



**GISS students raise over \$5,700 to help build school in Afghanistan**  
**Posted Nov 10, 2011 By Lorraine Payette**

EMC Lifestyle - Grades seven through nine students at Gananoque Intermediate and Secondary School (GISS) were thanked formally by Don Matthews and Bill Gray of Rotary International on November 4 for their incredible fundraising campaign.

Over the past year, these young people raised over \$5,700 for Rotary to use to build a school in Afghanistan.

Rotary decided to celebrate their first 100 years in Canada with a special project. Being aware of the deplorable conditions in the schools in Afghanistan, and of the fact that under the Taliban, girls were not allowed to be educated, they decided to build a school.

But these things take time, money and materials, so they did what they do best. They went to local communities across Canada and, working with the people there, raised the required funding to achieve this illustrious goal.

"It's a great privilege to be here with you to honour your great contribution to help others," Bill Gray, 2011-12 District Governor for Rotary International District 7040, told the assembled students. "You did an incredible job raising as much money as you did - over \$5,700 - for people on the other side of the world. Thanks for the effort and for all you did, helping all these people. I hope this won't be the last of your service endeavours and that you'll continue this into the future."

Don Matthews, of the local Rotary club, was also very pleased. "Thanks from Rotary for your participation."

The school that was built will help educate 4,000 Afghan children, the majority of them girls. Due to the characteristic enthusiasm and outpouring of effort on the part of Rotary, it was completed a number of months ahead of schedule, and students started classes in September of 2010.

The grades 7-8 students at Thousand Islands Elementary School (TIES) in Lansdowne got behind the project and through various fund raising efforts throughout the last school year, produced more than \$5,700 to contribute to the effort.

"Before they had schools like we have here, they had to sit in the mud and the dirt," said Mackinley Goff, student in Mr. Tamblyn's class. "Now they have real classrooms to work in."

Myra Pardy, another student, was also impressed with the project. "There were 4,000 kids, all sitting outside. Now they're all inside, but they only have 20 classrooms."

"But everyone is welcome now, including girls," said Jesse Tulk.

The school is well equipped, having not only classrooms to keep students out of the weather, but proper textbooks, desks and computers to enhance their learning experience. Trained teachers have been hired, and the future looks much brighter for all.

The Afghan students were so happy with their school that they sent a photograph of a completed classroom on to Rotary. Behind the rows of happy, eager young faces is a banner reading: "Thank you Rotarians in Canada celebrating your 100th anniversary of Rotary in Canada. Thank you Canadian international Development Agency. The financial support provided by both organizations has made this school possible. September 26th, 2010."

At the official opening ceremonies in Afghanistan, the elders stressed the extreme importance and value of education and equal opportunity for all, whether boys or girls.

"They expressed their gratitude for this generous gift and said their children will never forget they are sitting inside their classroom instead of sitting under trees and rain," said Matthews.

The Grade 7-8 students at GISS couldn't stop their praise for the projects and for the now Grade 9 students who did such a terrific job of fund raising. "There are 2 million getting a chance to go to school now who couldn't before," said Pardy.

"The grade nines put the people in Afghanistan ahead of themselves," Goff told everyone.

The fundraising was only part of the effort. It was also important that the money arrive where it could do the most good. "It took time to make sure we had the right people to get the money to the right places," said Rich Tamblyn, teacher. "Education is the one thing that makes a difference in the world."

And how do the grade nine students feel about their achievement?

"It was a great experience to be a part of, a great way to get involved with people around the world," said Rachel Dorun.

Bennett Wagar agreed. "It's hard to think it went by so fast. You don't think about it when you're doing it, but it's a great experience."

Rotary was founded in 1905 and is recognized as the first volunteer service organization. Known for its educational and new generations programs, people from the age of 12 on up can find a way to participate in the organization. Starting with Interact (for young

people aged 12-18), they can progress through the different levels and participate in a lifetime of volunteer service and achievement.

When the students were asked if they would do it again if they had the chance, the response was a resounding "YES!", proving that volunteerism is more than alive and well in the young people at GISS.

For more on Rotary International, please go to <http://www.rotary.org/en/aboutus/pages/ridefault.aspx> .



teacher Rich Tamblyn, Bill Gray, 2011-12 District Governor for Rotary International District 7040, and Don Matthews of the local Rotary Club, had the honour of posing with the assembled grades 7-9 students at GISS on Nov. 3, where they were publicly thanked for their contribution of more than \$5,700. The former TIES grade 7-8 students raised the funds to help Rotary build a school for students in Afghanistan.

Source:

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