



You Can't Keep a Good Club Down, or How Prestonwood Rotary Responded to the Corona Virus in its Own Indomitable Way

The corona virus (Covid-19 in medical talk) sneaked up on us the way that Carl Sandburg described fog in his famous poem... “on little cat feet.”

But this cat had not only a vicious scratch; it also possessed the bite of a tiger – powerful and often fatal.

By mid-March, many organizations were facing the possibility of shutting down or dramatically altering their operations. Rotary clubs across America were faced with this painful dilemma, because so much of what Rotary does is based on the personal contact of its members... and the orders for self-quarantining and lack of being able to congregate pushed most Rotary clubs to the limit.

Prestonwood Rotary was no exception. How are we going to meet? And if we find a way to meet, what are we going to do? And because we're a small club, how do we keep our members unified with a sense of purpose?

After a couple of weeks of deliberation, here's how Prestonwood Rotary responded to the virus and to Rotary's most basic direction, Service Above Self:

We “Zoomed” Ourselves Together



Thanks to the technology Past President Ivan Bartolome had at his firm, Prestonwood was able to resume its regular Wednesday afternoon meetings and continue to bring in speakers through Zoom. This added to our collective knowledge of current events and important developments.

Among the first speakers were Dr. Sonja Bartolome (Ivan's wife and more than better half), a UT Southwestern pulmonologist, who is representing the hospital in explaining that risks Covid-19 presents to us.



Dr. Bartolome was able to put into perspective both the realities and myths about Corona virus, a presentation that isn't all that easy to find these days.

And because many of us have lived through at least one other major pandemic, our club President Joe Levy was able to bring us Jim Lewis, a California Rotarian, long active in promoting Rotary International's efforts to eradicate polio worldwide.



Sometimes we forget just how widespread and tragic the polio epidemic was in the United States in the 1940s and 1950s, before Dr. Jonas Salk was able to develop a vaccine that all be eliminate polio's terrible consequences. As a boy Jim

Lewis was a victim of polio, which imbedded in him the strongest of desires to work to eliminate this disease.

Two pandemic separated by many generations, yet their message still rings clearly, and Prestonwood Rotary was most grateful to have the speakers enlighten us.

Generosity Can Kill the Hunger



Prestonwood Rotary did not neglect one of its primary missions – helping those who need our help. When it became obvious that the economy was suffering in direct proportion to the nationwide quarantine, Prestonwood Rotary was able to donate more than \$2,200 to the North Texas Food Bank, according Prestonwood Rotary Foundation Chair Cyrus Teherani. The original \$1,000 Foundation grant was matched and exceeded by additional donations by club members, Cyrus said.

Flying the Flag



Prestonwood Rotary's burgeoning flag program actually may benefit from the pandemic. This note from David Echols, one of the flag program's organizers:

The club honored our community health care workers and first responders with a show of appreciation and support through our flag program by putting flags out in mid-April for an extended time until Memorial Day. When flag program leaseholders were notified about the reason for early flag delivery, there were many responses thanking Prestonwood Rotary for this show of gratitude for the dedication, commitment and effort of these essential workers. There were a number of new leases and a surge in flag program renewals in response to our flags being displayed. Prestonwood Rotary is proud to recognize these dedicated contributors in our community.

... and not a drop to drink?

In keeping with Prestonwood Rotary's long-standing commitment to international service, our chair for these projects, Glen Campbell, was able to provide the near-completion of yet another water project in Africa:

This is a grant approved by RI and is for a total project cost of \$36,750, of which Prestonwood Rotary Club financed \$4,500. The two cities for the project are Luanshya and Ndola, Zambia. It should be completed within a twelve-month period. The Rotary Club of Luanshya is the host club and PRC the second club. This project includes: Provision of one waterborne toilet at Nsobe Secondary Community School; a borehole solar pump with tank and tower at MMM Vocational training Centre; and an ablution block for physically challenged children at Dagama School. Each of the facilities is expanding its services to the community, so these water and sanitation facilities ensure sufficient water and toilet access.

A Final Thought

Sometimes, the challenge presents the greatest reward. Once the members of the Prestonwood Rotary Club figured out how to communicate and treat Covid-19 as an obstacle to be circumvented, our work went on, as it always has.

Submitted by Barry Hoffman