

FAIRPORT ROTARY CLUB

second of two articles

Over the years since the Fairport Rotary Club was founded in 1926, members have expanded and extended their interests and their service beyond the boundaries of the town and village.

In 1956 Fairport Rotarians were instrumental, along with a number of other area Rotary clubs, in establishing Camp Haccamo for physically handicapped children of Monroe County. Dave Jordan and Warren Shaddock were Fairport's representatives. The first camp was held in 1957 at the rifle range used by the Culver Road Armory in Rush, NY. In 1960, the camp moved to a new site near Panorama Plaza on land donated by Emil Muller, the developer of the plaza. Cabins were constructed, each supported by a different Rotary Club from around the Rochester area. As of today, 480 Monroe County campers with disabilities ranging from cancer to Downs Syndrome can enjoy a one week stay free of charge.

Rotary projects have also gone international. Rotarians participated in the "Polio Plus" campaign, begun in 1986, whose goal was to eradicate polio by providing vaccines to developing countries and also to work against other serious diseases like tuberculosis, diphtheria, and whooping cough. One benefit dinner raised \$14,500. Rotarians also sponsor international student exchanges as well as group study program exchanges which provide travel grants for groups of five people to study different corporate settings and cultures. In 1998, a Swedish group visited Fairport and Rochester. In 1999 Rotarian Jean Wells, along with members from Penfield, East Rochester, and Wheaton, Illinois, traveled to Peru as part of a medical mission. Among other endeavors, India has received hospital equipment, and funding has supported a project to dig water wells in the Sudan.

Obviously there have to be ways to raise money for all the projects. Dues and fines alone would not suffice. The club has held dances, auctions, and raffles to accumulate funds, but several large events raise the bulk of the money. The popular and long-running Antique Show and Sale in early June has been a major source of income since the 1960's. The annual pancake breakfast held in the fall is another widely attended event. Since the early 1980's, Rotary has worked to make the LPGA tournament a successful event and in the process has made it a lucrative source of income for Camp Haccamo and Rochester's Sunshine Camp, both of which serve the area's disabled children. In the late 1990's the club initiated the "Polar Bear Open," a winter golfing event whose proceeds go to the Cerebral Palsy Foundation of Rochester and other Rotary charities. In its first four years, it raised over \$170,000. In October of 2006, Rotary and its youth arm, Interact, served food to the night shift at the sheriff's department, Perinton ambulance, Advent house, and the Fairport fire and police departments; sponsored a Halloween parade, painted the Perinton food shelf, and served a spaghetti dinner at the VFW in honor of "Make a Difference Day." The club will participate again this year; the date is October 27th.

Since 2000, Fairport's Rotarians have donated money to the Lion's Den teen center, the Crew Club, Upstate Guide Dogs, student exchange programs, Fairport School District "Robotics" team, and the Little League, in addition to providing ongoing support to Camp Haccamo and other charitable organizations selected by its charitable giving committee. In 2004 Rotarians gave \$30,000 toward the renovation of Columbus Commons from a parking lot into a festival site.

With a healthy membership, the Fairport Rotary Club continues to be one of the community's premier service organizations.



The Albert H. Knapp Rotary pavilion at Columbus Commons, made possible by significant donations from the Fairport Rotary.