



Rotary Excellence Awards

Awards & Recognition Program

Relaunch Award Year: July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026

Every Club Has a Story Worth Telling

Recognition is not about winning; it is about celebrating service, honouring volunteers, sharing ideas, inspiring others, and telling Rotary's story. Every project, every member, every club, and every story matters.

This handbook explains why District 5580 is relaunching the Rotary Excellence Awards, how clubs can prepare strong nominations, how award categories are evaluated, and how every submission can strengthen Rotary's public image, membership growth, and culture of recognition.

Message from the District Governor

Every Club Has a Story Worth Telling

Fellow Rotarians,

Every day across District 5580, Rotarians quietly make a difference. We mentor young people, support families, strengthen our communities, build international partnerships, protect our environment, and improve lives through our commitment to Service Above Self.

Much of this work happens without fanfare, driven simply by a desire to make our communities and our world better places. Yet one of Rotary's greatest opportunities lies not only in the work we do, but in the stories we tell.

The District 5580 Rotary Excellence Awards provide an opportunity to celebrate those stories. They recognize the passion, innovation, leadership, and commitment demonstrated by our clubs and members while inspiring others through the sharing of successful projects and meaningful service.

This year marks an exciting new chapter as we relaunch our District Awards Program. While we will continue to honour excellence, we are also building something much larger—a culture of recognition where every club feels encouraged to celebrate its accomplishments, share its successes, and inspire others.

Recognition is not about being the biggest club or raising the most money. It is about demonstrating impact. It is about celebrating volunteers, strengthening Rotary's public image, attracting new members, and reminding our communities why Rotary continues to matter.

Whether your club completed one major initiative or dozens of service projects this year, I encourage you to participate. Every club has something worth celebrating. Every project has the potential to inspire another Rotary club.

As this is our first year of the renewed Awards Program, we recognize there will be opportunities to learn, gather feedback, and continue improving the experience for future years. Together, we are building a recognition program that reflects the extraordinary work taking place throughout District 5580.

Thank you for your leadership, your commitment to service, and the difference you make every day. I look forward to celebrating Rotary excellence with you at our District Conference. Together, let's continue telling Rotary's story.

Yours in Rotary Service,

Peter Nelson

District Governor

Rotary District 5580

Message from the District Awards Chair

Celebrating Excellence. Inspiring Service. Telling Rotary's Story.

Fellow Rotarians,

When I accepted the role of District Awards Chair, I began by asking a simple question:

What if every Rotary club in District 5580 shared just one story about the difference it made this year?

The answer was inspiring. Imagine the collective impact we could showcase. Hundreds of volunteers. Thousands of hours of service. Countless lives changed. Communities strengthened. Young people inspired. Families supported. International partnerships developed. Environmental initiatives creating a healthier future.

Those stories deserve to be celebrated. The District 5580 Rotary Excellence Awards have been refreshed with a renewed focus on recognizing impact, encouraging innovation, and helping clubs tell their stories. This year also introduces exciting new recognition for **Environmental Stewardship Champions**, reflecting Rotary's commitment to protecting our planet and building sustainable communities. Most importantly, this relaunch is about participation.

Whether your club has 15 members or 100, whether your project raised \$500 or \$500,000, every club can be recognized. Excellence is measured not by size, but by impact.

As you prepare your nominations, I encourage you to think beyond the activities themselves. Tell us why your project mattered. Share the challenge your community faced, how your club responded, and the lasting difference your members made. Those are the stories that inspire others and demonstrate Rotary at its very best.

This year marks the beginning of a new chapter. We know there will be opportunities to learn, refine, and improve the program based on your feedback. Our goal is to build an Awards Program that not only recognizes excellence but also strengthens our District, supports membership growth, enhances our public image, and creates a lasting record of Rotary's impact.

On behalf of the District Awards Committee, thank you for everything you do in service to your communities and to Rotary. I sincerely hope every club will take the opportunity to participate. Every project matters, every member matters, every club matters, and every club has a story worth telling. I look forward to celebrating your accomplishments at the District 5580 Conference.

Yours in Rotary,

Jodi Phillips

District Awards Chair

Rotary District 5580

Every Club Has a Story Worth Telling

Across District 5580, thousands of Rotarians quietly make our communities stronger every day.

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| Meals are served. | Children are mentored. |
| Scholarships are awarded. | Parks are restored. |
| Communities become healthier. | Families find hope. |
| The environment is protected. | Lives are changed. |

Yet many of these remarkable stories are never told beyond the members who made them happen. That is why we are relaunching the District 5580 Rotary Excellence Awards. This is more than an awards program. It is a celebration of service, an opportunity to recognize the volunteers who dedicate countless hours to improving the lives of others, a chance to share innovative ideas that can inspire clubs across our District, and a way to strengthen Rotary's public image by demonstrating its extraordinary impact in our communities and around the world.

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| Recognition inspires service. | Service creates stories. |
| Stories inspire others to serve. | Every club has something worth celebrating. |
| Every project has a story worth telling. | We invite every club to participate. |

Why We Are Relaunching the Awards

Every year Rotary clubs complete incredible projects. Unfortunately, too many remain known only within the club that delivered them. That means opportunities are lost opportunities to:

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| Celebrate volunteers. | Recognize leadership. |
| Inspire innovation. | Strengthen Rotary's public image. |
| Recruit new members. | Build stronger partnerships. |
| Share successful ideas. | Celebrate excellence. |

This Awards Relaunch is designed to change that. Rather than simply recognizing a handful of award winners, we want to create a culture where every Rotary club feels proud to tell its story. The relaunch award year recognizes achievements, projects, service, and contributions completed during the Rotary year from July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2026. Recognition should become part of how District 5580 celebrates service. This year marks the beginning of that journey.

Because this is a relaunch, we recognize that there will be opportunities to learn and improve. We invite clubs to provide feedback following the District Conference so that together we can continue to strengthen the Awards Program in the years ahead.

Recognition Matters

Recognition is often viewed as the final step in a successful project, but in Rotary it is the beginning of stronger storytelling, deeper pride, and greater service.

The Rotary Impact Cycle

If every Rotary club in District 5580 submitted just one outstanding project each year, the District would have dozens of compelling stories for membership recruitment, local media, social media, newsletters, websites, community presentations, grant applications, partnership discussions, and conference celebrations.

Recognition Strengthens Rotary

Celebrating Excellence. Strengthening Rotary.

"Recognition is not the reward for service—it is the spark that inspires more service."

More Than an Award

When people think about awards, they often think about trophies, certificates, or a moment of recognition at a conference.

In Rotary, recognition is much more than that.

Recognition celebrates the dedication of volunteers who give their time, talent, and resources to improve the lives of others. It honours innovation, leadership, collaboration, and compassion. Most importantly, it ensures that the remarkable stories created by our clubs are shared, remembered, and used to inspire others.

The District 5580 Rotary Excellence Awards are designed to recognize excellence, celebrate impact, and encourage every club to share its story.

Awards are not the destination; they are the beginning of a conversation about Rotary's impact.

Recognition Creates Opportunity

Every successful Rotary project creates opportunities beyond the immediate service provided: a food drive feeds families, a scholarship changes a student's future, a park restoration creates community pride, a youth leadership program inspires tomorrow's leaders, and an environmental project protects future generations. When these stories are shared, they demonstrate Rotary's relevance, celebrate accomplishments, and inspire other clubs to create even greater impact.

Recognition Builds Club Pride

Every Rotary club is powered by volunteers. Those volunteers give generously of their time, energy, expertise, and passion—not for recognition, but because they believe in Service Above Self.

Yet recognition matters. When members see their efforts acknowledged, they feel valued. When projects are celebrated, members feel proud of what they have accomplished together. That pride strengthens engagement, encourages participation, and helps create vibrant, healthy clubs. Recognition reminds every member that their contribution makes a difference.

