

## June 2022 Newsletter

### BELRAG Annual General Meeting

Thank you to BELRAG members who participated in the Annual General Meeting. We met virtually on June 28 and again on 29 July. The purpose of the meeting was to review BELRAG activities for 2022-23, discuss members' interests for future BELRAG projects and activities and to vote on the proposed slate of officers and board members for 2022-23.

#### Proposed Slate of Officers, 2022-23

Carolyn Johnson, Chair (RC Yarmouth, USA)  
 Nancy Leonhardt, Vice-Chair (RC Little Rock West, USA)  
 Courtney Doldron, Secretary (RC Willowdale, Canada)  
 Michele Bois-Gilbody, Treasurer (RC Freeport, USA)  
 Sophie Bamwoyyeraki, Cadre Technical Officer, (RC Kasangati, Uganda)

#### Continuing Board Members

Joan Littleford (RC Whitby, Canda)  
 Ashok Mahajan, (RC Mulumd, India)  
 Maria Josephine Kora Tama (RC Porto Novo, Benin)  
 Kamal Sanghvi, (RC Dhanvad, India)  
 Brenda Parsons, RC Orpington, UK  
 Rachel Thwaites-Williams (RC Gros Islet, St Lucia)

#### Welcome New Board Members (2022 - 2025)



**Tony Bloome (RC Washington Global, USA)** is the founder and Executive Director of the Mobiles for Education (mEducation) Alliance. He has specialized in the field of international development and technology for over 25 years. Tony is the President Elect for the Rotary Club of Washington Global.

**Enedelsy (Nelly) Escobar King (RC Panamá Norte)** Nelly had a long career with UNICEF which took her to live in 5 continents, occupying various positions, planning, negotiating, implementing and monitoring programs of cooperation with various governments in Latin America and Africa. She joined Rotary in 2015 and served in multiple capacities with her club, most recently as Club President. Nelly was instrumental in the development of Interact in her club. Nelly is the primary contact for the Digital Rotary Classroom Global Grant to improve access to technology in government schools in Panamá.



**John Lawrence (RC Paddington Brisbane, Australia)** John began his professional life as a civil engineer and made a mid-career change to the computer industry. He joined Rotary Club in 1988, was District Governor 1999-2000 for D9710 and served as RI Director 2008-2010. Following the creation of his Club's Educational Resource project "Teacher in a Box" in 2015, John accepted the role as Chairman when the TiB project became a District Project. The educational resource has been deployed to countries as diverse as multiple African nations, SE Asian countries and is currently deploying to nations of PNG and Vanuatu.

**Debbie Pulido (RC Baguio South)** fell in love with teaching when she became an instructor at the Philippine Military Academy. Since then, her passion for teaching extended outside the walls of the Academy – volunteering to spearhead her church's Teaching Ministries since 2013, and the Rotary Club of Baguio South's RotaRead Project since she was club president in 2020-2021



At the AGM, we heartily thanked PRID John Thorne, who is retiring from the Board. John is a charter member of BELRAG (from the earlier LITRAG), has served as Board Member and as Chair. His knowledge and passion for education, encouragement to try new ideas, and commitment to ensure strong BEL projects from the grass roots, community level have served us well. As a result, it was by unanimous acclamation that John was named BELRAG Board Member Emeritus. We will benefit from his wisdom and friendship, but he will no longer need to stay up past midnight to participate in each Board meeting. John, we thank you for your remarkable service.

Information from the meeting (recording and slides) are posted on the BELRAG website

## BELRAG at Rotary Convention: Houston



BELRAG held a great presence at the RI Convention. We were pleased to host a booth in the House of Friendship - an opportunity to showcase projects and meet Rotarians interested in supporting literacy and education. Many current members stopped by to introduce themselves and so many Rotarians spent time sharing about their projects for supporting seeing new ideas, resources, ideas and support for future programs. Several Rotarian led projects were featured at the booth. A description of each follows. Many thanks to all BELRAG members and friends who kept the booth open and staffed throughout the convention - it was a wonderful opportunity to get to know each other better and to meet Rotarians passionate about offering literacy and education in the communities where they work.



