

October 2018



The **World Medical Journal** is the official publication of The World Medical Association (which is the international and independent confederation of professional medical associations, representing more than 10 million physicians worldwide). This journal has just published a phenomenal tribute to Speaking Books in an article titled **Multi-Media Educational Tool Created to Help Children**

### **Cope with Cancer.**

The author states that "Speaking Books® has just launched a brand new book, *Children Coping with Cancer*, created for children in paediatric oncology wards in the USA. Written in English and Spanish, this groundbreaking book was developed with the input and assistance from a number of paediatric oncologists ... and supported by the **Rotary Club of Hilton Head.**"

**Together with Pfizer and Rotary clubs in the USA, this book will be distributed in all children's cancer centres and hospitals free of charge.**

Cade Kriscunas (11) and Efrain Tinoco (10) are the two narrators of the book and are members of The Rotary Club of Hilton Head's 'Early Act Programme' for young Rotarians. Their narration delivers a message of hope and courage to children afflicted with cancer. With a push of a button, children can listen to a boy, called David, telling his story; they can learn about cancer; and they can be entertained and distracted.

David explains that he had cancer too and says, "I know you might be scared or in pain now." He explains what cancer is and gives some suggestions about how to cope. David emphasizes that cancer is an illness and that "You cannot make anyone else sick. You did not get cancer because you were naughty or because you did something wrong."

To date, Speaking Books® has created books in more than 35 languages for distribution in over 30 countries world wide.

For anyone wishing to know more about this initiative and in particular:

- Rotary Clubs wanting to help with distribution to their local Children's Cancer Centers
- Children's Cancer Centers needing Speaking Books® for their pediatric patients or able to provide support or additional funding
- Major funders looking to support this initiative either with additional funding to reach thousands more children for the Speaking Book® currently in production or to invest in a new version for a developing country or community.

Please contact: Brian Julius (USA) at [bj@speakingbooks.com](mailto:bj@speakingbooks.com) or phone: 1-843-298-1017

South Africa Office: +27 11 234 4837

Email: [info@speakingbooks.com](mailto:info@speakingbooks.com)



**If you truly want to change the world, you begin by educating the children.**

That is the philosophy behind the ARES Project. ARES is an acronym for the African Ruggedized Education System and a solution for the problem of education in rural communities with minimal resources.

Remote rural schools often have limited access to books, paper and writing materials, as well as intermittent power and no internet access.

In 2011, **Mark Knittel, a Rotarian from Bellingham, Washington**, took part in an Afrotech/Rotary service project in Kenya by installing a computer lab in a community library. Learning about the problems with intermittent power, power surges, dust, heat and theft, Mark was determined to find a better way to provide a computer-enhanced education model.

Mark created a small server that would be rugged to deal with the issues. That prototype was used in the first Kenya test project in 2015. The case is designed to prevent dust intake, while the components minimize heat issues. The ARES server can be charged overnight and will run on a battery - so that if the school loses power, the system still operates.

**Teachers could literally hold a class under a tree in the middle of a field.**

Working with other charitable groups which create digital educational resources, Mark stored educational data on a solid state hard drive so that ARES operates like an internet in a box.

ARES has educational resources from pre-school to post-grad, including thousands of video tutorials and books, the entire Khan Academy

curriculum, STEM resources, over 300 TED Talks and the massive educational Wikipedia library.

ARES also has agricultural guides and medical reference material to serve as a resource for the entire community.

Students access ARES through basic, inexpensive laptops, such as Chrome-books, as well as through existing school computer labs, tablets, smartphones and any other wireless device. Up to 50 wireless devices can connect to the ARES server at a time, with each user able to access different resources on the server.

But technology is only part of the solution. The ARES Project also provides training for teachers on how to use and to teach using the ARES materials. Many teachers use only rote memorization and repetition due to the lack of available resources.

**In the January 2017 pilot project, the ARES system was provided to a school that ranked towards the bottom of Kenya's approximately 2,600 secondary schools. At the end of the next quarter, that remote rural school was in the top 30.**

Through the ARES Project, rural students have as much - or more - access to education as students in urban schools.

Those pilot projects have prepared us for the next stage using a global grant.

**Four local Rotary clubs in BC and Washington (Bellingham, Langley Central, Chilliwack Fraser and North Delta)** have each donated \$5,000 USD which, with matching grants from Rotary and the Government of Canada, will provide funding of over \$129,000.

**ARES is a revolution in education for rural communities anywhere in the world.**

For more information on the ARES Project, visit the ARES website at <http://www.ares.education>





## Reading for life

Members may be interested to learn that the Chairman, PRID John Thorne, and Vice Chair, PDG Carolyn Johnson, speak about once every three weeks by phone to plan and share the latest information about your Literacy Rotarian Action Group.

