

APRIL 2022

# Rotary

AFRICA | south

# Contents

4	Welcome
5	President's Message
6	Convention Countdown
7	Foundation Trustee Chair's Message
8	Changemakers
9	Diversity Desk
10	Say No
14	The Action Plan
16	White Rhinos and Black Mambas
24	On the Wild Side
26	Strength in Times of Crisis
30	Creating Change
32	Heave, Ho!
33	Service Upgrades
34	Connecting Two Worlds
35	Giving Sport a Chance
37	Seizing Opportunities
38	Africa in Brief

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 083 777 3777

## 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](mailto:rotaryafrica@mweb.co.za)

**Editorial contributions:**  
[rotaryafrica@mweb.co.za](mailto: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](mailto:rotaryafrica@mweb.co.za)

**[www.rotaryafrica.com](http://www.rotaryafrica.com)**

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## 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?



# WELCOME

Sarah van Heerden  
**Editor in Chief**



I honestly needed at least another 15 pages for this magazine. Is it just me, or does it feel like so much has happened in the first four months of 2022 – almost as if we are making up for lost time during the pandemic?

There is a so much happening, good and bad, that it feels a little overwhelming. Add to it, the spread of misinformation, lies and contextually inaccurate information, it is becoming hard to know what to read or what to believe. Sadly, this means that we often lose a vital connection to the most important truth – humanity. Issues are becoming more and more politicised and because of that, it seems as if the stories of the real people, the true victims, are being forgotten. We all know that once politics enters the ring, people pick sides, and the humanitarian issues are no longer in the forefront as everyone is gearing up for a round of “us vs them”!

This is why I loved our feature on the Ukraine – it tells the story of Rotary. It shares the experiences of people, and it informs us of peace efforts in the country. Everything that matters.

This morning I woke to a chain of conspiracy theory messages in a WhatsApp group, and then had to sit in the doctor’s surgery with no escape and listen to two “informed” women dissect their truth. Honestly, I couldn’t care what people chose to believe, but I take great offence to being forced to have their beliefs battering my brain.

I am always reminded of an editor I worked under who would not allow the gory “It bleeds, it leads” type of photos on the pages of the newspaper. Her reasoning was that since it was delivered, free of charge, to people’s homes, it was an uninvited guest and people had no choice in whether or not they wanted to be exposed to graphic content.

This is something I feel should be considered when people feel the need to spout their beliefs. In my home, there is a ban on topics relating to religion, politics, race, dietary beliefs, medical beliefs, and EVERYTHING that anyone feels they are well informed of since they spent a few hours “researching it on Google.”

Essentially it comes down to respect for those around us and remembering, that everyone is human. While we may not care what others think of us, we should care deeply about how we make those around us feel.

# President's Message

## Greetings, my dear changemakers,

Friends, one of my mantras in Rotary has been do more, grow more. I am sure you are adopting this mantra. Do more, as in bigger and impactful service projects, and grow more, as in increasing our membership.

There is so much excitement across the Rotary world about our Each One, Bring One effort. Everywhere I travel, club presidents, district governors, and Rotary members - both veteran and new - express appreciation that their membership efforts are inspiring the Rotary world.

We are growing more, and I cannot wait to celebrate all of this success with you at the Rotary International Convention in Houston in June. There is still time to register and make your plans to join us. We are looking forward to a once-in-a-lifetime experience that will unite our members after far too much time apart.

As we grow more, we will have so much more opportunity to do more. April is Maternal and Child Health Month, a great opportunity for your clubs to consider what you are doing to support the health of mothers and young children. Improving access to care and the quality of care for women and children worldwide is an important focus for us and it also ties in very well with our Empowering Girls initiative. I appreciate the work being done by various clubs in this area of focus, and I would encourage you to think of ways to do more.

It has been so exciting to see Rotary members come together at the presidential conferences to share ideas about using our areas of focus to bring about big, lasting change in the world. The past and upcoming presidential conferences are looking at our new area of focus - the environment - and how our work to protect our planet must support our efforts to grow local economies, especially in places with the greatest poverty. I also had the honour to speak at the 26th United Nations climate change conference in Glasgow, Scotland, known as COP26. This important meeting brought together nearly 100 heads of state and government over a two-week



period to set new targets for fossil fuel emission. My call to action was to restore mangroves, a crucial ecosystem that can mitigate the effects of climate change in coastal areas. Already, countries across the world are showing great enthusiasm for this plan.

Our survival is at stake - the damage of environmental catastrophe is already upon us - and so is our ability to lift the world's most needy out of poverty and offer them hope. We must find ways to protect our planet while sustaining the economic growth necessary to achieve our highest humanitarian goals.

This is a very exciting time in Rotary, a time when the world needs us most. As we Serve to Change Lives, remember that we are also changing ourselves. We are becoming the world's great change-makers and peacebuilders.

The world is ready for us. It's time to rise to that call.

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](http://my.rotary.org)



# BREAKOUT SESSIONS

2022 Rotary International Convention Countdown

One of the highlights of the Rotary International Convention each year is its wide range of breakout sessions. These sessions provide an opportunity to explore topics that interest you and to gather inspiration from your fellow Rotary members. At the 2022 convention in Houston, 4-8 June, you can choose from dozens of breakout sessions that will help you sharpen your leadership skills and get new ideas for strengthening your club's membership, implementing sustainable projects, and more.

Some of the sessions cover membership topics, such as helping your club grow (Building Your Club-Specific Membership Growth Plan), putting diversity, equity, and inclusion into practice (Eliminating Roadblocks to Diversifying Your Club), and adapting to flexible meeting models (What's the Hype About Hybrid Meetings?).

Sessions focusing on service include those that provide tips for developing successful projects (Designing Results-Oriented Service Projects), offer guidance for coordinating specific activities (Organise a Local Addiction Prevention Activity) and promote strategies for expanding your capabilities (Enhance Your Club's Impact and Reach Through Rotary Community Corps).

You can also learn how to engage young leaders (Building Rotary's Future Through Youth Programmes), hear best practices for sharing your Rotary story (Demystifying Resources for Promoting Rotary) and get an overview of where the organisation is headed (Rotary's Action Plan for the Future).

Breakout sessions will be held 6-8 June. Registration is not required; seating is available on a first-come, first-served basis.



# Foundation Trustee Chair

John Germ

What's your Rotary moment, a time that strengthened your dedication to Rotary and confirmed you would be a lifetime Rotarian? I have had many such moments over the years and they all had one thing in common: They showed me Rotary's tangible power of turning our dreams of a better world into reality.

Rotary members are exceptional at it. I see that power in my own club in Chattanooga, Tennessee, and now, as Rotary Foundation trustee chair, in clubs and districts around the world.

Rotary members from Austria, Germany, Nigeria and Switzerland are realising their dream to help mothers and children in Nigeria. In partnership with several organisations, they have launched a multi-year, large-scale project to reduce unwanted births and drive down rates of maternal and child mortality. This project, once a vision of a few members but now the recipient of Foundation global grants, is training doctors, nurses and midwives throughout all 36 states of Nigeria.

Every great project begins in the minds of our members. You are the ones who see schools where adolescent girls have stopped attending because of the lack of private bathrooms. You are the ones who see families facing food shortages, the children who can't read, and the communities with health problems caused by mosquitoes. You not only see these things, but because you are in Rotary, you also

do something about them.

And because of that engagement, over the past decade, the amount of money the Foundation has awarded for global grants has grown by more than 100 percent. As more and more Rotarians have become involved, to keep our grants going we have had to adjust and stretch those funds by reducing overheads and by other means. The reason is simple: While the need for these projects is increasing and grant participation is also on the rise, annual giving from Rotary members has stayed relatively static for years.

Quite simply, we need more clubs and individuals to give to the Annual Fund to help keep our district and global grants thriving. This year, we set a goal of raising \$125 million for the Annual Fund. We can't realise your Rotary dreams or those of your fellow members without everyone's support.

Remember: It's not about the money, but about what our money can do. I am a firm believer that when we all give what we can, both as clubs and individuals, to the Foundation every year, we take another step toward making the world a better place.

Imagine the Rotary dreams we could make real if every member and every club got together and made a gift to our Foundation today. That would be quite a Rotary moment - for all of us.

## Rotary at a glance

- Rotary clubs: 36 843**
- Members: 1 199 580**
- Rotaract clubs: 11 040**
- Members: 239 945**
- Interact clubs: 17 151**
- Members: 392 437**
- RCCs: 12 034**

As at 23 March 2022

▲ Increase

▼ Decrease





# Changemakers

**DR PATRICK COLEMAN**

**ROTARY E-CLUB OF SOUTHERN AFRICA (D9400)**

A young woman went to her mother and told her about her life and how things were so hard for her. She did not know how she was going to make it and wanted to give up. She was tired of fighting and struggling. It seemed as if when one problem was solved, a new one arose.

Her mother took her to the kitchen. She filled three pots with water. In the first, she placed carrots, in the second she placed eggs, in the last she placed ground coffee beans.

She let them sit and boil without saying a word. After twenty minutes she turned off the burners. She removed the carrots and placed them in a bowl. She lifted the eggs out and placed them in a bowl. Then she ladled the coffee into a bowl. Turning to her daughter, she asked, “Tell me what you see?”

“Carrots, eggs and coffee,” she replied.

She brought her closer and asked her to feel the carrots. She did and noted that they were soft. She then asked her to take an egg and break it. After pulling off the shell, she observed the hard-boiled egg. Finally, she asked her to sip the coffee. The daughter smiled, as she tasted its rich aroma.

The daughter then asked, “What’s the point, mother?”

Her mother explained that each of these objects had faced the same adversity – boiling water – but each reacted differently.

- The carrot went in strong, hard and unrelenting. After being subjected to the boiling water, it softened and became weak.
- The egg had been fragile. Its thin outer shell had protected its liquid interior. After being in the boiling water, its inside became hardened.
- The ground coffee beans were unique,

however. After they were in the boiling water they had changed the water.

“Which are you?” she asked the daughter. “When adversity knocks on your door, how do you respond? Are you a carrot, an egg, or a coffee bean?”

Ask yourself: Which am I? Am I the carrot that seems strong, but with pain and adversity, do I wilt and become soft and lose my strength?

