

**A presentation by District Governor Susan Drake on the occasion of her visit
to the Rotary Club of Stockton.
September 30, 2009**

Susan is a member of our club and is our club secretary.

This is my 55th club visit since July 1. I'm on a journey I never expected to take.

A little about how I got here. I have been around Rotary my whole life, my grandpa, my dad and my husband. All were presidents of their clubs, Dudley twice, my dad and grandpa were District Governor's, my dad in 5220 in 1973 and my grandpa in 1947 in British Columbia. I have attended Rotary fellowship events since I was a baby.

I was at Joe Serra's District Conference in 1995 when I was invited to attend a Stockton Rotary meeting by John Reusche. I joined later that year. I was first on Jerry Smith's board in 1998-99, president 2004-5 and secretary since 2005. When Jim Anthony was DG in 1999-2000 he asked me to be district secretary, a job I held for two years, since then I have held several positions.

Before I was a Rotarian Dudley and I traveled on an international project to an Indian reservation outside of Ensenada to install a windmill, plant fruit trees with a group from Sonora Sunrise & Lodi. It made me appreciate and understand the importance of the internationality of Rotary.

The thing I noticed most about my grandpa, my dad and my husband was the good Rotary friends they had, how they laughed and had fun while doing good things. It has been so true for me as a Rotarian. When I joined Stockton, we were a club of 275 members. I wasn't sure how you would ever develop those friendships, but you do. My year as president was one of the best years of my life.

Now here I am following in the steps of my dad and grandpa. It's been a lot of fun.

I love the things we do, the impact we have on lives. What a great time to be a Rotarian, though I feel it's always been a good time to be a Rotarian.

We are united together in an ideal of service and you are welcome wherever you travel.

RI President John Kenny has challenged us with the theme "the future of Rotary is in your hands". He emphasizes that individual clubs make up the heart and soul of the organization.

Kenny explains that he wants Rotarians to take personal responsibility for Rotary's future and that every Rotarian can add fresh ideas and energies to their club and their district, passing on to our successors stronger clubs, healthier communities and a better world. His words "The future of Rotary is being decided every day, in every one of our clubs - by every one of you."

Currently there are 33,000 Rotary clubs in more than 200 countries and geographical areas with 1.2 million members. John Kenny asks that every Rotarian help with membership by asking good potential Rotarians to join us. He asks that each club

achieve a membership growth of at least one member from July 1 to March 31. President Michael goal is 10. We hope that each one of you will help with that effort.

At RI board of directors meeting in June, they adopted a membership slogan for the first time in our history "**each Rotarian: reach one, keep one**" that emphasizes the need for Rotarians to focus on both recruitment and retention in their membership growth efforts. Reach one reminds us that because Rotary membership is by invitation, it's essential that each Rotarian reaches out and invites someone to join. "Keep one" reminds us that it's not sufficient to simply sponsor someone into Rotary; we must also see that new members become active and involved Rotarians.

Every minute of every day someone's life is improved by the Rotary International Foundation, whether it's with clean water, food, health care or medications. The Foundation was created in 1917 by RI as an endowment fund for Rotary "to do good in the world" and that is what we have done and what we continue to do.

I am very proud of the things we do in our clubs and district:

- Street boys were sniffing glue in Kenya to keep warm, along came District 5220, now they have a place to live and learn skills thanks to a 3H grant.
- A GSE team member from Honduras discussed with host families the great need for clean water in her country, clubs with the help of a matching grant provided cisterns.
- Third graders around our district lacked dictionaries, clubs many with the help of district simplified grants stepped up and provided thousands of dictionaries.
- A young woman volunteered to help as a translator at eye clinics that PDG Dave Gallagher and Rotarians from 5220 held in Honduras. D5220 awarded her an Ambassadorial scholarship (\$25,000), a reverse one as we usually give one to someone in our District. She studied at Stanislaus State and lived with Rotarians, making her the first person in her country to receive this prestigious award. She has gone from being unemployed to fulfilling her dream to open a private school to teach English in her home town.
- While visiting the site of a 3H Grant Rotarians from 5220 were asked to stop to talk with a lady in the community. She thanked them for the clean water. However, she said that what she really wanted to thank them for was that her granddaughter would now be able to go to school, because she would no longer have to walk for 2 hours every morning to get clean water for the family. All of these, thanks to your donations to The Rotary Foundation.

As so often happens the results are different than we anticipate, in this case a clean water project also became a literacy project. We also have wheelchair projects, surgeries, medical supplies; the list goes on and on. In so many cases the impossible became possible because of the Rotary Foundation.

Our president John Kenny asks that we support Every Rotarian Every Year through Annual Programs Fund of the Rotary International Foundation to support these and many more great programs.

Every dollar we contribute to [The Rotary Foundation](#) is spent in support of humanitarian, educational and cultural programs. 50% comes back to our clubs and district three years later. We encourage you to contribute to your PH each year and to consider doubling it or joining the Paul Harris Society, where you agree to donate \$1,000 per year.

