

Educational Reading #1

Promoting Peace – Building Understanding Around the World

When many people think about peace, they imagine treaties or the absence of war. Rotary sees peace more broadly. Peace is created through education, economic opportunity, healthy communities, and understanding between people.

Rotary believes conflict often grows from poverty, lack of education, disease, discrimination, and limited opportunities. By addressing these root causes, Rotary helps reduce the conditions that can lead to violence.

One of Rotary's signature peace initiatives is the Rotary Peace Centers program. Each year, Rotary selects talented professionals from around the world to receive fellowships to study peace and conflict resolution at leading universities. These Rotary Peace Fellows return to their communities equipped with the skills needed to resolve conflicts, strengthen institutions, and build cooperation among diverse groups.

Rotary clubs also promote peace through local service. Youth exchanges, international projects, and community service all encourage friendships between people of different cultures and backgrounds.

Rotary's Four-Way Test also contributes to peace. Before making decisions, Rotarians ask:

- Is it the Truth?
- Is it Fair to all concerned?
- Will it build Goodwill and Better Friendships?
- Will it be Beneficial to all concerned?

These simple questions encourage honesty, fairness, respect, and cooperation—qualities that strengthen both communities and relationships.

Peacebuilding often occurs quietly. A scholarship that allows a student to continue their education, a clean water project that reduces conflict over scarce resources, or an economic development project that creates jobs can all contribute to lasting peace.

Rotary teaches that peace is not simply the absence of conflict. It is the presence of opportunity, justice, education, health, and mutual respect. Every service project has the potential to become a peace project because improving lives reduces the causes of instability.

Through thousands of clubs in more than 200 countries and geographic areas, Rotary demonstrates that friendship across borders remains one of the world's strongest forces for peace.^a