Guatemala Literacy Project

RI President Ian Riseley recently visited Guatemala, meeting local and international Rotarian partners as well as beneficiaries of the Guatemala Literacy Project (GLP). GLP is a partnership of Rotarians and the non-profit organization, COED (Cooperation for Education). Over the last twenty years, GLP has provided a sustainable, renewable means for students in rural middle schools to have access to textbooks and technology education. More recently, the project expanded to offer in-depth training (Culture of Reading Program) for primary school teachers to improve their skills to interest and engage students in literacy.

The GLP involves more than a hundred clubs annually in its projects and grants. Over the years, the program has provided textbooks to nearly 200 schools and supports 45 computer labs. Global grants provide the funding for the initial investment of textbooks and fully-equipped computer labs. Parents agree to pay an annual fee that is deposited into a designated account for their child’s school. After four to five years, the school’s account is sufficient to purchase new books or update the computer lab. In this way, families are learning to plan and manage for the future, ensuring that the school in their community will have the necessary learning resources for their children and for students well into the future.

The Culture of Reading Program is a two-year training program for teachers in grades 1–6. The emphasis of the program is to provide quality children’s literature that will capture the interest and imagination of students. Teachers use strategies to engage students in learning, developing strong comprehension skills. In addition to providing books, basic classroom supplies and ongoing training, teachers receive coaching support in their classrooms to ensure that they are confident in implementing their new skills.

“GLP is the gold standard”

In the words of RI President Riseley, “The GLP is very well regarded in Rotary far beyond the borders of this one country. You have involved the parents and teachers in your project, worked with an exemplary organization in CoEd and negotiated with all levels of government, which is often very hard. If you want to look for a project that meets the characteristics of Rotary, the GLP is the gold standard.”
This year, Zones 33-34 partnered with the Rosen Parramore PS 8 Foundation to provide support for a free pre-school constructed and operated by this Foundation. The Rosen Foundation was founded by Harris Rosen, owner of the Rosen Centre Hotel and numerous other hotels and resorts in the Orlando area. Their Zone project involved the provision of a portable library unit for this preschool, together with the provision of books suitable for pre-school children ages 2 to 5 that will be used to stock the shelves of this library. Institute participants were supported in this effort by local Rotarians in the Orlando area.

Additionally, the proceeds from a Silent Auction were donated to support this remarkable preschool. For more information regarding Mr Harris Rosen and his philanthropic efforts, including the development of this new preschool, please read the articles that were excerpted from the Rosen Reveals magazine published by Rosen Hotels & Resorts. You can download the articles from the links below:
- Article 1: Rosen Cares: Building America One Community at a Time
- Article 2: Building A Dream

This project fits squarely within our Rotary area of focus of Supporting Education and it also dovetails with Mr Rosen’s focus on education as an avenue of hope for a better future for young men and women living in our nation’s underserved neighborhoods.

Harris (Harry) Rosen (left), owner of Rosen Centre Hotel and several other resorts in Orlando, is a self-made millionaire, but he didn’t come from rich parents who passed down a business or had ‘old money’.

Harry Rosen is the son of Ukrainian immigrants who migrated to the United States for a better life. Growing up in Hell’s Kitchen in New York, Harry’s father emphasized the importance of education for his children. He told them, “If you want to get out of here, education is your key.”

After a brief idea of becoming an artist, Harry visited the Waldorf Astoria Hotel many times with his father. He met many celebrities but after meeting Marilyn Monroe on the elevator, Harry decided that hotel work was much more interesting and exciting than being an artist.

Mr Rosen graduated with a degree in Hotel Management and eventually decided to buy his first hotel. Once he became successful, he knew it was time to give back. Remembering his father’s words, he established a Foundation to support Education and Literacy in impoverished areas in Orlando.

Harry Rosen built two state-of-the-art pre-schools in downtown Orlando for children and families that would not have a chance of finishing school. (- see images above & below of some of the facilities.)

Mr Rosen has pledged that any child finishing high school in those areas will receive a free college education.

The 33–34 Zone project provided books for children, ages 2–5 years old, who attend these pre-schools. Rotarians attending Zone Institute were invited to bring as many books as possible or make money contributions to this effort. Spouses delivered the books to the Rosen Pre-School.

Why? Because all children deserve it!

LitRAG Connectors

As we work to grow LITRAG, clearly our strongest asset is you – our members! We are in the process of rebuilding our Action Group, but to do that, need to know what types of projects you are involved in and what type of information would be most helpful.

We would like to develop a group of key people throughout the world who will bring attention to new or promising projects in their area. This could take many forms: promoting strong projects so that others can learn from positive experiences, connecting potential projects with international partners and sharing needs of particular areas or communities so that others with expertise can become involved. If you would be interested in serving as a LitRAG Connector, please contact:

John Thorne (Chair) thorne.hobart@gmail.com or Carolyn Johnson (Vice-Chair) cfj2@icloud.com

And if you are doing or know of a great project, please share it to be included in a future newsletter. Write a summary of the project of about 500 words and include a few photos. That’s it! Show Rotary Making A Difference through literacy and education!
In communities affected by conflict, accessing education can be a challenge for all children. For children with trauma-related learning differences and children with autism, attending school may be impossible due to limited administrative capacity in schools and a lack of teachers trained to support children with diverse learning needs.

