

COMMUNITY NETWORKER No 35/2016

ROTARY CLUB OF PARRAMATTA CITY Inc. DISTRICT 9675

www.parramattacityrotary.org.au

Rotary Four Way Test

The Four Way Test challenges Rotarians, in everything they do, to ask of themselves:
Of the things we say or do:

1. Is it the **TRUTH**?
2. Is it **FAIR** to all concerned?
3. Will it build **GOODWILL** and **BETTER FRIENDSHIPS**?
4. Will it be **BENEFICIAL** to all concerned?

Club Meeting 14th November 2016

Bob Rosengreen proposed a toast to the Rotary Club of Atlantic City, the city being venue for next year's Rotary conference at which the centenary of the beginning of the Rotary Foundation will be celebrated.

Our Guests

President Phil welcomed Melissa Abu-Gazaleh, managing director of Top Blokes, a mentoring program for adolescent boys and young men; Louise Skilbeck, head of fundraising for Top Blokes and Liz Trehwella, program manager for Sydney for Fitted for Work, a program to assist women who have difficulty finding work. Melissa, it is pointed out, is the NSW Young Australian of the Year for 2016.

Annual General Meeting

President Phil reminded members that the club's AGM was on December 12 and people should consider whether they would like a board position. Phil himself would be going to a District AGM Presidents' Meeting on Friday.

Fitted for Work

Liz Trehwella said that in their work with women trying to find work, they started by coaching them on the approach they should take to the job interview and how they should present themselves. The team then mentored the women in their first 12 months of their job. They helped the women to "negotiate anything that is going on in their lives". The program started in Sydney in 2010. Liz had been with the program more than four years. The women running the program had to have had a career themselves and had to have the ability to impart their knowledge and wisdom.

Parramatta Rotary Club's Ninetieth

Secretary Joy said anyone who had not paid for next Monday's night's celebration at The Port restaurant at Parramatta and who wanted to go would have to make their own arrangements.

The Rotary Foundation Million Dollar Dinner

Secretary Joy said there would be no lunchtime meeting on Monday, November 28, but that it would be transferred to the night meeting at the Epping Club which was being convened to support the Rotary Foundation.

Kaheba Honda

PP Keith said he had had some correspondence from Kaheba Honda who was in the Central African Republic. Extra funding had been made available for his humanitarian work to continue through February 2017. However, he back in Sydney during December - January.

Tony Sonneveld

PP Malcolm gave the sad new that Tony Sonneveld, a prostate cancer sufferer who had spoken at the club and had led a courageous public campaign against the disease for several years, had finally succumbed on Sunday morning. His funeral will be at Rookwood Cemetery at 12.30 on Monday next week.



Tony Sonneveld

The Torrid Lives of Our Young Men

Melissa Abu-Gazaleh said she had initiated a foundation for adolescents and young men who had alcohol, drug, mental health and anger issues. She said the problem was serious. In the next 20 minutes, she said, one young man in Australia would come to the conclusion that had had no future and take his own life. Before members finished their working day, one young man would die of a drug overdose. By the time members went to bed, 793 men would have perpetrated violence against women and children. Untreated mental illness cost the country \$387,000 per hour. The top two causes of death for young men were road accident and suicide. Eighty-five percent of what we saw about young men was negative. Ninety-two percent of parents were impacted by their issues. And only four percent of young men volunteered for service to the community. People were asking: "Where are their role models?" Melissa thought there was need for a change of culture of adolescents and young men but nobody was doing anything about it. "When I was 19 years old, I thought I would have a go at it myself," she said. From that, she conceived the idea of starting the Top Blokes Foundation. It now worked with 1,400 adolescents and young men a year who were at risk and disadvantaged.



Melissa with President Phillip

Melissa said there were many complex issues facing the adolescents and young men her foundation dealt with. One 15-year-old they encountered was drinking with his dad five times a week. Two adolescents had had to watch on one occasion while their father bashed their mother. A young man and his mother had had to sleep in a car in school grounds. Schools were ringing the foundation asking what they could do, and foundation members were working through schools. The foundation ran a program at a school for six months, each week taking up a different topic. On the drug problem, the foundation knew that merely telling young people not to do drugs was perhaps effective, but for more so was an 18 or 19-year-old telling the students that taking drugs was "not cool". The young man who had knowledge of the scene was able to give the students information that would help them make an informed decision. Following the program, there was an improvement in the mental health of most of the boys, together with their ability to improve relationships. One boy, who had been suspended from school nine times in 12 months, had told his headmaster he wanted to finish Year 12, go to university and become an engineer.

The second program looked at young men between the ages of 16 and 24 who were not employed. A lot of them were burdened with unpaid driving fines and had had their licences suspended. But they needed a chance to get a job to pay their debts and to get a job they needed a licence. The team had liaised with The NSW Office of State Revenue to get concessions for them to make it easier

to regain their licence and pay their commitments. Since the program had started, \$62,000 worth of fines had been paid and the State Revenue Office had made a concession in some cases for the licence to be restored before the fines were paid off. Six months later, 82 percent of the young men had got an apprenticeship.

The team gave sensible advice to the young men about how to present themselves at job interviews. One young man after counselling had got himself a haircut, realising it would not look good going into an interview with a "mullet" cut. Once they got their job, the young men found other issues. One was that, coming from a home where they smoked cigarettes and drank but did not eat, some found they were exhausted doing an eight-hour day. One young man was so badly affected he had to be hospitalised. It was imparted to them that they had to change their lifestyle, including eating more. And when they did that, it was ultimately of great benefit to the community. There were many other issues, including sexuality. In the 1960's 42 percent of young people got access to pornography. Now it was 92 percent. There were huge complications following that, which contributed to an increase in anxiety among young men. One of the issues was gender identity where people who did not fit the conventional mould had to content with serious discrimination and harassment. When it came to suicidal depression, many young men simply went to a friend, instead of turning to professionals trained in suicide intervention.

Louise Skilbeck said in answer to a question from John Surian that in the past ages children learnt a lot from their parents but now, because of the pressures of life, parents were more remote. She said that in Australia, fathers spent an average of less than eight minutes a day with their sons. President Phil said a possible approach was to look at educating the parents. Melissa said that some homes were so dysfunctional that that was not possible. One boy came from a home where both his older brother and his mother was drug dealers.

Louise Skilbeck said that team, now operating in the Parramatta area, needed funding. She had been appointed fundraising manager and her goal was to double the size of the foundation in three or four years. A 16-week program for a school would cost \$6,500. A full year's program for a school would cost \$13,000. At present the group was working through 22 schools but it needed to expand. Parramatta City Rotary Club was associated with Parramatta High School, which was on the waiting list. In answer to a question from PDG Barry, Melissa said that though Parramatta had diverse ethnicity that did not matter. The message was the same regardless of the ethnicity. "You find you end up with the same conversation regardless of nationality," she said.

PE Natalie thanked the group for their presentation of "a fascinating topic". As a mother of a 12-year-old, going on 13, she could well appreciate their message.

For Your Diaries

18 November. D9675 Presidents Meeting

21 November. Club Lunch Meeting

21 November. 90th birthday celebrations of Parramatta Rotary Club at The Port restaurant, Parramatta ferry terminal. 7pm.

28 November. Rotary Foundation Million Dollar Dinner at the Epping Club
NO club meeting.

1 December. Clean-up and preparation of the Castle Hill Road site for selling Christmas trees.

2 December. Christmas tree sales begin on Castle Hill Road and will continue for at least two weeks.

10 March 2017. District Conference at Wollongong