



“The more I learn about Rotary, the more I love Rotary.”
- Michael P. Slevnik, USA



“Rotary lets you give something back, in the knowledge that you belong to the largest family of givers.”
- Deanna Ann Duguid, Indonesia

Rotary Basics

■ Rotary International, the world’s first service club organization, is made up of over 32,000 clubs in almost 170 countries. Its members form a global network of business and professional leaders who volunteer their time and talents to serve their communities and the world. ■ Rotary’s motto, Service Above Self, exemplifies the humanitarian spirit of the organization’s more than 1.2 million members. Strong fellowship among Rotarians and meaningful community and international service projects characterize Rotary worldwide. ■ Rotary enjoys a rich and sometimes complex tradition and organizational structure, with many programs and customs that can be confusing to new and even not-so-new members. The following pages offer a basic Rotary education – the fundamental knowledge that will make every member better informed about Rotary and proud to be a Rotarian. ■



“Rotary has taught me how an ordinary citizen from a small town can be a world citizen.”
- Raj Ghuman, India



“Thanks to Rotary, my efforts to make the world a better place are multiplied. I’m no longer alone.”
- Fernando Aguirre Palacios, Ecuador



THE ORGANIZATION OF ROTARY

Rotary is essentially a grassroots organization, with most of its service efforts being carried out at the club level. The district and international structure is designed to support the clubs and help them provide more service in their communities and abroad. ■ **Clubs:** Rotarians are mem-

bers of Rotary clubs, which belong to the global association Rotary International (RI). Each club elects its own officers and enjoys considerable autonomy within



the framework of Rotary's constitution and bylaws. ■ **Districts:** Clubs are grouped into 530 RI districts, each led by a district governor, who is an officer of RI. The district administration, including assistant governors and various committees, guides and supports the clubs.

■ **RI Board:** The 19-member RI Board of Directors, which includes the RI president

and president-elect, meets quarterly to establish policies. Traditionally, the RI president, who is elected annually, develops a theme and emphasis for the year. ■ **The Secretariat:** Rotary International is headquartered in the Chicago suburb of Evanston, Illinois, USA, with seven



international offices in Argentina, Australia, Brazil, India, Japan, Korea, and Switzerland. The RI in Great Britain and Ireland (RIBI) office, located in England, serves clubs and districts in that region. The Secretariat's active managing officer is the RI general secretary, who heads a 650-member staff working to serve Rotarians worldwide.

1905
Chicago attorney Paul Harris organizes first Rotary meeting on 23 February, leading to formation of the Rotary Club of Chicago.

1906
Rotary Club of Chicago provides a public toilet outside City Hall, Rotary's first community service project.

1910-11
Paul Harris elected first president of National Association of Rotary Clubs at the first convention.

1911-13
Clubs formed in Canada, Great Britain, and Ireland; organization name changes to International Association of Rotary Clubs.

Responsibilities of club membership

The club is the cornerstone of Rotary, where the most meaningful work is carried out. All effective Rotary clubs are responsible for four key elements: sustaining or increasing their membership base, participating in service projects that benefit their own community and those in other countries, supporting The Rotary Foundation of RI financially and through program participation, and developing leaders capable of serving in Rotary beyond the club level.

What Rotarians get out of Rotary depends largely on what they put into it. Many membership requirements are designed to help members more fully participate in and enjoy their Rotary experience.

Attendance Attending weekly club meetings allows members to enjoy their club’s fellowship, enrich their professional and personal knowledge, and meet other business leaders in their community. Many larger communities offer clubs with different meeting times, including early morning, the lunch hour, after work, and evening.

If members miss their own club’s meeting, they’re encouraged to expand their Rotary horizons by attending make-up meetings at any Rotary club in the world – a practice that guarantees Rotarians a warm welcome in communities around the globe. Find meeting places and times in the *Official Directory* or through the Club Locator at www.rotary.org.

In some cases, Rotarians can make up meetings by participating in a club service project or attending a club board meeting or a Rotaract or Interact club meeting. Members can also make up online at one of several Rotary e-clubs.



Service By participating in club service projects, members learn about their club’s involvement in local and international projects and can volunteer their time and talents where they are most needed.

Membership recruitment and retention To keep clubs strong, every Rotarian must share the responsibility of bringing new people into Rotary. Even new members can bring guests to meetings or invite them to participate in a service project. The value of Rotary speaks for itself, and the best way to

spark the interest of potential members is by letting them experience fellowship and service firsthand.

Keeping members interested in Rotary is another responsibility. Good club fellowship and early involvement in service projects are two of the best ways to sustain the club’s membership.

The ideal composition of a Rotary club reflects the community’s demographics, including professions, gender, age, and ethnicity. Such diversity enriches every aspect of the club’s fellowship and service.

“Rotary is a completely new angle of friendship, one that’s not private and one that’s not strictly business.”

- Susanne PrahL-Landzo, Bosnia-Herzegovina

1915-16
Club chartered in Cuba, the first non-English-speaking Rotary country.

