

Where are all the young members?



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Australian Rotarian Evan Burrell offers up his insights into how to attract younger members, including the need to start slow. Don't go too crazy at first.

[See Burrell's tips on attracting younger members](#)

[Register for a seminar on revitalizing and rethinking your club](#)

By Evan Burrell, a member of the Rotary Club of Turramurra, New South Wales, Australia

As a former member of Rotaract and now a young Rotarian, I get asked quite a lot, "where do we find more young members like you?"

It may seem like young members are as elusive to catch as Pokémon, but with the right strategy and awareness, it's not that difficult at all. The truth is, they are really all around us. They may be in your work place, they may be in your neighborhood, or they may be in those other social gatherings you belong to. Others may be active in our youth programs like [Rotaract](#) and [RYLA](#), readying themselves for the challenges that lie ahead.

Attracting new members is pretty critical to our clubs. They are the lifeblood of our organization, bringing in fresh ideas and insights, and keeping our clubs alive and relevant. In turn, young professionals seek a sense of purpose and belonging, and this is exactly what your club can give them.

As we celebrate Membership Month in Rotary, here are my tips for attracting younger members

1. **Don't go too crazy at first.** If the average age of your club is over 60, begin by trying to attract members in their 40's and 50's and work from there.

2. **Use your age differences to your advantage.** Stress the opportunity for career mentoring and set up mentoring programs pairing members with vast experience with those just beginning their careers.
3. **Make sure you welcome new members into your club.** At meetings, assign a seasoned veteran to each new member to be their host and introduce them to everyone else in your club. In time, the newcomer will get a better feel for the club.
4. **Use social media (Twitter, Facebook).** Let's face it, anyone under 30 is on social media 24/7. So use it to your club's advantage by promoting your activities and what you do in the community.
5. **Sponsor participants for our young leaders programs.** College or university students are excellent candidates for a Rotary Youth Leadership Awards event. Sponsor a high school student for a [Rotary Youth Exchange](#), and you not only broaden their horizons, but also make a lifelong friend of Rotary. Work alongside these future leaders of tomorrow so they become interested in your club and our organization.
6. **Keep younger, and newer, members in the loop.** This one is a biggie! Don't waste all that effort attracting new members only to forget about them and let them drift away from lack of attention. Engage them in as many ways as you can. Find out what they are interested in, and put them in charge of things that match their likes. If you have enough new members with a particular interest, start up a new program or incorporate their interests into an existing one. Make sure you give them lead roles, and give them a real opportunity to make a difference.

Member recruitment is a must for any club that wants to survive and not turn into the Rotary Club of Jurassic Park. It is not difficult, but you DO have to put some effort into it. You won't regret the time, though, when you see your club take on new life.