

MARCH 2022

Rotary

AFRICA | south



Rotary



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Our Team

Editor in Chief:
Sarah van Heerden

Administration:
Sharon Robertson

Chairperson:
Natty Moodley

Directors:
Greg Cryer
Andy Gray
Peter Hugo
Annemarie Mostert
Joe Otin
Lee-Ann Shearing

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rotaryafrica@mweb.co.za

Editorial contributions:
rotaryafrica@mweb.co.za

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9212, 9213, 9214, 9220, 9350, 9370 and
9400 (Southern and Eastern Africa)

Postal address: PO Box 563
Westville, 3630
South Africa

Telephone: +27 (64) 278 1848

WhatsApp: +27 (64) 278 1848

Email: rotaryafrica@mweb.co.za

www.rotaryafrica.com

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WELCOME

Sarah van Heerden
Editor in Chief



I believe that what you speak about yourself and what you do comes into being. No, I am not being mystical or loopy. What I mean by that is that when you speak positively about your activities or self, you are intentionally setting a can-do mindset. When you are negative and voice those thoughts instead of positive ones, you are setting yourself up for failure.

The reason is simple enough. When written or spoken, words become extremely powerful as they're 'made real'. When they are thought, they are just thoughts. By speaking or writing negative thoughts you create a negative reality. The 'imagined' words become real and your decision-making processes are affected accordingly. When positive 'imagined' words are written or spoken, you automatically trick yourself into believing in a positive outcome. Therefore, if you speak positively about the goals you set, success is a foregone conclusion and decisions relating to these goals are not based in fear or worry, but in success.

Think of a Rotary club meeting, where someone proposes something bold and exciting. As they lead the room through their idea, they start creating support, getting people excited and generating emotional buy-in.... Until that one person (or three), there is at least one in every club, pipes up with their, "Yes but..." and the room, the people, deflate. Suddenly, everyone worries about imagined failures and forgets the probability of success. Once this happens, they are doomed to fail.

I am leading a fundraising team for an NGO and I started my first meeting by saying, "Don't ask me to do a cake sale or sell a raffle ticket. I am not prepared to work extremely hard for a few thousand rand. I want to see returns for my time and effort – I want to work smart. Tell me how you think we can make real money!" Immediately, people nodded and although my team members are relatively inexperienced, they got excited and wow, they came up with some great ideas to yield high returns with minimal effort. And even when one became a little nervous and said, "It's all well and good to set big targets but there is a good chance that we will make only a few thousand rand."

The reality is that we will make a few thousand rand if we do what has always been done. If we want to make more, we need to be bold, try the new and scary. If selling tickets is hard, then get parties to sell the tickets and give them an incentive. Plan events for families, because we no longer live in a latchkey world where parents are comfortable leaving their kids at home alone. If you want the numbers, you make it family friendly and they will come.

We had a Christmas festival in my town on 18 December and a park was strung with lights and had a few market stalls. They expected 500 people but had entry tickets for 4 000 (sold at R10 a person). They sold out of tickets! Families arrived, old people, young people, people of all colours, all income groups were there. We sat in the park on a chilly night, listening to music, drinking coffee and enjoying the moment. Kids ran wild, the food stalls ran dry. Why? Because we needed something to do with our kids, friends and families and until then, nobody had done anything like that, because it "would not work, would not be supported, blah, blah, blah!"

We must stop thinking small and start pushing boundaries! We must leap beyond our comfort zone and taste the success. Because it is waiting... Are you brave enough?

The Four-Way Test

Of the things we think,
say or do:

- 1) Is it the TRUTH?
- 2) Is it FAIR to all concerned?
- 3) Will it build GOODWILL and BETTER FRIENDSHIPS?
- 4) Will it be BENEFICIAL to all concerned?



President's Message

Greetings, my dear changemakers,

We have overcome so many challenges these past two years and changed numerous lives. It brings me great joy that we have worked so hard this year to grow Rotary through the Each One, Bring One initiative. The result has been excellent growth in membership. Let us keep up the momentum. I am happy that you have put a spotlight on all we do by organising projects around the world on our Rotary Days of Service. The future looks brighter than ever for Rotary and our 1.4 million members.

On 11 March 2020, the World Health Organisation declared that COVID-19 constituted a pandemic, and two years later it is important that we continue to draw on our expertise in our disease prevention and treatment area of focus to help people worldwide cope with the continuing challenges. The pandemic continues to defy all expectations, but we cannot be frozen in fear. Our work is too important. It is also important that we make time for each other, and I urge you to register for the upcoming 2022 Rotary International Convention in Houston. It is a great way for all of us to safely celebrate Rotary service.

We can continue to build hope and spread peace in the world by using our resources to help the most vulnerable and keeping our faith in the future. The pandemic has had an especially devastating impact on girls worldwide. On the first anniversary of the pandemic, Henrietta Fore, the executive director of UNICEF, said that “immediate action is needed to mitigate the toll on girls and their families.” This need, unfortunately, remains just as strong a year later. The ripples of the pandemic have affected girls in unique ways — stunting their educational attainment, weakening their job prospects, and contributing to other terrible results such as child marriages and increased human trafficking.

Data from UNICEF reveals why our action is so essential. In the 2010s, important progress was made toward eliminating the practice of child marriage, and UNICEF estimates that 25 million such marriages were averted worldwide. Unfortunately, the pandemic reversed those positive trends, and as a result an



additional 10 million girls are vulnerable to becoming child brides by the end of this decade.

This is why our focus on Empowering Girls is such vital work, and I am delighted that at this year's virtual International Assembly, President-elect Jennifer Jones committed to continuing this initiative for another year. In my travels, I have witnessed many wonderful examples of club projects that back our Empowering Girls goals. But all Rotary members know that real change requires big efforts sustained over many years. This is the power of our global grants and actions taken within our areas of focus.

I encourage clubs to think of innovative ways to empower girls when designing their grant projects. Every step we take to improve education, health care, and economic opportunities for girls makes an important difference in helping them achieve their full potential. With opportunity we create hope, and with hope we address the root causes of conflict around the world, setting the stage for sustainable peace.

None of us know how long the COVID-19 virus will linger — and as an organisation that has worked tirelessly for decades to eradicate polio, we understand better than most the difficult work that lies ahead for the world. That is why we need to remain focused on the future and on what is possible — not feeling nostalgic for the way our lives were but looking hopefully to a future that uses this opportunity to Serve to Change Lives. I look forward to continuing this good work with you.

Shekhar Mehta

Shekhar Mehta,
Rotary International President (2021/22)



Find Project Partners

Thousands of Rotary and Rotaract clubs have shared their projects on Rotary Showcase since it launched in 2012. Now Rotary has added new features that make this online tool even more useful.

Your club can now post proposed projects and seek partners for those projects. You can share project details, ask for financial or other support and connect with other clubs. Potential partners can search Rotary Showcase to find proposed projects to join and contact project creators directly.

Learn more at my.rotary.org



FIELD TRIPS

2022 Rotary International Convention Countdown

Although its skyline is dominated by glass and steel, Houston has more than 500 parks and green spaces across some 40 000 acres. While you're attending the Rotary International Convention 4-8 June, consider taking advantage of the city's options for outdoor recreation. If you're looking to stay in shape — or simply enjoy some fresh air — opportunities abound.

About 6.5 kilometres west of downtown, Memorial Park is Houston's biggest; it's nearly twice the size of Central Park in New York City. Built on the site of a World War I training camp, it contains more than 48 kilometres of running and walking trails, a world-class golf course, and other sports facilities. The park is also home to the Houston Arboretum and Nature Centre, where you can see native plants and animals on self-guided "habitat hikes."

Closer to the convention centre is Buffalo Bayou Park, named for the winding waterway it straddles. Rent a kayak or canoe to paddle down the bayou. Or rent a bike to zip between landmarks such as Allen's Landing, which commemorates Houston's founding, and the bat colony under Waugh Bridge. With gardens, picnic pavilions and a multilevel nature play area, this sprawling park is perfect for families.

If you would rather watch the pros work up a sweat, you're in luck: The Host Organisation Committee has planned outings to Houston Dynamo (soccer) and Houston SaberCats (rugby) matches, both on 3 June.

Buy tickets at houstonri2022.org/events.

Learn more and register at convention.rotary.org.



Foundation Trustee Chair

John Germ

Let's get clean water flowing worldwide

In the mid-18th century, Benjamin Franklin wrote: “When the well’s dry, we know the worth of water.”

Right now, in the 21st century, many of us take water for granted because we have been fortunate to live in places where clean water is plentiful. But that’s not the case for millions of others around the world. The United Nations estimates that 2 billion people — about 1 in 4 people on the planet — lack safely managed drinking water. Just under half of the world’s population lives without access to effective toilets and sanitation systems, and nearly a third lack basic hand washing stations with soap and clean water.

Isn’t it astounding that, in an age of instant information and space tourism, we still haven’t managed to guarantee the necessities of water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) to so many?

Rotary is doing something about it; WASH projects are among the most funded within our areas of focus: Since 2014, Rotary clubs have carried out more than 2 100 global grants related to WASH by using \$154 million in Foundation funding, impacting countless people.

In addition, Rotary’s WASH alliance with USAID, more than a decade strong, is considered Rotary’s largest partnership outside of PolioPlus. Rotary and USAID have committed a combined \$18 million in WASH funding to large-scale strategic efforts

at the national level in countries such as Ghana and Uganda. The partnership unites the technical expertise of USAID’s development professionals with the local leadership and advocacy of Rotary members to find workable, sustainable WASH solutions in hundreds of communities. You can learn more at riusaidwash.rotary.org.

The theme of World Water Day, 22 March, is Groundwater: Making the Invisible Visible. This is an opportune time for clubs to learn more about WASH issues and take action collectively to create and sustain momentum for expanding access to universal WASH services. Rotary members can bring attention to the WASH challenges that impact us locally by sharing the stories, experiences and WASH needs of those we serve globally.

