



NEWS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Rotary Clubs of Whatcom County Donate to Help Local Children Struggling with Hunger

BELLINGHAM, WA 4/29/2020 — The Rotary Clubs of Whatcom County have teamed up with Rotary District 5050 to feed local children during the COVID-19 crisis with a \$10,500 donation. The five Clubs in Whatcom County – Rotary Club of Bellingham, Bellingham Bay Rotary Club, Sunrise Rotary Club, Mt. Baker Rotary Club, and the North Whatcom Rotary Club pledged \$5,500 with Rotary District 5050 matching with \$5,000. The recipients of this donation were the Boys and Girls Club Healthy Meals Program, the Starfish Pack Program, and the Bellingham Food Bank.

The Boys and Girls Club Healthy Meals Program was inspired to fill the child hunger gap caused by the COVID-19 school closures and subsequent limited access to food during the day. Open to all kids in Whatcom County ages 3-18, the grant provided by the Rotary Clubs and Rotary District will contribute 2,000 food packages a week for 10 weeks – greatly increasing the previous capacity of the program of 2,800 food packages a week. Food packages are distributed twice a week at sites located in Bellingham and the County.

The Starfish Pack Program is an ongoing program that was already receiving Rotary resources when the need increased due to COVID-19 school closures. To curb child hunger over the weekend, packs of food are given to the student to tide them over until Monday. The Starfish Program works directly with the local school counselors who vet the families to ensure that these meals are meeting a real need as intended. With the Rotary grant, 820 packs with six meals each will be given to children struggling with hunger, distributed by the individual schools.

Although each Rotary Club usually determines which causes and non-profits are the best fit for their individual missions, the Rotary Clubs of Whatcom County have teamed up for causes in the past that required a larger effort. The new Bellingham Food Bank facility and the creation of Boulevard Park are two such endeavors as is this current urgent need.

About Rotary

Rotary brings together a global network of volunteers dedicated to tackling the world's most pressing humanitarian challenges. Rotary connects 1.2 million members of more



than 35,000 Rotary clubs in over 200 countries and regions. Their work improves lives at both the local and international levels, from helping families in need in their own communities to working toward a polio-free world. For more information, visit Rotary.org.

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