

## **Rotary Club of Mendocino Membership Drive**

### **A. The Need for Action**

The club is aging and needs to decide whether to renew or fold. At present it has 26 members, comprising merchants, real estate agents, medical caregivers, insurance agents, bankers, lawyers, financial advisors and public servants. Of these there are 24 regular and 2 honorary members (Suzanne and Annie). Six of our members are women (Annie, Pam, Donna, Alitia, Susan and Suzanne) and 20 are men. Nineteen of our members are working and 7 are retired. Several who are on the books are thought to have dropped out. Others seldom participate in club activities. About 17-18 members are regularly involved in meetings, providing services, fund raisers and administration. Some help with club activities but seldom attend meetings. Only 7 or 8 members regularly attend meetings, some in person and some by zoom.

The pandemic and the demands it has placed on personal times combined with the restrictions it has placed on social gatherings has resulted in a diminution of our social gatherings including lunch and other meetings.

Since 2013/14 our club has diminished steadily in size, to the extent that most members hold several positions and we cannot identify a President-Elect, President-Nominee, Secretary or Membership Chair. On the other hand, Fort Bragg Rotary seems to have sustained or even grown its membership.

At a recent meeting with Dustin Littlefield, the District Governor, there was a discussion of options to deal with a declining membership which included:

- Combine with Fort Bragg Rotary, and work out the differences in the cultures of the two clubs;
- Disband the club, giving up its charter with an arrangement to continue the Foundation or devolve the Park to another agency;
- Have a rotating club presidency; and
- Have a co-presidency.

During 2019/20 the club recruited 3 regular members and voted 2 honorary members. During the present year an objective has been set for each quarter of each member inviting a friend to attend our meetings or activities. We have had several guests but overall we are falling short in this objective. Many of us have talked with possible members and we are finding that it is not easy to get them interested in our club.

People often ask "What is Rotary? What does Mendocino Rotary do?" To answer these questions we have prepared a bifold flyer, which is available in both hard and electronic copy. Let's use it!!

### **B. What Can We Do?**

To grow our membership we need to have a plan, a common understanding of how to go about it and an all hands on board approach, along these lines:

1. Reach out to (call, write, have coffee with) previous members (see the 2013/14 membership list) who have withdrawn from the club, and to present members who are marginal.
2. Require all members to contact friends, and invite them to attend our events. Hold members accountable for doing this (how can we do that?).

3. Organize social and work activities other than regular meetings, and invite friends, spouses and possible members to these. The approaching holiday season provides an opportunity for us to do this. One option: building a holiday display to be placed in the Park.
4. Update our Mendocino Rotary signs on Hwy 1, and place announcements of our meetings in the local papers.
5. Members wear Rotary hats, masks, shirts, jackets. Don't be shy about this!! People will see them, and ask you about the club, creating an opportunity to invite them to learn more.
6. Change our meeting format to include at least one zoom meeting per month, so that those who cannot attend in-person meetings can attend zoom meetings.
7. Consider alternative types of membership, such as a Corporate Membership, Friends Membership for older persons or Rotaract Club for younger ones.
8. Brainstorm how we reach out to merchants, younger persons and persons recently arrived in the area.
9. Mail out the bifold flyer to say 400-600 persons.
10. Establish a structure and process for following up on membership possibilities. Appoint a 3-person team to implement a membership campaign.
11. Hold a retreat to discuss, elaborate upon and refine these ideas.

### **C. What Sort of Members are we Seeking?**

- Persons who believe they can make the world a better place through providing service.
- Persons who are committed to providing service, whether that is in the area of work, social, funding or administration.
- Persons who are interested in our community, and have the skills necessary to explore and understand it and develop actions to help improve it.
- Persons who are aware of what it is to work in a social/public sphere, respect and get along with others, avoid conflict.
- Younger persons, women, merchants, new arrivals.
- Persons with skills we need: photographer, public relations, secretary.

### **D. Budget**

1. Printing of 800 flyers @\$0.65 each, say \$520 (we can fold ourselves)
2. Mailing of letters informing likely persons of the need to build our club, say 600 letters and flyers (200 for merchants and residents, 200 for youth, 200 for new subdivisions and 200 to hold in reserve) @.55 each, say \$330
3. Other \$100

#### 4. Total \$950

There is another way to do mass mailings, using a group discount provided by the Post Office and it is less expensive when the volume of mailings is on the order of 1,000 or so. But it may require us to reformat our flyer.

if we can get 600 well-targeted flyers out for a mailing cost of \$330 that may be the way to go.

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October 26, 2021