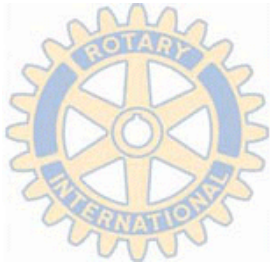

THE SPARKPLUG

Rotary Club of Decatur #180
March, 2007

www.decaturotary.org



A Message from the President

Greetings Fellow Rotarians,

March is literacy month for Rotarians. A recent television special followed families for a year in Camden, New Jersey, the city with the highest crime rate per capita of any city in the U.S. The families all lived in poverty. Several children were featured; some were kindergarteners and others were high school students. School was a struggle for the children and the parents for a number of reasons from homelessness, to lack of transportation, to single parents and teens working multiple jobs with long hours and limited time for their families. Part of the report contrasted students from middle and upper income families with students from lower income families and compared the impact that economics has on them. The statistic that struck me stated that children from middle to upper income homes have had 17,000 stories read to them by the time they begin school. The children in Camden did not have any books, and many did not have anyone who could have read stories to them if they did have books.

When the four of us traveled to Mérida, Mexico last month to Amor Y Vida Orphanage, we took 45 books in Spanish for the children. The majority of the books were stories that Americans read to their children (*Curious George*, *Charlotte's Web*, *Junie B. Jones*, *Dr. Seuss*, *Baseball in April*, *Ramona* and the classic fairytales), but there were also traditional Hispanic stories and nursery rhymes and Mexican biographies. Several of the caregivers at the home were pointing to pictures and sharing among themselves the board books (colors, animals, shapes, numbers) that we brought for infants and toddlers. Because my Spanish is limited, I do not know if their enthusiasm was because the books were for the younger children, or if they were unfamiliar with books for babies. When the books were first passed out, two of the older boys (pictured above) became totally engrossed with a children's reference book on *Reptiles* and exclaimed over every page with its pictures of snakes and lizards and other crawly things – the more outrageous and hideous the creatures, the more excited the boys! Another little boy slipped into the next room and quietly sat reading and smiling to himself as he read *Harry the Dog*. While we were in the Amor Y Vida study room, I looked through the books in their library. They had an older set of encyclopedias, several dictionaries, school workbooks and textbooks. When I asked Katinka Kelleher, the founder of the orphanage, if the books we brought were gifts that would be appreciated, she readily affirmed that they were. She told me they do not have many story books at the home, because just like the children in Camden, New Jersey when families must decide between food and clothing or books, they choose the necessities.

As a mom and a former English teacher, it breaks my heart to think that children do not have books and that they go to sleep without a bedtime story. Even after reading *The Hair Book* or *Where the Wild Things Are* ten times in a row, and not being allowed to skip a single word or page, reading to my children was the most enjoyable time we spent together each day. My fervent hope is that the 30 children at Amor Y Vida now experience the joy of reading.

I urge each of you to help others learn to read, whether it is reading to your own children or grandchildren, volunteering to help adults learn to read through programs like Project Read, or assisting children through local organizations such as Project Success or America Reads. Opportunities are limited when individuals cannot read, but with knowledge, the world awaits.

In Service,
Heather Stoa

"It is better to light a candle than curse the darkness." Chinese Proverb

New Member Orientation

March 9, 12:00-1:00 Decatur Club, President's Room 3rd Floor

New members, prospective new members or anyone who wants to brush up on Rotary basics are invited to join us on Friday. If you have not had the opportunity to attend a new member orientation (no matter how long you have been a member), are new to our club, or know someone who is thinking about joining, this is a fun, easy way to learn more about Rotary.

Over lunch, we will discuss: Rotary International, our club's history, club service projects, grants, finances, The Rotary Foundation, attendance, make-ups, Web sites, and club committees. And, we will still have time to visit and get to know one another better!

Please RSVP to Heather Stoa: hhstoa@gmail.com or hstoa@hotmail.com or 875-3752 by Thursday, March 8th. All are welcome.

The Reverend Robert Wiedrich Honored as Rotarian of the Quarter

Accompanied to the February 12th meeting, by Alice, his wife of 58 years, Bob Wiedrich was named Rotarian of the Quarter by Recognition Chair, Kit Paulin.

Bob Wiedrich was born in 1925 in Depew, Illinois where his father was the superintendent of schools. The family moved to Champaign when Bob was in high school. Bob was in the service from 1943-1945. After the war he completed his undergraduate degree at the University of Illinois and then went on to Garrett Biblical Institute.

Bob' first preaching position was in 1947 at the Methodist Church in Argenta. From there he served a number of churches throughout Illinois with one international stint as pastor of a church in New Zealand. Throughout his life, Bob has always been a social activist and proponent of social justice participating in the civil rights movement and locally in the Staley lockout.

