Even though Rotaract has been a part of Rotary since 1968, many Rotarians still aren’t familiar with the now Rotary Partner. But every day, we Rotaractors are working to change that - to bring awareness to our Rotary Family about the untapped resources they have in their local communities and districts and bring more Young Adults into Rotary.

Rotaract Clubs bring together people ages 18 and over to exchange ideas with leaders in the community, develop leadership and professional skills, and have fun through service. In communities worldwide, Rotary and Rotaract members work side by side to take action through service. From big cities to rural villages, Rotaract is helping Rotary be a positive impact on the world.

Rotaract is a Membership Type of Rotary which allows for young adults or those new to Rotary to experience their first foray into what being a Rotarian means - with increased flexibility, focus on a younger membership demographic, and a chance to explore Rotary International from a different perspective. There are two types of Rotaract Clubs: Campus and Community. Campus-based Rotaract Clubs are affiliated with Colleges or Universities, specifically designed for students. Community-based Rotaract Clubs are for young adults without college or campus affiliation.

I’m Cecily Swason, and I’ve been in Rotaract since 2015 when I helped charter the Rotaract Club of Amador – an online Rotaract Club that consists of Young Adults that grew up in Amador County who still want to serve our local community no matter where in the world they are living. It consists of mainly Interact Alumni, that participated in various years in the Amador/Argonaut Interact Club and the Interact Club of Amador High School.

I became the District Rotaract Representative in 2019, and have served in this position ever since. My goal and job is to raise awareness in our District to Rotaract’s potential, and grow Rotaract in our District so as to bring a younger cohort of Rotarians into the fold, thereby ensuring the continuation of Rotary in our region.

Currently, my club is the only active Rotaract Club in the District, but District Leadership is working hard to bring new clubs to life!

In fact, Elizabeth Swason – Charter President of the Rotary Club of Passport to Amador and the District Rotaract Chair – has chartered a BRAND NEW Rotaract Club in Amador County (Area 7)! The Rotaract Club of Unique Student of Amador is a Rotaract Club of students with disabilities who are participating in the Transition Program and LAUNCH Workforce Development Program. Dr. Russell, a charter member of the Rotary Club of Passport to Amador, oversees the Transition Program and Launch Program as the Director of Alternative Special Education.  It will be a community-based club that allows them to learn about community service and understand the importance of giving back. Their first community service project will be re-painting the U.S. Post Office sign in Plymouth.

What’s also fantastic about Rotaract is that although we are a Membership Type of Rotary, we also are a thriving network of our own, having built infrastructures to support, build and learn from one another. Outside of traditional Rotary District Structure, Rotaract has developed Multi-District Information Organizations (MDIOs) that allow us to support fellow Rotaract Clubs. What makes MDIOs special is that each works a little bit differently in order to support their member clubs and districts in the most effective way possible.

Our District is a part of the Big West Rotaract MDIO, which encompasses Western North America. The primary mission of Big West Rotaract, or “BWR” for short, is to provide leadership training and education to Rotaractors on the west coast of North America through leadership training Institutes, conferences, information exchange, and digital resources.

Today, there are 10, 698 Rotaract Clubs and 203,298 Rotaractors in 180 Countries worldwide. Rotaract is a great way to engage young folks in Rotary, and to tap into an enthusiastic workforce. I personally have friends world-wide because of this organization, and have participated more in Rotary than I ever thought I would because of Rotaract.

If you think there are young adults in your community that would be well suited for Rotary but they’re being hesitant, Rotaract might be the perfect answer. If you have questions, comments or want more information, don’t hesitate to reach out to me at cecilyswason@gmail.com!

