

## November 2022 Newsletter

### Literacy Awards 2022: Acknowledging and Supporting Club Initiatives

For the past five years, BELRAG emphasizes Rotary's commitment to basic education and literacy by offering clubs and districts an opportunity to share their project. Four projects are selected to receive a \$500 award. Projects are evaluated based on their demonstration of identifying a community need, broad impact for beneficiaries, promotion to create public awareness or Rotary's involvement with education and literacy, Rotarian involvement, and the overall effectiveness of the project. We were pleased to receive project applications from all over the Rotary world. The quality of the projects was excellent - it was a difficult decision to choose one over the others. Our congratulations to Easley Rotary (USA), Maraval Rotary (Trinidad), Manhattan Rotary (USA) and Education & Children's Issues Rotary (Provisional, Guatemala).

Thanks to the BELRAG members who served on the review committee. Led by Joan Littleford (Canada) and Brenda Parsons (England), reviewers included Courtney Doldron (Canada), Frank Romano (USA) and Sophie Bamwoyeraki (Uganda).

Be inspired by the projects selected for the 2022 Literacy Awards. Detailed descriptions of the projects (and those selected in previous years) are posted on the BELRAG website. If one seems like a potential fit for your community, be sure to get in touch with the project developers. Throughout the year, additional notable projects will be featured in the newsletter. Congratulations to the award recipients.

### The Rampanalgas Digital Learning Centre, Trinidad

Located in the rural village of Rampanalgas in northeast Trinidad is the Rampanalgas St Anthony RC Primary School. The community has two central institutions, the primary school and the RC church, located on the same compound. The school compound is also where community events and meetings take place. Students attending the Rampanalgas St Anthony RC Primary School come from low-income families significantly impacted by a loss of income due to the pandemic. Prior to our intervention, the school had a library and computer room with obsolete materials and equipment. Such facilities in public schools are not a priority to be upgraded or refurbished.



A Digital Learning Centre is valuable to the school's students. They come from households that experience socio-economic challenges such as poverty, inadequate public service access, and high unemployment. Students coming from such circumstances are less likely to have technology at home and more likely to be behind when it comes to skills needed in a world that is becoming more digital. For children in poverty, libraries are typically the only possible source of reading material.

Access to a library and digital tools profoundly impacts literacy, which has an effect on students' academic achievement. With a re-established library, students have access to a welcoming space where they can explore a diverse selection of good-quality books and enjoy reading for pleasure. These good quality books include age-appropriate literature by Caribbean authors, which is more relatable to them. This space has become a place where all students feel welcomed and are encouraged to grow and learn since we only get better at what we practice – that includes reading. Good reading skills are essential throughout students' lives.

Opportunities for teacher professional development and continuing education lead to an improvement in their skills that can boost student outcomes. With a world that is becoming more digital, this Centre is designed to equip the teachers with pedagogical approaches to incorporating tech with traditional learning methods. The

digital learning centre now becomes a place for teacher professional development, where technology sessions and other workshops can be conducted.

The school is a safe space and is respected by the community since it is one of the few public institutions to access. Past students from the community, now in Secondary School, often return to the Primary School for assistance from former teachers. In the early part of the pandemic, when secondary school students in the community did not yet have electronic devices or internet accessibility, they used the facilities on the school compound and have a teacher tutor them. The digital learning centre is now a place with accessibility of resources to serve the wider community.



With a library, the school can apply to the Ministry of Education to have a librarian assigned to their school. An assigned librarian will be a resource for students who help support literate and informed learners who can thrive in a digital and knowledge-based world.

The Rotary Club of Maraval has partnered with local NGO, Let's Read, to re-establish school libraries in three other primary schools over the last five (5) years. It is worth noting that the simple fact that differentiates this endeavour is that this is a Digital Learning Centre in a rural, underserved community.

Let's Read has been our primary partner for re-establishing the library space. This partnership includes sourcing age-appropriate, high-quality books, including those by local & regional authors, and library materials such as baskets, containers, labels, stationery, posters and other miscellaneous items. A further benefit to a partnership with Let's Read is the support of teacher professional development. After re-establishing a primary school library space, Let's Read's qualified educators facilitate a workshop to acquaint the teaching staff with the library space and encourage them to focus on researched-based instructional practices linked to improved student literacy.

