

"Make A Difference"

The Official Newsletter of Rocky Mountain RYLA, Inc

Volume 1, Issue 2, Spring 2007

A YRYLA Teen Makes a Difference Through Her Passionate Call to Action

by Dave Boon (2007 YRYLA Chair)



I first met Ana Dobson when she attended the 2005 Young RYLA Conference at the Ponderosa Resort and Conference Center. I was giving a presentation on how to make your dreams come true – how to set goals, take action, find people to help and never give up. I was telling the story of Ashley Schuler, a young lady who at the age of 15

started her own non-profit organization (AfricAid) to help educate Masai girls in Tanzania. Ana raised her hand and quietly informed me that she knew Ashley. "How do you know Ashley," I asked. "She dated my brother", she replied, "and she inspired me to start my own non-profit."

Ana was an orphan in Peru when she was adopted by the Dobson family of Golden, Colorado. On a trip back to Peru to visit where she had grown up Ana became passionate about helping other orphans that had not been as lucky as her. She was concerned about the health and well being of these children so she took personal initiative and started Peruvian Hearts (www.peruvianhearts.org) at the age of 12 years! Peruvian Hearts is a non-profit organization whose goal is to help provide education and enriched opportunities for children living in orphanages in Peru. The organization helps children by giving the additional resources needed to provide them with an environment that promotes and nurtures them physically, emotionally, spiritually, and educationally.

Vitamin Project – The Vitamin Project has made a significant difference in the quality of life for these children at the orphanage. One multiple vitamin a day can make the difference between malnutrition and good health for the young children.

Young people all over the country collect vitamins for the children in Anta Cusco. As a result, they have been able to supply the 16 girls at the orphanage and an additional 80 children that are fed daily at the Comidor Infantil. Malnutrition is a big problem in this part of the world and making a difference can be as simple as a daily vitamin. Your help can make a difference!

Good Health For All Project – Peruvian Hearts has arranged eye, dental, and medical exams for all of the children living at the orphanage. Last year, Evergreen Dentist, Dr. George Kachidurain worked on the 16 girls' teeth and examined, X-Rayed, and treated 82 fillings, several extractions and provided fluoride treatment for all – imagine all that for just \$550!

HEARTSTRONG Peruvian Hearts has embarked on a new fundraising project. The idea was developed by Danny Dobson. Peruvian Hearts is purchasing wristbands embossed with the word HEARTSTRONG along with a symbol of a heart. They will say Peruvian Hearts on the inside and are available in a variety of colors and styles. They will be sending them out to Peruvian Hearts "Street Team" members across the country to support fund raising drives in schools, churches, synagogues, and communities.

*"Those who see the
invisible can achieve
the impossible"*
Patrick Snow

Editor's Note:

Welcome to "Make a Difference". This newsletter is dedicated to reporting on how the RYLA conferees are making a difference in their family, school, community, or the world. With this end in mind, I invite Rotarians to report on the accomplishments of those conferees sponsored by your Rotary club.

Please send all articles to:

chuck@johnsonbruen.com

Rocky Mountain RYLA, Inc
P.O. Box 5073
Englewood, CO 80155-5073
Tel: 970-219-1368
Fax: 970-223-2875
chuck@johnsonbruen.com



Ana Dobson and Peruvian Hearts

(Continued from page 1)

True Leaders Make More Leaders

(continued from page 3)



(Above) Ana Dobson receives the Spirit of Community Award from Colin Powell.

How Can You Get Involved? Go to the Peruvian Hearts web site and get involved — they have something for everyone. They have a Kids' Page, a Teachers' Page with lessons, and an area to inspire you to help out by starting a Peruvian Hearts Club at your school. Go ahead and make a difference!

Peruvian Hearts
24918 Genesee Trl Rd.
Golden, CO 80401
(303) 526-2756

Email: info@peruvianhearts.org
Web Site www.peruvianhearts.org

RYLA Conferees Honored

This week in Greeley, CO, three former RYLA conferees took their place among the nearly forty Boettcher Scholars in the state of Colorado. The recipients are **Kirsten Cangilla** from Greeley Central High School, **Ryan Crisp** from Northridge High School and **Ryan Brauchler** from Northridge High School. Kirsten Cangilla attended the 2006 RYLA Conference in Estes Park. Ryan Crisp and Ryan Brauchler attended RYLA in 2005 and Ryan Brauchler served as a Junior Counselor at YRYLA in 2006 in Larkspur. Congratulations to all three of you for this accomplishment.

