

Turkish Rotaractors help people with disabilities find jobs

By Arnold R. Grahl

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Turkish Rotaractors received top recognition at the Rotaract Preconvention Meeting for helping people with disabilities bolster their job skills and find employment.

The Rotaract Club of Istanbul-Galatasaray's Integration Through Employment project aimed to provide skills training for those with disabilities, increase their interaction with employers, and raise awareness of the career difficulties they face.

The effort was recognized as RI's Outstanding Rotaract Project international winner on 20 May. It was one of eight projects singled out for honors at the preconvention meeting in New Orleans, Louisiana, USA.

Assisted by their sponsor, the Rotary Club of Istanbul-Galatasaray, the Turkish Rotaractors connected with agencies that provide training for those with disabilities, including an industry leader in call-center and communication skills courses. All 15 attendees at one training series were hired within three months of completing the program.

The Rotaractors and their sponsor club also hosted the country's first career fair for people with disabilities. More than 30 employers and 150 job seekers attended the 2009 event in the Besiktas district of Istanbul. A second successful fair was held in November 2010.

In addition, the Rotaractors delivered a presentation on disabilities to 10 Rotary clubs in the Istanbul area.

"The project resulted in a great collaboration between our Rotaract club and our sponsor Rotary club," says Rotaractor Tugba Ozdinc. "The most original part was the career fair. There are career days for college students or college graduates, but there had never been a career fair in Turkey for the disabled community."

The other outstanding [Rotaract](#) projects recognized at the awards ceremony were:

- Africa Districts: Rotaract Club of Adentan, Ghana (District 9100), for 1,000 Gifts of Life, to recruit blood donors, collect blood, create a blood donation registry, and raise awareness of the need for voluntary blood donations in the Accra area
- Asia Pacific Districts: Rotaract Club of San Pedro East, Laguna, Philippines (District 3820), for Greenenvironment, which raised environmental awareness and organized cleanup projects that involved 4,000 young people in the San Pedro area
- Europe Districts: Rotaract clubs of districts 1730, 1740, 1750, and 1760 (France and Monaco), for Musi'SEP Tour, which organized concerts that raised US\$14,000 for the fight against multiple sclerosis and increased awareness of the disease in six cities in central and southern France
- Latin America Districts (tie): Rotaract Club of La Villa Ciudad de México, Distrito Federal, Mexico (District 4170), for segunda Jornada Medica, Social y Cultural (second Medical, Social, and Cultural Event), a daylong project that provided free medical and social services along with cultural activities for more than 600 disadvantaged residents of Huehuetoca, and the Rotaract Club of Metropolitano, Distrito Federal, Mexico (District 4170), for Únete al Reto: 80 Toneladas (Join the 80-Ton Challenge), to provide food and drinking water to victims of Hurricane Alex in the state of Nuevo León
- South Asia Districts: Rotaract Club of the University of Moratuwa, Western Province, Sri Lanka (District 3220), for Handz, to renovate school facilities for rural secondary school students in the North Central Province, and to provide tutoring and educational materials
- United States, Canada, and Caribbean Districts: Rotaract Club of Mississauga, Ontario, Canada (District 7080), for the Pakistan Flood Relief Drive, which provided US\$9,700 in relief supplies and financial assistance to flood victims in the Muzaffargarh District of Pakistan