

TUESDAYS

ROTARY CLUB OF THE BRONX, NY, INC.

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Rotary Theme 2010-2011:

**"BUILDING
COMMUNITIES, BRIDGING
CONTINENTS"**

Volume 94 • Number 46

May 24, 2011

President

Barry Fitzgerald
530 Riverdale Avenue #6H
Yonkers, NY 10705
718-548-7732

LOOKING AHEAD

6/14 - Mel Saks from the Jewish War Veterans. Club Assembly & Board Meeting. Flag Day.

6/28 - President's/Paul Harris Dinner

OPENINGS...

President Barry Fitzgerald opened the meeting and Jim Romeo led the Pledge of Allegiance. Rev. Sue Chadwick gave the Invocation.

VISITORS & GUESTS

Guest speaker Sean Pica was a guest of the Club, John Gallagher visited from the Ossining Rotary Club and Richard Swann visited from the Peekskill Rotary Club.

MAKE UPS

None today.

CHUCK-A-BUCK

Barry Fitzgerald won \$22 in the 50/50.

DR. HAPPINESS

Amir Asadi collected \$46 from happy Rotarians and guests.

REPORT ON THE MAY 24, 2011 MEETING GUEST SPEAKER ~ SEAN PICA



Photo courtesy of Jim Romeo

President Barry Fitzgerald (l.) presents guest speaker Sean Pica with a Bronx Rotary Club pen in appreciation of his inspiring talk.

President Barry Fitzgerald introduced John Gallagher from the Ossining Rotary Club who has been a volunteer in the Sing Sing prison system for many years. It was there that he met guest speaker Sean Pica whom he introduced. Mr. Pica is the Executive Director of the Hudson Link for Higher Education in Prison (HLHEP).

HLHEP is a college degree program in Sing Sing and Fishkill prisons for men and the Taconic Correctional Facility for women.

Prior to 1994, there were many college degree programs for the incarcerated in New York State, but due to bud-

get cuts the funding for them dried up. Without funding the programs do not survive for long.

The national recidivism rate is 60%. 49 Hudson Link graduates have been released: zero (0) have returned to prison. It costs an average \$50,000 per year to keep one person incarcerated. For every year that the 49 released graduates stay out of prison, New York State saves \$2.5 million.

In 1998, inmates at Sing Sing Correctional Facility reached out to religious and academic volunteers for help. The loss of a college program was having a devastating effect on prison morale. The volunteers responded. Under the leadership of Dr. Anne Reissner, Hudson Link for Higher Education in Prison was founded to restore college education at Sing Sing through private funding.

Hudson Link began offering courses in June 2000 with 22 students taught by Nyack College faculty. Seventeen men graduated with bachelor degrees in Organizational

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PRESIDENT'S/PAUL HARRIS DINNER DANCE

June 28th is our most important fundraiser of the year. Please come help us honor Dr. Daphne Hsu, Serafin Mariel and Bill Gallo as well as Outgoing President Barry Fitzgerald for a year well served and incoming President Debby Appel. Show your support for your Club and send back your RSVP now. Also show your support by taking an ad in the dinner journal. Contact Mary Springman at 718-617-1600 to arrange for your ad.

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SEAN PICA

Continued from page 1

Management in 2001. That year, the program enrolled 35 students through a new partnership with Mercy College. The students at Sing Sing take the same curriculum as other Mercy College students to earn their degrees. Hudson Link's success at Sing Sing has enabled us to expand the program to a second correctional facility with other academic partners. Their plan is to continue to model our educational program at other facilities as funding allows.

They are committed to helping students prepare for more constructive and meaningful lives – whether it is in prison or out in the community. The highlight of each year – and the event that validates the work and the support of their donors -- is the annual graduation ceremony at Sing Sing, where the men who have worked hard to earn their degrees walk down the aisle to the applause -- and happy tears -- of their family and friends. The commencement speakers have included the actor/singer and social activist Harry Belafonte, and actors Ice-T and Tim Robbins.

