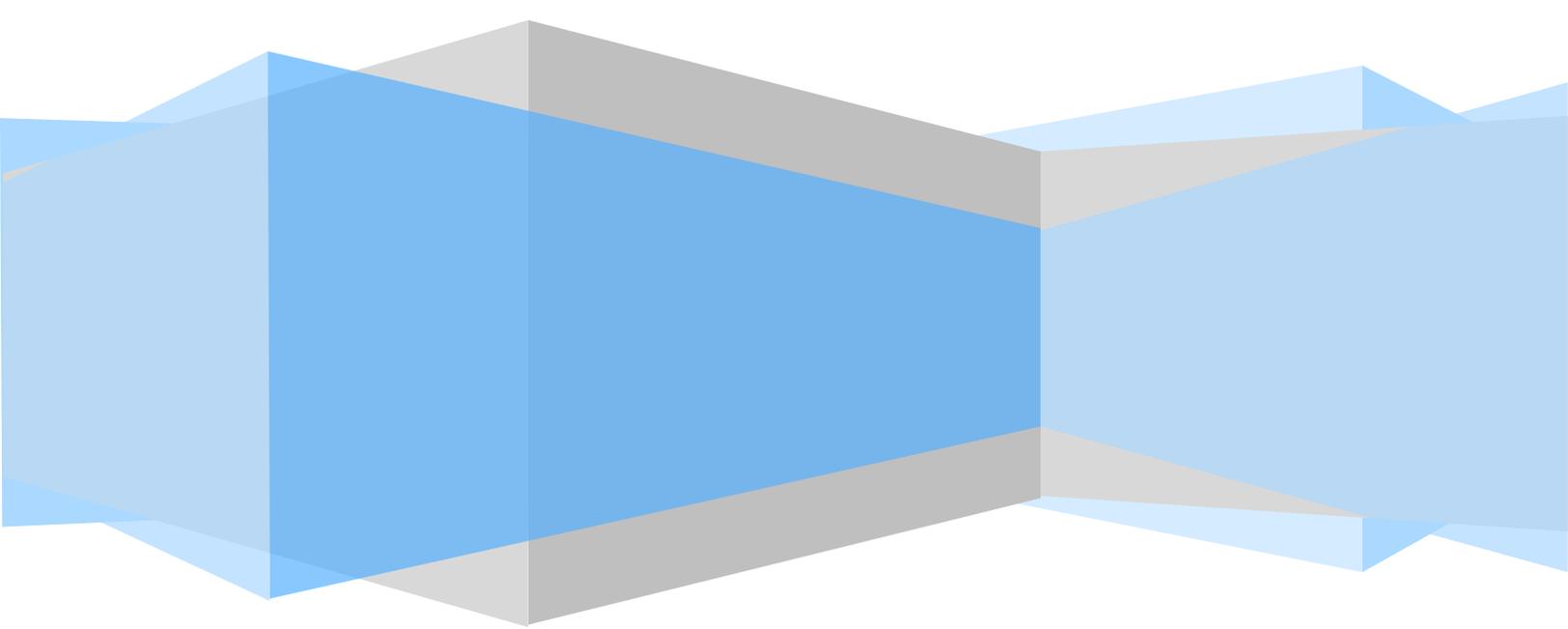


**Rotary International District 7980**



# **A Guide to Starting an Interact Club**

**Published by the Interact District Officers**



# Starting an Interact Club



*This guide is primarily intended for Rotarians looking to start an Interact club.*

Interact is a club for youth ages 12-18 who want to connect with other young people in their community or school. Interact club members have fun while carrying out service projects and learning about the world. Interact clubs organize at least two service projects a year: one that benefits their community and one that encourages international understanding. With more than 15,000 Interact clubs in 142 countries, Rotary is inspiring the next generation of socially responsible and globally conscious leaders.

