

District 1040 Rotary Youth Leadership Awards Course Report 2013

We have just completed two successful courses for 64, 16 and 17 year olds from throughout District 1040. When our Rotary clubs sponsor a candidate, they are making an investment in a young person for which they will always be grateful and will never forget. RYLA does actually change these young peoples' lives as they start to realise their leadership potential and gain in confidence throughout the course. It is a huge privilege to work as part of the team that delivers this fantastic programme.



On the final evening of each course, certificates and RYLA polo shirts were presented by DG Mark followed by a talent show. We ask the awardees to use some of the leadership skills they learn throughout the course to run the show including appointing comperes, organising the acts and arranging the running order. We saw performances from a number of individuals and groups which made both nights a huge success. The Thursday evening is an opportunity for everyone to let their hair down after a week of working hard and the awardees embraced the challenge that we set them. These evenings are a great opportunity for Rotarians to visit RYLA and see firsthand the skills learnt by the awardees and the talents they have to offer. Please feel free to visit RYLA 2014, I can guarantee you will enjoy it and the awardees enjoy chatting about the experience they have had.

We also held a Service above Self evening where the awardees filled 64 Shoeboxes with items that they had volunteered to bring and I would like to thank the Rotary Clubs of Mirfield and Bradford Bronte for sponsoring the Shoeboxes. We also had presentations from Rotarian mentors about their Rotary lives and Steph Budby, a RYLarian from 2005 and Assistant Course Director spoke about "Life after RYLA". Rotarian Tim Dale, our Deputy Course Director and RYLA Secretary gave a moving

presentation about the Laura Crane Youth Cancer Trust, the teenage cancer charity and encouraged the awardees to use their leadership skills not just to help themselves but to help others too. I am pleased to report that during the two weeks we raised £400 for the Laura Crane Youth Cancer Trust from the tuck shop, selling wristbands made and donated by one of the instructors and donations from Rotarians for refreshments. Thank you to everyone who contributed. We challenge the awardees to raise a minimum of £475 themselves (the cost of a place on the course) for a cause close to their own hearts whether that is through raising money or giving their time.



Thanks must go once again to the Rotary Clubs in the District for taking the time to select and sponsor young people. We appreciate the hard work that goes into selecting the right candidates. Thank you also for your patience when delivering them to and collecting them from Hebden Hey. In response to suggestions raised at District Assembly, I have asked this year's candidates to design a poster that clubs can use to help promote RYLA and I will let you have further information on this when available.

I would also like to thank all the Rotarians who worked as mentors on the course. Mentors hold a very special role in RYLA. Each mentor is allocated a team of eight awardees and supports and encourages them throughout the week as they learn and develop. The instructors may only see a particular group once or twice but the mentors are always there and provide consistency throughout the week as the awardees undertake tasks and learn from the feedback they are given. I would like to thank Rotarians Rick Raistrick, Chris Aldred, Sue Leach, Richard Greenwood, Gill Poole, Nigel Wales, Paul Hughes and Chris Redfearn.

After 14 years and 29 RYLA courses, Rotarian Tim Dale, our RYLA Secretary and Deputy Course Director has decided that due to his new work commitments it is time to step down. We made a presentation to him on the final evening and the District Governor also presented Tim with a certificate for his outstanding individual service to Rotary. I would like to repeat my thanks to Tim for everything he has done for RYLA. He has helped to shape it into the course it is today and his legacy will remain for many years to come.

I would also like to thank Honorary Rotarian from the Rotary Club of Batley and Past Awardee Steph Budby for her work as the Assistant RYLA Secretary and the Assistant Course Director. I am pleased to report that Steph is taking over from Tim and we are looking forward to working together over the coming years.

Last but not least, I would like to thank Awesome Adventure, our professional instructors. Their dedication to the learning experience of the young people is wonderful to see and we are very lucky to have them as part of the team.

If you would like to be involved in RYLA, I would be delighted to hear from you. If you would like to hear more about how Rotarians can get involved then please do let me know and I would be happy to come and speak to your club.

After catching up on some much needed sleep, we are now preparing to issue the application forms for next year in October's District Mailing so please watch this space.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to be the RYLA Course Director and Chairman and here's to RYLA 2014!

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