Several months ago a new pre-college program was instituted in Sing Sing and was so in demand that it started out at capacity. The prison only allows 24 men to be in a room together at one time. After 6 weeks, the men go directly into college. Out of the 24, only 1 decline to go on.

For many of these students, they are the first in their families to get a college degree. There is also a trickle-down effect that occurs. When family members and children see their son/husband/brother/father receive a college degree, they realize that it is possible for them to do so as well.

Every one of the graduates who has been released has returned to the community that they were previously a detriment to, as a community helper instead. They are social workers, HIV counselors, outreach coordinators, services personnel, etc.

Mr. Pica also goes into high schools with some of the graduates to speak to the students. He says it is not a Scared Straight type of program, and no one screams their message, but students pay attention because these men and women speak about how they have lost 10, 15, 20 or more years of freedom in the prison system. They have incredible success because teens will listen to and respect what those who have had the experience have to say when they will not listen to parents or teachers.

Mr. Pica admitted that he himself made terrible choices as a teen, and even though he came from a good family, those choices landed him in prison with a 24 year sentence. He assured us that what we see on TV and in the movies is a far cry from the realities of prison life.

At 16 he found himself in the Elmira maximum security prison. He was a high school dropout, but a guard recognized that he was the most educated of the inmates. Mr. Pica was asked to help the other inmates to learn to read and write. He read children's books to the other men daily for the 8 months that he was in the facility.

From participant in the program to now, Executive Director, Mr. Pica has seen that the program works and changes lives. He said that the first thing that he does every morning is email every one of the men and women who have gone through the program and returned to society. He asks them how and what they are doing. He knows from the responses that through these graduates, HLHEP is making a big positive impact on communities in and outside of the U.S.

Thank you so much Mr. Sean Pica for a very compelling presentation. It is one that we won't soon forget to be sure!

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Rotary Theme 2010-2011:
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Volume 94 • Number 47
May 31, 2011

REPORT ON THE MAY 31, 2011 MEETING
CLUB CATCH UP

OPENINGS...

President Barry Fitzgerald opened the meeting, Dr. Arthur Wolstein led the Pledge of Allegiance and Rev. Bill Kalaidjian gave the Invocation.

CHUCK-A-BUCK

It's Jim Romeo again for \$23 in the 50/50.

VISITORS & GUESTS

Richard Swann visited from the Peekskill Rotary Club.

DR. HAPPINESS

Sal Mastrocola collected \$36 from happy Rotarians and guest.

MAKE UPS

Debby Appel had make ups at the Orlando Rotary Club and the Midwest City Rotary Club. Ed Hicks had a make up at the Yorktown Rotary Club.



Photo courtesy of Jim Romeo

Rev. Bill Kalaidjian

The scheduled speaker, Laveille Lavette, was not able to reschedule a cancelled flight, so the meeting was one of fellowship and catching up on news.

Barry started the meeting by asking members to get behind the President's/Paul Harris Dinner Dance on June 28. It is a major fund raiser for the Club and if successful, will start Debby Appel off well for her Presidency. Honorees are Dr. Daphne Hsu, Division Chief of Pediatric Cardiology at Montefiore Medical Center, Serafin Mariel, Chairman of the New York Yankee Council and CEO/Chairman of Marace Associates, Inc. Financial Advisory Firm, and Bill Gallo, Daily News Cartoonist and Columnist. Mr. Gallo is being honored posthumously.

Invitations have been mailed out to all members and extras are available from Mary Springman at the meetings. Cheryl Simmons-Oliver asks that members try their best to attend and bring at least 3 other people. It is also important to support *your* Club by purchasing an ad in the dinner journal. Please use the ad response card included with your invitation or contact Mary Springman at 718-617-1600 to place one.

Rev. Bill Kalaidjian, chaplain for many years at the VA Medical Center in the Bronx, stood in for the absent speaker and spoke in observance of Memorial Day.

