



# 10 AT A TIME

*A YEAR OF PEACE REFLECTIONS*

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PAST CHAIR, RAGFP

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# WORD FROM THE EDITOR

**Tijana Ristić**

*When we reflect on a year, we often look for milestones – projects completed, connections made, goals achieved. But sometimes, the most enduring impact comes not from grand accomplishments, but from thoughtful words that stay with us, ten at a time.*

*This collection brings together a full year of reflections written by Past Chair Michael Hayes for the Rotary Action Group for Peace's monthly Newsletters throughout 2024. Each "10 Things" entry captures the essence of our shared journey as peacebuilders – month by month, theme by theme – offering insight, encouragement, and the steady reminder that peace is built through consistent, intentional action.*

*As editor of this publication, it's been a joy and an honor to revisit these reflections, each one a quiet call to reflect, recommit, and reimagine what's possible. Whether you're a longtime member of RAGFP, a new friend of peace, or someone discovering these writings for the first time, I hope this booklet offers you a sense of connection – to our work, our mission, and to each other.*

*May these words continue to spark dialogue, deepen understanding, and inspire you to build peace, one thoughtful step at a time.*

# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*Michael G. Hayes*

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Michael G. Hayes has been a dedicated Rotarian since 2000, serving as President of the Rotary Club of Westlake twice and later as District Governor for District 6200 in 2015–2016. A passionate advocate for peace and leadership development, Michael has been an active member of the Rotary Action Group for Peace (RAGFP) since 2015 and joined the RAGFP Board of Directors in 2020. His contributions to the group include serving on the Education and Business Plan Committees and developing peace-focused programs for youth.



Michael's Rotary service also includes founding three new Rotary clubs, leading membership initiatives across Zone 31, and chairing the RYLA program since 2005, where he introduced a Peace Curriculum for RYLA and Interact Clubs.

Professionally, Michael has held leadership roles in environmental management and governmental affairs, working closely with U.S. Congressional representatives, state leadership, the Environmental Protection Agency, and international diplomats. He is deeply committed to community empowerment and conflict resolution, and currently serves as Chairman of the Board for the New Legacy Foundation, focused on relocating and supporting at-risk minority communities.

Through his thoughtful "10 Things" reflections, Michael continues to inspire peacebuilders around the world with humility, clarity, and vision.

# 10 REASONS TO BECOME A RAGFP PEACEBUILDER CLUB

1. You and your Rotary Club have a passion for Peace.
2. Your Club seeks to make your community, region, country, or our world a more Peaceful place.
3. You want to incorporate the peace element into all of your Club Projects.
4. You have a peace project which you want to share/receive support from others.
5. You want to learn more about the multiple facets of peace and the difference between positive and negative peace.
6. You want to broaden your circle of contacts outside of your Club and District by meeting other Peacebuilders and Peacebuilder Clubs, and Rotarians with a passion for peace. You want to join the RAGFP Global Peacebuilder Meetings.
7. You want to put on a peace conference or peace event.
8. You want to support the District Peace Committee and be a resource to the District Peace Chair.
9. You want to be matched by the RAGFP with another Peacebuilder Club in another Country to grow international peace and understanding.
10. You want to join with other clubs to create a significant Peace Project to be funded with a Global Grant.



# 10 WAYS TO APPROACH CONFLICT RESOLUTION

1. Pause, breathe and find your inner peace.
2. Use nonviolent communication language.
3. Use your deep listening skills and note body language.
4. Use empathy and compassion.
5. Ask for clarification of the issue/statement/problem, seek to understand.
6. Request that you too have the opportunity to state your position/thoughts starting with "I feel...", or "I think...".
7. Respect all things which are said recognizing that what has a deep and perhaps painful effect on one person is very real to them.
8. Be transparent, open, and authentic.
9. Respect everyone involved and keep everyone involved in finding a solution.
10. Be certain that the outcome is owned by each participant.