Interact clubs are largely self-sustaining, however benefit from the guidance and support of sponsoring Rotary clubs. Before sponsoring an Interact club, Rotary clubs should research the program. By reviewing this handbook and speaking with Rotarians and Interactors involved with the program, Rotary clubs can get a firsthand perspective on Interact and its benefits. The following steps will help ensure that new clubs are established on a solid foundation and properly chartered by Rotary International. Rotarians, young people, and faculty advisers are encouraged to refer to this checklist throughout the organization process. Additional documents that you will need to charter an Interact club are hyperlinked throughout this document; contact and reference information is located in the back of this handbook.



The Interact Club of Valley Regional High School participates in a Habitat for Humanity house build.

# Seven Steps to a Successful Interact Club

## Step 1: Establish Rotary club support.

If your Rotary club is interested in sponsoring an Interact club, it should form an Interact subcommittee to study the requirements of sponsorship. Be sure to talk with the district Interact chairperson, who can provide information about how other Interact clubs operate in your district. The costs to start an Interact club are minimal; however, realize that some start up money may be needed for publicity and other expenses. Once the Interact subcommittee has compiled all the necessary information for sponsorship, it should present its findings to the Rotary club. Here are some tips for making a persuasive presentation:

- Highlight the rewards of sponsoring service-minded young people.
- Emphasize the importance of Rotarian involvement and support to an Interact club's success.
- Invite current Interactors from existing clubs to share their positive Interact experiences.
- Following the presentation, the Rotary club board must approve the sponsorship of an Interact club.

### JOINT SPONSORSHIP OF AN INTERACT CLUB

An Interact club can be organized and sponsored by more than one Rotary club if all the following conditions are met:

1. The district governor approves the arrangement in writing.
2. Sponsor clubs demonstrate that organizing separate Interact clubs, each sponsored by a single Rotary club, would divide what is essentially a single body of young people within a school or community.
3. A joint Interact committee is formed with members from each of the sponsor Rotary clubs.

## Summary & Checklist:

- ✓ Form an Interact subcommittee to study the requirements of sponsorship.
- ✓ Talk to the district Interact chairperson to learn how other Interact clubs operate.
- ✓ Have the Interact subcommittee presents its findings to the Rotary club.
- ✓ Have the Rotary club board approve the sponsorship of an Interact club.

## Step 2: Identify a club base.

After the Rotary club board approves the sponsorship of an Interact club, it must also select at least one Rotarian to serve as an adviser to the new Interact club. The roles and responsibilities of Rotarian adviser will differ depending on whether the Rotary club decides to sponsor a community or school based Interact club.

- A community-based club draws its members from several schools from the Rotary club's area. The Rotarian adviser must attend all of the Interact club's meetings.
- A school-based club draws its members from one school, and the Rotarian adviser is required to attend only the club's board meetings. The school and Rotary club select a faculty adviser to work with the Interact club.

Regardless of the type of Interact club your Rotary club chooses to sponsor, advisers should always have a strong interest in working with youth and ample time to dedicate to the Interact club. Rotarian and faculty advisers are the “glue” that keeps an Interact club together and need to have a good working relationship. Youth clubs like Interact have high membership turnover, as students graduate or surpass the age limit. Subsequently, advisers remain actively involved with their Interact club in order that it persists and grows long after the founding members leave.

Rotary clubs planning to sponsor a school-based Interact clubs must also work with the school to jointly establish the club. It is recommended that a member of the Interact subcommittee meets with school officials to explain the Interact program and its advantages. Rotarians and school officials should work together to determine membership requirements, club policies, the time and location of Interact club meetings, and the faculty adviser.

Once a faculty adviser is selected for a school based Interact club, members of the Interact subcommittee should discuss short and long term goals for their Interact club, as well as their roles in supporting the club. For more information on the roles of Rotarian and Faculty Advisers, please read [\*\*The Interact Club Adviser Guide\*\*](#). You may also wish to consult the [\*\*Interact Handbook\*\*](#), issued by Rotary International.

