

KEN WOO

President 1997-1998

During the 1997-1998 Rotary year the theme was “Show Rotary Cares”. It was a year of change as we in the ID Rotary looked for new ways to raise money and to increase membership. The club settled on a cash lottery as our major money-raising effort, which simplified things, but also did not have the drawing power that an auction event might have had.

We continued volunteering at Bailey Gatzert School for the Giraffe Project. In addition, Harry Obedin began a new project of providing Gatzert students an opportunity to choose and own their own book selections from Elliott Bay Book Store. The book-buying expedition delighted the children and has continued to become an annual event. Many of the children had never had a chance to own a book.

The major project of the year was an international project teaming our club with Seattle #4, Burien Rotary, plus clubs in Australia and Japan to help build and supply a school in a rural area of Shanxi Province in the People’s Republic of China. Past president Jesse Tam and I joined Rotarians from Seattle #4 and Burien to travel to China to see the completed project. Our ID Rotary’s contribution was to stock the school with textbooks. We were told by local and national leaders that had it not been for Rotary, there would be no educational opportunities for this very economically poor area of China. It is at moments like this that we can fully grasp the power we wield as an international organization.

We were welcomed by townspeople and children. This Rotary-sponsored school (K through 12) was the only school within a 200-mile radius of this town.