



Manchester Rotary Club  
P. O. Box 1, Manchester, CT 06045

# Press Release

## LOCAL ROTARIAN PRESENTED WITH ROTARY'S HIGHEST HONOR

Manchester, CT - Rotarian Rick Lawrence of Manchester, CT was presented the highest award conferred on an individual by the international service organization. The "Service Above Self" award was presented for his seven years of raising funds to construct sustainable clean water and sanitation projects for the indigenous Mayans in the northern highlands in Guatemala in addition to significant contributions to other volunteer causes during his lifetime.

The Award, named after Rotary's motto, was presented by District 7890 District Governor Mike Barnett and Rotary International President's Representative David Roper at the District's recent Conference held in Portsmouth, NH. District 7890 is comprised of 62 Rotary Clubs in northern CT and western MA and only 10 other District Rotarians have been so honored in the past 20 years according the Rotary International website.

This award recognizes up to 150 Rotarians each year from the 1.2 million Rotarians throughout the world who demonstrate their commitment to helping others by volunteering their time and talents. Barnett noted, "The nominee must have demonstrated exemplary humanitarian service with an emphasis on personal volunteer efforts and active involvement in helping others through Rotary. Services rendered by the nominee must have been on a continuing basis."

In presenting this significant award, Barnett noted the tireless efforts Rick Lawrence has exhibited in visiting dozens of Rotary Clubs on a yearly basis, making presentations and transmitting the donated funds to the non-profit organization, Behrhorst Partners for Development, that implements the construction of these projects. Over the past seven years Lawrence's efforts have raised \$213,000 and assisted over 3,174 people represented by 515 families. He and his wife travel to Guatemala each year to observe the completed project, participate in their dedication and a daylong celebration.

In nominating Lawrence, past Manchester Rotary Club President Marty Fins emphasized Rotary's requirement for community service for non-Rotary activities and the award recipient's list is lengthy. Lawrence was a member of the Manchester Jaycees and since 1978 has volunteered his time on the Governor's Committee for Employment of Persons with Disabilities and the Manchester Commission for Elderly Services and Persons with Disabilities. He is on the Manchester Soccer Club Board of Directors and served that organization as its President from 1993-1996. For 10 years he was President of the UCONN "Friends of Soccer" booster club and continues as its volunteer photographer. He is a member of the Manchester YMCA Board of Trustees, an Incorporator at ECHN and provided the complimentary design services for the recently completed Purple Heart Home for Sgt. Sandra Lee and the Hartford Distributors Inc. Memorial garden (site of mass slaying by a disgruntled employee). On a professional level he is a 40+ year member of the American Institute of Architects, spearheading the lobbying effort during the 2013 legislative session to pass legislation dealing with excessive roof pitch on municipal schools, thereby saving towns and the state approximately \$50 million per year. In the fall of 2013 he was one of three Connecticut architects and engineers nominated for "designer of the year" by the CT Association of General Contractors.

During the current Rotary Year, he has worked tirelessly in completing the application and was successful in obtaining a Global Grant from The Rotary Foundation to fund sustainable clean water and sanitation projects for two more Mayan villages. With matching funds being contributed by the Foundation and approximately 25 Rotary Clubs, it is anticipated another \$100,610 will be available to construct these improvements.

Locally, the Rotary Club of Manchester conducts a number of fundraising events to support Lawrence's efforts, including the Mother's Day Pancake Breakfast, a golf tournament and a Cabaret Night. Funds are also raised for local projects. For more information on Rotary, visit the website at [www.manchestertrotary.org](http://www.manchestertrotary.org).

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In the attached picture below L to R, Manchester Rotarian Rick Lawrence is presented the "Service Above Self" Award by David Roper and District Governor Mike Barnett.



In the attached picture below Manchester Rotarian Rick Lawrence and his wife Elin (holding baby) observe the Rotary-funded potable water running into the three-compartment sink at the household of a young Mayan mother.