Recognition Inspires Innovation

Awards are not simply about celebrating what has already been accomplished. They encourage clubs to think creatively, explore new partnerships, and develop projects that respond to emerging community needs.

When clubs share their most successful initiatives, they create a culture of learning across the District. One club's innovative project may become another club's inspiration. Together, we become stronger by learning from one another.

Recognition Supports Public Image

One of Rotary's greatest challenges is not the work we do; it is making sure people know about it. Every day, Rotary clubs improve lives in ways that often go unnoticed beyond the immediate community. Award nominations help capture those stories.

Use award stories for:

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| Articles in local newspapers | Features in District newsletters |
| Social media content | Presentations to community organizations |
| Website stories | Membership information |
| Grant examples | Conference presentations |

Recognition helps us tell Rotary's story to people who may never have experienced Rotary firsthand.

Recognition Supports Membership Growth

Prospective members are inspired by purpose and want to join organizations making a meaningful difference. Award submissions provide authentic examples of Rotary in action and demonstrate leadership, innovation, compassion, and impact.

Every nomination creates content that helps answer one of the most common questions prospective members ask: **"What does Rotary actually do?"** Recognition helps provide that answer.

Recognition Creates a Legacy

Projects come and go, events end, and committee members change, but stories endure. Award nominations create a permanent record of the work completed by Rotary clubs throughout District 5580.

Years from now, these submissions will help tell the story of our District—how Rotarians responded to challenges, strengthened communities, protected the environment, supported youth, and improved lives. Recognition preserves our history while inspiring our future.

The Rotary Impact Cycle

Recognition creates much more than award recipients.

It creates momentum.

Rotary Impact Cycle: Recognition → Stories Shared → Public Awareness Grows → Community Trust Increases → Membership Grows → More Hands to Serve → Greater Community Impact → More Stories Worth Sharing. This cycle reminds us that recognition is not an end. It is one of the ways Rotary strengthens its ability to serve.

Excellence Is Not Measured by Size

One of the greatest misconceptions about awards is that only large clubs with large budgets can succeed.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

A project involving ten dedicated Rotarians can be just as inspiring as one involving one hundred.

Judges look for meaningful impact, creativity, leadership, collaboration, sustainability, and strong storytelling—not club size. Every club, regardless of size, can demonstrate excellence.

Year One: Learn • Celebrate • Improve

This Awards Program marks the beginning of an exciting new chapter for District 5580. As we relaunch the program for achievements completed from July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2026, we recognize that the strongest recognition programs continue to evolve.

Following this year's District Conference, feedback from clubs, judges, Assistant Governors, and District leaders will help refine and strengthen the Awards Program for future years.

Our goal is simple:

To build an Awards Program that recognizes excellence, encourages participation, inspires innovation, and reflects the extraordinary service taking place throughout District 5580.

Reflection

As you prepare your nomination, ask: What challenge did we help solve? Who benefited? What changed? What lessons could another club learn? What story will people remember?

Those answers are at the heart of every outstanding nomination.

Looking Ahead

In the next chapter, we'll explore "**How to Build a Winning Nomination**"—providing practical guidance on how to tell your club's story, demonstrate impact, and present your achievements in a way that inspires judges and fellow Rotarians alike.

This chapter explains *why* District 5580 is investing in recognition and how awards support service, public image, leadership, and membership growth.

Building a Winning Nomination

Turning Great Service into a Great Story

"The most successful nominations don't simply describe what happened—they explain why it mattered."

Every Project Has a Story

Every Rotary project begins with a need. Perhaps a family required support, a local organization needed a partner, a shoreline required restoration, students needed mentors, or a community wanted hope. Your nomination should begin there—not with what Rotary did, but with **why Rotary became involved**. When judges understand the challenge, your club set out to address, they immediately appreciate the significance of your work.

Tell the Story Behind the Project

Avoid beginning your nomination with:

"Our club organized..." Instead, begin with the problem.

For example:

"Following a series of spring floods, several community parks became unusable, and hundreds of trees were lost. Rotary members recognized an opportunity to restore these important community spaces while engaging youth and local environmental partners."

Immediately, the reader understands the importance of the project.

A Simple Formula for Success

Strong nominations answer five questions: What was the need? What did your club do? How did Rotary make a difference? What changed? Why should another Rotary club care?

Think Like a Judge

Imagine reading thirty nominations. Many begin the same way.

- "Our club held..."
- "Our club organized..."
- "Our club donated..."
- "Our club raised..."

After reading several entries, they begin to sound alike.

Now imagine reading this:

When our community's only accessible playground was condemned due to safety concerns, families feared children with mobility challenges would lose one of the few places they could play alongside their peers. Rotary members decided that was unacceptable.

Which project will you remember? Stories create emotion. Emotion creates memorable nominations.

Activities vs. Impact

One of the most common mistakes is confusing activity with impact. Activities describe what happened; impact explains what changed. Judges evaluate impact—not simply activity.

Demonstrate Impact

Whenever possible, include measurable outcomes instead of writing:

"Many volunteers attended."

Write:

"Forty-three Rotary members and twenty-six community volunteers contributed more than 420 volunteer hours."

Instead of:

"We raised funds."

Write:

"\$38,450 was raised to purchase a new accessible playground, benefiting more than 700 children annually."

Numbers help judges understand the scale of your impact.

The Power of Partnership

Rotary rarely works alone. Tell judges about your partners.

Examples include:

Municipal governments	Schools
Indigenous communities	Local businesses
Environmental organizations	Healthcare organizations
Other Rotary clubs	Rotaract
Interact	Community volunteers

Strong partnerships often strengthen projects. They also demonstrate Rotary's ability to bring communities together.

Innovation Matters

Innovation is not always about technology. Innovation means finding better ways to solve problems.

Examples might include:

New partnerships	Creative fundraising
Youth leadership	Environmental sustainability
Volunteer engagement	New service models
Digital solutions	Community collaboration

Ask yourself: What made this project different?

Sustainability

Judges are interested in projects that create lasting value.

Consider whether the project will continue, whether the community will keep benefiting, whether partners will support it, and whether other Rotary clubs can replicate it.

Every Project Has Multiple Dimensions

Many projects fit more than one Avenue of Service.

For example:

Community Garden: Primary Avenue of Service: Community Service. Also supports Environmental Stewardship, Vocational Service, Youth Service, and Club Service.

Think broadly about the impact your project created.

Rotary Areas of Focus

Consider whether your project supports one or more Areas of Focus.

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| Peacebuilding & Conflict Prevention | Disease Prevention & Treatment |
| Water, Sanitation & Hygiene | Maternal & Child Health |
| Basic Education & Literacy | Community Economic Development |
| Environment | |

Highlighting these connections helps judges understand the broader significance of your work.

Tell the Human Story

Statistics inform. Stories inspire. Consider including a short example.

For example:

Through our literacy program, one Grade 3 student who had struggled with reading throughout the year improved by two reading levels and proudly read aloud during the school's year-end celebration.

A single story can bring an entire project to life.

Photographs and Supporting Material

Where permitted by the submission process, photographs should demonstrate impact rather than simply document attendance.

The strongest images show:

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| Members actively serving | Community participation |
| Before-and-after transformations | Youth engagement |
| Environmental improvements | Smiles, interaction, and meaningful moments |

If photographs or attachments are not permitted, use descriptive language that helps the reader visualize the impact of your project.

Common Mistakes

Avoid describing activities without explaining impact, assuming judges understand your community, forgetting measurable outcomes, using unexplained acronyms, writing long chronological reports, underestimating accomplishments, or waiting until the deadline.