Am I the egg that starts with a malleable heart, but changes with the heat? Did I have a fluid spirit, but after death, a break-up, a financial hardship, or some other trial, have I become hardened and stiff? Does my shell look the same, but on the inside am I bitter and tough with a stiff spirit and a hardened heart?

Or am I like the coffee bean? The bean actually changes the hot water, the very circumstance that brings the pain. When the water gets hot, it releases the fragrance and flavour. If you are like the bean, when things are at their worst, you get better and change the situation around you.

Life is full of ups and down, but the only thing that truly matters is how we choose to react to situations around us and what we make out of it. Life is all about learning, adapting and converting all the struggles into something positive. In a word... Innovate!

One certain way of learning, adapting and converting all the struggles into something positive is to make a regular and consistent contribution to our Rotary Foundation. You can release “the fragrance and flavour” of your generosity and love.

Serving Rotarians are having an impact on the world! President Shekhar Mehta has encouraged us all to continue to “Serve to Change Lives!” This is what is meant by The Rotary Foundation Motto: “Doing Good in the World!”

# Disability Desk

WITH JEREMY OPPERMAN



Like countless others, I watch, read and listen in impotent and morbid fascination of the horrors unfolding in Ukraine. But one rather different interview caught my ear, while listening to the BBC.

It was the manager of the Ukrainian winter paralympic team, still competing in Beijing. Speaking in excellent English, with exhausted clarity and indelible sadness etched into every syllable, he tried to articulate how the team were feeling about their country literally disintegrating in their absence.

Far beyond the incredulity and outrage at the atrocity of the invasion and war itself, was the equally incredulous notion that they simply could not return to their homeland. Knowing that for many if not most of the team, comprising athletes, coaches, doctors and many fans and support staff, their homes would in all probability, not exist any longer.

In fact, how would they even know?

Which made me think about performance under pressure. Most world class athletes perform under pressure of course, pressure of a tough opponent, old injury, hostile crowd, poor weather - you know what I mean.

But how many athletes have to perform while knowing that their country, city, town, village, suburb or homes are literally being devastated at exactly the moment they are supposed to be performing?

I was trying to think of an analogy to describe what that must be like, but realised that there is none which could do it justice.

Amazingly, their performance is unquestionably

excellent as they were ranked second in the competition.

Spare a thought for those athletes, exclude the others in their entourage from the equation if you will, for the moment.

Every one of those Paralympians have significant disabilities.

They will have a visual or hearing or physical or psychosocial impairment of some kind.

Notwithstanding their levels of independence, every one of them will have known and needed major support back home, rehab services, schools, accessible transport, assistive devices, prosthetics, technology and service animals, not to mention the love, encouragement and teaching found in human support.

Consider just for a minute, what they went through when they left Beijing after the conclusion of the Winter Paralympic on March 13.

They would all, without exception, have gone somewhere strange.

Hungary? Poland?

Frankly it is almost too hard to bear thinking about, but we must.

*Jeremy Opperman is a member of the Rotary Club of Newlands (D9350), a member of Rotary International Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) taskforce and a diversity practitioner and disability equity analyst*  
[www.disabilitydesk.co.za](http://www.disabilitydesk.co.za)

JOIN RAGAS AND

# SAY NO

## TO HUMAN SLAVERY AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Human trafficking is a scourge; a crime against the whole of humanity. It is time to join forces and work together to free its victims and to eradicate this scourge that affects us all, from individual families to the worldwide community.

Worldwide, 40.3 million people are in forced labour, marriages and domestic servitude together with sexual exploitation. In total, US\$150 billion is made each year from forced labour, which translates to more than US\$4 750 per second. These are just some of the staggering human trafficking and modern slavery statistics... and the numbers are multiplying at alarming rates.

The powerful and focused mission of the Rotary Action Group Against Slavery (RAGAS) is to educate, empower, connect and equip Rotarians to work with their communities and raise awareness to prevent the spread of human trafficking and modern slavery around the globe.

Members of RAGAS describe themselves as a global, action-driven network of Rotarians dedicated to freedom fighting, justice seeking and problem solving, campaigning for basic human rights and working together to abolish modern slavery.

### WHAT RAGAS DOES

We drive issue awareness and empower Rotarians with global and diversified expertise. The goal is to eradicate modern slavery and human trafficking with a multidisciplinary approach.

### HOW WE DO IT

Understanding our local community determines how best to assist and support others. Implementing the Community Awareness and Prevention Education (CARE) Plan enables us to achieve our goal. RAGAS relies on Rotary club members to coordinate projects successfully, to connect local partners and ultimately, to diminish the threat of human trafficking and modern slavery.

### LIBERATING THE GLOBE

RAGAS and its members have completed anti-slavery projects in combination with grassroots organisations such as Bachpan Bachao Andolan (India), Southeast Asia Coalition against Child Servitude (India), Free the Slaves (USA), Roman Catholic Diocese of Allahabad and Eastern Himalayas (India), Rescue Mission for Children (Thailand), Wulugu (Ghana), Asha Nepal, Maiti Nepal, Shakti Samuha (Nepal) and YouCanFreeUs (India).

### MODERN-DAY SLAVERY

RAGAS describes modern slavery as a severe exploitation of others for personal or commercial gain. It is often linked to human and sex trafficking and to land and labour slavery, where a person is

**HUMAN TRAFFICKING and MIGRANT SMUGGLING are widespread GLOBAL CRIMES that use MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN FOR PROFIT. The organised networks or individuals behind these lucrative crimes take advantage of people who are vulnerable, desperate or simply seeking a better life.**

**Human Trafficking is the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of people through force, fraud or deception, with the aim of exploiting them for profit. Men, women and children of all ages and from all backgrounds can become victims of this crime, which occurs in every region of the world. The traffickers often use violence or fraudulent employment agencies and fake promises of education and job opportunities to trick and coerce their victims.**

forced to work entrapped and controlled against their free will – either physically, financially or psychologically. Many fall into this oppressive trap because they are trying to escape poverty or insecurity, improve their lives and support their families. RAGAS works to help free them.

#### **WORKING WITH A21**

A21 is a global NGO dedicated to combating human trafficking and RAGAS is part of three of its working groups:

**REACH** – This is the prevention, awareness and education component that collects data on Global Education Programmes:

**RESCUE** – This deals with intervention and survivor legal assistance and is facilitated through a partnership with The Knoble, an NGO with a global network of experts who share a passion for preventing financial crimes that harm the vulnerable:

**RESTORE** – Deals with survivor aftercare. A21 provides a holistic approach to empower survivors with the support and necessary tools to reach wholeness and independence.

#### **CAN YOU SEE ME?**

The ‘Can You See Me?’ (<https://www.a21.org/content/can-you-see-me/grbis0>) campaign is a global anti-human trafficking public awareness and identification campaign of A21. It reveals the terrifying reality that human trafficking and modern slavery is ‘hidden but in plain sight’. With the aim of educating the public, the campaign shows how the signs of this crime are so subtle and manipulative that the crime is happening right in front of you.

#### **SOUTH AFRICA IS A HUMAN TRAFFICKER’S HUB**

According to the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development, “South Africa is a primary destination for trafficked persons in the southern African region and within Africa at large. It is also an origin and transit country for trafficking towards Europe and North America. Trafficking affects women, men and children exploited in forced labour, commercial sex, forced begging and forced criminality”.

The Deputy Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs of South Africa, John Jeffery, asserts, “Trafficking in persons is by no means a recent phenomenon. It is rooted in South Africa’s historical landscape and is fundamentally enabled by the country’s deep structural inequalities. A systemic response and culture shift is needed - one that radically

restrains the demand for cheap labour and sex and severs any hint of corruption and compromise.”

**JOIN US AND BECOME A RAGAS MEMBER TODAY**

“The good news is that a victim of human trafficking does not have to remain a victim.”

Get involved and help fight the onslaught of human trafficking and modern slavery. If you have time, passion, ideas, thoughts and a desire to end the scourge of deprivation, join us as we commit to ensure the empowerment of individuals, the closure of exploitation of the powerless and the hope of a better life for those who are defenceless against coercion.

“Collaboration should be our key priority as Rotarians. It brings change. The stronger our partnership on the ground with sustainable efforts to ensure we amplify the voices of those vulnerable groups, the more impactful will our investments be towards a gender equal world by the year 2030” said Past District Governor Annemarie Mostert, the Zone 22 - Region 28 Ambassador for Empowering Girls and a member of RAGAS.

**SPREAD AWARENESS FAR AND WIDE**

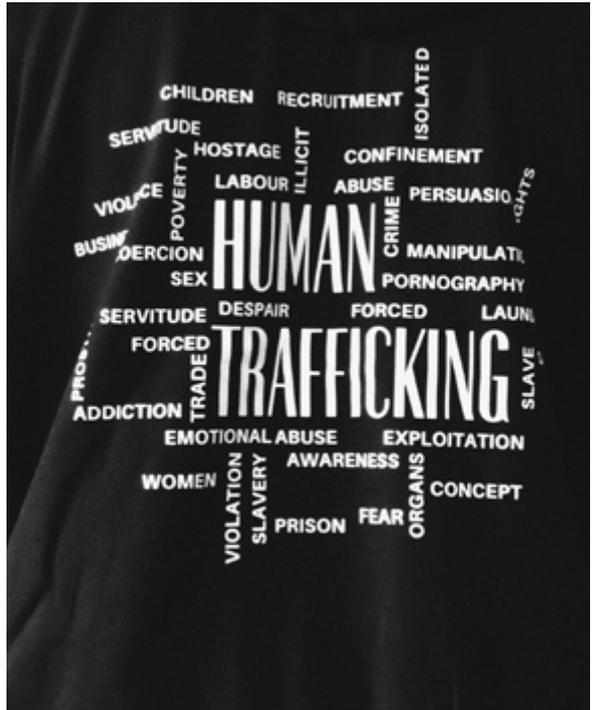
Let’s put the spotlight on human trafficking and slavery. We encourage your districts, leaders and club members to take the pledge ([ragas.online/district-pledge/](https://ragas.online/district-pledge/)) that stands for the belief that every individual deserves a life of dignity and freedom. Together, we can help those who are trapped by slavery, abuse and exploitation and make a difference to humankind.

