



'Where the biggies leave off...'

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Uptown Rotary celebrates thirty years of service to Minneapolis and the world

By Michael Wilson

An energetic group of service-focused people from the Uptown area and nearby suburbs held their first meeting on December 16, 1988, not knowing what the future held but determined to do their part under the umbrella of Rotary International to make their community and the world a better place.

Thirty years later, almost to the day, the still-energetic Uptown Rotarians joined with families and friends on December 18 at the Minikahda Club to take note of the myriad ways they have brought life to Rotary's primary motto, "Service Above Self."

When Rotarians celebrate their good works, they do so quietly. Self-congratulation would run counter to putting service above self. "Team work makes the dream work," they like to say. And the Rotary team is numerous and far-flung: over 1.2 million members belonging to 35,000 clubs in over 200 countries and territories around the world.

Irene Kelly, the governor of District 5950, which includes 63 Rotary clubs in southern, western, and central Minnesota, had no hesitation, however, in congratulating the Uptown Rotarians for their 30 years of service. They're one of the smaller clubs in the district, she said, but they have had an outsize impact on the community. Club members have had a long and deep connection with Joyce Uptown Food Shelf, donating funds and staffing evening hours on Thursdays. Joyce Uptown is the only food shelf in town with evening hours, Kelly noted, and it happens because of Uptown Rotary.

Being of service, and having fun doing it.

Readers of Hill & Lake Press have seen stories about Uptown Rotary's service to Jefferson School through this year's Great Jefferson Read program and the partnership with Magers & Quinn to give dictionaries and thesauruses to 5th and 8th graders. Uptown Rotary's engagement with Jefferson students stretches wider still with projects such as Warm Hands, Heads, and Hearts and the Sheridan Story, which provides weekend food packages to students from food-challenged homes.



Uptown Rotary Club members celebrated their 30th anniversary on December 19 at the Minikahda Club.

Seated, from left: Dale Snyder, Kenwood resident Gaile Sovell-Kenyon, Tom Sopoci, Cedar-Isles-Dean resident Glenna Case, District 5950 Governor Irene Kelly, Nancy Hayer, and Jim Myott.

Standing, from left: Bill Blackburn, Mike Quinn, Bill Sweatt, John Campobasso, Ed Hasselman, Andrew Ramirez, Kenwood resident Granville Lawrence, Cedar-Isles-Dean resident Guy Johnson, Jon Manchester, Magdeline Aagard, and Josh Hillger. (Photo: Amy J. Sundby/eyelovephoto.com. Caption: Glenna Case.)

Uptown Rotarians' service horizons also extend far beyond Minnesota. Club members have partnered with Haiti Outreach for ten years, raising funds and donating volunteer labor for clean water and education projects. Several club members will travel to Haiti at the end of January to continue Uptown Rotary's close connection with the people of Haiti.

Two of Uptown Rotary's five charter members remain active in club activities: Norma Doliff and Granville Lawrence. At the December 18 event Lawrence -- Kenwood resident, Calhoun Vision Center proprietor, raconteur, and a man of boundless commitment and humor -- narrated a photo tour of the club's first thirty years. What particularly stood out was the *FUN* that club members have together

while being of service -- the camaraderie, the social events, the good-natured give-and-take borne of close friendships. "In Rotary," Lawrence said, "doing a good deed does not need to be boring."

Rotary clubs throughout the world meet once a week, and Uptown Rotary's time together is Thursday mornings at 7:30 in the Lakeview Room at the Minikahda Club. Club members encourage folks interested in Rotary to stop in. You can also visit <minneapolisuptownrotary.org> or email club president Ed Hasselman at <ed.hasselmann@gmail.com> for more information.

Thank you, Uptown Rotarians, for thirty years of service!