

# ROTARY CLUB OF DUPONT CIRCLE COVID-19 UPDATE

*By Quinn Warner, President, Dupont Circle Rotary Club*

On behalf of the Rotary Club of Dupont Circle, I wish to share some of the ways in which our members are persevering in this unique time, to answer the call of #RotaryResponds and show the world that Rotarians are #PeopleOfAction.

With the roots of our club as Rotary Scholars and Peace Fellows, we generally are a younger, more transient lot than other clubs. Evident in the fact that our membership roster shows over 100 alumni, many of whom have moved away from D.C. Since migrating to virtual meetings the first week of April, we have been delighted to see many 'old' faces pop into our video meetings, who otherwise could not attend our in-person meetings. This has been both a beautiful reconnection of former friends in stressful times, but was also identified as an opportunity to reengage an under-utilized resource in potential projects, fostering membership and experience sharing. Looking to the future, this is an asset we seek to develop as we expect challenges with recruitment, event facilitation and the subsequent funding pressures that will result from social distancing.

While virtual meeting attendance has been as high if not higher (20-25 people) as our physical meetings, with a

similar proportion of guests visiting (2 to 4), the Board has consequently looked to update our membership process. The requirements of a 'fireside chat' and visiting another club has been made an online prerequisite while we doubled down on the emphasis of mentorship, assigning each new associate with an established Rotarian mentor. In this way we have enlivened our existing membership with new tasks that help them relive their experience of joining and rediscovering their passion for service and fellowship. This required a revision of the club bylaws, but was a process embraced by our members who understand innovation will be key to healthy growth.

As we near 10 years on our Charter, we recognized the vital importance of supporting our historical partners to support our community's most vulnerable. Our club acted quickly at the onset of this pandemic to extend considerable grants to Friendship Place and Food and Friends, both of which provide much needed meals and other support to the vulnerable populations in Washington, DC. Equally, we are committed to evolving and adapting in this time

of crisis so our traditional project design has shifted accordingly. Most recently, a member brought forth a match funding request for a limited amount of critical hand sanitizers to be sent to undersupplied corrections facility workers in Texarkana. The supplies come from the D.C. Distillery Cotton and Reed, a local business we were keen to support, as they adjusted their production from spirits to sanitizer to aid in the fight against COVID-19. This energy inspired the Board to release funding for three limited grants of up to \$500 designed to be member-driven projects meant to be responsive and quickly implemented in our community.

Naturally, we hope to all join again in person at our happy hour Tuesday meeting, to plan larger, more complex efforts. However, right now we realize expediency, mobility and action is the key. Future partnerships and larger projects may come from the smallest initial cooperation, especially when in trying times we identified like-minded allies who share convictions of empathy and cooperation that are the bedrock of the 4-Way Test!

We invite anyone interested to join

our virtual meetings each Tuesday with fellowship beginning at 6:30 pm and the meeting beginning at 7:00 pm. Please contact [info@dupontrotary.org](mailto:info@dupontrotary.org) for the Zoom information.



*[Above] Photo from Dupont Circle Rotary Club's March 1, 2020 trivia event their marquis event with over 100 people in attendance.*