

ROTARY ALUMNI ASSOCIATION of GREATER NEW ENGLAND

— est. 2013 —



Special Newsletter – Annual General Meeting in Danvers, MA, May 1st 2015

May 1st 2015 was a day to remember for a Rotary Foundation double scholar and then an active Rotarian like me. I met Christopher Uschnig, the president of RAAGNE when he came to pick me up from Harvard Square to go to the AGM with Rose Allen another Rotary Youth Exchange alumna. After communicating with Chris from Sri Lanka during the past 2 years and then most recently to organize the AGM since I was the only member physically in Boston attending



Patti Quigley, Executive Director of Razia's Ray of Hope Foundation

Harvard Kennedy School, I felt like I was meeting a long time friend even though it was the first time.

But that's just the way it is with Rotarians or alumni. That familiarity even if one has never met runs across geographical boundaries. Having met Rotarians in different continents, I have experienced this instant comradely and friendship many a times. The ride to Double tree Hilton in Danvers, MA where the AGM was to be held was full of animated conversation, that we even took a wrong turn! But in the true spirit of a mentor PDG Klaus and his lovely wife, honorary Rotarian Glenys Hachfeld was at hand to take us in the right direction.



RAAGNE's president Christopher Uschnig with key speaker Gani Abazi whi is a Rotary Alum from 2005/06

Been the first time the AGM to be live streamed, the equipment's had to be set up and checked. All that done, upon the signal given by Dave Gau (Treasurer) operating on line from Pittsburgh Chris delivered the welcome speech.

He was followed by our first guest speaker GaniAbazi, MD MPH (Harvard) (Rotary Ambassadorial Scholar 2001). Titled "Making a Difference in Kosova" he talked about how he

became the first Rotary Ambassadorial Scholar from Kosovo, and started the first Rotary project 'Gift of Life Kosova' for his country and how he continues his Rotary projects in Health Care and Medical Education for the betterment of his nation. A great example of our many alumni rising through darkness to not only shine light upon their near and dear but the entire world, Gani spoke volumes to responsibilities shouldered by us, who were lovingly nurtured by the Foundation.

Dave Gau our Treasurer explained the RAAGNE Scholarship format and possible funding opportunities by the current alumni for incoming scholars. In true spirit of Rotary Foundation it was wonderful to see the contribution made by alumni to this fund already.

Our next guest speaker Patti Quigley, Executive Director (Razia's Ray of Hope Foundation) presented on the ongoing journey of building schools in Afghanistan, including the importance of education, the obstacles to success, the long road forward, and ultimately, the impact that educating girls has on the community. She was of great praise to RAAGE for supporting the foundation.

The discussion about the future of RAAGNE and involvement of our members, had suggestions of forming an E Club for the convenience of alumni across the globe among many other ideas to



Christa Papavasiliou is discussing post-AGM with Gani Abazi



Some members of RAAGNE at the AGM 2015 in Danvers, MA, USA

give back in service.

The evening was concluded by an international culinary experience at a local asian restaurant. The fellowship among the alumni continued with family members over food, an age-old tool used by Peacebuilder like me world over to build relations, share value and empower. Which is also similar to Rotary spirit, where every conversation flowing that night had a common sentiment of, 'Service above Self'.

Pushpi Weerakoon MPA (Harvard), MCT (US), LLB (UK)
Rotarian-Rotary club of ColomboMid Town District 3220 (2011-2014)
Rotary Peace '07 & Ambassadorial '09 Scholar

RAAGNE Zabuli Education Project

by **April Labaro, Project Chair**

In June 2014, RAAGNE started to support the Zabuli Education Center which provides exemplary, free education to girls Deh'Subz, Afghanistan. This year, we are proud to continue this support by raising funds that will go towards building a post-secondary technical and vocational education and training (TVET) center.

The school opened its doors in March 2008, and now provides free education to more than 480 Afghan girls who were previously denied educational opportunities. In a region with one of the lowest literacy rates in the world, the Zabuli Education Center is empowering young girls to face head-on the severe gender-based social, political, economic and cultural obstacles that are common in their community. The funding for this year's project will go towards building post-secondary technical and vocational education and training center. Three courses will be offered at the new facility including: teaching, health services/midwifery, and office administration.



RAAGNE has further demonstrated our dedication to supporting the Zabuli Education Center at this year's 2ndAnnual General Meeting, which was held in Boston, MA from May 1st – 2nd2015. We were very lucky to have Ms. Patti Quigley, the Executive Director of Razia's Ray of

Hope Foundation at this year's meeting. She discussed the ongoing journey of building schools in Afghanistan, including the importance of education, the obstacles to success, the long road forward, and ultimately, the impact that educating girls has on the community.

We have already raised \$340 towards this project! Please continue to support us and stay updated with our project and future efforts at: <https://fundly.com/raagne-zabuli-center-project>