

Rotary

MARCH 2025

MAGAZINE

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One small act

March is here, and for Rotary International, that means celebrating Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Month — a time to shine a spotlight on one of the most transformative areas of our work.

This month is an opportunity to reflect on *The Magic of Rotary* and the profound impact we create when we come together with determination and purpose.

Years ago, I experienced this magic firsthand in the Dominican Republic. When a group of members helped people install water filters, three children watched with amazement as dirty water entered one end of a filter and clean water emerged from the other. When we paused the demonstration, one child tugged at my sleeve and pleaded, “Show me the magic again.”

To them, it felt magical. It was also the result of countless hours of effort — planning, transporting, and installing the filters — alongside local partners who were dedicated to making clean water accessible. In that moment, I realized that what seemed like a small act could change residents’ lives. That is *The Magic of Rotary*.

This story is a testament to the incredible potential of our global family to create change. Water projects exemplify our reach, our partnerships, and our unwavering commitment to improving lives. Consider Rotary’s work with USAID. That partnership has enabled us to work with communities and governments to improve access to sustainable water and sanitation services for thousands of people in the Dominican Republic, Ghana, the Philippines, and Uganda.

Partnerships remind us that Rotary’s impact is amplified when we work together. Through our strategic alliance with the United Nations Environment Programme, we’re advancing the Community Action for Fresh Water initiative. This program equips Rotary members with the tools and resources to protect, restore, and sustain freshwater ecosystems.

When we make use of Rotary grants and advocate for clean water in our communities, we create a ripple effect that extends far beyond individual projects.

As we embrace the spirit of the month, I encourage every Rotary member to seek out new partnerships. Collaboration multiplies our efforts and helps us reach more people in need.

Whether it’s joining forces with local organizations, forming alliances with international agencies, or mobilizing your community, every step we take together brings us closer to a world where everyone has access to clean water and safe sanitation.

The Magic of Rotary shines brightest when we work in harmony with others to create lasting good. Together, we can turn dreams into realities that transform lives and communities. The result may feel like magic at times, but we know it’s from the power of our collective commitment and compassion. Let’s harness this magic to make a difference this month and beyond.

STEPHANIE A. URCHICK

President, Rotary International





YOU ARE HERE: Verdi, Nevada

GO WEST: A small community in the Sierra Nevada foothills, Verdi was established in the 1860s as a lumber town to support construction of the Central Pacific Railroad, a segment of the first transcontinental railway. A few miles to the west of the future city of Reno, Verdi served as an important staging stop for travelers headed over the mountains into California.

YEP, THAT VERDI: In case you're wondering, yes, the place was named for Giuseppe Verdi, the famed Italian opera composer, by one of the founders of the Central Pacific Railroad. But beware: Locals pronounce it *vur-DEYE*.

MOONSET: Randy Rascati, a member of the Rotary Club of Sparks, a Reno suburb, captured this spectacular view during an early-morning excursion to photograph wildlife in October 2023. Having received his first camera at age 8, Rascati is passionate about photography and especially enjoys capturing Rotarians in action as a Rotary public image coordinator.

THE CLUB: With 100 members, the Sparks club celebrated its 75th anniversary in 2024 by pledging to initiate 75 hands-on service and leadership projects. Members completed 83 by year's end.

Rotary

MAGAZINE

March 2025

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Empowering Clubs to Create a Ripple Effect of Hope



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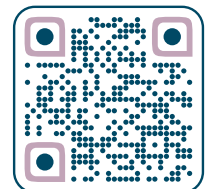
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On the cover: These Rotarians in Washington share a singular focus to stop sex trafficking: (from left) Kristine Moreland, Virginia McKenzie, and Susanna Southworth. **Photo by Grant Hindsley**



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Photo essay by Priyanka Mukherjee

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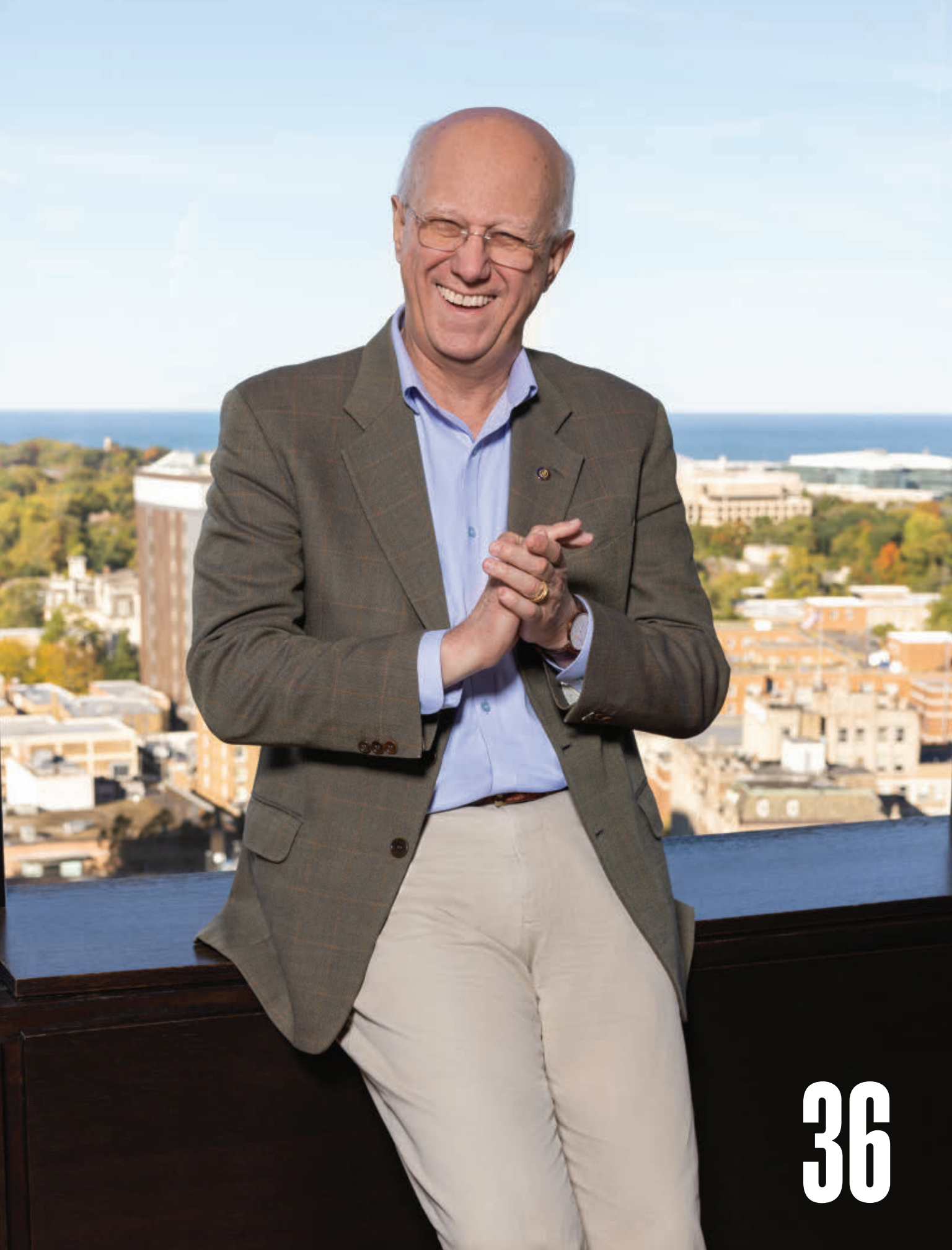
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STAFF CORNER

Sarah Horvath O'Brien

Stewardship supervisor

Farms and cornfields surround the Ohio town where I was raised.

Greenville was a friendly, tight-knit community to grow up in. In college, I met people who had experiences that I didn't have in my small town. My classmates at Olivet Nazarene University near Chicago really opened my eyes to the bigger world. And I wanted to try new things, like my schoolmates had done.

A study abroad program sent me to

Uganda in 2007, where I focused on cross-cultural learning and African history. I also took Swahili lessons. Since the program was service-oriented, I volunteered with a nongovernmental organization that helps people displaced within the country. Despite their dire situation, many people were full of hope and joy. Their optimism inspired me. The experience was transformative, pushing me to pursue a career in service with a focus on peacebuilding and migration due to conflict. After graduation, I got a job with the Chicago-based Pan-African Association, assisting refugees and immigrants from Africa.

My husband and I met through the

Peace Corps, which I joined in 2013. I was sent to North Macedonia as a community development specialist at an NGO that supports marginalized populations. We both came from Ohio and ended up volunteering in the same town. He had a degree in education and worked in a school. We were there two years and got married soon after our return.

My first job back home was with the

Trust for Public Land, an organization known for its land conservation efforts and an initiative to ensure residents are within a 10-minute walk of a public green space. I then pursued a master's in international public service at DePaul University in Chicago because I wanted to work on international sustainable development or humanitarian response.



Rotary crossed my radar, and in 2021, I started out at The Rotary Foundation as a regional grants officer for Europe, Africa, and the Middle East, interacting with grant sponsors and reviewing their applications and reports. In my current role as stewardship supervisor, I lead a team focused on the Foundation's Cadre of Technical Advisers, Rotary members who use their professional and technical expertise to monitor and evaluate Foundation grants and help clubs and districts develop stronger projects. This year, the program celebrates its 30th anniversary. The Cadre has more than 500 advisers from about 80 countries.








In my spare time, I volunteer with the

American Red Cross, supporting the international services division's preparedness and response efforts. I help assess needs and develop resources for cash/voucher assistance programming.

I studied art and acrylic and watercolor painting

during high school and college. I still paint as a hobby. My husband and I are avid fans of films, and we were exposed to many international movies while we lived in North Macedonia. We attend film festivals and track the Oscar nominations and get excited when the films we like win awards. ■

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Letters to the editor

TRAVEL WRITING

What a lovely December issue.

It is good to see RI President Stephanie Urchick acknowledging and appreciating a small but impactful membership initiative by a Rotary club in Chandigarh, India [President's message, "With heart and mind"].

Various alternative sites suggested for travelers are wonderful ["Crowd control"]. Two of them are discoveries for me. But I was surprised to see Pakistan among them, considering the political and social unrest in that country.

Loved reading about astronaut Samantha Cristoforetti's adventurous life and the unique meeting of the Rotary Club of Köln am Rhein ["Where no TikTok has gone before"]. Compliments to Diana Schoberg for introducing us to this magnificent Rotarian.

Travel tips from Jennifer Jones are so useful ["Pack like a pro"]. She has addressed the almost universal issue of packing while traveling.

Thank you for a satisfying reading experience.

Atul Bhide, Thane, India

The Travel Issue is outstanding! Two articles caught my attention.

The heartwarming story of the frog in the well, told by Wen Huang [Editor's note, "The world beyond"], makes me think too many Americans live at the bottom of a well. They are content with simple lives, a few friends, reliable groceries at the local supermarket, and perhaps Saturday football. But so many citizens fail to climb out of their secure habitat and see the whole world and everything it has to offer.

Bashar Asfour's account of his sojourn around Europe in an electric car ["Keep the Buzz going"] reminded me of my own trip across Turkey and Europe 55 years ago. My wife and I had just completed our two-year assignment as Peace Corps volunteers in Iran and elected to return to the States by traveling overland until we reached Ireland. The first country we arrived in was Turkey. The folks there were uniformly generous in helping us find lodging and meals across the country.



Years later I was fortunate to be a Group Study Exchange team leader to District 2440 in western Turkey. Our group had a wonderful experience. We remain in touch with some of our hosts from that trip.

Thank you for this issue. Perhaps it will encourage others to climb out of their secure wells and experience the whole world.

Ernie Bentley, Blacksburg, Virginia

CREW MATES

The article about Samantha Cristoforetti ["Where no TikTok has gone before," December] came at the perfect time for me. About an hour before I read the article, I finished reading American astronaut Scott Kelly's book *Endurance*, about his year on the International Space Station. Samantha and Scott were together in space, and as I read the magazine article, I had flashbacks to Scott's comments about working with Samantha. The photographs in the article are excellent and helped me to better understand what Scott wrote about.

Jon S. Greene, Sparks, Nevada

OVERHEARD ON SOCIAL MEDIA

In December, we profiled Italian astronaut and Rotary member Samantha Cristoforetti.

So happy to see Rotary members making an impact everywhere! 🌍 From Earth to space, Samantha Cristoforetti's incredible journey shows that Rotary's spirit of service and curiosity knows no limits. 🌟 Proud to be part of such a global community! **Mkr Hari** ▶ via LinkedIn

Rotary is now officially out of this world! **Rotary Club of Harrogate Brigantes, England** ▶ via Facebook

CONNECT

COMPASSION IN CRISIS

I just read the great article on the earthquakes in Turkey [“From the ruins,” November]. It’s more than service that drives Rotarians. It’s brotherly/sisterly love for strangers, recognizing the inherent dignity of every human being.

Phil Matous, Grosse Pointe Park, Michigan

PREVENTION MEASURES

Re “Elimination round” [November]: I am a semiretired physician in British Columbia. A lot of my work is with the homeless, hard-to-reach, and vulnerable populations. They are at high risk for cervical cancer; many of the women have been involved in the sex trade.

The logistics of providing pap tests have been difficult, if not impossible. Many of these folk have not had good experiences with the health care system and are loath to engage. None of them has a family physician. However, the new method of testing, involving a simple swab test for HPV, is a game changer. We can show our clients how to do this themselves, or the nurses can help them.

I applaud the emphasis on creating trust and a system with the population at risk. A recent article in *Scientific American* on the successes of vaccination also emphasizes the associated health benefits of establishing a vaccine distribution system.

With our populations, the involvement of clients in journey mapping has shown us where unanticipated gaps and communication failures impact health care delivery. We have done this successfully for hepatitis C identification and treatment and are planning to do the same with the HPV swabs.

Ralph Jones, Chilliwack, British Columbia

FACE THE FACTS

I read with great interest “The other literacy crisis” [November], which explores Rotary members’ efforts to foster information literacy.



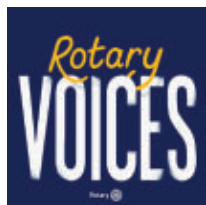
As a public librarian, I recognize the massive scale of this problem. The article says that 68 percent of Americans want to learn how to better distinguish between true and false information online. But in my daily work, I never get anyone asking me this question. In my experience, people want to know how to get an email account or an Amazon account, but they are quite comfortable hanging out in an online world where nobody ever asks them to question their facts or opinions.

There is no issue where this reality is more clear than climate change. We are entitled to our own opinions on how to fix climate change, as long as these solutions do not involve magic wands or extraterrestrials. But we are not entitled to our own invented set of facts about it. Our grandchildren will not have grandchildren if we continue doing that.

Chris Wiegard, Chester, Virginia

“The other literacy crisis” is thought-provoking. It’s surprising how many people, including some Rotarians, repeat misinformation. Currently we have advocates spinning the news rather than presenting facts. We need a fair, objective, and unbiased media.

Kirt Manecke, Highland, Michigan



ON THE PODCAST

The latest book by celebrated author Amy Tan (*The Joy Luck Club*) is *The Backyard Bird Chronicles*, in which she describes how bird-watching brought her closer to nature and helped her see its hidden beauty. On a recent episode of the Rotary Voices podcast, Tan talked about the book and her life as a writer. Listen at on.rotary.org/podcast.

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THE SPECIALIST

Happy as a worm

An animal lover and vermiculturist touts the many benefits of the humble earthworm

Since I was a little boy, I've loved animals, particularly all the small animals — worms, snails, crickets. At university, I wrote my thesis on vermiculture, the cultivation of earthworms to turn organic matter into compost. I never abandoned my passion for animals, and today I'm a veterinarian.

