**What is Rotary? A brief outline of how to become a Rotarian, and what is the commitment**

**by Eric Germain.**

·         **For me Rotary is a family affair. I grew up with Rotary. Our Dad, John Germain was an active Rotarian in the Red Deer and Edmonton South Rotary Clubs. He was the charter president of this club, the Rotary Club of Edmonton Strathcona when it started 41 years ago in 1974. John Germain achieved the milestone of 51 years of perfect Rotary attendance. He passed away two years ago, but his Rotary legacy lives on.**

·         **I joined Rotary in 1990. I am a past president of this Rotary Club, serving in 1992-1993.**

·         **My brother Ken is also an active member and a past president of this Rotary Club.**

·         **My daughter Nicolle joined our club in February 2013, and is an active member. It is always a pleasure to catch up with her for lunch at Rotary on Tuesdays.**

·         **Look around the room; this is part of my Rotary family.**

·         **What is Rotary? Rotary is a community of friends who are committed to creating positive change in the world. Rotary is a premier service club. It is a global network of business, professional and community volunteers.**

·         **Rotary has over 1.2 million Rotarians worldwide in 34,000 Rotary Clubs in virtually all nations in the world. We belong to Rotary District 5370 which has over 60 clubs spread out in communities in Northern Alberta and the Canadian North. There are about 20 Rotary Clubs in metro Edmonton.**

·         **As a Rotarian you are welcome to attend any Rotary Club meeting anywhere in the world.**

·         **Rotary was started in 1905 in Chicago by Paul Harris who wanted to develop a circle of professional friends. The first Rotary Club in Edmonton was started in 1916.**

·         **Rotarians are changing lives in a positive way in their own communities and around the world, forming strong lasting friendships in the process.**

·         **There’s something that all Rotary Club members have in common: We take action. As community volunteers, we reach out to neighbours in need. We build, support, and organize. We save lives. We work locally and globally.**

·         **Rotarians get involved in their communities, connect with other professionals, share their time and experience with young people, support global causes such as eradicating polio, and use their skills to help others.**

·         **Every Rotary Club in the world, no matter how big or small, has one thing in common: friendship. And it’s from this base of friendship that we serve our community.**

·         **Our motto ‘Service above Self’ embodies our humanitarian spirit.**

·         **Rotary’s Avenues of Service guide our activities:**

·         **Through Club Service, we have fun, build lasting friendships, and make sure that our club runs well. We have our weekly Tuesday lunch meetings with a variety of informative and entertaining guest speakers. We have special events such as our Christmas Party at the Edmonton Golf and Country Club, our formal Rotating Wheel dinner in late June or early July, a golf tournament and barbecue in June, an Oktoberfest celebration, and other events such as visiting Fort Edmonton Park. By the way Fort Edmonton, Edmonton’s second most popular tourist attraction behind West Edmonton Mall, was developed by the Rotary Clubs in Edmonton in the 1950’s and 1960’s.**

·         **Through Vocational Service, we volunteer our professional skills to serve others and promote integrity in everything we do. We run a Canada Flag program that puts a Canadian flag on hundreds of residential front lawns for Victoria Day, Canada Day and Labour Day for a nominal fee which helps with our fundraising initiatives.**

·         **Through Community Service, we address local needs and work with our community to bring lasting improvements. We are currently working closely with YESS, the Youth Empowerment Society, formerly  the Youth Emergency Shelter.**

·         **Through International Service, we meet humanitarian needs around the globe and promote world understanding and peace. We have supplied thousands of wheelchairs around the world and locally with our club’s wheelchair program. Recently Rotary supplied thousands of the Rotary designed Shelter Boxes for homeless families in the April Nepal earthquake. The Shelter Boxes provide essential food, water and shelter for a family. Rotary started the Polio Plus program in the 1980’s and is now on the edge of eradicating this terrible virus from the face of the earth.**

·         **Through New Generations Service, we work with young people to help them become the next generation of leaders, visionaries, and peacemakers. We participate in the International Rotary Youth Exchange program, we have had a strong Rotary Interact Club for over 7 years at J. Percy Page High School in Mill Woods, and we provide a scholarship program to a number of South Edmonton high schools.**

·         **How to join the Rotary Club of Edmonton Strathcona:**

**1.       Once a prospective member demonstrates an interest in Rotary membership, a membership proposal form is completed with the club member who is proposing the prospective member, and submitted to the club secretary for submission to the club’s board of directors. We have application forms available today.**

**2.       The prospective new member requires approval from the club’s board of directors and the overall club membership in order to become a Rotarian. This process takes approximately 30 days.**

**3.       There is an annual membership fee of $ 225, of which a portion goes to help the Rotary District and Rotary International in their endeavours.  The new Rotarian is expected to attend meetings on a regular basis and become an active club member.**

**To conclude, you may be interested in joining our Rotary Club if:**

·         **You are interested in building your personnel and professional network. It provides you with the opportunity for the development of acquaintance as an opportunity for service.**

·         **You believe in high ethical standards in business and professions, with the recognition of the worthiness of all useful occupations.**

·         **You like the application of the ideal of service by every Rotarian to your personal, business, and community life.**

·         **You appreciate the advancement of international understanding, good will, and peace through a world fellowship of business and professional people united in the ideal service.**

**If this sounds like you please strongly consider joining our Rotary family.**

- See more at: http://portal.clubrunner.ca/399/Stories/dg-meets-prospects#sthash.paqvkLGz.dpuf