
1 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Rotary's 100-year track record of professionals joining together to use their skills and passion to make a difference in their communities is one that fosters pride in Rotarians worldwide. In addition to our governance documents, Rotary clubs and districts should be familiar with Rotary's guiding principles and values statements in order to carry out Rotary's mission and understand our history of commitment to professionalism and service. The following is a selection of values statements and principles that Rotarians and Rotary clubs use to inspire their involvement and engagement in Rotary. In addition, a supplemental Resource Guide is available on the [Governance Documents](#) page of the Rotary website. This guide provides a list of additional resources and reference materials.

1923 STATEMENT ON COMMUNITY SERVICE

The following statement was adopted at the 1923 convention and amended at subsequent conventions. It is included in the Manual of Procedure because of its historical value. (RCP 8.040.2.)

In Rotary, Community Service is to encourage and foster the application of the ideal of service in each Rotarian's personal, business, and community life.

In carrying out this application of the ideal of service many clubs have developed various community service activities as affording opportunities for service by their members. For the guidance of Rotarians and Rotary clubs and to formulate a policy for Rotary toward community service activities, the following principles are recognized and accepted as sound and controlling:

- 1) Fundamentally, Rotary is a philosophy of life that undertakes to reconcile the ever present conflict between the desire to profit for one's self and the duty and consequent impulse to serve others. This philosophy is the philosophy of service — "Service Above Self" and is based on the practical ethical principle that "He Profits Most Who Serves Best."*
- 2) Primarily, a Rotary club is a group of representative business and professional people who have accepted the Rotary philosophy of service and are seeking: First, to study collectively the theory of service as the true basis of success and happiness in business and in life; and second, to give, collectively, practical demonstrations of it to themselves and their community; and third, each as an individual, to translate its theory into practice in business and in everyday life; and fourth, individually and collectively, by active precept and example, to stimulate its acceptance both in theory and practice by all non-Rotarians as well as by all Rotarians.
- 3) RI is an organization that exists
 - a) for the protection, development, and worldwide propagation of the Rotary ideal of service;
 - b) for the establishment, encouragement, assistance, and administrative supervision of Rotary clubs;
 - c) as a clearing house for the study of their problems and, by helpful sugges-

* Adopted Council Resolution 10-165 amended RI's secondary motto to "One Profits Most Who Serves Best."

tion but not compulsion, for the standardization of their practices and of such community service activities, and only such community service activities, as have already been widely demonstrated by many clubs as worthwhile and as are within, and will not tend to obscure, the Object of Rotary as set out in the RI constitution.

- 4) Because they who serve must act, Rotary is not merely a state of mind, nor Rotary philosophy merely subjective, but must translate itself into objective activity; and the individual Rotarian and the Rotary club must put the theory of service into practice. Accordingly, corporate action by Rotary clubs is recommended under the safeguards provided herein. It is desirable that every Rotary club sponsor a major community service activity each fiscal year, varied from year to year if possible, and to be completed if possible before the end of the fiscal year. This activity is to be based upon a real community need and should require the collective cooperation of all its members. This is to be in addition to the club's continuing its program for the stimulation of the club members to individual service within the community.
- 5) Each individual Rotary club has absolute autonomy in the selection of such community service activities as appeal to it and as are suited to its community; but no club should allow any community service activity to obscure the Object of Rotary or jeopardize the primary purpose for which a Rotary club is organized; and RI, although it may study, standardize, and develop such activities as are general and make helpful suggestions regarding them, should never prescribe nor proscribe any community service activity for any club.
- 6) Although regulations are not prescribed for an individual Rotary club in the selection of community service activities, the following rules are suggested for its guidance:
 - a) Because of the limited membership of Rotary, only in a community where there is no adequate civic or other organization in a position to speak and act for the whole community should a Rotary club engage in a general community service activity that requires for its success the active support of the entire citizenship of the community, and, where a chamber of commerce exists, a Rotary club should not trespass upon nor assume its functions, but Rotarians, as individuals committed to and trained in the principle of service, should be members of and active in their chambers of commerce and as citizens of their community should, along with all other good citizens, be interested in every general community service activity, and, as far as their abilities permit, do their part in money and service;
 - b) As a general thing, no Rotary club should endorse any project, no matter how meritorious, unless the club is prepared and willing to assume all or part of the responsibility for the accomplishment of that which it endorses;
 - c) While publicity should not be the primary goal of a Rotary club in selecting an activity, as a means of extending Rotary's influence, proper publicity should be given to a worthwhile club project well carried out;
 - d) A Rotary club should avoid duplication of effort and in general should not engage in an activity that is already being well handled by some other agency;
 - e) A Rotary club in its activities should preferably cooperate with existing agencies, but where necessary may create new agencies where the facilities of the existing agencies are insufficient to accomplish its purpose. It is better for a Rotary club to improve an existing agency than to create a new and duplicative agency;

- f) In all its activities a Rotary club acts best and is most successful as a propagandist. A Rotary club discovers a need but, where the responsibility is that of the entire community, does not seek alone to remedy it but to awaken others to the necessity of the remedy, seeking to arouse the community to its responsibility so that this responsibility may be placed not on Rotary alone but on the entire community where it belongs; and while Rotary may initiate and lead in the work, it should endeavor to secure the cooperation of all other organizations that ought to be interested and should seek to give them full credit, even minimizing the credit to which the Rotary club itself is entitled;
- g) Activities which enlist the individual efforts of all Rotarians generally are more in accord with the genius of Rotary than those requiring only the mass action of the club, because the community service activities of the Rotary club should be regarded only as laboratory experiments designed to train members of a Rotary Club in service. (RCP 8.040.1., 23-34, 26-6, 36-15, 51-9, 66-49)

STATEMENT ON COMMUNITY SERVICE

The 1992 Council on Legislation adopted the following statement on community service.

