

DC ROTARY'S TREES FOR THE CAPITAL INTERACT CLUBS

DC Rotary Club Historian Monica Smith shares the history of our Trees for the Capital project.

December 2, 2020, is considered the official 50th anniversary for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). This date derives from when William Ruckelshaus was confirmed by the U.S. Senate as the EPA's first administrator in 1970. Note that, earlier that same year, the first annual Earth Day was held on April 22. Clearly, there was significant national awareness at the time that our planet needed more attention paid to its caretaking and sustainability.

Interestingly, it wasn't until this year – 2020 – that Rotary International (RI) added "supporting the environment" as an official area of focus. That said, RI and clubs around the globe, including ours, have shown long-time commitment to environment-related service projects locally, nationally, and internationally. For our DC Club, one of our most prominent, sustained service activities for the local environment continues to be the "Trees for the Capital" project.

Started around 30 years ago, during Rotary Year 1990-91, this project was inspired initially by a meeting between then-RI President Paolo Costa from Brazil and then President of the United States, George H. W. Bush, which was organized by the Rotary Club of Washington, DC As RI President, Costa's theme was "Save Planet Earth" and he got Rotary involved in a world-wide tree planting program. On April 26, 1991, President Bush launched the Federal program by planting a tree on the White House lawn, with DC Rotarians in attendance.

Under the leadership of Peter Gilsey (then chairman of the Club's program committee), the Club established a collaboration with the National Park Service and the DC government for our new "Trees for the Capital" program. Initially, we helped plant and maintain primarily Japanese cherry trees around the iconic Tidal Basin area near the National Mall.

Today, under the leadership of President

Elect Bill Dent and December 2nd's birthday celebrant Dr. Sam Hancock, we continue to work with the National Park Service to support and help coordinate tree planting ceremonies one to two times per year around the capital city. These trees reflect our tradition at the end of each Wednesday Club meeting of presenting a "Trees for the Capital" certificate to each guest speaker, reflecting our intention of planting a tree in their honor. Recently, speakers have the added bonus of knowing that they will receive an exact GPS location of "their" trees after the official National Park Service ceremony with our Club.

For more about the Rotary Club of Washington, DC's "Trees for the Capital" project, please check out Dr. Sam's "Emerald Planet" website: http://www.emerald-planet.org/?page_id=11787. And if you have personal photos from past NPS-Rotary tree ceremonies, please send them to me for the club archives!

Hannah Dean of the National Park Service created a new map, which shows tree plantings in recent years with a speaker's name assigned to each of them. This is a major milestone! We are now finalizing the search feature, so that a speaker can locate his/her tree with relevant information on the tree. By clicking on any of the tree icons (at the "opening level"), it will take you to a closer-up view with more trees. In the near future, the link will be placed on the club's website. We are very grateful to Bryan Ingram and Hannah for making this a reality!

Link to Map: <https://nps.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=cc59d7f32aa04350b8f9af75ba3e11e3>

By Marilyn Nevy Cruz, District 7620 Interact Chair

On December 13, 2020, **Metro Bethesda Interactors** wrapped 98 toys for Angels for Christmas 22nd Annual Toy Drive! What a fantastic 1-hour community service project!



2020 Interact Video Award!

Congratulations to the 'Fan Favorite' video from the Interact Club of Prativa Pokhara Fishtail, Nepal! Their video received over 13,800 votes!

Stay tuned for the eight finalists for the 'Best Video' award announced soon! https://youtu.be/TNW0YeE_p1k

On Saturday, December 5th, more than 20 members of the **Interact Club of Charles County**, along with Rotarians, friends, and family,

spent the morning and afternoon preparing and assembling 1,000 arts-and-craft kits for local kids at Christ Church, in La Plata. These kits were distributed during the Neighborhood Creative Arts Center's First Annual "Giving Fair", on Dec 12th.

