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READY 2 READ BRINGS BOOKS TO SECOND GRADERS

By Arnold R. Grahl Rotary International News – 19 June 2009

Second graders in Birmingham, Alabama, USA, have a new library in their classroom, and a buddy who comes to read to them at least once a month, as part of the Rotaract Club of Birmingham's signature service project.

Rotary International recognized the club's Ready 2 Read project as this year's Outstanding Rotaract Project in the International Division during the 2009 Rotaract Preconvention in Birmingham, England, 19 June. In all, seven Rotaract club projects were singled out for honors.

"We are so excited about this honor," said Vincent J. Graffeo, president of the club, who accepted the award along with founding president Michael Mahon. "To receive international recognition by Rotary puts a stamp of validation on our efforts."

Graffeo said the club chose literacy for a service project because it was an area in which they felt they could make an impact and it would allow members to hone their leadership skills. Grade school students in the city of Birmingham lag considerably behind their state and U.S. counterparts in reading test scores and studies show second grade is a pivotal point in reading development. Studies also suggest students spend more time reading if books are in close proximity to classroom activities.

The Ready 2 Read project has provided more than 30,000 books to 129 classrooms at a cost of \$150,000. A \$100,000 endowment has been set up to maintain the libraries and replace books.

The Birmingham Rotaract Club, which has about 160 members, received its charter in 2004 and is sponsored by the Rotary Club of Birmingham, Alabama.

During the award ceremony, RI President Dong Kurn Lee encouraged the gathered Rotaractors to continue their Rotary experience after their time in Rotaract ends.

"I ask each of you today not to wait for an invitation to a Rotary club, ask for an invitation," Lee said. "If there are no clubs where you live, ask your sponsoring Rotary Club to help you form a new one."

"Rotaract is such an important part of Rotary," Lee continued. "You have skills and talents that we need. You are much more than future Rotarians, you are a vital part of the Rotary family."

Other Outstanding Rotaract Projects recognized during the award ceremony include:

- Africa District: Rotaract Club of Kololo, Uganda, for "Nakasongola Community Outreach Project," providing free medical exams and health education to nearly 900 rural inhabitants of the Nakasongola District of Uganda and planting 300 trees to prevent the area's desertification.
- Asia Pacific Districts: Rotaract Club of Timog, Philippines, for "Kalinisan Para Sa Kalusugan (Health Through Cleanliness): A Clean Hands Campaign" teaching disease prevention by hand washing through lecture, music, video, and other media and providing liquid soap to almost 1200 children at two public schools in Quezon City, Philippines.
- Europe Districts: (tie) Rotaract Club of Istanbul, Turkey, for "Healthy Water in Orhaniye," organizing and funding the construction of a new municipal water system providing clean water to the 250 residents of Orhaniye, Turkey and the Rotaract Club of Diyarbakir, Turkey, for "Just a Smile is Enough for Us" providing free dental exams and oral health care education and products to 7,000 children at seven primary schools in Diyarbakir, Turkey.
- South Asia Districts: Rotaract Club of Bangalore Jayanagar, India, for "Educating Impoverished Children" providing computer-assisted learning software and instruction, library books, and cultural opportunities to 750 underprivileged children at two government primary schools in Bangalore, India.
- Latin America Districts: Rotaract Club of Tegucigalpa, Honduras, for "Ayudanos a Educar (Help Us Educate)" providing educational materials to over 400 schoolchildren in seven impoverished rural villages in Honduras.
- United States, Canada, and Caribbean Districts: Rotaract Club of Salt Lake City, USA, for "Concert Quench" raising funds for the construction of 51 clean water wells serving the rural inhabitants of Kravanh District, Cambodia.



HOLDING LEADERS ACCOUNTABLE HELPS PREVENT AND RESOLVE CONFLICTS

By Joseph Derr Rotary International News -- 19 June 2009

Accountability and telling it like it is are critical components of building peace, said Jan Egeland, director of the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs. Egeland was the UN secretary-general's special adviser for conflict prevention and resolution from 2006 to 2008.

At the second Rotary World Peace Symposium in Birmingham, England, on 19 June, Egeland discussed what he has learned during his career of more than 30 years in humanitarian relief and conflict resolution, which included participating in secret negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians to produce the Oslo Accord of 1993.

As a peace negotiator, said Egeland, it's important to hold leaders accountable for their action or inaction. "We have to speak the truth. I have tried to say it as I saw it."

He also observed that "we're making progress, thanks to the good work of Rotary and hundreds of other good, nongovernmental movements." For example, when the December 2004 tsunami hit Thailand and other countries in Southeast Asia, the response was highly coordinated and effective, he said. "We have succeeded more often than we've failed, and we've shown that we can do remarkable things when we work together."

Egeland said he feels optimistic knowing that a new generation of peacemakers coming out of Rotary's peace programs will have unparalleled knowledge, technology, and training to do the much-needed work.

"What he said about accountability is crucial," said Rebecca Gasca, a Rotaractor and 2003-04 Rotary Foundation Ambassadorial Scholar. "Not only is it at the leadership level that we have to hold each other accountable, but also at the grassroots level. I think there is a place for Rotary in both regards."