We hosted a wonderful social event at the historic Houston Public Library. It was a pleasure to visit this beautiful building and learn from our our hosts, Federico Salas-Isnardi, Director, Mayor's Office for Adult Literacy and his staff. They presented an entertaining and informational program outlining Houston's strategic plans to address and support adult literacy programs throughout the city. Houston



Adult Literacy Blueprint This was such a nice opportunity to meet Rotarians from around the world who have a strong interest in literacy and improving education in their own community. Federico and the staff from the Adult Literacy office were wonderful hosts, sharing their expertise and this wonderful historic treasure of downtown Houston.



BELRAG was honored to be invited to host a break out session at the convention: How Rotarians Use Technology Programs to Bridge Gaps in Student Learning. Our excellent panelists represented a wide variety of programs and approaches. Included were Heather Lennie (WeRead, a comprehensive K-6 online literacy activities), Rajendra Rai (Rotary in India's approach to stemming learning gaps as a result of pandemic related school interruptions) Nelly Escobar King (a Global Grant to create Digital Rotary Classroom that improve access to technology in government schools in Panamá) and Bruky Tigabu (founder of the educational multimedia enterprise Whiz Kids Workshop that uses television, and classroom libraries to improve early childhood education in Ethiopia) To share these programs more widely, a webinar is being planned that will include each these excellent approaches to education.

## Want to get involved with BELRAG?

There are several ways to get involved with BELRAG and help us promote quality literacy and education projects among the Rotary world. We are looking for:

- Technical advisors to assist with Rotarians planning grants and projects.
- Communication Team
  - Newsletter: editors to set up format, writers to create content, share great Rotary stories
  - Facebook page - share and post activities, information
- Webinars: We have an ambitious plan for BEL-related webinars in the coming year. Do you have an area of expertise or a program that would be of interest and benefit to Rotarians? Individuals with technical expertise to manage webinar production are needed.
- Membership Team - help us connect with Rotarians to get involved and stay in touch with BELRAG members by promoting membership & resources. Goals for the coming year are to reach out to Rotaractors and to facilitate better opportunities for Spanish speaking members For more information: [cfj2@icloud.com](mailto:cfj2@icloud.com)

## Block Grants Promote Summer Reading

Without daily reading practice, children can lose up to three months of literacy skills over the summer. In the aftermath of school closings and decreased access to summer learning programs, children are at a higher risk of losing greater reading skills than ever before. However, reading at least 20 minutes a day can significantly boost vocabulary and prevent learning loss.

**The 100 Days of Reading Challenge** is an initiative hosted by Save the Children, USA and offered to Rotary Clubs to help bridge the summer reading gap. Congratulations to the 14 Rotary clubs awarded these grants. Each club is partnering with their local community library, local schools and health care providers to provide incentives to keep kids reading throughout the summer. A variety of approaches are being used: community reading events, story hour programs, family reading projects, book donations and incentives for daily reading. Clubs promoted the programs across television, radio, print and social media - several creating the advertisements in multiple languages to reach out to more families in the community. Different communities, different approaches - but all intended to keep kids reading to keep their reading fluency and comprehension skills sharp when school is not in session - and, of course, to reinforce the wonderful world of books!

Congratulations to the following Rotary Clubs for their commitment to keep kids reading and for submitting a terrific project proposal that enabled them to receive one of these grants. Our great thanks and appreciation to **Save the Children** for their continued partnership and generosity in making these block grants available.

1. RC Hartford, Wisconsin
2. RC Boone (Iowa)
3. RC Midland Noon (Michigan)
4. RC Tipton, (Iowa)
5. RC Carlsbad (New Mexico)
6. RC West Wichita (Kansas)
7. RC Chicago Lakes (Minnesota)



8. RC Bad Axe (Michigan)
9. RC Forrest City (Arkansas)
10. RC Marianna (Arkansas)
11. Carroll County Rotary Youth Literacy Foundation (Arkansas)
12. RC Bloomfield (Iowa)
13. RC Tulelake (California)
14. RC Northfield (Minnesota)



## Programs of Scale Grant 2022-23

**Application process open - Program concept notes due 1 August**



The \$2 million Programs of Scale grant will be awarded to a member-led, evidence-based program that is ready to scale up over three to five years to increase its impact in one or more of Rotary's areas of focus. We're excited to see the work Rotary members are doing to solve problems, improve communities, measure results, and increase our impact. In the first step of the 2022-23 Programs of Scale competitive grant process, The Rotary Foundation will accept concept notes

summarizing scalable programs. Applicants should be **qualified** Rotary and Rotaract clubs and districts that have long-term plans to significantly expand their successful service projects in partnership with other organizations. Concept notes can be submitted now through 1 August