The Rampanalgas Digital Learning Centre offers a more comfortable environment and can be an engaging and interactive facility. It will contribute to the rich and diverse ways of the intellectual life of the Rampanalgas St. Anthony RC Primary School and the wider community.

**Maraval Rotary, Trinidad & Tobago, District 7030**

**Adanna Narine**

[adanna.lewis@gmail.com](mailto:adanna.lewis@gmail.com)

**Noelle Patricia Ramcharan**

[miss\\_pat@hotmail.com](mailto:miss_pat@hotmail.com)

**Get involved with BELRAG's outreach and impact.** Opportunities to become involved include:

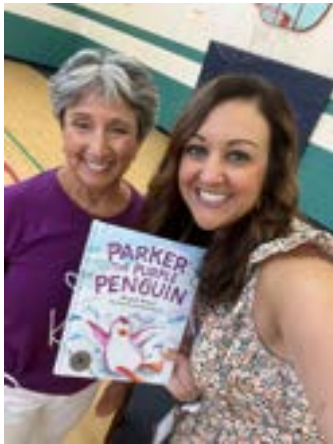
- **Newsletter:** identify great Rotary stories of impactful projects - local or international. An editor is needed to do design and layout
- **Website:** oversee our website so that it is current. No tech expertise is needed (we have a great webmaster to post the information) - help review the site, share new information.
- **Social media:** help develop and support BELRAG social media - share our good work!
- **Technical expertise:** join a topic-focused team to provide technical advice to project developers and share stories of best practice. Collaborate on topics such as early literacy/education, education technology, students with disabilities, adult literacy, mentoring youth, girls education, library support or development, professional development for teachers.

To get involved, contact Carolyn Johnson [carolyn@belrag.org](mailto:carolyn@belrag.org)

## Easley Rotarians in Action at Camp iRock

In 2022, the Rotary Club of Easley, SC partnered with the School District of Pickens County, the Pickens County YMCA and United Way of Pickens County on their children's literacy initiative called Camp iRock. Held in three locations throughout the county, struggling students in completed Grades K-3<sup>rd</sup> grade received remedial reading instruction during school vacation.

The Rotary Club of Easley developed a special initiative to read to classrooms of Easley-area Camp iRock students called "Easley Rotarians in Action at Camp iRock". Every Wednesday during the six-week Camp iRock program, approximately 6 Easley Rotarians met with classrooms of approximately 20 students during their classroom reading instruction portion of this summer program. Easley Rotarians would introduce themselves and shared about their profession (one of our club's VOCATIONAL goals). Easley Rotarians would then read to the students several age-appropriate books that has been selected by the reading teacher. One Easley Rotarian brought his puppets and used them to read to his classroom of students. Another Easley Rotarian, a dentist, brought toothbrushes to give to each student in his classroom following reading several books to students. Another Rotarian brought KIND breakfast bars, distributed them and encouraged his classroom of students to be kind to other students, their parents and their teachers.



*Author Marybeth Wishart & Camp iRock Director*

The Rotary Club of Easley purchased a copy of Parker, the Purple Penguin for each of the 175 students attending the Easley-area Camp iRock. The book was selected by the School District of Pickens County because it aligned perfectly with the curriculum of Camp iRock, and because it emphasized the Seven Strengths of a Super Reader instructional-strategy, utilized in the classroom. We invited the author, Marybeth Wishart, to come to Camp iRock to read her book to the students and talk about her inspiration to write the story. The smiles on the faces of 175 students when they met a real-live author, and when they were given their own, personalized copy of this popular book were priceless!

**Rotary Club of Easley, South Carolina, USA District 7750**

**Mark Eisengrein**

[meisengrein@uwpickens.org](mailto:meisengrein@uwpickens.org)



*Easley Rotarian Dr. E.W. Rabun speaking with a classroom of 20 Camp iRock students*

### What's Next?

**December - Education Supporting Children with Disabilities:** Rotarians providing access to education for students with disabilities will be featured.

