

Over 55s take to Facebook in numbers

You may have heard of “social networking” web sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter, but dismissed them as something for kids to mess around on.

But Rotary International has an official presence on each of these three sites, and the fastest growing demographic for Facebook – the biggest social networking site – is the over 55s?

Social networking sites and tools have been available online for a decade now, and in that time many have come and gone. Web sites such as Facebook have grown in popularity in recent years as mature offerings that have got it right and are here to stay.

There are tens of thousands of Rotarians, and many more Rotaractors, Interactors and alumni, who use Facebook regularly, to communicate with each other and with family and friends. Most Rotarians join Facebook at the invitation of a child, as an easy way to share photos and keep in touch, and soon see the power of the various applications on Facebook to promote Rotary fellowship and service.

A new fellowship – the Rotarians on Social Networks Fellowship (ROSNF), which is waiting for approval as an official fellowship – has been created to assist Rotarians and Rotaractors learn to use networks such as Facebook safely and effectively. More experienced users can provide assistance in how to share what you do in Rotary with a wider audience at no cost, simply by posting news, photos, web links, and videos in Facebook, and creating events, “fan” pages and groups that others, including those not on Facebook, can view.

It also gives you a chance to get to know your fellow Rotarians better on a more personal level – both those within your own club and overseas. PDG Guz Goh from District 3400, Indonesia, explains, “Facebook is an amazing tool for Rotarians and Rotary. Its informality in communication is nice – through sharing photographs and videos, we too share



their joy on birthdays, anniversaries, graduation of the children, etc. After a while you feel as though you're friends that meet often.”

For help in getting started with social networking, visit www.rosnf.org.

Did you know?

- Facebook has more than 250 million active users
- more than 120 million log on daily
- 45 per cent are 26 years or older
- is available in 50 languages
- sees more than 1 billion pieces of content (web links, news stories, blog posts, notes, photos) shared each week.

Simone Carot Collins

Rotary Club of Freshwater Bay, WA ■

Rotary is the catalyst

I commend *Rotary Down Under* for the excellent *End Polio Now* editorial feature in the October issue.

During the period when I had the privilege of chairing Rotary's Western Pacific PolioPlus Committee from the early 1990s until the region was declared polio free in 2001, we attended many WHO meetings throughout the region.

One of my most vivid memories was the spirit of cooperation between the support agencies – those organisations, that, collectively, funded the program in that area.

I well remember a meeting in Ho Chi Min City in Vietnam, where the Health Ministry officials from that country, pleaded with those agencies to find \$US2 million so that they could hold their first NID. The Japanese Government Aid Agency suggested to me that Rotary should provide those funds and advised it would take many weeks to get approval from his Government. In reviewing our commitments, I was aware that we had set aside \$US1 million for the following year. Because of arrangements the Vietnamese Government had in place, these funds would not be needed if the NID took place this year.

I knew that it was possible to bring our funds forward and suggested to the Japanese representative that we could provide \$1 million if his Government matched it. The next morning he had approval for the additional \$1 million.

Rotary had been the catalyst to make this happen and there would be many examples in other areas. As Rotarians we should feel a sense of pride in the difference this polio eradication program has made to the children of the world – and to their parents who do not face the threat of waking one morning to find a child afflicted by polio!

In nearly 50 years of Rotary membership, my most moving experience