

# Club Builder



**Tips, Ideas, and Success Stories for Attracting and Retaining Members**

Membership Success Stories from Around the Rotary World

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## Telling the Rotary Stories

How do you get people excited about Rotary? No one cares that we are over 100 years old, or that we have 1.2 million members in 200 countries organized into 34,000 clubs, or that we are made up of business and professional members of our communities. Well, maybe a few Rotarians care about this. But, to the average person the facts, the statistics about Rotary mean nothing.

What peaks people's interest in Rotary is the good things we do. We need to tell Rotary's story, or rather the many Rotary stories. When talking to prospective Rotarians it is so important that we appeal to the need that we have to serve others. Get others excited through our passion to serve. Story telling demonstrates our passion.

Why don't you have someone on your membership committee write down the stories to distribute to your club members. We need to know how to tell the Polio story, the Shelter Box stories, and the ways we change lives with the District's Rotaplast missions.

And of course, don't forget about the amazing things that your club does in your community. To get prospects excited, you need to get your members excited about Rotary. Do it through story telling.

Terry L. Reed  
District Membership Chair

## Events

### Membership Session

at the  
**District Training Assembly**

**Saturday, May 17**  
**Bear Creek**  
**Mountain Resort**

Send your membership team. We'll be conducting a mini membership workshop.

*Register on the District website*

**Coming in May**

Engagement and Retention Ideas

## ALASKAN ROTARIANS SEE MEMBERSHIP HIKE WHILE UNITING TO BUILD PARK

The Rotary Club of Eagle River Area in Alaska experienced a 50 percent increase in membership after building a playground designed for children with disabilities to play alongside their classmates. Former club president Tonya Gamble says the club is always looking for ways to increase membership, but it wasn't until they took on the park project that the club saw its membership rise from 29 to 43 members. Rotary members helped raise funds and assemble the park equipment.

"When children get together and play, they realize they have more in common than differences," Gamble says. "That concept is what the community really liked."

Club members sent fundraising letters to local businesses, held a community meeting, spoke at the chamber of commerce, and had their project featured in the local newspaper. "With this project, we had such good PR in the community that we had people coming to us," Gamble says.

The project resulted from a suggestion made by club member Seth Kelley, who was also the executive director of FOCUS Inc., a local nonprofit that provides services to the families of children and adults with disabilities. The parents of his clients had expressed their desire for a playground that their children could also use. The playground area in the local park had just one set of swings and a couple of other playground pieces that had been hand-me-downs. Thomas Wilder was one of those people who responded to the publicity. After retiring and settling down in Eagle River in 2008, he started looking for a place where he could make a difference among friends.

"The Eagle River Area club clearly had a lot going on. My friends were always talking about service projects, firesides, and other activities that appealed to me," Wilder says. "But what sealed the deal [of joining the club] was the ability to immediately get involved in a big, worthy, and tangible project." The idea to build the first all-inclusive playground in the state came out of the club's five-year plan, which Gamble says was essential in determining their club's overall goals. Finding what members deemed a "signature community project" would help the club fulfill its goal of working to build healthy communities.

As a new member, Wilder says he enjoyed having an immediate effect on the community. In addition to helping construct the playground, he secured a grant that helped pay for it.

"It's bigger than myself, something that makes a positive impact," Wilder adds.

By Daniela Garcia, *Rotary News* MARCH 27, 2014

## **IGNITE THE FLAME MEMBERSHIP INITIATIVE FIFTEEN TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL GROWTH**

From Rotary District 6950 on Florida's Gulf Coast

**TIP 1. PROPOSAL CARD** – At a club meeting, have every member fill out a proposal card and have them invite the proposed individual to a club meeting or service project.

**TIP 2. FRIENDS OF THE CLUB PRESIDENT** – The club President asks three members as a personal favor to propose a new member within a month. When the first person invites a new member, ask another member to propose a new member...and so on.

**TIP 3. SIMULTANEOUS INDUCTEES** – Induct several new members in the club simultaneously. This is especially effective when the inductees are of the same age or have the same interests.

**TIP 4. FORMER MEMBERS** – Encourage the club membership committee to develop a list of former club members. Ask a current member to invite the former members to rejoin or join another club.

**TIP 5. COMMUNITY PROJECTS** – A successful project attracts new members, especially if you use public relations tips. Invite friends to participate in a worthwhile community project.

**TIP 6. SIX MONTH PLAN** – Encourage every new member to bring in another new member within six months.

**TIP 7. FIVE FOR ONE TEAM** – Divide the club into groups of five. Assign each group to bring in at least one new member within three months. Make this a contest with recognition for the winners.

**TIP 8. ROTARY GUEST DAY** – Develop a list of potential members. Distribute invitations to those on the list. Host a meal and informational evening (meeting) for those who accept the invitation.

**TIP 9. SURVEY** – Conduct a survey to help members consider contacts they know who might be potential members. Use Rotary International's list of classifications to help prompt ideas.

**TIP 10. CLASSIFICATIONS** – Obtain the list of classifications not covered in your club. Read or distribute the list of uncovered classifications at a club assembly. (One club gained 20 new members using this strategy)

**TIP 11. CLUB FORUM** – Hold a club forum on membership development to discuss ways to seek out potential members...then follow through.

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### **New Member Engagement in Ann Arbor**

The club assures that new Rotary members are familiar with all the available activities within Rotary to enable them to determine where their talents can best be utilized, or alternatively to offer a new member with new talents and ideas the opportunity to form a new Rotary initiative. – RC of Ann Arbor, Michigan

## ... Fifteen Tips

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TIP 12. INCREASE EFFORTS – Change club practices to be more attractive to the new generation and to increase diversity.

TIP 13. DIARY – Encourage club members to keep a 24 hour diary of everyone with whom they come in contact. Select potential members from that list.

TIP 14. CONTEST – Have a club contest to see who can bring in the most members. Reward the top three members with special awards that will instill a desire to compete.

TIP 15. BRING A FRIEND DAY – Encourage all members to bring guests to club functions. Designate one meeting a month as “bring a guest” meeting.

## The Hook to Get Prospects Interested

Membership in Rotary is not successfully promoted by explaining to prospective members all of the rules, policies, procedures, Council on Legislation enactments, and folklore about Rotary or The Rotary Foundation. New member orientations and cogs meetings are the place for this discussion. But, the hook, as it were, is telling prospective new members WHY you are a Rotarian, why you have remained engaged in Rotary over the years, and why Rotary is important enough to you that you commit time, energy, and dollars.

LeRoy W. Blankenship, District Governor  
Rotary District 5230, California

## Membership Drives

RC of Emporia, Kansas held a successful membership drive 2 years ago by forming teams of club members who held a friendly competition. Now, they’re doing it again and hoping for similar successful results.

## Mile High Rotary Minutes

The RC of Denver Mile High has one of their members do a “Rotary Minute” at every meeting. Imagine if your club did the same thing how much your members would know about our organization and how engaged they would be so they don’t leave the club. Some of Denver Mile High’s Rotary Minutes can be found at

<http://www.denvermilehigh.org/RotaryMinuteArchive.cfm>

## Connect Weekly with Great Leaders!

“Our members connect weekly and learn from business experts, political and civic leaders, and entrepreneurs, who help us stay informed on topics that are relevant to our community. Where else can you hear regularly from a line up like this? “. They list about 30 speakers who have spoken at the club in the past. – RC of Crown Point, Indiana.