

## Press Release – May 28, 2024

The Rotary Club of St. Albans is dedicated to empowering youth and fostering leadership skills within them. Karyn Rocheleau, Past President noted that we want them to become successful and strong contributors in our community. In time, we hope they will also become Rotarians that will help to shape not only our local but international communities.

Rotary Interact clubs bring together young people to develop leadership skills while discovering the power of Service Above Self.

In 2015, Bellows Free Academy St. Albans partnered with Karyn Rocheleau' and Trish Woodward to establish a Club Interact chapter. With 15,000 chapters worldwide and over 300,000 students, interact teaches young people to become social and civic entrepreneurs. Stephanie Hodgeman a BFA School Counselor has been integral to the growth of this chapter and is a conduit to the Rotary Club. Since its inception, the St. Albans chapter has engaged hundreds of students (70 currently) and collaborated with various community, city, and state stakeholders to raise awareness and address local needs. From the annual coat drive, which collects at least 1,000 coats each year, to regular blood and food drives, Interact Club empowers students to identify community issues and equips them with the tools to create positive change.



*Interact students working in the Outdoor Classroom which is a flagship project initiated and funded through a partnership between Interact, Rotary and NMC hospital.*

Living by our motto, “Service Above Self,” Interact students also serve as ambassadors, actively participating in outreach and transition activities to ensure a positive and welcoming experience for new high school students. Interact ambassadors dedicate their time and talents to support countless Move Up Days, evening events, tours, and visits to sending school. Recent Interact initiatives include the Annual Coat Drive, Blood Drive, Cereal Drive, Prom Dress Drive, BFA Experience, BFA School Day visits, BFA Move Up Day, Ada’s Closet renovation, fall and summer tours, Eclipse Glasses Reuse Drive, and a senior voting drive currently in progress.

Rotary partnering with Interact Students are able to greatly increase the impact to our community.

Rotary supports and provides various learning opportunities.

The Financial Reality Fair organized by Rotary and Business Professional Women is a great initiative, providing high school students with practical knowledge about personal finance. These efforts are led by businesses and community leaders who generously volunteer their time.

Rotary is sponsoring other programs for youth development. We have sponsored a Rotary District speech contest and students to Camp RYLA (Rotary Youth Leadership Awards). RYLA is a weekend leadership development program that emphasized, leadership, citizenship, build confidence and learn new schools as well has have fun.

In the past Rotary has supported Youth Exchange program that allowed for a study abroad opportunity and understand the fundamental values of what Rotary does, Peace, Community and Service.

Rotary has instituted a scholarship opportunity for graduating seniors in Franklin County.

We have provided support to Spectrum demonstrating a comprehensive approach towards supporting youth in various aspects of their lives.



*Karyn Rocheleau, Co-Interact Advisor launching a food drive for Northwest Family Foods*



*Interactors Taylor Olds, Molly Bernard and Evangelica Luneu serving as Ambassadors for the BFA Experience.*

Furthermore, Rotary has made investment in community infrastructure such as playgrounds and outdoor activities that underscores the commitment to creating a conducive environment for youth growth and development. It enhances the quality of life for our people and families in Franklin County.

By recognizing the importance of investing in youth, Rotary is not only securing its own future but also sowing seeds for a stronger, more vibrant community and world.

Through these efforts, the Rotary Club of St. Albans exemplifies the true spirit of Service Above Self.

The Rotary Club is proud to celebrate its 100th Anniversary.

To learn more about the Rotary Club of St. Albans, visit their website at [stalbansrotaryclub.com](http://stalbansrotaryclub.com) or connect on Facebook, Rotary Club of St. Albans, Vermont