Judges' Tips

The strongest nominations are clear, concise, evidence-based, inspirational, well organized, measurable, easy to read, and memorable.

Before You Submit

Before submitting, confirm that someone unfamiliar with your community can understand why the project mattered, that the need and measurable impact are clear, that Rotary's unique contribution is explained, and that another club would be inspired by the story.

Excellence Is About Impact

The District 5580 Rotary Excellence Awards are not intended to identify the “biggest” project. They celebrate leadership, compassion, innovation, collaboration, measurable impact, and stories that can inspire other clubs, recognize members, and help communities understand Rotary’s difference.

NEW FEATURE: "Award-Winning Nomination Checklist"

Use the Award-Winning Nomination Checklist while drafting to confirm that the nomination explains the need, identifies relevant Avenues of Service, includes measurable outcomes, highlights partnerships, explains long-term impact, and tells a memorable story.

Celebrating Rotary Excellence

Understanding the Award Categories

"Every act of service has the power to change a life. Every project has the potential to inspire another club. The District 5580 Rotary Excellence Awards celebrate the many ways Rotarians make a difference."

A Program That Celebrates Excellence

The District 5580 Rotary Excellence Awards recognize the remarkable contributions of Rotary clubs and individual Rotarians across our District. The awards celebrate innovation, leadership, collaboration, measurable impact, and a commitment to Service Above Self.

No two Rotary clubs are alike. Clubs vary in size, geography, membership, and community needs. The Awards Program reflects this diversity by recognizing excellence across a variety of service areas while encouraging every club to share its unique story.

Club Size Categories and Recognition Format

The previous District 5580 Awards Program used club size categories for selected club awards, and this approach will continue in the revised Rotary Excellence Awards Program where applicable. Club size categories help ensure that submissions are evaluated fairly in relation to club capacity, membership, and available resources.

For the revised program, club size groupings are **clubs with 40 members or less** and **clubs with 40 or more members**.

Unlike the previous program, the revised Rotary Excellence Awards will not present 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place awards. Instead, applicable submission-based Rotary club awards will recognize one winner in each club size category—clubs with 40 members or less and clubs with 40 or more members. Achievement-based awards,

Distinguished Rotarian awards, and Rotarian of the Year will remain single district-wide awards with one winner each. All nominations will be acknowledged during the awards presentation. This approach reinforces the purpose of the relaunch: to celebrate participation, recognize meaningful service, and ensure every club story contributes to the broader story of Rotary in District 5580.

As you review the award categories, remember that many projects contribute to more than one Avenue of Service or Rotary Area of Focus. Select the category that best reflects the primary purpose of your project while highlighting any additional connections.

Achievement-Based Rotary Club Awards

In addition to nomination-based awards, District 5580 will continue to recognize selected Rotary clubs for measurable annual achievements in membership growth and support of The Rotary Foundation. These awards are based on reported District or Rotary International data rather than project nominations, and one district-wide recipient is selected for each achievement-based award.

- Membership Growth Excellence Award – Largest Net Gain
- Membership Growth Excellence Award – Largest Percentage Gain
- Rotary Foundation Giving Excellence Award – Highest Annual Contribution

These achievement-based awards help celebrate clubs that demonstrate measurable growth, strong member engagement, and generous support for The Rotary Foundation. They are separate from judged award submissions and do not require a written nomination unless otherwise requested by the District Awards Committee.

Community Service Excellence Award

Strengthening Communities Through Service

Purpose

The Community Service Excellence Award recognizes clubs that identify local needs and respond with meaningful, sustainable projects that improve the quality of life within their communities.

Community Service is often where Rotary is most visible. Whether supporting vulnerable populations, enhancing recreation, promoting literacy, improving health, or strengthening neighbourhoods, these projects demonstrate Rotary's commitment to making communities stronger.

Judges Will Consider: community need, innovation, member participation, volunteer engagement, partnerships, measurable outcomes, long-term sustainability, and community impact.

Suggested Submission Content

Describe the community need, how it was identified, what actions were taken, who participated, who benefited, measurable results, and lasting impact.

Examples

Community gardens	Food security
Youth mentoring	Literacy
Accessible playgrounds	Community safety
Mental health initiatives	Senior support

Housing partnerships

Emergency response

Rotary Avenues of Service

Primary Avenue of Service: Community Service. **May also include** Club Service, Vocational Service, Youth Service, and Environmental Stewardship.

Rotary Areas of Focus

- Basic Education & Literacy
- Community Economic Development
- Maternal & Child Health
- Disease Prevention & Treatment
- Environment

Judges' Tip

Don't simply describe what your club did.

Describe what changed because of your club's efforts.

Environmental Stewardship Champion Award (*NEW*)

Protecting Our Future Through Service

Purpose

Rotary recognizes that healthy communities depend upon a healthy environment. The Environmental Stewardship Champion Award celebrates clubs that demonstrate leadership in protecting, restoring, conserving, or enhancing the natural environment through service, education, advocacy, and collaboration. Environmental stewardship is more than planting trees. It is about creating sustainable communities for future generations.

Projects May Include

Tree planting	Habitat restoration
Pollinator gardens	Wetland restoration
Waterway protection	Shoreline restoration
Climate resilience	Environmental education
Recycling initiatives	Energy conservation
Native species restoration	Community clean-ups
Sustainable agriculture	Urban forestry
Environmental partnerships	

Judges Will Consider: environmental impact, innovation, partnerships, education, volunteer engagement, community awareness, long-term sustainability, and replicability.

Suggested Submission Content

Describe the environmental issue addressed, why it mattered, how Rotary responded, what partnerships were developed, what measurable outcomes were achieved, and how the project will continue.

Rotary Avenues of Service

Primary Avenue of Service: Environmental Stewardship. **May also include** Community Service, Youth Service, Vocational Service, and International Service.

Rotary Areas of Focus

Primary Rotary Area of Focus: Environment. **May also support:** Community Economic Development and Water, Sanitation & Hygiene.

Judges' Tip

Environmental projects often combine education, conservation, and community engagement. Explain all three.

Rotaract Club Awards

The District 5580 Rotary Excellence Awards will include two dedicated Rotaract club award categories to encourage and celebrate Rotaract service. In previous years, Rotaract submissions were rare, and any submission was traditionally recognized with an award. The revised program is intended to actively encourage Rotaract participation while establishing a clear recognition format: one award recipient may be selected in each Rotaract category.

Rotaract Community Service Excellence Award: Recognizes a Rotaract club project that identifies a local community need and responds through meaningful service, leadership, partnership, and measurable impact.

Rotaract International Service Excellence Award: Recognizes a Rotaract club project that builds goodwill and improves lives through international service, global partnerships, humanitarian action, cultural understanding, or cross-border collaboration.

One award recipient may be selected in each Rotaract category. All Rotaract submissions will be acknowledged during the awards presentation, and Rotaract clubs are strongly encouraged to submit projects for consideration.

International Service Excellence Award

Building Goodwill Beyond Borders

Focus on international partnerships, global grants, humanitarian assistance, medical missions, water projects, education, disaster response, peacebuilding, and economic development.

Fundraising Excellence Award

Creating Capacity to Serve

This award recognizes fundraising initiatives that enable Rotary clubs to make a greater impact.

Judges look beyond dollars raised and consider innovation, community engagement, volunteer participation, public awareness, return on investment, and long-term sustainability.

Inter-Club Collaboration Excellence Award

Stronger Together

This award recognizes Rotary clubs working together to achieve greater impact than could be accomplished individually.

Successful collaborations often demonstrate shared leadership, resource sharing, regional impact, innovation, fellowship, learning, and District cooperation.

