

LITERACY NEWS –NORTH AMERICAN AREA
RI LITERACY RESOURCE GROUP
September 1,2005

International Literacy Day – Book-of-the-Month Promotion

North American hopes are high for a plethora of highly visible Rotary club activities celebrating International Literacy Day (September 8th). As reported last month, all clubs have been encouraged to schedule a program on literacy during the week of September 8th. The clubs have also been encouraged to present a recognition to a local literacy leader either at the club's meeting that week or at a separate gathering. Finally, clubs have been asked to invite a member of the International Reading Association (IRA) to the meeting. For most clubs this will be a first step in making a reality at the local level of the international partnership between RI and the IRA.

For their parts, the North American zones will celebrate International Literacy Day by unveiling the "Book-of-the-Month Project" during the week of September 8th. The idea is simple enough. Every North American club will be asked to encourage reading by club members by means of the following simple process:

1. Once each month a member of the club will be asked to tell the other members of the club what books he/she has been reading recently and to recommend one or two of those books to the club members. ALTERNATIVELY, the club could invite prominent community leaders who are avid readers to attend club meetings and report on what they are reading (In this case, the guests could include non-members who are potential new Rotarians).
2. When the member is introduced, the club president will explain that the club is doing this for two reasons. **First**, because Rotarians belong to the class of adults who like to read for business or pleasure or both. Consequently, they will appreciate finding out what books others are reading. **Second**, to remind all club members, particularly those who are parents of young children, that one major incentive for children to read more is to have a parent who is a reading role model.

Lisa Foster's Guide to Parental Reading

Zone 24 Literacy Resource Coordinator Lisa Foster has prepared an important and timely background article on the development of literacy from birth through early childhood. This is a must read for Rotarians who want to understand what works and why. The article is included in the August issue of the Zone 24 literacy newsletter. You can obtain a copy as an electronic attachment to an e-mail by contacting Lisa at lfoster@aloha.net. Lisa lives in Hawaii, hence the "aloha" in the e-mail address.

Power Point Literacy Presentation Available for Club Programs

Looking for a good slide illustrated program on literacy for presentation at a district or club meeting? If so, contact Zone 23 Literacy Resource Coordinator Bill Mickleberry. Bill is acting as de facto agent for the district literacy coordinator who prepared this program ---- Diane Bandonis, Literacy Chair for District 5100. Contact Bill at the following address and he can e-mail a downloadable set of slides:

billnanmick@comcast.net

Mullin to Lead “Imagining our Literacy Future” Session at Zones 29-30 Institute

On Saturday, September 24th Zone 27 Literacy Resource Coordinator Dr. Mike Mullin will lead a brainstorming session to identify promising literacy projects for the next decade. The event will take place at the Zones 29-30 Institute in Memphis, Tennessee. PDG Mike is a seasoned teacher, coach, superintendent of schools and professor of educational administration. He’s also tuned in to the role of the internet in the classroom. Consequently, the major focus of the brainstorming session will be on opportunities for Rotary to be a leading player in revolutionizing literacy by using the internet as a tool. PDG Mike refers to the event as an opportunity to, “ask questions and imagine possibilities.”

Read to Me Update

The August literacy newsletter reported on the inspiring “Read-to-Me” program developed and managed by Colorado Rotarian Jerry Watson (jwatson3390@netzero.net). Since then we have uncovered the following two additional examples of this program at work:

1. The Idaho State Library – www.lili.org/read/readtome
2. Read to Me International – www.readtomeintl.org

The second citation informs us that Read to Me International started in 1992 as a partnership of the Governor’s Council for Literacy (in Hawaii) and the Rotary Club of Honolulu Sunrise.

Also worthy of note is the fact that the program was inspired by the teachings of Jim Trelease, author of *The Read-Aloud Handbook*. You will find the book currently available at most bookstores.

Literacy Getting More Attention at This Year’s Zone Institutes in September

It appears that literacy will be given greater visibility at several of this year’s zone institutes. And for those “on the ground” it’s clear that much of the credit for the increased emphasis goes to a handful of zone literacy coordinators who inserted themselves into the zone institute planning process (more on this below).

Arguably the most visible effort will take place at the Zones 31-32 Institute in Boston where (1) a Zone Literacy Leader Award will be presented, (2) an ambitious exhibit of club literacy projects will be mounted, and (3) a plenary session on literacy will feature such luminaries as past RID John Germ and current RI Literacy Resource Coordinator Dr. Eileen Gentilcore. PDG and Zone Literacy Coordinator Ann Williams deserves special recognition for this effort.