1916-17
President Arch Klumph proposes establishing an endowment fund, precursor of The Rotary Foundation.

1942-43
Rotary conference in London on education and cultural exchange sets stage for UNESCO.

1945-46
Forty-nine Rotarians help draft the UN charter.

Rotary's guiding principles

Throughout Rotary's history, several basic principles have been developed to guide Rotarians in achieving the ideal of service and high ethical standards.

Object of Rotary First formulated in 1910 and adapted through the years as Rotary's mission expanded, the Object of Rotary provides a succinct definition of the organization's purpose as well as the club member's responsibilities.

The Object of Rotary is to encourage and foster the ideal of service as a basis of worthy enterprise and, in particular, to encourage and foster:

- **FIRST** The development of acquaintance as an opportunity for service;
- **SECOND** High ethical standards in business and professions; the recognition of the worthiness of all useful occupations; and the dignifying of each Rotarian's occupation as an opportunity to serve society;
- **THIRD** The application of the ideal of service in each Rotarian's personal, business, and community life;
- **FOURTH** The advancement of international understanding, goodwill, and peace through a world fellowship of business and professional persons united in the ideal of service.

Classification principle

By assigning each member a classification based on his or her business or profession, this system ensures that each club's membership reflects the business and professional composition of its community. The number of members holding a particular classification is limited according to the size of the club. The goal is professional diversity, which



enlivens the club's social atmosphere and provides a rich resource of occupational expertise to carry out service projects and provide club leadership.

Avenues of Service Based on the Object of Rotary, the four Avenues of Service are Rotary's philosophical cornerstone and the foundation on which club activity is based:

- **Club Service** focuses on strengthening fellowship and ensuring the effective functioning of the club.
- **Vocational Service** encourages Rotarians to serve others through their vocations and to practice high ethical standards.
- **Community Service** covers the projects and activities the club undertakes to improve life in its community.
- **International Service** encompasses actions taken to expand Rotary's humanitarian reach around the globe and to promote world understanding and peace.

The Four-Way Test Followed by Rotarians worldwide in their business and professional lives, The Four-Way Test was created by Rotarian Herbert J. Taylor in 1932. It has since been translated into more than 100 languages and is used by organizations and individuals throughout the world.

- Of the things we think, say or do**
- 1 Is it the **TRUTH**?
 - 2 Is it **FAIR** to all concerned?
 - 3 Will it build **GOODWILL** and **BETTER FRIENDSHIPS**?
 - 4 Will it be **BENEFICIAL** to all concerned?

1946-47
 Founder Paul Harris dies in Chicago; outpouring of funds from Rotarians used to establish fellowship program.

1948-49
 First 18 Rotary Fellows study abroad, a precursor of Ambassadorial Scholars.

1962-63
 First Interact club formed in Melbourne, Florida, USA. World Community Service program launched.

1965-66
 Special Grants (now Matching Grants) and Group Study Exchange programs begin.

RI programs

RI's programs and service opportunities are designed to help Rotarians meet needs in their own communities and reach out to assist people in need worldwide.

Interact Rotary clubs organize and sponsor this service organization for youth ages 14-18; more than 10,500 clubs in 109 countries.

Rotaract Rotary clubs organize and sponsor this leadership, professional development, and service organization for young adults ages 18-30; more than 8,000 clubs in 139 countries.

Rotary Community Corps (RCC) Rotary clubs organize and sponsor these groups of non-Rotarians who work to improve their communities; more than 6,000 RCCs in 60 countries.

Global Networking Groups Rotary Fellowships (vocationally and recreationally based interest groups) and Rotarian Action Groups (groups focused on service activities) compose Global Networking Groups, which are open to all Rotarians, spouses of Rotarians, and Rotaractors sharing common interests; more than 90 Global Networking Groups.

Rotary Friendship Exchange Rotarians and their families make reciprocal visits to other countries, staying in each other's homes and learning about different cultures firsthand.

Rotary Volunteers Rotarians and other skilled professionals are provided opportunities to offer their services and experience to local and international humanitarian projects.



Rotary Youth Exchange Clubs and districts sponsor and host students ages 15-19 who travel abroad for an academic year or an extended holiday; about 7,000 a year.

Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA) Clubs and districts sponsor seminars to encourage and recognize leadership abilities of youth and young adults ages 14-30.

World Community Service (WCS) Rotary clubs and districts from two different countries form partnerships to implement community service projects.

Menu of Service Opportunities RI recommends that clubs planning service activities consider nine major needs or concerns: Children at Risk, Disabled Persons, Health Care, International Understanding and Goodwill, Literacy and Numeracy, Population Issues, Poverty and Hunger, Preserve Planet Earth, and Urban Concerns.

“The way
Rotary reacts
when calamity
strikes
demonstrates
the huge power
of Rotary.”
- Ravi Ravindran,
Sri Lanka

1968-69
Rotaract program launched.

1979-80
Foundation grant to immunize six million Philippine children against polio sets stage for PolioPlus.

1984-85
Rotary launches PolioPlus program and campaigns to raise US\$120 million to immunize all the children of the world.

