MEMO FROM TOM GUMP:

I wish I could be with you and the *Rotary/Lake Street Council Local Business Recovery Initiative* team here this morning; but our Rotary International President has scheduled a meeting with my paired Zones' District Governor Class at the same time.

As you know, our Rotary district has been focusing on racial equities this year.  I want to give you and the team a bit of a background on our district's preparation in anticipation of the *Rotary/Lake Street Council Local Business Recovery Initiative*.  The following initiatives have prepared our district for the next step:

**Club Book Reads** - The Rotary Club of St. James, to discover the club now takes one meeting a month to discuss an assigned chapter in "White Fragility," at their lunch tables (pre-printed discussion questions are circulated at the meeting), with club-wide sharing at the end.

**The George Floyd Memorial Rotary Scholarship** - Eight District 5950 Rotary Clubs (with the additional help of District Designated Funds) partnered with the Wallin Educational Partners to raise $23,000 to provide a partial scholarship and additional advising and academic support for one student for four years of undergraduate study at the University of Minnesota.

The scholarship will be administered by Wallin Education Partners, a nationally recognized college completion program for high-potential students with financial need. Wallin is one of the most successful college-completion programs in the country. It was started more than 25 years ago by Win Wallin, former Pillsbury executive and Medtronic CEO, and his wife Maxine Wallin. Today there are over 1,000 current scholars and a vital alumni network of 5,000 former students. Minneapolis University Rotary Club will provide academic and career guidance for the selected student.

**District 5950's Minneapolis Rotary "Club #9" Forged a Relationship with the Rotary Club of Topeka and the Rotary Club of Harlem** - Our District has stepped forward in an effort to create virtual places to discuss the need for social justice.  This is one example. Members of all three clubs joined for their first virtual meeting on July 7th for a guided discussion on unconscious bias. The conversation was moderated by trained facilitator Dwayne R. Norris, the former president of the Rotary Club of Harlem and a member of Rotary since 2013. Following the session, one of the takeaways was that although we are all inhabiting the same physical space, it seems like we are living in two different worlds.  White people live in the exact same world but experience it radically differently, and we don’t even realize how people of color are experiencing the world.

The three clubs also compiled an *Unconscious Bias Resource Guide*, which includes materials such as the implicit bias test and an NPR radio story from *On the Media* that focuses on understanding the implications of unconscious bias.

Roughly 50 members from the three clubs attended that session, and there are hopes of hosting other collaborative sessions in the next few weeks. It is all about starting a conversation and because we’re Rotarians we’re starting it at our clubs.

Of course, we are now ready to tackle the paired businesses on Lake Street, one of the most diverse communities in our area.  I know this will become a long-term relationship among our clubs and the area and will build peace and understanding in our overall community for years to come.