

# THE PAUL HARRIS SOCIETY of THE ROTARY FOUNDATION OF ROTARY INTERNATIONAL

## **Paul Harris Society (PHS) Objective**

To recognize those Rotarians and friends who annually contribute US\$1,000 or more to the Annual Programs Fund, PolioPlus or Humanitarian Grant programs that sustain and advance The Rotary Foundation's humanitarian, educational and cultural programs.



## **Goal**

To acknowledge the generosity and commitment of members of the Paul Harris Society at the district level in support of Rotary's mission of world understanding and peace.

## **HISTORY**

In 1956, to encourage Rotarians to increase their philanthropy to The Rotary Foundation, the Trustees developed Paul Harris Fellow recognition for those whose contributions met three criteria: 1) the contribution must be at least \$1000; 2) it must be from one individual; and, 3) it must be given within a single year. A pin and medallion were designed as a means to express appreciation to these generous donors.

After few gifts at that level were received, the Trustees decided that more money could be collected if Rotarians were allowed to contribute \$1,000 over a period of years and, if they could make contributions to honor another person.

Some clubs decided to name one person who had long service or other distinguishing characteristics a Paul Harris Fellow. In some cultures, the concept developed that a Paul Harris Fellow was primarily an award for exceptional service. The Paul Harris Fellow took on a totally different meaning than its original purpose -- to encourage individual Rotarians to give larger contributions to The Rotary Foundation.

In 1999, District Governor Wayne Cusick reversed that trend by initiating the Paul Harris Society of District 5340 encouraging Rotarians to personally commit to contributing \$1,000 or more annually to The Rotary Foundation. District leadership reminded their members of all the good those gifts do...especially through their financial support.

As the Paul Harris Society gained momentum in District 5340, the program spread to 22 districts and the entire country of Japan. In October 2005, Rotary Foundation Trustees officially adopted the Paul Harris Society as a district administered recognition effective with the 2006-2007 Rotary year.

## **2006-2007**

The Trustees of The Rotary Foundation agreed to adopt the Paul Harris Society as an official Foundation recognition program at the district level. They also agreed to:

- Design wearable PHS recognition pins, membership certificates and membership presentation folders for production and distribution by licensed Rotary vendors available in 2006-2007;
- Design and produce printed promotional PHS materials maintained by The Rotary Foundation; and,
- Cover the cost of computer programming to help districts track PHS members on the Club Recognition Summary or other identified report.