

International Literacy Day—8 September

Literacy is a cause for celebration since there are now close to four billion literate people in the world. However, literacy for all – children, youth and adults - is still an unaccomplished goal and an ever moving target. A combination of ambitious goals, insufficient and parallel efforts, inadequate resources and strategies, and continued underestimation of the magnitude and complexity of the task accounts for this unmet goal. Lessons learnt over recent decades show that meeting the goal of universal literacy calls not only for more effective efforts but also for renewed political will and for doing things differently at all levels - locally, nationally and internationally.



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RI President D.K. Lee appoints Literacy Resource Groups

More than 800 million people worldwide are unable to read or write, a lack of skills that makes them especially vulnerable to hunger, disease, and extreme poverty. Child mortality is also closely linked to literacy rates. When women and girls are educated, they are generally better equipped to access resources and make decisions that improve the lives of their children and families. Sadly, a variety of barriers prevent more than 500 million women and girls from obtaining even the most basic education.

The Literacy Resource Group connects Rotarians with the information and tools they need to actively promote literacy at home and abroad. It asks Rotary clubs to learn about literacy and education issues in their communities and help increase access to quality learning opportunities for those in need. Clubs are also encouraged to work with the International Reading Association to conduct literacy projects worldwide.

For more information go to:

<http://www.rotary.org/en/AboutUs/RotaryLeadership/RIpresident/Pages/Literacy.aspx>

Did you know?

In today's world, one in five adults is still not literate (two-thirds of them women) while 72 million children are out-of-school.

UNESCO-Education

What works and why: Some current examples of literacy projects from “Down Under” Nea Stewart Dore

Rotary Readers – The Rotary Club of Bundaberg East (Queensland, Australia), recruits senior citizens to read with, and listen to primary school children reading twice a week. The seniors are trained to support readers by a Learning Support Teacher. From a small beginning in one school, the program has now extended to a further 5 schools and the seniors can't get enough of the experience! The children's reading scores have increased dramatically, and the program is the subject of research by Dr Jeni Warburton of the Australasian Centre in Ageing at The University of Queensland into the role of senior citizens in contributing to school-based literacy interventions.

Through the Rotary Club of Bundaberg East, the Rotary Readers project was awarded the inaugural Rotary District 9570 Literacy Award at the District Conference in June. The Rotary Readers initiative also won a regionally coveted Excellence in Education award. The trophy that accompanies the Rotary Award is illustrated below. Made of Australian hardwood timbers by Steve Bundred, the trophy is, in the words of Learning Support Teacher, Sherilyn Strube, a "beautiful work of art". The trophy, dubbed affectionately "Bookworm", will be displayed publicly



in the window of a local bookstore that is owned and operated by a Bundaberg East Rotarian.

Why it works: This collaborative project works because of the active involvement of Rotary Club members in recruiting volunteers, especially in working with them to secure police clearance to work with children; community enthusiasm for the program and its benefits to both students and volunteers through regular press and radio publicity, and a deep satisfaction experienced by all volunteer tutors contribute to the success of this rapidly expanding program.

Kickstart to Literacy – This adjunct program for struggling readers who are at risk of dropping out from school is conducted among a cluster of middle schools in a regional Queensland, Australia, district. The Rotary Club of Mirani provides technical assistance in the form of instructors for a practical mechanics program. A large corporation funds the purchase and repair costs of damaged 4 stroke motors and lawn mowers, and students are shown how to diagnose mechanical problems, order parts, describe their repair progress, document repair and testing procedures, and write final reports. As well, they participate in online activities that develop mechanical knowledge and literacy skills and understandings provided by a local technical college.

Why it works: This project works because of the grass roots, hands-on collaboration between Rotarian instructors, school staff and students to establish and maintain working bonds; public recognition of the value of the project that is provided, and the corporate sponsorship that offers the incentive to take pride in completed tasks that have highly practical value.

