INSTALLATION MESSAGE

PRESIDENT CINDY CHERRY

JULY 1, 2020

When I called the Beaumont Rotary Club 12 years ago and said, "I think I want to join Rotary", I had no idea it would lead to this. I really didn't even know what Rotary was, only that a family friend from Levelland always spoke highly of it. Randy Fluke called to "interview" me and we soon found out we had Texas Tech and Lubbock in common. My first Rotary meeting was on Youth Day where students and Interact Clubs were recognized for impressive numbers of community service hours and two scholarships were awarded. I was hooked. Looking around the room, I saw one person that I knew but everyone I met was friendly and welcoming. I soon knew a dozen people, then thirty, then fifty. Rotary was fun! Every Wednesday meeting sent me back to work with newfound knowledge from our speakers and also from our members – like the fact that Roger McCabe's co-worker (otherwise known as Scott Hall's mother) grew up across the street from me in Morton, Texas population 1,799 (Salute!).

Rotary did meaningful projects that addressed community needs and made an impact. I think I volunteered for everything. From my Flag route (which I have laid claim to), to RYLA, to building a Playground, to painting, planting, moving, cleaning, tearing out, loading, sanding, reading to children, filling food boxes, serving burgers, sweating, freezing, pushing a wheel barrow full of dirt – the list could go on – all while Tim Sudela took hundreds of pictures, and if it was an inside project, shared his playlist of Sad 80's Love Songs.

In an article where Warren Buffett told a teenager his secret to success, he listed four types of people to surround yourself with:

People who live by their values

People who do what they love

People who actually listen. Really listen

People who live and work by their integrity

I found these people in Rotary, individuals who live by the 4 Way Test with truth, fairness, goodwill, friendship and an interest in the well-being of others. Watching them lead with confidence, ease, grace and dignity has inspired me to grow. Rotarians have encouraged, challenged, and provided me an education in leadership that is priceless. I continue to learn from someone in this Club every day.

Rotary has also shown me the Power to accomplish daunting tasks against what seems like insurmountable odds. I will give you an example from RYLA 2020. We had 22 high school juniors set to leave on Friday afternoon. A horrible storm was predicted for the day – and time - our students were set to leave. Our bus was grounded for Friday. A little while later we learned that the bus would not be available Saturday. Teresa Simpson contacted students and parents with a change of plans. She called Robert Turner and Anthony Toups – neither could get us vans on such short notice. She looked at her co-worker and said "WE are Rotarians. WE are going to make this happen." So what did she do – she called Pat Anderson. He got his church's 15 passenger bus. She texted us at camp to use Tim Sudela's trailer for the luggage and my truck to pull the trailer. Randy Shelton met my son at my house to pick up the truck and every receiver my husband owned so we were sure to have one that fit. Saturday morning everyone meets at Kelly High School and we have an extra passenger – Gary Moncla, part of our dynamic duo. Now between the bus, the truck and Teresa's car we are one seat short. But the Rotary magic is still with us. One of the campers, who also happened to be the best friend of Teresa's son, was driving his brother's SUV while his car was in the shop. With Teresa in the SUV, Randy in the truck and Pat and Gary in the church bus, 26 people were on their way to Woodlake, Texas. We are Rotarians. We are going to make this happen. And we did. Again and again and again, through hurricanes and floods and pandemics, Rotarians make things happen.

"Together, we see a world where people unite and take action to create lasting change – across the globe, in our communities, and in ourselves." Our Club will carry out Rotary's Vision this year as we assemble and send layette bags to new mothers' who live in poverty in Nicaragua, and as we offer support to the Rotary Club of Magnolia and District 5910 with a Peace Project in Sierra Leone.

We will continue to serve our students at Martin Elementary with books that will bridge the reading gap and put them a little farther down the path to success, we will serve our community with “service above self” projects that meet a need and make a difference, we will sponsor high school Juniors with a Rotary Youth Leadership Award and help build tomorrow’s leaders, we will award deserving students with scholarships – those attending strait from high school and a non-traditional student at LIT, we will recognize those members in our community that go above and beyond with a Vocational Service Award, we will raise money for our Club and honor our country by putting out flags, we will continue to strive to End Polio.

For the past few years, we have been exploring additional ways we can enhance the educational experience of our students at Martin Elementary in both big and small ways. We will continue researching courses of action and move forward when the timing is right. Uncertain times call for flexibility and patience.

In closing, it is the immense talents and capabilities of each member of this Club that has given me the confidence to take on this role. Your dedication and enthusiasm will continue to allow our Beaumont Rotary Club to accomplish anything we take on. Thank you to those who noticed my love for Rotary and started me on this journey. It has been – and no doubt will continue to be – a most rewarding experience.

Now let’s sit back and enjoy an encore performance of the Rotary Family and Friends Virtual Chorus masterly produced by Rotarian James Han from District Governor Becky Mason’s Installation a few weeks ago.

There are no extraordinary human beings. There are only common, ordinary human beings, like you and me, who are able to do extraordinary things if we connect to love and to passion, if we do things that are more important than ourselves. – Gustavo Zerbino, survivor of the 1972 airplane crash in the Andes, soccer team, 72 days in the mountains