

HISTORY OF THE ROTARY FOUNDATION

In 1917, Arch C. Klumph, Rotary's sixth president, proposed to the Rotary International Convention in Atlanta, Georgia, USA, the creation of an "endowment fund for Rotary . . . for the purpose of doing good in the world in charitable, educational, and other avenues of community service." A few months later, the endowment received its first contribution of \$26.50 from the Rotary Club of Kansas City, Missouri, USA.

In 1928, when the endowment fund had grown to more than US\$5,000, the fund was renamed The Rotary Foundation, and it became a distinct entity within Rotary International. Five Trustees, including Klumph, were appointed to "hold, invest, manage, and administer all of its property. . . as a single trust, for the furtherance of the purposes of RI."

Two years later, the Foundation made its first grant of US\$500 to the International Society for Crippled Children. The ISCC □ created by Rotarian Edgar F. "Daddy" Allen □ later grew into the Easter Seals organization.

The Great Depression and World War II both impeded significant growth for the Foundation, but the need for promoting a lasting world peace generated great post-war interest in developing the Foundation. After Rotary founder Paul P. Harris died in 1947, contributions began pouring into Rotary International, and the Paul Harris Memorial Fund was created for the purpose of building the Foundation.

That same year, the first Foundation program was established □ Fellowships for Advanced Study, which was the forerunner of the Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarships program. Then in 1965-66, three new programs were launched □ Group Study Exchange, Awards for Technical Training, and Grants for Activities in Keeping with the Objective of The Rotary Foundation, which was later called Matching Grants.

The Health, Hunger and Humanity (3-H) program was launched in 1978, with the Rotary Volunteers program being created as a part of 3-H in 1980. The [PolioPlus](#) program was announced in 1984-85, and the following year saw the introduction of Rotary Grants for University Teachers. The first Peace Forums were held in 1987-88, leading to the establishment of Rotary Peace Programs. Then in 1989, 1963-64 RI President Carl P. Miller and his wife, Ruth, donated US\$1 million to establish the Discovery Grants program.

Throughout this time, support of the Foundation grew tremendously. Since that first \$26.50 donation in 1917, the Foundation has received contributions totaling more than US\$1 billion. More than US\$70 million was contributed in 2003-04 alone. To date, some 914,792 individuals have been recognized as Paul Harris Fellows □ that is, someone who has contributed US\$1000 or has had that amount contributed in his or her name.

Such strong support and involvement of Rotarians worldwide ensures a secure future for The Rotary Foundation as it continues its vital work for international understanding and world peace.