

Rotary Club of Saratoga

Overview and Membership Guidelines

July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027

Understanding the Rotary Organization

Rotary International

- Paul Harris founded Rotary International (“RI”) as a businessmen's networking group in Chicago in 1905.
- The Rotary International 7 areas of focus: Promoting Peace; Fighting Disease; Providing clean water, sanitation and hygiene; Saving mothers and children; Supporting education; Growing local economies; and The Environment.
- Rotary International headquarters is in Evanston, IL. Rotary International has 1.4 million members in over 46,000 clubs worldwide.
- RI has immunized 2.5 billion children against polio.
- The Rotary wheel was chosen as its symbol because the members rotated the meetings from one member’s office to another.
- Rotarians gather annually at a Rotary convention held in a different country each year.
- Rotary International publishes a monthly magazine which features projects and people worldwide.

District 5170

- Rotary Clubs are divided into Districts.
- The Rotary Club of Saratoga is in Rotary District 5170, comprised of 62 clubs in the Bay Area.
- Our subgroup is Area 8B, and our Club number is 511.
- The District holds frequent workshops, and at least three annual Conferences open to all members – Avenues of Service, District Training Assembly, and the District Conference.

The Rotary Foundation

- This is Rotary International’s charitable foundation, which provides grants that save lives and improve conditions throughout the world.
- One of the most well-known programs is **Polio Plus**, dedicated to the eradication of polio.
- Rotary Foundation asks every Rotarian to donate a modest amount each year, as part of its “Every Rotarian Every Year” project. Some Rotarians have become major and/or bequest donors, donating much more over the years.
- The **Paul Harris Society** recognizes Rotarians who contribute over \$1000/year.

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- Rotary Club of Saratoga was formed in 1955. Its current membership comprises about 81 residents and professionals from South Bay/Saratoga area, from all walks of life and very diverse.
- Club members usually meet on Fridays from 12:15p to 1:30p at the Saratoga Community Center. During the pandemic, meetings were held on Fridays from 12:15pm to 1:30pm via Zoom. We have returned to in-person meeting in 2023.
- Members and significant others meet through group social events on a regular basis, and are also involved in charitable, civic and community activities depending on their interests and availability.
- Saratoga Rotary encourages each member to donate at least \$200 to the annual fund of The Rotary Foundation and \$50 to the Polio Plus fund on an annual basis. This is important as approximately half of the funds donated to The Rotary Foundation are returned back to the Club for executing projects in the form of District Designated Funds. These are typically used for International Projects, where larger projects are matched through the Foundation.
- Many Saratoga Rotarians are long-time sizable donors, making Saratoga Rotary, and District 5170 which it operates in, one of the top contributors to The Rotary Foundation.
- Saratoga Rotary hosts an annual two-day Art Show fundraiser during the first weekend of May to raise funds for local charitable and educational causes. Due to the pandemic, we had to cancel the May 2020 and 2021 Art Shows. We resumed the Art Show in May 2022. The Club continues to explore new fundraising opportunities, too. These funds go to the 501(3)c organization called Saratoga Rotary Charitable Foundation.

The Saratoga Rotary Charitable Foundation (“SRCF”)

- SRCF is separate from The Rotary Foundation. It was launched to make grants to nonprofits and supports our Club Youth Service and Community Service projects. SRCF Board of Directors, including the current President of the Saratoga Rotary Club, manages SRCF. SRCF is operationally run and is financially separate from the Rotary Club of Saratoga.
- With over 60 years of service to the community, the Saratoga Rotary Club, through the SRCF and its predecessor, the Saratoga Rotary Service Fund, has distributed funding for grants in excess of \$2.5M.

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Interact and Rotaract

- Interact is a Rotary International-affiliated organization comprised of students 12- to 18- years of age. Their goal is to improve the community and the world around them.
- Rotaract is a Rotary International-affiliated organization comprising young adults (up to 30 years old) who get involved in their community, develop their leadership and professional skills and have fun.

Membership Guidelines

To get the most out of Rotary, members are encouraged to participate in group events and get to know each other actively. The following guidelines are not enforced rigidly, but are recommended for members to build a stronger bond with each other. Rotary is a Membership Organization that does Service. Service Above Self is the motto, so the expectation is that people join Rotary with an eye for doing service.

Attend Weekly Club Meetings: This is a great way to meet members, make friends and get involved in the Club. We recommend that new members attend 60% of Friday meetings, or participate in many social, service and committee meetings to make up.