We can be proud of the work that Rotary clubs and our Foundation continue to do to provide communities with clean water and working sanitation and hygiene systems. But let’s not stop there.

This month let’s look out for our neighbours around the world whose wells are running dry or who lack toilets or soap. Rotary has the resources, partnerships, and passion to improve WASH services for millions in need worldwide. And most important, we have the people who can make it work — you and me.

Get involved with WASH

The WASH Rotary Action Group was formed in 2007 and since then it has facilitated many hundreds of projects – helping clubs find partners, ensuring sustainability, stressing the importance of a needs-driven approach, and developing best practices. The Action Group links water and sanitation to improved hygiene, better health, and empowerment of the community.

Learn more at: wash-rag.org



Foundation Update

WITH ROTARY REGIONAL FOUNDATION COORDINATOR JANKEES SLIGCHER

“As the Regional Rotary Foundation Coordinator for Zone 22 Region 28 it was a great opportunity to host Endowment Major Gifts Adviser Eric Kimani (D9212),” says Regional Rotary Foundation Coordinator (RRFC) Jankees Sligcher.

The objective for this visit was to help Rotarians understand the value of giving to The Rotary Foundation and the returns such gifts generate. Rotarians also learned how “Doing Good in the World” does not only include spending time assisting with club fundraising or projects.

Eric, an accomplished speaker, visited the Rotary Club of Rosebank (D9400), attended a luncheon hosted by the RRFC and EMGA and a champagne luncheon in Craighall Park.

Eric brought home the importance of giving and made the participants of these meetings well aware of the opportunities and possibilities that exist to support our Foundation. He actively promoted the Foundation’s major donor and bequest society member initiatives.

Needless to say, he enthused many present and pledges were made by the attendees, including District Governor Stella Anyangwe, to increase the Major Donor group in D9400!

Congratulations to Eric on a successful mission. We wish him all the best as he continues to support, encourage and guide members as they promote *Doing Good in the World* by supporting The Rotary Foundation.



YOUR GIFT CAN PROVIDE CLEAN WATER



Clean water, sanitation, and hygiene education are basic necessities for a healthy environment and a productive life. Your donation to The Rotary Foundation’s Annual Fund provides these essentials in communities close to home and around the world. **GIVE TODAY:** rotary.org/donate



Changemakers

ROTARY FOUNDATION MAJOR GIFTS INITIATIVE COMMITTEE
MEMBER, PDG PATRICK COLEMAN

EVERY DROP COUNTS

FOR THE NEXT 15 SECONDS DO NOT THINK ABOUT WATER!

For the past several years I have written – and talked – about Water, Sanitation and Hygiene every March – Rotary’s WASH Month. Very often I begin my presentations about water with the statement above. Invariably someone in the audience will reach for their glass or their bottle because of the suggestion.

The facts and figures are both positive and “not-so-positive” when it comes to the water situation in the world. We seem to have floods without clean water or droughts with little to no water. Just this year in southern Africa we have had Tropical Storm Ana and Cyclone Batsirai which dumped floods across Madagascar as well as the East African islands and Mozambique. At the same time, other parts of southern Africa are suffering the worst drought in several years with seasonal rains coming as much as two months late.

Rotarians are working harder than ever to provide clean water, safe sanitation and proper hygiene in schools, health centres and rural homes. We don’t see much publicity about these projects because many of them are off the ‘beaten path’. However, the improved lives and living standards within communities tell of the victories won by Rotarians across Africa and the globe.

One thing is evident when it comes to water projects: there is no *one-size-fits-all* water project. Even with something as basic as a water pump there

are many different models: hand pumps, treadle pumps, step dams, solar powered pumps... And the list goes on.

This is, obviously, followed by proper sanitation (if you drink it, you will pass it.) Without proper toilets the job is not complete. There are also many styles and models for sanitation facilities depending on location and logistics. Basic vented pit latrines are simple, clean and relatively long lasting. The composting latrine is much more complex, much cleaner and much longer lasting. It also (as the name depicts) creates compost for small gardens. Water-borne toilets are very clean, but need a constant source of water to ‘flush your problems away’. For rural homes the arbour loo might be more practical. They are temporary, very simple and self-composting every few months. Not fancy, but practical.

Then, of course, comes something that we have all become accustomed to doing dozens and dozens of times per day – hand washing! I am amazed at the YouTube videos demonstrating how to wash your hands. If you have an hour, try looking it up!

One more thing is evident when it comes to water projects. They cannot be done without the synergistic support of Rotarians around the globe! That means that we need YOU to be a part of the worldwide campaign to provide clean water,

sanitation and hygiene to those who live outside your “comfort zone.”

“How can I do that?” you ask. (I am SO glad you asked!)

One of the Rotary Areas of Focus just happens to be Water and Sanitation. That is not coincidental. While there are seven Areas of Focus, every one of them has a connection to water.

- Basic Education and Literacy – Many children and teachers are limited in their time in the classroom due to poor water and sanitation access.
- Maternal and Child Health – Nearly six million children under the age of five die each year because of malnutrition, poor health care, and inadequate sanitation.
- Peace and Conflict Prevention/Resolution – Wars have been fought over water rights and access to water.
- Disease Prevention and Treatment – The connection is obvious: Poor water equals a high instance of disease.
- Community and Economic Development – The provision of water enhances every community. Water is not only life, it is a better life!
- Support the Environment – Rotary’s newest area of focus works hand in hand with the protection of water sources.

Once again, how can we “Serve to Change Lives” this year? By giving! Individually we may only be one drop, but together we are an ocean!

Your enhanced online Rotary experience is beginning to unfold. Enjoy a modern design and search functionality that’s fast and easy-to-use.

Easily manage your club’s administration functions. Gain access from your mobile device. Search for Rotarians or clubs to connect instantly. Update your personal profile to control what information is shared with whom.

All of these improvements now funnel into one clear and simple platform.

Welcome to the start of the new

MY ROTARY.

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Everyone's welcome

In September 2020, Rotary created the diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) task force that is charged with shaping a comprehensive action plan with achievable, measurable and meaningful outcomes.

As one of Rotary's Core Values, diversity should be one of its great strengths. As Rotary members, we should be proud that Rotary reflects so many cultures, generations and lived experiences, and offers the potential for countless leaders to tap into those experiences to make a difference.

While progress has been made, we need a concrete plan to make sure that DEI are ingrained into everything that we do as an organisation and

reflected in the actions Rotary takes as we engage with the communities we serve.

Rotary tapped into the expertise of Rotary participants around the globe for the DEI task force. They will devise a plan that assesses the current state of DEI at Rotary and articulates a vision that incorporates regional differences, needs, and priorities.

Two of these members are from Africa.

GEETA MANEK (TRUSTEE LIAISON)

**Rotary Foundation Trustee
Kenya**

Geeta Manek is a second-generation Kenyan, who graduated from business school in the United Kingdom before returning to Nairobi to join the family retail and property management business, which she still runs.

Geeta joined Rotary in 1997. Her roles have included Rotary coordinator, chair of the Health Major Gifts Initiative and of the Joint Committee on Partnerships, member of the Major Gifts Initiative Oversight Team and the Rotary Institute Host Organising Committee, RI training leader, lead facilitator at the Regional Leaders Training Institute, and RI president's representative. She was also the only female governor of District 9200 before it was divided into Districts 9211 and 9212 in 2012/13. She also served as her district's coordinator of the Kick Polio Out of Africa Campaign.

Geeta is passionate about initiatives that help women and improve education. She was a charter member of Lohana Ladies' Circle, a women's club dedicated to community service, social welfare, and cultural heritage. She's also helping lead a Rotary literacy initiative in Kenya and the region. She has volunteered as a first responder during national crises, including post-election violence and after terrorist attacks. She has led teams of Rotarians to collaborate and coordinate initiatives with organisations such as the Red Cross, the United Nations and community-based institutions. In



recognition of her humanitarian work, The United Graduate College and Seminary International awarded her an honorary doctorate of humanities in 2019.

Geeta has been honoured with the Service Above Self Award. She and her spouse, Kaushik (who served as governor of District 9200 in 2008-09) are Rotary Foundation Major Donors and Benefactors, as well as Bequest Society and Arch Klumph Society members.

JEREMY OPPERMAN (MEMBER)

Rotarian
South Africa

Jeremy was born with retinitis pigmentosa, a deteriorating eye condition which results in total blindness.

After graduating from the University of Cape Town in 1987, Jeremy worked as a marketer of cutting-edge people development and training services and products.

Since starting his own HR marketing consultancy in 1999, Jeremy started focusing increasingly on diversity and disability issues and is particularly passionate about the unhesitant and natural integration of people with disabilities into mainstream society.

Jeremy created the Meeting Disability suite of programmes and has conducted hundreds of disability awareness workshops for both public and private sector organisations. In addition, Jeremy and his associates provided extensive access-auditing and consulting services to major stakeholders. He is a committed advocate of centralised disability service facilities within organisations. He believes in promoting a strong culture of disability confidence in all operational functions of a business, including corporate social investment, customer service, sales, marketing, and physical and digital infrastructure.

In 2015 he was asked to create a unique Disability Desk facility within the Western Cape Provincial Government. This provided, for the first time, a centralised resource for both internal and external stakeholders.

Jeremy speaks, writes, and consults widely on topics including achieving disability confidence in organisations; making a business case for universal access, and the benefits of a Disability Desk, a centralised approach.

Jeremy is involved with several disability



institutions and has served on the board of directors for the Western Cape Disability network.

He currently serves on the board of the South African Guide Dog Association, as well as St. Dunstan's Institute for War Blinded Veterans. St. Dunstan's incorporates the Ian Fraser Bursary Fund, which provides bursaries to blind students, and the John & Esther Ellerman Memorial Trust, which provides funding for orientation and mobility instructors.

