

Highlights of IRA-Rotary Literacy Projects

April 26, 2010
IRA 55th Annual Convention,
Lakeside Center at McCormick Place, Chicago, Illinois

Since 2002 the International Reading Association (IRA) and Rotary International (RI) have encouraged literacy awareness and literacy development projects between our two organizations. Rotarians serve at both the community and international level, and literacy and education are prime themes.

We will honor the UNESCO-sponsored September 8th International Literacy Day by encouraging all IRA councils and affiliates to meet with their local Rotary Club president or literacy chair. We encourage both IRA members and Rotarians to build on incoming RI President Ray Klinginsmith's theme, "Building Communities-Bridging Continents," by creating literacy partnerships focusing on communities at home and abroad.

Please celebrate 9/8/10 International Literacy Day by creating a local Rotary-IRA literacy relationship in your community or internationally.

Invite Rotarians and IRA members for coffee at a meet-and-greet, to attend a conference or club meeting, to make a visit to your school, or any other option to initiate a friendship.

IRA-RI, an IRA Special Interest Group, offers additional models of local and international IRA-Rotary literacy efforts. Search "Rotary" at the IRA website www.reading.org and download the form on which to share your projects. Also see Washington State's Ellensburg Morning Rotary-IRA www.ccsoc.com/litcom/club_menu.php

There are many IRA members who are also Rotarians who are happy to speak about IRA working with Rotary. To contact an IRA member who is a Rotarian, please email irawash@reading.org.



Australian Literacy Educators'
Association



Ellensburg Morning Rotary



Virgin Islands Reading Council

Joint IRA/Rotary Literacy Projects

Australia

Australian Literacy Educator's Association and Rotary District 9600

Tales from a Dilly Bag

A dilly bag is a traditional Australian Aboriginal fiber bag usually used for food transportation. This dilly bag is filled with books, craft materials, activity sheets to go with the stories, a digital camera, and a teacher's folder. These items allow Indigenous students to share not only oral stories but to additionally create printed and illustrated stories to help develop literacy. About 1300 students have read and created books with these kits. This literacy project design reflects and aligns with evidence-based literacy research. Current research is following the effectiveness of these kits on literacy learning for Indigenous Australian students. Contact: Australian Literacy Educators' Association, Janelle Young at jyoung14@gmail.com

Australian Literacy Association and Rotary District 9570

Books for Hospitalized Kids

This project supplies new books to children 0-12 years old recovering from surgery or illness in regional public hospitals. It catches the imaginations of Rotarians, IRA members, donors, parents, community members, and teachers as they work together using literacy to relieve the fear, loneliness, and pain of young hospitalized children. Contact: Australian Literacy Educators' Association, Dawn Haynes at d.haynes@rok.catholic.edu.au and Rotary District 9570, Nea Stewart-Dore at colnea@byterocky.net.au

California

Greater San Diego Reading Association and the Rotary Club of Chula Vista Sunrise, CA

Books for Babies

Many parents of newborns do not understand the joy and importance of speaking and reading to their babies. Rotary and IRA worked together to fund, choose books, assemble backpacks and deliver them to local hospitals. Each backpack for the parents and newborn is filled with baby books, nursery rhymes and pointers on the importance of reading to their baby. Rotary and IRA volunteers serve five hospitals, 25 families in each, two to three times a year. Consistent communication with hospital staff has been key to the success of this effort. Contact: Greater San Diego Reading Association, Penny Ann Cline, pcline6@cox.net and Rotary Club of Chula Vista Sunrise, Thomas Miller at temiller@cox.net

Idaho

Idaho Council of IRA and Rotary District 5400—the Rotary Clubs of Boise Sunrise, Boise, and Idaho Falls, USA, and the Rotary Cubs of Bahia de Caraquez, Loja, Guayaquil, and Quito, Ecuador.

Project Libros

Project Libros provides Spanish language children's books to children and teachers in Ecuador to six schools and a health clinic. The project also has opened computer labs in four schools, provided professional development to the teachers, and introduced the use of e-books in both Spanish and English. Teachers and university students in Idaho helped buy books for the project. Conference presentations, newsletter coverage and the interaction of Bev Pressman and Bob Rainville with Rotary in Ecuador have helped maintain the success of this project. Personal connections to local leaders in Ecuador, including two Idaho IRA Council members traveling there, have been essential to sustaining this project. Contact: Idaho Council International Reading Association, Lee Dubert at ldubert@boisestate.edu and Rotary District 5400, Bob Rainville at 208-830-1444.

Missouri

Culver-Stockton College IRA and the Rotary Club of Quincy East, Illinois

Literacy Hero

Literacy Hero recognizes educators who are instructional leaders, literacy coaches, and purveyors of books and opportunities for parents to promote literacy at home. The Hero recognition promotes those who help in programs such as a summer literacy bookmobile program that has the support of principals and serves students in six towns. Contact: Culver-Stockton College IRA Council, Terry Sherer at tsherer@culver.edu and Rotary Club of Quincy East, Illinois, Larry Shepherd at larry.shepherd@mercbanx.com

NW Missouri (St Joseph) IRA and the Rotary Club of Southside

Books for Habitat Homes

Rotary and IRA plan for the Books for Habitat for Humanity Homes project to be ongoing. Research shows that availability of reading material is a marker of potential reading growth. To support this concept, IRA provided the book collection and Rotary provided the bookcase for the project's initial offering. One family has received their personalized book collection and a second family will soon benefit from this program. Volunteers learn about family interests to align the books to each family. Contact: NW MO IRA Council, Glenda Haley at tgl0346@att.net and Southside Rotary, Richard Meng at 816-238-0983.

