

History of Rotary International



*The first four Rotarians (from left):
Gustavus Loehr, Silvester Schiele,
Hiram Shorey, and Paul P. Harris,
circa 1905-12.*

Paul P. Harris, an attorney, wanted to create a professional group with the same friendly spirit he felt in the small towns of his youth. On 23 February 1905, Harris, Gustavus Loehr, Silvester Schiele, and Hiram Shorey gathered at Loehr's office in Room 711 of the Unity Building in downtown Chicago. This was the first Rotary club meeting. They decided to call the new club "Rotary" after the practice of rotating meeting locations.

Within five years clubs had formed across the country, from San Francisco to New York.

In August 1910, Rotarians held their first convention in Chicago. The 16 clubs that existed at that time united to form the National Association of Rotary Clubs.

In 1912, the name changed to International Association of Rotary Clubs to reflect the addition of clubs in other countries. The name Rotary International was adopted in 1922.

By July 1925, Rotary had grown to more than 2,000 clubs and an estimated 108,000 members on six continents.

As Rotary grew, members pooled their resources and used their talents to serve their communities. The organization's dedication to this ideal is best expressed in its motto: Service Above Self.

— <https://www.rotary.org/myrotary/en/learning-reference/about-rotary/history>

History of the Rotary Club of Great Falls VA. [excerpted]

Our Club launched with 83 Charter Members on June 2, 2011.

Over the years we have had a variety of Prominent Speakers. Our First Guest Speaker was Supreme Court Justice Scalia. Additional speakers have included all major state and county-level candidates for General Election, US Congressman Wolf, Republican Presidential candidate Santorum, leading CEOs, the head of the USO, and many more

We continue to be recognized every year as a Sustaining Club of the Rotary International Foundation meaning every member of our club has contributed \$100 or more per year. This recognition underscores our club's commitment to the Rotary ideal of "Service above Self", but writing checks isn't all we do!

Working with the RI Foundation matching district grants program, we have promoted community development by building soccer and basketball courts at schools in Tela, Honduras and purchasing and installing materials for a new classroom. Closer to home, we've promoted education and literacy through a Book Fair at the Great Falls Library and joined students from our local elementary, middle, and high school students to pack over 100,000 meals to be distributed across the world as needs arise - from floods in Houston & the Puerto Rico to drought to political unrest.

We've collaborated with the Rotary Club of Pune, India as International Partners on two projects and are moving forward on a third project to benefit the schools in that rural region. Our projects spanned multiple years providing modern infrastructure and computer-based eLearning systems for 18 schools.

Thanks to the success of our annual Oktoberfest fundraising event, locally we've been able work closely with Tell Me Town, to provide books for children in INOVA hospitals in both English and Spanish to educate children and their families on medical issues from diabetes to ER and many other childhood medical situations and Cornerstone to provide support and advocacy for those in need of food, shelter, affordable housing, and other human services. We support the Thanksgiving Food Basket program, provide quarterly dinners at the Embry Rucker Community Shelter and initiated a much-needed drainage management project at the facility. Through a grant from the Foundation, Cornerstone was able to fund a chairlift for a child with spina bifida enabling him to enjoy the mobility we often take for granted.

Our Annual Bocce Ball Tournament on the Village Green in Great Falls has raised money for Stop Soldier Suicide, education and prevention to fight human trafficking and most recently the Jack and Jill Late Stage Cancer Foundation whose mission is to give children who will likely lose their Mom or Dad to cancer a timeout to create treasured memories as a family... while they can.

Rotarians also have passions for program that originated outside of Rotary but have been adopted by our club such Cars for the Cure to support the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation and the First-Time Campers program in conjunction with the Wolf Trap Foundation. The club also has sponsored Tell Me Town, to provide books for children in INOVA hospitals in both English and Spanish to educate children and their families on medical issues from diabetes to ER and many other childhood medical situations.