Jeremy joined Rotary in 2020. He is a member of the Rotary Club of Newlands in Cape Town, (D9350), and currently holds the chair for the vocational portfolio in his club.

Jeremy lives in Cape Town with his wife Jackie and his third guide dog, Ronnie.





CONNECTING

President-elect Jennifer Jones is poised to lead Rotary into a vibrant, diverse future

President-elect Jennifer Jones' office at Rotary International world headquarters in Evanston, Illinois, feels different from those of her predecessors, but that's in no way a result of the fact that on 1 July she will become Rotary's first female president. On the wall hangs a recent gift from a friend — a black scratch-off map on which Jones can record every Rotary destination she visits during the next two years. When we speak it's two months since she took office as president-elect, and on the map, only Chicago has been revealed — many planned events were cancelled or postponed due to a rise in COVID-19 cases. Today, Jones is the only person on the 18th floor of One Rotary Centre. There are no phones ringing, no fingers tap-tap-tapping on keyboards in the cubicles outside her door. One could do cartwheels through the Rotary boardroom, and nobody would notice.

Jones elbow-bumps her visitors, Rotary magazine senior staff writer Diana Schoberg and senior editor Geoffrey Johnson. Then, spaced apart at a table in her office, they discuss her vision for the year ahead. "If you start to think about how exponentially Rotary can touch the world, we're more than a club," Jones says. "We're a movement."

Jones is president and CEO of Media Street Productions Inc. in Windsor, Ontario, where she is a member of the Rotary Club of Windsor-Roseland. (Her husband, Nick Krayacich, is past president of the Rotary Club of La Salle Centennial and was recently selected as governor-nominee-designate of District 6400.) Her company's specialties include radio, television and live show production and corporate and NGO videos.

Using her media background to elevate Rotary's global profile is one of the primary goals of her presidency, and Jones is planning what she calls the "Imagine Impact Tour" to showcase to the world several large-scale, sustainable projects in each

of Rotary's areas of focus. "I see this as a way of increasing our membership," she says. "When we tell our stories, like-minded people will want to join with us."

A Rotary member since 1996, Jones played a lead role in the organisation's rebranding effort by serving as chair of the Strengthening Rotary Advisory Group. She is co-chair of the End Polio Now Countdown to History Campaign Committee, which aims to raise \$150 million for polio eradication efforts. She also led the successful #RotaryResponds virtual telethon in 2020, which raised critical funds for pandemic relief and attracted more than 65,000 views.

Between more serious topics such as elevating Rotary's image and its efforts towards diversity, equity, and inclusion, the conversation jumps around to the retro appeal of the 1980s television show *The Golden Girls* (its social commentary is relevant even today, Jones surmises) and dance parties ("Whenever a good song comes on, it's hard to not get a little groove on," she says.). Toward the end of the conversation, Jones' dad chimes in with a ding on her phone and the one-word message, "passed" — he's still working at almost 80 years old and wanted to let her know he'd succeeded at an annual exam for his job.

"He is the sweetest thing," she says with a smile. A few days earlier, his text to her had included a heart emoji and the query "How's fixing the world coming along?" With the family of Rotary behind her, Jones is well on her way.

You're going to be Rotary's first female president. What does that mean for Rotary?

When I was selected, although the process was virtual, everybody went around the "room" to reflect on something that was said during the interview. One of the points that was repeatedly emphasised was that I was selected for my qualifications, not because of my gender. I didn't enter the interview

with gender being at the forefront of my thinking. However, I do think that for our organisation, it was an incredibly significant moment. Diversity, equity, and inclusion is so important not only for Rotary but for our world. Maybe my nomination is happening at the right time.

When I gave my acceptance speech at the 2021 virtual convention, I mentioned my 10-year-old niece during the opening. She had given me a drawing of herself that included the words, “Different is always better. Different is me.” I loved it and was so proud of her for proclaiming this statement, so much so, that I ended the speech using her exact words. [Being different is] nothing to apologise for. One of our core values is diversity, and this is another way that diversity is represented. It’s just that it took 117 years for that to happen.

What does diversity mean for our organisation?

There is diversity in our Rotary world, but is there diversity in our own most immediate sphere, our own clubs? When we have diversity of thought, diversity of age, diversity of culture, diversity of gender, diversity of vocation, we bring that to the table. That is our secret sauce. That’s what allows us to solve things in ways that others can’t. We’re looking at it through that kaleidoscope of experience that we bring to the table.

There are going to be clubs that say, “No, we’re good. We’ve got diversity figured out.” And maybe they do and maybe they don’t. But I think we are uniquely poised as an organisation at this time in history to be the honest brokers of these kinds of conversations. Because we’re non-political and non-religious, we have the ability to host this type of dialogue and do it in a safe space where we respect each other.

How will you redefine the role of Rotary president?

I don’t know that I’m approaching the presidency from a perspective of change. I’m looking at it from the perspective of how we exist as a relevant organisation in today’s culture and climate. How do we do things that are proactive and positive for our future?

Maybe it’s a bit of a shift in what we’ve been striving for over the past several years, in terms of reaching specific demographics. Perhaps we need to walk it more authentically. If we’re going to ask more women to join our organisation and we’ve seen negligible results, perhaps this is an opportunity to inspire others to look forward and say, “If she can do it, so can I.” If we’re looking for younger members

and younger thinkers to be in our organisation, then we need to exhibit that behaviour. We need to showcase why it’s important to them — to make sure we’re giving people meaningful, intentional things to engage with in our organisation.

The biggest thing that I’m hoping I bring to the table is not gender but communication — how we communicate these things to our frontline members and others who are part of our family, to understand that being different right now is a good thing and that it doesn’t change who we are. Our DNA remains true. Our core values stay true. Those are things that don’t go out of style. But can we look at things through a little bit of a different lens right now?

You’re saying young thinkers as well as young members. What’s the distinction?

Have you met a 25-year-old who is old? We all have. Have you met an 86-year-old who is young? Of course. So, I talk about young thinkers. It’s something that resonates regardless of where I am in the world.

Embracing the fact that we are people of action speaks to our joie de vivre. We step out. We do things. That is what I think of in terms of young thinkers. We’re the people who make things happen in our world and our community.

We have such a brilliant opportunity to capture what I like to call cross-mentorship.

Sometimes a great idea comes through the lens of experience, and sometimes it comes from someone who hasn’t already been told that they can’t do something or that it needs to be done this certain way. When we look toward younger participants in our organisation, they give me hope that we can look at things through fresh eyes, that we can constantly be in a state of evolution.

This is going to be a very wide generalisation: If you have a great new idea, and you give it to a Rotaract club, within days they figure out what it is that they’re going to do. They’ve launched some sort of social media presence. They’ve called out and connected with partners. They’ve done all kinds of things. They act really fast. Similarly, you can give it to a Rotary club, and what do we do? We form a committee and then we have meetings, lots of meetings.

That’s not to be dismissive of that more deliberate path; I say that very much in jest. But the bureaucracy sometimes can bring us to a slow stop and be frustrating for people.

There is an opportunity for us when we look toward the younger demographic. They just do



“There are many different ways to communicate that, and it’s not just about sending an email. It’s about creating a reason for people to want to hear from the organisation”

things differently. And I think that’s something we truly can learn from them.

You’re a natural storyteller. What’s the first sentence of the opening chapter of your presidency?

It’s one word: imagine.

That’s your theme, right? How did you come up with that?

Imagine to me is about dreams and the obligation to run after those dreams. I want people to think about the things that they want to achieve, and then use Rotary as the vehicle to get there. We have such a huge array of opportunities in front of us, but we need to channel our energies so that we make sustainable, impactful decisions about what we do. The most powerful thing for a member is to be able to say, “I have an idea.” And then to share that with others and to amplify it and figure out where to go with it. Imagine is an empowering word, giving people permission to say that they want to do something to make their world better, and they can do it because they’re part of this family.

What is contemporary leadership, and how does your style of leadership fit in?

The past two years have given us this deep opportunity to take a look at what’s important to us and what things we want to get rid of, that carry too much baggage in our head and on our shoulders. Now we can look forward to how to do things a little bit differently and, probably most important, more authentically. How do we be true and honest to ourselves about what we want to spend our time doing, whom we want to spend our time with, and how we can work toward supporting each other better, not just as friends and neighbours but as humanity?

From a contemporary leadership perspective, we need to take the best from the worst. We’ve watched world leaders broadcasting from their kitchens and from their basements. We have learned how to be different and more appreciative of other people’s experiences. As Rotary, that’s what we’ve been good at all along. This is our time to shine.

What strengths and weaknesses do you bring to the presidency?

I’m proud of being a connector. I like to connect

people, and I like to connect people to stories. I’d like to see how that can be harnessed. I think my strength is also in communication and looking at how we can do things just a little bit differently. The most important thing that we can do is make sure that every member of our organisation understands what it is to be part of it.

One of the things I want to do is go live directly following a board meeting. I want to tell people what their organisation is doing — what just literally happened. Breaking news from the 18th floor in Evanston, and here is what it means to your club experience. Can we tell that story? I want to use some of the newer tools; when I’m travelling in the field, I will have my little GoPro camera. I want to field-produce my own presidency. I want to showcase what I just saw and what this person just said to me.

A weakness? Balance. Trying to take care of myself — trying to eat right, exercise, make time for friends and family. I’m not always good at it. I think this harks back to the conversation we’re having about the pandemic. We’ve all had this opportunity to push the pause button. Sometimes we go a thousand percent toward something that we’re working on when that’s maybe not the right approach. We can be stronger when we’re better to ourselves.

I think we’ve really learned this; at least I have.

One of the things that I have taken pride in my entire life is not dropping balls. I’ve arrived at a place where there is a lot going on, and at the same time I’ve given myself permission to drop some balls.

