

Urbandale High School Launches Interact Club With Local And International Aspirations

Rotary Club of Northwest Des Moines is the proud sponsor of a student-led, service-based Interact Club at Urbandale High School aiming to create a positive difference locally and globally

URBANDALE, Iowa – June 15, 2015 – A group of civic-minded [Urbandale High School \(UHS\)](#) students recently launched the school’s first Interact Club with an ambitious goal: to create positive, sustainable change within the Urbandale community and abroad through the development and implementation of meaningful service projects. The UHS Interact Club is sponsored by the [Rotary Club of Northwest Des Moines](#) and is Rotary International’s service club for youth between the ages of 12 and 18. Although the Rotary Club of NW Des Moines will provide guidance, the UHS Interact Club is fully self-supporting and self-governing.

Rotary Interact Clubs complete at least two service projects a year: one that helps their school or community and one that promotes international understanding and goodwill. Through these efforts, Interact Club members strengthen leadership skills, foster international relationships, enhance collaboration and critical thinking skills, and build a network of good.

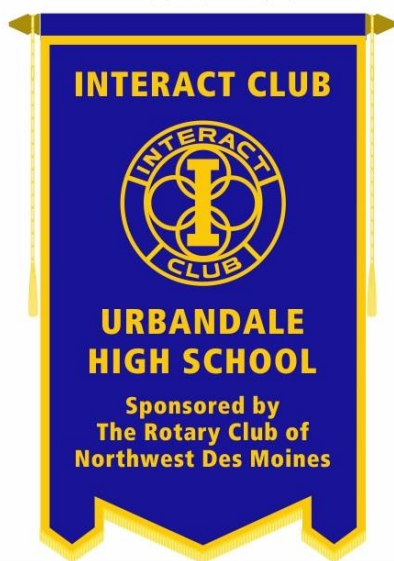
“As their school sponsor, I’ve had the opportunity to observe how effectively this group of students collaborate and support one another in order to achieve their goals,” said Joanne Hale, UHS Interact Advisor and Social Studies Teacher. “This is truly a student-run organization and I look forward to seeing the positive impact of their future projects.”

The UHS Interact Club began with one student, Noah Torstenson, discussing with friends the idea of forming an Interact Club at UHS. After months of hard work—securing the Rotary of NW Des Moines as a sponsor, finding a teacher willing to be the high school sponsor, recruiting members, and submitting an Interact Club application to Rotary International—their efforts paid off as the UHS Interact Club was approved by the Urbandale Community School District Board of Directors on June 1, 2015, and became a reality.



2015 UHS Interact Club: Front Row: Students Tad Schweizer, Mattia Stentella, John Clapham, Austin Smith, Brandon Helm and Emma Kuehl. Back Row: Students Kachi Ekwena, Lewis Cox, Eli McNees, Noah Torstenson, Sean Howard, Dalton Headlee and Joanne Hale, UHS Advisor and Social Studies Teacher.

The Rotary Club of NW Des Moines welcomed the UHS Interact Club officers and members into the Rotary family at an Inauguration Ceremony on May 13, 2015. Hale read the Interactors names while Rotary of NW Des Moines President Dan Boes and Director of Youth Services Brenda Auxier-Mailey presented Interact members with an Interact pin and Four Way Test Medallions. Officers and members of the UHS Interact Club include President Noah Torstenson, Vice President Austin Smith, Secretary Joel Andrews, Treasurer Eli McNees, Director Alex Snyder, Damon Allan, John Clapham, Lewis Cox, Amy Eldridge, Josh Flory, Dalton Headlee, Brandon Helm, Sean Howard, Elise Kerr, Emma Kuehl, Raelynn Meade, Blaine Price, Tad Schweizer, Mattia Stentella, McKenna Sutton, Marin Vidovic and Micheal Westphal.



The UHS Interact Club has a head start on developing a network of friendships with an overseas club and advancing international understanding and goodwill, as they have an international exchange student as a founding member. Stentella is from L'Aquila, Italy, and hopes to connect the UHS Interact Club with the club in his high school to partner on an international project when he returns to Italy next year.

“When youth become actively engaged and involved in service projects they not only benefit their community, but also themselves,” said Auxier-Mailey. “These outstanding students fully embrace our aim of service above self. The Rotary Club of Northwest Des Moines is thrilled to sponsor the UHS Interact Club.”

The UHS Interact Club has already learned the value of long-term relationships and the benefits of working with other Rotarians. President Torstenson is the son of the past Rotary Club of NW Des Moines President Cam Torstenson (currently a member of Rotary Club of Des Moines AM). While Clapham’s sister earned a Rotary Club of NW Des Moines scholarship several years ago and his aunt worked many years for Rotary International in Evanston, Illinois.

President Torstenson and Treasurer McNees will be attending Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA) this summer to further develop their leadership skills. Rotary Club of NW Des Moines is a proud sponsor of the new club and is looking forward to guiding and mentoring their “Service Above Self” projects. The Urbandale Community School District looks forward to seeing the impact that these dedicated, talented and inspiring students bring to the Urbandale community and our world. To learn more about how Urbandale is bringing learning to life, visit: Showcase.UrbandaleSchools.com

About Rotary

Rotary International is an organization of business and professional leaders who provide humanitarian service and help to build goodwill and peace in the world. There are 1.2 million Rotary members in 34,000 Rotary clubs in more than 200 countries and geographical areas. Rotary clubs have been serving communities worldwide for more than a century. The first Rotary club was founded in Chicago in 1905. To learn more about the Rotary Club of Northwest Des Moines, visit <http://portal.clubrunner.ca/1664>

About Urbandale Community School District

The Urbandale Community School District includes portions of Des Moines and Urbandale, Iowa. The district serves over 3,900 students in six elementary schools, one middle school and one comprehensive high school. The Urbandale district supports an increasingly diverse student population where 50 languages are spoken. Building on the existing foundation of excellence in education, Urbandale is transforming education throughout the district. By implementing innovative [Quality/Continual Improvement](#) strategies that create learning environments that more fully engage, challenge and motivate students, Urbandale is taking transformation from theory into practice. Urbandale prepares students for becoming lifelong learners and is a school district that brings learning to life for everyone. To learn more, visit: UrbandaleSchools.com

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