Ancient Egyptians were indebted to worms. The croplands in the Nile Valley were fertile thanks to earthworms. Aristotle called worms "Earth's entrails." And Charles Darwin studied earthworms and their contributions to soil fertility.

The use of vermiculture is widespread. Earthworms have great value, and they can live in so many habitats. You can bring them to almost any kind of environment and they will survive, even in space. Worms were here long before us — we have just learned how to use them.

Alex Arancibia Quintana
Rotary Club
of Los Angeles,
Chile

Veterinarian and
vermiculture
expert

The earthworm we use most often for composting is the red worm (species *Eisenia fetida*). This type of worm reproduces super fast, in just a couple of months. We can have tens of thousands of worms per square meter. Other types of worms require larger areas. It's been thought that like bees, they have a mechanism to self-regulate their population.

At my house, I keep worms. All my kitchen waste goes to feed them. We have a vegetable and fruit garden, and all that organic waste goes to them too. The worms eat the food scraps, and then their excrement, called worm castings, is used as fertilizer. There are several techniques for vermiculture. The simplest is home vermiculture, where you keep worms in a container. People also have worm farming businesses where they have huge fields with worms producing castings.

In Rotary, everybody shares their talents. When I started in Rotary back in 2013, I decided to do the same thing. Our club celebrated when The Rotary Foundation adopted the environment as one of its causes in 2020. We recently created a school vermiculture project. We had about 30 teachers come to a workshop, where we offered our best tips to succeed and shared worms with them so they could start teaching this to their students. The project is named after a saying we have in Spanish, *feliz como una lombriz* — happy as an earthworm. ■



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Learn more at
rotary.org/programsofscale



LEADERSHIP

Careers, connections, and comradeship

Women in Rotary get a professional boost, and it's not all about networking

One day in July, a typical Zoom meeting starts — typical, that is, in every way but one. As Rotary members join from different corners of the world — Nigeria, Thailand, Norway, and more than a dozen other countries — it gradually becomes evident that every participant is female.

This is a networking group for women who have served Rotary as trustees or directors, or in other leadership roles. Organized during the COVID-19 pandemic by Johrita Solari, a past RI vice president and director, the group has about 35 members. The discussions are wide-ranging, addressing everything from ongoing projects to career issues.

The meetings don't have a particular goal. They simply provide an opportunity for connection. "It's about having conversations on how to be better than we are and how to support each other," says Solari, a member of the Rotary Club of Anaheim, California.

The group is one of many avenues that women in Rotary use to form valuable professional relationships. Many women say Rotary helps them establish professional contacts, expand their skill sets, and — perhaps most important of all — find continuing inspiration to reach higher in their careers.

The chance to get an edge in the business world is particularly crucial for women. Despite having cemented their presence in the workforce in many countries, women still often find that subtle or not-so-subtle discrimination gets in

the way of getting ahead. Globally, less than a third of leadership positions are held by women, according to a report by networking site LinkedIn. That's despite women's equal or even majority presence in entry-level roles.

"Because we're a predominantly patriarchal society, I think men tend to gravitate towards their fellow men as opposed to women" in the professional world, says Sybil Bailor, immediate past president of the Rotary Club of Freetown, Sierra Leone. She works in project management and runs a boutique hotel. "There are certain do's and don'ts, spoken or unspoken, when you're approaching men in terms of networking and business," she adds.

And there are countless other challenges the group members describe. For example, there may be unwritten rules about what women are supposed to wear to the office, as one Rotarian learned when she showed up for her new job with a large UK-based law firm.

"On my first day, I had on a red dress," says Funda Gögebakan, immediate past president of the Rotary Club of Eğitim Hayallerine İnananlar, Turkey. "They said, 'Yeah, you look good. But according to our firm's rules, we advise you strongly to choose gray or black ones.'"

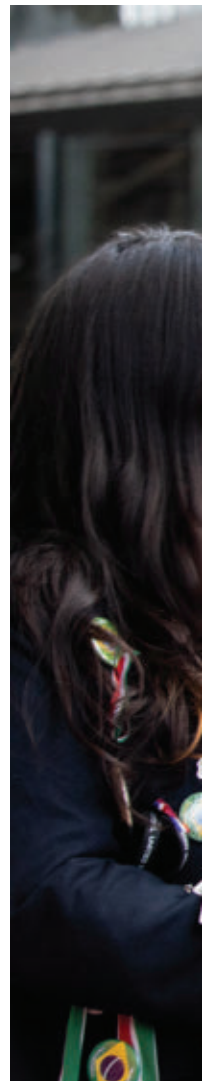
One frustration for women in some countries is being excluded from casual get-togethers outside of work. That's why it's essential for women to find other networking opportunities, says Hyun-Sook Lee, past president of the Rotary Club of Icheon Namcheon, Korea.

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A Rotarian lifts up her neighborhood

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Fundraising tips for clubs

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Against the odds

Visit rotary.org/fellowships to find an interest group for you.





Rotary Youth Exchange alumni network at the 2023 Rotary International Convention in Melbourne, Australia.

“In Korea, after-work gatherings, especially those involving alcohol, are a big part of professional networking and information sharing,” says Lee, CEO of the Icheon branch of a large chain of movie theaters. “These gatherings were often where relationships were built and crucial information was exchanged. I don’t drink alcohol and have rarely attended these events, which has sometimes made me feel like I was missing out on important opportunities to advance my career.”

That’s where Rotary comes in. Besides offering a way to build professional relationships in mixed-gender social settings, Rotary provides many other networking opportunities. About two-thirds of female members who participated in Rotary Action Groups, Rotary

**Rotary’s
leadership model
is more flexible,
and ultimately
more powerful,
than anything
offered in the
corporate world.**

Fellowships, and Rotary Friendship Exchanges did so as a way to make professional connections. As RI President Stephanie Urchick points out, the nature of the organization fosters the deep relationships that are essential for productive networking.

“Rotary was the original networking organization,” says Urchick, who belongs to the Rotary Club of McMurray, Pennsylvania. “Rotary is a place where people all have that DNA that says, ‘We want to serve, we want to make the world a better place.’ That’s not always true in other circles.”

Rotary’s global reach allows for opportunities like Solari’s Zoom call, which serves as both a networking session and a practical lesson in cosmopolitanism. Past RI

Director Suzi Howe, who owned a Montessori school for many years, often called on her Rotary connections to introduce her students to international guests.

“I had a Rotary Youth Exchange student from Russia come and visit the school, and a Nicaraguan children’s choir,” says Howe, a member of the Rotary Club of Space Center (Houston). “The internationality of Rotary is a gift that we have.”

Many women credit Rotary with teaching them to lead. On the Zoom call, Nicki Scott, a past RI vice president and director, says persuading fellow members to get excited about a service project is a true test of leadership. “When you’re working in a volunteer environment as we are, you have to learn to build trust first,” says Scott, a member of the Rotary Club of West England District 1100 Hub. “Being brave enough to step into leadership roles teaches you so much. It’s a priceless MBA of leadership skills.”

Others say the leadership model that Rotary imparts is more flexible, and ultimately more powerful, than anything offered in the corporate world. “When you are in a corporate job, you can command people, right? But not when you are in Rotary,” says Joanne Kam, a past district governor and a member of the Rotary Club of Suntec City in Singapore. She works in real estate and owns a wellness company. “You don’t give out salaries. Everyone is here to serve. So you have to lead and inspire and motivate in a different way.”

Rotary also offers a multitude of opportunities for mentorship, something women often lack in their professional lives. Only about 27 percent of women in senior leadership positions around the world report ever having had a formal mentor, compared with 38 percent



Former Rotary Scholar Hannah Warren (left) founded a fair-trade clothing company in India that supports women with a living wage, health insurance, and child care.

of men, according to a 2024 survey by a leadership consulting firm.

“One of the strongest things that we can do for each other in Rotary is mentoring,” Urchick says. It’s a topic she’s familiar with, having worked for decades as a leadership consultant and an administrator in higher education. “That’s a message I frequently share with clubs. Clubs can take a look at their own culture and ask, How are there ways that we can foster mentorship?”

Ultimately, membership in Rotary confers a benefit that is even more valuable than professional connections or business lessons: a sense of possibility that many women didn’t feel before. As Kam says: “We don’t get paid. The bonus is our own personal growth, our own self-actualization.”

That awareness pervades Solari’s Zoom call. The members have convened to talk about what they’ve accomplished in their careers, but few limit themselves to that narrow metric of personal satisfaction. They speak not just of connections and leadership but of inspiration and imagination.

“I’ve personally gained by being more empathetic, more tolerant, more patient. Rotary teaches you all that,” says Geeta Manek, a past Rotary Foundation trustee and member of the Rotary Club of Muthaiga, Kenya. “It starts with trust. There’s so much more to Rotary than just doing projects. We empower ourselves. We learn so much.”

— ETELKA LEHOCZKY WITH
ADDITIONAL REPORTING

BY SEOHA LEE

BY THE NUMBERS

2/3

Approximate portion of female Rotary members in action groups, fellowships, and Friendship Exchanges who participate in part to make professional contacts

<1/3

Leadership positions held by women globally

2x

Attrition rate of roles on diversity, equity, and inclusion teams within large U.S. firms in 2023, compared with non-DEI roles

Short takes

A new Rotary Fellowship focused on artificial intelligence was added in the fall.



The Rotary Foundation raised over \$1.4 million in support of Giving Tuesday, which fell on 3 December.

The RI Board renewed Rotary’s partnership with the Peace Corps through October 2027.



PROFILE

Environment matters

A Rotarian lifts up her neighborhood

Sharon Adams
Rotary Club of
Milwaukee North
Sunrise

It was Christmastime almost 30 years ago, and Sharon Adams had recently moved back to her hometown of Milwaukee. She lived in a historically Black area once home to social clubs, stores, and entrepreneurs, but by then lined with abandoned homes. One night, Adams sat at the dining room table with her husband, Larry Adams, who is a builder. Lights flickered in a vacant home across the street. She asked Larry what they were. He said people were smoking crack. Not long after, Larry asked her what she wanted for Christmas. “I want you to fix that house, please,” she said.

This conversation snowballed into the creation of Walnut Way Conservation Corp., a resident-led nonprofit the Adamses co-founded to rehabilitate homes, support and operate small businesses, and advocate for residents on key issues. Walnut Way has since built and restored over 100 homes and created over 20 green spaces.

Early in the organization’s formation, Adams got to know the residents of the neighborhood. “I met some of the most wonderful people who love their home, refuse to be defeated, watching block after block being torn down,” she says.

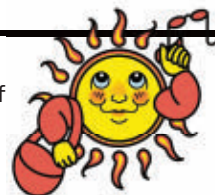
Today, Adams is the executive director of Community Water Services in Milwaukee, where she helps prevent lead poisoning to protect the health of children and pregnant women, continuing her work to improve her community. “If you ask me why I joined Rotary, it’s because I love to work locally and be connected globally in impactful service,” she says.

The house across the street from hers is now a duplex that’s home to two families, and one of the residents is a county supervisor.

— JP SWENSON

Nominations for the Rotary Award for Excellence in Service to Humanity, which honors nonmembers, will be accepted this month. Learn more at rotary.org/awards.

Hundreds of Rotary clubs will take part in an annual Epic Day of Service on 17 May. Join them by registering your club’s project at epicdayofservice.org.



People of action around the globe

By Brad Webber

United States

The Rotary Club of Wellington, Florida, went the distance by staging a military-style race in which competitors wore heavy backpacks filled with donated food items. More than 100 participants, including U.S. Army and Marine Corps representatives, stepped off on 10 November during the Veterans Day weekend food drive, says club member George Kinoshita. The club modeled the event on the military endurance training known as ruck marches that involve carrying weighted backpacks. The club requested a minimum of 8 pounds of food donations, but many runners hoisted nearly double that, filling their bags with canned beans and cranberries, boxes of stuffing, and other foodstuffs. The club later handed over the Thanksgiving meal staples to the town's seasonally operated pantry. The Wellington High School Interact club conducted a 50-50 raffle, and members hoofed it or served as course guides.

Rotary
Club of Wellington



6.7%

Portion of U.S. households that used a food pantry in 2020



Canada

Fourteen clubs in Ontario are participating in a District 7070 initiative to sew reusable menstrual pads for girls in the Dominican Republic led by Janet Thorsteinson, a member of the Rotary Club of Whitby Sunrise. Among the most prolific is the Rotary Club of Campbellford. Since it introduced "Sewing with Janet nights" in September 2023, club members and friends have sewn more than 1,000 pads using sewing machines and fabric that Thorsteinson provided. Nearly two dozen people participate in each session. "The idea of allowing more members to be involved in an international project was very appealing," says Rob Pope of the Campbellford club. Thorsteinson agrees. "Sewing events create opportunities for fellowship, creating a Rotary buzz and a draw for new members to get involved," she says.

Rotary
Club of Campbellford

\$688 million

Global value of household sewing machine exports in 2023



South Africa

You never know what kind of proposals will land in a club's inbox, says Bev Frieslich, a past president of the Rotary Club of Cape of Good Hope. She and her club took to heart an email from a Ugandan Rotarian with an admittedly audacious ask: to help him spring a surprise marriage proposal on his significant other, Barbara Nyakato, while she was touring Cape Town. "When I thought of a romantic proposal to my dear girlfriend, Rotary was an obvious and automatic choice," says Richard Kalungi. He and Nyakato are members of the Rotary Club of Kampala South. On 3 December, Frieslich brought Nyakato to Fish Hoek Beach under the guise of a club function. "Once she overcame her shock that Richard was there, she wept tears of joy and love," says Frieslich, who helped Kalungi with the shopping, organized a dinner reception, arranged a professional photographer, and provided Kalungi with lodging for the escapade. "Whoever said Rotary is boring?" says Frieslich.



12,874

Tourists from Uganda who visited South Africa in 2023



New Zealand

Members of the Rotary Club of Waikato Sunrise are flying high thanks to an annual hot-air balloon festival where they raise money and community awareness of Rotary. The 2025 Balloons Over Waikato event, slated for 18-22 March in the club's hometown of Hamilton, will feature about two dozen balloons along with fireworks, music, amusement rides, and food tents, says Willemien Wennekers, a club member and past manager of the festivities. Rotarians serve as crowd ambassadors and help staff the information tent and VIP area. They also sell merchandise and run a "walk-through balloon" that's inflated but moored flat along the grass, allowing visitors to walk inside, Wennekers says. The \$5,800 raised by the club during the 2024 event was donated to True Colours Children's Health Trust, another of the event's charity partners.



1783

First crewed hot-air balloon flight

GOODWILL

Secrets to successful fundraising

Tips from clubs that lead in Rotary Foundation giving

In places where winter brings snow and ice, a classic Rotary club fundraiser is the polar plunge. It's downright heroic to jump into an icy lake when the outdoor temperature is below freezing, so participants have little trouble getting their friends and families to pledge to donate. But what about when winter temperatures are far above freezing, as they usually are in Alpharetta, Georgia? Do people still get excited — and open their wallets — for a less-than-icy plunge?

You bet they do.

"It's a unique fundraiser here," says Jeff Davis, president of the Rotary Club of Alpharetta. "It's not something you really think about a lot in the state of Georgia, so we usually get a segment on the local news. In 2020 we actually had snow. We've gotten a ton of use out of the pictures of that year's snowy polar bear plunge."

This unconventional approach to fundraising has worked well for the Alpharetta club. Last year's plunge raised more than \$150,000 for Rotary and other local charities, and that wasn't the only benefit.

