

Create a Rotary Newspaper Column

One way to get word of Rotary news out to the public on a routine basis is to contact your local paper and inquire whether space can be reserved for a regular Rotary column. An editor has the right to decide whether a column will be included and who will be responsible for it. The editor may assign the column to a staff member or may offer to publish what a Rotary representative has written. Either way, consider using this format to share Rotary news with the public on a routine basis:

- Begin with community-related activities
- Announce upcoming projects and the need for volunteers
- Share news of the organization worldwide
- Add something light about club members — a bit of "inside Rotary"
- Provide a standard ending

Begin with community-related activities

Remember your audience. The readers of this column are not fellow Rotary members but non-Rotarians in the community. Focus on what benefits Rotary brings to the community-at-large.

Model:

[Your Town] club's project keeps troubled students going

Members of the Rotary Club of [Your Town] have reason to celebrate. Twenty-seven of 30 students the club selected to participate in Diploma Plus, a project designed to keep at-risk students from dropping out of high school, made it to graduation — some of them in the "A" honor rolls.

Initiated about a year ago, the project selects potential dropouts going into their senior year of high school in the [Your Town] school districts for mentoring and financial assistance. Many such students attend class irregularly and score low grades because of problems at home. Some support themselves and their families by working at least one job. Often, balancing the demands of school and work proves too much, and they drop out of school altogether.

[Your Town] Rotarians raise \$15,000 annually for Diploma Plus, enabling 30 students to participate each year. The club relies on school counselors to shortlist 50 candidates among whom the final selection is made. Fifteen students were selected from five schools in each district to participate in the program this past school year.

As part of the selection process, each of the students signed a contract to maintain a "C" or better grade average and an attendance record of at least 95 percent during the school year. The 30 students also were required to write a 250-word essay to explain "Why Education Is Important to Me."

Working with the school counselors, every month a committee of three Rotarians reviews the performance of the participants. As long as they maintain at least a C average and meet the attendance requirements, the students continue to receive the support of the Rotary club. For the 27 who graduated, the money they received from the project was a big factor in their success, though the fact that someone cared about their progress was also pivotal.

Announce upcoming projects and the need for volunteers

Describe a project that is just beginning for which the Rotary club may need additional volunteers, partner organizations, or other types of community support.

Respondents to such queries may be potential candidates for Rotary club membership.

Model:

[Your Town] to Host Russian Leaders

Rotarians in [Your Town] will host five Russian participants in next month's U.S. Library of Congress Russian Leadership Program, which introduces government officials and business managers from Russia to public and private institutions in the United States. Rotary members are seeking [Your Town] businesses to offer professional development opportunities and other assistance in welcoming the Russian visitors.

Rotary clubs across the United States will host some of the 1,800 Russian leaders participating in the program this summer. Last year, 169 Rotary clubs in 82 U.S. Rotary districts hosted 725 Russians who held meetings and received on-site experiences geared toward fostering professional and cultural contacts with their U.S. counterparts in government, business and nonprofit organizations. "It's quite an experience bringing somebody into your home who speaks little or no English and letting them see how we live," said [Rotary Member], a [Your Town] Rotarian who helped organize the local visit and is playing host to one of the delegates.

Contact the Rotary Club of [Your Town] at [phone number] to host or assist with the Russian visitors.

Share news of the organization worldwide

For up-to-date news and information on Rotary International that can be re-printed in your column, visit the Rotary International Press Center at <http://www.rotary.org/newsroom/presscenter/index.html> or the Rotary News Basket at <http://www.rotary.org/newsroom/newsbasket/index.html>.

Model:

RI hosts panel presentation at UN conference

During a special session of a United Nations (UN) conference in Geneva, Switzerland, on June 27, an international panel presentation hosted by RI highlighted the polio eradication initiative of Rotary, UN agencies and governments as an example of effective public-private partnerships in improving social development through healthy populations. Moderated by the immediate Past Foundation Trustee Chairman Bill Huntley, the presentation featured World Health Organization (WHO) Executive Director Dr. David Nabarro; United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Executive Director Dr. Nafis Sadik; and the World Bank's Human Development Network Vice President Eduardo Doryan as panelists.

Huntley cited PolioPlus, RI's pioneering effort to eradicate polio, as a best practice for health care initiatives in developing countries made possible through private and public partnerships. Collaborating with WHO, the United Nations Children's Fund and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Rotary hopes to rid the world of polio by 2005.

Discussing the necessity of promoting healthy populations, the panel concluded that it is impossible to attain measurable social development without addressing issues such as reproductive health, disease eradication and disabilities. If citizens are not healthy, they are unable to work and provide the resources necessary to move out of poverty. Also, they often do not have access to nutrition needed to survive and fight illness. As a result, healthy family members are sometimes forced to stay at home and care for the ill, which pulls them away from available jobs, causing even more unemployment and poverty.

Therefore, the panel presentation reaffirmed the importance of public and private sectors working together, where resources can be combined, to encourage the global exchange of knowledge. This will increase the effectiveness of projects that do work and help countries become healthy and capable of social development.

Add something light about club members — a bit of "inside Rotary"

Share something fun about a club meeting or a Rotary member's good news. Keep in mind, however, that the audience reading the column may not know a great deal about Rotary. Avoid using jargon or too much insider information. The goal is to let others know that club meetings and club members enjoy life.

Model

"Joysters" make meetings, activities a thrill at [Your Town] club

Members of the Rotary Club of [Your Town] have found a way to inject new energy and excitement into meetings and activities. At the initiative of [Club President's Name], club president, they have added the position of "director of joy" to the leadership team, and [Director of Joy's Name] is the first holder of this new office. The task of the director of joy and a team of "joysters" is to make club meetings and activities lively and varied.

"We create a central team and an intention for each meeting and use a variety of approaches to get our message across," says [Director of Joy's Name]. "It's like a grand experiment."

Though in effect for only a few weeks, this new effort is already showing results. Rotarians who used to be only marginally involved have started to volunteer to

do things, thus using their unique gifts and talents to benefit the club and community.

Provide a standard ending

End with a general description of Rotary and provide contact information for readers who would like to find out more information about the club and its activities.

Sample:

Rotary International is a worldwide humanitarian service organization with 29,000 clubs in more than 160 countries. Founded in 1905 in Chicago, members of Rotary are business and professional leaders united worldwide to provide humanitarian service, encourage high ethical standards in all vocations and help build good will and peace in the world. For more information about Rotary in [Your Town], call [Rotary Member] at [phone number].