

President's message 11-19-04

**“The great thing in this world is not so much where we stand, as in what direction we are moving”**

Oliver Wendell Holmes

One of my favorite non-fiction books is Connections, Burke. You may remember the PBS series based on the book that aired some years ago. I am constantly reminded of the many small connections any effort takes to be successful. In Rotary the connections are enormous, as many of you know. I often refer to early connections of a project as the planting of seeds. We often do not know how well it will grow, or what the final result will be, but with proper tending it often exceeds our expectations.

Several months ago John Keane ADG, Oak Forest RC, planted such a seed. He sent me a note that I should meet a friend of his named Jim Boswell. I met Jim and was told about his plans to participate in the Race Across America. Jim explained that his plan was to raise one half million dollars from his effort towards the Crisis Center located in Tinley Park. I immediately remembered the connections our club has to that fine organization and began to water the seed that John had sown. I gave Jim a quick course in Rotary International and mentioned that he will pass by hundreds of Rotary clubs on his journey across America next year. Thousands of potential Rotarian donors would be along his path. When Jim mentioned that he actually starts the race on June 19<sup>th</sup> 2005, during our Centennial Convention and the day after our host hospitality event, I began to feel this was meant to be. I asked Jim if he would give a presentation to our club and he put together a very good presentation for us on September 2, as you may remember. He has since taken that presentation to other area clubs and they have matched the \$500 our board voted to give to The Center in support of Jim's effort.

Several weeks ago Kathy Mahoney arranged for me to have a tour of The Crisis Center. What remarkable work they do, and how much more is needed to be done really made an impression on me. We talked about the specifics of Jim's fundraising efforts and Rotary's connection. They began getting the same excitement that I was already feeling. We talked about the 800 clubs Jim will be passing by on his journey and the potential for support that this might bring. They talked about the specific part of their program that will benefit from these efforts and how important that will be to the future success of their programs.

The quote above was taken from the conference room wall at The Center where Kathy, Jan Strykland and I met for the tour. The quote was below a timeline showing their growth over the past twenty-five years and that they are celebrating that milestone soon and it all started at a kitchen table.

The connections continue.

Yours Rotarily,

John Schaefer