Off the Hook Cook Book - A member of the RC of Yeppoon worked with students from a full service alternative high school to compose, collate and print an illustrated, spiral-bound cook book of favourite recipes. All materials - including food ingredients - required by the project were funded by a Rotary Club grant. All contributed recipes were 'kitchen tested' at the school before being selected for inclusion on the basis of cost, ease of preparation and having won "the taste test". The significance of the choice of the recipe book's title was that despite having ready access to fresh fish (the school was located in a coastal town famous for its fishing), no recipe was for a fish dish - hence, 'Off the hook'. Participating students, aged between 14 -18, had long experienced low self-esteem and underdeveloped literacy skills. Not only were they in danger of dropping out of school, they were also highly suspicious of the motives of volunteers. As one girl asked ini-

FROM THE CHAIR: Nea Stewart-Dore

Welcome to the second edition of the IRARI Partnerships SIG Newsletter. There's been a lot of activity since the last issue. First, there was the session conducted at the Atlanta Convention.

A special guest at that event – as representative of Rotary International's President, Wilf Wilkinson - was Richard (Dick) Hattwick, who is General Coordinator of RI's Literacy Resource Group. Productive discussions with Dick were held, as well. The next event of note was the IRARI Symposium held during the 22nd

World Congress on Reading held in San Jose, Costa Rica. As RI's Area Literacy Coordinator for Central and South America, Rosa Maria Acevedo de Vazquez was Rotary International's representative on that occasion. Rosa spoke passionately – in Spanish & translated for those of us who are monolingual – of literacy problems in her area of concern, and of Rotary projects to address them.

Work has begun on revising the Memorandum of Understanding between Rotary Interna-

tional and the IRA. I have forwarded an initial draft to Rich Long, IRA's Director of Government Relations, who is the person responsible for negotiations with Rotary International about collaborative matters.

Finally, IRARI Partnerships SIG membership has soared since the May Convention in Atlanta. As a result of publicity at Regional Leadership Workshops, we have 63 new members enrolled. This means that we qualify for mounting a 2.5-hour Symposium at the Minneapolis Convention in May,

2009. The original submission (for a one hour session) is in the process of being revised appropriately.

Now for a plea: Do send in to the Editor, please, reports of activities that you develop whereby IRA Councils and Rotary Clubs collaborate to deliver literacy programs for local, national and/or international communities.

All best,

Nea

Convention book drive sets Guinness world record

**By Ryan Hyland
Rotary International
News -19 June 2008**

Rotarians at the 2008 RI Convention demonstrated their commitment to literacy by setting a Guinness world record for the most books donated during a seven-day period. Exactly 242,624 books were collected this week for public school students in Southern California and Southern Nevada.

Danny Girton Jr., an adjudicator for Guinness World Records, confirmed that Rotary now owns the record for Most Books Donated in Seven Days at the final plenary session on Wednesday. Ingo Werk, of the Rotary

Club of Wilmington, California, who chaired the project, joined Girton on stage to thank and congratulate Rotarians for achieving such a meaningful record.

The book drive, cosponsored by the *Los Angeles Times* Reading by 9 program, will benefit public school students in kindergarten through grade 3 in the region.

Project organizers set a goal of collecting a quarter of a million books. Convention registrants from more than 140 countries brought books representing their home cultures and languages.



From left: Danny Girton Jr., adjudicator for Guinness World Records, RI President Wilfrid J. Wilkinson, and Ingo Werk, of the Rotary Club of Wilmington, California. Monika Lee/Rotary Images

Guinness World Records receives more than 60,000 applications a year from people hoping for recognition. Of those, only 3 percent set world records.

**Rotarians!
Educators!**

WE NEED YOU!

Please encourage your friends and colleagues to join the IRARI SIG in the near future. We gained many new members in Atlanta and hope to gain additional members at the Conventions in Phoenix and Minneapolis.

If you would like to have an IRARI Membership Form to share with interested friends and colleagues, please e-mail Judith Casey at jdcasey1@mindspring.com.