Community Partnership Excellence Award

Working Together for Greater Impact

This award celebrates partnerships with municipalities, businesses, schools, health organizations, Indigenous communities, foundations, service clubs, non-profit organizations, and community groups.

Judges will consider the strength of the partnership, shared outcomes, community benefit, long-term collaboration, and innovation.

Why Multiple Categories Matter

Many outstanding Rotary projects fit more than one category. For example, a shoreline restoration project may qualify under Environmental Stewardship, Community Service, Community Partnership, and Inter-Club Collaboration; a literacy project may also include Youth Service and Vocational Service.

The Awards Program recognizes that Rotary projects often create benefits across multiple areas of service.

Selecting the Right Category

If your project could fit into more than one category, ask yourself:

What was the primary purpose of the project?

That answer should guide your category selection.

Your nomination should also identify any additional Avenues of Service and Rotary Areas of Focus supported by the project.

Excellence Takes Many Forms

Some award-winning projects involve hundreds of volunteers. Others are led by a handful of dedicated Rotarians. Some require significant financial resources. Others rely almost entirely on volunteer commitment. Success is not measured by size. It is measured by impact.

The District 5580 Rotary Excellence Awards celebrate clubs that identify needs, respond with compassion, demonstrate leadership, and leave their communities stronger than they found them.

Celebrating Individual Excellence

Honouring Rotarians Who Inspire Others

"Projects change communities. People make projects possible."

Recognizing the People Behind the Service

Every successful Rotary project begins with people who see a need, inspire others, build partnerships, mentor members, and ask, "How can I help?"

These awards recognize the individuals whose leadership, compassion, dedication, and commitment embody Rotary's motto of **Service Above Self**. Individual recognition is about much more than acknowledging years of service. It is about celebrating those who inspire others, strengthen their clubs, and leave a legacy within Rotary and their communities.

Why Individual Recognition Matters

Outstanding Rotarians are often humble. They rarely seek recognition. In fact, many of the most deserving nominees are those who quietly work behind the scenes without expecting thanks. Taking the time to nominate a fellow Rotarian is one of the most meaningful ways a club can express its appreciation.

Recognition tells deserving Rotarians: "We noticed, we appreciate your leadership, and you made a difference." That acknowledgement inspires continued service and encourages others to become involved.

What Makes an Outstanding Nominee?

Outstanding Rotarians are not defined solely by the number of years they have been members or the offices they have held.

They are defined by their impact.

Consider Rotarians who inspire others, demonstrate Service Above Self, lead with integrity, mentor new members, strengthen club culture, build partnerships, champion innovation, and represent Rotary positively in the community.

The most compelling nominations describe **how the nominee made a difference**, not simply **what positions they held**.

Distinguished Rotarian Award – Club Service

Strengthening Rotary from Within

Purpose

This award recognizes a Rotarian whose dedication strengthens the club itself through leadership, mentorship, fellowship, membership growth, governance, and active participation.

Healthy clubs are built by members who quietly support others, encourage participation, and help create an engaging Rotary experience.

Judges Will Consider: club leadership, committee involvement, mentorship, membership development, meeting engagement, fellowship, innovation, and club sustainability.

Suggested Nomination Content

Describe how this Rotarian strengthened the club, what leadership roles they undertook, how they supported fellow members, and what lasting impact they had on club culture.

Judges' Tip

The strongest nominations explain **how the nominee influenced the success of the club**, not simply the number of positions they have held.

Distinguished Rotarian Award – Community Service

Making a Difference Close to Home

Purpose

Recognizes a Rotarian who demonstrates exceptional leadership and commitment through projects that improve the quality of life within their community.

Examples: community development, food security, youth programs, health initiatives, housing, accessibility, senior support, community partnerships, and emergency response.

Judges Will Consider: leadership, innovation, community engagement, volunteerism, and long-term impact.

Distinguished Rotarian Award – Vocational Service

Leading Through Professional Excellence

Purpose

Vocational Service is one of Rotary's unique strengths. This award recognizes Rotarians who use their professional knowledge, ethical leadership, and expertise to improve their communities and mentor others.

Examples may include mentoring young professionals, promoting ethics, career development, skills training, business leadership, professional mentorship, and employment initiatives.

Distinguished Rotarian Award – International Service

Building Goodwill Across Borders

Purpose

Recognizes a Rotarian who has demonstrated exceptional leadership in international service through humanitarian projects, partnerships, grants, cultural exchange, and global collaboration.

Judges Will Consider: international partnerships, Global Grant leadership, sustainable development, peacebuilding, education, health, and international collaboration.

Distinguished Rotarian Award – Environmental Stewardship Champion *(NEW)*

Protecting Our Future

Purpose

This award recognizes a Rotarian whose leadership has advanced environmental sustainability through Rotary service.

Environmental leadership may include conservation, habitat restoration, environmental education, climate resilience, sustainable community development, water protection, community partnerships, and environmental advocacy.

Judges Will Consider: innovation, leadership, education, community engagement, environmental impact, and long-term sustainability.

Rotarian of the Year

The District's Highest Individual Recognition

Purpose

Rotarian of the Year recognizes an individual who consistently exemplifies the Rotary motto **Service Above Self** through outstanding leadership, service, integrity, and commitment across multiple Avenues of Service. This award celebrates a Rotarian whose contributions extend beyond a single project or committee and whose influence has strengthened both Rotary and the broader community.

Judges Will Consider

Club leadership	District involvement
Community service	Vocational leadership
International service	Environmental stewardship
Youth engagement	Mentorship
Membership growth	Innovation
Collaboration	Public image
Living Rotary's values	

What Makes an Outstanding Nominee?

An outstanding nominee is someone who inspires others. Their leadership may be visible—or quiet. Their greatest contribution may be a signature project—or years of consistently helping others succeed. Rotarian of the Year recognizes those whose service leaves a legacy.

Nominating a Fellow Rotarian

Writing an effective nomination is one of the greatest gifts you can give another Rotarian.

The strongest nominations:

- Focus on impact rather than titles.
- Provide specific examples.
- Include measurable accomplishments where appropriate.
- Describe leadership through stories.
- Explain how others have benefited.

Avoid simply listing committee assignments or years of membership.

Instead, explain **why this individual deserves recognition.**

Leadership Comes in Many Forms

Leadership comes in many forms. Not every leader stands at the podium; some mentor quietly, build relationships, solve problems, inspire volunteers, or simply show up repeatedly. Rotary needs every type of leader.

The District 5580 Rotary Excellence Awards celebrate all forms of leadership that strengthen Rotary and improve our communities.

Reflection

As you consider nominations, ask who inspired the club, consistently puts others first, quietly makes things happen, encourages others to become involved, and demonstrates Service Above Self in everything they do.

The answer may be your next Distinguished Rotarian—or your next Rotarian of the Year.

How Awards Are Evaluated

Recognizing Excellence Through a Fair and Transparent Process

"Every nomination deserves thoughtful consideration. Every club deserves a fair opportunity to be recognized."

Our Commitment

The District 5580 Rotary Excellence Awards are built upon three guiding principles:

Fairness: Every nomination is evaluated using consistent criteria by an impartial panel of judges.

Transparency: Clubs understand what judges are looking for and how submissions are evaluated.

Continuous Improvement: The Awards Program will evolve each year based on feedback from clubs, judges, Assistant Governors, and District leadership. Our goal is not simply to identify award recipients. Our goal is to celebrate excellence throughout District 5580 while encouraging participation, innovation, and continuous improvement.

What Judges Are Looking For

Although every award category is unique, judges consistently look for meaningful impact, strong leadership, innovation, collaboration, sustainability, community engagement, alignment with Rotary values, and clear storytelling.

