

ROTARY CLUB NEWS: Interact Club fills student need, raises awareness

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Columns

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Lake Placid Rotary Club



Lake Placid Central School District students and Interact Club adviser Greg Fisher pose in the 1932 Rink during the 2023 Lake Placid Holiday Village Stroll. In the front row, from left, are Connor, Will, Mikey, Mia, Olivia and Ruth. In the back are Greg Fisher and Nora. (Provided photo)

In order to graduate from Lake Placid Central School, a student must have accomplished 40 hours of community service. In the past, some students achieved this goal by participating in Kiwanis Key Club, a service organization for youth.

Nicole Trainor attended the LPCSD and was a member of Key Club from 2005 until she graduated in 2009. After college, she returned to the school district as a special education teacher.

“When I was a student at Lake Placid, I really appreciated being in Key Club and the service projects we got to do,” she said. “When Lake Placid’s Kiwanis Club closed, the Key Club kept going independently for several years. I didn’t want to see this opportunity for students go away, so I looked into what Rotary could offer us, and that led to Interact for middle and high school students.”

This past summer and fall, with the support of Community Schools Director Keith Clark and the Rotary Club of Lake Placid, Trainor led the founding of the Lake Placid Interact Club, which is a chapter of Rotary International’s service club for young people ages 12 to 18. Interact clubs bring together young people to develop leadership skills while discovering the power of Rotary’s motto, “Service Above Self.”

Clark recruited teacher Greg Fisher to lead the middle school Interact group. With Trainor leading the high school group, in just a few months, Interact has supported a blood drive with the Adirondack Blood Bank, led a food drive for patrons of the Lake Placid Ecumenical Food Pantry, participated extensively as volunteers in the Lake Placid Holiday Village Stroll, helped at the Palace Theatre and assisted with a “46er dinner.”



Grocery carts were decorated for the food drive collection. (Provided photo)

This past fall, Interact students and the LPCSD collected an estimated 3,300 pounds of food, which converts to 3,667 meals or enough to feed a family of four, three times a day for 306 days. Fisher spoke about the successful food drive.

“The students checked the grocery carts every day (see pictures of carts) and were so excited about the increasing numbers of cans and boxes of food their fellow students were donating,” he said. “About 15 of students participated when we delivered to food to the pantry. They went in and saw the set-up and got a lesson in how it works. It was a great service activity and the kids learned a lot. They are learning life skills through Interact.”

For the Holiday Village Stroll, which is led by the Regional Office of Sustainable Tourism, Interact students served as skate monitors to help people in the 1932 Rink go in the correct direction. They helped younger kids to get up to see Santa, served hot cocoa and some of them even rode with Santa in the fire truck. Tasks rotated every twenty minutes so the student got a chance to help out with all aspects of the event.

“The Lake Placid School Interact Club was very important to the stroll’s success,” ROOST’s Catherine Ericson said. “The students are a great addition, getting their volunteer hours and giving the events even more holiday cheer. ROOST and the Lake Placid Holiday Village Stroll Committee are very appreciative to all the students, Mrs. Trainor, Mr. Fisher, and the Interact Club for all they did to make the Lake Placid Holiday Village Stroll so special.”

Fisher sees value in Interact because it helps young students see things from a different perspective and helps them on their lifelong journey learning how to be responsible citizens.



Grocery carts were decorated for the food drive collection. (Provided photo)

“It’s fun to see the kids collaborate and work together outside of school and be part of community events,” he said. “The students have met some of our local leaders and are gaining an awareness of how the community works. Lake Placid has a unique culture of welcoming tourists and athletes from all over the globe, and I think these volunteer opportunities help our kids to expand their understanding of the world.”

“Upcoming Interact events will include another blood drive with the Red Cross on March 8, a North Elba parks clean-up day in the spring, and maybe a service project for senior citizens,” Trainor said. “Interact is looking at reviving some other community events that were previously held.”

There are about 65 students in middle and high school who are signed up for Interact service projects. Freshman Avory Lamoy is one of the student leaders in Interact, and she volunteered to speak about Interact at the Rotary Club meeting earlier this month. She arrived early and acquainted herself with the grown-ups. She is a poised and confident young person. In front of a group of about 25 Rotarian adults, Avory answered questions comfortably, projecting her voice so the elders at the tables could hear well enough.

“Yeah, the 40 hours of community service is why I joined Interact,” she said. “But it turns out to be really fun.”

(Martha Pritchard Spear is a member of the Rotary Club of Lake Placid.)