

# OUTREACH

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mother and no apparent medical condition with mother or child.

“Five years ago, we didn’t know that people like you would reach out to help provide equipment to help babies like my Esther,” he said at a joint Rotary meeting between the Riga clubs and representatives from Sweden and Oklahoma City’s Club 29. “Now she’s doing well. We were lucky.”

For about a year, Club 29’s Mary Jane Calvey and Bob Medley worked closely with Inese Priedniece of the Riga Rotary Club to make sure translation in the grant request was clear and accurate.

Oklahoma City contributed \$2,500 to the \$51,964 project in a partnership that included Rotary Club Riga, Riga Ridzene, Sweden’s Degafors and Karls goda Nobel and Budapest City (Hungary) Rotary Club — with matching funds from Rotary International.

“It was impressive to see the Rotary-provided monitors and equipment in the neonatal intensive care unit at the hospital,” Club 29’s Rotarian Martin O’Gwynn said. “Their work is similar to what we find at The Children’s Hospital (at OU Medical Center), in that miracles happen daily. For our Oklahoma City club to have played a role in providing those resources for people eight time zones away was a strong testimony to global cooperation and how so much more can be accomplished when people work together.”

A dedication ceremony in the summer brought together



Residents relax on the banks of a river in a park near Riga Plaza.

[PHOTO BY MARTIN O’GWYNN]



Clayton Taylor, left front, and Mary Jane Calvey, right front, are shown on a tour bus with Swedish Rotarians on the way to the resort town of Jurmula, Latvia.

[PHOTO BY MARTIN O’GWYNN]

representatives from the partnering clubs to Riga at the joint meeting where members talked passionately about global corporation as a way to solve problems.

A doctor who formerly worked under the Soviet regime said if politicians adopt the Rotary model of cooperation, there will be more successful agreements between countries.

## Being a Rotarian

Each week around the world, business, civic and political leaders and others gather around a meal for Rotary club meetings. The largest of those clubs, some 600 members and growing, is Club 29, which meets

weekly at the Petroleum Club in downtown Oklahoma City. Members hear presentations on issues from leaders in various industries and organizations. Occasionally, even the governor takes the podium.

It’s a group rooted in the motto “service above self,” raising money for teachers to spend on miscellaneous expenses, for the families of servicemen and service-women at Tinker Air Force Base and providing dictionaries for third-graders in Oklahoma City schools, among other things.

And as part of Rotary’s Global Grants program, Club 29 has contributed to projects that include helping scabies eradication in Panama,

brickmaking in Uganda, telemedicine equipment to reach remote patients in Columbia, dental surgery in Romania, empowerment of women in Rwanda, auto mechanic classes in Peru and projects in Oklahoma City, including a vision clinic at Crossings Community Church.

But members don’t experience the full impact of those routine weekly meetings until they attend a dedication ceremony.

Medley, District 5750 chairman of Rotary’s international grants program, said members who attend project dedications return “with a new appreciation of both how fortunate we are to be in our community and how similar those we visit are to the friends and neighbors we live around.”

“Our primary goal, for being involved in Global Grants, is to develop a relationship with Rotarians around the world as we help fund and execute a humanitarian activity,” Medley said. “We can talk about good works and show videos all day long, but there is no better way for Rotarians to see and feel the impact we make each time we participate than to actually be there and see it up close and personal.”

And the beneficiaries of Rotary’s Global Grants also are forever changed by the generosity of strangers from around the world.

“These units also greatly helped Esther,” her mother Elina Verle said in an email. “We were fearful about how she will be able to breathe independently. But thanks to medical apparatus, and of course the great staff, Esther spent three months in hospital. As you know, now she is a very active, smart and healthy girl.”

## TRIP TAKE-AWAY

### FROM MARTIN O’GWYNN

The Latvian people we visited with have a frame of reference for life, which I find hard to comprehend. Most of the Rotarians were all at least 30 years old when the country regained its freedom in 1991. The decades of Soviet occupation could have created a bitterness and distrust among the Latvian people.

But the individuals we visited with were warm, friendly and eager to work together in cooperation. That feeling of partnership was a great element of the journey to Riga.

