

## CLUB HISTORY

On May 9, 1969, the Almaden Valley Rotary Club received its charter from Rotary International. While this is a relatively short existence compared to that of Rotary International, which started in 1905, it has still been a very active and productive time for the club.

San Jose Rotary Club gave us our territory, Almaden and Blossom Valleys, and aided in the organization of our Club. Dr. Fred Eberle, one of twenty-two charter members, became the first President. He, along with his "Board of Directors" and the general membership, determined that all members should be involved with the workings of the Club, that attendance at meetings be made mandatory, and that fellowship and respect for each other would hold the Club together.

These goals have changed, and even though membership has changed, both upwards and downwards, we continue to strive to have good attendance at our own meetings and at all District 5170 functions. Almaden Valley Rotary Club has won the "Best Club" award in District 5170, (formerly 517), several times.

Our club focuses on community service. We joined the Police Athletic League of San Jose in order to sponsor what was called "The Silicon Valley Youth Classic All Star Game". An annual event, the game was played in July/August by graduated high school senior all stars. All proceeds went to the Clubs Endowment Fund, which is the depository for all of our fund-raisers. The game's forty-first iteration took place in 2015 at Levi's Stadium. Almaden Valley Rotary had been the sole sponsor from 1981 to 2017 and is now run by a different organization. In the later years, the late Charlie Wedemeyer, of local high school coaching fame, lent his name to the game and, along with his wife Lucy appeared at the football banquet and at the game. The event was run with the active participation of all members.

In 1977 Club members started a Polish sausage sandwich booth at the annual Almaden Arts and Wine Festival. Since then, root beer floats and Chinese chicken salad have been offered for sale. It has been fun for us and has produced funds for the Club Endowment for many years. Jerry Gibson has often been chairman of the event. This event has since been cancelled. We were active in the Cambrian Arts and Wine festival as well, where we ran a beer and soft drinks booth until that event was terminated. In 1984 the Club was given all the food and beverages concessions at the LPGA golf tournament held annually at the Almaden Golf and Country Club. At the time

it was the Clubs largest fund-raiser. Members split fundraising with charities that helped with the work. Unfortunately, the tournament was discontinued in San Jose due to the lack of a sponsor. In past years, fundraising activities have included the Barney Quement "Youth Focus Golf Tournaments," an annual Super Bowl Party, "Night at the Movies" in collaboration with the Center For Living With Dying, and the annual "Kids Fishing Day," coordinated by John Baker.

In the past, the Club received a request from Simonds Elementary School, San Jose Unified School District, to aid them in the beautification of their school. The final plan was for an outside science classroom. All members of the Club were involved in this project, not only in providing money and materials to build it, but also in the actual construction work and all enjoyed the resulting fellowship.

In subsequent years, Almaden Valley Rotarians helped the Los Alamitos Elementary School build an outdoor amphitheater. The project was directed by Bob Seymour and took six weekends to finish. The Club members also completed a "par course" at Castillero Middle School. The Simonds and Castillero projects were co-chaired by Paul Consentino and Paul Uenaka.

Many projects have followed. In 1986, Pioneer High School asked the club to help renovate and build benches in the Quadrangle. Members also completed some brickwork around the benches and planters. Uenaka and Consentino again shared responsibility. In 1988, the Club was responsible for the painting of the interior of the Southside Senior Center located at Cottle and Blossom Hill roads. The Interact Club of Pioneer High School assisted in this effort. Coordinating the work schedules of participating individuals again were Gibson, Consentino, Uenaka and Vern Kuhn. Another significant project was the landscaping of the South Valley YMCA directed by Uenaka. Another project has been the building of a "Welcome to Almaden Valley" sign which can be seen in the median of Almaden Expressway, near Coleman Avenue. Although the sign was not built by Rotarians, it was the persistence of AVRC member Ken Tavernier, working with other service clubs, members of local government and local construction companies that the funding, design and actual construction of the sign was accomplished.

It has been said, by students, parents, community members, Rotarians and others, that these have been our Rotary Clubs' outstanding projects. This commitment to physically working on projects that are an asset to our community is certainly one of the finest accomplishments of our Club, and one that has provided members with great satisfaction. It is relatively easy to simply donate money to charity. The Almaden Valley Rotary Club has a history of doing projects that get its members involved in the spirit and

fellowship of knowing the work they have done has made a difference in the community.

During the holiday season, the Almaden Rotary Club participates in various activities. At Christmas, the Club participates in the Christmas Families Program to give back to the community. Chaired by Bill Smith, Roger Bier, Fred Eberle, among others, this program was set up to distribute gifts to the children of needy families. For a time, it expanded to include the giving of Christmas trees, food items, household items such as microwave ovens and other such useful appliances. The Club also financially helps a number of needy military families at Christmas. At Thanksgiving time, in conjunction with the City of San Jose Re-developmental Agency's Strong Neighborhood Initiative, the club had distributed turkeys and other foodstuff to about fifty families in the Hoffman/Via Monte development in San Jose. Every year the members of the Southside Senior Center and the Willow Glen Senior Center and previously the Almaden Senior Center have been treated to a steak dinner, supplied and cooked by the members of the Almaden Rotary Club.

International Service is a significant part of the Clubs activity. An important project was the Clubs relationship with Casa Guatemala. Casa Guatemala is a non-sectarian, non-political charitable organization dedicated to helping children. It is supported solely by private contributions from around the world, receiving no government funding. It includes an orphanage for children under three, a girls' home in Guatemala City, and an orphanage on the Rio Dulce River. Charter member Earl McIntosh and his wife Barbara led this project. Using a matching grant, The Club and Las Americas Rotary Club of Guatemala City purchased two outboard motors and constructed a pond for 10,000 fish. The Club also helped raise money to repair a water tower. The club belongs to the Southern District Area 9 which have participated in many various large International projects in Tanzania, Ameca, Ghana, Nigeria and Uganda.

In the past several years, we as a club have made a commitment to improve our support of the Rotary Foundation, which we have done. AVRC is one of the top clubs in District 5170, based on total contributions. Many of our members are either a Paul Harris Fellow or a Sustaining member of the Foundation. Our Club values every member's achievements, including past Presidents who have served or are serving at the District 5170 level. The Rotary years, 2010-11 and 2013-14. are especially significant for Almaden Valley Rotary in that two of our own members, Roger and Angie Hassler were chosen to serve as District Governors of the District.

The years 2015-2020 were similar to the previous years until COVID happened. With the lack of meetings and the general fear amongst some of

the members, membership was reduced to around 25 members. The club added Willow Glen area in San Jose and changed its name to Almaden Valley-Willow Glen Rotary Club.

Bob Carlson, former member of the Campbell Rotary, joined our club and brought the West Valley Rotary Community Corps (RCC) with him. The only RCC club west of Denver at the time.

The new AVWGRC club sponsored an inclusive play garden at Almaden Lake Park. The club with President Ken Tavernier joined the groundbreaking, and Phase 1 is now finished. Phase 2 is in the contribution gathering stage, although the groundbreaking ceremony has already taken place.

We are currently working with Operation Care and Comfort (OCC), an organization that sends 200–500 packages each month to service members overseas. We also partnered with them to provide complete Christmas gifts for five families through Operation: Secret Elves. We are also partnering with Friends with Special Needs (FCSN).