



Traditions and Expectations

Welcome to the Rotary Club of Portage!

We are thrilled to have you join us! Our members are here to welcome you and help you fully engage in the fellowship, meaningful work, and fun that define our club. Every new member takes time to learn our traditions, customs, and expectations. This guide will help you get started, and we encourage you to ask any veteran member or club officer if you have additional questions.

Orientation

Before your induction, you will receive a packet with information about Rotary International and our local club. Review these materials before your “fireside chat.” This informal chat, held one hour before your induction meeting, will deepen your understanding of Rotary’s local and global mission. Bring any questions you have!

At your induction, you will share a brief three-minute biography with the club. Tell us about yourself—where you are from, your schools, your career, hobbies, and family. This is your opportunity to discuss your vocation, employer, or business without receiving a “fine”. (you will learn more about fines later) Stick to the three-minute limit.

You will receive your Rotary pin and a name badge with a red ribbon, signaling you are a new member. After the meeting, stand at the exit to greet members as they leave.

In the weeks following, arrive early to meetings and stand with the day’s greeter. This is a fantastic way to connect and re-connect with fellow Rotarians. Once you have attended a few meetings and completed the new member checklist, the Club President will ceremoniously remove your red ribbon at a meeting.

Attendance

We encourage members to attend at least 50% of meetings, with a club goal of 60%. Meetings are held in person and via Zoom. Zoom details are included in the weekly agenda.

Missed meetings can be made up by visiting other area Rotary clubs or attending virtual meetings. Local clubs in Gull Lake, Kalamazoo, and nearby towns offer opportunities to connect. Find meeting times at www.district6360.com.

Report your makeup attendance by filling out a card at the club you visit or notifying our Club Secretary. You can also check your attendance on our website.

Financial commitments

Meeting fees

Each meeting costs \$17 (\$15 for your meal, \$1 for the venue, and \$1 for our account). Members are billed \$200 quarterly for meals. Contact the Treasurer if you need to opt out or expect an extended absence.

Dues

Annual dues are \$285, payable by June 30. First-year dues are prorated. Payment plans are available—just reach out to the Treasurer. Your dues cover Rotary International dues, District 6360 dues, local club dues, and your subscription to *The Rotarian* Magazine. You can find your Rotary International Membership ID# on the mailing label of *The Rotarian* magazine.

Voluntary contributions

Supporting The Rotary Foundation and Portage Rotary Charities helps us achieve our humanitarian goals. We encourage you to contribute \$50 to The Rotary Foundation on your birthday and another \$50 on your anniversary. If this amount does not fit your budget, any donation is appreciated. You can give cash or write a check to Portage Rotary Charities and place it in the Sergeant at Arm's fine bucket while the club sings to celebrate your occasion. Please note "Paul Harris donation" in the memo field of the check. This will start your account toward a Paul Harris Fellowship.

The club awards Paul Harris Fellowships for every \$1,000 donation to The Rotary Foundation's Annual Fund (preferred) or to Polio+. Donations to the Annual Fund are ideal, as Rotary International holds them in trust for three years. During this time, interest supports worldwide humanitarian projects. After three years, half of your donation returns to our District 6360 to fund District Simplified Grants, which support local club projects, including ours. The other half supports global Rotary Foundation projects.

The Kalamazoo Community Foundation manages an account for Portage Rotary Charities, and the Rotary Club of Portage also maintains an endowment fund with Ameriprise Financial. Contributions to either fund increase the principal, with interest earnings

allocated to support our charitable initiatives each year. Contact the Club Treasurer for guidance on donating to these funds.

Portage Rotary Charities focuses on local and international projects, including ongoing causes and one-time funding opportunities. Our club raises money for Portage Rotary Charities, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, to fund these efforts. These funds support various charity projects, ensuring we can make a lasting impact.

Fellowship & fun

Fifty/Fifty raffle tickets

Purchase Fifty/Fifty raffle tickets at the desk as you enter the meeting. Tickets cost \$1 each, \$2 for three, \$3 for six, or \$5 for ten. The raffle proceeds are split equally, with 50% going to Portage Rotary Charities and 50% awarded to raffle winners. At the meeting's conclusion, two chances to win are available: the first ticket drawn receives 25% of the day's proceeds, and the second ticket grants a chance to draw the ace of spades from a deck of cards.

The jackpot grows each week as the deck shrinks until someone draws the ace of spades or the fund reaches the \$500 limit set by the State of Michigan. At that point, a new deck is introduced, and the kitty resets. Winners can keep their proceeds or donate them to the club for a Rotary charity of their choice. If you donate, provide the proceeds or a portion to the Club Treasurer and specify the charity you wish to support. While it is acceptable to keep your winnings, we encourage discretion about your choice during the meeting.

Happy Bucks

Contribute Happy Bucks in any amount you choose. During the happy buck period at the meeting's end, share your family or work achievements, praise another individual, or make brief announcements about work, community, or non-Rotary charity events. All funds collected go to Portage Rotary Charities.

Fines

Fines, typically \$1, are a lighthearted Rotary Club of Portage tradition aimed at fostering fellowship. Sergeants at Arms creatively levy fines for infractions such as:

- Forgetting to wear your Rotary pin or name badge
- Arriving late (you will also get a song!)
- Leaving early (drop your fine in the bucket unless the meeting runs past 1:00 pm)
- Mentioning your alma mater or personal business during a meeting
- Appearing in a photograph or having your name mentioned in public media
- Allowing your cell phone to disrupt a meeting
- Sitting at a table without representation from all genders
- Excessive table chatter during a meeting

Participate in these fines knowing your contributions support our Charities account while adding fun to our meetings.

Service Above Self

Rotary International defines five avenues of service:

- **Club Service** ensures the smooth operation of the club.
- **Community Service** supports projects that directly meet community needs.
- **International Service** promotes projects our club supports to assist global neighbors.
- **Vocational Service** upholds high ethical standards and extends community outreach through professional efforts.
- **Young Leaders** mentors' students and nurtures tomorrow's leaders to secure our shared future.

Each year, the club presents awards to members who excel in one of these five avenues. The Club President also nominates one member to receive the prestigious Five Avenues of Service Citation, signed by the President of Rotary International. This honor recognizes outstanding contributions across all five areas.

Participation and engagement

We strongly encourage participation in club events. In April or May, the President-Elect distributes sign-up sheets for committees, including Club Service, Service Projects, and Fundraisers. Each member should commit to one club service activity, at least one project within the four other avenues, and one fundraiser annually.

Tradition of giving

Rotary Club of Portage excels at raising and donating funds to support these five avenues and improve our community. In recent years, we have raised approximately \$30,000 annually for charitable purposes. Two-thirds of these funds benefit local youth through high school Interact Clubs, mentoring programs at Portage Community High School, and scholarships for deserving students. Starting in 2025, we replaced scholarships with grants that benefit K-12 and trades programs, along with other member-recommended organizations.

Our fundraisers provide members with opportunities to contribute directly to the club's goals while enjoying camaraderie. For detailed information, refer to the fundraiser tab.

Community service hours

Members earn club meeting make-up credit or community service hours by participating in board meetings, committees, fundraisers, or club projects. Committee chairs track service hours and report them to the Club Secretary. We also celebrate members who achieve perfect attendance, with some achieving up to fifty consecutive years. Members often dedicate 80+ hours of community service annually.

We hope this document clarifies the traditions and expectations of the Rotary Club of Portage. We warmly welcome you into our fellowship and look forward to serving alongside you as a new Rotarian.