**Friends of Rotary program (FOR)**

The Wiarton Rotary initiated this program 1 year1 ago, in hopes of attracting individuals who had an interest in Rotary but did not want to commit to a full membership at this time.

The membership drew up a program outline and presented it to our board and then membership where it was approved. We have had a membership drive June of 2016 and received a number of applications then.

As you know we have a very busy fundraising schedule that many helping hands are needed on. So we wanted to attract like minded individuals. Each person who becomes a friend is assigned a mentor. This person takes on the role to help keep FOR involved and answer any Rotary related questions.

The outcome we would like of course is that these individuals will at some point become a full member which has happened in one case already.

Friends receive our weekly bulletin to keep them informed of upcoming speakers they may be interested in or what fund raisers are coming up, but because they are not full members also don’t receive all the information that full members get. This also protects them from a barrage of emails they may not be interested in reducing the feeling of being overwhelmed by mail.. FOR are welcomed at regular rotary meetings.

When Friends of Rotary are formally welcomed into the club they are given a name badge. This badge is produced in reversed colours as the full membership so they are recognized as a friend and not a member, but acknowledges their association with our club.

Friends are vetted the same way our potential full members are.

There is an application form, and when filled out is sent to the membership committee. If approved there, it is sent to the executive who also makes a decision if this person should be approved for membership as a Friend of Rotary. If it is passed at this level the request is sent to the whole club for approval. If a member has an issue and would like to not approve this candidate, they must send their objections in writing to the membership committee within 5 business days from the time the request was published in our bulletin. If there is a valid concern, then we send the application back to the membership committee to reconsider in light of new information. If passed again it again goes through the same procedure. If not passed then that application is denied at the person applying is notified.

Each successful member pays $50.00 for membership to help defray the administration costs. If you become a full member after that in the same rotary year that amount is prorated towards your regular membership costs. A Friend of Rotary term is 2 years, after which membership will meet with this person to see where they are ready to move towards full membership.

We do recognize that some Friends of Rotary will never become full members, but the hope is that the majority will use this as a transition to our club.

 Our exceptions with a Friend of Rotary Membership:

A Friend of Rotary has a formal association with the Club, which provides an avenue to participate in and contribute to Club projects and activities, but a Friend of Rotary is not a member of the Rotary Club of Wiarton and therefore not entitled to the rights of, or subject to the responsibilities of membership, as provided by the Constitution and By-laws of the Club.

Specifically Friends of Rotary will:

• Have no voting rights relating to decisions made by the Club.

• Not be entitled to serve as an office holder in the Club including membership on the Club’s Board or director of a Club committee.

(however they can sit on a committee if interested)

We have a Fireside chat once a year in a Rotarian’s home, inviting our newest full members and selected group Friends of Rotary. The intent is to provide Rotary education about how our club operates and fits into Rotary International worldwide and so we offer an opportunity for an informal question and answer for all who attend.

We have to date after one full year in operation 11 Friends of Rotary. One of which has just recently switched to full membership.