Thanks for your encouragement and support of the future work of the IRARI Partnerships Special Interest Group.

What worked “Down Under,” *continued.*

tially, "Why would Rotary want to help us?" Thus, the first task was to establish purposeful rapport with the participants and enable them to plan a cooperative project that incorporated aspects of nutrition, budgeting, shopping and literacy.

Why it worked - Despite irregular school attendance previously students became enthusiastic about the project which they felt they owned and attendance improved dramatically for those days when work was carried out on the project. They liked the fact that they were free to make their own choices about selection of recipes, and their arrangement, layout and illustration. Their response to feedback was very positive as they could see how editing and proofreading enhanced their product. They were thrilled to learn new skills such as binding the publication. A truly coopera-

tive activity, the outcome contributed to their assessment requirement, and they came to trust the volunteer working alongside them as mentor. Both patience and persistence - required by the Rotarian and the students alike - resulted in a most worthwhile literacy learning experience. Gratifyingly, one of the students involved has since become an apprentice chef.

Literacy Summit – A joint venture between a Local Council of the Australian Literacy Educators' Association (a National Affiliate of IRA) and Rotary District 9570 to mount a weekend Literacy Summit was planned to celebrate Rotary Literacy Month in March 2008. This followed a highly successful, similar event last year. An added highlight this year, was the promise of a SCRABBLE-a-thon to raise funds to support an IRARI *Books for Hospitalised Kids* project. Summit participants were invited

to bring along a children's picture book as their personal donation to the project. Unfortunately, the Summit had to be cancelled because of lack of participants.

Why it didn't work – The error was to attempt to hold the event during March, already a busy month for teachers and Rotarians alike. The Summit was scheduled for a week before the Easter school break and a week after the Rotary District's training weekend for 2008-2009 Club and District Officers. To offset the disappointment of postponing the weekend, a one-day event is being considered for September, ahead of International Literacy Day.



From the Guatemala Literacy Project. www.coeduc.org/rotary.htm

We need to hear from you!

For future issues of this newsletter, we need to hear about projects being conducted by local Rotary Clubs and IRA councils. We would like to feature programs from all over in which literacy is being promoted.

Send this information to:

Michael French & Darrel Jacobs, Eds.
mfrench@lourdes.edu

Fact Sheet

International Reading Association and Rotary International

What is the purpose of this cooperative relationship?

The cooperative relationship between the International Reading Association and Rotary International provides a way to collaborate and combine resources so that more can be achieved to pursue their common objectives of developing community service projects to promote literacy worldwide. A memorandum of understanding between the two organizations was first signed in 2002 and renewed in 2005.

What is the International Reading Association?

The International Reading Association (IRA) is a professional membership organization dedicated to promoting high levels of literacy for all by improving the quality of reading instruction, disseminating research and information about reading, teachers, reading specialists, consultants, administrators, supervisors, university faculty, researchers, psychologists, librarians, media specialists, and parents. The IRA includes a network of 300,000 educators in nearly 100 countries who support a thriving professional program of publications, meetings, and advocacy and outreach efforts locally, nationally, and internationally.

What is the focus of this cooperative relationship?

RI and IRA are working together to develop community service projects to promote literacy worldwide. Rotary clubs and districts and the IRA's councils and affiliates are encouraged to share resources and information and to develop cooperative literacy projects.

How can my club or district get involved?

Rotary clubs and districts are encouraged to consult with an IRA member representative to identify and address literacy needs in their community.

Rotary clubs and districts should consider involvement in the Teacher Program,

which is a joint effort of the IRA and the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and the IRA's Reading for All: A Pan-African Voice for Literacy, in which Ugandan Rotary clubs play an active role. International Literacy Day, observed 8 September, focuses attention on worldwide literacy issues and needs. Rotary clubs and districts may wish to plan special activities around this time.

