

Rotaract

Rotaract clubs for men and women aged 18-30 foster leadership and responsible citizenship, encourage high ethical standards in business and promote international understanding and peace.

A program of Rotary International, Rotaract clubs work under the guidance of their local Rotary club. The word Rotaract comes from a combination of the words “Rotary” and “action.” The first officially chartered Rotaract club was in North Charlotte, North Carolina, in 1968, but clubs of young people associated in service with local Rotary clubs had existed for several years in India and Europe.

Today, there are an estimated 149,000 members in 6,447 Rotaract clubs in 154 countries and geographical regions. Clubs draw members from the community or are organized as an extra-curricular activity for college students. Rotaractors should be of good standing and reputation in their communities.

Under the guidance of a Rotarian advisor, Rotaract clubs conduct formal meetings, usually every two weeks, which feature speakers, tours of local businesses, cultural activities, discussions, and visits to other clubs. Each year, Rotaract clubs conduct at least one service project in each of three areas of service: vocational, community and international. In addition to their service agenda, Rotaract clubs also focus on professional development, organizing career-related programs to assist members and peers outside the club in making informed career choices.

During the week of 13 March, Rotaractors join in a worldwide celebration of World Rotaract Week. This coincides with the date that the first Rotaract club was officially certified by Rotary International. In celebration of this week, Rotaractors plan and carry out service projects and local events to raise awareness about the club.

ROTARACT ACTIVITIES

Many Rotaract service projects focus on issues of importance to young people such as AIDS, the environment, homelessness, urban peace, and drug abuse prevention. Often Rotaractors work in tandem with area Rotarians.

- The Rotaract Club of San Diego, California, **USA** teamed-up with the San Diego Rotary Club to host 80-90 High School juniors at their “Camp Enterprise.” Camp Enterprise is an educational activity undertaken by Rotarians and Rotaractors to teach San Diego youths about the free enterprise system and the world of business. Because the Rotaractors are near in age to the students at the camp, they represent excellent role models and help to “bridge the gap” between the high school students and the Rotarians.
- The Rotaract Club of Colombo Metropolitan in **Sri Lanka** has provided continuing support to disabled students by way of their Hip Hop ‘95 project. The project raises funds for disabled youths by organizing a dance called Hip Hop ‘95. The proceeds from the event are used to fund scholarships for the disabled through the annual “Rotaract Higher Education Scholarship for Disabled Youth” program.
- In **Bolivia**, there is a large illegal cocaine trade. Local people who work in the fields harvesting the coca plants often become addicted to the drug. To reduce the local ill-effects of the cocaine trade and curb drug-related violence, Rotarians and Rotaractors have launched a campaign to educate impoverished field workers about the dangers of drug abuse.
- In the **Ukraine**, Rotarians and Rotaractors in Lviv launched a joint project to teach English in the local schools. The teaching group is composed of Rotarians on the faculty of the University of Lviv and Rotaractors who have lived in the U.S. and are fluent in English.
- Two-thirds of **Korea’s** schools are located in urban areas. Many students are victims of violence or abuse, which often goes unreported because of fear of reprisal. The government is trying to remedy the situation with a nationwide anti-crime campaign aimed at teens. Rotaract clubs in Korea have responded with programs to build teen leadership skills, such as youth leadership camps and anti-drug campaigns to prevent drug-related violence.
- Rotaractors throughout **Argentina** will help implement a national public awareness campaign for the prevention of AIDS. In cooperation with the country’s Ministry of Health, some 17,000 Rotarians, Rotaractors and Interactors are organizing public forums about AIDS and semiannual AIDS Prevention Weeks to educate the community about the disease.
- In **Kenya**, the Rotaract Club of Mombasa is working with UNICEF and several government agencies to set up a center that provides food, clothing and other necessities for homeless children. To make the center self-supporting, the club is selling coupons that the general public can give to the street children in lieu of cash, which might be stolen from them or used to purchase drugs or alcohol.
- Rotaractors are also very active in supporting Rotary’s PolioPlus Program. In **The Philippines**, Rotaractors helped Rotarians deliver vaccine door-to-door and promote awareness. In **Manila**, the Rotaract Club of San Francisco Del Monte-East volunteered at a medical clinic to help immunize children against polio.