

Educational Reading #1

Community Service and International Service – Serving Both Near and Far

Rotary is unique because it encourages members to improve lives both in their own communities and around the world. Two important avenues of service—**Community Service** and **International Service**—reflect this balanced approach.

Community Service begins with a simple question: **What does our community need most?** Every Rotary club is encouraged to identify local challenges and develop projects that address those needs. This might include providing dictionaries to third-grade students, awarding scholarships, supporting food banks, organizing park cleanups, planting trees, assisting veterans, improving playgrounds, or raising funds for local nonprofits.

The best community service projects are based on listening. Rotary clubs often partner with schools, local governments, charities, healthcare providers, and community organizations to ensure that projects respond to genuine needs rather than assumptions.

International Service extends Rotary's reach beyond local borders. Rotarians recognize that many challenges—such as disease, poverty, illiteracy, and access to clean water—are shared by communities around the world. Through partnerships with Rotary clubs in other countries, members work together to address these issues.

Examples of international projects include drilling wells, constructing schools, providing medical equipment, supporting maternal health programs, distributing educational materials, and training local professionals. Many of these efforts are funded through Rotary Foundation Global Grants, allowing clubs to multiply the impact of their fundraising.

An important principle of International Service is sustainability. Rotary seeks to avoid projects that create dependence. Instead, clubs work with local communities to develop long-term solutions, provide training, and ensure that projects can continue after Rotary's direct involvement ends.

Community Service and International Service are not competing priorities—they complement one another. A club that helps local students while also supporting a clean water project overseas demonstrates Rotary's belief that compassion has no geographic boundaries.

Service projects also strengthen Rotary itself. Members build friendships while working together, develop leadership skills, attract new members, and increase Rotary's visibility within the community.

Whether serving neighbors across town or families halfway around the world, Rotarians are united by a common purpose: improving lives through service, friendship, and ethical leadership.

The combination of local action and global cooperation is one of Rotary's defining strengths. It reminds us that while our communities may be different, our hopes for health, opportunity, peace, and a better future are shared by people everywhere.