

The Rotarians – The Mark of Excellence in Community

Rotary has been working selflessly since the beginning of the nineteenth century. They are a humanitarian organization with peace being the cornerstone of their mission. They believe that when people work together to create peace within community that change can have a global effect. The Rotarians support peace fellowships and scholarships, which address underlying causes of conflict, such as poverty, discrimination, ethnic tension, lack of access to education and unequal distribution of resources. They are a global network based on creating a united world, taking action to make lasting change. They value inclusion, welcoming people of all backgrounds, race, abilities, religion, socioeconomic status, culture, sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity. International Rotarians support a number of causes. They are involved in fighting disease, promoting peace, providing clean water, saving mothers and children, supporting education, and growing local economies. Their mission is to provide service to others, promote integrity and advance world understanding, goodwill, and peace through their fellowship of business, professional and community leaders.

([www://www.rotary.org/en/about-rotary](http://www.rotary.org/en/about-rotary))

On January 15, 1928, the Rotarians held their first meeting in The Pas. At that time, 24 members became official Rotarians. Membership has gone up and down, but today there are 34 members, 7 being female. The majority of this membership is getting older and are retired or reaching retirement. They find it difficult to perform some of the tasks necessary to see projects to completion. The Bill Bannock Fishing Derby is one example that requires the muscle power and energy of younger members. One pressing goal for 2021 is to increase Rotarian membership and draw in younger members. Recruitment is ongoing and more than ever they are recruiting younger members from within the tri community area.

This local service group genuinely enjoys their work. You will see them socializing in the community, laughing, and having fun while performing service work. Julia McKay, current Club Rotary President commented, "If the community is to be successful, you need people to get involved." Everyone has a different reason for being involved in Rotary, as there are many projects that are supported by the local club."

Some of the roles of the Rotarians include supporting community locally and worldwide. In the beginning it was a fellowship that started for businessmen to promote and encourage community to support their business. It has changed since its inception, now welcoming anyone, not just businessmen, but anyone who wants to join and make the wheels of the organization turn. If you are over the age of 18, you are needed and encouraged to join the Rotarians.

The Rotarians are involved with local high schools. High school students (under the age of 18 years) are encouraged to get involved with "Interact" which promotes youth involvement in community and current world issues. It is about nurturing and influencing positive change. The Rotarians support youth through two scholarships of \$1000 which is designated to students who excel in our local high schools. They are also known for supporting the Rotarian youth exchange program. Each year the Rotarians put out a call to Grade 11 high school students to apply for the youth exchange program. The project is partially sponsored by the club to offset expenses associated with living out of country with another Rotarian family for a year. The Rotarians determine who will best fit the program. The fit has to be right as the program requires that the exchange student must be capable of living in another country for 12 months. The student selected must be socialized to adapt to a new family, different culture,

different language, and customary practices. It can be challenging as each culture is vastly different. There have been many local students who have benefited from this program. Two past outbound students involved in the program were Angie Hay and Lisa Neimi.

The Rotarians are behind the development of the Rotary Park which overlooks the Saskatchewan River. This area is utilized daily by many local people who enjoy the scenery and natural wildlife that the river brings with it while sitting on a rotary bench/table or walking the path. The Rotarians work together with other local service groups and the town to create special projects that alone would not be possible. Along with the Kinsmen the Rotarians worked towards the development of the 10 km walking path that circles the town. They are involved in generating funds to support community projects such as the outdoor arena complete with lighting and boards cradling the outskirts of the Roy H. Johnstone Arena. This past summer, they renovated the Snack land Deck overlooking the retention pond. These projects are accessible to all that live in the community with barrier free opportunity for families, youth, friends, and all that live and work here to enjoy. During various times of the year, these locations and pathways are full of users enjoying the outdoors, nature, and fresh air, free of a user fee.

Families, seniors, youth, and everyone in between walk, bike or cruise the paths. All are welcome to sit and enjoy their leisure time with family, friends, and pets. Regularly you see people, dogs, bicyclists, and skateboarders fully enjoying the areas provided by the efforts of the Rotarians. All enjoying the fruit of Rotarian service work. This one group has supported an incredible number of community projects that improve life for everyone that chooses to live and work here. People that call this community home. The Rotarians are a service group that is truly of incredible value to the community. This type of work cannot be bought. It is something that is instilled in their human spirit to give back to community. The Rotarians are founded in the belief of helping others in need at a community level which eventually spills over to worldwide borders. They believe in peace and practice this concept presenting it in every community event they host. Two mottos that Rotary are founded on are "Service above Self" and "One profits most who serves best". They have been practicing under these mottos in our community and internationally for more than a century.

