Rotary Clubs Join Forces to Help Middle School Students

The Rotary Club of Tahoe-Incline and the Rotary Club of Incline Village frequently work together on District Grants to support projects in Incline Village. Our most recent collaboration, the completion of the Incline Middle School Literacy and Improvement Project, demonstrates the value of a multi-club approach. It also illustrates how responsive the District Grant process can when events necessitate a major redesign to achieve the project goal.

Initially, both the Rotary Club of Tahoe-Incline and the Rotary Club of Incline Village had teamed up to apply for a District 5190 grant to refurbish the Incline Middle School (IMS) library through the purchase of furniture. Unfortunately, two-thirds of the way through the process, the Washoe County School District announced the possible consolidation of Incline schools, and potential closure of IMS – thus rendering a library refurbishment risky.

Our Rotary Clubs quickly reached out to District 5190 to seek a project re-design, pivoting away from fixed assets to an investment in literacy that could move with the middle-school population. District leadership confirmed that we could pivot to a new project design, subject to District and The Rotary Foundation concurrence. With such assurances, our team of Rotarians and IMS administrators and teachers mobilized to identify another way to support literacy for local middle school students, within the established project budget. Our team assessed that the purchase of 24 iPads would be the most effective alternative. The devices would maintain our initial focus on literacy and improving reading comprehension, while increasing student engagement and being able to move with the students should the schools consolidate.

To secure District and The Rotary Foundation approvals, we prepared a brief one-page note explaining the need for a project pivot, outlining the new design and providing revised cost information. Within a few days of uploading this note to the District Grant Module, we had concurrence from both and moved forward with the iPad purchase. The process was straightforward and demonstrated the flexibility of our District Grant program and responsiveness of The Rotary Foundation.

The 24 iPads arrived in mid-June and we met the deadline for our final report. We are pleased with the revised and improved project. Students will be able to check out these devices, much like they would check out a book at their school library. Teachers will be able to assign engaging materials, track reading assignments and create specific challenges for students based on their individual needs. The iPads will hold up to 1,200 books and a variety of math apps that are easy to manage, convenient and not dependent on wi-fi, thus allowing students complete accessibility to assigned materials.

Rotarians are continuing to assist with the project by loading the devices with the apps and reading titles chosen by the IMS staff. Rotarians are also putting Rotary emblems on each of the devices so that students, faculty and parents are aware that Rotary donated the iPads. These devices will continue to provide benefits for our local Incline Village students for years to come.