**Healthy Beginnings Sub-Committee (Youth and Children) – Chair Sylvia Geist**

The Healthy Beginnings Committee has had another very successful year. The Committee grew in size in its membership and continued to focus on the needs of children ages from infancy to 6 years old. These agencies received diapers, wipes, sleepers, socks, hats, shirts, puzzles, flashlights, Rotary Bags to name a few of the items. Moms received promotional items such as hand lotions, hand soaps, cologne, and vanity kits. The committee members organized these items and the agencies arranged for staff to pick them up at the two designated locations. In this manner, issue of storage was resolved and was no longer a barrier for the implementation of the Rotary Community Bag Program.

Ten agencies received these items, 4 times this year (fall, winter, spring and summer). Agencies complete receipt forms on the day of each delivery, thus providing the committee with data as to the numbers of children and their mothers being assisted by this program. An approximate 500 mothers and their children receive the contents of the Bag Program on each delivery date. The committee has developed an agency survey that will be conducted next year to expand our knowledge and more specific data on the effectiveness of our Community Bag Program.

The Rotary Community Bag Program offers a unique program in the downtown area for mothers and their children. The diapers are especially appreciated, since they are costly for the mothers to purchase. The other items are certainly welcomed, valued and are very practical in their use. The agencies have frequently commented that this program serves a valuable purpose, addresses a significant need in the community and want the Bag program to be continued as long as possible.

Thank you to all the committee members for their active participation, sense of humour and continued commitment. With their interest and energy the Healthy Beginnings Committee will continue their successful partnership with its community.

If you are interested in making a difference in the lives of children from infancy to age 6 and their families, join our committee. We meet every 3rd Friday at 1:30 in the Rotary Board Room. Next year the success of the committee will continue under the capable leadership of Kerry Bowser who assumes the role of the Chair and Luba Rascheff, who continues to be the Lead for the Community Bag Program.