1987-88
Through the PolioPlus campaign, Rotarians raise US\$247 million.

The Rotary Foundation

The Rotary Foundation of RI is a not-for-profit corporation whose mission is to support the efforts of Rotary International in the fulfillment of the Object of Rotary, Rotary's mission, and the achievement of world understanding and peace through local, national, and international humanitarian, educational, and cultural programs.



Financial support In 2004-05, The Rotary Foundation received contributions totaling US\$117.9 million and spent \$110.2 million in support of humanitarian and educational programs implemented by clubs and districts. Contributions from Rotarians go into one of three main funds:

- **Annual Programs Fund**, which provides grants and awards through Foundation programs
 - **Permanent Fund**, an endowment from which only a portion of the earnings are spent in support of Foundation programs, ensuring the long-term viability of the Foundation
 - **PolioPlus Fund**, which supports Rotary's dream of a polio-free world
- Every dollar contributed by Rotarians funds the humanitarian, educational, and cultural programs and program operations. Clubs and districts apply for and receive Foundation grants to carry out many worthy projects worldwide. To maintain sufficient funding for

these vital programs, the Foundation launched the Every Rotarian, Every Year initiative, designed to increase annual giving to \$100 per capita or more.

Educational Programs These programs promote international understanding by bringing together people from different countries and cultures.

- **Ambassadorial Scholarships**, the world's largest, privately funded international scholarships program

for university-level studies, sends about 750 students each year to serve as ambassadors of goodwill while abroad.

- **Rotary World Peace Fellowships** are awarded to individuals for study in master's degree programs at the Rotary Centers for International Studies in peace and conflict resolution.
- **Rotary Peace and Conflict Studies Fellowships** are awarded to individuals for study in a short-term

“The Rotary Foundation is the cement that binds every one of us together.”

- Calum Thomson, Scotland

1988-89
First women join Rotary. Rotary returns to Hungary and Poland.

1994-95
Western Hemisphere declared polio-free.

1998-99
Rotary Centers for International Studies in peace and conflict resolution established.

2000-01
Western Pacific region declared polio-free.

Key meetings

certificate program at the Rotary Center for Peace and Conflict Studies in Thailand.

- **Group Study Exchange** is a short-term cultural and vocational exchange program between districts in different countries for professionals ages 25-40.
- **Rotary Grants for University Teachers** are awarded to higher-education faculty to teach abroad in an academic field of practical use to people in a low-income country.

Humanitarian Grants Program Humanitarian grants enable Rotarians to increase their support of international service projects that provide water wells, medical care, literacy classes, and other essentials to people in need. Rotarian participation is key to the success of these projects.



- **District Simplified Grants** enable districts to support service activities or humanitarian endeavors that benefit the local or international communities.
- **Volunteer Service Grants**

help cover the travel of individual Rotarians and their spouses as they plan needed projects or provide essential services in a community.

- **Matching Grants** assist Rotary clubs and districts in carrying out humanitarian projects with clubs in other countries.
- **Health, Hunger and Humanity (3-H) Grants** fund long-term, self-help, and grassroots development projects that are too large for one club or district to carry out on its own.
- **Blane Community Immunization Grants** provide U.S. Rotary clubs and districts up to \$1,000 in matching funds to improve immunization levels in their communities.



Several key meetings bring Rotarians together to share ideas, celebrate successes, enjoy fellowship, and plan for the future.

RI Convention The RI Convention, the largest Rotary meeting, is held in May or June in a different part of the Rotary world each year. This lively, four-day event features speeches by world and Rotary leaders, spectacular entertainment reflecting the local culture, and unparalleled opportunities to experience the true breadth of Rotary's international fellowship.

District conferences Rotarians are encouraged to attend their district conference, an annual motivational meeting that showcases club and district activities. A family event, the district conference mixes fellowship with learning and allows Rotarians to become more directly involved with charting their district's future.

“The RI Convention put the Rotary in this Rotarian.”

- Eric Marcus, USA

2001-02
Europe declared polio-free.

2002-03
Rotary launches a second polio eradication fundraising campaign to help fill a critical funding need. Rotarians raise over US\$129 million.

2004-05
Clubs celebrate Rotary's centennial by launching hundreds of Centennial Community Projects and contributing thousands of volunteer hours.

2005-06
Rotary opens extension to China and Cuba.



Rotary offers its members many opportunities to serve – from working to eradicate polio to helping young children live healthier lives to rebuilding communities devastated by disaster.



Of the many Rotary club projects that focus on youth, some provide for basic needs such as health care and literacy, and others offer opportunities to learn about life in another country.



In an effort to eradicate polio, Rotarians help transport vaccine over land and water to reach children in some of the most remote parts of the world.



Through Rotary, members have the chance to use their energy and skills to improve their communities and help others achieve their dreams.



Find out more about Rotary and its service work at www.rotary.org. You can read the latest news, order publications, register for the international convention, contribute to The Rotary Foundation, and conduct other Rotary business.

