

# LitRAG

## Literacy Rotarian Action Group Newsletter

June 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:

- Use the **LitRAG Literacy Grant Application Form** available from [rotary.tas@gmail.com](mailto:rotary.tas@gmail.com) for your entry.
- Tell LitRAG how your club would use the US\$500 if successful.
- The **closing date** for receipt of your club entry is 15 October 2018. No late entries accepted.
- Email your application form, supported by documents and photographs, to LitRAG: [rotary.tas@gmail.com](mailto:rotary.tas@gmail.com)



**Above:** LitRAG Vice Chair Carolyn Johnson smiles proudly after finishing the set-up of the LitRAG display at the Rotary International 2018 Convention Toronto. Carolyn and her team have had a literacy bookmark, business cards and a range of flyers and LitRAG newsletters reproduced ready to hand out to interested Rotarians.

**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)



**Above:** Rotarians train children in effectively using the MKD tablets.

## Tablets That Cure Illiteracy

With the help of a trendy Multimedia Knowledge Delivery ('MKD') tablet, a brainchild of Rtn Kulbir Dodd of RC Poona North, **young children have the capacity to learn as well as teach and develop the literacy of adults as well as other children.**

Kulbir Dodd quit his high-paying job as an industrial engineer in the US and settled down in Pune in the late 1990s. He started his education outreach in a personal capacity and his activities were funded by his



**Above:** Children teaching parents and curing their illiteracy.

Trust, Multimedia International Research Associates.

The total population of India is approximately 1300million. There are approx. 523 million who are literate, 365 are studying to become literate while another 412 million remain illiterate (that is, they cannot read, write or count). (Statistics provided by PP Kumar Shinagare, Rotary Club of Poona North.)

### Tripartite agreement

A tripartite agreement has recently been signed between:

- MKD Multimedia Knowledge Delivery Trust
- Rotary International District 3131
- Rotary Club of Poona North

which allows for a **permanent fund** flow as a District Designation Fund to the club each year for global grant projects under the focus area, Basic Education and Literacy.

The project motivates children, adults, students, teachers and NGOs to make innovative use of MKD tablets to eradicate illiteracy based on the concept, 'Teach through Technologies of Today'.

The tablets are loaded with animated lessons called 'Akshardhara' developed as Adult/Child Education software by Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) in Marathi. It is also available in 12 other Indian regional languages. After initial training on how to use tablets and pedagogical teacher's training, tablets are distributed to all illiterate people through many NGOs operating at grass-root levels in this field.

### Major advantages of this tablet-based literacy project:

- Lowest cost of developing a person's literacy in India.
- Less need for attending a school or classroom.
- Reduced need for many qualified teachers as volunteers or lead students can make a strong impact.
- Instant use with minimum training.
- No internet, no power required as solar batteries are used.
- Exponential learning through volunteers, lead students, teachers.
- Built-in feedback system.
- Small group learning can be supportive and motivating for each other.

**Right:** (From left) Prof. Swapnil with LitRAG Chairman John Thorne, an enthusiastic student and Rtn Kulbir Dodd, the mastermind of the MKD tablets.



## Here's an idea:

Set your internet home page to [www.theliteracysite.com](http://www.theliteracysite.com) and click daily on the button 'Click Here - it's completely FREE', to donate books completely free of charge every day.

At least 113,000 books were donated in this way in 2017.

The Literacy Site Blog aims to provide informational articles and videos every day to spread literacy awareness.

## IHOPEE International Health Patient Education and Empowerment

Ihopee believes that **literacy facilitates the viability of country's development. Investors evaluate how well citizens of a country will be able to perform globally by their ability to read, write and comprehend materials.**



This non-profit organisation in East Africa seeks to offer life-changing opportunities for young people to have an education and strive for academic success.

Their Equip, Educate and Empower mission is to:

- have a library in every village
- spearhead a culture of reading and writing
- alleviate poverty by giving people an education
- equip children with the 'tools' to make their academic careers a success.

Ihopee seeks the support and collaboration of any interested Rotary Club. If you or your club can offer support in any way, please contact Ihopee Literacy Programs: [info@IHOPEE.org](mailto:info@IHOPEE.org)

Website: <https://www.Ihopee.org>

Phone: +1(813) 597 3223

PO Box 1659, Brandon, FL 33509 USA

**How can you help?** You could build a library in a village; provide solar power in a village for children to read and learn at night; purchase and supply crayons, pencils and even 'softly-used' second-hand books.



## How to Raise a Reader

From the moment you're expecting your first child, you are bombarded with messages about the importance of reading. For good reason: the benefits of reading at every stage of a child's development are well documented.

Happily, raising a reader is fun, rewarding and relatively easy.

For an extensive range of advice and suggestions, visit the [How to Raise a Reader website](#).

## Brain Changes

Looking at a word and not reading it is almost impossible, because our brains are symbol-seeking experts. But we weren't born that way.



*How the brain changes when we learn to read* is a fascinating article by Nicola Bell. [Read it at this link](#).

## Scientific Literacy

Scientific literacy has different degrees and forms; it expands and deepens over a lifetime, not just during the years in school. But the attitudes and values established toward science in the early years will shape a person's development of scientific literacy as an adult.

According to the National Academy of Sciences, **scientific literacy is the knowledge and understanding of scientific concepts and processes required for personal decision-making, participation in civic and cultural affairs and economic productivity.** A scientifically literate person will have the ability to understand, experiment, reason and interpret scientific facts and their meaning.

The OECD PISA Framework (2015) defines scientific literacy as "the ability to engage with science-related issues and with the ideas of science, as a reflective citizen." A scientifically literate person, therefore, is willing to engage in reasoned discourse about science and technology which requires various competencies of explaining, evaluating and interpreting.

Science matters. Don't forget to include it.