

## **ROTARY CLUB OF ALBUQUERQUE**

### **ETHICS PROJECT: *WHY ETHICS AND WHY NOW***

Inaugurated May 1, 2006

#### *Why Ethics and Why Now?*

Why are we thinking about Ethics as Rotarians? Why are we in the Rotary Club of Albuquerque thinking about these things now?

#### *Our Rotary Heritage*

Rotary International has consistently focused on high ethical standards from its inception and expressed these ideals in its Foundational documents throughout the years in the Four Way Test, the Rotary Declaration, the Object of Rotary and the attitudes toward service embodied in "Service above Self."

#### *Holes in the Moral Ozone*

The Why Now question arises in the face of the serious and highly publicized misdeeds of officials in virtually all walks of life including business, government, education, religion, philanthropy as well as private interpersonal dealings among individuals. In recent national studies more than two thirds of work place participants report witnessing behaviors of illegal, dangerous or criminal behaviors by co workers and bosses. Another study found that the level of detected misbehaviors was essentially the same across all types of institutions within our society.

#### *Our Vision*

The Rotary Club of Albuquerque's Vision in adopting its Ethics Program is to be a Club that represents and practices ethical behaviors embodied in the Traits of Ethical behavior: Respect, Responsibility, Trustworthiness, Fairness, Caring and Citizenship.

#### *"Walking the Talk"*

As Rotarians, we espouse high ideals of service, honesty and fairness. Each of us is involved in our own profession, work place, recreational and social groups and has numerous opportunities to positively influence our own environments and to improve the internal environment of our own Rotary club. These multiple opportunities exist here and now and as leaders in our community, we consider it our duty set the highest standards of business and personal behaviors. We can and must "walk the talk" and model the positive behaviors associated with persons of ethics and character. We must start this effort with ourselves and our club meetings and activities.

### *Ethics Defined*

We have to be precise about how we use the word “ethics.” The term is broadly used today and can mean a variety of things ranging from philosophical ideas to moral and religious behaviors and attitudes. The meaning of ethics for our purpose is more limited. Ethics to us means *the behaviors that are associated with membership in our particular group, our own Rotary Club of Albuquerque.*

### *A Vocabulary for Behaviors*

To describe what obligations membership in the Rotary Club of Albuquerque requires a vocabulary. We need to be able to describe the behaviors we value and the behaviors that we would like to see modified. We refer to our vocabulary as the Traits of Ethical Behavior consisting of six words: Respect, Responsibility, Trustworthiness, Fairness, Caring and Citizenship. Within the meaning of these words or Traits, we can sum up what we do, how we do it and what the behaviors mean.

### *We Are a Collection of Volunteers*

All volunteer organizations tend to experience certain issues and problems in common. Our own club is not exceptional that way. Each of us has probably observed behaviors within our club that do not represent the highest ideals of Rotary International nor conform to the spirit and intent of our Foundational documents. The consequences of some of these behaviors have been misunderstandings, hurt feelings and lost opportunities for fellowship and service. A vocabulary capable of describing what is both good and in need of improvement holds the prospect of considerably improving overall outcomes of club activities.

### *Making a Difference*

We also strongly believe that success in improving the internal environment of our club we will result in higher retention rates of members and a more productive and fruitful effort in recruiting new members. We are also likely to expand our collective influence in our community and in our various venues of interpersonal activities in our lives.