At this time, the Interact subcommittee should also identify potential youth members of their Interact club. Brainstorm to develop as wide a membership pool as possible. In a school-based club, ask the faculty adviser to offer suggestions for possible club members. Sources of potential Interactors include:

- Community centers, churches, athletic clubs and teams, secondary schools
- Sons, daughters, and other young family members of Rotarians in the area
- Current and past participants of Rotary Youth Exchange (RYE), Next Generations, and Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA)

### COMMUNITY-BASED CLUB

Community-based Interact clubs can be formed through existing organizations and youth groups, like a local YMCA or Boys & Girls Club.

### SCHOOL-BASED CLUB

School-based Interact clubs can either be high school or middle school based.

It may also be helpful to consider the reasons why a young adult might join an Interact club. This may help your Interact subcommittee further focus its search for prospective members in your community. Some possible reasons may include:

- Finding steady volunteer work to meet a community service requirement
- The desire to improve the community and inspire positive global change.
- Spending time with friends, making new friends, and interacting with members of the community
- Support a prominent local cause or charity
- Seeking new opportunities to refine leadership skills
- Interest in Rotary club scholarships

### **Summary & Checklist:**

- ✓ Decide to sponsor a community or school-based Interact club.
- ✓ Select dedicated Rotarian and faculty advisers oversee the Interact club.
- ✓ Meet with school officials to introduce them to the Interact program and work with them to establish the Interact club. Discuss club goals and support roles with the faculty adviser for a school-based Interact club.
- ✓ Develop a wide membership pool and identify potential members.
- ✓ Consult the faculty adviser for guidance in identifying potential members
- ✓ Consider why potential members might join an Interact club.

## Step 3: Invite prospective members to an informational meeting.

### Who do I invite?

In addition to prospective Interactors, you'll want to invite the following people to an informational meeting:

- Interact subcommittee members
- Rotary club president
- District Interact co-chairs
- Rotarian advisers
- Faculty advisers (for a school-based club)
- Interactors from nearby clubs who can share their experiences and answer questions

The contact information for the Interact co-chairs and the district officers is located at the end of this guide. The district officers can put you in contact with current Interactors who may be able to attend your informational meeting.

### At the meeting:

- Give students a general idea of Interact's history, as well as Rotary's history and commitment to young people.
- Distribute copies of ***Get More Connect for Good***, a publication intended for new Rotarians. This will provide Interactors an overview of Rotary.
- Explain the policies and goals of Interact, including a description of some recent Interact service projects (The district Interact co-chairs and current Interactors can provide examples).
- Highlight the program's internationality, including the potential to partner with youth in other parts of the world.
- Have copies of the **Interact Promotional Card** available for prospective Interactors to give to friends who might be interested in joining.
- Allow plenty of time for prospective Interactors to ask questions. Solicit ideas for club projects from these future members.

### At the end of the meeting:

- Take a vote to confirm that there's enough interest to establish an Interact club. Keep in mind that a minimum of 15 charter members is recommended but not mandated.
- Set a date for the first organizational meeting.

### Summary & Checklist:

- ✓ Host an informational meeting for potential Interact club members.
- ✓ Determine if there is enough student interest to create an Interact club.

## Step 4: Hold organizational meetings.

Now that you've identified a group of prospective Interactors, it's time to get the club organized. Keep enthusiasm high by encouraging the Interact club to schedule organizational meetings no more than two weeks apart. Have the Rotarian adviser and, if the club is school based, the faculty adviser, keep a list of everyone who attends these meetings, along with their phone numbers and e-mail addresses. Encourage attendees to invite friends to meetings. Although there's no specific number of organizational meetings required before a club can be chartered, you'll need to ensure that the Interactors complete the following tasks before applying for a club charter:

- Hold elections for president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, and other members of the Interact club board.
- Develop a membership plan to ensure the club includes a balanced number of male and female members, as well as students from each grade level or age group.
- Discuss and establish annual club dues.
- Determine where and when club meetings will be held. Clubs must meet at least twice a month.
- Begin planning for service activities, fundraising events, and the inaugural ceremony.
- Familiarize club members with the constitutional documents.

