

Rotarians for Hearing Regeneration

Newsletter January – July 2009

Three year strategic plan

Our planning sessions regarding our three year strategic plan ended in early March. Board member Sydna Koontz chaired this committee and presented the final works to the board and it was subsequently approved. If you have not received a copy by email, please contact Gene Pankey gspankey@comcast.net to receive one.

Virginia Merrill Bloedel Hearing Research Center Tour

On March 18, Rotarians for Hearing Regeneration (RfHR) sponsored and led a tour of District 5020 leaders and spouses through the Virginia Merrill Bloedel Hearing Research Center at the University of Washington.

District Governor (5020) Brian Beagle, DG-elect Alex Alexander and his wife Marnie and a number of other Rotary Presidents and leaders joined several RfHR board members for the tour. Joining also was Mary McBride, Director of Senator Patty Murray's (D-WA) Seattle office. Senator Murray is on the Veteran's Affairs Committee in the US congress. Currently disability payments to veterans experiencing hearing damage and tinnitus as a result of service in Iraq and Afghanistan amount to \$1.2 billion annually. Thus we feel it was important to have a representative from Senator Murray's office join us. RfHR believe the US congress needs to take a more serious step in helping research hearing loss.

While several of the scientists gave individual presentations to the group updating everyone on today's advanced studies and research on hearing research. a boxed lunch was served. The feedback from the tour group was very positive.

District 5020 Convention

With their wives, Don Doman and Gene Pankey attended the May 24-26, 2009 district 5020 convention in Bremerton, WA. The exhibit in the Friendship Hall was viewed by many. Doman also set up two table video screens to play our DVDs. This was a very well attended conference in a nice setting on the Puget Sound.

Annual Meeting

Rotarians for Hearing Regeneration held their annual meeting on May 20 at the Oakbrook Golf and Country Club in Lakewood Washington.

Elected to the board of directors were Gene Pankey, Dave Sclair, David Cotant, Brian Knutson, Don Doman and Christine Storbeck, PhD.

Officers reelected to serve in 09-10 were Pankey, Chairman, Sclair, Vice-Chairman and Cotant, Secretary-Treasurer.

Pankey, Sclair and Cotant will also serve as the Executive Committee

Annual meeting - Committees appointed:

Membership: Gene Pankey, David Cotant, Bill Parker
Fundraising: Don Doman, Sydna Koontz, Brian Knutson
Promotions/Marketing: Dave Sclair, Alan Billingsley

Name Change?

There has been some discussion recently on our name, Rotarians for Hearing Regeneration. Some have said that our name is not inclusive and that a more appropriate name would be **Rotarians for Hearing**. While we want to continue to create awareness of the disability of hearing loss and to promote funding for research to find a permanent cure, we do want to support the many other hearing loss projects Rotarians are currently doing. We would appreciate your feedback and suggestions on this subject. You can contact Gene Pankey at gwankey@comcast.net with your comments/suggestions.

Rotarian Magazine

Because two of our board members had to cancel attendance at the Birmingham Convention and thus eliminate our exhibit, it was decided to place two advertisements in The Rotarian Magazine. Hopefully this will elicit additional membership and provide as much visibility as we might have gained from the convention exhibit. Funding was supplied by a generous grant from the Rotary Club of Clover Park, our original sponsor. We will report on the outcome in our next newsletter. We also plan to attend the Montreal Convention in 2010 and have an exhibit.

Team Leaders

One of our plans for membership growth is to establish Team Leaders in Rotary Districts. Team leaders would give presentations at their own club and in their District and also arrange exhibits at their respective district conferences. RfHR will furnish DVDs and other promotional materials. Hopefully Rotarians with an interest in hearing loss and restoration will respond and join with us to grow the membership, thus creating more awareness of the disability of hearing loss.

Claudine Storbeck, PhD

Shortly after our annual meeting, Claudine Storbeck sent her resignation to us because of unexpected family health issues. We regrettably accepted her resignation with hope that in the future she might rejoin our board. An Ambassadorial scholar, Claudine is coordinator of deaf studies at Witwatersrand University in Johannesburg, SA. She also has a deaf children's project (Hi Hopes) which is posted on our web site.

Hearing loss projects

Do you have a hearing loss project in your club or district? If so we will post it on our website. Send us your information and if it is a legitimate Rotary connected hearing loss project we will be glad to give you some space on our website.

Our Website

We do have visitors from all around the world coming to our web site. Recent checking revealed that visitors from 25 different countries recently visited the site. Our primary visits are from the US and Great Britain. Canada, China, Australia, Ireland, India, Romania, Austria, Taiwan are the next biggest visitors in that order.

Club Programs

Would you like to do a hearing loss presentation at your club? If so, please contact us and we'll send you our current 9 minute DVD and a script to help you. We'll also include a recent brochure from the Virginia Merrill Bloedel Hearing Research Center that will bring you right up to date. Board members of RfHR have presented to over 50 clubs and the reception is always very good. You can get this information by contacting our Chairman at gwpankey@comcast.net.

Jean Irwin joins board of directors

Jean Irwin of the Reno Nevada Centennial Sunset Club has joined the board of Rotarians for Hearing Regeneration. Jean has an extensive background with Rotary International at the local, district and Zone levels. Jean is a retired Teacher of the Deaf from the Washoe County School District in Reno, Nevada. She has taught in grades pre-school through 12th grade in 12 schools. Jean was an Ambassadorial Scholar in 1989. She speaks to many Rotary groups about the long term effects of investment in the Rotary Foundation.

The scholarship Jean received allowed her to do research into reading and deafness 20 years ago which earned her a Masters Degree from Nottingham University in England. She shows tapes in her talks of how she has taught her students to speak and how to read, although they've been profoundly/and severely deaf. Her story is but one example of how Rotary can support a teacher to meet the challenges to educate all of our children. The methods she learned 20 years ago are as relevant to meeting the challenges of literacy as they were in 1989. While most deaf students do not go on to college because of their low reading levels, most of Jean's students have done so.

Jean received the Best of Education award by the Reno Gazette Journal, her local newspaper, in 2004. Rotarian of the Year, club level, and Service Above Self, district level. In 2009 she received the "Service Above Self" award from Rotary International. She is a multiple Paul Harris Fellow.

She has spoken to over 200 conferences for both Rotarians and teachers of the deaf about what she learned as an Ambassadorial Scholar. She will incorporate the mission of Rotarians for Hearing Regeneration into her future presentations to Rotary clubs and district conventions.

Join Rotarians for Hearing Regeneration

If you are an active Rotarian, spouse of a Rotarian or member of Rotoract you are eligible to join and we need your support. Dues are only \$10 annually or \$100 for life membership. You can join on our website: <http://www.hearingregeneration.org> or by sending regular mail to RfHR POB 881037 Steilacoom, WA 98388