### Here are some updates from recent meetings:

- We have applied to have a booth and a break-out room at the next **Rotary Convention** which will be in Hamburg, Germany in early June 2019. Please plan to come.
- Currently we are moving the administration of the LitRAG **web page** from Thailand to the USA. Hong Thong Narongchai has kept the page tirelessly since inception and also kept the list of members. This has been in his own time and we fully appreciate the energy he has given.
- Recently LitRAG advertised two **Literacy Awards** (of US \$500 each) for members and at closing we had 12 applications. We are all delighted at the response. In addition to the applications, the awards generated quite some interactive communication, which we encourage.
- A model **Memorandum of Understanding** to be used between LitRAG and similar groups, within and outside Rotary, has been devised. This will be used to recognise friendly partnerships that maybe share resources to extend benefits in early learning and basic education at all ages.
- When the web page has been revised, there will be a box" link especially for **membership renewals**.
- We are particularly keen for you to be proactive within your home Club and District to always be creative with 'other' worthwhile projects that may give a better outcome with **an education or literacy component** - projects around water supply, gardens, school toilets, unemployed youths, those in jail (men and women) are the activities that immediately come to mind.

### Please feel free to contact us directly at any time:

- ◆ **John Thorne** ([thorne.hobart@gmail.com](mailto:thorne.hobart@gmail.com)) and
- ◆ **Carolyn Johnson** ([cfj2@icloud.com](mailto:cfj2@icloud.com))

## News from LitRAG Administration

Members may be interested to learn that the Chairman, PRID John Thorne, and Vice Chair, PDG Carolyn Johnson, speak about once every three

## LitRAG Awards 2018 – Contributors

In the left-hand column, we mentioned that there were 12 nominations for the awards. The following is the briefest summary of each nomination:



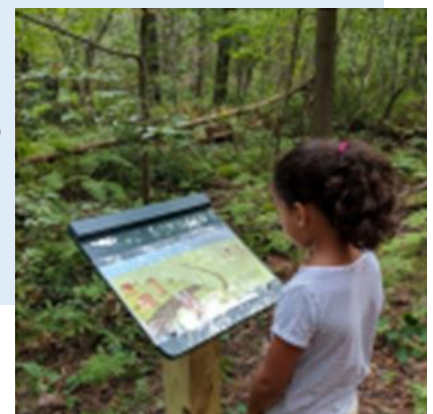
1. **Bahari, Mombasa, Kenya** - Rotaractors assembled at the Bamburi Primary School outside the Women and Girls Empowerment Organization Library. (- see above) This was a joint program between Rotaractors, Rotarians and teachers. The day started with introductions/opening remarks followed by reading and storytelling where the school children and Rotaractors read different stories in both Kiswahili and English. Then a game called *Ubongo* was played in groups facilitated by Rotaractors while a spelling bee was conducted by guest teachers and Rotaractors. The interaction was wonderful for both children and adults.  
Contact: Nelly Wanjiru [nellywanjiru840@gmail.com](mailto:nellywanjiru840@gmail.com)

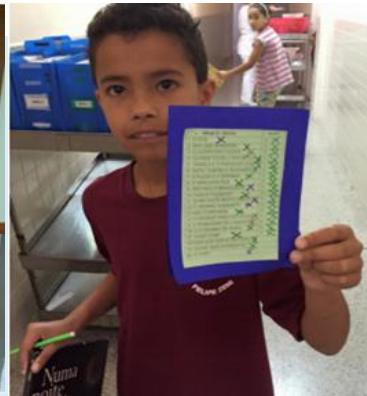


2. **South Berwick-Eliot Rotary Club, Maine, USA.** Rotarians from this club created/ supported a brochure to illustrate a delightful walk in a park. Story boards have been erected and children (and adults) are encouraged to "take a hike" and explore the park. The stories

change with each season and the participants combine literacy with the environment and map reading.

