



Jack Martin
 President
 District 6990 Rotary Elder Program, Inc.
 4000 Ponce de Leon Boulevard
 Suite 470
 Coral Gables, Florida 33146

Telephone: 305-865-0747
 Fax: 786-513-0253
 Email: jmartin@rotaryelderprogram.org

www.RotaryElderProgram.org

Improving the quality of life of elder citizens in Broward, Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties

April 2006

Simple Gestures

Six members of the **Rotary Club of Fort Lauderdale North** spent a Saturday morning in March bettering the lives of the residents of Mercy Manor North in Fort Lauderdale.

The Rotarians took aim at a patio area that is a favorite gathering area for the senior citizens that call this retirement community home. In addition to a general cleanup the hedge was trimmed, the existing plants mulched and new plants were added. Just a few hours, spending time doing what Rotarians do — bettering the community in which they live.

So moved was the family member of one resident that she came down and thanked the Rotarians for what they had done. What: not just some

landscaping; no they had improved the quality of life of that person's parent — and everyone else that lives there.

Rotary Elder Program projects don't have to be complicated. They do need to make a difference by making volunteer involvement an integral part of the project.



Members of the Rotary Club of Fort Lauderdale North pause to commemorate their recent workday.

The Rotarians that labored on that Saturday morning might well agree that it didn't only make a difference in the lives of those that live at this place, but it also made them feel good, real good, about what their club does to better the commu-

nity that they serve.

The **Rotary Club of Coral Gables** reprised their ongoing theatre series in March by again hosting AARP members as well as clients of Little Brothers Friends of the Elderly at a matinee performance

at Actors' Playhouse. On a Sunday afternoon the Rotarians hosted by providing tickets and by serving snacks at the conclusion of the performance.

More Rotarians, from the **Rotary Club of Hialeah-Miami Springs** hosted well over 100 elder residents at their monthly gathering and the Rotarians from the **Rotary Club of Opa-locka** paid another visit to Archbishop McCarthy Residence to entertain the seniors there with another edition of their reading program.

Four outstanding examples of Rotarians putting Service Above Self and hundreds of thankful seniors appreciative of the efforts that were made.

Medical Information Emergency Kit

The reach of this project continues to expand as clubs in Colorado and North Florida have requested quantities of kits for distribution in their areas.

Every time that I receive a call from a Rotarian somewhere in the country it is fascinating to learn that people are passing these kits on to friends and relatives—and that, quickly, others see the value of introducing these lifesaving packets that contain critical medical information in their own communities.

First and foremost, it is essential that the club get buy-in from local fire-rescue officials. This insures that the first responders will be trained to look for the kit on a home refrigerator and then make use of the information contained on the card.

The success of the program locally has been powerful, so powerful that efforts are now underway to source additional grant funding to assure the continued availability of kits.

With close to 130,000 kits out in distribution from Key West to Fort Lauderdale this program is a lifesaver.

More Candles on the Cake

Birthday celebrations in the future might take on a whole different look if the report presented during a conference at Oxford University turns out to be accurate.

Paul Hodge, of Harvard University's Generations Policy Program predicted that, "Life expectancy is going to grow significantly and current policies are going to be proven inadequate." Richard Miller, of the Michigan University Medical School, added that "lifespan could be extended by 40 percent, simply by limiting caloric consumption."

The experts concluded that, within our lifetime, average life expectancy in advanced countries could rise from near 80 to 112 years with many individuals exceeding that.

The evidence of advancing years has been clear in Florida for some time now, with the Florida Department of Elder Affairs reporting the most rapidly expanding demographic, by percentage, is that of residents age 85 and over. Year after year the number of people that live to celebrate their 100th birthday continues to grow rapidly.

For quite some time I have said that, while science, coupled with better living conditions such as cleaner air and water is allowing for people to live longer it doesn't always mean that these same individuals will be living better.

That is where Rotarians, and Rotary clubs can make a difference, much like the four clubs highlighted this month and the dozens of clubs, indeed, the overwhelming majority of clubs in this district, have proven more than one hundred times over since the inception of the Rotary Elder Program.

I thank you for what you have done and ask that you redouble your efforts as all of us plan for the upcoming Rotary year, 2006-2007.