

April 2018

### LitRAG Awards 2018

An award of US\$500 will be made to each of two clubs which best celebrate **Rotary Basic Education and Literacy Month in September 2018** and/or **International Literacy Day on 8 September 2018**.

Here are a few suggestions for consideration:

- organise a writing competition for children in your local school(s)
- run a spelling contest for children in your local school(s)
- hold a poetry festival
- donate books/dictionaries and maximize local publicity for their presentation
- obtain publicity for your *Basic Education and Literacy* projects
- promote your club *Basic Education and Literacy* projects on social media
- arrange for a limerick competition on social media
- recruit an educator to your club
- run a Literacy Seminar for clubs in your local area
- get Interactors involved in establishing a local literacy project
- work with Rotaractors to help with an adult literacy project
- establish a project to get club members and friends to listen regularly to children reading in schools
- visit a local prison and work out a plan to help inmates improve their reading and writing skills
- run a Project Fair and invite other reading charities/organisations to be involved
- cooperate with the *International Reading Association* in a joint project
- send an article about your project(s) for publication in the LitRAG newsletter.

#### Details:

- Tell LitRAG how your club would use the US\$500 if successful.
- The **closing date** for receipt of your club entry is 31 October 2018.
- Send your entries, supported by documents and photographs, to LitRAG by email to:  
[rotary.tas@gmail.com](mailto:rotary.tas@gmail.com)

### Need a Literacy Project?

Why not deliver **Teacher in a Box** to a community in need? Where there are limited resources or teachers with limited training or education, Teacher in a Box provides people with offline access to an extensive range of free educational and training materials via an wifi-enabled device. No internet access is required. The [Teacher in a Box website](#) offers self-paced learning as well as classroom teaching.

Teacher in a Box is currently deployed in Papua New Guinea, Tanzania, The Philippines, Kenya, Liberia, Zambia and Timor-Leste.



Above: Photographer and Warrnambool Rotarian James Mepham (left) helps volunteer teacher John Dominik connect to the TIB program via his mobile phone. (Image: Louise North)

Website: [www.litrag.org](http://www.litrag.org)

Facebook: [facebook.com/reading.rotary](https://facebook.com/reading.rotary)

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



## Toronto Convention LitRAG News

### Are you going to the Toronto Convention?

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

**Volunteer at the LitRAG Booth** – It's a great way to meet Rotarians, learn about projects, 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 LitRAG!

**Participate in the LitRAG Annual Meeting** – Add your voice to the outreach, promotion and involvement of LitRAG in meaningful literacy and educational projects locally and around the world.

Monday, 25 June 16:30 – 18:00

Metro Toronto Convention Center, Room 803 B

**Network with the Fellowship of Rotarian Educators** – Attend a 'get to know you social' for LitRAG and FRE members. Connect with fellow Rotarians who have a passion for literacy and education. Light refreshments will be served.

Monday, 25 June – 16:30 – 18:00

Metro Toronto Convention Center, Room 803 B  
(immediately preceding the LitAG Annual Meeting)

## Bringing Water Projects into Classroom WaSH in Schools: A Collaboration of Education and Water, Hygiene and Sanitation

Education and Water might seem a strange partnership, a bit of a mismatch of efforts. But in noticing how many water and sanitation efforts were focused on schools, it seemed the perfect match to add education to the equation so that Rotary grants projects were enhanced to bring about lasting behavioral change.

Enter the **WaSH in Schools Target Challenge**. This special pilot project was created and supported by TRF to provide appropriate education programs (targeted curriculum, teacher training, student activities, appropriate children's literature) in the classrooms that are paired to reinforce the purpose and importance of the projects going on outside the classrooms.

The goal in all of this is to provide the water, sanitation and hygiene programs so needed in schools and provide classroom instruction (developmentally appropriate, connected to and developed from the curriculum) that teach children the why's of good hygiene. In the words of WinS Committee Chair, Trustee Sushil Gupta, "We are working to bring WaSH projects into the classrooms so that students understand & change their behavior, improve habits in their home and bring about positive change throughout their community. We are educating for the future."

