

Humanitarian Reporting Awards (HRAs)

A guide to help clubs and districts recognize outstanding local humanitarian reporting.

Rotary clubs and districts can strengthen their relationship with the media by awarding them an honor for humanitarian-based news reporting. Humanitarian Reporting Awards will recognize the contributions journalists have made to help the general public better understand humanitarian, health, education and cross-cultural issues.

This guide provides an overview to help you design your own Humanitarian Reporting Awards. Rotary members should be on the watch for exceptional stories and examples of outstanding humanitarian reporting in their area.

Recognizing Efforts to Promote World Understanding

The awards are not just about building relationships for Rotary. Through technology and cultural awareness the world is becoming closer. We are learning that news everywhere affects us. There is a need to recognize the impact and value of humanitarian writing.

Rotary clubs and HRAs can benefit communities. The awards:

- **Build relationships.** Rotary and the media need to work together to share stories of hope. Having a journalism award creates ties between Rotary and the general public.
- **Educate the community.** The award introduces global topics to the community and opens doors for newsworthy humanitarian local stories.
- **Encourage humanitarian and solutions-oriented journalism.** Acknowledging the positive work of journalists underscores the importance of addressing relevant issues.
- **Recognize local talent.** The HRAs recognize reporters who have focused on global news trends occurring at the local level.

Holding your own HRAs

In order for the awards to run smoothly, they should follow a set of guidelines upon which your club or district should agree. Here are some suggestions on how to get started and what your club should be thinking about when planning the HRAs:

Effective public relations campaigns require time and planning. It is important for your club to discuss the HRAs and decide if they are something your club can commit to developing. There are no specific dates to follow, so HRAs can work whenever you want them to. A practical starting point would be to collaborate on a strategy and timetable for the HRAs.

I. Discuss and Research

Appoint a club committee to work on implementing the awards.

When appointing a committee for the HRAs, select club members with professional public relations or event planning skills. Club members will have to work closely with the local media and the community to ensure success.

Eligibility

Decide who should be eligible for the award. Possible candidates may include:

- Professional journalists (those who receive 60% of income from news writing)
- Freelancers
- Editors
- Students

Decide what topics should qualify for the award.

Your Rotary club can determine what humanitarian issues are important to your community. Decide what categories you would like to include in the eligibility for one or several award(s).

Here are some examples of potential award categories:

- Literacy
- Hunger
- Clean Water
- Microcredit
- Health issues
- Refugees
- Human Rights
- Natural disasters
- Environment
- Peace processes
- Ethnic minorities

Decide what your award(s) would provide for the journalist.

Like almost everything, there should be an incentive for your applicants to want to receive the award. Since there are many different journalism awards available, what would make a journalist apply for your award?

- Invitation to speak in your community, or to travel within your district or zone to speak.
- Opportunity to travel and cover a story of a Rotary project.
- Scholarship
- Cash prize
- Plaque or statue

II. Timetable Planning

Decide on a timetable and deadline date for all aspects of the award process. Now that you have a general idea of how your awards will work and what you want to accomplish, it is time to start putting your plan into action. Use your committee to organize a calendar to follow in order for everything to run as smoothly as possible.

Month 1	Month 2	2-6 Months	6-8 Months	Final Month
8 th month out	7 th month out	6 th -2 nd month out	2 nd -1 st month out	Last four weeks

-Create a HRA committee -Choose date of HRAs (at least 8 months out) -Set up timetable	-Use provided tactics as a guide -Brainstorm how your awards will work -Find a place to hold the ceremony	-Implement timetable -Begin publicizing to local media -Create awareness through the community	-Gather and evaluate applications for the award. -Feature applicants in your local papers -Pick your HRA winners	-Hold Awards -Follow up with press releases, collect newspaper clippings -Evaluate your outcome
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III. Applicants and Judging

How to receive applications for the awards?

What works best for your club? Are you in a small town or a big city? In smaller populated areas, perhaps it would be better for a district to be in charge of the awards and each club may submit articles or recommend journalists. In a metropolitan area, there could be more applicants, so there may be room for more than one award.

Publicizing the award opportunity

You can get the word out about upcoming HRAs through:

- Ads in local papers
- Websites and blogs
- Creating a :30 video and e-mail to local journalists or post on-line
- Creating and distribute flyers and posters around the community
- Writing letters to newspapers
- Contacting professional journalists or writer associations
- Asking local journalism professors or editors/producers to nominate candidates

Judging suggestions

The panel of judges for the HRA should be made up of a committee of Rotary members or experts in humanitarian fields. They will determine the distribution of prizes and their decisions will be final. Your club may also want to decide on some other judging criteria. You might have the articles submitted follow certain guidelines, such as length or style.

What criteria will be used for judging?

- Articles or broadcast stories published or aired in the last year
- Stories that motivate or encourage a call to action
- International news stories with a local focus

How should deadlines work?

Set deadlines to be flexible with your club's and district's availability. You might want to keep a specific event in your community in mind or consider doing this around district conference.

IV. Planning the Awards Ceremony

Just like planning any event or meeting, organizing your HRAs ceremony will take careful planning. Make sure the committee has specific guidelines to follow to ensure nothing is overlooked. Some steps in planning your event will have to happen months before the actual ceremony.

Where to have the HRAs

You will need to begin calling around for a space for the ceremony as soon as you decide to hold the event. Clubs should hold the awards in places where reporters could easily attend. The following are good examples of places to hold an award ceremony:

- Local universities
- Community centers
- Libraries
- High schools
- Hotel conference rooms

Attracting media to your event

- Write a letter to the editor and send it out to local papers
- Invite guests and a host that the media in your community follow (i.e. Mayor, distinguished reporter, famous philanthropist)
- Hold the ceremony on a special date for your community
- Send out invitations to all media and local leaders in your community
- Create a website to refer the media for information on your HRAs
- Submit news releases to all newspapers and television stations informing them of the event

VI. Following up and measuring success

Take time to let media find out about the event. Send out a news release prior to the event. For examples of press releases go to the [Effective Public Relations](#) section of www.rotary.org.

Write up a summary of the program and how you believe it contributed to your club and community. Consider submitting it for your own Public Relations Award from Rotary. Visit the link below to find out more on the RI Public Relation Award for Clubs and Districts.

<http://www.rotary.org/en/members/generalinformation/Awards/Pages/ridefault.aspx>

Contact the Public Relations Division at pr@rotary.org for any other questions regarding the promotion of humanitarian writing.

For more examples on how media awards are coordinated visit these websites.

- Pulitzer Prize <http://www.pulitzer.org/>
- National Press Club Awards <http://www.press.org/programs/npcawards.cfm>
- The Global Health Council http://www.globalhealth.org/view_top.php3?id=94#media