

From the President's Desk

Dear Fellow Members,

May is celebrated across Rotary as Youth Service Month – a time when we recognize, celebrate, and invest in the immense potential of young people. It is also a moment to reflect on the responsibility we carry as Rotarians: not only to serve communities, but to shape the leaders who will carry this spirit of service forward.

Since its early years inspired by the ideals of Paul Harris, Rotary has always believed in building a better future through people. Youth Service embodies this belief in its purest form. Through programs such as Rotaract and Interact, Rotary has created platforms where young individuals can learn leadership, develop professional skills, and most importantly, embrace the value of service above self.

For many of us, Youth Service is not just a Rotary avenue – it is a deeply personal journey. My own association began as a member of a Rotaract Club, an experience that shaped my outlook towards leadership and service. Over the years, I have had the privilege of chartering and supporting several Rotaract and Interact Clubs, and I continue to engage closely with young leaders as a mentor. These interactions have consistently reaffirmed one belief: when you empower youth, you energize the future of Rotary.

Across the world, young Rotaractors and Interactors are leading impactful initiatives – be it in community development, education, environmental sustainability, or public health. Their energy, creativity, and willingness to challenge convention bring a refreshing dynamism to Rotary's service efforts. However, beyond the visible impact of their projects lies something even more significant – the shaping of values, the building of character, and the nurturing of leadership. These are the

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intangible outcomes that define the long-term strength of Rotary.

This is where the role of the Rotary Global History Fellowship becomes especially meaningful. While youth-led projects are vibrant and ongoing, their stories are often fleeting unless consciously documented.

- How did a young Rotaractor conceptualize and lead a transformative project?
- What challenges did Interact clubs overcome in their early years?
- How have youth programs evolved across decades and geographies?

These are not just stories of activity – they are stories of growth, leadership, and continuity. By documenting them, we create a rich repository of inspiration for future generations. Today's Rotaractors are tomorrow's Rotarians, and their journeys form an integral part of Rotary's evolving history.

One of the most powerful aspects of Youth Service is its ability to connect generations. Experienced Rotarians bring wisdom and perspective, while young members bring fresh ideas and enthusiasm. Together, they create a dynamic exchange that strengthens Rotary as an institution. As members of this Fellowship, we are uniquely positioned to capture this intergenerational synergy. Documenting mentorship stories, leadership transitions, and the evolution of youth programs helps us understand how Rotary continues to remain relevant across time.

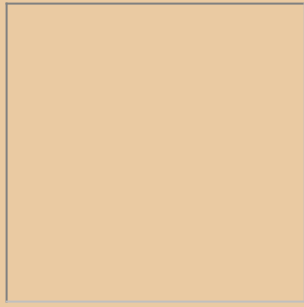
As we celebrate Youth Service Month, I encourage each one of you to:

- Actively mentor young leaders in Rotaract and Interact.
- Support the formation and growth of youth clubs.
- Most importantly, document their journeys, achievements, and learnings.
- Encourage these young leaders to be a part of our Fellowship.

Let us ensure that the contributions of our youth are not only appreciated in the present but also preserved for the future.

Thank you for your continued dedication to nurturing young leaders and preserving Rotary's legacy.

Rotary Regards,



Jeetendra Sharma
President
Rotary Global History Fellowship (RGHF)



Boys Week

My fellow History Hunters,

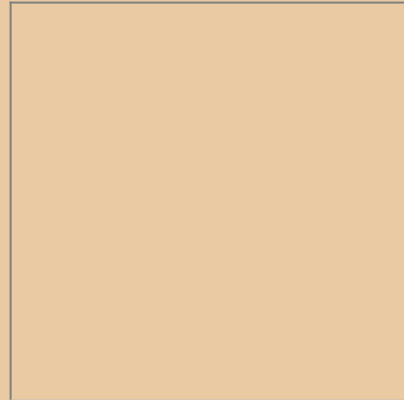
Every now and then, while digging through the dusty corners of Rotary's past, you stumble upon a trail that reminds you just how long Rotarians have believed in the power of young people.