Rotarians in clubs and districts of three target areas were invited to participate: India, Kenya and D4250 (Guatemala, Belize and Honduras). The process involved a preliminary application process to submit draft proposals. Of the 46 applications submitted, 13 were awarded up to \$10,000 to complete a full community needs assessment and submit a completed grant proposal. A team of Rotarians representing both LitRAG and WaSRAG reviewed the applications and recommended those projects deemed most promising. At their meeting in January, the WinS Committee selected four projects to recommend to the Trustees for funding.

Congratulations go to:

- ◆ Districts 3211 & 3292 (India)
- ◆ Districts 3131 & 3600 (India)
- ◆ RC Usula, Districts 4250(Honduras) & 5830
- ◆ RC Guatemala Sur, Districts 4250 (Guatemala) & 6440

For more information on WaSH in Schools projects, goals and how your education expertise can support WaSH projects, visit:

- (a) [Challenge framework three-star approach](#)
- (b) [About Rotary wash schools target challenge](#)

## Sesame Street and Autism

Julia is a Muppet with autism and a central character in the Sesame Workshop app. Click on the title to check out this app, share it with families who have a child with autism and celebrate learning differences with Julia!



## What is a Literacy Project?

Literacy skills are important for participating in family life, the community, learning and employment and to access essential services. Literacy skills help people in solving day to day problems and in making the most of opportunities in life.

Literacy refers not just to letters and written text but also to other multimodal, technological and symbolic representations that we encounter in society.

Without basic literacy skills everyday tasks are harder – whether reading a bus timetable, applying for a loan, filling in forms, finding information on the internet, reading the newspaper, enrolling in a course, taking medicine, applying for a job or reading with your child. Not being able to do these important activities can add up to a person feeling less confident in themselves and their abilities. It can also lead to experiencing higher levels of social and economic disadvantage.

There are a surprising number of adults and children in need of literacy learning to help them function more effectively in their lives. With the support of your Rotary Club taking up a literacy project, you could make a significant difference in people's lives.



### But what is a Literacy Project? Is it a simple or difficult thing? What if none of us are teachers?

A Literacy Project can be as straightforward as raising money and buying a set of books for a school or community group or a retirement village or a remote community. **But a project is not necessarily about raising money.** More effectively, it can be about educating people, whether young or mature, who need genuine support in developing their literacy skills.

The range of literacy skills people need for everyday life and work changes over time and in different contexts. It is important to update and learn new literacy skills throughout our lives. Businesses can also benefit by improving the literacy skills of their workforce as demonstrated through improvements in productivity, the confidence and communication capacity of employees, and better health and safety. As more people gain qualifications and skills over time, businesses will also benefit through having access to more skilled, more effective workers.

Try developing a community literacy project that could work for permanent social change.

## Maternal and Child Health Project – opportunity with an educational involvement

### Want to get involved in a high impact child and maternal health global grant? Global Grant Gg1870710 Healthy Kids/Brighter Future #3

The Rotary Club of Ipswich (MA, USA) is working on a US\$200,000 Global Grant to improve the health and learning of more than 40,000 Zambian school children through a proven model of school-based healthcare. The model was developed through two previously successful Rotary Global Grants, wherein it demonstrated its effectiveness and was shown to be sustainable.

The model works by making schools the locus of children's healthcare through training teachers as school health workers and holding school-based preventative medical interventions. The program empowers schools to provide health education, basic medical care, health surveillance, clinic referrals and follow-up on students who are absent for more than a few days. The project is implemented in partnership with the Zambian government and leverages the existing infrastructure of their schools and health centers.

Overall, we have found that by training teachers as school health workers and by building strong links between schools and clinics, we can help communities provide substantially better care for their children. The result is better health for children, better monitoring by schools of their students' well-being, a new professional status for participating teachers and substantially improved student attendance and performance.

