

A Menu of Service Opportunities

Every day, in communities throughout the world, Rotary clubs are actively working to improve the lives of those around them. From providing safe havens for street children to helping the poor become self-sufficient through the establishment of revolving loan funds, they engage in an impressive spectrum of Community Service activities.

Each Rotary club has the freedom to choose its own service activities, and each is urged to undertake activities that best meet the needs of its own community. But historically, Rotary clubs worldwide have addressed many of the same issues; indeed, Rotary has been proudly identified with service activities that it has initiated, including PolioPlus and Preserve Planet Earth.

While many of the needs Rotarians have been tackling remain as urgent as ever, new concerns arise. In an effort to identify those concerns which have the greatest relevance to Rotary, the Rotary International Board of Directors in 1999 approved a Menu of Service Opportunities which it is encouraging clubs and districts to consider. These opportunities are in addition to the Rotary International structured programs, such as Rotaract and Interact, which have a recommended framework and guidelines.

The Menu of Service Opportunities includes the following topics:

- Children at Risk
- Disabled Persons
- Health Care
- International Understanding and Goodwill
- Literacy and Numeracy
- Population Issues
- Poverty and Hunger
- Preserve Planet Earth
- Urban Concerns

This publication contains background on each of these service opportunities, outlines a number of club project ideas, and gives examples of Rotary club and district projects. It is designed to be used in conjunction with *Communities in Action: A Guide to Effective Projects* (605A-EN), a new handbook providing step-by-step instructions on how to develop, carry out, and evaluate a service project.



Children at Risk

For decades, and especially in recent years, Rotarians have been focusing their attention and resources on vulnerable and troubled children. From “adopting” homeless children to serving meals to schoolchildren from low-income families, Rotary clubs worldwide are working to provide education, housing, and a safe, secure environment for needy children. The plight of children at risk merits every effort.

According to United Nations agencies, an astounding number of children worldwide are living under extremely difficult conditions:

- Some 40 million children ages 14 and younger suffer abuse and neglect.
- An estimated 250 million children ages 5-14 are working.
- More than 100 million children live on the streets, vulnerable to exploitation, drugs, and crime.
- Nearly 12 million children under age 5 die every year from preventable childhood diseases and malnutrition.
- Some 130 million children of primary school age, mostly girls, do not attend school, contributing to shorter life spans and greater susceptibility to poverty and illness.

The 1998-99 Children’s Opportunities Grants inspired a wave of Rotarian initiatives. Rotarians need to maintain that momentum on behalf of needy children.

PROJECT IDEAS

- Host an immunization clinic or distribute immunization history cards to new mothers in order to prevent childhood diseases.
- Support a school-based meal program to improve students’ nutrition.
- Conduct a literacy program focusing on girls.
- Establish an awareness campaign about child labor issues or provide alternatives for child workers and their families, such as scholarships for school.
- Volunteer at a home for former street children or support programs to feed, educate, and provide health services and mentoring to street children.
- Offer vocational guidance and training to increase a young person’s opportunities for employment and break the cycle of poverty.
- Host a community-based workshop focused on raising awareness of children’s issues.
- Promote a local program that assists victims of child abuse.

PROJECT EXAMPLES

Preventing child abuse

Studies confirm that approximately 65 percent of child abuse cases involve injuries to the head, neck, and face — areas easily observed by dentists and dental assistants. With the assistance of an educational program called Prevent Abuse and Neglect through Dental Awareness (PANDA), Rotarians in Ontario, Canada, designed, produced, and distributed pamphlets to help oral health care providers determine and report symptoms of abuse and also to promote awareness of child abuse prevention. The PANDA guidelines include step-by-step instructions on how to report child abuse as well as graphic photos to assist visual identification. The first phase of the project was so successful that the provincial government offered to fund additional printing and distribution of the pamphlets for

all dentists and dental nurses and assistants in Ontario. The next step may be the establishment of courses in community colleges to teach dentists how to spot signs of abuse.

Educating street children

The Rotary Community Corps of Delhi, sponsored by the Rotary Club of Delhi Central, India, is providing free formal education to 200 street children. Forty children are enrolled in each class, from first to fifth grades. They receive a midday meal, books and other reading material, uniforms, and access to medical aid, a library, and a sports facility. In an effort to offer a well-rounded education, the children are also taught music, dance, and arts and crafts.

Helping needy children be healthier

To overcome diarrhea and other health problems of needy children, the Rotary Club of Kowloon, Hong Kong, and several clubs in District 3810, Philippines, teamed up to provide emergency medical supplies, health assessments, and training in primary health care to 17 orphanages in Metro Manila. The Kowloon club and District 3810 each contributed US\$5,000 to the project, which was doubled by a US\$10,000 Rotary Foundation Matching Grant. Philippine Rotarians joined forces with the local health department to distribute 170,000 oral rehydration therapy packets, water purifiers to prevent diarrheal infection from contaminated water, health care manuals, and other supplies to benefit more than 2,200 orphans. The effort subsequently expanded to reach nearly 5,700 additional children in seven more orphanages. The clubs in District 3810 made plans to adopt the 17 target orphanages and provide long-term support.

Nourishing underprivileged infants

Through their voucher support project and in cooperation with supermarkets in their district, French Rotarians helped feed and care for 750 underprivileged infants through their Bébés du Coeur (Babies of the Heart) effort. The two-day community service project raised FF1,300,000 (US\$232,142) of store credit for needy parents to buy such essentials as diapers, milk, baby food, and baby care products. With greatly expanded volunteer involvement — from one Rotary club the first year to 27 clubs and two Rotaract clubs the second year — the grand total of vouchers collected increased over 15 times.

Providing buddies for children

Children, especially boys, have to wait a year to get into the popular Big Brothers, Big Sisters program in Venango County, Pennsylvania, USA. To reach those children on the waiting list, members of the Rotary Club of Franklin decided to regularly spend time with them until they are assigned a match. Club members plan activities for the children at least once a month; they have gone roller skating, bowling, to baseball games, and to the zoo. A local judge called the Rotarians' service "terrific" because the volunteers "significantly, positively impact the lives of at-risk kids."