Typical Friday Meeting Agenda

- 12:00: Social conversations, name badge pick-up at check in, pick up lunch.
 - Periodic assignments to set up/take down table settings, greet members, salute the US flag, share inspirational comments, or taking table cloths home for cleaning.
- 12:30: US flag salute, followed by an inspirational comment from a member.
- 12:35: Visiting Rotarians and guests of Rotarians introduction
 - We Care: Announcements about ailing Rotarians
 - Good News: Small donations as members make such announcements
 - Announcements: Includes fellowship events, charitable projects, etc.
- 1:00: Special speaker for 20-25 minutes, followed by Q&A on the topic
- 1:30: Meeting adjourned

Pay Dues: One-time Initiation Fee (\$200) plus Annual Dues. Annual dues are established by the board each spring. The 2026-2027 dues are \$440. Our Club has a "Friendship Fund," used to pay a portion or all of a member's dues that are temporally experiencing a financial set back. It is expected the amount will be repaid to the club upon better times.

Join At Least One Committee: There are many Committees from which to choose and all welcome new members. A list of the Committees and current chairs are listed in the Club Leadership section.

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Work at the Art Show: The only Club member requirement is for every Rotarian to set up the Art Show on Friday late afternoon, work a four-hour shift on Saturday or Sunday and help with breakdown, late Sunday afternoon. If you are unable to fulfill this responsibility, permission must be obtained prior to the Art Show from the Art Show Chair to make up this requirement by working on some other aspect of the Art Show.

Contribute to The Rotary Foundation: We request a donation of \$200 to The Rotary Foundation and \$50 to Polio Plus each year.

Process to Apply For Membership

- Attend two Rotary meetings
- Meet with the Membership chair to learn about membership process
- Fill out a Membership Application and provide a short bio, then give it to the Membership Chair
- Secure two sponsors for new member application (Club can arrange this as needed)
- Submit completed application to the Membership Committee for approval by committee as well as Board of Directors and then approval by the Club
- Collect a “Red Badge” as a new member during induction (generally at the Friday Club meeting)

The Red Badge Program

- Once the membership application is approved and new members join Rotary, they are classified as a “Red Badger” – with a personalized red badge available for use at lunch meetings.
- Each Red Badger goes through a “warming period” when they complete the Red Badger Checklist, designed to get them acquainted with Saratoga Rotary.
- This checklist includes requirements to attend various Saratoga Rotary committee and area club meetings. Most new members complete this checklist in a few months.
- Once requirements are met, new members become a “Blue Badger” and receive a new personalized blue badge, showing their line of business.
- Membership Committee members will help new members navigate the requirements to become a Blue Badger.

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Useful Information

The Saratoga Rotarian is the Club bulletin, published monthly, available on the Club's website and emailed to all members. It contains a list of upcoming programs, weekly member assignments, club and committee calendars, as well as information and photos of fellowship events, committee information, club projects, member news and more.

The Club's website is www.saratogarotary.org. It contains information about the Club's activities. As a Member, you will have a user name and password to access the "Member Area."

Club Leadership for 2026-2027

President: Terrie Creamer
Past President: David Guidry
President Elect: Sheeba Garg
Secretary: Marsi Nomura
Treasurer: Sheree Williams

Committee Chairs

Bulletin Editor: Parul Samdarshi
Club Service: Cathie Thermond
Community Service: Sandie Prevot & Nancy Shih
Fellowship: Sheeba Garg
Fundraising/Art Show: Archana Vahalia & Maria Guldner
International Service: Sangita Seshadri & Chuck Swan
Membership: Cynthia Chang & Nancy Shih
The Rotary Foundation (TRF): Sangita Seshadri & Dave Eshlemen
Vocational Service: Jenny Wong
Youth Service: Aparna Vijay

Saratoga Rotary Charitable Foundation (SRCF) Board 2026-2027

Russ Hansen, President and CEO
Archana Vahalia
Cathie Thermond/
Bruce Hodgins
Bella Mahoney
Patti Workman
Jim LeBlanc
Larry Grace
Shinku Sharma
Terrie Creamer , Club President 2026-2027

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Select Club Activities

- **Breakfast with Santa:** Held on a Saturday morning in early December at Washington Elementary School in the San Jose Unified School District, is the most fun you will ever have at Christmas. Kindergartners and 1st graders come dressed in their best for breakfast, coloring, face painting, carols and even presents with Santa, Ms. Clause and Elves.
- **Enterprise Leadership Conference (ELC)** is sponsored annually by partnering Clubs in District 5170. The 3-day conference at Asilomar teaches kids how to run a business.
- **Other Community Service** activities are **Rise Against Hunger** food packaging event, **Latimer Literacy and STEM**, packaging of supplies for the Military, back to school shopping & backpacks for school kids, and much more!
- **The Debunking**, usually held the last Friday in June, is the "roast" and dinner for the outgoing President. A must!
- **Social Events** are organized by the Fellowship Committee and occur almost monthly. They include TGIF's at a members' home where everyone brings an appetizer and wine, a holiday party, Bocce ball parties, San Jose Giants games, etc. Significant others are welcome at these events. There is a Pre-Art Show party the weekend before the Art Show and a Post-Art Show Party on Sunday night after we breakdown the art show infrastructure.
- **Affinity group activities:** walking group (twice weekly), book club (monthly), theater attending (occasionally), etc. are open to all members, to further foster connections among members.