



*John de Giorgio*  
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### ***Trees Project and Presidential Conference positive image of our District***

The month of April was another busy month in which at a District level we focused on three types of activities: the successful conclusion of the “Un albero per ogni Rotariano” project, the Presidential Peace Conference held in Taranto and the continuation of preparations for the District Congress.

The “Un albero per ogni Rotariano” project was a wonderfully simple yet effective global project through which International President Riseley encouraged each Club to plant a tree for each member. In addition to having the environmental benefit of adding 1.2 million trees in the world, this project had the advantage of involving Rotarians in direct action, improving our communities providing visibility to Rotary. Of course, if we do not maintain our trees then the visibility will become a negative factor.

The participation of our District’s Clubs in this project has been excellent with 5798 trees planted for our 3720 members. That is a 55% over achievement on the President Riseley’s target. 79 out of our 93 Clubs participated in this project according to the information that we have received.

By far excelling was Rotary Club Ribera that were responsible on their own for 1,250 plantings by their 50 members. Exceptional. Well done to Ribera, led by their President Serafino Mazzotta. I wish to congratulate all the Rotarians that got their hands dirty with this project.

#### **Riseley in Taranto**

In April our zone was also honoured to host one of the six Presidential Peacebuilding Conferences organised globally. The event in Taranto focused on Maternal and Infant Health with particular emphasis on immigration. 700 participants were able to hear from a variety of specialised speakers including the Rotary International President, Ian Riseley, and the Chairman of the Rotary Foundation, Paul Netzel, about the priorities we need to set to ensure maternal and child health as an essential component to peace.

Each District had the opportunity to demonstrate how their activities help towards this area of focus and as well as having PDG Giovanni Vaccaro as one of the speakers at the conference, showcasing the activities in our district targeting the immigrant communities, he produced a little brochure on the subject which was well received by President Riseley.

#### **Ravindran at the Congress**

Preparations for the District Conference are well under way and we have over 400 people already booked for the event. As you will see from the article on page XXX, we are honoured to have the Past International President of Rotary International Ravi Ravindran (2014/15) as the President’s representative at our Congress. President Ravi was a highly successful and popular President and, as was explained to me last week by President Riseley, he is much sought after at Rotary events.



Although the language of the Congress will be Italian, we shall be providing translation services from Italian to English for some of the Rotarians from Malta as well as English to Italian for when Past President Ravi speaks. We shall be introducing a simultaneous translation system which allows people to listen through their Smartphones instead of normal headsets and I urge you to read about what is required on page 24 of the Magazine.

One other point about the Congress is that the welcome buffet on Friday evening will be at the beach Club of the Westin Resort called the Reef Club and the dress code for that event is "Smart Casual".

### **Support for Foundations**

As we get towards the end of the year, our minds also turn towards ensuring that we have stood up to our responsibilities to sustain our donations to OUR Rotary Foundation, both for the sustaining of the global fight for the eradication of Polio as well as the Annual Fund. It is the donations to the annual fund which will finance the District and Global Grants that our District will have access to in 3 years' time.

I have heard from many Clubs that they were unable to receive funding for District Grants and yet, often it is these same Clubs that are the ones that had not effected donations three years previously. Remember that one of the parameters used to evaluate the points system for awarding District Grants is the extent of donations made by the Club in the past.

Our donations this year are significantly behind what was achieved in previous years. There are many Clubs that have not made any donations to either fund. Remember the recommendation of a donation of a minimum of \$100 per member. Whatever we donate comes back to allow us to fund our activities in the community. Please dig deep into your pockets. I shall be calling each of the Club Presidents that I consider have a lower than reasonable level of donations. Do you want to receive that call?

A final note: congratulations to the Rotary Club of Messina who on the 4<sup>th</sup> May are celebrating their 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

*John*