



## **INTERACT - WHAT IS IT?**

**Interact** stands for **International Action**. It is a kind of junior Rotary Club for young people between the ages of 14 and 18. All Interact Clubs are part of the Rotary International organization and every club must be sponsored by a Rotary Club. Most Interact Clubs are based in schools but in some parts of the world they are in villages and towns as part of the community. It is not a religious organization – it accepts young people of all creeds and ethnic backgrounds.

There are over 10,700 Interact Clubs around the world in about 109 countries with a total membership of about 250,000 so, as soon as a new club starts, its members become part of a large international family, all with one thing in common – to serve their communities in whatever way seems best.

Clubs appoint or elect their own President and form an Executive group (usually called Directors) to lead the planning of club activities. The main task is to get everybody involved and enjoying what they are doing.

Every Interact Club has a commitment to at least **TWO** projects in any one year.

One is a **Community Project** designed to serve the local community (which can be the school community) in some way. This could be to provide help for old people, children, young people, new immigrants, handicapped – any group needing a helping hand. It could involve painting out graffiti, washing windows, doing gardening, collecting food for food banks, helping someone receive specialist treatment etc. etc. The possibilities are endless as there are always needy people!

The second project is to be an **International** one. This may be to work together with another Interact Club in another country to raise funds for a special project, supporting World Vision or other aid agencies in sponsoring a child, sending books and other equipment to schools in needy areas or providing Rotary Emergency Boxes for places hit by hurricanes. Again the choices are limitless.

The motto of Interact is **SERIOUS FUN** which gives a good idea of what it is like to be a member. The serious part is the fund-raising and project organizing which leads to helping an individual or a group. The fun part is in joining together with others to do it! Clubs often organize social occasions for themselves and for others and it is certainly not intended that all activities have a serious intention. However, students seem to have a lot of fun raising money – especially if food is involved!

It is not always easy for young people to find opportunities to serve their communities in a positive way or to develop leadership skills. Interact provides these opportunities. District 9920 has several clubs operating – in the Auckland area and the Pacific Islands. A District Committee of Rotary keeps an overview of their activities and organizes an occasional get together – more fun!

So – **Welcome to Interact** – a fun group doing fun things for a serious purpose. Enjoy your membership then move on to **Rotaract**, the next stage of life in the Rotary world.