### COLLECTING MEMBER DATA:

Use the Interact Membership Form to easily collect and maintain member contact information.

### ANNUAL CLUB DUES:

Interact clubs are not required to pay or collect dues.

## Summary & Checklist:

- ✓ Hold organizational meetings to secure varied club membership and to determine how the Interact club will operate.
- ✓ Complete the required tasks before applying for a club charter.

## Step 5: Complete paperwork.

Once a prospective Interact club has achieved a strong membership base, the club can be chartered by Rotary International (RI). The sponsor Rotary club should work with Interactors to complete the following paperwork:

### Standard Interact Club Constitution and Standard Interact Club By-Laws

- Before a prospective club can be chartered, it must adopt the Standard Interact Club Constitution and all its amendments, then adopt the Standard Interact Club By-Laws consistent with the constitution and policy established by Rotary International. These bylaws are subject to the approval of the sponsor Rotary club.

### Interact Club Certification Form

- Complete the Interact Club Certification Form listing all charter members who have agreed to attend a minimum of 60 percent of the club's service and social activities. A minimum of 15 charter members is suggested.
- Obtain the signatures of the sponsor Rotary club president and the district governor on the form.
- Send the Interact Club Certification Form to RI World Headquarters. Their contact information can be found at the end of this guidebook.
- Send a copy of the signed Interact Club Certification Form to the district Interact co chairs. Their contact information can be found at the end of this guidebook.
- Keep a copy for the sponsoring Rotary club and the new Interact club.

### Incoming Interact Officer Data Form

- Have each Interact club officer complete a copy of the Incoming Interact Officer Data Form and submit to the district Interact chairperson.
- Once the Interact club has been chartered, which typically takes about two to four weeks, the sponsor Rotary club will receive the club's **Certificate of Organization** from RI.

## Step 6: Plan an inaugural ceremony.

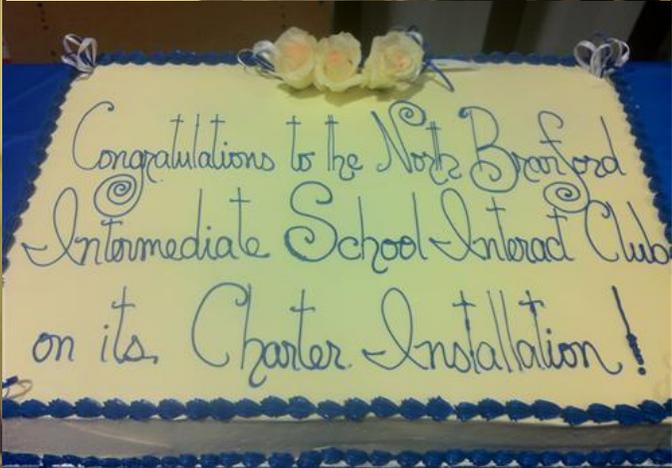
The chartering of an Interact club is a meaningful and exciting event. The sponsor Rotary club may wish to host an inaugural ceremony where sponsoring Rotarians can welcome Interactors as partners in Rotary service. Invite Rotary district leaders, such as the governor, Interact chair, and Interact representative, to this celebration to introduce the new Interact club to the district. Every inaugural ceremony is unique, but modeling it after the sponsor Rotary club's traditions is a good way to begin. Here are some other ways to put together a memorable ceremony:

- Create an inauguration ceremony program book that lists club members' names.
- Briefly explain Rotary and The Four-Way Test.
- Describe how the new Interactors are now part of the family of Rotary.
- Review the history of Interact and how the new club was formed. (Consider including a humorous story or anecdote.)
- Induct members individually, and announce board members and officers.
- Include school- or community-related themes, mottoes, and traditions.
- Present each member with an Interact pin and club t-shirt.
- Take photos to commemorate the event.

