

LAKE PLACID NEWS

ROTARY CLUB NEWS: No room for racism at Rotary, diversifying membership a priority

“At Rotary, we have no tolerance for racism. Promoting respect, celebrating diversity, demanding ethical leadership and working tirelessly to advance peace are central tenets of our work.

“We have more work to do to create more just, open and welcoming communities for all people.

“We know there are no easy fixes and that challenging conversations and work lie before all of us. Rotary’s strength has long been our ability and commitment to bringing people together. We will tap into that strength now as we stand with those who are working for peace and justice.

“Rotary will do our part to listen, learn and take action to ensure that we continue to contribute to making positive change.”

— Statement by Rotary International, 2020

A top priority for the Rotary Club of Lake Placid is growing and diversifying our membership to make sure we reflect the communities we

serve. Rotary International strives to be inclusive of all cultures, experiences, and identities. We are creating an organization that is more open and inclusive, fair to all, builds goodwill, and benefits our communities.

The COVID-19 pandemic and worldwide anti-racism demonstrations have called out global inequities and the need for social justice. It's critical that Rotary be an organization inclusive of all cultures, experiences and identities. To help us achieve our goal, the Rotary International Board of Directors passed a diversity, equity and inclusion statement:

“As a global network that strives to build a world where people unite and take action to create lasting change, Rotary values diversity and celebrates the contributions of people of all backgrounds, regardless of their age, ethnicity, race, color, abilities, religion, socioeconomic status, culture, sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity.

“Rotary will cultivate a diverse, equitable and inclusive culture in which people from underrepresented groups have greater opportunities to participate as members and leaders.”

Making diversity, equity and inclusion a priority is everyone's responsibility. While our club is all-white, reflecting the communities in which we live, we are vastly diverse in areas such as age, socioeconomic status, physical ability, religion, politics and preference for the Adirondack winter over the Adirondack summer, or vice versa.

What our club is doing:

- Talking about diversity, equity and inclusion. Rotary International suggests that we create a member diversity and inclusion action plan using an assessment tool available on their website.
- Inviting local diversity, equity and inclusion experts to speak at our club's gatherings. We have had speakers including Nicole Hylton-Patterson of the Adirondack Diversity Initiative and plan on adding more to our weekly meeting schedule.

– Connecting with local organizations that are supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts and working with them on projects or events. We have partnered with several other local groups to run a year-long food drive serving low-income people.

– Inviting club members to take the Building a Diverse Club course in the Rotary.org Learning Center to learn more about diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Racism and white supremacy are extremely loaded, difficult topics to discuss. Achieving social justice goals requires personal sacrifice. But we must move forward with this work, collectively, for the benefit of those will call us ancestors.

The Rotary Club of Lake Placid meets weekly via Zoom for the duration of the pandemic. Contact rotarylakeplacid@gmail.com or visit us on Facebook or online at www.rotarylakeplacid.org. We have regular community volunteer projects and the public is welcome to join us.

(Susan Friedmann is a member of the Rotary Club of Lake Placid in charge of publicity.)