# 10 THINGS WE HOPE PRESIDENT ELECTS LEARNED ABOUT PEACE AT PETS

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1. Every Club should appoint a Peace Chair and a Peace Committee.
2. Each Club should ask each member to take the Rotary / IEP Positive Peace Workshop.
3. The Club should perform a community assessment to determine how to increase Peace and Resilience in their community.
4. Every community has youth that need education in respecting all peoples, every Rotary Club should examine their Youth Services efforts for opportunities to upgrade them.
5. Every Community has groups that are disenfranchised, isolated, or not connected to the overall community, develop an outreach for inclusion project.
6. Each Club should consider becoming a Rotary Action Group for Peace (RAGFP) Peacebuilder Club and learn about the RAGFP.
7. Each RAGFP Peacebuilder Club should ask to be paired with a PB Club in another Country.
8. Each Club should ask to be connected with a Rotary Peace Fellow, a Rotary / IEP Positive Peace Ambassador or Activator and/or Peace Cadre.
9. Each Club should identify and recruit candidates for scholarships to become a Rotary Peace Fellow.
10. Each Club should connect with the District Peace Committee Chair. If the District does not have a Peace Chair, ask the District Governor to appoint one.





# 10 THINGS YOU CAN DO TO HELP THE ENVIRONMENT AND BUILD PEACE

**1 Build a Community Garden and plant a Peace Pole.** For extra credit, grow vegetables for community use, place the garden in a disenfranchised or disadvantaged community, or at a school. Make the initial Peace Pole ceremony a “new life” ceremony that can become an annual renewal project at planting or harvest that reintroduces the messages of the Peace Pole.

**2 Implement a community tree planting project,** assuring that it introduces or incorporates individuals from all different segments of the community. Create opportunity in the project for everyone to exchange conversation; or set the planting teams based on diversity. The conversations will lead to acquaintance and understanding and help build a socially sustainable community. An urban forest is a sustainable environmental solution, it reduces impacts of heat and growing trees convert more CO<sub>2</sub> to Oxygen than mature trees.

**3 Another sustainable garden project is to plant Pollinator Gardens.** Feeding bird, bee, and butterfly populations, especially during the summer months, is a sustainable project to help maintain a healthy ecosystem. Building gardens across the community sustains community development and the engagement strengthens the community.



4 Teaching the proper management of solid waste will help eliminate disease through elimination of exposure to pests and rodents carrying the disease, reduce pollution of rivers and oceans through discharge of waste materials in stormwater and tidal action, and lead to sustainable solutions that help create healthier communities and a healthier environment. Composting, recycling, and material replacement to reduce volumes of wastes are subsets of waste management.

5 Work with schools to have students help with clean stormwater projects. Litter and pollution swept away by rainfall goes directly to lakes, rivers, and streams. Marking stormwater drains and educating the public on stormwater will help reduce the community impact on the environment. Teaching students respect for the environment, while also teaching respect for all peoples, is building a sustainable future.

6 Build sustainability in the community through Community Rehabilitation and Restoration projects. Rotary Clubs should do these projects jointly with nonRotarian Community Members and other partners to increase outreach across community lines.

7 In almost all parts of the world, mosquitoes are a transmitter of many illnesses. A Community Birdhouse or Bat House Project will provide a source of mosquito consumers for the community. These projects can be built and installed cooperatively with community members at schools, churches, and many public areas and can be used to build community.

8 Teach youth groups such as EarlyAct, Interact, Rotaract, school youth groups, church youth groups, and other such audiences the fundamentals of respect for the Environment, and the fundamentals of building Peace both based on the 4 Way Test. Behaviors which negatively affect ecosystems and are environmentally damaging are as contrary to the 4 Way Test as behaviors which disrespect other people and deny them human dignity.

9 Provide education on and actions community members can take to reduce the impact of invasive and non-native species. This is another area where communities can join together to address an issue which could affect environmental sustainability. This is another opportunity to create sustainable community resilience.

10 Identify ways to reduce community energy impact project. In some communities it may be carpools, in others more accessibility to alternate or natural fuels. Identifying opportunities could become a community project that results in citizens saving money, creating sustainable environmental improvements, and hopefully becoming a stronger, more sustainable community.

# 10 THINGS YOU CAN DO FOR YOUTH AND PEACE

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1. Start an Early Act, Interact or Rotaract Club.
2. Teach youth inner peace and self-respect development skills.
3. Teach youth the 4 Way Test, and how it calls for respect for all.
4. Teach youth to care for and support others.
5. Teach youth conflict prevention and management skills.
6. Teach youth listening skills.
7. Help youth identify ways to make their schools and communities more peaceful.
8. Help youth understand how they can be advocates for peace.
9. Help youth develop service projects and to learn the value of service to others.
10. Educate youth on the need for peace.





