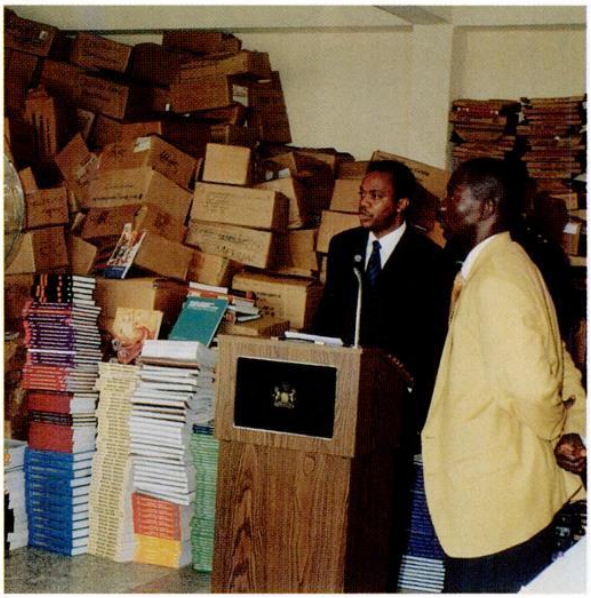
New Zealand club helps build reading skills "after-hours"

For the second consecutive year, members of the Rotary Club of Courtenay Place, New Zealand, are devoting their spare time to helping school children strengthen their reading skills. An increase in the number of elementary students who need remedial reading instruction and mentoring prompted the Rotarians to get involved. Many students are recent immigrants or come from single-parent families.

"We're the first Rotary club doing this in Wellington, and we've been welcomed at the school," says Rotarian Len Kenna. "I think the children are benefiting immensely."

Kenna and his fellow Rotarians regularly visit the local school, where they encourage and mentor the students in an after-hours reading program. Many of the students in the program have already demonstrated a significant improvement in literacy skills.

Clubs coordinate delivery of 25,000 books to Nigeria



The Rotary clubs of Calabar and Hill-Top Calabar (Nigeria) present 25,000 books to Donald Duke (left), executive governor of Cross River State. The March presentation was part of a two-year World Community Service project that also involved the Rotary Club of Monticello, Minn., USA. The university textbooks were distributed to institutions that included a local college, a medical school and a maritime academy.

Sun City Center completes 10-month literacy project

These youths are part of the "Reading with Sun City Center Rotary" program, a club initiative focused on literacy and the pleasures of reading. Every four weeks, members of the Florida, USA-based club read to 50 Ruskin Elementary School students as part of a 10-month project that ended in May. During that period, each child received 14 books–all of which were marked with the club's seal and the child's name. Pictured: Rotarian readers, teachers and children celebrate after a reading session.

Chinese classics continue to impart wisdom

The Rotary Club of Hong Kong Northwest is involved in an effort to print classic Chinese texts for distribution in China's schools. The project is aimed at strengthening literacy skills for the country's youth and exposing them to venerable, mostly Confucianist works. The club has already printed some 60,000 books.

Once the books are distributed to schools, a teacher reads aloud to the students, most of whom are under 13 years of age; the youths follow along in their own books, and repeat the passages to the teacher. This teaching method has been used in China for centuries. Children not only become literate in a relatively short period of time–usually about one year–but many of the rhythmic, lyrical readings stay with the students for the rest of their lives.

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The Hong Kong Rotarians have taken the aural-teaching method one step further, by producing a compact disc that functions as a teaching aid.

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