






Youth Leadership Programs

-  World Affairs Council
-  Interact Clubs
-  Rotaract Clubs
-  Rotary Outstanding Vocational Award (ROVA)
-  Rotary Youth Leadership Award (RYLA)

The *World Affairs Council* is usually held in November (sometimes in May) in Pittsburgh and at least through 1981 or so was an overnight event. There appears to have been some concern about the expense of the event by the late 1970s: The March 1980 governor’s newsletter stated, “World Affairs Council has reappeared unexpectedly. Pam Sheehan called me [DG Wilbert L. “Bill” Wagner] to discuss the problems that have developed with the program. For one thing, the expenses have been staggering. \$3,600 just for the discussion group meeting rooms alone! She asked my opinion of taking the Council to the District instead of the other way around. With so many suitable campuses, she is considering a one-day presentation on Saturday. This would cut the costs dramatically and, perhaps, give an opportunity to more and more students.” Although the event did eventually go to a one-day format, it appears to have continued to be held in Pittsburgh.

World Affairs Council		
Year	Topic	Our District’s Participation
1971		First time: “This is a new venture for our District as well as three others of the Pittsburgh area.” <i>October 1971 governor’s newsletter</i>
1972		
1973		
1974		Six of our students received merit recognition as part of the Donald Farr Award for outstanding student participation: Mark J. Shaughnessy (Bradford), John G. Blakeslee (Erie), Lance Letterio (Leechburg), Rebecca Nichols (Presque Isle), Donna Faust (Rich-Mar), and Mark Murray (Slippery Rock).
1975		
1976		
1977		
1978		
1979		

World Affairs Council		
Year	Topic	Our District's Participation
1980	Resource War in 3-D: Dependency, Diplomacy, Defense	
1981	U.S. Foreign Policy: Central America	
1982		
1983		
1984	U.S.-Japanese Relations	
1985	International Economics and Trade	
1986	Focus on the Arab World	
1987	U.S.-Soviet Relations	
1988	South Korea	
1989		
1990		
1991		
1992		
1993		
1994		
1995	Mexico: the history, peoples, current political, economic, and related security issues	
1996	The Future of Russia	31 clubs sent 90 students
1997		
1998		
1999?	Sub-Saharan Africa	
2000		
2001		
2002		
2003		
2004		
2005		
2006		

RI encourages districts to sponsor **Interact Clubs**, which are designed for young people between the ages of 14 and 18. Such clubs are called Interact clubs. There are almost 11,000 Interact clubs worldwide.

Interact Clubs		
Year Founded	Sponsor Rotary Clubs	Interact Club Name and/or Location
	Sharon	Sharon High School
1988	Rich-Mar	Richland Youth Center
1996	Evans City, Zelianople, Cranberry	Seneca Valley

RI encourages districts to sponsor **Rotaract Clubs**, which are designed for young people between the ages of 18 and 30. Such clubs are called Rotaract clubs. There are more than 8000 Rotaract clubs worldwide.

Rotaract Clubs		
Year Founded	Sponsor Rotary Clubs	Rotaract Club Name
1969	Butler	
1989-?? and reactivated 1995	Clarion	Clarion University
1998	New Wilmington	Westminster College
2000	Erie	Merceyhurst College

A leadership camp for vocational students in our district was started by Rotarian Mary “Skip” Sample when she was district governor in 2003-04. “We decided to name the camp ‘**ROVA**’ for ***Rotary Outstanding Vocational Award***,” PDG Skip explains.

“I wanted to show the respect our district has for youth who are potential leaders *and* who are attending career and technical programs,” continues PDG Skip. “Most of the scholarships offered by the clubs in our district are for students in the traditional high schools and on a traditional academic track. However, in the 14 vocational/technical (votech) schools here are students who will become proficient and conscientious craftsmen, mechanics, and medical workers in our communities. Many of these young people are also already providing service to their communities, peers, and school; and we need to recognize them publicly and encourage them to continue their drive.”

Basing a program of activities on the successful Rotary Youth Leadership Award (RYLA) camp, which has been offered in District 7280 for many years, PDG Skip and her team of educators have been perfecting a day-and-half-long camp for vocational students who are selected by the directors of the votech schools. Each student is then sponsored by one of the 44 Rotary clubs in this district. Each votech school also sends a chaperone with its group of students. Many Rotarians devote their time and energy to planning and presenting the camp’s activities.

The camp includes practice in group decision-making skills through creative activities such as the “Centipede Skis,” “Electric Spider Web,” and “Paper Sales.” Practice in problem-solving skills is also presented through the “Human Knot” and “Blind Amoeba.” Saturday evening is capped off with a speaker “disguised” as a hypnotist or magician, that is, a speaker who can tailor his/her motivational message to the group of votech students.

“Picking a site for the camp was important, too,” adds PDG Skip. “We chose McKeever Environmental Learning Center near Sandy Lake, Pennsylvania, because it is a serene setting that is almost centrally located in the district. Amid the woods is a cluster of rustic buildings that house the dormitories, cafeteria, and classrooms. Just walking the paths from one building to another gives the students a chance to get acquainted and share ideas.”

After the camp, the sponsoring Rotary clubs invite their ROVA students to a regular weekly meeting to be introduced and presented with a certificate of completion. The students take this opportunity to tell the Rotarians about their experience and invariably express thanks for the chance to meet other conscientious students with similar interests and life goals. It’s often the first time they have ventured far outside their daily routines, and they come to realize that their hard work can lead to respect and support from peers and Rotarians alike.

For more information about ROVA, go to <http://district7280.org/rova.htm>.

The **Rotary Youth Leadership Award (RYLA)** program is a weeklong leadership training program that was officially adopted by RI in 1971. The goal was to offer young people a special opportunity to take part in developing qualities of leadership and good citizenship. The program is conducted each June, with an intensive schedule of lectures and discussions of leadership skills, youth-related concerns, public issues, community service activities, and career guidance. In addition, lectures are presented by experts and leaders in businesses, law, government, and the community. Evenings are devoted to varied activities, such as organizing a talent show, recreation, campus movies, concerts, and social events. The program is conducted by Rotary professionals assisted by qualified young educators. Rising high school seniors who have demonstrated leadership in school, religious, or community service and who want to develop their leadership potential. RYLA was started in District 7280 by PDG Trueman Mills in 1981. (See also Waltenbaugh’s history for more details written by Delber L. McKee.)

RYLA		
Year	Number of Attendees	Location
1976	At least 21 sponsored by 6 clubs	Robert Morris College, Coraopolis, PA (Joint effort with Districts 730 and 731)
1982		Westminster College
1983	57 sponsored by 27 clubs	
1984	71 sponsored by 34 clubs	
1985		
1986		
1987	Nearly 80	
1988		
1989		
1990		
1991		
1992		
1993		
1994	76 sponsored by 37 clubs	
1995	83 sponsored by 39 clubs	
1996		
1997		
1998		
1999	101 sponsored by 42 club	
2000	s	
2001		
2002	96 sponsored by 43 clubs	
2003		
2004		
2005		
2006		
2007		