Recording the Grand Stories

An oral history project initiated by Rotary Past District Governor Patrick Roberts has spread far and wide, with 60 Rotarians now recording important stories for posterity. By **Jessica Goulburn**

Influenced by a strong desire to hear the voices of his ancestors, past district governor, Patrick Roberts initiated Grand Stories, a project to record oral histories and memories of community leaders and relatives.

Of specific interest to Patrick was hearing of the challenges and successes of his grandparents or great-grandparents and putting voices to the pictures he had seen, in order to learn more about his family history.

Grand Stories has since expanded to include Rotary district governors, charter members of Rotary clubs and other people who have interesting and unique stories to tell. Project leaders now identify people in the community who have lived through challenging times, significant events or funny experiences, and record their stories.

Sue Hayward is the chairman of the Grand Stories committee. She has been involved from the start, learning oral recording techniques in order to pass this education on to fellow Rotarians.

"It's a privilege to record a person's story in their own words, for posterity," she says. This allows their stories and their memories to stand the test of time.

The Grand Stories committee, through Rotary District 9570, ran workshops in 2010 and 2011 with Rotarians and other interested people.

Approximately 60 Rotarians have been trained to use the techniques identified when recording and transcribing the oral history of key community people, relatives and friends.

The recordings are given to the subject to be kept as part of their family history for future generations.

The committee is now looking at ways to expand the project's reach.

"We would like to see those stories put onto CDs and then placed in local libraries where they could be accessed by the general community," says Sue. "And we are hoping that, down the track, we might possibly be able to place these archives onto the Rotary International site for worldwide access."

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GET INVOLVED!

The committee is calling upon people with time and interest to be trained to participate in this exciting initiative.
Contact Sue Hayward, Chairman of the Grand Stories Committee.
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