**Rotarians Strive toward World Peace** **A Rotary District 5790 Peace Symposium Article** (in *response to the 2012 Presidents Citation*)

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**Rotarians Strive toward World Peace by David Hurt, Arlington West Rotary Club**

**The Road to Peace**: During the last century, Rotary International has developed the reputation as a philanthropic, non-threatening humanitarian organization throughout the globe. It invests in helping others, and asks nothing in return. The organization and its members are a wonderful example of how people can work together peacefully.

This year, Rotary International President Tanaka suggested a World Peace initiative, and challenged all Rotary clubs throughout the world to respond with a World Peace project. As an initial step to link humanitarian projects to Peace, this article was written with the intent to present a peace forum in our club and to help other Rotary clubs with the metamorphosis of club projects with the spirit of peace.

**2. Project Objectives**: The objectives of this article and PowerPoint presentation are:

 1) To provide knowledge and resources to link peace to Rotary projects,

2) To encourage discussion for individual and organizational peace applications, and

3) To provide materials for a peace forum in your club in order to satisfy one of the Rotary International 2012-2013 Presidential requirements for club excellence certification.

This article is not meant to be a sermon from the pulpit, nor does it attempt to have all of the answers to peace. Rather it is an effort to support one of our areas of focus…education and literacy. Hopefully, it will inspire others to provide a peace forum to more fully discuss, analyze, and debate the complex and elusive concept of peace.

The document is segmented into fifteen areas of discussion to provide the reader the opportunity to delve into a single topic without having to read the article in its entirety, and to provide material for a series of public relations articles for the newspaper, television, radio, and social media.

Background: A few years ago on September 21, the International Day of Peace, the writer attended a World Peace conclave in Dallas, Texas and heard an inspiring speech. It was presented by a very knowledgeable keynote speaker, my daughter, who as a radio host interviewed twenty-one world class visionary peace builders and founders of peace related organizations. Their global views, which serve as the foundation for this project, have been collected in her recent book, Let It Begin With Me: 21 Voices of the New Peace Movement. The information, summarized in this article, suggests one place to start is to learn about peace, and provides valuable insight to kick-start the process of peace-building.

Some of the interview questions posed to these peace builders: What does it mean to be a peace builder and why should we care? What are external and internal signs of peace? Where do we start, and what are our resources to grow this movement on a planetary level? How do we include peace strategies with current projects? For additional insight and a brief preview of the book, go to <http://letitbeginwithmebook.com> and play the video intro. As a peace project, the club could send a copy of this article, the accompanying PowerPoint presentation, and the book (available from Amazon.com at about $14) to another Rotary club outside our District, with your own message of peace to that club…suggesting they do the same with another Rotary club.

Rotary has a comprehensive list of areas of service, and thousands of local and international projects are developed every year that address these areas of need. Indirectly, these efforts have established Rotary International as a stellar humanitarian organization.

It seems that the basic challenge posed with this presidential citation requirement is to include with our Rotary humanitarian projects an element that enhances world peace, and to develop public relations forum for peace. With that in mind, the following topics are organized in an effort to better understand various elements of world peace and to provide support material for clubs to better communicate and promote peace within future projects.

**3. Peace Classifications**: The United Nations (U.N.), founded in 1945 after World War II. This powerful and influential organization plays a critical role in world peace, and has established three categories for peace initiatives: 1) peace-making, primarily involved in resolving conflict and involves national and international political effort and is outside the boundary of this project,

2) peace-keeping, also beyond the scope of this project, is related to enforcing treaty resolutions to provide stability and infrastructure of peace following conflict, and

3) peace-building, an interaction of individuals and governments, is the heart of this article. It is a process that creates environments where peace, abundance, and joy can thrive.

**4. Peace Defined**: Wikipedia, an excellent source of information on peace, very broadly defines peace a “state of harmony characterized by the lack of violent conflict and the freedom from fear of violence. Commonly understood as the absence of hostility, peace also suggests the existence of healthy or newly healed interpersonal (inner) as well as external quality of life variables, prosperity in matters of social or economic welfare, the establishment of equality, and a working political order that serves the true interests of all. Peacetime is not only the absence of war or violent conflict, but also the presence of positive and respectful cultural and economic relationships.”

