

EARLY BIRD WEEKLY



NewbergRotaryEarlybirds.org

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Welcome, Ken & Lindsay Stoller, sponsored by incoming President, Casey Hostetler, and inducted by Doug Cain.

While there, she earned the title of best pupil in the Siaya District (a neighboring county).

Following were four years of [KCSE](#) secondary school. In 2014 Emily's uncle paid her way to Strathmore University for her undergrad where she completed degrees in Commerce and CPA Studies. She is now working on her Masters in public policy and management.



Our second presenter was former Early Bird, Dr. David Krier, for [Volunteer Voyages](#), "Enriching Lives Through Humanitarian Service Adventures."

The first thing established when launching a project is making clear that, "we're not Santa Claus. Now, how can we

help?" In other words, VV can't just open a magic bag of gifts and fix all their problems. But it can bring aid, focus and education to help locals identify and fix their own issues.



Paul Harris 5x5 Pool ... Spiderman (alter ego, Frank) stood in for Paul Harris this week to draw the winning name from the pool containing Rod, Lessie, Matt, Doug and Gary. He enlisted Assistant Governor Elect, Pat Wolfram (Wilsonville Rotary) to pick his own superhero identity from Capt. America, Batman, Green Hornet, Superman or Iron Man. It was Batman which meant Lessie is our newest Paul Harris Fellow recipient (how many is this for her now?).

Emily Bakhitah was one of our presenters last week introducing Rise to Shine Education Foundation (RTSEF).

Emily Bakhita Akoth Otieno is the only university student from her Kenyan village.

Emily's elder sister assumed the role of mother when their mom passed in 2000 and Emily helped support their younger siblings. They eventually had to drop out of school because they couldn't raise the pittance required for primary education.

On the eastern shores of Lake Victoria, Kenya, the locals caught and ate fish for all their meals. When you don't have money or means to catch fish, many girls in her community depended on "sex for fish" to earn money.

Fortunately for Emily, her family caught the attention of a Catholic priest who offered to sponsor her to a primary boarding school.

RTSEF had a humble start in 2012, originally known as Scars to Stars, identifying a dozen children of varying ages. Some orphaned, some just poor, but all had a clear desire to succeed in education, develop their potential and break the poverty cycle.

Today, RTSEF, a Kenyan NGO, has empowered and enable over 500 bright and needy students in the lake region of Kenya (Siaya, Migori, Kisumu, and Homa Bay).

And just for some perspective, below the poverty line in this region is \$1 per day, my customary tip at Dutch Bros for black coffee.



Emily [shared a video with interview](#) of parents and students that is a poignantly persuasive call to action to support one student's year of education for \$600.

This includes uniforms, food, books, education and shelter. Why uniforms? Why boarding school?

These things change the mindset of the student. Boarding separates them from the distractions of poverty and uniforms engender a sense of common purpose and community. [Get Involved Here, RTSEF.org.](#)



The Bora tribe of Iquitos, Peru, earns most of its income entertaining tourists. COVID messed that up.

The chief, a longtime friend of David, called him for ideas to grow, eat and sell vegetables. David arranged a \$2,000 grant to bootstrap the tribe.

VV helps with health care, water filtration, solar stoves, gardening education, cacao production, building mosquito nets, and much more.

Fun story of an early conversation with the chief began with questions. "Where do you get your water?"

Keep in mind, the question was asked while standing in a stilted home a few inches above an Amazon tributary.

The chief looked at David like he was nuts.

David clarified, "Where do you get your drinking water?" Then followed with, "Do you get sick from the water?"

It was the same incredulous look, "Of course it makes us sick."

And that is how life altering projects begin between Volunteer Voyages and people that don't know they need help.