**IN SOUTH AFRICA** trafficking victims (women, men and children) are exploited by being forced into labour, commercial sex, begging and criminality.

Foreign male forced labour victims have also been detected working as forced labour on fishing vessels in South Africa’s territorial waters.

**Internally**, girls are trafficked from rural to urban areas for sexual exploitation and domestic servitude, while boys are forced to work in street vending, begging, agriculture, mining and criminal activities.

- UN Office on Drugs and Crime



**HUMAN TRAFFICKING** has many forms. These include exploitation in the sex, entertainment and hospitality industries, and as domestic workers or in forced marriages. Victims are forced to work in factories, on construction sites or in the agricultural sector without pay or with an inadequate salary, living in fear of violence and often in inhumane conditions. Some victims are tricked or coerced into having their organs removed. Children are forced to serve as soldiers or to commit crimes for the benefit of the criminals.

**IN 2020, THE TOP REPORTED** recruitment methods reported to the National Human Trafficking Hotline (NHTH) were the false job opportunities and the ‘loverboy’ methods, where traffickers form intimate relationships to manipulate victims. However, reports to the NHTH resulting in successful victim identification and recovery did not involve recruitment through the ‘loverboy’ method, but rather recruitment and exploitation by family members or through false job opportunities.

These false opportunities often involved promises of jobs or education, as well as promises of a better life. The NHTH experienced a spike in job vetting requests from October 2020, with 271 requests submitted in the final three months of 2020. These cases included callers contacting the NHTH with concerns regarding job advertisements and requesting support in investigating the legitimacy of proposed work opportunities. On investigation, many reports displayed concerning indicators of risk that had the potential to lead to exploitative situations.

- A21 Impact report



The crime of human trafficking has three core elements: Act, Means, Purpose. Physical and sexual abuse, blackmail, emotional manipulation and the removal of official documents are used by traffickers to control their victims. Exploitation takes place in a victim’s home country, during migration or in a foreign country.

## FIVE TYPES OF TRAFFICKING



### SEX TRAFFICKING -

Forcing, deceiving, or coercing a person to perform a commercial sex act.



### FORCED LABOR -

Forcing a person to work in captivity for little or no pay.



### BONDED LABOR -

Forcing a person to work for low wages to pay back an impossible debt.



### INVOLUNTARY DOMESTIC SERVITUDE -

Forcing a person to work and live in the same place for little or no pay.



### CHILD SOLDIERS -

Forcing a child to participate in an armed force.

LEARN MORE: [A21.ORG](http://A21.ORG)



*The* **ROTARY ACTION PLAN**

# TAKING ACTION FOR CHANGE



## IMPACT

**We want to put our resources behind programs that will have the greatest impact and that align with our areas of focus.**

We're creating tools and guidelines for tracking and sharing our efforts. We're also developing an evaluation process that will help us make objective recommendations about what is working and what we should continue, start, or stop doing.

## REACH

**We're committed to exemplifying and embracing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in everything we do.**

We're testing new products and alternative models that will allow more people to connect and take action with us in ways that work best for them.

We are at a defining moment in Rotary's history. We're implementing our Action Plan, a strategic road map that will help us better connect with each other, grow as an organization, and more effectively share our stories of how we are making a difference in communities.

At every level of Rotary, we have embraced opportunities to work together to achieve our goals. Over the coming four issues, you'll hear from Rotary members around the world who will offer their inspiration, encouragement, and guidance as we carry out the four priorities of the Action Plan.



## ENGAGE

**We're tearing down the walls between "us" and "them" and focusing on participants.**

We're asking people how they want to participate, finding ways to meet them where they are, and making sure they know we value them.

## ADAPT

**We're streamlining operations so we can be more agile and responsive.**

We're simplifying the way we do things and helping members manage change so that our clubs, districts, and zones can more effectively communicate and work together.

Learn what your club can do at [rotary.org/actionplan](https://rotary.org/actionplan).



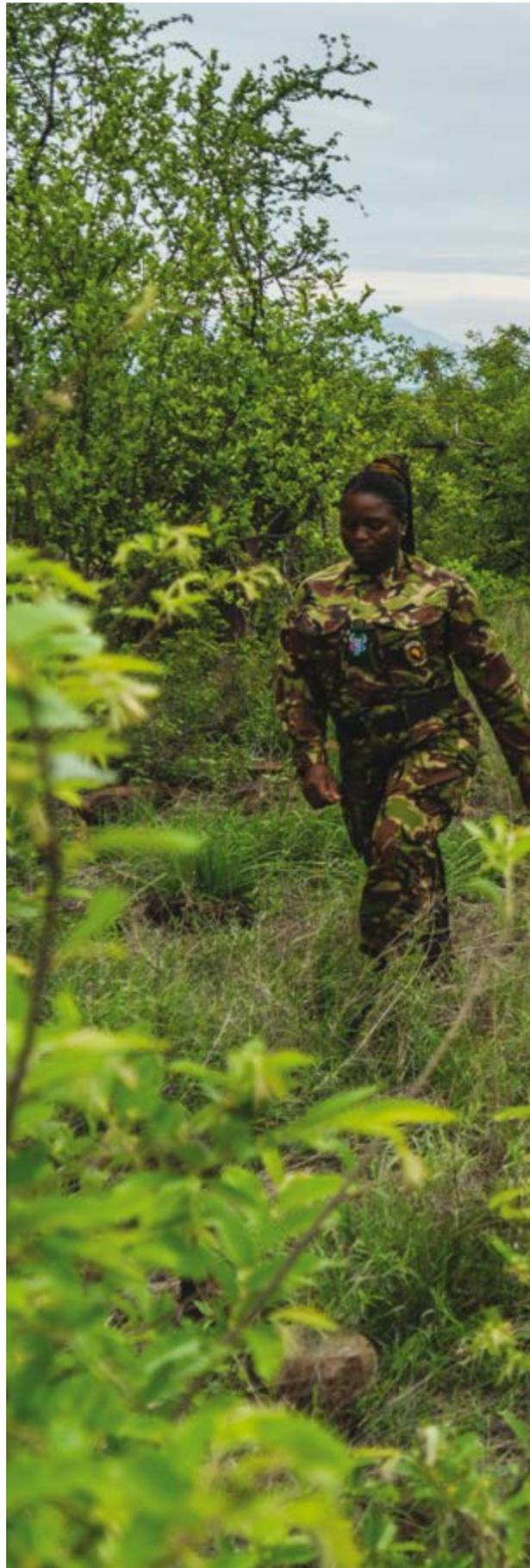
# White Rhinos and Black Mambas

Can an all-female anti-poaching unit stop wildlife crime in an African game preserve - without guns?

**D**ressed in a baggy green camouflage uniform and black work boots, long ponytail swinging against her back, Tsakane Nxumalo, 26, and her partner Naledi Malungane, 21, stride alongside an elephant-proof electric fence that is 7 feet high and nearly 100 miles long. The potent, honey-like odour of purple-pod cluster-leaf trees hang heavy in the humid summer air, while overhead a yellow-billed hornbill swoops to perch on the skeleton of a dead leadwood tree. Nxumalo and Malungane are members of the Black Mambas Anti-Poaching Unit. Named after a snake that is native to the region and is long, fast, and highly venomous, the Mambas strive to protect the animals of the Balule Nature Reserve within the Greater Kruger National Park, one of Africa's largest game reserves, that is about the size of Israel.

Nxumalo and Malungane, who both grew up near the unit's headquarters but only got to know each other since they became Mambas, are checking, as they do every day of their 21-day shift, for breaches in the fence. Mostly this entails collecting rocks to

by Nick Dall  
Photography by Bobby Neptune





Judy Malatjie, Naledi Malungane, and Tsakane Nxumalo on patrol.

shore up the places where animals such as warthogs and leopards have tried to burrow their way under, but periodically they come across a spot where humans have cut the fence to hunt animals for bushmeat or, worse, poach rhinos for their horns.

In 2013, when the first Mambas began patrolling the reserve, they quickly discovered that rhino poaching was only part of the problem. The park was also losing hundreds of animals of all species to snares every year. “It was embarrassing,” recalls Craig Spencer, 48, as he sits by a bushveld braai (barbecue) and talks over the calls of a nearby hyena. The dynamic South African conservationist, he was head warden of Balule, a private animal preserve.

“I should have known what was happening under my nose. It took the Mambas to show me what was going on.”

White rhinos have been hunted almost to extinction in Africa. Of the continent’s 18 000 remaining white rhinos, nearly 90 percent are in South Africa, the species’ last best hope. Kruger is home to the world’s biggest white rhino population, as well as about 300 of the world’s 5 600 remaining black rhinos.

The rhinoceros horn is prized in some countries, used as a traditional medicine and a status symbol. According to the Wildlife Justice Commission, a horn

along with elephants, are keystone megaherbivores that shape the landscape in ways that benefit other species. And the big animals in any ecosystem are usually the canaries in the coal mine, to abuse the phrase. “If we can’t prevent keystone species from going extinct,” says Tom Tochterman, “other species are also doomed.”

Since 2009, when he had an “aha!” moment during his first photo safari in South Africa, Tochterman, 60, has been a passionate supporter of this nature reserve. A retired real estate developer and a member of the Rotary Club of Chelan (D5060, USA), he has since founded an NGO called Rhino Mercy, which strives to fight rhino poaching, and developed a luxury photo-safari programme that helps to fund conservation work. He also earned a PhD by researching “the influence of cognitive dissonance on the consumption of natural resources and ecosystem degradation.”

In addition, Tochterman was a founding member of the Rotary Action Group for Endangered Species (RAGES) which has the goal of improving the lives of people by improving the habitats and lives of endangered animals of all types. He welcomes the recent addition of protecting the environment to Rotary International’s areas of focus. “We firmly believe that healthy landscapes contribute to healthy communities,” he says, adding that “the Mambas have shown that the reverse is also true.”

## The black mambas name symbolises how seriously they took their opportunity to enter an industry which had previously been off-limits to women.

fetches an average of \$4 000 per pound in Africa, and as much as \$8 000 per pound in Asia; given that a set of white rhino horns typically weighs 11 pounds, it’s worth between \$44 000 and \$88 000. South Africa’s per capita income is about \$5 000 per year and its pre-COVID-19 unemployment rate was about 29 percent. Therefore, a rhino, sadly, is a tempting target. In 2017, poachers killed more than 500 rhinos in the Greater Kruger National Park, including 17 in Balule.

