

# Rotary

AUGUST 2025

MAGAZINE

Community  
health's essential  
frontline force  
page 14

The Rotary pathway  
to professional  
development  
page 36

Decade of Doers:  
Jean Best  
page 54

**RIPPLE EFFECT**  
In the water, people with disabilities  
explore new wavelengths page 26



# THE GREATEST CHALLENGES OF OUR TIME

THROUGH THE EYES OF THE GLOBAL HERO WHO CHANGED THE COURSE OF HISTORY

HISTORIC  
EVENT

AN EVENING WITH PRESIDENT

# LECH WALESA

NOBEL PEACE PRIZE WINNER AND FORMER PRESIDENT OF POLAND

USA & CANADA GRAND LECTURE TOUR | AUGUST 31 – OCTOBER 30, 2025

“

*We, the people,*

*live in challenging times and face a turning point in history. On this lecture tour, I will reflect on our past, confront our present and offer ideas for a better future. Join me for this historic conversation. Together, we can create the change we need.*

— Lech Walesa

**Meet the man who defended freedom and became one of the world's greatest leaders. His courage and vision inspired millions to believe that a better world is possible.**

Now, Lech Walesa, the living legend who defeated communism and pushed the world toward democracy, will take you behind the scenes of one of history's greatest turning points – and into the future we must build together.

Aug 31	Los Angeles, CA
Sep 2	Phoenix, AZ
Sep 4	San Diego, CA
Sep 6	Oakland, CA
Sep 8	Seattle, WA
Sep 12	Denver, CO
Sep 14	Houston, TX
Sep 18	Austin, TX
Sep 20	Dallas, TX
Sep 22	Atlanta, GA
Sep 24	Columbus, OH
Sep 26	Pittsburgh, PA
Sep 27	Baltimore, MD
Sep 28	Cleveland, OH
Sep 30	Minneapolis, MN
Oct 2	St. Louis, MO
Oct 4	Chicago, IL
Oct 5	Milwaukee, WI
Oct 9	Miami, FL
Oct 11	Orlando, FL
Oct 13	Boston, MA
Oct 15	Charlotte, NC
Oct 17	Philadelphia, PA
Oct 18	New York, NY
Oct 24	Montreal, QC 🇨🇦
Oct 25	Toronto, ON 🇨🇦
Oct 26	Detroit, MI
Oct 30	Vancouver, BC 🇨🇦

HISTORY  
EXPLORER

PEACE AND LEADERSHIP | THE FIGHT FOR FREEDOM AND HUMAN RIGHTS | CHALLENGES TO DEMOCRACY  
THE SOLIDARITY MOVEMENT | THE FALL OF COMMUNISM | RUSSIA AND UKRAINE | OUR VALUES  
NEW SOLUTIONS FOR A NEW WORLD

**REGISTER NOW** for lessons from the past and inspiration for tomorrow



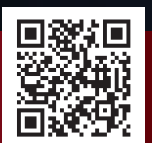
[www.HistoryExplorer.com](http://www.HistoryExplorer.com)



[contact@historyexplorer.com](mailto:contact@historyexplorer.com)



917-722-5050





## This month and every month

**A**ugust is Membership Month, but our commitment to growth and connection is year-round. When we focus on growing Rotary, we grow our ability to serve, to lead, and to bring lasting change.

Membership growth isn't just about numbers. It's about opening doors. It's about inviting more people who are ready to give their time, talents, and hearts to a cause greater than themselves. When we welcome new members, we bring in fresh ideas and new energy. We expand our impact, strengthen our clubs, and ensure that Rotary continues to evolve with the world around us.

Remember, there is now great flexibility in fashioning nontraditional club models. I'm inspired when I see these innovative clubs thrive by offering new and prospective members more ways to connect and serve.

In Korea, the growth of satellite clubs has created opportunities for nearly 1,000 new members to find their place in Rotary. In Romania, the close collaboration between Rotarians, Rotaractors, and Interactors has built a pipeline of future leaders. In India, some Rotarians gather around a shared interest — whether it's professional development or a passion for service — and those connections deepen their commitment and their joy in being part of Rotary. And we've seen cause-based clubs thrive in regions as diverse as Southeast Asia, Africa, and Europe.

There's a common thread: Where clubs are

growing, membership is a priority and there is a willingness to try something new. Rotary is not limited to one structure or tradition. We are a global network of people of action, and that means there is room for many kinds of clubs, many ways to serve, and many paths into our organization.

This spirit of innovation is also guiding our efforts to reach new communities. In places where there has never been a Rotary club — or where a club once existed and faded — Rotarians are finding ways to grow Rotary. They are identifying areas of potential and building clubs that reflect the character and needs of their communities.

Every member plays a part in this journey. Whether you introduce a friend to your club, support a new meeting format, reconnect with program alumni, or simply share your Rotary story, you are helping our organization grow stronger and more vibrant.

No one owns a Rotary club. It is a gift we pass on to the next generation. When we nurture that gift, when we invite others to share in it, we ensure that Rotary continues to be a force for good.

Let's prioritize membership growth — not just in August but every month of the year. Together, through friendship, creativity, and shared purpose, we will grow Rotary and *Unite for Good*.

**FRANCESCO AREZZO**

*President, Rotary International*







# WELCOME



---

**YOU ARE HERE:** Tanzania

---

**GREETING:** Jambo

---

**SERENGETI:** A World Heritage Site and popular safari destination, the Serengeti National Park in Tanzania is home to one of Africa's highest concentrations of large mammals, such as lions, rhinos, leopards, and elephants. Nearly 2 million wildebeests, zebras, and gazelles migrate hundreds of miles around the plains each year, crossing crocodile-filled rivers in search of water and greener pastures.

---

**PERCEPTIVE PACHYDERMS:** Rashid Abdullah and Ashley Ness, members of the Rotary Club of Evanston Nouveau, took this photo while exploring the park during their safari honeymoon in January. "Elephants are hyperintelligent," Abdullah says. "They interact with humans — looking us in the eye and raising their trunks to smell us. We felt very connected to them."

---

**THE CLUBS:** Tanzania has 48 Rotary and 26 Rotaract clubs. The Rotary Club of Evanston and the nonprofit Watts of Love are partnering with the Rotary Club of Moshi (chartered in 1959) in Tanzania to supply communities there with hand-held solar lights.

# Rotary

MAGAZINE

August 2025

**CHIEF COMMUNICATIONS  
OFFICER**

**David Alexander**

**EDITOR IN CHIEF**

**Wen Huang**

**MANAGING EDITOR**

**Jason Keyser**

**SENIOR EDITOR**

**Geoffrey Johnson**

**SENIOR STAFF WRITER**

**Diana Schoberg**

**DIGITAL EDITOR**

**Kristin Morris**

**EDITOR**

**John M. Cunningham**

**EDITOR**

**Rose Shilling**

**EDITOR**

**JP Swenson**

**ART DIRECTOR**

**Jacqueline Cantu**

**DESIGNER**

**Madison Wisse**

**PRODUCTION MANAGER**

**Marc Dukes**

**EDITORIAL COORDINATOR**

**Vera Robinson**

**CIRCULATION MANAGER**

**Katie McCoy**

**CONTRIBUTING ROTARY STAFF**

Art Director: Leann Arthur

Photo Editor: Diego Campos

Photographer: Monika Lozinska

**Send ad inquiries to:**

GLM Communications, 203-994-1883, cdunham@glminc.com

**To contact us:** Rotary magazine, One Rotary Center, 1560 Sherman Ave., Evanston, IL 60201; 847-866-3206; magazine@rotary.org

**Website:** rotary.org/magazine

**To subscribe:** Twelve issues at US\$18 a year (USA, Puerto Rico, and U.S. Virgin Islands); \$24 a year (Canada); \$36 a year for print and \$18 for digital (elsewhere). Contact the Circulation Department (866-976-8279, data@rotary.org) for details and airmail rates. Gift subscriptions available.

**To send an address change:** Enclose old address label, postal code, and Rotary club, and send to the Circulation Department or email data@rotary.org. Postmaster: Send all address changes to Circulation Department, Rotary magazine, One Rotary Center, 1560 Sherman Ave., Evanston, IL 60201.

**Call the Support Center:** USA, Canada, and Virgin Islands: (toll-free) 866-976-8279. Elsewhere: 847-866-3000.

**Unless otherwise noted:** All images are copyright ©2025 by Rotary International or are used with permission.

Published monthly by Rotary International, 1560 Sherman Ave., Evanston, IL 60201. *Rotary*® is a registered trademark of Rotary International. Copyright ©2025 by Rotary International. All rights reserved. Periodicals postage paid at Evanston, Illinois, USA, and additional mailing offices. Canada Publications Mail Agreement No. 1381644. Canadian return address: MSI, PO Box 2600, Mississauga, ON L4T 0A8. This is the August 2025 issue, volume 204, number 2, of *Rotary*. Publication number: USPS 548-810. ISSN 2694-443X (print); ISSN 2694-4448 (online).

## GENERAL OFFICERS OF ROTARY INTERNATIONAL, 2025–26

**PRESIDENT**

**Francesco Arezzo**  
Ragusa, Italy

**PRESIDENT-ELECT**

**SangKoo Yun**  
Sae Hanyang, Korea

**VICE PRESIDENT**

**Alain Van de Poel**  
Wezembeek-Kraainem, Belgium

**TREASURER**

**Patrick Eakes**  
Crescent (Greensboro),  
North Carolina, USA

**DIRECTORS**

**Christine Buering**  
Altenburg, Germany

**Christine Etienne**

Petoskey, Michigan, USA

**Brian Hall**

Covington, Louisiana, USA

**Jung-Hyun Lee**

Hwasung Taeon, Korea

**Naomi Luan-Fong Lin**

Taipei Lily, Taiwan

**Isao “Mick” Mizuno**

Tokyo Tobihino, Japan

**M. “MMM” Muruganandam**

Bhel City Tiruchirapalli, India

**K.P. Nagesh**

Bangalore Highgrounds, India

**Salvador Rizzo Tavares**

Monterrey Carlos Canseco,  
Mexico

**César Luis Scherer**

Marechal Cândido Rondon-  
Beira Lago, Brazil

**Jennifer A. Scott**

Central Blue Mountains,  
Australia

**Wyn Spiller**

Grass Valley, California, USA

**Suzan Stenberg**

Östersund Åre, Sweden

**Daniel V. Tanase**

Suceava Bucovina, Romania

**Harriette Florence Verwey**

Leiden-AM, Netherlands

**GENERAL SECRETARY**

**John Hewko**  
Kyiv, Ukraine

## TRUSTEES OF THE ROTARY FOUNDATION, 2025–26

**CHAIR**

**Holger Knaack**  
Herzogtum Lauenburg-Mölln,  
Germany

**CHAIR-ELECT**

**Jennifer E. Jones**  
Windsor-Roseland, Ontario,  
Canada

**VICE CHAIR**

**Greg E. Podd**  
Evergreen, Colorado, USA

**TRUSTEES**

**Ann-Britt Åsebol**  
Falun-Kopparvågen, Sweden

**Martha “Marty” Peak Helman**

Boothbay Harbor, Maine, USA

**Frank Ching-Huei Horng**

Panchiao West, Taiwan

**Chun-Wook Hyun**

Seoul-Hansoo, Korea

**R. Gordon R. McNally**

South Queensferry, Scotland

**Ijeoma Pearl Okoro**

Port Harcourt, Nigeria

**Bharat S. Pandya**

Borivli, India

**Vicki Puliz**

Sparks, Nevada, USA

**Carlos Sandoval**

San Nicolás de los Garza,  
Mexico

**Dennis J. Shore**

Hawthorn, Australia

**Katsuhiko “Kats” Tatsuno**

Tokyo-West, Japan

**Stephanie A. Urchick**

McMurray, Pennsylvania, USA

**GENERAL SECRETARY**

**John Hewko**  
Kyiv, Ukraine



A publication of Rotary Global Media Network





# Inspiring Action, Feeding Communities

Empowering Clubs to Create a Ripple Effect of Hope



Born from the Rotary Club of Naples, FL, Meals of Hope has packed over 100 million meals across the U.S., addressing food insecurity while strengthening communities.

## Clubs that host meal-packing events create lasting local impact:



Engage and retain members with a hands-on service project.