There are so many different ways that people now communicate, whether through email, text, WhatsApp, Facebook, LinkedIn, or Twitter. I’ve got two phones going. It’s crazy. So, I have given myself permission to walk away and to not be tethered to my phone. I’m aware of it, I am respectful of it, but I need to be a little bit more present. I could literally be communicating 24 hours a day. And that doesn’t serve anyone.

You are well known for being a hugger. So, what’s the new hug?

That’s a tough one. Elbow bumps are definitely going to be a pattern going forward, maybe a fist bump here or there. Hugs are probably on hold for a little while.

HOW TO BOUNCE BACK

Build resilience in yourself and others

Why do some people spring back from hardship while others struggle? Experts agree that resilience is a function of several elements, including genetics, trauma and personal development, not necessarily in that order. Each of us is genetically hardwired to recover after a failure — some more quickly than others. And, to an extent, our resilience is informed by our experiences. A young person who is abused, neglected or abandoned is less likely to develop the resilience of one who was nurtured and supported. But most important, whatever degree of resilience we possess, we can always work to increase it. Resilience gets projects accomplished and polio eradicated. It beats the odds, turning losses into wins. Which leads to the question: What, exactly, is resilience?

According to George Everly Jr, professor of psychology and public health at Johns Hopkins University and co-author of *Stronger: Develop the Resilience You Need to Succeed*, resilience is a matter of both attitude and actions. Tenacity is an action. “People won’t be tenacious if they assume they are going to fail,” he says. “A resilient attitude is optimistic; it’s the belief in a self-fulfilling prophecy.” If you expect to be resilient, you will become resilient. “But the attitude is impotent without subsequent action,” Everly adds. “This ain’t rocket science. We tend to couch it in psychobabble and the ethereal, and it is not.”

Here’s how to learn the art of bouncing back.

- LOUIS GREENSTEIN



ADVICE

DON'T LET YOUR GENES RULE YOU Kenneth Ginsberg, an adolescent medicine specialist, professor at the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia and the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania and author of the book *Building Resilience in Children and Teens*, came up with the term 7 Cs (see sidebar). “I drew on concepts from the leading thinkers,” he says. “It’s about raising

youth to be resilient.” The model, however, applies to adults as well.

While Ginsberg acknowledges a hereditary component to resilience, he is reluctant to bring up that fact in early visits with patients. “If you put genetics first, people feel disempowered. It may be true that certain things are genetically predicted, such as intelligence and anxiety, but really more



CONTROL



CHARACTER



COPING



COMPETENCE



CONNECTION

Illustration by Zulema Williams

than anything else it's that people around you support your growth and recovery."

LET KIDS SOLVE PROBLEMS Jenny Stotts, a social worker who is a member of the Rotary Club of Athens Sunrise, Ohio and District 6690 membership chair, says we can build resilience in young people by simply supporting them. "Maybe they are having a conflict with a peer," she says. "Instead of swooping in and fixing it,

"A resilient attitude is optimistic; it's the belief in a self-fulfilling prophecy"

George Everly Jr, professor of psychology and public health at Johns Hopkins University

look for opportunities for them to problem-solve. That is a resilience-building activity."

The 7 Cs of Resilience

CONNECTION: Human connection is one of the most important elements supporting resilience. Find meaningful opportunities to connect with friends, family, colleagues and your community.

COMPETENCE: Knowing how to handle stressful situations and face challenges will make us more resilient. Stress reduction is a skill that can be learned, practised and improved to increase our social skills and build resilience.

CONFIDENCE: When we're confident, we know that falling down isn't a failure — but not getting back up is. Adopting a positive attitude will change our perspective on failure.

CHARACTER: Always showing integrity, ethical conduct and personal accountability will increase our self-confidence and our resilience.

CONTRIBUTION: When we contribute to our communities, our neighbourhoods and our families, the appreciation we receive drives our self-confidence and boosts our resilience.

COPING: Strong social skills and the know-how to reduce stress prepare us to tackle life's challenges. These skills can be taught to children, teens and adults.

CONTROL: When we take responsibility for our decisions and actions, we begin to make choices that enable us to feel like we're in control of our lives and able to overcome challenges.



22%

Share of Generation Z respondents (ages 13 to 27) who say they have no friends. This is a worrisome number, according to professor of psychology and public health George Everly Jr; a key element of resilience is our relationships with other people.

Source: 2019 YouGov poll

TECHNIQUES

Think yourself positive As trite as this may sound, the key to resilience is maintaining a positive attitude. The good news is that if you don't feel positive, you can still build resilience by acting positive. "Fake it till you make it," says Everly. Act as though you are tenacious and bound to win.

"Even if you don't believe it, just adopt a positive attitude that views the future as bright and failures as stepping stones to success." He points out that the silent movie star Mary Pickford once said, "This thing we

call 'failure' is not the falling down, but the staying down."

Everly says that when we accustom ourselves to acting as though we will succeed, our perspective changes. That shift allows us to begin to see life as a journey, not a destination.

Distance yourself According to Stotts, "One cool thing about personal resilience is that what you are born with doesn't necessarily remain static." As a social

worker, speaker, and trainer who specializes in resilience, leadership and organisational change, Stotts says there are many ways to increase resilience. “People prosper from success and learn from others,” she says. “If we break down resilience, it is the space between a stimulus and a reaction to the stimulus. In that space are your coping skills.” Trauma, a lack of security, and disruptions can erode those coping skills and diminish our resilience.

Building resilience, she says, is a function of increasing that space between the stimulus and the reaction. With more space - more time to consider, to take a breath, to reframe the world - we learn to get back up.

One way to open up that space is to challenge your perspective. Say you’re at an airport and see a flamboyantly dressed woman walking toward you. “I’ve been socialised to draw conclusions about her,” Stotts says. “But I can challenge my own perspective.” Instead of asking why she would dress that way at an airport, “I might wonder if she is an artist.”

Stotts recommends getting into the habit of developing alternative hypotheses when we encounter a stimulus. “Then, when you are under stress you are more likely to do it,” she says.

Focus on process In her workshops, Stotts helps expand the space between stimulus and response by treating failure

from a different perspective. Focus on “process, not results,” she says.

Say an organisation wants to increase its volunteer ranks. Instead of looking only at the number of volunteers, look at the recruitment process. “Is it easy to volunteer?” Stotts asks. “Are there barriers we don’t know about?”

Also, all too often, she says, we look at failure and ask what we did wrong and what we should do differently. “But we should unpack our successes and learn from those processes too. That is building a culture of constructive positivity.”

Practise kind listening If you are talking with a seventh grader who scored a winning goal in a soccer match, here’s a good question to ask, says Stotts: “If you were giving advice to a first grader about how to score a goal, what would you tell them?” That builds confidence and resilience too.

Or say an adult brought in a project on-time and under budget. Stotts recommends saying something like, “You really pulled this off well. Let’s unpack it. What lessons apply to other things we do?” Again, this drives connection, competence and confidence — and helps build resilience.

Everywhere, including in Rotary, “we hear the message to talk and speak and act with kindness,” Stotts notes. “But we don’t hear as much about listening with kindness.”

“Resilience is accepting your new reality, even if it’s less good than the one you had before. You can fight it, you can do nothing but scream about what you’ve lost, or you can accept that and try to put together something that’s good” — Elizabeth Edwards



A chance for a future

Fleeing violence in his homeland, a young man leaves his family behind and faces the unknown. When he arrives in a place he never knew existed, Rotarians are ready to help

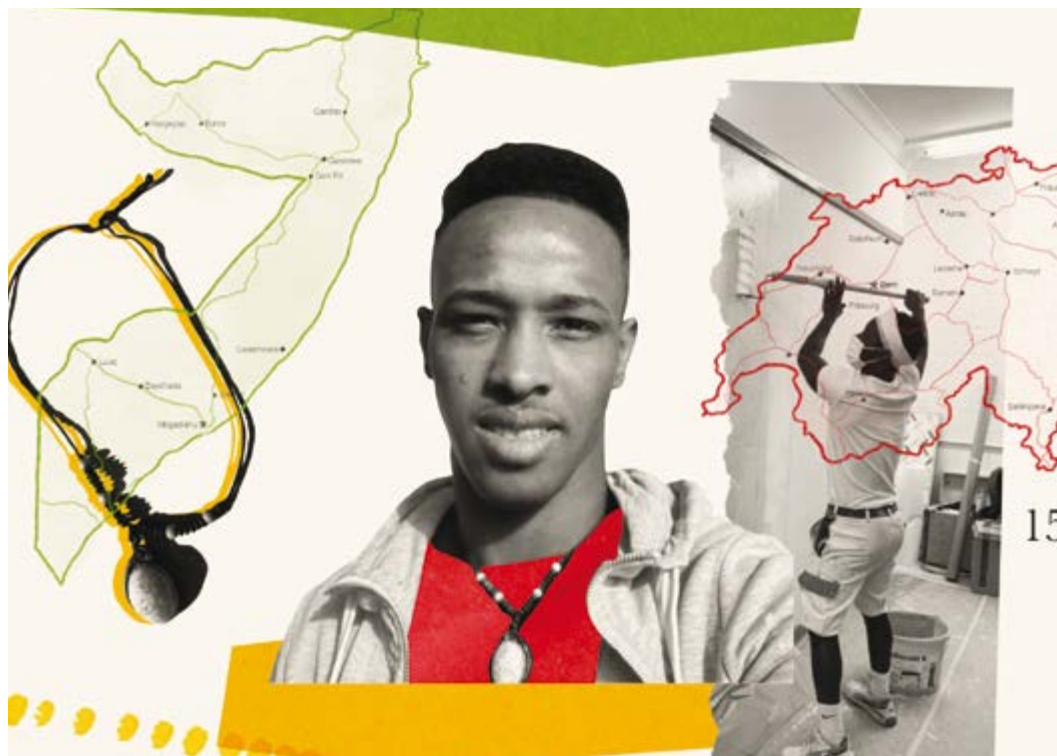
I left Somalia when I was 14 or 15. It was only about five years ago, but it feels like such a long time.