"It's a great advertisement for Rotary," Davis says. "Folks in the community get a better understanding of what Rotary does. It's more visibility, which helps bring in more members and ultimately more donations."

Fundraising is a year-round activity for many of the clubs that raise the most for The Rotary Foundation. One of them, the Rotary Club of Taipei Nankong, Taiwan, asks all members to donate at least \$100 each year.

"We have a baseline for basic fundraising every single year," says Johnny Hou, the club's vice president and membership chair. "We also encourage members to donate to special campaigns, like polio [eradication], and to specific projects."

One of the club's main projects in 2024 was establishing a free health clinic in Changbin, a rural township in southeast Taiwan. It also collaborated with clubs in Myanmar to open a similar clinic there and is working to launch another one in Thailand.

"We collected donations to fulfill those projects. Our members are motivated and very generous," Hou says. "This year we might double or triple our donations compared to last year."

Other clubs emphasize donating in November, which is Rotary Foundation Month. "During Foundation Month, we hold informational meetings about The Rotary Foundation," says Tomoaki Kurebayashi, a member of the Rotary Club of Toyohashi, Japan. "And we try to announce information about giving at all our meetings. We take care to properly explain the purpose of the donation so as not to overstep the bounds of the request and force the donation."

One of the Toyohashi club's signature projects dates back to 1998. The club works with the Rotary Club of Bangkok Benjasiri, Thailand, and members of Thailand's Indigenous hill tribes to develop housing and educational resources for tribe members. Tying donations to specific projects also has

been effective for the Rotary Club of Edmonton South, Alberta, which was one of the top fundraising clubs around Giving Tuesday 2023. One of its main projects is in Belize building playgrounds and supporting education for girls.

"A number of our members have traveled to Belize to build these playgrounds. Their enthusiasm rubs off on other members and creates financial support," says Brian Rothwell, who served as the club's Foundation chair from 2021 through 2024.

The key to successful fundraising, Rothwell says, is having a strong club with members who believe in Rotary's ideals. He notes that his club's members are diverse in age and gender.

"They're very willing to engage with the community and support international projects," he says. "Our meetings are lively, with many good speakers. Members want to attend, and financial support becomes a natural consideration of belonging to the club."

Rothwell has tried to get as many members as possible to contribute even a small amount to the Foundation every year and has found testimonials from contributing members to be useful. But he cautions against placing too much emphasis on fundraising. Instead, he says, club leaders should focus on building a strong, nurturing culture.

"Clubs should avoid a 'hard sell' when it comes to contributions. We use a gentler approach," he says. "If the club is strong and supportive of its members, the money will come."

— ETELKA LEHOCZKY

Make your contribution to The Rotary Foundation at rotary.org/donate.



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ROTARIAN
EVERY
YEAR

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ESSAY

Against the odds

An endurance athlete with ALS stirs hope — and memories of my dad

By Carol Frey



When I was in my 40s raising a lively sixth grader with my husband, I was getting ready to go to a Sunday school teachers meeting in 1997 when my mom called sobbing with news of Dad's diagnosis.

A onetime high school diving champ in Joplin, Missouri, and retired chemist, my dad had been slurring his speech. He learned at age 67 that he had Lou Gehrig's disease, with a grim prognosis from his doctor. There is no cure for the neurological disorder, also called amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, that takes your body's movement and eventually attacks the muscles that enable you to breathe.

I made it to that meeting at my church but dissolved in tears when someone innocently asked, "How are you?" Between bouts of crying, the best response our family had to ALS was to pull together and get to work. My husband, Ed Miller, hired a contractor to turn an unfinished downstairs space in our house outside Raleigh, North Carolina, into an apartment for Mom and Dad in about six weeks. Their suburban St. Louis split-level away from family was no place for Dad to go through ALS. Within a month after they moved in, Dad needed a ventilator to help him breathe, and Mom and I began a crash course in home health care.

When I first learned of Andrea Lytle Peet, I immediately thought of my family's experience helping my dad through his last months with this disease, which took his voice but not his daily laughter at *Judge Judy* no matter how bad he felt.

Peet's experience with ALS has similarities to my dad's, but also key differences that bring hope to me and so many others touched by the disease, which has an average survival time of two to five years. To start, she's defied the odds and lived more than a decade with ALS. Then there are the 50 marathons she's logged on a recumbent tricycle since her diagnosis.

Duke University neurologist Richard Bedlack has followed Peet's progress as a case of someone who has lived longer than others typically do with the disease, as did renowned physicist Stephen Hawking, who had ALS for more than 50 years.

The disease has a lower number of viable treatments compared with some types of cancer, for example. For most

people, doctors don't know what causes the disease, though a small portion of cases is due to mutations, or differences, in a person's genes. Since the ALS Association's popular ice bucket challenge in 2014 that inspired people worldwide to dump frigid water on their heads to encourage donations, the organization says that it has been able to invest in projects to speed the pipeline of treatments. One recent advance was the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's 2023 conditional approval of the first medicine for a rare form of the disease, targeting a gene mutation. "It's our first blockbuster drug," Bedlack says.

I wondered whether Peet's dedication to vigorous physical activity is what helps her beat back the disease, and, as a retired journalist, I wanted to find out. In her earlier days, Peet led a rowing team in college and ran the Washington, D.C., streets for exercise. She ran a marathon and completed nine triathlons, including a 70.3-mile half Ironman, before her doctor told her in 2014 that she had ALS. The physician advised her at age 33 to put her affairs in order.

"In less than a year, I went from intense activity to walking with a cane," Peet, now in her 40s, told me when we finally sat down for an interview in the cafe of the fitness center where she works out. Her doctor predicted that would happen and prepared her to expect the disease's attack on her breathing muscles. He told her about the abysmal survival rate for most people who have ALS.

"I'd cry when I'd see somebody running on the sidewalk," says Peet, who wore sparkling high-tops with her wed-

ding gown. So many things changed that had been important to her. At first.

She and her husband, David Peet, decided to put their energy into transforming their encounter with the disease into something positive. "Can I have hope again? I believe in hope. I do," she says.

She left an urban planning career, the couple moved to North Carolina where she grew up, and Peet started working out again to build strength for a goal she had in mind. A couple of members of my Rotary club first met Peet at the fitness center, and the rest of us learned of her story when she came to speak at one of our meetings. She showed us her low-riding three-wheeler that allows the seated rider to lean back and can be easier to operate for people who have limited mobility.

Blowing past her doctor's life expectancy estimate, Peet achieved her goal to complete a trike marathon in every state, finishing the 50th event in May 2022 in Alaska.

Her stamina, triumph, and longevity have inspired me and other Rotary members and many others to donate to research to find a cure or treatment that helps people with ALS live longer. Early on, she and her husband formed the nonprofit Team Drea Foundation to raise money for research on a disease that affects an estimated 30,000 Americans and 3,000 Canadians, to give two example countries. So far, by joining other families affected by ALS, the foundation reports raising \$1.4 million.

The foundation is funding a new leg of Bedlack's research through the Duke ALS Clinic on similarities among people who recover a significant amount of the movement they had lost, a rare group he calls "ALS reversals." Researchers can't explain why some people's health unexpectedly improves after initially meeting the criteria for a diagnosis of progressive ALS, but he worked with researchers from other institutions to identify genetic features in these people that may suggest a pathway to treatment with further study, which Peet's foundation supports.

In 2023 the five Rotary clubs in Cary, North Carolina, raised money for ALS research by screening a documentary about Peet, *Go On, Be Brave*. In 2024, members of my Rotary Club of Cary-Page celebrated with Peet when she received the Order of the Long Leaf

**Blowing past
her doctor's life
expectancy estimate,
Peet achieved her
goal to complete a
trike marathon in
every state.**



Pine award, the highest award for service in North Carolina, granted by the governor. We also made her an honorary member of our club.

Margaret Sophie, of the Rotary Club of Cary MacGregor, is among those raising money, by competing in golf and cornhole events. And Sophie represents Team Drea when it's time for the real estate agency where she works to make decisions about its charitable giving in the community.

Peet "has no staff, nobody paid, no office. Every transaction I do in real estate includes a portion for Team Drea," Sophie says.

In turn, working with the Team Drea Foundation has been its own source of inspiration for Sophie and other Rotarians. "When I wake up tired and don't really want to get up to face that tough little world out there, then I think of Andrea with her smile, and I've just got to get up," she says.

Seeing Peet exercising in the fitness club pool pushes Julia Cobley, a past president of the Cary-Page club, to keep working out herself and "to live each day with kindness and integrity and gratitude for the health we've been given."

Peet describes in a biography on her foundation's website how she should

already have lost that feeling of working her muscles and lungs hard while cycling outside. "These simple joys are denied to people with ALS as they are forced to watch themselves die, muscle by muscle."

My family relates to Peet's family. Her mother, Sandra Lytle, wore her own emotional pain on her face when she listened in as her daughter relived her grief in our interview. My dad wrote notes when he could no longer talk and eventually learned to communicate better with a computer. Our family, including my brother, who drove two hours every weekend to be with Dad, shared responsibilities through his hospitalizations and rehab stays, taking him for occasional excursions and even a beach vacation. In the days following the Fourth of July 1998, the three adults in our household kept vigil with Dad in a hospital where he took his final breaths, while our daughter went on an outing with a neighbor's family.

In less than two years after his diagnosis, Dad died peacefully without pain. Mom spent much of the first month grieving with lights turned off, before a visit to her Missouri hometown to reconnect with old friends helped spur her reentry into life. In her mid-90s, Mom said she was amazed to learn about the quality of Peet's life with ALS.

When Dr. Bedlack heard about Peet's attempt to complete 50 marathons, he said, "Give me some notice if you get to number 50. I'll come to see that." He hadn't counted on number 50 happening on remote Prince of Wales Island in Alaska, but he had become a witness to Peet's extraordinary determination and in 2022 booked flights, boats, and vans for the three-day trip.

"Andrea is an amazing human being who happens to have ALS. She could easily live past the 20-year mark," Bedlack says. "I tell patients there are so many things we can do now to slow this disease down. And you can fight to live a great life." Beyond mental health support and physical therapy, doctors are exploring gene and cellular-level therapies, potential medicines, and robotics and other technology to help with eating and communication.

Is Peet living a great life? Without hesitation, Bedlack says, "She's living one of the greatest lives I've ever seen." ■

Carol Frey, a member of the Rotary Club of Cary-Page in Raleigh, North Carolina, is a retired journalist who worked odd hours against deadlines for 35 years. Her dad encouraged her career, saying she could do anything with enough hard work.



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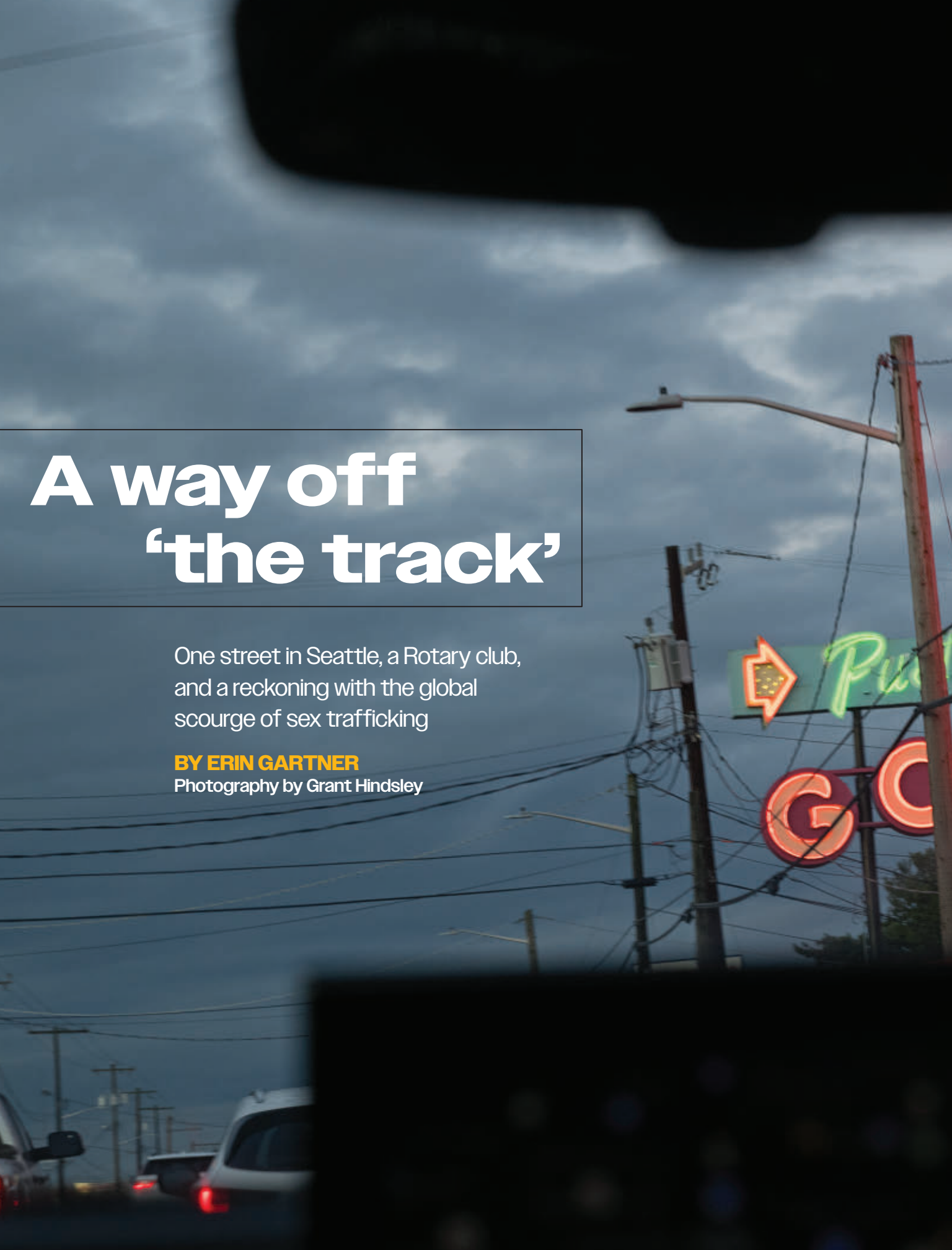
Selected fellows receive full funding for a master's degree or postgraduate diploma in disciplines related to peace and development. Our fellows lead peacebuilding efforts worldwide. Rotary members play a key role in recruiting candidates from their communities!

A way off 'the track'

One street in Seattle, a Rotary club,
and a reckoning with the global
scourge of sex trafficking

BY ERIN GARTNER

Photography by Grant Hindsley



Nites
Inn
MOTEL

NO VACANCY

FREE WIFI HBO
LOW DAILY
REMODELLED

LOW
RATE



RIGHT
LANE

BUSES
ONLY

BICYCLES OR
SIDEWALK FINE



Dozens of gunshots pierce the quiet, jarring me awake at 3:30 a.m.

It's a warm night in early July, must just be fireworks, I say to myself before falling back to sleep. Later, I learn about the 30-plus cartridge casings that police found at the intersection three blocks from my home in north Seattle. A neighbor's security camera captured what I had missed while sleeping: the explosion of gunfire, muzzle flashes, wisps of debris blasted off a wall, a group of hooded shooters emerging from a dark alley firing handguns without pause: tat, tat. Tat, tat, tat.

Seconds earlier, a man had approached a woman dressed in a top, panties, and stilettos. Another man confronted him, pulled a gun, and the firefight ensued, with the targeted man leaping almost comically as if to avoid being hit. Police said at least one woman was shot and injured during the melee, one of several shootings last summer at the corner of Aurora and 101st.

