



**ROTARY INTERNATIONAL**  
**District 6110**

**Dictionary/Literacy Project**  
2004-2005

In response to President Glenn E. Estess' recommendation, Rotary District 6110 will initiate a district-wide Literacy Project as follows:

Assumptions

A. The district will move into phase *II* of the District 6110 Dictionary Project, begun last year. We will endeavor to attain 100% participation by all clubs and begin distributing books to outlying rural public school districts in areas without functioning Rotary Clubs.

B. The district will begin implementing a two-year integrated literacy program in keeping with the guidelines set-forth by Rotary International Literacy/Education Task Force.

Condensed RI Guidelines:

1. Develop literacy training for adults.
2. Develop literacy training for children of all social status
3. Assist refugees and immigrants in gaining literacy skills in using English
4. Conduct mentoring programs including reading, writing, and vocational training.
5. Serve as a resource for community schools and provide assistance where needed.
6. Provide educational opportunities to low economic areas by adopting schools, orphanages, street children and/or AIDS orphans.
7. Assist in establishing and enhancing libraries for children.
8. Contribute to literacy programs in prisons, reformatories and places of confinement.
9. Celebrate Rotary's Centennial as related to literacy

Action Steps In Attaining Goals Under Assumption A:

Utilizing an expanded District 6110 Dictionary Committee, supplemented by efforts of our Assistant District Governors, we will initially move to include all 77 clubs in The Dictionary Project. This will be conducted in accordance with the guidelines of our Approved Procedures as listed in Appendix I.

A District 6110 Foundation is being organized under guidelines of IRS for approval under 501(C) 3 requirements. This will assure all clubs, individuals, and corporate contributors that their support is fully tax deductible, although it presently is as well under the Southside Foundation. Funds

will be funneled through a District 6110 Dictionary Project Bank Account by the District Administrator. Regional inventories and combination of orders will hasten distribution of books to the clubs.

Aid to smaller clubs will be offered in preparing bookplates and/or financial assistance as required. Further, we will begin moving into rural areas, not serviced by local clubs, using funds from corporate donors, delivered by Rotarians and other volunteers.

### Action Steps In Attaining Goals Under Assumption B:

The criteria contained in RI's 9 points can be grouped as follows:

#### **Adult's items**

- Item #1. Literacy Training For Adults
- Item #3. Assist refugee & immigrants,
- Item #8. Work in prisons, etc.

#### **Children's Items:**

- Item #2. Develop literacy training for children
- Item #4. Adopt-A-School and mentoring programs
- Item #5. Serve as resource for local schools and render other assistance as needed.
- Item #6. Provide educational opportunities in low economic areas.
- Item #7. Establishing and/or enhancing libraries for children

#### **Celebration of Rotary Centennial:**

- Item #9. Utilizing Twin Clubs, Community Projects, or Volunteer Month in April

## **ADULT AREAS OF CONCERN**

Due to the magnitude of our total Literacy Project it will be necessary to phase in various segments over the next two years. Accordingly, we will start in the area of highest need which is the Children's' Area. We do this because we feel it is most urgent, and is an extension of our previously successful Dictionary Project. Areas of Adult Concern will creep into our activities in several ways this year by virtue of our distribution of Spanish/English Dictionaries, and continuing work with the children.

Adult mentoring will be developed at some future time, and may be done in partnership with other community groups. If groups can be identified other activities tailored from the children's area may be implemented such as: Rotary Readers, Rotary Story Tellers, and Rotary Tradesmen. The one significant support groups we can establish immediately is called, "*Rotary Literacy Advocates.*"

#### **ROTARY LITERACY ADVOCATES**

Developing this program will take time and dedication and will be a major undertaking unless participated in by a large group of interested Rotarians, supplemented by outside personnel with specialized skills and experience..  
If we believe our efforts should be to provide training to individuals in "Literacy" to the point that they possess, "the ability to read, write, reason and solve problems necessary to function in the community,"

it follows that we should seek specialized counselors adept in matters of the legal profession, accounting, insurance claims, banking, construction, health & sanitation; a myriad of other talents.