My mother is a farmer. My parents separated when I was little, so I never knew my father. Then my mom married my stepfather. At that time, the war was already going on.

I had never thought of leaving Somalia. But a terrorist group called al-Shabaab was taking children from farm families, selling them false ideas,

bringing them to the cities and using them as human bombs. I saw them take a neighbour. I couldn't tell my mom or anyone because they would have put me in jail or shot me. I had to flee without saying goodbye to anyone.

I left at night. I didn't know where I was going. My goal was never to get to Europe because I hadn't even heard of it. I wanted to get across the border to Kenya. In Somalia, we don't have buses or trains



15

like in Switzerland, but we have these cars that you can catch a ride with. I took the first one I could. After a journey that lasted an entire day, I found myself in Ethiopia. I had gone the wrong way.

In Ethiopia I was arrested and put in jail. I was held there for a month. When they let me go, I was walking down the street and heard someone speaking my mother tongue. He told me that a lot of people come to Ethiopia and then go on to Sudan, Libya or Europe, and he offered to help me.

I spent two days in an apartment with a group of refugees, and then someone picked us up with a car. The car broke down in Sudan, and we had to walk across the desert for three days. After that we found a car to take us to Libya. They don't ask you for any money at the start, but when you get to Libya, you have to pay for the

ride and for everything you ate or drank on the way.

If you are able to pay the money you owe, you can get directly on a boat to Italy. But I didn't have any money and when I tried calling my stepfather, he hung up. When you can't pay, you get beaten up. They beat me and some other young people and made videos. We were like an example for the new people who were arriving.

Once they realised I was broken, really skinny and almost dead, they decided to let me go. I found work, but I didn't get paid anything. All I got to eat was flour with salt and sometimes some sugar. The first week I couldn't eat it and kept throwing up. By the second week, I was so hungry that I started eating it. I was sleeping outside on the beach.

I stayed in Libya for almost a year and a half. Finally, I was able to get on a boat. It wasn't

a real boat, just something put together from wood and plastic, and they put as many people as possible on it. It had two decks and as we were crossing the Mediterranean Sea, the people on the top deck saw a big Italian ship. They all stood up at the same time to look at it and our boat flipped over.

The sea was cold because it was winter. I was lucky because I know how to swim. Many people went into the water and drowned. One friend of mine from Somalia, Mohammed, went down into the water. Someone I know from Eritrea, who now lives in Lucerne, lost his wife and two children.

I ended up in a hospital in Italy. After two weeks they brought me to a camp, an awful camp. They gave us very little food. I decided I couldn't stay there.

I went to Syracuse, in Sicily. Some people there were putting refugees on buses - if they had

money. I have an uncle who lives in Holland, so I created a Facebook account and found him on there and wrote him a message. The next day my uncle called and told me to take a bus to Holland. A guy made me a fake passport and bought me a ticket after my uncle sent him money, but the ticket only took me as far as a small village in Switzerland on the border with Italy, where there was another refugee camp. I spent two days in this camp and then I was sent to a camp in Zurich. My uncle still wanted me to come to Holland, but now I had my fingerprints and information in Switzerland, so I wasn't allowed to.

I didn't have a job or anything. I decided I had to do something, it didn't matter what, so that I would have a chance for a future.

In Somalia, I knew I was going to be a farmer. That's how it is. But when I looked at airplanes in the sky, I dreamed of flying airplanes.

I did a job placement for refugees. I took some tests, and I chose jobs that I was interested in. But it was already August, which is when all the apprenticeships start in Switzerland. That's when the organisation that was helping me put me in contact with ROBIJ and with Marianne Hopsch [see *Untapped Potential*], who found me an apprenticeship. I had to do a week of job exploration and then another week where they could see if I'm punctual. At the end of those two weeks, they offered me a two-year apprenticeship to learn to be a painter.

At the beginning I didn't know what a painter was, but now I really enjoy it.

A lot of things were difficult at the beginning. For example, in Somalia, we didn't have showers. We wash by using a plate to pour water over ourselves. In the place where I first stayed in Switzerland, there was no one from Somalia who I could ask where I could wash myself. For a month I used a plate to wash myself. The whole bathroom was full of water.

In Somalia, my family didn't have a TV, so how can you know all this stuff? The first time I saw a white person was in Libya and it was so weird. I thought, this is not a real human. People had to explain to me that it was a human. Other refugees had come from cities where they have TVs, so they knew about it.

At the beginning, I had no idea of the value of money in Switzerland. I went to a shop to buy some clothes. I gave my money to the cashier and she took everything I had for the entire month. I didn't think it would be so expensive.

I didn't know how to cook either. I ate just bread and potatoes and drank tea. Then I learned how to cook eggs and found some friends to cook with. It wasn't easy to meet people in Switzerland. But now with vocational school, I have friends. Now I really like Zurich.

— As told to KIM WIDLICKI. Widlicki is a marketing and social media specialist in RI's Zurich office.

UNTAPPED POTENTIAL

In 2018, Rotary members in Zurich started an NGO aimed at helping young refugees integrate into society — and helping local businesses find skilled workers. With the motto “We give young people a chance,” eight clubs work with dozens of local employers, including tailoring, catering, construction and cargo-handling businesses, to provide career exploration days, vocational training and internships to young people like Mahdi, whose story you can read on these pages.

Three years earlier, Marianne Hopsch had been serving as programme officer for the Rotary Club of Zürich City (D2000, Switzerland) when she decided to focus on aid to refugees. She and her fellow club members got to know the various organisations working in that sphere; their programme, which goes by the German acronym ROBIJ, grew from those connections.

As of mid-2021, six refugees have found apprenticeships and more than 20 others have been placed in trial internships. During three career exploration days, almost 200 young people have been able to meet with representatives from trade organisations and learn about job opportunities. For more information (in German), visit robij.ch.

Learn how you can help refugees in your community and globally by visiting the website of the Rotary Action Group for Refugees, Forced Displacement, and Migration at ragforrefugees.org.

Living well with Disability

Occasions such as National Disability Rights Awareness Month, the International Day of Persons with Disabilities and the National Disability Rights Awareness Day, writes Rotarian Moira Gundu of the Rotary Club of Pretoria East (D9400), help people understand the need to remove barriers to access and improve the lives of people with disabilities.

Disability rights are human rights; everyone is entitled to dignity, integrity, and respect. Everyone should have equal access to opportunity, service, participation, inclusion, and development.

Thanks to two fellow Rotarians, Halaliswe Mthethwa and Patrick Mdhuli, who live with disabilities, the members of Pretoria East have become increasingly aware of the obstacles people with disabilities face and inspired by their remarkable stories.

Bubbly and vivacious Halaliswe Mthethwa is a 32-year-old sourcing specialist at Telkom. Hala lives with disabilities caused by polio and kyphoscoliosis. The condition was not diagnosed at first, as the doctors were baffled by her folded legs at birth. Kyphoscoliosis is an abnormal curve of the spine on two planes: the coronal plane (side to side) and the sagittal plane (or back to front) and is a combined spinal abnormality of two conditions: kyphosis and scoliosis. Not only does she live with disability, but the motivational speaker and fashionista uses it to inspire others around her.

Patrick is an unassuming 50-year-old who holds a Masters in community development from Stellenbosch University and is responsible for stakeholder management and research support at the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) in the presidency. He is currently busy with his doctoral studies.

When he was a mischievous four-year-old, he had a fall which bent his leg at an awkward angle. Further investigations by the doctor showed that he had polio which left him on crutches for life (his mother had missed vaccination due to a busy schedule at the time). He was privileged to have access to a school that catered for disabled children which nurtured him and made him understand his condition, what help was available for him and his rights as a person living with a disability.

Patrick and Hala's lives are not defined by disability and the members of Pretoria East are proud of their success stories.



Evoking emotions

By Sneha Saloni and the Rotary Action Group for Family Health and AIDS Prevention (RFHA)



If you do not understand someone's story, how would you understand someone's pain?" Jurgen Marx (Badenhorst), a photographer from Pretoria, South Africa, has been chronicling people's emotions during Rotary member-led public health programmes to create a conversation about the importance of health since 2004.

"I grew up in South Africa and had always heard about Rotary. When I was a kid, I would always see people from Rotary outside a church or on the streets, distributing food, helping people and I would always wonder who they were. And then, in 2004, I got an opportunity to work with them," shares Marx.

"Oh! My God! I was in awe of the work Rotary does," he exclaims. Creativity and empathy, when blended together, have always worked their magic, even in the most difficult times. Jurgen's idea of capturing a moment or "freezing time" as he describes it, is all about telling an impactful story.

"I clearly remember the first time I worked with the Rotary Action Group for Family Health and AIDS Prevention (RFHA). We drove to this small town and the volunteers, nurses, doctors, were running around, setting up at the site, doing all the hard work. And I just stood there in the background with my camera, mesmerised, capturing them doing all the groundwork."

"Health is a human right. No human should wake up in the morning and see their loved ones suffer and wonder how are they going to look after them. RFHA reaches out to these people, bringing some hope to their lives," Marx says.

Storytelling in photography is not so different than storytelling in words. It can be even more impactful as the visuals have the power to capture one's attention quickly. Trying to find a purpose behind every photo he clicks, Marx says, "Whenever I capture a photo, I think about why I am here, what I am trying to say, and why I want to share this with others."

"I don't know how to begin to describe my feelings when I saw mothers accompanied by their little kids, getting checked for HIV, receiving medicines. Relating to someone's pain without walking in their shoes is difficult," he adds.

