

LIFETIME AWARD FOR COMMUNITY IMPACT



R.J. LEWIS

The Joy of Giving Back

R.J. believes making a positive impact on the welfare of humankind is the single greatest responsibility any of us have.

A MAJOR CONTRIBUTOR TO ROTARY

R.J. has been a member of Rotary for 17 years (Rotary is a global network of people committed to creating lasting change for the betterment of the community). R.J. has served as president, board member, and chairperson for the District's Ambassadorial Scholarship program; board member and chairperson for Trenton Rotary Club; and board member and chairperson for the Trenton Rotary Foundation. R.J. has been awarded a Paul Harris Fellow twice. He also received Trenton Rotary's Charlie Bain Lifetime Achievement Award. In his 17 years with Rotary, R.J. has participated in hundreds of community, youth and even international projects. A list of projects he and his club work on can be found at www.TrentonRotary.org.

CHARITABLE CULTURE

R.J. encourages his employees at eHealthcare Solutions to become actively involved in charitable events, providing a match to funds raised. eHealthcare Solutions' employees participate in food drives, putting together hygiene kits for the homeless, helping serve lunch at the Trenton Rescue Mission, and purchasing gifts for the Holiday Wish List program at the Boys & Girls Club of Mercer County.

RUN FOR THE KIDS

R.J.'s most recent personal mission is to create an after-school program for the Boys & Girls Club of Mercer County that teaches entrepreneurialism and financial literacy. Learning these important skills also builds character and helps to transform the participants into productive members of society. Along with Bill Sheehy, a fellow Trenton Rotarian, R.J. founded the Run for Kids Club to raise money for the program. In 2017, they ran in the Trenton Half Marathon and were able to recruit 24 other runners/fundraisers to support the cause. In 2018, they ran the Princeton Half Marathon and Meadows Miler runs (1 mile, 5K, or 10K options) with over 40 runners joining in the running and fundraising.

The Run for Kids Club raised over \$280,000 in two years and funded the establishment of the Entrepreneurial program and Financial Literacy program at the Boys & Girls Club of Mercer County. The program expanded to include a college access program that awarded college scholarships to a half-dozen talented seniors this year. November 2019 was the third year running a Half Marathon for this cause. The list of runners expanded to include the founders of the Dig-

ital Healthcare Coalition, plus runners from Novo Nordisk and Bristol-Myers Squibb. The 2019 fundraising target is to generate another \$125,000 for the program.

RUN FOR ENTREPRENEURISM AND FINANCIAL LITERACY

As a part of Entrepreneurs Organization (EO) New Jersey, R.J. enjoys meeting monthly with other entrepreneurs to share his experience in business. As an active angel investor, R.J. consults and advises dozens of entrepreneurs and helps them make connections, whether he invests in their business or not. Bill Sheehy is a financial planner who sees the challenges created by a lack of financial literacy on a daily basis. Together, R.J. and Bill created the Run for Kids Club with the dual mission of teaching underprivileged children entrepreneurship and financial literacy to correct recognized gaps in the educational system. R.J. says if they impact just one life, it's well worth it.

RJ sees financial literacy and entrepreneurship as a path to breaking the cycle of poverty. The cause relates to people and, by running and fundraising, they can also

help themselves physically *and* feel great because they're making a difference. R.J. loves to challenge others to get involved, "It's always fun to challenge someone with a stretch goal that takes them out of their comfort zone and then watch them proudly grow as a result. Many of our first-time runners never thought they could do a half marathon and are more confident having achieved that goal," he says.

R.J. ran miles every week to prepare for the Trenton Half Marathon. He believes that persistence is the single biggest reason for the success of both this fundraising effort as well as his success as an entrepreneur. R.J. now feels he's started something bigger than himself that must continue. Initiating college scholarships is part of that commitment, as most of these kids will need funding for their entire college education. R.J. hopes to change lives. Someday, R.J. hopes he is approached by a child whose life was changed because of this club. It's this vision that gives R.J. the resolve to keep the momentum going for this worthy cause.

All his efforts to give back to the community can be summed up best by R.J.'s statement, "There is a joy that comes from giving back and helping other people that is unmatched by anything else."

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After the first half marathon for Boys & Girls Club.