



## WHAT IS ROTARY?

Rotary International is an association of local clubs whose purpose is to bring together business and professional leaders to provide humanitarian services, encourage high ethical standards in all vocations, and promote peace and goodwill around the world. Founded in 1905, Rotary is the world's first international service organization with 1.2 million members in more than 36,000 clubs in over 200 countries today. It is a non-sectarian organization open to all persons regardless of race, color, creed, religion, gender, or political affiliation.

Rotary International and its associated clubs encourage the development of friendships as an opportunity to foster the ideal of service as the basis for an organization whose members exemplify the Rotary motto of "service above self". Rotarians are committed to high ethical standards in business and professions, the recognition of the worthiness of all occupations, and dignifying each member's dedication as an opportunity to serve society. Rotary offers its members an opportunity to be part of a world fellowship of business, professional and community leaders united in the ideal of service, who are dedicated to the advancement of international understanding, peace, and goodwill.

Members use the Rotary Four-Way Test as a lens to see if their thoughts and actions are compatible with the spirit and ideals of Rotary. Developed by entrepreneur Harold J. Taylor during the Great Depression as a set of guidelines for restoring faltering businesses, the Four- Way Test was adopted as the standard of ethics by Rotary in 1942.

Is it the TRUTH?

Is it FAIR to all concerned?

Will it build GOODWILL and BETTER FRIENDSHIPS?

Will it be BENEFICIAL to all concerned?

**History of Rotary** The first Rotary Club was formed when attorney Paul Harris called together a meeting of three business acquaintances on February 23, 1905. Gustave Loehr (a mining engineer and freemason), Silvester Schiele (a coal merchant), and Hiram E. Shorey (a tailor) joined Harris for the first meeting held at Loehr's office in the Unity Building on Dearborn Street in downtown Chicago. The members chose the name Rotary because initially they rotated subsequent weekly club meetings to each other's offices. Within a year, however, the Chicago club became so large it was necessary to adopt the now common practice of a regular meeting place.

The next four Rotary clubs were organized in cities in the western United States beginning with San Francisco and followed by Oakland, Los Angeles, and Seattle. The National Association of Rotary Clubs in America was formed in 1910. In November of 1910, a group of Canadian business associates began meeting in Winnipeg, Manitoba. In April 1912, Rotary chartered the Winnipeg club, marking the first establishment of an American-style service club outside the United States. In August 1912, the Rotary Club of London received its charter from the Association, as the first chartered Rotary club outside North America. To reflect the addition of clubs outside of the United States, the name was changed to the International Association of Rotary Clubs in 1912.

By the end of World War I in 1918, twenty two Rotary clubs had been chartered in Great Britain. Rotary clubs were also established in Cuba in 1916, the Philippines in 1919, and India in 1920. In 1922 in recognition of its growing international reach, the name of the organization was changed to Rotary International. By 1925 Rotary had grown to over 200 clubs with more than 20,000 members.

In 1945 Rotary International had clubs in 65 countries and was working to further international understanding, peace, and goodwill through a world fellowship of business and professional persons united in the ideal of service. Rotary International's relationship with the United Nations was established when the UN was founded in 1945. At the UN Charter Conference in San Francisco, fifty Rotarians served as delegates, advisors, and consultants. The commitment of Rotary to promoting international understanding, peace, and goodwill was consistent with the purpose of the UN to maintain international peace and security; to develop friendly relations among nations; to help solve international economic, social, cultural, and humanitarian problems; and to promote human rights.

Rotary's work in promoting peace through education began in 1943 with a London conference on international, cultural, and educational exchanges. Working under the premise that "war begins in the minds of men", the conference was attended by ministers of education and observers from around the world. The London conference sponsored by Rotary was an early inspiration for the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) which was established in 1946 with a motto of "building peace

in the minds of men and women". Rotary International established formal consultative status with the United Nations and UNESCO in 1947. As one of the first cooperative activities with UNESCO, the Rotary Foundation awarded grants to social service and educational leaders in war-devastated countries identified by UNESCO designed to provide training to those who trained others in recovery efforts.

Having grown to 1.2 million members in more than 35,000 local clubs in 200 countries, today Rotary is the most widespread and far-reaching international service organization in the world. North America accounts for 450,000 members, Asia for 300,000 members, Europe for 250,000 members, Latin America for 100,000 members, Oceania for 100,000 members, and Africa for 30,000 members.

