



RAYJONSHARECARE



RAYJON Board Announcement

Rayjon is pleased to announce that the position of Board Chairperson will be shared in 2017 between the former Chairperson, Den Shannon, and new co-Chairperson, Ann Tuplin. Ann took on the role of Volunteer Coordinator in 2016 and formerly she was Rayjon's Executive Director.

At this time of transition a spotlight on Den Shannon's involvement with Rayjon would seem to be timely.

Den's first exposure to Rayjon was an awareness trip to Dominican Republic in 1988 and he still remembers it as being a very memorable experience. Over the years he has assisted in a number of capacities: as the Social Convener, as a Trip leader, as Financial Director from 1995 – 2003, and he was appointed Chairperson at Rayjon's AGM in October 2009.



Den at an eyeglass clinic with another satisfied beneficiary

In total Den has been on 44 Rayjon trips, 20 of which were to Haiti. Needless to say he recalls many, many memorable moments during those years. Here are a few anecdotes in his own words:

- We were quite frightened when protesters, near St. Marc, placed a tree across the road to block our progress and when we turned around there was another tree behind us. The protesters' grudge was really with the authorities but nonetheless it was a bit unsettling to be caught in the middle of the conflict. We stayed there until the President arrived in his helicopter and settled the dispute. Meanwhile we were

entertained and made friends with a group of young Haitian musicians.

- Although I was very apprehensive, on one trip, we visited the hospital ward for lepers. We met the various patients and the staff working with them and left with a much better understanding of the disease.
- I met a little lady at a Haitian eyeglass clinic who could no longer do needlework for her children's clothes nor earn any wage doing work for others. I fitted her with a suitable pair of glasses and watched her as she threaded a needle. We all cried a bit and applauded.

There have been many, many heartwarming moments like those above, but my best thoughts are of the continuing generous support of donors, volunteers and Haitian partners that enable Rayjon to make this a better world for us all.

Thank you Den and thank you Ann for leading Rayjon onward and upward in 2017!!

What is a "Red Zone" Family

In the December post-hurricane project update it was stated that, "... funds raised for hurricane relief are going to assist Red Zone families who face increased hardship this year." One reader asked for an explanation of the term "red zone".

Red Zone is a category of extreme need. Special requests for emergency assistance are often received at the Sacred Heart Centre. Quite simply they are families that have no other source of assistance and are facing dire circumstances. For example, there are families without a father figure or any source of income. Bereaved families often receive Red Zone support as funeral expenses can become a huge burden on family heads left behind. For example most recently there was a one of our tuition-supported kids that passed away (at age 12). He left his mom and four other siblings. This was a family that has been connected with the centre for a long time. The Red Zone fund enabled the centre to help cover the costs of his funeral.

Below, is a photo of Bernadette and her family



Bernadette: "My name is Bernadette. I am a widow since 2011. I have been frequenting the Centre Sacré-Cœur with my 5 children. I am truly very poor but with your support all my children go to school thanks to the Tuition Support program. If I now can get involved in an activity, it is thanks to you. I was very pleased that Wisigoth (staff member) came to visit me at home."

The tuition support program is another way that Red Zone families get help. The Red Zone Fund makes sure their kids/grandkids get enrolled in school. Home visits are done to make sure the families have what they need.

And in case you missed it, be sure to read this Nov-16-2016 Observer article about Dr. Glen Maddison and the Rayjon board members' post-hurricane visit to Haiti earlier in the month. <http://www.theobserver.ca/2016/11/16/rayjon-board-members-recently-visited-projects-in-haitis-north>

Rayjon in the Community

During two weekdays in December, Rayjon volunteers gave their time to present themselves and the organization to the public at the Lambton Mall. There were many positive outcomes. Coffee, vanilla and Haitian-made Artizani items were available and sales went well. There were some shoppers who were previous awareness trip participants and were very happy to see Haitian art on display. Lots of eyeglasses were donated, gift cards were purchased, and many people kindly made financial donations. It was a great chance for Rayjon to be out in the community, to have fun socializing, and to be able to offer promotional material about Rayjon projects, the eyeglass program, and the new strategic plan. The final tally for the two days was over \$3600.

Many thanks again to everyone that volunteered and to those who stopped to talk. Watch the Rayjon web page and the Newsletters' Upcoming Events section for future notices on ways to volunteer.

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 dominant theme of the program is meant to remind us to be thankful for all that we have.

Most days we read or listen to news that reminds us of problems and catastrophes in the world: the refugee crisis, disastrous weather events, firestorms, political uncertainty and turmoil, health concerns, global climate change. In spite of these harsh realities part of our response ought to be one of gratefulness for all the blessings and privileges we enjoy. Our lives may not be free from all concerns and areas of suffering - but in comparison to other parts of the world we are indeed fortunate. It is hoped that the music program will encourage everyone to consider giving generously to those who suffer unimaginable hardships.

The music presentation will include songs that acknowledge that darkness exists in our lives, but this will transition into songs expressing hope and reminding us that there is light. Encouraged by these messages the concert will then embrace songs about safe places, the beauty of nature and music, and songs of faith and hope for others. The 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.

2017 Rayjon Trips

Later this spring a March Break Awareness trip will be heading to Haiti and in March/April there will be an Eyeglass Clinic, also in Haiti. A monitoring trip is planned for April or May. Later in the year there is some discussion about another awareness trip for adults – in the fall – and there will be another monitoring trip and eyeglass clinic as well. Details will be provided, when available.

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.



[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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