**February and March - Science, Technology Engineering & Mathematics (STEM):** How do Rotarians encourage and support an interest in STEM? We will discuss quality programs from developing basic numeracy skills to encouraging girls' interest in STEM to ensuring teachers are well trained in teaching maths and sciences and using technology to enhance learning. A broad topic that will STEM two newsletters!

**April - Early Childhood Education:** an investment in quality early learning - the physical, cognitive, linguistic and socio-emotional development of children from birth to early primary school - is shown to have a profound impact on brain development. In April, BELRAG will share how Rotarians are involved in initiatives that support parents and communities and clubs support quality early learning programs.

If your club or district is involved in projects involving these themes, **share your story with us.** Articles should be 500 - 750 words. Include 2-3 photos - especially those showing Rotary As People of Action (be sure that you have permission for photos to be published!) Submit your article to [carolyn@litrag.org](mailto:carolyn@litrag.org)



## Rotary Early Learning Partnership: Expanding Early Literacy Opportunities

The Rotary Early Learning Partnership, was established in fall 2021 by the Manhattan Rotary Club of Manhattan, Kansas, in cooperation with partners throughout a multi-county region of northeastern Kansas. The roots of our club's interest in childhood education lie much deeper. For several years we have thanked speakers at our weekly meetings by donating new books to local elementary-school libraries in their names. We have also donated dictionaries and thesauruses to students. A couple of years ago we initiated a program that allows our local school system to issue certificates to students to purchase used books at The Dusty Bookshelf, a local bookstore.

As we attempted to ramp up our efforts in this area, we determined to adhere to certain principles:

1. Emphasize early education, i.e., pre-kindergarten or ages 0-5.
2. Cover a larger geographic area than just the city of Manhattan, to include smaller communities and rural areas.
3. Strengthen and support existing initiatives rather than to duplicate or compete with them.
4. Draw upon the expertise of people who knew more than we did about
5. Include more than one component in the project rather than "put all our eggs in one basket" in anticipation that any single component might encounter unforeseen difficulties.



*Rotarians unloading book donations to be distributed to families with young readers.*



*Young readers involved with DPIL share a moment with life sized Dolly Parton cut-out.*

We talked with potential partners, including early-childhood professionals, other school officials, the director of the local United Way, and librarians. Our partnership ultimately included community foundation officials, extension personnel, and members of other Rotary clubs, in addition to these early partners – a total of more than 100 individuals. We work in three areas: expanding the Dolly Parton Imagination Library to four additional counties, support Public Library Early Reading Programs and expanding the Dusty Bookshelf Certificate program to Families with Early Learners. We received a donation of 7200 Disney Books, intended to be distributed at no cost.

We have increased the number of families enrolled in DPIL from 200 to 1800. The Club also partnered with the North Central Kansas Libraries System (NCKLS) and public libraries throughout the region to enhance their reading programs. Librarians distributed Disney books to their patrons in support of their summer reading programs. NCKLS hosted a conference on "Stimulating Stupendous Storytimes" for librarians throughout the 12-county NCKLS region, including all the counties in the Rotary Early Learning Partnership. In cooperation with the Dusty Bookshelf Used Book Program, the Club provided 175 certificates (\$10 each) to families to purchase books for children 0 to 5. The certificates were distributed to families by librarians, early childhood educators,

members of other Rotary clubs, and other partners. Totaling all counties, we were able to reach 385 children, 175 parents and caregivers and 42 early learning professionals.

Through this year-long commitment and the many components, the Club has established education and literacy as a signature cause documented in our newly created strategic plan and formalized the commitment by establishing the Education, Books and Literacy Grants Committee. Design and implementation of the project has been a collective effort with shared responsibilities, involving primarily members of the Manhattan Rotary Club, but also members of the Manhattan Konza Rotary Club and its new satellite club. Communication with other Rotarians in District 5710 through the monthly online newsletter and representation at the district conference has raised widespread awareness in our part of Kansas of basic education and literacy issues.

