Greetings!

This is our first newsletter since reorganizing, and we would like to invite all members and friends of the Health Education and Wellness Rotarian Action Group (HEWRAG) to come to the 2015 Rotary International Convention in São Paulo, Brazil and to participate with us in the following:

**HEWRAG Activities at the São Paulo Rotary International Convention**

**BOOTH IN THE HOUSE OF FRIENDSHIP – June 6-9**

We would love to have you stop by to say hello and catch us up on what you have been doing. To volunteer some time working with us in the booth, please send an e-mail to rotaryjane@yahoo.com.

**BREAKOUT SESSION: MONDAY, JUNE 8, 12:30 – 14:00**

This will be an action-packed interactive update on health fairs, educational and information session. We will provide more detailed information about the program and speakers in our next newsletter.

**ANNUAL MEETING: MONDAY, JUNE 8, 15:15 – 16:30**

Our annual meeting will be after the breakout session, and there will be enough time to walk to the venue. We will include the Annual Meeting Agenda in our next newsletter.

NOTE: The Rotary International Convention Program Directory will include the booth number and the venue locations. If we have the information by the time of our next newsletter, we will include the updated data.
It is a pleasure to write this note for the number one edition of the renamed HEW Rotarian Action Group newsletter.

Action Groups grew out of an age-old practice of Rotarians joining together to enjoy common hobbies, special interests, and recreational activities. Originally these were called "Rotary Fellowships." Some of the original Rotary groups were the golfers, airplane pilots, musicians, yachters, tennis players, stamp collectors, home exchangers, and bridge players. Dozens of these groups organized over time.

As these groups expanded, Rotarians also joined in activities by vocation and profession. The dentists, accountants, physicians, lawyers, and pharmacists were some of the early groups who would frequently meet at Rotary International Conventions to discuss service projects of their professions. Gradually the professional groups began taking on projects to provide eye and ear operations, AIDS information, promoting clean water and sanitation, concerns of malaria, population, dementia, and meeting many other major health, hunger and humanitarian needs. They became "action groups" to bring the resources of Rotary Clubs and Districts to enhance lives of less fortunate people of the world. (Continued on page 2.)
The Rotarian Fellowships of recreational and hobby activities and the Rotarian Action Groups, with vocational and professional purposes, are occasionally referred to as Rotary's Global Network which focuses on the wide range of special interests found among the Rotarians of the world.

I commend the Rotarians who are bringing together those who recognize the importance of health and wellness education, in all of its forms, into the Health Education and Wellness Rotarian Action Group. There are so many needs in the world, and you have so much to contribute! May your numbers expand as you reach out to serve those who recognize that you may be their only hope for a better life.

**A Brief History of Health Fairs in Homer, Alaska**

By Noko Yoshida  
South Hilo Rotary Club, District 5000 (Hawaii, USA)

The Homer Kachemak Bay Rotary Club sponsored the first Homer Health Fair in 1984. The Homer Health Fair provides a comprehensive blood test through the local hospital which charges 80% less than the normal charge and is now a Co-Sponsor of the Health Fair. Every year a few people test with serious conditions (diabetes, prostate cancer, etc.), which allow them to seek their doctor’s evaluations, and it has saved their lives.

Homer Health Fair’s exhibits included local dentists giving toothbrush demonstrations, gym aerobic dance demonstrations, Public Health gave immunization shots, the local Health Food Store demonstrated organic recipes, and many other non-profit organizations had exhibits. It is a truly fun event for the rural area residents.

In 1997 Homer Kachemak Bay Rotary Club invited Russian Rotarians to observe Homer Health Fair, and the Russians went back to Russia and started their own health fairs with help from the Homer Rotarians. The Russians were awarded a Rotary 3H Grant to set up Health Centers throughout Siberia and Far East Russia. Russian cities do many Health Fairs by themselves now, and the Russian government has encouraged them. These events helped to first create a World Health Fair Fellowship that became the World Health Fairs Rotarian Action Group.
and has recently expanded and evolved into the Health Education and Wellness Rotarian Action Group (HEWRAG).

