



Rotary Opens Opportunities!

A Thank You and Year in Review from DG Jax~

June 2021

Every challenge we face is an opportunity for strengthening, ourselves and our District. This has been a year of planning for things that do not happen, AND, the year of patience and flexibility!

We have done AMAZING things this year!

We had a GREAT District Conference

Travelling around the district beginning with a beautiful evening under the City stars at Vetro on Cross Bay Blvd. in Queens, to celebrating a little local history and our Legacy Program, Gift of Life, at the Cradle of Aviation museum; and closing the weekend with a most beautiful Memorial Service and lunch BBQ on the Suffolk Beaches. Virtual presentations representing a panel, *Not Your Father's Rotary* and *Service Above Self: meeting a Veteran Volunteer* to afternoon workshop sessions to help you fundraise, write Global Grants, or hear more about Youth programs in our District.

TY to Chair Diane Marmann committee members Arnie Quaranta, Sue Sherman, Tom Crowley, Barbara Ackerman, Lydia Wells.

We participated in the Million Mask Challenge a New England

A regional service project that allowed forty-five D7255 clubs to distribute ½ million surgical, KN95 and children's masks across Brooklyn, Queens, Nassau & Suffolk Counties. We had a beautiful spotlight location at the Heritage Village properties in Hicksville NY, was on channel 11 news and had a feature in Newsday!

Special TY to first ever Rotary Public Image Coordinator Donna Rivera-Downey .

GOT OUT OF SUSPENSION!!!!

So much hard work and dedication from the Track Team – PDG Justin Quaranta, DGE Mary Ellen Ellwood, DGN Sonia Saleh, and DGND Thomas Crowley!

Thank you to PDGs Arnie and Gabor, and Rob to start the year with us; Thank you to Nancy, Lorraine and Pat for taking their place and joining us in the lead to victory!!!!

This then led to the 2020-2021 Grant that MAY happen, DID HAPPEN!

A weekend of service at Camp Pa-Qua-Tuck, 16 Kindness Gardens established in 9 different communities; and 175 youth will participate in Marine Education programs lead by Rotarians.

RAH RAH RYLA!!!!

Without a skip of a beat Mrs. Lydia Wells led the RYLA committee through our most unprecedented times. In fact, ADDED MORE in-person RYLAs for the teens! In a year with high levels of domestic violence, depression, suicide, drug and alcohol abuse, creating this safe place, a place of normalcy, and position mindset has never been more important. On behalf of our 'children' THANK YOU!

And to my good friend Rich Wells, Youth Committee member 9 =) thank you for always being the support for Miss Lydia!

Keeping Youthful, THANK YOU to Rose Quaranta! Stepping into the Youth Service Chair position; safely getting all of the Youth Exchange participants safely home, establishing the Youth Crisis Management Plan, and nominating two of the three Zone Interact Convention committee members!

Staying Youthful! THANK YOU to Stephanie Duniaeff for keeping our Interactors connected with the new District Virtual Interact Club! When schools stopped, we did not!

Rotary International President sent District Governors home from International Assembly with four focus points of motivation and inspiration:

ONE: Have a Strategic Plan! And revisit the plan every year! What a vision to have this year! If we ever needed a year to sit back, reflect, re-do, change, adopt and relook at how we Rotary, it was 2020 – the year of clearer vision.