Tackling the problem of bullies

About four million children across Great Britain and Ireland have access to an anti-bullying CD-ROM produced by District 1030, England. Local clubs and districts distributed 18,000 copies of the disc to half the primary and secondary schools in those countries. In the USA, the National Society of Crime Prevention Practitioners acclaimed the disc as "the best community crime prevention project." District 1030 plans to release and distribute other Coping with Life series discs to schools.

Disabled Persons

The first recorded Rotary club project for the disabled occurred in 1913 when Rotarians in Syracuse, New York, USA, initiated a health-improvement program for crippled children. Since then, Rotarians worldwide have worked to provide the disabled with education, employment, accessibility, and equal participation in all essential areas.

According to the United Nations, one in 10 people worldwide is disabled. Eighty percent of them are in developing countries, where their numbers are rising due to poverty, hunger, epidemics, disasters, and wars. Many disabilities could be prevented or treated:

- Of the 160 million people around the world with visual impairments, perhaps 20 million of them could see with a simple cataract operation.
- Some 120 million people have disabling hearing impairments; it is estimated that 50 percent of all hearing disability could be avoided.
- Many disabling and deadly diseases among children under age 5 could be averted by immunizations; due to the polio-eradication initiative of the past decade, three million children who might have been polio victims are walking and playing normally.
- About 150 casualties are caused each week from the 100 million land mines scattered across 64 countries; no fewer than 280 million people are at risk from these mines.

Much needs to be done to prevent disabilities through measures taken against malnutrition, environmental pollution, poor hygiene, inadequate prenatal and postnatal care, waterborne diseases, and accidents of all types. Just as important, Rotarians and all people of goodwill face the challenge of changing attitudes about disabled persons and promoting awareness about causes, prevention, and treatment of disabilities.

PROJECT IDEAS

- Present a program by a qualified speaker on subjects such as employment or rights of the disabled.
- Support a program to train the disabled for job interviews and to assist them in finding meaningful employment.
- Construct a professionally designed park that allows disabled and nondisabled children to play together on specially designed equipment; install paths that support wheelchairs.
- Sponsor a disabled student to participate in Youth Exchange or a Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA) program.
- Initiate sporting events for disabled youths in the area.
- Donate medical equipment such as wheelchairs, eyeglasses, hearing aids, crutches, and prosthetic limbs to assist the disabled in low-income countries.
- Finance or provide surgery or other necessary medical procedures to help a disabled person who lacks resources.

PROJECT EXAMPLES

Opening up RYLA to youths with special needs

After years of running a successful RYLA program, Rotarians in District 1090, part of England and Wales, decided to expand their program to include a five-day Special Needs Course for young people with disabilities. The course is almost identical to that of the able-bodied RYLA participants, including such challenges as rock climbing, rappelling, and canoeing. As many as 20 disabled youths

participate in annual RYLA programs alternating between those with physical disabilities and those with learning difficulties. Half a dozen able-bodied people, often Rotaractors or graduates of previous RYLA programs, assist the trained instructors with the activities.

Manufacturing prosthetics for the needy

Due to the high cost of prosthetics in Peru — US\$1,500 per artificial leg — the Rotary Club of Yanahuara-Arequipa initiated the Free Legs program to supply artificial legs for 150 indigent people. The club was able to manufacture prostheses with the help of a Matching Grant from The Rotary Foundation and the Rotary Club of Toronto, Ontario, Canada, and in association with the Artificial Limb Society of Ontario, Canada. As well as offering disabled persons a greater degree of mobility, independence, and self-esteem, the program taught local technicians how to manufacture artificial legs at a cost of only US\$70. Club members have advised Rotary clubs in Turkey, Bolivia, Colombia, and Brazil on how to conduct their own limb camps.

Creating a special baseball league

Rotarians in Georgia, USA, formed a special baseball league with help from the local youth baseball association and 100 children with physical and developmental disabilities. Whether in a wheelchair or using a walker, every participant in the Miracle League plays the field, gets a hit, gets on base, and crosses home plate. Members of the Rotary Club of Rockdale County joined forces with their sister club in Conyers to expand the flourishing league by creating the Field of Dreams project, an extraordinary complex for Miracle Leaguers and other youth baseball teams. Their custom-designed venue has three playing fields of grass and one of cushioned synthetic turf to accommodate wheelchairs and other walking-assistance devices, plus accessible concessions and restroom areas. While fundraising was a big part of the project, Rotarians also have been committed to spreading the word about the unique league, identifying prospective players, and promoting awareness of Rotary in the area.

Supplying necessities to a home for needy children

The Rotary Club of Kristinestad-Kristiinankaupunki, Finland, took action when it learned of a home in Kupanitsa, Russia, where 108 children with mental disabilities lived in desperate need of basics such as blankets, medicine, and food. With US\$2,000 in District Designated Funds and donations from individual members, the club obtained a Helping Grant from The Rotary Foundation. A team of Finnish Rotarians planned a mission that would entail purchasing the supplies and delivering them in person. When the relief supplies arrived — including 3,100 pounds of groceries, more than 100 pharmaceutical products, and loads of blankets — they were greeted by throngs of delighted children.

Making arts education available

Most students who attend CIARTE, an arts education program for young people with Down syndrome in Guadalajara, Mexico, go to government schools that don't teach the arts. The unique program offers classes three evenings a week in theater improvisation, traditional folk dances, painting, crafts, and music, and has received international recognition for its innovation in teaching children with Down syndrome. Staffed by professionals who volunteer their time, CIARTE is attended by nearly 70 students, ranging in age from 6 to 35. When a past president of the Rotary Club of Guadalajara Chapultepec heard about the arts education program, she encouraged her club to support it. In addition to making financial contributions for supplies and operational needs, the Rotarians regularly visit the center that houses the program, attend student performances, and drive students to orphanages and retirement homes where they perform folk dances, puppet shows and plays, and present art exhibits.

Health Care

From sponsoring eye and limb camps in developing countries to providing surgery for children with congenital defects and building and equipping medical institutions, Rotary clubs have never ceased their efforts to ease suffering and provide life-sustaining care to millions of people. Yet, achieving better health for all is an ever-changing, ever-challenging task.

