

Rotary at a Glance

Established: February 23, 1905, in Chicago, Ill., USA

Founder: Chicago lawyer Paul P. Harris

Clubs: 32,000 clubs in more than 200 countries and geographical regions

Membership: 1.2 million men and women

Global aid: Rotary has given US\$1.5 billion to humanitarian programs that promote literacy, alleviate hunger, provide safe water, and advance world peace.

Education: Every year, Rotary offers 1,000 international college-level scholarships and sponsors 8,000 international exchanges for high school students.



Experience Rotary

Rotary membership gives men and women a rewarding opportunity to help communities locally and internationally.

Rotary clubs are autonomous and meet weekly for fellowship and to determine their own service projects based on community needs and the talents and interests of their members. Clubs often team up with clubs in other countries to carry out international service projects, enhancing members' personal and professional development and advancing world peace.

Rotary clubs are non-religious, nonpolitical, and open to men and women of every race, culture, and creed. To learn more about the Rotary experience, visit www.rotary.org or contact a Rotary club in your community.

Rotary and Polio

Global Polio Eradication Initiative

- Unique international public health initiative, spearheaded in 1988 by Rotary International, World Health Organization, UNICEF, and U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Rotary

- Launched PolioPlus program in 1985
- Has contributed more than \$600 million to fight polio worldwide
- Provides armies of volunteers to assist in immunizations, vaccine delivery, and social mobilization
- Has played a major role in decisions by donor governments to contribute more than \$2.6 billion to polio eradication

Results

- 2 billion children immunized in 122 countries
- Polio cases slashed by 99 percent
- Five million cases of paralysis prevented; 250,000 pediatric deaths averted
- Polio-endemic countries now down to four

Rotary — a global network of volunteers

EVANSTON, Ill., USA — When Paul Harris, a young lawyer in Chicago, formed a club with three friends in 1905, he hoped to recapture the atmosphere of camaraderie and friendship he had experienced growing up in small-town America.

Because they rotated meetings between their offices, they called themselves the Rotary Club. Members met weekly to socialize and to plan projects to help the community.

Over a century later, Rotary has turned into a global movement, growing from a single club into a diverse, international network of 1.2 million business and professional leaders united by the same desire to participate in fellowship and community service. Rotary has no political or religious agenda and is open to men and women of all backgrounds.

Rotary today is dedicated to fostering world peace and understanding through an array of humanitarian and educational programs aimed at the underlying causes of conflict, such as poverty, illiteracy, hunger, drought, and disease.

With its network of more than 32,000 local clubs in more than 200 countries and geographical regions, Rotary works at the grassroots level to deliver practical assistance to communities in need. For more than 20 years, Rotary's top goal has been the eradication of the crippling disease polio, a job 99 percent achieved.

Rotary's 1.2 million club members also carry out projects that provide water wells, install sanitation systems and teach children and adults to read. Rotary is the world's largest privately funded source of international scholarships, each year allowing about 1,000 college students to begin study abroad as unofficial goodwill ambassadors.

When Hurricane Katrina devastated communities along the U.S. Gulf Coast last year, Rotary rallied in response. Rotary clubs raised millions of dollars in aid and supplies and provided volunteers for hundreds of recovery projects in Mississippi and Louisiana.



From left: Rotary volunteers from Indiana unload supplies in Mississippi after Hurricane Katrina; Biloxi Rotary member Tracy DeDeaux takes a breather.



One of the best examples is the venerable Warren Easton High School in downtown New Orleans, a major city left reeling by Katrina's winds and flooding. When Warren Easton finally

reopened in September, much of the credit went to the Rotary Club of New Orleans, which raised more than \$100,000 and provided nearly 2,000 hours in volunteer work to refurbish and repaint classrooms, offices, and stairwells. Major assistance came from Rotary clubs as far away as Berkeley, Calif., Brookline, Mass., Rochester, N.Y., and Warrington, Pa. The club intends to continue to help the school over the coming years.

"We knew from the outset that this is a school that must be reopened," says New Orleans Rotary member Henry Lowentritt, who chairs the project. "And when Rotary clubs hear about us, they ask, 'How can we help?' It's been just heartwarming, and we're making so many new friends in the process."

Rotary president targets illiteracy, global water shortage

EVANSTON, Ill., USA — Rotary's current president, Bill Boyd, of Auckland, New Zealand, embodies both the commitment to service and the internationality that characterize the world's premier club-based, volunteer service organization.

As the 97th president in the organization's 101-year history, the affable Kiwi brings a casual yet pragmatic approach to the job of leading 1.2 million members of 32,000 Rotary clubs in more than 200 countries and geographical regions.

