

President's message

Dear fellow Rotarians and members of the family of Rotary,

Here in the United States, another summer is winding down. And for the Maloney family, every summer ends with a return to my hometown of Ridgway, Illinois, for the annual Popcorn Day festival, where I am honored to serve as the "Popcorn King," the master of ceremonies for the day's events.

Regardless of the season, every family has its own traditions. I would like to suggest a new one for yours: Find an opportunity to introduce your family to Rotary. One of my family's traditions is to take our daughters and grandsons to the Rotary International Convention. The 2020 convention in Honolulu will be a wonderful way to introduce your children and grandchildren to the internationality of Rotary. We are planning many family-oriented events for everyone to enjoy.

Any time is a fabulous time to bring family members on a Rotary service project or to a fundraising event. But perhaps you have not seen many family-friendly events at your club. That is precisely why one of my top priorities this year is to make most Rotary events welcoming to family members.

We must foster a culture where Rotary does not compete with family, but complements it. We should never expect our members to choose between the two. That means being realistic in our expectations, considerate in our scheduling, and welcoming of children at Rotary events on every level.

Often, the young professionals that Rotary needs to attract in order to remain a dynamic 21st-century service organization are the very people who have the greatest family responsibilities. We must not keep these prospective young members away from their families by holding events on evenings and weekends at which their children are not welcome.

For too long, we have closed the doors of many Rotary events to children and sometimes even spouses. What wasted opportunities these are! Every chance we have to pass on the gift of Rotary to young people is one we must take if we are going to grow Rotary and ensure that the next generation is fully engaged in our mission.

So let us open our doors and do it in a fun way, with opportunities that make our children and grandchildren want to learn more about Interact, Rotaract, and Rotary membership. Start small if you must — perhaps by holding some of your meetings at more family-friendly times — but think about how you can continue these kinds of events for years to come.

Bringing children to Rotary events is not just fun; it also exposes them to the world! Make this a memorable year for your family — and an unforgettable year for the ever-expanding family of Rotary as *Rotary Connects the World*.



MARK DANIEL MALONEY

President, Rotary International

