

## **Message from President Geoff:**

Addendum to the July 29, 2020 Newsletter  
August 4, 2020

### Survey about in-person meetings

I am sharing here with you the link to the results of our recent survey designed to gauge our club's level of comfort to returning to an in-person meeting....and when we might want to explore that option for those members who would be comfortable with an in-person meeting.

I want to thank the 88 people who responded....more than half of whom took the extra time to offer their thoughts and comments. Feel free to review the results on your own by following this [link](#). Keep in mind while 88 folks responded, only the first 60 responses were recorded since we were working with the basic level of survey monkey. Regardless, it's clear from the results that the majority of us are not comfortable with resuming in-person meetings at this time. With that said, it is also clear that when we do offer in-person meetings, there must be a virtual option (whether that be zoom or live streaming) in order to accommodate **all** those wishing to participate.

As for a timetable for any decision on future in-person meetings, I think it is wise to wait until at least after Cornell University and Ithaca College have resumed on-campus learning to see if there are any spikes in the infection rate that might trigger community spread of COVID-19. In the meantime, we will proceed to gather the information needed from Coltivare as well as the technical requirements necessary so when we do decide to offer the in-person option we are prepared accordingly.

### Quarterly Report of the Pandemic Response Group

I also want to take this opportunity to let you know how incredibly proud we all should be of the way we have adapted and responded to the COVID-19 pandemic. Even though we may have been 'slow out of the gate,' canceling two meetings at the end of the March, we haven't missed a beat since. Please take a moment to read through what amounts to a quarterly report (below) of our Pandemic Response Group. We have stepped up to help address the food security needs identified in our community, to recognize the good work of so many people who are on the front lines of this pandemic such as Rotarians Jessica Gosa (Foodnet Meals on Wheels) and Capt. Stacy McNeil (Salvation Army), and to take part in not one - but two - highway cleanup days in a socially distant and safe manner!

Thank you all for demonstrating on a daily basis your **R**esiliency, **I**nspiration, **S**trength and **E**ngagement...

Yours in Rotary,  
Geoff

## ITHACA ROTARY CLUB CARES

### COMMUNITY SERVICE IN A TIME OF PANDEMIC

Let's admit that the impact of COVID 19 caught us a bit by surprise. That at first we thought we might be able to manage to function as a service club with simple adaptations. Then reality struck, and we went in to social isolation. We only cancelled two weekly meetings, though! We started meeting on ZOOM at the beginning of April. By mid April, we had a Pandemic Response ad hoc committee in place, tasked with creating initiatives in response to the consequences of living in a world wracked by virus. This is what amounts to a quarterly review of what we've done in these past three months.

As an organization, we emphasize **Service and Fellowship**. We decided that our first emphasis had to be on our own **Members**, because we are nothing without our members, right? Ivy Stevens-Gupta spearheaded our efforts for members.

- Each month, members of the **Board of Directors reach out** to club members, checking in.
- The club has purchased **Rotary/People of Action face masks**, which were back ordered, but are now here. We have mailed masks to each member who has requested one – and will continue to do so until everyone who wants one, has one.
- Semiannual dues notices were distributed with an email detailing our recognition that dues payment may be difficult for some at this time. We have a safety net in place for members whose only barrier to membership is cost.

Our second focus was on **Service**. Needs are high in our community, so we looked for ways that we could help within the confines of social distancing. Juliet Gibbs led the search ways to serve, whether in person (socially distanced, with masks, outdoors), or remotely, with a focus on food security issues.

- Club member Stacy McNeil of the Salvation Army, needed help with food distribution, as need increased dramatically. In the months of May and June, **12 Rotarians volunteered 34.5 hours of service**, distributing free food at the pantry, or delivering meals to homeless people being sheltered in hotels in the area.
- Working with Club member Jessica Gosa, executive director of Foodnet/Meals on Wheels, we launched **Notes to Neighbors**, coordinated by Past President Mary Berens. Meals on Wheels food deliverers are not allowed to “visit” with food recipients, so Notes to Neighbors is a gesture of care and friendship. As of the beginning of July, **9 Rotarians had written/created 503 notes** to be included with meal deliveries. Mary estimates (conservatively) that **42 hours of service** went in to this effort, and she notes that some Rotarians enlisted grandchildren and friends to participate. Special note: club member Sherrie Haeefele, who is a gifted quilter, sent 17 handstitched postcards!

- Our Rotary grant writing specialist, Nancy Potter, submitted a District Grant application in support of the Salvation Army food services to the homeless program. Regrettably, not all grant applications are funded, and in a crowded field of applications, ours was not approved. That being said, we still appreciate the effort it took to apply, so thanks go to Nancy Potter, Juliet Gibbs and Stacy McNeil.

Our most visible new effort has been “**Tastes of Gorges**”, our Safely Distanced Supper Club. This project is coordinated by Dennis Gray and Maricelis Acevedo (aka Team Grace), and Ron Provus. Launched in mid May, we encourage members and friends to support our local restaurants by ordering take out meals on a specific day(s). Promoted by email, social media posts and local news outlets, the focus has been on restaurants which have supported our international service projects through our Dozen Dinner Draw raffles. To date, we have highlighted 8 local restaurants in 9 weeks (we have gone to our meeting host, Coltivare, twice).

A long standing project of the Ithaca Rotary Club is **Highway Clean-up**. Coordinated by John Barradas, this spring cleanup had **14 participants**. Additionally, **3 Rotarians** did an “**On the Lake**” waterway cleanup by kayak, and at least an additional **6 members** did an “**On Our Own**” solo clean up in our own neighborhoods, promoted by Maricelis Acevedo, who is also working with Cornell Cooperative Extension to ensure the care of our **Rotary Rotary**.

Past President **Brett Bossard** is serving as our **Clubrunner webmaster**, updating our website regularly. The homepage reflects our current Rotary year theme, “Rotary Opens Opportunities”, and has a statement on reflecting diversity, as well as numerous new articles.

- our **Handwashing Project** (spearheaded by Joe Cassaniti and Heidi Goldstein), which includes links for information, videos and brochures.
- **Rotary Cares** articles from members Jessica Gosa (Foodnet/Meals on Wheels) and James Brown (The United Way), describing their workday efforts in Pandemic.
- The “**Tastes of Gorges**” profile includes the weekly restaurant selection.
- We recognize this year’s **Rotarian of the Year**, Linda Brisson!
- A profile of our new Club President, Geoff Dunn.
- The **Request for Proposals for Community Grants**.
- The upcoming **Road Rally** information.

Our new **Communications Team** Chair, Sherrie Negrea, has taken a lead in crafting public statements for the club, and has been posting press releases at an average of one per week since joining the Board. She has sent press releases about “Tastes of Gorges”, our roster of Program Speakers, our new Club President Geoff Dunn, and the Road Rally.

And in the “last is definitely not least” category, TEAM GRACE ( Dennis Gray and Maricelis Acevedo) is easing in to the new world order of **Fundraising** with an upgrade to the weekly raffle. Now dubbed the “**Do-Goodery**” **Raffle**, bids are taken virtually during our ZOOM meetings as well as by text or email. Fun items entice bidding, and the proceeds are dedicated to mini-grants to local organizations addressing food security. First up, the **Ithaca Rotary Harvest**, a 14 year tradition of providing three weekends of direct food deliveries to needy families, in coordination with the Ithaca City School District.

Respectfully submitted,

Joanne Lamoureux, Chair, Pandemic Response Committee