Despite revolutionary medical advances that have increased life expectancy and quality of life, not everyone shares the benefits of better health, as the World Health Organization and UNICEF make clear:

- While global infant mortality rates have fallen by two-thirds since 1950, in some developing countries mortality rates for children under age 5 are more than 50 times higher than in the industrialized world.
- In many developing countries, HIV/AIDS is increasing infant mortality rates and reducing life expectancy dramatically; in at least two African nations, 25 percent of the population has HIV, which leads to AIDS.
- Although many killer diseases like poliomyelitis stand on the verge of eradication, at least 30 new infectious diseases — for many of which there is currently no treatment or vaccine — have emerged during the past 20 years to pose a threat to the health of hundreds of millions of people.
- In industrialized countries, the major health problems are noncommunicable diseases such as heart disease and cancer, which are often linked to high-fat diets, smoking, lack of exercise, and other lifestyle choices.
- In developing countries, the major killers remain infectious diseases, including respiratory illnesses, tuberculosis, and malaria, which are often associated with poverty and unhealthy environments.

Rotarians work on many fronts to help people gain access to health care, build supportive environments, and learn to make healthy choices. The poor especially need the resources Rotarians can provide.

PROJECT IDEAS

- Organize an awareness campaign, such as an AIDS walk or drug and alcohol abuse awareness rally.
- Hold an immunization drive or a health fair that provides information on health and screening services, in collaboration with the local health department.
- Organize continuing education opportunities for local health professionals.
- Work with local schools to provide staffing and funding for a school clinic for the students.
- Partner with local communities to develop a source for safe water and a sanitation system.
- Establish a clinic or hospital or a facility that focuses on a special needs group such as families affected by leprosy or underserved women.
- Gather and donate medical equipment or supplies.
- Locate areas needing medical assistance and recruit fellow Rotarians with medical expertise to visit the area and provide their services at no charge.

PROJECT EXAMPLES

Building a ‘Hospital of Hope’

District 7070, Ontario, Canada, helped build a children’s surgical hospital in the impoverished Los Alcarizos neighborhood of Santo Domingo, capital of the Dominican Republic. The stand-alone facility is part of an existing hospital, which did not have the resources to perform as many opera-

tions as were needed. All the funds raised by District 7070 and District 4060, Dominican Republic, went toward construction. A group of Rotarians from 10 different clubs in the Canadian district worked a week in the Dominican Republic, spending their nights sleeping in barracks and their days mixing and pouring concrete, cutting supporting rods, and creating walls from cement blocks. Many of the doctors at the new hospital are volunteers, including a number of Rotarian physicians from Canada who expressed an interest in serving.

Increasing cancer survival rates

While breast cancer survival rates in many developed countries are high, the battle rages on in Poland, which has only a 50 percent survival rate. The lack of early detection equipment there means loss of life, a situation Rotarians in District 7330, Pennsylvania, USA, wanted to change. Created as a joint project between Districts 7330 and 2230, Poland, the breast cancer detection endeavor had Rotarians in both districts learning about the medical technology and procedures, identifying the needs of a local hospital, and initiating a fundraising campaign that totaled nearly US\$60,000. With the funds, a new mammography unit was purchased, along with standard accessories.

Preventing the spread of malaria

Following a request by the World Health Organization, the Rotary Club of Port Vila, Vanuatu, initiated a project to fight against the constant threat of malaria. Trials in other countries had shown that installing permethrin-impregnated bednets was an effective method of risk prevention, so the Rotary club and other donor organizations purchased more than 90,000. Distributed throughout the 83 islands that make up the Republic of Vanuatu, the bednets reached an estimated 73 percent of the population. The results of the distribution are reflected in the 80 percent reduction of reported incidences of malaria since 1991. In addition to the cost of bednets, Rotarians also purchased permethrin for the re-dipping of nets, which is done periodically for maximum protection.

Working for reproductive health

Districts 1620, Belgium, and 1670, France, decided to help prevent fetal and infant deaths in Russia, which had become the most significant obstetrical problem in that country due to economic factors, deficient diagnoses, and lack of medical equipment and information. While visiting Moscow, French Rotarians established an exchange program between Setchenov Medical University of Moscow and private and public medical schools in France and Belgium. They identified other ways in which they could help, including providing diagnostic equipment and creating a booklet on pregnancy and family planning.

Providing access to clean water

Families in rural Zimbabwe have access to clean water, thanks to the initiative of the Rotary Club of Harare. The project upgraded over 900 wells for families in the area and helped significantly reduce the incidence of waterborne diseases. Previously, people had to either draw water from the deteriorated wells, which posed a public health risk, or walk long distances to communal water supplies. Rotary clubs provided supplies for the project, which received assistance in the form of Rotary Foundation Matching Grants involving the Rotary Club of Kelowna, British Columbia, Canada, and District 2330, Sweden, and grants from the Canadian government and SIDA, the Swedish development agency.

International Understanding and Goodwill

Advancing world understanding and peace, which is expressed in the fourth part of the Object of Rotary, is an important focus of Rotarian service. It is the impetus for numerous service efforts and other cooperative ventures among Rotarians from different parts of the world. It is the reason Rotary International has a long-standing, close collaboration with the United Nations and many of its member agencies. Appropriately, every year the anniversary of the founding of Rotary, 23 February, is celebrated as World Understanding and Peace Day.

It was once thought that international understanding would be a byproduct of world trade and instantaneous communication. However, although globalization may be bringing the world closer together, universal tolerance and peace sadly remain out of reach.

- Twenty-seven major armed conflicts were under way throughout the world in the late 1990s, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute — all but two of them internal conflicts.
- Conflicts have produced some 31 million refugees and other displaced persons, most of them women and children.
- Imbalances of power among nations, tensions between religious and ethnic groups, and the widening gap between rich and poor within and between nations cause deep resentments, which can easily turn into clashes.

The internationality of its membership puts Rotary in a unique situation to promote peace and goodwill. Through club-to-club contacts, international service projects, peace programs, and cultural and educational exchanges, Rotary clubs worldwide make a meaningful contribution to world peace. But Rotary clubs make an equally meaningful contribution to peace through service in their own communities. Given the communal nature of many of today's conflicts, the homefront is an excellent arena for local Rotary clubs to begin advancing international understanding and goodwill.