Ahamed Imthiaz Ismail, a member of the Rotary Club of Colombo Mid Town, Western Province, Sri Lanka, has mentored three Foundation Scholars and is involved in humanitarian land mine action and the resettlement of internally displaced people in his country. "His presentation was based on real-life experiences, and it had diverse views that you could relate to different circumstances and situations," said Ismail.

"I thought it was really inspiring to hear positive things and put a number of current conflicts in perspective," said Zélie Pollon, a Rotary World Peace Fellow from Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA, who graduated from Rotary's [professional development program at Chulalongkorn University](#) in Thailand and will enter the University of Bradford in a few months. "In tandem, it's also good to be reminded of the things we're not focusing on that we can do."

WITNESSING EVENTS AFFECTS COURSE OF CONFLICT

By Joseph Derr Rotary International News -- 19 June 2009

During a plenary session addressing the media's perspective on challenges to peace-building, held 19 June as part of the two-day Rotary World Peace Symposium in Birmingham, England, a media panel talked about how news coverage seems to affect peace and conflict work.

"The media have a role to play in conflict resolution by bearing witness," said Kira Kay, an independent U.S. journalist with the Bureau for International Reporting who has worked in conflict zones including Aceh, Indonesia, and Darfur, Sudan. She said the media could be viewed as a partner in conflict resolution and described the "observer effect" -- how during a conflict, perpetrators of violence and corrupt governments are less likely to act when being closely watched by the media. "We create a record that doesn't go away," said Kay.

The media also face enormous challenges. With the worldwide economic downturn, foreign bureaus of international news agencies are closing, forcing broadcasters to reduce coverage of worldwide events. The result: Journalists who could explain the dynamics and causes of conflict are not on the ground, and the public's right to know is not well served, Kay said.

Arnab Goswami, chief editor of India's English-news network Times Now, which broadcast three days of live coverage of the November 2008 Mumbai terrorist attacks, used the incident as a case history of how media coverage shapes government response. Goswami said that in India and Pakistan, pressure from the media influenced how both countries' governments handled the crisis.

Goswami advocated a global perspective for the decision makers in the media. "The attacks weren't just an Indian story. When we look at conflict, we often look at it as someone else's conflict," he said.

Past RI President Rajendra K. Saboo encouraged attendees to forge stronger ties with the media to help get the good news out about Rotary's contributions. In addition, he suggested that media professionals apply to the [certificate program at Chulalongkorn University](#), home to one of the Rotary Centers for International Studies in peace and conflict resolution. The program has already trained five journalists and several other professionals who regularly work with the media in peace and conflict resolution.

BUILDING PEACE FROM THE GROUND UP

By Joseph Derr Rotary International News -- 19 June 2009

Creating lasting peace and facing the challenges to peace-building in the 21st century were some of the topics discussed at the second Rotary World Peace Symposium.



Humankind stands at a crossroads, said Paul Rogers, an expert in international security, at the opening plenary session on Thursday, 18 June.

"The period between 1945 and 2045 will be the century where we will have to learn to live with the ability to destroy ourselves," said Rogers, a professor of peace studies at the University of Bradford, home to one of the [Rotary Centers for International Studies in peace and conflict resolution](#). Nations tend to fall back on military options to resolve conflict rather than looking at underlying factors, he said.

The two-day symposium in Birmingham, England, provides a forum for lively discussion and networking opportunities for hundreds of Rotary World Peace Fellows, alumni, peace experts, and Rotarians. Topics discussed at the symposium included migration, development, religion, and ethnicity.

In his talk about the role of development in peace-building, David Chick, a 2005-07 peace fellow from Australia, discussed his field experience in Papua New Guinea, where he worked as director for Pacific programs at AusAID.

"Development is giving an individual an opportunity to use his or her talents to benefit society," said Chick. And simple projects can be effective, he added.

For example, to curb roadside assaults, rapes, and thefts, Chick devised a simple communications plan so local officials could use inexpensive megaphones to make announcements to roadside vendors about safety. Violence decreased, and "the megaphones became the biggest show in town, sometimes attracting as many as 5,000 people gathering to listen," said Chick. "It was low cost but also built a lasting security by involving beneficiaries in the process."

Etsuko Teranishi, a 2005-07 peace fellow from Japan who has worked for nongovernmental organizations in Cambodia and Indonesia, said that after a peace agreement is signed, the real work begins. "It is critical to focus on working toward political, social, and economic development that will sustain peace," said Teranishi. "Economic development is really part of the peace-building process."

Rogers said he was optimistic about the future, adding that Rotary World Peace Fellows will help drive the peace agenda forward, an observation reiterated by Rotary Foundation Trustee Chair Jonathan B. Majiyagbe.

"Rotary's investment in peace in the world is reaping rewards through the Rotary Centers program," Majiyagbe said.

DESMOND TUTU ENCOURAGES WORKING FOR PEACE

By Arnold R. Grahl Rotary International News -- 18 June 2009

Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu encouraged Rotary World Peace Fellows and young Rotarians to "go for it" in working for world peace.