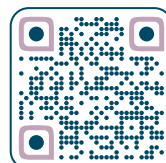
Build stronger bonds among members and the community.



Keep meals local, supporting families and seniors in need.



**Bring a meal-packing event  
to your club or district.**



**MEALSOFHOP.ORG**  
**(239) 596-8990 EXT.5**

# CONTENTS

**On the cover:** Rotary club support helps grow Diveheart adaptive diving program.  
**Photo by Kevin Serna**



**August 2025**  
Vol. 204, No. 2

## FEATURES

**26**

### **Making waves**

Divers with disabilities find peace in the water

**By Kate Silver**

**Photography by Kevin Serna**

**36**

### **How to succeed in business ...**

In uncertain economic times, Rotary offers assured avenues to professional development

**By Sam Worley**

**Photography by Joshua Cogan**

**44**

### **The genie in the bottle**

As they transmute trash into treasure, Peru Interactors learn the magic of Rotary

**Photo essay by Monika Lozinska**

- 1 President's message**
- 2 Welcome**

## CONNECT

- 8 Staff corner**
- 9 Letters**
- 12 The specialist**  
Rotarian Tom Eickman on the ins and outs of the butcher business

## OUR WORLD

- 14 An invisible army**  
Numbering in the millions, community health workers form an essential yet often overlooked frontline force
- 17 Hope away from home**  
In Rotary, an Afghan transplant finds family and purpose
- 18 People of action around the globe**
- 20 Join the club**  
Sharing my Rotary stories attracted new members — it will work for you too
- 22 An unexpected education**  
For a well-schooled nurse, a life of global service was its own classroom — and a path to Rotary

## OUR CLUBS

- 52 Virtual visit**  
Rotary Club of Taipei Peony Sa Dou, Taiwan
- 54 Where are they now?**  
The Peace Advocate Project empowers the next generation of peace ambassadors
- 56 Dispatches from our sister magazines**
- 58 Trustee chair's message**
- 59 Calendar**
- 60 Programs of scale**  
Rotary partnership with the World Food Programme seeks to break Colombia's cycle of violence
- 62 2026 convention | Crossword**
- 64 Just peachy**  
A Colorado classic ripe for the picking










## SNEAK PEEK

Look for an interview  
with President  
**Francesco Arezzo**  
in our September  
issue.



Follow us to get updates, share stories with your networks, and tell us what you think.

-  [rotary.org/magazine](https://rotary.org/magazine)
-  [on.rotary.org/podcast](https://on.rotary.org/podcast)
-  [yourletters@rotary.org](mailto:yourletters@rotary.org)
-  [@rotary](https://twitter.com/rotary)
-  [/rotary](https://facebook.com/rotary)
-  [@rotaryinternational](https://instagram.com/rotaryinternational)
-  **Rotary magazine**  
One Rotary Center  
1560 Sherman Ave.  
Evanston, IL 60201

The editors welcome comments on items published in the magazine but reserve the right to edit for style and length. Published letters do not necessarily reflect the views of the editors or Rotary International leadership, nor do the editors take responsibility for errors of fact that may be expressed by the writers.

## STAFF CORNER

# Nick Taylor

*Club and District Support supervisor*

**I was born in Gainesville, Florida,** where my father was studying for his master's degree in polymer science. As his career took him to different U.S. cities, my family moved from Rochester, New York, to Pittsburgh and eventually Chicago, where I spent my formative years. These frequent relocations taught me to adapt quickly. Playing soccer made it easier — no matter where we moved, I would join the local team and my teammates quickly accepted me into their group. I found excitement in building new connections.

**I started playing soccer at age 4** and dreamed of becoming a professional player. I was selected to play on competitive club teams. My parents drove me to practices in western Pennsylvania, an hour each way, three times a week. I traveled to games across the U.S. and to Canada and Mexico. But by the time I was 17, I felt burnt out, especially following an injury. The motivation just left me and I stopped pursuing soccer.

**I first majored in premed biology** at Brigham Young University but moved on after a year — organic chemistry was tough. I traveled to Argentina on a service mission and for two years was immersed in its culture. The mission ignited my passion for Spanish, a subject that I had failed in sixth grade.

**When I returned, I switched my major to secondary Spanish education** and taught high school Spanish on the South Side of Chicago after graduation. In 2016, when the school faced closure, I went to graduate school at DePaul University in the city. My experience in Argentina opened my eyes to international development and service. I chose International Public Service for my master's.

**In 2018, I started at Rotary** as a Club and District Support officer for North America. Now I manage a team that supports clubs in North America, and I



Nick Taylor with his wife, Iris, and sons Jaden (left) and Micah.

support Zone 26, which covers the South and Southwest United States. Together, we provide personalized services, learning opportunities, and regional guidance on club and district officer responsibilities. I'm also leading a cross-functional strategic initiative on improving club experiences.

**I'm a member of the Rotary Club for Global Action,** an e-club with members around the world. As a father of two boys with a day job, I find that the club's online access and flexibility fit my life perfectly. The meetings are engaging and I feel connected with my fellow members despite our physical distance. Every New Year's Day, our club carries out a global cleanup project in our neighborhoods. We track the amount of garbage we pick up to gauge our impact. We're also a traveling club; when one member organizes an event, a few others will go in support.

**In 2020, my wife and I moved from Chicago to Phoenix,** which has an active running and outdoor community. We love to spend time outside, especially in winter. Our community is planning a fundraising event where we will attempt — collectively — to climb the same elevation as Mount Everest on a local mountain to support a good cause. ■



## Letters to the editor

### MAP IT OUT

This was an excellent article [“Healing water,” May] but it lacked one thing: a map of the Klamath River and its tributaries. This concept of providing a visual geographical “fix” is applicable to all your worldwide articles.

**James Rini**, New Castle, New Hampshire

### ACTIVE VOICE

Rotary’s newest area of focus — protecting the environment — was the reason I joined Rotary over three years ago. As someone committed to sustainability and caring for the planet, I was thrilled when Rotary International added this to its core mission. It signals that Rotary is not only aware of the urgent challenges facing our world but is willing to lead.

Since then, I’ve brought three new members into my club who share that same passion for environmental stewardship. Our club, the Rotary Club of the Classic City of Athens, is deeply supportive of environmental service and projects, and this focus continues to energize and grow our membership.

Your May article on Katharine Hayhoe [“You’re the perfect messenger”] is a powerful reminder of why this work matters. Her voice brings clarity, science, and hope to the conversation, and featuring her in *Rotary* magazine speaks volumes about Rotary’s vision and values. Thank you for highlighting environmental leaders and stories that inspire and unite Rotarians across the globe.

**Laura Iyer**, Athens, Georgia

### LEFTOVERS

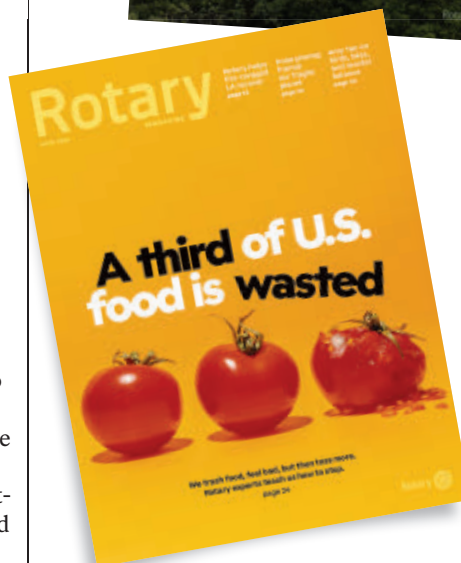
I very much appreciated the article “Waste not” in the April issue. As an Illinois farmer, I was interested to read about food waste.

While the article explains food waste at the consumer level, it does not talk about waste from the time food leaves our farm until it gets to the consumer. As I write in my book *Your Food – My Adventure*, the agriculture community has been able to produce enough food to feed everyone in the world. Even as

the world population has increased, the American farmer has been able to increase production to keep up.

Our farm’s corn yield has increased from 70 bushels to the acre in 1963, as I point out in my book, to over 200 bushels in 2024. The book also explains how U.S. farmers have banded together to collect funds to promote their commodities through new uses and more efficient production and distribution. These commodity checkoff programs raise around \$1 billion a year.

When I read in the article that about 18 million U.S. households are food insecure for some portion of the year, and knowing that our country produces plenty of food and has the wealth to



### OVERHEARD ON SOCIAL MEDIA

A Rotary club in the Pacific Northwest that fights sex trafficking was the subject of a March feature article and a *Rotary Voices* podcast episode.

This article was so impactful and spot on with how one person can ignite a fire through Rotary. Way to go!!

**Rotary District 7610**  
► via LinkedIn

This is an incredible podcast. I dare anyone to listen and not cry. Very moving. Not only for the stories told and the tragedy they capture, but for the response of good people working to save those who many would rather forget.

**chuck.rey**  
► via Spotify

## CONNECT

provide food to everyone, it makes me wonder if our agriculture, food, and welfare programs are working.

**Philip E. Bradshaw**, Griggsville, Illinois

Thanks for an article that is timely and very necessary but which I believe leaves out a major point: Here in the U.S. and probably in many developed countries, there is a lack of early education and family and school guidance to eat responsibly.

By that, I mean ordering or taking only as much food as you are likely to consume. Again and again, even in Rotary meetings, people load up way too much food on their plate, often leaving much to waste. The same goes for fast-food restaurants where uninformed kids and even adults ask and pay for too much food, leaving the rest to rot.

I grew up in postwar Germany with little to eat, so food was never left over. Unfortunately, overabundance, wealth, and marketing lead to the tremendous waste described in your article.

**H. Peter Krebs**, Las Cruces, New Mexico

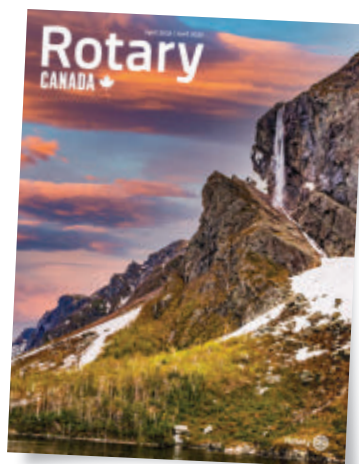
Thank you for highlighting the negative impacts of food waste. It was highly educational.

I wanted to raise awareness of one additional issue that has become a problem in my town and no doubt many others: the widespread use of “compostable” bioplastic bags to dispose of our organic waste. The fact is that no plastic of any kind should be placed in compost bins.

Research shows that bioplastics are every bit as harmful as traditional plastic, and mixing them with organic waste risks contamination of the final compost product of commercial composters, committing whole batches to the landfill. The labels on bioplastic bags even carry disclaimers like “Commercial facilities may not exist in your area. Check locally,” revealing a disconnect between the marketing of the bags and the [capabilities of] local commercial composting facilities.

Until widespread “truth in labeling” laws are in effect and/or all commercial compost facilities are better equipped to handle bioplastic bags, their use will unfortunately continue to contribute to the organic waste in landfills.

**Laura Fay**, Los Altos, California



### MOMENT OF RECOGNITION

I was browsing the article “Horses as healers” in the April edition of *Rotary Canada* when, to my delight, I saw the photo of a gentleman seated securely in the Free Form wheelchair back. This product is designed and made in Canada by our company, Symmetric Designs Ltd., here on Salt Spring Island.

I was invited to join Rotary in 1999 after I made a presentation on the business to the local club. I am now retired, and the business is run by my son Sam. You never know what you are going to see when you turn the pages of *Rotary* magazine.

**Richard Hannah**, Salt Spring Island, British Columbia

### BANNED AID

I joined Rotary in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, and it helped me to give back and provide additional service to my community as I eased into retirement. I liked Rotary’s Code of Conduct and The Four-Way Test.

However, I have to take issue with what I am now seeing. Every month

*Rotary* magazine has articles on the heroic work and artful changes initiated to right a wrong and bring goodwill. So I am finding it very difficult that we are not speaking out for the wrongs occurring on our watch.

The [U.S. government’s] sudden closure of more than 80 percent of USAID programs is causing untold deaths due to starvation and the loss of lifesaving HIV medication in Africa. One of the services provided was food to the many soup kitchens in the war-torn country of Sudan. In the capital city of Khartoum, there were over 700 soup kitchens that relied on aid from the United States through USAID. These soup kitchens provided the one meal a day these people received. Americans cannot fathom the level of starvation of these desperate people.