For more information, contact Rtn. Lonnie Hackett: [lhackett207@gmail.com](mailto:lhackett207@gmail.com)



**Above:** Healthier Zambian primary school children can concentrate better and for longer and are motivated to learn.



## Electronic Devices Block Language Learning

Verbal exchanges have two components that children must master: temporal contingency and semantic contingency. This refers to understanding the timing of human conversation and how to respond meaningfully. Research, including that of Kathy Hirsh-Pasek a developmental psychologist at the Infant Language Laboratory at Temple University, has shown that children cannot learn this from watching television, although they can learn it via video-chat technology such as Apple's *FaceTime*.

Children from the poorer strata of society begin life not only with material disadvantages but cognitive ones. Decades of research have confirmed this, including a famous [1995 study](#) by psychologists Betty Hart and Todd Risley: By age four children reared in poverty have heard 30 million fewer words, on average, than their peers from wealthier families. That language gap has been linked to children having poorer language skills at the start of school, which, in turn, predicts weaker academic performance.



Growing evidence has led researchers to confirm that quality matters more than quantity and the most valuable quality seems to be back-and-forth communication – known as **contingent language**. Contingent language begins in infancy — well before words

emerge — when parents begin making happy 'goo-goo' sounds at their babies, who use it as a model and respond in kind.

Socioeconomic differences in this behavior arise during the first year of life, according to [a 2017 study](#) of 141 eleven-month-olds by Danielle Matthews, Michelle McGillion and colleagues of The University of Sheffield, England. Research in this area has significant implications for parents and caregivers.

Encouraging conversation is particularly necessary in an era when both children and adults are spending more time with electronic devices and less in face-to-face communication. The engagement is not only about words but about feelings and paying attention to someone else.

In 2017, Kathy Hirsh-Pasek co-authored [a study](#) which found that when a cell phone call interrupts an interaction in which a parent is teaching a child a new word, the learning is lost. While we are fiddling with our digital devices, we lose out on effective communication.

Language is the single-best predictor of school readiness — in math, social skills and reading skills. It is the foundation for learning.

Check out: *Scientific American*: 'Talking with - Not Just to - Kids Powers How They Learn Language'.  
<http://google.com/newsstand/s/CBlwrZjJyDY>

## Providing Mental Health, Suicide and Healthcare Audiobooks

**Speaking Books®** are designed to communicate important information in a format that is easy to understand and process low-literacy communities around the world.



### Children Coping with Cancer

We are delighted to announce the creation of a new bilingual English/Spanish speaking book for children having to cope with cancer. To date, Speaking Books® has created their books in more than 35 languages for distribution in over 30 countries worldwide.

For the first time there will be a colorful, well-illustrated book that with a push of a button will read to a child in their own language. No matter what their level of reading comprehension, the messaging will be seen, read, heard and understood to help them comprehend their illness and what they are facing.

This exciting development was made possible with support from Pfizer and also has the endorsement of the World Medical Association, which is the global federation that represents millions of physicians worldwide. Visit the [Speaking Books® website](#)

Rotary Clubs wanting to help with distribution to their local Children's Cancer Centers can contact: Brian Julius; [bj@speakingbooks.com](mailto:bj@speakingbooks.com)  
Phone: 1-843-298-1017

### 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)

#### LitRAG Advisors to the Board:

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

A handout for parents, teachers, caregivers & guardians of 8–9-year-old children to aid their literacy and numeracy development – prepared for Rotary International.



## Tips for helping your eight to nine-year-old child enjoy developing his/her literacy and numeracy skills

### Here are some ideas to use while shopping:

- Before leaving the house, ask your child to write a shopping list as you think of things to purchase.
- Encourage your child to practise counting and calculating in your home language as well as in English. Count backwards as well as forwards; sum (and create a total), add, subtract items to buy.
- Look at advertising brochures and discuss what you might want to buy. Read a street directory or use maps on your mobile phone together before you drive to the shops to find the best way to there or to avoid traffic lights or stop signs.
- In the shops, ask your child to guess the weight of a few of the fruit and vegetables first and then at home use kitchen scales to weigh them and check how close he or she was.
- Show your child how to check shopping dockets for correct prices.
- Discuss a recipe or a menu with your child. For example, discuss the courses that you will serve at dinner and what ingredients are needed. Or imagine that you are having relatives to lunch. You want to prepare a special dish for them. What do you need to buy? What would you do if one product (such as bread rolls or sausages) only comes in packs of eight when you only need six?



