

Interact: Serious Fun



PICTURED: Five of District 9640's six Interact clubs came together on November 2 for the inaugural Interaction 2020 conference. (Photos: Rhys Martin)

November 4-10 marked World Interact Week, an opportunity to celebrate the accomplishments of approximately 250,000 Interactors worldwide and share how they are making a difference in their communities. District 9640 celebrated with its inaugural Interaction 2020 Conference, a seriously fun day for like-minded youth to come together, strengthen their community mindset, and develop their leadership, teamwork and communication skills.

INTERACT members from as far afield as Stanthorpe, Qld, made the four-hour journey to the Gold Coast for Interaction 2020, held at Marymount College on Saturday, November 2.

Organised and run by the Rotaract Club of Burleigh Heads, five Interact clubs from throughout the district turned up to hear from motivational guest speakers, partake in leadership development sessions and participate in an international district-wide project, the first of its kind in District 9640.

District governor Harry Bolton and governor elect Andy Rajapakse were both in attendance and commented on the power of such initiatives to promote the good work of Interact clubs both within Rotary and the wider community.



PICTURED: Club members packed a total of 400 shoeboxes with stationery supplies for school children in Timor Leste.

“I SEE INTERACT AS ONE OF THE MOST POWERFUL ROTARY YOUTH PROGRAMS FOR THE NEW DECADE.”



“I see Interact as one of the most powerful Rotary youth programs for the new decade,” Andy said. “Interact is the only Rotary program that is school-based. It brings together students from different grades within a school to get to know each other and look outside the curriculum into the community.”

“For Rotary, I see Interact as a large funnel to attract members and volunteers to Rotary clubs. We must look at every parent, every teacher, every family member, every neighbour of an Interactor as a potential Rotarian.”

“With 250,000 Interact members worldwide, there is a pool of one million prospective Rotarians around them. Even if we attract 10 per cent of them that’s 100,000 new Rotarians.”



Operation Christmas Child

The Interact Club of Ormiston College, NZ, wrapped up another successful year with a gift drive and fundraiser for Operation Christmas Child. The project involved an ongoing collection of special gifts during Term 3 to create shoeboxes for children around the world facing a not so merry Christmas.

The Interact club’s service group worked with Operation Christmas Child to provide emergency relief and to develop assistance to suffering people around the world. It was decided to conduct a gift drive, collecting any donations from Ormiston Senior College students, packaging them in shoeboxes and putting them to better use.

Categories listed for gift donations included:

- Something to wear;
- Something to play with;
- Something for school;
- Something to love;
- Something special;
- Something for personal hygiene.

The project proved extremely popular, with the enthusiastic cooperation of the entire school resulting in \$588 raised through a multi day to purchase items for the gift boxes.

“It was so gratifying to see the response and support from the school community,” said Dorena Deo, the teacher in charge of the Interact club.

The club’s international group has also focused on the refugee crisis, in compliance with the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre, the central processing and assessment location for all refugees who arrive in New Zealand. Club members and student leaders visited the centre on October 16 and received an amazing response.

“The visit to the centre was greatly appreciated by all, as emotions were exchanged,” Dorena said.

Interactors and student leaders created a mural for the refugees at the centre to welcome them with warm hands. Students imprinted their hands on the mural and included special messages within.



A highlight of the day was participating in the Give To Learn initiative, where students packed personalised shoeboxes filled with donated stationery supplies and messages of friendship. A total of 400 boxes were packed and will be delivered to school children in Timor Leste via a Donations In Kind shipment.

"We chose Give To Learn because we felt it was a project the kids could really relate to," Interaction 2020 co-chair Harrison Howick, of the Rotaract Club of Burleigh Heads, said.

"In Australia, most students take having basic school supplies for granted, however, only a little over 3600km away, students in Timor Leste don't have any of these basic supplies. These shoeboxes will mean children start school with everything they require for the coming year."

The day proved a resounding success for those who attended; a chance to meet fellow Interactors from outside their own clubs.