Pennsylvania

South Central Reading Council, Penn State and the Rotary Club of York, PA

Reading Secrets

IRA member and Penn State University instructor Julie Wise offers this unique literacy perspective focusing on an overlooked age group: new college students. *Reading Secrets* pairs college freshmen with seasoned professionals who share how reading plays a role in their success. Mentors help college students identify connections between reading in school, personal growth, and reading that awaits them in the work place. Thirty-six Rotarians mentor students based on professional interests. Students visit the mentor's workplace, meet the mentors on campus, and do phone interviews. Students write and publish Rotarian Reading Secrets Formula. Throughout the semester, students share reflections through an on-line discussion board. In the end students make changes to personal habits that hinder their comprehension. They increase their academic goals from "reading to get it done" to "reading to learn and grow professionally." The Rotarian mentors build a safe environment for students to share the struggles of college reading and provide a future vision of success. One important reading secret Julie Wise newly recognized: the importance of setting time aside to read. Contact: South Central Reading Council/Penn State University, Julie Wise at juliebwise@comcast.net or www.myreadingsecrets.com and Rotary Club of York, PA, Jim Poland at jimpoland@jimpoland.com

Tennessee

TN Reading Association and the Rotary Club of Morristown AM, Tennessee

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

Each month over 1,800 Hamblen County, TN children from birth to five years receive an age appropriate hard cover book. Parents and children benefit as they experience the fun of reading aloud. Children love that the mail carrier delivers their own personal package each month: a book. Local pre-school teachers report that the children who have been part of this program come to school with many pre-reading skills: print awareness and phonemic awareness among them. Purchasing and mailing books cost \$27 per child per year. The state of Tennessee pays one half the expenses and the rest are raised locally (by HC*EXCELL). Tennessee Reading Association, Eva Thompson at ethompson@hcboe.net and Rotary Club of Morristown AM, Tish Jones, at 423-587-9278, tjrom@usit.net

Texas

El Paso Reading Council and the Rotary Club of El Paso

Celebrate Literacy 2009

The El Paso Reading Council and Rotary highlighted literacy in their community by recognizing community literacy leaders. They distributed bookmarks in both organizations and in the public libraries, donated to an adult literacy support group, distributed children's books to Head Start for 4,000 children, and adopted the Center for Family Violence by donating books and funds to the Center. This brought much community attention and support to literacy. El Paso Reading Council and Rotary Club of El Paso: Paul Haupt at cphaupt@earthlink.net

Texas State Reading Association, Amistad Reading Council, and Laredo Rotary Club

International Literacy Project

This project raised \$20,000 to build a library in a 500-student high-need elementary school in Mexico. Included in the project was teacher training to ensure the kids got the most out of their new school library. Contributors include a total of four Rotary Clubs in the US and Mexico, the Texas State Reading Association, and the Amistad Reading Council. Texas State Reading Association, Amistad Reading Council and The Laredo Rotary Club, Juanita Lira at juanitalira@aol.com

Trinidad

Trinidad and Tobago Reading Association and the Rotary Club of Central Port of Spain

Preparation of Literacy Tutors

This project brings IRA and Rotary together to offer research-based training to tutors who work in community programs in high-need remote areas of Trinidad. The volunteers are selected based on academic qualifications, attitude, and willingness to learn literacy teaching skills. Volunteers have time to practice between sessions that cover diagnostic work with students and parents. They work on improving reading comprehension and word recognition, the writing process, oral skills, and monitoring and evaluating academic work, attitude, and behavior. Contact: Trinidad and Tobago Reading Association, Lynette Noel at lyntn@lycos.com and Rotary Club of Central Port of Spain District 7030, Ceronne Prevatte at cprevattw@yahoo.com

Virgin Islands

Virgin Islands Reading Council and the Rotary Club of Road Town

Book Fair: Reading is a Family Affair

This community book fair included guest readings by the Governor and his wife, the Deputy Premier, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education and Culture, and the Chief of Police. Teachers, parents, and children got prizes and surprises, families were involved in choosing books together, and all got tips for encouraging the reading habit, working together on reading, and selecting books to build personal libraries. Contact: British Virgin Islands Reading Council, H. Lynden Smith at lynden_smith@hotmail.com and Rotary Club of Road Town, Melvin Stoutt.

Washington State

IRA (National Office) and the Rotary Club of Ellensburg Morning, WA

Southern Sudan Teacher Training Initiative

This endeavor trains teachers returning from the refugee camps to their homes in Southern Sudan as they attempt to rebuild their civil-war-devastated communities with viable education. Most of these teachers have a high school diploma or less that they earned in the refugee camps. A group of Rotarian and IRA members met with selected lead teachers in August 2009, having them take part in the International Reading Association Pan African Literacy Conference, and have followed up with distance intervention training. The project outline: student and teacher assessment; follow-up with intensive two-week training sessions for 12 mentor teachers; and continued support and evaluation provided either in person or electronically via distance intervention programs. This process is supported not only by Rotary and IRA members, but Central Washington University students preparing to be reading teachers, and students from local Title I schools who are learning about Africa, Sudan, and international issues, and how to select and use durable, easy-to-transport literacy teaching tools for a special population. Contact: Rotary Club of Ellensburg Morning, Judy Backlund at backlundju@cwu.edu