

Dictionary4Life and other District 7040 Literacy Projects

The Rotary Club of West Ottawa continues to provide the lead role on the Dictionary4Life (D4L) project that has the purpose of providing a gift of the Dictionary4Life book to grade 3 youth in our District. The number of D7040 clubs involved has steadily risen from 2 clubs in 2011 to 15. In 2011 the number of schools was 3 and 1 homework club and in 2017 there were ~39 recipient schools. The number of books ordered has gone from 256 in 2011 to our most recent order of 1,800 in December 2017 for the Fall of 2018 presentations. Thanks to the DSG support received over the years the book cost for participating clubs has been kept below \$6CAD (\$4.70USD). A truly inexpensive **literacy and basic education** focused project.

The project allows for: an additional literacy support tool for students and teachers; raised awareness of Rotary; and, enhanced communications between Rotarians and schools, parents and students. A further project goal is to enhance student self-esteem, confidence, skills, learning capacity and hopefully better EQAO scores. Ultimately, these goals contribute to students becoming successful members of society.

The attached [power point](#) presents a project update. It really tells the story.

D7040 clubs involved in 2017-18 are West-Ottawa, Nepean-Kanata, Ottawa-Bytown, Orleans, Ottawa-South, Ottawa-Stittsville, South Nepean, Brockville (taking on former Prescott schools), Kingston-Waterfront, Napanee, Montreal-Lakeshore, Cornwall-Sunrise, Eganville, Smiths Falls, and Arnprior. Schools in all of these communities benefit. D7810 has a joint RC Sackville, NB and Mount Alison Rotaract club D4L project.

Volunteer time continues to be estimated in the range of 180-200 Rotarians that could be involved and donating over 360-400 volunteer hours for labeling and presenting the books to students. The D4L co-coordinators time is conservatively estimated at 100-150 hours per year. As in the past, the D4L committee will oversee the hands-on implementation of the entire project and report to the RCWO Board of Directors. The RCWO Finance committee is responsible for the club financial accountability aspects of the project supported by the D4L committee chair.

Recently [West Ottawa's & the District literacy plan](#) was updated and approved by the RCWO Board. It will guide the RCWO D4L committee and the District Literacy Chair for 2018-2021. On June 2, 2018 District Council received and approved the plan. A key D4L goal is to engage ~8 more clubs of the 68 D7040 clubs. These clubs are thought to be the last potential clubs in our District for expanding the D4L project.

The order deadline date is November 15, 2018 for clubs wanting to participate next year. Book delivery will be July 2019. A coordinated August distribution date will be set and all clubs manage their presentations for early Fall of 2019 in schools of their choice.

Our belief is that literacy is an issue which touches almost every aspect of peoples' lives. Autonomy and confidence in the student are developed when they are provided opportunities to use a dictionary, a core tool for developing literacy skills. Communities will benefit in a myriad of ways, not least of which are students' ability for innovative thinking in our knowledge based society. They will be more likely to be engaged members of our communities. A secondary community benefit is that the students are encouraged to share their dictionary at home with siblings, friends and parents who also are learning English. Because the D4L becomes theirs after signing their name on the inside label they learn responsibility for perhaps their "first ever" brand new book that belongs to them.

If your club is not involved yet please consider this incredible inexpensive gift of a book to your local Grade 3 students. If you are already involved, are there other schools you may want to consider?

District 7040 clubs have a multitude of different literacy projects. Bill Robinson, former District Literacy Chair began a [Literacy Project Database](#). Please have a look at it and send updates to [Linda Flynn](#) so we can update this information.

For more ideas your club can be inspired by the [Rotary International Literacy Project Guide](#).

For more information contact [Linda Flynn](#) or [Ken Murray](#).

