

Vision and Goals for 2020-2021

Start with Why!

Introduction

First of all I want to thank you all for the opportunity to be President of the Rotary Club of Kirksville. Clearly, these are not the circumstances that I expected to be President in, but here they are. Winston Churchill said, "A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty. Our theme this year is Rotary Opens Opportunities and opportunities are what I want to look for this year. R.I. President Holger Knaak's main priority this year is investing in young people. So how are we going to do this? Let's start by looking at how I got into Rotary.

How did I get here?

I remember getting a phone call 7 years ago from Ray Klingensmith asking to meet with me to discuss an opportunity with Rotary. Of course, I had heard of Rotary, but didn't know much about what Rotary did. Ray came to my office and asked if I would like to be a charter member of a new evening club. Just starting my business and looking for opportunities to network and meet new people, I accepted. Looking back on it, another reason that I accepted is the impact Ray had on me by taking time out of his day, and physically coming to "ask" me. I became a Rotarian in 2013 and a member of this Club in 2018 I believe. Dale Shenewerk was my sponsor and I'm happy to be able to fill my obligation to him as serving as President. He was sure to remind me that every Rotarian that he has sponsored has served as President.

Why be a Rotarian?

I'm reading a book title Start with Why by Simon Sinek I want you to listen to something he says. "If those outside your megaphone share your WHY and if you are able to clearly communicate that belief in everything you say and do, trust emerges and value is perceived." The megaphone he is referring to starts with WHY, and goes to HOW, and WHAT. Our WHY is what we want to promote so we can articulate to others the value they get from joining Rotary.

The WHY, what some call Vision, of Rotary is to advance goodwill and peace around the world. Wow! I can't help but wonder, did Paul Harris expect this? Paul formed Rotary for fellowship and now Rotary is striving to advance goodwill and peace worldwide!

Why would young people want to become a Rotarian? Because it gives the opportunity to be a part of something that makes a difference – something that can add value, and change someone's life! The top two reasons people join Rotary are to give back to their local community and connect with friends. Today, the capability and the way we connect with friends has been changing in various ways, but what hasn't changed is people wanting to give back to their local community. What's unique about Rotary I've learned is we don't just give money to an organization; we serve as well! The main reason, the WHY of Rotary is still the same as when it began, but the HOW and WHAT and I quote... "have changed and must change" as RI President Knaack pointed out.

HOW are we going to evolve?

If we are not moving forward, we are moving backwards. We've seen the trends over the past several years of our Rotary club, and others around the world struggling with membership. Maybe it is because we are not evolving fast enough with the times, and possibly an even bigger reason, is the lack of promoting our WHY. We do not want to get left behind like what happened to Kodak. Who would have thought the largest hospitality service in the world would be Air BnB and yet they do not own a single piece of real estate. Who would have thought the biggest taxi service such as Uber would not own a single car? So let's look at HOW we are going to move forward.

Rotaries strategic plan over the next five years is to increase our impact, expand our reach, enhance participant engagement, and increase our ability to adapt. This is HOW we are going to grow Rotary and attract young people to join. We need to take these four actions and implement them in Kirksville, and the surrounding area. I believe we can be better at letting our community know what we are doing. People want to support and be apart of something that is making a difference that is perceived as adding value – and we do that to a certain extent already, but we need to be better and more proactive in sharing our work with others.

HOW are we going to take advantage of the Opportunities that open in Kirksville? HOW are we going to increase our impact? Through service and fundraising! Right now, thanks to Jeff Romine and his team we have a fundraiser that has a phenomenal start and honestly unlimited income potential. We need to take advantage of this opportunity and sell these flag subscriptions from our “toes” not from our “heels” so we can make an impact! How are we going to expand our reach? By using the proceeds from our successful fundraisers to help more people, to do more service projects, we'll have a story to tell of what we've done for this community, and that will give us a means to expand our reach.

We are also going to expand our reach by investing in young people. I look around this room, and there are many who aren't here, but I see so much wisdom and knowledge. I encourage you to be mentors to our young people. Ask a young person to join you for lunch. You have an opportunity to invest in their lives. You could talk about the weather – which is fine, there's nothing wrong with that. Or you can choose to go deeper with them, and ask them what books they've been reading, how is business going in they are a business owner or manager, share something you've learned form experience that might help them. I just encourage you to make an invest in a young person, and I believe that not only will we have young people joining Rotary to serve, but also joining because they feel like they are getting value through the fellowship!

We'll enhance participant engagement because people want to be apart of a club that is doing something! And, lastly, we'll increase our ability to adapt by implementing hybrid meetings which will also allow for more member participation. His is HOW I believe we can increase membership over the next couple of years and increase member participation.

So WHAT are the results?

I'm giving this a two-year time frame. Amanda and I plan to work closely together to put this club on the path of more service and more growth. My main goals as I mention are increasing membership, especially young people, and increase participation. This year, I would like to increase membership by 20 members. Does this sound a little bit crazy, yeah! **What has happened to our membership over the past couple of years? From 2016 – 2020 we have decreased from 86 members to 76 members.**

I would like our club to complete a service project through a District Grant.

I would like our club to achieve the Presidential Citation.

In Closing

We are people of action and Rotary Opens Opportunities. What opportunities is this pandemic opening up? I want to end with a short story. **There is a Taoist story of an old farmer who had worked his crops for many years. One day his horse ran away. Upon hearing the news, his neighbors came to visit. "Such bad luck," they said sympathetically. "May be," the farmer replied.**

The next morning the horse returned, bringing with it three other wild horses. "How wonderful," the neighbors exclaimed. "May be," replied the old man.

The following day, his son tried to ride one of the untamed horses, was thrown, and broke his leg. The neighbors again came to offer their sympathy on his misfortune. "May be," answered the farmer.

The day after, military officials came to the village to draft young men into the army. Seeing that the son's leg was broken, they passed him by. The neighbors congratulated the farmer on how well things had turned out. "May be," said the farmer.

It's comforting to know that good can come from bad! Help me this year in growing membership and by getting involved. Support R.I. President Holger Knaak's main priority of investing in young people. Know your WHY, invite a guest to join you for lunch at a Rotary meeting. They will be honored you asked them. I'm honored to be in this club and look forward to working along side my fellow Rotarians to advance goodwill and peace in our community and the world!