

GOOD MORNING,

District Governor Eve, Rotarians and Members of Inner Wheel.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak to you all this morning.

One of my roles as District Chairman is to spread the word about the activities of Inner Wheel and what our members achieve throughout the year.

The world is ever changing around us but Inner Wheel has been a constant source of help for people who have health and social problems and from which they are unable to find an escape.

We provide a friendship service frequented by hands-on activities like meal services, transport and disability aids. We also raise funds to assist young people to gain education and leadership skills or to be safer in their communities.

Outdoor concerts, youth competitions, knitted garments for premature baby units, specialist wheelchairs for physically disabled children, hospice support, the purchasing of Lifeboats for the RNLI, hundreds of dogs for the blind, support of the British Heart Foundation, Braille books, talking books and talking newspapers. We also give precious aid to dozens of charities reliant upon our support, and are helping to eradicate polio worldwide through the Rotary network. This is some of the work that Inner Wheel members achieve.

We do an enormous amount of Overseas Service, often working through UNICEF for global education for girls, medication for babies delivered by AIDS infected mothers allowing them to be born free of the disease, treatment for mothers to protect them and their offspring from tetanus for fifteen years.

We are now supplying Life-straws so that infected water filtered through the straw is pure enough to drink.

We send shoe boxes for the children of Eastern Europe and Emergency Boxes which includes Shelter Boxes for those made homeless by natural disasters.

We also support the Fistula Hospital in Ethiopia where girls as young as nine are damaged giving birth. Worldwide, we are fighting for the rights of women and children through our 5 rotating representative in the United Nations.

Internationally Inner Wheel has a 3 year social project which in the past has supported the work of UNICEF in helping to provide education for Girls in Madagascar. The 2012-2015 project hopes to provide a better life and happier future for children worldwide. Inner Wheel in GB & I has decided to support "Hope and Homes for Children" during this time.

Inner Wheel nationally raises per year an average of between £45,000 and £50,000 for a national charity and between £11,000 and £12,000 for an Overseas Charity.

In our District last year, despite having only 16 clubs, we raised £2500 for the Chigwell Riding Trust as well as "Impact" which is a national charity doing work overseas. The clubs also usually support a charity of their own choosing as well as the District and National ones. District 13 is supporting this year the Shooting Star Chase Children's Hospice. They provide support and care for children, teenagers and their families who live in West London. I have seen at first hand the wonderful work they do.

On their behalf, I have arranged the sale of Christmas Cards in support of the hospice, which are now available from the Inner Wheel Stand.

The National charity for this year is “Brainwave”. A small charity which works with families to deliver individual home based therapy and exercise programmes that help children with disabilities and development delay to achieve their full potential. Inner Wheel hopes to raise enough money to provide a fully equipped van to take the experts from “Brainwave” to families who otherwise would not have access to their programmes. The overseas charity is Sightsavers.

The need for all these and other voluntary services has not reduced over the years. Since our formation 90 year ago, Inner Wheel has adapted the ways in which it assists to meet the changing needs and we still remain one of the largest women’s service organisations in the world. However, in some quarters, Inner Wheel is thought to be a waste of time, but as you can tell from my address this is far from the truth.

The International Inner Wheel theme for this year is “Be a Friend” which underlines all we stand for. This makes our work so enjoyable and is the essential ingredient of friendship. We are friends with each other, in our communities and to those in need abroad. We aim to produce happiness where previously there was none and this provides the incentive to continue and develop our work.

At our Inner Wheel International Convention in Istanbul in May this year, a resolution was passed to increase the membership classifications by not only being relatives of Rotarians and Inner Wheel members but also to include **any** lady who shares in our ideals and who would be keen to share our service and friendship. Inner Wheel is proud of its place within the Rotary Family and recently there have been cases where an Inner Wheel member has encouraged her husband to become a member of the local Rotary Club. So you see, both our organisations can benefit from this new ruling.

I would now like to speak directly to those Rotary Clubs who do not have any Inner Wheel connection, to think positively about asking your wives, female relatives, Female neighbours, or other members of ladies clubs who may share our ideals to become members of Inner Wheel and indeed if possible to create a new club. There are so many benefits, we meet just once a month, and there is no attendance rule. We have good community programmes, excellent overseas charitable programmes and for just one afternoon or evening a month, you have friendship with other ladies which will last. Incidentally, ladies can belong to both Rotary and Inner Wheel at the same time.

To those clubs who **do** have an Inner Wheel Club, please ask your members to go out and see if there are any ladies who you may think would enjoy Inner Wheel. The Women’s Institute has an abundance of members, but they do not have any Overseas Charitable programmes – Inner Wheel does. Do not ask the lady to leave the WI, but see if she would be interested in a meeting just once a month with Inner Wheel, as well as being a member of WI.

District Governor Eve, Thank you once again for this opportunity to speak to your members, I also look forward to both Inner Wheel and Rotary continuing to work together this year for the good of both our organisations and wish every Inner Wheel member and the Rotarians in District 1130 every success in achieving the goals that they have set themselves.

Thank-you.