

World Wide Literacy Newsletter

Volume 2, Issue 5

November, 2009

Special points of interest:

- The family that eats together...
- Try your hand at Thai...

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From the Desk of Roger Hayward—North American Area Coordinator

November is Foundation Month which fits together well with the Literacy Resource Group's efforts both through District Simplified Grants (DSGs) and Matching Grants. The needs for literacy and education around the world are in all nations, both developed and developing. Even though money for matching grants have been used up for this year, truly sustainable projects take a long time to develop so planning for submission to The Foundation for July 2010 will come around quickly. In the interim the DSGs are available at the district level. Also clubs are encouraged to check

the RI website for projects through Projectlink.

In the next two issues of this newsletter you will see articles and stories on two important programs that attempt to address illiteracy throughout the world, namely CALS (Computer Assisted Learning Solution) and CLE (Concentrated Learning Experience). These programs actually teach people how to read and write.

The planning for the Montreal International Convention is proceeding and the first deadline for less expensive registration approaches, December 15th.



The call for proposals for breakout sessions related to President John Kenny's key initiatives, which include literacy and education, has been issued. The next item will be the call for display booths in The House of Friendship. This convention celebrates the 100 years since Rotary became international with the formation of the Winnipeg Club in Canada.

Let's all plan to be there and celebrate our literacy successes.

House of Lords—U.K.

Recently Past Zone Literacy Coordinator John Bendall tells of the story of how Rotarians in the United Kingdom were invited to the House of Lords in London, England to be thanked for their continued support in providing money for talking books and Braille books for the blind.

The photo shows Lord Low of Dalston CBE thanking Rotarians at the House of Lords.



The Benefits of Family Meals

Gabor Mate, a Vancouver, Canada physician, recently co-authored a book called “Hold on to Your Kids” in conjunction with Psychologist Gordon Newfeld. The book talks about the benefit to children who eat meals together with their parents.

As evidence continues to mount that eating as a family can protect children from all sorts of harm, experts say the bonding and connectedness that comes with regular family meals may positively influence the brain development of kids.

Studies have found that by adolescence, the more often a family eats together the less likely children are to smoke, use alcohol and drugs, suffer from an eating disorder or consider suicide. Family meals have also been linked to higher self-esteem and better performance at school. There isn't a cause-and-effect relationship. Still, the correlations are strong enough for researchers to say regular

family meals offer a protective effect. Now, they want to find out why.

“A lot of kids are not getting the environment their brains require for their development. I am talking the physiology of the brain and connections,” says the author.



District 7070 Literacy Seminar

Literacy – The Key to the Future

This was the theme of this year's district 7070 literacy seminar, held at the Holiday Inn in Oshawa on Saturday, October 3, 2009. The event included a keynote presentation by the North American Region Area Literacy Coordinator, Roger Hayward, who encouraged us to leave a legacy of well-educated, literate citizens locally and globally.

This was followed by a presentation by Suzy Dickstein, the literacy chair of The Rotary Club of Toronto Don Mills, about an innovative approach to the donation of dictionaries to grade 5 students in an elementary school in Toronto. John Hastings, literacy champion of The Rotary Club of Toronto West and a school trustee, presented information about a very successful public speaking contest for elementary

school students. His guests shared a successful and multi-layered “Read To Me” project that is in operation through a unique partnership with a child care facility and a local library.

In addition, participants discussed implementation of programs such as “Who Is Nobody?” and Sandparents. They also had an opportunity to work with “Rotary Reads” to see how the unique scoring system in this publication can help clubs decide which projects or programs might be appropriate for their involvement. All this and lunch and the opportunity to network and formulate plans for their clubs meant that the participants of this year's event spent an energetic and worthwhile day together. They won't let the admonition to “Leave a legacy” die in Oshawa!



Our Partnership with the International Reading Association (IRA)



Within IRA a special interest group has been formed called IRARI which is chaired by Rotarian Nea Stewart-Dore. This article is a message from her to all Rotarians.

