

# Rotary



## Literacy Rotarian Action Group

LitRAG Newsletter  
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### March is Literacy Month

A human right, literacy plays a key role in overcoming poverty, reducing child mortality, curbing population growth, achieving gender equality and ensuring peace, democracy and sustainable development. For these reasons, it is one of Rotary's six Areas of Focus: Basic Education and Literacy.

UNESCO estimates there are more than 770 million illiterate adults globally, about two thirds of whom are women. Further, there are many millions more who do not have sufficient literacy skills to perform everyday tasks. As a result, illiteracy is a barrier to economic, political, and social development. Such is not confined, either, to economically developing or recently democratized countries.

Literacy especially contributes to peace: through literacy, people are empowered to claim their right to freedom, and to prevent or resolve conflict. In conflict-ridden countries, however, establishing and sustaining a literate environment is most difficult.

A foundation of learning, literacy enables individuals to understand the world; to participate in democratic processes; to be heard, and to pursue educational, economic and vocational opportunities throughout life. The importance of literacy to local communities is borne out by the fact that literate parents are more likely to send their children to school. However, action must result from Rotary's Basic Education and Literacy focus. The Literacy Rotarian Action Group is one way of accessing the means for action in the field.

Join our action group now to learn how!

**Go to <[www.LitRAG.org](http://www.LitRAG.org)>  
and click on 'Member Area', then click on 'Join LitRAG'.**

Membership form may be downloaded, or you can join online.

### 3 Ways your Club / District can acknowledge Literacy Month

**1. Create Awareness:** Sponsor a newspaper, radio, television or billboard advertisement to raise public awareness of Rotary's work with literacy; conduct a Community "Literacy Breakfast, Luncheon, or Dinner" at which a literacy teacher or advocate is guest speaker.

**2. Make plans for a future sustainable literacy project:**

Refer to <[www.LitRAG.org](http://www.LitRAG.org)> then click on "Featured Projects". For information about Concentrated Language Encounter "how to" procedures, contact Dr Neil Adamson, <[jnadj@bigpond.net.au](mailto:jnadj@bigpond.net.au)> See *Every School a Star* <[www.coeduc.org/PDF/literacy\\_tool\\_kit.pdf](http://www.coeduc.org/PDF/literacy_tool_kit.pdf)> for ideas about other literacy projects.

**3: Celebrate!** Present a literacy award to a teacher, librarian, author, illustrator, bookseller, journalist, community member or civic leader who advocates for literacy in your community.

## Some Localised Club Literacy Projects

David Scott of the Rotary Club of South Worcester (UK) reports that members, partners and friends visit Dines Green Community Primary School one hour each week to help individual pupils with their reading. Steve Gough, headmaster, said, "This project has been a great boost to our children [and] has had a marked impact on [their] reading abilities."



*Learning to read at Dines Green with the help of Rotarians*

Following a teacher's poll of Dines Green Year 5 students, a need for books in homes became apparent. A second project was developed to provide 2000 pre-loved books to children throughout the school through the Club's *Rotary Shop or Swap*. Children could take books home to read and keep or return them for swapping.



*The Rotary Shop or Swap Project at Dines Green*

## Providing Student Resources are Popular Club Literacy Projects

Throughout the Rotary world, Clubs provide resources to develop students' basic knowledge, independent learning, love of language and interest in books (as well as other technologies) and reading. Many of these initiatives are supported through a *Dictionaries for Life* program. For example, the Rotary Club of Wylde Green (UK) supplies dictionaries annually to four local primary schools. Further, the Club has sponsored students at a girls' school in Hadiabad, India, through the donation of dictionaries.



*Girls in Hadiabad work with their dictionaries supplied by the RC of Wylde Green, UK*

For the last seven years, the Rotary Club of Sandy Springs, Atlanta, USA has donated dictionaries to 3rd Grade students as well as atlases and thesauruses to 5th Graders. These latter resources extend students' understanding of the world and appreciation of language and its uses.



*Sandy Springs students learn how to use their new resources*





A participant and a tutor in the Perth Public Library Summer Literacy Program thank Rotary for their donation.



Indian students welcome Rotarians to their schools.

This year, in recognition of Rotary's Literacy Month, the 48 Clubs in District 9570 (Central Queensland, Australia) have been asked to donate new board and picture books to their local pre-school, kindergarten and child care centres. Focussing on children aged 0-5 years, Clubs are invited to organise a bulk purchase of books valued at around \$200, with a Club co-ordinator selecting books after consultation with intended recipients. Individual members may donate books to the project as well.



Never too young to read!



The most well known 'book giving' literacy project that many Clubs engage with is that of *Dolly Parton's Imagination Library*. The Dollywood Foundation has distributed more than 50 million books through the Imagination Library program!

Currently operating in the USA, Canada, the United Kingdom and most recently, Australia, *Dolly Parton's Imagination Library* aims to improve early childhood literacy by providing children 0-5 years of age with a high quality, age-appropriate book every month. This is very much a "books in the home" program, further information about which can be obtained from <[www.imaginationlibrary.com](http://www.imaginationlibrary.com)>

## Other kinds of Club-focussed projects for Literacy Month

- The Literacy Committee of the Ellensburg Morning Rotary Club, Washington, USA, has developed a menu of literacy project options that clubs might consider pursuing, especially in celebrating Literacy Month and International Literacy Day, 8 September, annually. For details, go to <[www.ccsoe.com/litcom/club\\_menu.php](http://www.ccsoe.com/litcom/club_menu.php)>
- Rotary International and the International Reading Association produced a *Literacy Project Guide*. It includes sections related to access to books and other learning materials, library support, adopting a school, student mentoring and catering for special needs students among other matters. Go to <<http://www.rotary.org/en/document/680>>
- Rotary Showcase: Numerous literacy projects are described on the Rotary Showcase website. For example, the RC of Metropolitan Chittagong (Bangladesh) distributes educational supplies to needy students.



*Bangladeshi students proudly display donated school stationery supplies*

If you have photographs to support a description of your Club's literacy project, we'd like to hear from you. Please send your contribution to LitRAG Secretary, PDG Dr Neil Adamson, <[jnadja@bigpond.net.au](mailto:jnadja@bigpond.net.au)>