Health Fairs and health projects have been and are supported by our Action Group in the United States, Russia, Mexico, Fiji, Mongolia, Thailand, Kenya, Zambia, South Africa, Nicaragua, China, Myanmar, and the Philippines.

Rotarian Action Group Offers Expansion Opportunities

By Past District Governor Laura Day, District 5106 Rotary Club of Anderson

What to do when your successful Rotary Foundation Global Grant project comes to a conclusion? Sure, the project is sustainable and continues to function in the locale and manner as intended. But supporters ask and expect the momentum to grow, perhaps to other areas and in other directions. But the grant is closed, and the funding is spent. What next? Kenya Smiles, a dental health and education grant serving the children of Kenya, was one of those TRF Grants.

Sometimes project leaders set up a new non-profit organization and operate independently of The Rotary Foundation. Still they solicit support from Rotarians but are no longer connected to Rotary. Kenya Smiles leaders wanted to stay very connected to Rotary.

Kenya Smiles is a sustainable dental preventive care program that promotes education, provides basic information, and builds awareness about oral health to help free children from preventable mouth pain and tooth decay. It was created to allow smooth replication throughout Kenya and to be adopted with straightforward modifications and revisions by other countries in East Africa and beyond.

The message is very well-known: good nutrition, good oral hygiene, and regular dental visits can help prevent tooth decay, mouth pain, and malnutrition. The goal is healthy children free from preventable pain who are ready to grow, motivated to learn, and eager to play in a world of peace. (Continued on page 5.)
Its supporters wanted to see it expand to other countries and possibly to other continents. By bringing Kenya Smiles into the Health, Education and Wellness Rotarian Action Group, we were able to do just that. HEWRAG provides support for Health Education Fairs and more. And Kenya Smiles fits in well. First mission to Myanmar proved to be successful. We are looking forward to the direction HEWRAG is headed and to the future of Kenya Smiles.

Democratizing Individual Health Information – Health Screening for Individuals Through 9Health Fair

By James H. Goddard, President/CEO, 9Health Fair
President, Rotary Club of Denver 2014-15, District 5450 (Colorado, USA)

In the late 1970's a physician who was conducting heart disease research at the National Institutes of Health in Washington, D.C., USA became involved in cholesterol screenings. As he traveled the U.S., he observed a high level of interest from communities to provide screening services. However, he noted that few screenings were available, and the quality varied. But more importantly, he noted that there was no mechanism to provide health education and medical follow-up to the community. Through his development of a national volunteer health screening organization, the health fair concept was born. A local television station in Denver, Colorado (9News) recognized this effort’s value to the community and agreed to provide both financial and media support to help launch the first health fair in the state of Colorado.

With the sole mission of advancing health awareness and providing people with the tools they need so they can take responsibility for their own health, and because of the support of 16,000 volunteers, 9Health Fair has helped save thousands of lives by providing free and low-cost health awareness and educational screenings.

To date, 9Health Fair is the only program of its magnitude and that has become a community institution as a result of the National Health Screening Council for Volunteer
Organizations (NHSCVO) initiative. Since inception, 9HealthFair has impacted over 1.7 million individuals.

Anyone 18 and older can participate in a 9Health Fair. With over 30 screenings available, their 9Health Fair results, along with an explanation on how to read those results, are delivered directly to participants within three to four weeks of their visit. Our team of volunteer registered nurses and physicians will contact individuals within 72 hours of their 9Health Fair visit and, if necessary, provide them with local follow up resources if their results indicate that a critical or alert health situation is occurring.

The screenings available include affordable blood and stool screenings (blood chemistry; blood count; hemoglobin A1c; prostate specific antigen; Vitamin D; and a take home colon cancer screening kit), and over 20 free screenings (for example: blood pressure; vision; breast exam; pap smear; skin screening; lung volume; bone health; Ask a Pharmacist; memory; or prostate exam). Additionally, 9Health Fair partners with over 200 other health-related NGO’s to provide education to participants.

