**Best Practices for Engaging Members**

RI studies membership issues. They do surveys, study trends, analyze data. So, we know all we need to know about engaging members. We just need to ACT on the information.

Fact 1: Most people join for service, stay for the friendships.

Fact 2: Most people who are going to leave Rotary will do so in their first 2 years.

Fact 3: If a member has ONE great friend in the club, they will stay.

If we accept these facts to be true, we can plan for retention and engagement accordingly.

Solution 1: Invite - personally - newer members to join you in service. Have many opportunities. Ditto for any member you observe becoming distant.

Solution 2: Watch newer members closely in the first 2 years. Watch for signs of disengagement from ALL members of the club. Act on it with invitations.

Solution 3: Befriend them & help them find/make additional friends in the club.

While the answers are simple, they are not easy. They are time consuming. They require us to focus on people we barely know when we want to be with our old friends. We must make our own needs and desires subservient to the needs and desires of others. We can’t do it alone. Ideally every person in a club reaches out to new and/or disengaged members but the reality is, many will not. It is therefore incumbent on clubs to identify and enlist their most socially astute members to be on an official (or unofficial) team to be sensitive to new members awkwardness and signals of disengagement any member is sending.

Psychologist Abraham Maslow created the now widely accepted ‘Hierarchy of Needs’ that persons in first world countries have. With basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter, safety, and love met, people then seek meaning, achievement, opportunities to be creative and solve problems. Rotary provides the perfect vehicle to have all those needs met.

Time spent devising ***many*** ways for members to get engaged and stay engaged and to develop the friendships needed to form attachment and then ASKING and INVITING them personally (not in emails or texts) to attend and participate in those things (projects or socials) is the time-tested proven technique to engage and keep your members year after year.

 Carol Lester, July 2017