It is equally important to note that the absence of proclaimed war, or hunger, or basic personal needs, does not ensure peace within the individual. If the road to world peace does begin from within the individual, how does it get started? Peace-building can quickly travel through the home, the workplace, organizations, and the world. Can we, individually or collectively as a club, take actions that will build peace? If the answer is yes, then there is a need to better understand, develop, and communicate how this may be accomplished, then set goals and implement a plan to take both individual and organizational action.

**5. The Global Peace Index (GPI)** measurement process is an attempt to measure the relative position of nations' and regions' peacefulness. It is a product of the [Institute for Economics and Peace](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Institute_for_Economics_and_Peace) (IEP) and developed in consultation with an international panel of peace experts from peace institutes and think tanks, with data collected and collated by an Economist Intelligence Unit.

The list was launched first in May 2007 and claimed to be the first study to rank countries around the world according to their peacefulness. It now ranks 158 countries (up from 121 in 2007), with the [United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States) ranked 85/149 on the Global Peace index for 2010. With these international peace ratings of countries, evidence suggests the key to peace goes far beyond economic gross national product indicators, and that there remains a great deal of work to be done in our own country.

**6. The United States Peace Index (USPI)** is a measurement of American States by their peacefulness and was also created by the Institute for Economics and Peace. It is said to be the first in a series of National sub-divisions by their peacefulness and was created due to plentiful data and a large amount of diversity between states to develop levels of peace. There are five peace indicators that make up the USPI: 1) The scores for Number of Homicides per 100,000 people, 2) Number of violent crimes per 100,000 people, 3) Jailed population per 100,000 people, 4) Police officers per 100,000 people, and 5) ease of access to small arms. These peace indicators are averaged together to form each state's score.

For the first time, this year’s report includes a Positive Peace Index (PPI), highlighting the key institutional factors associated with creating peaceful and resilient societies. The PPI ranks countries by their institutional capacity to move away from violence and towards peace.

**7. The Nobel Peace Prize**: The highest honor awarded to a peace maker is the [Nobel Prize in Peace](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nobel_Prize_in_Peace), awarded since 1901 by the [Norwegian Nobel Committee](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norwegian_Nobel_Committee). It is awarded annually to internationally notable persons following the prize's creation in the will of [Alfred Nobel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alfred_Nobel). According to Nobel's will, the Peace Prize shall be awarded to the person who… shall have done the most or the best work for fraternity between nations, for the abolition or reduction of standing armies and for the holding and promotion of peace congresses.

**8. The Gandhi Peace Prize**: The International Gandhi Peace Prize, named after [Mahatma Gandhi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi), is awarded annually by the [Government of India](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Government_of_India). It is launched as a tribute to the ideals espoused by Gandhi on the occasion of the anniversary of his birth. This is an annual award given to individuals and institutions for their contributions towards social, economic and political transformation through non-violence and other Gandhian methods.

**9. The Peace Corps** is an American volunteer program that was formed March 1, 1961 and is run by the United States government. Since 1961, over 200,000 Americans have joined the Peace Corps and have served in 139 countries. The stated mission of the Peace Corps includes three goals:

1) To help the people of interested countries meet the need for trained men and women. 2) To help people outside the United States to understand American culture. 3) To help Americans understand the cultures of other countries.

The work is generally related to social and economic development. Each program participant, a Peace Corps Volunteer, is an American citizen, typically with a college degree, who works abroad for a period of 24 months after three months of training.

Volunteers work with governments, schools, non-profit organizations, non-government organizations, and entrepreneurs in education, hunger, business, information technology, agriculture, and the environment. After 24 months of time served, volunteers can request an extension of service.

**10. Rotary Peace Initiatives**: Rotary Peace Fellows are leaders promoting national and international cooperation, peace, and the successful resolution of conflict throughout their lives, in their careers, and through service activities. Fellows can earn either a master’s degree in international relations, public administration, sustainable development, peace studies, conflict resolution, or a related field, or a professional development certificate in peace and conflict resolution.

The Rotary Peace Centers award up to 110 Peace Fellowships annually. Peace Fellows are looked upon as leaders who promote national and international cooperation, peace, and successful resolution of conflict throughout their lives, in their careers, and through service activities. They help develop sustainable peace through training in conflict resolution and a holistic approach to international development.