"It's about getting out there, being open to new opportunities and ideas and seeing the stories of what other people have done," Bianca Perry, from Miami State High School Interact Club, said.



PICTURED: Willetton Senior High School Interact Club board members with Seven News anchor Susannah Carr at the presentation of the Seven News Young Achiever Awards, where the club received the Woolworths Youth Group Achievement Award.

Award-winning Willetton Senior High School Interact Club

The award-winning Willetton Senior High School Interact Club, WA, has been going from strength to strength since its incorporation in 2015, and 2019 is proving a stellar year indeed.

In May, the club was recognised for its outstanding community service work when it was awarded the Youth Group Achievement Award at the Seven News Young Achiever Awards. And in August, the club's Upendo Charity Quiz Night for Africa raised more than \$8000 for Water for Africa and Mercy Ships.

"Interact is about fostering, in a generation of students, a mindset of caring about the community in which they live," Willetton Senior High School Interact Club president Jae Breffies says.

Each year, the club actively conducts fundraising activities and programs to assist the disadvantaged, both locally and in neighbouring countries, and engages in local tree planting activities.

In previous years, members have worked with Living Child to send maternity packages to Papua New Guinea and helped raise \$7000 for a number of not-for-profit organisations, including the Rotary Oceania Medical Aid Fund for Children. Members also lend a hand with the Rotary Club of Willetton's annual Willetton Rotary Community Fair, and hold sausage sizzles and cake stalls on state and federal election days, when the school is used as a polling booth.

With an active membership of up to 70 students from years 7 to 12, the club is facilitated by teachers Deb Livense, Pip Peake and Sue Thorp and the school board's executive officer Helen Wong.

Pakuranga changing the world, one small step at a time



PICTURED: The Pakuranga College Interact Club raised awareness and funds for South Sudanese refugees at its 40 Hour Famine Launch Day in September.

By Shirley Huang
Co-Chair, Pakuranga College Interact Club

Embracing Interact’s motto of *Serious Fun*, the Pakuranga College Interact Club, NZ, had another awesome year, volunteering within the local community, raising awareness and fundraising for various charities – all while having a seriously good time!

As tradition follows, the year kicked off with the highly anticipated Valentine’s balloon fundraiser, spreading love and painting the college red, with members preparing and selling over 950 red, heart-shaped balloons. Students buy the balloons, write a special note to their friends, then have the balloon and

note delivered to the recipient on Valentine’s Day.

This year, the club broke records by selling over 100 more balloons than previous years and raising almost \$2000 for the Heart Foundation.

The club also assisted within our local community through the Community River Carnival, hosted by the Rotary Club of Pakuranga and the Howick Local Board. Interactors helped out at various food stalls, including the sausage sizzle, cotton candy and popcorn stations, as well as supervising the children playing in the bouncy castles.

Along with the River Carnival, members also volunteered to support and encourage the primary school children who participated in the annual Tip Top Schools Day at Edgewater College. This was again a huge success, with both the children and Interactors having a blast throughout the day!

Within Pakuranga College, our club hosts and organises all events regarding the 40 Hour Famine. This year, money raised from the famine went towards the South Sudanese refugees who fled Northern Uganda – a country suffering from an awful civil war. The funds helped support refugees by providing essentials like food, clean water, toilets and safe areas, where the children can learn, play and just be children.

To raise awareness, the club held a 40 Hour Famine Launch Day, which included special performances from students, a specialist harpist, and a guest speaker from World Vision to help inform and inspire the students. A total of \$5370 was raised through famine participants and various fundraisers.

As a student-led council, we are very proud of our efforts and what we managed to achieve this year. We would like to thank all the Interactors and supporters who helped us in our journey to try and change our world for the better, one small step at a time.



PICTURED: Pakuranga College Interact member Karen helped man the popcorn stand at this year’s Community River Carnival.

INSET: The club’s annual Valentine’s Day balloon fundraiser broke records this year, bringing in almost \$2000 for the Heart Foundation.