



RAYJON SHARECARE

e-bulletin

MARCH (2017 #03)

Shortly after her experience on an awareness trip to Haiti last November, Terry DeMarco accepted an invitation to join the Rayjon Board of Directors. Here's part of her story.

The Roundabout Road to Board-dom

When I went to Haiti for the first time five years ago, I knew I would someday want to become involved with Rayjon. When I returned a second time this past November, I realized it was time.

Going back many years, I knew a little bit about Rayjon and made some effort to support their endeavours. Since my first trip in 2012, I have been a volunteer with some of Rayjon's events and, about three years ago, was asked to consider taking on a more active role with the organization. I declined at the time because I felt I had too much else on the go to make that kind of commitment. I've come to realize, though, that if I were to wait until it was convenient for me; it was never going to happen. My second trip to Haiti this past fall renewed my resolve to become more involved and, in February, I attended my first meeting as a member of Rayjon's Board of Directors.



Terry (red shirt) feeding a child at Rayjon's SHC nutrition centre

I have also discovered that there are opportunities for my husband and our youngest daughter to help with Rayjon events, as well, combining family time with volunteerism. The three of us hope to make a trip to Haiti together in a couple of years. As high school students, our oldest daughter made a trip to the Dominican and our middle daughter was part of my first trip to Haiti, and both were very much enriched by the experience.

I was very pleased to see the progress of Rayjon's projects in the five years separating my two visits. During the trips, we visited not only Rayjon's own project sites but also others – providing more opportunities to look, listen and learn about what kinds of projects and programs have been effective, while also affording the chance to discover yet more possibilities for partnerships. A key characteristic of all of the successful initiatives is that they are geared to allowing Haitians to help themselves.

There were experiences that left me deeply affected and saddened. For example, we learned that the tiny caskets of the children who had died at St Damien's children's hospital in the previous week are usually brought into the chapel during Tuesday morning mass. Even more horrifying was hearing that there were simply too many to bring them in the day we were there. But I tried to focus on the many, many reasons to be hopeful for the people of Haiti. It is heart-warming to have the opportunity to feed lunch to the "rusty" haired babies suffering from severe malnutrition at Rayjon's Sacred Heart Centre (SHC).

We saw firsthand how these children are nursed back to health to the point that they can "graduate" to the nursery on the next floor. More encouraging still is learning about the many other programs coordinated through the SHC, geared to ensuring that there will be a lasting impact on these children and their families, and allowing them to ultimately support themselves. I also took great comfort in knowing that these families will support each other, as there is an incredible sense of community that is deeply engrained in the Haitian people. The people of Haiti are hopeful, faith-filled and resilient beyond explanation.

When I consider my experiences as a whole, I would venture to guess that what I will be able to contribute by being part of Rayjon's endeavours will be only a fraction of what I will receive in return.

Making New Connections

One of Rayjon's goals is to recruit and engage volunteers of all ages. Samantha Prieur is the youth coordinator for Rayjon. Recently she was asked to comment on how she became involved with Rayjon and what her goals are in her volunteer role.



I have always had an interest in social justice and learned about Rayjon through a newspaper article when I first moved to Sarnia. Two years later, I went on an awareness trip to the Dominican Republic in March 2014. My experience there, the stories I heard and the people I met made me realize I wanted to continue to be involved and to strive to encourage others to make an impact.

My goal is to increase youth participation in Rayjon events and activities beyond the awareness trips while also raising awareness of the social justice initiatives that Rayjon is a part of. Since the establishment of the youth co-ordination role, a youth group PowerPoint presentation has been created.