Many services affected by these cuts overlap with Rotary goals and aid. How can we remain silent when one individual stops all services of an organization we partner with?

**Patricia Sadoski**, Logan, Utah

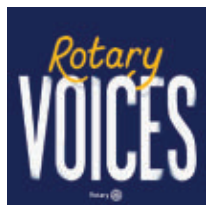
*Editor’s note: Rotary International issued a statement about recent political and economic volatility and its potential impact on the organization’s work. Read it at [my.rotary.org/message-our-members](https://my.rotary.org/message-our-members).*

### FOUR-WAY FAILURE

I was disappointed that the editors of *Rotary* chose to print the letter [“Relocate Rotary”] in the June issue suggesting that the United States is not a suitable location for the headquarters of Rotary International because it isn’t stable or friendly enough.

This was clearly a divisive political statement that fails all four questions of The Four-Way Test.

**Barbara Kogerman**, Tulsa, Oklahoma



### ON THE PODCAST

On a recent episode of the *Rotary Voices* podcast, Rotarian and financial adviser Derrick Kinney and certified financial planner James Bogart provide an easy-to-understand overview of the current economy and discuss how to make reasoned decisions about investing, retirement planning, and charitable giving. Listen at [on.rotary.org/podcast](https://on.rotary.org/podcast).





EVERY  
ROTARIAN  
EVERY  
YEAR

## OUR FOUNDATION'S ANNUAL FUND

Your gift to The Rotary Foundation's Annual Fund empowers Rotary members to take action and create positive change in communities close to home and around the globe. When you donate to Annual Fund-SHARE, your contributions are transformed into grants that fund local and international projects, scholarships, and other activities.

**GIVE TODAY:** [rotary.org/donate](https://rotary.org/donate)

**LEARN MORE:** [my.rotary.org/annual-fund](https://my.rotary.org/annual-fund)





## THE SPECIALIST

# Meat, your maker

*Rotarian Tom Eickman on the ins  
and outs of the butcher business*

**A**s a child, I sold beef jerky at my elementary school. I raked in \$300 each week. Today, my wife and I own Eickman's Processing Company in Seward, Illinois. Founded by my grandpa Merlyn in 1953, Eickman's does everything the big guys do, but on a smaller scale. We walk the animals in, harvest them, and process their meat. We're a smokehouse, a retail store, and a caterer.

**Our 70-year legacy shows in our products.** We know which methods are best, old and new, such as injecting a brine solution into the ham and using its own arteries to uniformly distribute the brine and cure the meat.

**Creating new recipes** is one of my favorite parts of the job. Across generations, my family has been actively involved in meat industry organizations to

exchange ideas with global innovators. After all, the idea of putting cheddar cheese in a ground beef patty wasn't popularized by a single individual.

**Our supply doesn't go to waste.** Along with donating to food pantries, we send stock to schools for dissection. When LASIK eye surgery was in its infancy, we were saving the eyes. We send out stomachs for gastric bypass surgery research.

**"Cook slow" is the best tip** I can give my customers. People are in such a rush today — I'm guilty as anyone on that. I have all this great product around me and I'm still picking up fast food. Enjoy some time cooking. Your food will thank you for it. Also, get a meat thermometer. Our industry is highly regulated, but as many things as I can do to try to ensure a safe product, cooking is ultimately the last step of protecting yourself and your family.

**We feed about 22,000 people every day.** I wasn't a very social person when I was younger, but I've developed into one as people come through the plant and our store. It's the fun part of being a small community. Sometimes we'll go out to eat and see our product incorporated in a dish. We've become a part of our customers' family traditions. We want to make sure that our quality remains high, maintaining the legacy of Grandpa, Dad, and everyone in the Eickman family.

— AS TOLD TO JP SWENSON

**Tom Eickman**  
Rotary Club  
of Pecatonica,  
Illinois  
Meat processor



# Rotary magazine is now accepting advertising

If your business plans to market a product or service to a targeted audience, consider advertising in Rotary magazine.

We drive engagement and action – when surveyed, our readers reported spending 52 minutes with an issue, and nearly 75% said they've taken “some sort of action” as a result of reading Rotary magazine.

Our diverse membership, attractive demographics, and expansive reach will enhance your results.



Interested? Please email  
[cdunham@glminc.com](mailto:cdunham@glminc.com)  
for rates and guidelines.

**17**  
An Afghan  
finds family  
far from  
home

**20**  
Share the  
gift of Rotary

**22**  
The  
classroom  
of global  
service

## FIGHTING DISEASE

# An invisible army

*Numbering in the millions, community health workers form an essential yet often overlooked frontline force*

**K**oko Patience Samuel remembers how it felt to save a new mother's life. On that day in 2023, she arrived for her shift at a rural health clinic in Nigeria to find a patient hemorrhaging after giving birth. Samuel immediately used an antishock garment that applies pressure to slow the bleeding. Then she quickly reviewed her options.

"We were able to refer some cases to higher-level facilities. So we rushed her to the health center," she says. "We got her out of [danger], and she was fine. It was amazing."

Samuel is a community health worker trained in maternal and child health care through Together for Healthy Families in Nigeria, a Rotary Programs of Scale grant recipient. She's also part of a vast, but sometimes overlooked, workforce in public health. Around the world, millions of community health workers provide essential frontline care in low- and middle-income countries. They're not medical professionals, but they can perform basic health interventions and advise people on topics including maternal and child health, nutrition, vaccination, and family planning.

They support everything from routine care in their home communities to large-scale campaigns by major global health and aid organizations, often traveling long distances to reach unserved people in rural areas. With a projected global shortfall of 11 million health care providers by 2030, community

health workers are expected to increasingly fill gaps.

"Their responsibilities are ballooning because people realize how great they are," says Svea Closser, a professor at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, who has studied community health worker programs in numerous countries, including Ethiopia, India, and Pakistan. "But sometimes the remuneration and support have not kept pace with the expanding responsibilities."

With the growing reliance, the World Health Organization and others are calling for fair pay and for better training and support for the world's estimated 4.7 million community health workers, around two-thirds of whom are women.

Some of the largest community health worker programs, including initiatives in Pakistan, India, and Ethiopia, only employ women. "A lot of countries prefer women, partially for really good reasons, like they are better suited to address maternal and child health. They're just socially better positioned to do it," says Closser. "But there are also, potentially, some more problematic reasons, like you can get women to work for less pay."

Linnet Otieno, who teaches sex education in Siaya County, Kenya, has volunteered without pay for around seven years, she says, because the work is rewarding in other ways. She does work for both the Kenyan Ministry of Health and a nonprofit, the ABCs of Sex Education, which received funding from a Rotary Foundation global grant in 2020.



Visit [rotary.org/our-causes](https://rotary.org/our-causes) to find more information and get involved.





"I love my job. I love serving the community because I get to interact with so many people," Otieno says. "People appreciate the services that we offer to them. When you see somebody in the community that you've assisted in some way, you just feel motivated, because you get that recognition."

Still, Otieno sometimes encounters situations that are far more complex than she's been trained to handle — such as when she learns that a child is being physically or sexually abused. "We always report to the [community] chiefs. And at times we'll get the families called in for a talk," she says, while noting there's little more she can do. "It's never easy."

Community health workers also experience abuse and violence themselves. A study Closser co-authored in 2023 found that female community health workers around the world were frequent targets

both within their programs and in their communities. "These workers are really at the bottom of the health care hierarchy," says Roosa Tikkanen, another co-author of the study. "Sometimes the perpetrators are actually their supervisors. So who do you even report to?"

In 2018, the World Health Organization released its first-ever guidelines for community health worker programs, including a recommendation for fair pay. Since then, researchers and advocacy groups have called for workers to receive contracts, more extensive training, better oversight, and better pay — or any pay. Following through on those recommendations has the potential to make the sector a driver of economic growth by creating good jobs, particularly for women, while also ensuring more people have access to health care.

In many parts of the world, community health workers provide the

only care that people receive. And their contributions are far-reaching. Community health workers have participated in efforts that have reduced AIDS-related deaths by nearly 70 percent since 2004. These workers also treat more than half of malaria cases in some parts of the world, including 10 districts in Zambia where Partners for a Malaria-Free Zambia, another Rotary Programs of Scale grant recipient, trained and equipped 2,500 community health workers.

While that program relies on volunteers, other Rotary-supported initiatives do pay community health workers. A 2020-22 Rotary grant-funded program in South Africa, in partnership with the University of Pretoria, paid slightly more than the South African minimum wage at that time of around \$1.50 per hour.

Pakistan, one of the two countries where the wild poliovirus remains endemic, employs nearly

Clockwise from left: Community health workers perform outreach for the Together for Healthy Families in Nigeria program; Linet Otieno receives a certificate for her work in sex education; Koko Patience Samuel, who is trained in maternal and child health, says the job "gives me joy."

PHOTOGRAPHS: (NIGERIA) MARYAM TURAKI; (OTIENO) COURTESY OF KATHY TATE-BRADISH; (SAMUEL) COURTESY OF ASHEZI DAVID



Community health workers gather for a meeting in Karachi, Pakistan, in 2022. Pakistan employs nearly 450,000 community health workers in its efforts to eradicate polio in the country.

## BY THE NUMBERS

# 7 out of 10

Jobs in the health and social care sectors worldwide that are held by women

# 4.7 million

Estimated number of community health workers

# 13%

Projected 10-year growth of community health worker jobs in the U.S.

450,000 community health workers in its efforts to eradicate the disease. As trusted community members, they play a key role in administering vaccines and spreading word to family and friends that vaccination is safe.

“It is very important for people to have social and emotional attachments to the workers who end up at their doorsteps. It’s like, ‘The people from within us would never harm us,’” says Israr Ul Haq, a social and behavioral change specialist for UNICEF who helps oversee Pakistan’s community health worker program. “That social buy-in is very important. After many years of this program, more than 95 percent of people open their doors to get their children vaccinated.”

In other countries, too, the trust that the workers establish in their communities, often by going door to door, is making a difference, including by connecting families to ser-

vices. “It’s different from house to house,” says Rebaone Madzivhandila, a research assistant at the University of Pretoria, who oversaw community health workers as part of the Rotary-supported South African project. “It depends on what challenge a particular household is facing. If it’s malnutrition or food insecurity, then the community health worker will bring in a dietitian to assist. If a household is facing social issues, then they will bring in a social worker.”

That kind of work is not limited to developing countries. In the United States, for instance, about 63,000 community health workers connect people with local health resources, counsel people who have been discharged from hospitals, and educate communities about chronic conditions such as diabetes and asthma.

In Nigeria, Samuel is paid a \$10 monthly stipend, but she is also

driven by the importance of the work and the results she can see, as when her community shed some of its cultural resistance to talking about subjects like birth control. “When the program started, we had family members who didn’t want us to come in and speak about family planning to their wives and daughters,” she says. “But with the advocacy we had from the state midwife, everything was sorted out. She came and organized community meetings and made them understand the need for child spacing and other activities.”

Samuel, who has been doing the job for four years, particularly appreciates the opportunity to teach her community about good health practices. “I love the fact that I’m able to educate people, to reach out to them,” she says. “And their feedback is positive, so it gives me joy. I’m providing knowledge they need to know.” — ETELKA LEHOCZKY

## Short takes

In April, the RI Board recognized the Rotary Action Group for Girls’ Empowerment, the first action group to be established since 2021.

Nominations for the Sylvia Whitlock Leadership Award, which honors a member working to advance women in Rotary, will be accepted this month. Submit via [rotary.org/awards](https://rotary.org/awards).





#### PROFILE

## Hope away from home

*In Rotary, an Afghan transplant finds family and purpose*

**Zi Azizi**  
Rotary Club of  
St. Petersburg,  
Florida

**W**hen Zi Azizi was born, his mother gave him the nickname Omid, which means hope in the Afghan language Dari. “None of us know what is going to come in life,” he says, “but she had a feeling.”

Growing up in war-torn Kabul in the 1990s, Azizi had reason to feel hopeless at times. Rocket and artillery fire surrounded him. When the Taliban captured the city in 1996, his parents lost their jobs. He taught himself English by watching TV via a satellite dish that the family took down during the day to escape notice.