#### Actual Example

*A Japanese war bride had been in this country for 50 years but was practically illiterate in every phase of our definition. Her husband had been dead for two years when she received a copy of a cancellation notice on a mortgage life insurance policy. This policy should have paid off her mortgage upon the passing of her husband but she did not know of the existence of the policy. Her mortgage will be paid off and she will receive several thousand dollars for the mortgage payments she continued to make. This lady needed (still does) help but it was a happenstance that she went to a friend for explanation of the cancellation letter from the insurance company.*

Prison Literacy Assistance will be carried out in conjunction with churches, state department of human service offices, and other programs already in place and functioning. Dr Donnie Nero, President of Conner College, Warner, OK (918-463-6213) is a Member of the Muskogee Rotary Club. His school has Literacy Programs for prisons. More on this will be distributed in the second semester of this school year.

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### **CHILDREN'S AREA OF CONCERN:**

- Step 1. Enlist all 77 clubs in the Dictionary Project
- Step 2. Encourage all clubs to participate in the Adopt A School or Partners In Education programs.
- Step 3. Add books and provide supplies for our adopted schools.
- Step 4. Support existing groups in working with infant and pre-school literacy training.

*All of the five items listed in **CHILDREN'S AREA OF CONCERN** can be accomplished with these 4 Steps.*

### **Salient Points Concerning our Literacy Program**

#### **WHY IS IMPROVING LITERACY IN OUR NEIGHBORHOODS IMPORTANT?**

In the Tulsa area, and more than likely throughout the entire district, 17% of all adults cannot read and understand directions on a prescription bottles. 45% cannot properly fill out an employment application, and more than one-half of people in hospitals and/or jails are illiterate. Inability to read and understand Driver's Manuals is the leading cause of license refusals. One-half of elementary grade students read at one-and-one-half grade levels below their actual grade.

#### **WHAT IS OUR DEFINITION OF LITERACY?**

Most dictionaries contain the phrase, "the ability to read and write" in defining the word. We need to expand that definition to give our efforts a purpose. In so doing, we find that literacy becomes an "individual's ability to listen, speak, read, write, view, represent, compute and solve problems at

levels of proficiency necessary to function in the family, in the community, and on the job." This expanded definition of literacy will be incorporated in our work with *all* age groups. Some of those ideas appear below.

### *IS THE NEED FOR ROTARY LITERACY PROGRAMS GREATER THAN BEFORE?*

The role of Rotary, and other service organizations, is more important this year because a recent US Department of Education publication issued June 16, 2004 reveals that school districts in the states of Kansas and Missouri will get substantially less federal money than last year and many independent districts in Arkansas and Oklahoma will also suffer losses. Overall, 56 percent of school districts will get fewer federal dollars next year as funds get shifted around because of declining numbers of low-income students in some areas, and a new federal formula for awards of money to individual districts

### *ADOPT-A-SCHOOL PROGRAM*

It is important that each Rotary Club in District 6110 pursue a continuing permanent relationship with at least one school in their community. Club contributions will vary from town to town depending upon the local need. One school may need help in refurbishing its physical plant, one may need a separate stand alone library, one may need assistant teachers. Nearly all schools will applaud our members' appearing on a weekly basis to read and serve as mentors to the students. With nearly 30 children in many classrooms the teacher faces the dilemma of how to move the class forward at a pace faster than the slowest student. This results in the brightest children being punished by not being allowed to learn up to their potential. Volunteers in the classroom can eliminate these peaks and valleys in the learning cycle.

At present 25 of our 77 clubs have an established relationship with an elementary school. Mike Chittom of the Rotary Club of Tulsa has established a procedure for making this program meaningful. You may contact him at 918-585-5650 or [hescoinc@tulsacoxmail.net](mailto:hescoinc@tulsacoxmail.net) or view his report on our website [www.RotaryLiteracy.com](http://www.RotaryLiteracy.com)

### *PARTNERS IN EDUCATION (PIE)*

In areas with active Chambers of Commerce the Partners In Education program has largely supplanted the original Adopt-A-School movement to include periodic support by corporations and organizations offering special help to schools not available from ordinary civic clubs. Partners In Education recognizes a three way relationship between the local school district, the area chamber of commerce, and the individual organization/corporation willing to help public education. This might be in the form of; concentrated six week course by skilled teachers in computer literacy; a one time per year holiday party with food, presents, and outside entertainment; or a Special Field Trip for students with meals and transportation to tour a manufacturing site. Whether individual Rotary Clubs call their project an *Adopt-A-School*, or *Partners In Education* will depend on local conditions. Either way, it is the potential good for the greatest number of children that should guide our efforts.