He said that on the morning of Memorial day he had been at the Isaac Varian House where he and 30 others attended an observance for the Jewish War Veterans. He has attended the service there of over 25 years. Bronx historian Lloyd Ultan told several interesting stories about servicemen from the Bronx. In the afternoon a service was held at the VA Hospital Chapel which approximately 60 people attended.

Rev. Bill spoke about Christina Jean Alexis who is one of the best volunteer at the VA Hospital. She was a NY attorney and Rev. Bill once asked her if she had ever thought about going into the clergy. She took that to heart, went to seminary school and graduated last year with a Masters in Divinity. She was one of the speakers at the observance in the VA Hospital.

The VA Hospital has 3,000 out patients a day and 300 in patients at the main hos-

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RAM P. GUPTA '87

CLUB CATCH UP

Continued from page 3

pital and 125 in the nursing home care unit. Rev. Bill said that if anyone knew of someone who wanted to volunteer there, they would be glad to have them. He said there are many volunteers who are ex-police officers of which some have created second careers as nurses. He also said that their doctors and surgeons mainly come from Mt. Sinai Hospital, but specialists are brought in from all over to ensure the best possible medical care.

The original hospital building started life as a Catholic orphanage for boys and girls and then was owned by Barnum and Bailey Circus before become the VA Hospital. Ten years ago that building was demolished to make way for the new facilities. At that time they also wanted to knock down the original chapel to make way for 20 parking spaces. Rev. Bill wrote a letter to Max Cleland, head of the VA in Washington, in an effort to prevent the demolition. The initial response was negative, but one day he got a call from the head of the VA Hospital asking if he could arrange a police helicopter to take Mr. Cleland on a tour of the 5 borough VA hospitals. When they returned to the Bronx and toured the chapel, Mr. Cleland realized the mistake it would be to tear it down. Not content to rest with that victory, Rev. Bill advocated for the relocation of the Nursing Home Care Unit. Mr. Cleland agreed that attaching it to the chapel made more sense.

And so the sleek modern facilities of the VA Hospital lives comfortably alongside the beautiful, original chapel with its stained glass windows valued at 1 million dollars. The Nursing Home Care Unit was designed in brick to match the chapel and merge with it seamlessly.

American war veterans have a fitting and beautiful facility that they well deserve.

Rev. Susan Chadwick's church is holding an "American Idol" type karaoke contest for teens. She is collecting donations from Rotarians which will go towards the prize money for the kids. A large vinyl banner advertising the event will be placed on the fence in front of the church and all sponsoring businesses and organizations will be listed on it. Since the Foundation is out of matching funds for this fiscal year, individuals were asked to contribute what they could on behalf of the Bronx Rotary Club.

Another initiative located on City Island is being spearheaded by Islander Pat Madsen. She is collecting clothing,

shoes, non-perishable food items, cleaning products and implements, tools, cookware, candles, etc. for those displaced by the severe flooding in Missouri. A tractor trailer will be loaded every Wednesday at the City Island Firehouse on Schofield Street until donations peter out and they can no longer fill the truck. Members are encouraged to bring donations to the meetings and either Sue or Marguerite will bring them to the firehouse. Please mark your boxes and bags with "Bronx Rotary Club".

On Sunday, May 22, Ed Hicks, Rev. Sue Chadwick, Marguerite Chadwick-Juner and Robert Chadwick did the Cystic Fibrosis walkathon at Rye Beach as the Bronx Rotary Club Team. With Rotarian donations, matching funds from the Foundation and additional funds raised, the team contributed just shy of \$2,000 to the cause.

RAISING ROTARY AWARENESS

Millions of travelers who pass through Philadelphia International Airport have one thing in common, says Rotarian Joe Batory: They wait for luggage in the baggage claim areas.

That's why for two years, District 7450 (Pennsylvania, USA) has showcased Humanity in Motion materials in two backlit displays in these areas, which are used by more than two million passengers a month. The district customized public service announcements about water and polio from Rotary's global public image campaign.

The district's research found that 8 of 10 travelers read the messages posted in the airport.