“Poachers make me angry,” Nxumalo says, because they are killing the animals that all South Africans should be preserving for future generations. While Nxumalo is fully aware that some people poach only out of a desperation to feed their families, her commitment to the cause is unwavering. She points out that it would be devastating for both tourism and conservation to lose a member of what’s called the “Big Five,” an old hunting term that refers to the five most sought-after animals in Africa: lions, leopards, elephants, buffalo and rhinos. Rhinos,

In 2010, Tochterman was at a bush camp, sitting around a campfire with Spencer, the former game warden who is now his close friend and partner, drinking rum-and-cookes and talking long into the night, when they lit a spark that would grow to become the Mambas.

“Across Africa, the default response to poaching has been to bring in more men with more guns,” Tochterman says. “And it hasn’t worked anywhere.” It dawned on them that the only way to change the narrative was to shape the minds of the next generation, and that the best way to reach children was through their mothers.

Tochterman and Spencer eventually learned about a government programme to employ women as environmental monitors in conventional agriculture; they thought they could maybe stretch the job description to include “game ranger,” but senior management at South African National Parks questioned the concept of unarmed women operating



Animals in the Black Mambas' patrol area include giraffe, zebra and rhinos; Naledi Malungane trains on an obstacle course.

in areas where lions, leopards, rhinos, elephants and buffalo roam free. Tochterman was told on more than one occasion that this was a “stupid, dumb idea” that “could only have come from America.”

When the two men were finally given a chance to put their theory into action, the candidates shortlisted by bureaucrats in the government programme were told what the job would entail - and they all quit. So, Spencer and Tochterman got permission from the local chiefs to go into communities near the park and look for the right kind of people. The Black Mambas name was chosen by the first group, says Tochterman, symbolising how seriously they took their opportunity to enter an industry that had previously been off-limits to women. They wanted to make a statement that they were not window dressing.

Word quickly spread, and within months the Mambas were receiving unsolicited applications from local women almost every day. Since the beginning, the day-to-day operations of the Mambas have been managed by Spencer’s NGO, Transfrontier Africa. Tochterman was key in building and financing the Mambas’ operations hub as well as the separate compound where the women stay during their shifts. He had also spent six years in the military police,

counselling I decided to stay and prove the doubters wrong.” Looking back, Mzimba, now a sergeant who will soon qualify as a professional field guide, realises that the whole situation could have been avoided if she had better read the lions’ behaviour.

Mzimba now ensures that every patrol includes a veteran Mamba and that armed response is always on standby. (The Mambas’ every move is tracked from a central operations room.) In their first year, it was not uncommon for the Mambas to find 70 snares in a day. They also came across several “bushmeat kitchens,” large operations for butchering and drying meat, within the reserve itself.

One full-moon night in 2015, a patrol of Mambas responded to the sound of gunfire and startled a group of poachers who had just killed a rhino. After briefly giving chase in their vehicle, the Mambas returned to the scene to find two rhinos dead and a third one wounded. Despite the best efforts of emergency veterinarians, the third, too, succumbed. The only small mercy of this grisly episode was that the poachers didn’t get their prize.

Knowing that the Mambas have played a part in reducing poaching feels “really amazing,” says Nxumalo, more so because it’s a job that she says she grew up thinking was “supposed to be done by men.” To this day, many in the conservation industry in South Africa still feel that women have no place in the anti-poaching arena and that conducting unarmed patrols in Big Five areas is foolhardy. “I don’t think men would want to work unarmed in a Big Five area,” says Nxumalo with a laugh. “A man would come up with so many reasons why he needs a gun. But for us it’s more about reading the animals’ behaviour. We understand that it’s not really about guns.”

Through their community connections, the Mambas are also helping to change the cops-and-robbers narrative that has plagued the conservation movement in South Africa since its inception. While nature conservation is often depicted as noble protectors of the environment doing battle with evil poachers and exploiters, this ignores more complex social, political and economic realities. Shortly after the land that would become the Kruger National Park was set aside and protected in 1898, some 3 000 people belonging to the Tsonga ethnic group were forcibly removed from the land. Fences were erected, national borders that had previously been recognised only on maps were enforced and people were fined or imprisoned for “trespassing” on the land they had always lived on and hunting the animals they had always eaten. During apartheid, the fences became

## To this day, many in the conservation industry in South Africa still feel that women have no place in the anti-poaching arena.

so he was able to provide training in skills such as handcuffing a person. Tochterman’s Rhino Mercy NGO acts as the Mambas’ international fundraising arm, and it has brought them financial security. The government recently stopped funding the women’s basic salaries (around R6 500 a month), which was a small fraction of the total cost of the programme. Tochterman says that all told, employing one Mamba costs upwards of \$50 000 per year.

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**N**kateko Mzimba, who was part of the Mambas’ second cohort in 2014, remembers many men in her hometown teasing her about the job and belittling her chances of survival in what they deemed to be a man’s world. Their predictions very nearly came true when, during her first few months with the Mambas, she and two colleagues were repeatedly charged by a pride of lions and had to be rescued from a tree by a passing vehicle. “I tried to quit,” she remembers. “But after



Tsakane Nxumalo scans the horizon at sunset.

more impenetrable and the sentences harsher.

This history is vital to understanding how rangers and poachers can come from the same communities - or families. And it's why many of the people who have lived their entire lives on the fringes of one of the world's most iconic national parks know almost nothing about it.

Nxumalo had been to Kruger a few times but had no real affinity with the bush. After passing a panel interview and a fitness test with flying colours, she and eight other recruits, including Malungane, began their basic training. Training was hard, she says, involving exercises such as "running the whole day in the sun with only a small bottle of water." Now she looks back on that time with appreciation: "Training gave me that go-ahead, that I can be more and do more."

After racking up thousands of kilometres of foot patrols in Big Five areas, Nxumalo loves the bush and remains devoted to the cause. She's not alone - all of the women from her cohort are still Mambas. And they're proud to pass on what they've learned. "We won't only teach our own kids; we will tell other girls that they can do anything," Nxumalo

are more likely to be interrupted by a leopard or a herd of elephants. "They are so peaceful at night," she says. "Sometimes they block the way, but we never rush them."

Weekly tasks for the Mambas include searching the compounds where reserve staff and contractors live, conducting roadblocks, and speaking to tourists and local communities about the importance of wildlife conservation. "If nothing happens on a patrol, it is a big success," Nxumalo says. "If I don't find any snares, that is a bonus because it means that no one has come in to plant a new snare and no one has cut the fence since I last checked it. It's a huge relief."

The Mambas programme got a boost in 2015 with the arrival of Lewyn Maefala, an energetic nature conservation student with an infectious laugh. Maefala did a year-long practicum with Spencer's NGO for her coursework at the Tshwane University of Technology and hasn't left since. She noticed that although the Mambas were patrolling fences and protecting the animals from poachers, they weren't doing much prevention work in the communities the poachers came from. Within a few months, Maefala received permission to teach an environmental education programme for students at four local primary schools.

Calling her programme, the Bush Babies, Maefala focused on using animals that the students were likely to come across in the field as a way to teach about ecosystems conservation. "We talk about the animals and how they fit into the local culture," she says, giving the example of the Shai people in Ghana, who love *dancing to elephants*, their totem animal. But the Bush Babies also learn why animals need clean water and healthy trees to survive. And they are taught to unlearn the belief, passed down from their elders, that snakes and scorpions should be killed. "Just the other day, some of my Bush Babies found a puff adder," Maefala says. "Together we released it into the wild, far away from the community. That would never have happened a few years ago."

By 2017, Maefala had expanded the programme to include 10 schools, two grade levels, and more than 1 000 students. She also took advantage of the same government-funded environmental monitors initiative to hire several young men and women to teach the Bush Babies. Never one to sit still, Maefala has integrated the programme with the school curriculum (math students, for example, might record the species, age and sex of all the animals they see on a game drive and use that data to create

## "If the rhinos go extinct, the poachers will move on to the elephants, the pangolins, the lion bone trade. Conservation is about saving all the animals."

says. "We are telling every lady out there that you can do more, you can be more." While they never go home in their uniforms (a poacher could steal one from a clothesline and use it to infiltrate the park), Nxumalo makes no attempt to hide what she does. "You have to be proud of what you do," she explains. "This inspires others to walk tall. I've always known I could do a lot. But the Mambas really brought it out of me."

The Mambas' salary is considered quite good for the area, so in addition to using her income to support her mother and her sister, Nxumalo has been paying her own university fees. She recently completed the first year of a teaching degree online. Mzimba uses her income to fund and run a food pantry for hungry neighbours - which further aids in reducing poaching.

A typical day for the Mambas involves rising at dawn for a fence patrol or snare sweep (both on foot) and conducting nightly observations from a blind or vehicle. Gunshots, torchlight, and the smell of tobacco smoke are all tell-tale signs of poacher activity, but these days Nxumalo says the Mambas



Tom Tochterman and Craig Spencer co-founded the unit.

a mini-census) and started a vegetable-gardening project where children oversee the entire process, from mulching the soil to cooking the produce. She has also initiated a Bush Grannies programme, which taps into local grandmothers' deep wells of knowledge, and teamed up with a local organisation affiliated with Scouts South Africa to ensure that her programme also reaches adolescents. Last year over 1 500 teens attended Scout meetings at the Bush Babies Environmental Education Centre. Says Spencer appreciatively, "Lewyn has taken the Bush Babies to the moon."

By the time Nxumalo joined the Mambas in 2019, the programme was at full capacity (36 Mambas including the Bush Babies team), and community attitudes towards female rangers had softened considerably. "When I go home to my village, the other women ask me if there are any vacancies at the Mambas," she says. "It feels really good to change mindsets, to show people that women can make a real difference in the fight against poaching."

Aided by a combination of COVID-19-related travel restrictions, which have made it harder to move rhino horns across borders, an apparent reduction in demand for the horns in Southeast Asia, and the fact that there are fewer rhinos left to kill, there is evidence that rhino poaching has slowed. In the first half of 2021, poachers killed 249 rhinos in South Africa - a considerable decline from 2013 to 2017, when they killed more than 1 000 per year. And within the Mambas' territory, poachers have killed just one rhino since the beginning of 2020.

