

District Governor Message December 2020



My Fellow Rotarians, Rotaractors and Interactors, friends and all those who have taken the time to read this month's message, Maggie joins me in wishing you many blessings as we approach the end of the first half of this Rotary year. Maggie and I have much to give thanks for as 2020 draws to a close and we will do so quietly this year as we observe the safety protocols that will keep us

all as safe as possible.

There is no doubt that this will go down in history as a Rotary year with a difference! Hold fast to your Rotary family, embrace them (virtually) and reach out to support each other. We all need support now as this pandemic is biting deeper into our psyche. Some of our family may become lonely due to separation. Be sensitive, be observant and above all, be kind my family – kindness is transformational. Our members are our greatest asset, so let us not lose a single member because they felt neglected, or became disenchanted, or because of financial strain brought on by COVID-19.

I have completed my club visits and I am truly humbled by the generosity of spirit of our Rotarians. I have formed bonds with so many outstanding humanitarians, that I could never have dreamed possible through the virtual platform that has become a substantial part of my Rotary life. Maggie and I have been embraced by many Rotarians and made to feel so incredibly special. I want you all to know that I will never forget you and will always cherish your friendship, support, and advice. I am so proud of our District as I have seen the stuff that our members are made of. There is quiet resilience as we adapt and carry out projects and take care of the less fortunate. We are raising funds in innovative ways and we have dug deep and focused on our core values.

Membership in the District has grown by over 2% or 54 members since the commencement of the year. Of note: the Creation of the Satellite Club of Diego Martin -14 members, the Charter of the RC Garden City – 33 members, and clubs where multiple new members have been inducted – 9 into RC Demerara for example, and RC Aruba inducted 5 past Rotaractors which is particularly pleasing. But there is a decline in membership in some clubs which needs to be addressed if we are to continue our progress toward our membership goal set by the individual clubs at the beginning of the year.

Our Rotaractors have been extraordinarily active under the guidance of the dynamic District Rotaract Committee and every Rotary District Committee now has a Rotaractor on it. There is a buzz and vibrancy among Rotaractors as they build on the foundation from years past but with Elevate Rotaract guiding the future.

Last month, we gave our support to Rotary's quest to End Polio Now and we made contributions to Our Rotary Foundation. We joined forces with the Healthy Caribbean Coalition to produce a successful webinar on the relationship between what and how we eat, and the incidence of Non-Communicable Diseases, as well as the issue of food insecurity in our region. Clubs have embarked on projects that teach children the value of food groups and the importance of drinking water and taking exercise, and

we have embarked on planting nutritious crops in school gardens. Taken together, these add up to the roll out of our District wide Childhood Obesity Prevention project.

Our Foundation team hosted an informative Foundation Zoom with Past RI President John Germ with an entertaining appearance by PP Owen Standley from Pennsylvania who will hike the Appalachian trail (2,168 miles) to raise funds for Polio.

Our District now has three Peace Builder clubs, and our District is recognized as a Peace Builder District. Our intended Positive Peace Activation programme has been shelved due to the cost, but we have regrouped and expect to have alternative Peace Builder programs in play early in the second half. We will continue to promote the Peace Fellows program as we are determined to have more Peace Fellows in our District. Applications will be solicited for Peace Fellowships, commencing February 2021.

In the month of December, we turn our attention to "Disease Prevention & Treatment". It is also the "Holiday Season" and the "Holy Season". It is the season for giving, and it is also the season of loneliness for many. My family, I ask you to be more generous in your giving this year than you have ever been, generous in giving of your time. Time to pop next door to the neighbour who lives alone even if it means standing in the yard at a safe physical distance while you chat; generous with your time for the elderly who may have no family nearby. Cook and share. Contribute to your local food bank or distribution centre if you can. And as mentioned earlier, look out for your Rotary family.

Depression and mental illness are high on our agenda this month.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to our Rotary family who may have suffered loss over the course of this year and those who have been hit hard by this pandemic. We remember fondly PP, Keith Scotland from Rotary Club of Saint Lucia who died

suddenly last month and hold his wife Diane and her family up in prayer. We also lost much loved PP Ivan Sobesky from the RC Fort de France and we hold his wife Laurence and sons up in prayer also. Mary Cheeks, wife of PDG Rupert Cheeks passed away and our prayers and support are with PDG Rupert who is now a centurion; many of our older members knew and loved Mary dearly.

Looking to the future, we can now confirm that District PETS will take place virtually over the weekend of April 16th to 18th 2021 and that our District Conference will open on the evening of Friday April 23rd. We will provide a Hybrid conference experience that allows all members of all clubs in the District, the opportunity to attend the conference either virtually or in person; the latter depends of course, on the situation with the COVID-19 pandemic. With the likelihood of a vaccine, I remain positive. But rest assured, your conference team is working to ensure that the conference experience will be awesome!

As we close out the calendar year, I thank you all for your commitment to our Rotary way of life: for your leadership; for your friendship; for your integrity; for your commitment to diversity and for your service to humanity.

"Rotary stands; though the tempest roars about – Rotary still stands. Why and how? Because it is grounded not on fear, rivalry, and /or suspicion, but the eternal and indestructible rocks of friendliness, tolerance, and usefulness". - Paul Harris

Blessings my family, stay strong.

D. Lisle Chase
Team Leader, District 7030