

THE ROTARIAN PEACEBUILDER

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News Briefs

Rotarians Ready for Peace

North American (+Danish) Rotarians Gather in the Name of Peace

In a series of three gatherings over the past nine months, over 80 Rotarians gathered to discuss what the focus of the peace movement within Rotary should look like. Sponsored by the **Rotarian Action Group for Peace ("RAGFP")**, local districts and clubs, the results are being touted as instructive to Rotary International ("RI") leadership.

Winnipeg, Canada September 25, 2016

Thirty eight Rotarians serious about peace gathered in Winnipeg, Canada from as far away as Denmark to discuss what they felt Rotary's opportunity was to advance peace on the planet. Using a collaborative process called Open Space Technology, discussion was lively and inclusive.

Virtual Conference, April 23, 2017

To further test the Winnipeg results and to reduce the cost of attendance for participants from around the world, a virtual conference was held again using Open Space Technology with over 30 Rotarians meeting online over the course of a weekend. Attendees welcomed the experience and the convenience of attending from the comfort of their home or work.

Parkdale, Oregon USA May 21, 2017

As a final opportunity to gather grassroots data, Rotarians from the same Districts (5100) gathered to discuss their clubs' Peacebuilder activities and to get to know one another. The weekend was informative to those that attended and several who were new to Rotary went home inspired to do projects in their communities and with each other.

Findings are consistent and meaningful

Whether it is after Polio or not, Rotarians in three separate gatherings over the past nine months came to the same general conclusions regarding their own personal piece of peace as well as their role in building a safer world for us all. In over 9 days of intense dialogue, sponsored in part by the **Rotarian Action Group for Peace**, several common themes became apparent.

Conclusion #1: The Club is the Hub

The concept of Peacebuilder Committees within every club will lead to world peace over time. Working with other peacebuilders will inspire community peace projects and allow for international projects as well. Global Grants for international projects are welcomed by the Rotary Foundation. Rotary is perfectly structured to employ its members for peace action.

Conclusion #2: Local Projects will help membership

Participants gave examples of how peace action is attracting many current and new club members to their committees/clubs.

Conclusion #3: Nuclear Weapons do not meet the Rotary Four-Way Test

As a priority, beginning in Winnipeg, participants wanted to address the continuing planetary threat caused by the presence of nuclear weapons and WMD.

Conclusion #4: Community Culture of Peace Program

A world of peace is made up of a lot of communities of peace. As peace coaches, process consultants, and agents of change, local Rotarians can help facilitate the co-creation of a **Community Culture of Peace Program** that helps communities become more peaceful.

Conclusion #5: Education is the Key

Personal education precedes educating others, so an emphasis on learning and then teaching others is a common theme stemming from the many breakout sessions. A curriculum matrix is available on the **RAG for Peace** website to get oriented in support of youth education in schools in our communities.

Our Call to Action: In the next year, we envision assisting Rotarians in co-creating a **Strategic Plan for Peace** that models the **Four-Way Test**, is inclusive and pragmatic. Continuing our conferencing model, we will flesh out a common Rotarian peace language, process, and the "How To" that can help guide Rotarians, Clubs and Districts that wish to join in the urgent call to peace action. For more information, and to join RAGFP, go to

www.RotarianActionGroupForPeace.org

or email

contact@RotarianActionGroupForPeace.org

[The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of RAGFP, RI or any agency.]