

## Local Youth Organization Raises \$500 for Local Projects and Initiatives Abroad

### Rotaract Group "Small But Mighty": Sarah Simpson

Kimberley Johnston  
Contributor

The fund-raiser held two weeks ago by the Rotaract Club of Charlottetown was a great success, said the organization's vice-president Sarah Simpson. Half of the strategy was appealing to their target group – and putting the "fun" in fundraiser.

"We decided to hold the fundraiser at the Wave because we wanted something that would create awareness about the group while still raising money. The Wave seemed like a good idea because it would be mostly people in the Rotaract age group (18-30) who would attend. There were over 100 people in attendance (for the fund-raiser)," she said. "Pretty good for a Thursday night."

Local bands John Connolly, The Danks, Smothered in Hugs, and Two Hours Traffic played to the lively crowd and gave fantastic performances. With the help of the bands, the Wave, and the Wave patrons, the local group raised \$500 to do some good in the world- literally, said Simpson.

"After minimal expenses we raised almost \$500 – which is awesome. The money will help toward our ongoing work supplying dinners at the Upper Room, and it gives us something to work with to start looking into international projects. We are currently setting up contacts to start sponsoring gardens for orphanages in Africa so they can grow some of their own food," explained Simpson.

So, can another fund-raiser like this one be expected in the near future?

"We may consider another fundraiser like this seeing as it was successful, but probably not until next year. We are currently working toward the garden project mentioned above as well as getting started with our involvement in the Tip to Tip for Africa Bike event, and are looking at some other exciting projects as well," she explained.

The group will also join forces with Robertson Library in the near future for a fund-raiser. She encouraged UPEI students to keep their ears to the ground for upcoming news.

"In the fall we will be co-

organizing a book sale with the Robertson Library to raise funds so keep your ears open for that!"

UPEI Students (and non-UPEI students) between the ages of 18-30 are welcome to join the group as well, she said.

"Rotaract is definitely looking for new members, especially since we are such a young club. Our group is currently small but mighty."

The club has about eight regular attending members and numerous others who have left to go travelling. Many of those people have found other Rotaract clubs around the world.

"That's the beauty of the organization," explained Simpson. "It's such a dynamic age group that we constantly have people coming and going. There are 7,600 Rotaract Clubs around the world in 158 countries, including a brand new one at Acadia and one at CBU (Cape Breton)."

Simpson said Rotaract is an organization sponsored by Rotary, which focuses on local and international projects. Each Rotaract around the world looks for projects that will develop different skills in its members. Focuses of the clubs include community, social and professional development. Last year, for example, the group did all of the promotions and marketing for the Tip to Tip for Africa event.

There are lots of experiences and advantages to reap by joining, she said.

"Getting involved with Rotaract will give you experience with local and international projects as mentioned above, and we also have connections with the Rotary Clubs which can be very helpful for those entering the work force. The international aspect is great too, because joining a Rotaract Club if you move to another country can be a great way to meet people."

If anyone would like to get involved with Rotaract, e-mail [rotaractofcharlottetown@hotmail.com](mailto:rotaractofcharlottetown@hotmail.com) and check out the Rotaract website <http://www.rotary.org/programs/rotaract/>.

## UPEI Engineering Students Top - Again!

Zak Kurylyk  
Contributor

Engineering students from UPEI once again proved themselves this month, this time winning the Canadian Engineering Competition.

Teammates Hannah Sutherland, Caleb Curtis, Daniel Palmer, and Gabriel Landry walked away with the prestigious national award March 18 at École Polytechnique de Montréal. They earned their way to the competition after taking first place in the Atlantic Engineering Competition in February. The team from UPEI won both the Junior Team Design Award, and the Environmental Design Award, making them the only group to win two first place prizes.

Landry said there was a bit of trepidation going into the national competition, since their win at the Atlantic level had been a close call.

"Honestly, our win at the Atlantic competition almost seemed attributed to the fact that our wing fell off, then the design pole vaulted itself to victory," said Landry. "Going to the nationals was intimidating and we felt honored just to be there."

Palmer said the team's win at the Atlantic competition gave them a boost. Despite the fact they faced competition from Canada's most prestigious universities, they knew they could beat them.

"We knew that their engineering curriculum was identical to ours, and that in competitions like this, it's people who make the difference, not academics," he said.

Landry agreed, saying that their competitors all had the same level of schooling, so they weren't scared by their training.

The team from UPEI ran into problems as soon as they arrived at the competition. Competition organizers e-mailed the team members to tell them to bring their own tools, but Landry said that due to a technical glitch, the emails after the UPEI students left for their flight. Palmer said this created some major logistical problems for the group, who were on a tight time schedule.

"An e-mail was sent at 6 PM, which we didn't get until returning home," said Palmer. "This put us at a severe disadvantage, because all the other teams had tools in their own room, and we had to run to borrow tools from the organizers. We would sprint 3 minutes to borrow a pair of scissors."

The team's task was to move a pile of sand eight feet across a table by building a machine out of the materials at hand. To make it harder, the machine had to collapse into a printer paper box at the end of the competition. The team built a crane with a collapsible boom to win the project, splitting the tasks up between the group to concentrate on different components.

UPEI's design was clearly the best at the competition, winning a unanimous decision by the judges. Curtis was worried the crane wouldn't last the test, especially after his strength calculations indicated the machine could break under the stress of operation.

The design worked extremely well, however. The crane's hydraulic system malfunctioned while Curtis was operating it at one point, though, giving everyone a laugh.

"He was operating the machine, and the tube had fallen off a hydraulic, and even after I yelled 'No, Caleb, No' he discharged the hydraulic, spraying water everywhere, including the judges table," said Palmer.

A lot of the team's success (including the environmental award) came from a masterful presentation as well, said Curtis, who mentioned teammate Sutherland performed exceptionally well under pressure to help them gain points in this critical portion.

With this year's win in hand, Palmer expects the team to return next year for the competition, saying, "There isn't a doubt in our mind."

The team's way to Montreal was paid for through both private organizations and UPEI departments.

