

Using its net proceeds from the 2018-2019 Investing in our Kids Campaign, the Rotary Club of Golden will fund and carry out our several programs benefitting Golden-area youth. These are described below.

Golden Backpack Program

The Golden Backpack Program helps feed students in need by providing a sack full of food to feed a child for the entire weekend so that when they return to school each Monday, they arrive ready to learn because they had food over the weekend. Volunteers help fill the backpacks each Wednesday night. Over 550,000 meals have been served since the program began in 2008. The program also serves children during the summer through the Snack-n-Wagon. More recently a program making "rescue food" available to kids and their families year-round was developed in response to the community's request for healthier food options.

Holiday Food Box Project

For many years, members of the Golden Rotary Club along with others have packed Holiday Food Boxes for the less fortunate members of our community. Approximately 300 households are served each year, each receiving two boxes of nutritious food which is a welcome addition around the holidays. In addition to healthy food staples such as canned goods, recipients often receive special items such as fresh produce and gifts cards.

Mental Wellness Fair

Golden Rotary organizes and sponsors an annual Community Wellness Fair, first held in 2018. The Fair is free, open to all, and designed to accomplish several objectives:

- Provide mental wellness resources for children and families experiencing behavioral and emotional problems
- Raise community awareness of the seriousness of mental health disorders
- Reduce the stigma associated with mental health problems.

Mental Health Initiatives

Golden Rotary is involved with several initiatives in the community to increase awareness of mental wellness issues and decrease the associated stigma. Working with Welchester Elementary, we funded "cool-down corners". These spaces allow children to self-calm and refocus on learning in a non-punitive manner. In cooperation with Jefferson Center for Mental Health, we have offered Mental Health First Aid courses for Golden residents. We have organized community events including presentations by well-known mental health professionals, underwritten an art therapy class, and helped fund a mural designed and painted by Golden High School students highlighting the struggles of youth with mental health issues.

The Miracle shop

The Miracle Shop is a "pop-up" holiday toy store for financially-struggling families. Parents are invited to shop at the store for toys for their children. All toys are sold at garage sale prices...*they are not free*. Parents are asked to pay what they can. Those who participate tell us they are excited for the opportunity to *choose* gifts for their children and that paying something feels better than receiving a handout. There is no "charity". Parents and kids are so thankful and excited. In 2017, the program served approximately 400 families.

Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA)

RYLA is a life-changing leadership training program for middle school and high school students in which leadership skills and principles are learned, developed and enhanced in an atmosphere of trust and respect. Each summer, the Rotary Club of Golden sponsors twelve students to attend the week-long, life changing program. One 2018 participant summed up RYLA...RYLA is a place, a camp, a group of people. But it's a feeling and a way of life above all. At RYLA you learn leadership and teamwork, and you learn what the sunrise is, who you are, and that we are all in this together....

Interact

Interact is an international organization of service and social clubs for young people in middle school and high school organized by Rotary. The program fosters leadership and responsible citizenship and promotes international understanding and peace. Clubs participate in school projects and community projects and along the way, they have the opportunity to develop leadership skills and learn about serving the community. The Rotary Club of Golden sponsors Interact clubs at Bell Middle School and Golden High School.

Rotaract

Golden Rotary sponsors a Rotaract Club at the Colorado School of Mines; the club is very similar to our Interact Clubs, but functions at the college level. Approximately 50 students belong to the club this year.

Scholarships

Annual scholarship awards are provided to students at Golden High School and Warren Tech. Merit scholarships recognize academic, extracurricular, and service accomplishments of graduating seniors proceeding to college and vocational training institutions. At least one student receives an award based on achievement involving extraordinary circumstances. Awards range from \$1,000 to \$1,500 per student. In 2017, ten scholarship winners were selected through a written application and in-person interview process with a committee of Golden Rotarians.

Youth Exchange

Getting off the plane in a foreign country where you barely know the language is a scary experience, especially when you're moving there for an entire school year. This is what our high school exchange students feel when they arrive. But they are quickly paired up with amazing host families. Students typically attend Golden High School and engage in school activities, Interact activities and Rotary club activities. This program helps promote international goodwill and better friendships, and it gives the exchange student and host families the opportunity to share cultures and create better understanding. In 2018 the Rotary Club of Golden is hosting a female student from Denmark.