

World Wide Literacy Newsletter

Volume 2, Issue 2

August, 2009

Special points of interest:

- International Literacy Day, September 8th
- Another Highlight from Birmingham

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From the Desk of Roger Hayward—North American Area Coordinator



In the northern hemisphere we are in the height of our summer with many people on vacation while those of you in the southern hemisphere are in the midst of winter. Regardless of where you are, if you don't have a written plan for literacy for the year your club will not succeed to its full potential. It is key that by the end of August clubs should have prepared a plan for the year. Literacy Zone Coordinators and District Chairs are a key resource for clubs. Also the catalogue known as "Rotary Reads" and the RI website have many ideas for your consideration.

August is membership month. There is probably not a club in the world that would not like to attract new members. One classification to consider is that related to literacy. Imagine having a person with this kind of background and what he or she can bring to a club working on literacy and education projects.

Clubs are reminded to consider celebrating Worldwide Literacy Day on September 8th or during the regular Rotary meeting that week.

International Literacy Day September 8th

Ways to celebrate and promote Literacy on September 8th or during this Rotary week are provided in the July 2009 issue of this newsletter. If you need a copy, please send an e-mail to the editor at rhayward@sympatico.ca

District Literacy Seminars

Again this year one of the Literacy Resource Group's goals is to have all districts hold literacy seminars. The four key objectives for these seminars are to:

- Provide information about key programs such as (a) instructional programs such as CALS, Teach Your Children Well, CLE, SOUNDS, BrainWise (b) augmentative programs such as The Imagination Library, Sandparents, Who is Nobody?, The Apple Dumpling Adventure, book projects;
- Encourage all clubs to undertake a literacy project this Rotary year;
- Allow discussion among club members to share ideas; and
- Find out your districts' key club contacts. This could be the Vocational or Literacy Chair.

District 7070 Literacy Conference August, 2008



Rotary Club of Volcano and Rotary District 5000 Volcano School of Arts and Sciences - First and Second Grade Computer

The following was submitted by Helene Kalfuss, Zone 26 Literacy Coordinator:

In retrospect, the 8 new computers (4 in first grade and 4 in second grades) made possible through the Volcano Rotary DSG grant were a watershed event. The new computers in first grade are being heavily used for on-line reading and other literacy work. All first grade students now have access to art programs and a variety of other programs through their individual accounts on the campus Linux server. This enhanced learning environment will allow them to enter second grade next year with a major head start in skills. The progress in second grade has been even more exciting! Before the new computers arrived, Laura Warner, the second grade teacher, had only one very old, donated Mac. This was used to show students a few items on the Internet, but the students didn't have the opportunity for any "hands on" computer work.

Since the introduction of the four new computers, the second graders have been receiving technology instruction for four hours each Wednesday. Each student has a private account and can on and log off of their accounts by themselves. They have had the opportunity to explore computer art via the Tux Paint program - they love it! All students have been trained on Ktouch - one of the Linux touch typing programs and are continuing to practice their touch typing.

Students are learning basic Internet research skills and have put them to use for their endangered animal projects as well as researching Thanksgiving history just before Thanksgiving last November. Students are learning basic word processing and have typed up their introductions to their peers at Forest Ranch Charter School - our partner school just outside of Chico, California.

On an even more exciting note, our students are learning how to build Open Office Power Point presentations. They are taking material from their endangered animals reports and putting it into Power Point slide shows. After a recent trip to the kalo patch, some of the students are building slide shows from the pictures on the field trip.



The day before Christmas vacation started last December, our second graders got to sing Mele Kalikimaka to the second and third graders at Forest Ranch via our video conferencing link. Our students were treated in turn to Christmas carols sung by the Forest Ranch students.

John Bush (the computer teacher and amazing tech on this whole project) currently has the second graders in both schools on parallel learning tracks – word processing, PowerPoint, touch typing, Internet research, and computer art. The networks at both schools are now tied together on a secure basis. New email servers and web servers have now been completed at both schools and students in the upper grades have already successfully exchanged email back and forth. We anticipate starting the collaborative student environmental projects next school year. John will continue to work with the same group of students next year when they reach third grade. They will remain in the same classroom and will be using the same set of computers they've been on this year.



The new challenge will be to keep this same group of students advancing in their technology skills when they hit fourth grade since they lack computer resources for four out of the six elementary grades (including kindergarten). John will be working with Chico State to receive access for our kids to their webcams "in the wild" in mud wallows to view live (or delayed) the bear cubs. John will continue to work on and have video field trips in the weekly 4 hour tech class in Volcano for both schools to enjoy.



