Nina Kolenc
Maribor, Slovenia

"MAGNUM EST VIS HUMANITATIS" (Cicero)
"Magnificent is the power of humankind" (Cicero)
"Veličastna je moč človečnosti" (Cicero)

As a Regional coordinator(RCO) for Slovenia in Multi-district 1910 (Austria, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Hungary, Slovenia), Nina Kolenc a high school teacher in Maribor, Slovenia, helped initiate a blood donation-brotherhood project on World Rotaract Week in March 2006. This project has influenced similar blood drives in many countries across numbers of continents. Nina said

"We wanted to take a small step towards a big difference."

Nina says that Rotaract was not well known in her coutry among Rotarians and she felt that, through this project, they could all do something together. It turned out later to be without borders, quickly moving from local to global.

The project has been very successful. It was initially planned to take place during a single week but that was extended at the beginning. Not long after the initial project, a blood drive was organized in Sao Paulo, Brazil. And then, Rotaract Club of Mella, Ethiopia, organized a Blood Drive. The most recent count showed that the idea has spread to 23 countries, over five continents.

Through this simple beginning, blood is being donated in Austria, Bangladesh, Bosnia &Herzegovina, Brazil, Canada, Croatia, Egypt, Ethiopia, France, Hungary, Mexico, Mongolia, Philipinness, Nepal, New Zeland, Samoa, Serbia, Slovenia, Tanzania, Turkey, Ukraine, Uruguay, USA and spreading each year. Through this project more than 1000 RI blood donors and their friends have united.

The project has had recognition since it began. It placed second in the Best European Social Project (BESP) chosen by the Rotaract Europe board in 2007. The project was presented internationally at European Rotaract Convention (EUCO), Milano, 2007, and at the Breakout Session at Rotary International Convention (RIC), Los Angeles, USA.

Nina Kolenc is daughter of Alojzij, RC Maribor member, and Ljudmila, IWC Maribor member. Her brother, Matej, past RAC Maribor member, introduced her to Rotaract club Maribor. Nina is a charter member of Global Network for Blood Donors, Rotarian action group (GNBD) and has served as board member the last two years. After being a member of RAC Maribor, honorable member of RAC Celje, RCO for Slovenia in RID 1910, DRR in 1910 (Austria, Bosnia &Herzegovina, Croatia, Slovenia), charter and board member of GNBD, she joined RC Maribor Lent, chartered on 18th April 2009.

Nina says that the idea came from a personal experience. Eight years ago when she was 21, her heart stopped suddenly due to fibrillation that caused cardiac arrest. No blood could be pumped to her body. She was declared clinically dead. She recovered but she says that:

> *"I did not forget that life is short and that humans are mortal. For me, the life blood is the symbol. When someone donates blood he or she is giving life to someone else and helping the blood circulate."*

Today Nina is a PE teacher. She has finished the Faculty of sports, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia, and is currently working on her master of science thesis (Faculty of Social Sciences, also at the University of Ljubljana).

The blood drive, with Nina as a primary driver behind it, continues in its 4th year primarily in Rotarian family clubs in Slovenia.