

DG Penny's March 2011 message Literacy

Literacy is a passion for me and this year I have encouraged the Rotary Clubs in District 5040 to take on a local or international literacy service project. We want to recognize and celebrate your literacy projects this year at the District Conference May 6th to 8th. Please send information about your work for literacy to our District Literacy Champions Francis Kolotyluk and Patricia Porter at 5040cfk@telus.net by April 15th. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) defines literacy as the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate, compute and use printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning to enable an individual to achieve his or her goals, to develop his or her knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in the wider society. "Literacy" is so much more than reading and writing as we usually think of it.

One of the six Areas of Focus for The Rotary Foundation is **Basic Education and Literacy**. As Rotarians we are encouraged to make basic education and literacy a focus as we plan our service activities. The goals in this Area of Focus are

- Ensuring that children have access to quality basic education
- Reducing gender disparity in education
- Increasing adult literacy
- Strengthening the capacity of communities to support basic education and literacy
- Supporting studies related to basic education and literacy

The literacy challenge

- Worldwide, 75 million children — 41 million of them girls — do not have access to basic education. (World Bank)
- Child survival rates jump 40% if girls are educated for five years. (ONE)
- Young people who have completed primary education are less than half as likely to contract HIV as those without such an education. Universal primary education would prevent 700,000 cases of HIV each year. (World Bank)
- More than 1 in 4 adults cannot read or write, 66% of them women. (End Poverty 2015 Millennium Campaign)

What you can do?

- Develop an adult literacy program that teaches literacy skills to adults
- Send a vocational training team to provide training in curriculum development and reducing gender disparity in education to rural communities
- Consult with education officials to provide the relevant curriculum and supplies for schools
- Sponsor a scholar studying adult education with an emphasis on literacy

Two exciting projects in District 5040 are the BC Government House and Rotary Literacy project and CALS – Computer Assisted Literacy Solutions. Check out other stories on our District website for more information on these two projects. Both these projects will be presented at the District Conference. There are lots of reasons and opportunities to do a literacy service project. Tell us what your club is doing.