

# Dining for a Cause

“Make your having dinner out become the event of the night, instead of just the beginning,” said John Walters, the famous British musician. Every year since 1985, Rotarians have celebrated an evening during the Zone Institute as the Major Donor Dinner Nite. It was from 1995 that the event also became a fund raising evening. John Walters also said, “Too many people just eat to consume calories. Try dining for a change.” What this would mean is dining becomes more enjoyable when it is with a group of like-minded persons who get together for a cause.

Nearly 70 percent of the earth is covered by water and so for the past few years, it has become a practice to host the Major Donor Dinner event on the river which is flowing through the host city. The effect has always been good. We saw that in Goa, Bangkok and now in Kolkata. The evening titled ‘Riviera on the Hooghly’ was spectacular. The Hooghly River is a distributary of the Ganges in West Bengal. In its upper reaches the river is generally known as the Bhāgirathi, until it reaches Hooghly. Like the rest of the Ganges, the Bhāgirathi-Hooghly is considered sacred to Hindus, and its water is considered holy.

Every action of The Rotary Foundation can be considered holy as it



*TRF Trustee John Germ addressing TRF Major Donor Dinner, Rotary Zone Institute, Kolkata.*

serves humanity all over the world. So, on Thursday, November 17, 2011, the Rotarians assembled on the barge anchored safely in mid-river and exchanged pleasantries with RI President Kalyan Banerjee, TRF Trustee John Germ, PRIP Rajendra K Saboo, RI General Secretary John Hewko and a host of other leaders including RI Directors Y.P. Das and Shekhar Mehta. The mood was upbeat. The climate was perfect and the music was soothing. The atmosphere was conducive for dining and talking about how TRF has changed the way people live. It is said that dining is not merely a material pleasure. Dining well gives a spectacular joy to life and contributes immensely to goodwill and happy companionship. It is of great importance to the morale. This mood of the evening made Rotarians pledge US \$545,000 to TRF. As the barge was stationary,

no one can claim that their nod was induced by the rocking of the waves!

Will Rogers, the American comedian said, “An onion can make people cry, but there has never been a vegetable invented to make them laugh.” I will say that a well balanced dinner in an ambience of friendship makes people give. The dinner and the menu by themselves may be insignificant when compared to the cause for which the Rotarians assemble for this event year after year.



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