Police attribute much of the violence to sex traffickers jockeying for turf. Girls, some not even teenagers, have been forced into the commercial sex trade here. The roadway has for decades been associated with the city's seedier elements, like drugs and prostitution, but sex trafficking has flourished and become far more conspicuous in recent years. The city accused two of the motels along the strip of facilitating prostitution and forced them to close over the summer of 2023. Not long after, the activity moved south along Aurora Avenue North. It landed in the surrounding neighborhoods, including mine. All out in the open. The streets and the parked cars — the neighborhood itself — became the new motel.

"It was insane how quickly it erupted," says Andrew Steelsmith, another neighbor whose security camera footage of the disturbances that year seemed to touch a nerve in the city. The former Coast Guard law enforcement officer and his family have lived here since 2016. At least one

bullet has hit the fence behind his house. The videos he's posted over the years track the accelerating chaos. What started as one or two cars passing each night when he moved in turned into more than 100. "There were five, six, or seven women standing in the road, and a line of traffic waiting like a drive-through," he says.

Frustrated by the spike in violence and his now weekly walks with neighbors to pick up fast-food wrappers, used condoms, and other trash, Steelsmith began piecing together his dashcam and security video, including a time-lapse sequence showing the astonishing number of cars rolling through. He posted it online, and it quickly sounded a wake-up call, grabbing the attention of the community and local officials. "I released that video, which really showed what everyone was missing when they were sleeping," he says.

It showed me, too, what I was missing when my eyes were closed.

Just a few miles north of Seattle's glittering downtown, home to some of the world's richest tech companies, this turbulent section of Aurora Avenue North burrows through block after block of drab urban terrain, auto body shops, nondescript shopping centers, restaurants. The roadway is completely different from the days when it was part of U.S. Highway 99, or the Pacific Highway, a celebrated road-trip route that ran from Mexico to Canada in the early 20th century.

Walk a couple of blocks west, though, toward Puget Sound, and you enter another world, a neighborhood of 1920s bungalows, newly built townhomes, and large single-family houses, some near collapse and others selling for over \$1 million. On a typical Saturday afternoon, children run and bounce around well-kept playgrounds, dogs excitedly play fetch in adjacent parks, and soil-smudged neighbors tend to their plots in community gardens billowing with flowers and leafy vegetables. Couples push strollers as they walk home from coffee shops, breweries, and grocery stores.

My husband and I moved to the area three years ago. After more than a decade working in journalism in Chicago, I was looking for a career change and found a role in corporate communications with Amazon in Seattle. We canvassed the city for months looking for a home in the city's pricey housing market and landed in a neighborhood bordering Aurora Avenue North.

Like many neighbors, I didn't know how deeply some of the area's problems ran or how they'd shifted in recent years. Then luxury cars with tinted windows began slowly circling day and night, dropping off young women in tight, short dresses or other scant clothing. Gunfire became a nightly occurrence. We no longer felt safe walking in the evenings.

One chilly fall morning, as I walked to a bus stop along Aurora on my way to work, I rounded a corner and came face to face with a girl who looked no older than 15. She was balancing on red stilettos and wearing a red lace negligee. It was 7 a.m. on a Thursday. I boarded the bus stunned and watched her slowly cross the street. I looked for resources online but felt helpless as I read warnings about how violent sex traffickers were often watching the women from nearby vehicles.

A couple of months later, in early 2024, a bullet went through my neighbor's home in the middle of the night, barely missing his father-in-law as he slept in a guest bedroom. Nearby homeowners gathered later that week to share information, and I met Steelsmith. He had just left a meeting organized by Virginia McKenzie, an executive recruiter and longtime Rotarian who helped charter the Rotary Club of the Pacific Northwest Ending Sex Trafficking in 2021. The club grew out of a project within the Rotary Club of Seattle and, I was surprised to learn, is among a handful of cause-based Rotary clubs in the U.S. focused on human trafficking.

McKenzie had seen Steelsmith's video and asked him to attend the community meeting. There, he discovered an ecosystem of nonprofits, prosecutors, law enforcement officers, and others who were working to address the issue — and to help survivors of sex trafficking. I connected with McKenzie, too, and became a member of the young club. Thus began my journey of trying to understand this dark side of Seattle and many other cities across the U.S., along with the strength of survivors and the healing power of community. Or as McKenzie put it: "When you bring awesome people together, something awesome is going to happen."

Opposite top: The Seattle skyline is seen from a hotel that serves as a temporary shelter for sex trafficking survivors.

Bottom: A security camera captured a gunfight likely sparked by the sex trafficking trade on Aurora Avenue North.



The troubled Aurora Avenue North corridor is known as “the track,” an epithet earned over decades. But particularly since the COVID-19 pandemic, the signs of forced sex work have become more visible. Dozens of the women walk the corners day and night in the summers. Nightly violence has followed, with pimps clashing over turf and high-speed chases between luxury cars. Police suspect most of the shooters are from outside of Seattle, and many of the women officers encounter were brought here from other states.

Seattle Police Detective Maurice Washington works in the department’s human



VIDEO STILL: COURTESY OF I. JORDAN



“I didn’t know what to do [about Seattle sex trafficking]. ... I just tried to figure out who’s working on this, and how can I be helpful and bring my Rotarian friends with me.”

trafficking vice unit and is a 16-year member of the local FBI office’s Child Exploitation and Human Trafficking Task Force. He says a de facto sex trafficking corridor runs through Washington state, Oregon, California, and Nevada, largely along Interstate 5, which replaced the old Pacific Highway and is just a few blocks east of Aurora Avenue North.

Washington says Aurora Avenue has earned a national reputation as a place where prostitution goes largely un-

Above: Virginia McKenzie is a founder and charter president of the Rotary Club of the Pacific Northwest Ending Sex Trafficking.

checked, in part because of Seattle’s historically lax enforcement policies. He also notes a cultural shift toward people being more accepting of some aspects of the sex trade. “The difference we’re seeing now is in the volumes of younger and younger persons involved,” Washington says. “And people doing the trafficking crimes know

it’s very difficult to investigate without cooperation from a victim.”

Alex Voorhees often works with detective Washington as the lead prosecutor for cases involving human trafficking and the commercial sexual exploitation of children, through the King County Prosecuting Attorney’s Office. She says trauma runs deep with trafficking victims, many of whom have been subjected to physical and psychological abuse for years. As a result, many are hesitant or scared to testify against their traffickers. “We’re often dealing with people with a considerable amount of trauma,” Voorhees says. “It’s important to understand that even when we deal with adult victims, they’ve often been exploited since they were 13, 14, or 15 years old.”

Washington and other experts stress that any child is at risk, especially from traffickers online who promise lavish gifts, money, and affection, but that the children most targeted are often from foster care and households with significant troubles.

Together, Black, Asian, and Hispanic girls make up more than half of underage victims in King County, with Black girls dramatically overrepresented, according to a report from prosecutors. Their data shows that from about 2013 to 2022, white men made up 73 percent of defendants accused of buying or attempting to buy minors for sex in King County, and over a similar period of time, 44 percent of the victims in all commercial sexual exploitation of children cases were Black. (In King County, Black residents make up 7 percent of the population.) Young men and boys are also trafficked, though most cases involve female victims.

“The buyer pool is pretty much the flip side of our victims. These are men of affluence, of means, and have the disposable income to buy a human being for their sexual gratification,” says Voorhees, who has over 20 years of experience as a prosecutor.

She notes that even most adult victims are young, nearly all between the ages of 18 and 25. “There’s a narrative in some communities that says there’s no harm in this, that the woman wants to be doing this. But if you look back into the history of where our survivors come from, this wasn’t a choice. Who at the age 13 says, ‘I want to drop out of high school, prostitute, and give all my money to a man who wants me to do this?’”

Debra Boyer is a cultural anthropology researcher whose work has focused

for decades on sexual exploitation and how to help victims in Washington state. She says the Seattle and King County data aligns with national trends and that sex trafficking is an issue in metropolitan areas across the U.S. “You don’t find anyone in this industry who wasn’t groomed or sexually abused in some way. People involved in prostitution are coerced and have been the victim of a lot of violence,” says Boyer, an affiliate faculty member at the University of Washington.

She says that Washington state has been at the forefront of anti-trafficking efforts. In 2003, the state became the first in the U.S. to criminalize human trafficking on the state level. State courts, including the Washington Supreme Court, were the first to rule against backpage.com in lawsuits filed in several states that took aim at the website, which the U.S. Department of Justice described as the internet’s leading forum for prostitution ads, including ones featuring minors, when it was finally shut down in 2018. And under a new state law, all school districts must offer students instruction in sex trafficking awareness and prevention by the 2025-26 school year.

Seattle had repealed its anti-loitering laws in 2020, after criticism that they had long been misused by police to target minorities and harass people experiencing homelessness. Police, however, said the prostitution loitering law was one of the few tools they had left to approach potential victims of sex trafficking after a shift away from charging women with prostitution starting around 2012.

In mid-2024, amid the spike in violence along Aurora Avenue North, business owners and residents successfully pushed the Seattle City Council to adopt a reworked anti-loitering ordinance that shifted enforcement efforts toward traffickers and buyers. The revised loitering law took effect in October, but its impact remains to be seen. And survivor-focused nonprofits and government agencies say funding is still needed for additional services to help women trying to exit the sex trade.

Ultimately, Boyer says, it comes down to deterring demand. “The pipeline is always full of victims because there are always customers. That’s why you have to go after sex buyers. They’re the cause,” Boyer says. “We protect the men here. Look how long it has taken to get rape taken seriously, or domestic violence. Prostitution is another form of this gender violence.”



A troubled corridor

A Ingraham High School

Seattle City Council member Cathy Moore, who represents the area, said in August that students at Ingraham High School and Robert Eagle Staff Middle School (**K**), some as young as 12, had been the targets of solicitation and recruitment near their schools.

B 117th–127th streets

Most of the trafficking has occurred along this 10-block span.

C Shuttered motels

Two motels were forced to close by the city in

summer 2023 after being accused of facilitating prostitution.

D UW Medical Center–Northwest

E Evergreen Washelli Funeral Home & Cemetery

The streets around the cemetery have been high-traffic areas for the sex trade.

F Viewlands Elementary School

G Aurora Avenue North and 101st Street

Scene of the July shootout between groups apparently competing for control of the corner

H 95th–109th streets

Violence shifted here after the two motels were shut down.

I Seattle Police Department North Precinct station

J Aurora Commons

This drop-in day center serves people experiencing poverty and homelessness. The organization is also well aware of the trafficking and can help people find resources.

K Robert Eagle Staff Middle School

L Cascadia Elementary School

The Rotary Club of the Pacific Northwest Ending Sex Trafficking has become a hub of information and action. The list of members is a who's who of experts and others personally and professionally connected to the issue — some with specialties I was shocked to learn even existed, like a doctor who removes branding tattoos that traffickers use to mark women.

And there are people like Jessie Tallent, a past president of the club, who is a crisis clinician working with marginalized people. She now works with families in acute crisis with behavioral concerns for their kids, particularly cases where sexual abuse or sexualized behaviors have occurred, including sex trafficking.

Tallent engages with youth at a clinic that provides behavioral health services through a state program, but she also visits youth centers, juvenile detention facilities, and even jails to be a consistent, trustworthy face in environments where she could encounter victims. She says traffickers can be relatives, or they can be strangers who target victims online or by infiltrating their family or social circle.

"These girls are singled out at parties, at the mall, walking home from school. Traffickers know what to look for: the wounded bird — the person who's either really trying to hide in a group or pushing themselves to the front for attention," Tallent says. "These are kids seeking validation. They're vulnerable, maybe in foster care or with a single parent who is never home, so they tend to double down on people who do pay attention to them."

That's when the grooming begins, she says. "Your new 'boyfriend,' who is much

older, is giving you praise. He's scary sometimes, but he tells you you're special and more mature than your friends. This will be interspersed with fun things — a party where there's alcohol, there's pot. Getting kids addicted to something early on is a big draw for traffickers."

She says the signs of grooming often come out as defensiveness among teens, especially about new friends or a new love interest. To a parent or guardian, it may just look like teenage rebelliousness but with an unclear source influencing the new behavior. "Traffickers want these kids to lead double lives — to go to school, to have dinner with their parents — so nothing seems out of the ordinary," Tallent says. "But to hide the new shoes, the expensive gifts, and their new phone."

Once that grooming takes hold, girls can quickly lose control. "Traffickers will, for example, ask for nude pictures early in the relationship," Tallent explains. "So these kids get trapped real quick, and that's the goal of traffickers."

She says a cultural shift needs to happen, where the girls aren't the ones bearing the shame and blame. "We need to stop saying it's the oldest profession," she says. "It's the oldest form of exploitation."

Prosecuting traffickers and obtaining justice for victims in criminal courts poses many challenges. Attorney Susanna Southworth is taking another approach. She files civil cases on behalf of survivors of online exploitation, child sexual abuse, child pornography, and sex trafficking. Working with other lawyers, she has sued online platforms and hotel franchisors and franchisees that, her cases argued, benefited financially from participating in a venture that they knew, or should have known, was engaged in sex trafficking. She, too, is a past president of the Pacific Northwest club.

She says after larger websites including backpage.com were shut down, some traffickers turned to the dark web to advertise services. Many still use dating or escort sites and social media to advertise, but with coded language or emojis to indicate expected payment for sex acts. Traffickers treat it as a business and the young women as a reusable commodity.

Her work has uncovered details of how the traffickers maintain systems of control. The girls have to meet quotas, say \$1,000 a night, requiring 10 or more customers over

a 12-hour period, Southworth says. The girls must make those numbers to receive food or shelter, for example. "Traffickers will also use drugs to keep the women awake and get them addicted. Then they withhold drugs or beat the girl if they don't meet the quota, and do it in front of the other girls to set the tone, a warning to everyone else that the trafficker is in charge."

During the grooming stage, a dynamic known as "trauma bonding" can develop in which a trafficker looks to fill the holes in a vulnerable victim's turbulent life: the need for a friend, a boyfriend, or a father-figure. "It's so strong that a survivor — despite having possibly been beaten to near death by their trafficker and enduring psychological abuse — will still go to great lengths not to testify against them," Southworth says.

The trauma that follows, especially from a long grooming period that can last months, can cause memory suppression and mental disorders that impact a person's ability to recall the abuse, she says.

Southworth co-founded the law firm Restore the Child PLLC to help trafficking survivors and victims of child sexual abuse material. Through the civil suits, survivors are awarded financial damages and achieve, she hopes, a measure of justice. She is district secretary for Rotary District 5030, which encompasses the Seattle metropolitan area, and serves on the boards of the Rotary Action Group Against Slavery and the nonprofit Child USA, a think tank devoted to ending child abuse with a focus on statute of limitations reform.

Those limits on the amount of time a person has to file a legal case are a major hurdle given that it can take years for survivors trafficked and exploited as children to come forward, if they ever do, Southworth says. Providing support for them to do so is about more than just building a case, says Washington, the Seattle police detective. "You're plucking them from a dysfunctional family structure, so to speak, where housing and food are often provided. If they're going to step forward and cooperate with law enforcement, they have to give all that up," he says.

"All of those structures have to be put back into place: housing, education, medical, therapists and counseling," he adds.

Opposite: An attorney who works with trafficking survivors, Susanna Southworth is a member and past president of the club that is trying to stop the forced sex trade.

51%
**Share of reported
U.S. sex trafficking
victims under age 18**



Traffickers “withhold drugs or beat the girl if they don’t meet the [nightly] quota, and do it in front of the other girls to set the tone, a warning to everyone else that the trafficker is in charge.”



