



Something old, something new

Most Rotarians know that for several decades, Rotary has operated with four Avenues of Service: namely Club Service, Vocational Service, Community Service, and International Service. But an unusual thing happened at the 2010 Council on Legislation! The proposed enactment to add a fifth Avenue of Service was approved by the Council after being rejected at previous Councils.

The new avenue is called New Generations Service, and there is some confusion and concern about the impact of the change. The proposer of the enactment did not file a statement of support, and therefore, we do not have a written statement of the proposer's rationale. However, it seems to me that the purpose and effect is to focus more attention on the Rotary programs for youth and young adults.

Rotary's programs of Interact, RYLA, Rotaract, and Rotary Youth Exchange are some of the best in the world for young people. However, they have been divided between Community Service and International Service at the club level and district level, which has made it more difficult for them to be coordinated. The change to five Avenues of Service will provide a single director or coordinator for each club and each district to supervise and promote the Rotary programs for young people.

Our work with youth and young adults has two salutary benefits. First, the favorable influence on the participants by their exposure to the core values of Rotary, which are fellowship, service, integrity, diversity, and leadership. Second, the positive memory of Rotary that often causes the participants to join Rotary clubs later in their lives. We need to do a better job of recruiting the participants into Rotary membership, and we are working on plans to record the names and e-mail addresses of the participants to stay in touch with them as they leave the youth and young adult programs.

So in reality, the 2010 Council on Legislation did not create any new programs. But adding the fifth Avenue of Service will facilitate our quest to make the youth and young adult programs even Bigger, Better, and Bolder in the future – and to recruit even more of the participants into Rotary membership. The perfect example of a win-win situation!

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