Contact: Helen Goranson [heleng@bondgarden.net](mailto:heleng@bondgarden.net)





3. **Rotary Club of Curitiba Oeste, Brazil** has implemented in 2014 a Pilot Project of Reading Line with 223 students who were considered to be 'low performing' in reading by the local education department. It is a "didactic approach" which aims to develop the habit of comprehension of texts for elementary students from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 5<sup>th</sup> year at school. (- see above) The early work was indeed a success and the method has been introduced into 21 more schools. This Rotary Club has partnered with a professor who instigated the concepts. Contact: Claudia [claudiannatividade@gmail.com](mailto:claudiannatividade@gmail.com)

4. **Rotary Club of St Catherine's Lakeshore, Ontario, Canada.** This club, has over many years, given a clear focus to reading. There is outreach to the community and to other Rotary clubs. A major part of the model (which has a manual) has teachers selecting 15 to 20 students. Their reading is tracked and volunteers attend and listen individually for at least 15 minutes. Each child is encouraged, critiqued and their progress rewarded. Each student takes a book home to read to their family and the process repeats. Careful recording of progress is made. In June, children are honoured and names are placed on a school plaque. A US\$50 gift certificate is given to each school by a book outlet. About US\$54,000 has been donated to the schools while 175 volunteers have given 6240 hours to 440 children. Contact: Linda Landry [service@lindarjohn.com](mailto:service@lindarjohn.com)

knowledge and history of the different local peoples of the State of Hidalgo. This club has initiated the first stage - that means teaching the indigenous language to all club members and other community leaders in weekly sessions of 40 minutes. That is indeed personal commitment. Contact: President: [rotaractmetropolitanotulancigo@hotmail.com](mailto:rotaractmetropolitanotulancigo@hotmail.com)



6. **Rotaract Club of Semanggi, Jakarta, Indonesia.** Here is a Rotaract club that means business! Knowing that September is recognised by UNESCO as specially devoted to

literacy and also aware that Indonesia, in 2016, was ranked the second worst among 61 most literate nations, they intended to make a significant difference to some children. On 8 September, the club gathered a large group of 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students from the Petamburan Elementary School (- see below) and had three hours of "literary fun". There was "Pass the Word", "Fill the Blanks" and "Category Words". Of course, there was good fun and mixing with the spirited Rotaractors. Contact: Marsella Eka [marsella\\_eka93@yahoo.com](mailto:marsella_eka93@yahoo.com)



7. **Rotary Club of Winder (BBP), D. 6910, USA.** Every Monday at the Barrow County Health Department there was chaos. Maybe 100 adults and children visiting - the program was designed for low-income families. So there was breast-feeding, pregnant women, children running and more - all waiting to see professionals ... also fathers, siblings, caregivers. The TV was on in a corner between nutrition classes! Several Rotarians saw an opportunity for service. They



5. **Rotaract Club of Tulancingo Metro, Mexico.** This club of young leaders of Hidalgo in Mexico began a literacy program for "language rescue" and we applaud them for it. The indigenous language is "Nahuatl". The goal is to promote the language, its recognition and value as a cultural legacy. The words carry a set of

formed (with some others) the Barrow Book Partnership (BBP). The goal of the BBP is to provide books and assist families in providing nurturing, language-enriched environments during the crucial first five years of life. Instead of watching TV, the families are now treated to storytelling and literacy information by the volunteers. They are also given the opportunity to sign up for a free public library card and the children are given free age-appropriate books to take home.



Contact: Beth McIntyre [bmcintyre@prlib.org](mailto:bmcintyre@prlib.org)

8. **Rotary Club of Zanesville, D. 6690, USA.** The Rotary Club of Zanesville Daybreak celebrated International day of Peace and Literacy month with a week of activities in the Zanesville and Muskingum County community. A key component of the peace project was promoting a literacy activity. The purpose was to build partnerships with area schools and organizations to foster literacy and peace in the community.

The book, *Andy and Elmer's Apple Dumping Adventures*, was chosen because it does a wonderful job of introducing the **Rotary Four Way Test** to students.

Maysville Local, West Muskingum Local and Zanesville City Schools opened their doors for Rotarians to distribute 29 readers and 495 activity books to their second graders on September 21 & 26, 2018. Volunteers were recruited to be readers and activity leaders. 13 Rotarians from the Peace Committee and their Interact Student Advisor, 18 member Rotarians and 19 Interact students read to our students. The reception received was phenomenal. Everyone had a great day!

Contact: Janet Stewart [jancys@columbus.rr.com](mailto:jancys@columbus.rr.com)

