*Sent to all Members*

March 23, 2025

TO: District 6220 Rotarians

FROM: Roger Utnehmer, District Governor

RE: Formation of a New Club Model

MEMO: THE FACE FOR ME OF THE US AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

As Rotarians, we share a common commitment to building goodwill and better friendships. It’s an essential component of our Four Way Test. It also is opportunity to make Rotary more relevant, respected and impactful in our communities.

The greatest opportunity for Rotarians to build goodwill and better friendships may be with our American Indian neighbors. Every club in District 6220 meets on land formerly occupied by American Indians. Many Rotary clubs meet near reservations that afford us the opportunity to do what our Four Way test encourages us to do.

“BUILD GOODWILL AND BETTER FRIENDSHIP”

I propose that we consider creating a new model of Rotary by forming clubs for the specific purpose of building goodwill and better friendships between Native American and non-native neighbors.

If we could identify a minimum of four people who would like to reach out and welcome four Indigenous neighbors, a satellite club could be formed under the sponsorship of an existing club.

Many successful satellite clubs meet just once per month in the evening with meals optional.

Consider the positive implications of a monthly meeting of Rotary satellite clubs committed to building goodwill and better friendships.  The monthly programs could focus on, initially, educating members about the history of American Indian treaties, current economic conditions and challenges on reservations. We have been fortunate to have native speakers share stories at Rotary meetings and conferences in our district that opened hearts and minds with impressive result.

Many issues divide our communities. It certainly is not my intention to dwell on those but to create an environment where respectful, civil conversations are initiated, where goodwill is modeled and friendships developed.

An optimistic outcome might be joining together on service projects, applying for Rotary grants, inviting Indigenous students to participate in Rotary Youth Exchanges and, eventually, membership growth.

The first step is to determine if existing Rotary clubs that are located near American Indian reservations, or in communities with a Native American population, are interested in the concept of a satellite club formed to build goodwill and better friendship.

The second would be to compile a list of potential members, followed by an initial meeting to share the concept with interested participants.

Please know I stand ready to assist in any way possible. I believe the educational power of Rotary’s programs can be utilized with impact. There is a need to have important conversations. Rotary has the standing and respect to facilitate the needed conversations. Problems that are not discussed with civility and respect are seldom solved.

May I hear your thoughts, your interest and your guidance on this initiative for District 6220?

ROGER UTNEHMER
Rotary District 6220
District Governor 2024-25
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