### Ideas while watching television:

- Watch TV advertisements and discuss the value of a product and whether you need it or can afford it at the moment.
- Talk about the many different types of programs that we see on television, such as, news, comedy, games shows, soap opera, documentary, drama, cooking programs, sport and thriller. Explain the ratings system (e.g., PG for parental guidance needed, M for mature audience, etc.). Discuss which ones are the preferred ones for your child to watch.
- The more that a child reads or hears words, the better their vocabulary becomes. Children at this stage should have an understanding of synonyms (which are words that can be used to represent the same object) as they have similar meaning, e.g. *pretty* and *beautiful*; *enormous* and *gigantic*. Play synonym games where each person in the room must replace one word in a sentence with a word with the same meaning.
- After viewing a favourite program together, discuss why you liked it. Discuss some of the values, ethics and moral codes that were in the program. How do they fit with your cultural beliefs?
- Play spelling games by asking your child to spell the title of a TV program or a character's name.



- Ask your child to create a chart and total the number of hours that each family member views television in a week and discuss the findings.

## Here are some ideas when watching a film or video:

- Talk about the choices a YouTube filmmaker might make in creating and uploading a short film.
- Ask your child to 'step into the shoes' of a character in a film or program and explain how the person is feeling and why. What choices does the person have now?
- Discuss the purpose of a film. Does it change the way you feel or think about a certain subject? How do the issues in the film meet with your cultural values and attitudes at home?



## Build your child's speaking, listening and conversational skills:

- Discuss possibilities or solve problems. Ask: *What could happen when...? What would happen if...?*
- Talk about activities in terms of time. For example, "It's going to take about five minutes to cook this, so let's time how long it takes you to set the table."
- Show your electricity, water and phone bills to your child. These often include graphs, so explain what they mean. Then you could discuss how you could save by reducing the quantities shown in the graphs.
- You could ask your child to estimate the amount of water used when washing the car and how much it would cost. Would car-washing facilities be cheaper?
- Show how to create a budget and discuss how to maintain it. Try creating a budget spreadsheet with columns showing the items' costs and totals.
- Talk about careers where it may be vital to be accurate with measurements or numbers, such as in plumbing, hairdressing, architecture, building, accounting, designing, tourism.
- Use and discuss measurement words such as *approximately, about, nearly*. Discuss why these words are used at different times.
- When you're driving somewhere, you could ask your child to use a map to find the place (a printed map, on your mobile phone or using the car's GPS location finder. Your child could also use the map scale to work out the distance to be travelled and calculate the time it'll take to get there. As your child to calculate how much petrol the trip will use.



## Being aware of your child's sense of 'self' developing

- By this age, children have a clearly developed sense of self-worth and may express frustration when asked to do things that they regard as areas of personal weakness. By eight, they begin to understand the concept of masking emotions and can vary their use of coping strategies to deal with challenging situations. They are developing a strong awareness of their independence and will want to express it and test it out on parents and siblings. In peer interactions, they may start to engage in leadership, goal-setting and a range of interactive games.
  - At the age 8–9, children learn life-long habits by mimicking adults around them. Children need to see that their parents place value on reading, learning, using numeracy well and so on. Limiting the TV to read without distraction and reading as a family, with a communal bookshelf including a dictionary, atlas, novels and magazines can have a lasting impact. It's a good idea to avoid rewarding behavior with television as the treat.
- Parents using technology for information sets a powerful model as well. Gifting books to each other (also in Kindle form) also shows that books are special.