"We must identify real needs and see that those needs are addressed in a practical, sustainable way, not through idealism and wishful thinking," says Boyd, a retired magazine distributor.

As befitting the son of a bookshop owner, the problem of illiteracy ranks high on his priority list.

"As a member of a family of readers, literacy has always been very important to me, and its value to society can hardly be overestimated," says Boyd, who with his wife, Lorna, regularly volunteers as a reader to children from low-income families at a South Auckland school. "Literacy is a prerequisite for democracy, stability, and prosperity, and it has the potential to halt the cycle of poverty and bring a better life to the next generation," says Boyd, who has passed down

his love of reading to his four children and 11 grandchildren.

Rotary clubs worldwide are heeding the call. This fall, for example, the Rotary



President of Rotary International Bill Boyd of New Zealand

Club of Washington, D.C., will provide free dictionaries to all 5,500 third graders in the D.C. Public School District. On Sept. 8, International Literacy Day, Doris Margolis, a past president of the D.C. club, described the DC Dictionary Project at a symposium convened by the International Reading Association and the National Geographic Society.

Another of Boyd's top priorities is water management. He cites the sobering statistic that more than one billion

people worldwide do not have access to safe water, resulting in about 35,000 childhood deaths each week, many from diseases spread by polluted water. "If a natural disaster wiped out 6,000 children in one day, it would be on the front page of every newspaper, yet this is what is happening," Boyd says. "I encourage clubs throughout the Rotary world to expand on their work to bring clean water wherever it is needed, one community at a time."

Rotary clubs in Michigan and Ontario, Canada, have taken the lead in an ambitious project to provide more than 6,000 bio-sand filters to families throughout the Dominican Republic in cooperation with Dominican Rotary clubs. The U.S. clubs have raised more than \$135,000 for the project, with additional support coming from clubs in California and New York.

Boyd acknowledges that the worldwide water shortage, illiteracy, poverty, disease, and other major problems facing humanity may seem daunting. But that's where a healthy dose of Kiwi pragmatism comes in.

"We know that it is not enough to dream about a better world," he says. "A better world will come only through careful planning, honest cooperation and hard work."

U.S. Rotary member fights polio in his Ethiopian homeland

SEATTLE — For Seattle resident Ezra Teshome, volunteer service is a deeply personal matter involving his heritage, family pride, and sense of responsibility.

For the past 10 years, he has used the opportunities provided by Rotary to lead volunteer teams back to his native Ethiopia to help immunize children against the crippling disease polio. He has also worked through Rotary to provide low-cost housing for the poor and install clean water systems in remote villages, among other humanitarian projects. Teshome, a member of the Rotary Club of University District of Seattle, was recognized for his polio work at the 2005 Time Global Health Summit

in New York City, where he was named one of 10 global health heroes. Typically, Teshome barely made it to the event in time: He was en route from Ethiopia, where he and his 35-member team had helped immunize 16 million children.

Teshome arrived in Seattle in 1971 to study pre-law at Seattle University. He intended to

return to Ethiopia, but by the time he completed his studies, political and economic conditions at home had deteriorated.



Ezra Teshome immunizes an Ethiopian child against polio.

His parents urged him to stay in the United States. He began working for an insurance company (he now heads his own agency), got married, and started a family. At a colleague's urging, he joined a Rotary club.

In 1996, Teshome returned to Addis Ababa to attend a Rotary conference. The trip was a revelation.

"Going back, it really opened my eyes to how many children are crippled and their lives destroyed by polio," he recalls. "I saw such extreme poverty and such devastation. I said to myself, 'What can I do to help?'"

Rotary's spearheading partnership in the Global Polio Eradication Initiative provided the answer. Each year since 1996, Teshome has led teams of volunteers to participate in massive drives during which millions of children receive the oral vaccine that will protect them for life.

Teshome says his Rotary-driven volunteerism "has been a life-changing experience." But his true reward is knowing that he is helping improve the lives of

people in his homeland. It's also made a difference for the Teshome family. He and his wife, Yobi, have made sure their four children — daughters Selome and Sophia and sons Hewan and Zach — have seen Ethiopia's need firsthand by spending one year of high school there.

"It's important for them to

experience the culture and values of our people and to witness the unfortunate circumstances many Ethiopians face because

of poverty," Teshome says. "I'm hoping awareness will inspire them to do some of the same things that I am involved in."

ROTARY WORLD PEACE FELLOWSHIPS

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- ◆ Universidad del Salvador, Buenos Aires, Argentina
- ◆ University of Bradford, West Yorkshire, England
- ◆ University of California, Berkeley, California, USA
- ◆ Duke University and University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, North Carolina, USA

Apply through your local Rotary club.

For more information:
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