PROJECT IDEAS

- Sponsor a Model United Nations program so that young people can experience the challenges and mechanics of global problem solving.
- Help build friendly reciprocal relations with Rotary clubs in other countries by developing club-to-club links or by participating in an Intercountry Committee.
- Plan — and invite the public to — a club program on Rotary peace activities in honor of World Understanding and Peace Day, 23 February.
- Encourage ethnic diversity in club membership and invite the participation of Rotary scholars, exchange students, and Rotary Foundation alumni in club activities.
- Sponsor a peace-themed essay, art, or drama contest for youth, or use your international Rotary contacts to locate pen or e-mail pals for local youth.
- Participate in RI programs like World Community Service, Rotary Friendship Exchange, and Rotary Recreational and Vocational Fellowships.
- Take part in a Rotary International Convention or other meeting that stimulates mutual understanding, resource sharing, and networking among new friends.

PROJECT EXAMPLES

Cooperating to help orphans

Intercountry Committees, which link clubs and districts in two or more countries, have the potential to achieve multiple projects. Active since 1992, the France-Bulgaria Intercountry Committee has carried out many humanitarian activities. Recently the committee purchased 25 cows and milking and refrigeration equipment for a rural orphanage and school at Glavititza, Bulgaria, in order to provide the 150 children there with daily milk. Some 30 clubs, most of them in France, helped raise funds for the project. At the request of the Rotary Club of Sofia, Bulgaria, the Bulgarian Agricultural Ministry donated land to the school for raising grain for the cows and the city of Glavititza cleaned up a stable. The Sofia club supervised all local purchases. The committee then determined the next steps: to increase the number of cows, start yogurt and cheese production, and, most important, train some of the school's students in the operation of the farm, a trade that will serve them in the future.

Creating a peace partnership

In a project called Partners in Peace, the Rotary Club of Edmonton Riverview, Alberta, Canada, sponsored a 10-day visit by six teenagers from three different ethnic backgrounds in war-torn Bosnia-Herzegovina to interact with Edmonton high school students. The Bosnians were selected by a Sarajevo Rotarian, transported by Canadian Armed Forces, and housed with Canadian families. Modeled on similar projects involving Irish and Middle Eastern youths interacting with U.S. students, the nationally publicized project exposed Canadians to the horrors of war and the Bosnians to the multiculturalism of Canada. It also immersed Edmonton Riverview Rotarians in the peace process.

Helping immigrants assimilate

The Rotary Club of Hadera, Israel, recognized that many immigrants had trouble assimilating into mainstream society because of a language barrier. The problem is often self-perpetuating because immigrants tend to work and socialize together, relying on their mother tongue for communication. The club set up a weekly session for a group of Russian immigrants to practice speaking Hebrew. The club's work ended only when the immigrants themselves felt comfortable enough to say — in Hebrew — that they no longer felt the need for the workshop.

Hosting an international RYLA

Organizing or hosting a multinational Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA) seminar is a great way to further international understanding. In the Caribbean area, where one RI district — 7020 — comprises 10 nations and geographical areas and another district — 7030 — has 13, a RYLA event easily becomes international. When District 7020 staged a RYLA camp in Jamaica, it gathered 35 young people, including Interactors and Rotaractors, from Jamaica, the Bahamas, the Cayman Islands, and Suriname. Besides learning leadership skills and regional concerns, the youths forged close bonds among themselves and expressed enthusiasm for starting Interact and Rotaract clubs in their communities.

Finding fellowship through sport

Shared avocations and vocations ranging from amateur radio to veterinary science unite Rotarians in global fellowships, with sporting activities being particularly popular. When the International Fellowship of Cricketing Rotarians (IFCR) held a five-day festival in Chennai, India, competition gave way to fellowship. Rotarian teams from India, Australia, New Zealand, England, and Sri Lanka took part in matches and put on impressive performances. Off the pitch, the cricketing Rotarians gathered for fellowship in post-match luncheons, and clubs around Chennai welcomed the visitors to their meetings. The event laid the groundwork for lasting relationships between clubs in India and those in the visiting nations, future Rotary cricket tours between pairs of the participating countries, and special scholarships for young Indian cricket players.

Literacy and Numeracy

For many years, Rotarians have been active in efforts to reduce illiteracy, from building schools and paying salaries of teachers to serving as tutors to collecting and distributing books and audiovisual materials to libraries. Rotarians are working with governments to create large-scale replicable literacy projects in the developing world. In 1997, the RI Board of Directors designated July as Literacy Month, a perfect time for Rotary clubs to develop their own literacy projects as well as raise awareness of Rotarian efforts worldwide to eradicate illiteracy.

Considerable progress has been made in recent decades in reducing illiteracy; yet, close to a billion people lack the most basic literacy and numeracy skills. Millions more are functionally illiterate, lacking the skills necessary to meet the demands of everyday life. The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) illuminates some of the greatest challenges for those tackling illiteracy:

- Ninety-eight percent of the world's illiterate population is in developing countries.
- Fifty percent of the world's illiterate people live in India and China.
- More than 50 percent of the population of Africa is illiterate.
- Two-thirds of all those who lack literacy and numeracy skills are women.
- More than 130 million school-age children are not attending classes.

The ability to read, write, and do simple math is not only critical to progress and prosperity, it is necessary for the very survival of individuals in a modern society. Literacy and numeracy projects allow Rotarians to make a creative contribution to building nations, reducing poverty, and opening up opportunities to those who need them.

PROJECT IDEAS

- Apply for a Rotary Foundation grant to establish literacy programs for girls and women, working with an international partner in a country with high rates of female illiteracy.
- Establish a literacy center with a library where people can come to read and meet tutors.
- Sponsor a business breakfast, inviting business executives and managers of local businesses to hear about literacy efforts in the workplace.
- Offer to set up satellite schools in villages, if girls are forbidden to travel far from home, and to sponsor single-sex schools with female teachers, if coeducational learning is a cultural issue.
- Organize a public awareness campaign encouraging parents to read to their children.
- Donate books to students and class libraries at home and abroad.
- Schedule a reading hour at a local library when club members would read to children.
- Provide child care for parents attending literacy classes.
- Reward students who read the most books, win a spelling bee or book report contest, or tutor others.