### *READING PROGRAMS BY PARENTS OF YOUNG CHILDREN*

Children are never too young to enjoy books. In fact literacy experts recommend using books as supplemental crib toys from the day of birth. It has been established that a person's ultimate intelligence is developed by the age of 4. Parents who wait until their child is school-age to introduce books are missing this critical time of development in cognitive and language skills which are necessary for future school success.

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Children who are read to twenty minutes daily are nearly always ready to learn when they enter school. In developing a plan to accomplish this, parents are encouraged to associate with a group such as *Parents As Teachers*, ([www.patnc.org](http://www.patnc.org)) *The Georgetown Early Learning Project*, ([www.elp.georgetown.edu](http://www.elp.georgetown.edu)) or any number of *Storytime* programs sponsored by local libraries. Rotary Clubs are encouraged to advertise these sources through PTAs and other parent groups.

#### *DONATE BOOKS TO SCHOOL LIBRARY*

Clubs are encouraged to give books to their school's library in lieu of speaker's gifts and provide additional books at other times during the year. Perhaps a dozen books about our US presidents in February; some books relating to our national holidays between Halloween and Thanksgiving; books on sports in the spring; books on our nation's history in the fall. Maintain a collection box for donated books & magazines at the club's meeting places to be delivered to school librarians (must make sure they are suitable to young readers). Many second and third grade teachers use magazines to teach not only the reading of printed words, but how the contents relate to contemporary living

#### *KATHY'S HOME FUN PROGRAM*

Utilizing material being developed by ad hoc Dictionary Committee member, Kathy Boyer, children will be encouraged to explore their dictionary during free time at home. A calendar format with simple questions requiring the use of the dictionary will be given the children on a monthly basis. Upon successful completion of all assignments the children will return the sheet with their parent's initials. Prizes will be awarded each month and a grand prize will reward one of the successful monthly prize winners. The monthly prizes will be items such as a healthful meal from a local restaurant, a mechanical pencil, a container of ice cream, rulers & punches, tickets to an amusement park, etc. The grand prize will be a trip for the lucky winner and parents with an overnight stay and a ball game in St. Louis, with recognition over the loud speaker system, and admittance to the locker room to meet the players.

#### *ROTARY READERS*

This is a continuation of many club's Adopt-A-School, reading program. Whereas mentoring is normally a one-on-one situation, the Rotary Readers will be talking to an entire class. Rotary Readers will be using materials that enhance a child's potential as a future citizen. Texts will cover a number of items that might be termed social studies. In order to maintain interest the reader will occasionally stop and ask for reactions to the material just covered. An especially meaningful date to read Doctor Seuss stories is March 2<sup>nd</sup>. That day has been adopted by the National Education Association as "Read Across America" day.

It is important that you relax and have fun when reading to a class. Look over the material ahead of time so you can go through it confidentially. Show the books cover, have them name any animals or symbols on it. Read the title and ask them if they have any idea what the story is all about. Show them that books start at the front and go to the end. We read from the top, left to right. Point out page numbers. Stop in the middle and ask them what they think is about to happen.

#### *ROTARY MENTORS*

In the typical classroom there is little time for one-on-one conversation between a student and the teacher. This lack individualized time is because of increased administrative responsibilities and other demands on teachers. The typical child seldom comes in contact with an unknown adult unless they are in trouble. Hearing an idea, an opinion, or just a thought from a kindly stranger is impressive to

a young student. Being able to initiate a conversation or a subject with an older person seldom occurs. Our success with the dictionary project has reinforced our belief that children appreciate attention paid them by older people. Rotary Mentors are typically assigned to a particular child for a full semester depending on the child's deficiencies. Other ways a Rotary Mentor can make a difference to their students are:

- By appearing genuinely interested in being there for the child.
- By listening to the child carefully.
- By giving the child positive, specific, feedback.
- By showing respect for the child's ideas.
- By respecting the child regardless of background or personal characteristics.
- By allowing the child to feel it is OK to be inquisitive and curious.
- By making corrections in a kindly tone. Explain why.
- By encouraging the child to have confidence in their abilities.
- By helping the child develop skills which will help them accomplish their tasks.
- By honoring the weekly commitment to be with their child as scheduled.

