

Speaker 1: 1926–1950 — Building from the start

Good evening everyone,

Let's begin in 1926.

On April 29th, 1926, this club was officially chartered at the Preston Springs.

From the very beginning, this was a club built on action.

The early Rotarians saw a need—children in our community who required medical care—and they stepped forward in a very direct and personal way.

Members made what were described as “countless trips” to the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto—personally driving children, and often their parents, for treatment.

It's hard to imagine today...

but at the time, this was essential care—

and it was done by Rotarian volunteers.

Alongside this, the club organized annual clinics—reviewing over 1,300 cases a year—with doctors volunteering their expertise.

To support this work, the club launched the Annual Rotary Carnival in that very first year—1926—which became the core fundraising effort for decades.

Through these efforts, the club contributed nearly \$80,000 in its first 25 years—toward children's care, hospitals, and community projects.

The club also began investing in the broader community—developing playgrounds in multiple neighbourhoods, and working with local partners to improve opportunities for children and families.

Then came World War II.

As noted in our early records, all able members—and able sons—served, while those at home supported the Red Cross and local efforts.

And in January 1946, we officially changed our name from the Preston Rotary Club, to the Preston-Hespeler Rotary Club.

Throughout this period, one thing defined Rotary:

People showing up—personally—and doing the work.

And this spirit would carry forward into the next generation.