



Members of Buffalo area Rotary clubs doing Spring Cleanup at the Buffalo Naval Park

RESOURCES TO HELP OUR CLUBS GROW AND PROSPER

# Membership District 7090



## December 2016

## Working together to grow our clubs.

By IPDG & District Membership Director, Kevin Crosby



Every Rotary club is looking for ways to grow its membership. Clubs need to focus on two strategies: (1) retaining their current members and (2) recruiting new members. Doing one without the other will only produce a smaller club over time. A smaller club means fewer people to do the work of Rotary and fewer people to provide leadership in the club. This is the recipe for burnout and the loss of vitality in the club.

The key to retaining current members is **engagement**. As long as your members are staying engaged with the activities of your club – your meetings, your committees, your youth programs, your vocational service activities, your fundraisers and your service projects – then they are likely to stay with your club unless they move away, change jobs or experience some other significant life change.

Guess what the key to recruiting new members is? Surprise! It, too, is **engagement**. If you want to get someone interested in joining Rotary, and joining *your* club in particular, then you need to find a way to engage them in the activities of your club.

Most people don't join Rotary because they want to belong to a club. They join Rotary because they want to give back to the community or engage in humanitarian work. They want to **do** something positive to help make the world a better place .... just like your current members.

So it's important that the people you're trying to recruit get an opportunity to experience Rotary as something more than attending meetings. The same is true for your current members as well.

### The Power of Collaboration

If you are serious about growing your membership, I encourage you to reach out to other Rotary clubs in your area and plan to collaborate on at least four activities this year. (If you are in a Rotary club that doesn't have another Rotary club less than 30 minutes away, you can reach out to another service club in your area.)

So what are four activities you could do in collaboration with one or more other clubs?

**1. Multi-club recruitment events.**

Plan an event that will promote what Rotary clubs are doing to serve the local community, local youth and people in need around the world. Show one or two of the many inspirational videos about Rotary. Have local beneficiaries give brief testimonials about the impact of Rotary. After getting participants inspired, give each club some time to talk about itself. Invite people to fill in a contact form for more information about the clubs they're interested in. By having more than one club represented, these events will make a much greater impression on prospective members.

**2. Multi-club service projects.** This is key to providing opportunities for engagement of your current members as well as prospective members. Many clubs don't have a hands-on service project every month. By inviting local clubs to participate in each other's service projects, there will be more opportunities for everyone to participate in a key part of Rotary.



**3. Joint fundraising activities.**

Much like local service projects, fundraising activities are an

important part of the Rotary experience. By helping each other with hands-on fundraising efforts, clubs can engage their current members as well as recruits in the fun and fellowship of these activities.

**4. Multi-club orientation programs.**

Most people who leave Rotary, do so within the first year. Often, this is because the new member has failed to become engaged with Rotary. One way to increase the chances of a new member becoming engaged and staying in Rotary is to offer a strong, positive orientation to the club AND to Rotary beyond the club. This is where a multi-club orientation program can really help. Depending on the number of clubs in an area, you could schedule multi-club orientation programs quarterly or semi-annually. At these sessions, you can introduce new members to "the bigger picture" of Rotary – things like international projects, youth programs, Vocational Training Teams, Friendship Exchanges, Rotary Action Groups, Rotary International Conventions, and Rotary Fellowships. This is also a great time to provide an overview of our District, its resources, and programs.

So, what should you do now? First, talk with the members of your club about these ideas and generate support for collaborating with other clubs. Try to persuade those who might be skeptical that the best shot at growing your membership is to find ways to work together with other Rotary clubs. It's all about collaboration, not competition.

Then, reach out to the other clubs in your area and see if you can work together on any or all of these four types of collaborative activities.

And don't forget about your Assistant Governor (or, as some call it, "Area Governor.") Your AG can help to foster these interclub activities. You may be surprised at how much your club can benefit from this approach.

## Great Resources for Membership

There are many great resources available from RI and other sources to assist clubs with their recruitment and retention strategies. In each of these newsletters, we'll feature a few of these.

Here are a few good videos to use when you are recruiting new members (or even to show at your club meetings):

**We're Rotary – There's No Limit to What We Can Do (1:16) -**

<https://youtu.be/6rlo8DWZFrq>

**Rotary Smiles (1:13) -**

<https://youtu.be/gsXmVIHJdgc>

**This is Rotary (4:07) -**

<https://youtu.be/6vVyG0TJBWM>

**Questions?** Contact IPDG Kevin Crosby, 2016-17 Membership Director, at [kevin@d7090.org](mailto:kevin@d7090.org).