One night about 20 years ago, Kristine Moreland and her fellow volunteers walked through a homeless encampment of about 15 tents in a wooded area under a Seattle bridge, offering food and wellness checks around 1 a.m. The night started off like most others. Then, from inside one of the tents, Moreland heard someone whispering: “Help. Help.” Moreland bent down and, peering through the opening, saw a naked woman. The woman asked Moreland to take her someplace safe. After getting her to a hotel room, Moreland saw that the woman was covered in bruises. She listened as the woman told of being repeatedly raped by multiple men over several days while being forced to stay in the tent. “It was then that I understood the vulnerability,” Moreland says.

In the two decades since, Moreland, a former mortgage broker, has volunteered to help sex trafficking survivors and people without homes, a population where service providers are likely to intercept trafficking, she says.

Moreland is also a survivor. She was trafficked when she was 8 years old by a neighbor who’d been entrusted to watch her as her mother worked long hours. Moreland shared the story for the first time publicly in 2024, speaking through tears to about 500 people gathered for the annual luncheon for the nonprofit StolenYouth.

Moreland, who joined the Pacific Northwest club not long after, recently took another leap: She let her mortgage license expire and devoted herself full time to the nonprofit she founded. The organization, called The More We Love, provides hotel stays and other immediate emergency services to vulnerable youth and adults, including those trying to exit the sex industry. She runs the organization with a fellow survivor, Sarah Ann Hamilton, who was trafficked along Aurora Avenue North starting at 12 years old.

Moreland’s mantra is to “be someone’s constant,” a regular source of support. She’s built connections with people she’s helped, including the survivor she discovered in that tent two decades ago: “We walked together for many, many years.”



Above left: A trafficking survivor, club member Kristine Moreland founded The More We Love, which helps sex industry survivors. **Below left:** Sarah Ann Hamilton, another survivor, is director of survivor services at The More We Love. **Opposite:** An inspiring new mural adorns Aurora Avenue.



Virginia McKenzie describes it as a bolt of lightning, a particular moment during a panel on human trafficking that her former Rotary club hosted in 2015. One of the presenters told about a local sting operation in which a fake advertisement was posted online offering sexual services, purportedly from a 15-year-old girl. Within two hours, the ad attracted 250 calls. Another presenter revealed that many of the people who bought sex from children in King County worked at local businesses and that the peak time when people solicit sex online is during the workday, at 2 p.m.

"I couldn't believe it. I just kept thinking, 'Do I sit next to someone who looked at this? Do I work with them?'" McKenzie remembers. "I didn't know what to do, so I started looking at all the service providers in Seattle. I went to their trainings, their galas, their talks — everything. And I just tried to figure out who's working on this, and how can I be helpful and bring my Rotarian friends with me."

She connected with the peacebuilders

committee in the Rotary Club of Seattle, where she helped organize a project to train over 1,000 firefighters, EMTs, and other health care workers how to recognize and respond to signs of trafficking.

That work led her to form the Pacific Northwest club. Its signature effort today is to provide similar education to students, teachers, and caregivers in partnership with 3Strands Global Foundation. Together, they recruit other Rotary clubs to apply for \$300 grants to help provide the training in their communities. "Education is sustainable, low-cost, and high impact," McKenzie says. "With education, these young people are less likely to grow up to be exploited, or to be exploiters, and they're watchdogs for their friends."

The club is also exploring the creation of a public awareness campaign to install anti-trafficking ads on billboards and city transit ahead of the 2026 FIFA World Cup games hosted by Seattle and more than a dozen other cities in North America.

The club works in collaboration with the larger, global Rotary Action Group

Against Slavery. Together, they provide a forum for discussing solutions to trafficking and the other social challenges — from homelessness to domestic violence — that make people vulnerable. Alongside those with deep knowledge and others, like me, who had little background beyond a desire to help, I've found a place and purpose here too, helping tell the story.

Amid last summer's gunbattles, the city closed off the entrance to 101st Street from Aurora Avenue North to vehicle traffic using concrete barriers, a move meant to disrupt the sex trade there and associated violence. Whether that and the revised loitering law have long-term effects remains unclear, though traffic has slowed and much of the gunfire has quieted since.

On a recent walk, I adjust my route to wander through the intersection. I notice something new: a mural of swirling color has appeared covering the corner building that had been scarred by bullet holes. On one side, keeping watch over Aurora Avenue, is the face of a girl blowing bright yellow stars from her hands. ■

If you are in the U.S. and suspect someone is being trafficked, please call the National Human Trafficking Hotline at 1-888-373-7888. In Canada, call the Canadian Human Trafficking Hotline at 1-833-900-1010. To learn more about how to protect children and teens from traffickers and identify signs of grooming, visit 3Strands Global Foundation at **3sgf.org**. To find out more about the Rotary Club of the Pacific Northwest Ending Sex Trafficking, visit **rotarypnw.org**.



Things to know about Mário

Meet your
2025-26 Rotary
president,
**Mário César
Martins de
Camargo**

After a day of interviews with the committee vetting candidates for 2025-26 Rotary International president, Mário César Martins de Camargo returned to his hotel and waited. And waited. “It’s an elimination process,” he says. “The anxiety level reaches sky high.” When he got a call asking him to return to Rotary headquarters in Evanston, his first thought was that he’d made some sort of mistake. As he walked the few blocks to the building, he mentally reviewed everything he’d said. When he finally realized why he’d been called back, it was an emotional moment, he says. “The nominating committee stands up and applauds you, and you are invited to say your first words as president. Mine were, ‘Are you guys sure?’”

They were, of course. De Camargo’s Rotary résumé goes back decades. A member of the Rotary Club of Santo André, Brazil, since 1980, he served as his club’s Rotary Youth Exchange officer the following year at age 24 and as its president in 1992-93. He was governor of District 4420 (part of Brazil’s São Paulo state) in 1999-2000, Rotary Foundation trustee in 2015-19, and Rotary International director in 2019-21. He has also served Rotary as an RI learning facilitator, committee member and chair, and task force member. De Camargo and his wife, Denise da Silva de Camargo, also a Rotarian, are Major Donors and Benefactors of The Rotary Foundation.

Professionally, de Camargo was president of the printing company Gráfica Bandeirantes and has been a consultant to the print industry in Brazil. He has served as president and chair of several printing and graphics trade associations. He has been on the board of Casa da Esperança (House of Hope), a medical center in Santo André sponsored by his Rotary club that sees more than 200,000 patients a year.

That’s his official biography. But we wanted to know, *What’s de Camargo really like, what makes him tick?* Here’s what we found out.

His biggest regret is that he stopped playing piano.

From the ages of 8 to 21, de Camargo played piano. He even attended a music conservatory for nine of those years. While in Germany apprenticing at a press manufacturer, he attended German language classes at the Goethe Institute. The school had a Steinway piano that “to me, was the Rolls-Royce of pianos,” he recalls. The school’s dean allowed him to play it under one condition: he perform for the school when his training was finished. “It was the last time I played the piano,” he says, explaining that family and work obligations began to take more of his time. “I really regret not being able to continue because it is a self-rewarding experience.”

He believes printers have a noble cause.

Printing presses have their origins in China, where movable type was invented in the 11th century. When Johannes Gutenberg created the mechanized printing press in Germany 400 years later, it launched the mass production of books, newspapers, and more throughout Europe. “The press and the publication of books and ideas changed the world,” de Camargo says, allowing scientific findings to be shared more widely, decreasing censorship as it was harder to destroy a “dangerous idea,” and giving the general public access to educational materials.

De Camargo’s business used to print 25 million to 30 million items per year: coffee table books, romance novels, automotive industry manuals — “you name it,” he says. “We were replicators of ideas. Printers have a mission to reduce ignorance.”

Rotary is the best leadership training he’s ever had.

De Camargo has been on several boards in his industry, but it was through Rotary that he learned how to be a leader. “Rotary is the best school of leadership I’ve had,” he says. De Camargo says Rotary taught him to speak in public, one of people’s biggest fears, along with flying. (“If I was still afraid of flying and speaking in public, I wouldn’t be president of Rotary International, because all we do is public speaking and flying!” he says.) He also learned when to stop talking and listen. “You have to pay attention to what people are telling you,” he says. “It is an exercise of humility.” And he learned how to motivate people who aren’t getting paid to perform a task. “When

you're motivating volunteers, you don't have that tool of payment. The only tool you have is inspiration, motivation, and challenge to make them a better person."

▶ **This is the most memorable Rotary advice he's received: Never ask for anything, never refuse anything.**

As co-chair of the Host Organization Committee for the 2015 Rotary International Convention in São Paulo, de Camargo received these words of wisdom from John Kenny, a past Rotary president who was The Rotary Foundation trustee chair at the time. "That has oriented my Rotary journey," he says. "I never refused any job that was given to me by Rotary or The Rotary Foundation, but at the same time I offered myself for different positions without knowing what the result would be," he says. "I could never fathom that I would be here someday."

▶ **People call him Membership Mário.**

"It's not rocket science," he says. "If you look at our numbers, some people say we have stabilized at 1.2 million. I say we have stagnated at 1.2 million." The word "stabilize" makes people sit back and relax, he believes, whereas the word "stagnate" makes people want to sit up and do something.

The puzzle, he says, is figuring out why membership is increasing in some areas and decreasing in others. "Maybe it's demographics, maybe it's economics, maybe it's an age thing," he says. "The challenge motivates me so much because it's a mosaic of different regions and different performances that makes it very challenging and at the same time very attractive."

What works in Korea may not work in Germany, and what works in Germany may not work in Brazil or the U.S., he says. "We have to be humble and very attentive to the different scenarios."

▶ **The 2025-26 presidential message is *Unite for Good*.**

"I think 'unite' is a very powerful word," he says. "It's a very powerful word in a divided world."

It's easy to sow division, he says, but much harder to find common ground. "We are always looking for somebody's defects," he says. "We should be looking for somebody else's talents." That's where Rotary comes in, offering the opportunity for people to connect with others in their community and around the world.



RI President-elect Mário César Martins de Camargo and 2024-26 RI Directors (from left) Christine Etienne, Alain Van de Poel, and Daniel V. Tanase at One Rotary Center in Evanston, Illinois.

De Camargo has been on several boards in his industry, but it was through Rotary that he learned how to be a leader. "Rotary is the best school of leadership I've had," he says.

▶ **He believes a focus on the environment will draw younger members.**

Before de Camargo, the last RI president to come from Brazil was Paulo V.C. Costa in 1990-91. Costa is best known for the environmental program he started, Preserve Planet Earth, which launched shortly before the 1992 United Nations Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. Had Rotary kept the environment as a central focus then, de Camargo says, "we would be far ahead, bringing a visionary agenda to the world." As a Rotary director, de Camargo helped secure approval of the environment as the newest area of focus. "We still have a lot of room to grow," he says.

In 2025, the annual UN conference on climate change, COP30, will be held in the Brazilian Amazon, and de Camargo sees a place for Rotary to get involved. "Rotary should have its logo, its brand, associated with environmental protection in the Amazon," he says. "We have a unique opportunity to do that."

▶ **He gets to know a city by walking.**

"When I go to Chicago or New York or São Paulo or wherever, when I have the

chance, I just put on my tennis shoes and I start walking," he says, "just seeing the colors, the smells, the different foods, the people." It's the best way to feel like a local, he says. "You cannot do that by Uber or by driving a car. You're not part of the environment. But when you're walking, you feel like you are." But he doesn't stop at the city. De Camargo is a fan of hiking. "I love the outdoors, to be able to breathe fresh air," he says.

▶ **Yes, he once dressed as Super Mario.**

Step into de Camargo's office at One Rotary Center in Evanston and you'll notice a collection of figurines based on Super Mario, the Nintendo character. "That was the idea of Trustee Akira Miki, who was a director with me on the Board in 2019-20," he says. "He immediately called me Super Mario, and it started catching." At the 2024 Rotary institute in Toronto, de Camargo dressed up as the character and engaged in a mock battle with Past RI President Holger Knaack, part of a Rotary Foundation fundraiser that netted \$115,000. "I put the moustache upside down, but I'll get better," he says. "Whatever it takes to raise money for The Rotary Foundation." ■

GENEVA JOURNAL

THE NEXT GLOBAL LEADERS

YOUNG TRAILBLAZERS
FIND INSPIRATION
AT ROTARACT UN DAYS



The first Rotaract UN Days brought about 200 young people to the United Nations Office at Geneva for four days of inspiring discussions about human rights, health, economic development, peace, and science — and of course some fun (they're Rotaractors, after all). We asked three participants in the 30 October-2 November gathering to tell us about the experience, their takeaways, and what it was like to enter the halls of the historic Palais des Nations.

THE ROTARACTORS



ZAYNE SINCLAIR

- Entrepreneur, food security, sustainable development
- Rotaract Club of Bermuda
- Hamilton City, Bermuda

HANEEKAH RAHIL

- Law graduate, advocate for peace and climate justice
- Rotaract Club of Cinnamon Gardens
- Dehiwala, Sri Lanka



LAMECH OPIYO

- Climate activist
- Rotaract Club of Nairobi Central
- Nairobi, Kenya

DAY ONE

ARRIVAL AND WELCOME



That's me, Haneekah!

+ my Rotary friends

Shahd Elshazly & Noël Kutz

Landing in Geneva feels surreal. Over the past year, I've traveled to events in Dubai, Mexico, and Chicago. But Geneva's been on my bucket list for as long as I can remember. Even better, I quickly run into my friend Christina from my Rotary district. What are the odds? Even better still, it's her birthday. We head into the city center to do some sightseeing and sample Switzerland's legendary chocolate. Let me tell you, it did not disappoint. We head back for the welcome cocktail ceremony and after running into more old friends, we celebrate Christina's birthday at a rooftop bar with a gorgeous view of the city. — **ZAYNE SINCLAIR**

In 2020, I was deputy secretary general for the National Youth Model United Nations in Sri Lanka. I made a promise to myself: One day, I would walk through the halls of the United Nations Office in Geneva. But little did I know that Rotary would bring this dream to life. I'm so excited to see inside the iconic Palais des Nations. — **HANEEKAH RAHIL**

As an environmentalist, I'm very interested in working with the UN in Nairobi, where I'm from and the home to the United Nations Environment Programme, which partners with Rotary on clean water projects. So, I have dreamed of visiting the United Nations Office at Geneva for a long time.

— **LAMECH OPIYO**



DAY TWO

UNITED NATIONS OFFICE AT GENEVA

I stop to take a picture in front of the United Nations building. I'm not exactly sure why I feel compelled to do it, maybe as a silent promise to myself that one day I'll contribute to service on this scale, far beyond Bermuda's pink shores. The morning session begins with a welcome address by Tatiana Valovaya, the first woman to serve as director-general here. She shares that only 20 percent of global diplomatic roles are held by women, a sobering statistic. Another eye-opener: Even Grammy-winning singer Gaby Moreno has self-doubts at times. The Rotary celebrity ambassador is speaking about the migration crisis, particularly in Latin America, when she acknowledges once doubting whether her music could make a difference. But she realized that just bringing people joy and comfort matters. My takeaway: Even the smallest acts can create ripples of hope. Then, as if to make that point, Moreno closes out the session with a heartfelt performance of her music. — **ZAYNE SINCLAIR**

In her speech, Rotary President Stephanie Urchick puts an emphasis on youth as leaders of today — not just of tomorrow. That is incredibly powerful and resonates deeply with me. Later, I have the honor of sharing a panel discussion with her. During my own speech on youth in humanitarian action, I discuss the role young people play in driving solutions to global challenges. It is my vision to see Rotaract working toward peace and reconciliation in my home country of Sri Lanka after decades of civil war. — **HANEKAH RAHIL**

I don't just get to meet Gaby Moreno, I have the honor of sitting on the same panel as her for a discussion about human rights, immigrants, and refugees. I've interacted with so many artists, but what stands out with her is how she uses her songs to advocate for human rights and to create something positive, which I find inspiring. She is very approachable. She shares her insights and encourages me to do the work that I do. Apart from the serious side, we are having lots of fun. The first evening we attend a VIP dinner and awards ceremony with cocktails. There is a DJ, so of course we dance a lot. Sometimes you almost forget to sleep! — **LAMECH OPIYO**



Gaby Moreno performing!

