New Avenue of Service - New Generations
by Robert Paddock, Jr.

Rotary has a new Avenue of Service, called New Generations! Adam Doty, Manager, Youth Programs Department of Rotary International made an informative presentation of what it means, what it means to us as a club, and what it means to Rotary.

New Generations Service, the Fifth Avenue of Service, recognizes the positive change implemented by youth and young adults through leadership development activities, involvement in community and international service projects, and exchange programs that enrich and foster world peace and understanding.

Like the other Avenues, it should help sustain or increase membership, help implement successful service projects, support The Rotary Foundation, and develop leaders beyond the club level. The four youth-oriented programs remain the same, these being Interact, Rotaract, RYLA, and Rotary Youth Exchange. The new Avenue brings them under one area of focus.

Speaking at the Arlington Rotary Club in June, he presented a good review of these component parts. Interact is a service club for young people ages 12-18. There are 11,900 of these clubs in over 131 countries. Rotaract is a service club for students and young professionals ages 18-30. There are nearly 7,600 of these clubs in 165 countries.

Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA) are intensive training programs for youth ages 14-30. Our club regularly sends high school students to RYLA training. Rotary Youth Exchange is a high school exchange program for youth ages 15-19. Starting in the 1920s, there are now over 8,000 exchanges every year.

What does it mean to your club? Not much of a change in what we do as Rotary International or a club, though there might be a realignment of some committees if the club wants to do so. What it does do is put a focus on developing youth...maybe it will lead to some additional thought and ideas for involving and developing younger people in the values of Rotary.

Adam noted some of the challenges these programs have under the new avenue -- training, documentation and regulations to make it work well, volunteer burn-out, the relationship of these programs with Rotary itself, and keeping up interest in joining Rotary after participation ends.

He encouraged us to charter a club, keep up our RYLA efforts and broaden it to include older young adults. He also suggested inviting students to speak and to acknowledge youth observances in Sept., November and March. He said there are several resources available through Rotary International; include an Abuse & Harassment Prevention Manual. This is an area he previously worked in and is an apparent need these days to help Rotary avoid some of the problems other organizations have had.

The new Avenue is part of Rotary's Strategic Plan, under the focus of increasing humanitarian service through increased attention on youth and young adult programs. Adam has been employed with RI for 11 years, 10 of which have been in the area of Protective Services. He recently became department manager for youth programs in the Rotary Programs Division.
Those of us who have been members for several years sometimes wonder what those folks at Rotary International really do; we all sometimes wonder about what "the overhead" does. At Arlington Rotarians heard that among other things, RI can supply great programs and venues to help us make Rotary an even better part of ourselves, of our community, and of the world.

A slide presentation is available at the Rotary International web site, http://www.rotary.org/RIdocuments/en_ppt/rg08-09_youth_services_presentation.ppt

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