**Organization of Rotary** In order to carry out its service programs, Rotary is structured in club, district, and international levels. Rotarians are members of their local club which is chartered by the global organization Rotary International (RI) headquartered in Evanston, Illinois. For administrative purposes, the more than 36,000 clubs worldwide are grouped into 529 districts and the districts into 34 zones. Rotarians are welcome to attend any Rotary club around the world at one of their weekly meetings. The local Rotary Club is the basic unit of Rotary activity, and each club determines its own membership. Clubs originally were limited to a single club per city, municipality, or town, but Rotary International has encouraged the formation of one or more additional clubs in the cities when practical. Most clubs meet weekly, usually at a mealtime on a weekday in a regular location, when Rotarians can discuss club business and hear from guest speakers. Each club also conducts various service projects within its local community and participates in special projects involving other clubs in the local district and occasionally a special project with a "sister club" in another nation. Most clubs also hold social events at least quarterly and in some cases more often.

The local clubs enjoy considerable autonomy within the framework of the standard constitution and the constitution and bylaws of Rotary International. The governing body of the club is the Club Board of Directors, typically consisting of the club president (who serves as the Board Chairperson), President-Elect, Immediate Past President, club Secretary, club Treasurer, and several Club Board directors. The President usually appoints the Directors to serve as chairs of the major club committees, including those responsible for club service, vocational service, community service, youth service, and international service.

A District Governor, who is an officer of Rotary International and represents the RI board of directors in the field, leads his/her respective Rotary district. Each Governor is nominated by the clubs of his/her district and elected by all the clubs meeting at the annual Rotary District Convention held each year. The District Governor appoints Assistant

Governors from among the Rotarians of the district to assist in the management of Rotary activity and multi-club projects in the district.

Approximately 15 Rotary districts form a zone. A Zone Director, who serves as a member of the RI board of directors, heads two zones. The Zone Director is nominated by the clubs in the zone and elected by the convention for a term of two consecutive years.

Rotary International is governed by a Board of Directors composed of the International President, President-Elect, General Secretary, and 17 Zone Directors. The nomination and the election of each President is handled in the one to three year period before taking office and is based on requirements including geographical balance among Rotary zones and previous service as a District Governor and board member. The international board meets quarterly to establish policies and make recommendations to the overall governing bodies, the RI Convention and the RI Council on Legislation. The chief operating officer of RI is the General Secretary who heads a staff of about 600 people working at the international headquarters in Evanston, Illinois and in seven international offices around the world. More information about Rotary International is available at [www.rotary.org](http://www.rotary.org).

**Rotary Club of Los Gatos** The Rotary Club of Los Gatos was chartered on January 15, 1924 with Edwin Melvin serving as its founding President. The Club is an active and highly respected service organization in the Los Gatos community and the local area. Hundreds of business and community leaders have shared the fun and fellowship of being a member of the Rotary Club of Los Gatos, while upholding the ideals of humanitarian service, high ethical standards, and promotion of international understanding, peace, and goodwill. The Los Gatos Club is within Rotary District 5170 covering the San Francisco Bay Area stretching from Alameda County to San Benito and Santa Cruz Counties with over 60 clubs and more than 4,000 members.

The Rotary Club of Los Gatos is governed by an 11 member Board of Directors elected annually by the membership. The Board includes the President, Vice President, President-Elect, Immediate Past President, Secretary, Treasurer, and five Directors. Most of the work of the club is done through its 30 committees on which members volunteer to serve based on their individual interest. In addition, there are six administrative committees whose members are specified in the by-laws of the Club and its two foundations and appointed by the President as required. Each committee and its role in the club are outlined in the club roster distributed to members annually.

Up until the COVID-19 pandemic, the Rotary Club of Los Gatos held its weekly club meeting on Tuesdays at lunchtime at the Los Gatos Lodge. Now, the club's weekly meetings have temporarily switch to the Zoom platform. The Zoom meeting starts at 12:30 p.m. and concluding at 1:30 p.m. The meeting begins with the pledge of allegiance and

words of inspiration by one of the members followed by the introduction and welcoming of visiting Rotarians and guests. The President then conducts the weekly business of the club calling on members for announcements and reports of current and upcoming club events and projects, recognizing members for special accomplishments, and giving members the opportunity to share their recent achievements, activities, celebrations, or other personal matters. The period of club business is followed by a program featuring a guest speaker or group presentation covering a variety of topics and issues of interest to the membership. Members are encouraged to attend the weekly meetings, but there is no meeting attendance requirement.

The basic cost of membership in the Rotary Club of Los Gatos includes a \$200 initiation fee (which includes a \$100 initial year contribution to the Rotary Foundation), monthly dues of \$31, and, once meeting in person again, lunch at the weekly meeting (\$20 for buffet, \$5 for beverages only). In addition, members may have expenses associated with the periodic social events as well as supporting the fundraising events sponsored by the Club. In addition, in the Spring, members are asked to contribute to the Rotary International Annual Fund. The amount contributed is at the discretion of the member.

**Service and Social Opportunities\*** The Rotary Club of Los Gatos offers a variety of service projects and social events for its members with individuals choosing activities that offer opportunities for meaningful engagement for each individual. Being an engaged member of the Rotary club affords the opportunity to develop friendships that foster the ideal of service as the basis for an organization whose members exemplify the Rotary motto of “service above self”.

