



# ROTARY

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## WHAT'S ROTARY

Rotary International is a volunteer organization of business and professional leaders who provide humanitarian service, and help to build goodwill and peace in the world. There are approximately 1.2 million Rotary club members belonging to 34,000 Rotary clubs in more than 200 countries and geographical areas.

Founded in Chicago in 1905, Rotary celebrated 100 years of service in 2005. The Rotary Foundation has awarded more than US\$2.1 billion in grants, which are administered at the local level by Rotary clubs.

### What is the purpose of Rotary?

Rotary clubs exist to improve communities through a range of humanitarian, intercultural and educational activities. Clubs advance international understanding by partnering with clubs in other countries. Rotary also encourages high ethical standards in all vocations.

### What do Rotary clubs do?

Rotary clubs address critical issues at home and abroad by providing health care and medical supplies, clean water, food, job training, youth development, and education to millions of people in need. Examples of Rotary's focus areas include:

**Polio Eradication** - In 1985, Rotary International created PolioPlus – a program to immunize all the world's children against polio. To date, Rotary has contributed more than US\$1 billion and countless volunteer hours to the protection of more than two billion children in 122 countries. Rotary is currently working to raise an additional US\$200 million toward a US\$355 million challenge grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. These efforts are providing much needed polio vaccine, operational support, medical personnel, laboratory equipment and educational materials for health workers and parents. In addition, Rotary has played a major role in decisions by donor governments to contribute over \$6 billion to the effort. With its community-based network worldwide, Rotary is the volunteer arm of the global partnership dedicated to eradicating polio. Rotary volunteers assist in vaccine delivery, social mobilization and logistical help in cooperation with the national health ministries, the World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF, and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

**Peace** - In an effort to educate tomorrow's peacemakers and ambassadors, up to 110 Rotary World Peace Fellows are sponsored each year to study at one of the eight universities for International Studies in peace and conflict resolution. Since 2002, 431 fellows from over 75 countries have participated at a cost of more than \$23 million.

**International Education** - Rotary is the world's largest privately-funded source of international scholarships. Each year, about 1,000 university students receive Rotary scholarships to study abroad. Rotary clubs also coordinate a high school-age student exchange program that has sent nearly 8,000 students abroad for three months to a year.

**Humanitarian Projects** - Rotary clubs initiate thousands of humanitarian service projects every year. These volunteer-driven projects address the root causes of conflict, such as hunger, poverty, disease and illiteracy.

**Literacy** - Rotary clubs work to improve literacy rates worldwide. A unique, Rotary-pioneered approach called the Concentrated Language Encounter (CLE) has proven very effective in resource-strapped developing countries. It was so successful in Thailand, that the Thai government adopted the program nationwide.

**Water Management** - Recognizing the importance of clean water, many Rotary clubs help to install wells and develop water treatment and distribution systems to increase access to fresh drinking water for communities in need, especially in developing countries.

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