PROJECT EXAMPLES

Implementing a revolutionary project

In Bangladesh, the Concentrated Language Encounter (CLE) literacy project, implemented by Rotary clubs in Dhaka, has revolutionized the national education curriculum. The project demonstrated that a child's reading skills can be developed and enhanced by interactive learning that involves acting out words and stories, singing, or even dancing. Following the recommendation of Rotarians, primary school teachers in Bangladesh now are required to complete a CLE methods

course to qualify for their certificate in education. By June 1999, some 3,136 educators received CLE training and more than 2,157 classrooms in 357 schools implemented the CLE program, benefiting 162,982 students.

Volunteering to teach

The number of illiterate people in India has risen from 230 million in 1951 to more than 340 million today. This increase is attributed to lack of resources and a high birth rate. To attack the problem, Rotarians in District 3010 (Union Territory of Delhi and parts of Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, India) came up with the Navjot literacy campaign, an innovative project aimed at mobilizing Rotarians, Rotaractors, Interactors, and other organizations to assist the Delhi Schools Literacy Project. Under the project, which now involves more than 75 schools, Rotarian volunteers identify and teach the nonliterate people in their communities and workplaces.

Educating workers at the workplace

In 1998, the Rotary Club of Marília Pioneiro, São Paulo, Brazil, launched a literacy project called Education at Work. Supported by the CIESP (Center for São Paulo State Industries) and Adima (Association of Marília Food Industries), the initiative encourages firms in the community to establish workplace literacy programs. Several firms including Nestlé, the multinational food and drinks corporation, have joined the project, contributing equipment such as video monitors, teaching space, and convenient training times for employees. At Sasazaki, one of the companies participating in the project, 460 of 1,500 employees had not completed primary education. When the company invited workers to register for remedial classes, 158 of them signed up.

Saving a school

When fire gutted a three-room elementary school in the impoverished rural community of Taloy Norte, Philippines, the Rotary Club of Metro Baguio stepped in to help. Architects, engineers, and construction experts in the club inspected sites, drew up specifications, and prepared cost estimates for rebuilding the school. All club members and their families helped raise funds for the project. Some also donated lumber, cement, paint, windows, and doors. Together, community residents and club members reconstructed the school, exemplifying their belief that education helps bring lasting solutions to the community's socioeconomic needs.

Shipping books abroad

The Interact Club of St. Ives, New South Wales, Australia, collected 1,000 books for a school library in Papua New Guinea, but needed help in shipping them. So its sponsoring Rotary Club of St. Ives investigated options. The Rotarians learned about the nonprofit Ranfurly Book Service, whose volunteers ship books to PNG towns. There, Rotary clubs distribute the books free of charge. The Interactors' books were delivered to Ranfurly's Sydney branch where they helped form the largest book consignment it ever shipped. The Interactors followed up with a cookout that netted A\$200, which, after being matched by the Rotary club, was donated to the Ranfurly Book Service.

Donating 'Books for Babes'

The Rotary Club of Endwell, New York, USA, has for several years conducted a Books for Babes project in which every new mother at two local hospitals receives a shopping bag filled with literacy information and a book to read to her child. More than 1,400 such gifts have been distributed. The Rotarians have also held book fairs to solicit donations of reading materials. Club members also promote the recycling of discarded books.

Population Issues

Rotarians care about the quality of life for all, from the youngest to the oldest, and have sponsored immunization and health programs that have helped to increase longevity. But falling global child mortality rates and climbing lifespans have prompted a new concern: that population growth may outpace Earth's ability to sustain development.

In the 30 years between 1969 and 1999, the world's population grew from 3.7 billion to 6 billion people. While the annual rates of growth slowed from 2.4 to 1.3 percent over that same time span, the global population continues to rise by about 78 million a year. United Nations reports provide telling glimpses into population issues:

- The highest population growth rates are generally occurring in the poorest and most environmentally fragile parts of the world.
- The most rapid fertility declines have occurred in developing countries which have achieved major improvements in child survival rates and educational levels and have implemented family planning programs.
- Even if fertility rates everywhere were to fall instantly to replacement level (2.06 children per woman), the high number of youths who are entering reproductive age ensures that world population growth will continue for another two generations.
- While there are more young people than ever, there are also more older people; the proportion of people over age 65 worldwide will exceed 17 percent by 2020.

In 1999, the RI Board adopted a statement on population growth and sustainable development, which reads in part: "Rotary International encourages Rotary clubs and districts, working as appropriate with government agencies, nongovernmental organizations and local leadership, to increase awareness and undertake even more projects that directly impact population growth and sustainable development. Projects would include those that promote education on the issue of population, access to family health care, adequate nutrition, and enable individuals to make informed and responsible decisions about issues such as child spacing in a way that is in keeping with their personal values and cultural and religious considerations."

PROJECT IDEAS

- Conduct or sponsor women's health seminars in the community, focusing on reproductive health, prenatal care, and the benefits of delaying childbearing past adolescence and of spacing children, if appropriate.
- Arrange transportation for underprivileged mothers to attend health clinics and seminars.
- Sponsor a community health fair providing senior citizens a free blood pressure check, eye exam, diabetes screening, and other services.
- Develop a community-awareness campaign aimed at warning young people about the consequences of teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases while promoting self-esteem.
- Sponsor a microcredit program to provide loans to small-business entrepreneurs, particularly women.
- Conduct a literacy program focusing on girls, or establish a scholarship fund for girls that would cover the costs of school fees, uniforms, books, and other materials.
- Develop child care programs for preschoolers so that their older sisters would be free from babysitting duties to attend school.
- Invite a speaker to educate Rotary club members about population and development from a global perspective.