### INTERACT CLUB BANNER:

The sponsoring Rotary club purchases the banner for the new Interact club. To order an Interact club banner, you may wish to consult the catalogues published by National Award Services, Inc. and the Russell-Hampton Co.

The Interact Club of North Branford Intermediate School celebrates its charter installation.



## Step 7: Sustaining your Interact Club

While a chartering banquet makes an Interact club official, this does not guarantee a club's continued growth, success, and longevity. Ultimately, this task falls in the hands of the sponsoring Rotary club and the club advisers. Their active support and guidance will ensure that the Interact club does not fizzle out once its founding members leave, but rather continue to grow and serve the community. Here are some tips on how to start and nurture a sustainable club:

- Splatter the newspapers, radio, and other media with articles about your new Interact club, its members, Interact, and Rotary. Continue to publicize the efforts of your Interact club to raise community awareness and attract new members.
- Invite Interactors to work with your Rotary club on annual projects. This helps the Interact club anticipate annual events and allows ample time for club members to plan accordingly. The sponsoring Rotary club benefits from additional volunteers while the benefits Interact club by keeping members engaged.
- Every couple of months, invite your Interact club to present at a Rotary club meeting. This helps inform other Rotarians about Interact and allows the Interact club to share what they have accomplished. Rotarians are also encouraged to attend Interact club meetings, which gives them the opportunity to meet Interactors, learn more about Interact, request the club's assistance for upcoming projects, and invite members to district events. Rotarians and Interactors should be familiar with one another.
- Select key members of your Interact club to attend Rotary District 7980's Next Generations and RYLA leadership training conference, as they may serve as your club's future officers. Maintain healthy communication with the district leaders of the Interact program to get event invitations and information. Encourage members to attend district Interact events, like the Interact-Rotaract Assembly and ICoP's.
- Actively recruit new members to grow your Interact club. Many clubs host recruitment parties or events where members are encouraged to bring non-member friends. A high school Interact club may also consider visiting with service clubs at nearby middle schools to recruit new members for the fall. School based clubs should take part in club fairs and other opportunities to publicize their club.
- Maintain varied membership that reflects all demographics equally. This ensures
- Make sure your club's activities reflect the interests of all members. Take on projects that all members are supportive of partaking in. This encourages commitment and club loyalty.
- Set short and long term goals for your Interact club. This can be project or club oriented. For example, your club may strive to raise \$200 dollars more than last year for their annual fundraiser and add ten new members by the end of the year.
- Most importantly, maintain healthy communication with club advisers and officers. If the club is struggling, work with them to solve the problem. Meet with club leadership on a regular basis to define new goals and evaluate progress.

## Contacts & References

### RI World Headquarters

#### Rotary International

One Rotary Center  
1560 Sherman Avenue  
Evanston, IL 60201-3698  
USA  
Tel.: 847-866-3000  
Fax: 847-328-8554  
Website: [www.rotary.org](http://www.rotary.org)

### RI District 7980

*Southern Connecticut, USA*

District Website: <http://rotary7980.org>

Youth Service Website: <http://rotaryyouthservices7980.com>

#### G. Justin Phillips

*District Youth Service Chairperson*

Tel.: 917-374-5808

Email: [gjustinphillips@me.com](mailto:gjustinphillips@me.com)

#### Ron Webb

*District Interact Co-Chair*

Email: [ronwebb@snet.net](mailto:ronwebb@snet.net)

#### District Interact Officers

Email: [InteractClubsD7980@gmail.com](mailto:InteractClubsD7980@gmail.com)

Facebook Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/interact7980/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/Interact7980>

Tumblr: <http://interact7980.tumblr.com/>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/interact7980>