### ROTARY PIONEERS

Rotarians can help build connections between people in the community in many ways. We can share personal stories with people of all ages. Youngsters especially like to hear about our life when we were their age. *What was your school like? What was your house like? What did you do during the summer months?* During the week containing December 7<sup>th</sup> you might tell them about World War II, In February you could relate stories about our presidents. Students are appreciative of older classroom visitors who can encourage them to develop an appreciation of what life in the United States offers them. A Rotarian telling true stories of their past is of great interest to a young child who has no recollection of WWII, the great depression, playing marbles, hide-and-seek, making a rubber gun and any number of other common occurrences to those born before TV, MP3, rockets to the moon. A veteran of Korea for instance can whet a child's appetite to study weather, history of the orient, the culture of Asia, food around the world, medical services in military combat, national politics, and many other subjects.

### ROTARY KINDERACT

A program for pre-kindergarten children wherein they are taught elementary civics, social studies and facts about life in general by working in "*Four Way Test Coloring Books*" available from RI. For more information contact Larry Strickert of the Bull Shoals-Lakeview Club at [gofishn@bullshoals.net](mailto:gofishn@bullshoals.net)

### ROTARY TRADESMEN

Rotarians visit schools and talk about the duties and rewards of their chosen line of work. This might include, but is not limited to, the following topics:

#### *Bank@School*

Sponsored by local banking associations, this program prepares elementary grade students to begin thinking about money. Monthly visits by Rotarians involved in banking teach them many things, from making change, reading a restaurant menu and/or ticket, keeping track of their allowance by use of a simple ledger that has the basics of a double entry bookkeeping system, how to open a bank account, read a monthly statement, and how write a check. Lesson plans are being arranged by Robert Reins, BankFirst, Tulsa. [reins@bancfirst.com](mailto:reins@bancfirst.com)

### Fire Fighters To The Rescue

Representatives from fire departments often visit schools to conduct safety inspections and/or fire drills, but plans are underway for Senior Fire Officials to visit, in full uniform, and explain what it is like to be a Fire Fighter. Since only 12% of calls are actually "fire calls," many activities make up a typical day at the fire house. Lesson plans are currently being prepared by Tulsa Fire Chief Allen LaCroix, Contact: [alacroix@ci.tulsa.ok.us](mailto:alacroix@ci.tulsa.ok.us)

### Your Day in Court

Adults infrequently, and children almost never, have direct contact with our court system. Retired judges or lawyers tell children what it takes to be a lawyer and what the daily activities include for a person in the legal profession.

### Your health is Important to the Health Department

Glenn Burnett is preparing lesson plans about the work and responsibilities of a local health department.

### The Police are Good Guys to Know

Sgt Pat Calhoun (591-4500) will provide police officers for elementary schools in the Tulsa area and/or lesson plans of Tulsa Police Department's Public Education Program for the use of other clubs.

### Emergency Response Personnel

First Response Personnel will discuss procedures for handling accidents, storms, and terrorist attacks. And show the kids the inside of an ambulance

### What is a Machinist?

The work of a machinist has progressed to the point that much of their work requires computer literacy. Tom Sawyer who heads a company manufacturing heavy pipeline laying equipment will prepare lesson plans on what it takes to be a machinist and what the rewards are for a person entering that field.

## COMBINING OUR EFFORTS WITH JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT

Do you remember Junior Achievement as the high school after-school program where you were to start your own business? Well it has come a long way since those days!

Junior Achievement uses hands-on experiences to help young people understand the economics of life. In partner-ship with business and schools, JA brings the real world to students, opening their minds to their potential.

This worthwhile organization stands ready to speak to elementary students in many areas of our District. There are chapters of JA in each of our four states. JA would welcome the opportunity to work with us in our Literacy Project.

## CONCLUSION

District 6110 is embarking on an ambitious program under the best *ideals of service* Rotary has to offer. We will need lots of help from within and without our ranks. We will take things one step at a time and make sure our efforts are practical and well accepted by the community. For continuing assistance, see an abbreviated step list for implementing our Literacy Project, at our district website, [www.RotaryLiteracy.Com](http://www.RotaryLiteracy.Com).

Gerald L. Harp  
Governor 2004-2005  
Rotary District 6110

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