Rotary International encourages Rotary clubs and districts to share their related projects with RI staff by e-mailing programs@rotary.org so that they may be incorporated into the RI Community Projects Database.

Volunteers sought for International Reading Association programs

IRA is currently seeking technical advisers and trainers to serve on multiple projects in the areas of professional development, advocacy, and research. Projects take place in both the United States and other countries, especially those with developing economies. Guidelines and an application form are available at www.reading.org.

What else can my club do to help?

Once you have set up a project with the IRA, let RI's External Relations staff know about it. They may want to publicize it in one of Rotary's publications or at www.rotary.org. Send an e-mail with "International Reading Association" in the subject line to ers@rotary.org.



Additional Resources

Communities in Action: A Guide to Effective Projects (605A-EN)

www.rotary.org/newsroom/downloadcenter/pdfs/605a_en.pdf

A Menu of Service Opportunities (605B-EN)

www.rotary.org/newsroom/downloadcenter/pdfs/605b_en.pdf

World Community Service Program

www.rotary.org/programs/wcs

The Rotary Foundation Humanitarian Grants Program

www.rotary.org/foundation/grants

RI Community Projects Database

www.rotary.org/programs/projectsdb

CONTACT INFORMATION:

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Evanston, IL 60201-3698 USA

www.rotary.org

Phone 847-866-3436

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E-mail programs@rotary.org

International Reading Association

800 Barksdale Road

PO Box 8139

Newark, DE 18714 USA

www.reading.org

Phone 302-731-1600

Fax 302-731-1057

E-mail pubinfo@reading.org

Resources to Help Clubs and Councils

The Dictionary Project—How it all began!

The idea for the Dictionary Project began in 1992 when Annie Plummer of Savannah, Georgia gave 50 dictionaries to children who attended a school close to her home. She didn't stop there. In her lifetime she raised the money to buy 17,000 dictionaries for children in Savannah.

Mary French, a Rotarian and former school secretary, admired Annie's work and took up the crusade in Charleston, South Carolina. Under Mary's leadership, Annie's idea has developed into The Dictionary Project, a nonprofit organization. Since Annie's death in 1999, over 1.25 million children have received dictionaries because thousands of people saw the same need in communities all over the United States.

For more information, go to:

<http://www.dictionaryproject.org/>



Over 7,936,224 children have received a dictionary thanks to the generosity of sponsors who have participated in the Dictionary Project. Sponsors provide a dictionary for the children in their community each year, so they can enjoy the benefits of a large vocabulary.

What Rotarians are saying about the Dictionary Project (from the Project web pages):

Many of our third grade students have never had a dictionary and the children are sooooo excited to get one of their very own. We have received wonderful letters from the children thanking us for their precious gift of words. Rotary Club of Shelbyville, TN

Last year the students were so excited and eager to look in their own dictionaries. The teachers were surprised and quite amazed at the student's excitement. If we can contribute to this kind of excitement and enthusiasm then we definitely want to do it.

The Moody Lions Club, AL

This is the third year that our club has participated in this project and it is one of the most amazing projects I have ever been involved in. I never would have imagined the reaction that we would receive from the students. The shocked expressions when they learn the book has their name in it and that they get to keep it, the enthusiasm to see the sign language alphabet, planets, maps and other documents, the smiles, applause and hugs that we receive is truly heart-warming. Rotary Club of Lawton, OK

Resources from the IRA to support International Literacy Day.



International Literacy Day, observed annually on September 8, focuses attention on worldwide literacy needs. More than 780 million of the world's adults (nearly two-thirds of whom are women) do not know how to read or write, and between 94 and 115 million children lack access to education.

Check out this IRA web site for useful information and downloads:

http://www.reading.org/association/meetings/literacy_day.html

Here you will find

- *The official ILD brochure*
- *ILD Fact Sheet*
- *Literacy Facts*
- *Idea Starters*
- *IRA/Rotary Brochure*
- *ILD Certificate of Participation*
- *Literacy and Health Fact Sheet*

WHAT'S a SIG?

