

April 2019



**Would you be pleased if this were the school for your children or grandchildren?
What will it take to encourage you and your Club to take an active interest in literacy?**

Rotary District 5550 Emphasizes Literacy

Most of the 47 Rotary Clubs in Rotary District 5550 are involved in literacy projects.

Rotary District 5550 covers a vast geographical area, covering northwest Ontario, all of Manitoba and most of Saskatchewan. Most of the 47 Rotary Clubs, particularly in the smaller cities and rural areas, have developed tailor-made literacy programs to suit the needs of their communities and are also involved with Rotary Youth programs, hosting long-term Rotary Youth Exchange students, sponsoring local students to attend both the junior and senior RYLA

(Rotary Youth Leadership Award) camps, sending teams to participate in MUNA (Model United Nations Assembly) in Winnipeg and sponsoring students to attend the various Rotary Adventures programs.

Many clubs award scholarships to local high-school graduates for post-secondary education and are involved with music recitals and/or art projects.

Adventures Programs

Four of the Rotary Clubs in District 5550 have developed Rotary Adventures Programs which enhance literacy and provide a broader understanding of



annually, meeting with the Minister of Education, the Canadian Ambassador, local Rotarians and the many partners who help to leverage the dollars raised.

Since 1999, the Canadian Ripple Effect Program has built or refurbished over 85 schools, awarded over 550 middle school and high school scholarships, directly benefitted over 25,000 students and invested over \$3 million in education in Guatemala.

Rotary International Global Grants

Four Rotary District 5550 clubs have sponsored Ambassadorial Scholarships; and one applicant received a Rotary Peace Fellowship in 2017–2018. In addition, five Global Grant projects relative to education have been completed, while nine more have been approved and are underway.

Rotary International District Grants

During 2017–2018, eighteen clubs received a District Grant to send a student to the Rotary Youth Leadership Award (RYLA) camp at Clear Lake, MB. Eight clubs received a District Grant to assist with the cost to the clubs of their inbound long-term Rotary Youth Exchange student attending the mandatory weekend activities.

A further six clubs received Literacy-related Project Grants, ranging from a new school cafeteria (that is, a large room functioning as a cafeteria and an auditorium), a Literacy Book Award, Books for Babes, Family Literacy Bags, Building Capacity for Cree Language Literacy (- see p. 3) and the Summer Reading Program. While another seventeen Rotary clubs in District 5550 received funds for scholarships for post-secondary education.

Above: An excited group of teenagers and their coaches ready to embark on Adventures in Agriculture.

life's options and opportunities.

More Collaboration between Rotary Clubs

There has been increasing cooperation and support for neighboring Rotary Clubs to work in partnership. For example, the Rotary Clubs of Dryden, Kenora and Sioux Lookout, all in Ontario, have developed the Northern Home Reading Program project.

Some of the smaller District 5550 Rotary clubs piggy-back with larger Rotary clubs' literacy projects and even with large clubs in other districts.

The Ripple Effect Program

The Rotary Club of Winnipeg West was the founder and architect of the Ripple Effect Program, starting in 1999, a basic education and literacy program in Guatemala. It began with a program of building and renewing primary school infrastructure, including supplies and computers. A key to enhancing literacy is the liaison with the Guatemalan Ministry of Education which has committed to providing qualified teachers in every school that was built or funded by the Ripple Effect Program.

The Rotary Riders' Charity Motorcycle Ride has become an annual event to raise funds for the Ripple Effect Program. The Ripple Effect Scholarship Fund encourages Guatemalan students to attend middle school and high school. A Teachers' Scholarship Program was started in 2015 and four Guatemalan teachers graduated with a degree in 2017. Four scholarships were awarded in 2018, enabling four young women to enter university.

Members of the Canadian Ripple Effect Committee and supporting Rotarians tour projects in Guatemala





Left: The statement “May peace prevail on Earth” on the Peace Pole in Manitoba’s Rotary Park is in three languages: English, French and Cree.

Building Capacity for Cree Language Literacy is an initiative of the Rotary Club of Saskatoon Nutana.

As part of the Residential Schools' Settlement, reconciliation efforts are being made to restore the Cree culture and language to the First Nations people.

