

# ROTARACT IN DISTRICT 5030

## THE ISSUE

Rotaract Clubs can be a great source of new blood and energy. According to Rotary International, *“Organizing a Rotaract Club is one of the most rewarding activities a Rotary Club can undertake in its community. The Rotaract program gives Rotarians the opportunity to mentor dynamic young women and men interested in providing service to their own communities as well as the global community. In turn, a Rotaract Club can bring new energy to a Rotary Club, inspire fresh ideas for service, increase support for projects, and help develop future Rotary Club members.”*

In District 5030, there are currently two active Rotaract and at least two “phantom” clubs on the books at Rotary International. Given the District’s interest in growing membership and reducing the average age of Rotarians along with the ongoing interest in service activities, it is appropriate that District 5030 develop a plan for growing Rotaract in the District.

## WHAT IS ROTARACT?

Rotaract Clubs consist of women and men age 18-30 residing, employed or studying in the vicinity of the organizing Rotary Club. They are self-governed and largely self-financed at the local level. They work in cooperation with the sponsoring Rotary Club as partners in service. All Rotaract Clubs undertake three types of activities: professional development, leadership development and service. Each Rotaract Club has a Board consisting of a president, immediate past president, vice president, secretary, treasurer and other officers as deemed necessary. A club needs to have at least 15 members to be formed. All Rotaract Clubs operate under standard Rotaract Club Constitution prescribed by Rotary International.

Rotaract is described in Section 8 of the *Rotary Manual of Procedure* and *Rotaract Handbook* ([www.rotary.org/newsroom/downloadcenter/pdfs/562en.pdf](http://www.rotary.org/newsroom/downloadcenter/pdfs/562en.pdf)) (Publication 562-EN).

## ORGANIZING ROTARACT CLUBS

There are two types of Rotaract Clubs:

- **Community-Based Clubs** have members, age 18-35 who live, work or study in the vicinity of the sponsoring Rotary Club. These clubs usually have a Rotarian from the sponsoring club as the primary advisor. This role may be handled by a committee but it is usually best to identify one responsible individual.
- **University Clubs** have members of the same age who are also enrolled at the university, college or community college. These Rotaract Clubs usually have a faculty advisor, as well as an advisor from the sponsoring Rotary Club. The University Rotaract Club is established as a student organization within the guidelines and regulations of the school or university.

The first step is to identify Rotary Clubs willing to sponsor a Rotaract Club. Then the membership base must be identified and recruited. The *Rotaract Handbook* suggests an

informational meeting be held in which the advisor from the sponsoring Rotary Club will explain Rotary in general. A representative of an existing Rotaract Club or the District Rotaract representative will also explain Rotaract's purpose, goals and activities. Finally, information will be gathered from the attendees for prospective membership.

When enough interest has been demonstrated that at least 15 individuals are willing to form the club, the Board positions (described above) are elected, annual club dues are set and the meeting place and time are set (at least twice per month). The prospective club then must adopt the Standard Rotaract Constitution (Publication 661-EN) and establish bylaws. The bylaws are to be approved by the sponsoring club. At the same time, the club should apply for its charter from Rotary International by listing the members committed to attending at least 60% of the clubs meetings and service activities. These charter requests must be signed by the sponsoring Rotary Club's president and District Governor. That, plus \$50, completes the certification process.

## **THE PLAN**

The first step should be to recruit Rotary Clubs as potential sponsors. Under certain circumstances, more than one club can sponsor a Rotaract Club. The planning committee recommends that District 5030 target the creation of three (3) Community-Based Rotaract Clubs and several University Rotaract Clubs. The Community-Based Rotaract Clubs should be respectively in the north, south and east section of the District. The existing University Rotaract Club can represent Seattle. University Clubs could be formed in connection to any of the community colleges, colleges or universities in the District. Highline Community College, Seattle Central Community College, the University of Washington-Bothell and Green River Community College were identified as candidates.

The planning committee also recommends that current or incoming presidents be asked to consider their club's involvement in sponsoring or helping to sponsor a Rotaract Club. Pre-PETS or PETS might be an opportunity for this recruitment of sponsoring clubs. Rotaract can be marketed to Rotary Clubs on a number of levels. The committee identified the following reasons why Rotary Clubs would want to sponsor a Rotaract Club:

1. It provides a great pool of younger members for the club
2. It can help with new and existing hands on community service activities
3. It will provide the club with a connection to youth
4. It adds life and fun to a club
5. Older Rotarians can give the gift of Rotary to their family members or young associates in their workplaces

A most crucial step in the process is to identify one or more igniters. The planning committee defined these folks as young people interested and committed to the establishment of a Rotaract Club. They might come from businesses or organizations that have Rotarians in senior management. They might be family members or friends of Rotarians. These are the people that get the ball rolling. They would identify other potential leaders of the Rotaract Club and should then be connected to the Seattle Rotaract or the Bellevue Community

College Rotaract to get a feel for how those clubs operate and the kinds of activities they sponsor. This process of exploration would take about three (3) months.

Recruitment of a critical mass of members is the next step. The committee recommends that membership recruitment focus on different benefits for university and community-based clubs. For university clubs, Rotaract is a great resume builder. It also provides an international connection that may not exist in the institution or be available to them in their jobs. For those in community college, or at the undergraduate level, involvement in Rotaract can be very helpful in getting to the next tier of college. In many ways recruitment is less difficult in the university clubs because it is a student activity with a ready-made audience. It is important that the club have enough promotional or social events to make a presence.

For community-based clubs, Rotaract should be promoted as a fun way to get involved in the community and have an impact globally. Professional and leadership growth are also good motivators for this potential audience. It is important that it be promoted as an efficient use of their limited free time. In this group those who have been connected to Rotary as ambassadorial scholars, GSE team members or participants in RYLA make good prospective members. Again younger employees in companies and organizations which have Rotarians in senior management, as well as family members of Rotarians are also good candidates. In both cases, the recruitment period will 4-6 months.

Finally, once the club leadership and initial membership is identified and the sponsoring club(s) has appointed advisors and the college or university has approved of the establishment of the Rotaract club, the certification process should be started. For the community-based programs, the paperwork for Rotary International needs to be submitted. The sponsoring clubs should plan to support by helping with the establishment of a website, a PO Box and, at a later date, the filing for a non-profit 501(c) (3) status. Some clubs also sponsor the attendance of two Rotaract members to the District Conference. Usually, all other costs are covered by the Rotaract Club. In this case, the annual cost is \$500 to \$1,000 per year. Similarly, the college or university clubs will need this amount per year to assist with the promotional materials and district conference attendance.

## **SUMMARY**

Rotaract provides great promise as an energizer and pool of new strength for Rotary. District 5030 should have at least regional, community-based Rotaract clubs and several connected to community colleges and universities so that all clubs in the District could experience and benefit from Rotaract. Recruitment of the sponsoring clubs, the young people who can get the ball rolling and the initial groups who will charter the clubs are the order of importance in this development. The Seattle Rotaract and the Bellevue Community College Rotaract are prepared to assist in this effort.

## **PLANNING COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Rosemary Aragon  
Jay Barker  
Jason Courter

Jacob Peltier  
Karen Muller  
Bill Ptacek

Rachel Theriot  
Aleena Von Berks  
Don Gregory