Members of the International Reading Association Rotary International Partnerships Special Interest Group of the IRA send greetings to all Rotarians who are engaged in literacy projects at home and abroad. Any of these activities are likely to underscore the notion of *The Power of Literacy*, the theme of the recent UNESCO / IRA International Literacy Day celebrations, 8 September 2009.

We must be aware always of the plight of nearly 800 million people – mostly, but not exclusively in economically developing countries unfortunately - who are unable to enjoy the benefits of being literate in their own languages let alone those in which commercial and political life is negotiated. Such benefits include employment, good health and hygiene, clean water and living conditions and educational opportunities for themselves and their children. Provision of these basics is among Rotary's humanitarian priorities.

At the same time, however, it is important for us to celebrate from time to time – as this Newsletter does - the achievements of all those teachers and volunteers who have taught nearly four billion people to become literate. Many of those people – both children and adults - have learned to read through the methodology of RI's Concentrated Language Encounter

Lighthouse Project (see www.cleliteracy.org).

Members of the IRARI Partnerships SIG work to promote literacy awareness and development projects between International Reading Association councils and affiliates and Rotary Clubs and District and Zone Literacy Resource Groups. A relatively fledgling group of volunteers, IRARI members are responsible for a range of projects ranging from Books for Babies, Books for Hospitalised Kids, Dictionary Projects, Rotary Readers, Books for Little Hands, and Library focussed projects among myriad others in a range of countries.

For more information about the IRARI Partnerships SIG, go to www.reading.org/General/AdvocacyandOutreach/SIGS/IRARI_SIG.aspx

Note there, especially, two joint Rotary/IRA publications regarding current projects and ideas for new ones. *Rotary Reads*, another book of project ideas, is available online at www.rizones29-30.org/view/72

My best wishes for rewarding literacy activities that your Club / District may undertake during 2009-2010 and beyond to promote and develop literacy awareness, knowledge and skills. Where possible, aim to collaborate with, and engage the assistance of your local IRA affiliated Reading / Literacy Council. These exist throughout the world.

To locate an IRARI affiliated Reading / Literacy Council near you, contact pubinfo@reading.org

Book Donations in District 3800, Philippines

In celebration of International Literacy Day, the Rotary Club Sampaguita Grace Park, District 3800, Philippines worked on acquiring book donations to reach out to five (5) public elementary schools with a population of 19,217 pupils.

In the Philippines, there are several public schools with quality education. But some are still deficient in learning resources. Given such concern, PDG Lina Aurelio proposed a project involving the donation of books to five school libraries with very few books on hand. These books will help alleviate the declining standard in speaking, writing and reading comprehension. The beneficiaries are public elementary schools in Caloocan City, Metro Manila. These favored institutions are: Pag-asa, A. Mabini, Tala, NHC and Manuel L. Quezon Elementary Schools.

Present during the turnover ceremonies are members of the Rotary Club of Sampaguita Grace Park and Principals of the recipient schools. DepEd Superintendent Mrs. Corazon Gonzales on behalf of the recipient public elementary schools of Caloocan City expressed appreciation and gratefulness to Rotary for the continuous support and assistance through service/health/programs/projects given to them.

The event ended prosperously, as it emphasized Rotary's Theme for the year:

“THE FUTURE OF ROTARY IS IN YOUR HANDS.”



Story Reading in Thailand

Saowalak Rattanavich, Asian Region Area Coordinator for Literacy, sends the following:

This is about a literacy project of District 3350 held on September 7th in Nakornsawan province, four hours' drive north from Bangkok. There were about 17 clubs in Districts 3350, 3330, 3360 and 3340 that joined together to organize the Children's Literacy Day for nearly 600 kindergarten and primary school children who read stories with a team of Rotarians. The team provided the lunch party and gifts for all the kids. It was a very successful event.

Please see page 5 for the text in Thai...



The photographs say it all!!!

Story Reading in Thailand (cont.)