This is the case in Gaziantep, Turkey – a community that is home to more than 1000 children with autism and which currently hosts more than 300 000 Syrian refugees. Most of these refugees are children, the majority of whom live with trauma-related behavioral challenges. Currently, children in Gaziantep with significant learning differences are denied access to public schools. Together, A Global Voice for Autism, the Gaziantep Municipality and the Turkish Ministry of Education recognize these children’s potential to learn, gain literacy and contribute positively to the community.

We are now working together to launch a year-long program that will train 40 teachers and 30 families in Gaziantep in evidence-based practices for inclusive, trauma-informed education, will equip training participants to disseminate learned practices in their community, and will offer community-based psychosocial support to families.

A Global Voice for Autism is a U.S. 501c3 non-profit organization established by Class 15 Rotary Peace Fellow, Melissa Diamond. Melissa is a current Peace Fellow in the Bradford England Peace Center program.

The organization inspired Melissa to pursue the Rotary Peace Fellowship to improve her understanding of the political structures in which organizations operate in conflict-affected communities. With the support of the Fellowship, her studies catalyzed the growth of A Global Voice for Autism and she was able to develop partnerships with government and international organizations to maximize A Global Voice for Autism’s impact.

A Global Voice for Autism is now seeking funding to bring this program in Gaziantep to fruition. In the next two years, this program has the potential to reach more than 56 000 children in Gaziantep. These children will benefit from improved teaching strategies, fewer classroom disruptions and access to classroom-based education for children who were previously denied this opportunity. By addressing the needs of both Turkish and Syrian children in Gaziantep, the program will also assist with the integration of refugee children into Turkish public schools.

Given our deep respect for the work of Rotary International, we hope to involve you and your Rotary club or district in the launching of this program. If you or your club are interested in sponsoring the program or offering your ideas and suggestions for funders that will help us support Turkish and Syrian refugee children in the Gaziantep community beginning in January 2018, please contact Melissa Diamond at: melissa@aglobalvoiceforautism.org or by phone at +1-763 245 8907 (WhatsApp) or +20 115 744 9532 (mobile phone).

For more information about A Global Voice for Autism, visit our website at: www.aglobalvoiceforautism.org or watch Executive Director Melissa Diamond’s speech at the United Nations in April 2017 (at 1:36:00 and 1:57:00 in the recording) or visit our Facebook page: http://www.aglobalvoiceforautism.org/aglobalvoiceforautism


Left: Siblings in Mersin participate in a Sibling Support and Self-Development group session to learn about the communication challenges that their siblings face. For 100% of participants, the program was their first time meeting another sibling of a child with autism and the first time discussing their siblings’ diagnoses with someone outside of their families.

Left: Parents participate in a Support and Self-Development group session in Mersin, Turkey, where they have the opportunity to ask questions about their children’s diagnoses and learn strategies for teaching life and academic skills to their children at home.
Learning Basic Science Concepts

Students in Taiwan are learning basic science concepts through play. [Click here](#) to see how a Rotary program uses kites and simple machines to help students understand physics, math and engineering.

New Global Grant Requirement: Community Assessments

Starting 1 July, any club or district that applies for a global grant to support a humanitarian project or a vocational training team will need to conduct a community assessment first and include the results in their grant application.

Assessing the strengths, weaknesses, needs and assets of the community you’re helping is an essential first step in planning an effective project. Not only do assessments lead to projects that have the most meaningful impact, the process itself builds valuable relationships, involves residents in decisions that will shape their communities and encourages them to participate in making lasting improvements. Most importantly, projects that are informed by community assessments are more sustainable.

You can use district grant funds to conduct the assessment.

Rotary’s [Community Assessment Tools](#) guide has ideas and proven methods for assessing a community’s assets and needs, including meetings, surveys, interviews and focus groups.

Are comics a legitimate entry to reading?

It is true that many children do not find reading easy. Connecting letters and sounds can be a puzzle, but the story behind the reading surely can be interesting or even exciting. Reading can be fun.

Sometimes an eager reader can come to maturity via a book that they have chosen and it may indeed be a joke book or a comic book.

Allow children to choose their own book. Don’t worry if these books do not seem substantial enough. If there’s progress, then maturity with reading may indeed come to initially reluctant readers when they want to read.

As well as letters, sounds and connections, early readers need to understand the sequence of events and how stories are laid out. Comics can be visually appealing and challenges of further reading can follow. Some children may even need help to follow a story from a comic. All of these things can be in the mix to assist the reluctant reader.

Further ideas, reading and resources:

- [Comprehension Through Comics](#)
- [ESL Printables](#)
- [How Comics Boost Reading Comprehension](#)

Simple Idea – Great Results

Tony Colman is the District Governor for District 9830 (Tasmania, Australia) and at each club presentation his wife, Liz, gives a short, pertinent address on the need for **books and literacy in our homes**. Prior to the visit, the club members throughout the District were alerted and encouraged to bring along books suitable for the early reader.