Apology from the Editor

In our Fall issue of "Make a Difference", I reported that the two Head JC's at the 2006 RYLA Conference, Heather Amen and Jason Griffith, received a Paul Harris Scholarship for their contributions to a very successful conference. However, I failed to give credit to the Rotarian who made all this possible. It was through his generosity that Norm Lyster of Greeley enabled our staff to recognize the contributions of Heather and Jason. My sincere apology to Norm for this omission.

Making A Difference . . . Touching A Life . . . These are some of the major themes of RYLA. In 2000 the JCs developed sweatshirts that stated, **True Leaders Make More Leaders**. Warren Holm, the first chairman of RYLA, stood one more time across the street and glanced one more time at the scene before him. He represents the spirit of Rotary and the spirit of RYLA . . . He represents all of us in Rotary who have supported RYLA . . . through our contributions . . . of money for scholarships, of names of applicants and attendants at RYLA, of our time in interviewing and selecting the conferees, and of our time and talent in serving as staff at the twenty conferences themselves. We shall never know exactly what change we make in **touching the lives** of these young people who attend RYLA. We shall never be able to objectively quantify the difference we make in their lives. But every body knows . . . We just know . . . and if you are not sure, ask someone who has been there. Ask Warren. He will give you the shortest version . . . You will see it in his eyes and you will see it in his smile. Ask any of the conferees . . . Ditto!

*"Be alert for
opportunities to
serve others"
anonymous*

An annual award has been developed and given at RYLA on behalf of the two most conspicuous original Rylarians and is known as the **Warren Holm-Murph Widdowfield Touch A Life Award**. For the first two years it has been given most deservedly to **Kevin Farrell**. These men epitomize the RYLA Motto, **If It Is To Be It Is Up To Me**. May all of us be able to see in and through the eyes of those who two decades ago dreamed of such days. On the grounds that day Warren Holm saw about fifty future Rotarians . . . fifty future leaders . . . Indeed it is so, **TRUE LEADERS MAKE MORE LEADERS!**

Conference Dates Set

Save the dates. This years RYLA conference will be held in Estes Park from July 15th through Friday July 20th. YRYLA will be held in Larkspur from July 29th through August 3rd.

We look forward to seeing you there.

True Leaders Make More Leaders

by Doug Armbrust

He was there . . . at first standing across the street to simply observe everything that was going on, gazing up toward the roof and the many young people located there hammering away, noting many on ladders painting the house exterior, and then later he was inside quietly touring through each of the rooms, taking satisfaction with all that was transpiring around him. I am no mindreader, but I cannot help but believe that the man there that day took great pleasure in what he was witnessing. He had come not just to observe but to do whatever would be necessary. I could not suppress my smile as I looked in adoration upon his tweed pants and paint-splattered black shoes . . . obviously he had come prepared to work if not enough others had been present. Even at eighty years young **Warren Holm** was there ready to serve . . . as he has throughout his life . . . in the United States Navy in service to his country . . . with his job as Executive Director of the Regional Boy Scout Organization . . . and as Secretary of the Rotary Club of Greeley for twenty-nine straight years.

Plant a seed and watch it grow . . . That was what was happening in northern Greeley at the **Habitat For Humanity** build that first Saturday in August. It was the full bloom of an idea that started twenty years earlier. **Warren Holm** and **Murph Widdowfield** were the first two chairmen of **RYLA** (Rotary Youth Leadership Award) and still today are present at every RYLA Conference at Estes Park throughout the twenty years that it has been held every summer there. These two men carefully constructed the plans for RYLA as Rotary Districts 5440 and 5450 still know it today with actually very little change. Fine-tuning on an annual basis yes . . . but without significant major overhaul through the years . . . a credit to the thoughtful and precise efforts of the original creators of the program.

On Saturday, August 5, 2006, however, the first official Post-RYLA Project became a reality. The two Head Junior Counselors, **Heather Amen**, from Centennial, Colorado, and a sophomore at Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas, and **Jason Griffith** from Greeley, Colorado, and a junior at the University of Colorado in Boulder, decided that one important aspect of learning about leadership is learning to serve and **Service Above Self**, the Rotary Motto.

They vigorously sought approval of a service project as part of RYLA, and two projects were submitted for consideration. Both were accepted with the idea to allow the conferees the opportunity to gather at such projects after RYLA to renew their newly-developed friendships with one another and to refresh their commitment of leadership back in the "real world." And on that Saturday in Greeley and up in the mountains on the Continental Divide Trail Rylarians gathered with energy and enthusiasm in jubilant celebration of creating **Real Happiness In Helping Others**.