"I have a high admiration for young people. I believe very strongly in the fact that they are dreamers," Tutu said during a press conference at the Hilton Birmingham Metropole in Birmingham, England, before his keynote address at the Rotary World Peace Symposium 18 June at the National Exhibition Centre.

"This is why I accepted the invitation to come to the peace symposium. Rotary peace fellows are a fantastic bunch of human beings. They believe, and I believe, it is possible to have a world without war. It is possible to have a world without hunger."

Tutu cited Rotary's efforts to [eradicate polio](#) as an example of what the organization can do.

"Look at polio. When they started out saying they wanted to eradicate polio, a lot of people said you ought to have your head read," he said. "Now there are only four countries where polio is endemic. This is fantastic. It is going to happen, and it is fantastic."

Hundreds of peace fellows, Rotary International and Rotary Foundation program alumni, and Rotarians are convening in Birmingham to attend the Rotary World Peace Symposium and Rotary Alumni Celebration 18-20 June. In addition to Tutu, other major speakers include Jan Egeland, director of the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, and Jean-François Rischard, an international consultant and former vice president of the World Bank.

In responding to a question about recent conflicts in Africa, Tutu said it is important to keep a historical perspective to remain positive about peace. He noted that Europe went through some dark times during the past century, including two world wars.

"What gives me a great deal of hope in Africa is looking at the history of Europe," he said. "Millions and millions have been killed. We tend to forget."

Arnoldas Pranckevicius, a 2002-04 peace fellow from Lithuania who is now an administrator with the European Parliament, said Tutu's presence at the symposium is inspirational and gives the Rotary Centers for International Studies enhanced visibility. He said the program has had a profound impact on his life.

"Today we are 400 alumni, still a small group and very young, but potentially a powerful network, a soft power," Pranckevicius said. Through the Rotary experience, he added, alumni have forged close friendships and work every day for peace.

TUTU: "YOU AND I ARE CREATED FOR GOODNESS"

By Arnold R. Grahl Rotary International News -- 18 June 2009

Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu said Rotary's dedication to peace in the world makes God smile.



During his keynote address Thursday, 18 June, at the Rotary World Peace Symposium, Tutu shared how he envisions God looking down on His creation and crying when He sees all the bad things His children are doing to each other. But, Tutu said, then God looks again and sees Rotary.

"God begins to smile through His tears, and the sun shines through. God says that is exactly why I created them, for goodness," Tutu said. "You and I are created for goodness. You are helping wipe the tears from God's eyes."

Tutu, a Nobel Peace Prize recipient from South Africa, was the keynote speaker at the second Rotary World Peace Symposium in Birmingham, England. For two days, attendees will take part in discussion groups to share ideas and strategies for enhancing peace in the world. The event also builds stronger bonds between Rotary World Peace Fellows, Rotarians, and alumni through social events and networking.

Izabela Pereira, a 2005-07 peace fellow from Argentina, said it was not so much what Tutu said, but the way he said it, that impressed her.

"His way of approaching the subject is inspiring, refreshing," Pereira said. "He carries an immense air of authority that is overwhelming."

Francisco Benavides, a 2002-04 peace fellow from Mexico, said Tutu speaks with a lot of authority. "I think it is encouraging to see someone like him who has been fighting for peace as long as he has, who still believes there is hope."

Tutu also addressed terrorism, asserting that labeling groups as terrorists sometimes does more to hinder peace than help it. "One person's terrorist is another person's freedom fighter," he said.

"When you negotiate, you are not negotiating with your friends. You are negotiating with your enemy -- and often, with the most loathsome enemy," he said. "You don't get to pick who represents the enemy."

Syeda Uddin, a 2002-04 peace fellow from the United States, found Tutu's candor refreshing.

"It is great he had the courage to say the things he said," she explained. "Some of the things he said were very controversial. But because of who he is, his words have an impact."

JOKE OF THE WEEK

A new priest noticed a group of boys playing with a bottle of mysterious, smoking liquid on the sidewalk in front of his church. Wanting to engage the youth of the community, he approached them and asked what was in the bottle.

"It's battery acid, Father," they told him.

Realizing that this was not good and that they might get hurt, he rushed back into the church and returned with a bottle of holy water which he offered to the boys in exchange for the acid.

"What can that holy water do that so's special?" demanded the leader of the group.

"Why, I once poured some on a woman's belly and she passed a baby," boasted the priest.

"That's nothing," replied the youth. "I poured some of this acid on a cat's butt and he passed a motorcycle!"

John Mitchell, Southampton, New York

MEETING SCHEDULE

Jun 21 st -24 th	International Convention – Birmingham UK
Jun 29 th	Officer Installation Dinner
June 30 th	Ambassadorial Scholarship Application Deadline
Jul 6 th	NO MEETING
Jul 13 th	Mike Healy – Sleeping Giant Build
Jul 20 th	Cook Out at Camp Mountain Laurel (YMCA) 6-8PM

Of the things we think, say, or do...