PROJECT EXAMPLES

Promoting child spacing and women's health

Rotary Districts 1860, Germany, and 9120, Nigeria, helped implement child spacing in parts of Kaduna State, Nigeria, consistent with the government's national health policy and World Health Organization guidelines. Child Spacing and Family Health Investigation Centers, developed by Nigerian and German Rotary clubs and aided by Rotary Foundation and German government grants, educated families about the benefits of child spacing, which has helped reduce maternal and infant mortality. Workshops educated more than 1,000 doctors, nurses, health care workers, and birth attendants about screening for reproductive tract cancer and child spacing methods. About 500,000 Nigerian women and their families have benefited from the project, which included a massive reproductive health awareness campaign supported by civic and religious leaders. Three years after introduction of the project, the United Nations Population Fund was working with Rotary clubs to replicate the effort throughout Nigeria and Africa.

Improving maternal and child health

Six Rotary clubs in District 4760 (part of Minas Gerais, Brazil) assisted by local health agencies, District 5280 (California, USA), and a Health, Hunger and Humanity (3-H) Grant established a human milk bank, lactation center, family planning and perinatal care office, and three dental offices, which benefit mothers and children in northern Minas Gerais and southern Bahia states of Brazil. Mothers receive paid transportation to the milk banks to donate their milk and receive education in using natural foods to improve family diets. The project also raised funds to enlarge a community hospital.

Providing free access to integrated health care

A free medical camp organized by the Rotaract Club of Karachi Midtown, Pakistan, provided community residents with tuberculosis scanning in a mobile van, ultrasound facilities, and movies about family planning. Fourteen doctors specializing in eye care, dermatology, gynecology, pediatrics, and general health care contributed their services at the camp. Several pharmaceutical companies also donated medications. More than 1,000 patients received examinations and treatment for various diseases and conditions.

Helping the aging maintain a high quality of life

In a desire to help overcome a shortage of housing for the oldest residents in its community, the Rotary Club of Fort McMurray, Alberta, Canada, helped establish Rotary House — a “supportive housing facility” that fills a void between independent living and long-term institutional care. The club raised C\$2.66 million to fund construction of the 40-unit facility, which provides private living space, meals, and other services for each resident, along with common areas for group activities. Residents receive a level of assistance that, in most cases, they wouldn't otherwise be able to afford and a sense of independence by having the option to furnish their own suites.

Making an ongoing commitment to welfare of the aged

Aware that Japan is aging more rapidly than any other country, the Rotary Community Corps of Okayama Chuo conducts three projects benefiting senior citizens: visits to institutions for the aged, communication with the area's aged, and a Symposium on the Aged. Through these projects, seniors have participated in annual sports and dance events at the Okayama Saiseikai Life Care Center. The symposium focuses on topics such as community support for the aging, assisted-living arrangements, and hospice care. Widespread television and newspaper coverage has helped the symposium become a civic learning event that addresses community needs.

Poverty and Hunger

Traditionally defined as lack of income, poverty also means lack of access to health care, nutrition, education, and employment. It is perpetuated by hunger. People without enough food to eat are unlikely to have the strength to educate themselves, learn marketable skills, or find and keep a job. The United Nations Development Program points out:

- Nearly 1.3 billion people — more than one-fifth of the world's population — live in extreme poverty on little more than US\$1 a day.
- Some 840 million people — one out of every seven worldwide — are malnourished.
- Although the world produces plenty of food, it is not getting to those who need it most.
- When the health and productivity of a nation declines, it is vulnerable to economic and social hardship and political instability.

Rotarians undertake thousands of service projects each year to help conquer poverty and hunger in communities around the world, often with local resources only. Many projects draw upon the assistance of Rotary clubs in other countries through World Community Service, The Rotary Foundation, or other organizations.

PROJECT IDEAS

- Establish a microcredit bank or revolving loan fund to help residents start or expand small businesses.
- Make available appropriate technology tools, expertise, and training to farmers to help increase their harvests, and encourage them to assist neighboring farmers.
- Provide vegetable seeds and training to impoverished families to enable them to raise food in their own gardens.
- Sponsor a land-use survey to determine how agricultural production might be increased through irrigation, fertilization, cultivation, and other means.
- Provide low-cost housing for homeless or extremely low-income families.
- Establish a hot lunch program for disadvantaged children at a local school.
- Identify children in the community whose families cannot afford to send them to school and arrange to pay for their tuition and fees.
- Organize a club for disadvantaged youths to provide vocational training, job placement, mentoring, and fellowship, and instill self-esteem.
- Collect donated coats and other clothing in good condition that can be provided to impoverished children and their families.

PROJECT EXAMPLES

'Adopting' children, schools, villages

In the midst of the worst crisis Indonesia suffered in more than three decades, the Minister of Poverty Alleviation appealed to the country's Rotary clubs to participate in a program to provide relief to children. District 3400, which contains all of Indonesia's Rotary clubs, responded by launching a program called Help the Children, Help the Schools, Help the Villages, supported in part by Children's Opportunities Grants. Rotarians throughout the country are working to Help the Children by "adopting" them — that is, compiling databases on children of families below the poverty line and providing them with tuition, school uniforms, shoes, food, transportation and other assistance. To Help the Schools, Rotarians have targeted run-down facilities and arranged repairs,

equipment, and supplies to keep them operating. To Help the Villages, Rotarians are using micro-loan projects to assist farmers in obtaining seeds, fertilizer, and instruction to boost productivity and to support small businesses.

Equipping a community to build better lives

The Rotary Club of Mymensingh, Bangladesh, with the support of the Rotary Club of Brisbane, Australia, and a Health, Hunger and Humanity (3-H) Grant, expanded a livestock and poultry development project. The effort boosted agriculture and livestock production, created fisheries, developed forestland, improved sanitation, and provided health care and family planning services. A Rotary Community Corps comprising 66 farmers and representatives of 16 villages helps maintain community support for the project. Women received baby goats and tree saplings to raise for income. A credit fund aids farmers in purchasing supplies, with the request they pay the balance when their produce has been sold.

Finding a homegrown response to hunger

A health training center is helping families in Cochabamba, Bolivia, to learn organic gardening techniques and raise chickens, rabbits, and fish. Two acres of land are being used to construct cages, create ponds, and establish other facilities. A partnership between the Rotary Club of Cochabamba and District 6920, Georgia, USA, the project is training health promoters from more than 200 communities who are helping to improve the health and nutrition of more than 60,000 people.