Outstanding nominations explain **why the project mattered, what changed, and how Rotary made a difference.**

Judging Philosophy

Judges do not evaluate projects based solely on:

- Club size
- Budget
- Number of members
- Length of project
- Geographic location

Instead, judges consider the significance of the impact relative to the resources available. A small rural club leading an innovative literacy project may demonstrate the same level of excellence as a larger club delivering a significant fundraising initiative. Excellence is measured by impact—not by scale.

Suggested Evaluation Framework

To ensure consistency, all submissions will be assessed using a common evaluation framework, with category-specific considerations where appropriate.

Evaluation Criteria	Weighting
Demonstrated Need	15%
Leadership & Initiative	15%
Impact & Measurable Outcomes	25%
Innovation & Creativity	15%
Collaboration & Partnerships	10%
Sustainability & Long-Term Value	10%
Quality of Submission & Storytelling	10%

Judges may also consider category-specific criteria depending on the award.

Demonstrated Need

Judges ask:

- Why was this project necessary?
- What challenge was the club trying to address?
- How well did the nomination explain the need?

Projects that clearly identify the problem help judges better understand the significance of the solution.

Leadership

Leadership is demonstrated through vision, initiative, collaboration, volunteer engagement, problem solving, and the ability to inspire others.

Leadership is not limited to elected positions. Many outstanding Rotary leaders serve quietly behind the scenes.

Impact

This is often the most important element. Judges consider who benefited, how many people were impacted, what measurable difference was achieved, and what lasting changes resulted.

Impact may be social, environmental, educational, humanitarian, or economic.

Innovation

Innovation does not necessarily mean creating something entirely new.

Judges value creative partnerships, new approaches, improved service delivery, unique fundraising, technology, community engagement, and youth involvement.

Projects that inspire replication by other clubs often score highly.

Collaboration

Rotary is strongest when clubs collaborate with other Rotary clubs, Rotaract, Interact, municipal governments, schools, businesses, community organizations, environmental groups, Indigenous communities, healthcare organizations, and other partners. Successful partnerships often increase both impact and sustainability.

Sustainability

Judges consider whether the project will continue to benefit the community, whether it created lasting change, whether another Rotary club can replicate it, and whether it strengthened community capacity.

Projects with long-term benefits generally receive higher scores.

Storytelling

Facts are important. Stories are memorable. Judges appreciate nominations that explain the need, describe Rotary's role, demonstrate impact, include measurable outcomes, highlight partnerships, and share a compelling example.

District Awards Committee

To support the successful relaunch and ongoing improvement of the District 5580 Rotary Excellence Awards, the District will establish a District Awards Committee. The committee will help coordinate the awards process, support clubs, review procedures, assist with judging administration, and recommend improvements for future years.

The committee will include five members from Rotary clubs across District 5580 and two designated positions for members of the District Public Relations Team. Public Relations representation will help ensure that award nominations also support District storytelling, public image, media outreach, and membership engagement.

The committee may assist with promoting the awards program, answering club questions, coordinating judge recruitment and orientation, supporting fair and consistent judging procedures, identifying nomination stories suitable for District promotion with club permission, helping plan the awards presentation, reviewing feedback after District Conference, and recommending improvements for future years.

The Judging Process

To ensure consistency and fairness, the District Awards Committee will:

1. Confirm eligibility of all submissions.
2. Remove any submissions that do not meet the stated requirements.
3. Assign submissions to judges for independent evaluation.
4. Compile scores using the approved evaluation framework.
5. Review significant scoring differences where appropriate.
6. Confirm finalists and award recipients.
7. Recommend opportunities for continuous improvement following the Awards Program.

The decisions of the judging panel are final.

Conflict of Interest

Maintaining confidence in the Awards Program requires impartiality. Judges must disclose any actual, perceived, or potential conflict of interest.

Examples include:

- Membership in the nominated club
- Personal involvement in the nominated project
- Immediate family relationships
- Financial interest
- Any circumstance that could reasonably influence impartiality

Where a conflict exists, the judge will not participate in evaluating that nomination.

Confidentiality

Award submissions often contain information prepared specifically for the Awards Program. Judges and Awards Committee members are expected to:

- Maintain confidentiality.
- Respect the work of every club.
- Use information solely for judging purposes unless permission has been granted for promotional use.
- Treat every submission with professionalism and respect.

Feedback and Continuous Improvement

As this is the first year of the refreshed District 5580 Rotary Excellence Awards, we are committed to continuous improvement. Following the District Conference, clubs, judges, Assistant Governors, and Awards Committee members will be invited to provide feedback on:

- Award categories
- Submission process
- Judging criteria
- Communications
- Timelines

- Overall experience

This feedback will help guide future enhancements and ensure the Awards Program continues to evolve to meet the needs of District 5580.

Excellence Beyond the Awards

While awards recognize outstanding achievement, every nomination submitted contributes to something much larger. Each submission becomes part of the story of Rotary in District 5580. Together, these stories demonstrate our collective impact, celebrate our volunteers, and inspire future generations of Rotarians. Every nomination matters. Every story matters.

Reflection

Before submitting your nomination, ask yourself:

- Have we clearly explained the community need?
- Have we demonstrated measurable impact?
- Have we highlighted Rotary's leadership?
- Have we acknowledged our partners?
- Have we told a compelling story?
- Would someone unfamiliar with our community understand why this project mattered?

If the answer is **yes**, your nomination is ready to tell your Rotary story.

Looking Ahead

The next chapter will move from **how awards are evaluated** to **preparing your submission**. It will provide practical, step-by-step guidance on planning, organizing, writing, reviewing, and submitting nominations. Clubs will find templates, timelines, writing tips, and checklists to help them prepare strong, compelling entries while avoiding common pitfalls.

An Award of Excellence designation could significantly increase participation by recognizing any nomination that achieves a predetermined score, such as 85 out of 100 or higher, regardless of whether it is selected as an award recipient.

Planning for Success

Making Awards Part of Your Rotary Year: Awards Are Not a Year-End Activity

One of the most common reasons clubs choose not to submit nominations is simple; "We ran out of time."

By the time award deadlines arrive, memories have faded, statistics are difficult to find, photographs have been misplaced, and the members who led the project are already focused on the next Rotary year. The most successful clubs don't prepare award nominations at the end of the year. They collect their stories throughout the year. Awards become part of their club culture—not an administrative task.

Create an Awards Mindset

Think differently: instead of asking whether to submit an award, ask how your club will capture the story of each project as it happens.

Appoint a Club Awards Champion

Every club should identify one member to coordinate awards throughout the year. This does not need to be a large committee; one enthusiastic member can make an enormous difference.

The Awards Champion can:

- Encourage project leaders to document their work.
- Collect photographs and statistics.
- Remind committees to record volunteer hours.
- Track stories throughout the year.
- Coordinate award submissions.
- Promote recognition within the club.

Awards become everyone's responsibility—but one person keeps the process moving.

Start at the Beginning

When planning a project, ask these questions:

- What community need are we addressing?
- How will we measure success?
- What Rotary Avenues of Service are represented?
- Which Rotary Areas of Focus does this support?
- What partnerships are involved?
- How will we tell this story?

Thinking about these questions early makes it much easier to prepare a compelling nomination later.

Capture Information as You Go

Do not rely on memory. Throughout every project, record:

- Project name
- Date(s)
- Location
- Purpose
- Committee chair and number of Rotarians involved
- Rotaract participation
- Interact participation
- Community volunteers

Community Partnerships

- Businesses
- Municipalities
- Schools

- Indigenous organizations
- Health organizations
- Community agencies
- Sponsors

Measurable Results

Examples include:

Meals served	Trees planted
Children supported	Scholarships awarded
Volunteer hours	Funds raised
Funds distributed	People reached
New partnerships	Environmental improvements

The more specific your information, the stronger your nomination will be.