Things improved after the Taliban fell in 2001. After high school, Azizi got a job at a shipment center in Kabul’s international military and diplomatic enclave, which eventually led to work with a U.S. defense contractor. He took university business classes at night. But by the time he earned his bachelor’s degree in 2013, he worried about the safety risks of continuing to live in Kabul.

A scholarship from a U.S. nonprofit brought Azizi to St. Petersburg, Florida. In 2019, he learned about Rotary from a Facebook post. Inspired by the organization’s work to end polio, he joined the Rotary Club of St. Petersburg and became an enthusiastic participant in its service projects. Last year, Azizi served as public image chair and coordinated relief efforts after hurricanes Helene and Milton struck the area.

Now the club’s president-elect, he looks forward to advancing a literacy project in local schools. Thousands of miles from his homeland, Azizi sees Rotary as a family and a source of purpose: “I’m here to help, to make good friends, to create a positive impact, and enjoy life.” — JOHN M. CUNNINGHAM

In a May webinar, Rotary’s Youth Advisory Council shared how Rotary members can support young people. Watch at [my.rotary.org/webinars](https://my.rotary.org/webinars).

Rotary and the Gates Foundation extended to 2029 their partnership to end polio, including the foundation’s 2-to-1 match of funds Rotary raises up to \$50 million per year.

The Rotary Youth Exchange alumni association of District 5190 (parts of California and Nevada) won the 2024-25 Alumni Association of the Year Award.

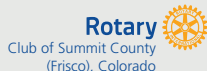
# People of action around the globe

By Brad Webber



## United States

To help people affected by the financial crisis of 2008, the Rotary Club of Summit County (Frisco) began serving a weekly dinner free of charge in the Colorado ski town. Sixteen years later, they haven't stopped. In January, the club and its partners served their 200,000th meal. "The housing and mortgage crisis deeply affected people in Summit County, so in November 2008 I went to a nonprofit in the county and asked the director what was needed to help people through it," says club member Deborah Hage. "For people displaced, living in their cars, or sofa surfing, there was no way for them to prepare meals with the food being distributed by the food banks and pantries." On a typical Tuesday night, 100 to 500 people — children, families, retirees, and even donors who simply enjoy the camaraderie — come together to share restaurant-quality dinners and good company.



# 750,000+

Volunteer hours at  
Summit County dinners  
since 2009



## Canada

Dogs are feeling especially lucky in the Yukon territory thanks to the Rotary Club of Whitehorse-Rendezvous, which bakes, packages, and sells pet treats to raise funds. The club's annual dog biscuit sale has generated about CA\$3,000 since it began three years ago. Proceeds benefit the Mae Bachur Animal Shelter and the Food Bank Society of the Yukon in Whitehorse. "This fundraiser brings Rotarians together for enjoyable social occasions in our various homes, and local people love the biscuits for their dogs," says Kevin Rumsey, immediate past president of the club. Rumsey's mother created the recipe, which includes pumpkin and peanut butter. "We always sell out," he adds. "We even deliver to people's homes."



# \$3.3 billion

Value of retail sales of dog  
food in Canada in 2024



## Greece

In December, the Rotary E-Club of Greece began delivering wheelchairs to archeological sites and museums throughout the country. Through May, the e-club and three other clubs — Halandri, Preveza, and Psychico — had distributed 17 wheelchairs valued at \$2,600. Benefiting institutions included the Aegean Maritime Museum on Mykonos, the Archaeological Museum of Patras, the ESIEPIN Press Museum, and the Museum of Cycladic Art. “This is a large-scale project covering almost all of Greece, with deliveries planned for 14 museums and archeological sites,” says George Stavropoulos, immediate past president of the e-club.



# 2020

Wheelchair lift and special paths installed at the Acropolis

# 681 A.D.

Gounsa temple originally constructed

## Korea

In March, the largest wildfires in Korea's history swept across the country's southeast, scorching nearly 120,000 acres and forcing more than 37,000 people to evacuate. Rotary districts swiftly assessed the needs and delivered food, water, hygiene kits, and other essential supplies to shelters and affected communities. Rotarians were able to reach even more people in need through \$100,000 in funding from The Rotary Foundation. Rotary members also assisted with clearing orchards and with home demolition in devastated areas. Some even provided heavy equipment, including to assist with reconstruction of the historic Gounsa temple in Uiseong. “Disasters like these strike without warning,” says Ung Seop Jeong, immediate past governor of District 3590. “No one is truly prepared, but Rotary is always there for the community.”



## Rwanda

The Rotary Club of Kigali Golf is passionate about more than just hitting the links. Within months of its formation, the club began supporting programs to foster entrepreneurship within the deaf community and other underrepresented groups. In November the club delivered more than a dozen sewing, knitting, and textile heat-press machines to the Rwanda National Union of the Deaf and to Empower the Future, an organization supporting mothers of former street children. The equipment, valued at about \$8,500, was paid for with member donations as well as a golf tournament (naturally). “We look forward to building a long-term partnership with the Rwanda Union of the Deaf, Empower the Future, and other organizations supporting marginalized communities,” says Tabvi “Mellow” Motsi, a member of the club's public relations committee.



# 9

Cooperatives for deaf people in Rwanda

## GOODWILL

# Join the club

Sharing my Rotary stories attracted new members — it will work for you too

By Hashim Taqvi



**W**hen I first joined Rotary in 2014, I immersed myself in the Rotary experience. I actively participated in our district's events and training sessions and met amazing people. These opportunities and connections offered me invaluable insights into the world of service and leadership. I quickly and fully embraced Rotary's mission and, inspired by my mentors, became a committed Rotarian focused on making an impact.

During district training and interactions with senior Rotarians, I learned the importance of always wearing your Rotary pin. It's not just a symbol of pride but also a conversation starter.

One day, my friend Tariq Shah noticed my Rotary pin and asked me about it. I took the opportunity to share the inspiring history of Rotary, how it came into existence, and the story of its first-ever project — a public washroom in downtown Chicago to address sanitation issues.

I also shared a powerful story about a combined project undertaken by nine Rotary clubs in Mississauga, Ontario. We partnered with the Rotary Club of Myanmar to rescue 400 women from slavery, provide them with vocational training, and empower them with sewing machines

to build a sustainable livelihood. It was a challenging yet rewarding project that was successfully completed, leaving a profound impact on the lives of those women.

Hearing these stories left a strong impression on my friend. Within a few days, he decided to join our Rotary club, inspired by the meaningful work we do.

This strategy of sharing Rotary's history and impact has helped me sponsor many members, both friends and acquaintances. The stories of service and transformation resonate deeply and inspire others to join our mission of making a difference in the world.

Since then, I've sponsored 30 additional members and brought even more members into Rotary by chartering new clubs.

Here are some tactics that have worked for me over the years:

**1 Building relationships:** Focus on nurturing genuine relationships and understanding individual passions for service. This has helped me connect prospective members with Rotary's mission in a meaningful way.

**2 Highlighting the Rotary impact:** Make sure that prospective members see the broader impact Rotary is having — from community initiatives

to global programs — while making them feel that they too can contribute meaningfully.

↑ Hashim Taqvi (left) with two people he sponsored as members, Majid Kazmi and Zoheir Hasanbhai.

### 3 Engagement and mentorship:

Encourage new members to participate in events and training sessions to build their confidence and engagement. Guiding them step-by-step helps them envision themselves as active Rotarians.

### 4 Leveraging stories:

Share personal anecdotes of how Rotary has transformed lives — both for those we serve and for members themselves. Your examples are a powerful motivator.

Your efforts to sponsor new members will not go unnoticed. When I was recognized as a Membership Society member, I received a letter from Past RI President Gordon McNally. I recently reached the silver level of the Membership Society for New Member Sponsors. This is an honor not only for me but for my club and district. ■

*Hashim Taqvi is the immediate past president (2024-25) of the Rotary Club of Mississauga, Ontario, in District 7080.*

**The Membership Society** for New Member Sponsors includes four recognition levels: **bronze** for Rotary members who sponsor 25 to 29 new members into their club, **silver** for those who sponsor 30 to 49 members, **gold** for those who sponsor 50 to 74 members, and **platinum** for those who sponsor 75 or more. If you sponsor a new member, you'll receive a thank you email from Rotary later that month. Once you reach 25, you'll receive an email letting you know that you are eligible to join the Membership Society.

Learn more about the Membership Society for New Member Sponsors and visit the virtual gallery of its members at [rotary.org/membershipsociety](https://rotary.org/membershipsociety).



Do you know **Someone**  
who is **advancing women**  
in **Rotary?**

**NOMINATIONS  
DUE 31 AUGUST**

*for the*

**SYLVIA  
WHITLOCK  
LEADERSHIP  
AWARD**



Dr. Sylvia Whitlock is a Rotary pioneer, an educator, a humanitarian, and a longtime advocate for women in Rotary.



Any Rotarian or Rotaractor  
can nominate one member for  
consideration from 1 to 31 August.  
<https://bit.ly/SWL-Award>



ESSAY

# An unexpected education

For a well-schooled nurse, a life of global service was  
its own classroom — and a path to Rotary

By Ann Evans





**I**n 2008 I traveled from the United States to England to take a course on international health consultancy. Later I made the short list to join a team from Liverpool Associates in Tropical Health that was destined for southern Sudan. There we would assess the health of what would, in 2011, become the newest nation in the world. But on the last cut, I failed to make the team. That's when I decided to join Dr. Jill Seaman to see how I could help her. It would be a profound learning experience.

I had first met Jill in western Alaska where I was working as a nurse practitioner and educator with Alaska Native Corporations. Based in Bethel for several months a year, Jill provided health care in Indigenous Yup'ik communities. The rest of the year she worked in Sudan, where she treated infectious diseases, especially kala-azar, a deadly parasitic disease caused by the bite of sand flies. When Jill arrived in Sudan, the cases of kala-azar were rising. An epidemic was brewing.

In 1997, *Time* magazine designated Dr. Seaman, "an unassuming but iron-willed American woman," as one of its Heroes of Medicine. "In an eight-year struggle against the disease," the magazine wrote, "Seaman developed a wealth of clinical expertise in treating thousands of kala-azar patients, perhaps more than any other single doctor in history." A MacArthur "genius grant" would follow in 2009.

Jill was also my hero. She had first mentioned joining her in Sudan when we met in Alaska. I had long wanted to use my extensive education and my decades of work experiences to make a difference in a place where so many have so little. Jill's work sounded intriguing, but I wasn't a physician and knew nothing about tropical diseases. When we first talked, I worried I wasn't a good fit for what she needed. Then the offer to help her arrived. I eagerly accepted, little realizing that Sudan would provide an unexpected education of its own. It would also be my introduction to Rotary.

In Old Fangak, an isolated community in southern Sudan, I surveyed a challenging situation — poor sanitation, severe hunger, and a dramatic rise in kala-azar cases, most of which would result in death if not properly treated. Jill's initial

plan for me to teach her Sudanese medical staff was abandoned amid the spike in cases. Soon I was learning how to diagnose and treat diseases I had never heard of. I extended my six-week stay to 10 weeks after our patient load approached 1,000 people a day.

After another worker arrived, I departed for Nairobi where I had a few days before my international flight. While waiting I received an email from Liverpool. Within a few minutes I was discussing an opportunity to consult with the Ministry of Health in southern Sudan. I accepted the offer and returned to the United States. Within days I was in Juba, which today is the capital of South Sudan, conducting a six-week consultation on the role of community midwifery in combating the extraordinarily high rate of maternal mortality in southern Sudan. That consultation led to two more. By then I was hooked, even though (I'm embarrassed to admit) my earlier ideas about volunteering and working in the developing world were less selfless. Instead, I had imagined joining a project somewhere like Costa Rica, spending a week helping out, then moving on to the beach for a month or so.

While I was in Juba, my friend Ray Buchanan, a founder of Stop Hunger Now (now known as Rise Against Hunger), joined me. We chartered a plane to take us to Jill in Old Fangak, where we learned of the need for a school and the completion of an unfinished women's center. Soon I became the country representative for Stop Hunger Now, which provided me with a calling card that I found invaluable for entry into the

**I eagerly accepted,  
little realizing  
that Sudan  
would provide  
an unexpected  
education of its own.  
It would also be  
my introduction  
to Rotary.**

government circles and nonprofit organizations where I advocated for assistance.