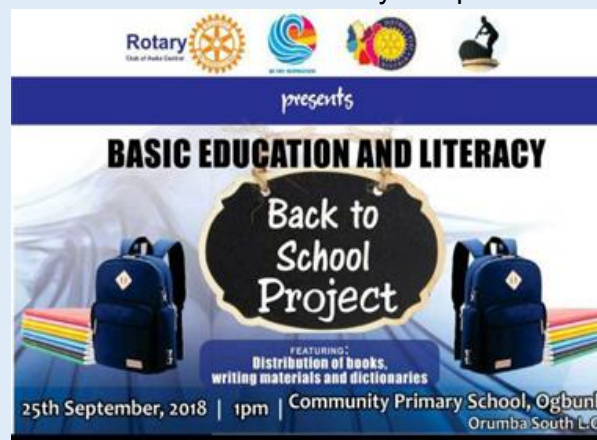
9. **Rotary Club of Ponta Grossa Oeste, Brazil.** This year the Rotary club promoted the "Edmundo Schwab" Poems Competition in partnership with Prof. Faris Michaelle. The competition audience were students in 6<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> grades in the local municipal schools. The inspiring aim was to encourage reading and writing as well as stimulating poetic writing and, hopefully, the discovery of new literary skills. A theme was chosen around the word 'solidarity'. An extensive planning proceeded

in the club & community. In conclusion, 62 poems were submitted and all were wonderful! However, in the end, six were given special recognition. All children explored the key word of *solidarity* especially as it applied to their communities. The Rotarians learned a lot about the children and their abilities as well. (- see photos above and below)

Contact: Alana Berti [alanaberti52@gmail.com](mailto:alanaberti52@gmail.com)



10. **Rotary Club of Awka Central, Anambra, Nigeria.** The Rotary club celebrated Basic Education and Literacy Month by taking action in their community. There were two major projects: a 'Back to School' and an essay competition.



However, the club members also contributed greatly by donating reading and similar material to several local school. 300 pupils who received supplies in form of dictionaries, exercise books, writing materials and storybooks. The essay writing was popular as the title was "How I spent my last holiday". There were 62 submissions and the variety of writing and holidays was a delight.

Contact: Joan Emegoakor [joanolachi@yahoo.com](mailto:joanolachi@yahoo.com)

**Rotary Club Of Uyo**  
District 9142, Nigeria

**EGG POWER: EAT BETTER. LEARN BETTER.**  
PROPER NUTRITION:  
KEY TO BRAIN DEVELOPMENT & LEARNING

**AKENAI**

BASIC EDUCATION AND LITERACY PROJECT.  
AKWA IBOM EGG NUTRITION AWARENESS INITIATIVE (AKENAI)

*Practical Demonstration of Affordable Egg Meals*

DATE: FRIDAY 5TH OCTOBER, 2018  
TIME: 10:00 AM PROMPT

**O.I.C. GROUP SCHOOL,**  
HONG UNOT IYAM, ITO L.G.A.,  
ALONG IKOT EKPENE ROAD.

The SuperReader Program was quite a hit for children and adults where participants were encouraged to read at least one book per month. Planning is underway for 2019 to repeat successful activities from this year and add such events as Reading in the Park (this year they had Reading in the Mall). The club members felt empowered as they were indeed a community catalyst for good. Contact: PDG Felix Stubbs [felixstubbs@gmail.com](mailto:felixstubbs@gmail.com)



11. **Rotary Club of Uyo, D. 9142, Nigeria.** The Rotary Club, in collaboration with the Akwa Ibom Egg Nutrition Awareness Initiative (AKENAI), unveiled a novel project to educate teachers, parents, children and guests on the preparation of affordable egg meals; rich in protein and beneficial for optimal brain function - especially in growing children. A background to this is that there has been a long tradition in folklore that children who eat eggs will become thieves!

There was a lecture by Dr U.A. Inyang, an AKENAI Resource Person, who spoke in English and Ibibio, followed by a practical demonstration of the preparation of five affordable egg meals. There was a very lively Question and Answer session and one of the five different dishes demonstrated, was sampled by all. The highlight of the day was when over 100 pupils, teachers and parents went home with a pack of six eggs each, to practice what they had learned. Exercise books, pencils, pens, sharpeners, erasers and rulers were distributed to pupils. The link with literacy was the bilingual lectures and the charts used as well as showing that children can indeed participate in 'grown-up' sessions about important issues.

Contact: Eka Etuk [ekastica@yahoo.com](mailto:ekastica@yahoo.com)

12. **Rotary Club of Nassau Sunrise, D. 7020, Bahamas.** This year the Rotary club designed several activities aimed at improving the literacy experiences of children and adults in the general community. The topics covered: the effect of literacy on crime, the importance of literacy in the education system, literacy challenges at university level and literacy and skills development at the local junior high school. The Rotarians were quite excited that they could initiate these topics in the community and were intent on making the exercise full of fun while being engaging.

## LitRAG Office-Bearers

### LitRAG Executive Committee:

- Chair: John Thorne, PRID (Australia)
- Vice-Chair: Carolyn Johnson, PDG (USA)
- Secretary: (position vacant)
- 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](http://www.litrag.org)

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

Contact John Thorne or Carolyn Johnson:  
[info@litrag.org](mailto: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.