Bob first joined Rotary in 1961 when he lived in Havana, Illinois. With his first move to Decatur, he joined Rotary Club of Decatur. In 1971, Bob sponsored the first African-American man who was admitted to our club, and in



later in Washington, Illinois, he sponsored the first woman to the Washington Rotary Club. Bob joined Rotary Club of Decatur again in 1990 when he and Alice returned to Decatur. He was named a Paul Harris Fellow in 2006.

Bob and Alice have three sons, five grandchildren, and a huge family of Methodists who love them for their life's work.

The Rotary Club of Decatur is grateful to Bob for dedicating his life to great work, and we thank him for serving and enriching our community and our club. We look forward to hearing his hearty laugh each Monday.

Congratulations to Our Newest Paul Harris Fellows

Norma Maddio and Wegi Stewart became our clubs 105th and 106th Paul Harris Fellows. They join a group of 1,035,612 caring Rotarians and friends who support The Rotary Foundation's work to advance world understanding, goodwill and peace through the improvement of health, the support of education and the alleviation of poverty.



Norma receives her certificate from PHF Miley Palmer



Wegi is presented with her pin, medallion and certificate

Our TRF Contributions at Work

Please remember The Rotary Foundation (TRF) and include a \$25 quarterly contribution with your dues and meals check to be used for the humanitarian efforts of Rotary International. Our donations come back to us in Matching Grants which we can use to help those who are in need.

Our club received a TRF matching grant in 1994 for the purchase of a new van for the Amor Y Vida Orphanage in Mérida, Mexico, and we are seeking another TRF grant to remodel the kitchen; purchase a washing machine, patio benches, a blender, waste baskets, outdoor play equipment, and a DVD player; and to reupholster a sofa and chair.

We are also in the process of partnering with area clubs and Indian clubs to apply for District and TRF Matching Funds for Dr. Sinha's eye clinic in the Bihar province in India. Dr. Sinha recently returned from two weeks in India where he and another ophthalmologist saw 1200 patients and performed 112 surgeries with 110 more patients waiting for surgeries on his next trip. It is estimated that by the year 2015, one in every four Indians will have diabetes, and with the disease comes an increased incidence of eye problems and the need for information and help.

District 6490 Newsletter Available On-line

The latest district newsletter has been published on the District 6490 Web site. You may read it on-line by visiting <http://www.Rotary6490.org/Newsletter.cfm>. The February issue features news from clubs in our area – Forsyth, Metro, Blue Mound and us!

March Birthdays

If you were a child in Ireland celebrating your birthday, you would be lifted upside down and “bumped” on the floor – one bump for each year, plus one for good luck.

When someone turns 21, he or she is given the key to the house symbolizing coming of age in Ireland. The key offers freedom to come and go at will and to stay out as late as one likes.

Happy Birthday Rotarians. Stay out as long as you like!

3/1 Trent Thompson
3/4 Harry Cook
3/8 Jack Dolan
3/12 Mike DelSignore
3/18 Dick Cain
3/20 Miley Palmer
3/21 Jason Tompkins
3/24 Jim Masey
3/31 Stu Ellis



March Programs

Thank you to our Program Committee: Melinda Hawbaker, Glenda Williamson, Dave Brandon, Mike DelSignore, Larry Foster, Diana Knaebe, and Debbie Seitz for scheduling terrific speakers for the month. Invite a friend or co-worker to join you for these outstanding presentations.

- March 5 Lauren Hunt, the 501 Club's new Executive Director, will share the excitement these young professionals have about Decatur.
- March 12 Our club's own Monte Cherry with the Decatur Sanitary District and Rexlyn Nicole with the University of Illinois Extension will give us an update on the Engineers in the Classroom program.
- March 19 Dr. Mary Kalantzis, the New Dean of the College of Education at the University of Illinois will impart her vision of the future of education.
- March 26 Our own Randy Prince of the Greater Decatur Chamber of Commerce will preview the upcoming Business Expo.





March Speakers' Honorarium – Doing our Part for Literacy

Each month, Rotary Club of Decatur donates funds in honor of our speakers to a Decatur or Macon County elementary school library for the purchase of new books. This month the donation will be sent to South Shores School.

March Do Good Dollars (formerly known as the Penny Fund)

Inflation has arrived! In recent months, our donations to local organizations have been less than what we typically have given in the past. The board is asking members to skip the pennies and **go for the green** each meeting.

In the past year, we have contributed to Race for the Cure, Relay for Life, Northeast Community Fund, Good Samaritan Inn, Rotary Endowment, Decatur Club Wait Staff, Community Relief Fund, and Anna Waters Head Start.

This month **Do Good Dollars** will be given to the University of Illinois Extension Small Business for a new project entitled “Going Solo” to help teens learn how to start a small business.

Please give generously!



A Heartfelt Thank you from Amor Y Vida

Rotary Club of Decatur
Decatur, Illinois, USA
January 30, 2007

Dear Rotarians,

It was a pleasure having in Mérida and Amor Y Vida Heather, Terry, Gary and our long time friend, Noel. I know there was a lot of work, time and money spent and above all, big hearts for your visit. We want to thank all of the Rotarians involved in this visit and would like to tell you how much the children are enjoying their new clothes, books, toys, crayons, pencils, pens, backpacks and books. Thank you.



