50 YEARS OF SERVICE

1950’s: The first meeting of the Rotary Club of Cupertino was held on March 7, 1955 under the sponsorship of the Rotary Club of Sunnyvale, District 513. Darrell Sedgwick, Superintendent of the Cupertino Elementary School District, was elected the Charter President. The club was officially chartered by Rotary International on March 23, 1955. The club established a perpetual “Service Above Self” Award (Scholarship) to a senior at Cupertino High School. Lunch was $1.50.

1960’s: Established additional scholarships at Homestead and Lynbrook High Schools. Started an Interact Club, chartered by the Rotary Club of Homestead. Interact is a High School service club and additional clubs were later established at Cupertino, Lynbrook and Monta Vista High Schools.

1970’s: Chartered Boy Scout Troop 479 in 1960 and continues to sponsor three Scouting programs. Entered a float in the Cupertino Christmas Parade and supplied an award for the best student entry in the Cupertino Fine Arts competition. The club included one female Honorary Member, 20 years before women officially entered Rotary International. Lunch was $3.00.

1980’s: Chartered an Explorer Scout Troop and sent a local young professional person on a Rotary Group Exchange sponsored by the Rotary Club of Cupertino Foundation, to a foreign country to exchange vocational information. In 1975 Rotarian Earl Goodell became the first Paul Harris Fellow of the club. This signified a donation of $1,000 to The Rotary Foundation who’s Mission is the achievement of world understanding and peace through local, national, and international humanitarian and educational programs.

In 1975 Rotarian Earl Goodell became the first club member to serve as District Governor for District 517, now District 5170 with 4,000 Rotarians and 59 clubs. Jim Walker served as Governor in 1995-96, Don Allen in 2003-04 and Dick Lohmiller in 2007-08.

1990’s: Celebrated a 25th Anniversary, along with Rotary International’s 75th Anniversary. The club had grown to 53 members and was supporting 13 group activities and 14 different organizations. Hosted two Fulbright Ambassadors, Chairmen and a donor of a van to the YMCA.

The first Club sponsored Oktoberfest was held in the fall of 1982. Members supplied tents, tables, chairs, personal BBQ’s and ran out of sausage buns the first day, which created a scramble to purchase every bun in local markets. Over the years Oktoberfest has generated hundreds of thousands of dollars for charitable causes. The event grew into a two-day German theme festival with the addition of the annual Oktoberfest Lunch.

Lunch was $7.75 at the Sandpiper Restaurant. The newly formed softball team lost every game but won the championship the following year – the come back kids. 1986-87 began the tradition of all members becoming Sustaining Members ($100 or more) of The Rotary Foundation and in recent years the amount of Club members are Double Sustainers ($200 or more) each year.

In the late 80’s seventy-five club members donated $75,000 to PolioPlus/ Rotary’s global effort to rid the world of Polio by 2005. Another eradication campaign was held in 2002 and Cupertino Rotarians again donated over $100,000. Members traveled to Ghana in 1998 & 2000 to administer life saving drops of Polio vaccine directly into the mouths of children to protect them from this crippling disease.

In 1987-88 women were officially admitted to Rotary International with Betty Pacheco, Yvette del Prado and Pat Jackson being welcomed into Cupertino Rotary. Today, women make up approximately one third of the membership.

1990’s: The club moved its’ weekly lunch meeting to the new Quinlan Center and luncheon cost $5.11. Club won $6,000 in a Chili Cook-off for club charitable giving.

Hosted a Youth Exchange student for the year. Coordinated an International Service project in Estonia, which supplied, installed and trained medical persons on cardiac care monitoring equipment. The club moved its’ youth exchange student to the United States for the year.

Created a ‘hands-on’ service project for the Fremont Union High Schools Foundation whereby Rotarians donated their time and energy to help a Crab Feed in partnership with De Anza College. Over $200,000 has been raised by this event for the foundations.

Additionally, the Rotary Club puts on an “All you can eat” Crab Feed in mid-February at St. Joseph’s Church to benefit the club’s local charitable giving.

Rotary partnerships allow the club to leverage its charitable donations and volunteer service with other organizations in supporting community and international causes. Examples are the partnership with Quota International and JC Penny’s Holiday Shopping Spree, where deserving children have the opportunity to shop for needed clothing at great discounts.

Another partnership is with the Northwest YMCA Service Club who assists Rotary at our two Crab Feeds. Cupertino Union School District, Fremont Union High School District and De Anza College are valued partners. Cupertino Rotary values its’ relationship with the three high school Interact Clubs and three Scouting organization working together on community projects and fund-raising activities.

While Cupertino Rotary is very active in our local community it is also an international service organization with the opportunity to partner with 1,324,237 Rotarians in 32,176 clubs in 165 countries. One third of club members have traveled to foreign countries in humanitarian service. It started in Estonia and then to Turkey, Taiwan, Greece, China and Guatemala for Rotary projects. In Guatemala members created a Village Bank where women can borrow money to start a home business to help support their family.

1990’s: “Adopted” the Gazebo in Memorial Park as the club icon and we continue to maintain it to this day as a Community Service project.

In 1994 the Hanson/Rotary Golf Classic and Million Dollar Hole-In-One fundraiser debuted. A Major Beneficiary was established to receive a significant donation from the event.

1998 – Van for YMCA-Teen program.


2000 – Cupertino Senior Center furniture.

2001 – Cupertino Community Services/Rotary/Hanson Food Pantry.

2002 – De Anza Child Development.

2003 – VIA – Beds for Camp Castanoa.


2005 – Pacific Autism Center for Education (P.A.C.E.)

The Golf Classic is held the second Saturday in May and has raised over $350,000 for the Major Beneficiaries (above) and an additional $250,000 for other local charitable causes.

Qualifying for the Million Dollar Hole-in-One occurs nightly for the 30 days preceding the golf tournament. Each night the closest to the hole qualifies to shoot for the Million Dollar the evening of the tournament.

During the 90’s membership grew to over 100 active men and women. The first “Kid’s Fishing Day” started in 1997 where Rotarians teach 3-12 year olds how to fish. The club worked with Turkey, Ghana, China and Guatemala for Rotary projects. In Guatemala members created a Village Bank where women can borrow money to start a home business to help support their family.

2000’s: The decade kicked off with the first Club Strategic Planning session. A plan was developed and a comprehensive marketing campaign was launched to raise community awareness about Rotary and to increase membership. Cupertino Rotary was designated a “New Models Rotary Club” by Rotary International, which allows for six “ideas” that are outside the Rotary International Constitution and By-Laws. Only 190 clubs out of 32,000 worldwide have received this prestigious honor and the opportunity to start ideas to keep Rotary, up-to-date and viable to the ideals of Service.

Established Vocational Service Awards to recognize members volunteering the services of their vocation in the service of others.

World Community Service (WCS) has been described as the “quiet revolution of hope.” Clubs reach out to someone who needs help. Develop a relationship with a club in another country and become acquainted with the customs and culture of a faraway place. The club shipped 1,000 books to the Philippines as its’ first WCS project.