The Mambas now plan to implement a formal high school and/or vocational training programme in the near future, and to expand across South Africa and beyond, in places where the demand has been

strong not only to protect land but to also involve more women. The only thing holding them back has been the lack of funding to make it happen. "We will continue to strengthen our programmes despite the complications brought on by the global pandemic to ecotourism and conservation initiatives in general," Tochterman says.

Maefala's Bush Babies programme has inspired two members of its first graduating class to pursue nature conservation degrees. She would love to see every school in the province implement her programme, and she also has her eye on a 100-seat bus ("Imagine taking 100 kids to see the Kruger Park!") and a "really big" Bush Babies resource centre with a library and internet access. "Finding the people to run the programme isn't a problem," she says. "I could find a hundred people tomorrow, but we barely have enough money to run the programme in 10 schools."

This, says Nxumalo, is just one more obstacle that must be overcome. "We need to have Mambas working across the park," she says. "If the rhinos go extinct, the poachers will move on to the elephants, the pangolins, the lion bone trade. We need the elephants to trample over trees so the impalas can eat. The lions need the impalas to survive. Conservation is about saving all the animals. This is why the work we are doing is so important."

Nick Dall is a freelance writer from Cape Town.

His journalism explores the intersection of culture and the environment. He has written two books on South African history: *Rogues' Gallery* and *Spoilt Ballots*.

# On the wild side

The Rotary Action Group for Endangered Species (RAGES) helps clubs and districts design environmental projects. The group launched in 2015 with the support of famed conservationist Jane Goodall and boasts nearly 1 000 members across 71 countries. “Healthy landscapes lead to healthy communities,” says Tom Tochtermann, who chairs the action group. “Rotary is all about healthy, safe and prosperous communities. Without a healthy landscape, the cards are stacked against you.” Put your club’s project on the map; visit [rag4es.org](http://rag4es.org) to submit the details.



**WHAT**  
Pollinators

**WHERE**  
Guatemala

**THE ISSUE**  
More than 75 percent

of the world’s leading food crops rely on pollinators, whether bees, birds, butterflies, beetles or bats. Pollinators are also responsible for much of the world’s oils, fibres and raw materials. But habitat loss, climate variability and pesticides are hastening the decline of these species.

## THE PROJECT

The Rotary Club of Carpinteria Morning (D5240, USA) launched the Save Me Peace Project in the Lake Atitlán basin, where a number of hummingbird species are threatened. Through the citizen-science initiative, club members taught school children about the importance of pollinators and their habitats. The club partnered with RAGES to host a virtual symposium on pollinators at the Universidad del Valle de Guatemala.

**WHAT**  
Mountain gorillas

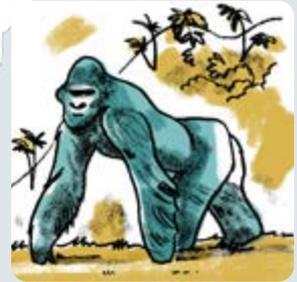
**WHERE**  
Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda and Uganda

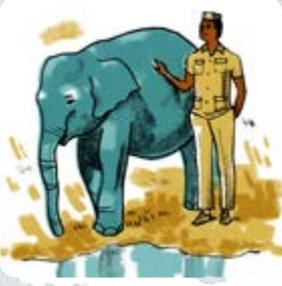
## THE ISSUE

Only about 1 000 mountain gorillas remain in the world, although the numbers are slowly increasing due to conservation efforts. Mountain gorillas have thicker fur than other great apes to help them survive the colder weather at higher elevations. Their biggest threats are habitat loss, political instability and human encroachment; because mountain gorillas share more than 98 percent of their DNA with humans, they are susceptible to human diseases such as flu and pneumonia.

## THE PROJECT

The Mountain Gorilla Conservation Society of Canada, led by Rotarian Raemonde Bezenar, is working to increase the number of wildlife veterinarians through scholarships in wildlife health and management at universities in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda and Uganda. The Rotary Clubs of Edmonton Riverview (D5370, Canada) and Kampala Munyonyo (D9214, Uganda) worked with RAGES to secure three global grant scholarships for the wildlife health programme.





**WHAT**  
Orangutans and pygmy elephants

**WHERE**  
Indonesia and Malaysia

**THE ISSUE**  
Orangutans used to live across Southeast Asia, but today they exist only in fragmented forest patches on the islands of Borneo and Sumatra. The animals' preferred habitat has given way to plantations of acacia, rubber and palm. Indonesia and Malaysia produce 90 percent of the world's palm oil, which is found

in half of the world's supermarket products. Habitat destruction has similarly affected the Bornean pygmy elephant, an Asian elephant subspecies which is found only on Borneo and has an estimated population of fewer than 1 500.

**THE PROJECT**  
Orangutan Appeal UK works with the Sepilok Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre in Malaysian Borneo to care for orphaned animals. The organisation, founded by Susan Sheward of the Rotary Club of Bookham & Horsley (D1145, England) funds staff at the centre and supports a wildlife rescue unit, reforestation efforts and habitat protection.



**WHAT**  
Rhinos

**WHERE**  
South Africa

**THE ISSUE**  
Every 22 hours a rhino is killed for its horns in South Africa, home to the majority of the world's rhinos. Poachers killed more than 1 000 rhinos each year between 2013 and 2017. Rhino horns are used in traditional Chinese medicine and, increasingly, as a status symbol; sophisticated international criminal gangs are often behind the poaching.

**THE PROJECT**  
The Chipembere Rhino Foundation (chipembere means "rhinoceros" in Shona, an African language) supports anti-poaching efforts by providing specially trained tracking and apprehension dogs, technology for monitoring rhinos and ranger equipment. The Rotary Club of Kenton on Sea (D9370) is a long time supporter of the organisation. Rhino Mercy, which Tochterman founded, co-developed the Black Mambas anti-poaching unit, the first all-female group of its kind in South Africa, and supports environmental education and scientific research.

# Strength in times of crisis

Past and current conflicts have had a significant impact on Rotary in Ukraine, which has only made members there more resolute

Ukraine is an agricultural powerhouse and a country of significant technological and strategic importance, but it has had a turbulent history. The build-up to the Russia-Ukraine war that began in February preoccupied many members of Rotary around the world, who worried about the future of Rotary within Europe's second-largest country.

Yet amid this turmoil, Rotary members in Ukraine continue to demonstrate resilience and an unwavering commitment to peace. To learn more about Rotary's circuitous journey in Ukraine over the past decade, Rotary Magazin for Germany and Austria compiled this report. (From Rotary International's headquarters in the United States, Rotary magazine - formally The Rotarian - has reached out to Rotary and Rotaract clubs in Russia and will feature reports from them in a future issue.)

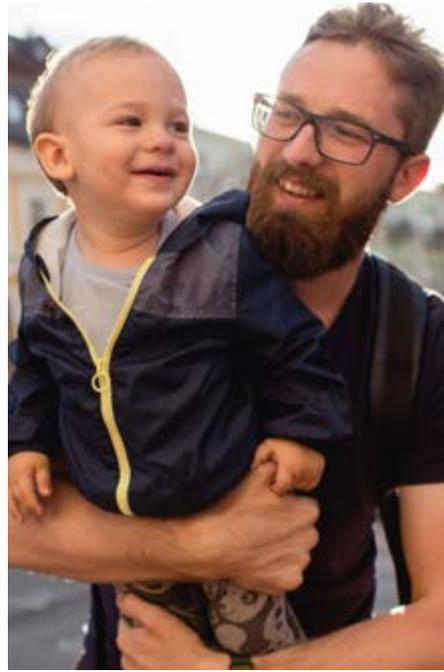
## A LOOK BACK - AND TOWARD THE FUTURE

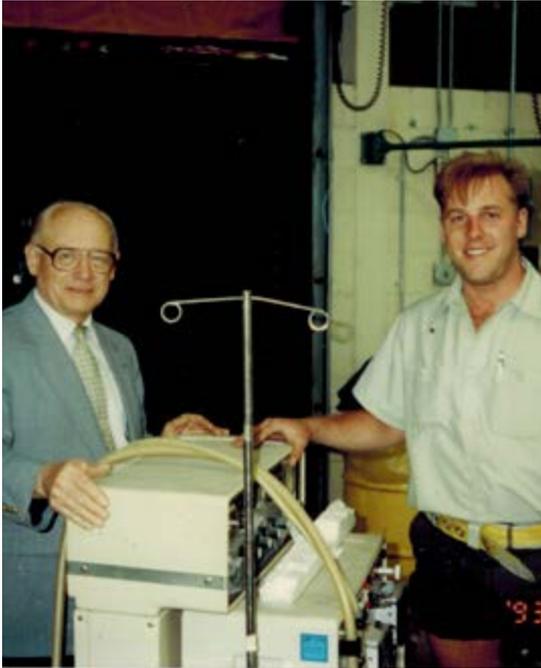
Rotariets, the regional Rotary magazine in Ukraine

Let Rotariets provide our readers some background information about Rotary in Ukraine.

The first Rotary clubs within the current borders of Ukraine were chartered in the 1930s in the cities of Uzhgorod, Chernivtsi and Lviv. During World War II, Rotary clubs disbanded in territories under conflict, and clubs were forcibly dissolved during the Cold War in countries under Communist rule.

After the collapse of the USSR, several clubs in Europe and North America sought to re-establish Rotary's presence in the former Soviet countries. Lubomyr "Lu" Hewko, the father of John Hewko, RI's CEO and general secretary, played an important role. Lu's family fled Ukraine during World War II, and years later, as president of the Rotary Club of Clarkston, Michigan, he organised several Rotary projects:





delivering medical equipment to Ukrainian hospitals, assisting the victims of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster, and recruiting doctors to perform eye surgeries for the needy. After Ukraine declared its independence in 1991, Lu helped to charter the first Rotary club in the capital, Kyiv. John Hewko is a charter member.

In the early 1990s, Ukraine was part of District 1420, along with all the clubs in the former USSR, as well as some in Finland. Other district affiliations followed, until finally, in November 1999, RI decided to integrate Ukraine and Belarus with Poland in District 2230. This came to fruition on 1 July 2000. With the steady growth of Rotary in these three countries, the district was split into Districts 2231 (Poland) and 2232 (Ukraine, Belarus) in July 2016.