For more information, please contact Jim Goddard at jim.goddard@9healthfair.org

Rakhine Medical Mission for Rotary

By Eddie Aung-Gyi Lim, MD
M.B., B.S (RGN), M.R.C.P (UK), F.R.C.P. (Edin), F.H.K.C.P (HK)
Diplomat, American Board of Internal Medicine
We Rotary e-club of District 5000 (Hawaii)

Working together with Rotarian from US and other countries, this was our second humanitarian medical mission to Rakhine state, the second least developed state in Myanmar, the country formerly known as Burma.

Prior to the mission, tons of preparation was needed, particularly with the selection of people, soliciting from numerous companies not only donations for miscellaneous uses but also for medical supplies and equipment, and collaborating with various organizations including WE Rotary E- club of Hawaii D5000, the Suu Foundation, Myanmar Association of Hawaii, the Alodawpyei monastic organization, the Rakhine Social Welfare organization, and the Dr. Saw Mra Aung family.
(Continued on page 7.)
Finally, the mission began on Dec 30, 2014 and ended on Jan 5, 2015. We flew from Yangon to Sittwe, followed by a boat ride to Mrauk Oo. A make shift pharmacy, medical and dental clinics were set up in Mrauk Oo and then in Sittwe. Nearly four thousand patients from near and far villages with all types of illnesses were managed and treated. In addition, dental examinations, tooth cleaning and extractions, treatment of pelvic infections, and insertion of intrauterine contraceptive devices were performed. Prosthetic hands were fitted to the amputees. Basic Life Support training was given to nurses. Relieving of musculoskeletal pain with accu-laser was carried out. Health and dental education were delivered to the Health Fair attendants, and dental education lessons and supplies were provided to thousands of children in rural schools. At last, left over medications and medical supplies were donated.

After the mission, those who needed urgent care were taken along with us during the boat ride from Mrauk Oo to Sittwe district hospital for further management.

Even though we all faced many challenges and were exhausted, caring for the needy people was very rewarding. With support from all walks of life, we hope to continue this type of humanitarian medical and dental mission annually.
Taking a Road Trip
By Past District Governor Karl Diekman, District 5106
Rotary Club of Woodland

When I thought about how best to explain how Kenya Smiles moved half way around the world, I thought about one of my many road trips. It was 2014, and Kenya Smiles, an oral health and nutrition project that reached thousands in Kenya, was ready to grow beyond its original boundaries. The question this situation posed was what was the best way to take Kenya Smiles and make it a global effort.

You could say it was luck or perhaps fate, but if you knew the project principles you would quickly conclude that a vehicle would be found. In early 2014, Kenya Smiles leaders Sheila Hurst and Past District Governor Laura Day came up with the idea of employing a Rotarian Action Group (RAG) as the vehicle for a Kenya Smiles road trip. There were a lot of details, but the key point is that after a lot of hard work on the part of many people, the Health Fair RAG was renamed Health Education and Wellness Rotarian Action Group (HEWRAG), and its purpose was expanded.

That brings us to late December 2014. Sheila and I were part of a team of about 50 people who went to Myanmar as part of a Medical and Dental Mission that coordinated two large Health Fairs in the Rakhine District. We delivered oral health and nutrition education lessons based on the Kenya Smiles model to thousands of children and adults in remote village schools, monasteries, and at the Health Fairs. Thousands of children also received dental care supplies and hygiene products. This project was made possible thanks to the generosity of Rotarians in District 5160 and several businesses, and with the support of the HEWRAG.
Gratitude and recognition go to the following for their support of the HEWRAG Myanmar Oral Health Project:

1. Sponsoring clubs of District 5160:
   a. Woodland, Redding, Redding West, Redding Riverview Sunset, Redding East, Alamo, Anderson, Hayfork, and Weaverville
2. District 5160 Governor Pam Gray and Assistant Governor Bev Stupek
3. Ravanelli’s Arts and Antiques of San Francisco, California
4. Folkmanis Puppets of Emeryville, California

