



Issue 81

BrainWise and Rotary Collaborate to Serve Others

Seventeen years ago, I met with two members of the Denver Mile High Rotary (DMHR) Club. Patricia Fiske was starting a local school/community project and Susan Henderson was a nursing colleague of mine who knew about BrainWise and wanted to introduce it to Patricia. The meeting was a success! Patricia agreed that BrainWise would benefit her Rotary project helping children and families.



**Susan Henderson, Dr. Pat, and Patricia Fiske at
the Rotary International Convention in Toronto**

I joined DMHR, and the partnership gave BrainWise access to the support of Rotary members -- volunteers, Interactors, [as well as a network of community leaders, schools, and social service agencies](#). I was able to use a foundation grant that was awarded to BrainWise to underwrite BrainWise training and educational materials. The result of our meeting was a “win-win” collaboration, and Rotarians have been valued partners for almost two decades.

The Rotary partnership has also led to many other BrainWise collaborations with agencies and individuals serving school children, mentoring programs, parents, homeless populations, and social organizations in the United States. Internationally, Rotarians have taught BrainWise at a health fair they organized in China and have been instrumental in training teachers in schools in India and other countries.

[1] BrainWise has been taught in Rotary youth leadership programs that include **Interact**/Young Rotary Clubs for high school students and at Rotary Youth Leadership Award (RYLA) camps for teens, tweens (Young RYLA), and teens with physical disabilities (RYLA Plus).



BrainWise in China



BrainWise in India

Rotary Youth/Interact Club Members Teach BrainWise

An example of our sustainability and reach involves youth teaching BrainWise to school peers. In 2012, DMHR started an Interact/Young Rotary Club at the Career Education Center—Early College of Denver (CEC). CEC is a public high school, with a largely Hispanic population, that offers dual enrollment for college, with a variety of career paths. Stacey Hervey, Senior Team Teacher, and instructor of a criminal justice course is CEC's Interact Sponsor with DMHR



**Stacey Hervey DMHR Interact Sponsor
CEC High School**

Stacey has been a long-time advocate for BrainWise and for 11 years has integrated the program into her two-semester curriculum. In addition to BrainWise projects, the Interactors have staffed community health fairs and holiday parties, recognized fallen police officers, created peace ornaments, held children's book fairs, collected and distributed coats, food, and toiletries, beautified school grounds and classrooms, visited nursing homes, and other projects.

Youth Preparation to Teach BrainWise

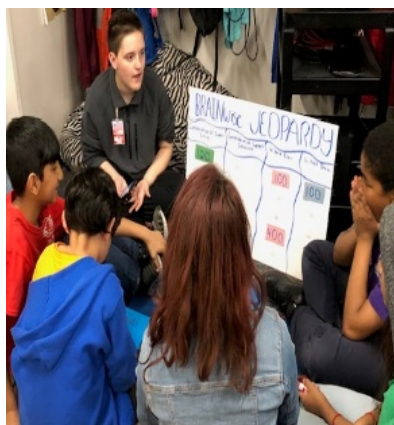
The 2022-2023 Interactors who chose BrainWise as their project were excited to learn more about the program. They became familiar with the 10 Wise Ways, past projects done by Interactors and others, and read papers on research outcomes.

Interactors' BrainWise Project Team

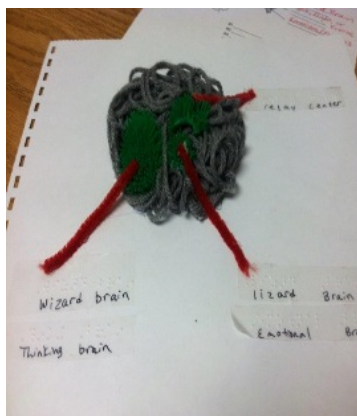


Noemi Sussey, Bryanna Rodriquez, Rotarian Debra Flick, Adriana Aleman, Rotarian Dr. Pat, Xitlali Ferrel, and Gabby Herrera

Previous Interact projects involved teaching and reinforcing the 10 Wise Ways with students in grades K-8 using stories and games, creating classroom Brain Zones as “Stop and Think” spaces, and teaching specific lessons. Projects by others include making Braille brains for blind students, writing rap songs with BrainWise-related lyrics, and writing and performing a play that used BrainWise skills to escape an abusive relationship.



BrainWise Jeopardy Game



Braille Brain



Classroom Brain Zone

The Interactors are Rock Stars!

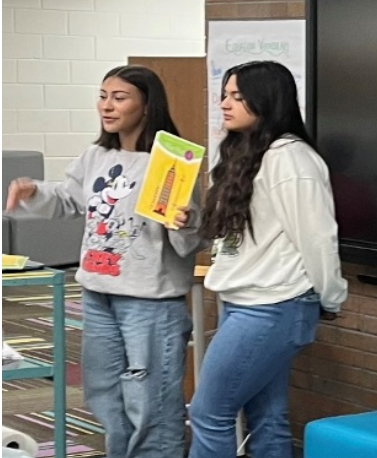
With their understanding, creativity, and support from Stacey, myself, and other Rotarians, the Interactors created BrainWise lessons using their favorite childhood stories, *The Cat in the Hat Comes Back* (grades K-3), *There Was an Old Lady who Swallowed a Shell* (grades K-4), and *The Giving Tree* (grades 5-8).