Capture the Human Story

Numbers tell one part of the story; people tell the rest. Throughout the year, ask project leaders to collect short quotes, success stories, volunteer reflections, community feedback, and partner testimonials.

Build a Project File

Every major project should have a simple file containing:

Project description	Objectives
Budget	Volunteer hours
Partners	Statistics
Photographs	Media coverage
Social media links	Lessons learned

At the end of the year, everything needed for the nomination is already available.

Think Beyond Awards

The information you collect can also support club newsletters, District newsletters, social media, grant applications, community presentations, annual reports, membership recruitment, and public image campaigns. Awards are only one way this information creates value.

Before Submitting

Review every nomination using this checklist:

Clearly explained the need?	Demonstrated measurable impact?
Identified Rotary's contribution?	Highlighted partnerships?
Described sustainability?	Told an inspiring story?
Included accurate statistics?	Selected the correct award category?

Identified additional Avenues of Service?

Proofread carefully?

The Value of Every Submission

Winning an award is never the only measure of success. Every nomination submitted celebrates volunteers, documents Rotary's impact, inspires other clubs, builds Rotary's public image, creates stories for membership recruitment, and strengthens District 5580.

Whether your club receives an award or not, your story contributes to something much larger—the collective impact of Rotary throughout our District.

Building a Culture of Recognition

The most successful clubs do not wait for someone else to recognize excellence; they celebrate it throughout the year.

Consider recognizing outstanding volunteers, project leaders, community partners, youth volunteers, sponsors, long-serving members, and emerging leaders. Recognition builds momentum, and momentum builds stronger clubs.

Reflection

If someone visited your club one year from now, would they understand the difference you made, see the stories behind the work, and feel the pride your members share? Awards help answer those questions.

Looking Ahead

The next chapter moves beyond planning and into communication. Great projects deserve great visibility, but many Rotary clubs struggle to tell their stories effectively. Chapter 8, "**Sharing Rotary's Story**," will explore how award nominations can become powerful tools for public image, media relations, community engagement, and membership growth. It will provide practical guidance on writing for newspapers, using social media, working with local media, and ensuring that the incredible work of Rotary reaches far beyond our meetings.

Sharing Rotary's Story

Turning Recognition into Public Impact

"People don't join Rotary because they read a financial report. They join because they hear a story that inspires them."

Why Stories Matter

Every day across District 5580, Rotarians quietly improve lives: children learn to read, families receive support, communities become stronger, the environment is protected, young leaders are inspired, and lives are changed.

Yet many people in our communities have no idea Rotary made these things possible. One of the greatest opportunities for Rotary is not to do more service. It is to better tell the story of the service we are already doing. Award nominations provide those stories.

Every Nomination Is More Than an Entry

Think differently about awards. An award nomination is not simply a submission for judging.

It can also become a newspaper article, social media campaign, membership story, presentation for another club, or permanent record of Rotary's impact.

Whether a project receives an award or not, its story has tremendous value.

Tell Stories, Not Statistics

Statistics matter; stories connect.

Instead of saying:

Our club distributed 800 backpacks.

Tell the story.

For many children in our community, the first day of school can be a source of anxiety because they lack the supplies needed to succeed. Rotary partnered with local schools and businesses to ensure every child began the school year with dignity, confidence, and the tools they needed to learn.

The number matters, but the story is remembered.

The Rotary Story Formula: Every Rotary story should answer four simple questions.

What was the challenge? Help people understand the need.

What did Rotary do? Describe the project clearly.

What changed? Explain the impact.

Why does it matter? Help readers understand why the project deserves attention.

Tell the Human Story

People remember people. Whenever appropriate, include a real example, such as a student receiving a scholarship, a senior reconnecting with their community, a family receiving support, a new immigrant gaining employment, a child learning to read, or a shoreline returning to life. These stories create emotional connection.

Great Stories Build Great Clubs

Every time your club shares a story, members feel proud, partners feel appreciated, volunteers feel valued, communities learn about Rotary, potential members become curious, and club culture grows stronger.

Awards Support Membership Growth

One of the most common questions prospective members ask is: "What does Rotary actually do?" Award nominations answer that question. Not through brochures. Through real examples. Imagine having dozens of

award-winning stories available when speaking with potential members. Stories demonstrate Rotary's values far more effectively than statistics alone.

Recognition Builds Public Trust

Award stories demonstrate integrity, leadership, collaboration, innovation, compassion, and impact. These qualities strengthen Rotary's reputation and build public trust.

Sharing Success Throughout the Year

Do not wait until Conference. Celebrate projects when they happen through project launches, volunteer appreciation, milestone celebrations, community partnerships, completion events, and award nominations. Recognition should become part of your club's culture.

Working with Local Media

Local media are looking for positive community stories. When preparing media releases, focus on people, use photographs showing service in action, provide quotes, explain community impact, highlight partnerships, mention Rotary naturally, and avoid Rotary jargon whenever possible.

Remember: People are interested in people—not organizations.

Social Media Tips

The best Rotary posts include:

- A compelling photograph.
- A short story.
- One interesting statistic.
- A clear explanation of impact.
- A thank you to partners.
- An invitation to learn more.

Ask yourself: Would someone who has never heard of Rotary understand this post?

Photography That Tells a Story

Great photographs show people serving, people benefiting, people working together, emotion, transformation, and connection. Whenever possible, take before-and-after photographs, capture candid moments, include community members, and show Rotary in action.

Building Your Club's Story Bank

Throughout the year, collect:

- Project summaries.
- Volunteer stories.
- Photographs.
- Media coverage.
- Social media posts.
- Testimonials.

- Statistics.
- Award submissions.

This becomes your club's Story Bank, giving you everything needed for awards, membership, public image, annual reports, grant applications, and club history.

Building the District Story Bank

With club permission, selected nominations may be featured in District newsletters, the District website, conference presentations, membership campaigns, public image initiatives, social media, and future awards materials. Together, these stories become the story of Rotary District 5580.

Every Story Inspires Someone

One story might inspire a new member, another Rotary club, a community partner, a grant opportunity, a donor, or a future leader. Never underestimate the influence of sharing your success.

Reflection

Before submitting your nomination, ask whether the story could inspire another club, encourage a prospective member, and help the community better understand Rotary. If the answer is yes, you have already succeeded.

Recognition Beyond the Conference

The District Conference is not the end of your story; it is the beginning. Award-winning projects—and many other outstanding nominations—should continue to be shared throughout the year. Recognition should not be limited to one weekend. It should become part of how District 5580 celebrates Rotary every month of the year.

Appendix A: Judging Rubric

The judging rubric is designed to help judges evaluate nominations consistently, fairly, and transparently. It should be used together with the category-specific guidance in this handbook. Judges should consider the scale, resources, and context of each club when assessing excellence.

Scoring Instructions for Judges

Each judge should score every nomination independently using the 0–5 scale below. Scores should be based only on the nomination materials provided, not on outside knowledge of the club, project, or nominee. Judges should look for clear evidence, measurable outcomes, and examples that support each criterion.

Score	Description
5	Exceptional: clearly exceeds expectations and provides strong, specific evidence.
4	Strong: meets expectations with clear evidence and meaningful impact.
3	Satisfactory: addresses the criterion but could provide more detail, evidence, or clarity.
2	Limited: partially addresses the criterion but lacks sufficient evidence or explanation.
1	Minimal: provides little evidence or does not clearly address the criterion.
0	Not addressed or not applicable based on the submission.