Over the course of a few years, the concrete block women's center got a roof, windows, and doors. It became the headquarters for a new school that opened with 1,300 students and 13 classrooms, as well as additional classrooms in the women's center. Stop Hunger Now sent two large shipping containers filled with food that we shared with two neighboring schools and Jill's medical project.

When Ray returned to Old Fangak he brought along the past chair of the board and the director of field operations at Stop Hunger Now. All three of them were Rotarians. Meanwhile, a friend who had a project in southern Sudan had introduced me to a Ugandan man, Emmanuel Ecodu, who was working in Juba. My friend explained that Emmanuel had been a Rotaractor in Uganda; a Rotarian for more than 15 years, he's currently a member of the Rotary Club of Juba Airport. A crucial part of my education in Africa had just fallen into place.

Emmanuel became a trusted ally, procuring materials from Juba and Uganda, shipping them to Old Fangak, arranging flights and accommodations, and managing purchases and bank accounts. He continues to be a vital part of my work. Soon he became vital to Jill's South Sudan Medical Relief project as well as the Alaska Health Project South Sudan. Begun in 2008 by mutual friends of Jill and mine, the latter organization has, among other accomplishments, completed more than 100 boreholes, delivering safe water to areas of South Sudan that didn't have access to that necessity. In time I joined the boards of both organizations, and by now I've lost count of the number of times I have traveled to South Sudan, where the work continues.

In 2015, after moving back to North Carolina, I met some Rotarians assisting with an art fair in Durham. Within days I joined a Rotary meeting, expressed my interest in international work, and was invited to join the Rotary Club of Durham and participate on the grants committee. I jumped in with both feet and started writing a grant for improving a local park, as well as grants for Jill's project in South Sudan.

I moved to the Charlotte area in 2022, and there I became a member of the

Rotary Club of Charlotte International. Within 24 hours of joining, I wrote my first grant so as to meet the impending submission deadline. Soon I was simultaneously the lead on grants in District 7710 and District 7680 (both in North Carolina) for projects in South Sudan.

In 2022, I was in South Sudan with Jill working with the Himalayan Cataract Project. There I met Dr. Lloyd Williams, the director of the Global Ophthalmology program at Duke University, known colloquially as Duke GO. Working with the Himalayan Cataract Project, Dr. Williams regularly traveled to South Sudan to treat blindness. I watched as he performed a brief cataract surgery, which included the insertion of an inexpensive lens replacement. A day after the operation, a blind person had recovered his sight. That experience changed my life — another watershed moment in my ongoing education.

Inspired by Dr. Williams' passion for this work, I'm now devoted to expanding Rotary's involvement in avoidable blindness and vision impairment. In 2023, the Charlotte International club presented a portable operating microscope to Duke GO for Dr. Williams to use in his work in South Sudan. (My daughter Deanna, who next year will succeed me as club president, concocted an ingenious fundraiser — \$80 for Mom's 80th birthday — to celebrate my special birthday while raising funds for the microscope.) In March Deanna and I traveled to Liberia with the co-founder of Cure Blindness to participate in a cataract surgery event and speak at the Liberian Ophthalmic Association's annual meeting. And in April I traveled to Nepal with members of the Seva Foundation, which develops sustainable programs worldwide to preserve and restore sight. In Kathmandu we attended the 2030 In Sight Live conference presented by the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness. And so my education continues.

Working with Rotarians, writing grants, and completing projects that make a difference is exhilarating. As a nurse, nurse practitioner, and educator, I had always been in a service role. Rotary turned out to be the perfect vehicle to fulfill my desire to be of service in the developing world. After decades of work and travel, I have found my tribe, people



### Rotary turned out to be the perfect vehicle to fulfill my desire to be of service in the developing world.

with the vision and the heart to make a difference in the world. Through working on grants, I saw the checks and balances that protected the assets that made those grant projects possible. The Rotary Foundation was clearly the right repository for the financial resources that Carl (my husband and fellow club member) and I had set aside for humanitarian work. In 2022, we were inducted into the Arch Klumph Society at the Rotary International Convention in Houston; the following year we participated in an elevation ceremony at the convention in Melbourne and again this year in Calgary.

Seeing so many dire challenges around the world, and knowing there are resources and people committed

to solving them, motivates me to keep going. I want to spend the rest of my days working alongside people who care about those who need help, both locally and internationally. At the beginning of my recent presentation in Liberia, I announced that all speakers have a bias. I always like to know a speaker's biases, so I showed a slide of my two youngest grandchildren. And these children, I said, are *my* bias. I believe they and all children deserve a better, fairer world. We are all one family — which is why class remains in session. ■

*Ann Evans, FNP, MS, DrPH, is president of the Rotary Club of Charlotte International, North Carolina.*





## USE ROTARY VIDEOS TO TELL OUR STORY

The Rotary Brand Center has dozens of videos for you to enhance your meetings, engage with your community, and help tell the Rotary story. These high-quality videos promote our campaigns and causes, showing that we're people of action and saving you the time and expense of creating them.



Visit [brandcenter.rotary.org](https://brandcenter.rotary.org) and explore our video selection today.





# MAKING WAVES

Divers with  
disabilities  
find peace  
in the water

200 MEDLEY	OSMANSKI - PUHR
200 FREESTYLE	R. GAGE - TERRELL
200 IND. MIXED	R. WHEELER
50 FREESTYLE	Y. NAM
6 DIVES	LUKE FRITZ
11 DIVES	COHEN LAYLO
100 BUTTERFLY	COHEN LAYLO
100 FREESTYLE	LUKE FRITZ
300 FREESTYLE	LUKE FRITZ
	C. YONTEZ
	2015



BY KATE SILVER

PHOTOGRAPHY BY  
KEVIN SERNA



"It's one of the only  
places in the world  
where I don't need my  
wheelchair," Bill Bogdan  
says poolside.

**MORE THAN A DOZEN SCUBA DIVERS** dot the pool's turquoise waters, swimming in groups of threes and fours in dark wetsuits and face masks. Excited chatter, splashing, and the occasional squeal of delight pierce the humid, chlorine-scented air, a contrast to the frigid conditions outside on this January morning.

To the uninformed observer, the people in the pool at a high school in suburban Chicago are indistinguishable from one another. But Jim Elliott, a member of the Rotary Club of Downers Grove, Illinois, knows the different groups, and why they're here: the instructors who are leading the sessions, the dive buddies serving as safety companions, and the rookie divers, who are learning to navigate deep waters with autism, brain injuries, paralysis, and other conditions. Some family members, too, are learning to dive. They're all gathered for a monthly open pool session hosted by Diveheart, a nonprofit that Elliott founded that teaches people with disabilities using an approach known as adaptive diving.

Bill Bogdan approaches the edge of the pool. It's an exciting day for the 55-year-old father, a volunteer and a member of the organization's board of directors: Two of his children are learning to scuba dive in preparation for a family trip to Mexico this summer.

As his kids listen intently to the instructor, Bogdan decides to join everyone in the pool. His muscular arms flex as he lowers himself out of his wheelchair. He lands roughly on the ground, then shifts his legs, which are paralyzed, into the water and pushes himself in. He surfaces with a smile. "It's one of the only places in the world I can go where I don't need my wheelchair," he says.

**WHEN ELLIOTT LAUNCHED DIVEHEART** in 2001, his vision was simple: He wanted to introduce people with limited mobility to scuba diving, a sport that he loved. Intuitively, he thought someone with, say, a spinal cord injury could benefit from the sensation of weightlessness in the water. He hoped to make scuba more accessible and welcoming to all.

"The thrill for me is when a diver first looks down, and they go, 'Oh my God, I'm standing up. I'm not in my wheelchair,'" Elliott says.

What he quickly learned, however, is that "scuba therapy," as Elliott and others call it, can benefit people with a whole array of physical, cognitive, and mental conditions. In addition to training divers with paralysis, including people with paraplegia and quadriplegia, Diveheart has trained people with cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, limited vision or blindness, ALS, autism, and post-traumatic stress disorder, among other conditions.

Diveheart instructors and volunteer buddies go through dive training as well as "empathy training" so they can be sensitive to adaptive divers' needs. That may mean restricting their legs or arms, for example, and relying on other people to place and remove their face mask.

During those trainings, in particular, Elliott says he feels his Rotary pride coming through. It's challenging work, learning how to best help an individual who may not be able to communicate verbally, or who uses a wheelchair and must be safely moved to and from a boat and into the water. By their very nature, he says, the sessions are guided by a sense of Service Above Self. The values of Rotary are the values of Diveheart.

Diveheart sessions near its Downers Grove headquarters take place in pools and deep quarry lakes in Illinois and Wisconsin, and there are affiliate Diveheart chapters elsewhere in the United States and the world. The nonprofit has built relationships with resorts and trained dive operators globally, and it leads group trips to places like the Caribbean islands of Cozumel, Grenada, and Roatán. Often, entire families will join those trips, and for many it's their first international adventure.

"I tell people this really isn't about scuba diving," says Elliott. "This is about taking an individual with a disability and creating a paradigm shift. So now it's not 'Johnny in a wheelchair.' It's 'Johnny the scuba diver.' And then they go on and they take on other challenges."

**AFTER AMBER RANGEL** was paralyzed from the chest down in a waterskiing accident and nearly drowned, she wanted nothing to do with water. Prior to the accident, the 20-year-old was a semiprofessional barefoot waterskiing athlete, tearing along the water in slalom and tricks competitions. Afterward, all it took were a few droplets of water splashed on her face while bathing to trigger her emotions.

This new reality, including using a wheelchair, felt stifling. "A lot of my friends were leaving for college or starting families, or just doing the coolest stuff that a 20-year-old could do," she says. "And I was having incontinence issues and scared to shower."





Through their nonprofit Diveheart, Rotary members Tinamarie Hernandez and Jim Elliott introduce people with an array of disabilities to “scuba therapy.”

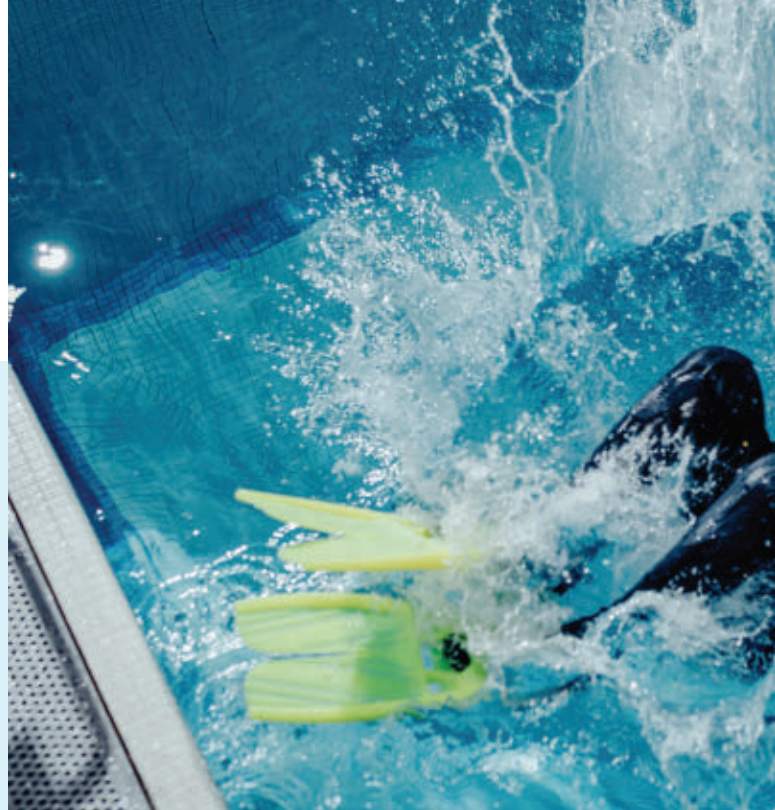




From top: Amber Rangel prepares for a pool dive at the University of Illinois in 2022, and heads out for a dive in Utila, Honduras, in 2016.