DAY THREE

WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ORGANIZATION

We are welcomed by the organization's Director-General Darin Tang with remarks on innovation as a driver of global progress. That is particularly impactful for me, as I focused on intellectual property law in my graduate studies. — **HANEKAH RAHIL**

There is a lot of discussion about how we can apply technological advances and innovations to environmental and sustainability projects and maybe to drive climate action projects as well. Two of the speakers introduce us to WIPO Green, an online platform for technology exchange that supports global efforts to address climate change. Now I'm thinking about how I can apply some of these technologies, for environmental monitoring, for instance. — **LAMECH OPIYO**

DAY FOUR

CERN (EUROPEAN ORGANIZATION FOR NUCLEAR RESEARCH)

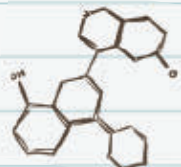
An outing to the birthplace of the World Wide Web! The CERN international physics laboratory on the Swiss-French border is also home to the world's largest particle accelerator and more than 12,000 scientists from over 70 countries exploring the origins of the universe and more. Its legacy is not just in scientific discovery but in proving that collaboration can overcome division. As CERN's former Director-General Rolf-Dieter Heuer told us a day earlier: "Science has no agenda; it belongs to everyone." I am struck by the similarity with our Rotaract values — collaboration, innovation, and the drive to create a better future. — **ZAYNE SINCLAIR**

Quantum tennis, anyone? Or maybe quantum karaoke? The interactive exhibits at CERN's Science Gateway bring science to life. Beyond the weekend events, I'm also embracing the adventure in me and taking time to explore Switzerland's stunning beauty. Visiting Jungfrau (aka the Top of Europe) and beautiful Lausanne is a dream come true. It reminds me of the joy of stepping into the unknown, conquering fears, and discovering new stories.

— **HANEKAH RAHIL**



Lamech Opiyo
+ Rotaractor Daniel Zavala



A close-up, profile shot of a young woman with dark hair tied back, wearing a grey school uniform jacket over a light blue shirt and a dark tie. She is looking down intently at her work. The background is blurred, showing a classroom setting with a green storage bin and a stack of papers on a desk.

Essential makers

Photography by
Priyanka Mukherjee

Since 2018, members of the Interact Club of Lotus Valley International School in Noida, India, have been manufacturing menstrual pads for girls and women, using a process they perfected at their school outside of Delhi.

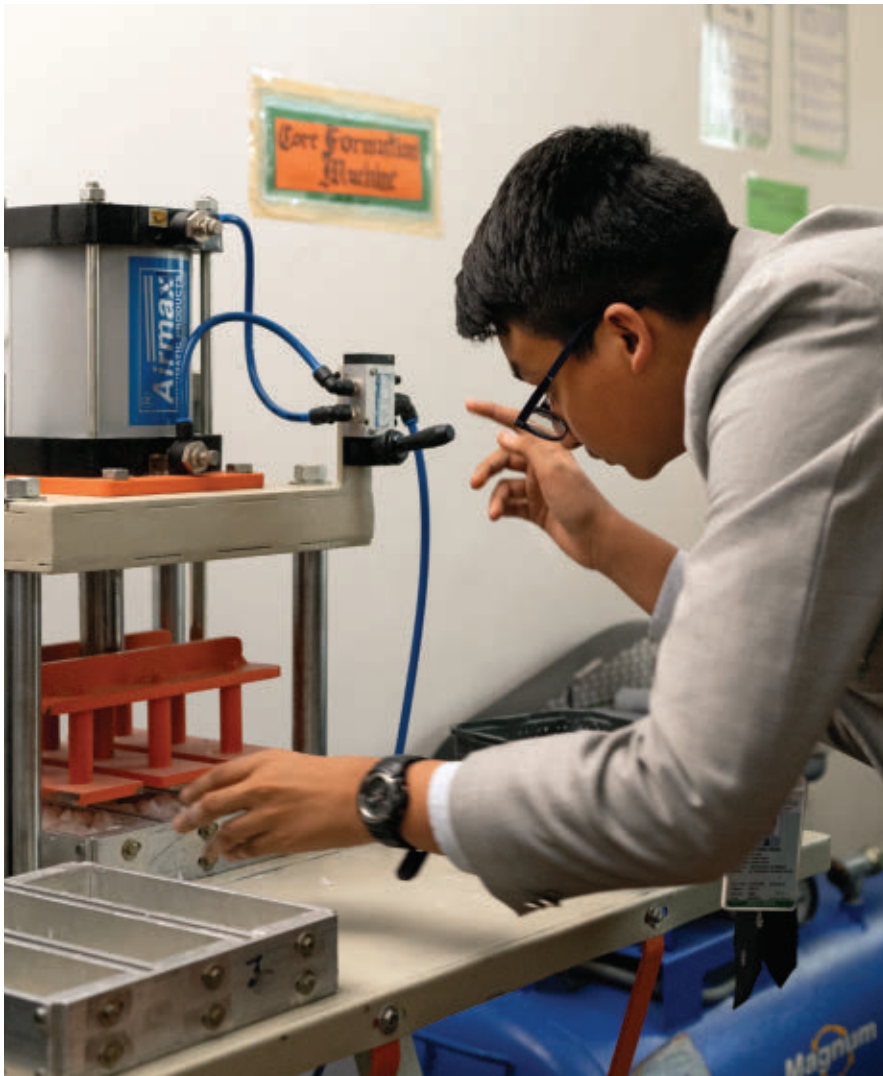




Measure, mold, compress



Left: Working in a room dedicated to the project at the school, Pranet Kumar combines wood pulp and raw cotton in a 3-to-1 ratio. **Bottom:** Reyansh Pasari places the composite material into rectangular molds and compresses it into thin pads. “Menstrual hygiene is something we need to address as a whole community and not view it as solely a women’s problem,” he says.



Wrap, seal, sanitize

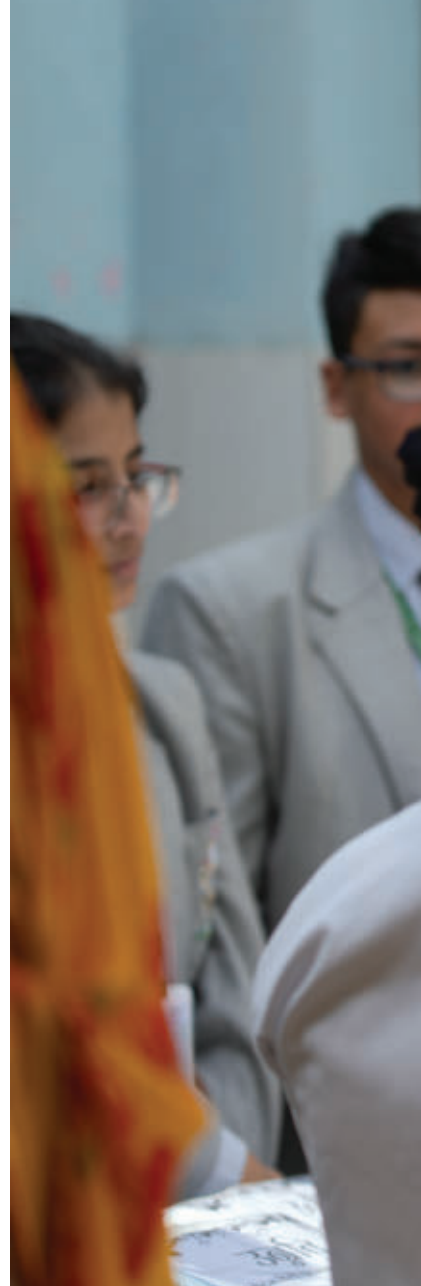


Opposite top: After a film is applied to prevent leakage, Arshita Raj wraps a layer of nonwoven cotton cloth around a pad, which is then sealed with a heat press. **Opposite right:** Shaza Rizvi loads the pads into a machine to sterilize them before distribution.



Package, transport, distribute

Below: Dhanvi Khandelwal (left) and Riya Dafauti load boxes of menstrual pads ready for distribution. **Bottom:** The club members give the pads to people at area orphanages and schools, in villages, and, as pictured here, at a community health center. Many girls and women can't afford or aren't aware of menstrual pads, instead using rags or other material they have on hand to absorb their menstrual blood, explains Saira Puri (left). When the material, like discarded paper, is not sterile, it could cause an infection. "If you just talk about it, you can actually save a woman's life," she says. **Right:** Club members produce an average of 350-400 pads per month to distribute to women and girls.





**Since the project began
in 2018, club members
have made an estimated
30,000 menstrual pads.**

OUR CLUBS

VIRTUAL VISIT

The right stuff

Rotary Club of Space Center (Houston)

At the height of the space race in the early 1960s, thousands of aerospace engineers, scientists, contractors, and support crew members flocked to Houston, turning 1,600 acres of what was mostly cow pasture into the bustling research hub known as the Manned Spacecraft Center, now the Johnson Space Center. The transplants needed social connection. They needed an outlet to improve their rapidly growing community. They needed a Rotary club.

When the Rotary Club of Space Center (Houston) formed in 1964, about a third of its 35 charter members were connected to the space program — including a manager in a General Electric department that designed and built equipment for Project Apollo; an executive from McDonnell Aircraft, which supplied the Gemini and Mercury capsules; and the IBM chief in charge of the acres of computers needed to program space flights. The club's early members also included a real estate agent who found homes for NASA families, an assistant superintendent of a burgeoning school district, and a veterinarian who treated astronauts' pets.

It even attracted astronauts L. Gordon Cooper, the youngest of the seven original astronauts in Project Mercury, and Frank Borman, commander of both Gemini 7, which at the time had the longest space flight, and Apollo 8, the first mission to leave Earth's orbit and circle the moon.

"I wanted to become a member because I'm very much interested in the community around here," Borman said in a 1966 cover story about the club in this magazine. "I think a Rotary club is an important asset to housing developments like these."

The club today retains its proud heritage, ties to the space center, and interest in the community. Its members still include a superintendent from that same school district and plenty of people with connections to the space program.

Alan Wylie, a longtime club member, served 18 years as a flight controller for NASA and another 25 as a contractor. He graduated from Texas Tech in 1967 with a major in mathematics and a minor in physics, and just two years later was at his console for the first manned lunar landing. His team also plotted navigation for moon flights, including the critical reentry angle into Earth's atmosphere.

"I was very fortunate to graduate when I did, which enabled me to be a flight controller when we first landed on the moon," he recalls. "My specialty was navigating the lunar landing."

In 1985, Owen Morris, a club member who had led the team that developed the lunar module for the Apollo missions, proposed the idea for the club's National Award for Space Achievement. The club set up a special foundation to work with

NASA, the military, and industry leaders to nominate and select recipients.

Today, the black-tie gala is held in downtown Houston and includes a number of categories in addition to the prestigious National Space Trophy. In 2018, for instance, William Shatner, the actor who portrayed Captain Kirk in the original *Star Trek* TV series and movies, received the Space Communicator Award.

For the 2022 Rotary International Convention, members organized tours for attendees of Space Center Houston, the official visitor center, and tours of the Johnson Space Center for VIPs, says club member Suzi Howe, a past RI director and aide to 2025-26 RI President Mário César Martins de Camargo. Astronauts Jessica Watkins and Bob Hines addressed the opening session from the International Space Station, and Wylie presented in the House of Friendship about Apollo 13 and its harrowing return to Earth after an explosion.

The club has often been a popular way for traveling Rotary members and guests to make up meetings. While in-person visits have declined in recent years, virtual attendance at the club's hybrid meetings is still considerable, especially when an astronaut is speaking or the program includes updates from NASA.

"During COVID I would invite all kinds of people to come if I knew a program would be of interest," Howe says, "especially high school kids if we had an astronaut. How often do they get to meet an astronaut?"

In addition to honoring their space roots, members also boldly go on international service projects. Howe traveled



Members of the Rotary Club of Space Center (Houston), including (from left) Stan Galanski, Suzi Howe, and Alan Wylie, honor the club's past and present connections to the space program.

to São Paulo to visit six literacy projects supported by the club. Another effort in Nicaragua supported the construction of a school and microfarms that provide food and income to families.

The club has carried out many other projects closer to home. Soon after receiving its charter, the club established a public library in the community that grew next to the space center, collecting thousands of donated books from residents, renovating a building, constructing shelving, painting, and landscaping. Two members even served on the first library board. Today, the club supports children and older residents through a variety of projects and helps stock a food pantry.

It's also active in Rotary Youth Exchange, hosting more than 60 students since the 1980s. Wylie served as a club and district Youth Exchange officer for many years before retiring to a mentoring role and managing the district's Youth Exchange database.

"I've always enjoyed working with young people," he says. "These are special kids trained to be ambassadors, and that is what they become. An investment in Youth Exchange is an investment in the future."

And who knows? Given the nature of this club, perhaps one of those exchange students will be part of the next giant leap forward in space exploration.

— ARNOLD R. GRAHL

A WHO'S WHO OF THE SPACE PROGRAM

Notable contributions by Rotary Club of Space Center (Houston) members past and present:

■ **L. Gordon Cooper** (1927–2004) was one of the Mercury Seven, the first class of American astronauts. "I practically had to pinch myself every day to think that I'm really here, because it was really an opportunity to really do some pioneering, because we had no idea what we'd find in space," he said in an oral history project. "Every day was truly an 'Oh, gee whiz!' day." Cooper piloted the last of the Mercury spaceflights in 1963, orbiting Earth a record-setting 22 times.

■ As commander of the 1968 Apollo 8 mission, **Frank Borman** (1928–2023) led the first team of astronauts to orbit the moon, describing its surface as a "vast, lonely forbidding expanse of nothing, rather like clouds and clouds of pumice stone." He said of the dark side of the moon: "To me, it looked more like the burned-out gray ashes of a barbecue." During the orbit, he carried a Space Center Rotary club banner, which is part of the Rotary International archives today.

■ **Alan Wylie** and his team plotted navigation for moon flights. The Apollo 13 mission tested their mettle, as an onboard explosion forced major changes in the flight path and their efforts to get data on the craft's precise location were hampered by the need to conserve power. "We had to tell the flight director to turn the power back on for five minutes so we could collect data," Wylie recalls. "As soon as they had turned it on, they [the crew] were urgently asking us, 'Do you have enough, do you have enough?'"

■ **Owen Morris** (1927–2014) was chief engineer on the team that developed the lunar module for the Apollo moon landings. One of the challenges, he said, was having to forget about aerodynamics; a streamlined design didn't matter in space. But the module had to be lightweight and efficient. Some thought the resulting boxy craft on thin legs resembled a spider. "It wound up being what a lot of people thought was a fairly ugly vehicle," Morris said in a NASA oral history project. During the near-death Apollo 13 mission, the lunar module served as a lifeboat for crew members on their return trip to Earth. Morris also helped develop the idea of carrying the space shuttle on top of a 747 to ferry it across the country after landing.