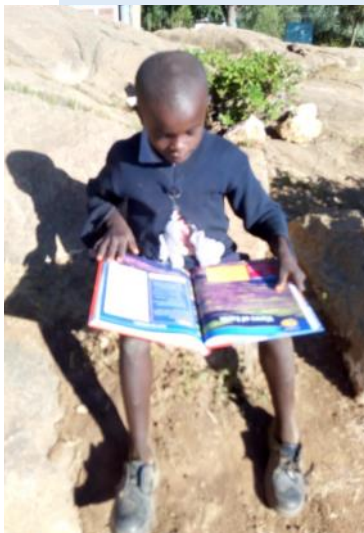
At a smudging ceremony, one elder told how their non-Indigenous teachers at Scott Collegiate High School were attending the First Nations University of Canada to learn Cree, in their own time and at their own expense, so that they could teach it

as part of the curriculum. **He stated, "That is true reconciliation."**

The annual drop-out rate in this inner-city high school used to be around 40% but thanks to the fine efforts of the staff, it is now much lower.



Literacy advocacy in Kenya through IHOPEE



IHOPEE (International Health Operations Patients Education and Empowerment Inc.) is a non-profit organization established to educate, empower and equip youth, women and children in rural parts of East Africa.

Their main goal is to reach individuals and empower them

to take charge of their health and education and to recognise their talents through leadership and mentoring. They develop sustainable economic projects that are focused on eradicating chronic malnutrition, hunger and on developing life skills.

The programs include partnerships, sending out ambassadors to raise social awareness at local and global levels. Medical health mission camps are held to create awareness and relief to the vulnerable communities.

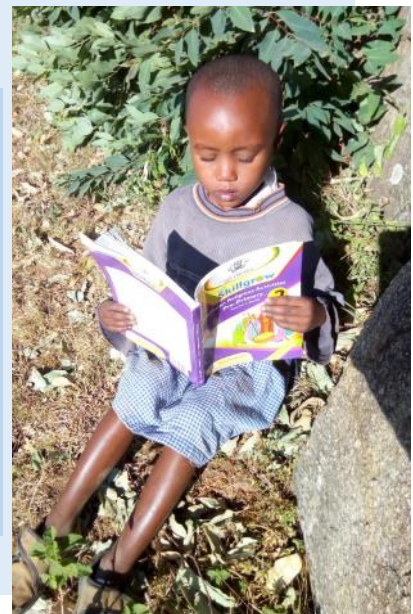
IHOPEE’s Mission Statement:
To provide a positive impact by organizing community outreach resources and supporting programs that help educate, inspire and empower members of our community.

To maximize their impact on current efforts, IHOPEE seeks to collaborate with friends as well as corporate organizations as they strive towards transforming lives in developing nations.

Donations are desperately needed even though they hold fundraising events in order to provide immediate relief and assistance to those who are suffering.

The Rotary Club of FishHawk-Riverview in Florida has just generously donated funds for the shipping of books to Kenya to help create a conducive environment for children to enjoy reading and improve the literacy skills.

IHOPEE’s Women’s focus program is committed and determined to push for opportunities for women by promoting gender equality and thereby providing unparalleled access to resources and opportunities in various fields in life.





Notes from LitRAG Chairman John

Greetings. With the International Convention to begin on June 1 in Hamburg, I wish to share a few thoughts.

Firstly, we often think that all new activities and support for older ones need money. Please be proud and recognize that your personal effort, time and skills given in supporting service activities are worth a great deal and highly valued.

Projects should not be measured by how much money is spent, but by how much progress and peace takes place. Personal human effort is valuable.

We do need money. Sometimes it's critical equipment. In Rotary we think of The Rotary Foundation first, then we often go to our own Rotary Club and even our own pocket! Please consider seeking out independent philanthropists. There are charities and organizations also committed to doing good in the world. Hollywood film star Dolly Parton is one example, however, there are most likely key people in your region, in your local neighbourhood who, if approached, may be very willing to help.

Try collecting donors. Donors to your program can be more powerful than just the money content. A donor can be an advocate and lend their voice to your work – they could become an advocate to enhance the goals you hold dear.

Sometimes it is indeed worth the time to stop, think and collect in your mind some potential people whom you might know who just might be encouraged (with a good story) to join your quest for a better world – in our case, through increased literacy and basic education skills.

Anne Frank said, "No one has ever become poor by giving."

Lastly, there is the Hamburg Convention. We will have an attractive and useful booth and a break-out session.

- ◆ If you are attending, please come by the booth and chat with VC Caroline Johnson or myself. I look forward to meeting you and sharing ideas.
- ◆ We do need support for an hour or two of your time – please support us.
- ◆ The break-out will have a clear focus on the vital needs of the education of girls. I believe it will be well worth attending – please enrol early as there are only about 300 places.
- ◆ If you are not actually attending, please seek out those people who will be going to Hamburg and work hard on them to both visit the LitRAG Booth and to enrol/attend the break-out session.

Thank you.

