

What is Rotary? What do you guys do?

Rotary is a global service organization made up of business and community leaders who are committed to making a difference in their local communities and around the world. Our motto is "Service Above Self."

The Rotary Club of Overland Park meets weekly to hear from community leaders, learn about important issues impacting our region, and organize service projects and fundraising efforts that support local and international causes. We provide scholarships, support nonprofits, participate in community service projects, and help develop future leaders.

One of my favorite things about Rotary is that it connects people who want to make a difference. Whether you're passionate about education, fighting hunger, supporting youth, or helping communities around the world, Rotary provides opportunities to get involved.

Tell us a little bit about you.

My name is Marc Shaffer, CFP®, EA, and I serve as CFO at Searcy Financial Services. My wife, Bridgette, and I live in Overland Park and are raising our two children, Grant and Emily.

I am passionate about helping people, both professionally and personally. In addition to my work as a financial planner, I serve on the board of Growing Futures Early Education Center and will begin serving as Board President this year. I am also the author of One For All: How to Systemize Kindness, Grow Your Network, and Support Others Like It's Your Job.

Many of the volunteer opportunities and community connections that have become important parts of my life started through Rotary.

Marc, how long have you been a member of the Rotary Club?

I joined the Rotary Club of Overland Park in April 2009 and recently celebrated 17 years as a Rotarian. Honestly, it's hard to believe it's been that long. What started as a way to get more involved in the community has become one of the most rewarding parts of my personal and professional life. Through Rotary, I've developed lifelong friendships, served alongside incredible leaders, discovered meaningful causes to support, and had opportunities to grow as a volunteer and leader.

Why did you join in the first place?

Early in my career, I was looking for ways to become more involved in the community and meet people who were making a positive impact. Several mentors encouraged me to check out Rotary because of its focus on service, leadership, and relationship building.

I attended a few meetings and quickly realized Rotary was much more than a networking organization. It was a group of people genuinely committed to helping others. That culture of service resonated with me and has kept me involved ever since.

For people that are new to the area, why should they consider coming to a few club meetings to see what it is all about?

Moving to a new community can feel overwhelming. Rotary is one of the fastest ways to meet people who care deeply about the community and are actively involved in making it better.

You'll meet business owners, nonprofit leaders, educators, healthcare professionals, and community volunteers who can help you build meaningful relationships while learning more about the area. Whether you're looking to serve, build friendships, or simply get connected, Rotary is a great place to start.

What about people that have lived here for many years? What does Rotary offer for them?

Even if you've lived here for decades, Rotary offers opportunities to continue growing, learning, and giving back.

Many members discover causes they didn't know existed, develop leadership skills, and build friendships with people they may never have met otherwise. Rotary also provides a meaningful way to stay engaged in the community and leave a lasting impact.

I've lived in Johnson County for most of my life, and Rotary continues to introduce me to new organizations, community leaders, and opportunities to serve. There is always something new to learn and another way to make a difference.

Has there been anyone that you met through Rotary that helped you in your career?

Absolutely.

One of the greatest benefits of Rotary has been the mentors, friends, and community leaders I've met over the years. Rotary introduced me to people who challenged me to think bigger, get involved, and pursue leadership opportunities that I may not have considered otherwise.

Many of the opportunities I've had to serve on boards, support charitable organizations, grow professionally, and expand my network can be traced back to relationships that began through Rotary. The relationships have been far more valuable than any single business opportunity.

Rotary also provided me with the opportunity to attend the Rotary International Convention in Lisbon, Portugal, before serving as President of the Rotary Club of Overland Park. It was incredible to see the impact Rotary has around the world and to experience another culture alongside thousands of Rotarians from nearly every country.

Following the convention, I spent another ten days traveling through Europe with two Rotarians from another club. What started as Rotary connections turned into friendships and an unforgettable travel experience. Moments like that remind me that Rotary isn't just about local service. It's also about building relationships and gaining perspectives that can truly change the way you see the world.

Can you give us an example of a charity that has benefited from the Rotary Club of Overland Park?

One example is Growing Futures Early Education Center. My involvement with the organization began through relationships in the community, many of which were strengthened through Rotary. Today, Growing Futures serves vulnerable children and families throughout Johnson County by providing early childhood education, health services, and family support programs.

Another great example is Band of Angels, a nonprofit founded by fellow Rotarian Mike Meyer. I've enjoyed watching it grow from an idea shared among Rotary members into an organization that has helped countless students gain access to musical instruments and music education opportunities throughout the Kansas City area.

These are just two examples. Rotary members are involved with organizations focused on education, food insecurity, healthcare, youth development, and international service projects throughout our community and around the world.

Where can I find out more?

Anyone interested in learning more is welcome to visit a meeting of the Rotary Club of Overland Park.

You can learn more at:

- www.oprotary.org
- www.rotary.org

Guests are always welcome, and attending a meeting is the best way to experience Rotary firsthand. You don't need to know anyone before attending. Just come visit, meet some great people, and see if Rotary might be a fit for you.