**“I WANT TO GET OUT OF THE WHEELCHAIR. THIS WAS A CHANCE TO DO SOMETHING DIFFERENT AND TO DO SOMETHING NEW.”**



Rangel found she enjoyed adaptive snow skiing, and two of her instructors, also volunteers with Diveheart, encouraged her to consider diving. She sat with the idea for a long time before accepting the invitation. She worked through her fear of the water, and when she got in the pool, she started to see possibilities. “This was a chance to do something different and to do something new,” she says. She felt relieved to be in the water standing, weightless, and far away from her wheelchair.

Until then, Rangel hadn’t thought much about traveling, but she was drawn to the idea of diving in the ocean. She joined a Diveheart group trip to Cozumel, off Mexico’s Yucatán Peninsula, and it lit a fire in her. Soon after, she traveled to Honduras and dove with Diveheart instructors. She found that diving was a passageway to serenity and feeling weightless — more about the sensations than the sights. “I want to get out of the wheelchair,” she says. “And I like to be able to just float.”

Those early travel experiences built her confidence, so much so that she returned to Honduras every few months solo, diving by day and staying with a local or in a hostel by night. She liked the people there and found it was easier to get around in a wheelchair than back home. “I struggled more making it to a Starbucks in Chicago than I struggled making it in Honduras,” she says. “People just treated me differently there.”

Those trips helped her work through a lot of anger, she says. In Honduras, she realized that she still had control over who she was and





**Left:** Diving instructor Bruce Bittner takes the plunge during training at a high school pool in Oak Lawn, Illinois. **Right:** Adaptive diver Veronica DeJong gets some help putting on her mask.

the person she wanted to become. She booked more international trips — sometimes diving, sometimes not — visiting Bali, Iceland, Tulum.

Prior to her injury, Rangel had dropped out of high school. She needed an education and a steady income to keep diving and exploring the world on her terms. She got her GED, enrolled in college, and in 2024, at age 30, she graduated with honors from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Now, she's in the process of applying to law school. And she credits scuba diving for continually pushing her to do better and to be better, both in the water and on land.

**IN THE EARLY DAYS,** Elliott hung flyers in dive shops to find participants, volunteers, and instructors. He talked up the fledgling organization at Rotary club meetings, joining Rotary himself in 2003.

“Rotary has been a super support system for us, from the beginning,” says Tinamarie Hernandez, Diveheart’s executive director, also a member of the Rotary Club of Downers Grove. “It’s important to be a part of the community and that’s what Rotary is.”

Following a presentation to a club in Oak Lawn, for example, Elliott met the superintendent of Oak Lawn Community High School, who offered him access to the school’s pool. Today, it’s Diveheart’s longest-running pool program, at more than a decade.

Word spread about the organization, fueled in no small part by Elliott’s knack for storytelling

and his media connections. Stories splashed across NBC, CNN, *Money* magazine, *Success* magazine, and other outlets, and interest soared. In 2008, U.S. Army veteran Tammy Duckworth, who lost her legs in the Iraq War, made news when she dove with Diveheart. At the time she was the director of the Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs; today she’s a U.S. senator.

As dive instructors in other cities reached out to inquire about starting their own adaptive diving chapter, Elliott told them to first make sure to get Rotary members involved. “We don’t start up a program unless the person we’re working with sets up Rotary meetings,” says Elliott. “They are absolutely instrumental.”

In 2010, Diveheart had a booth at the Rotary International Convention in Montreal. There, Elliott met Rotarians from Haifa, Israel, who wanted to set up a diving program for kids with autism. He worked with them to raise money for scuba gear and other equipment.

Around the world, Elliott estimates that around 50 adaptive diving nonprofits have started thanks to the training and support of Diveheart. While a handful of those are considered Diveheart chapters, most are independent nonprofits. “Our goal now is to grow adaptive scuba around the world and keep improving our training practices to be the standard-bearer for best practices,” he says.

Diveheart has also captured the attention of medical professionals. Elliott regularly speaks at medical conferences about the benefits of scuba therapy. At diving trade shows, Diveheart hosted adaptive scuba symposiums that drew researchers, physicians, professors, and therapists. And in recent years, Diveheart began offering continuing education units for people in the medical field.

Some small research studies indicate that diving may have measurable benefits for people with post-traumatic stress disorder, autism, and physical disabilities. Richard Moon,



## STUDIES POINT TO MEASURABLE BENEFITS FOR PEOPLE WITH PTSD, AUTISM, AND PHYSICAL DISABILITIES.

who researches diving medicine at Duke University School of Medicine, says that, anecdotally, diving is known to improve a person's mood, alleviate depression and anxiety, and help people relax. "People often tell me, 'Well, I'm very anxious, but once I get in the water, I have a terrific time,'" he says.

Moon became acquainted with Diveheart through a physician colleague. "There are a lot of reasons why some people shouldn't dive, at least by the book," he says. "To be able to take people who are handicapped in various ways and allow them to dive is a fabulous thing."

**VERONICA DEJONG LEARNED** about Diveheart two years ago while attending a support group for people with traumatic brain injuries. At the time, she was 29 years old and didn't know how to swim.

Just three years prior, DeJong had a headache that grew so severe she was vomiting and seeing double. At the hospital, she learned she had blood clots throughout the venous sinuses of her brain that were causing pressure to build on her optic nerves. "I had all of the symptoms of a stroke," she says.

In the aftermath, she was still seeing double. Vision therapy has helped, but her spatial awareness and depth perception remain altered, as does her short-term memory. Multitasking can be overwhelming, and she's no longer able to drive.

When DeJong heard about Diveheart, she loved the idea of throwing herself into something new and different. While afraid of the water, she felt emboldened by her recent health emergency. "I just kept telling myself, I handled blood clots in my brain. I can do this."

Over time, she made her way from the shallow end of the Oak Lawn pool to the deep end, learning to swim as she learned to scuba dive. In the water, she doesn't have to worry about whether she'll trip and fall like she does on land. Plus, she always dives with buddies who are aware that she has memory challenges, and she knows they have her back.

In 2024, DeJong traveled to the Cayman Islands with a

group of women through Diveheart and dove in the ocean for the first time. Storms limited the actual time diving, but the trip, overall, felt like a victory. It was DeJong's first time leaving the U.S. and made her feel like anything was possible. "Everybody has different abilities. I'm just redefining what my abilities are," she says. "Accepting my new normal has been difficult but doing it through Diveheart has been amazing."

**AS A CHILD, JIM ELLIOTT** had a life filled with colorful characters, each with their own challenges. His father was an Army veteran who used a wheelchair and orthotic braces to get around. "I grew up dodging wheelchairs at the VA hospital," he laughs.

Later, Elliott's daughter, Erin, was born blind. When she was about 9 years old, kids at school teased her about her eyes, and she became obstinate. "She threw down her cane and refused to learn Braille," he recalls.

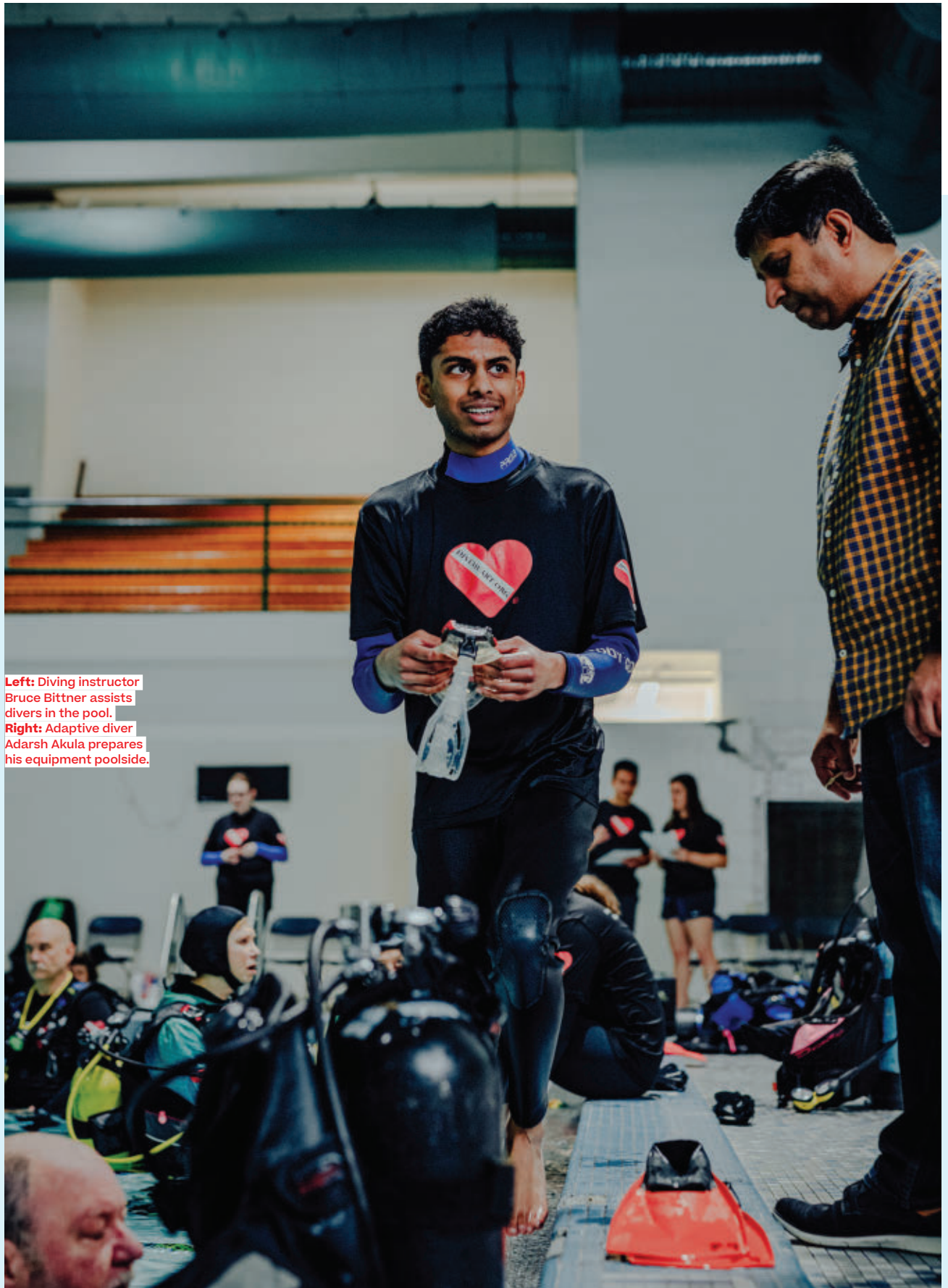
This was in the late '80s, and a coworker told Elliott about an organization called the American Blind Skiing Foundation, which teaches people with blindness and visual impairment how to ski while accompanied by guides. Within days, Erin was hitting the slopes, and her dad saw her confidence grow. She'd go to school and tell stories about her weekends on the slopes, giddy with her new identity: She was a skier. At the same time, Elliott became a ski guide and volunteered with the organization for about 25 years — long after Erin had grown up and moved on. "I saw it change a lot of lives," he says.

For as long as he can remember, Elliott was eager to try new things and prepare for any scenario. He studied journalism in college in the 1970s, at a time when oceanographer Jacques Cousteau was delighting TV viewers with his underwater discoveries.

"As a young journalist, I thought, if I ever meet someone like Jacques Cousteau, I better know how to scuba dive," Elliott says. He was captivated by the world he found underwater. "It was like being a superhero, just hovering in the middle of an intersection," he says. "The body, mind, and spirit experience was so powerful for me, I knew at some point I wanted to be an instructor."

It was much later in life — after raising a fam-





**Left:** Diving instructor Bruce Bittner assists divers in the pool.  
**Right:** Adaptive diver Adarsh Akula prepares his equipment poolside.



**This page:** Tinamarie Hernandez prepares her dive tank before entering the pool.  
**Opposite:** Madelyn Bogdan, learning so she can dive with her dad, gazes across the pool.





ily and leading a successful career as a media advertising sales executive — that he returned to the idea of teaching people to dive. He wanted to see scuba diving change lives in the same way he'd seen skiing do so. He left his job and his six-figure salary to start Diveheart, hoping to build a small nonprofit in the Chicago area that used local pools and maybe took a trip to a quarry or the coast from time to time. He had no idea just how much adaptive diving would resonate, or how much Rotary would help to foster its growth.

