

The Winds of Change

It was 2003 and change was in the air. The K-W Rotary Children's Centre was faced with a number of significant challenges and needed strong leadership to steward it through this transitional period.

The Centre Board, led by Bob Blowes (Chair at the time), was faced with the unenviable task of renaming the K-W Rotary Children's Centre – an organization that people in the community had come to recognize and embrace. As Bob noted at the time, "This initiative was required for two reasons – a legal requirement of Rotary International that we discontinue using 'Rotary' in our name and our need to more fully identify our role and purpose to a wider constituency."

The process was difficult, as local Rotarians closely identified with the Centre. However a committee was formed from the Centre, Foundation and School Boards and they worked together to ensure the success of this major rebranding initiative. After much thought and discussion, "KidsAbility Centre for Child Development" was chosen as the new name – and the organization hasn't looked back since.

Eventually, Bob moved to the Foundation – which several years earlier was given a new charge. Originally, the Foundation (entirely made up of volunteers) was the trustee of funds that had accumulated in excess of current needs. However, as Bob states, "It was decided that the Foundation would become very active in fundraising outside of the Rotary Clubs and that the name change could support a broader appeal for funds." With this new mandate in place, the Foundation continued to increase its fundraising totals on a yearly basis. In fact, in 2016, over \$2 million was generated through its various initiatives.

Bob originally served the Centre as the representative of the Rotary Club of Kitchener, where he was Treasurer for several years. Eventually he joined the executive of the Centre Board and served as its Chair and Past Chair. Bob continued to serve the Centre as a member of the executive of the Foundation and its Treasurer for several years.

For his efforts, Bob received the Elaine Ormston Outstanding Butterfly Award – an acknowledgment of his contributions made even more special as his 85-year-old parents were in attendance to share this proud moment.

Today, it's hard to imagine where we would be without the work of people like Bob – a true leader who helped shepherd KidsAbility through momentous changes during his tenure as Chair at KidsAbility and as Treasurer at KidsAbility Foundation.



Bob Blowes

Volunteer, Rotarian and
2010 Elaine Ormston
Outstanding Butterfly Award Recipient