



## Bristol Rotary Club and Charities Foundation



Bristol Rotary was founded in 1929 and is a member of Rotary International which has over 34,000 clubs worldwide with over 1,200,000 members. Each club serves a community like Bristol and generally is made up of many of the businesses and professionals of the town. The motto of Rotary is "Service above Self" - doing something for the community over and above doing your job. The French writer Alexis de Tocqueville touted these local groups back in the 1830's as representing some of the best national characteristics of Americans – compassion, generosity, neighborliness, energy and ingenuity.

Bristol Rotary has annually contributed to a number of local charities such as Women's Resources, Food Pantry, Home & Hospice Care, Bristol County Chorus and over 20 more; plus runs fundraisers and community projects. For example, just before Christmas 20 Rotarians gathered to prepare 50 Christmas Baskets of groceries and gifts for some of Bristol's most needy. In 2014 the Club ratcheted up charitable activities a notch by getting IRS approval to form a tax deductible public charity foundation (a 501(c)(3)) to provide the means to raise more donations in order to fund bigger projects that support the community. This entity is called the Bristol Rotary Charities Foundation, and the projects we chose were the Emergency Dialer Program and The Autism Project - East Bay Support Center.

The Emergency Dialer Program is well known to Bristolians as there are about 350 users and growing as more become aware of this lifesaving service. The service is a dialer that attaches to your phone and coupled with a pendant, when pressed, summons emergency services. This is a free service contrary to the commercial equivalents that can cost upwards of \$50 a month. Plus, it is the local Bristol emergency services that are called not a call center in Utah. This Program has allowed the elderly or disabled Bristolians, regardless of means, to continue to live independently with the assurance that help is available when needed. It is estimated that over 113 lives were saved over the past 18 months.

Earlier in 2015, Bristol Rotary formed an Advisory Council of town leaders and professionals to address a growing issue in our community and the country in general – families affected by Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). We were told by the Autism professionals at Bradley Hospital that the East Bay was under supported. The nearest ASD support center was in Johnston, RI. ASD families are living with a disorder for which there is no known cause, is growing exponentially, and for which there is no cure. It is a life time commitment for the parents. The estimate is that there are 200 ASD families in Bristol, 700 in Bristol County and 2,000 in the East Bay. Our Rotary Club alone has 8 families and they were well aware that help was needed closer to home. Since summer of 2015, with tremendous community support, we raised almost \$40,000 which allowed us to open The Autism Project - East Bay Support Center in mid-September. The Center is located in space donated by the East Bay Chamber of Commerce in Warren and uses donated facilities at Mt. Hope High School and The Highlander Charter School. It provides parent training, professional consultations, support groups and much more. We will need to continue fundraising for the next few years to assure that this critical service continues to be available free of charge to our ASD families.

We will continue to serve the Bristol and surrounding communities in the years to come. However, we would welcome new Rotary members from the community who not only want to find a way to give back but who could also feel proud to be part of an organization where their experience and ingenuity can make a difference. If you would like to make a tax deductible donation to any or all of our projects, please send a gift to Bristol Rotary Charities Foundation (or BRCF), PO Box 469, Bristol, RI 02809.