DISPATCHES FROM
OUR SISTER MAGAZINES
ROTARY GREAT BRITAIN
AND IRELAND

A helping hand in Afghanistan



↑
Midwives and doctors receive training to become instructors for the Helping Babies Breathe program in Afghanistan.

While the world's attention has focused on Ukraine and the war in Gaza, Afghanistan has become a forgotten conflict zone to many.

Everything in Afghanistan changed on 15 August 2021. After 20 years of Afghans living under a democratic government, the Taliban entered Kabul and took over as President Ashraf Ghani and a small entourage fled the presidential palace for neighboring Uzbekistan and then moved on to the United Arab Emirates. Afghanistan lost most of its professionals and 90 percent of its gross domestic

product in the first year after the Taliban takeover.

For the country's Rotary clubs of Kabul City, Herat, and Jalalabad, the impact was severe. According to Rameen Javid, a founder and charter president of the Kabul City club, at least half, if not most of its members either left the country or lost their jobs, along with their sense of security.

"Additionally, a rush of internally displaced refugees to major cities overwhelmed the three clubs' ability to make the impact they were used to," says Javid.

In Kent, England, the Rotary Club of Maidstone Dawn Patrol forged a close link with Javid and the Afghan Rotarians. Maidstone club member Pat Jeffery, who served as club president in 2021-22, says she felt the group could not allow Afghanistan to become a forgotten conflict zone while a huge need for humanitarian aid existed.

"As I came to the end of my presidency, I was concerned that whilst, quite correctly, Ukraine was dominating Rotary thoughts, Afghanistan seemed to me to be being forgotten. News of the treatment of

women and the ban on education for girls worried me,” Jeffery says. “I found details of the Kabul club, including Rameen’s contact details. Members agreed that we should make contact to ask in what way we could help while emphasizing that we are a small club.”

A small-scale partnership began between the Maidstone and Kabul clubs. The Kent Rotarians sent money to the Kabul club to help cover the cost of an operation for a boy whose hands were badly injured. A member of the Kabul club performed the surgery.

“The money was used to help the boy so that he is able to work in the future,” Jeffery says. “Members of our club promised we would do as much as we could to help the people of Afghanistan who face some of the worst deprivations in the world.”

Despite the adverse conditions in Afghanistan, Rotarians are working on several projects there. Afghanistan is estimated to have 35 million people and has a young population, with 70 percent of its citizens under the age of 30.

“Being at war for the past 40 years, much of Afghanistan’s infrastructure, including the education and health system, has been destroyed,” Javid says. “In the past 20 years, there was a nation-building effort, but when the Taliban took over the country just about all progress stopped.

“Because most of the aid agencies and foreign embassies have left, the economy is at a standstill. Poverty has increased to the point that people are selling their children or their organs just to survive. Afghanistan is in dire need.” ■

A roundtable discussion about expanding the Helping Babies Breathe training program included members of the Rotary Club of Kabul City, doctors who volunteer as Helping Babies Breathe instructors, and doctors from Kabul University Medical School and the Afghanistan Islamic Medical Association.



Building a future

To address the immediate needs in Afghanistan, Rotary clubs have focused on three areas: education, health, and income generation.

EDUCATION

With schools closing, millions of students have suffered, especially girls. In 2022, the Taliban enacted strict laws restricting girls’ education. Girls cannot go to school past the sixth grade. The clubs are working on four projects:

- **Girls cyber school:** The curriculum for grades one to 12 has been placed online so students across Afghanistan can access it. Over 80 percent of Afghanistan has internet coverage and sufficient access to electricity. The online course content enriches the government school’s curriculum, which benefits students of all genders. Clubs also will negotiate with the government to receive permission for girls in grades seven and above to learn at home but go to schools twice a year to take exams. If the girls pass, they would receive a high school diploma.

- **Girls enrichment programs:** These initiatives will enhance areas of education, including STEM and foreign languages, that have been lacking after many teachers left the country.

- **Vocational training:** Rotary clubs are working with students to improve their literacy and numeracy. The lessons include vocational and entrepreneurship skills to help them earn money and be independent. The training can be in health, beauty services, crafts, or engineering.

- **Scholarships:** Clubs run a scholarship program for select students in private schools. These scholarships are provided by an Afghan club or a district. In addition to covering the full tuition (\$250 per year), the grant also provides students

with school supplies and STEM-related materials.

HEALTH

With the health system broken, many people cannot afford basic care. The clubs are proposing these projects:

- **Mobile clinics:** A mobile clinic would visit different places every day to see patients who don’t have access to doctors, primarily due to economic reasons.

- **Health fund:** A fund would cover surgery costs for a selected number of critically ill patients who need financial assistance and require minor surgeries that can be done in Afghanistan. The cost would be no more than \$1,000 with doctors encouraged to perform the operation free of cost or at a significantly reduced price.

- **Training doctors and nurses:** Short-term courses for health professionals would be brought to Kabul to boost their expertise.

INCOME GENERATION

To give dignity to people by allowing them to earn money through their own skills, the clubs are proposing two projects:

- **Arts and crafts:** Clubs around the world could purchase Afghan products (paintings, calligraphy, glass, silk goods, jewelry, felt, carpets, dried fruits, and saffron) and sell them. This way, the clubs raise money for themselves, and Afghan artists sell their items.

- **Exhibitions:** Clubs from Afghanistan would receive a free booth at various Rotary events to sell Afghan products. Money raised would be returned to Afghan artists.

Amplifying impact



Mykola Stebljanko publishes *Rotariets*, the Ukrainian magazine for Rotary news, from his home in Odesa, a port city on the Black Sea. In February three years ago, when Russia began an all-out war against his country, Stebljanko, a member of the Rotary E-Club of Ukraine, kicked into high gear. Amid the barrage of missile attacks against his city, he coordinated relief efforts with his fellow Rotary members in Ukraine through video calls. At the same time, he reached out to me and other editors of the Rotary Global Media Network, which consists of the flagship *Rotary* magazine and 33 independent regional publications, briefing us weekly on the situation and the extensive relief efforts launched by The Rotary Foundation and Rotary clubs around the world.

The members of the Rotary Global Media Network responded vigorously with in-depth coverage of the devastating humanitarian crisis brought on by the war and the importance of Rotary's assistance. The stories we published reached Rotary members world-

wide, galvanizing them into action. By the end of 2024, The Rotary Foundation and Rotary clubs had raised tens of millions of dollars in contributions that helped provide essential support to people in Ukraine. This is one of many examples of the effectiveness of *Rotary* and our sister magazines in rallying Rotary clubs globally.

In the spring of 2022, an article in this magazine about a Rotary-supported program in California called Music Mends Minds caught the attention of the Rotary community. The initiative promotes the use of music as a viable therapy to delay the symptoms of neurodegenerative dementia. Soon after publication, similar projects cropped up in other parts of the United States and the world. Similarly, after flooding struck Brazil in April 2024, the reporting by the Rotary regional magazines in Brazil as well as in Great Britain and Ireland helped spur an outpouring of support.

The list goes on. Each story is meticulously researched, written, and produced. We are a network of professional writ-

ers, photographers, and graphic designers who are passionate about telling your stories — to amplify the positive change you are creating in the world. For me and my fellow editors, it's been rewarding to see that our high-quality publications help strengthen our organization by fostering a sense of belonging for our members, increasing our membership, and offering a window into the Rotary world for the general public.

Surveys show that a majority of readers feel the flagship and regional magazines strengthen their connection with Rotary, allowing them to better understand the organization. "The magazine is a primer for Rotary members, keeping us informed on the who, what, when, where, why, and how of the world," says Sylvia Whitlock, a trailblazer who was the first woman to serve as president of a Rotary club. "Without the magazine, everything is just happenstance. Any good primer is beside you all the time."

WEN HUANG

Editor in chief, Rotary magazine

READERSHIP SURVEY

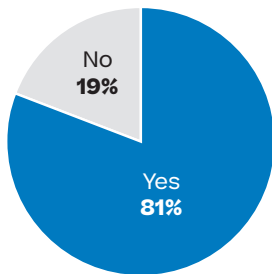
What readers want

With the changing media landscape, members of our family of magazines are using technology to reinvent themselves while also finding ways to improve the quality of their publications to better serve readers.

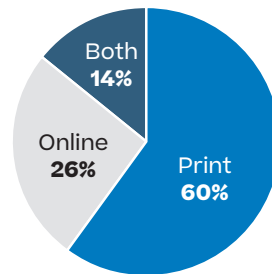
To help us better understand our audience, RI's Research and Evaluation team surveyed more than 10,000 readers of *Rotary* or one of the 33 regional magazines. The research, conducted in the summer of 2024, focused not only on readers' opinions and their suggestions for the publications but also their general interests and reading habits.

Here are combined results for *Rotary* magazine and the regional publications (some numbers are rounded):

Do you regularly read your magazine?



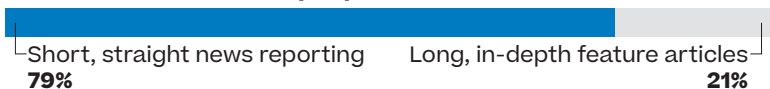
In what format do you read your magazine?



On average, how much time do you spend reading each issue?



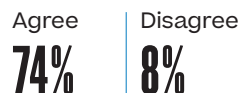
Which kind of articles do you prefer?



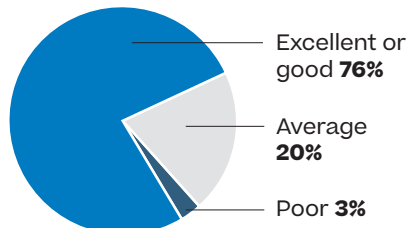
What would you most like to see more of in your magazine?

Information on club projects

Do you agree or disagree that the magazine allows you to better understand our global organization?



How would you rate the overall quality of your magazine?



THE ROTARIAN

A 114-year legacy

Not long after Rotary's founding, Paul Harris and Chesley Perry, Rotary's first general secretary, launched a magazine to share news and information with the growing number of Rotarians.

The first issue was published in January 1911 as *The National Rotarian* with news from existing clubs, announcements of new clubs, and an essay in which Harris discussed the purpose of Rotary clubs.

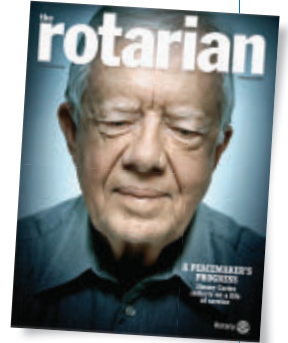
Perry became the magazine's first editor and held the position until 1928. As Rotary reached Canada and England, the magazine adopted the name *The Rotarian* in September 1912.

Through the years, well-known critics and authors, along with popular artists and photographers, contributed their work to its covers and pages. The roster of contributors includes prominent figures such as Jimmy Carter, Winston Churchill, Albert Einstein, Mohandas K. Gandhi, Alex Haley, Ernest Hemingway, Helen Keller, Ann Patchett, Eleanor Roosevelt, Carl Sagan, Kurt Vonnegut, and H.G. Wells.

As Rotary clubs formed around the world, regional magazines appeared, each offering Rotary news from a local perspective. The first regional magazine was published in Great Britain and Ireland in 1915.

Today, while the official flagship magazine is published by Rotary International, the regional publications are produced independently by Rotarians and distributed in more than 130 countries and in 26 languages. The flagship and regional magazines have a combined circulation of more than 1 million.

While all regional publications focus on reporting about Rotary activities in their areas, they also carry content from the flagship magazine, including stories and messages from Rotary headquarters. Each publication is an integral part of the Rotary Global Media Network. ■



HANDBOOK

One team. One dream.

Team End Polio launched in July with a starting lineup of 10 extraordinary athletes and a shared goal: a polio-free world. From breakdancer Junior Bosila Banya sporting his Team End Polio merch on Instagram to football club Paris Saint-Germain posting a star-studded World Polio Day video, the squad members and their supporters have taken to social media to reach sports fans worldwide. Find out what else they're up to and rally behind the team at teamendpolio.org.



1

Anne Wafula Strike

Kenya, Britain

Polio survivor, wheelchair racer in the Paralympic Games

2

Ade Adepitan

Britain

Polio survivor, medalist in wheelchair basketball at the Paralympic Games

3

Muhammad Ali

Pakistan

Member of Pakistan's national men's cricket team

4

Minda Dentler

United States

Polio survivor and Ironman triathlete

5

Wasim Akram Pakistan

Former captain of Pakistan's national men's cricket team and international cricket commentator

6

Michael Essien Ghana

Coach and former star football player

"When you compete in a sport like football, you have to rely on your teammates to defeat your opponent. The fight against polio is no different."

7

Ajara Nchout Cameroon

Professional football player



6

7

10

9

8

8

Junior Bosila Banya France

Polio survivor and professional breakdancer

"It is critical that people realize that polio knows no borders."

9

Ramesh Ferris Canada

Polio survivor, handcyclist, endurance athlete, Rotarian

10

Bismah Maroof Pakistan

Former captain of Pakistan's national women's cricket team



TRUSTEE CHAIR'S MESSAGE

A glass half full

After joining Rotary, you never look at a glass of water the same way again.

Holding it, you are humbled by the privilege of access to drinkable water. Then, you recall how Rotary brings communities and water experts together to deliver safe drinking water to places in need of it, transforming lives.

According to the United Nations, 2 billion people lack access to safely managed drinking water, and 3.6 billion lack safely managed sanitation. During March, we focus on our commitment to addressing water, sanitation, and hygiene challenges through our clubs and The Rotary Foundation.

District and global grants, made possible by the Foundation, provide a direct way for members to engage in water and sanitation projects. My wife, Gay, and I have seen the transformative power of these grants. Our clubs, the Rotary Clubs of Decatur and Decatur Daybreak, Alabama, partnered with the Rotary Club of Ecatepec, Mexico, to sanitize cisterns and tanks for about 300 schools.

We are also launching a new global grant to provide rainwater collection systems for 50 Indigenous families in the Sierra Madre Mountains of Chihuahua, in partnership with five organizations.

Globally, Rotary employs comprehensive approaches to these initiatives. In Mexico, the global grant-funded program Niñas Sabias, or Wise Girls, empowers

girls by providing education on menstruation, building self-esteem, and purchasing reusable menstrual products.

Our partnership with USAID in Uganda has shown how small-scale piped water systems can deliver cost-effective, sustainable solutions. By investing in local governance and technical capacity, this initiative ensures long-term access to clean water for entire regions.

Rotary's Programs of Scale also demonstrate the power of interdisciplinary strategies. In India's water-scarce regions, Rotary promotes solutions such as rainwater harvesting and groundwater recharge, integrating water management with agricultural productivity to enhance sustainability and resilience.

Moving forward, we will continue improving how we deliver water and boost sanitation, focusing on regional planning, strengthening delivery systems, and fostering partnerships.

Be proud to be part of this meaningful work — and please consider supporting it.

When you give to The Rotary Foundation, you not only help us reach our 2024-25 fundraising goal of \$500 million, you also play a role in ensuring Rotary can make clean water, effective sanitation, and hygiene accessible for generations.

MARK DANIEL MALONEY

Foundation trustee chair

SERVICE ABOVE SELF

THE OBJECT OF ROTARY

The Object of Rotary is to encourage and foster the ideal of service as a basis of worthy enterprise and, in particular, to encourage and foster:

First The development of acquaintance as an opportunity for service;

Second High ethical standards in business and professions, the recognition of the worthiness of all useful occupations, and the dignifying of each Rotarian's occupation as an opportunity to serve society;

Third The application of the ideal of service in each Rotarian's personal, business, and community life;

Fourth The advancement of international understanding, goodwill, and peace through a world fellowship of business and professional persons united in the ideal of service.