[Learn more about Programs of Scale](#)

# BASIC EDUCATION & LITERACY MONTH

## \$500 AWARDS

### CELEBRATE & BUILD AN AWARENESS OF ROTARY'S COMMITMENT TO BASIC EDUCATION AND LITERACY IN OUR COMMUNITIES

#### FOUR AWARDS OF \$500 (USD)

THREE AWARDS FOR ROTARY PROJECTS  
ONE AWARD FOR ROTARACT PROJECTS

Applications must be received by 30 September, 2022  
(Project should be currently implemented or ongoing)

To enter:

- Describe your project: tell how your club decided the need, what Rotarians are doing to address that need (any community partners)
- Explain the impact, and tell who benefits from the project
- How are Rotarians involved?
- How is the project promoted?
- 2-3 photos (include a signed release for photos of children)

Include:

- Name, contact info of Rotarian submitting application
- Club name & District number
- City, State/province/Country

Send to: [literacyaward@BELRAG.org](mailto:literacyaward@BELRAG.org)

For further information, guidelines, project evaluation rubric  
[BELRAG.org](http://BELRAG.org)

Rotarian submitting project must be a current member of BELRAG



## Rotary and UNICEF: A 30-YEAR GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP



Since Rotary and The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) began our partnership in 1988, as founding members of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI), we have played a fundamental role in dramatically decreasing the number of polio endemic countries.

Rotary and UNICEF have recently released a handbook, Local Collaboration Framework, to guide partnerships between UNICEF country and regional offices with Rotary clubs and districts. The handbook includes guidance, policies, templates, and other tools that will empower UNICEF and Rotary to work well together . It outlines 10 steps for successful collaboration. The long term, large scale changes that children and young people need are possible through concerted action. Together, Rotary and UNICEF can help create a better future for all children

Download the Rotary-UNICEF Local Collaboration Framework [English](#) [Español](#)

## BELRAG Featured Projects at the RI Convention, 2022



**Sing Out and READ (SOAR)** has a mission to save at-risk, struggling young readers, ages 6-12, from illiteracy through the power of singing. SOAR’s Family Literacy Project or FLiP is an individualized, e-learning reading intervention solution delivered to children on a tablet or computer. This sing-to-read program is evidence-based and raises a child one full reading grade level in just three months’ time in a cost-effective way. SOAR partners with schools and the community to provide a fun program that disguises learning through gamification – children love the program and parents see the results. FMI: [Erica Hardison](#) [SingOutAndRead.org](http://SingOutAndRead.org)



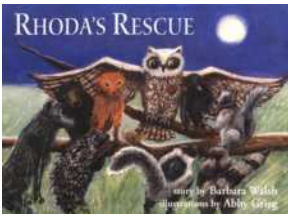
**The Free Reading Program** is a professional, comprehensive, free and fun Kindergarten to Grade 6 online English literacy program. The program has over 260 learning units and over 3600 interactive learning activities. Designed to engage young learners and instill confidence, the activities’ auditory, visual, and tactile elements are based on leading educational research and the most thoroughly proven and effective teaching practices. The new **Free Reading Program PRO** was developed based on feedback from parents and teachers who love our program content but want a way to better manage its delivery and oversight. It incorporates a Learning Management System (LMS) [Heather Lennie](#) [www.BeReading.org](http://www.BeReading.org)



**Tsehai Loves Learning** is a children's educational platform that provides materials that drive learning and behavioral change. The platform focuses on providing critical information on health, literacy, social and emotional learning in order to give young children a jump-start on education. Tsehai is available as a television show, a radio show and a book series to accommodate the diverse needs of young children across Ethiopia. Supplementary books (which are available in 7 local languages), flash cards, posters, tracing books are available for purchase and are given to underprivileged children and underfunded schools across the country. Rotarians in Addis Ababa collaborated with Whiz Kids, the result is that their project was a finalist in Rotary’s Programs of Scale Grant (2022) [Brukty Tigabu](#) [www.whizkidsworkshop.com](http://www.whizkidsworkshop.com)