One such trail leads us back to the roaring 1920s and something called Boys' Week. Now, this was not just a picnic in the park or a couple speeches in a town hall. No sir. It was a worldwide movement built around a simple but powerful idea, helping young people become good citizens, strong leaders, and decent human beings.

The first Boys' Week was held in New York City in May of 1920, led by the Rotary Club of New York along with several community organizations. The focus was on education, citizenship, health, character, and vocational guidance. Rotary believed that if communities invested in young people early, they could help steer them away from delinquency, truancy, and hopelessness.

And like many good Rotary ideas, it spread fast.

By the middle of the decade, Boys' Week activities were taking place in nearly 600 communities across 25 countries. By 1928, that number had exploded to almost 3,000 towns and cities around the world. Parades rolled through downtown streets. Loyalty Day celebrations filled communities with marching bands, speeches, and Rotary-sponsored floats. Young people were not just spectators, they were the center of attention. In places like Rotary Club of Fort Smith and Rotary Club of Vicksburg, Rotarians proudly sponsored events celebrating the next generation.



And somewhere along the trail, Rotarians realized something important. The future did not belong only to boys.

By the late 1920s and early 1930s, the focus expanded to include girls as well, eventually becoming Youth Week and later Boys' and Girls' Week. Rotary's belief in developing young leaders had grown beyond one program and into something much larger.

Even after Rotary International officially stepped away from sponsoring the week in 1954, the spirit of the mission never disappeared. In fact, it evolved into some of Rotary's most impactful programs, programs many of us know well today.

Interact.

Rotaract.

Rotary Youth Exchange.

Women in Rotary

On May 4th in 1987, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that Rotary clubs could not exclude women from membership on the basis of gender. Rotary issues a policy statement that any Rotary club in the United States can admin qualified women into membership.

The Rotary Club of Marin Sunrise, California (formerly Lakespur Landing), was chartered on May 28th. It became the first club after the U.S. Supreme Court ruling to have women as charter members.

Sylvia Whitlock, of the Rotary Club of Duarte, California, was the first female Rotary Club President.

From the archives to the adventure

My fellow History Hunters,

Every old archive has a locked drawer. Every dusty library shelf hides a story waiting to be rediscovered. And every now and then, history whispers that something exciting is just around the corner.

My friends... this is one of those moments.

The Rotary Global History Fellowship continues to grow because of people like you, Rotarians who believe our history matters. Not because we live in the past, but because understanding where Rotary has been helps guide where Rotary is going.

Every preserved photograph. Every saved document. Every forgotten story brought back to life. That work matters. And it only happens because History Hunters like you step forward with your memberships, donations, encouragement, and belief in this mission.

You are not just supporting a fellowship. You are protecting Rotary's memory.

And trust me, there are still incredible stories left to uncover.

Now between us History Hunters... I have recently stumbled across something rather exciting in the archives. I cannot say too much just yet, because some discoveries deserve a proper unveiling, but next month the Fellowship will be making a very special announcement exclusively for RGHF members.

And my friends... you are going to want a front row seat for this one. Let us just say the trail ahead is about to get very interesting. So if you have been thinking about joining the Fellowship, renewing your membership, or making a donation to

support the preservation of Rotary history, now is the perfect time.

And here is one more challenge for you, my fellow adventurers... Invite another Rotarian to come along on the journey.

Every Rotary club has someone who loves the stories, the history, the traditions, and the remarkable people who built this organization. Bring them with you. Share the Fellowship. Help us grow this incredible band of History Hunters around the world.

Because the more people who protect Rotary's story, the stronger Rotary's future becomes.

Adventures like this do not happen by accident. They happen because people who care choose to keep the story alive. The archives are calling.

And the next great discovery may be waiting just beyond the next dusty box.

Click the link to join RGHF: [Join RGHF today!](#)

From the archives to the adventure,

Archibald Gearhart

History Hunter
