RESOLUTION 19R-14

To request the RI Board to consider officially recognizing RotaKids clubs

**Proposer(s):** District 9570, Australia

**Endorsed by:** District 9570 through an annual district conference, Biloela, Queensland, Australia, 7 April 2019

WHEREAS, Rotary’s fifth Avenue of Service is Youth Service; therefore, it is imperative to give all youth an opportunity to develop themselves and engage in service, irrespective of age and background, and

WHEREAS, Interact is a recognized and successful program of RI. Additionally, there are existing RotaKids, Rotary Kids, EarlyAct, and Futuract clubs operating at least 229 clubs successfully in 29 countries, and growing rapidly, that are strongly supported by Rotarians, schools, families, and children worldwide, but they are not recognized as an official part of Rotary, and

WHEREAS, basic education and literacy are one of Rotary’s six areas of focus. RotaKids gives students the opportunity to further develop literacy, numeracy, confidence, and leadership skills through authentic situations outside the walls of a classroom, and

WHEREAS, RI has invested significantly in creating a uniform international Rotary brand; RotaKids clubs are currently using multiple names for this program and logos that are not consistent with the Rotary brand, and

WHEREAS, children are considered ‘sponges’ and it is in their primary schooling that their view of the world is being shaped. This is a critical age, one at which they can best benefit from exposure to the needs of others and to the concept of making a difference through service, even as they are building confidence and learning leadership skills that will benefit the students and the communities they will serve in the future, and

WHEREAS, RotaKids clubs grow the Rotary brand in schools and the broader community through parents and teachers, who are all potential Rotarians, and

WHEREAS, if children have not been exposed at home to the idea that we can help others and make the world a better place, RotaKids provides them with this insight and empowers the next generation to make a positive difference, and

WHEREAS, RotaKids helps build awareness of the needs of our local and global communities among students, parents, and teachers, which benefits the larger community, and
WHEREAS, there will be a cost incurred to RI for branding and management of RotaKids clubs, but such funding can be seen as a significant investment in the future of Rotary.

IT IS RESOLVED by Rotary International that the Board of Directors of Rotary International consider officially recognizing RotaKids, or such representative name as the Board determines, as a structured program of RI for children six to twelve years of age.

(End of Text)

PURPOSE AND EFFECT

RI President Mark Maloney has indicated that the growth of Rotary will be his primary emphasis in 2019-2020. RI’s recognition of RotaKids as an official program of RI will do just that. Many thousands of existing RotaKids and their families will become part of the extended Rotary family around the world.

The extension of Rotary’s fifth Avenue of Service to children between the ages of six and twelve creates a logical progression from RotaKids to Interact to Rotaract. Further growth to Rotary will be achieved through recruitment of parents and other family members who gain exposure to Rotary through RotaKids. The current strong growth in Interact and in the RotaKids world is in direct contrast to the struggle to maintain numbers in Rotary clubs. Nelson Mandela has said, “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.” Teaching RotaKids the value of service, peace, and leadership perfectly fits Rotary’s vision of creating lasting change.

None other than Abraham Lincoln once observed that it is best to “Teach the children so it will not be necessary to teach the adults.” RI has spent considerable money and resources in educating and training the adults on growing Rotary, with little to show for it. The amount of money necessary to brand and register RotaKids will be an investment in the long-term future of Rotary.

Should RI determine not to officially recognize RotaKids, the movement will continue to flourish, but with several different names, having little connection to, or in actual competition with RI. It is far better to take immediate action to bring this wonderful Rotary club initiative within the family of RI. Having one name, one brand and similar objectives, RotaKids will play an important role in growing Rotary and creating lasting change.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

If implemented, this resolution would result in an increase in expenses for RI. If RotaKids is administered as a structured program (similar to Interact), expenses
are estimated to be at US$150,000 per year for one staff person, production of
materials, and postage. In addition, there is an initial cost of US$20,000 for
global trademark research and registration.