**Rotary goes green planting trees**

POND ISLAND-The Little League Ballpark became a lot greener on Saturday, August 19. A total of 26 coconut trees and 24 palm trees were planted by the Rotary Club of St. Maarten-Mid Isle The tree planting was the result of the ongoing ‘Rotary Plant a Tree Project’. The coconut trees and top soil were donated by Mr. Jerry Speetjens, and the palm trees by Rotarian Mr. Wayne Wilkie. Windward Island Roads assisted by providing a backhoe to dig the holes for the trees.

This project was an initiative of Rotary International President 2017 – 2018 Mr. Ian H.S. Riseley. He challenged all 1.2 million Rotarians to each plant a tree between the start of the Rotary year July 1, 2017, and Earth Day, which is celebrated on April 22, 2018. With this project, he hopes to accomplish that the Rotary Clubs will become more active in regard to the environment. *“Environmental issues rarely register on the Rotary agenda,”* Ian Riseley said. *“The time is long past when environmental sustainability can be dismissed as not Rotary’s concern. It is, and must be, everyone’s concern.”*

Planting trees will help to improve environment sustainability, because trees remove carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases from the air that we breath. This will hopefully slow down the effects of global warming. *“It is my hope that the result of that effort will be far greater than the environmental benefit that those 1.2 million new trees will bring,”* stated Riseley. *“I believe the greater result will be a Rotary that recognizes its responsibility not only to the people on our planet, but to the planet itself.”*

The Rotary Mid-Isle teamed up with Little League’s Player Development, because “*We wanted to plant trees where they would be appreciated and taken care of, and where we could keep an eye on them ourselves”,* stated the club’s Secretary Mrs. Denise Antrobus*.* Rotary Mid-Isle has a long-time involvement with Player Development. They plan to visit Player Development at least once a month, and as such this would be an ideal location.

A total of 11 Rotarians, two partners in service, 1 prospective Rotarian, Coach Tom Burnett and some of his players from Player Development were involved in the planting of the trees. The children helped by filling holes, watering all the trees and by placing stone borders around the smallest trees to protect them from being damaged. Of course, the children are looking forward to the coconuts, because these will provide them with coconut milk and a yummy treat to eat. They will acquire, however, a lot of patience and in time they will earn the coconut produce.