"Why not have tens of thousands of

people read about Rotary while they wait [for their luggage]?" says Batory, district PR chair and president of the Rotary Club of Philadelphia. "Find a place where you know a lot of people will have the time to actually read the ad."

District 7450 also persuaded its vendor, Clear Channel Airports, to donate one of the 42 x 63 inch color displays, getting two for the price of one. Such in-kind contributions help stretch funds, says Batory.

He also stresses the importance of using PR materials to tell the story of Rotary and raise awareness.

"We have a story to tell that has not been told very well," he says. "We want people at that airport to say, 'Oh, that's what Rotary does.' If Rotarians don't tell our story, then who will?"

District governors-elect, PR chairs, and other club and district leaders are encouraged to work with district governors to start planning how they'll use Humanity in Motion V and other PR materials in the coming year.

THE BRONX ROTARY OFFICERS

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 Secretary..... Rev. Susan Chadwick
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MEETING TIMES & PLACES of ROTARY CLUBS in DISTRICT 7230

MONDAY		
Bedford-Armonk	6:15p	Bedford Presbyterian Church
Bronxville	12:15p	Fogarty's Town Tavern
Central Bronx	7:00p	Jol Kabar Restaurant
Chappaqua	12:15p	Crabtree's Kittle House
New York	12:00p	Harvard Club
Northeast Westchester	6:15p	John-Michael's Restaurant
St. George's	6:30p	Grotto Bay Beach Resort
TUESDAY		
Bronx	12:15p	The Harbor Restaurant
Chinatown	1:00p	Hop Lee Restaurant
Croton-on-Hudson	12:15p	Bella Paula
East Yonkers	12:15p	Luciano's Restaurant
Hamilton	12:15p	Royal Hamilton Amateur Dinghy Club
Hastings, Dobbs Ferry, Ardsley & Irvington	6:15p	Doubleday's
Mount Pleasant	12:00p	Casa Rina Restaurant
Port Chester-Rye Brook	12:10p	T&J Trattoria
Scarsdale	12:00p	Moscato's
Somers	6:15p	Pinnacle Restaurant
Staten Island	12:30p	Ligreci's Staaten Restaurant
Upper Manhattan	6:00p	Gran Piatto d'Oro Restaurant
White Plains	12:15p	Crowne Plaza
WEDNESDAY		
Eastchester	12:15p	CIAO Restaurant
Gateway	7:15p	Lake Club
Harrison	12:15p	Emilio's Restaurant
Hartsdale	12:15p	Alaroma Restaurant
Inwood Manhattan	7:00p	Garden Cafe
Metro NYC	7:30p	Trattoria Dopo Teatro
Mount Kisco	12:15p	Mt. Kisco Holiday Inn
Mount Vernon	12:15p	Bona Sera Restaurant
New Rochelle	6:15p	Davenport Club
Ossining	12:30p	The Tuscan Grille
Pelhams	12:15p	Rockwells
Sandys	6:30p	Henry VIII Restaurant
Tarrytowns	12:15p	Westchester Marriott Hotel
Wall Street	5:30p	Downtown Association
Yorktown	12:15p	Murphy's Restaurant
THURSDAY		
Cortlandt Manor	7:00p	Cortlandt Colonial
Elmsford	12:15p	Rinis Restaurant
Mamaroneck	12:15p	Emilio's Restaurant
Mid-Island	7:30a	Dakota Diner
North Shore	7:00p	LiGreci's Staaten Restaurant
Peekskill	12:15p	Cortlandt Colonial Restaurant
Pembroke	7:15a	Royal Bermuda Yacht Club
Pleasantville	12:15p	Riviera Restaurant
Riverdale	6:45p	The Riverdale Greentree
South Shore	12:15p	Marina Grand
Yonkers	12:15p	Luciano's Italian Restaurant
FRIDAY		
Briarcliff Manor	12:15p	Briarcliff Recreation Center
Larchmont	12:15p	Larchmont Yacht Club
Rye	12:15p	Coveleigh Club