

Rotary Club of Palgrave's Weekly Rotary Minute

By Diether Weeren

Rotary (RI) and the United Nations (UN) have a long history of working together and sharing similar visions for a more peaceful world.

In 1942, RI was one of the largest 'international' organizations in the world, with more than 6,800 clubs in 81 countries and were already working on projects around the world to diminish the causes of war and aggression. In 1942, Rotary clubs from 21 nations organized a conference in London, attended by ministers of education, to develop ideas for advancing education, science and culture across nations. This meeting was the impetus for what is known today as UNESCO 'the UN's Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

In 1945, 49 Rotarians went to San Francisco to help draft the UN Charter. The Charter was signed that year by the representatives of 50 countries. Many of the delegates at the San Francisco Conference that were representing their respective governments, were also members of their own Rotary clubs. The UN officially came into existence Oct. 24, 1945, when the Charter had been ratified.

RI and the UN have been close partners ever since. The two organizations share a history of working together toward world understanding and peace. RI holds the highest nongovernmental status with the UN.

Secretary General Ban Ki-moon praised the invaluable partnership between RI and the UN when he said 'our common activities are saving lives. You help the United Nations reach our goals and you help the world understand the UN. The UN is proud to be a partner with RI'

RI maintains ties with the UN and other organizations through its 31 representatives in 15 capital cities around the world. RI representatives, including two youth representatives, serve as unofficial Ambassadors. Rotary also has representatives at UNESCO, UN-HABITAT, the UN Environmental Program, the Food and Agricultural Organization, World Food Programme, UNICEF, WHO and World Bank.

Nov. 12, we celebrate United Nations Rotary Day. An annual event where 1,500 Rotarians and guests 'take over' the UN headquarters in New York.

Please visit www.rotaryclubofpalgrave.com for more information on our Club and all the wonderful ways you could get involved.