At the Zones 27-28 Institute in Boston , Zone Literacy Leader Award will be presented thanks to some proactive work by zone literacy coordinators Lee Ahlum and Mike Mullin. At the Zones 25-26 Institute Eileen Gentilcore will be a plenary session speaker thanks to the efforts of George Wheeler. At the Zones 29-30 Institute Adopt-a-School legend Mike Chittom will be a plenary session speaker thanks to the intervention of the North American Area Coordinator. And Zone 22 LRC Irwin Stewart reports that the Canadian “Pathways” project will be featured at a plenary session of the zones institute.

It’s important to note that in all but one of these cases it took the intervention of the zone literacy coordinator to upgrade the attention given to literacy. **THE LESSON TO BE LEARNED FOR 2006-07 IS THAT LITERACY ADVOCATES NEED TO CONTACT THE PERSONS PLANNING THE ZONE INSITUTE PROGRAMS IN TIME TO BE PUT ON THE PROGRAM IN A MEANINGFUL WAY.** If you wait for a call from the planners, you risk having literacy receiving less attention than it deserves.

Delray Sunrise Recognized for Best Literacy Month Project

Last month’s newsletter reported on the highly successful literacy month promotion of the Rotary Club of Delray Beach-Sunrise (In Florida). In late August it was officially announced that the Delray club won the award for the best literacy month project in 2005.

Another Innovative Summer Literacy Project in Zone 28 –Serving Migrant Workers

Zone 28 Literacy Coordinator reports the following summer project from District 6650. The Lake Township Rotary Club found out that children of migrant workers were attending a summer reading program at the Hartville Migrant Center. The classes were in Spanish, but there was a need for books. So the Rotary club stepped forward and donated the books. Then, in order to encourage the students to stay with the reading program, the club treated the students who attended all of the summer reading events to a night of baseball at an Akron Aeros game. This is a project that can be replicated in many locations in the United States and Canada.

October Theme of the Month – Weekly Character Literacy Minute

The world-wide literacy theme for the month of October is Character Development and Ethics Literacy. The North American Area plans to promote awareness of the theme in

part through a club service project labeled “The Character Literacy Minute of The Week.” Here’s how we envision the project working:

1. At each weekly meeting of the club a 2-5 minute time period is set aside for a Rotary Information presentation focusing on character development and ethics.
2. Clubs will be provided with scripts for these presentations. The scripts can be used as is or simply reviewed for ideas.
3. Clubs will be encouraged to have the weekly presentations made by members of the vocational service committee since October is also Vocational Service Month AND Rotary has a special focus on ethics literacy as it relates to vocations.

For clubs in other parts of the world interested in doing something similar, here are the weekly themes and key points to be made for each theme.

1. First week theme: Character Development and The Object of Rotary
 - * State that The Object of Rotary is an excellent description of good character.
 - * Note that The Object has two special components that make Rotary’s view of what’s important stand out- (1) The emphasis on vocational service as a hallmark of good character and (2) The emphasis on promoting international peace and understanding as another hallmark of good character.
 - * Then point out how Rotary’s two mottos relate – (1) Service Above Self tells the Rotarian how to think and act and (2) They Profit Most Who Serve The Best tells the Rotarian why a service focused character is desirable.
 - * Ask members if they think the club does enough to promote character literacy by creating awareness of The Object of Rotary and the two mottos – in the club, in the community, in vocations, and internationally.
2. Second week theme: Ethics and the Four-Way Test
 - * State that a person’s character refers to basic ideals and that we are all challenged to live up to our ideals by specific events in our daily lives. Virtually everybody fails these tests at least once in a while
 - * Identify a few of the situations that cause a person to act unethically (mention could be made of John Maxwell’s book *Ethics 101 – Pressure, Greed, Power, Pride and Misplaced Priorities*).
 - * State that ethical guidelines have been developed by the world’s religions and philosophers for the express purpose of helping people raise their ethical batting average.
 - * Identify The Golden Rule as the most famous and ubiquitous (All religions have some version of this)
 - * State that The Golden Rule is quite general and most people can use additional guidelines.
 - * State that Rotary’s Four-Way Test is one such additional guideline – One that has proven acceptable all countries where Rotary is present.
 - * Ask the club members if they think the club is doing enough to promote ethics literacy – in the club, in the community, in vocations and internationally.