# 10 REASONS TO FORM A RAGFP CHAPTER OF PEACEBUILDER CLUBS

1. Provide guidance, support, information, and education to Peacebuilder Clubs in the Chapter and create more Peacebuilder Clubs in your region.
2. Capture project ideas from clubs, understand from the clubs the community needs within the region, and communicate those within the Chapter.
3. Create opportunities for fellowship and acquaintance for Club members across the region.
4. Provide support and information to the District Peace Chairs.
5. Capture best practices and successes from Clubs in the Region.
6. Participate in the Chapter Council meetings hosted by the RAGFP team.
7. Communicate best practices and project ideas from your Chapter to the other Chapters.
8. Create opportunities for acquaintance and fellowship across the Chapters.
9. Identify and collaborate on District Grant and Global Grant Projects between clubs in the Regions and between the Chapters.
10. Use the collective power of Rotary through the clubs within the Chapters and the Chapters around the world to bring about Peace. Peace is possible.

**1. Celebrate becoming a Peacebuilder Club, or the Anniversary of becoming a Peacebuilder Club. The celebration should be the Club's renewal of commitment and purpose in advancing peacebuilding.**

**2. Celebrate completion of successful Peace Projects. Building a foundation for sustainable peace is always worth celebrating. Also celebrate finding ways to incorporate an element of Peacebuilding into all your Club projects. Finding ways to be intentional about Peace is always worth celebrating.**

**3. Celebrate building friendships and fellowship with Rotarians, both inside and outside your club. Celebrating these friendships and fellowships and strengthening them may be the most important item on this list!**

**4. Celebrate when your Peacebuilder Club becomes part of a RAGFP Chapter. The universe of opportunities for friendship, fellowship, project ideas, project partnerships, and other things this writer has not considered has just expanded for you!**

**5. Celebrate Rotarian empathy and compassion. From helping to relieve the traumatic stress of a natural disaster or war, relieve anger resulting from mistreatment by others, to helping the powerless and disenfranchised become healthy members of a community, the use of empathy and compassion is a powerful peacebuilding skill. Celebrate the power of Rotarians helping those in need!!!**



**10 THINGS TO  
CELEBRATE THIS  
ROTARY YEAR**

6. Celebrate the 4-Way Test of the things we think, say, and do; it is a basic guideline for peacebuilding. It calls for basic respect for all people, and to treat each other with humanity and dignity. That is worth Celebrating!

7. Celebrate the 103-year history of Peacebuilding in Rotary. Adding the Fourth Object of Rotary to the RI Constitution in 1921, calling on all Rotarians to “to promote international understanding, goodwill, and peace through a global fellowship of business and professional people who share the ideal of service” is worth its own celebration.

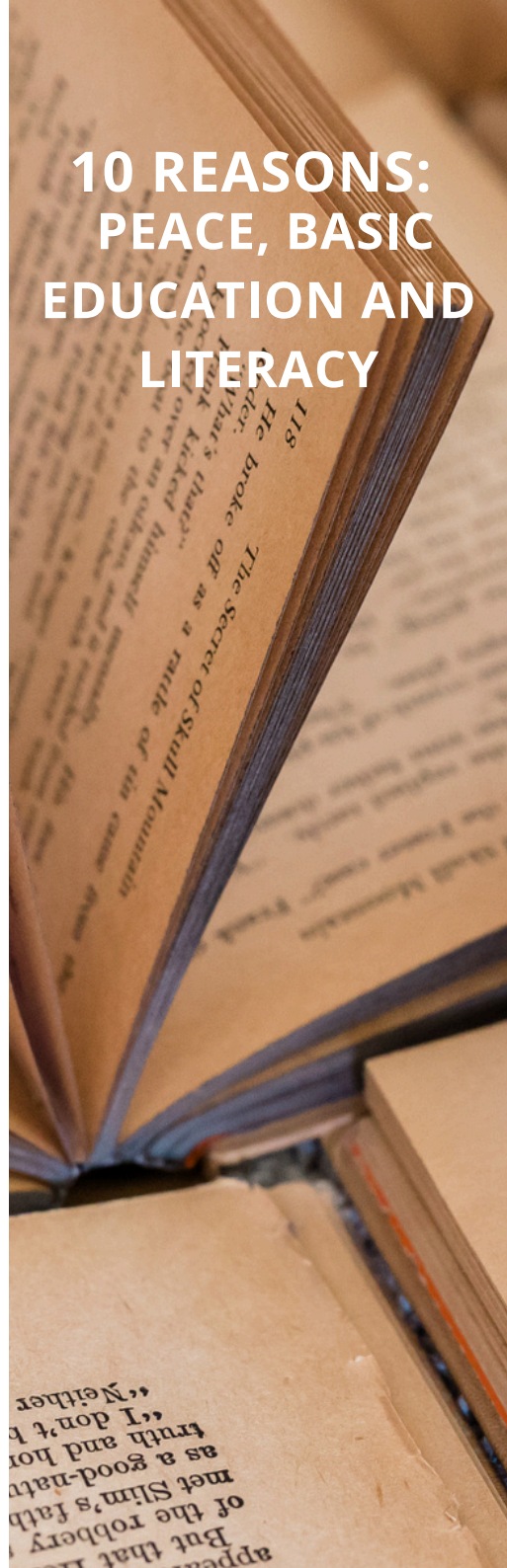
8. Celebrate the many Rotarians around the world working for peace while living and working in a conflict zone!!!

