

Berkeley Springs Rotary Club

At a recent meeting, the Berkeley Springs Club voted to sponsor member, Elaine Parke to attend the District 7360 Annual Conference at Split Rock in Pennsylvania. Elaine will share her experiences in, and insights about “Rwanda’s National MOTTO - Never AGAIN”, gleaned from her 2006-07 trip to Rwanda with her peace project, 12 Habits for Wonderful People.

The trip was sponsored by Rotary District 7300, Rotary International, and the National Unification and Reconciliation Commission (NURC) within Rwanda.

Before expanding to West Virginia the peace-building project was called 12 Caring Habits in schools and communities in Western Pennsylvania. The downtown Pittsburgh Rotary Club was looking for a youth empowerment project to sponsor in Pittsburgh City Schools that combined service with support and for nearly fifteen years, sponsored Caring Habits in Pittsburgh.

Elaine’s presentation will be focused not only on the new generation of her project now growing in West Virginia but also on Rwanda since 1994. She will share her knowledge of the many multi-level peace-keeping, citizenship and economic development projects uniquely created in Rwanda that has supported lasting peace and growing prosperity there for 24 years.

Rotarian Parke’s dream would be for a team of Rotarians to visit Rwanda and study in detail the many works - not just the model she brought there - but so many more - that are successfully growing and thriving. Rotary international has long been supportive of world peace and annually provides Rotary Peace Fellowships at Duke University and University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, USA, International Christian University, Japan, University of Bradford, England, University of Queensland, Australia, Uppsala University, Sweden

- Chulalongkorn University, Thailand (certificate program). In her view the best way to move past the image of the Rwandan genocide is to learn just gain a global reputation for your country with the motto of “Never Again” that has truly lived up to that motto for all.

Says Parke, "Rotarians have brilliantly nearly closed the book on the world threat of polio. I can think of no better organization to now top their agenda with the cause of World Peace than Rotary International. Building upon Rwanda’s great works relating to their motto, “Never Again.” is something that could be taken to other parts of the world where peace seems unattainable - and help them see how Rwanda has done so well."

Recently, Elaine was referred to Rwanda’s new citizen-building agenda, Torero ry’Igihugu program that has taken the implementation of the 12 habit themes beyond the schools into national citizenship building. An article about this new demonstration appears in the "Democracy in Africa Report.

(Photo - 2006, Kigali, Rwanda Rotarians, left to right: Dr. Jean Baptiste Habyalimana, Albert Mugangaal, Elaine Parke, Antionette Rwagatare and Bobo Rwayitare.)

