

Dictionary Project

Sparks Rotary Club

Program Summary: The Rotary Club of Sparks will be donating a dictionary to every third grader in Washoe County for the ninth year in a row. Members of the Sparks Rotary Club will be visiting local elementary schools to distribute a new Dictionary to over 5,000 third grade students. We also add the Four Way Test to the inside of the front cover of the Dictionary which is promoted as a vocational practice by RI.

Focus of the program: Literacy is an important issue for Rotary International and we think this is a great way to help in our own community,”

How is the program best implemented: “The Dictionary Project” was started over eleven years ago in South Carolina when Mary French set out to give a dictionary to every third grader in every school in South Carolina, every year. We contacted Mary French and she hooked us up with the books. The dictionaries are handpicked to fit the needs of young students learning to read and write. The dictionary has larger print and is small enough for growing hands and contains most words that third-graders use.

The 3rd grade was targeted because this is the age when children are beginning to learn the importance of words; in their speech and in their writing. Having a dictionary of their own gives them ‘word power’ to write essays in later years, to read a book and understand it, and to function in the business world when they grow up. It will also be a help to teachers and in doing homework. It is not a children’s book, but one they can keep and use all their lives, helping them to become knowledgeable adults.”

Results of the program: Rotarians will deliver the books to every third grader and ask them to look up words like “truth”, “respect” and “courteous”. Words that have important meaning not only to third graders but to community leaders like those involved in Sparks Rotary. Typical distribution takes approximately 1 week with all the Rotarians in the club delivering to 1-2 schools. Given that this will be our ninth year, we will have touched approximately 45,000 3rd graders in Washoe County since the program began.