

EWB Portland Maine Professionals

9-15-2015 Meeting Minutes

President Nadia Glucksberg opened the meeting by asking for introductions of attendees and reviewed ongoing chapter activities, including:

STEM Outreach: We're currently working five school systems to present our projects and team with the STEM programs to teach that science and engineering can improve public health. If you want to join the team, please contact Mary Kate Hegarty (marykateh83@gmail.com) or Kathy Kern (Katherine.kern58@gmail.com). We will also have a table/booth at the STEM summit at Ocean Gateway in Portland on November 10. We are looking for volunteers to present/staff the table. You do not have to have traveled to Debre Birhan or Dorgobom to present – just have to enjoy getting students excited about engineering outside the classroom.

Fundraising – The next Portland Uncorked! event is targeted to coincide with Engineers Week in late February 2016. We are looking for folks to step up to help with corporate sponsorships and the silent auction. This is critical if we want to travel in 2016, so if you have a knack for organization or believe in what we do – please join the effort. If you do not have time to work on the event, at least look for silent auction items.

The Community Project (TCP) in Debre Birhan, Ethiopia: Monthly teams are going over to break ground on the foundation of the first school building! It's finally coming together and we're building a school!!! Rita Cooper & Scott Winchester evaluated the property last year, followed by Keith Stone, Mike Zanchi, Matt Randall, Emily Kelsey and Brad Roalnd. The most recent team (Nadia, Kathy Hillman Reed and Stan Reed) returned just before this next meeting with MaryKate and Kevin traveling in December! There is a lot MORE WORK TO DO. If you're interested in the project, please contact Rita Cooper (rcooper207@gmail.com) or Mary Kate Hegarty (Marykateh83@gmail.com). Other amazing tasks completed for this project have included the only full track and Olympic size football (soccer) field in the region, which are expected to boost the economy of the area, a community garden and a wonderful playground donated by our partners. The community continues to contribute their share and to partner with us, the founders of TCP and the PSU chapter.

Dorgobom, Ghana Water Project: The team is working on reconnecting with the community and CDDF before we head back over in the spring. They are working on a draft MOU that will set monetary requirements from the community and dictate how our rainwater harvest system has been maintained/is still being used. Travel will occur after the community demonstrates that they can track rainwater data for several months so that we can properly design any modifications. If they meet our expectations, additional projects may include an evaluation to see if secondary treatment is needed on the Rain Water Harvest system, potentially using LEDs for UV purification. Interested? please join the administrative meeting that will follow the chapter meeting for a more detailed update of the proposed and upcoming work. Contact Kelcy Adamec (Kelcy.adamec@hdrinc.com) if you want to get involved.

WEBPAGE support – We need someone to manage our webpage and keep it up to date Heather Lumb stepped forward to take over managing the webpage. Thank you, Heather!!!!

October Presentation

Matt Wolcott from Safe Passage shared an excellent overview of the great work the organization is doing in Guatemala. Safe Passage works to "combat poverty through education". The families of Safe Passage children scavenge through the Guatemala City Dump for items to resell. The organization works to enroll these children in the public schools and tracks their success. If students miss less than three days of school a month and less than three days at the Safe Passage program, their family receives a food bag with the equivalent of what money the child would likely have earned if not in school.

Matt reviewed the various educational programs Safe Passage is providing to the children and their families, including the first expeditionary learning school in Central America for grades 4 – 9 and an adult literacy program. He noted that the adult literacy program is attended mainly by mothers, as fathers are "generally absent", which is one of several major issues the program confronts. Safety and security of the children are also among the major concerns, particularly as they relate to gangs in and around Guatemala City and gang recruitment activity. Safe Passage currently serves about 550 children, which translates to about 3,000 people when their families are included.

Matt extended an invitation to our EWB chapter to consider forming a "service learning support team" visit to Safe Passage, especially to discuss STEM principles. He noted there was no need to be fluent in Spanish to participate in the educational program. FMI, contact safepassage.org/take-action.

Other Business

There was an administrative meeting immediately following the PMP chapter meeting.

Next Meeting

NEXT MEETING: TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2015 at 6:00 PM in the event room at the Sea Dog Brew Pub, 125 Western Avenue, South Portland, ME. A representative from Portland Adult Ed will discuss the various programs and activities provided, particularly to immigrants in the Portland area.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Hillman Reed, Secretary