



# MAKE DREAMS REAL

## Governor's Bulletin



Rotary International District 3310 [www.rotarydistrict3310.org](http://www.rotarydistrict3310.org)

## LITERACY AND THE MAGAZINE GO HAND IN HAND

**M**arch is Literacy Month and April is Magazine Month. In some ways, they are closely inter-related. Producing a magazine would not be of much use without literate readers.

Literacy is one of the emphases of RI. It is said to 'break the cycle of poverty'. With a literate population, there would be better understanding of health and hygiene, the need for clean water and sanitation, and the knowledge to overcome hunger and achieve a better quality of life.

With a literate population, there would be added value to the magazine and its purpose, making it more meaningful. In fact, any media would then become useful to disseminate information. With information comes knowledge and understanding.

When we trek to the rural areas in our mission to assist the communities in need, we bring with us knowledge to share with these people. We provide medicines and health care and in the process, inform them of the need to practise good hygiene and sanitation. We are however, faced with obstacles in our communication methods, especially by bringing in literatures, which feature important health concerns. Not only may we be confronted with the inability of the populace to read and write, but also the capability to understand the message.

I am reminded of the story in a remote village in Africa when medical personnel brought in big poster-size pictures of the malarial carrying mosquitoes. The villagers were full of cooperation and assurance that these deadly mosquitoes will be destroyed in their village. Some months later when the medical team returned to the village because of a high incidence of malaria, the villagers again assured the team that they had been on the lookout for the mosquitoes since the first day, but so far they 'had never seen a mosquito as big as the one in the picture'.

The anecdote tells us that even a picture can fail to communicate when people are illiterate. Literacy, other than just the ability to read and write, therefore encompasses also the need to provide knowledge and understanding. When all these factors are combined, the magazine or any other media will be a powerful tool to bring about change for the better.

For those of us who live in the world of modern technology, there is also a need to be 'IT literate'. As the world clamours for a 'greener environment', the magazine, as we know it now, will soon be forced to a more 'sophisticated production', or to put it simply, the need to produce an 'e-magazine' vis-à-vis a printed magazine. So much more benefits can come out of an e-production. Not only do we save on paper, but we can go the extra mile on the number of pages, photos and designs with no cost added, unlike printed materials.

### **They Who Serves Best, Enjoy Rotary Most.**

Yours in Rotary,  
MAKE DREAMS REAL

Edward Sung Burongoh  
District Governor 2008-09.