FINDING SOLUTION AT GRASSROOTS LEVEL

Always looking for those hopeful moments to capture, Marx feels that photographs have a powerful way of telling a story. "There is always a message behind every photo I click, a story. And I want people to feel that emotion when they look

“There was hope on their faces. I feel so grateful that I got this opportunity to walk these streets and capture these beautiful moments”



at my photographs. There is a reason behind the existence of every image.”

“The reach of RFHA’s work is amazing. You need to understand the problem at grassroots level to provide a solution. I have seen RFHA CEO Sue Paget and Wilma Lig working tirelessly to help the people find hope from these communities” he adds.

There is despair, sadness and hurt around but there are also moments of hope, love and joy. And these feelings are stronger. Marx’s photographs communicate these stronger emotions. “The joy on the faces of the nurses is beyond measure. You see an HIV positive kid being all smiley and chirpy at these programmes, clueless about the harsh realities of life,” he says.

There is nothing more amazing than seeing a kid smile. They are more than their pain and the world needs to see these moments of joy. “These moments are so beautiful and it is made possible only because of the love that RFHA shows towards these people,” explains Marx.

HELP US DO MORE

RFHA envisions a society where every individual has the right to a healthy, happy and dignified life. It is changing communities by bringing free preventative healthcare solutions, vaccinations, counselling and health education to them. Through its signature programme, Rotary Family Health Day, RFHA has helped over 2.65 million patients by providing over 11 million free health services.

Spanning from cities to the most rural parts of countries in Africa and India, RFHA dreams of a world where health is within

reach for everyone. Feeling inspired and want to be a part of this change? Get in touch today by visiting www.rfha.org or connect with Sue Paget, CEO, RFHA Inc at email spaget@rfha.org.

The Rotary Action Group for Family Health and AIDS Prevention (RFHA) signature programme, Rotary Family Health Days, builds healthier communities in Africa and India by delivering comprehensive, free healthcare services to tens of thousands of people in underserved communities.



Driving Peace

Past President Grace Van Zyl of the Rotary Club of Johannesburg (D9400) was elected to the board of the Rotary Action Group for Peace (RAGFP) and holds the Director for Africa portfolio.

The Rotary Action Group for Peace (RAGFP) works to assist clubs in implementing peace and conflict prevention and resolution projects, educates Rotary members, clubs and districts in peace building and raising the profile of Rotary's work in peace and conflict resolution.

It is committed to providing the tools for our members to pursue their passion for peace. It offers resources that provide knowledge, ideas, networks and support for advancing world peace and understanding.

Grace's duties commenced following the AGM on 15 February and she will be responsible for promoting the Rotary Action Group for Peace, increasing the RAGFP membership in Africa, growing peacebuilding in Rotary, Rotaract and Interact clubs in Africa and to identify and be instrumental in the formation of an African Chapter of the RAGFP.

She is off to a flying start and has already successfully converted three Rotary clubs to Peace Builder Clubs, the first of which in southern Africa was the Rotary Club of Johannesburg. Grace is the Peace Builder Club Chair for D9400, a regional leader



for the African Peace Hour formed by the RAGFP and an ambassador for the Institute of Economics and Peace (IEP). Grace presents to clubs all over the world on the importance of positive sustainable peace and how to become a peace builder club.

Clubs interested in a presentation can contact her at grace@gracevanzyl.com.



Members of the Rotary Club of Rosebank spent hours building and preparing the Madiba Buggies for children with disabilities living in Venda.

Building Buggies

After getting up at the crack of dawn on a Friday morning, a team of nine volunteers, led by Marilyn Bassin of Boikanyo (the Dion Herson Foundation) headed north to Venda with the aim of making a difference in the lives of severely handicapped cerebral palsy (CP) children, writes *Sybillie Essmann* of the Rotary Club of Rosebank (D9400).

It had taken months of painstaking planning and logistics and a lot of blood, sweat and tears to firstly source old abandoned Madiba buggies, then strip and refurbish the shells, make new tray tables and footrests, cut and glue foam rubber seats and sew covers.

These were then wrapped in plastic and with the generous support of Value Logistics transported to their destination.

Occupational therapist Mireo Ralivhesa, who is practising from the Donald Fraser Hospital in Thohoyandou, spent hours identifying parents and carers of CP children in far flung villages and urged them to bring their children for a fitting.

It was a sweltering 37c when Mireo met us and took us on a one-and-a-half-hour drive to a rural home close to the Zimbabwe border where a granny was caring for her orphaned three-year-old CP grandchild. A young mother of twins joined us, where one of the twins, a little boy, was cerebral palsied. To fit each child took nearly 90 minutes, but it was evident that the Madiba buggies were going

to change the lives of these children and their carers.

The sun was setting by the time we headed back to Thohoyandou, humbled and satisfied with a job well done. Saturday was another early start and when we arrived at the Donald Fraser Hospital we found that there were already 11 families waiting with their children ranging from toddlers to a young twenty-year-old.

Without a fuss we all slotted into our assigned roles, fixing and adjusting buggy settings, sewing Velcro on to straps, cleaning and preparing buggies and making sensory toys/rattles for children to take home.

It was a mammoth task expertly executed by Marilyn, the trained physio and her daughter Gina, a qualified occupational therapist, with Mireo close at hand acting as an interpreter, making sure that the parents understood what they were trying to achieve. Besides the sensory toy that was lovingly made by Shirley Eustace, each parent received a beautifully crocheted or knitted blanket donated by the NGO Warm the World.

Loaves of Love

Two weeks before Christmas, 56 young people gathered at the Blouberg Scout Hall to make sandwiches for those going hungry in the surrounding community. The goal for the day was to make 10 000 sandwiches, writes event organiser *Rex Omameh*, a dual member of the Rotary and Rotaract Clubs of Blouberg (D9350) who is also serving as the Youth Director of the Rotary club.

I have always been passionate about fighting hunger. I started in 2013 by cooking and feeding hungry kids on the streets in Benin City, Nigeria. Years later, in Cape Town, I started a soup kitchen to feed kids in Dunoon and Wolwerivier.

In July 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdowns, I was inspired by a dear friend, Ms Pat Strydom, who has since died, to start making sandwiches.

We all could see the struggles people faced during the COVID-19 hard lockdown. So, with the help of my family, friends and a few Rotaract members, I turned my living room into a sandwich factory and embarked on this journey to feed more than 100 people a week. On several different occasions, my family and I have managed to feed more than 1 000 people a week!

However, this time we had a bigger goal – we planned to feed 10 000 little tummies as the Christmas approached to honour the life of our beloved friend and Rotarian Pat Strydom. She was one of the biggest supporters and cheerleader of this initiative and dedicating this recent endeavour to feed 10 000 people, was the best way I knew to memorialise her.

This was a very expensive project which needed not just money, but people's time and energy. It wasn't easy getting people to help, especially during the period when our country was battling with the third wave of COVID-19. That didn't discourage me, as I know how to get things done when it's really important to me.

On that day, my family, friends and other volunteers, equipped with plastic knives, a pool of peanut butter and enough bread and polony to build a little house, successfully prepared and distributed 10 657 sandwiches (made from approximately 172 loaves of bread)

within just seven hours!

This was made possible thanks to sponsorships and the time donated by friends and family, Rotaract District 9350, the Rotary Club of Blouberg, the Milnerton Community Action Network (CAN) and Albany Bread.

Volunteers on the day included people from Atlantis Modelling Youth & Development School, the Interact Clubs of Blouberg International School, Bosmansadam High School, Milnerton High School, Parklands College and Sinenjongo High School. Rotaractors from clubs in Atlantis, Blouberg, Hout Bay, Khayelitsha and Waterfront, as well as members of the Rotary E-Club of Greater Cape Town also helped.

The sandwich distribution was a challenge, but the final sandwich delivery was made at exactly 18:35, just seven hours after we began.



Update: Empowering Girls



Mentee and Life Choices student Bertha Kapopo at her first visit to a large, established book store, on an outing with her Claremont mentor, President Jo Hobson.

Empowering through Education

A unique leadership development project targeting secondary school learners aims to turn around the high dropout rate in South African schools by providing selected learners with academic tutoring, coaching and mentorship, writes *Jo Hobson* of the Rotary Club of Claremont (D9350) and *Linda Daniels* of Life Choices.

Funded by a Rotary global grant, the Future Leaders Development Project is a partnership between Life Choices, the Rotary Club of Claremont (D9350), the Rotary Club of Bamberg and Rotary District 1950 (Germany). The project's focus is to mould a generation of young leaders – especially girls – from developing communities to become influential decision makers contributing towards a sustainable future for all South Africans.

The United Nations (UN) reports that, worldwide, 129 million girls are not in school. The UN makes

the point that investing in girls' education transforms communities, countries and the world. It also strengthens economies and reduces inequality by contributing to more stable, resilient societies that give all individuals – including boys and men – the opportunity to fulfil their potential.

Life Choices' role in the project is informed by its track record of having impacted over 200 000 people with "choices and not charity", since 2005. Life Choices is a small, yet impactful NPO based in Cape Town and offers health, education and welfare

programmes to these communities.

Life Choices MD Sofia Neves described the project's relevance: "Most young people in South Africa do not finish school or enrol in tertiary education. Out of every 100 children who start school, only 40 reach Grade 12, four study further and only one will graduate from a tertiary level institution. This means that many young people are not fully able to participate in a productive and sustainable future. While some schools provide after school classes, these generally aim to achieve a minimum pass rate and do not provide a holistic approach."

The Future Leaders Development Project has selected 220 learners who are in their last two years of schooling. 80% of them are girls from 12 secondary schools on the Cape Flats in Cape Town, South Africa.