**LORE (Love of Reading Early)** is a community based literacy promotion by Rotarians of International Falls (MN, USA) to foster a love of reading in our youngest children. Their vision is for a community (and world) where every child is read to beginning at birth. Rotarians work with health care providers to promote reading and provide books for children at well-child checks. They partner with other agencies to support the Dolly Parton Imagination Library. LORE Libraries (free children’s book resources) are constructed and located where families frequent: schools, grocery stores, social service offices, etc) ROaR (Reach out and Read) Rotarians visit local classrooms to read to and with young children. [Rotarian Jeff Hardwig](#)



**Rhoda Reads™** is an early literacy program designed for Rotarians to engage in the development of our youngest community learners at the most opportune time – ages 0-5. With the Rhoda Reads™ program, we provide training to our Rotarians on early childhood development, and then equip each Rotarian with a Rhoda Reads™ Tool Kit: a variety of books for children up to age 5 and an adorable stuffed owl named Rhoda (our program mascot). Rotarians are matched with a local early childcare provider which they will regularly visit and spend time reading to children 0-5 years of age. Rhoda Reads™ also

includes a Tool Kit for elementary-aged kids. Pulitzer Prize-winning Maine children's book author Barbara Walsh collaborated with Waterville Rotarians to write "Rhoda's Rescue" - our own children's book featuring Rhoda the Owl teaching her fellow woodland creatures about the ideals of Rotary. It is available in English, Spanish, and French. [Tina Chapman](#) [Rhoda Reads](#)



The [mEducation Alliance](#), a global education non-profit, is teaming up with the Rotary Club of Washington Global, the Rotary Action Groups for *Basic Education and Literacy* and for *Refugees and Forced Displacement* and several refugee-serving partners to support a *Wondrous Learning* site for Afghan – and other – refugees in Riverdale, Maryland. The

"Wondrous Learning Center" partners will begin programming in July 2022 at the Association's Community Building. The Center will be a welcoming place for children, adults, and families to access educational, career and professional services. Activities will focus on Afghan children and teenagers by providing play- and game-based educational experiences to build cognitive, team-building, critical-thinking, and other leadership skills.

The Afghan Kids Support Hub offers hundreds of free books and other digital resources for Afghan Refugee children. Access the content here We hope that the training activities and lessons learned at this first Wondrous Learning Center will be replicable and scalable in a variety of US and international locations. [Tony Bloome](#)



**The T-E-A-C-H Program**

Rotary India Literacy Mission

**Teacher Support**

1,80,707 Teachers Trained

30,972 teacher recognized with the Nation Builder Award

**E-learning**

School curriculum developed and shared with Government during Pandemic

RILM provided Curriculum based E-learning modules of all subjects from Class 1-10.

English & Hindi content televised 24x7 through 10 PM eVidya NCERT TV channels. benefitted 10 crore children of 12 states.

**Adult Literacy**

88,005 Adults made literate through Diksha & Vidya

**Child Development**

44,190 Children have been identified & enrolled in the Asha Kiran program through 39 NGOs from 15 states & 2 union territory of India

**Happy School**

3,112 Happy Schools across the country

3,139 School libraries made across India

For more information

[www.rotaryteach.org](http://www.rotaryteach.org) [program@rotaryteach.org](mailto:program@rotaryteach.org)

The **Rotary India Literacy Mission (RILM)** aims to work towards Total literacy and Quality Education in India. To achieve that RILM have designed a comprehensive program called "T-E-A-C-H" (Teacher Support, E-learning, Adult Literacy, Child Development, Happy School)

Each of these programs has a specific focus and it is interlinked with each other in achieving the common goal of bringing total literacy and improving the learning outcomes of primary education, in various parts of the country. Understanding the enormity of the task, we have decided to adopt, in implementing T-E-A-C-H, a strategy of meaningful co-operation with all actors in the field, by forging strong partnerships with the Government, Corporate, National/ State specific Non-Governmental Organisations as well as international organisations working in various segments of this country wide endeavour. [communications@rotaryteach.org](mailto:communications@rotaryteach.org)

How is your club involved in supporting literacy and education projects? Share your stories through the BELRAG newsletter. Articles should be 500 words and include a photo or two. Send to: Carolyn Johnson at [cfj2@mac.com](mailto:cfj2@mac.com)