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?

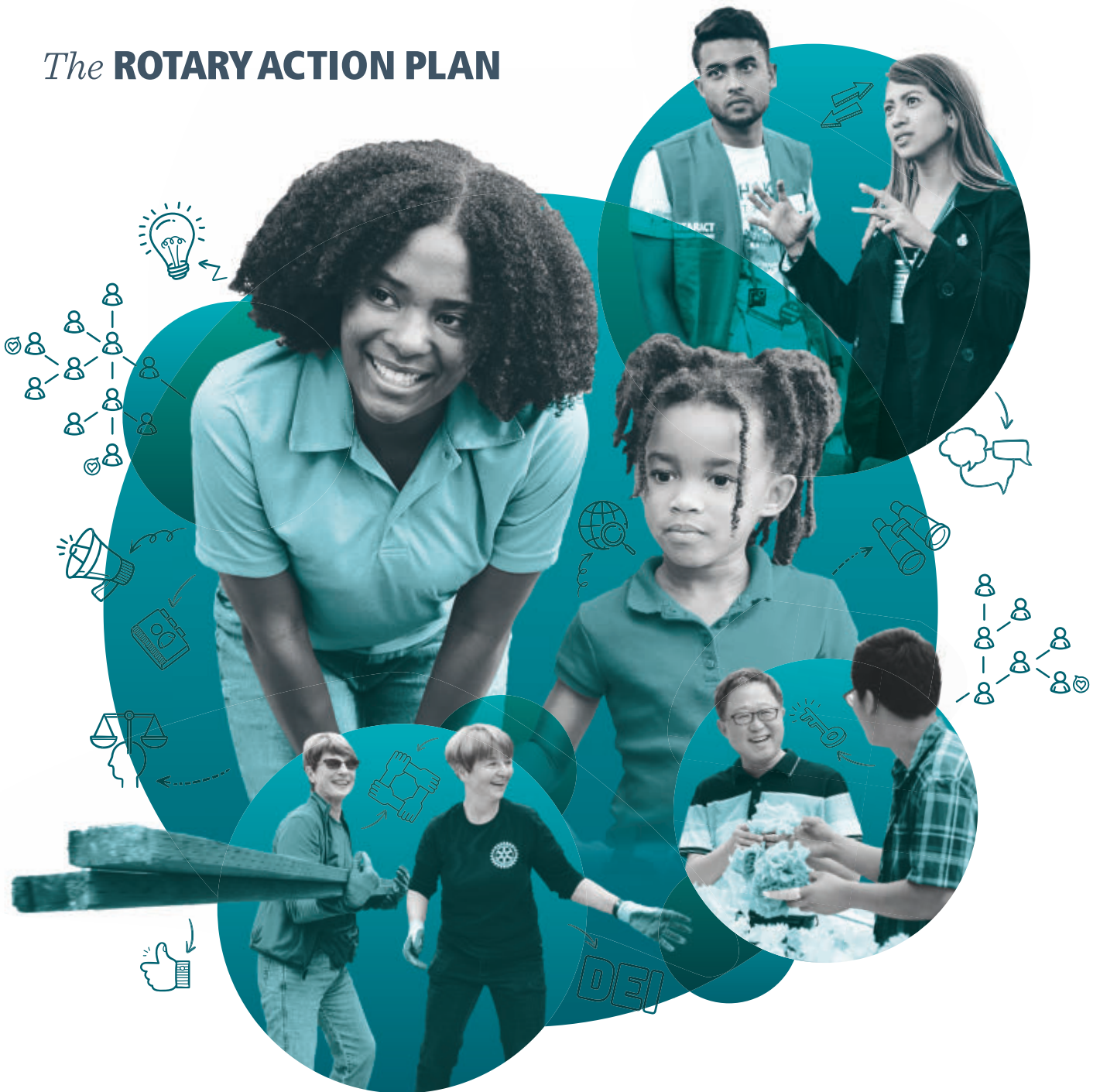
ROTARIAN CODE OF CONDUCT

The following code of conduct has been adopted for the use of Rotarians:

As a Rotarian, I will

1. Act with integrity and high ethical standards in my personal and professional life
2. Deal fairly with others and treat them and their occupations with respect
3. Use my professional skills through Rotary to: mentor young people, help those with special needs, and improve people's quality of life in my community and in the world
4. Avoid behavior that reflects adversely on Rotary or other Rotarians
5. Help maintain a harassment-free environment in Rotary meetings, events, and activities, report any suspected harassment, and help ensure non-retaliation to those individuals that report harassment.

The **ROTARY ACTION PLAN**



Is your club looking for new ways to
connect with your community?
The Action Plan can help.



Learn about expanding your club's reach:
rotary.org/actionplan

CALENDAR

March events

BUH-BYE, WINTER

Event: Midnight in the Tropics
Host: Rotary Club of Livingston Sunrise (Brighton), Michigan

What it benefits: Local nonprofits

Date: 1 March

This evening event features tropical-themed cuisine and music, silent and live auctions, games, and more. The club expects more than 300 attendees, many of whom will be clad in Hawaiian shirts or other casual attire. Held annually for over a decade, the fundraiser has brought in nearly \$850,000 since 2014. Proceeds from this year's festivities support Vina Community Dental Center and North Star Reach, a camp for youths with health challenges.

RACE FOR THE CAKES

Event: Rock Roll & Run Pancake Breakfast

Host: Rotary Club of Playa Venice Sunrise, California

What it benefits: Local schools

Date: 8 March

For this event, the club partners with the LAX Coastal Education Foundation, which hosts a morning of family-friendly races on the campus of Loyola Marymount University, with live music along the route. Club members serve pancakes, orange wedges, coffee, and juice to the participants, including hundreds of students who compete to raise money for their schools.

YES, CHEF!

Event: Cast Iron Cookoff

Host: Rotary Club of Houma, Louisiana

What it benefits: Local projects and nonprofits

Date: 15 March

At this food fest in downtown Houma, dozens of amateur cooking teams com-



CARNIVAL STARTS HERE

Event: The Original Souse and Punch

Host: Rotary Club of Dominica

What it benefits: Local projects

Date: 2 March

First held in 1976 and now a staple of Carnival season, this lively celebration reflects Dominica's vibrant island culture and culinary heritage. Each guest receives a complimentary glass of punch and a bowl of either fish soup or souse, a cold broth filled with meat. Other Caribbean food and drinks are available for purchase. Bands and DJs entertain the attendees, who are encouraged to dress in all white.

pete to make the best dish using cast-iron cookware. Attendees can sample as many dishes as they like and vote for their favorite. An overall People's Choice winner is crowned, with additional honorees in the categories of meat/game, seafood, dessert, and lagniappe (a Cajun term meaning "a little extra"). A portion of the proceeds supports students who are facing food insecurity.

MIX AND MATCH

Event: Viva Gala

Host: Rotary Club of Cambria, California

What it benefits: Local and international projects

Date: 29 March

The club's annual gala dinner returns to the oceanfront San Simeon Lodge with the theme Black-Tie Tie-Dye! Guests are invited to show up in a formal gown or tuxedo, a swirly Grateful Dead T-shirt,

or perhaps a creative combination of the two styles. Background music will range from Jefferson Airplane to Johann Strauss, to encourage dancing of all kinds. Organizers expect to raise tens of thousands of dollars through ticket sales, raffles, and a live auction.

BRING ON THE BAYOU

Event: Bayou Brewfest

Host: Rotary Club of Edinburg, Texas

What it benefits: Local projects

Date: 29 March

Cajun food, craft beer, and live music draw hundreds of people to this annual festival, which the Edinburg Chamber of Commerce recently named the town's best community event. This year, the fest will kick off the club's centennial celebration (it was chartered 10 January 1925). The revelry takes place at the downtown Promenade Park Amphitheater.

Tell us about your event. Write to magazine@rotary.org and put "calendar" in the subject line. Submissions must be received at least five months before the event to be considered for inclusion.

SUCCESSFUL PROJECT PLANNING BEGINS HERE

Two Rotary guides — **Conducting Community Assessments** and the **Rotary Impact Handbook** — can lead to more effective and meaningful service projects by helping you:



**MAKE BETTER-
INFORMED
DECISIONS**

**MEASURE
YOUR
OUTCOMES**

**BUILD
STRONGER
COMMUNITY
PARTNERSHIPS**

**PLAN FOR
SUSTAINABILITY**



**CONDUCTING
COMMUNITY
ASSESSMENTS**



**ROTARY
IMPACT
HANDBOOK**

2025 CONVENTION

Make Calgary the first of many



We hear it over and over from members: Everyone needs to experience the Rotary International Convention at least once. (And grab a discount while you're at it! The last day to register before prices increase for the convention in Calgary is 31 March.)

Convention newbies, from Rotaractors to new club leaders, will reap the reward that results from thousands of members coming together: the feeling that you belong to something bigger than yourself. "You have to feel it. You have to be here in the moment. There's no other way," says Nadine Broghammer, of the Rotary E-Club of 2000, her district in Switzerland.

That feeling turns first-timers into convention regulars. A top takeaway for Broghammer and other new convention attendees last year in Singapore was the deep knowledge they gained about how to make measurable improvements for people in their communities.

Members kindle their fire for service listening to leading experts at general sessions. During the convention in Canada 21-25 June, you'll learn from Katharine Hayhoe, chief scientist for the Nature Conservancy who analyzes data on climate change to help leaders and the public understand the effects. She is widely considered one of the most skilled communicators on the topic. One of her recent book titles sums up her optimistic approach: *Saving Us: A Climate Scientist's Case for Hope and Healing in a Divided World*.

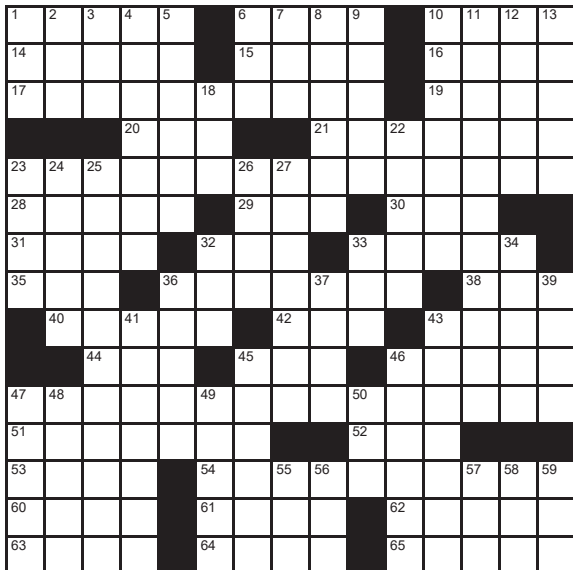
If you still feel unsure about trying the convention, Paula Santiago encourages every member to give it a shot. "Never in my life have I experienced making about 25 friendships in a span of six days," says Santiago, president of the Rotary Club of Champaign (West), Illinois, whose first convention was in Singapore. "The Rotary Convention is life-changing." ■

Learn more and register at convention.rotary.org.

CROSSWORD

Spring appeal

By Victor Fleming
Rotary Club of Little Rock, Arkansas



Solution on **opposite page**

ACROSS

- 1 Bridge beams
- 6 Badly worn, as tires
- 10 Solvers' reactions
- 14 Salsa queen Cruz
- 15 Baby bang-up
- 16 Shower alternative
- 17 Start of an apt verse for this month
- 19 Foal's father
- 20 "All ___ day's work"
- 21 "That's not true!"
- 23 Part 2 of the verse
- 28 Adjoins
- 29 Smart den fixtures
- 30 Word after curtain or lightning
- 31 Caramel candy brand
- 32 Have regrets about
- 33 Chart anew
- 35 Ltr. enclosure
- 36 Part 3 of the verse
- 38 Word before dance or water
- 40 Municipalities
- 42 Certain baseball positions (abbr.)
- 43 Detest
- 44 Like a fiddle
- 45 Bum ___
- 46 Block, perhaps
- 47 Part 4 of the verse
- 51 Home of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival

- 52 "Good" cholesterol, for short
- 53 "I thought ___ never ask!"
- 54 End of the verse
- 60 "I've Got the Music ___" (1974 song by the Kiki Dee Band)
- 61 Descartes or Lacoste
- 62 Destroyed
- 63 Cornhusker's st.
- 64 *The Nanny* name
- 65 Poet William Butler ___

DOWN

- 1 "___ bin ein Berliner"
- 2 Busy one
- 3 "I'm ___ ears!"
- 4 Aggressively tear open
- 5 After-exercise refreshers
- 6 ___ choy
- 7 Amaze
- 8 Certain nonviolent protests
- 9 Company divs.
- 10 When doubled, a 1936 Faulkner novel
- 11 Eschewed Lyft and Uber
- 12 Skylit office spaces
- 13 Platoon star
- 18 Took a load off

- 22 Fallen rocks
- 23 Rows
- 24 Lusitania sinker
- 25 General principle regarded as roughly correct
- 26 "Shake ___" (1981 song by the Cars)
- 27 Seized control of
- 32 Parts of apts.
- 33 Airstream offerings
- 34 At-home outdoor dining locale
- 36 Mural opening?
- 37 Life ___
- 39 Scranton's st.
- 41 Ax ___ (one who's chopping down trees)
- 43 Crisis phone number
- 45 Original *Saturday Night Live* star Gilda
- 46 Villain
- 47 Entrance ramp, perhaps
- 48 All together
- 49 Eat up, with "down"
- 50 "Love ___ neighbor"
- 55 ___ lab
- 56 "The Little Red ___"
- 57 *The Conspiracy Against Childhood* author LeShan
- 58 Picker's lead?
- 59 Hollywood's Harris and Helms
















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Rotary 



Oh, so sweet

Arroz con leche is the perfect finale to Sunday lunch at Grandma's

With just three staples — rice, milk, and sugar — you've got the makings of arroz con leche, or rice with milk, a quintessential dessert throughout Spain and Latin America. Also known as rice pudding, the classic combination has been adapted and refined by region and even by family, with variations in ingredients such as raisins, grated lemon peel, vanilla, cinnamon, cloves, and other spices. Miguelina Acosta's version uses evaporated milk and coconut milk to give it a personal touch, she explains.

The dessert's roots extend across cultures. India and China have sweet rice dishes. And during the period of Muslim rule in medieval Spain, Arabs brought rice — and their own take on the sweet rice dish — to the Iberian Peninsula. When the Spanish colonized the Americas, arroz con leche followed.

SWEET OR SALTY: Families sometimes give the dish a savory spin known as arroz con leche amargo (amargo means bitter, or unsweetened). "It is popular both for those who have dietary restrictions and for families who cooked too much rice for lunch," Acosta says. To make it, take your leftover rice, add milk, salt, and butter to taste, and you've got a simple dinner.

NOSTALGIA: Arroz con leche is often served when family members gather for Sunday lunch at their grandmother's house. It's accompanied by coffee and lots of stories and laughter. Acosta recalls her grandmother, Mama Lola, surprising her with the dish as a child, singing the popular children's song "Arroz con Leche." "Practically all Dominican children have been attracted to this tasty delicacy." — DIANA SCHOBURG

Miguelina Acosta
Rotary Club of
Santo Domingo
Bella Vista,
Dominican
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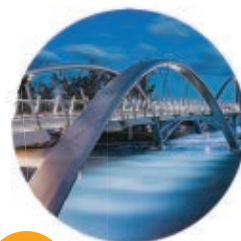
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