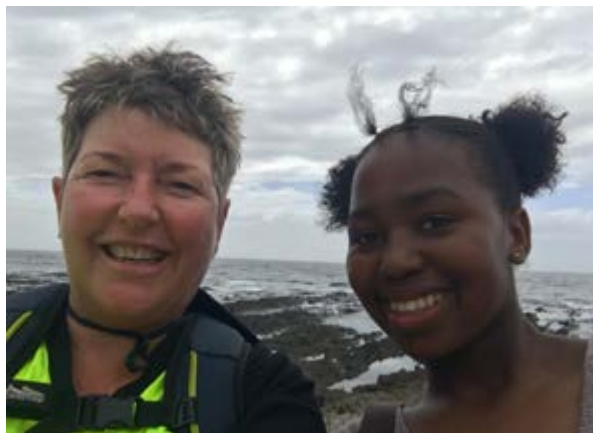
President Jo Hobson of the Rotary Club of Claremont explained: "Inspired by Rotary International President Shekhar Mehta, we are empowering girls through education."

The model incorporates leadership training, life skills sessions, academic tutoring, mindfulness practices, one-on-one career guidance, therapy and mentorship. The mentors are Rotarians, Inner Wheelers and Rotaractors from Claremont. They provide an additional network of support aligned to their mentees' goals and the Rotary ethos of 'service above self'.

Claremont Past President Monique Stuart-Fox, who is also the global grant project manager, said "I have found the mentorship part of the project especially rewarding and I experience a sense of pride watching my mentee develop".

Learners are also assisted with university and financial aid applications and supported to succeed when studying at university or college. They are also encouraged to give back to their communities and can become tutors and peer advisors to the future intakes of learners.

The project aims to develop a core of leaders for generations to come and contribute towards a sustainable future.



Mentee and Life Choices student Mbali Maphundu and mentor Monique Stuart-Fox enjoying a walk-and-talk at the Sea Point promenade.



Mentee and Life Choices student Bertha Kapopo and her mentor, Claremont Rotarian Jo Hobson, at a Rotary fundraiser.



Mentee and Life Choices student Mbali Maphundu at Kirstenbosch Gardens.



Using education, the Rotary Club of Phoenix (D9370) is affecting positive and sustainable change within its community. The club has a bursary fund that educates one tertiary student at a time until they complete their chosen course of study. It recently opened applications for the bursary award and was flooded with submissions. After shortlisting and interviews were conducted, the panel chose Shaday Goordeen to receive R20 000 a year for the prescribed period of her law degree. The bursary was sponsored by attorney Sharm Moodley and another sponsor who wishes to remain anonymous. At the presentation of the bursary are Charter President Sharm Moodley, Shaday Goordeen and President Clinton Samuel.

The Rotary Club of Hout Bay (D9350) is helping girls get a better education by ensuring that they are able to see in the classroom. The club's vision testing programme visits primary schools to provide vision screening to Grades 1 and 7 learners and spectacles to those who need them. A young girl in Grade 2 was found to have extremely poor vision and had no glasses. She could not see the classroom board unless she was standing less than a metre away and was very unhappy at school. She was diagnosed with an unusual muscle spasm in her eye that affected her vision even when wearing glasses. After correcting this, she received new lenses and had the biggest smile as she looked around at everything she could now see!



What empowering girls and women projects are you busy with?

We would love to hear more about them! Send your stories and photos to rotaryafrica@mweb.co.za

Sustainable food project

How do you turn a short-term project of food parcels into a sustainable, long-term project to provide ongoing food security and the possibility for economic development? You form a public private partnership and teach people to grow food for themselves and their communities!

The project partners, the Golden Vaal Chamber of Commerce, Thusong Projects, the Rotary Club of Vanderbijlpark (D9400) and others were proud to announce that after just 10 months, the Rita Benecke Agricultural project participants have accomplished a lot.

It began when community stakeholders partnered with the chamber to provide thousands of food parcels to those affected during the COVID lockdowns. After productive brainstorming sessions, the partners decided to grow their own food and train selected people in order to keep the project sustainable.

Under the leadership and watchful eye of PP Rita Benecke, after whom the project is named, it grew from strength to strength. Of course, there was a lot of blood, sweat and tears involved to get to the point where the project is starting to reap benefits.

Certificates of appreciation were handed to the workers and volunteers who contributed to the success of the project. They also provided feedback on how this project has changed their lives for the better and how they will share what they have learned with fellow community members so that they can start their own gardens.



Making a Sustainable Difference

Covenant Garden Estate was the vision of Rotarian Dr Pat Francis from the Rotary E-Club of Southern Africa (D9400), based in Toronto, Canada.

With the help of passionate Rotarians around the province, using their vocations, Rotarians Annemarie Mostert, Judith Chinkumbi and Charlotte Khoza started construction of the estate in 2012.

The launch in 2014 was attended by Chief Mathibe, the leadership from Northwest Province, members of the community, Pat Francis Trust, Sesego Foundation and many others.

The centre has served the community in many ways. It has been used as a venue for Rotary Family Health Days, training programmes, looking after families in need, providing aftercare and extra classes for learners in the area and feeding thousands of children a year through the Parmalat

sponsored kitchen. Today, seven years later, it continues to be a beacon of hope in Mathibestad and remains spotless.

In December last year, the e-club acknowledged the commitment and contributions from sponsors and members of the community and hosted the graduation of 82 early childhood development (ECD) practitioners from 41 ECD centres.

This training was sponsored by The Townships Project, a Rotary district grant from District 9400, Sesego Foundation and Pat Francis Trust. The Townships Project through Rtn Martha Deacon, a member of the e-club, also based in Canada, invested in hundreds of small businesses over the past years. This organisation is also part of Rotary Means Business. Each centre in Mathibestad received a sponsored desktop from Busch South Africa, a German-based family business.



First place Best Short Story: Sinenjongo High School. Siziwe Gwatyuzza, Mazuva Makanaka, Mazindhu Patronella, DG Ian Robertson, Helène Visser and Dr Bettye Walker.

Peace in Schools

The Rotary International peace global grant culmination programme honoured five High School Peace Clubs in Cape Town at a special event held at the Lagoon Beach Hotel in Milnerton.

The 2020/2021 Rotary Cape Town Film Festival Awards programme was coordinated by Dr Bettye Walker, Peace Chair of the Rotary Club of Downtown Los Angeles (D5280), and honorary member of the Rotary Club of Blouberg (D9350).

Five high schools in the area, Buren High School, Milnerton High School, Parklands College, Sea Point High School and Sinenjongo High School, were invited to participate and create a peace club. The Rotary Clubs of Blouberg and Downtown Los Angeles applied for a peace in schools global grant that paid for items such as laptops and cameras for use by the peace clubs.

The high school peace club learners used these to produce films titled 'What Peace Means to Me' to enter into the film festival awards. The three categories

of the film competition were: Best Short Story; Best Film and Best Poem.

At the special event in December, District Governor Ian Robertson, presented the awards, together with Dr Bettye Walker and Helène Visser, the district foundation chair and member of the Rotary Club of Blouberg. Each member of the peace clubs received a certificate and a medal, while each school received a Rotary 4-Way Test trophy.

Using Zoom, Rotary clubs and learners in the US, Wales, Turkey and Kenya, were able to participate in the inaugural evening. The judges were Past District Governor Vicki Radel from California, District Governor-elect Randell Barclay, Vermont, President-elect Carolyn Herrick, Dr Brittani Smit, Interactor Skylar Martin and Rotarian Charles Koyoo of Kenya.

Rotarian Dianne Barclay of Vermont, USA, who is an honorary member of the Blouberg club, opened the programme with her peace play, before the winners were announced and received their prizes.



Many cyclists, participating in the Winelands Cycle Race in 40c heat, struggled to complete the race. Cyclists sought relief from the heat at water tables. Of the 1 300 participating cyclists, about 200 gave up along the way due to heat exhaustion and dehydration, and had to be collected and transported to the finish.

Winelands Race Hard Hit

By Anne Kruger

The annual Winelands Cycle Race, presented by the Rotary Club of Paarl (D9350), was hard hit by a heat wave and the death of a cyclist.

About 1 300 cyclists arrived for the race that started at Huguenot Primary in Wellington, then headed for Riebeeck West and Malmesbury. Temperatures rose steadily and by midday it was decided to call off the race due to extreme heat conditions of 40 degrees and high humidity.

The Paarl Rotarians at water stations were kept busy providing water, ice and soft drinks at regular points on the race route. Five ambulances were also deployed along the route to assist the riders who required medical attention. In addition, vehicles with 1 000 litre water tanks patrolled the route and sector marshals had water on their vehicles assisting

riders to keep hydrated.

Additional vehicles with water cans were deployed to cater for riders at the back of the field once the race was called off. A total of 1 093 riders made it back to the finish while the rest were transported.

One of the front group of riders, Juan Gierz of Cape Town, was seriously injured near the finish in Wellington when he swerved to avoid a fellow cyclist and collided with a stationary vehicle in a side street.

A medic was dispatched to the scene to attend to Mr Gierz and an ambulance from the local ambulance service transported him to the nearest hospital where he subsequently died.



Recognition Inspiration

In December 2018 I received a Paul Harris Fellowship from the Rotary Club of Kromboom (D9350) recognising the work that we do at Baby Bundles. This acknowledgement and encouragement spurred us on to continue supporting vulnerable moms in greater Cape Town, writes Jean Viljoen.

Supplying bundles of essentials to new moms at clinics is the backbone of what we do. To date we have supplied more than 3 300 packs of essentials to moms, who, in some cases, have absolutely nothing.

Because of our now considerable network, we have become a conduit to support several worthwhile projects in Khayalitsha. The Lindokuhle Children's Home was a safe home for abandoned and abused children.

We were able to assist in supplying the home with furniture, bedding, toys, books and even a magnificent jungle gym for the garden. For two years we held a Christmas party for 18 children ranging from a year to 15 years old.

