

## **David Carlson and Khristina Landers prepare for Rotary-sponsored trip to Germany**

Belfast is going to be well represented on a Rotary Group Study Exchange (GSE) to Germany from April 12 to May 11, 2009. While the Belfast Rotary Club has hosted teams from other countries in past years, this is the first time anyone from Belfast has traveled abroad with the GSE. And of the four young professionals selected for the trip, two are from Belfast.

Included on the team from Rotary District 7790 are David Carlson, owner of Three Tides restaurant and brewery, and Khristina Landers, Director of Community Relations for the Belfast Area Chamber of Commerce. While the two come from different fields, the unique design of GSE will allow both to meet their professional and personal goals during the trip.

As a small business owner, Carlson had to weigh the benefits of the exchange with the problems created by leaving his business and young family for four weeks. Having hosted a GSE participant from Venezuela last May, Carlson had an understanding of the opportunities afforded GSE participants. This past experience coupled with the rich pub culture and history of beer in Bavaria and Southern Germany and the timing of the trip made this an opportunity he could not pass up. So with the support of his wife and their extended family and his brewer and assistant brewer, Carlson will leave the business in their capable hands. He is looking forward to forging a working relationship with the breweries and brewers in Germany. To encourage that dialogue with German brewers about American craft beer, he plans to bring some of his own as well as other local micro-brews with him on the trip.

After some discussion and research, Landers said the experience is just the sounding board and training vehicle she's been looking for. So with the support of the Chamber and her family she decided to apply for the GSE. Landers felt the ability to learn about business development and community abroad is a tremendous step toward deepening her professional and personal awareness internationally. She plans to use that knowledge to reach her lifelong goal of creating a foundation for refugees and relief services both globally and locally. "I see it as my personal responsibility to be of service to organizations and individuals as we all adjust to the environmental, economic, and global changes of the world around us," she said. She is also a full-time student at Goddard College completing a degree in sustainable community development. Goddard is an intensive distance learning program with a self directed/mentor approach to learning and her time abroad will count as credit toward her degree.

Over the next several months, Landis and Carlson will participate in a language education program and at least 12 hours of orientation to be held in both Maine and Quebec City where the team, led by a Canadian Rotarian, will meet to plan their presentation and prepare for the trip ahead. Team members are strongly encouraged to clarify their professional needs and give specific examples of activities they'd like to undertake overseas to insure that the itinerary meets their goals and expectations.

Both Carlson and Landis were recruited for the exchange by the GSE Committee of Belfast's Rotary Club. According to committee chair Su Wood, "This is a wonderful vocational, cultural and fellowship opportunity for a young professional to experience while traveling abroad. However, the rules of the program make finding qualified candidates a challenge." The exchange lasts 4 weeks; applicants must be employed full time in a recognized profession; have no Rotary connection at all and must be 25-40 years of age. Wood and her team were up for the challenge and within a matter of days both Landis and Carlson had completed all of the application requirements and were chosen by a District 7790 committee after individual interviews. Applicants came from many different communities in Rotary District 7790, which is made up of 52 clubs extending from central Maine through central and eastern Quebec.

The Rotary Foundation covers the cost of the air fare and the local Rotary District provide meals, lodging, and group travel and in some instances other expenses.

Rotary is an organization of business and professional leaders who provide humanitarian service and help to build goodwill and peace in the world. There are 1.2 million Rotary members in 32,000 Rotary clubs in more than 200 countries. Rotary clubs have been serving communities worldwide for more than a century.

The Belfast Rotary holds a lunch meeting at noon every Wednesday in the Waldo County Shrine Club on Northport Ave. For more information about the GSE or membership in Rotary, contact Belfast Rotary Club President, Scott Hawthorne, at 338-3360.