



Santa Maria Breakfast Rotary Compassion Fund For Rotarians and Their Families

A Rotary Club is more than a service organization that does good works in the community and around the world. It also becomes the center of our social base. Our close friends are members of the Club too, our spouse's friends are spouses of other members and we know and care about each other's families. We look forward to Rotary parties and the camaraderie we develop leads to greater participation in our service projects....these projects become fun events that we want to participate in.

It is inevitable in a Rotary Club that some Rotarians or their families will have a catastrophic episode take place in their lives which deeply affects us all. These unfortunate events may include everything from catastrophic illness to devastating fire to an unexpected accident. Our Club has certainly experienced several of these. Most recently, a popular member of our Club has spent several months trying to recover from a most unusual and sudden illness at Stanford Medical Center. The outpouring of love and support and prayers for this member and his wife and son were not surprising. The large picture of our group, that we sent him when he first had to be admitted, stays near his bed and helps keep him going. It makes him smile and he speaks of it often. And God willing, we will have him back with us again.

For all that we have tried to do for this member and his family, we all felt nonetheless helpless for lack of an ability to do more. From this frustration was born the concept of the Rotary Compassion Fund, not just for this situation, but for the future members and their families that will inevitably (unfortunately) follow. Our Club is 20 years old and we have had a half dozen or so of these types of episodes. We expect over the next 20 years, that we will likely have more. The Fund is not a replacement for, or a substitute for, the love and support we give our fellow Rotary families. Rather, it is a supplement to that love and support. It gives us a tangible way to help out monetarily. We recognize that the corpus of the fund will likely never be great enough to meet all the monetary needs that come along with a tragedy, but at least its there to help. And coupled with love, support and prayers, it is our belief that the Fund will make a difference in our fellow Rotarian Families lives.

The second page below is the "plan document" of our Rotary Compassion Fund that we are rolling out at the beginning of January 2005 to the full Club. It has been approved by the Board at the December 15th Board meeting and has already received pledges of seed money to "jump-start" it. It will undoubtedly change and improve as we gain more experience with it. Other Clubs may be interested in this as well....we were surprised to find from Rotary International that they had no knowledge of this kind of plan existing elsewhere in Rotary. Perhaps we can change that.



Santa Maria Breakfast Rotary Compassion Fund
For Rotarians and Their Families

Purpose:

To provide a responsive, non-bureaucratic means for funding needed assistance to our Club's Rotarians and/or their immediate families who are victims of some type of catastrophic illness or event. We believe in and support our Club's membership and their immediate families and view this as a mechanism to supplement that support monetarily.

Structure:

The Fund will consist of monies collected by volunteer contributions from our members. Contributions are not tax deductible and are part of the Club, not the Foundation. Contributions may be made through voluntary contributions through the Club's regular monthly bill and/or through one-time donations. The Fund will be administered by a committee of 5 chosen at large from the Club who will select a Chairperson as a contact. They will meet as needed and report to the Club at least annually on their finances.

Fund Limitations:

We recognize that the Fund will likely never have a sufficient corpus to meet all the financial needs of a Rotarian/Family who has suffered a catastrophic event. The Fund will do what it can to help and hope that this support, coupled with the love and encouragement of the members, will help the Rotarian/Family through their circumstance. It is expressly noted that even with the existence of this Fund, the Club may still be compelled to "pass the hat" to supplement what the Fund is doing when unusually difficult circumstances are being encountered.

Funding Requests:

Requests should be directed through the Fund Committee Chairperson and may originate from anyone in the Club. The Committee is expressly empowered to be able to act quickly without having to wait for full Club or Board approval. The Fund will be able to write checks for specific needs. These may include such things as clothing, travel costs, lodging costs, non insurance covered medical necessities, food, etc. It is impossible to anticipate all the types of things that may be necessary for a family experiencing a catastrophic event, so committee members are expected to use their good judgment in funding requests. A majority of the committee should ordinarily approve all requests and this can be done by phone. If a majority is unavailable after best efforts to contact them, take care of the Rotarian/Family first and seek approval after the fact.

Funding Limitations:

Checks written to help cover a particular need should be limited to 50% of the corpus of the fund or \$1,000, whichever is less. The purpose of this proviso is to assure the availability of additional funds for subsequent needs encountered by the Fund Committee (either from the same Rotarian/Family or from other Rotarians/Families).

Notwithstanding this limitation, the Committee may still need to approach the Club and "pass the hat" for additional funds should a series of calamities be encountered.