*Water, water everywhere and ...*

By Carolyn E. Jones, Past Trustee
The Rotary Foundation
Rotary Club of Anchorage East, Alaska

There is no shortage of water in Myanmar. With a rainy season that endures for 9-10 months, one can’t complain about a lack of water. On the other hand, safe drinkable water is a real challenge. It would seem a simple matter to dig a well, but past attempts in the State of Rakhine to provide well water have been frustrating and a failure. There is a lot of lime in the soil, and the water has a chalky taste. Efforts to dig deeper and avoid the lime have often tapped into salt water. So the people rely on what has been tried and true for decades: pond water.

There are ponds everywhere. All you need is a depression in the soil, and it eventually will fill with rainwater. The residents fill their pot-bellied pots with the water and take it home for their cooking, drinking, and other needs. While they know that they should boil the water to pasteurize it, sometimes they simply drink it as is.

So, this year I joined a team of Rotarians and non-Rotarians on a humanitarian mission to Myanmar to provide medical and dental care, plus an array of other basic needs such as school desks and supplies, dental education plus toothpaste and toothbrushes, an English language camp, a water pipeline, water purification indicators (WAPIs), and a water pond. (Continued on page 10.)
The Rotary Club of Anchorage East, my Rotary club, used a District Grant and club funds to finance the excavation of a water pond in a small remote community in the State of Rakhine. The money would pay to add an additional one foot depth to an existing pond, provide a fence and gate to keep out animals and children, provide a platform to access the pond, and provide a pipe to convey the water closer to the community. Digging and construction cannot begin until sometime in March or April once it is evident that the rainy season is well and truly done. The workers will have about a two-month window of opportunity to complete the digging, and the entire project should be completed before the end of the summer. There are many communities throughout Rakhine that are in sore need of a safe water pond. We hope this first project will be the successful beginning of many more water projects in the future.

Why Do an Education Camp in Mrauk Oo in the Rakhine?

By Karen Kankkunen and Kathryn Hester
Rotary Club of Logan, District 9630 (Australia)

Just back from the northwest corner of Myanmar as part of the Rakhine Medical Mission, which consisted of the family of Dr. Saw Mra Aung, Rotary International participants, and members of the Rakhine National Social and Welfare Organisation, we have been reflecting on the English camp that we ran for 50 local teachers in Mrauk Oo. How did it fit into the brief of the mission? For us the links are obvious. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and literature about children’s well-being (Feinstein, et al 2006), find education strongly linked to health. It is through the education of females that the means to fight poverty, diseases and social injustice can be achieved. “For one additional year of education that
a girl receives beyond the average, her health improves by 10%, and it reduces child mortality by between 5-10%.”


Therefore, we believe that the English camp will have long-term effects. We wanted to run an immersion camp where teachers, female and male, could use their English in a safe and fun environment. We wanted to illustrate teaching methods for language acquisition that were creative and practical. One activity was the learning of a simple Australian song about having a home in the gum trees, and for the teachers to re-write the song from their own perspective and word base. We wanted to engage the teachers so that they can make school more fun for their students. This will ultimately provide a basis for positive behavioural, social, and health changes.

The teachers were amazing and took small parts of the lessons themselves as participants. They are professionals, and we wanted to empower them to provide experiences for their students that will improve English vocabulary, comprehension, and retention. Hopefully, we will return next year to continue with the goodwill and friendship that was created and to meet up with new friends.

For additional information, please visit

www.rotary.org
www.rotary.org/actiongroups  www.rotary.org/fellowships
www.hewrag.org  www.kenyasmiles.org  www.9healthfair.org

With questions or for more information, please write

hewrag@gmail.com
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Special appreciation for the Graphic Design is extended to Pat Sagan * Creative Business Solutions * patricia.sagan@sbcglobal.net

The next HEWRAG newsletter will be published in May 2015. To submit an article about Health Education and/or Wellness for consideration in that edition, please write to hewrag@gmail.com by April 17, 2015.