

Hello, My name is Craig Roberts, I am the deputy chairman of Disaster Aid UK and Ireland. We are a worldwide charity helping those affected by disaster.

Disaster Aid is a Rotary charity and I am a Rotarian. We are the largest service organisation on the planet with 1.4 million members in over 46 thousand clubs.

Together, we see a world where people unite and take action to create lasting change — across the globe, in our communities and in ourselves.

The mantra of Rotary is “service above self”. We are people who look out for others, helping where we can and putting others needs before our own.

Paul Harris founded Rotary over 100 years ago in America. He was an inspirational leader to whom we all aspire to be like. He had the beliefs and values that made the organisation what it is today.

I met Sila after the earthquake when she volunteered to perform some translation services for me on a Sunday afternoon. What neither of us realised at that time was that she held the same values as Paul Harris and went on to become in every sense of the word an “aid worker”.

I have seen her, show compassion and empathy to those who lost everything

Offer support and sympathy for things we cannot replace

Build rapport and trust with survivors

Show genuine concern and work tirelessly to source what people need

Negotiate the complex and frustrating systems that are your countries customs processes

Be responsible for purchasing, negotiating and handling budgets

She is able to install water filters

I have seen her peacefully quell a demonstration with her negotiation and communication skills

All these things she did whilst being a survivor herself and asking nothing for herself or family.

The greatest honour a Rotary Club can instil on an individual is to make them a Paul Harris Fellow, known as a PHF, this is awarded for those who have shown exceptional dedication in the face of adversity putting service above self.

“Presentation”

Ladies and gentlemen may I present Sila Arslan PHF. The angel of Samandag.

Taylor Swift once wrote, “when you are young, they assume you know nothing”. This could never be said of Sila.

Also I would like to extend my thanks to Sevcan who brought such an amazing young woman into the world and organised this evenings event, plus yesterday she took the children to the cinema! flowers.

I would also like to thank Aydin who I know has driven Sila around all her camps and has been a source of inspiration and knowledge when it comes to sourcing aid. No flowers for you but I bet you can't wait till she can drive herself.