

NEIGHBORHOOD

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EXTRA

Lincoln Rotarians provide dictionaries to 3rd graders

NICKI KLEIN, LINCOLN SOUTH ROTARY
for the Neighborhood Extra

“Thank you, Rotary. This is the first book that I can put my name in – it is mine,” said one of the students upon receiving a dictionary.

One ELL student commented, “This will really help me learn English.”

Since 2006, Rotary Clubs in Lincoln have been distributing dictionaries to elementary students in Lincoln. This year Lincoln 14, Lincoln East and Lincoln South Rotary clubs partnered on the project to distribute dictionaries to 3,351 students.

“Hope to the World” is the 2023-24 theme for Rotary International. The reactions from these students indicate that local Rotary clubs are achieving that – helping fulfill students’ hopes and dreams.

“Dictionaries changed my life.

I was first exposed to a dictionary when I was 10 years old,” said Azariah Lawal, Lincoln East Rotary Club Dictionary Project chair. “I recall poring over the book from page to page exploring different pictures and words. The dictionary instilled in me an affinity for words.”

He continued, “The dictionary project has a soft spot in my heart, and I hope delivering these dictionaries to these young students will serve as a foundation for their academic and real-world success.”

Nearly 50 Rotarians gathered to prepare the dictionaries for deliv-



COURTESY PHOTO

Lincoln 14, Lincoln East and Lincoln South Rotary Club members prepare dictionaries for delivery to third grade students in Lincoln.

ery. Book plates were added to the inside cover, which allows each student to write in their name as the owner.

The dictionaries are counted and placed in boxes, which are labeled with delivery details. They are then assigned to Rotarians who deliver them to the students.

The dictionaries that Rotary purchases are designed specifically for elementary students. Key features include the Constitution

of the U.S., the Declaration of Independence, brief biographies of all the U.S. presidents, world maps, and information about all 50 states, countries of the world, planets in our solar system, sign language, braille and the longest word in the English language.

“My favorite thing about the Dictionary Project is how we, as a community of Rotarians, can make such a significant impact by each doing a small part,” said Christie

Weston, Lincoln 14 Rotary Club member and overall Lincoln Dictionary Project chair. “For packaging and delivering, it will take over 100 members to make it possible to get these dictionaries in the hands of the students.”

Weston continued, “The dictionaries spark conversations, curiosity and learning, which has a ripple effect in the families and homes of the students.”

The dictionaries are being de-

livered to third grade students, an ideal time to introduce them to dictionaries so they can begin to use them in their studies, according to curriculum specialists. Using a paper dictionary helps students increase their vocabulary, learn correct spelling and improve reading comprehension. Research indicates that this is a time when students are transitioning to a new level in their education, moving from “learning to read” to “reading to learn.”

“This is Rotary at its best – just one way that Rotary is serving our community,” said Clay Ehlers, Lincoln South Rotary Club Dictionary Project chair. “We are positive role models for our youth. We are adults showing youth that we care about them – their education – their hopes and dreams – their future.”

Lincoln 14, Lincoln East and Lincoln South Rotary clubs are members of Rotary International, which includes 1.4 million members in over 46,000 member clubs around the world. Together, Rotarians see a world where people unite and take action to create lasting change – across the globe, in our communities and in ourselves. Learn more about Rotary at rotary.org. You can also connect directly with Lincoln 14 Rotary (rotary14.org), Lincoln East Rotary (<https://portal.clubrunner.ca/4424>) and Lincoln South Rotary (lincolnsouthrotary.org).