



Rotary International in Ireland District 1160

District Governor's Newsletter February 2012 – World Understanding Month

My Fellow Rotarians,

February is World Understanding Month which includes the anniversary of the first Rotary club meeting on 23 February 1905. Rotary International (RI) recognises 23 February as World Understanding and Peace Day. We as Rotarians are asked in this month to provide programs for our club meetings and undertake special activities that emphasize understanding and goodwill as essential for world peace.

Things we might consider doing this month could include inviting international speakers, an Ambassadorial Scholar, past or present, Youth Exchange students, GSE participants and people with international backgrounds and experience generally. We could usefully address issues of culture, migration and the changing multi ethnic face of modern Ireland. Why not ask someone or some group to come to our club, tell us about themselves, their ethnic background and ask them to put on some entertainment for the club. February is an ideal month to launch an international community service project or make contact with a Rotary club in another country. Club Presidents might recall from PEPS last March being given the details of a District Governor in another district and being asked to make contact with a Rotary club in that District; now might be a good time to follow up on this.

Across the world many of our 1.25 million brothers and sisters have many different ways of giving service to others, having fellowship and generally getting things done. Have a look at the Rotary E Club of Singapore. You will find them at <http://www.rotaryclub3310.net> Meet their president Rotarian Tan May Yan and have a look at their interesting Rotary club. When you have done this travel around the world (from your office or sitting room couch of course) to the Rotary E Club of South West USA at <http://www.recswusa.org> See how they do their business, who their members are and how they meet and give service. Wouldn't it be a Rotary like gesture to send both these E Clubs a greeting from your Rotary Club in this Rotary World Understanding Month?

What about closer to home? How do we relate with other Rotary Clubs across RIBI. Are we twinned with another Rotary Club in our own District, in RIBI or somewhere else in the world? The subject of twinning might make a good topic for discussion at our next Club meeting. Maybe an article on twinning and world understanding for the next edition of COGS or perhaps RIBI's bi monthly magazine, Rotary Today or, be really bold and send an article to The Rotarian, Rotary International's official monthly magazine first published in 1911, one hundred and one years ago. Each April is Rotary Magazine Month. To celebrate Rotary Magazine Month why not start an article now for publication in April – there's no time like the present.

In the context of world understanding have a look at how you and your Rotary Club engages with The Rotary Foundation and International Service. One of our District strategic goals is

to Support the Rotary Foundation. Is your Rotary Club participating in a humanitarian programme? Is your Rotary Club participation in any of the Foundation's educational programmes i.e. Ambassadorial Scholarships, Peace Scholarships and Group Study Exchange (GSE)? I see in my service as DG the amount that Rotarians in District 1160 contribute to Foundation annually and am constantly amazed how little we avail of the programmes provided by the foundation. Every Rotary Club should nominate a candidate for these programmes every year. Have a look at the Presidents Guide at <http://www.rotary.ie/presidents/index.php> which will give you the application deadlines for these programmes many of which will have passed for this Rotary year by now. However, these opportunities appear every year and notwithstanding the changes that Future Vision will bring to us in 2013 there will always be opportunities for Rotary Clubs to nominate candidates to compete for places on these very prestigious and sought after programmes.

Each of us as individual Rotarians should make a personal giving commitment such as Sustaining Membership, Foundation Benefactor or one of the other avenues. Our Clubs should have a commitment to giving also. Consider also when has your Rotary Club applied for a Foundation Grant? One of the next major organisational challenges facing us is the reorganisation of The Rotary Foundation under Future Vision to make it more efficient and effective and to improve the impact of our service internationally. Watch out for information on this in the coming months.

Our district Strategy mandates us to develop sustainable and effective service projects at Club, Community, Vocational and International levels and to expand leadership development opportunities at all levels to fully utilise the talents and skills of Rotarians. Our International Service is crucial to our World Understanding; we are all very familiar with Rombo, Jaipur Limb, Shelter Box, Life Straws and the Jole Rider's (bikes4Africa) project to name but a few. International Service is one of the five avenues of service and for our Clubs to be effective we must have an International Service programme in place. This programme can be even more effective if we do it in conjunction with other clubs as it will then have networking and fellowship benefits. Working in collaboration with another Rotary Club in another District can contribute to Rotary's drive for goodwill, peace and understanding among people of the world.

As I sign off and wish you all the very best in your Rotary service in your clubs and communities at home and abroad I'll leave you with a final thought relating to the Rotary International Convention in Bangkok this year. The Convention runs from 6 to 9 May and promises to be a truly exceptional gathering which will, as it always does, contribute to World Understanding. It provides a unique opportunity to see Rotary International in the splendour of its diversity and once you have seen it your perspective on the world we live in will have been changed forever. It would be wonderful to see you there.

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