Noel has been a wonderful promoter for us all these years, and we thank God we never lost contact with him and the love he has always showed for the children of Amor Y Vida

There are not enough words we can say to express our gratitude to all of you. Decatur Rotarians will always be in our prayers and our hearts.

Love,
Katinka Vales de Kelleher

Katinka Kelleher and friends recognized a need and founded Amor Y Vida Orphanage in Mérida, Mexico in 1989. A board and staff of 14 manage the home where 30 children between the ages of 10 months and 14 live.



Kudos for Weekly Service to Our Club

Thank you to Bob Gauthier, Steve Hill, Bob Weidrich, and Glen Dalluge for beginning our meetings with thoughtful invocations; to Sergeants-at-Arms Jane Shade, Al Luchetti, Dick Shelby and Dave Goebel for recognizing visitors and collecting Happy Bucks; to our greeters Tim Stock, Jeff Stout, Norma Maddio, Glen Dalluge and Bud Wilcox for making everyone feel welcome, and to David Coopridier for leading us in song.

Membership Updates

Welcome to our newest members!

Georganne Sadomytschenko is a Decatur native and president of GRS Human Resources, a business which she founded. Georganne was sponsored for membership by Michael Sexton.

Mike Cassell, Director of Marketing for Decatur Memorial Hospital was sponsored for membership by Heather Stoa. Mike and his wife, Mary, recently adopted a son from Russia.

Greg Crowe was sponsored for membership by his dad, Rotarian Robin Crowe. Greg is the Director of Economic and Urban Development for the City of Decatur.

It is with sadness that we mourn the passing of Jackson Owens on February 24th. He was a Rotarian for many years in locations around the globe and joined our club in 2002. Jackson was a Paul Harris Fellow, served on our board and was a frequent greeter. He will be missed.

We currently have 126 members.



February Scholar-Athletes

MacArthur High School seniors Autum Tucker and Jared Carter were accompanied to the February 26th meeting by their parents and MHS Athletic Director, Tim Cruz. Tony Wilkins introduced the Scholar-Athletes and presented them with their awards.

Autumn has a 4.1 GPA, played volleyball for four years and was a member of the band, pep band and marching band. She was named to the Big 12 Leadership Conference in both her junior and senior year of high school. Autumn plans to attend Aurora University and major in child psychology.

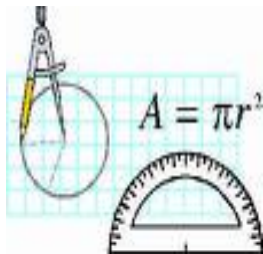
Jared is first in his class with a 5.00 GPA, played golf and tennis, participated in Scholastic Bowl and served as a congressional page for a semester during his junior year. Jared placed first in English and Biology at WYSE Sectionals. He has received the Bausch & Lomb Science Award and is an Illinois State Scholar and a National Merit Semifinalist. Jared plans to attend the University of Illinois and major in Electrical Engineering.



Smile!

Glen Dalluge is taking photos for our on-line directory. If you do not have a photo, please see Glen before or after the meeting. Or if you have a photo that you would like to have used, please give it to Heather Stoa or e-mail it to her at: hhstoa@gmail.com. She will scan photos and return them to you.

February Teacher of the Month



Pat McLoughlin, a math teacher at MacArthur High School, was honored as the Rotary Teacher of the Month for February. Pat has been teaching math since he began his career in the Cincinnati Public Schools in 1969. He has tutored math students for the University of Illinois and taught math at University High school in Urbana. In 1993, Pat joined the Decatur Public Schools and has taught everything from basic algebra to advanced placement calculus.

His sense of humor, though sometimes dry, lightens the mood of his classroom. Several years ago one of his A.P. calculus students came to school dressed as him; Dockers, shirt, tie, hair style and all! Mr. McLoughlin holds his students to a higher standard and keeps the bar raised.

More Photos from Amor Y Vida

January 29, 2007



Meals are a busy time for the staff and volunteers at Amor Y Vida. At left, four year-old twins finish their meal of rice and beans, sweet potatoes, tortillas and bananas.

After a morning of play, the youngest resident, 10 month old Jimmy, eagerly eats his lunch before nap time.



The children had a great time playing with the medical kit donated by Peter (age 6) and Patrick Brandon (age 3) to their amigos at Amor Y Vida. The children took turns wearing the stethoscope, taking each others blood pressure and checking reflexes and temperatures. We are happy to report that all were in good health and excited about the new toys and art supplies donated by two future Rotarians from Decatur, Illinois.



HAPPY SAINT PATRICK'S DAY

For past issues of **The Sparkplug**, to read board minutes, to consult the board manual and club by-laws, or to look up member contact information, visit our Web site at www.decaturrerotary.org