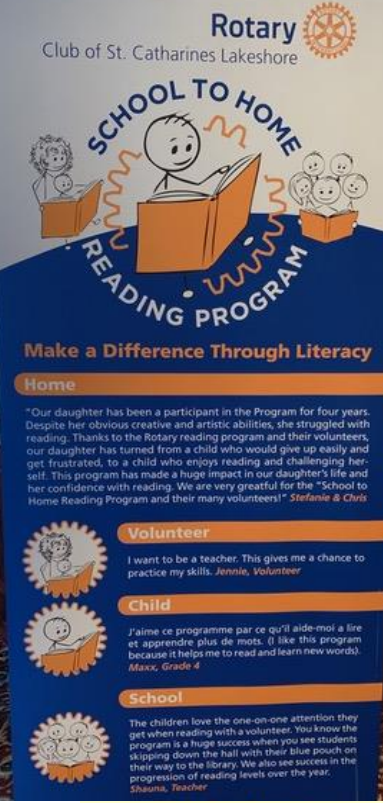
John Thorne

Chairman, Literacy Rotarian Action Group

Stuck for ideas about how to include literacy in your project?

Please email us for past copies of the LitRAG newsletter for a range of ideas and approaches, literacy research achievements, literacy handouts for parents and teachers, and for encouraging and heartening stories.

Contact John Thorne or Carolyn Johnson:
info@litrag.org



Investing in Literacy

The Rotary Club of St. Catharines Lakeshore's Literacy Program is in its 7th year in local elementary schools throughout St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada.

How does it work?

The Club purchases reading books to suit various reading levels; recruits volunteers; and oversees the entire Program which is monitored and accountable. Volunteers are recruited from both Niagara College and Brock University – where mature students mentor younger students.

Participating students from Grades 1 – 4 are chosen by their teachers who have determined that certain students need additional reading assistance. The teacher offers one-on-one attention where possible, thereby raising the student's literacy levels, encouraging family involvement and the joy of reading.

The volunteers work together on a certain day and time between 1.5 – 2 hours. The participating students are given suitable books to read individually to the volunteers for 15 minutes once a week.

Each session the volunteer encourages and critiques in writing the child's progress which helps both the teachers and families identify any problem areas. The student then takes the book home to read to their family, brings the book back to school and the process repeats over a three-month period.

In June, the Rotary Club awards a girl and boy in each school with a 'Most Improved Award' during an Assembly presentation. The two students each receive a \$50 gift certificate to a book shop, a Rotary medalion & their name inscribed onto a Rotary wall plaque.

For further information, contact: Linda Landry, Co-Chair of Literacy, The Rotary Club of St. Catharines Lakeshore Email: service@lindalandry.ca Cell phone: 905-321-0506



LitRAG Display

**Rotary International Convention, Hamburg
1–5 June 2019**

Are you going to the 2019 Hamburg Convention?

Be involved with LitRAG through the several opportunities we have planned!

Please volunteer to be on the LitRAG booth – it's a great way to meet other like-minded Rotarians; to learn about different projects in other Districts and countries; and to promote and find partners for your projects!

A sign-up list will be shared among all LitRAG members. Please consider signing up for a two-hour shift and help promote literacy projects and LitRAG!

Contact John Thorne or Carolyn Johnson:
info@litrag.org

LitRAG Office-Bearers

LitRAG Executive Committee:

- Chair: John Thorne, PRID (Australia)
- Vice-Chair: Carolyn Johnson, PDG (USA)
- Secretary: Courtney Doldron, Pres. (Canada)
- Treasurer: Harvey Baxter, Rotarian (USA)

LitRAG Directors:

- Rodolfo Bianchi, PDG (Guatemala)
- Sylvia Byers, PDG (Australia)
- Chebab Elawar, PDG (USA)
- David Fowler, Past President RIBI (England)
- Shekhar Mehta, PRID (India)
- Anand Seth, Rotarian (USA)
- Courtney Doldron, Rotarian (Canada)

LitRAG Advisors to the Board:

- Bill Boyd, Past RI President (New Zealand)
- Noraseth Pathmanand, PRID (Thailand)
- William Stumbaugh, Rotarian (Ecuador)

Website: www.litrag.org

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Reading.Rotary/>

Contact John Thorne or Carolyn Johnson:
info@litrag.org

The Literacy Rotarian Action Group is a recognised Rotarian Action Group and operates in accordance with Rotary International Policy but is not an agency of or controlled by Rotary International. Note: Rotarian Action Groups are a resource to Rotary clubs and districts in their speciality but are not an agency of RI and may not act on behalf of RI as part of all agreements.