



## SATELLITE CLUBS ASSESSING THE OPPORTUNITY IN YOUR COMMUNITY

***Rotary surveys and focus groups repeatedly show prospective members and younger Rotarians want flexibility.***

The potential of satellite clubs to address this need intrigued many Rotarians when it was announced as a membership pilot program nearly two years ago. Resourceful Rotarians had questions such as, *How can I make this work for my club? Can I use it to attract those individuals in my community who would be*

*ideal Rotary members, but don't fit into the club meeting time? How can we adapt this idea as a way to involve younger members?*

The practical minded also asked other important questions: *How many members does a satellite club need? It is part of the host club or a stand alone? If part of the host, does it become a "real" club at some time? What dues are paid by members? And, Does my club need to be part of the pilot to have a satellite club?*

Numerous satellite clubs have been formed and are functioning successfully, both in our own region and around the world. To help your club decide if it would also like to take advantage of this new opportunity and begin a satellite club, we've provided information on a few of the most-often-asked questions.

### **WHAT IS A SATELLITE CLUB?**

Rotary describes a satellite club simply as *"an alternate meeting time and place of the host club. The satellite club is not an official independent Rotary club. It gives the opportunity for a club to conduct multiple club meetings during a week, each taking place at a different location, on a different day, and/or at a different time."*

### **WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF A SATELLITE CLUB?**

Satellite clubs can be created for a number of purposes, including:

- To support chartering of a new club
- To accommodate a small population in a rural area or community
- To offer flexibility in a large metropolitan region by allowing a club to provide several meeting times and locations
- To provide an opportunity for a small, weak and struggling club to become connected to a larger, active and vibrant club for ongoing mentoring, support and assistance
- To address the needs of different demographic groups such as young people where the established Rotary club doesn't fit their requirements or isn't attractive to them for various reasons. The club's traditions and dues may be different from those of the parent club to better reflect the need for which the satellite was formed.

Bottomline, it is an outstanding way to build membership in your club by using a method designed specifically to attract and engage members of your community or a nearby community who are not currently involved in Rotary. It is also an ideal way to ensure that Rotary better represents the diversity in your region.

### **CAN OUR CLUB HAVE A SATELLITE CLUB?**

Yes! All Rotary clubs can now start satellites. In addition to being a highly-flexible, adaptable way to attract, engage and retain members as part of the original membership pilot program, satellites were also approved by the 2013 Council on Legislation (COL) as another avenue toward developing new clubs.

### **HOW MIGHT OUR SATELLITE CLUB LOOK?**

Satellite clubs around the world have many different configurations. It might be located in a small rural community that does not have enough residents to support a full Rotary club, it might be located in a commuter city where the host club meets for lunch and the satellite holds a breakfast meeting, or it could be an after-work club designed to attract young members. In the latter example, the satellite might have lower club dues, no meal and a less formal structure than its downtown host club that meets for lunch in a hotel in the city center. A satellite may even decide to meet to do service three Saturdays during a month, holding a “regular” meeting on the fourth. There is tremendous flexibility to develop a satellite club to address specific community or club needs in your region.

Guidelines for satellite clubs from the COL decision can be found in the updated standard club constitution <http://www.rotary.org/myrotary/en/document/632> (Rotary.org, log onto My Rotary, Learning & Reference, Policies & Procedures, Governance Documents, Standard Rotary Club Constitution).

Ideally, a satellite would become a full-fledged Rotary club at some point in the future; however, as with all new clubs, that is based on feasibility of location, community size and other factors. Not all satellites will become stand-alone clubs.

### **WE HEARD THERE ARE TWO DIFFERENT TYPES OF SATELLITE CLUBS. WHAT ARE THEY?**

Currently, there are two slightly different structures: 1.) satellite clubs formed under the pilot program; 2.) satellites as an approved structure in the MOP. The pilot satellites are highly flexible with the structure and leadership, primarily determined by the host club. The host club helps to support the satellite and satellite members are members of the host club. Members of both the host and the satellite can attend either meeting weekly and participate in joint club projects and events. In most cases, the president, president elect or other board member of the host take an active role in the weekly meeting of the satellite to provide leadership and continuity between the two parts of the clubs. In other examples, most especially if there is a geographic separation, the satellite forms its own meeting organization and the clubs set up an ongoing communication plan to stay connected.

As an MOP-defined satellite is looking toward becoming a full-fledged club at some point in the future, there is a plan for more internal leadership and management structure as described in the MOP to help it move in that direction. It is the primary difference between the two types of satellites. There is not a minimum number of members required for a satellite, only that it is sufficient number to be an active, vibrant and contributing member of the Rotary family.

### **IS THERE A SPECIFIC TIMELINE FOR A SATELLITE TO BECOME A STAND-ALONE CLUB?**

Although there is not a timeline defined in the MOP model for this to occur, a satellite is an ideal way to build a new club. There is not a specific timeline when it is required. Some, if located in a very small community, may not have the ability to become a stand-alone club, whereas a satellite in a larger city may become a provisional club quickly and charter within 12 months.

### **DO WE REGISTER A SATELLITE CLUB? HOW ABOUT THE MEMBERS?**

As members of satellite are full members of the host club, they are registered by the club online and pay RI dues using the same process as other members. There are forms to notify Rotary International that your club has a satellite and about its members so it knows who is involved in these innovative clubs and can provide information specific to satellites when needed. The forms are at Rotary.org, My Rotary, search “Satellite club” or [www.rotary.org/en/document/84176](http://www.rotary.org/en/document/84176) and <https://www.rotary.org/myrotary/en/document/84171>

### **ARE THERE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN A SATELLITE CLUB AND THE HOST CLUB?**

A satellite and its members are part of the host club; however, the satellite simply meets at a different time and place, and often has a modified administrative structure, such as club dues, as well as different practices and traditions to better fit the needs of the community in which it is located or the specific member group for which it was designed.

### **WHERE CAN I FIND MORE RESOURCES?**

There are a number of resources to help your club launch a satellite. You may find that some of the most useful information is learning about what other clubs have already put into place. A conversation with your regional Rotary Coordinator about the specific needs in your area can provide options for structure and also real-life examples of what has worked well for others. In addition, resources and examples for satellite clubs have been collected and added to the Zone 24/32 blog site [www.GreatIdeasToShare.com](http://www.GreatIdeasToShare.com) Membership Tab or <http://greatideastoshare.com/membership/>

There is also a Rotary discussion group formed for satellite clubs: log into My Rotary at Rotary.org, Exchange Ideas, Discussion Groups, Satellite Clubs or <https://www.rotary.org/myrotary/en/exchange-ideas/groups/satellite-clubs>

The best answers to many questions about satellites are often found through discussing the individual situation, deciding what structure best fits the needs of the community and your club, and how to best reach those who are not currently Rotarians in your town and involve them into your club.

### **WHOM CAN I CONTACT WITH QUESTIONS ABOUT FORMING A SATELLITE?**

Gayle Knepper is the Rotary Coordinator for Zone 24 West and she can share more ideas and discuss ways that your club could begin a satellite. Gayle can be reached at [rotary5010@ak.net](mailto:rotary5010@ak.net) or 907.345.2044.

**A satellite club is an outstanding way to increase the vibrancy and the vitality of a Rotary club. It can attract a diverse group of new members and retain valued long-time members by providing additional flexibility to their Rotary memberships. Schedule a time to discuss this outstanding opportunity with your club as a way to increase the involvement of members in your club and expand Rotary in your region.**

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