Criterion	Weight	What Judges Should Look For	Score
Demonstrated Need	15%	The nomination clearly explains the community, club, or global need and why the project or service mattered.	
Leadership & Initiative	15%	Rotarians showed initiative, organized others, solved problems, inspired participation, and demonstrated Service Above Self.	
Impact & Measurable Outcomes	25%	The nomination explains what changed, who benefited, and includes specific outcomes, examples, or measurable results.	
Innovation & Creativity	15%	The project or service demonstrates creative thinking, new partnerships, improved approaches, or ideas that could inspire other clubs.	
Collaboration & Partnerships	10%	The nomination identifies meaningful collaboration with clubs, community organizations, youth programs, businesses, municipalities, or other partners.	
Sustainability & Long-Term Value	10%	The work created lasting value, strengthened capacity, can continue over time, or could be replicated by another club.	
Quality of Submission & Storytelling	10%	The submission is clear, organized, concise, compelling, and helps judges understand the human story behind the work.	
Total	100%	Final weighted score	

Score Interpretation

Final Score	Interpretation
90–100	Exceptional nomination; strongly demonstrates excellence and District-wide inspiration.
80–89	Strong nomination; clearly demonstrates impact and may merit special recognition.
70–79	Solid nomination; meaningful work is evident, but the submission may need more detail or evidence.

Below 70 Participation should still be acknowledged; nomination may need stronger explanation, outcomes, or storytelling.

Award of Excellence: The District may choose to recognize nominations that achieve a predetermined threshold, such as 85% or higher, regardless of whether they are selected as an award recipient. This designation can help celebrate high-quality nominations and encourage broader participation.

Appendix B: Judge Submission Review Form

This form may be used by judges to review nominations consistently. Judges should complete one form for each nomination reviewed and provide brief comments that support the score assigned.

Award Category

Club Name

Nomination Title / Project Name

Judge Name

Date Reviewed

Conflict of Interest Declared?

Yes / No

How to Complete the Scoring Worksheet

1. Review the nomination once for overall understanding before scoring.
2. Score each criterion from 0 to 5 using the rubric in Appendix A.
3. Calculate the weighted score for each criterion by dividing the score by 5 and multiplying by the criterion weight.
4. Add the weighted scores to determine the final score out of 100.
5. Add comments where helpful, especially for high scores, low scores, or close decisions.
6. Declare any conflict of interest before scoring. If a conflict exists, do not score that nomination.
7. Recommend Award of Excellence consideration only if the nomination meets or exceeds the District's approved threshold.

Criterion	Weight	Score 0–5	Weighted Score	Comments
Demonstrated Need	15%			
Leadership & Initiative	15%			
Impact & Measurable Outcomes	25%			
Innovation & Creativity	15%			
Collaboration & Partnerships	10%			
Sustainability & Long-Term Value	10%			
Quality of Submission & Storytelling	10%			
Total	100%			

Judge Recommendation

Recommended for award recipient consideration: Yes / No

Recommended for Award of Excellence consideration: Yes / No

Key strengths of this nomination:

Areas where the nomination could have been stronger:

Suggested wording for presentation acknowledgment:

Additional judge notes:

Judging reminders: Evaluate the nomination as submitted, not based on outside knowledge. Consider club size, available resources, and community context. Do not score nominations where a conflict of interest exists. Treat all submissions, comments, and scoring discussions as confidential.

Appendix C: Award Categories and Descriptions

This page provides a clear overview of the District 5580 Rotary Excellence Awards categories. Clubs can use this list to identify the most appropriate award category before preparing a nomination.

Award Year: Awards recognize achievements, projects, service, and contributions completed during each Rotary year, which runs from July 1 to June 30. The relaunch award year covers July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026, with recipients presented and recognized the following October.

Recognition Format: Where applicable, submission-based Rotary club awards are reviewed within two club size categories: **clubs with 40 members or less** and **clubs with 40 or more members**. Submission-based Rotary club awards recognize one winner in each applicable size category. Rotaract awards recognize one recipient in each Rotaract category. Achievement-based Rotary club awards do not require a written submission; recipients are determined using reported District or Rotary International data for the Rotary year, with one district-wide recipient selected for each achievement-based award. Distinguished Rotarian awards and Rotarian of the Year are district-wide individual awards with one recipient selected for each category. The program does not use 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place awards; however, all nominations will be acknowledged during the awards presentation in October.

Submission-Based Rotary Club Awards

Award Category	Description
Community Service Excellence Award	Recognizes Rotary clubs that identify local needs and deliver meaningful service projects that strengthen quality of life in their communities. One winner is selected in each club size category: clubs with 40 members or less and clubs with 40 or more members.
Environmental Stewardship Champion Award	Recognizes Rotary clubs that protect, restore, conserve, or enhance the natural environment through service, education, advocacy, and collaboration. One winner is selected in each club size category: clubs with 40 members or less and clubs with 40 or more members.
International Service Excellence Award	Recognizes Rotary clubs that build goodwill and improve lives through international partnerships, projects, grants, humanitarian service, or global collaboration. One winner is selected in each club size category: clubs with 40 members or less and clubs with 40 or more members.
Fundraising Excellence Award	Recognizes Rotary club fundraising initiatives that create capacity for greater service and community impact. One winner is selected in each club size category: clubs with 40 members or less and clubs with 40 or more members.
Inter-Club Collaboration Excellence Award	Recognizes Rotary clubs that work together to achieve greater impact than any one club could accomplish alone. One winner is selected in each club size category: clubs with 40 members or less and clubs with 40 or more members.
Community Partnership Excellence Award	Recognizes Rotary club projects that demonstrate strong collaboration with municipalities, schools, businesses, service organizations, non-profits, Indigenous communities, or other community partners. One winner is selected in each club size category: clubs with 40 members or less and clubs with 40 or more members.

Submission-Based Rotaract Club Awards

Award Category	Description
Rotaract Community Service Excellence Award	Recognizes a Rotaract club project that addresses a local community need through service, leadership, partnership, and measurable impact. One recipient is selected in this category.

Rotaract International Service Excellence Award	Recognizes a Rotaract club project that builds goodwill and improves lives through international service, global partnerships, humanitarian action, or cross-border collaboration. One recipient is selected in this category.
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Achievement-Based Rotary Club Awards

These awards do not require a written submission. Recipients are determined using reported District or Rotary International data for the Rotary year, July 1 to June 30, and one district-wide recipient is recognized for each achievement-based award during the awards presentation the following October.

Award Category	Description
Membership Growth Excellence Award – Largest Net Gain	Recognizes the Rotary club with the greatest net membership gain during the award year.
Membership Growth Excellence Award – Largest Percentage Gain	Recognizes the Rotary club with the highest percentage membership growth during the award year.
Rotary Foundation Giving Excellence Award – Highest Annual Contribution	Recognizes the Rotary club with the highest annual contribution to The Rotary Foundation during the award year.

Individual Awards

Award Category	Description
Distinguished Rotarian Award – Club Service	Recognizes a Rotarian whose leadership, mentorship, fellowship, and participation strengthen their club. One district-wide recipient is selected.
Distinguished Rotarian Award – Community Service	Recognizes a Rotarian who demonstrates exceptional leadership and commitment through service that improves their community. One district-wide recipient is selected.
Distinguished Rotarian Award – Vocational Service	Recognizes a Rotarian who uses professional knowledge, ethical leadership, and vocational expertise to serve others and strengthen the community. One district-wide recipient is selected.
Distinguished Rotarian Award – International Service	Recognizes a Rotarian who demonstrates leadership in international service, humanitarian projects, global partnerships, or cross-border collaboration. One district-wide recipient is selected.
Distinguished Rotarian Award – Environmental Stewardship Champion	Recognizes a Rotarian whose leadership advances environmental sustainability through Rotary service. One district-wide recipient is selected.
Rotarian of the Year	Recognizes an individual who exemplifies Service Above Self through outstanding leadership, service, integrity, and commitment across multiple Avenues of Service. One district-wide recipient is selected.