เชิญชมภาพกิจกรรมโครงการ โรตารีรวมใจให้เด็กไทยรักการอ่าน จัดโดยสโมสรโรตารีกรุงเทพ ไซนาทาวนร่วมกับโครงการเรียนรู้หนังสือและการศึกษาภาค 3350 สโมสรโรตารีกรุงเทพบางนา สโมสรโรตารีนครราชสีมา ภาค 3340 สโมสรโรตารีลุมพินี สโมสรโรตารีอุททอง ภาค 3340 สโมสรโรตารีบางขุนเทียน สโมสรโรตารีสัมพันธ์วงศ์ สโมสรโรตารีสาทร สโมสรโรตารีนครสวรรค์ สโมสรโรตารีหนองบัว สโมสรโรตารีท่าตะโก และสโมสรโรตารีเจ้าพระยานครสวรรค์ เมื่อวันที่ 7 กันยายน 2552 ณ อาคารสำนักงานเทศบาลนครนครสวรรค์ ในช่วงเข้ามามีนักเรียนเข้าร่วมกิจกรรม จำนวน 530 คน ครู 110 คน มวลมิตรต่างสโมสรจำนวนมาก ได้รับเกียรติจากท่านผู้ว่าการภาค 3350 ท่านชัยรัตน์ ประเสริฐล้ำ เป็นประธานในพิธีเปิด ท่านศิริ เอี่ยมจรรย์ลาภ ผู้ว่าการภาค 3340 ให้เกียรติเดินทางมาร่วมให้กำลังใจและชมกิจกรรมภายในงาน ในช่วงปลายได้รับเกียรติจากท่านปริญดา บุญญฤทธิพงษ์ นายกเหล่ากาชาदनครสวรรค์ ให้เกียรติเป็นประธานในพิธีปิด กิจกรรมเป็นไปด้วยความเรียบร้อยและได้รับความร่วมมือเป็นอย่างดี ในการนี้ได้เชิญเคเบิลท้องถิ่นและช่อง 11 มาทำข่าวประชาสัมพันธ์ ในการจัดโครงการครั้งนี้ด้วย

Success of CALS in Los Angeles, USA

Shirley Giltzow, Literacy Chair of District 5280 in California, USA writes about how she was impressed by PRIP Wilf Wilkinson's telephone call about CALS (Computer Assisted Learning Solution) and the possibilities for helping children and adults learn to read and write:

In May 2008, after having received a telephone call from a colleague of then RI President Wilf Wilkinson, I wrote to all of the club presidents asking them if they would be interested in sponsoring students for one year, at a cost of \$80 per student, for unlimited use of the computer assisted literacy program in the ACES School in South Central Los Angeles. The Rotary Clubs of Beverly Hills, El Segundo, Downey, Inglewood, Playa Sunrise and Rio Hondo answered "Yes, we will support this literacy project!" Unfortunately, it was not possible to get the program started in just one month, but the program was up and running by December 2008.

I have visited the school several times since then, and can attest to its value to the students who attend this school near Main and 37 Street in Los Angeles. I want to sincerely thank those clubs for making a difference in the lives of the 50 children that the clubs collectively sponsored. I personally spoke to several of the children about their impressions of the CALS/Autoskill computer assisted literacy program. They LOVED it. They enjoyed the immediate feedback, they were proud of all of the growth they had made in increasing their reading and language skills, and they were very excited about the "trophy room" in the virtual awards program that is built into rewarding them in their progress on this individually paced program.

A letter from the principal of the school, Tanya DeLeon, thanked Rotary for sponsoring the children in this literacy project. I congratulate the clubs again for helping this project become a reality. I have extended an invitation to the members of those clubs to visit the school and see the program in action.

The CALS literacy program is one that was suggested by the current District Literacy Chair on the 2009-10 Literacy Resource Group hand-out at the District's Literacy Breakfast in late August, and is one of a variety of ideas to help our community to improve literacy.

When I spoke to the ACES School principal, Ms. DeLeon, she said the unlimited year usage of the program expires in December 2009. She would very much like to see this program continue from December 2009 to December 2010. I have asked the clubs in my district to consider having this outstanding literacy program continue at this impoverished school in South Central Los Angeles.





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