At the Habitat Build site in Greeley there were approximately seventy Rylarians and Rotarians

from across the two Rotary Districts from Morrell, Nebraska, and Rock Springs and Torrington, Wyoming, and from Colorado from Castle Rock and Evergreen and many sites in between. Working side by side were people like Rhonda Morehead, the second youngest president ever of the local Rotary Club of Greeley, with young Rylarians in truth not much younger than she, slapping paint on the outside walls and a fair amount upon themselves. No complaining . . . no discord . . . no frowns . . . no downs . . . just solid 'can-do' attitude the entire day with

much accomplished. The on-site change was truly remarkable and displayed what people can accomplish when they put their minds and bodies together in harmony. The woman whose home was the primary focus of the efforts made comment toward the end of the work day that she now had seventy new friends and also a house far-advanced toward becoming a home.

(continued on page 2)



(Above) RYLarians work on Habitat House in Greeley, CO after the conclusion of RYLA 2006.

"Your heart is born free: have the courage to follow it"

William Wallace

Becoming a Guiding Star

By Dave Amen

You read about half of this incredible team of Head Junior Counselors in the Fall, 2006 RYLA Newsletter – now we get to hear about the other half of the team!



First, let me explain a bit about the structure of RYLA. Each year, 240 High School Sophomores and Juniors are selected by the 107 Rotary clubs in Wyoming, northern Colorado, and western Nebraska to attend this week-long leadership conference in Estes Park – named Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA). These clubs gladly pay for students to attend RYLA, knowing that RYLA helps build them into thoughtful, caring and moral leaders for tomorrow's world.

The 240 students are divided into 20 teams with 12 students each, and each team has one Senior Counselor (SC), a Rotarian, and one Junior Counselor (JC) – someone who attended RYLA as a conferee. Over the 20 years of Rocky Mountain RYLA's existence, the organization has evolved to where the JC's now organize and run the conference! We SC's are there to assist the JC's as needed.

Of the dozens of conferees who apply to be JC's, about 10 are selected. The other 10 are selected from the pool of past JC's. Of the JC's who have already served 2 years, two are then selected to run the entire RYLA conference – these are the Head JC's. Heather Amen and Jason Griffith were the two selected for this honor for RYLA 2006.

I'm Heather Amen's father, so my viewpoint may be slightly biased, but this is all unvarnished truth – I promise! In 2003 I convinced Heather to apply to go to RYLA, which I knew little about, but it had to be a good thing since it's a Rotary program! Even though it was "one of those Dad things," Heather agreed to go.

Heather fell in love with RYLA. She came back from the conference so enamored with it that becoming a JC was one of the most important things in her life. Obviously, the day she was selected was a day of celebration in our house!

As a 1st year JC, Heather was able to touch several people's lives in a way that helped them overcome

personal issues that had been holding them back for years. And, of course, each of these people helped Heather grow in understanding, empathy and the realization that helping others in this way also enriches her own life.

Her 2nd year as a JC, Heather became an even better listener, guide and mentor. Together with her SC partner, the wonderful Karen Sekich, their team had some of their most heartfelt discussions at the top of a mountain with the stupendous Rocky Mountain National Park all around. Imagine being there, with a magnificent view all around you. That awesome beauty is what Heather and Karen helped their team members realize they all had inside of themselves. Each JC can serve a maximum of 2 years, unless they are selected to come back a 3rd year as a Head JC. Most conferees and JC's want very much to do this, making the level of competition incredibly high. With lots of hard work and a bit of luck, Heather and Jason were selected.

Heather was in her freshman year at Trinity University in San Antonio, with Jason at CU in Boulder. Thanks to the world of electronic communications we live in, they both spent enormous amounts of time from January to July selecting the JC's for RYLA 2006, helping select the RYLA speakers, helping design the RYLA program for the week, and the myriad other planning and organizational tasks required for a week long conference with 240 conferees and 43 counselors. Of course, this was in addition to tutoring students in chemistry and Spanish, joining a sorority and organizing community service projects, running events with the freshman leadership council, and moving to the top 1% of her class!

Being Heather, she also took on the task of rewriting the RYLA Conference Manual. She added valuable content to double the size to 140 pages, along with color-coded pages to indicate things like which pages to take out and write on, which pages were for counselors, where to separate each day's set of events, etc. The resulting manual will be used, largely intact, for years to come. In fact, Heather's first SC, the amazing Len Brass, is working to have this manual become the international RYLA standard, and it is now being used as far away as Thailand!

All of this was prior to the start of 2006 RYLA. During RYLA, both Heather and Jason showed their amazing leadership abilities and stage presence and kept 300 people fully engaged for the entire week. Dozens of conferees I spoke with said they changed and grew in ways they had never imagined. And, they all dream of being stars like Heather and Jason some day!

*"Save a child,
change the world
forever"*

Rocky Mountain RYLA, Inc
P.O. Box 5073
Englewood, CO 80155-
5073
Tel: 970-219-1368
Fax: 970-223-2875