

# Rotary



## ROTARY AND INNER WHEEL – A CREATION STORY

Rotary and Inner Wheel were created from the same material, that of service and community. You could even say they are related as woman is to man, created from his rib as the Biblical Genesis story goes. In the beginning, being a Rotarian was only available to men. Rotary was founded in Chicago, Illinois by Paul Harris on February 23, 1905 and three of his friends. They named their new club "Rotary" to describe the practice of meeting in rotation at the members' various places of business. Within 10 years Rotary had spread to the British Isles. Rotarians embarked on many community service projects which often involved the cooperation of their wives. Usually a women's committee was set up to help on the project. The women enjoyed the friendships they made and often initiated their own community service projects. Social events were organized, and speakers invited to entertain and inform. These unofficial groups of women with Rotary connections were meeting in various parts of the country unknown to each other. They were affectionately referred to as "Rotary Ann". There were plenty of opportunities for voluntary work for both Rotary members and their wives.

On November 15, 1923, encouraged by their Rotarian husbands, a group of 27 women called a meeting for the purpose of setting up a club like Rotary. The mandate of the club was twofold; to foster friendship between the wives of Rotarians and to increase the opportunities for service. A committee was set up to contact the wives who had not attended, and the chairman of this committee was Mrs. Margarett Golding, a nurse, businesswoman and the wife of a Manchester, England Rotarian.



Paul Harris, Rotary Founder



Margarett Golding, Inner Wheel Founder

The next meeting was held on January 10, 1924. Funds had been raised and woolen garments were knitted and sent to a local hospital as a service project. It was at this meeting that the name "The Inner Wheel Club of Manchester" was adopted, thus cleverly indicating the Rotary connection. Mrs. Margarette Golding became the first President of Inner Wheel, and it was good. Each January 10 is now celebrated as Inner Wheel Day around the world.

In less than a year, membership had doubled and with many successful projects, news of this club's achievements had spread. By 1927 five more Inner Wheel clubs were formed, one of which had previously been a women's Rotary club. The symbol they adopted is the Rotary Wheel with smaller cog inside of it. Because as woman is to man, the inner wheel helps the big wheel of Rotary turn.

A few years later at the Rotary District 5 conference held in Llandudno, Wales, the executive committee decided to form a corresponding Inner Wheel district. Mrs. Margarette Golding was the speaker and the first Inner Wheel District President.

During the Harrogate conference in 1934, Rotary International in Great Britain and Ireland sponsored a women's meeting that chartered the first national Inner Wheel organization, called The Association of Inner Wheel Clubs in Great Britain and Ireland. This association of clubs had a structure similar to Rotary, with the caveat that a member had to be the wife (or daughter) of a Rotarian to join. In 1989 that rule was eliminated.

As Rotary became international, so did Inner Wheel. In many countries Inner Wheel became the rare opportunity for a woman's voice to be heard. International Inner Wheel was formed in 1967 and today there are over 108,000 members in 104 countries with 3979 clubs in 147 districts worldwide. International Inner Wheel is one of the largest women's organization in the world, and it has representation at the United Nations. In the United States there are 5 districts and 38 clubs.

Staying true to the first Inner Wheel club's original mandate, International Inner Wheel's objectives are 1) promoting friendship, 2) encouraging the ideals of personal service and 3) fostering international understanding. Often the service projects' focus is to assist women and children and to improve international relationships. This too is good.



#### THE INNER WHEEL USA FOUNDATION \*Give a Child a Hand\*

The Inner Wheel USA Foundation was incorporated in the United States in August 1988. Its overall mission is to further understanding among all people through tangible and effective programs of a philanthropic, charitable or educational nature. The Foundation's governing body chose as its service program "Give a Child a Hand - Turning Disabilities into Possibilities" to provide children with myoelectric limbs. This is done in partnership with the Hanger Clinic with over 800 clinics nationwide. These children, who are missing an arm or hand from birth or through disease or an accident, are provided a limb that is also refitted with as they grow.

The Inner Wheel USA Foundation celebrates each year in February to fundraise, educate, and bring awareness of this program through each club to the greater community. A sustaining contributor is any individual, group or business who donates a gift of at least \$100 with the commitment to accrue a total of \$1,000.00 within a 10-year period. Sustaining contributors are then eligible for the Rose Council Pin. The Rose Council Pin is comparable to Rotary's Paul Harris Rotary medallion.

The Inner Wheel USA Foundation has raised nearly \$2 million and provided over 80 children with greater opportunities and independence. The myoelectric technology allows significant dexterity as it functions more like a real limb with a motor and electronic sensor that pick up muscle and nerve activity. It is also made to look more like a real limb. These prostheses have indeed changed the lives of the young recipients. As technology improves, so will these prosthetics as there are now 3D printed limbs called the "Hero Arm" being tested in partnership with Open Bionics.

Rotary and Inner Wheel have been working in partnership for nearly a century, and still many Rotarians do not know about Inner Wheel. As the name implies, the inner wheel is an integral part of a rotary wheel, supportive, yet independent, with its own mechanics and goals. An Inner Wheel club can support and help your local Rotary club reach out and touch so many more people who need our support. Each woman's talents and gifts are encouraged and often flourish in Inner Wheel. With the focus on helping women and children, Inner Wheel can address community issues that may go unnoticed or unaddressed. More community involvement encourages more publicity for the good works of Rotary and Inner Wheel, which often translates to more active and motivated members. Each good deed begets more good deeds, and so on. Membership in each club is not exclusive, so you can be a member of Rotary and Inner Wheel. Both organizations strive to bring people and communities together, building a safer and healthier world for generations to come.

If you do not have an Inner Wheel club in your area or district, consider starting one. A new club can now be established by women related to Rotarians/former Rotarians, women related to Inner Wheel members/ former Inner Wheel members and now, by women who have been invited to join the organization. Contact [www.internationalinnerwheel.org](http://www.internationalinnerwheel.org), or [www.innerwheelusa.com](http://www.innerwheelusa.com) to ask about joining or starting a new Inner Wheel club.

This article is submitted by the Inner Wheel Club of Slidell, Louisiana who boasts three members in both Inner Wheel and Rotary, supporting both local Rotary clubs. They hold a Foundation fundraising walk every year in February, in addition to soliciting grant requests from the local Rotary clubs and Rotary District 6840, toward the Inner Wheel USA Foundation, contributing \$5,500 in 2018.



Inner Wheel Club of Slidell, Louisiana, USA