

Rotaract Club



of Indiana University-Purdue University, Indianapolis

Sponsored by the Rotary Club of Indianapolis

What is Rotaract?

Rotaract is a Rotary-sponsored service club for young men and women. Rotaract clubs are usually community-based or university-based and are sponsored by a local Rotary club making them true "partners in service" and key members of the Rotary family. Through the Rotaract program, young adults not only augment their knowledge and skills, but they also address the physical and social needs of their communities while promoting international understanding and peace through a framework of friendship and service.

All Rotaract efforts begin at the local grassroots level and all Rotaract clubs have access to the many resources of Rotary International and The Rotary Foundation. As one of the most significant and fastest-growing programs of Rotary service, with more than 7,600 Rotaract clubs in some 158 countries, Rotaract has become a worldwide phenomenon.

What is Rotary International?

Rotary is a worldwide organization of business and professional leaders that provides humanitarian service, encourages high ethical standards in all vocations, and helps build goodwill and peace in the world. Approximately 1.2 million Rotarians belong to more than 31,000 Rotary clubs located in 167 countries.

Goals of Rotaract

- To develop professional and leadership skills.
- To emphasize respect for the rights of others, based on recognition of the worth of each individual.
- To recognize the dignity and value of all useful occupations as opportunities to serve.
- To recognize, practice, and promote ethical standards as leadership qualities and vocational responsibilities.
- To develop knowledge and understanding of the needs, problems, and opportunities in the community and worldwide.
- To provide opportunities for personal and group activities that serve the community and promote international understanding and goodwill towards all people

What Does Rotaract Do?

Rotaractors participate in a variety of community and international service projects, as well as leadership and professional development. Typical **community service** projects include tutoring area students, working with Habitat for Humanity, serving meals to the homeless, recycling, participating in campus-wide projects, and working with local community organizations. Rotaract Clubs also work with their sponsoring Rotary Club(s) on their various community projects.

Rotaract also performs **international service**. This can include working on joint project with Rotaract Clubs in other parts of the world or fundraising for an international organization such as UNICEF.

By working with area Rotary Clubs, you have **professional development** opportunities through meet and networking with local Rotarians. Many Rotarians are the business and civic leaders of our community.

Take advantage of **leadership development** opportunities by running for an office or volunteering for committees. Various committees might include fundraising, public relations, community service, social activities, and much more. You also have the opportunity to represent your club by serving as a district representative on the District Rotaract Committee.

Conferences

Rotaract offers the opportunity to attend international conferences to network and meet other Rotaractors from all parts of the world. Each year Rotary International holds an annual convention somewhere in the world. A Rotaract Pre-convention Meeting precedes this annual meeting.

Each summer there is an opportunity to attend the Rotaract Conference for the United States, Canada, and Caribbean (USCC). The USA, Canada, and Caribbean make up a network of Rotaract Clubs called a Multi-District Information Organization, or MDIO.

Within each district, there are also local conferences. Each fall there is a District Rotaract Conference hosted by a local Rotaract Club. There is also a Rotary District Conference each spring at which Rotaractors volunteer and attend.

History of Rotaract

Rotaract, Rotary International's service club program for young adults, was officially inaugurated during January 1968 under RI President Luther Hodges. On March 13, 1968, the Rotaract Club of the University of North Carolina, sponsored by the Rotary Club of North Charlotte, North Carolina, USA, was the first Rotaract club to receive its official charter. Although this club is recognized as the first Rotaract club, Rotarians have been sponsoring similar organizations for young adults since the early 1920s.

Perhaps the greatest impetus for the creation of the Rotaract program came from Rotary's youth service club for secondary school students, Interact clubs. Established in 1962, the Interact program enjoyed immediate success. However, since membership was only open to students in secondary schools, graduated Interactors and Rotarians were soon looking for ways to extend their relationship. Several proposals were brought before the RI Board of Directors to allow membership in Interact clubs to extend for a few years after graduation. Instead of extending the age requirements for Interact, the Board decided to study the feasibility of creating a new service club program for young adults at the university and young professional level.

The decision to adopt the Rotaract program came at a time when student protests worldwide were of growing concern to Rotarians. The Rotaract program was adopted not only as a means of keeping former Interactors within the Rotary family, but as a means of channeling the energies of young adults into positive activities that could benefit their communities.

A special committee was convened to design the new service club program for young adults during 1966. After polling students at the University of Houston, Texas, USA, the committee decided that "Rotaract" would be the best name for the program — a combination of the words "Rotary" and "action." The committee also decided that young women should be allowed to join on equal standing with male members.

Several developments in the early 1990s helped strengthen the Rotaract movement. In February 1991, the first Rotaract club in Eastern Europe was chartered in Budapest, Hungary, with the help of Austrian Rotaractors. Ties with Eastern Europe were further strengthened when the same Austrian Rotaractors helped charter the Rotaract Club of Prague in what was then Czechoslovakia later in 1991. In March 1992, the RI Board established World Rotaract Week, which is celebrated annually during the week of 13 March to commemorate the chartering of the first Rotaract club.

Information obtained from www.rotary.org