Hi all, it’s May and the monthly Rotary Theme is Youth Services Month and we want to continue every day to “Create Hope in the World”, our Rotary International theme for 2023-2024.

Youth Services month highlights the wonderful Youth programs we have in Rotary. Interact is Rotary in Junior and Senior High school for students from the age of 12 through senior year. These young people run their own meetings, plan their own service projects and participate in their Sponsor Rotary Club’s activities as well. RYLA is Rotary Youth Leadership Awards and is generally a 2-to-5-day session for high school age youth to learn about Leadership and Team building. Rotary Youth Exchange is the premier exchange program in the world where high school students from the age of 15 ½ to 18 ½ go abroad for a school year to learn a language, a culture and to make lifelong friends. If your Club does not participate in Youth Exchange, then you are missing out on a rewarding experience.

What does our Rotary Foundation do to support this theme? Funds from the Annual Fund can be used as District Grants which can be utilized to support Youth Services Programs.

Let’s also continue to concentrate our efforts every month on Membership. We need more members to do more locally and globally. Tips for increasing membership is providing options for every Club to use. There should NEVER be a time where we turn away a potential Rotarian because they can’t attend meetings at a specific time and place. We have the “E-Member” option, Companion Clubs, Focus Based Clubs, Corporate membership, Family membership. Let’s make sure every person in your community with a Rotarian heart for service is able to join in the Gift of Rotary. Have you looked at the various professions in your Club to see what is missing? This is a good practice and can lead to reaching out to those professions in the community to join us in our local and global humanitarian efforts.

Let’s be sure to involve the community in our service and fellowship activities, ask a friend or neighbor to join you at the next fellowship or your service event. Don’t keep Rotary a secret, let others join us in the special gift of Rotary. Take action photos of your events and get them out in the local news media and social media. Public Image is critical to promoting what we do and will get others excited about becoming a Rotarian.

Special thanks to those Rotary Clubs that are hosting Rotary Youth Exchange students that are living in our District. These 13 students are attending high school, living with Host Families, becoming more fluent in English and learning our culture. Please take the opportunity to meet these amazing young people and make their exchange year special. Take part in Youth Services, work with young people in Interact and Rotaract and provide mentorship to them.

Let’s all do what we can each day to make our communities and our world a better place in every way we can to “Create Hope in the World”.

Thanks so much for all you do as a Rotarian.

Yours in Rotary Service

Lou Mello