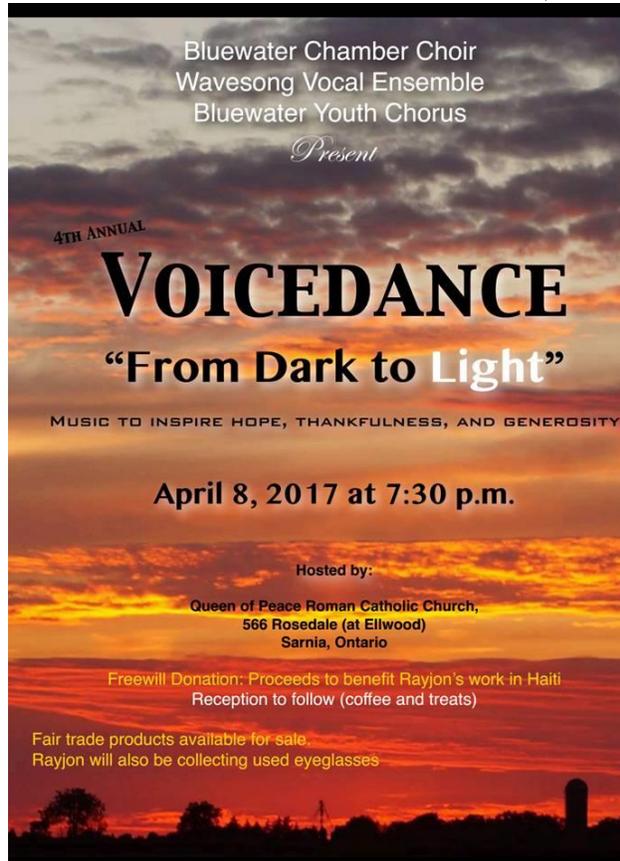
Many youth presentations have already been made during the 2016/2017 school year and other classroom and youth groups have expressed interest in learning more about Rayjon and social justice. It is our hope to form a group of presenters that are available to speak to these groups. If there is interest, we are also looking at putting together a youth oriented event that could also act as a small Rayjon fundraiser. This is still in the brainstorming stage and we hope to be able to involve more youth in existing Rayjon activities as well.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

BCC Concert Performance Partners with RAYJON

Save the date: Saturday April 8th, at 7:30 p.m.

Location: Queen of Peace RC Church, 566 Rosedale Ave, Sarnia



The *Bluewater Chamber Choir* is providing an evening of music. There will be a short presentation about Rayjon during the evening and a table will be set up with the usual selection of Rayjon products for sale: coffee, vanilla, gift cards and Artizani goods. Refreshments will be provided and all proceeds of the concert freewill donation will go to Rayjon. The BCC is a large ensemble with individual adult and youth choirs.

The musical package is intended to be an inspiring and uplifting experience. You are encouraged to come out and support Rayjon and be treated to a wonderful evening of music.

Rayjon Yard Sale

Saturday May 13th (Mother's Day weekend)

As part of the Point Edward, Town-wide Yard Sale, we invite you to visit Rayjon's collection at 605 Michigan Ave. We are accepting donations of goods NOW – everything except large furniture items and clothing. We will pick up and store till that date.

Call: Marlo @ 226-886-0476; Dianne @ 519-862-1963; Joan @ 519-542-3893; or Karen @ 519-542-4247 for pick-up of goods.

Rayjon/DeGroot Plant Sale

Mark your Calendars!

Watch for the DeGroot's Nursery's postcard in the mail in late May; bring it to DeGroot's June 2nd – 4th. [8-8 on Friday; 8-6 Saturday; 9-4 Sunday] and purchase beautiful 10",

red or pink hanging Dipladenia plants for your garden - they flower all summer long and are proven butterfly magnets. The same event last year was a great success! Profits support Rayjon's Haiti projects. These are the same plants we offered last year. (\$25, cash, cheque or credit / no debit)

For more information or to volunteer for a 3-4 hour shift at this fundraising event, call Dianne McKillican at 519-862-1963



Rio™ Dipladenia - 10" Hanging Basket

Thank You!

To our many donors, we must say again a tremendous thank you. With your donation you make a lasting change to the lives of people in Haiti and the Dominican Republic

To Donate Online:

[DONATE NOW](#)

One time or monthly options

Tax receipt and Record of your online donations immediately available

Mail Cheques To:

Rayjon Share Care, PO Box **2482**, Sarnia, Ontario N7T 7T1.

To Purchase or Distribute Rayjon Coffee:

- Coffee - \$10/12 ounces (please call Mary: 519-541-0142) Organic, Fair Trade, 100% Arabica coffee, fine grind or beans, decaffeinated, medium roast or dark roast. Available to community organizations, churches, schools and service clubs to sell in support of communities in Canada as well as in Haiti and the Dominican Republic.
- Vanilla - \$3/2 ounces; \$6/4 ounces (please call Brenda: 519-344-3755)

Beautiful Gift/Memorial donation cards - receipts issued for donations of \$20 or more (please call Karen: 519-542-4247)

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