

## **ROYAL CITY MEN'S CLUB**

### **MINUTES – AUGUST 3, 2023**

Introductory remarks

Members present: 37 (by my count)

Chairman Bob welcomed our newest members: Ron East and Jay Gold.

There were no guests present.

Ken Marchant spoke about upcoming activities: "Evita" in October, Night at the Races on September 22, at the Guelph Storm on November 15, visit to the Warplane Museum date to be fixed (probably sometime in October) and the Battery factory tour (still working on a date)

Today's speaker Gabriel Allahdua: Justice for Migrant Workers

#### **Bio:**

Gabriel is a former migrant farm worker from St Lucia and now is the first Activist in Residence at the University of Guelph. He is also an organizer with the collective Justice for Migrant Workers (J4MW ((Harvestingsfreedom.org)) and an Outreach Worker serving migrant workers across Ontario. He is the author of the soon to be released "Harvesting Freedom"- The life of a migrant worker in Canada by Between the Lines.

#### **Presentation outline (by Gabriel)**

Who is a migrant worker in Canada?

What makes us and how we are made vulnerable in Canada?

My talk will be about the living and working conditions of migrant farm workers in Canada. Some of my experiences and why I decided to become an Activist and Explaining what status means to migrant workers in Canada and how Canadians can support our call for Status upon arrival.

**Gabriel was introduced by our Speakers' Committee chair, Doug.**

#### **Content of presentation**

Gabriel's hope was that his presentation would affect our thoughts, words and actions. Among the points raised were the following:

- (1) Is peace the absence of conflict or the presence of justice? We think of Canada as a peaceful country, but are we a just country, especially as regards migrant workers?

- (2) Migrant workers come from developing countries, which are often subject to environmental disasters. Also, the World Trade Organization and the IMF have “forced their countries out of the market” and have contributed to global inequality. He recommended a watching of the video “Life and debt”.
- (3) In Canada, the workers have no status or rights, and are excluded from employment standards (holiday pay, sick pay, paid overtime, minimum wage etc.). They do not have the same access to health care, and accommodation (which is provided by their employer) is not properly regulated. They are tied to their one employer, so there is no labour mobility.
- (4) They work in jobs that Canadians don’t want: those that are dirty, deadly, dangerous and difficult.
- (5) The treatment of migrant workers continues a long line of injustices in our country, that include the treatment of Chinese railway workers, Home Children and Residential Schools.
- (6) Food is no longer a necessity, but is rather a commodity, and is exploited by the Supply Management system which supports the producer over the consumer.
- (7) Gabriel concluded by asking where we stand on resources, inequality in our country, and the need for change, especially as to the treatment of migrant workers. He urged us to educate ourselves, get involved and speak up!

Unfortunately, Gabriel was unable to finish in time for questions (Bob thanked him at 11.05), as I’m sure that there were many unanswered questions, and some of the points he raised were probably controversial.

Recording Secretary: **David Moller**