



Interact Advisors' Update

December 2019



Hello, Interact Advisors:

I hope you have been able to enjoy a wonderful holiday season with your families. As we begin the New Year of 2020, there are a lot of exciting things happening with Interact here in our Rotary district, along with some challenges that we have been facing internationally.

Interact District Conference, Feb. 22: The biggest Interact event of the year is always our Interact District Conference, which is being hosted this year by the Interact Club of Canyon View High School, located at 6024 N. Perryville Road, Waddell, AZ 85355 (in northwest Phoenix metro area). The deadline for registering is Valentine's Day, Feb. 14, and the cost is \$30. However, you can save \$5 if you and your club members register by January 22. District Governor Madelynn Mac Donald wants you to know that this will be "the most hands-on conference yet," with the breakout sessions involving active participation in projects. In addition to featuring the inspirational David Talbot, founder of Crutches 4 Africa, we will also be hearing from Rotarian Bob Solis about the Open Arms Home for Children in South Africa he established for children who have been orphaned by AIDS. Hear him tell about his 700-mile walk across South Africa to raise money to build cottages for those children. We will also be viewing the top three club videos and revealing the identities of those who have been chosen as our 2020 Interact Ambassadors to Kenya and Mexico. This action-packed event is guaranteed to inspire your club members as they see Interact in a larger dimension.

Deadline for Club Videos is Feb. 1: You have one month to create and submit a 3-minute video that shows how your Interact club is serving in ways that help Rotary to connect with people and needs in other parts of the world. Once your video has been created and uploaded to YouTube, send the link by Feb. 1st to Art Harrington, arths@msn.com. See the attached District Video Contest flyer for the judging criteria and additional information. Your club's video can be a great marketing & fundraising tool for your Interact Club.

Wheelchairs and parts needed: In addition to crutches & walkers, we urgently need wheelchairs in any condition — even those that are no longer operative, that we can use for parts. We need your club's help in checking with nursing and retirement homes to find this equipment that has been left behind by individuals who could no longer need this mobility equipment. We can put it to good use and can change lives with it. Save the attached flyers that provide workable collection ideas and tell you where to drop off the equipment.

2020 Ambassadors being chosen: December 15 was the deadline for submitting applications to become one of the Interact Ambassadors on the teams we will be sending to represent us in Kenya and in Mexico this summer. Twenty of our top Interactors have submitted their applications and recommendation letters. Our selection committee will be reviewing their submissions and scheduling an online interview with each of them, in order to select up to six Ambassadors who will comprise each team. Those selected will then begin their bi-weekly training and preparations for this unique international service opportunity.

New Year offers three RYLA opportunities: Leading off our high school Rotary Youth Leadership Award camps will be our **Camp Pinerock RYLA**, held in Prescott over the Martin Luther King Holiday weekend, January 17-20. Then on April 2-5 we will be holding our **Camp Ponderosa RYLA** up at Heber. Brand new this year will be our **JR RYLA**, for grades 6-8, which will be held at Camp Wamatochick, 6 miles south of Prescott on Senator Highway, June 17-20. While each of them will be different, all three of these RYLAs will offer an incredible experience that challenges participating youth to push the boundaries that have limited them, to try things they have never before attempted, and to envision what they are capable of becoming. The youth apply online, via www.ryla5495.org, for the scholarships to attend these camps that are provided by our Rotary clubs. With our JR RYLA program being new this year, the associated website and application process for that camp are still being built, but we expect those to be up and running by February.



Raising the \$35,000 for Interact C4A: It is always a daunting task to collect enough mobility equipment, and to raise enough funds, each year to send the shipments and to help underwrite the cost of sending our Ambassadors teams. Shipping of containers of mobility equipment is costly, and we cover the cost of the plane fare and insurance for our Interact Ambassadors. (The adult Advisors have always paid for their own airfare.) This year, by expanding the program to include shipping equipment and sending a second team to Central Mexico, we anticipate the total cost to be at least \$35,000. So how can we do it? The key is the “we.” It takes the work and creative fundraising of as many of our Interact and Rotary clubs as we can persuade to help us with this endeavor. Is it worth so much effort, and that much money, to make this happen? We believe the answer is a resounding, “Yes!” What these young people are doing to give the invaluable gift of mobility to change lives in these countries, and what this program does for these youth who rise to this pinnacle in their international leadership training and experience, is of inestimable value. These youth, in whom we are investing today, will be the future leaders of Rotary.

What’s with the suspensions & terminations? Many of you have been aware that, since Oct. 1, we have been scrambling to save Interact clubs from having their charters terminated on Dec. 31. Per a decision by the Rotary Board of Directors to clean up the records on Interact clubs, all clubs for whom the required annual reporting by their sponsoring Rotary clubs had not been done for the past two years, were automatically Suspended on Oct. 1, and Rotary clubs worldwide were notified via an email on that date that, unless an online report identifying an Advisor for their clubs was filed by Dec. 31, the charters for those clubs would be terminated at that time.

While an annual report has always been required, the rule has never been enforced until now; and the majority of the Rotary clubs have consequently never filed any reports. As the result, over half of the 24,000+ Interact clubs around the world suddenly wound up being Suspended on Oct. 1 — including more than half of the clubs in our district. The online report must be filed via the Rotary International website. It is the responsibility of the sponsoring Rotary club — not the Faculty Advisor — to file the annual report, no later than June 30 each year. It has not been an easy task to get the attention of sponsoring Rotary clubs, to get them to attend to this matter within the time limit the Rotary Board set. Complicating the matter has been some malfunctioning of Rotary’s online reporting mechanism, requiring multiple reports to be filed before “Suspended” status of clubs finally changed to “Active.” As the result, as the District Interact Chair, I have invested well over 100 hours so far in this frustrating endeavor.

Unfortunately, some Interact club charters will be Terminated, due to Rotary clubs not acting quickly enough; and some clubs will consequently need to be re-chartered. The bottom line is that Rotary is now enforcing its requirement for annual reporting by sponsoring Rotary clubs for their Interact clubs.

Revised Interact governing documents: In the course of dealing with the suspensions and terminations, we have discovered that, also due to action by the Rotary Board, Interact’s Standard Club Constitution and Recommended Club Bylaws have been recently revised. Copies of these are attached for your file and for your club officers to review.

-- Art Harrington
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