



Being the Good in ROTARACTion

Sarah Merkel, Public Health Promoter

My Dad has been a Downie Optimist member for more than 30 years, and my Mom dedicated so much time to parent council and the Recreation Board in Downie when I was growing up. Their love of community and giving back is ingrained in me. I am a true believer in “it takes a village to raise a child.” Between my parents, siblings, extended family, coaches, teachers and workplaces growing up, I am a product of one very supportive village. And then I became an adult, and decided it was my time to be part of the village. I truly want to make the world a better place and in 2014, I sought to find a volunteer

organization to make that happen.

Rotary is a global network of 1.4 million neighbours, friends, leaders, and problem-solvers who see a world where people unite and take action to create lasting change – across the globe, in their communities, and in themselves. You may have heard of Rotary Clubs before, but have you heard of Rotaract Clubs? I hadn’t until I stumbled across the Rotaract Club of Stratford in December of 2014. I actually learned about it from a previous Perth District Health Unit coworker whose daughter was president at the time. I went to my first meeting and haven’t stopped going since.

Rotaract Clubs are geared towards ‘young adults’ where the age range to be a member was 18-30. That age range has loosened quite a bit so if you are 40 and feel like Rotaract is right for you, then that’s great. The Rotaract Club of Stratford is a dynamic group of enthusiastic young adults. We promote community service, professional development, and friendship. Meetings are generally twice a month.

I am so grateful to my parents for teaching me the importance of giving and community from a young age. And now I have passed on the torch to my own kids; they’ve been involved in helping me with the Be An Angel campaign and picking up garbage over the last few years.

In Our Community...



Above: Putting a team in for the Coldest Night of the Year walk (2020-2022)

Left: Providing funds and supporting the StopGap initiative (2016)

Below: Be An Angel was started in 2018 and will continue this year.



If you live in Huron County, check out the [Rotaract Club of Goderich](#).

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THE BEACON HERALD Rotaract's Be an Angel to a Senior program takes off

Cory Smith
Jan 12, 2021 • 23 hours ago • 2 minute read



The Rotaract Club of Stratford's Be An Angel to a Senior program has taken off in the three years since Sarah Merkel was inspired by a similar initiative in London. (Submitted photo) jpg, SF

I am so proud of all we have accomplished since our induction as a club! Some of our past projects include:

- Applying for and obtaining the Libro Community Builder and Stratford Community Foundation grants to update the Stratford Youth Centre, 2014
- Organizing monthly trivia nights to benefit charities (we still run these in Stratford so check out our Facebook and Instagram pages for more details)
- Helping at the annual Rotary Dragon Boat Festival
- Helping to replenish the House of Blessing after a fire in 2018
- Hosting various charity fundraising events, including: dueling piano wars, improv comedy nights, and volleyball tournaments
- Replacing 50 year old mattresses at Shelterlink, Stratford's youth homeless shelter
- Supporting the development of the Rotary Hospice
- Hosting community trail clean-ups
- Creating and running a "Be an Angel to a Senior" Christmas project (this is a project that I started and organized from conception)

If you are interested in learning more about the Rotaract Club of Stratford, please email me at smerkel2@gmail.com. We are always looking for new members so please tell your friends, kids, etc. about us!