



In July 2019 Rotary President Mark Maloney kicked off the Rotary year with the theme that Rotary "Connects the World". He sought to encourage greater connections between club members, their local communities and Rotarians around the world and our club made substantial strides towards this end until March 2020.

The year of connections then evolved into the year of the pandemic necessitating a complete reimagining of how Rotarians, People of Action, could in fact "connect". In 2020 everything became virtual as we kept in the forefront of all our activities Dr. Bonnie Henry's mantra to "Be kind, be calm, and be safe". As always Rotarians rose to the challenge and, despite the pandemic restrictions, by the end of the Rotary year our club was able to achieve the Gold level international Presidential Citation and special recognition for our Polio contributions. Here is a summary of our many achievements.



**Connecting club members:**

- Revitalizing our weekly meetings by flowers and decorations to match the monthly theme and overheads to provide information on upcoming events,
- Encouraging more inclusivity by varying the opening inspirational message and on occasion changing our meeting place,
- Recognizing monthly members who made a significant contribution to the club,
- Holding a successful Fireside Chat which was well attended by both new and longtime members,
- Enjoying a wonderful social where members created a painting symbolizing what "connecting" meant to them,
- Drafting terms of Reference for each committee and participating in an annual club planning session with the assistance of our District Governor,
- Creating a new category of Corporate membership allowing up to 3 members under the umbrella of this membership. We welcomed Village Farms as our first Corporate member including Julie Cameron, Tarlyn Campbell and Kate Hammer, and we met with Pure Sun Farms to encourage their membership,
- Welcoming 7 individual new members, Sharie Dahl, Howard Wang, My Dang, Charmaine Levan, Kreesan Naidoo, Richard Mayer and Ann Waldo.

By early 2020 we were well under way to accomplishing goals of a membership of 60 with 50% female membership but by July 2020 for a number of personal reasons we lost 9 of our female members because of job changes, health issues and moving

away, including our Past President and Secretary. In addition, 3 of our male members left the club. Not all the loss of membership can be traced to the Covid pandemic and this is an area that needs particular attention in the coming years if we are to continue our many local and international projects.

### **Connecting with our local community:**

- We again increased our visibility in our local community by partnering with the City of Delta to install new barbecues and near Ladner Rotary Splashpark,
- We held our Summer picnic and Christmas banquet for the South Delta Peer Support Group,
- We set up the Christmas lights at Delta Hospital,
- We participated in multiple Arthur Drive cleanups during the year,
- We connected with other local Rotary clubs through a golf tournament and a drive by parade in support of our local hospital workers,
- We held a Pumpkins for Polio fundraising event at Delta Community Centre and Delta Secondary School with the assistance of our revitalized Interact Club.

### **Connecting Internationally:**

- In October 2019 club members helped to load a container of medical and educational supplies headed for the island of Panglao in the Philippines,
- Having partnered with the Rotary Club of Richmond Sunrise we brought to schools in the Philippines a "world of learning in a portable hard drive", Asian Ruggedized Education System (ARES) in February. Each club contributed \$5,000 to this project and District 5040 matched with a \$5,000 grant. We donated two ARES systems (the server box, 10 chromebooks, a speaker and a projector) to two high schools and installed three elementary school libraries. The ARES system is a self-contained server that allows students and teachers to access a vast array of educational content when they do not have basic internet. The server is a powerful system designed to provide a complete education and classroom management environment for up to 40 users. The collection of educational content from pre-school to post-grad includes the Khan Academy, Wikipedia for schools, TED videos and thousands of books.
- Our clubs' representatives were on hand for the unloaded container sent by our District in October, with the books donated to the three elementary schools
- Although members had to cancel their international trip to Laos the club did sponsor this project, which provides water filters to remote communities, at a cost of \$3,000.

While the pandemic meant the cancellation of our annual May Day Parade and barbecue social it also meant that through our particular international ARES project hundreds of students in the Philippines were able to access their education virtually at a time when personal attendance at school was impossible. Connection it seems comes in many forms and to the members' credit they proved able to adapt and change in the unprecedented year that was 2019/2020.