



## Welcome Rotarian To Your Rotary Club, to District 6920 And to Rotary International

### Welcome

Welcome to the world of Rotary International. While you may initially think of Rotary as a local group of interesting people who meet weekly and hear a speaker, Rotary International is much more. It began as and continues to be an exceptional service and social networking institution in your community.

Hopefully, this document will help you quickly learn the scope, terminology and operating methods of Rotary International (**RI**) and its related non-profit funding organization called the Rotary Foundation (**TRF**).

### Rotary is World Wide

[www.rotary.org](http://www.rotary.org)

As a member of your Rotary Club you are now a part of Rotary International and as such you are welcomed at any meeting of a Rotary Club around the world. Even though its headquarters is in Evanston, Ill., RI is actually larger outside of the US and has a number of specific programs that connect Rotarians far beyond the city limits of your town. RI operates under one President, one Board of Directors and one set of policies and procedures around the world. You are a member of a truly a world-wide organization.

There may well be multiple Rotary Clubs in your town that meet at various locations, times and days of the week. Each of these clubs likely has its own history, personality, and composition as you may learn from visiting these clubs for a “make up”. Rotary’s strength is in each club whose leadership has considerable latitude on how it operates and what it seeks to achieve.

In every country Rotary seeks to deepen the relationships among its members, to promote volunteerism and service both locally and in developing areas of the world, and to encourage high ethical standards – an example of which is the “4 Way Test”. Rotary, through its organization, offers many, many ways to translate these objectives into concrete action.

You can and should maintain your own contact information and profile with photo in the Rotary database at [www.dacdb.com](http://www.dacdb.com) by using your email address (user name) and member number (password) from the label of your copy of The Rotarian magazine.

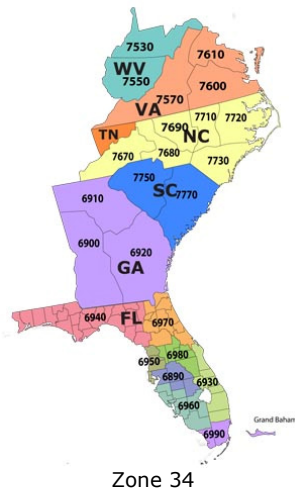
## Your Club is in Rotary District 6920 in Zone 34

[www.rotarydistrict6920.net](http://www.rotarydistrict6920.net) [www.rizones33-34.org](http://www.rizones33-34.org)

Rotary Clubs in central and southeast Georgia, an area bounded by Augusta, Macon, Valdosta, St. Mary's, Brunswick and Savannah, cooperate as **Rotary District 6920**, one of three districts in the State of Georgia. The others are 6900 which includes Atlanta and west Georgia and 6910 for north Georgia. The designated leader for each district is called the District Governor (or **DG**) who serves for a term of one year, as does the President of your own club and as does the President of Rotary International (who determines the annual theme of Rotary).



Rotating leadership on an annual cycle worldwide beginning on July 1 each year encourages the members to share responsibility for the various positions within each club. If you have seen a V of geese flying, you may have noticed how one takes the lead position at the front of the V and provides actual aerodynamic benefits to lift the flock, and then another member of that flock moves up to take that position. The leader then drops back into the flock. Rotary operates in much the same way.



Your club, your district and TRF are the most relevant organization units of Rotary for you – what happens locally for you and what happens worldwide. In between is a group of multiple districts which are grouped into Zones (we are in Zone 34) and one of the 18 Directors of RI represents Zone 33 & 34. This RI Board of Directors provides the overall guidance and leadership for Rotary internationally.

## Service Above Self

[www.rotary.org/en/AboutUs/Pages/ridefault.aspx](http://www.rotary.org/en/AboutUs/Pages/ridefault.aspx)

Our message of personal involvement is captured in the phrase **Service Above Self**. There are a number of service programs and acronyms for Rotary programs that would be confusing for anyone new to Rotary in Georgia. You will learn that some of what is discussed at your club is unique to your club, some programs are unique to your Rotary District 6920, some are programs of the three Rotary Districts in Georgia, some reach beyond Georgia into adjacent states, and some are world-wide.

