

Rotary
Club of
Gaithersburg



**Dictionaries
for Kids
October 2019**



BE THE INSPIRATION

MISSION STATEMENT

The goal of this program is to assist all students in becoming good writers, active readers, creative thinkers, and resourceful learners by providing them with their own personal dictionary. The dictionaries are a gift to each student to use at school and at home for years to come. Educators see third grade as the dividing line between learning to read and reading to learn, so we encourage our sponsors to give dictionaries each year to children in the third grade.

The idea for The Dictionary Project began in 1992 when Annie Plummer of Savannah, Georgia, gave 50 dictionaries to children who attended a school close to her home. Each year she continued to give this gift, raising money to help give more and more books so that in her lifetime she raised enough money to buy 17,000 dictionaries for children in Savannah.

Early on, her project attracted the attention of Bonnie Beeferman of Hilton Head, S.C., who began a project of raising money by selling crafts to buy dictionaries for the schoolchildren of Hilton Head and the surrounding communities. By 1995, Bonnie was getting so many requests from local teachers to be included in the project that she wrote a letter to the editor of the Charleston Post and Courier explaining the project and asking for someone to help meet requests from the Charleston area. Mary French, who was already an active school volunteer even though her two children were still of preschool age, read the letter and decided this was a project for her. Starting with a few schools in Charleston and Summerville, she realized quickly that providing dictionaries to all the students in Charleston was going to require serious fundraising. She and her late husband Arno French formed a 501(c)(3) nonprofit Association in 1995, along with a Board of Directors. Arno served as president, Mary became the director of the Association, and The Dictionary Project was born.

Since its implementation in 1995, over 18 million children have received dictionaries because thousands of people saw the same need in communities all over the United States.

The Rotary Club of Gaithersburg will again provide 1000+ dictionaries to all 3rd classes in Gaithersburg elementary schools. With the help of our sponsors and [The Dictionary Project](#), we will continue helping our children realize the beauty of the English language.