Locally, members have the opportunity to participate in hands-on community service projects. These projects have included working with St. Luke’s Pantry, Stop Hunger Now, West Valley Community Services, Ronald McDonald House, Fisher House, Uplift Family Services, Rebuilding Together, and many others. Members also have opportunities to participate in international service projects supported by the Los Gatos club, District 5170, and Rotary International. Members of the Los Gatos club have recently supported a micro lending program in underdeveloped countries, soccer balls for youth in Vietnam, and computers in Philippine schools. Youth programs are a particular focus of the Los Gatos club. The club sponsors Los Gatos Boy Scout Troop 2, Rotary Interact Clubs at Los Gatos and Leigh High Schools, Rotary Youth Leadership Award Camp, a high school Enterprise Leadership Conference, and a high school Speech Contest.

Offering a variety of opportunities for members to develop friendships and enjoy interacting with fellow Rotarians and their families is an emphasis of the Rotary Club of Los Gatos. Historically, on the first Thursday of each month the Club has held a no-host happy hour which is a great opportunity for members to interact with each other as well

as spouses and guests in an informal setting at a local restaurant or the home of a member. The Club has also historically held an annual family barbecue at Oak Meadow Park in May, a fun-filled awards dinner celebrating the transition of the Club leadership in June, a Club barbecue at Oak Meadow Park in the Fall, and a holiday Presidents' brunch at La Rinconada Country Club in December.

**Fundraising Events and Philanthropy\*** The Rotary Club of Los Gatos has a long tradition of generosity in supporting local and international charitable projects. In 1986 the Rotary Club of Los Gatos formed the Los Gatos Rotary Charities Foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit public benefit corporation, for the purpose of accumulating, investing, and distributing funds to support philanthropic projects championed by members of the club. In 1998 the Rotary Club of Los Gatos formed the Los Gatos Rotary Scholarship Fund, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit public benefit corporation, for the purpose of accumulating, investing, and distributing funds to support scholarships for high school students in the Los Gatos area.

The Club sponsors three major fundraising events annually – The Great Race from Saratoga to Los Gatos, a Crab Fest and Auction, and a Fall Movie Night at the Los Gatos Theater. Proceeds from the events are used by the Club's charitable foundations to support scholarships to graduating seniors in local high schools, grants to local service organizations, and international projects. All members are generally expected to participate in the Club's three major fundraising events.

**Rotary Foundation** The mission of the Rotary Foundation is to enable Rotarians to advance world understanding, goodwill, and peace through the improvement of health, the support of education, and the alleviation of poverty. At the 1917 Rotary International convention, Rotary President Arch Klumph proposed to set up an endowment "for the purpose of doing good in the world". In 1928 the fund was renamed the Rotary Foundation, and it became a distinct entity within Rotary International. In 1929, the Foundation made its first gift of \$500 to the International Society for Crippled Children, an organization created by Rotarian Edgar F. Allen that later grew into Easter Seals. When Rotary founder Paul Harris died in 1947, contributions began pouring in to Rotary International, and the Paul Harris Memorial Fund was created to build the Foundation. Since the first donation of \$26.50 in 1917, the Foundation has received contributions totaling more than \$1 billion.

The Foundation provides humanitarian and educational grants to promote peace and goodwill that save lives and improve conditions throughout the world. Since 1947 the Foundation has awarded more than \$1.3 billion in grants from the voluntary contributions of Rotarians and friends of Rotary. One of the most notable programs of the Foundation is Polio Plus a joint effort of Rotary, the Gates Foundation, the World Health Organization,

UNICEF, and local health organizations to reduce the incidence of polio throughout the world. The Foundation also makes grants to support Rotary district community activities, large international activities with high impact outcomes, ambassadorial scholarships, group study exchanges, and Rotary peace programs.

The Foundation is supported by voluntary contributions from Rotarians and friend of Rotary. Contributions are invested at the direction of the Foundation's Board of Trustees with the investment earnings covering the administrative costs of the Foundation and supporting the Foundation's grants. While contributions to the Foundation are voluntary by Rotarians, the Los Gatos club has set a goal of all members making an annual contribution to the Rotary Foundation as our commitment to the Every Rotarian Every Year initiative. A portion of the initiation fee paid by new members is forwarded as an initial contribution to the Foundation. Named for the founder of Rotary, the Paul Harris Fellow program was established to express appreciation for substantial contributions to the Foundation. Rotarians are recognized as Paul Harris Fellows when they have contributed a total of \$1,000. More information about the Rotary Foundation is available at [www.rotary.org/myrotary/en/rotary-foundation](http://www.rotary.org/myrotary/en/rotary-foundation).

\* COVID-19 restrictions have impacted these activities which we hope will be back in full force at some point in the future.