

**Rotary**  
District 5610



<https://www.rotary5610.org/>

# Companion Club Framework

# Companion Club

## Ask Yourself...

- Does your Rotary Club need more members?
- Would your club like to have more service projects?
- Does your club want younger members?
- Would your club want more women?
- Does your club want to look more like your community?



If you answer **YES** to any of these questions, you should consider a Service **Companion Club**!



- Companion Club is an extension of an existing Rotary Club!
- Organized around community service, without traditional Rotary setting.
- Companion Club is not separate from Host Club

# Companion Club Overview

- Companion Clubs (a.k.a., a satellite or club extension) are a proven way to help clubs grow by:
  - Providing alternate meeting time allows more people to join with more flexibility for younger adults (25-49); couples often attend together.
    - Members come after work but still home for evening activities
  - Companion Club members can attend their meetings but can also attend Host Club meetings
  - Flexibility in structure – meetings not every week, generally twice a month
  - Flexibility in fee structure – meals are not included in membership costs, only District and Rotary dues.
  - Companion Club members are Rotarians with all the benefits of a great organization.
  - Companion Club focuses on service/impact
  - Companion Club can serve a nearby geographic area



***One club that meets at two different times.***

# Driving Factors

- Because it's a companion of the Rotary club, members are included in Host Club membership numbers.
- Having two meeting time options is a big advantage for prospective members and existing members.
- Snacks are usually provided, and beer & wine are often available for purchase.
- Younger professional couples often attend together.
- Spouses of current members are among first to join.
- Most Companion Clubs meet twice a month (1st & 3rd Thursday, 2nd & 4th Tuesday, etc.)
- It is common for members to attend both meetings.
- Companion Club members are eligible to be on Host Club committees.
- RI recognizes one President per club. The leader of Companion Club is often referred to as The Chair.
- Most clubs maintain one board that includes Companion Club representation.
- Decision to start a Companion Club does not require approval by RI, however a Club Application can be submitted to RI to document its existence and to allow RI to track future success of Companion Clubs.

# Companion Club Structure

Who decides what service projects a Companion Club can do?

- Companion Club engages its members by creating and executing its own projects
- Members of the community and Host Club are invited to join in on the fun.
- Companion Club provides invaluable support for Host Club projects and other clubs.
- Companion Club founding members design it from the ground up (meeting place, when, how often, structure of non-service meetings, etc.)



Every Rotary club is different. Don't try to create a carbon-copy of your club. Let Companion Club members decide what kind of club they want to be!

# Primary Steps



- Get Board approval by Host Rotary Club
- Assign Champion from Host Rotary Club to advocate for Companion Club and solicit charter members.
- Assign Chair for Companion Club that facilitates the meetings, recruit members.
- Recruit core set of members
  - Past members, teachers, young professionals, small business owners, work colleagues
  - Communities in the area that are underserved by Rotary or other service clubs. A Companion Club could be formed in that community partnering with nearby Host Club
  - Encourage 3-4 people from a similar group to join together.
- Host a kickoff meeting (set start date)
  - Choose a neutral friendly location, such as brewery
  - Welcome prospective members, describe Rotary and its value.
- Sign up new members
  - Fill out club application and collect dues.

# Club Administration (1/2)



- Once a set of people are committed to the Companion Club, the Companion Club can be formed. Two approaches:
  - Starting a Companion Club without Rotary Approval
    - The Host Club can start a Companion Club without RI approval. The Companion Club members are added to the club using the existing club application process.
  - Officially chartering a Companion Club with Rotary
    - Currently, Rotary doesn't have a specific structure for Companion Clubs. When 8 or more people would like start the Companion Club, the club can be chartered and the of the applicants will become Rotary members of the Host Club as part of the Companion Club. The application can be completed with the help of IMPACT (see the District Contacts at the end of this presentation).
      - New Companion Club members can be added using the satellite club application, but the information will be sent to a special email within Rotary. Club members will be part of the Host Club data in MyRotary or ClubRunner.



**Creating a Companion Club is mostly about attracting core group of members with a committed focus on service.**

# Club Administration (2/2)



- Companion Club members are full Rotarians of the Host Club and managed locally by the Host club leadership.
  - The Companion Club members may want a separate list for email groups and contact information.
    - Key members of the Host Club should also be included (i.e., Host Club leadership, Companion Club Champion)
    - The Host Club should include Companion Club members in club-wide communications (i.e., newsletters)
  - Membership: Adding or removing members from the Companion Club is managed by the Host Club secretary.
    - Companion Club members are added to the Host Club using existing club application process or via a modified Rotary satellite application process.
    - Companion Club members can be identified in club runner with companion club designation.
  - Host Club Treasurer bills for dues, which may have a different dues structure.
- Companion Club operates with a Chair structure



**Whether the Companion Club is chartered through Rotary or not, the members are always managed through the Host Club.**

# Rotary Dues

- Do members of the Service Companion Club pay Rotary dues?
  - Yes, members of the Companion Club are also members of the Rotary Club and Rotary International.
  - The Service Companion Club offers a cost-effective option for members with a suggested annual fee generally less than the host Rotary Club, which includes Rotary International and District dues, as well as basic club expenses.
    - Companion Club members typically don't have meeting place costs.
  - Club members can also support annual giving of \$25 per year supports the RI Foundation and applies towards a Paul Harris Fellow and club EREY goals.
    - **Every Rotarian Every Year (EREY)** initiative asks every Rotarian to support The Rotary Foundation every year.

# Contacts, References & Contributors



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- **References & Contributors:**
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  - Carmen Hansen (D5610 Membership Chair)
  - Bruce Nearhood (DG 5610)
  - Deb McCaslin (PDG 5630)
  - Rotary International (rotary.org)
  - Patrick Longano (IMPACT)
  - Dave Cook (PDG D6000)