Rotary Community Service encourages and fosters the application of the ideal of service to the personal, business, and community life of every Rotarian.

In carrying out this application of the ideal of service, a variety of activities developed by Rotary clubs have afforded significant opportunities for service by their members. For the guidance of Rotarians and to formulate a policy for Rotary toward community service activities, the following principles are recognized:

Community Service is an opportunity for every Rotarian to exemplify "Service Above Self." It is the commitment and social responsibility of every Rotarian and Rotary club to improve the quality of life for those who live in the community and to serve the public interest.

In this spirit, clubs are encouraged to:

- 1) review regularly service opportunities within their communities and involve each club member in an assessment of community needs;
- 2) capitalize on the unique vocational and avocational talents of members in implementing their community service projects;
- 3) initiate projects in accordance with the needs of the community and commensurate with the club's standing and potential in the community, recognizing that every community service activity, however small, is important;
- 4) work closely with the Interact clubs, Rotaract clubs, and Rotary Community Corps and other groups which they sponsor, in order to coordinate community service efforts;
- 5) identify opportunities to enhance community service projects through Rotary programs and activities at the international level;
- 6) involve the community, when desirable and feasible, in implementing community service projects, including the provision of required resources;
- 7) cooperate with other organizations in accordance with RI policy to achieve community service objectives;
- 8) achieve proper public recognition for their community service projects;
- 9) act as catalysts to encourage other organizations to work together in community service efforts;

- 10) transfer responsibility for continuing projects, when appropriate, to community, service, or other organizations, so that the Rotary club can become involved in new projects.

As an association of clubs, RI has the responsibility to communicate news of community service needs and activities, and from time to time suggest programs or projects which advance the Object of Rotary and which would benefit from the concerted efforts of Rotarians, clubs, and districts who wish to participate. (92-286)

CORE VALUES

Rotary adopted the core values in 2007 as part of the Rotary Strategic Plan, understanding that these five values are fundamental traits of being a Rotarian. Since their adoption, the core values have been reaffirmed by the Board and are strongly supported by Rotarians throughout the world. (RCP 26.010.2.) Rotary International's core values are:

- Fellowship
- Integrity
- Diversity
- Service
- Leadership

More information on the core values can be found on the Rotary [website](#).

THE FOUR-WAY TEST

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?

The Four-Way Test was created in 1932 by Rotarian Herbert J. Taylor, who later became president of Rotary International. (RCP 33.070.)*

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. (RIC 4; SRCC 5)

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The sole purpose of any reproduction or use of The Four-Way Test should be to develop and maintain high ethical standards in human relations. The test should not be reproduced in any advertisement intended to increase sales or profits. It may, however, be used on the letterhead or in the literature of a firm, organization, or institution to convey its sincere attempt to conduct itself along the lines of The Four-Way Test. All reproductions of The Four-Way Test should be in the form shown above.

FIVE AVENUES OF SERVICE

Rotary's Five Avenues of Service are the philosophical and practical framework for the work of this Rotary club.

1. Club Service, the first Avenue of Service, involves action a member should take within this club to help it function successfully.
2. Vocational Service, the second Avenue of Service, has the purpose of promoting high ethical standards in businesses and professions, recognizing the worthiness of all dignified occupations, and fostering the ideal of service in the pursuit of all vocations. The role of members includes conducting themselves and their businesses in accordance with Rotary's principles and lending their vocational skills to club-developed projects in order to address the issues and needs of society.
3. Community Service, the third Avenue of Service, comprises varied efforts that members make, sometimes in conjunction with others, to improve the quality of life of those who live within this club's locality or municipality.
4. International Service, the fourth Avenue of Service, comprises those activities that members do to advance international understanding, goodwill, and peace by fostering acquaintance with people of other countries, their cultures, customs, accomplishments, aspirations, and problems, through reading and correspondence and through cooperation in all club activities and projects designed to help people in other lands.
5. Youth 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 cultural understanding. (SRCC 6)

PURPOSES OF A ROTARY CLUB

The purposes of this club are to pursue the Object of Rotary, carry out successful service projects based on the Five Avenues of Service, contribute to the advancement of Rotary by strengthening membership, support The Rotary Foundation, and develop leaders beyond the club level. (SRCC 3)

STATEMENT OF CONDUCT FOR WORKING WITH YOUTH

Rotary International strives to create and maintain a safe environment for all youth who participate in Rotary activities. To the best of their ability, Rotarians, Rotarians' spouses and partners, and other volunteers must safeguard the children and young people they come into contact with and protect them from physical, sexual, and emotional abuse. (RCP 2.100.1)

MOTTO OF ROTARY INTERNATIONAL

Service Above Self and One Profits Most Who Serves Best are the official Rotary Mottos. Service Above Self is the principal motto of Rotary. (50-11, 51-9, 89-145, 01-678, 04-271, RCP 33.080.)

MISSION OF ROTARY INTERNATIONAL

We provide service to others, promote integrity, and advance world understanding, goodwill, and peace through our fellowship of business, professional, and community leaders. (RCP 26.010.1)

MOTTO OF THE ROTARY FOUNDATION

Doing Good in the World is the motto of The Rotary Foundation. (TRFC 7.090.1.)

MISSION OF THE ROTARY FOUNDATION

The mission of The Rotary Foundation is to enable Rotarians to advance world understanding, goodwill, and peace through the improvement of health, the support of education, and the alleviation of poverty. (TRFC 1.030.)