The Object of Rotary

The Object of Rotary is to encourage and foster the ideal of service as a basis of worthy enterprise and, in particular, to encourage and foster:

- FIRST. The development of acquaintance as an opportunity for service;
- SECOND. High ethical standards in business and professions, the recognition of the worthiness of all useful occupations, and the dignifying of each Rotarian's occupation as an opportunity to serve society;
- THIRD. The application of the ideal of service in each Rotarian's personal, business, and community life;
- FOURTH. The advancement of international understanding, goodwill, and peace through a world fellowship of business and professional persons united in the ideal of service.

Avenues of Service

Based on the Object of Rotary, the Avenues of Service are Rotary’s philosophical cornerstone and the foundation on which club activity is based:

- **Club Service** focuses on strengthening fellowship and ensuring the effective functioning of the club.
- **Vocational Service** encourages Rotarians to serve others through their vocations and to practice high ethical standards.
- **Community Service** covers the projects and activities the club undertakes to improve life in its community.
- **International Service** encompasses actions taken to expand Rotary’s humanitarian reach around the globe and to promote world understanding and peace.

Mission

The mission of Rotary International, a worldwide association of Rotary clubs, is to provide service to others, to promote high ethical standards, and to advance world understanding, goodwill, and peace through its fellowship of business, professional, and community leaders.

Moving toward the future

In 2001-02, Rotary International began developing a strategic plan to guide the organization as it entered its second century of service. In June 2007, the Board of Directors approved the RI Strategic Plan 2007-10, which identifies seven priorities:
- Eradicate polio.
- Advance the internal and external recognition and public image of Rotary.
- Increase Rotary’s capacity to provide service to others.
- Expand membership globally in both numbers and quality.
- Emphasize Rotary’s unique vocational service commitment.
- Optimize the use and development of leadership talents within RI.
- Fully implement the strategic planning process to ensure continuity and consistency throughout the organization.

The world's first service club, the Rotary Club of Chicago, was formed on 23 February 1905 by Paul P. Harris, an attorney who wished to capture in a professional club the same friendly spirit he had felt in the small towns of his youth. The Rotary name derived from the early practice of rotating meetings among members' offices.

Rotary's popularity spread, and within a decade, clubs were chartered from San Francisco to New York to Winnipeg, Canada. By 1921, Rotary clubs had been formed on six continents. The organization adopted the Rotary International name a year later.

As Rotary grew, its mission expanded beyond serving club members’ professional and social interests. Rotarians began pooling their resources and contributing their talents to help serve communities in need. The organization's dedication to this ideal is best expressed in its motto: Service Above Self.

By 1925, Rotary had grown to 200 clubs with more than 20,000 members. The organization's distinguished reputation attracted presidents, prime ministers, and a host of other luminaries to its ranks — among them author Thomas Mann, diplomat Carlos P. Romulo, humanitarian Albert Schweitzer, and composer Jean Sibelius.

**The Four-Way Test**

In 1932, Rotarian Herbert J. Taylor created The Four-Way Test, a code of ethics adopted by Rotary 11 years later. The test, which has been translated into more than 100 languages, asks the following questions:

Of the things we think, say or do

1. Is it the TRUTH?
2. Is it FAIR to all concerned?
3. Will it build GOODWILL and BETTER FRIENDSHIPS?
4. Will it be BENEFICIAL to all concerned?

**Rotary and World War II**

During World War II, many clubs were forced to disband, while others stepped up their service efforts to provide emergency relief to victims of the war. In 1942, looking ahead
to the postwar era, Rotarians called for a conference to promote international educational and cultural exchanges. This event inspired the founding of UNESCO.

In 1945, 49 Rotary club members served in 29 delegations to the UN Charter Conference. Rotary still actively participates in UN conferences by sending observers to major meetings and covering the United Nations in its publications.

"Few there are who do not recognize the good work which is done by Rotary clubs throughout the free world," former Prime Minister Winston Churchill of Great Britain once declared.

**Dawn of a new century**

As it approached the 21st century, Rotary worked to meet society’s changing needs, expanding its service efforts to address such pressing issues as environmental degradation, illiteracy, world hunger, and children at risk.

In 1989, the organization voted to admit women into clubs worldwide and now claims more than 145,000 female members in its ranks.

After the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Rotary clubs were formed or re-established throughout Central and Eastern Europe. The first Russian Rotary club was chartered in 1990, and the organization underwent a growth spurt for the next several years.