I also hope that you will consider a speaker or program on the programs and projects that are supported by the Foundation, district chair PDG Dave Gallagher would be happy to help. We will continue honoring star clubs, clubs who have contributions to the annual programs fund with an average of \$125 or more per member.

Our president also suggests that we can finish the crucial job to eradicate polio and keep our promise to the world through Rotary's fundraising challenge. Dudley and I heard from Bill Gates at the International Assembly (where RI trains 531 DGE's, you attend 7 days, 21 meals and attendance is taken at all events, I mention this because RI takes the training of DG's seriously and so do your DG's) and the secretary general of UN at the RI convention that Rotary is the heart of the polio eradication movement and that these organizations put their trust in Rotary because they know we will complete our goal.

We have reduced polio cases by 99% and in 2008 there were 1600 cases worldwide. However stakes are high. As long as polio threatens even one child anywhere in the world, children everywhere remain at risk.

Rotary needs to raise \$200 million over a three year period to match the \$355 million in challenge grants received from the [Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation](#). At the RI convention they told us we are on time to do this and that we had raised \$90 million, we are now over \$93. Our District and clubs have raised over \$100,000 to date to support that effort and over \$60,000 last year.

We want to take this effort to the public and not just seek Rotary donations. President Michael has one planned for us. I know several other clubs are planning special fundraisers. We are planning a district wide Rotary trivia bee to support polio eradication Jan 23.

President Kenney asks that emphasize Rotary's unique vocational service commitment by demonstrating our strong pledge to high ethical standards in our professional lives.

He also asks that we don't keep our good deeds to ourselves, we need let the world and our communities know what Rotary does.

We all have stories to tell and it is important that we do so. I tell ones that have impacted me. I'm an Interact advisor, for 14 years my husband and I have taken students to Mexico to install playgrounds in schools and communities that have none. We see a big difference in our Interactors from the time we leave until we return home, only 4-5 days later. On the way down they are discussing going to the beach, shopping etc, on the way back what an amazing project we have completed.

On a pre visit there was one school with no water, school desks, electricity, I wasn't sure it was a good place to put in a playground. It turned out to be one of the best because when we installed the playground we also bought school desks, chalkboards, crayons, books, and paper. As I was taking the final pictures I noticed a chalkboard with a large heart on it, it said Stockton Rotary loves you, written by an Interactor.

You see we not only change lives in Mexico but we also changes lives of our Interactors.

A few years ago, an interact student asked me to write a college recommendation, it's not unusual. It was easy because for 3 years he had attended almost every interact project or event, including Mexico. We didn't know until I was asked to respond to an essay he wrote about obstacles he had overcome that his father was never in his life, that his mother was schizophrenic and sometimes failed to take her medicine. That when he was in middle school she locked he and his younger sister in their apartment and didn't let them out for 3 months, that their grandmother snuck them food. But I did know he was a great student and loved Interact. He is now in his 3rd year of college with a full scholarship.

There are unlimited numbers of stories on how we make a difference every day. Help us find ways to let others know how all the wonderful things that Rotarians do.

I'm very excited about this year. We have a great group of presidents, cabinet and committees.

We have many wonderful events planned for this year and we invite you to join us at the:

- Foundation Dinner October 24 in Tracy with PRIP Rick King
- District 5220 goes to an ice hockey game Nov 15,
- the Rotary Polio Trivia Bee January 23 SOS and the
- District Conference at beautiful Lake Tahoe April 30 - May 2, 2010.

Our District is doing several exciting things:

We have a visioning team who are available to help clubs with strategic planning. Liz Hosmer is the contact.

A vocational directory is available at no cost on our website. There are so many individual businesses in our district whose prosperity allows so many members of our district to continue to be members. Help support them, and yourselves, by seeing, joining, and searching the new District 5220 business directory. Contacts Brian Bizzini and Dave Hosmer

New web based database, this program is easy to navigate and can be up and running after setting a few parameters. The beauty of this system is in the self maintenance by individual Club members. Any Rotarian can input, update and maintain their personal information. It allows pmail to your club, different committees within the district or your club; attendance, websites.

Information is always available on our website and Friday Facts, which I write each week.

I would like to end with a call for action!

- Invite a guest to a meeting, it's easy, maybe you should invite 2-3
- Seek out a new member, it can be harder, but someone invited you, who will you invite?
- Look around at your meeting, notice who isn't here and let them know they are missed
- Donate to the RIF every year as you can
- Invite a speaker on the foundation to your club
- Mentor a fellow Rotarian, an Interacter, students in your community
- Become more involved in the activities or projects of your club
- Ask your president how you might help this year

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you, I wish everyone a wonderful year with lots of great projects, activities, fun and laughter! Remember what our president John Kenny says "the future of Rotary is in your hands."