Each year the Center selects and trains Rotary Peace Fellows based on their ability to have a significant, positive impact on world peace and conflict resolution during their future careers. Four outstanding examples of Rotary Peace Fellows:

**Stephanie Borsboom** 2005-07: Stephanie has been able to continue to work and live in the country that has become her second home - Nepal. Her small NGO is still running well and they have now completed the construction of over 30 schools, 50 water supply systems with many more in the pipeline.

**Louisa Dow** 2008-10: Louisa Dow provided policy advice to Habitat for Humanity in Haiti, and worked on projects related to housing, community and capacity development. For Dow, shelter is intimately connected to peace building.

**David LaMotte**: A few years ago, this writer met this impressive individual, David LaMotte, the musician, at a “house concert.” Born on April 25, 1968 in Norfolk, Virginia, David is a singer-songwriter and his work includes original folk music, children’s music and books, lectures and peace-making. He also directs a non-profit corporation he created to aid Guatemalan schools. He serves as a consultant on peace issues for the North Carolina Council of Churches and also serves on the AFSC [Nobel Peace Prize](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nobel_Peace_Prize) Nomination Committee.

In Mr. LaMotte’s words: “Having chosen to make some real sacrifices in order to answer this call, though, and then finding things to be so good here, the words of Rev. Howard Thurman keep coming to me: “Don’t just ask what the world needs, ask what makes you come alive, because what the world needs is more people who have come alive. The power structures on all sides will be reluctant to move toward peace until the civil societies on all sides demand it, which will only happen when we stop believing the extremist rhetoric. That will only happen when we come to know each other.”

**Jeff Whitfield**, our own local Rotary Peace Fellow and leader in this symposium, is an attorney who specializes in conflict resolution. Jeff grew up in Haltom City and attended Haltom High School. He left Texas for the Air Force Academy, from which he graduated as a Distinguished Graduate, and then spent 6 years as an Air Force officer. After his Air Force service, Jeff studied in England as a Fulbright Scholar and Rotary World Peace Fellow. His studies focused on domestic and international conflict resolution. Returning to the United States, he attended law school at The University of Texas and worked his way through school serving as legislative assistant to Texas State Senator Whitmire.

Jeff spent much of 2007 at the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. He worked on the criminal trial of politicians and military members who were responsible for the murders of more than eight thousand Muslim men and boys in Bosnia. After this, Jeff returned to the United States and served with a United States Appeals Court Judge. Following that judicial clerkship, he began work as an attorney in North Texas.

His practice is focused on helping companies and individuals resolve conflicts and crises they face. Jeff continues his public service by volunteering in several areas, including: veterans’ support programs; community groups working on economic development and employment; and the promotion of conflict resolution.

**11. Rotary Humanitarian Projects**: Rotary International is the oldest and largest service organization in the world with more than 34,000 clubs and over 1,200,000 Rotarians who provide thousands of humanitarian projects every year. Included are projects like water filters for entire villages, wheelchairs for those who cannot walk, crisis emergency response, and, ongoing since 1985, immunization for about one-third of the worlds’ population against Polio.

In Rotary lingo, peace is a humanitarian by-product of the synergistic reaction of heart and mind. One initiates the process and the other provides the “how-to” know-how. All Rotary projects impact the world peace process and an untold number of Rotarians develop that inner peace that comes with helping others. The goodwill generated with our projects has not only developed Rotary as an International organization dedicated to help those in need, but has also contributed to positive relationships among people of all nations.

This year we are challenged to provide peace projects. This invokes the question as to whether new projects are needed, or whether a modification of HOW we approach current projects is the intent. With the breadth and scope of previous projects, it appears to this writer that a modified approach that incorporates the message of peace is the intent of this new challenge. If so, how do we do this? How do we transform projects to directly spread the message of peace?

If peace is going to be a key component of projects, we must build positive relationships. Humanitarian efforts need to communicate who we are and why we are involved. Fresh ideas, innovation, and organizational strategies need to be developed by Rotary Clubs to develop a “ground-up” grass root swell of techniques to actively and compellingly communicate how peace is involved in our projects. It is not just about the project; it is also about how we are doing it. Some tips on communicating the peace message with humanitarian projects:

1. Plan peace into the project…tag or label the product provided with a peace message.
2. Ask the product supplier to print a Rotary peace message on the product brochure.
3. Ask the local Rotary Club to pursue a newspaper (or social media) piece on the project.
4. Produce street flyers emphasizing peace and goodwill from members of your Rotary club.
5. Ask the local newspaper to write a series of topics about peace (use this support article).
6. Develop a Press Release to be used as a Public Service Announcement for Radio and TV.