Investing in a food bank

For several years Rotary clubs in Marseilles, France, have served as an energetic partner in the Bouches du Rhone Food Bank. The clubs defrayed the cost of transporting 33 tons of apples cross country, provided a computer system, helped finance a poster campaign for a food drive in shopping centers, and purchased a refrigeration truck. Marseilles Rotaractors have also taken part in the food drives. In addition, Rotarians and Rotaractors help sort and check food collected in a major drive conducted every November in large supermarkets, as well as other drives in shopping centers and educational institutions throughout the year.

Achieving far-reaching impact with soybean project

The Soybean Self-Help Nutrition Project launched by the Rotary Club of Luanshya, Zambia, has helped improve the nutrition of people living in the country's copper belt region. Assisted by a 3-H Grant and local nongovernmental organizations, the project established four soy centers in shanty compounds. The centers serve 90 to 120 mothers and children each week, providing a high-protein soy porridge donated by the World Health Organization, medicine, vitamins, and nutritional counseling, along with recording children's weight. The project has helped reduce infant mortality and increase infants' weight. In addition, mothers have started raising soybeans, supplying their own needs and selling the surplus to others. The strong demand for soybeans has spawned small businesses and new jobs, and several schools have incorporated soy production and utilization into their curricula.

Establishing a revolving loan fund

In a project that aims to improve the lives and livelihoods of the rural poor, Rotary clubs in Central America are establishing locally operated village banks and providing capital for investment in small business enterprises. Numerous women in Guatemala and Honduras have received loans at nominal interest to start tailoring, fruit-selling, tortilla-making, and other businesses. With help from North American Rotary clubs, a 3-H Grant, and 42 Rotary clubs in Districts 4240 (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Panama) and 4250 (Belize, Guatemala, and Honduras), the project will soon be extended to hundreds of other women throughout the region.

Preserve Planet Earth

Improving the environment has been central to Rotary service from the organization's earliest days. Spurred by the example of Rotary founder Paul Harris, who stopped to plant many a tree during his world travels, Rotarians have planted millions of trees, created parks large and small, and carried out recycling activities in communities all over the globe. In 1990, Rotary International endorsed a focus on Preserve Planet Earth as a way to promote awareness among Rotarians and increase the number of Rotary environmental service projects.

Reports from United Nations agencies and the World Bank underscore the urgency of preserving our planet:

- Without changes in water management, a third of the world's people will likely suffer from chronic water shortages in 30 years.
- In a 25-year span of the late 20th century, the world's natural forest cover declined about 10 percent, an area equivalent in size to England and Wales.
- Loss of forests and global warming are among factors aggravating the impact of natural disasters, resulting in great loss of life and displacement of people.
- Global energy use is increasing more than 2 percent a year, most of it from nonrenewable fossil fuels.
- In developing countries, an estimated 400 to 700 million women and children are exposed to severe air pollution, mainly from cooking fires.
- As much as a third of all croplands worldwide have lost topsoil due to poor agricultural practices, and drylands are spreading in more than 100 countries.

Through hands-on activities, educational programs, and innovative projects to reverse environmental deterioration, Rotary clubs and districts continue to make Preserve Planet Earth a service opportunity.

PROJECT IDEAS

- Support the creation of urban gardens, parks, woodlands, and greenbelts.
- Arrange a cleanup day along a river, lake, or ocean shore in your community.
- Promote the use of public transportation and ride-sharing.
- Assist poor communities to obtain safe water and sanitation systems.
- Publicize community health training that addresses the relationships between safe water, sanitation, and health.
- Organize a community program to collect and sort glass, paper products, and other recyclable items.
- Support innovative educational programs that emphasize the importance and interdependence of the ecosystem.
- Sponsor a service project that provides agricultural training, appropriate tools, and capital resources to small farmers.
- Give awards to local businesses or industries for ecologically sound extraction, production, design, packaging, and waste disposal practices.

PROJECT EXAMPLES

Recycling household wastes

The Rotary Club of Cerquilho, Brazil, organized a project to encourage community members to separate and recycle household trash, such as bottles, plastic, paper and cardboard, cans, and iron.

These items are packed in plastic bags, collected by trucks, and sent to a storage area for later sale. The income derived from the sale is given to the Municipal School for the Assistance and Education of the Handicapped for the purchase of teaching materials, paint, equipment, and the like. The cost of the plastic bags used for trash collection is underwritten by the Cerquilho Solidarity Social Fund, relying on support from the Cerquilho municipality which collects the separated trash.

Using the sun for fuel

In Kenya, wood fires account for more than 80 percent of the country's energy use. The fires not only strip the land of trees, they also cause acute respiratory diseases in the women who tend them. A U.S. Rotary volunteer went from village to village demonstrating the effectiveness of energy-efficient solar cookers. Convinced by his presentation, the Rotary Club of Nairobi East spearheaded a project to build inexpensive solar cookers and train villagers in their use. The solar cooker or sun oven idea has proved equally popular in dozens of other countries, from Egypt to Honduras.

Rediscovering pedal power

In an initiative modeled after programs in cities elsewhere, Rotarians in Fresno, California, USA, are offering residents free use of bicycles as an alternative mode of public transportation. The program is targeted at community members who lack cars and cannot afford bus or taxi fares. Rotarians collect donated bicycles from individuals, organizations, and the local police department, then have them painted yellow. Residents pick up and drop off the bright two-wheelers at designated racks or they collect them from city buses with bike racks.

Creating awareness of pollution

When Omura Bay, in the Nagasaki region of Japan, became polluted by oily wastewater, the Interact Club of Koyo High School took action immediately. Working with the municipal government's environmental unit, the Interactors collected 20 liters of oil from the bay. From the oil, they made 35 kilograms of soap, which they sold at their school's bazaar. Their action created a strong public awareness of the need for environmental preservation.

Preventing forest fires

Aggravated by drought, forest fires spread out of control in Indonesia in the late 1990s, producing acrid smoke that hovered over the chain of islands for months. Rotarians pitched in to help battle the fires, providing ground information to the national crisis command post and helping identify solutions in which Rotary could assist. In cooperation with the Environment Ministry and a group of environmentally minded businesses, District 3400, Indonesia, produced a video on the causes and effects of forest fires and how to prevent them in the future. The video was designed for use in schools throughout Indonesia.

