

**Letter from Eduardo Rodrigues da Costa
Jim & Jan Heinrich Named Rotary Peace Fellow – Class 9
The Duke/UNC Rotary Center
for International Studies in Peace and Conflict Resolution**



(Three years ago Phil & Karen Morris and Mitzi & Steve Ellis served as host sponsors for World Peace Fellow Willan Mendoza from Santa Cruz, Bolivia. This year Phil & Karen are serving as host sponsors for Eduardo da Costa from Belém, Pará, Brazil. Belém is located at the mouth of the Amazon River.)

June 16, 2010

Please allow me to introduce myself. My name is Eduardo Rodrigues da Costa, from Brazil. More specifically, I live and work in the Brazilian Amazon. I am an economist for the Chamber of Corporate Social and Environmental Responsibility at the Pará State Commerce Association. I also work as a professor in the Program of International Relations at UNAMA - University of the Amazon, the largest and most traditional private university in the Brazilian Amazon. In 2008, I spent two months in Missouri on a U.S. Department of State fellowship with the Missouri Department of Economic Development, in Jefferson City, St. Louis and Kansas City.



Eduardo, Camila & Cintia standing in front of the Sanford School of Public Policy, Duke University.

It is both a privilege and a great honor to have been selected by the Rotary Foundation as a 2010 Rotary World Peace Fellow. I have been admitted to the Duke Sanford School of Public Policy in the two-year Master of International Development Policy program beginning in the 2010 Fall Term. My study project will focus on issues related to promoting sustainable economic development and environmental conservation in the Brazilian Amazon. I believe that only sustainable development policies and strategies can ensure that the needs of the local populations are met, that the Brazilian Amazon has the opportunity to develop its economy, and that the rainforest persists as an ecologically functioning ecosystem that plays a vital role in regulating the global climate.

I first learned about the Rotary World Peace Fellowships when I volunteered as an interpreter for Mr. Robert Scott, the 2007-2008 Chair for the Rotary Foundation, during the XXX Brazilian Rotary Institute, held in Belém, Pará, Brazil, in September 2007. When Mr. Scott mentioned that I would be a potential candidate for the fellowship, I decided to obtain additional information with local Rotarians Mr. Octávio Gomes de Souza and Mr. Moacir Dias da Silva..

Last year, I was invited by Rotary Club Belém Norte to apply for the fellowship, being the only applicant from District 4720.

You may be aware that I am bringing my family to Durham. My wife Cintia has a Master's degree in Linguistics and currently works as a Professor of English at the Federal University of Pará. During our first semester in North Carolina, Cintia will be teaching online distance education courses for her university, however, she also intends to seek employment opportunities in Durham. We have a daughter, Camila, who also speaks English very well. Camila will turn 16 in mid July and should have no difficulties adapting to a high school in Durham. We also have a small shih-tzu dog, Luna. She grew up in an apartment and hardly ever barks. Luna gets along with everybody and makes friends very easily.

Now let me write a few more words on how educational opportunities have contributed to the development of my family in recent decades.

My grandparents, José and Maria Costa, were born in a very poor community by the Amazon River and never went to school. They spent their entire lives growing and selling bananas along the rivers in the Brazilian Amazon. Although they did not have any formal educational background, they were wise and visionary enough to send my father to the state's capital city, Belém, where they believed he would have more educational opportunities and better chances to succeed in life. My father first went to school at the age of twelve, when he learned how to read and write, and made it as far as a bachelor's degree in Economics, which he obtained at the age of forty. He was then offered a scholarship to continue his studies at Sorbonne University, in Paris, but he was unable to take the opportunity because he could not speak a single word in French.

Following the wise and visionary advice of my mother, my father put me to studying English at the age of five. Somehow, my parents knew that learning how to speak English would make a major difference in my future. And they were right. I have no doubt that speaking a foreign language, along with my educational background and professional experience, did qualify me to apply and to be selected to receive the prestigious 2010 Rotary World Peace Fellowship.

By funding my fellowship and providing me with the opportunity to receive world-class, top-quality education at one of America's leading universities, the Rotary Foundation is taking a concrete step in terms of promoting sustainable development in the Brazilian Amazon. They are investing in an economically viable, socially just and environmentally sustainable future for the Brazilian Amazon and its inhabitants.

Thank you so much for agreeing to be my host counselor and for providing me with guidance, assistance and support during my period of studies at Duke University.

Please find a picture of my family on the attached document. Cintia, Camila and I look forward to meeting your family soon.

Best Regards,

Eduardo Rodrigues da Costa
Jim and Jan Heinrich Named Rotary Peace Fellow



Orienting Daughter Camila at Jordan High School



Family portrait, including Luna Da Costa!



The Da Costas stumble on an extraordinary offer for furniture for their apartment



Eduardo and Cintia with Bob Scott (2007- 2008 Chair of The Rotary Foundation.)



Moving into their apartment – end of the day!



- When they first arrived in North Carolina the da Costa family stayed in Durham with Matt & Natalia Harwood. Natalia was an acquaintance from Belém. Matt & Natalia have provided wonderful support and have been an extraordinary resource for the Da Costas as they move through the process of settling in Durham. (Matt has expressed interest in joining Rotary!) Daughter Camila is now enrolled in Jordan High School.
- On Friday, August 27, the da Costas experienced an armed robbery when they returned to their apartment after dinner. No one was hurt; however a wallet and a pocketbook were stolen. Eduardo says that the police were very helpful and thorough in their interview with the family. The apartment complex is in the process of relocating the family to a more central and hopefully more secure unit on their campus.
- “We are trying to forget what happened and live our lives normally. Camila is really enjoying her school and she is studying a lot when she gets home after school. It's great to see her so excited about her courses. It was not like that in our hometown. She says it doesn't seem she's going to school as she doesn't feel the time passing there. She says the classes are very fast, even though they last around 90 minutes each. She really enjoys staying there and this is wonderful. – Cintia” – September 2, 2010
- Karen and I want to thank Willow Creek Rotarians Mike Carlone and Andrew Cumby, and Furnitureland Rotarians Cody Fielden and Don Redding for helping the da Costas obtain some of their furniture and household goods, and Matt & Natalia Harwood of Durham for the time, enthusiasm and friendship they have shown to the da Costas.
- **Note: On your calendar save April 9, 2011 for the 8th Annual Rotary Fellow Spring Conference.**