Improving Literacy in Pakistan

Pam Akins, last year's Zone 31 Literacy Coordinator, has forwarded this report from Mateen Haider of the South Windsor Rotary Club (District 7890) in Connecticut. Mateen was the District Literacy Chair last year.

The most volatile regions of the world are also the most illiterate. Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan have very high illiteracy rates. Pakistan is one of the most illiterate countries of the world. Illiteracy is optimistically pegged at 50% for the country/86 million people as a whole (depending on which reports you read) and it is much higher for women. According to official Pakistan Government statistics the literacy rate is 42.7% and the percentage of school age children that have never attended school is 53% for boys and an astronomical 61% for girls. Only a handful of countries in Asia and Africa share this dubious distinction.

Given these appalling statistics the International Committee of the South Windsor Rotary Club (ICSWR) decided to focus on improving literacy in Pakistan. They conducted research and found the largest and credible educational NGO (Non Governmental Organization) in Pakistan called the Citizens Foundation (TCFUSA.Org). The goal of TCF is to provide the under privileged in Pakistan a quality secular education with a focus on girls (girls become mothers, literate mothers will also

improve the infant mortality rate, one of Rotary's goals), in purpose built schools. The cost of such an education is \$168 per year, which includes tuition, books and uniforms.

In order to increase the funds to be donated or the number of children that get educated the ICSWR selected a host partner club in Pakistan that is called the Sunset Millennium Rotary Club of Karachi, Pakistan District 3270. This club donated \$2944 and their district donated \$3000. The Rotary Club of South Windsor and their District 7890 donated \$2000 and \$3792 respectively. A matching grant application was also filed to the Rotary Foundation and approved for \$9264.

All of the above contributions amounted to \$21,000 and were received by TCF in Oct. 2008. This sum is being utilized to educate 125 children for one year. The funds were given to TCF for one of their Elementary Schools called the Rotary Metropolitan Campus.

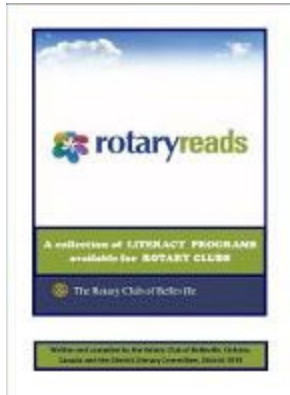
Mateen Haider a South Windsor Rotarian visited this school last January. He interviewed some Nursery/KG and First Grade kids and was very impressed with their enthusiasm and English skills. He confirms that the donations are meeting their objectives. Mateen is obviously an ardent supporter of literacy.



Mateen Haider, a keen supporter of literacy, pictured with the children who have benefited from the work of the Rotary Club of South Windsor, D. 7890.

“Rotary Reads”

A Catalogue of Literacy Projects



Just a reminder that “Rotary Reads” is available to clubs and districts as a download by going to Rotary Zone 29 and clicking on Literacy which will lead you to “Rotary Reads” and allow you to download the document.

Another Breakout Session from the Rotary International Convention in Birmingham

In the July issue of this newsletter, I highlighted one of the three literacy breakout sessions at the international convention. It was a description of “Rotary Reads” and how the document can help clubs choose programs and projects to enhance their literacy activities in local and international communities.

Another literacy breakout session at the convention was entitled “Vocational Service and Functional Literacy”. This was chaired by the Literacy Resource Group General Coordinator, Richard Hattwick, and involved descriptions of character literacy programs, including those that highlight the 4-Way Test, and programs that help prepare people for the world of work.

One such character literacy program is called “Who Is Nobody?” and was presented by last year’s Zone 22 East Literacy Coordinator, Joan Hayward. This program involves students doing volunteer work in their communities and helping to shape a shapeless humanoid with no personality, skills, friends, past or future into a “Somebody” who knows what it means to help other people. The students are also involved in presenting their volunteer activity to their classmates, writing a description of what they did and providing a drawing or photograph of their community volunteer work. More information can be found at www.whoisnobody.com

Another vocational service-related literacy project is the essay writing contest. Brenda Erickson, District 6900 Literacy Chair, outlined this project. Many clubs are involved in this, helping students understand what it means to be a Rotarian who demonstrates ethical behavior in his or her professional and personal life. By encouraging students to read, research, and write about the 4-Way Test and what it promotes, Rotarians are helping students understand how important it is to conduct themselves in ways that will earn them respect. Brenda can be reached at berickson@counterpane.org