Delivering clean water

One of the most urgent needs of disaster victims is a clean water supply. District 1220, England, launched a project to supply "aquaboxes" to people in disaster areas in order to prevent the spread of waterborne diseases such as cholera and typhoid. Each box holds 75 liters of water and medical supplies. The container itself can be used as a water purifier, effectively replenishing the water supply 14 times. More than 10,000 aquaboxes have been distributed through clubs and other organizations to 25 countries, from India to the Balkans to Gambia.

Urban Concerns

In 1905, Chicago was a bustling frontier city with both job opportunities and destitution, and with a reputation for filth, violence, and vice. Paul Harris believed “there could have been no more favorable birthplace for a movement like Rotary than paradoxical Chicago.” For the founder of Rotary, the city not only was a place in dire need of club fellowship but also of basic services, like public toilets. Rotary has never forgotten its urban roots and service concerns.

Today, the United Nations calculates that more than 50 percent of the world’s population resides in urban or suburban areas, many in cities of 10 million or more inhabitants. The world’s urban population is growing by 60 million a year. While urban areas have become the engine of social growth in all regions, they also pose great problems:

- Urban population growth, especially in less-developed regions, has outpaced the development of employment, housing, services, and the rest of the infrastructure; some 25-30 percent of urban inhabitants in developing countries live in slums.
- The numbers of poor women in particular have increased, both in cities, where work opportunities are limited, and in rural areas, where their husbands or children are leaving to seek urban opportunities.
- Problems once associated with urban decay and poverty in large cities can now be found in communities of all sizes: crime, unemployment, gangs, domestic and other violence, substance abuse, ethnic tensions, and homelessness.

Just as Rotarians work for peace globally, it is equally critical that Rotary clubs develop plans of action to address urban problems that threaten their own neighborhoods. From sponsoring inner-city Scout troops to building houses for low-income residents to providing training and jobs to ex-substance abusers who need a fresh start, many clubs are finding a way to renew their communities.

PROJECT IDEAS

- Recognize that young people can too easily become either the victims or perpetrators of violence, and structure service efforts that focus on the needs of children.
- Utilize the workplace as an area to build community peace, assist in vocational training, and promote fairness and integrity in business practices.
- Create a service project addressing the needs of refugees, migrants, or immigrants in your community.
- Support a local shelter for victims of domestic abuse.
- Serve as mentors or tutors for young people in need of caring adult role models.
- Work with local schools to create a peer mediation program or present a conflict-resolution or peace education workshop to students.
- Sponsor alcohol-free festivals and dances to demonstrate you needn’t be “high” to have fun.
- Conduct a community cleanup or tree-planting to improve the physical appearance of a neighborhood and instill a sense of pride in its residents.

PROJECT EXAMPLES

Turning danger into opportunity

Sales of once widely popular switchblades have now been restricted in Japan, but many youths still carry them, and police have had little success in coaxing young people to surrender their weapons. With an altruistic and creative request, however, members of the Rotary Club of Ise South in Mie

Prefecture convinced a number of youths to disarm themselves. Rotarians sent a letter to students at 29 local schools with the following message: "The people of the Republic of Palau want your knife." Pamphlets accompanied the letter to explain that the Pacific islanders of Palau need the knives, which are costly, for fishing, hunting, and food-gathering. More than 300 knives were sent in via Rotary pre-paid parcels, many anonymously, and some students journeyed to Palau to deliver the knives.

Organizing a Neighborhood Watch

Rotarians in Mexico City, Mexico, decided that an effective way to address lawlessness in the country was to involve all citizens in a neighborhood watch program. Residents have been trained on how to respond to suspicious activity, either by telephone or whistles, and homes throughout the city display signs warning would-be criminals that the community is on alert. The project was sponsored by the Fondo Unido Rotario de México and the Centro Cívico de Solidaridad and received Matching Grants from The Rotary Foundation.

Comforting crime victims

Since 1991 the Rotary Club of Vancouver Chinatown, British Columbia, Canada, has funded a joint project with the local police department to supply teddy bears to the force's Victim Services Unit. Made up of over 180 volunteers, the special unit's members respond to calls to assist the victims of crime, such as children who have been sexually or physically abused. The teddy bears, called Care Bears, have become an invaluable tool for the volunteers. When given to abused children, the bears serve not only as a comfort but, in some cases, as assistants to detectives interviewing children who need to feel at ease telling their story and showing where, on the bear, they were touched or hit. Care Bears wear T-shirts imprinted with a Rotary wheel and police department crest.

Preventing violence against women

The Interact clubs of Visakha Vidyalaya and St. Peter's College in Sri Lanka organized the first youth forum on violence against women. The Canadian International Development Agency was the advisor and principal sponsor of the project. The main objectives of the project were to create awareness among Sri Lankan youths about the many aspects of violence perpetrated against women and to discuss the contributing factors and steps that should be taken to prevent the crimes from occurring. Various speakers and student entertainers made presentations during the all-day event, educating the 200 participants about the severity of the problem in society, the importance of awareness, and the need for positive change.

Building a new library

To counteract drug and alcohol abuse among youths in the small Italian town of San Felice Circeo, the Interact Club of Latina Circeo, in partnership with the Rotary Club of Latina Circeo, Italy, proposed to the local school the construction of an after-school library. They were inspired by the school's effort to provide after-school activities such as theater and environment classes and sports. The Interact and Rotary clubs agreed to contribute books, a computer with Internet access, CD-ROMs, videos, and furniture to the library project.

Giving troubled youths a fresh start

Being thrown out of school can be a serious setback in a child's life. A program called Improved Solutions for Urban Systems, working with a school in Dayton, Ohio, USA, is giving a second chance to 160 youths who have been expelled from school. The students, most of whom were referred to the program by juvenile courts, are learning construction as a trade. They are also rebuilding homes, thus helping to restore neighborhoods. The Rotary Club of Dayton contributed US\$175,000 to the program, which allowed it to enroll more students, hire new teachers, and improve its vocational curriculum. The club's money, combined with other funds, also helps the school pay the young people a daily stipend, which increases if they complete a high school equivalency diploma.



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