Russia’s annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the armed conflict in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions (collectively known as the Donbas) have hindered Rotary’s development in Ukraine. In 2013, there were seven Rotary clubs (with a combined total of about 110 members) in Crimea and the now-occupied areas of the Donbas. Only two clubs remain, and both are in Crimea: the Rotary Club of Simferopol and the Rotary Club of Alushta. They have a total of 14 members.

In the rest of Ukraine, however, Rotary is undergoing robust growth on the strength of an influx of members who have joined since the beginning of that conflict. The national impulse to engage in humanitarian work and disaster assistance remains strong in Ukraine. Since 2014, Rotary has grown from 49 to 62 clubs, with an additional six satellite clubs. Membership has increased from 800 to 1 100 - and members of Rotary in Ukraine are very optimistic about the organisation’s continued growth.

*Clockwise from top left: A father and son share a happy moment in Kyiv; Lubomyr “Lu” Hewko (left) participates in a 1993 service project in Ukraine; St. Michael’s Golden-Domed Monastery is the headquarters of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine.*



### **A VIRTUAL CLUB**

Tetiana Godok, president-elect of the Rotary E-Club of Ukraine

My history with Rotary began when I was a senior in high school. The newly formed Rotaract Club of Yalta ambitiously set out to establish an Interact club, and I was fortunate enough to be a part of it. I didn’t know much about Rotary, and the complex club organisation befuddled me at first.

But over several months, we visited Interact clubs in Kharkiv and Cherkasy, and I came to learn more about Rotary and gradually immersed myself in the ideas and values of this service organisation. With strong convictions about the role I might play, I joined the Rotaract Club of Yalta, serving as president and treasurer, and set a goal to get to know Rotaract all over Europe.

Until the annexation of Crimea, I had a very active and rewarding Rotaract career: I often travelled to Rotaract Europe Meetings (REM) across Europe, to Rotary Youth Leadership Awards events in Turkey, to Portugal in western

Europe, and all over Ukraine, countless times, for conferences, for seminars, or just to visit Rotaract friends. We gladly and proudly hosted all-Ukrainian and district events in Yalta.

Unfortunately, the annexation forced many Rotaractors and Rotarians to flee the turmoil and conflict on the peninsula, where it had become impossible to conduct our normal service duties. I moved to Lviv in western Ukraine, but the emotional trauma from the migration was such that it took me a long time to settle down and integrate into my new life. The good news was that a Rotary e-club had been established in Ukraine, enabling former Crimean residents and Rotarians from other occupied territories to continue to be part of Rotary. The mutual support was enormously helpful, especially in the early days.

I later moved to the United States, first to New York City, where I studied biology, and then to Philadelphia to work in a research lab. Fortunately, the virtual club has allowed me to remain a Rotarian regardless of where I live, although accommodating members from the different time zones can be tough.

I have lived in Italy, near Milan, since 2021, but continue to see my friends at club meetings. It is good that our club has enriched itself over the years with new members from all over Ukraine. Last year, I was elected club president for 2022-23. I am very grateful for the trust placed in me and look forward to presiding over our first meeting. I definitely want it to take place “virtually” against a backdrop image of the Yalta Mountains in Crimea, which is - and always will be - my home.

### ROTARY TRANSCENDS BORDERS

Mykola and Olga Stebljanko, the Rotary E-Club of Ukraine

Our Rotary life began in 1996, when we joined what would become the first Rotaract club in Crimea: the Rotaract Club of Simferopol. Since then, Rotary has been an integral part of our lives. Our 10-year Rotaract past has become a classic example of young leadership development that creates the conditions for a natural transition into the ranks of Rotarians.

In 2006, I, Mykola, joined the Rotary Club of Simferopol, which later sponsored the Rotary Club of Simferopol-Taurica, of which my wife, Olga, was the charter president. In 2007, I became the editor of the official Rotary publication, Rotariets, in Ukraine and Belarus. Since 2011, Olga has supported the production of the digital version.

I was president of my club in 2013-14, but

when the Crimean Peninsula was annexed during my term, we had to move to Odesa. To continue our Rotary activities, we established the Rotary E-Club of Ukraine. This type of club, which was fairly new then, helped us and other Rotarians from Crimea and the Donbas keep our Rotary ties and sustain our community. Our club brings together people scattered across thousands of miles. I was elected district governor (D2232) for 2019/20 and now serve as a Rotary public image coordinator at zone level. Olga chaired the District Scholarship Subcommittee for two years, and the District Rotary Youth Exchange Committee since 2018. Together, we continue publishing Rotariets and providing virtual Rotary events in District 2232 and Zone 21.

### NOBODY IS LEFT ALONE

Oleksiy Kuleshov and other Rotarians from the Rotary Club of Sloviansk

The year 2014 became a time of testing for us, a test of endurance and humanity. On the positive side, Rotary brought us new strength, uniting a large number of people of different nationalities, faiths, and levels of prosperity with a common idea: to serve society. In Ukraine, Rotarians from Lviv, Kharkiv, Dnipro, Poltava, Kyiv, Ivano-Frankivsk, Chernivtsi, and the conflict areas of Donetsk - they were still holding on at that time - helped people who had fled the war, as did Rotarians from Moscow and Krasnodar in Russia.

We reached out to those Ukrainians who had lost their livelihood and were left alone in misery. Some helpful Rotarians had sent groceries, baby food, and clothing; others sent personal care products and medicine. We organised logistics to help refugee resettlement. We served meals, distributed gifts, books, and clothes to people in the disputed territories, and, in the evening, delivered grocery packages to large families. Together with the Rotary Club of Lviv, we also organised a mobile dental practice.

In 2015, with the help of other Rotary clubs in Ukraine, we established a multimedia class at an art school in the city of Sloviansk, and, in 2016, the Rotary Club of Sloviansk endowed a choreography class for children. The project “Helpers of Saint Nicholas” gained momentum and became a separate major Rotary project in eastern Ukraine. Other club projects include replenishing libraries with modern literature, sponsoring sports teams, and supporting the “Believe in Yourself” project of the world-champion Paralympic swimmer Viktor Smyrnov. We also provided funding for kindergarten classes for children living with visual, mental, and musculoskeletal disorders.



**PROJECTS FOR PEACE**

Many clubs in Ukraine have initiated their own projects to bring peace to the country.

In the combat zone along the Russian border in eastern Ukraine, about 14 000 people, including more than 3 000 civilians, were killed, and at least 30 000 injured, between 2014 and 2021. During that same time period, more than 1.6 million people from Crimea and the Donbas fled their homes and became displaced within Ukraine, while some 3 million remained in the territories controlled by armed militia forces.

Rotary clubs in Ukraine have provided medical and psychological assistance to victims of the conflict and have supported the large, displaced population, while also delivering relief supplies to those who live in frontline territories. Rotary International has called for peaceful dialogue within divided communities and between the governments of Russia and Ukraine. Members are sponsoring efforts to locate and remove land mines in combat areas while also educating the public about minefield demarcation and identification. For the victims of land-mine injuries, Rotary clubs have set up rehabilitation centres in frontline areas.

As part of their efforts to help restore the Donbas region, Rotary members are planning and creating business opportunities that can promote restoration of communities for reintegration into the national economy.



*(Above) Children in eastern Ukraine at a mobile dental practice; (left) Piotr Wygnańczuk, then governor of District 2230, poses with Olga Stebljanko; (below) Members of the Rotary E-Club of Ukraine with a member of the Rotary Club of Kyiv (centre, in white).*



# Creating Change

**CHANGEMAKER:** Collin Nyabadza  
**COUNTRY OF IMPACT:** Zimbabwe  
**POSITION:** CEO of The Collin Nyabadza Children’s Voice Charitable Trust (CNCVCT)  
**CLUB:** Rotary Club of Swift Current (D5360, Canada)



Born in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe’s second largest city, and eldest of three brothers and three sisters, the young teacher, fresh out of college, had no idea that his first teaching deployment to a rural primary school in the Matobo district in 1993 would be the start of a remarkable humanitarian journey.

He found the school run-down. Its condition created an unpleasant working environment that frequently led to teachers leaving, which impacted on the academic and sporting progress of the children.

Touched by this plight, Collin remained at the school and mobilised the community to improve the school’s infrastructure. “This will always remain one of the most important and most rewarding decisions I have ever made in my career.”

This first project was also the first time he encountered Rotary. “The Rotary Club of Matopos in Bulawayo supported me a lot with financial grants to purchase classroom furniture and other learning resources.” In April 1998, Collin sourced a grant of \$26 000 from Irish Aid to build a block of two classrooms and a teacher’s cottage, sink a borehole, and buy a water pump and classroom furniture. More than 20 years later, the borehole is still functioning.

**“I always see my children’s eyes in the eyes of every child that I work with.”**

Collin also focussed on developing the children. He sourced high school scholarships for many children from disadvantaged families, from the school and surrounding community. “My motto has always been: It is neither a crime nor a sin for a child to be born into a poor family.” Some of those

*In October 2021, Collin was recognised as a Paul Harris Fellow (PHF) by the Rotary E-Club of South Africa One (D9370). The Rotary Club of Swift Current held a physical presentation of the fellowship recognition and District Governor Martin Parnell (D5360) presented the PHF.*

children are now doctors, engineers, teachers, nurses, and pharmacists.

In 1997 Collin returned to college to pursue a Special Needs Education course and in April 2021, he, his wife and their four children emigrated to Canada. “My four children are my biggest inspiration. I love my children and always want the best for them. What I want for my children, is what I want for every child.

Collin works as an educational assistant at a local school, works part time for an agency that supports individuals with disabilities and volunteers as a soccer coach, this year for a boys’ under 9 team.

Collin also serves as the CEO of a children’s NGO in Zimbabwe, the Collin Nyabadza Children’s Voice Charitable Trust (CNCVCT), that he founded in December 2012, the same year that he joined the Rotary Club of Swift Current.

The NGO aims to enhance the quality of education in Zimbabwe’s disadvantaged rural schools. This is achieved by providing proper learning resources such as classrooms, classroom furniture, books, sports equipment and infrastructure development. It has also built science and computer laboratories, and provided re-usable sanitary pads to girls to enable them to attend school without shame.