Here on the District level, a culture change is happening -

- Extending Our Reach – let's keep sharing great things we are doing on our website, on social media, in print media. Connecting with neighboring clubs to combined efforts to showcase Rotary. Let us STOP being the best kept secret and be a place for community members to serve.
- Revamping committees and creating an inclusive environment – we have never had as many clubs participating on District Committees as we do now. New Rotarians are stepping up to lead, such as:
 - The Finance Committee – taking the step up! Angie Reese will take on the role of Finance Chair, Nilima Madan as District Treasurer, and new committee members AG Tom Reilly and incoming club president Anthony Vitale
 - Website Goddess Flora Parekh, who is in our heads! Before you send an email to update or make a website change, it is taken care of!
 - Tech Guru Stephanie Duniaeff who not only comes early to make sure everything is ready to go, she provides a list of who has what, who is responsible to bring items, provides zoom training and help to this of us less skilled, and understands when to mute all =)
 - Assistant Governor Chair – is a new role established to keep a tighter connection with the Governor Track and the Assistant Governors and therefore the Clubs. Thank you to AG Ted Firetog for your past two years in this role. We would also like to extend a thank you for your work as District Youth Protection Officer.
 - Assistant Governor terms are now 3-years.. **WHAT!?!?!** Was the initial reaction, but the goal of the three-year term is to meet your clubs, know your clubs, select and work with your replacement!
- We began Future Planning meetings – almost 40 leaders in our district came to brain storm how to better D7255. We will continue this meetup during 2021-22
- Leadership Continuity. Having a 5-year track, joining the decision making in your DGND year to mentorship and wisdom in your IPDG year, we lead as a team – our hope, is you see it work and bring this format to your club.

TWO: Now that you are Strategic Planning, look at your club and ask, does your club model work? Is there an Innovative Club model your thinking of?

- Would you benefit from a Satellite Club? A group of 8 community leaders who have a different mindset of when to meet or how, allowing for an arm of the traditional club model so many are accustomed too.

- Or perhaps a Passport Club in your community? A club focused on service who only meets virtually?
- Many people join a Rotary Club in communities where they live or work, but what about establishing a Caused-Based Club? The Great Rotary Club of Manhasset re-evaluated connecting to their community, and shifted gears to a Virtual Caused-Based club who meets once on month on zoom and is focused on Gift of Life. This year the club's membership jumped from 9 members to 16!

THREE: Making sure Membership Matters! Rotary is so much about relationships, fellowship, people. Make sure the connection is right for your club – this goes both ways! We have so many options in our Rotary world for people, we can always find a good fit, even if our prospective member is better for our neighbor club. Focus on cultivating great relationships.

- Finding the Rotarians who not a part of Rotary, yet! Connect people with their passions. With all of the Areas of Focus and 5 Avenues of Service, let us connect folks looking *Serve Above Self*.
- Following up with Membership Leads. THEY WORK! As long as the contact is quick. Leads are community members looking to join Rotary! They are asking us!
- Drive the People of Action campaign! A sense of purpose is so important and being a part of our communities is very meaningful. Again, share the story of Action! Get out there and be the face of what Rotary DOES.

FOUR & LAST: The Rotary Foundation

- 3 cases of Polio this year and recently, excitedly, announce wild polio free in Africa
- TRF is how grant projects are funded, from our traditional community block grants to the 2021 May District grant projects, we invest back into our communities. International Global Grants have healed Little Hearts in Egypt, Philippines, and Hungary; established a Blood Bank and clean water projects in India; provided education and teaching in Haiti.
- Is how we support the Peace Fellow program. 5 Universities and 2 certificate programs around world training ambassadors of peace. A HUGE THANK YOU to a true leader, Ms. Beverly James, Assistant Governor and Peacefellow Chair! You joined the Foundation Committee without hesitation, just commitment to betterment. We cannot thank you enough for all your work this year!
- The Fundraising Committee! 100 new members joined Rotary Direct this year or increased their giving to Rotary Direct! Almost 10 new Paul Harris Society Members! THANK YOU to Chair DGN Sonia and team Beth Kramer, Lisa Hunte and PDG Shawn Weis.

Thank you to all of the Club Presidents this year! When your clubs and communities needed you most, you rose to the occasion. And to the partners and spouses of Club Presidents! Thank you for your support!

To PDGs Kathy Gibson, Gabor Karsai, Justin Quaranta, Arnie Quaranta, Fred Notter, Shawn Weis, and Robbie Donno – I would never have stepped into this role without your leadership and guidance. I have called upon you for assistance and without hesitation or reserve you were there. I am looking forward to serving our District in the future with you.

Thank you D7255 for this incredibly OPPORTUNITY to serve!