Appendix D: District Awards Committee Terms of Reference

Purpose

The District Awards Committee supports the planning, administration, judging coordination, recognition, and continuous improvement of the District 5580 Rotary Excellence Awards. The committee exists to help ensure that the awards program is fair, transparent, inclusive, well communicated, and aligned with Rotary's values and District public image goals.

Mandate

The committee's mandate is to coordinate the annual awards process, encourage participation from clubs across District 5580, support consistent judging practices, help identify stories that demonstrate Rotary's impact, and recommend improvements to strengthen the program each year.

Membership Composition

The District Awards Committee will include seven members: five members from Rotary clubs across District 5580 and two designated members from the District Public Relations Team. Club members should, where possible, reflect the geographic diversity, club size diversity, and service priorities of the District. Public Relations representatives will help connect award nominations to District storytelling, media relations, social media, membership engagement, and public image opportunities.

Appointments and Term

Committee members may be appointed by the District Governor in consultation with the District Awards Chair and appropriate District leadership. A draft term of service is one Rotary year, with the option for renewal to support continuity. Where possible, staggered appointments should be considered so that experienced members can help orient new members.

Chair and Key Roles

The District Awards Chair will normally serve as committee chair unless another chair is appointed by the District Governor. The chair is responsible for convening meetings, coordinating the annual work plan, liaising with District leadership, ensuring judging procedures are followed, and preparing a brief post-conference summary. Public Relations members will advise on story use, promotional opportunities, presentation wording, and appropriate recognition of all nominations.

Responsibilities

The committee may be responsible for reviewing award categories and guidance, promoting the awards program to clubs, supporting club questions, confirming submission requirements, coordinating judge recruitment and orientation, maintaining judging materials, supporting consistent scoring, identifying nominations suitable for District storytelling with club permission, planning the awards presentation, acknowledging all nominations, gathering feedback, and recommending improvements for the next Rotary year.

Meetings and Decision-Making

The committee should meet as needed during the Rotary year, with more frequent meetings in the months leading up to the nomination deadline and District Conference. Meetings may be held virtually. Decisions should normally be made by consensus. Where consensus is not possible, the committee chair may refer the matter to District leadership for direction.

Relationship to Judges

The committee may administer the judging process but should maintain appropriate separation between administration and scoring. Committee members may serve as judges only where there is no conflict of interest and where doing so supports a fair process. Judges should evaluate nominations independently using the approved rubric and submit scores according to the process established by the committee.

Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality

Committee members and judges must disclose any actual, perceived, or potential conflict of interest. A member with a conflict should not participate in discussion, scoring, or decision-making related to the affected nomination. All nominations, scores, judge comments, and committee discussions should be treated as confidential unless club permission has been granted for public recognition or storytelling use.

Reporting and Annual Review

Following the District Conference, the committee should prepare a summary for District leadership outlining participation levels, award categories used, judging process observations, public image opportunities, feedback received, and recommended improvements. The Terms of Reference should be reviewed annually and updated as needed before the next awards cycle begins.

Appendix E: Draft Announcement Emails

Email to Assistant District Governors

Subject: District 5580 Rotary Excellence Awards Refresh – Your Support Requested

Dear Assistant District Governors,

On behalf of District Governor Peter Nelson and District Awards Chair Jodi Phillips, we are pleased to announce the refresh and relaunch of the **District 5580 Rotary Excellence Awards** for achievements completed during the Rotary year from July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2026.

This refreshed program is designed to celebrate club impact, recognize outstanding Rotarians, strengthen Rotary's public image, encourage every club to tell its story, and build a stronger culture of recognition across District 5580.

The revised awards program will recognize excellence across club and individual award categories, include new **Environmental Stewardship Champion** recognition, continue using club size categories where applicable, acknowledge **all nominations** during the awards presentation, and focus on impact, storytelling, innovation, collaboration, and service.

Attached is the full draft awards package for your review and awareness. We are sharing the complete package with Assistant District Governors first so you have the background needed to support clubs, answer initial questions, help identify committee members and judges, and encourage strong participation across your areas.

We are inviting Assistant District Governors to help identify Rotarians who may be interested in serving on the new District Awards Committee. The committee will include five members from Rotary clubs across District 5580, along with two designated members from the District Public Relations Team. Ideal committee members will be organized, fair-minded, collaborative, enthusiastic about recognition, and interested in helping clubs tell their stories.

We are also seeking Rotarians who are willing to serve as award judges. Judges will review nominations using the approved rubric, help ensure a fair and consistent process, and support the District's goal of recognizing excellence across club sizes, communities, and service areas. Judges do not need previous awards experience, but they should be impartial, thoughtful, and able to maintain confidentiality.

Please share the names of interested committee members or potential judges or encourage them to contact Jodi Phillips directly at jodi.phillips1972@outlook.com.

Whether by submitting a nomination, encouraging your clubs to participate, or serving on the District Awards Committee, you can help build a stronger culture of recognition across District 5580.

Yours in Rotary Service,

Peter Nelson

District Governor
Rotary District 5580

Jodi Phillips

District Awards Chair
Rotary District 5580
jodi.phillips1972@outlook.com

Email to All Rotary Members in District 5580

Subject: District 5580 Rotary Excellence Awards Refresh – Every Club Has a Story Worth Telling

Dear Rotary Members of District 5580,

On behalf of District Governor Peter Nelson and District Awards Chair Jodi Phillips, we are pleased to announce the refresh and relaunch of the **District 5580 Rotary Excellence Awards**.

Awards recognize achievements, projects, service, and contributions completed during each Rotary year, July 1 to June 30. This relaunch covers the Rotary year from July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026.

Every day across District 5580, Rotarians quietly make a difference. You support families, mentor young people, strengthen communities, build partnerships, protect the environment, and live Rotary's motto of **Service Above Self**.

The attached award category list provides a concise overview of the refreshed recognition opportunities, including club awards, Rotaract awards, achievement-based club awards, Distinguished Rotarian awards, Rotarian of the Year, and new **Environmental Stewardship Champion** recognition. Full nomination materials and submission details will follow once finalized.

Every club is encouraged to begin thinking about the projects, partnerships, service stories, and outstanding members they may wish to nominate.

District 5580 is also seeking members to serve on the new District Awards Committee. The committee will include five members from Rotary clubs across the District and two designated members from the District Public Relations Team. Committee members will help promote the awards program, support clubs, assist with judging coordination, help plan the awards presentation, gather feedback, and strengthen how we share Rotary stories across the District.

We are also looking for members who are willing to serve as award judges. Judges will review nominations using the approved rubric and help ensure that submissions are evaluated fairly, consistently, and confidentially. This is a meaningful opportunity to learn about the outstanding work happening across District 5580 and to help recognize clubs and members who are making a difference.

If you are interested in serving on the District Awards Committee or volunteering as a judge, please contact Jodi Phillips at jodi.phillips1972@outlook.com to express your interest.

Every nomination matters. Even if a nomination is not selected for an award, it helps document Rotary's impact, celebrate volunteers, and create stories that can be shared with clubs, communities, prospective members, and District audiences.

Clubs are encouraged to begin now by identifying meaningful projects and service stories, collecting photos, results, and volunteer hours, documenting community impact, recognizing outstanding members, and thinking about which award categories best fit their work.

Whether by submitting a nomination, encouraging your club to participate, or serving on the District Awards Committee, you can help build a stronger culture of recognition across District 5580.

Every club has a story worth telling. We look forward to celebrating yours.

Yours in Rotary Service,
Peter Nelson

District Governor
Rotary District 5580

Jodi Phillips

District Awards Chair

Rotary District 5580

jodi.phillips1972@outlook.com