CNCVCT is run by volunteers to ensure that every penny received is spent on the children it supports and not on salaries.



*The trust is working with communities to develop education infrastructure in Zimbabwe.*



Volunteer Muzimkhulu Dube with a new vehicle that was purchased for the Collin Nyabadza Children's Voice Children's Voice Charitable Trust. After the death of Chad Haubrich, his family contacted Collin and asked if cheques could be made out to the trust in honour of Chad. The Rotary Club of Saskatoon North agreed to receive the cheques on the trust's behalf and C\$1 300 was raised. The Saskatoon club decided to add C\$3 500 to the total. The trust found a suitable vehicle in Zimbabwe for US\$7 000 and raised the balance through a GoFundMe campaign. Shortly after the vehicle was purchased and branded, the trust received a container of 54 000 books from Scotland to distribute at schools.



*Introducing indigenous fish species will improve the water quality and reduce mosquito populations. Numerous sewage spills delayed the removal of the carp, an invasive fish species. Invasive fish negatively impact water quality and other natural species. The removed fish were transported to Optimum Fisheries and Research for use in aquaponics.*

# Heave, Ho!

The Rotary Club of Benoni Aurora (D9400) spent a day releasing indigenous fish at The Korsman Bird Sanctuary.

Club members and other community volunteers assisted with the long-awaited fish release, funded by the Benoni Aurora club. In 2021, the club received a R25 000 district grant to fund this environmental project.

Casper Kruger of Optimum Fisheries and Research at Hartbeespoort Dam assisted with the project, supplying safety netting for the carp removal. This is becoming increasingly necessary to sustain the biodiversity within local dams and other

bodies of water. These fish negatively impacted the water quality and the other natural species in the bird sanctuary.

During the netting process, members of the Korsman Conservancy volunteer group and Benoni Aurora got down to business, heaving heavy nets to remove as many carp from the pan as possible. While sifting through piles of algae, volunteers were delighted to see the variety of indigenous fish species present in the water.

Many southern mouth breeders were found, which was a good sign for the pan and the wildlife sustainability in the beautiful reserve.



*With the new C-arm x-ray Unit are hospital CEO Dr Andries Brink, radiographer Glouda Terblanche, clinical manager Dr Francois Potgieter, Sr E Geswindt, President Albert Lombaard, radiographer Wilmaryna Hoogbaard and Nurse M Coetzee.*

# Service Upgrades

In July 2020, the Rotary Club of Knysna (D9350) undertook a global grant project to significantly upgrade the palliative care and urological services offered at Knysna Provincial Hospital.

The palliative care upgrades included renovating and converting a doctors' residence, Lilita House, into a self-sufficient, seven bed palliative care facility with a kitchen, office and lounge facilities for visiting family members. A Rotary district grant provided Covid-19-specific training for the staff of Lilita House. This centre is run by Knysna Hospice with support from the provincial hospital.

A state of the art mobile C-arm x-ray unit was acquired for the hospital's new urological unit. This specialised x-ray is used during surgery to enable complicated procedures to be undertaken with greater accuracy and success.

Since receiving the new machine, the hospital has been able to perform over 40 urological procedures, which previously would have been referred to a bigger hospital. Before this x-ray unit was acquired,

the treatment waiting time was between three and six months. Now a patient requiring surgery has a maximum waiting time of two weeks.

Another significant benefit of the C-arm is that its application is not limited to urological procedures. Since the acquisition of the machine, the hospital's surgeons have used it in 87 non-urological cases. These include intra-operative cholangiograms for gall-bladder disease, reduction of fractures, removal of foreign bodies and placement of oesophageal stents. The hospital is now able to provide a much more comprehensive and efficient surgical service to the people of Knysna.

The Rotary clubs participating in this grant were the Rotary Clubs of Knysna and Plettenberg Bay, six clubs in Canada and two clubs from Alaska. The Rotary Club of Brampton Ontario (D7080, Canada) was the primary international partner.

The hospital funded all building related costs and the grant provided for equipment and furniture to the value of just over R950 000.

# From Ireland With Love: Connecting Two Worlds

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

Who knew that a box full of outmoded sportswear would become a box filled with hope for someone a world away? This story of hope and inspiration started with a phone call which ignited a chain of kindness that sparkled its way across two hemispheres.

It began when Dessie Mullen of the Bray Wanderers Football Club in Ireland, contacted Gina Miltiadou and John Mullins of the Zahra Media Group, about donating some sports equipment.

“There was a change in the logo design on our jerseys and as a result, a lot of sports equipment was to be discarded. I have known Gina and John for many years. Their office is right across the football ground. I knew they were going to travel to South Africa around Christmas, so I called them up and asked if they would like to take our stuff for donation purposes,” said Dessie Mullen, grounds manager, Bray Wanderers Football Club.

“Dessie informed us about this box of new, unused sportswear he had and since he knows that we are actively involved in a lot of charity work through our foundation, Zahra Helps, he thought it would be a good idea if we could take it to South Africa. We were delighted! We collected around 30 kg of sportswear from Dessie, sorted it all into individual kits, and packed them in our suitcases,” shared Gina Miltiadou, managing director, Zahra Media Group.

And now it was time to identify the perfect club or organisation that could use the equipment. Gina contacted Wilma Lig of the Rotary Club of Hibiscus Coast (D9370) and Sue Paget the CEO of the Rotary Action Group for Family Health and AIDS Prevention (RFHA). They connected with Past District Governor Annemarie Mostert of the Rotary E-Club of Southern Africa (D9400) and a partnership between RFHA and the E-Club was formed to distribute the equipment to the children at a local football club.

Luckily, two new members of the club run the East Rand Excellent Soccer Academy (Eresa) in Johannesburg, which teaches children from the local community football. “When I received a call from Sue informing me about Gina and John bringing all that sports kit, I immediately decided to sign up for this opportunity. I decided to meet up with them and what a privilege it was!” said Annemarie.



*Annemarie Mostert receiving the kit from John Mullins and Gina Miltiadou of the Zahra Media Group*

Eresa is a small football academy in the Daveyton township that focuses on social development of kids through sports.

There are many heroes in this story but the real heroes are those little soccer players whose dreams just found new wings. Behle Bukhali, who plays in the under-15 boys team, was beaming with joy when he received his brand-new sports clothes. “My dream is to play internationally one day, and all this equipment is going to help us with our training.”

Not just boys, the girls’ team was also seen sporting their new jerseys and practising on the field. Zukile, the football director of Eresa, who is also a Rotarian, said that when he first heard about it, he couldn’t believe the news. “We have 120 kids in our academy. Our goal is to give them hope through sports, especially through soccer. We also have a girls’ team in our organisation and the idea behind this was to shift focus on women in sports and make them self-sufficient,” added Zukile.

These kids will soon be playing for the Gauteng Development League (GDL) and they are already beaming with confidence as the new equipment is helping them to practise better. This chain of kindness that started in Ireland will play a small part in inspiring social change, strengthening young people and rippling it back to their communities.

## People of Action in Constantia



# Giving Sport a Chance

When Principal Landie Diamond spoke to the Rotary Club of Constantia (D9350), the members were shocked to learn that Westlake Primary School had no sporting facilities. As a result of the drought, the playing field had become a dusty bed of weeds and thorns.

Inspired, the members decided to act. Led by Past President Richard Rawson, a team of Rotarians investigated what could be done and what fundraising opportunities existed. Guidance and support came from Vincent Van Der Bijl, who had experience in providing a similar facility to a nearby school. He emphasised the importance of the facility not just for sports and recommended that Life Skills/coaching/teacher involvement be incorporated.

Since finance could take some time, the team decided to undertake the project in stages. Initially, the quadrangle was converted into a netball court. The club also funded the provision of equipment and clothing.

Then COVID-19 struck and priorities changed. Fundraising became more challenging and the club had to start investigating what could be done using global grants, crowdfunding and other sources of finance. Thanks to a strong support network in the area, Richard found a donor who financed the levelling of the ground, an all-weather cement hardened soccer field, a 60 metre sprint track and a 170 metre oval running track.

Richard Rawson identified another donor who

financed the installation of a Rhinoturf facility on the field. He also then drew up the plans, arranged a topographical survey and submitted the proposal for approval by the school and the school governing body. Once this was obtained, Richard began a tendering process and appointed contractors for the fencing, nets and artificial grass.

While waiting for the surface to arrive, a team of Rotarians built a grandstand for the school in Richard's garage.

The facility was completed in February 2022. A grand opening was held and attended by District Governor Ian Robertson, who dedicated the facility to Constantia's founding member PDG Lloyd Whitfield. Members of the school governing body and the education department attended, and an article appeared in the local community newspaper which reported the club had provided a "beacon of hope" for Westlake.

Club President Peter Rogers attributed the success of the project to "our engaging the community to bring as many stakeholders together to make this a success. We also engaged the SGB and the school at the outset with our plans. We used Rotary's network of contacts to keep the costs down on the R1.3m project."

At the opening, principal Landie Diamond said, "The field you see here today goes beyond fulfilling the learners' sporting needs. It is meant to change this community, which is bedevilled by poverty and



*The field, which had dried out and become weed ridden during the drought, just after it was levelled.*



*The fence going up after the Rhino turf was installed.*

*The field being used by a sports group.*

unemployment. It is meant to fight crime and other social ills, it is designed not only to enhance the children's physiques but also to train their young minds and build their confidence. Most importantly, it is built to be a bridge between this community and the rest of the world. Overall, it majestically stands here as a beacon of hope and resilience."

The school is attended by 800 learners who live

in the Westlake area and mostly come from areas in the Eastern Cape, Malawi, Zimbabwe and the Congo. The facility should last 12 years. The club has arranged the necessary training and support from the suppliers to ensure that this happens. The local business community has been engaged to provide sports training to the educators and learners.





*Rotarians, along with some of the staff and learners of Carpe Diem School, showed the project to District Governor Ian Robertson during his club visit.*

# Seizing Opportunities

Since unemployment and poverty figures have sky-rocketed thanks to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Rotary Club of George (D9350) organised four soup kitchens to feed those in need. The club initially received donor funds to maintain the soup kitchens over several months, but soon it was clear that this was not sustainable and food gardens were created. After partnering with the Department of Agriculture, the club selected Carpe Diem School as the first to receive a garden.

