



## **The History of Rotaract**

Rotaract was founded forty years ago, with the Rotaract Club of North Charlotte, Carolina being the first club to be chartered - on March 13, 1968.

However, as early as 1935, Paul Harris encountered a youth organization based on Rotary principles in Australia. In the 1950's many youth clubs were sponsored by Rotary clubs under various names. These included the "Paul Harris Circles" in Europe and the "Rotors" clubs created in some American Universities.

In 1965, these organizations experienced significant growth - in part due to the Interact program created by Rotary International in 1962. Many Interactors, having reached the age limit of that program, were starting new types of clubs called "Senior Interact".

The new program's name, Rotaract, was created by Rotary International as a combination of the words "Rotary" and "Action". The aim of the program was stated to be "to develop leadership and responsible citizenship through service to the community."

Following the founding of the Rotaract Club of North Charlotte, many existing Rotary based youth clubs changed their names to become an official Rotaract club.

In the 1990's, Rotaractors combined their organizations on an international level with the creation of Multi-District Organizations in Europe, Australia and South America.

There are over 7,000 clubs in about 163 countries and geographical areas. Internationally, Rotaract is strong in Asia, Africa and South America as well as Europe, where Rotary membership may be exclusive or expensive.

## **What Is Rotaract**

Rotaract is a Rotary sponsored service club for young men and women between the ages of 18 and 30.

Rotaract is a way for young adults, who may not be ready or eligible for Rotary membership, to become involved in the Rotary family and contribute to their communities and world, in keeping with Rotary ideals.

Rotaract helps members with leadership skills, career development, community and international service and the development of good friends and good fun.

Rotaract is often described as being like Rotary, but with better parties. Most clubs hold two meetings per month, with one as a business meeting and the other as a social event. The club also meets as needed for their service projects and events.

Rotaract clubs engage in local and international service, both independently and working with local Rotary clubs. Members address their communities physical and social needs while promoting international understanding and peace through a framework of friendship and service.

Rotaractors are true “partners in service” and key members of the Rotary family, who work hand in hand with Rotarians.

## **Rotaract in District 5050**

The District Rotaract Committee’s purpose is to encourage and provide a venue for Rotaract clubs to communicate and work at the District level; to support the clubs and promote Rotaract across the District and to encourage Rotary clubs to sponsor more Rotaract clubs.

Currently there are three active Rotaract clubs in the District: the Chilliwack-Fraser Rotaract Club, the Langley Rotaract club and the Aldergrove Rotaract club. Two other clubs (Tri-Cities and Surrey/North Delta) are not presently active, but there is interest from Rotaractors and Rotarians to revive them. There has also been interest expressed in forming Rotaract clubs in Arlington and Everett.

Typically a Rotaract club will have a core membership of 5 - 8 and a group of less active members who provide hands for service work and bodies for social activities.

## **Rotaract Clubs: Community & College Based**

There are two types of Rotaract clubs - community based and college based.

College/University clubs have a built in recruiting tool and a pool of potential members. These clubs usually only meet during the academic year and therefore have some limits in retaining members (due to summer vacations and the duration of their academic program), and time limits for service/activity commitments.

Community clubs are active year round, but can struggle with membership and leadership continuity due to the mobile nature of the age group and the school/work/life schedules of the members.

## **Supporting Rotaract**

What makes a strong Rotaract club? Two things - Rotary involvement and a handful of keen and committed Rotaractors.

Rotarians can support Rotaract clubs through active participation at Rotaract meetings and events, providing financial assistance (when needed for events), providing guidance, support and advice, and helping provide continuity in the Rotaract leadership.

Rotary clubs can support Rotaract by promoting membership with young persons they know - through the workplace, community groups, neighbours and their own families.

District 5050 has been very supportive of Rotaract, including, as of last year, inviting Rotaract presidents to attend the District PETS conference.

The Committee would like to see greater Rotaract involvement at the international level by participating at the Multi-District International Organization (MDIO), and at the America, Canada, Caribbean Together (ACCT) as well as at Rotary International conferences. Given the restricted funds available to Rotaract members, assistance with these expenses, as well as with the cost of attending the District Conference and promoting Rotaract in the US would be appreciated.

All young adults, who are becoming business leaders or professionals, should get involved in Rotaract and then later join Rotary.

If more young adults were Rotaractors, the world would be a better place.

## **Contact Information**

The District 5050 Rotaract Chair is Collin Rogers, and his email is [collinrogers@legacypacific.com](mailto:collinrogers@legacypacific.com)

The District 5050 Rotaract club representative is Jaimie deChamplain and her email is [jamied1@telus.net](mailto:jamied1@telus.net)

The Presidents of local Rotaract clubs are :

Cher Ugolini, Abbotsford	<a href="mailto:epilepsy.support@telus.net">epilepsy.support@telus.net</a>
Corbin Kempenaar, Chilliwack-Fraser	<a href="mailto:corbin.kempenaar@gmail.com">corbin.kempenaar@gmail.com</a>
Dave Zenko, Langley	<a href="mailto:langley.rotaract@gmail.com">langley.rotaract@gmail.com</a>
Denny Hollick, Surrey/North Delta	<a href="mailto:dj_bizarre@hotmail.com">dj_bizarre@hotmail.com</a>