At the Rotary Club of North Hobart, Liz spoke well and was presented with a substantial box of new books by the Club President, Jenny Kerrison. In turn, Jenny, Tony and Liz donated the books to Cate Harding at the Migrant Resource Centre which has direct access to families who have newly arrived families from a range of countries where English is not the home language.

Cate shared with the Rotarian members and partners how many of the children in migrant families loved the written word in ‘real’ books and subsequently shared the stories with their parents.

LitRAG Office-Bearers

LitRAG Executive Committee:
- Chair: John Thorne, PRID (Australia)
- Vice-Chair: Carolyn Johnson, PDG (USA)
- Secretary: (position vacant)
- Treasurer: Harvey Baxter, Rotarian (USA)

LitRAG Directors:
- Rodolfo Bianchi, PDG (Guatemala)
- Sylvia Byers, PDG (Australia)
- Chebab Elawar, PDG (USA)
- David Fowler, Past President RIBI (England)
- Shekhar Mehta, PRID (India)

LitRAG Advisors to the Board:
- Bill Boyd, Past RI President (New Zealand)
- Noraseth Pathmanand, PRID (Thailand)
- William Stumbaugh, Rotarian (Ecuador)
Used well, the simple technique of **Pause, Prompt, Praise** will support your child in practising his/her reading and in developing reading confidence and fluency. Try using this technique every time your child reads aloud to you at home and he/she becomes stuck trying to read a tricky word or read one that is new to them.

This technique (sometimes called the 3Ps) will give your child the chance to have another go, self-correct or, if needed, be told what the word is.

Remember from the outset when using Pause, Prompt, Praise:

- The main aim of reading is to make sense (understand) what is being read and to enjoy the experience. Keep this in mind when prompting or praising.
- Try to be relaxed, interested and supportive when listening to your child read. This will encourage your child if he/she makes mistakes or cannot work out a word. Being frustrated at your child does not help.
- Sit comfortably and in a position where you can easily read the material too.

This technique works best when your child is reading material that suits his/her age and reading level. That is, when your child can easily read most of the words in the material and only stumbles occasionally.

**Is the book too hard at the moment?**

To be considered a fluent reader, a child needs to have a success rate of 96 per cent or more. You can use the ‘five finger’ test to work this out. Ask your child to read about 100 words in the book and every time he/she makes an error without correction curl up one finger. If you curl up five fingers within those 100 words then the book is probably too hard at present.

**How to do the 3Ps well:**

**Before reading starts:**

- Are you both sitting comfortably?
- Is the TV and any distracting noise (other than gentle music) turned off?
- Together, talk about the book cover and what the title and any illustrations suggest the book might be about. Try to make connections with other books you’ve read together or TV shows, movies and the world. This will help provide a context and then be more meaningful.
Pause
If your child stops at a word, try not to jump in straight away. Wait for five seconds and give your child time to work out the word.

Pausing allows your child to try to self-correct or work out the word for him/herself.

Prompt
If the mistake is minor, move on. You don’t have to correct everything if the sentence still makes sense.

If your child cannot work out the word independently, you can support him/her by prompting with some quick, low-key suggestions, such as:

- Try reading on for a sentence, miss out the tricky word and see if that helps you work out that word.
- What sound does the word begin with? Use that clue and think about what might make sense here.
- Break the word into chunks and read those.
- Look at the pictures and see if they give you a clue as to what the word might be.
- Go back to the beginning of the sentence, re-read it and have another go at working it out.

If prompts like these don’t work, this is where you simply tell your child the correct word. You can be positive by saying things like:

- Would you like me to help you?
- May I tell you the word?

When your child does read the word he/she has stumbled over, it’s a good idea to ask that he/she goes back to the beginning of the sentence and re-read it to get the meaning before reading on.

You might even briefly explain the meaning of the word, but then quickly prompt your child to continue reading.

Avoid spending too much time prompting as your child will find it difficult to capture the overall meaning of the section.

Praise
This is the part that comes easiest. Praise your child’s reading efforts and successes throughout the reading process.

As well as praising, it’s good to tell him/her why you are praising. For example, you might say things like:

- Well done! I thought it was great how you went back, re-read the sentence from the beginning and worked out that tricky word.
- That was strong reading tonight. I know I had to help you with a few words, but you also worked others out for yourself. Well done.

Enjoy the reading experience yourself
Try to make time to read with your children and if you can, do so daily. A mixture of reading to and with them as well as listening to them read is important. Choose a place in your home that is comfortable and away from distractions (e.g. dog, TV).

Discuss
At the end of the book, spend some time talking about the book. This will build your child’s understanding (comprehension) and memory skills. Ask your child what he/she liked or disliked about the book. Tell what you both thought and felt about it too. Link what was in the book to your child’s experiences or those in the family or things happening in the neighborhood or the world.