

Jerseyville Rotary Club celebrates an Arbor Day in October

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JERSEYVILLE - Traditionally in the United States, Arbor Day is celebrated in the spring with communities, groups and individuals planting trees. However, thanks to the Jerseyville Rotary Club, there was an Arbor Day celebration on October 12-13, 2018.

Freshly planted Red and Pin Oak, Red Maple, Crabapple, Red Bud, Cherry, Magnolia and Cyprus trees are now taking root at Jerseyville's Wock Family Lake Park thanks to a collaborative project headed by the Jerseyville Rotary Club. In addition to its local fundraising efforts, the Jerseyville Rotary Club applied for and was awarded a Rotary District 6460 Grant, made possible through donations of Rotarians and the 48 Rotary Clubs within the West Central Illinois District.

These funds allowed the Jerseyville Rotary Club to work with the Jersey County Soil and Water District to purchase 40 trees native to this area. Then, with the assistance of the City of Jerseyville and the Jersey Community High School FFA, Rotarians enjoyed two days of hole digging, planting, watering, along with social interaction and other comradery.

The idea initially started as a challenge by Australian Ian Riseley, the 2017-18 Rotary International president. During his term, he challenged every Rotary club to make a difference by planting a tree for each of its members during his term. The idea has carried on and grown well beyond his term in office.

The Jerseyville Rotary club stepped up in response to the challenge, as well as to the City of Jerseyville's outreach to the community asking for help with purchasing trees to plant at Wock Lake to help with its erosion problems. As the local project grew, it became clear if more trees were added to the lake area, not only would Rotary be helping increase groundwater recharge and help improve water quality by preventing runoff and soil erosion, Jerseyville residents and guests would be able to enjoy the natural landscape and shade over the next several decades while walking, fishing, or just visiting Jerseyville's Wock Family Lake Park.

In addition to the erosion prevention and scenic aspects of planting trees, U.S. Department of Agriculture data notes that one acre of forest absorbs six tons of carbon dioxide and puts out four tons of oxygen. So tree-planting also contributes to addressing climate issues due to the ability of trees to absorb carbon dioxide. Trees are also an important part of storm-water management in many cities and provide valuable habitat for local wildlife.

For more than 113 years, Rotarians across the globe have worked to make the world a better place. Rotarians take action locally and globally on issues related to literacy, peace, water and sanitation, maternal health, education, eradication of polio and more. Protecting the environment and curbing climate change has become one of Rotary's sustainable service goals. Former President Riseley stated, "It is my hope that the result of that effort will be far greater than the environmental benefit that those 1.2 million new trees will bring. I believe the greater result will be a Rotary that recognizes our responsibility not only to the people on our planet, but to the planet itself." Jerseyville Rotary is honored to be assisting in this global project on a local level.

If you would be interested in finding out more about Rotary International[®] and the Jerseyville Rotary Club, which is celebrating its 65th Anniversary this year, contact any member, visit our Facebook[®] page (Rotary Club of Jerseyville, Illinois) or stop by one of our regularly schedule lunch meetings most Mondays at starting at noon at the Jerseyville Peace United Church of Christ.

