

EWB PORTLAND MAINE PROFESSIONALS

10/23/2018 MEETING MINUTES

Chapter President Nadia Glucksberg welcomed everyone and, after introductions, provided the following updates:

DEBRE BIRHAN, ETHIOPIA: The travel team is back home after a successful trip! They'll be ready to present their adventure for our November meeting (now scheduled for December 10). For those new to the chapter, our portion of this project is the design and construction of a school for 1000 K-12th graders, with support for the latrine design and miscellaneous support as needed. If you want to join the Slack Channel, to follow the conversations, just let Kathy Hillman Reed (khillmanreed@gmail.com) know.

EL PROGRESO, ECUADOR: The Project Team is heading to El Progreso November 10 for the first of the implementation trips. This is a water project that will start as water distribution project and then progress as new phases are identified. There will be more travel opportunities in the spring, so if you want to get involved, let Baxter Miatke know (baxter.miatke@woodplc.com) as this team meets separately for planning and completing the EWB requirements. The team communicates on Slack, and if you would like to be included, just let Baxter know.

HAITI BRIDGE TEAM: The Haiti Bridge project is moving forward with weekly teleconferences and has momentum. As noted last month, Cashman has a full time volunteer now to lead the project management and the bridge is going up. Geotechnical, structural and hydrology support is helpful. Let Nick Dempsey (Nicholas.Dempsey@hdrinc.com) know if you are interested in getting (back) involved. We also have a Slack Channel dedicated to this project.

STEM OUTREACH: If you like kids and being a role model (or like playing hooky) join us. Our chapter is looking for a member to lead the school outreach and organize the presentations. They are easy, fun and only take a few hours. If we want to continue to support the local schools, we need someone to take on this effort. We have already been requested to join the Portland Schools STEM Expo (Fri. 11/2) and to present to Greely Middle School in November for their Africa Day (Fri. 11/16). We have committed to both, but need participants! Contact Kathy Hillman Reed (khillmanreed@gmail.com) if you want more info or can participate.

EWB CHAPTER OUTREACH: We continue to support the EWB New Haven Professional Chapter with their sanitation project in Nicaragua. They are fundraising now, with hopes of traveling again, although due to recent events in the country EWB-USA has suspended travel until it is safe

FUNDRAISERS: With three active projects percolating for our chapter, it is more important than ever to look toward our major fundraiser - Portland Uncorked! The planning process will begin shortly. We need participants to help with all aspects to make this a successful event. If you can help, please contact Kathy Hillman Reed (khillmanreed@gmail.com).

HOLIDAY FAMILY: It's coming up to that time of year again when we need to decide whether the chapter will "adopt" a family for holiday giving. Please be thinking about this and whether you can/will participate.

OCTOBER PRESENTATION

Our speaker was Nassan Rohani, an Iranian who has become a U.S. citizen and worked in IT/Computer Science for 30 years. Nassan and his wife Parivish have been in the U.S. since 1985 and now live in Maine. Parivish is a human rights activist.

Nassan's topic revolved around the cost of discrimination for any country, but his native country in particular. He described the purge of non-Muslims in Iran following the revolution in 1979 that overthrew the Shah. Nassan and his wife practice the Baha'i faith, so were discriminated against because they and their faith allegedly brought "western thinking" to the Iranian culture.

Parivish and Nassan met in India where Nassan had gone to study and work. He talked about his countrymen who also had to leave Iran for India, the West, South Africa, or other countries due to discrimination. He described the loss of professionals in Iran such as economists, architects, mathematicians, technology developers. He noted that the founder of eBay and an executive at Twitter are Iranians who had to leave their country. His question is: what about the people left behind and the cost to the country from such a loss of professionals?

Nassan went on to say that while Parivish has been able to return for a visit to Iran, he does not dare to do so in the current environment. His and Parivish's story is a cautionary tale for any country.

NEXT MEETING: NEXT CHAPTER MEETING IS MONDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2018 at SEA DOG BREWING in SO. PORTLAND, ME from 6:00PM – 7:00PM. PLEASE JOIN US!

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Hillman Reed, Chapter Secretary