The Latvians’ investment in their children’s hospital facilities shows their resolve to move forward with hope for the next generation of leaders. There is great pride and optimism for the future of their country, despite geographic tensions which won’t go away any time soon.

From my perspective, Latvia has a rich history and the people we met have great nationalist pride. In our lifetime, they have struggled with political issues and economic crises which are greater than those Americans have faced since World War II, yet they operate with a positive outlook. Their resilience impressed me.

### FROM CLAYTON TAYLOR

The impression that has stayed with me now that I am back home, is how the people of Latvia are still struggling for autonomy — out from under Russian dominance, dominance in terms of both their national security and their economy. They are very concerned that Russian President Putin can do the same thing to Latvia that he has done to the Ukraine — invade on the basis that Russians are being mistreated. (It’s a) very fragile state of their independence and their economy. The feeling I have brought home is worry and fear for their future. And they are

concerned that the U.S. is moving in the direction of being less and less willing to stand up for Democracies like theirs, should they be seriously threatened by Russia. They are in a very precarious position.

But it was a great experience in a very interesting part of the world.

### FROM LARRY STONE

First, we met lots of people who are very proud of Latvian history, people, and language. Those same people have clear concerns that Russia represents a threat to all those things. Russian speakers comprise 37 percent of their people, with the capital at 50 percent. The economy depends on Russia, generally. Many cultural and political influences still originate in Russian, even after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. They obviously felt very proud of their country. The pediatric hospital gave a feel for who they are and what they would like Latvia to become.

Second, it fascinated me to talk to individuals about the Latvian political situation and find that every person had his own specific take on things. No two people seemed to have the same perspective. Everyone seemed to feel unsettled about the current situation, and no two people agreed on a solution.

And, of course, I was fascinated to learn about Latvia and Tobago. Never in a million years would I have guessed anything like that. Who would have thought that you had the most in common with all those blonde-haired, blue-eyed Latvians? That was the best discovery of the entire trip.”

### FROM CLYTIE BUNYAN

So let me explain that. On our last day in Latvia, our host Inese Priedniece and

her husband drove us to the countryside to the Rundale palace, said to be a summer home of Catherine the Great of Russia. Priedniece was an excellent guide and gave us quite a history lesson about the founders of Latvia. When Bob Medley asked if they were colonizers, she responded, “Ya! In Guinea (Africa) and Tobago, Trinidad-Tobago.”

When she mentioned Courland Bay in Tobago, I swore — with my apologies to the passengers — knowing that there is indeed a Courland Bay. I’ve frolicked there with friends during my high school years. (I grew up in Trinidad and graduated from high school in Tobago.) At this point I perked up in the backseat, thinking this woman must be mistaken. I broke my rule about remaining silent when I’m not sure of facts and began to challenge her, deciding Google would set her straight. But it turned out that I clearly was asleep in a history class. (I already can hear the rebuke from my family.)

Back in the 1600s, Latvia was part of the Dutchy of Courland. The Courlands were seafaring merchants and were among the first colonizers of the island of Tobago. They were run off a few times by the Spanish and other Dutch colonizers. What was even more fascinating, what that after the Courlands sold the island, they embarked on one last colonization attempt — about 23 miles to the south on the island of Trinidad near what is modern-day Toco.

I was gobsmacked, to everyone’s amusement. Toco is the village where I was born and lived until I migrated to the United States. It’s my hometown.

“Welcome to the fatherland! You finally made it home,” Priedniece teased.

# NEEDS

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attend perform procedures and help to train doctors in Nicaragua, Klos said. The trips attract physicians and medical students from around the U.S., as well as students in Mayflower Church’s youth group, Klos said. The trips typically occur in winter and summer, and last for about ten days. Volunteers who attend pay their own way, Klos said. The organization also runs a boarding school for deaf students, Albergue Mayflower. Mayflower worked with the Nicaragua Ministry of Education to have the students attend local schools in the morning



Judy Chasin, volunteer audiologist with clinic patient in Nicaragua. [PHOTO PROVIDED]

and enrichment classes at Albergue in the afternoon, where they are instructed in Nicaraguan Sign Language and learn academics, life skills instruction, arts activities, sports and take field trips, according to the

Mayflower website. Mayflower partially funds the school by finding people to sponsor individual students, Klos said. Sponsorship for each student, each year, costs \$800 and covers their school supplies, food,

For more information about the organization, volunteer trips or ways to help, visit [www.mmonicaragua.org/](http://www.mmonicaragua.org/).

room and board and uniform for the city public school, according to the Mayflower website.

