

When we think about peace, most of us tend to think of major wars between countries. In our Peace project, we concentrated our efforts at a much lower level, where personalities, attitudes and behaviors are still being developed. Behavioral researchers have found that those attitudes developed prior to our late teens and early twenties tend to remain with us throughout our lives. That is why addressing bullying in school is so critical. If we can change behavior in the developmental stage, we believe it can have a lasting effect and lead to a more peaceful world.

Our project started in 2018/19 when Rotarian Dave van de Velde learned of an attempted suicide by a high school student. Dave, a very successful entrepreneur (founder of eight different companies including Ketel One vodka) felt something had to be done about bullying and took a very non-traditional, business-like approach, focused on taking market share away from the bullies.

The success he achieved was dramatic by all measures. The principal of the school confirmed that the culture of the school had dramatically changed from one of hostility and antagonism to caring and support. School attendance jumped from 88 to 92% and fights, a weekly occurrence, dropped to zero and remained at that level for the remaining three months of the school year. But what was even more significant, the historic graduation rate of only 67%, increased to 85% and has remained at that level since along with the dramatic change in the culture of the school.

Think of the lives that have been changed with an improved learning environment due to a more civil high school experience. Equally important, think of the impact on the lives of those additional 18% of the students that now have high school diplomas.

One of the many businesses Dave founded was one in the space industry. It was his connections with that industry that served as a catalyst for one of the elements of the anti-bullying program and our Peace program today. He acquired space in a capsule on a moon lander and as a part of the anti-bullying program promised to send student's digitized pictures to the moon if they took a pledge not to bully. The program took off like a rocket.

With 1 terabyte of space Dave had room for a lot more than just high school pictures so we decided to put Rotary on the moon first with a digitized version of the Rotarian Magazine and now pictures of Rotarians and Rotary Clubs holding Peace on Earth signs and banners. This is done to help draw attention and excitement to Rotary's Peace initiatives which we are all so passionate about and RI President Gordon McInally and RI President elect Stephanie Urchick have emphasized in their plans.

Why the moon you ask?

It's simple, the moon is a place where everyone on earth can look up and see. It's the only place where humans have set foot that is still at peace...and hopefully will remain that way. It's a place where Rotary already has a presence led by Rotarian Neil Armstrong, with a couple artifacts which we will be adding to. Finally, it's a way of drawing attention to our cause with a united message from Rotarians around the globe.

We are inviting each of you to join our program simply by sending your club or individual pictures holding a Peace on Earth sign or banner with your name, email address, club name and your country to: [picturesonthemoon@gmail.com](mailto:picturesonthemoon@gmail.com) The more pictures we get the greater the attention we draw to our cause, Peace on Earth. There is no cost to you. All costs for the rocket have been covered by Dave.

All pictures will be loaded on a chip placed in a capsule aboard the Griffin lunar lander placed atop a SpaceX Falcon Heavy Lift currently scheduled to launch in early 2025 destined for the South pole of the moon. NASA's current cutoff for receiving all pictures is July 30, 2024. So, time is very short. **You must act now.**

Like all rocket programs delays can be expected and if a mishap should occur Dave has already purchased space on a backup rocket and will have a duplicate chip ready to go. You can learn more at [Rotaryonthemoon.com](http://Rotaryonthemoon.com)

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