**Manhattan Rotary Club, Kansas, USA, District 5710**

**Tara Claussen**

[taraclaurotary@gmail.com](mailto:taraclaurotary@gmail.com)

**Bill Richter**

[wrichter@ksu.edu](mailto:wrichter@ksu.edu)

## A Mobile Library to Promote Family Literacy in Guatemala



*Mom and daughter sharing a reading moment with a book from the mobile library.*

Over the past 16 months, our Rotary Club has created and launched a mobile library in Guatemala in partnership with four local educational organizations (NGOs) to support education and literacy. We believe that by increasing literacy and strengthening family involvement in the education of children, we are also supporting the Rotary pillars of promoting peace, growing local economies, and assisting mothers and children. For this reason, we have created a sustainable, rotating, lending library to benefit young children and their families.

Our Rotary Education & Children's Issues Provisional Club has developed a traveling library model that is viable and feasible. We manage the Mobile Library Program which is implemented on the ground by four school/project directors who are also members of our club. Many participants in our club are trained educators, the majority are fully bilingual, and we have encouraged all members to be involved in the Mobile Library Program from

choosing the books for the library to writing the accompanying activities for each book to monitoring and evaluating the program. In addition, with the aid of literacy experts in our club, we have been able to offer a professional development component to the program for local educators who are partnering with the mobile library.

Reading a book at home may seem like a common activity in developed countries. However, sharing a picture book with family members is a rarity within the majority of Guatemalan homes. Most children never have the opportunity to explore books, and to cultivate a joy for reading. Home libraries are rare.

Our Mobile Library program brings Spanish language books into the homes of children and encourages families to come together in exploring picture books. All books are carefully selected to include appropriate cultural representation, accurate reading levels for our students and concepts related to the Rotary Four Way Test. We have developed a teacher's manual that includes activities for teachers and parents to use as an accompaniment to the books.

Among the four organizations, 420 students (grades K-2) have directly benefited from our project in the first year of implementation. In addition, at least 800 family members who have accompanied a child on their reading journey have benefited. Finally, 8 teachers who have been professionally trained in reading engagement have gained new teaching strategies. These 'lead teachers' have multiplied their learning by replicating trainings with other K-2 teachers in their schools, expanding the outreach. The project will have an impact on students and families long into the future as it is intended to be repeated year after year.



*Story time - sharing books in class*

The PR team for each organization will include at least one article about the Mobile Library Program in their organization's newsletters and on their websites. Messaging will emphasize the organization's connection with Rotary, enhancement of existing programs, and the impact it has had on their communities. We hope that our mobile library model may be replicated for clubs to use around the world!

**Education & Children's Issues Rotary, District 7780 (Provisional)**

**Amanda Flayer**

[amandaflayer@gmail.com](mailto:amandaflayer@gmail.com)

## BELRAG Seeks Support for Global Grant to Assist Education in Ukraine

BELRAG is collaborating with Rotarians from RC Dnipro Novyi to develop a Global Grant to support education for children in Ukraine who can no longer attend school, as a result of the ongoing hostilities.

Since the start of hostilities in Ukraine, more than 13 million people have been forced to leave Ukraine, many of them are internally displaced persons, most of them are families with children. Currently, the education and future of children is completely uncertain, and the efforts of the Ministry of Science and Education of Ukraine to ensure educational processes are not guaranteed.

Many children have not received proper education since February 24, 2022 due to the lack of access to schools, for various reasons. Parents have not been able to provide online education services due to the lack of technical devices, and many have been deprived of the proper opportunity due to the lack of digital education online.

Obtaining appropriate educational services is a global problem for all Ukrainian schoolchildren, both those who remained in Ukraine and those who left its borders. For children, this is a difficult test, and therefore this project is designed to provide basic knowledge and is aimed at high school children. The goal of the program: provide of online educational services to continue the education of Ukrainian students. The goal is to provide adequate opportunities for children to receive a hybrid form of education, both offline and online, to expand the informational knowledge of both children and parents regarding online learning opportunities. The grant will provide training for teachers in effective on-line teaching strategies, provide technology to students so they can access on-line learning, create safe spaces for students to gather and study in small groups with their teachers. The project will be implemented in the territory of the Dnipropetrovsk region. This Global Grant budget is estimated to be \$45,000 (USD) but could be expanded to include more students with additional funding.

