

The Crestwood-Sunset Hills Rotary Club

A brief history

Chartered in 1960 as the Crestwood Rotary Club, our club celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2010. Since its founding, the club has shown a strong commitment to supporting our community as well as international Rotary projects such as Polio Plus, a worldwide effort to eradicate polio.

In 1983 the club voted to include Sunset Hills and became the Crestwood-Sunset Hills Rotary Club. In 2012 the South St. Louis County Rotary Club disbanded and eight of their members joined our club. At present, our Rotary club has about 60 members and is planning for additional growth.

As a service organization, we embrace the Rotary International motto, "Service Above Self". To support community and international projects, we hold fundraising activities. In 1972, the club started a barbecue. Members sold tickets to the event and spouses (Rotary was men only at that time) baked and served desserts. For several years the barbecue was our major source of revenue. In 1981 former member Tony Badalamenti directed the organization of a Fall Arts and Crafts Fair. Held the weekend before Thanksgiving, the Fair has become the club's major fundraiser and a popular St. Louis area arts and crafts attraction. In 2006 member Jenny Bell initiated a Spring Arts and Crafts Fair, held two weeks before Easter. The Spring Fair is now about half the size of the Fall Fair, featuring about 250 booths. In June 2013, the Arts and Crafts Fairs were cited as the Best Fundraising Events in our Rotary District. In 2013 our club adopted the Trivia Night brought by the members of the former South County club.

Our Rotary Club is actively engaged with young people. Since 2005 the club has hosted Rotary Exchange Students from Belgium, Argentina, Japan, Italy, France, Germany and Brazil. In 2009 we initiated a Rotary Interact club in Lindbergh High School. This very active club holds fundraisers and community projects including an annual chili cook-off, car washes, Salvation Army bell ringing and food drives. Interact students and Rotary club members went to Guatemala in 2011, 2012, 2014, and 2016 to deliver safe and efficient stoves to native Guatemalans and to teach safe food preparation. They plan to continue to return to Guatemala biannually. Interact clubs have been added to each of the Lindbergh Middle Schools.

Each year our club donates to local schools, charities and other organizations to aid in providing essential services and projects. Visible community projects include the Rotary Garden at the Sunset Hills Community Center, a Rotary Pavilion at Whitecliff Park in Crestwood and a Rotary Pavilion and Marker in Minnie Ha Ha Park. Ongoing projects include a monthly cleanup of a local commuter parking lot and programs to provide winter jackets and weekend food packs to needy children identified by Lindbergh school counselors.

Our club is proud of its history, our accomplishments and commitment to active service. We look forward to meeting the challenges and opportunities offered in Rotary.

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