Looking to the future, Elliott has his sights on the next ambitious goal: the Diveheart deep pool project, which will be built on donated land north of Chicago. He's been working with architects and engineers to design a pool that would be the deepest in the country, at 130 feet, enabling divers to descend to ocean-level depths without having to travel to the coast or navigate weather disruptions. Diveheart is raising money to construct the pool, which will have multiple levels in a patented telescoping design. When built, it will be used for research, rehabilitation, education, and training, and will offer vocational opportunities to people of all abilities.

**WATER HAS BEEN AN IMPORTANT PART** of Bill Bogdan's life for as long as he can remember. When he was just 8 months old, he

was diagnosed with a type of cancer on his spine called neuroblastoma. The removal of the tumor resulted in paralysis in his legs. Swimming and water therapy helped strengthen his muscles, and his parents put in an above-ground pool. A friend from high school got him interested in scuba diving, leading him to pursue certification through the Handicapped Scuba Association.

Bogdan still gets emotional when he remembers his first diving trip in the Bahamas when he was in his 20s. The dive crew wouldn't let him take his wheelchair on the boat, because they worried it wouldn't be stable in the choppy water. At first, he was reluctant to leave the chair behind — he was rarely apart from it. But once he got in the water, he felt like a different person. "For three hours, I almost forgot that I had a disability, because I was able to do three dives," he says. "And the whole time, no wheelchair, no nothing. I was in the water, going swimming, checking out the marine life, checking out the coral, just having a blast."

He was thrilled to later learn about Diveheart and joined the organization as a volunteer, eager to help other people with disabilities experience diving. His experience has also inspired everyone in his family to learn to dive — first, his wife and oldest daughter, and now, the two children at the pool today.

If all goes according to plan, their first ocean dive as a family will happen this summer on a Diveheart trip to Cozumel. It's something Bogdan has dreamed of for years, and he can't wait to tell the stories when he gets back.

"I always tell people, don't let your disability be your handicap," he says. "There's nothing you can't do." ■

▶ Experience a Diveheart pool session in our video story at [youtube.com/rotaryinternational](https://youtube.com/rotaryinternational).

In uncertain  
economic times,  
Rotary offers  
members assured  
avenues to  
leadership and  
professional  
development

# How to succeed in business...

By Sam Worley  
Photography by Joshua Cogan









Washington is nothing if not a networking town, which Ahmed Eltally knew even before he moved to the East Coast, looking

to kick-start a career in international diplomacy. He had a vivid idea of how things might go: “Getting my suit and tie, going to think tank events, bumping into congresspeople in the street, drinking coffee at Starbucks.” Then 27 years old, Eltally had recently completed a graduate degree in conflict resolution at Portland State University in Oregon and settled in New Jersey while he looked for work. He soon found a job in his field at an organization based in D.C. And he was ready to make some connections.

Just one hitch: It was the beginning of 2020.

Rather than spending those crucial first months rubbing elbows with senior diplomats at D.C. coffee-houses, he found himself working alone from afar at home in New Jersey, wary of the lethal respiratory virus spreading around the world. “The word ‘quarantine’ was not in my dictionary, since English is not my first language,” says Eltally, who was born and raised in Egypt. He quickly learned what it meant.

He eventually relocated to Washington, D.C., that fall, though his job was still remote. Seeking ways to connect, Eltally looked online for young-professional groups in his new city — and found Rotary. He was familiar with the organization — in Portland, Eltally had been nominated for a Rotary Peace Fellowship — but it wasn’t until moving to Washington that he joined a Rotaract club, in 2021. Even as the club navigated pandemic challenges, it offered Eltally the kinds of social connection he was after. It also wound up playing a critical role in his professional life, allowing opportunities for networking and mentorship that he was missing by not working full time in an office.

“D.C. is a transient city. It’s very hard to sustain and build relationships, to find authentic connection and someone who cares about your professional development and wants to share their journey,” he says. “Rotary fills such a space in a way that feels both local and global.”

Even as more workers return to offices, other shocks to the economy and the labor market — from layoffs across industries to a global trade war — are throwing up new obstacles to professional development and career advancement. Research has found hybrid work alone has come at a cost to younger workers who might enjoy — even insist upon — the flexibility but are missing out on the essentials of early career development: mentorship, regular feedback, and training.

“In very small to big ways, we really have missed out on some incredible relationship-building opportunities, and the people who are going to suffer from it the most are the younger employees, without question,” says Allison McWilliams, assistant vice president for mentoring and alumni personal and career development at



With his Washington job being remote, Ahmed Eltally (above) looked online for young-professional groups and found Rotary, which led him to experienced mentors like D.C. Rotarian Marilyn Nevy Cruz (previous page). It also opened the way to leadership opportunities like helping organize Ascension Rotaract Network events (opposite page, top) and discussing projects with club members (opposite page, bottom).



**“It’s very hard to sustain and build relationships, to find authentic connection and someone who cares about your professional development. Rotary fills such a space in a way that feels both local and global.”**

Wake Forest University in North Carolina. “We know that people who are well-mentored, they have greater role clarity. They have a better understanding of what it is they’re supposed to do, day in and day out. They have higher rates of promotion. They are more satisfied with the work that they’re doing and with their organizations.” The lack of those opportunities poses challenges for those beginning their careers, McWilliams says: “They’re desperate for this. They know that they need it and they will leave an organization when they’re not being given it.”

Community organizations like Rotary can fill the gap, offering members the kinds of networking, mentorship, and leadership development they may be missing at work or while searching for a job. “Rotary is a great example, or professional organizations, or other local civic organizations,” says McWilliams, whose grandfather was a Rotary district governor. “I tell people all the time: This doesn’t have to just come from work. There are a lot of places where you can seek this out.”

**THOUGH BEST KNOWN FOR SERVICE,** Rotary was created in 1905 in Chicago to bring together business professionals from all fields to exchange ideas, build networks, and form friendships. Rotary International’s general secretary, John Hewko, has called the organization the “original LinkedIn.”

Today, many members, younger ones in particular, join first and foremost for networking, leadership, and career development opportunities. Those include everything from club leadership roles and opportunities to become better at public speaking and project management to finding mentors and making career connections locally or around the globe. For building specific skills, Rotary offers members a library of online courses ranging from conflict resolution and peacebuilding to grant management and fundraising.

Eltally, who became president of his D.C. Rotaract club, is one person who’s been able to take advantage of Rotary in this way. He has become director of education for the Ascension Rotaract Network that

includes Rotary zones from a large area, and in 2023, he helped organize a Rotaract event on “career paths in the American foreign service,” co-sponsored with Young Professionals in Foreign Policy. Eltally knew the types of panelists he wanted: senior diplomats across government agencies, the kinds of people that young employees would be fortunate to run into in, say, the State Department cafeteria. The challenge was finding them outside the leafy confines of Foggy Bottom, the D.C. cultural and diplomatic district.

Eltally had an idea: He tapped into a database called DACdb, which stands for District and Club Database, that allows users to search Rotary members by location and occupation. There, he made contact with Rotarians who were leaders at government departments and invited them to join the conversation. Organizing the event was a skill-building exercise in itself.

The name of the event, Beyond Cocktails and Cigars, pointed to a new way of doing business and, in this case, of asking questions, seeking feedback, and advancing careers. And maybe that’s a good thing. Not everyone is into cocktails and cigars, anyhow.

**MARILYN NEVY CRUZ WAS IN A SIMILAR** position as Eltally nearly a decade earlier — completely unfamiliar with Washington, D.C., when she moved from California in 2012 to pursue a career. “I had no family or friends. I knew no one,” says Navy Cruz, today a federal public defender who works on death penalty

PHOTOGRAPHS: (BELOW) COURTESY OF AHMED ELTALLY



# Take us to work

## HOW TO ELEVATE YOUR CAREER THROUGH ROTARY:

### Lead your club.

From serving as club president to joining a committee or service project, you can sharpen your teamwork, project management, and other leadership skills. To learn more about these roles, visit the club leadership course catalog at [rotary.org/learn](https://rotary.org/learn).

### Explore leadership courses.

Rotary's Learning Center offers online courses in marketable capabilities such as resolving conflict, public speaking, mentoring, and networking. Enroll at [rotary.org/learn](https://rotary.org/learn) or download the new RotaryLearn app.

### Network with club members.

The person sitting across from you could be a CEO, entrepreneur, or a nonprofit leader. It's a room full of potential partners, advisers, mentors and mentees, clients, and job leads.

**Build peace.** Join the Rotary Positive Peace Academy to learn about building and sustaining peace and the Positive Peace framework. Get started at [positivepeace.academy/rotary](https://positivepeace.academy/rotary).

**Go global.** Make connections at the Rotary International Convention. Or join a Rotary Action Group and learn from professionals in a field of your interest, ranging from the environment and peacebuilding to public health and economic development. Find one at [rotary.org/actiongroups](https://rotary.org/actiongroups).

■  
Know someone looking to advance their career? Tell them about Rotary. [rotary.org/join](https://rotary.org/join)

cases. "So I googled 'community service organizations,' and that's where Rotaract popped up." Like Eltally, she rose through the ranks, becoming president of her Rotaract club and, later, president of the Rotary Club of Washington, D.C.

Going from Rotaract to Rotary, Nevy Cruz has served as a bridge between generations. She became a mentor to Eltally and others, but only after receiving generous mentorship herself from a president of the D.C. club. "She really took me, as the Rotaract president, under her wing, and started to build that mentorship — informal, because it wasn't forced," Nevy Cruz recalls. "It was very natural."

The two didn't just talk about Rotary business. They became real friends, meeting for drinks or coffee, helping Nevy Cruz navigate professional life. "At the time, I wasn't sure I wanted to go to law school," she remembers. "It was reviewing my statement of purpose, reviewing my speech performance, if I had a presentation at work. D.C. is such a small but important city in the country, and everybody is trying to move up to the next position." She laughs. "So, how to navigate that — that was really important, especially not being from here."

Mentorship is "such a critical piece of what Rotarians have to offer," says Elizabeth Moody, a nonprofit consultant, Rotaractor, and former Rotary Scholar. But sometimes, Moody thinks, Rotary clubs put too much pressure on themselves to develop formal mentorship programs or match people by interests. In her D.C. Rotaract club, "we've generally tended to keep mentorship fairly informal, and it's worked well."

Sometimes the right mentor relationship can have clear professional results. That was the case for Cinderella Ndlovu, a member of the Rotary Club of Matopos, Zimbabwe. The founder of an environmental nonprofit, she traveled to the U.S. with the 2024 class of the Mandela Washington Fellowship, a leadership program for young people from Africa. In one of her classes, she listened intently as a clean energy expert talked about a solar workforce development project for military veterans in Ukraine. The guest speaker, Pat Courtney-Strong, turned out to be a Rotary member. "Pat's project showed how, through Rotary, one can actually make an impact in a different part of the world," Ndlovu says. "It's something I really admire." Ndlovu introduced herself after class, and since then Courtney-Strong has coached Ndlovu on grant writing, fundraising strategies, and project team engagement.

In addition to those hands-on skills, mentors can impart soft skills that are just as valuable. "Rotary has been great for me in terms of practicing public speaking, developing as a leader, developing as a communicator," Moody notes. "It's definitely built my résumé with a lot of different skills that have helped my professional career."

There is such a hunger for the kinds of mentorship Rotary can offer, says Nevy Cruz, who's built a profile





**“It’s whatever the mentee needs at the time, from looking over a college application to dealing with financial troubles or a transition to a new job.”**

as an expert on the topic. She says she’s “inundated” — in a good way, she adds — with requests. Her approach is to let the mentee lead. “It’s whatever the mentee needs at the time, from looking over a college application or a postgraduate application to dealing with financial troubles or a transition to a new job,” she says. This spring, she and Moody, another of her mentees, were preparing a breakout session for the Rotary International Convention in June in Calgary. The theme: effective mentorship strategies.

**FOR MANY MEMBERS, THAT LITTLE ROTARY** lapel pin alone opens doors, to business partnerships, new clients, and jobs. Steve Amara knows all about this. He has been connected to Rotary most of his life, starting as a student participating in Interact in his native Cameroon and then as a Rotaractor working and studying overseas. But it wasn’t until after he returned to Africa in 2015 that he realized what an accelerator Rotary could be to his business career. “Rotary is, I dare

There is such a hunger for the kinds of mentorship that Rotary can offer, says Marilyn Nevy Cruz, a past president of the Rotary Club of Washington, D.C., and a mentor to Eltally and many others.

say, the cornerstone of my personal and professional life,” he says in an interview via video call, wearing his trademark suit and tie — and Rotary pin.

