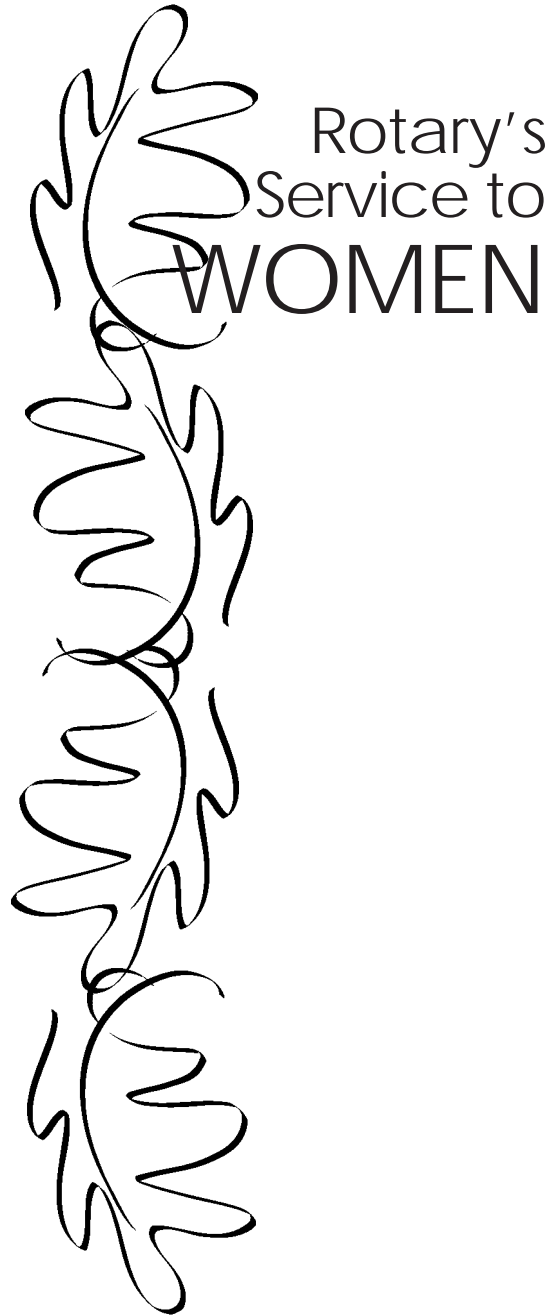


- ☞ Mentor young women and inform them of the wide range of occupations available through vocational presentations and career-development seminars.
- ☞ Volunteer at a women's center or shelter, providing emotional and financial support and practical assistance.
- ☞ Publicize through the media the importance of women's contributions to the club and community.

For more information on women's issues and how your club can get involved, contact the Community Programs Section of Rotary International, telephone (847) 866-3404, fax (847) 866-6116.



Rotary's Service to WOMEN

TO ENCOURAGE CLUBS TO FOCUS ON WOMEN'S ISSUES, THE RI BOARD ESTABLISHED TWO AWARDS: THE DISTRICT-LEVEL "JEAN HARRIS AWARD," WHICH RECOGNIZES OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTIONS BY INDIVIDUAL NON-ROTARIAN WOMEN, AND THE "ROTARY AWARD FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN," WHICH ANNUALLY RECOGNIZES ONE OUTSTANDING CLUB PROJECT WORLDWIDE THAT ADVANCES THE DEVELOPMENT AND PROGRESS OF WOMEN. FOR DETAILS, CONTACT THE RECOGNITION SECTION OF ROTARY INTERNATIONAL, TELEPHONE (847) 866-4494, FAX (847) 866-6116.

FOR MANY WOMEN around the world, each day is a struggle simply to survive. They endure physically taxing jobs to feed their families because basic education is a luxury they cannot afford. Many die from preventable diseases because they lack adequate health care. They are the victims of violence, frequently at the hands of someone they love. In many countries, women are powerless to control their lives.

Rotary is in a position to help change this grim reality.

In 1996, RI's Women in Future Society Committee met to identify key issues which affect the development and progress of women worldwide and how Rotary clubs can best address them.

Based on recommendations made by the committee, the RI Board of Directors encourages Rotarians to identify the needs of women in their communities and to develop projects and programs to meet those needs. Specifically, clubs are asked to focus on education, health, economics and self-development. Following is information in each category which will help in raising awareness along with ideas for planning a project.