Develop your own club message with each project. For example a paper or metal tag, attached to the product, might have the following information: “In the spirit of peace and goodwill, this (product) is provided by the members of the Fort Worth, Texas USA Rotary Club.” The first paragraph in this article could be a good start for a press release, perhaps followed with details like “Next week, members of the Rotary club from Fort Worth, Texas USA are on a mission to spread the spirit of peace and goodwill by providing wheelchairs for many who have never had the capability of mobility that many take for granted.”

Rotary has a motto, “Service Above Self” and has established six major areas of service, each embodying the spirit of peace. These areas are: Peace and conflict prevention/resolution; Disease prevention and treatment; Water and sanitation; Maternal and child health; Basic education and literacy; Economic and community development. Each focus area impacts peace in a meaningful way. Rotary is also very active with youth and in training future leaders through hands-on seminars and events.

Since 1985, the flagship program of Rotary, “End Polio Now,” in collaboration with other national and international alliances, has resulted in the reduction of this totally incapacitating disease from about one thousand cases a day worldwide to current day level of less than one case per day. I can only imagine how sweet the spirit of peace must be that fills the hearts of those volunteers administering the life altering polio drops. Now, with increased philanthropic support from strategic partners like the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, together we are “this close”…within 1% of totally eliminating polio throughout the planet!

The ability to inspire other people through our work is one of Rotary’s greatest assets. When we share a story about our experiences, we become peace-builders by breaking down barriers and building friendships.

**12. Peace, Let It Begin with Me**: **21 Voices of the New Peace Movement**: In this book, it is suggested that in addition to external aspects of peace, there is also an aspect of peace that begins within individuals and that this “inner state of peace” goes beyond basic needs of food, clothing, and shelter.

When one reads interviews in the book (also highlighted in the PP guide), you find peace visionaries to be excellent communicators. There is a focus on mental components that suggest peace within the individual is the starting point and the ultimate foundation for world peace, albeit through organizational, national, and international world peace projects.

With the danger of over-simplification of developing peace within oneself and with others, there are key words that stand out and fill the mind with positive, action oriented thoughts. These words serve to provide excellent positioning of what peace involves at the personal and the organization level.

They are words like non-judgmental, inspired action, forgiving, mindset, awareness, attitude, passion, personal well being, mutual understanding and acceptance. These peace terms help embellish a peaceful relationship needed between both the giver and receiver of goodwill.

There are those who incorrectly assume wealth is the only path to peace. Evidence has proven that the desire for wealth, or the envy of those who have wealth, can result in a mental state that may not be conducive to peace within. Hopefully without being presumptuous, here are a few thoughts suggested with the experts in the book Peace, Let It Begin With Me:

1. Enjoy life in whatever way you can. This can be as simple as observing the beauty of a sunrise or sunset. Take a picture and send it to others with a positive thought.
2. Be thankful for those things that are important. Things like good health, family, friends, and the capacity to serve others. Everyone has something to be thankful for.
3. Take a walk. Give the mind the opportunity to slow down, to think, and to meditate.
4. Read, both for enjoyment and for knowledge (Learn about peace).
5. Practice observing the good that is going on around us daily…locally and internationally.
6. Do something nice for someone you do not know well.
7. Think about what peace means to you, and how you can contribute to world peace.
8. Set the example for peace where-ever you may be.

Peace-building may start with Rotary projects and goodwill, but it does not end there. Peace-building is like life, it is a work-in-progress process and additional thought from each club is needed to link the internal aspect of peace to the external aspect of projects. Peace is enhanced when there is a deliberate mental mindset within the individual, and then shared among others. In addition to Rotary’s six avenues of service, peace-building can start with our interaction with others…perhaps a simple acknowledgment…a handshake or perhaps a hug, or even holding a door open for someone. Once the process is in auto-pilot, a signal reaches the heart and great things happen.

