

President's MESSAGE



Dear fellow Rotarians,

In 1905, when Paul Harris founded the first Rotary club, he probably never imagined that he was planting the seed for the 1.2 million-member, internationally respected organization we are part of today. As we look back on the first 100 years of Rotary, and ahead to the next 100, we can't know for sure what lies ahead - but we can do a great deal to ensure that Rotary International continues to grow and thrive.

Programs for young people are bridges to Rotary membership, and among the most important ways we keep Rotary's future bright. The members of Rotaract are the cream of their generation - community-minded students and professionals aged 18-30 who come together for fellowship and service. Every Rotaractor has the potential to become an outstanding Rotarian, having already demonstrated an active commitment to Rotary goals and the ideal of Service Above Self.

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In my travels as president, I am constantly impressed by the commitment and creativity of Rotaractors. On a recent trip to Russia, I met with Rotaract members in St. Petersburg who had come from Vladivostok - nine hours away by airplane. These young people truly understood what Rotary volunteerism is all about, and Russia can only benefit from their work. I came away feeling confident that the future of Rotary was going to be with the next generation, and the future of Russia as well.

As I write this message, the members of a Rotaract club in San Diego are packing their bags for their first international service project - one for which they are uniquely qualified. The club's members are all Sudanese refugees who, as children, fled their country's civil war without parents or relatives. Now, these new Rotaractors are returning to the Kenyan refugee camp where they once lived to help other refugees find a better life. This is just one example of Rotaractors seeing a need and doing everything they can to make a difference.

Rotaract is flourishing around the world. With over 7,700 clubs and 177,000 members, there is Rotaract in almost every country where there is Rotary. World Rotaract Week, 7-13 March, is an opportunity for all of us to reach out to Rotaractors and make sure Rotaractors feel that they are part of the Rotary family. Sponsor joint projects with your local Rotaract club. Invite Rotaractors to your club meetings, and propose them for membership. Rotaract is a path to Rotary, and it is our responsibility as Rotarians to keep that path clear and inviting.

For my wife, Mary, and me, family always comes first. And often, we hear from members or prospective members that they have so little time to spend with their families, they cannot take on the commitment of community service. Rotary was never meant to take members from their families - instead, it should be a force to bring families together. Encourage your children or grandchildren to join Rotary, Rotaract or Interact, and involve them in your club's service projects whenever you can. There is no better way to teach service than by example - and bringing generations together in service is one of the many ways we continue to Celebrate Rotary!

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Glenn E. Estess Sr." The signature is written in a cursive style.

Glenn E. Estess Sr.
President, Rotary International