In addition to sponsorships, the organization has opened businesses, such as a bakery, in Nicaragua to raise money for operations, Klos said. They also accept donations of money and supplies, and occasionally hold fundraisers, such as a raffle currently going on for a 2016 Honda Fit LX and tickets to an Oklahoma City Thunder game, according to the website.

## APP FINDER

### Top apps to help you fall asleep

For some people, going to bed can be the most stressful part of their day. Bedtime can bring about dread and anxiety for the millions of people who suffer from insomnia. One-quarter of the U.S. population reports not getting enough sleep at night and nearly 10 percent suffer from chronic insomnia, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Instead of lying in bed and staring at the ceiling hoping to fall asleep, here are some apps that can help you develop better sleeping habits or help you relax.

**Deep Sleep with Andrew Johnson:** The Deep Sleep app is guided meditation to help you relax and unwind. The app features step-by-step instructions to guide yourself into meditation and a soft blue background to help soothe the most active of minds. The app is based off Andrew Johnson’s best-selling CDs and MP3s that have helped people deal with stress, anxiety and addiction. Cost: \$2.99 to download to iOS and Android. Find it: [www.withandrewjohnson.com/pages/apps](http://www.withandrewjohnson.com/pages/apps).



DigiPill is one app that offers ways to help users fall asleep. [PHOTO PROVIDED]

**DigiPill:** Using a selection of “pills,” the DigiPill app features guided meditation that can help you beat insomnia, lose weight, increase motivation, reduce stress, gain confidence, explore your mind and to be more creative. DigiPill uses a combination of psychoacoustics and Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) to help you change your mood, perception or behavior. The app comes with 18 “pills” and more “pills” can be purchased through the Pill Store in the app. Cost: Free to download to iOS and Android. Find it: [www.digipill.com](http://www.digipill.com).



You can select a relaxation or timed sleep program in the Sleep Genius app. [PHOTO PROVIDED]

**Sleep Genius:** Sleep Genius is a scientifically designed sound program to help your brain get ready for sleep, guide your brain through each stage in the sleep cycle and wake you with a gentle alarm. The neurosensory algorithms help train your brain to fall into its natural sleep rhythms. You can select a relaxation or timed sleep program and when it’s time to wake up the alarm will bring you out of your meditation or a night’s sleep. Cost: \$4.99 to download to iOS, free to download to Android. Find it: [www.sleepgenius.com](http://www.sleepgenius.com).

**Sleep Well Hypnosis:** Using hypnosis, the Sleep Well Hypnosis app helps train your mind through subconscious thoughts to prepare for deeper sleep. The app features hypnosis audio read by the soothing voice of a certified hypnotherapist, Vpeaceful background music and nature sounds, a sleep booster with binaural beats to induce brainwave frequency into a state for deep sleep, and the ability to continue listening to background sounds after a session ends. Cost: Free to download to iOS and Android. Find it: For iOS, <http://apple.co/2dWzst>. For Android, <http://bit.ly/2dagsgl>.

### Featured app

**Cosmic Watch:** If you’ve ever wondered about your place in the universe, Cosmic Watch can pinpoint your exact position. Cosmic Watch helps users learn about the relation between time and the cosmos, and to understand the concept of the celestial sphere. The app features a Time travel mode to explore any planetary position from the past present and future; navigation to align with the cardinal points and find your real time position in the universe; the ability of discover the solar system from a geocentric point of view; and a solar eclipse detector. Cost: \$3.99 to download to iOS, \$4.25 to download to Android. Find it: [www.cosmic-watch.com](http://www.cosmic-watch.com).

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