## Polio Plus

[www.rotary.org/en/serviceAndFellowship/Polio/Pages/ridefault.aspx](http://www.rotary.org/en/serviceAndFellowship/Polio/Pages/ridefault.aspx)

RI's most ambitious objective, begun in 1985, is the eradication of the disease of polio from the planet. Though an organization of only slightly more than one million members, RI is the global polio eradication leader, now joined by our allies because our members are committed, local, civic-minded leaders around the world. Recently the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation has joined our effort and has contributed \$450 million; Rotarians have committed to match that with an additional \$200 million – which amounts to \$1,000 of Polio Plus contributions annually from each Rotary Club world-wide over the next several years.

You are invited to participate in a National Immunization Day (**NID**) in India to see Polio Plus in action. We (along with our partners) have eliminated 99% of the polio cases but immunization of the millions of new children born each year must continue until this disease, which attacked less than 2000 people world-wide last year, is eradicated from the four remaining countries of Pakistan, Afghanistan, India and Nigeria.



Rotarians have seen not only disease but also conflicts and wars between countries. We have felt called to the mission of promoting world peace and understanding, which is reflected in several of our programs.

## Georgia Rotary Student Program

[www.grsp.org](http://www.grsp.org)

The three Rotary Districts in Georgia together operate a program, unique with Rotary, called the Georgia Rotary Student Program (**GRSP**). This program brings approximately 70 foreign college students to Georgia for a year of college. Only Georgia Rotarians have a program of this nature, which is funded from several sources. Seven dollars of your annual club dues goes to GRSP. In addition you can contribute to GRSP's Endowment Fund. Your dues and the income from the Endowment Fund pay about 30% of the cost of the program.

Your club (often in conjunction with another club) selects and sponsors a student and pays the remaining 70% of the cost of the student's tuition, books, housing and meals. The office that handles the applications and visas and school logistics is in Savannah. The president and the host family in the sponsoring club select their student each year from the applications screened by the GRSP office. The whole class of GRSP students throughout Georgia meets together four times during their year here. You may want to consider being a host family for your club's next GRSP student; the experience is priceless.



GRSP Class of 2008-2009

## Group Study Exchange

Around the world District Governors create a match each year with another district for an exchange of teams lead by a Rotarian with four young professionals who are not Rotarians and are between 25 and 40. This is called the Group Study Exchange (GSE) program and in recent years the 6920 DGs have exchanged teams with Rotary Districts in Brazil, Korea, France, Scotland, Russia, Japan, Italy, Chile, India, Bolivia and Poland. These are often life-changing experiences as the team members live with host Rotarians and are immersed in life in another culture and another country for a month. The cost of the air travel is covered by TRF. In-country housing and costs are covered by the hosting Rotarians.

You can meet the inbound team and provide hospitality when the next visiting GSE team is in your area. You can also recommend local individuals to be members of our outgoing team and you may even want to be considered in the selection process for becoming a District 6920 GSE Team Leader on a future exchange.



6920 GSE Team in Ukraine

## Medical Equipment Transport Services

[www.rotarymets.org](http://www.rotarymets.org)

In addition to these two programs that invest in the personal growth and world view of future leaders, Rotary District 6920 Medical Equipment Transport Service (METS), a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation, was formed by District 6920 to respond to the basic medical needs of the world's poor in developing countries. Sterile and non-sterile medical supplies and functioning retired medical equipment that would otherwise be headed to landfills are collected and shipped in 40-foot containers to hospitals and clinics around the world. During its first five years of its existence, METS shipped medical equipment and supplies valued in excess of \$9 million to clinics and hospitals in nine countries. METS is funded by the dues of District 6920 Rotarians, with each district member contributing \$15 annually. Those funds are spent to lease and operate a warehouse near the Port of Savannah and to provide a box truck with hydraulic lift with which to collect supplies and equipment.

