

After the election of Governor Doreen, I was immediately asked about my Partner's Project. As I thought about our previous projects, I decided that we should continue to carry on with the many great things that we have been doing: the reading to children programs, books for those children who never owned one and so gratefully clutched on to the one given to them, help in education, donation of clothing essentials and in creating inclusiveness among all. I didn't think that there was anything new that we could start.



I asked First Lady Marlene if she would help in maintaining these projects. Graciously accepting she asked what I thought about the new requirement that the State Education Department was starting: requiring schools to tell parents to have dental exams done for children starting school and then in two-year intervals. I was surprised to hear of this even though my son and I have a dental practice. Information wasn't being disseminated. I immediately decided that there was another project needed -- a program of health initiatives.

I am asking clubs to develop health programs for children and adults. Provide information on the requirements and recommendations of the State Health Department, starting with the initial examination and vaccinations and the subsequent follow-ups. If there is a need in your community, seek the help of your county medical society and your county dental society in setting up programs to ensure the availability of services for all.

Complacency has set in causing outbreaks of whooping cough, measles and chicken pox even though we thought that they were a thing of the past. Flu shots are now recommended from 6 months old to 18 years old. Children who contract the flu are at risk for common staph infections that last year killed 74 children.

A vaccine is available that can greatly reduce cases of cervical cancer in women if girls are started on the HPV vaccine as they approach teenage.

Before leaving for college or work, teenagers should receive a vaccine to prevent contracting meningococcal encephalitis. This disease can result in brain damage, loss of limbs, blindness and ultimately death in a matter of days. Don't let this happen to your children or any other young person.

Decide how your club should proceed to provide information and services required in your location. You know best what is needed.

However, to be of service, we need Kiwanians and we need to keep our Kiwanians around as long as possible. Governor Don has led our District in taking in more than 700 new members this year. However, we also lose many each year, especially to premature death. We need to promote health initiatives for ourselves also so that we may provide the most hours of service to our youth.

Our club lost a great member earlier this year. He was renowned in our town for spreading the Kiwanis name and in asking people to come to our meetings and learn the joys of becoming a member. He raised over \$1,000 per year for Golisano Children's Hospital. He was my Uncle Tony and he was "Uncle Tony" to all in our area.

He died after symptoms of colon cancer became severely evident. Like so many men (and women) he refused periodic colonoscopies, even though colon cancer is almost 100 percent curable if detected in the very early stages of polyp formation. Fear of the unknown kept him from having this test, not knowing how much improved this procedure was. Spread the word about colonoscopies for those 50 years old and up.

Encourage women to get on a schedule for mammograms and Pap smears as their doctors recommend. Again, survival rates are excellent with early detection.

Periodic complete blood screenings should be promoted to detect diabetes, high cholesterol, high blood pressure and many more conditions.

Shingles, an extremely painful and sometimes lethal disease can be developed from the chicken pox virus lodged in the nerve sheaths many years after initial onset. People who don't recall having chicken pox can also be affected. Everyone over 65 years of age should receive the shingles vaccine along with younger people at risk.

Once again, there will be no set requirements to fulfill this Partner's Project. Do what works best for your club, your community and your division to spread information and to promote clinics where needed. Inform me of what you are doing. Together we can develop health initiatives that will benefit everyone! Banner patches will be given to clubs who fulfill this need.