 **13. World Peace Goal**: World peace may be defined as that final destination point at which all nations share the message that reflects peace within people of their respective countries. As peace is formally pursued through Rotary service projects and goodwill, here are a few suggestions for clubs or for organizations to enhance peace-building projects:

1. Clearly define peace in respect to the planning process, and to planned projects.
2. Develop and implement a sustainable three-year club plan (see Presidential Citation)
3. Make a short “to do” list and don’t start with the problem, start with the solution.
4. Know the cultural boundaries of personal interaction, and simplify communication.
5. Link the peace-building process to activities that provide joy, happiness, and contentment.
6. Collaborate, form alliances, and cooperate with other clubs and organizations that have peace related projects.
7. Develop workshops to educate and prepare leaders for the peace-building process.
8. Make peace-building a key part of the club or organization culture…identify the word peace and the peace concept within club projects.
9. Select, train and utilize leaders who have demonstrated inner peace.
10. Ask others to join Rotary and share the peaceful spirit that exists among Rotarians.

**14. Conclusion**: Peace is a broad complex concept involving many variables. There are those who believe that the starting point is an educational process that address personal factors, then follows up with the external, project related humanitarian needs. Rotary projects are primarily tangible efforts that embed intangible variables of peace. This year the presidential citation appears to be an attempt to focus on the concept of peace as a key component that accompanies the primary project objective.

The resolution of conflict addresses current and future needs of individuals, and is a key element of peace-building….it is what we as Rotarians do. It appears that the missing link to connect our projects with peace is how we communicate peace as a by-product of our projects. In terms of peace-building, it would appear the HOW is just as important as WHAT the project is. In essence, a more focused effort is needed to communicate the spirit of peace from Rotary projects and from volunteers across the globe.

How can the communication of a peace message be addressed? One approach might be to attach a peace message to (wheel chairs) and also include that message in the wheelchair literature. This message could also be provided to the local media to further spread the word of peace…maybe something like “In an effort to improve the quality of life and promote the spirit of peace among all people, this (wheel chair, water well, water filter, etc) is provided by members of the Rotary Club of Fort Worth, Texas USA.”

One peace strategy to consider could be to identify humanitarian projects with a logo or peaceful name and develop a secondary project objective of obtaining local public media support to reinforce the cause of peace that accompanies the project objective.

Hopefully, this project has been helpful in identifying the missing link that leaves the receiver of tangible physical products with the spirit of peace and goodwill that may have started the entire project. Several workshops, as part of this peace project, will focus on additional methods that communicate the peace and goodwill involved with Rotary humanitarian efforts.

By enabling conflict resolution with Rotary projects that address basic humanitarian needs, the quality of many lives are improved, and that is part of the peace process. The project recipients should know the effort stems from the goodwill of Rotarians, and is not some government work that is taken for granted.

This project has helped increase my awareness of peace, and has provided better insight as to why the idealistic goal of World Peace, when defined to encompass every individual in the world, will be extremely difficult to accomplish; however, this should not deter us, as individuals or as an organization, from being a leader in the peace-building process.

In the book, Let It Begin With Me: 21 Voices of the Peace Movement, it is suggested there exists a link between individual inner peace and the more easily understood economic, humanitarian, and social issues related to world peace. The PowerPoint guide that supplements this article identifies strategies from many well known peace-builders and provides their website addresses for additional sources of information.

The jury is out, so to speak, as to whether Rotary as a non-political, non-profit organization can, or should attempt to bridge this link. Achieving world peace may or may not be a realistic goal of any organization but the process of building and working toward world peace, one individual at a time, is a very worthwhile objective. This will mean that we as Rotarians must first believe in world peace, then prepare for peace, and finally cultivate peace.

**15. Hope for the Future**: With the current state of conflict, the search to find peace has never been more important. There is no question the vast majority of people among all nations want peace. And, with the brainpower, money, and effort that have been invested in understanding peace, one would think the world would now be a more peaceful place.

Enormous goodwill has been, and will continue to be generated with projects from Rotary clubs that address local, community, and world needs. Although the seed of peace is embedded within the spirit of goodwill from involved Rotarians, a focused message of peace could enhance our humanitarian efforts. In addition, follow-up communication to our projects would provide a sustained effort and message of peace.

The point is that it is important for each of us to become active in the peace-building process, and now is the time to embrace President Tanaka’s challenge. With Rotarians working shoulder to shoulder in over 200 countries, our projects may become a stepping stone to help nations improve their peace-building process. This possibility springs forth hope that when individuals, world class organizations, and governments of all nations actively communicate the importance of living in harmony, there will be progress toward world peace.

**END**: Note: For a Power Point guide and electronic copy of this article for your club forum please contact the District newsletter or e-mail your request to davidwhurt@sbcglobal.net.