

**RIOTT (Rotary In Our Twenties and Thirties)**  
**A Membership Initiative for Recruitment of Qualified**  
**New Members for East Portland Rotary**  
By Kristi Govertsen, Founding Member of RIOTT

"Wouldn't it be funny if all of us East Portland Rotarians under the age of 40 brought peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, and sat at 'the kid's table' during one of our lunches?" a group of us 20 and 30 somethings joked at the annual holiday party. One of our more senior members, overhearing our laughter and comments, replied with, "I dare you. If you guys do that, I'll donate \$100 to the foundation." And with that joke and double dare, RIOTT was born. RIOTT (Rotary In Our Twenties and Thirties) threw our first RIOTT with almost full participation. There we were, all 10 of us in decked out in RIOTT t-shirts, baseball caps, pig-tails, sneakers, our lunchboxes and juice boxes, giving up our \$10 of lunch money we would normally spend on our weekly fellowship buffet. We played disco music as we greeted our fellow East Portland Rotarians, we led the membership in a rousing rendition of the Sesame Street theme song, and read from Dr. Seuss for the opening invocation. This flagship RIOTT, proved to ourselves that our little group of 20 and 30 year olds (we make up about 10% of our total club's population) could effectively make a contribution, and we pledged to do four more RIOTTs during the 2006-2007 year.

Our first RIOTT of the year was a "Double Our Numbers" RIOTT. Every one of us brought a guest in our age group to lunch that day. We had all sorts of classifications from nuclear engineers to professional magicians as guests, and we filled a few more lunch tables with the younger crowd. Our second RIOTT was a lot like our original one, with the t-shirts, the lunch money, and our honored guest, District Governor, Tom Jenkins, matching our funds that day. Our third was a Quiet RIOTT, where we held a silent auction. We auctioned off a "Restore Your Youth and Vitality, Have Lunch with Some RIOTTers" package. With our little auction, lunch money, and matching funds we raised almost \$400 in less than a half hour. Our final RIOTT of the year, has not yet happened, but no doubt will be a party party party!

Incredibly, in the year since our inaugural RIOTT, we have grown our little RIOTT group to 16 members in this age group, with several newer members ready to take our RIOTTs next year to a new level. We have several events planned outside the walls of our luncheons to promote visibility and public relations for younger members in Rotary, as well as continuing with our quarterly club RIOTTs. Additionally, we have become known as a club with the group for younger members, and we have had the opportunity to speak about RIOTT at other clubs as well as district membership events. We are truly excited about spreading this idea to others, and are dedicated to the future of Rotary. And as our club exceeds our membership goals for the year, with RIOTTers being the most frequently inducted age group during our 2006-2007 year, the future looks bright.

What we are remembering about ourselves as we begin to grow this age demographic, is that WE ARE the generation that grew up with Sesame Street, where we learned what it meant to be neighborly, play fairly, and tell the truth. There we learned the principles of

The Four Way Test long before we ever stepped into our first Rotary meeting. We grew up knowing all the words to "We Are the World" and participating in "Hands Across America." And no doubt, that belief that we can come together to make a difference still lives in all of our hearts, as a dream ultimately none of us have never outgrown. As we now come into our own as Rotarians, we have found a forum, both close to home and on a global scale to let those dreams come alive.