

The Reasons why Rotarians Support The Rotary Foundation – Impact, Trust and Choice

Story by Ed Kolybaba on Nov 18, 2020



Carolyn Ferguson, the Senior Major Gift Officer for Zone 28 of The Rotary Foundation addressed the members of the Rotary Club of Kelowna Sunrise on Friday, November 13 via Zoom, updating the club on several key areas of the Foundation. Zone 28 encompasses 16 districts from Canada, USA, France and Russia.

With the theme of “Doing Good in the World Together,” Carolyn Ferguson stated that after ten years working with The Rotary Foundation, has learned that people give to support a reason, a cause or a feeling. Rarely do they support giving out of the obligation to do so. She shared that there are basically three reasons why Rotarians are inspired to make a gift to the Foundation – impact, trust and choice.

Impact is illustrated by how far we have come with polio eradication mainly because of the increasing financial support from Rotarians worldwide, where at present ten percent of the global Rotarians give to the PolioPlus Fund. In fact, during the past Rotary Year, Rotarians have contributed more than the total contributed in the prior five years. This has resulted in over 18 million children worldwide having their lives changed for the better. The impact of the generous financial support of Rotarians has also helped to build peace worldwide

through the Rotary Peace Centres and to enable grants, both global and district, across all of the six areas of focus.

Rotarians trust The Rotary Foundation. “TRF has a proven legacy of transparency, stewardship and effective investment practices,” shared Ferguson. One has only to check with Charity Navigator to learn that The Rotary Foundation enjoys a perfect score of 100 percent and is rated number three in the top ten charities.

While Rotarians enjoy the unique situation of supporting one foundation, they have the opportunity to choose from so many unique programs. Ferguson states that “you can really choose to customize how you want to change the world through Rotary.”



Ferguson also focused on what has been transpiring recently with respect to the global and district programs. She explained that Rotary clubs continue to increase their desire to make a greater impact in making a difference in the world. As a result, the demand for grant requests almost doubled from 2014 to 2018, with an increase from US\$50 million to US\$80,000. While greater concern for doing good in the world is good news, the costs for the programs increased by 83 percent last year but the contributions only increased by eight percent.

Not surprisingly, Canadian Rotarians are deeply concerned about the humanitarian needs worldwide. To illustrate, Canadian Rotary clubs, which amounts to 2% of the world’s Rotarians (22,000 Rotarians), were identified in the 2019-20 listing of the Top 30 Countries contributing to the Foundation; but not only that, Canadian clubs were listed as #6 out of the 30, making donations of over US\$8 million.

In her presentation, Carolyn Ferguson updated the club members on the Foundation’s focus on building peace through the Rotary Peace Centres; and on the ways the Foundation recognizes the vital supports, including the financial support and volunteerism of Rotarians, that make the work of the Foundation so effective.