3. Third week theme: Ethics and the Declaration of Rotarians in Businesses and Professions
 - * Hand out copies of the Declaration of Rotarians in Business and Professions
 - * Explain how it came into being (In 1987-99 RI President Charles Keller appointed a Vocational Service Committee for the first time in 50 years. Bill Sergeant chaired the committee. The committee decided that it would be useful to produce a Rotary ethics statement to supplement the 4-Way Test. So the group drafted a Declaration of Rotarians in Businesses and Professions. That document was adopted by the 1989 Council on Legislation
 - * Read the 8 parts of the Declaration of Rotarians in Businesses and Professions
 - * Ask the club members if they think the club is doing enough to create awareness of the Declaration in the club, community and at work.

4. Fourth week theme: Rotary support for community organizations which focus on character development and ethics literacy
 - * Identify the local organizations – scouts, schools, churches, etc.
 - * Point out inspiring examples of Rotary clubs supporting each organization in other communities.
 - * Identify local organizations which the club currently supports
 - * Ask members if they think the club is doing enough to support the local organizations.

October Theme of the Month – Resources

There currently exist a small number of national (North America) programs that focus on character development and which would like to partner with Rotary clubs. Following is a short list which has been provided to the North American zone literacy coordinators:

1. Caring Habits – www.caringhabits.org
This organization is eager to work with Rotary clubs. So far we know of one club that partners with them- the Pittsburg, PA club.
2. Laws of Life Essay Contest – www.lawsoflife.org
This is an essay contest provided by the John Templeton Foundation and promoted by a number of Rotary clubs across the nation. This is a particularly popular program in the State of Georgia. The Rotary Club of Buckhead introduced the contest six years ago and promoted it throughout Georgia. As of last June, 24 Georgia Rotary clubs conducted this program.
3. Winners Walk Tall – www.winnerswalktall.org
This project puts Rotary role models in front of school children. Successful business and professional persons go to an elementary school classroom once a week and give a ten minute presentation dealing with some aspect of good character. The Rotary Club of Cincinnati has sponsored this project
4. Character Counts – www.charactercounts.org

A number of Rotary clubs across North America have partnered with their local schools to get this program started. The Bartlesville (Oklahoma) club and the Rotary Club of Waterloo (Iowa) are contacts for an evaluation of this program.

This program was founded by financier Michael Josephson and is partially underwritten by a foundation bearing his name. Zone Literacy Coordinator Bill Mickelberry heard Josephson speak at a zone meeting. PDG Bill was left with the impression that Josephson would be an effective speaker for a RYLA or Interact group.

The Character Counts program recently received a grant from the John Templeton Foundation to create a Character Counts version of the Laws of Life Essay Contest.

October Theme of the Month – Four-Way Test Projects

By now club presidents should be well aware of the call for Four-Way Test projects. In July the zone literacy coordinators sent the presidents (by way of the districts) a request that the club board discuss the possibility of starting a Four-Way Test project. In August, clubs were made aware of the two key web sites that explain how to run such a project. Those are:

1. District 5810 in Texas --- www.rotary5810.org/html/4way_speech.html.
2. District 5440 in Colorado – www.rotary5440.org/fortcollinsco4waybrochure/

Two other sources of inspiration and instruction are:

1. The Rotary club of Slidell Northshore (Louisiana) . Last year they initiated a highly successful ethics literacy program in the high school modeled on the District 5440 program. The contact person is last year's club president Don O'Bryan (jdonob@bellsouth.net)
2. District 5110 (Washington and Oregon). Last year they conducted their first district 4-Way Test Contest. Under the direction of district vocational chair Don Malcolm it was a great success. Don can provide you with detailed instructions on how to do it. Contact him at donmal1@comcast.net.

Canadian Computer Assisted Literacy Program

Among the projects showcased at the International Convention Workshop on Literacy was the Canadian Computer Assisted Literacy Program. The project is run by a commercial organization named Cornerstones, Inc. That group has partnered with some Canadian Rotary clubs. As presented at the convention this program claims to achieve marvelous results in teaching basic reading to children and adults. To find out more go to their web site: www.autoskill.com/rotary (for examples of items shared at the

workshop) or www.autoskill.com (for more extensive information about the company's products.

You can also communicate directly with the corporation by contacting Vince Walter, Chairman, Cornerstones, Inc.at telephone number 905-737-0144 or at the e-mail address vcw@idirect.com.