

# Service Above Self: Rotary Club committed to community service

By David Reardon

On July 1, I was given the honor of being the president of the Jamestown Rotary Club. I have been asked "Is Rotary a secret club with some type of secret ritual?"

Many of us may be aware of secret societies such as Opus Dei (from the DaVinci Code), Priory of Scion and Yale University's Skull and Bones, but Rotary is far from being a secret society...we don't even have a special handshake. In hopes of making Rotary more visible, I plan on writing a story every few months keeping the community advised of our projects.

Many of my friends have asked

"What is Rotary?"

Rotary was started in 1905 by Paul Harris, a Chicago-based attorney. Initially a business networking club, Rotary morphed into an international organization with more than 32,000 clubs committed to serving communities in need throughout the world. Rotary's motto is "Service above Self." Our local club is made up of successful men and women from many walks of life whose primary goal is to give back to society and have fun while doing it. Although we are very serious about our projects, our club's personality is very down-to-earth. We meet on



Thursday mornings for friendship, fun and a great breakfast. Most meetings we have visiting speakers who cover many different and interesting topics.

Even though we are a small club of about 20 members, we are very active in raising funds from events such as our annual appeal, the annual May breakfast, the doughboy

shack at the Fool's Rules Regatta and the Jamestown Classic, our annual bike race. We, in turn, support projects such as scholarships for local students, provide equipment and sponsorships to local athletic teams, contribute to projects important to the town, provide Thanksgiving baskets for those less fortunate, and many others too numerous to list. Internationally, we have given funds for wheelchairs to help Nicaraguans with disabilities and have also funded a literacy program in Ghana.

Since 1985, Rotary International has been focused on eradicating polio, a crippling and deadly dis-

ease that affects mostly children. Recently, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation awarded Rotary a \$100 million grant toward this endeavor. Although cases have declined 99 percent since 1985, there are still small outbreaks in Pakistan, Afghanistan, India and Nigeria and much more work to do before we can consider this disease extinct.

We welcome people who may be interested in joining the club to attend our meetings. More information about the club is available at [www.jamestownclassic.org](http://www.jamestownclassic.org) or feel free to email me at [dreardon@reardoncomponents.com](mailto:dreardon@reardoncomponents.com).

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