Special interest groups provide a forum for sharing information about specific areas of interest among reading professionals and thus serve as a resource for professional growth. Membership in these groups is open to all members of the International Reading Association.

Our special interest group, IRARI, is open to all IRA members whether or not they are Rotarians.

Presently, there is no membership fee to Join IRARI. Those wishing to join this SIG or seeking further information about IRA/Rotary partnerships should contact our secretary below:

Judith Casey
3795 McKay Rd
Colorado Springs CO 80906
Ph: (Home & Fax): 719 471 3553
Email: jdcasey1@mindspring.com

IRARI

Check it out!

The Rotary Club of Tulsa Oklahoma and Jim Weems has created a fantastic web site:





Composed at Lourdes College
6832 Convent Boulevard
Sylvania, Ohio 43560
<http://www.lourdes.edu>

Phone: 419-824-3721
Fax: 419-824-3510
E-mail: mfrench@lourdes.edu

INTERNATIONAL READING ASSOCIATION is a community of reading professionals with over 350,000 members and affiliates in nearly 100 countries. IRA is committed to promoting higher achievement levels in literacy, reading, and communication by continually advancing the quality of instruction worldwide.
www.reading.org

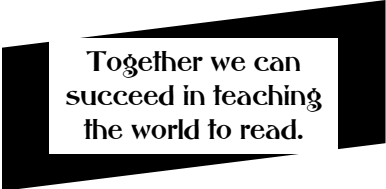
ROTARY INTERNATIONAL is a worldwide organization of business and professional leaders that provides humanitarian service, encourages high ethical standards in all vocations, and helps build goodwill and peace in the world. Approximately 1.2 million Rotarians belong to more than 32,000 clubs in 168 countries. www.rotary.org

OUR MISSION STATEMENT:

Members of this special interest group work to promote literacy awareness and development projects between International Reading Association councils, national affiliates, and international development committees, and Rotary Clubs and District and Zone Literacy Resource Groups. Their goal is to provide a network and forum for members to generate ideas for, and exchange information about, IRARI activities in local, district, national, and international communities; to conduct a symposium at the annual IRA convention and the biennial World Congress, and to organize SIG-sponsored sessions on IRA/Rotary International Partnerships at IRA council/national affiliate and Rotary International meetings of different kinds.

To download the IRA/ROTARY Brochure Advancing Literacy Worldwide, go to:

http://www.reading.org/downloads/association/0611_rotary_brochure.pdf



WHO'S WHO IN IRARI?

Here is some key contact information for IRARIans.

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Rotarian Dusky (Lady) Reider performs for 5th graders in Upper Arlington, Ohio, USA.

Submissions (ideas, short pieces, photos) may be sent to the editors at the address above.

IRARI Partnerships Special Interest Group (SIG)

Membership Form

Membership is open to all financial members of IRA and is FREE.

The IRARI Partnerships SIG was organized in 2007 to encourage IRA and Rotary partnerships in literacy. The Memorandum of Understanding was signed by IRA and Rotary International officials in November, 2005.

Please insert the following details in clear PRINT, copy and paste into a MS Word document and forward to: jdcasey1@mindspring.com (cc. col-nea@byterockv.com.au) as an email attachment.

First Name: Initial: Last Name:

Street Address:

City: State/Province: Country:

Zip/Postal Code: Email Address:

Tel: () Home () Office Fax:

IRA Membership Number: Local Council / Affiliate Number:

IRA Membership Expiry Date: (See journal/mailling label/membership card)

If you are a Rotarian, please complete the following.

District Number: Name of Club:

Position (if any) within Club / District:

If your Club / District conducts a Literacy Project, please describe it briefly, explaining how it is funded.

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Describe any IRA/Rotary literacy collaborations in which you've been involved:

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With thanks,

Nea Stewart-Dore (Chair) & Judith Casey (Secretary) 2007-2009