If you or your club is interested in supporting this project, please contact the host or international partner (contact information below) We welcome club or individual contributions toward the grant, and are seeking DDF so that our funding goal can be reached quickly. We would like to submit the grant in early January, 2023.

**Iryna Odyntsova, President-elect**  
**Dnipro Novyi Rotary, Ukraine**  
[illy2011@i.ua](mailto:illy2011@i.ua)

**Carolyn Johnson**  
**Yarmouth Rotary, Maine USA**  
[cfj2@icloud.com](mailto:cfj2@icloud.com)

### Planning a Global Grant? A Cadre Advisor Can Help!

The Rotary Foundation Cadre of Technical Advisers' mission is to strengthen the impact of Rotary's grants by safeguarding Foundation funds and assisting Rotary members in planning projects. The Cadre are a group of volunteers who serve Rotary through their vocations. They are appointed and trained by The Rotary Foundation to support Rotarians who are planning and implementing projects.

The BEL Cadre work with Rotarians to ensure that the Rotary Foundation goals for Basic Education are met: supporting programs that strengthen a community's ability to provide basic education and literacy to all; increasing adult literacy; working to reduce gender disparity in education; and funding graduate scholarships for career-minded professionals related to basic education and literacy.

The purpose of the Cadre is to assist and advise Rotary members planning and implementing projects; to assist the Trustees with the grant funding process by reviewing grant applications for proposed projects and to evaluate the implementation of projects that have received Foundation grant funds to ensure that grant funds are being used in accordance with the Terms and Conditions for TRF Global and District Grants and that stewardship guidelines are followed.



Cadre have expertise in one or more of Rotary’s seven areas of focus or auditing and are familiar with the grant program. Members have expertise or professional experience in matters of: health, education/literacy, small business/revolving loans (micro credit), and financial auditing (chartered accountants and certified public accountants), environmental management. They use their technical and professional know-how to support, guide and advise other Rotarians.

For example, they can advise on information that needs to be submitted, guide Rotarians to decide the types of projects and activities that are eligible for global grant funding such as: early childhood education; teacher training; teaching students with disabilities; libraries; language training; after-school or tutoring programs; and technology projects. Likewise, the Cadre can guide Rotarians to understand what types of projects and activities are not eligible for global grant funding.

They are fluent in the language of the country where the project is taking place. They also help with financial planning, training and education.

Cadre members from the same area where a proposed project will be implemented are more likely to understand cultural, socioeconomic, and political contexts where that project is being planned. Since the Cadre usually have secure background in their given areas of focus, before the Rotarians apply for the Global Grant, they may help them by sensitizing them on matters of community assessment in Basic Education and Literacy to identify where our support is needed most. So, through working with the community and Rotarians they help identify the community’s strengths and weaknesses and help them work with local residents on solutions. There are also instances when Cadre members from outside the district may give advice and insights to Rotary members planning a project. This remote advising can be done easily through email, online communication platforms, or phone conversations.

As the Rotarians are doing monitoring and evaluation, the Cadre may assist them to look out for to improved learning outcomes for early childhood, primary, and secondary students, including students with physical or developmental disabilities; improved literacy (reading and writing) and numeracy skills for adults; and reduced gender disparities in education.

The Cadre of Technical advisers would be willing to assist in many other ways and I encourage Rotarians to fund out who the Cadre in your districts are. Approach them and ask them for assistance. They are a wonderful resource. They receive training from the The Rotary Foundation staff and they are well equipped. For more information, to request assistance from a Cadre, or to get involved as a member with the Cadre, contact [cadre@Rotary.org](mailto:cadre@Rotary.org)

**Sophie Bamwoyeraki**  
**BEL Coordinator, Cadre of Technical Advisors**  
**BELRAG Technical Officer**  
[sophiekb3000@gmail.com](mailto:sophiekb3000@gmail.com)



**BASIC EDUCATION  
AND LITERACY**

### BEL GLOBAL GRANTS - (RY2014-22)

