

4-WAY TEST SPEECH COMPETITION OVERVIEW

History: The speech contest was started in 1984 by Lenexa Rotary Club President, Wes Fry. He was introduced to the concept of a speech contest incorporating the 4 questions that all Rotarians apply to their daily lives. And challenged our club to start the speech contest.

The contest has evolved over the years but one thing has remained. All speakers have to incorporate the 4 Way Test of Rotary to the topic of their choice.

Is it the TRUTH? Is it FAIR to all concerned? Will it build GOODWILL? Will it be BENEFICIAL to all Concerned?

Conducting the Contest: When the contest started, information was sent to all high schools in Johnson County announcing the speech contest. All participants were to show up at the contest judging site where judges would hear their speeches and award scholarships to the winners. This approach was found to be unworkable because there was no advance registration and follow-up with students did not exist. Many members in the club felt the contest should be discontinued due to a lack of student participation. Other members thought more direct involvement between our club and the schools and participating students was needed.

A committee was established to make direct contact with every high school in Johnson County to gain teacher and counselor cooperation in registering students for the contest. That year over 40 students registered. We had other Johnson County Rotary clubs assist in judging a group of speakers at one of their meetings. Five Finalist came from the first round of speaking. They spoke again at the Lenexa Rotary Club to determine winners for the scholarships offered that year.

Currently, we hand out registration forms to high school students at a College Clinic in October held at Shawnee Mission East. We offer two help sessions in the first half of November where students can come to review videos of prior winning speeches and ask questions of Rotary Club members about the contest and its rules.

The preliminary round of speaking is done over two nights the week following Thanksgiving. Each student is assigned one of those nights to speak. Four Lenexa Rotary members serve as judges each night. Preferably at least one of the members judging is the same on both nights.

Typically, there are 12-15 students from 5-7 schools that speak. The judges determine the top three speakers from both nights. Those top three present their speeches again to our Lenexa Rotary Club at the next regular club meeting. They are judged that day by four new judges to determine who places 1st, 2nd and 3rd and placements are announced at the club meeting.

Scholarship awards are held by the Lenexa Rotary Foundation until the student requests the funds for college tuition. At which point, the scholarship is paid directly to the college.