9. Celebrate your progress on your own personal peace journey!!! Celebrate finding inner peace, finding ways to build peace in family, community, and the world!!!

10. Celebrate Rotary!!! Peace is Possible because Rotarians are working on it!!! Being intentional about working toward Peace is worth a celebration!!!!

# 10 REASONS: PEACE, BASIC EDUCATION AND LITERACY

1. "Knowledge is power." - Francis Bacon
2. Literacy creates empowerment.
3. Basic Education creates the opportunity to participate in society.
4. Peace is enabled when literacy is present.
5. Literacy enables empathy.
6. Literacy enables understanding.
7. Literacy enables conflict resolution.
8. Literacy enables Inner peace.
9. Literacy enables respect for all.
10. Literacy enables Peacebuilding!





A close-up photograph of a hand stacking several silver coins on a wooden surface. The coins are stacked vertically, and the hand is visible at the top, holding the top coin. The background is blurred, showing more coins and a wooden surface.

## 10 THINGS ABOUT PEACE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

1. “Peace is the most powerful weapon for mankind” - Mahatma Ghandi.
2. “Peace is more than the absence of conflict, it is a catalyst for economic well-being, laying the foundation for societies to thrive for generations to come” – Ameyavikram Pathak and Armen Baibourtian.
3. Economic development builds more resilient communities\* and more peaceful communities.
4. Conflict resolution can result in a more peaceful community and one that is better positioned for economic development.
5. Efforts which engage all segments of a community build stronger communities and grow economic development
6. Building education invests in human capital which encourages community economic development and peace.
7. Investments in infrastructure, whether micro level such as water wells or macro level projects create more resilient communities and grow peace.
8. Supporting efforts in community investment, whether micro level using microcredit or at the macro level financial investment, creates economic development and more resilient and peaceful communities.
9. Helping to grow respect for all and assuring their rights are enabled engages all citizens in the community and assures everyone can participate economically, growing economies and building peace.
10. Creating and maintaining good relationships with all yields a variety of benefits which encourage economic development and build peace  
\*in this context “community” means everything from small groups of people to cities, countries, and includes globally.)

# 10 WAYS THE ROTARY FOUNDATION BUILDS PEACE

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1. Disease prevention projects move people out of survival mode so they can build stronger families
2. Polio Eradication through PolioPlus gives children the opportunity to grow up healthy and participate in family and community
3. Clean Water Projects prevent illness and allows families to help to build healthy stronger communities
4. Hygiene Projects help female students complete their education, and empower them to participate in society
5. Maternal and Child Health Projects build stronger and healthier families, resulting in more resilient communities.
6. Education and Literacy projects are the ultimate empowerment projects for individuals, helping to build stronger communities.
7. Community Economic Development projects empower individuals and the community and help build stronger, more resilient communities.
8. Environmental Projects help communities to protect resources which help to sustain their future and to enhance balance between community and the environment
9. Peace Projects address conflict prevention, discrimination, poverty, hunger and other sources of societal conflict.
10. Rotary Foundation Projects help build the attitudes, structures, and institutions needed to build stable, successful societies that exist in a state of positive peace!!!

# 10 WAYS TO BUILD PEACE AND KINDNESS IN THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

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1. Give strangers a smile and say hello, your kind act may change their life.
2. Anonymously give flowers or a plant to a friend or acquaintance to boost their calm or inner peace.
3. Go visit a lonely elderly person.
4. Donate a coat to a homeless center (northern hemisphere).
5. Donate Blankets to a homeless shelter (northern hemisphere).
6. Donate a gift to a family in need.
7. Volunteer at a soup kitchen.
8. Take cookies or treats to fire stations, police stations, hospitals or other places where service providers work.
9. Donate groceries to a food bank.
10. Repeat these throughout the year!!!