Rotary International
One Rotary Center
1560 Sherman Avenue
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Rotary International

Education

- ☞ Of the world's nearly one billion illiterate adults, two-thirds are women.
- ☞ Two-thirds of the 130 million children worldwide who are not in school are girls.

Women are clearly at a disadvantage in the educational arena. Families may not see the importance of schooling for girls, or there may not be enough money to send every child to school, and education for girls is more often sacrificed than education for boys. But it is women who typically care for families and set an example for their children. A woman who can read, for example, is unlikely to raise children who cannot read. Educated women are more likely to raise their children in an environment that stimulates healthy development. Women's education should be a top priority.

Rotary project ideas

- ☞ Establish or support a family literacy program, with child-care facilities and parenting education.
- ☞ Begin or assist with an existing adult literacy course or vocational workshop for women.
- ☞ Assist women in the search for employment through practice interviews and application-writing.
- ☞ Provide teaching materials and equipment to a literacy course or to a school for women.
- ☞ Stock schools and libraries with books that have strong female characters to be role models for young girls.

Health

- ☞ More than 1,600 women die every day from causes related to pregnancy and childbirth.
- ☞ Globally, 43 percent of all women and 51 percent of pregnant women suffer from anemia caused by iron deficiency.
- ☞ Women make up an estimated 42 percent of the HIV-positive population.

Health education and services are essential to the overall improvement of women's lives and their families' well-being. Yet many women face insurmountable obstacles in obtaining health care, including limited or no access to health-care facilities, family planning services and health information; no access to clean water; and poor sanitation systems.

Rotary project ideas

- ☞ Provide the community with clean drinking water.
- ☞ Distribute educational materials — for example, breast self-examination instruction cards.
- ☞ Inform women of available health services and help arrange transportation.
- ☞ Donate mammography machines and other health equipment and medicines to a hospital or clinic.
- ☞ Provide medical professionals with additional training in reproductive health care and contraception.
- ☞ Train women to be peer educators or health volunteers, to share health information with others in their communities, to make house calls and to keep health records.

Economics

- ☞ One in every four households in the world is now headed by a woman.
- ☞ Of the world's 1.3 billion poor people, it is estimated that nearly 70 percent are women.
- ☞ On average, the majority of women outside the agricultural sector earn three-fourths of the pay of their male counterparts for the same work — in both developed and developing countries.

Women often lack access to income-generating opportunities and resources, in part because of insufficient education and job skills, but also because women are traditionally not seen as the family breadwinner. Even when women are employed, they often receive less compensation than their male counterparts and are not given the same promotional opportunities.

In addition to literacy and vocational education, access to financial credit, transportation and child-care services are critical to women's economic success. Helping to provide women with these basic needs will not only help women to find employment but will encourage them to achieve success in the workplace.

Rotary project ideas

- ☞ Assist women in the development of small businesses by donating equipment and expertise.
- ☞ Offer small loans to women to enable them to start new businesses.
- ☞ Facilitate women's access to product markets.
- ☞ Ensure adequate working conditions and compensation for women at all levels.

Self-Development

- ☞ As many as 50 percent of women worldwide experience some degree of domestic violence during marriage.
- ☞ Women hold just 10.5 percent of the seats in the world's parliaments.

To encourage women to take control of their lives and reach their potential, women in communities worldwide must be provided with new opportunities for empowerment and leadership development.

In both developed and developing countries, women work outside the home to support their families, but they still carry the full burden of domestic work including child-rearing. Family education is needed to foster the development of partnerships between husbands and wives to meet domestic needs.

Domestic abuse is one of the most serious threats to women's self-development. Community-wide education is needed to prevent such actions, and to ensure that when abuse does occur, women and children have a safe place to seek refuge.

Positive role models for women and girls are essential to women's self-development. Role models can be made visible by recognizing outstanding achievement. Rotarians can encourage the media to play a role in making these leaders visible and presenting issues relevant to women.

Rotary project ideas

- ☞ Invite a speaker to share with your club some of the challenges women face today.
- ☞ Recognize the outstanding contributions of a woman in the community.
- ☞ Actively recruit young women into Rotaract and Interact clubs, RYLA, Youth Exchange and Rotary Foundation scholarship programs.