

Today marks my last day as your president for the 2013-2014 Rotary year. As the luckiest gal in the room to have been able to serve you as president this year, it is my hope that today you will sense and receive my sincere and heart-felt thanks and appreciation for lending me that honor. I say the word "lend" because I have realized that, in a group of such as this; that this office isn't bestowed, it isn't given and in my case, it certainly isn't earned. You have lent the office of president with me this year and in so doing, entrusted the goals, ideals and standards of Rotary with me, starting back in Lisbon, Portugal as I represented our club at the Rotary International Convention and concluding today, a year later. I am grateful, I am humbled and I am honored. I take a moment of personal privilege to acknowledge and thank the person not only there for me during this entire year but also for the past almost 35 years and that is my husband, Stuart. Thank you for always believing in me. You truly are my better self.

Rotary International's President for this past year was Ron Burton, a man of direct words, tremendous leadership and immense vision. He addressed us all in his last speech as president by reminding us of his theme - our theme - to engage Rotary, Change Lives. He also said that, as an Oklahoman, he ascribes to a saying that you need to leave the woodpile just a little higher than you found it. To do that, involvement is the key. As each of us has found our individual calling to serve and truly engage Rotary—we have also changed lives.

My true passions - children, literacy and veterans - have also been about changing lives and today I want to highlight some of the ways we have been about this during the past year.

We have been extremely proud to have completed our second year of partnership with Whitcomb Elementary School to sponsor the outstanding program of character development, EarlyAct FirstKnight. Based on the theme of gallant knights and Rotarian values, Early Act First Knight is a curriculum-based program that teaches students how to become noble, service-oriented people. Because Marilyn Musial had the heart and vision to see this program implemented last year and Whitcomb's principal, Mark Smith had the willingness to invite us in; it was really a no-brainer that we should continue the fine work Marilyn initiated. Thank you, Marilyn. With a dedicated team of Space Center Rotarians being the face of the knighting ceremonies, over 740 children were impacted each and every school day with 2 important things: repeating - and thus, learning - the Rotary 4-way test and learning, discussing and implementing one of the monthly character traits taught by their teachers through the curriculum we bought and provided. I want you to think: except for parents and in some cases, the church, from how many other sources are these students hearing about the importance of truth-telling, of being fair to all concerned, of building good will and of doing good that will be beneficial to all. What an incredibly amazing investment in our future and our future leaders.

At each knighting ceremony, one student from each of 6 classes and of six grade levels was honored with a medallion from Sir James and his or her accolades were read to the student body. Each student was escorted by Sir Jack Bacon, and greeted by Marilyn Musial and John Branch. The student's parents, sisters, brothers, sometimes grandparents, aunts, and uncles shared in the celebrations. I want to introduce you today to one of those very special honorees, Dyson Nevels, and his mother Chrystal, who are here to tell you a bit about the EarlyAct FirstKnight program as it impacted them.

In addition to the children impacted by you this year, we were also able to make significant contributions to the children helped in Communities in Schools and in the Autism program of UH-CL.

This leads to the second area of my areas of service—literacy. As a practicing Speech/Language Pathologist, my work is to test and treat persons of all ages who have dyslexia. Part of my life's work is teaching persons how to read. Books are my passion. Literacy is my passion. I have been delighted to have brought a new area of service to our club this year by having our weekly speakers autograph a specially-chosen book which is then donated to the Whitcomb library. If you go over to Whitcomb's

library, you will find an ever growing shelf filled with our books that are continually used by both students and their teachers in their lessons on character development. I am proud to say incoming president Scott Rainey will be continuing this literacy project-thank you, Scott.

My third area of passion and service is to our veterans. Our club has generously donated to Team River Runners, the group that was highlighted at the beginning of my year and again 2 weeks ago. This group has been overwhelmed by our generosity and is looking forward to seeing more of our athletically inclined members join up at upcoming kayaking events this fall for the service members who join them. Our club also made a donation to Fisher House, the home away from home organization; that provides housing for the families of service member who are being hospitalized in out-of-town or out-of-state locations.

I will most likely omit inadvertently some project, but in addition to these areas, we have left the Rotary wood pile a little higher by providing:

- truckloads of clothes to the needy at CrossRoads
- roses, smiles and many hugs to the seniors at nearby nursing homes and centers on Valentine's Day
- sight to the vision-impaired in Guerrero, Mexico
- water sanitation in Honduras through the global grant piloted by Stan Galanski
- a life-time of memories and better world understanding through the sponsorship and hosting of Anna and Marcus through the International Youth Exchange program
- over 1000 meals to shut-ins through Meals on Wheels
- research funding to the Alzheimer's Association
- camping funding to Camp be an Angel
- multiple scholarships to graduating students from Clear Creek ISD
- funding to the important programs of EA Smith YMCA
- recognition of the outstanding teachers of our district through the teacher of the year program
- financial contributions to the Autism School and the Hearing Impaired School in Cozumel, organized by our own Mike Hernandez, done during Governor Bob's Conference Cruise and,
- our club's contributions through the Rotary Foundation, towards polio eradication in the countries of Pakistan, Afghanistan and Nigeria.

