

EARLY BIRD WEEKLY



NewbergRotaryEarlybirds.org

April 22, 2021



Raquel opened the meeting with a birthday girl last week. That reaction could've passed for our morning inspiration.[grin]

The Sherwood Club needs our help tending their annual tree sale. It's on now and running through May 8 (Mother's Day).

[Click here to volunteer.](#)



We inducted our newest Rotarian last week. Becky Potter, who knocked out her classification talk weeks ahead of induction, is now part of District 5100's ninth largest club. Welcome to Early Bird Rotary, Becky!



Rick Condon stopped and visited our friend and sister, Tina recently. On her third of three rounds of chemotherapy, he was checking in and seeing if she needed anything.

She was doing well but teased him, asking, "You could go wig shopping with me..."

He wasn't sure he was the right person for style advice but commented, "I passed a dead raccoon on the way up here if you would like me to make you a hat."

Seriously, Tina is doing well and looks forward to visitors!

Last week was [Firmina Foundation's](#) founder, Rukshana Triem.

Her family fled wartorn Mozambique and hiked two days to a Malawi village in 1985. Five years later, a Zambian refugee camp until 1992 when the family was granted asylum and moved to the United States in 1992. Her job, as an older child, was to stand in line for food to help feed the family.

That struggle and early trauma steeled her to become who she is today.

Visiting, back in Africa, her grandmother pointed to a nearby mango tree. She asked Rukshana, "Do you see those children learning under the mango tree? You should build a school for them."

[editorial - Dang. Most kids get their knickers in a twist being asked to take out the trash.]

Rukshana, in a rational moment of self doubt, pushed back a little at budget and timing and...

Grandmother (as grandmothers do) replied, "If not you, who? If not now, when?"

In 2010 she was able to bring her grandmother to the United States.

In 2018, remembering the proverb "if you want to go far, take people with you," she rallied some people.

She had ambition but no plan, she needed \$10,000 but had only raised \$8,000. Still, people trusted her and joined her.

In the villages near Tengua, Mozambique, "It took a lot of voices in the communities" that she needed



support from. She needed permission from chiefs. "I am a woman, but I speak the language."

She did succeed in mobilizing people, got the money raised, and got that school built.

It's not just a school. It serves as a community meeting place, it has served 3,500 weekend trade school students, and serves 350 weekday students. Teachers make \$50 per month there, by the way.

Then ... COVID.

So now the students have a building, and they're studying outside but under the eaves, not the leaves.

That's not forever, though. And the next project is building desks by trade school students for weekday students.

"Made In Tengua" is a concept Rukshana is trying to instill in the villages. Sure, we have products made in US, UK, and China, but "other countries want what you have to offer!"

Empowerment and education aren't just for students, are they.