

Facebook post from the District Governor Tony Sheard – March 14th, 2020

Earlier today we held a District Leadership Meeting online regarding the CONVID 19 outbreak and we have written out to directly to all members on the impact on the District, its operations and specifically in relation to the postponement of PETS/Leadership Exchange scheduled for April.

We have updated our guidance on the Home Page of District 6330 and we intend this to be the single source of guidance on CONVID -19 as we move forward. Check it out at:

The coronavirus/COVID-19 pandemic has made this last week a trying one for many of us, the past seventy-two hours in particular. We have watched as institutions, sporting events, and businesses have canceled or closed for the first time in decades. “self quarantine” and “work from home” advisories are becoming the new normal, and our local and national governments are providing guidance and restrictions that have not been seen in at least a half-century. We have seen a great deal of change in a short period of time, and it is OK to feel frustrated, confused, or concerned.

Many of you have asked whether the District is asking clubs to cancel their meetings, or whether District events are being canceled or postponed. Rotary starts with you and the clubs, so while we do not issue mandates, we do offer the following suggestions and notes:

- Each club is empowered to meet or not meet as it sees fit for so long as it sees fit. Each Club’s President, in consultation with their Board, should decide what makes sense for their members. It is still unclear just how long this pandemic will impact our District, so it is OK to be flexible. Whether you gather as a club, in small groups, meet online (via Zoom, GoToMeeting, Google Hangouts etc.), or not at all, it is the right decision - you are all Rotarians, and Rotary is not meetings, it is service. Similarly, clubs are to use their own judgment in holding public events during this time. If possible consider postponing your event, but if you do hold your event please take appropriate precautions for the sake of your Rotarians and your community.

As we increase our hand washing and redirect our coughs into our elbows, practice social distancing: Let’s stay connected, both as Rotarians and to our communities, because this world needs Rotary now more than ever.

Consider the following:

- Stay in touch with your fellow Rotarians, either virtually or in person. Check in with them to see how they’re doing and if they need any assistance.
- Be aware of community needs. As many of you have observed, if schools do close, many children will lose their primary source of food. If COVID-19 cases increase, local first responders and health care facilities will be strained and may be in need of support. Challenging times bring an increase in needs (not just for toilet paper), and we are great at serving community needs.
- Check in on your neighbors, especially those in the at-risk populations (the elderly and the immuno-compromised) and see how they’re doing. Help out when and where you can. Physical distance may be healthy at this time, but social isolation can be deadly as it contributes to depression and allows people in need to fall through the cracks. Be a good neighbor and a good friend.
- Take care of yourself and your families – pay attention to your physical and mental health. Ask for help if you need it. And even if, like me, you are one of those “it won’t happen to me” types, try to remember that your health and the public health are interrelated. While you may feel fine, you might just be carrying something harmful to others.

If we stay connected and lend a hand where we can, the worst that will happen is that our communities will survive a trying global pandemic. The best that can happen is that this all passes us by and we grow stronger as Rotarians and as a community. Either way, coronavirus/COVID-19 is temporary, Rotary is here to stay.

We are hosting a District wide Zoom Forum on Monday evenings via Zoom to share our experiences so check out our web page for details on how to participate.

Please share how your club is coping during this difficult time on the District Facebook site so we may continue to learn from each other.

Stay healthy, and stay connected.
Greet with a Smile not a Handshake!

Yours in Rotary Service

Tony

PS With thanks to my Classmate DG Richard J Fox for some of the ideas for this post
Adopt Adapt and Improve....!