

March 2009



Dear fellow Rotarians:

We have long supported literacy and education for all. Our projects have strengthened schools, built community libraries, and given the precious gift of reading and writing to those in need.

As we celebrate Literacy Month this March, we are confronted by the monumental challenge of helping nearly a billion people experience the essential pleasure and power of reading and writing. Without these fundamental skills, too many of our friends and neighbors will remain trapped by poverty, hunger, and disease.

Despite this challenge, we are heartened by the company of trusted friends and new allies in our struggle to stop illiteracy. Over the last year, we have renewed our relationship with the International Reading Association, allowing Rotary clubs to benefit from the experience of local and international literacy professionals. In addition, The Dollywood Foundation, our newest literacy ally, is working with Rotary clubs across North America and the United Kingdom to support early childhood literacy through its Imagination Library program.

While these relationships heighten the effectiveness and impact of our projects, little would be possible without your active support for literacy. Your contributions are significant, and I urge you to renew your commitment to this vital effort.

Our success depends on careful planning. As business, professional, and community leaders, we must pause to consider what more our clubs and districts can do to support literacy in the months and years ahead. We must invest in strong champions for literacy in our communities, including our own club and district literacy chairs, to strengthen and lead our literacy efforts.

Together we can stop illiteracy and help *Make Dreams Real* for our friends and neighbors in need.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "D. K. Lee," with a stylized initial "D" and a comma at the end.

D. K. Lee
President, Rotary International, 2008-09