Rotarians not only help locate supplies and equipment, they also sort and pack the donated sterile and non-sterile supplies for shipping. You and a group from your club can schedule a sort day at the METS warehouse in Savannah and you can contact your local hospital and physicians to determine when surplus medical equipment may become available. Volunteers are also needed to work in the warehouse, to pick up supplies from hospitals and doctors' offices, to help prepare a quarterly newsletter, to perform data entry of inventory information, to speak to clubs, and to assist with many other tasks associated with METS operations.



## Global Priorities of RI

Our world service only begins with GSE, METS, GRSP and Polio Plus. RI is one of the world's most effective and efficient funding mechanisms for executing projects in service to humanity around the world through a process called Matching Grants. A Rotary Club or District (close to the reality and practical solutions) in a less developed country and a club or district in a more affluent country find each other and implement a project. In our District 6920 projects have installed wells where there was no safe drinking water, have provided training resources to teach indigenous health promoters to return to their mountain villages to instill more healthy practices, has provided thousands of desks for children whose students previously sat on the ground. These are called matching grants because club funds are matched by the district and by TRF. The Grants Coordinator for District 6920 will assist your club with the matching grant process.

District Simplified Grants are also available annually for local projects within District 6920.

When a Rotarian has contributed \$1000 to TRF he or she is recognized as a Paul Harris Fellow (**PHF**). The theme of Every Rotarian Every Year (**EREY**) is a drive for having you and every Rotarian contribute, usually when you pay your club dues, at least \$100 per year to TRF. Your club President or Foundation Chair can explain more about this non-profit foundation side of Rotary world-wide and how you can reach the PHF level.

Beyond clean water and health, RI places a priority on **literacy**, unfortunately a significant problem in our own Georgia communities, which in many cases have higher illiteracy rates than do provinces in countries such as India. Rotary Districts in Georgia and nearby states (e.g. South Carolina, Tennessee) are partnering with the Ferst Foundation for Childhood Literacy so that Rotarians can sponsor the delivery of 12 books a year for a child between birth and age 5 at a cost of \$36 per student per year. With books mailed directly to the child, this program has demonstrated that it significantly increases the readiness of Georgia children to succeed in school when otherwise they would begin and likely never shed their handicap of limited vocabulary and reading ability. Links to the literacy projects are available at [www.RotaryDistrict6920.net](http://www.RotaryDistrict6920.net)



Collaborative relationship between Rotary International and the Dollywood Foundation's Imagination Library

Another regional Rotary program is called Coins for Alzheimer's Research Trust (**CART**) that uses blue buckets to collect spare change from the pockets of Rotarians at weekly club meetings to fund research for the cure of Alzheimer's disease. Medical research projects to reduce the tragic effects of this disease are funded by the coins collected and are selected by the Board of CART.

## **Sustaining the One-Year Cycle**

With its one-year rotation policy, Rotary would not be able to sustain our clubs, our district and our many important programs without materials, training and communications. As a new Rotarian, you would learn a lot from participating in the Rotary Leadership Institute (**RLI**). Your club President attended the President-Elect Training Seminar (**PETS**) several months prior to taking office. Other officers have attended other training sessions. Each year around May a district conference is held in or near our district where all Rotarians in the district can be refreshed and updated in our understanding and appreciation of RI, and where we can get to know members from other cities within our District 6920. And all Rotarians are invited to the International Convention held annually in a major world city where you can meet with your counterparts from around the globe.

## **In Summary**

You now know that Rotary is much more than a weekly meeting and that you can take pride in your contributions to the scope, vision and impact of the programs of your Rotary Club, of your District 6920, of the three districts in Georgia and of Rotary around the planet.

### **We Rotarians do make a difference:**

- We support each other in our personal and business lives.
- We share the responsibilities in our club and in our District 6920.
- We volunteer and provide leadership and service in our community.
- We use our profession or business to set a high standard of ethics.
- We contribute to TRF, METS, GRSP, Polio Plus and other programs.
- We work to break down national boundaries and cultural barriers through GSE and GRSP.
- We demonstrate our compassion for those less fortunate than ourselves through Polio Plus, local club projects, and matching grants.

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