Another outstanding project that we were approached to support, was the Teen Moms Club (Intyantyambo Yesizwe) run by Ntombie Basso, a social worker. She supports young girls who fall pregnant at school and encourages them to continue their schooling. She has created peer support groups, encouraged the girls to come with her to schools to give talks about the reality of teenage pregnancy and makes an enormous difference in her community.

We supply her with bundles to give to the new moms and in 2020, thanks to generous Australian sponsorship, we gave the moms a great Christmas party at Green Point Park.

Ntombie has become a friend and through us, has created her own network of support for the truly wonderful work that she does.

Our January appeal was for an Early Learning Centre in Khayalitsha and a carload of clothes, toys and equipment was delivered to the little school.

In February, our first appeal for support of a children's home for abandoned, orphaned and neglected children was sent. Its needs included clothes, equipment and food.

COVID-19 has had a serious impact. Firstly, the enormous suitcases of clothes and toys that were regularly delivered from Australia by travellers connected to the Jewish Women's Guild in Sydney have stopped for the time being, as have the regular supplies from England and Germany.

However, it is amazing to see the lengths some of our 'cheerleaders' will go to get parcels to us. Our German friends 'coerced' a pilot and a flight attendant at Lufthansa to act as couriers and we recently received several wonderful parcels from them.

Our local supporters are, however, our main donors and we are so grateful for their ongoing generosity. We're also grateful for our core of willing volunteers who help us pack, store and collect goods each month.

Peter's unwavering support

The Woodside Sanctuary, a home for the severally mentally and physically impaired children, was opened by Vernon Veal, a Round Tabler, who needed a place where his son would be with other children like himself and receive the stimulation he needed.

The Round Table Club No.3 took it on as a project and painted the little building that Vernon bought and equipped it as necessary. Their wives made the bedspreads for all the beds and the matching curtains, for the wards. It grew quite rapidly and most of the children were babies as there was no facility for amniotic synthesis tests at the time. Then Woodside moved into much bigger premises further up the hill.

Peter and Carol Alexander first became involved with Woodside Sanctuary when they were in Round Table No.3, 44 years ago. When Peter turned 40 he joined the Rotary Club of Johannesburg (D9400).

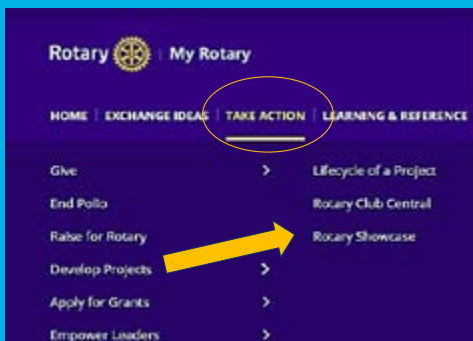
Woodside has had many ups and downs over the 44 years that Peter has been on the board. Peter has been the Rotary representative on the Woodside board up until October 2021 when he had to resign due to his health. But Woodside was not going to



let him go without having a big farewell event and showering him with presents. At a recent luncheon a plaque renaming the boardroom the Peter Alexander Boardroom was unveiled.

The plaque reads “with their deepest gratitude and thanks for providing Woodside Sanctuary with his incredible support and assistance over the last four decades, as an unwavering and invaluable member of Woodside’s Executive Committee.”

ROTARY SHOWCASE



Attention Rotary clubs!

Attention Rotary members! An Empowering Girls tab has been added to Rotary Showcase. Project champions are encouraged to log into My Rotary and upload their empowering girls projects. This will allow you and other Rotary clubs to collaborate, showcase and inspire more projects through a single platform!

AFRICA IN BRIEF



The Rotary Club of Grahamstown (D9370) gave Food4Futures Ithemba Le Kamva (F4F) and Grahamstown Hospice each a cheque for R67 387. The R134 774 was raised through the successful combination of the club's online and live Grand Finale auction. F4F has 160 people/families on its list of parcel recipients and provides food support to an estimated 800 people. The parcels and sandwiches are distributed every fortnight, with an approximate monthly food cost of R40 000. The Rotary donation will finance six weeks' worth of parcels every two weeks. F4F also collect clothing, shoes, bedding and household items all year round and distributes them when they have sufficient stock to do so.



The Rotary E-Club of South Africa One (D9370) has a new recognition tool to retain members. The *Ball Tampering Floating Trophy* for the newest Rotarian, in memory of Past District Governor Gerald Sieberhagen, a life-long cricket fan, was donated by Rotarian Mike Millard. Rotarian Logie Naidoo gave the trophy to Kevin Lachanna, the club's newest Rotarian.



The Rotary Club of Polokwane (D9400) enjoyed a Christmas dinner at Plumtree Lodge in Polokwane.



Monique Stuart-Fox of the Rotary Club of Claremont (D9350) and Mbali Maphundu her empowering girls global grant mentee, were exploring Table Mountain in February when they met Siya Kolisi, the Springbok Rugby Captain. It was the first time Mbali had been up Table Mountain.



The Rotary Club of Flamingo-Welkom (D9370) bought and packed 90 Rape comfort kits for the Thutuzela Crisis Centre in Welkom. Funds donated by a local law firm ensured that each kit contained a face cloth, soap, Vaseline, underwear, a sweet and a soft toy for a child. Bags of clothing were also donated.



Car enthusiasts geared up for the long-awaited George Old Car Show (GOCS), rated as the second largest motor show in South Africa and held at Eden Technical High School in George. The 25th GOCS was held on February 12 and 13 with the Silver Jubilee milestone serving as its 2022 theme. Visitors enjoyed the event's many displays and attractions, at a healthy social distance, while ogling engines old and new or supporting stall holders. Art and food stalls, model cars, and a well-stocked beer and wine garden, run by the members of the Rotary Club of George (D9350), raised funds that will be donated to local charities and used in the club's community projects.



The Junior City Council, sponsored by the Rotary Club of Algoa Bay (D9370), held its first meeting of 2022 at Cilliers in January. The councillors of Cape Recife High School had collected R6 000 worth of sanitary towels, a great achievement considering the size of the school. The sanitary towels were distributed in February. Bottle tops collected at each school were also handed in.

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Email stories and photos to rotaryafrica@mweb.co.za

Please note that photos need to be at least 1MB in size

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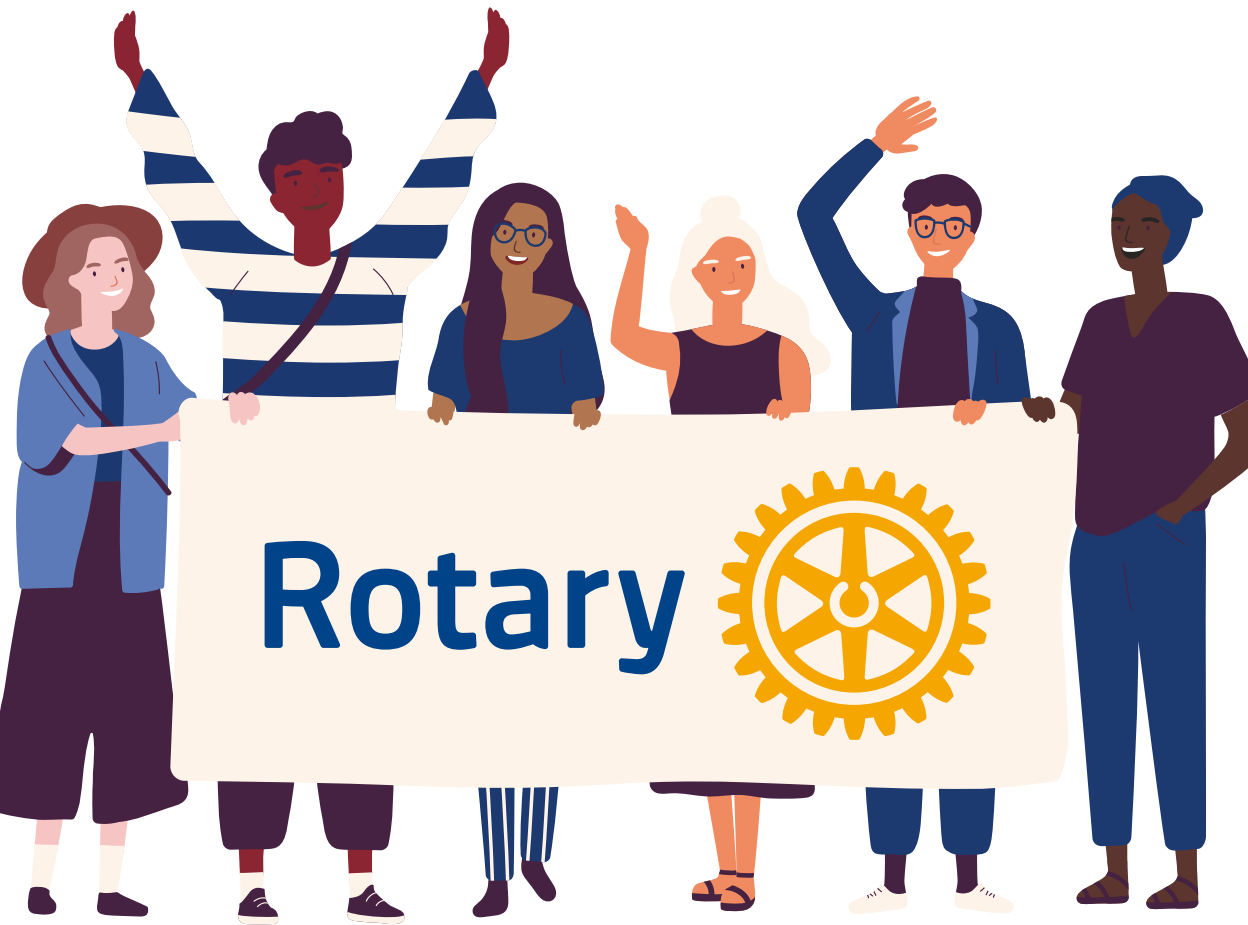
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