

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 four Rotary clubs in Centre County (three in State College and one in Bellefonte). Our club was chartered in 1986 as an offshoot of the original State College Rotary Club.

Membership

Our membership is comprised of women and men 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 Hotel and Conference Center on South Atherton Street on most Thursdays at noon. Meetings last an hour. We invite interesting speakers to make presentations at two to three meetings per month. Two to three 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, Boal City Brewing, or the Discovery Space. We devote four meetings each year to Club Assembly, the purpose of which is to discuss the work of the club.

Fellowship

Our members like to have fun! To accomplish this goal, we hold various events throughout the year. Events include a family picnic, a wine tasting/auction, a beer tasting, a holiday party in mid-December, hikes and bike rides, and monthly happy hours. We have also attended, a Palmer Art Museum tour, theatre and sporting events, and comedy and improv nights as group outings.

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 Food Bank, Mid-State Literacy Council, Center for Alternatives in Community Justice, Centre Safe, Rhoneymeade Arboretum and Sculpture Garden, Housing Transitions, Centre Helps, Bellefonte Art Museum for Centre County, Discovery Space, Schlow Library, Interfaith Human Services, Wildlife Leadership Academy, and others.
- Rotary related opportunities, including monthly stipends to inbound Rotary Student Exchange participants, funding for international humanitarian projects, and vocational scholarships.

We raise money in several ways:

1. Holding the annual community Spaghetti Dinner in the spring. We sell advance tickets to this event, then cook and serve meals to go. We expect each member to sell an allotment of tickets.
2. We run the annual Ice Cream Fest every August. It is a fun way to bring joy to everyone in the Centre Region (who doesn't like ice cream?).
3. We hold a Mum sale each fall.

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4. We hold a weekly 50/50 drawing and celebrate club members through "Happy Bucks" (dollars given by members announcing personal or professional highlights) at our weekly meetings.
5. Each week, a Rotarian of the Week is responsible for providing an item to be auctioned off.

Community projects

We perform community service in various ways:

- Each year we field a team for the United Way Day of Caring. Most recently we spent the day on landscaping projects at Centre County Youth Service Bureau group homes in State College.
- With the State College Food Bank, we cosponsor the Fresh Produce Market held several times each summer.
- We are the chartering organization for Scouts BSA Pack 31, Troop 31 Boys, and Troop 31 Girls.
- Annually we prepare Jared boxes for hospitalized kids.
- We interview candidates for Rotary sponsored programs. Typically, 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 4 Way Speech Contest.
- 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 one or two community grants each year. These grants help fund capital improvement for local organizations. Recent recipients include the Boy Scouts, Centre Volunteers in Medicine, 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 monthly. 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 members. Prospects are invited to attend a meeting, which is an opportunity for the candidate to meet other members and to see if there is a "good fit." If there is, then the proposing member completes and submits a New Member Application/Proposal Form.

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 makes a recommendation on their suitability to the Board. The Board discusses the candidate's attributes and votes on the application. If the vote is affirmative, then the president announces at the next meeting that the prospective member 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 any objections, then the candidate will be asked if he or she desires to become a member and if so, is inducted.

Following induction, a mentor from the Membership Committee guides 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 quarterly. Our dues are currently \$175 per quarter, which includes our weekly meals, as well as district and RI general dues, and the annual holiday party. Payments are handed to or mailed to the treasurer. Payments by credit card, including automatic recurring payments, are possible.

Attendance

Attendance is important and valued. However, there is no longer an attendance requirement. Members are encouraged to attend as often as their schedule allows and to attend meetings of other clubs when they are unable to make our club meetings. We also encourage members to participate in fellowship events and service projects as well.

Rotarian of the Week

Every week, one member is designated the "Rotarian of the Week." That person is responsible for 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 a year. 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 our members.

Administration

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

We have our own website, LinkedIn, Facebook, and Instagram sites to communicate externally and use email to communicate with members.

Rotary Club and District information can easily be found by accessing the **D**istrict **a**nd **C**lub **D**ata**b**ase, 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 which is a 501(c)(4), 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.