Carpe Diem School is an integrated education centre for 350 children living with mental and physical disabilities, from pre-school to Grade 12. The centre has hostel facilities for 85 children from distant farming communities and daily meals are provided by the in-house kitchen.

Food parcels are given to desperate families and the school bus service ensures that children can go to their families on weekends if desired. A staff

complement of 101 employees includes teachers, therapists, nurses and physiotherapists.

The school has an annual budget of R95m, half of which is provided by the municipality and the Western Cape Government. The rest is raised from parents, donors and sponsors. A food garden project was started but became neglected due to the pandemic lockdowns.

The Rotary Club of George saw an opportunity to help and reactivated the gardening activities by providing tools, water harvesting, compost and the expertise of its members. This initial phase has a budget of R125 000 and great care has been taken to ensure it follows the principles of sustainability, competitive bidding and proper documentation for auditing.

The main goal of this gardening project is to not only provide food, but also to teach the children about gardening and agriculture.

## UPDATE YOUR DETAILS

Please ensure that we have your club's latest member lists by no later than 20 June 2022. Email them to [rotaryafrica@mweb.co.za](mailto:rotaryafrica@mweb.co.za)



# AFRICA IN BRIEF

In March, the Rotary Clubs of Randburg (D9400) and Singapore (D3310), the Rotaract Club of Noble Pursuits (D9400) and the Interact Club of Khensani's Collection joined Earthly Touch Foundation to lay the foundation for an ecobrick centre for Khensani's Collection. The day included a litter collection by the Interact club, tree planting by the Rotaract club, and the making of ecobricks by various



organisations and schools. The foundation was constructed by Earthly Touch Solution. The centre will have three classrooms, a library, a recreation room and toilets. Pregnant women who are sponsored by the Yes We Can Business Network will attend antenatal and postnatal classes at the centre and 150 students will receive extra lessons on the site. This project will also see creation of 20 temporary jobs and repurposing of 45 tons of plastic litter.



Kura Mazongo received a presidential award from the Rotary Club of Algoa Bay (D9370). Kura, a runner, taught himself to swim and cycle so that he could compete in the 2021 Ironman. Presidential awards are given to individuals who set and achieve a high standard of goals and is approved by the president of a club.



The Rotary Club of Phoenix (D9370) donated gardening equipment and seedlings to Greenbury Primary School for its food garden project. At the handover are President Clinton Samuel, Past Presidents Imantha Arumugam and Kerby Perumal and Principal of Greenbury Primary School, Ms D Pillay.



A Two Rander project of the Rotary E-Club of South Africa One (D9370) has become a fun way to raise funds in support of St Thomas Home for Children. The club members gathered at Windermere Shopping Centre on a Saturday morning and gave shoppers a two rand coin to put towards a can of food to donate to the home. At the collection are Tony Holness, Past President Irene Kotze, AG Ash Maharaj, Iris Canham, Logie Naidoo, Xavania Reddy, Selvie Gounden, Kevin Lachanna, Preba Moodley and Monique Labat.

After a two-year delay, the Rotary Club of Pretoria Hatfield (D9400) was once again able to travel to Lesotho to continue with its community projects in Ramabanta. In addition to the projects undertaken in the local schools, the club initiated an embroidery project to help women generate an income. The embroidery workshop was facilitated by two members of Soroptimist International Pretoria-Tshwane and two embroiderers from Mapula Embroidery. Each learner was given a pack containing fabric, thread, needles, a cellphone purse embroidered by the women of Mapula Embroideries and a book of embroidery stitches. While the project is aimed at skilling women, to our surprise and delight, the group of fifteen women was joined by four men who enthusiastically tackled the embroidery samples. The project will be managed by the Rotary Clubs of Maluti (D9370) and Pretoria Hatfield.





Celebrating Rotary's 117th anniversary in February are members of the Rotary Club of Flamingo-Welkom (D9370), AG Doreen Cloete, Evert Demmer, Jill Lombard, Vicki Harrison, PB Dippenaar and Zack Lombard.

The Rotary Club of Polokwane (D9400) celebrated Rotary International's 117th birthday. The eldest member, Past President Jules Coetzer, cut the cake but explained that no, he was not alive 117 years ago. President Mxolisi Bambo joined him in the cutting of the cake.



## WHICH CLUB MEETS TODAY

Please ensure that we have your club's correct details to enter into our directory by no later than 20 June 2022. Email them to [rotaryafrica@mweb.co.za](mailto:rotaryafrica@mweb.co.za)





The first-ever International Women’s Day was held in 1909 and now, as we celebrate International Women’s Day in 2022, let’s continue to tell the stories of women on whose shoulders we stood. This year’s theme was #BreakTheBias which focuses on creating a world free of bias, stereotypes and discrimination, and creating gender equality in workplaces, communities, schools and more. The Rotary E-Club of Southern Africa (D9400) held an International Women’s Day Mentoring event at the Wanderers Club. The day, which was filled with mentoring, wisdom, laughter and dedicated empowerment of young women, served various entrepreneurs with the space to network and learn from some of our country’s most successful women in business. It also raised over R23 000 in support of a mental health programme that is being undertaken by the e-club.





Lesley Satchel, Joan Huskisson, President Albert Lombaard and Elwin Thompson with Yonela Pokolo (centre), the 2022 recipient of the Ian and Joan Huskisson Rotary Bursary. Yonela wrote Matric at Percy Mdala High School in Knysna in 2021 and is pursuing a Bachelor of Nursing degree at the University of the Free State. This new bursary, awarded to a student studying in a humanitarian field at a recognised South African tertiary institution, commemorates the dedicated service of two members of the Rotary Club of Knysna (D9350), Dr Ian Huskisson and Joan Huskisson. Before retiring to Knysna, the Huskissons were members of the Rotary Club of Cape Town (D9350). They both served as presidents of this club, were recognised with Paul Harris Fellowships and received the Rotary International Commitment to Service award. In Knysna they continued with their excellent track record as Rotarians, utilising their expertise in the fields of healthcare and nutrition in numerous projects. Dr Huskisson passed away in 2019, but Joan remains an active and valued member of the Rotary Club of Knysna. In addition, the club awarded bursaries for tertiary studies to McKayle Benn, Lomious Kuphata, Clareece Le Roux, Nontembiso Njwayi, Willard Nyoni and Yondley Solomons.

## Share your club's stories with Africa

Email stories and photos to [rotaryafrica@mweb.co.za](mailto:rotaryafrica@mweb.co.za)

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

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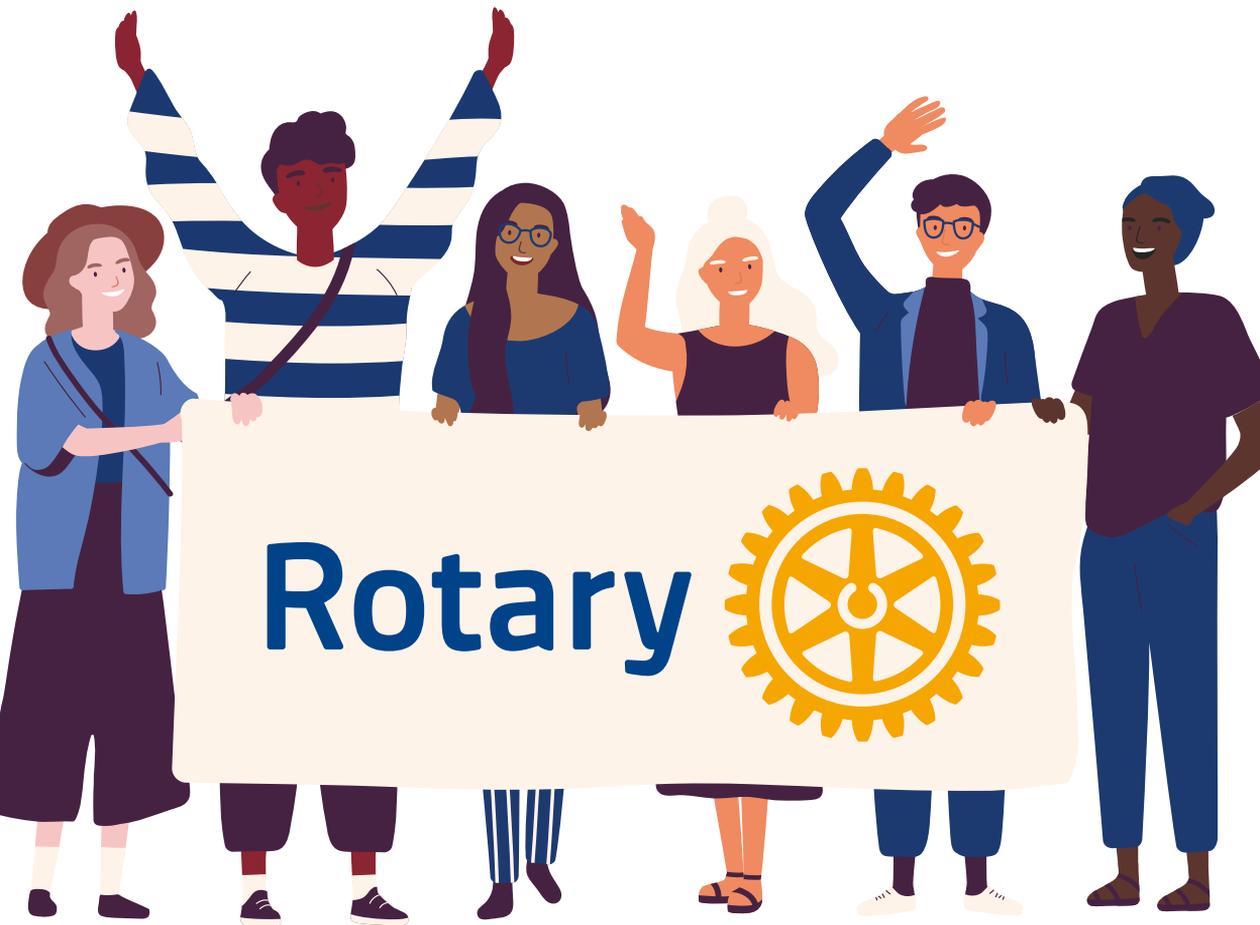
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