The Ripple Effect – promoting a community of care, and the idea that one person can make a difference

One specific objective of the Rotary Eighth Grade Leadership experience is for the students to embrace the idea of creating a Caring Community at their school.

During the three-day weekend of the Leadership Program, students will work with other members from their school to determine some of the challenges and issues they face at their school and in their community. Examples may be:

1. Lack of pride in the campus (trash, garbage)
2. Students being disrespectful to each other
3. Bullying in various forms
4. School cliques – Campus Welcoming
5. Drug/substance abuse
6. School apathy

During the week following their leadership experience, we ask the students to meet with the school principal to discuss their thoughts/ideas regarding these challenges. Staying with the concept of “Creating a Caring Community” our goal is for the students to select one challenge (with the principal’s approval) they would like to work on as their school project. In 2016 students chose from the following ideas: Campus Clean-up, Campus Improvement, Supplies/Technology Drive, Middle School Mentors, Campus Welcoming Committee, Selfless Selfie, Gratitude Campaign.

Within the next week or two, with help from Rotarians, middle school leadership staff, and possibly high school RYLA leaders, they will begin to establish a “plan of action” for creating a caring community. Our goal is for the 8th graders to have at least five action items to begin working on during their 8th grade school year. One action item will be some form of presentation to their school about their accomplishments.

Rochelle Whellams will share examples of projects supported by Middle School principals so students, principals new to our program, and Rotarians will have some concrete ideas for Caring Community projects. If you have questions, please feel free to contact Rochelle at rochelle@learningforliving.com.