We have so much to celebrate! Let's move from celebration to a time of remembrances. The slide show coming up is not exhaustive in its scope but rather gives us a snapshot view of this past year's fun and achievement. At the conclusion of the slides, I ask that the designated bell ringers come forward and the club stand for a special time of remembrance. (Note: See Year in Photos at the beginning of the page)

We want to give a special tribute to our deceased Space Center Rotarians, so if you will stand with me as we remember them: (read members)

Our time today moves to that point of recognizing and thanking members for this year's service to our club's work and its part in Rotary around the world.

1. To our very own Suzi Howe, recipient of the prestigious Service Above Self Award
2. To you who serve Rotary International on the district or International level, please stand.
3. To you who serve on the Rotary Foundation Board, please stand.
4. To you who have served as a Director, please stand.
5. To our club officers for the 2013-14 year, please stand.
6. To members who have joined in the 2013-14 year, please stand, (read all new members)
7. And, then to give recognition to a few individuals who may have already stood in another capacity and who will be surprised at this additional honor because they did not expect it. But, it is the fact that you do not expect any recognition for what you have done says so much about you.

This year, I am recognizing a new member who has not stopped from the day they arrived and were inducted. Giving of their time, taking positions of responsibility, getting involved in numerous avenues of services – all the time while running a business and home-schooling their children. The Rising Star Award for Space Center Rotary for 2013-14 goes to Wendy Holley.

I want to next recognize a member who serves constantly, excellently, selflessly and never, ever wants any recognition or fanfare about it. This member's faith is a personal inspiration and encouragement to me. This member encouraged me during this year, when I thought I could barely hold my head above water—running a full-time campaign and serving as this club's president. It's like he knew the emotional toll it took and said, through his actions, "How can I help you?" This member, earning a Shining Star Award for Space Center Rotary for 2013-14, is Jerrold Dewease.

I want to recognize a member who has been the face of teaching financial literacy as well as the importance of voting and citizenship to the students of Whitcomb in their new after-school program. This member, has not only been a dear friend and personal mentor, but has been a constant source of support, encouragement and joy. This member epitomizes what it means to live, Service above Self. The member earning a Shining Star Award for Space Center Rotary for 2013-14 is Marilyn Musial.

I want to recognize a member who has grabbed hold of an avenue of service and become synonymous with what a gallant knight is. This member faithfully dressed the part of a knight, developed that part into the most chivalrous and amazing of knights and made every student - and their families - feel the singular attention they deserved. The member also has been the face of Engineers without Borders in our club and joined in the district grant application process for the EA FK program. The member earning a Shining Star Award for Space Center Rotary for 2013-14 is Sir Jack Bacon.

I want to recognize a member who elevated the fine art of encouragement to new levels. This member made women swoon when he gave them a rose and a kiss on the cheek. This member continued to take a key role in the past 2 Shrimporees when he had every reason to sit it out. This member personally encouraged me all year long with emails, saying "great job!" "You did a wonderful job" or "This has been a great year!" Your encouragement will stay with me for the rest of my life. The member earning a Shining Star Award for Space Center Rotary for 2013-14 is Jerry Smith.

I want to recognize a member who is unflappable in his service. Always, always wearing a smile, always a team player, always ready to do whatever is needed to get the job done, this member became a pivotal part of the after-school program at Whitcomb Elementary for the teaching of the importance of voting and citizenship. Ever ready to be helpful, and being a Longhorn, too, the member earning a Shining Star Award for Space Center Rotary for 2013-14 is John Branch.

The final award to be presented, Rotarian of the Year for our club, will be announced in a few short weeks.

Today has been an event for celebrating, remembering and thanking. As I ask our newly-inducted President to come up here, I charge you to look around you today at those in this room and ask yourself—is there a finer group of leaders anywhere who have the goal of service above self? Is there a better group anywhere with whom to invest your time and your energy - than right here? Dare greatly and think big of what our club will do this next year when every single one of us engages Rotary to change lives. President Rainey, I want to pass to you the diamond pin of club president that was passed to me. It was not given to me but rather lent me, much as this past year was lent me - may this next year be even better and brighter under your leadership! Congratulations!!