

# CLUB CHARTER CELEBRATIONS

The charter event is a time to celebrate a new club joining Rotary. It should be a memorable event in the history of the club and an opportunity to introduce the club to its local community and surrounding Rotary clubs.

## ORGANIZING THE CELEBRATION

The charter members decide what type of celebration to hold, and how it can convey the image they wish to project to the community. Ask a smaller group of members to organize the celebration, drafting a program outline and budget for all members to approve. The organizers should focus on the following details.

### + DESIGNING THE RIGHT EVENT

The celebration should reflect the new club's image and can range from a formal dinner to a casual party. It usually includes an inspirational address and allows the governor to present the charter to the club.

### + SELECTING A DATE AND LOCATION

Select the date for your charter event only after the new club application has been approved. The club's official charter date is the date the club is admitted by Rotary's Board of Directors, not the date of the charter celebration.

When setting the date, allow enough time to plan the program and hospitality and publicize it throughout the district. Avoid conflicts with other Rotary events in the district so members of other clubs can participate.

Once the date is set, select the location of the celebration.

### + BUDGET

Admission fees should be reasonable but cover your expenses. Factor in the estimated attendance, meals or refreshments, the cost of printing programs, dinner tickets, place cards, invitations, and publicity materials, as well as other expenses, such as souvenirs and speakers' fees.

### + INVITING OTHER CLUBS

When sending invitations, allow enough time for other clubs in the district to announce the event during at least two meetings. The invitation should include the date, time, price, and location of the event, as well as the names of speakers, a way to register or RSVP, and the reservation deadline. Some clubs ask for Rotarians to pay for charter event reservations in advance.

### + PUBLICITY

Send news releases to local media and promote the event on social media.

### + GUESTS OF HONOR

You might extend invitations to local dignitaries. Decide whether any guests should receive complimentary tickets. If you invite any special guests, make sure they're each assigned a host.

## **+ SET-UP**

Have a registration area if the event is large. To facilitate introductions, prepare name badges in advance.

If the event is formal, make seating arrangements in advance. It's always useful to assign seats to speakers and other presenters, and to have a designated space with a lectern, microphone, and other equipment available for speakers.

## **+ GIFTS FOR THE NEW CLUB**

Traditionally, the sponsor and other clubs present the new club with gifts, such as a podium, a Rotary flag, Rotary lapel pins, a bell, or a gavel. Clubs that are less formal, though, may not feel a need for these items. Guests who wish to bring gifts should ask the new club what it needs or would like. Sponsor clubs may also offer to cover the club charter fees. The governor or the new club adviser should arrange for the presentation of gifts and tell the master of ceremonies before the event which clubs will present gifts.

# **THE PROGRAM: CREATING A MEMORABLE EVENT**

The entire program should be designed to foster fellowship and inspire the new club's members. Carefully decide which Rotarian will give the main address. In many cases, the new club adviser or the president of the sponsor club calls the meeting to order and continues as master of ceremonies, keeping the program on schedule and providing smooth transitions between segments.

## **+ PRESENTATION OF CLUB CHARTER**

If a paper copy of the club's charter certificate is presented, it should be framed. The electronic version could be included in a slideshow or printed in the program book. The governor often presents the charter during his or her address and may recognize the charter members by calling each of their names.

## **+ SOUVENIR BROCHURE**

The event program may be designed to serve as a memento of the charter celebration. It doesn't need to be elaborate or expensive. It usually includes:

- The name of the new club
- The time and place of the charter celebration
- The event schedule, including names of speakers
- Entertainment details

## **+ GOVERNOR'S REMARKS**

The district governor may attend and speak about:

- Rotary's meaning to its individual members and the community
- What the club has agreed to by joining Rotary
- The benefits of Rotary fellowship in the district and around the world
- The worldwide impact of The Rotary Foundation
- The importance of steady membership growth and development

## **? Want more information?**

- ➔ See [Starting a Rotary Club](#) for the overall process of starting a new club.