More than a century after Paul Harris and his colleagues chartered the club that eventually led to Rotary International, Rotarians continue to take pride in their history. In honor of that first club, Rotarians have preserved its original meeting place, Room 711 in Chicago’s Unity Building, by re-creating the office as it existed in 1905. For several years, the Paul Harris 711 Club maintained the room as a shrine for visiting Rotarians. In 1989, when the building was scheduled to be demolished, the club carefully dismantled the office and salvaged the interior, including doors and radiators. In 1993, the RI Board of Directors set aside a permanent home for the restored Room 711 on the 16th floor of RI World Headquarters in nearby Evanston.

Today, 1.2 million Rotarians belong to over 32,000 Rotary clubs in more than 200 countries and geographical areas.

**Programs of The Rotary Foundation**
Through Foundation grants and programs, Rotarians and other contributors can help change the world. They can finance a well for a village that lacks clean water, improve the environment, or provide scholarships to educate the next generation. The grants and programs available to Rotarians allow them to realize Rotary’s humanitarian mission throughout the world, including its number-one goal of eradicating polio.

**PolioPlus**

To eradicate polio, Rotarians have mobilized by the hundreds of thousands. They’re working to ensure that children are immunized against this crippling disease and that surveillance is strong despite the poor infrastructure, extreme poverty, and civil strife of many countries. Since the PolioPlus program’s inception in 1985, more than two billion children have received the oral polio vaccine.

**PolioPlus Grants** – Primarily applied for by National PolioPlus Committee chairs or a major partner agency, such as the World Health Organization or UNICEF. Support is available for eradication efforts in polio-endemic, recently endemic, and high-risk countries, including National Immunization Days, poliovirus transmission monitoring, and other activities.

**PolioPlus Partners Grants** – Allow Rotarians to contribute to specific social mobilization and surveillance activities in polio-endemic countries.

**Humanitarian Grants Program**

**Disaster Recovery** – Allows Rotarians to donate money in response to specific disasters. Funds are distributed to local committees to support recovery efforts. The program was created in 2005-06, and the Foundation currently administers four Disaster Recovery accounts: Hurricanes Stan and Wilma (Guatemala and Mexico), Hurricane Wilma (United States), the Earthquake in India and Pakistan, and Solidarity in South Asia. Total contributions to the accounts were $6.4 million.

**District Simplified Grants** – Support the service activities of districts locally and abroad. Since this program began in 2003-04, more than 1,160 grants totaling over US$17 million have been awarded to districts in almost 60 countries.

**Health, Hunger and Humanity (3-H) Grants** – Fund large-scale, two- to four-year projects that improve health, alleviate hunger, or promote human development. Since 1978, more than 280 projects in 75 countries have been funded through The Rotary Foundation at a cost of $74 million.
Matching Grants – Provide matching funds for the international service projects of Rotary clubs and districts. Since 1965, more than 24,000 Matching Grant projects in 167 countries have been funded at a cost of more than $257 million.

Volunteer Service Grants – Support the international travel of qualified Rotarians and their spouses to provide a needed service or plan a necessary project in a community. This program began in 2006-07, and more than 200 projects in over 40 countries have been funded at about $1 million.

Educational Programs

Ambassadorial Scholarships – The Foundation sponsors one of the largest international scholarship programs in the world. Scholars study in a different country, where they serve as unofficial ambassadors of goodwill. Since 1947, more than 47,000 scholars from 110 countries have received scholarships of more than $476 million through The Rotary Foundation.

Group Study Exchange (GSE) – Annual awards are made to paired Rotary districts to cover travel expenses for a team of non-Rotarians from a variety of professions. Rotarian hosts organize a four- to six-week itinerary of vocational, educational, and cultural points of interest. Since 1965, more than 57,000 individuals (almost 12,000 teams) from 100 countries have participated at a cost of more than $92 million.

Rotary Grants for University Teachers – These grants are awarded to university faculty members to teach in a developing nation for 3 to 10 months. Since 1985, more than $4 million in grants has allowed over 430 teachers to share their expertise with a college or university in a developing country.

The Rotary Peace and Conflict Studies Program – This program, which began July 2006, provides professionals from around the world the opportunity to be trained in conflict resolution and mediation strategies. The intensive three-month course is housed at the Rotary Center for Peace and Conflict Studies at Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand.

Rotary World Peace Fellowships – Each year, up to 60 scholars are sponsored to study at one of the six Rotary Centers for International Studies in peace and conflict resolution for a master’s-level degree. Since the program’s inception in 2002-03, 233 fellows from 60 countries have participated, funded by awards of almost $14 million through the Foundation. Sign up for the Peace Net newsletter, which provides a forum for the Rotary Centers community.