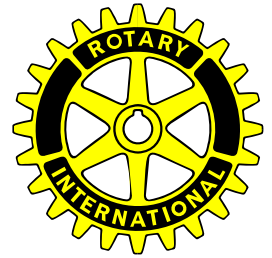


# GSE Russian Team



The Group Study Exchange Program involves young professionals between the ages of 25 and 40 who have pursued their professional endeavors for a period of at least two years. Ken informed us that in June of 2008 we from District 7070 would send a team back to Russia. He touted the program as providing not only an opportunity to the individual to learn about his or her profession in the other nation, but also to become acquainted with the culture of the other nation and its people. Such programs have in the past involved Malaysia, Singapore and Turkey among others.

Our friends from Russia on Group Study Exchange arrived after traveling three days, half way around the world. Their adventures and misadventures were prolonged by being stranded in Moscow due to a snowfall and missing the connecting flight, ending up in Berlin rather than Frankfurt and then having to depart from Berlin to Frankfurt.

Vladivostok is on the far eastern coast of Russia, and given the ancient history and tradition of the Russians, it is a relatively new city being very similar in age to our Canadian cities. Our

friends from District 5010 are an impressive lot.



The Russian GSE Team, from left, Yulia Suslova, Svetlana Us, Ron Tuttle, Alexey Bragunets (Team Leader), Ken O'Neill, Alexey Romanchuk, and Yulia Soboleva.

President Ron introduced Alexey, Svetlana, Alexey, Yulia and Yulia and welcomed them to Port Hope where they are commencing the first leg of their month long stay in District 7070.

Linda Thompson, the Mayor of Port Hope, was also welcomed and she advised she was looking forward to meeting further with the five young exchange guests from the Vladivostok area.

Rotarian Ken, who gave a brief history of the Group Study Exchange Program involving educational components, grants for university professors and the Peace Scholarship. These programs spread the goodwill of Rotary worldwide.



Our visitors arrived Monday after an exhausting journey to embark on a very intense program. Our visiting oncologist, Yulia, was to visit Lakeridge Hospital. Alexey, the maxillofacial surgeon, was to spend the day in Peterborough with Dr. Taylor at the clinic. Alexey, the dealership director, was to spend time with Joyce at Fraser Ford and also through Joyce with other dealerships in the area. Yulia, who works with the university in the Vladivostok area, was to spend time at TCS, and Svetlana, the educator and florist, was to spend time as the Port Hope High School and Holton's Flowers. They were then to be given a tour of the Port Hope municipal building in the presence of Mayor Linda Thompson. On Wednesday they will attend the Rural/Urban dinner at the Canton United Church.

The schedule that they have planned is quite daunting. Rotarian Ken assured us that these people, being younger, would have the energy to see it through.

Notwithstanding the efforts of these technically competent GSE professionals and some Rotarians who are also quite gifted in the area, we were unable to coax the secret of operation out of the laptop and had to forego an interesting power point presentation that would have provided us with considerable visual contact with Vladivostok and Khabarovsk the two premier cities in the Russian far east.



Showing considerable aplomb in the face of these difficulties, and notwithstanding the fact that they were very tired, the group provided us with a very interesting and informative oral presentation including some fascinating nuggets relating to the history of Russian far-east.

There was a concerted effort to settle the far-east portion of Russia some 200 years ago. Vladivostok was established in 1898 and is a noted shipbuilding center and seaport on the Pacific.

We were told that the city proper contains roughly 600,000-700,000 people but that there are approximately 1 million people living in the immediate vicinity of the city. Surprisingly Vladivostok is on the same latitude as Toronto. Khabarovsk is also a beautiful city and has the highest production rate per capita in Russia. It has 300,000 people and is surrounded by what we are told are beautiful forests.

Following a brief description of their occupations and backgrounds, this remarkable group of young professionals donated 2 banners to president Ron in gratitude for our club's hospitality.



At the end of the presentation, vice-president Jim Hunt had the

honour of thanking Svetlana, Yulia, Alexey, Yulia and Alexey for their calm and effective presentation in the face of what must have been a considerable amount of fatigue, and some distress brought on by the unfamiliar surroundings and the necessity of negotiating a language foreign not only in its sound patterns and meanings, but in its use of a completely different alphabet. All in all it was a most impressive performance by our guests.



Rotarians Ron and Ken along with Port Hope Mayor Linda Thompson during a visit to the Town Hall and Municipal Chamber.



The Russian Team at Northumberland Hills Health Centre during their tour of the facility.