

Rotary Club of State College/Downtown

Who we are, what we do, and how we do it...

Club organization

Rotary's presence began in our community in the mid-1920's. We are one of five Rotary clubs in Centre County (three in State College, one in Bellefonte and one in Pleasant Gap). Our club was chartered in 1986 as an offshoot from the original State College Rotary club.

Membership

Our membership is comprised of men and women from varied vocations and occupations who live or work in the State College area. Our members range in age from their mid-twenties to their eighties. We currently have about 70 members.

Meetings

We meet at the Ramada on South Atherton weekly at noon on Thursdays. Meetings last an hour. We invite interesting speakers to make presentations two to three weeks a month. Several times a year, we may hold our meeting at another location and enjoy a tour of, for example, the PAWS animal shelter, the Penn State Creamery, the Food Bank, Eisenhower Auditorium, or the Central Pennsylvania Institute of Science and Technology. We devote the first Thursday of the month to a club assembly, the purpose of which is to share club administrative matters.

Fellowship

Our members like to have some fun, and to accomplish this goal we hold various events throughout the year. Events have included a family picnic, a wine tasting/auction, a beer tasting/auction, an evening at Wise-Crackers comedy club, a holiday party in mid-December, football tailgate and happy hours. We have also obtained group tickets to sporting events.

Fundraising

We provide financial support to a number of organizations and groups. We raise over \$25,000 annually, and give the money to, or use it for:

- Local non-governmental agencies and organizations including the State College Area Food Bank, the Centre County YMCA, the Women's Resource Center, Centre Peace, Discovery Space, Schlow Library, Interfaith Human Services and others.
- Rotary related opportunities, including monthly stipends to Rotary Student Exchange participants, funding for international humanitarian projects, and vocational scholarships.

We raise money by:

1. Publishing and selling an annual local merchant Dining and Entertainment "coupon book" beginning in late fall. Patrons may redeem the coupons during the following calendar year. We expect each member to sell at least 10 books.
2. Hosting a community Spaghetti Dinner in the spring. We sell advance tickets to this event, then cook and serve meals at a local church. We expect each member to sell an allotment of tickets.
3. Net proceeds from our weekly 50/50 drawing and "Happy Bucks" (dollars given by members announcing personal milestone events at our weekly meetings).
4. Each week, one member is responsible for providing an item to be auctioned off.
5. We also hold other fund raising events at various times during the year such as the Flavors of Happy Valley Ice Cream Festival.

Community projects

We perform community service in various ways.

- A spring “park cleanup” at Lederer Park, in memory of deceased member Gene Lederer.
- Our “Farmers to Food Bank” initiative, where we gather food donated by the downtown Farmers’ Market vendors every Friday and transport it to the Food Bank. The downtown market is open May through November.
- Preparation of Jared boxes for hospitalized kids.
- Interview candidates for Rotary sponsored programs. These programs are geared to promoting world and cultural understanding. They include the Rotary Student Exchange (high school students from the surrounding school districts who study abroad for a school year), and the Ambassadorial Scholarship program (for a graduate level student to spend an academic year abroad).
- We do prep work and provide staff for the “Polar Express” that is operated each Holiday season by the Downtown State College Improvement District.
- We continually search for worthy community projects which will benefit the citizens at large in our community. No project is too large or too small.
We award a community grant each year. This grant helps fund a capital improvement for a local organization. Recent recipients include the Boy Scouts, Taproot Kitchen, the Dyslexia Reading Center and the Centre County Library & Historical Museum.

Club governance

Our club’s official year begins July 1st and ends June 30th of the following year. This follows the standard Rotary year. The club officers are elected to their respective positions, and agree to serve for this 12 month period.

The officers of the club are: president, first vice president (president elect), second vice president (weekly program coordinator), treasurer, secretary, and sergeant at arms.

The Board of Directors is made up of the above mentioned officers, four members elected at large, and the immediate past president. They meet over breakfast at 7:30 am on the first Tuesday of each month. All members are welcome at any Board meeting.

Application process

Membership in Rotary is “by invitation”. We look to our existing members to propose new initiates. Please invite any person who embraces the ideal of *Service Above Self* to any meeting. Introduce the candidate to other members. See if this is a “good fit” for both the club and the prospective member. If you believe the person is worthy of membership, complete a New Member Proposal form (found in the Rotary Box near where we sign in), and deliver it to our Membership Committee chairperson(s) or the Club President.

The Membership Committee holds a “fireside chat” with the prospect to make sure the individual understands the club expectations. A report on the Fireside chat is provided to the entire membership committee who discusses the candidate and makes a recommendation on their suitability to the board at their next monthly meeting. The Board will discuss the candidate’s attributes and vote on the application. If the vote is affirmative, then the president announces at the next weekly meeting that “Mr. X or Ms. Y” has been proposed for membership. A 10-day period then begins, during which any member can provide private comments regarding the candidate. If no member expresses objections, then the candidate will be asked if he or she desires to become a member.

The Membership Committee then takes over, and leads the new member through an onboarding process,

through which the new member learns more about our club, our district and Rotary International (RI).

Dues

The club's treasurer issues dues statements every three months. Our dues are currently \$150 per quarter, which includes our weekly meals, as well as district and RI general dues. Payments are handed or mailed to the treasurer. Payment by credit card including automatic recurring payments is possible.

Attendance

Attendance is important, and perfect attendance is valued. Our club requires that members attend 50% of meetings to maintain membership. Thirty percent of those meetings must be at our own club, and a member must stay for 60% of the meeting for their attendance to count.

Rotarian of the Week

Every week, one member is designated the "Rotarian of the Week". That person is responsible for thanking the speaker and providing an auction item. The item should have a value of at least \$35, but can be worth more, at the member's discretion. Because of the number of members in the club, each member is the Rotarian of the Week approximately once every 18 months. The Rotarian of the Week is also expected to say a few words about him/herself. This gives newer members a chance to find out more about all of our members.

Administration

There are numerous committees which make things happen. We encourage every member to choose at least one committee on which to serve.

We have our own website and a private intra-club email communications listserv. We appreciate members not sharing the listserv with others, thereby retaining and maintaining the privacy of our members.

Club and District information can easily be found by accessing the District and Club Database, www.dacdb.com. The club portion of this site contains a secure membership directory with committee lists and a district calendar, among other features.

Our Foundation

Our Club has its own charitable foundation, which is a conduit entity for our charitable giving. (Unlike the Club, the foundation is a 501(c)(3) organization, so donations can be tax deductible.) Our foundation has its own Board of Directors and operates independently from the Club.

Calendar of Events

January

- Club Foundation Annual Meeting
- Dining & Entertainment book sales continue

February

- Club Foundation Dinner
- Spaghetti Dinner ticket sales begin

March

- Spaghetti Dinner

April

- Lederer Park Cleanup
- District Training Assembly

May

- Vocational Scholarships awarded
- District Conference

June

- RYLA Camp @ Juniata College
- Rotary funds distributed to local charities
- Farmers to Food Bank every Friday
- Ice Cream Festival

July

- New Rotary Year Begins – Installation of Officers
- Farmers to Food Bank every Friday
- Jared Box preparation

August

- Youth Exchange Students arrive
- Farmers to Food Bank every Friday

September

- District Training seminars
- Farmers to Food Bank every Friday
- Centre County Rotary Clubs Tailgate

October

- Dining & Entertainment book preparation
- Farmers to Food Bank every Friday

November

- Dining & Entertainment book preparation
- Wine Tasting and Auction
- District Rotary Foundation Dinner

December

- Election of New Officers
- Dining & Entertainment book sales begin
- Polar Express
- Holiday Party