If we want people to be able to stop, think, and reflect on the 4-Way Test questions, it is necessary to train people to use their “wizard” brain rather than their “lizard” brain. We want thinking people to behave as a result of measured thought and systems using critical

thinking. Then there is a good chance they will be able to see the value of guidelines for behavior such as our 4-Way Test. This is the premise of a program called “BrainWise” that was also described in this breakout session. President-Elect Carolyn Schrader outlined the premises upon which the program is built and how Rotarians can become involved. For more information go to www.brainwise-plc.org

This breakout sessions’ final presentation, before the audience had an opportunity to participate in discussion, was linked directly to a program that helps prepare people for the workplace. In Egypt, an approach to teaching literacy is being used to teach adults, as well as children in the government schools. It is called Concentrated Language Encounter (CLE) and is based on active participation of the learners rather than rote learner and drill alone. Ahmes Gabriel, an Egyptian Rotarian, outlined the incredible success this program has had, especially in educating women and preparing them for specific vocations. Dr. Ahmes can be reached at Ahmes.Lab@tedata.net .



**Panelists, from left to right,
Ahmes Gabriel, Brenda Erickson,
Carolyn Schroder, Joan Hayward**

An Opportunity for a Partnership in Africa Operation Upgrade–South Africa

The following article was submitted by Area Coordinator Doug Kent (Africa, parts of Europe) and originally appeared in *The Mercury* written by Colleen Dardagan:

A local woman, who never went to school, (recently) reduced international luminaries in Paris to tears after she read them a story she had written about life in rural KwaZulu-Natal.

Eunice Nteza Ngema, 47, who learnt to read and write through the Unesco-funded Operation Upgrade South Africa adult literacy programme, was selected to read her story to ambassadors and ministers of education as part of the Global Action Week 2009 and World Book and Copyright Day in Paris.

The story, entitled *With A Stone In Her Heart And A Storm In Her Stomach*, tells the heart-wrenching story of a woman, named Thoko, who struggled not only to learn to read and write, but to come to terms with her HIV status in a superstitious rural community.

The story begins simply. It describes Thoko as a rural woman living in Qomukuphila in KwaNibela in northern KwaZulu-Natal.

“She is perhaps 48 years old, but no one really knows her age because she has never had a birth certificate.

“She was never allowed to go to school because girls were needed to help at home and her parents feared that she would be attracted to boys at the school.”

But through the literacy classes which she decided to attend after hearing about them from a friend, Thoko learned that HIV/AIDS was not caused by a curse and that she had rights.

Even after her husband beat her for going to the clinic without his permission, she found the courage to gather her friends and go to the tribal court. At first, the tribal leaders laughed.

“Woman, men have been beating their wives for many years. It is our culture. Why are you crying to us now?” they said.

But the woman began to sing a song from one of the literacy lessons.

“One of the men said things have changed. Women can vote, but another said that the man is the head of the family and the woman must do what he tells her. “Thoko spoke again. She spoke about the constitution and human rights.

“In the end, the men agreed. No one has the right to beat another person for any reason at all.

“Thoko had the right to go to the clinic and the right to know her HIV status.”

Sitting in her bright tribal dress at Durban’s International Airport and obviously tired from the long journey, Ngema told *The Mercury* she could now speak more loudly than before.

“I looked at the people in the room when I began to read—they were all white—I didn’t know any of them, but I felt proud”, she said.

Pinky Pietersen from the literacy NGO, Operation Upgrade, who accompanied Ngema to France, said the story had reduced the audience to tears.

Brave lady

“She is a very brave lady. But literacy has changed her life. She has become a leader in her community and now heads a literacy class, helps to run a nursery garden and leads a drama and singing group.”

Ngema agreed that she had changed.

“I couldn’t write my name. It worried me when I looked at a piece of paper or a book and I couldn’t see it. But I am not scared any more,” she said.

Pat Dean, director of Operation Upgrade South Africa, said Ngema had also participated in a debate on how to support literacy in the country.

“It is very difficult for people in developed countries to understand a world where adults have nothing to read, which is often the case in many of our remote rural areas.”

On what she thought of Paris, Ngema said the hotel rooms were very small but she was struck by the cleanliness of the city.

:There wasn’t a piece off paper or plastic on the road.”

And what was she going to tell her family when she got home?

“I will tell them that by learning, I was able to go overseas and fly in an aeroplane,” said Ngema





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