The Friendship Exchange program allows Rotary members and friends to take turns to host one another in their homes, clubs, and communities. The Friendship Exchange is an international program that promotes travel as families, groups, individually or as a couple.

Most community people recognize the Rotarians through their fundraising events. The major ones being the Lobsterfest and the Bill Bannock Fishing Derby. They are currently fundraising through a lottery called "Catch the Big One" raffle lottery. You can check out this contest on their Facebook page.

In a typical year, the Rotarians support a fur queen candidate to run in the Northern Manitoba Trappers Festival. This contest alone creates a substantial source of revenue for the NMTF. Rotary has donated to the Skating rink project, the outdoor walking trails, the creation and maintenance of the Rotary Park, scholarships for local high schools, the youth exchange project, and the Paul Harris Fellowship Fund. The Rotarians formulate a budget each year, fundraising and collecting dollars tagging them for specific local projects. The outdoor skating rink is a prime example of fundraising efforts that were generated over a few years. This project is complete, impressive, and used regularly by many grateful Northerners.

We will not have the community that we want, if we do not have people talking about what we need to make our community desirable. It requires a lot of time and commitment. We have had people who do

not want to attend a meeting but will help out at an event if called upon. We have been truly fortunate in that sense. Each new member is mentored by another member to help them understand and work through the logistics of the organization. We spend time matching skill sets to members. Everyone has something that they are passionate about. There are many areas that people can get involved in according to their particular skill set.

Pre-COVID-19, the club met face to face each Tuesday at the Wescana Rendezvous Room. It was always a lunch meeting as they are a very social group and like to gather, meet, and break bread together while making worthwhile community plans. They are now opting for Zoom meetings while abiding by the Provincial "Red" Restrictions. Once they hold regular meetings again without the fear of COVID-19, Julia is hopeful that people will want to get back together to meet and continue to have the interactions while doing good community service. They are looking at finding ways to alternate meetings over the lunch and in the evening to accommodate new members.

A Rotarian is easily identified in the tri community. Each Rotarian member proudly wear the Rotary blue jersey sporting a golden rotary wheel. The Rotary Wheel is the official Rotary International emblem symbolizing civilization, movement, and service work in action. The logo gear wheel has 24 teeth and six spokes which represent the fact that "work is to be done". The six spokes represent the inner and outward direction and path of their vocation service. Rotarians go into the community and encourage business and vocations to become working, not idle members. Symbolically quality members are the key to the Rotarians success. The wheel hub engages with the shaft allowing it to turn, putting the energy into motion and creating the power for the gears to do their work. The Rotarians believe in selfless community work promoting community peace, growth, and projects. The Rotary wheel is often referred to as the Mark of Excellence.

Rotary International is the mother organization of The Pas Rotary Club. The local organization follows the principles of Rotary International which I have listed below. One main cause is to rid the world of polio. They aligned themselves with the Gates Foundation, a key supporter of this cause. Today Polio is in part almost eradicated around the world because of the work of Rotary International. One other worthy cause of the Rotary International is to deploy shelter boxes to countries where disaster has struck. Shelter boxes provide a temporary shelter to support those in need in times of disaster. Due to the unusual number of disasters this year, it is has become exceedingly difficult to assist all that require this assistance.

Whether you are enjoying the walking path, the rotary park, the outdoor skating rink, the Snack land deck, salute the Rotarians. They are one of the service groups working towards creating community through action. You can get involved and be a part of this action. Contact: Email: juliamckay@xplor.net

Thank you, Rotarians, for sharing your story and being such incredible long serving volunteers in our community. You are a driving cog in the moving wheel that makes shift happen.

Make Shift Happen

Submitted by Denise Duncan

Rotary International

Together, we see a world where people unite and take action to create lasting change – across the globe, in our communities, and in ourselves.

We Are People of Action

Rotary is where neighbors, friends, and problem-solvers share ideas, join leaders, and take action to create lasting change.

We Connect People

Rotary unites more than a million people.

Together, we see a world where people unite and take action to create lasting change – across the globe, in our communities, and in ourselves.

We Transform Communities

We act locally and globally.

Each day, our members pour their passion, integrity, and intelligence into completing projects that have a lasting impact.

We persevere until we deliver real, lasting solutions.

We Solve Problems

No challenge is too big for us.

For more than 110 years, we have bridged cultures and connected continents to champion peace, fight illiteracy and poverty, promote clean water and sanitation, and fight disease.

Our Causes

Promoting Peace

Fighting Disease

Providing Clean Water

Saving Mothers and Children

Supporting Education

Growing Local Economies

Supporting the Environment