Rotary Youth Leadership Awards

What is Rotary?

A man named Paul Harris, an attorney who wished to get together with a few business friends to talk about mutual business problems, formed the world's first service club, the Rotary Club of Chicago, Illinois, over one hundred years ago. He felt that talking about matters that concerned each of them would prove beneficial not only to themselves but to the community at large. The men liked the idea of the weekly meetings so the name "Rotary" was derived from the practice of rotating meetings sites among members' respective offices. Thus Rotary, the largest service organization in the world, was born.

In the years that followed, Rotary's popularity grew. By 1921, the organization had spread to six continents, and one year later adopted the name Rotary International.

Today Rotary is a worldwide organization of business and professional leaders that provides humanitarian service, encourages high ethical standards in all vocations, and helps build goodwill and peace in the world. Approximately 1.2 million Rotary men and women belong to more than 32,000 clubs in more than 200 countries and geographical areas.

Rotary club members represent a diverse cross-section of the community's business and professional leaders. The world's Rotary clubs meet weekly and are nonpolitical, nonreligious, and open to all cultures, races, and creeds.

The main objective of Rotary is service — in the community, in the workplace, and throughout the world. Rotarians develop community service projects that address many of today's most critical issues, such as children at risk, poverty and hunger, the environment, illiteracy, and violence. They also support programs for youth, educational opportunities and international exchanges for students, teachers, and other professionals, and vocational and career development. The Rotary motto is *Service Above Self.*

Measured in time and money, Rotary is the largest independent giving organization in the world.