

Upon being told of this honor, my first reaction was that some mistake must have been made. There are certainly many other residents far more deserving of the recognition than I am and I would gladly step aside to allow others to receive this special honor. That being said, here are some highlights.

A life-long resident of Bedford, and 1963 graduate of Bedford High School, Ralph Hammond holds a B.S. in Education from Framingham State College, and an M.S. in Education and a Certificate of Advanced Graduate Study from Lesley College. Hammond has served the Bedford Public Schools from 1969 to 1995 first as a classroom teacher, vice principal of Center School (1976), and principal of Lane (1988) and Davis Elementary (1991) Schools. He served as first director of computer education (1983), supervised student teachers through Boston College, taught math education classes through Lesley University, and computer education classes through Fitchburg State College.

Throughout his life, Hammond has believed that learning through sharing and teamwork is what makes learning and life fun, effective and meaningful. During his career with the Bedford Public Schools he was involved with many projects. As a part of teaching government, at the Annual Town Meeting the students of his fifth grade class presented two articles funding the reuse of the town owned railroad beds as bicycle paths, 1971. In 1974 he introduced sixth graders in Bedford to the Nature's Classroom, a week-long camping experience. Beginning in 1978 with much help from community volunteers we launched the first computer education program at the elementary level. Hammond was instrumental in bringing the Invent America program to Lane School. This program inspired creative thinking and fantastic inventions by students. The Lane and Davis School fund raising for Children's Hospital was always a meaningful holiday season event. Under his direction Davis School became the first in the system to have Internet access in every classroom in 1994. It is truly the professional staff, parents and students that have made all this possible.

A principal exchange program between Davis School and Nepal helped to build a deeper and more meaningful awareness of how involvement with developing countries can become a rewarding and enriching opportunity for many. For two years the students at Davis by sharing their ice cream money actually sponsored the education of a young lad in Kathmandu and with pride, the students and staff did other projects to help support the education of children far beyond the walls of the Bedford Public Schools.

Rotary has promoted both local and international sharing. Hammond has been a member of the Rotary Club of Bedford since 1990, serving as club president in 1994–1995, and helped to establish an Interact Club at Bedford High in 1997. He was International Service Director from 1995–1998 and has been District and International Grant Coordinator since 1997. In 2001–2002, he presided as Governor of Rotary International (RI) District 7910, Central Massachusetts. He chaired the district Polio Eradication fundraising campaign and was involved with the training of Rotary Club presidents in the northeastern United States. The volunteer hard work and dedication of Rotarians worldwide make incredible things happen. We are fortunate in Bedford to have such a strong and dedicated Rotary Club.

International involvement is key to learning. Ralph has traveled to 20 nations, and served on the board of Hands In Outreach for the education of Tibetan and Nepalese children. With his wife they hosted a high school Rotary exchange student from Germany who later became a graduate student at Harvard and then a professor in a German university. The Hammonds also supported the education of a child in Nepal, who later came to the US to earn an associate degree in dental assistance at Middlesex Community College. Then, on full scholarship she completed a BA at Mt Holyoke College, returned to Kathmandu and works in a dental clinic there.

Hammond continues work as a volunteer international literacy consultant, appointed to the RI Literacy-Numeracy Task Force, charged with promoting literacy in developing nations with Rotary's low cost literacy methodology, Concentrated Language Encounter (CLE). In Nepal, Hammond trained teachers while a guest lecturer at Tribhuvan University in Kathmandu (1996) and Aadi Kavi Bhanubhakta University in Damauli (1997). Since 1999 this methodology has been Nepal's national standard. CLE is now growing in Haiti, and in marginalized areas in the Philippines. Through the Bagong Kulturang Pinoy (BKP) Mini Library organization,

CLE may soon become the national standard of the Philippines too. With Hammond's help, interest in CLE has grown locally in Lawrence. In addition to his interest in world literacy, he has also worked to provide pure water for Nepal and Haiti. He pursues both community service and education projects along with Rotarians in Bedford and worldwide so as to explore opportunities to grow and promote world peace and understanding.

For health reasons, international travel for Hammond is no longer likely. He served on the board of the Framingham ESL Plus program. He has been a member of the Bedford Arbor Resources Committee, the Bedford Bicycle Advisory Council, Trails Committee, and the Transportation Advisory Committee all with the focus to help the residents to enjoy Bedford as a more bike able and walk able community. The Bedford Circuit Trails when fully developed will become an enjoyable, educational, social and inspirational resource for all with high quality trails like we find in the town owned Old Reservoir land. Hammond is also a River Steward and a Job Lane House trustee. The wild and scenic river resource and archaeological exploration at the Job Lane House again are among the learning resources that many of us are just beginning to discover. Hammond has volunteered as a driver for Angel Flights. With his wife Jean they serve as Bedford Land Stewards and they have been involved with the fight against cancer through the Pan Mass Challenge for the past ten years. For the last 5 years he has volunteered with the hospice unit at the VA Hospital in Bedford.

Hammond is honored to be citizen of the year, but more importantly Citizen of the Year of Bedford. The Rotary Club of Bedford is heading up a woman and children health and medical project for the poorest of the poor in Mali, in western Africa. Sustainability and good nutrition are key to the solution. High school graduate students in Mali are stepping up with support to help sustain this project. Young people and families in Bedford can help too by doing what John Glenn Middle School students helped to do last April. Later in the year there is a planned repeat of the "Stop Hunger Now" meal packing project. It would be truly special if the entire town of Bedford: Families, Churches, Businesses, Schools, Clubs, Sport Teams, Town Departments, Hanscom, the VA, Middlesex Community College, high school graduates and/or those returning from college can all join together and on a one day packing event, package 288,000 meals (48,000 packages) to be distributed through this SHN school lunch program hopefully in Mali's greater Bamako area. (Interested leaders of organizations above are encouraged to contact Ralph) The "Stop Hunger Now" leaders are very selective. If a school will only educate boys then that school will not qualify for their lunch program. In Haiti, many schools close for the day at noon because the community cannot afford to provide lunch for the children. Should Mali not qualify for a lunch program, another country will be chosen. To purchase, package, and ship a full container of individual meals will cost \$79,000. Bedford Town-Wide packing date set for 26 April 2014. With the High School Interact club networking with Interact Clubs in Mali, our high school graduates networking with their Mali counterparts, and with the entire town working together reaching above and beyond, we can all experience this opportunity to grow, learn, and collectively, have fun doing it. How many know the name of the capital of Mali? Is it A) Timbuktu or B) Bamako?

Hammond's Awards and Recognition:

Bedford Schools Exemplary Teaching Award, 1983

Bedford Rotary Club Rotarian of the Year, 1996, 2004, 2007

BKP Special Recognition for the Literacy Mission in the Philippines, 2005

BKP Volunteer of the Year, 2006

National Council of Negro Women Greater Boston Chapter, Liberating Vision Award, 2008

Central Massachusetts District Rotarian of the Year, 2008

The Rotary Foundation of Rotary International Citation for Meritorious Service, 2009

Department of Veterans Affairs Volunteer of the Year, 2010

Now Citizen of the Year of Bedford, Massachusetts, 2013