Rotary
Club of South Portland-
Cape Elizabeth

Cut to the Chase Version

Volunteerism in the United States
and the
Rotary Club of South Portland – Cape Elizabeth

November 11, 2026



Volunteerism in the United States
and
the Rotary Club of South Portland – Cape Elizabeth

Why this presentation?

- Member Engagement and Resource Leveling

Thesis:

- There are no clear expectations of member commitment.
- Current commitments exceed our capacity to meet them.
- Willing and fully engaged members are getting burned out.

Presentation outcome:

- Baseline understanding of the issue.
- Next steps.

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Agenda

Data: Volunteerism in the U.S.



Data: Global Volunteerism of Rotary International

Data: Rotary Club of South Portland – Cape Elizabeth

Thoughts to ponder.

Ideas and Actions to consider.

Next steps.

Why people volunteer and their preferred way to do it, by age ("generations")

Approx. ages "Generations"	18-26	27-42	43-58	59-77
Primary Motivation	Skills building, flexibility, social impact	**Community impact plus convenience**	Reliability, **family and school involvement**	**Social connection and giving back**
Preferred Format	Virtual and hybrid roles, short project-based tasks	**Task-based and episodic roles with clear outcomes**	**In-person roles connected to schools, sports, and community events**	**Recurring in-person roles and relationship-based volunteering**

Meet them where they're at.

Source: "The State of Volunteering 2025: Trends & What to Expect in 2026. A data-backed breakdown of 2025 volunteering trends, participation rates, and insights to help organizations plan for 2026." Trey Mosier. Signup Genius 12/15/2025

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Conclusions about our Club

- Favorable comparison in average volunteer hours per month:
  Club: 4 Census: 4 RI Study 3.7
- 80% of members are carrying the load.
- Older members account for more of the hours.
- Members 6+ years provide more hours. (squint)
- Significant time spent in managing, organizing, or coordinating isn't measured.
- Vast majority of members joined due to emphasis on service.
- Members selectively participate by what motivates them and how they prefer to do it. We kinda meet them where they're at…

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Random thoughts to ponder

- Managing, organizing, and coordinating are sometimes thankless, frustrating, or exasperating but always necessary and usually rewarding.
- There's an assumption that certain members will perform specific tasks for life.
- Members "carrying the load" try to do so in ways that fit their life without overwhelming them, but some feel pressured to do so.
- Some members enjoy leisure and other volunteer activities; Rotary commitments are balanced with everything else.
- People increasingly prefer "episodic volunteering:" Focused, short-term, project-based tasks.
- Engagement includes participation in not only manual work (service projects), but also meetings, social activities, and other events.

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Ideas and Actions to consider.

Establish minimum expectations of engagement.

Meeting attendance + Social events + Fundraising + Volunteer activities + managing, organizing and coordinating + other.

Meet them where they are - flexibility

Conduct one-on-one interviews with infrequent or rare participants.

What is their motivation for being a Rotarian.

How do they want to be involved.

What constraints – essential and discretionary - do they have in their willingness and ability to participate.

Frank discussion on meeting the minimum expectations.

Determine in advance the CLUB's capacity and willingness for old & new events.

Identify an event "Champion" to manage the decision process and event (IF it happens)

Have earlier signups with drop dead date for commitment.

Establish Board(?) process for advance approval of an event.

What else?? What are YOUR ideas?

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What now? Next Steps.

Take the Board and Club's temperature:

- As a condition of membership, members are obliged to engage in a minimum number of hours per year across all available opportunities. Meet them where they are.

Recruit a small team to:

- Ask more questions and gather additional data
- Query Active members
- Investigate what other Clubs are doing
- Develop a range of solutions
- Recommend specific Club policies to the Board
    - Minimum expectation of member engagement
    - Process to add or remove volunteer activities based on capacity.