

RESOLUTION 19R-03

To request the RI Board to consider clarifying that Rotary is a philosophy of life based on the ideal of service

Proposer(s): District 2580, Japan

Endorsed by: District 2580 through a ballot-by-mail, 15 May 2019

1 WHEREAS, the research report of Siegel+Gale, published on 25 January 2012, was
2 used to develop what has ultimately become RI's Strategic Plan. The document
3 reports that, for every ten Rotarians who were asked what Rotary stands for, ten
4 different answers were given, highlighting the fact that there is no clear definition
5 among members. The document does not provide a clear answer to the question,
6 but nevertheless proceeds on the assumption that Rotary is the organization itself,
7 and
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9 WHEREAS, there has already been such a debate in the history of Rotary, a debate
10 so momentous that it nearly destroyed our organization and this resulted in
11 Resolution 1923-34, which states that "Rotary is a philosophy of life," which was the
12 philosophy of "Service above self" (consider others before you act), which would
13 then lead to "One profits most who serves best" (those who follow the first motto are
14 rewarded most), and
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16 WHEREAS, the Object of Rotary is to encourage and foster the ideal of service as a
17 basis of worthy enterprise and, in particular, to encourage and foster, among others,
18 the application of the ideal of service in each Rotarian's personal, business, and
19 community life, or, in other words, in all aspects of a Rotarian's daily life, and
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21 WHEREAS, Rotary is a philosophy of life, or the ideal of service, as implemented by
22 Rotarians. Rotary clubs are organizations composed of individual Rotarians, just as
23 RI is the collective expression of the clubs, and
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25 WHEREAS, both RI's previous strategic plan and its new strategic plan, scheduled
26 for implementation in 2019, see Rotary as a respected *organization* that works to
27 improve communities internationally, and
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29 WHEREAS, the ideal of service is a philosophy that points to ways in which
30 Rotarians can achieve personal satisfaction by working to improve the lives of
31 others, thus fulfilling their own goals, as well as those they serve. In particular, by
32 applying the ideal of service in one's own profession or vocation, it is transformed
33 from a means of making into a means of serving people and the communities in
34 which they live. Along with community service, vocational service is a reward in and
35 of itself, and

1 WHEREAS, RI's Strategic Plan was established to develop our membership, which
2 has stagnated for many years at around 1.2 million members. Membership
3 development is significant because it will expand our capacity to provide service to
4 communities, a process that, in itself, is inherently satisfying to Rotarians.
5 Expanding or maintaining the organization should not be the sole purpose of the
6 strategic plan, and

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8 WHEREAS, the tendency to view Rotary as an entity rather than as a philosophy
9 inevitably results in failure to recognize the individual Rotarian's activity as a
10 Rotary activity, or recognize the vocational service that each Rotarian performs in
11 their own professional life. This leads to the misunderstanding that community
12 service activities such as vocational training teams (VTTs) are the equivalent of
13 vocational service, and

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15 WHEREAS, in service activities, as well, there has been an overemphasis on
16 donations and volunteer activities and a departure from Rotary's original concept of
17 vocational service as satisfying for both Rotarians and their communities. Just as it
18 is more important to teach a starving person how to fish than to hand out a fish to
19 them, it is more important to promote our ideal of service (i.e., why we implement
20 certain service activities) than to publicize the individual service activities

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22 IT IS RESOLVED by Rotary International that the Board of Directors of Rotary
23 International consider clarifying that Rotary is a philosophy of life based on the
24 ideal of service, so that the Object of Rotary can be properly implemented.

(End of Text)

PURPOSE AND EFFECT

25 Rotary is a philosophy of life. The ideal of service directs one to first consider
26 others before acting, which would then lead to greater rewards for those who
27 follow this precept. Rotarians are the ones that implement the ideal. Rotary
28 clubs are organizations composed of Rotarians, just as RI is an entity that
29 represents all of the clubs and supports them.

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31 Based on proper recognition of the above, we should focus our principal
32 membership development efforts on recruiting potential members who are still
33 active in the workforce, as these make up the largest segment of the adult
34 population, and we should encourage and foster the implementation of the ideal
35 of service through vocational service, as this benefits both Rotarians and
36 communities alike.

37
38 That is the true Object of Rotary, and it would lead to membership development.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

- 1 If implemented, this resolution would have a financial impact on RI which cannot
- 2 be determined at this time. Cost would be dependent on the scope and extent of
- 3 support provided by the RI Board to accomplish this goal.
- 4
- 5 Significant resources have been invested over the past four years in market
- 6 research and the creation of messages, materials, and promotional campaigns
- 7 that drive public awareness and understanding of Rotary.