

# **STEPS FOR CONDUCTING A SUCCESSFUL DICTIONARY PROJECT**

Prepared by  
Kathy Gross, District 5710 Literacy Chair  
August 2008

*(The following is suggested steps to follow as there are many great ways to do dictionary projects. There are sample letters to use for a dictionary projects are posted at [www.district5710.org](http://www.district5710.org))*

## **1. IDENTIFY A DICTIONARY PROJECT COORDINATOR AND COMMITTEE**

Dictionary projects require some up front planning and communication but don't require huge amounts of time. Most of the work can be done by email (ordering dictionaries, contacting the schools) or phone (calling school administration). I suggest that have one person to serve as project coordinator to help with the logistics of the project and a couple of other people to help with preparations. You will need several club members to help when delivering dictionaries. You may need someone on your dictionary committee that can print your own dictionary labels and letters or you can have them printed at a local Kinkos or office supply store. Remember to involve your club PR chairperson to help with press releases and contact Andrea Norris for the simplified grants (see # 8). You can contact Andrea through the district website [www.rotary5710.org](http://www.rotary5710.org)

## **2. GET PERMISSION FROM THE ADMINISTRATION**

Contact the principals or administrators of the school or schools that you are interested in giving dictionaries. Sometimes you may need to get "permission" of the school district administration or local school board to distribute the dictionaries, so please check with them in advance. It is also good publicity for your Rotary club for these administrators and school board members to know that your club is doing the dictionary distributions. ***(See Dear Elementary School Principal)***

## **3. DETERMINE HOW MANY DICTIONARIES AND WHEN TO DELIVER.**

Once, you gain permission to distribute dictionaries, ask how many dictionaries they will need. Include in your count the number of students, teachers and don't forget to give a dictionary or two to the school librarian for the library. Also order a few extra dictionaries to keep on hand or leave at the school for new students that arrive during the school year. Find out the best time to deliver the dictionaries. What weeks are good and not good, what days of the week are ok and when they want you to come....during class time, during a school assembly, during lunch period, etc. Start lining up Rotarian volunteers to deliver the dictionaries for each school's preferred date and times. Two Rotarians per classroom usually works best. ***(See Dictionary Distribution letter to club)***

## **4. GETTING READY: ORDER THE DICTIONARIES, PLACE STICKERS, PRINT PARENT LETTERS**

Place your order for the dictionaries with the Dictionary Project of Kansas City. They are a non-profit group and require your "donation" for the dictionaries in advance of ordering them. They will provide you a receipt for your order. It usually takes 3 weeks from order to receipt of dictionaries. The organization to order dictionaries from is: [www.DictionaryProjectKC.org](http://www.DictionaryProjectKC.org).

The exact url for the dictionary orderform is:

<http://www.dictionaryprojectkc.org/Donations/donations.html>) and the contact person is Chris Hope at this email address: [thehopes-chris@kc.rr.com](mailto:thehopes-chris@kc.rr.com). Student Dictionaries are available in English or Spanish.

Once dictionaries have arrived, It is recommended to place a sticker on the inside cover of the dictionary to provide a place for each student to write their name. The sticker can also indicate that it was provided by your Rotary Club. It is easy to print the stickers from a home computer or you can have them printed at Kinkos. We have a group of Rotarians put the stickers in the dictionaries together. It is a great opportunity for fellowship and allows more people to get involved with the dictionary project. For the Dictionary labels, you can use Avery Brand ink jet white mailing labels #8164 (6 labels per sheet -- 3 1/3" x 4" actual size). Next, sort the dictionaries into boxes for delivery to each school. Then, print parent

letters (enough for one for each student that receives a dictionary). The parent letters are a great way to let parents know about the dictionary program and your Rotary club's commitment to literacy. ***(See Rotary Dictionary labels with logo and Parent Letter)***

## **5. NOTIFY LOCAL NEWSPAPERS AND TV STATIONS**

Send a press release, email or phone the local media to let them know of the dictionary distribution schedule ***(See Press Release for Dictionary Project)***. The media loves children and school-related news, so letting them know could result in publicity for your club. It is great to have quotes from school administrators, teachers or principals to include in your press release. A quote from your club President or project organizer is great too. At the very least, place a notification in the clubs section of the local newspaper telling of the project. Contact Patty Bossert, District Publicity Chair for ideas and help with publicity options. If you do get media coverage, please let Patty know as she is tracking the information. You can contact Patty through district website [www.rotary5710.org](http://www.rotary5710.org).

## **6. DELIVER THE DICTIONARIES**

On the agreed upon date and time, Rotarians deliver dictionaries to the students at the school. The best way is for the Rotarians to personally hand each child a dictionary. The Dictionary Project has suggestions for a presentation related to Noah Webster that helps explain history of the dictionary. Kids want to know what Rotary is...so be prepared to explain what a Rotary club is at a 9-year old level. We have found telling kids that Rotary is a club for adults somewhat like Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts with a mission of helping people all over the world helps them to understand better. Bring a camera and take photos of the kids getting their dictionaries or a class photo of all the kids holding their dictionaries. These are great to keep for your club history, send to the district for the newsletter, and you can even send them to the local media.

## **7. FOLLOW-UP WITH THE SCHOOLS**

Send the teacher and(or) school principal a letter expressing thanks for letting your club deliver the dictionaries. It is a great way to get feedback on what went well and what to do differently next time. It can also set up the expectation for the next year to again deliver dictionaries. ***(See Dictionary thank you to school)***

## **8. SUBMIT YOUR PROJECT TO DISTRICT 5710 FOR A DISTRICT SIMPLIFIED GRANT**

Application may be made for a District Simplified Grant for one-half the cost of the dictionaries you purchase. (Grants require a dollar-for-dollar match) The "Application For Project Funding" and "Individual Project Summary" may be obtained from downloaded from the district website or by contacting Andrea Norris. A copy of the paid invoice for the dictionaries, and/or other evidence of payment, must be submitted with the Application for Project Funding, along with the Individual Project Summary, completed as a "Final Report".

If downloading the forms from the website is not an option for you, you may contact Linda Ireland, Exec. Asst. to the District Governor at [exec5710@swbell.net](mailto:exec5710@swbell.net).

## **9. THANK YOUR CLUB MEMBERS**

Acknowledge your club members that participated in the project by announcing it at a club meeting, in your club bulletin or by sending personal thank-you notes. Acknowledge those members that helped to organize the project when you submit press releases or send information to the District PR Chair.