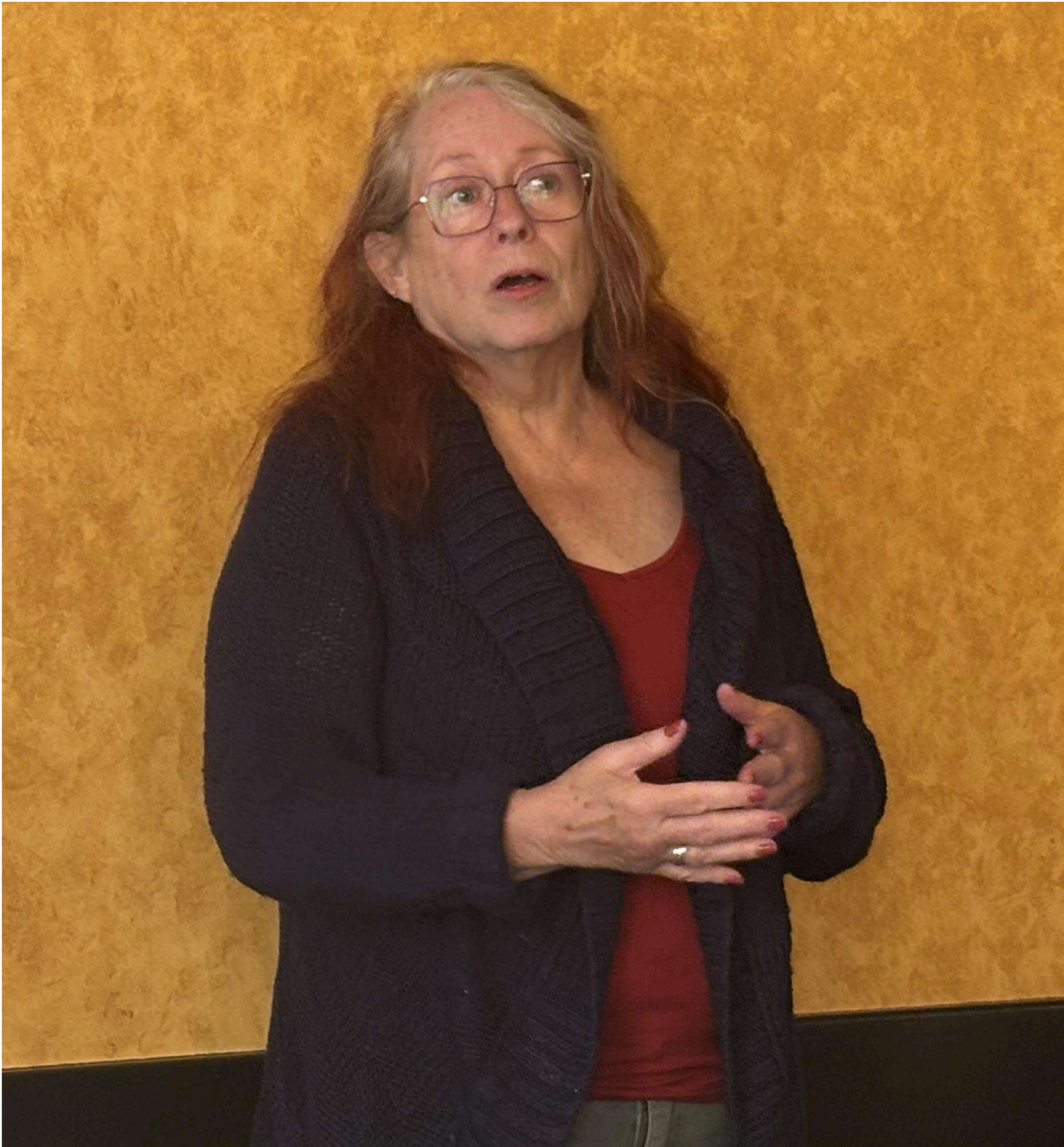


Nogales Shoebox Project: Evolution and Long-Term Impact



On October 14th, Cheryl

Ewing provided a detailed update on the tri-country Nogales shoebox project, emphasizing its transformation from gift-giving to sustainable community development.



Cheryl has participated in the Nogales Shoebox project since her early days in Rotary 25 years ago. Over that time, she has attended to the Nogales trip in 20 of her 25 years. During her tenure, the project has shifted from shipping physical gifts across borders to purchasing locally in Mexico due to border challenges, improving efficiency and supporting local economies.

The Nogales project was started by the Pantano club in Tucson AZ. Three years after inception it became a three country project involving Rotary clubs from Canada, Mexico and the US. Unfortunately, the Pantano club withdrew in 2019 although there are US members still involved and the original Mexican host club withdrew in 2019, replaced by the Industriale Club, which now drives community-led decision-making and fundraising, including a US golf tournament raising \$10,000 to \$20,000 USD annually. Current initiatives include providing groceries, hats, mitts, potable water to hospitals, refurbished school desks, and commercial kitchens that train women to bake for income. The project supports volunteer fire departments crucial to local safety, providing financial aid and equipment despite inconsistent government funding. Cheryl highlighted the long-term nature of the project, which fosters sustained relationships and visible impact beyond monetary donations.

Plans for the coming year include continuing the shoebox program, expanding potable water projects, refurbishing desks, and supporting income-generating community kitchens.

The project's timing of the trip for 2026 was adjusted to avoid school holidays, increasing engagement with children and schools. Cheryl invited club members to participate in future trips, reinforcing the importance of direct involvement.

The dates for 2026 are January 14th, returning on the 18th or 19th.

The goals for this year are:

- another water fountain/distribution system
- Shoeboxes
- sports equipment
- new school desks

If interested in assisting with this project please contact Cheryl at cheryl@cherylaewing.ca.