They also found teaching examples that used games (with and without devices) and created lessons using online learning games Kahoots and Jeopardy. They included the 10 Wise Ways card set as a teaching aid—students held up a card to identify a character’s behavior in the story and shared how they would handle a similar problem in their life.

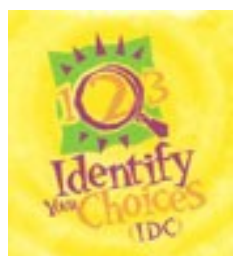
The Interactors were well-prepared and confident when they presented their materials to 183 students in grades 1-8, from two schools. The children were excited and even asked for autographs! The teachers praised their teaching skills, and the Interactors expressed their gratitude for the opportunity to teach thinking skills.



Interactors Presenting



Child Responding



Rotarians Set the Stage for Interactors to Shine

Rotary members played an organizational role for the project. They identified an elementary school in Denver and a middle school in Boulder for the presentation sites. They gathered information needed for the eight classrooms -- teaching materials and teaching devices (tablets, online programs/platforms), setting up electronics as needed, transporting the Interactors, and identifying school safety protocols for entry (security checks and COVID requirements).

Rotarians were present during the presentations and helped with unexpected events. For example, seventh graders at one of the schools were not familiar with the BrainWise program. The Rotary advisor suggested Interactors give a short overview of the brain and building brain connections (neuroplasticity) as a foundation to introduce the Wise Ways before presenting the stories and questions. The session ended on a high note when the Interactors asked the students, "How would you use these skills in your life?" A student's hand shot up, "Everyone should learn these skills because they help you solve problems. I am lucky because my parents taught them to me."



**interactors Teaching About the Brain
(Rotary Advisors in Background)**



**interactors Teaching About the
Constellation of Support**

Far-Reaching Potential with Virtual BrainWise Presentations

After making these local presentations, an opportunity opened up for the Interactors to make an online presentation to children learning BrainWise through the South Las Vegas Police Activities League (PAL) afterschool program in Nevada. The Interactors followed the model a previous class of CEC Interactors used to teach BrainWise on Zoom to elementary school students in the rural community of Keensburg, Colorado. (Click [here](#) to read the Keensburg story.)

To prepare, the Interactors read about retired Las Vegas Police Captain Dan Barry, and his wife, Allison, adding BrainWise lessons to their boxing sessions for disadvantaged youth. ([click here](#)). Captain Barry had the the PAL mentees well-prepared for the Zoom session with the Interactors.

In the future, a range of hybrid models can be used to support BrainWise educators, Interactors, and other volunteers wherever the program is taught. Rotary's motto is "*Service Above Self.*" This description fits all who teach BrainWise.



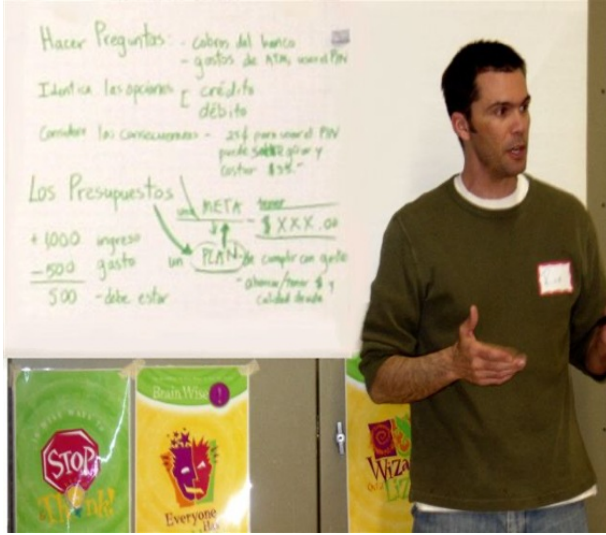
My heartfelt thanks to all of you,

Dr. Pat

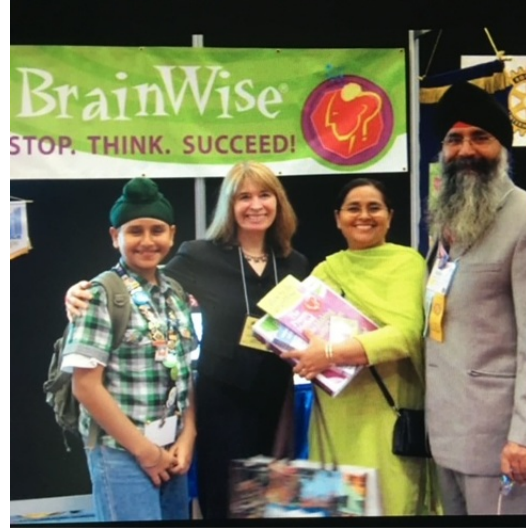
On a Lighter Note

These pictures show more examples of how Rotarians use BrainWise for projects.

Rotarians Introduce BrainWise to Parents and Schools



Rotarian Teaches BrainWise and Finance



Rotarians Purchase BrainWise for IndianSchool

Rotarians Support BrainWise Training for Youth Programs



BrainWise Training for Rotary Mentor Program



BrainWise Training at Rotary Leadership Camp