Now based in Senegal, Amara has spent the past 10 years leading organizations in education and digital innovation across West Africa, each time leaning on his Rotary connections to get established and to understand the cultural nuances crucial to making deals in different places. “Every time, my first investors, my lawyer, and my banker were all Rotarians,” he says with a laugh.

He arrived in Senegal’s capital in 2019 to take over as CEO at expat-dakar.com, a classifieds platform that had stalled on its growth path to topping \$1 million in annual revenue. His Rotary connections, including the owners of large hotel chains, car dealerships, and more, allowed him to lure big corporate deals needed to grow the platform.

For Amara what makes Rotary such a valuable business network is what he calls the “strong presumption of shared values” in potential partners and clients. Chief among those values, he says, is the desire to come together to do good. “There is nothing else. It’s not because we come from the same tribe, or because we work in the same field, or because we practice the same faith,” he says. “It’s just the pleasure to be with each other as people who want to do good.”

That’s why, within his Rotary club, Dakar Millénium, Amara knows he can rely on a group of elders he calls his “fantastic five.” “When I have issues, I know I can call them,” he says. “I’m in a safe space. They are always going to tell me the right thing to do.”

Half a world away, in Malaysia, another longtime Rotarian is opening doors for younger professionals. Leslie Salehuddin, now semiretired, started a boutique recruitment agency in the 1990s to help companies large and small find job candidates. While scanning résumés, he’d often deliver an additional recruitment pitch: nudging people with an obvious passion for community service to consider joining Rotary.



**Top:** Cinderella Ndlovu, a Rotarian from Zimbabwe and the founder of an environmental nonprofit, relies on a Rotary mentor she met on a fellowship in the U.S.



**Center:** Leslie Salehuddin, a Rotarian from Malaysia who founded a recruitment agency, puts on career development seminars for participants in Rotary Youth Leadership Awards camps.

**Bottom:** Steve Amara (bottom, left) has led organizations across West Africa, each time leaning on his Rotary connections.

**Opposite:** D.C. Rotary members like Mike McCabe are aiding civil servants left without jobs in government downsizing.

With his decades of experience building careers, Salehuddin, a member of the Rotary Club of Gombak, Kuala Lumpur, puts on career development seminars, including for participants in Rotary Youth Leadership Awards camps. He notes how young people’s goals have changed over time, including wanting to work for themselves or to work online. “While we were looking for 9-to-5 jobs, nowadays kids want to start a coffee business or to start this or that,” he says. “They’re very inquisitive. They’re very resourceful.”

## THESE DAYS, ROTARY MEMBERS IN

Washington, D.C., are leaning on their networks more than ever amid the large-scale downsizing of the federal government workforce. The upheaval has left legions of civil servants without jobs and narrowed options for graduates hoping to enter public service.

“I’ve never seen a situation where so many folks approaching graduation are clueless about where they’re going to go,” says Mike McCabe, until recently a regional director for the Peace Corps for Latin America, the Caribbean, and the Pacific. As a political appointee under the Biden administration, McCabe resigned as the new president came into office. It’s customary for political appointees to leave their jobs in such fashion, but he’s never seen such widespread departures.

McCabe is president of the Rotary Club of Washington Global, which includes many people who work





in international development. To help laid-off workers find a place to land, the club helped organize an April event at George Washington University, where people could connect free of charge with career coaches, practice giving one-minute pitches promoting previous successes, and simply get to know one another. “While Rotarians cannot reopen government agencies, they can certainly offer friendship, skill-building opportunities, career tools, networking, community support, and hope during these challenging times,” says the club’s 2024-25 president, Rose Cardarelli. Within days of the event, 21 of the attendees joined the club.

The club’s members are practiced at such events because they’ve already been doing this kind of work, as Rotary members, for years. Last year the club launched a mentorship program for young people interested in careers in the field of international development.

The club created a webpage with bios of potential mentors and spread the word through career offices at universities that those experts were available for consultation in topics like peacebuilding, climate finance, and humanitarian assistance. “We followed what the strength of our club members was, which was international development, and the joint desire of us to do mentoring of young professionals,” McCabe says. Interested mentees can get in touch if they want to chat — mostly for one-time conversations, though some longer relationships develop.

“Global issues are not going away,” McCabe says. “The question is, How do we support those who are passionate about doing good in the world to get connected to jobs where they could do it?” For instance, he’s been helping a student at George Mason University who is planning a campus conference on fighting human trafficking and might like to find a career in the field — still eminently possible, despite the challenges. “People are like, all right, I understood the pathways before. How have the pathways shifted now?” McCabe says. “A lot of it comes back to what Rotary can be good at, which is teaching entrepreneurial thinking in meeting community needs, globally or locally.”

Ahmed Eltally, who today manages projects on international security, peacebuilding, and other areas for a State Department contractor, is also casting a concerned eye toward the future. But his own experience shows that flexibility and resilience are necessary preconditions for change. He’s reinvented himself before, after all. Eltally’s first career, in Egypt and the Gulf region, was in civil engineering. After people challenged authoritarian governments in the region in the early 2010s with the Arab Spring uprisings, he decided he wanted to “understand how conflicts work,” so he went back to school to study conflict resolution.

“I always tell people, I used to build bridges of concrete,” Eltally says. “Now I build bridges of peace and understanding.” And as a connected Rotary member, he’s ready to help others find their way to the right path for them, whether the bridge they’re crossing is real or metaphorical. ■

**“A lot of it comes back to what Rotary can be good at, which is teaching entrepreneurial thinking in meeting community needs, globally or locally.”**







As they  
transmute  
trash into  
treasure,  
Interactors  
in Peru  
learn the  
magic  
of Rotary

# THE GENIE IN THE BOTTLE





PHOTOS BY  
MONIKA LOZINSKA



# A

**As Raquel Lozano Fernández** explained, the mission was twofold. The 2024-25 president of the Rotary Club of Lima, Peru, Lozano is also the adviser for the Interact Club of Abraham Valdelomar, which is sponsored by the Lima club. Under the guidance of Lozano and other Rotarians, the Interactors embarked on an ambitious project to transform plastic bottles and other recyclable materials into eco-bricks. The bricks were then used to create tables and chairs for the Bellavista school in Independencia, a municipality north of Lima's city center.

As part of the project, the Interactors included the Bellavista students in crafting the eco-brick furniture, thereby providing a useful lesson in environmental sustainability. But that was only one facet of the project. Under the guise of *la gincana* – connection-based games, songs, and activities – the Interactors also conducted social-emotional workshops with the younger students, thereby picking up lessons in leadership and confidence building along the way.

Last November, Monika Lozinska and Aleks Iricanin, two members of Rotary's Visual Media team, visited with Lozano, the Interactors, and the students at Bellavista. As the pictures on the following pages reveal, there's more going on in Lima than an admirable recycling project. "All the kids really like and listen to Raquel," says Lozinska. "It's in her heart to be with younger generations."

As for the relationship between the older and younger students, the Rotary staff duo report that the kids were all happily, well, "interacting." Mission accomplished.







**This page:** Britani Alejos Cucho, a student at Bellavista school, compresses scraps of plastic into a recycled plastic bottle to create an eco-brick. The eco-bricks will later be used to make tables and chairs for the school.

**Opposite page, top:** The completed eco-bricks are prepared for the furniture-building phase of the project.

**Bottom:** The Bellavista school is in Independencia, a municipality north of the city center of Lima, Peru.

**“INTERACT CLUBS BRING TOGETHER YOUNG PEOPLE TO DEVELOP LEADERSHIP SKILLS AND DISCOVER THE POWER OF SERVICE.”**

**– RAQUEL LOZANO FERNÁNDEZ**







**Opposite page:** Raquel Lozano Fernández (in cap), a member of the Rotary Club of Lima and the club's adviser to the Interact Club of Abraham Valdelomar, explains the next phase of the process to the students and Interactors.



**Above:** Lozano hugs Romina Abigail Solia (left) and Valeria Reymundo Zabrano, two of the Interactors participating in the eco-brick project and the social-emotional workshops at the Bellavista school.





**“THIS WORK FILLS YOU AS A  
PERSON AND DEVELOPS YOU IN BOTH  
LEADERSHIP AND EMPATHY.”**

**— CAMILA VELAZQUEZ CASTILLA**





**Opposite page:** Interactors Camila Velazquez Castilla and Joaquin Camacho Solis show off a chair constructed from the eco-bricks.

**Below:** On the steps of the Bellavista school, Rotarians, Interactors, and students display the fruits of their labor — and their newly acquired sense of camaraderie.



# OUR CLUBS

## VIRTUAL VISIT

### Ceremonial gestures

Rotary Club of Taipei  
Peony Sa Dou, Taiwan

**Noriko Murakoshi has always been interested** in the tea ceremony, known in her native country of Japan as *sadō* or *chadō*. To Murakoshi, the elaborate cultural practice of preparing and drinking powdered green tea represents the essence of Japanese arts, religion, philosophy, and social life.

She began taking lessons at the Tokyo branch of the Urasenke school of tea ceremony, one of the most prominent and widely practiced traditions. Murakoshi was planning to move to Taiwan to run a museum owned by her husband's family, and she wanted to use the opportunity to promote Japanese culture abroad.

Since Genshitsu Sen, the former grand master of the Urasenke tea tradition, is

a long-term member of the Rotary Club of Kyoto, it seemed logical to Murakoshi to join Rotary too. Two years after she arrived in Taipei, she found her home at the Rotary Club of Taipei Peony, a club devoted to Japanese arts and culture and whose members are predominantly women. "At our club meetings, we learn and perform Japanese traditional dance," says Murakoshi. "Through Rotary, I met a group of like-minded women who are passionate about Japanese cultures."

Murakoshi read a 2022 story in *Rotary* magazine chronicling Sen's lifelong work to cultivate peace and harmony through tea ceremonies. Inspired by the story, she and Wenny Lin, a teacher of traditional Japanese dance and flower arrangement who helped charter the Taipei Peony club, worked to bring Rotary to Urasenke practitioners and followers in Taiwan and Japan.

They established the Rotary Club of Taipei Peony Sa Dou, a satellite of the Taipei Peony club, to honor Sen in the year of his 100th birthday. Even though the former grand tea master was not able to attend the charter ceremony in 2023, he sent an enthusiastic congratulatory letter. "As Genshitsu Sen often says, Rotary's values fit perfectly with the tenets of the Urasenke tradition, such as harmony, respect, purity, and peace," Murakoshi says. "Through Rotary, I want to help build a cultural bridge between

Japan and Taiwan, however small, and I also want to expand the tea ceremony, even if only a little."

The satellite club meets at the Yang San Lang Museum, a towering red brick building nestled on a narrow street in New Taipei City that showcases the artworks of Murakoshi's father-in-law, the 20th century Taiwanese painter Yang San Lang.

On a warm spring day, a group of club members wearing kimonos welcome *Rotary* magazine editors and American celebrity chef Rick Bayless and his wife and restaurateur partner, Deann. Pink cherry blossoms perfume the fenced courtyard, but even more Japanese-inspired beauty is unfolding inside the museum.

On a makeshift platform with low tables, Yuri Wang, a charter member of the club, carefully cleans each bowl with a crisp red napkin, removes small scoops of matcha powder from a red-and-black lacquer container, pours hot water into the tea bowl, and then delicately froths the mixture with a bamboo whisk, creating a crown of jade foam atop the aromatic tea.

After turning the bowl 180 degrees to show its loveliest side to the audience, she silently walks it to her first guest and presents it with a bow. The ritual transforms a mundane task into an act of generosity and beauty.

While Wang performs, Lin presents written instructions to the international guests on how to best appreciate the cer-



## JAPANESE TEA CEREMONY ETIQUETTE

Rotary Club of Taipei Peony Sa Dou members expect to offer tea ceremony demonstrations to visitors to the Rotary International Convention in June in the city. Be ready with these tips:

1. If you are presented with your tea bowl (chawan) before the other guests, it is polite to tell them, "Excuse me for going before you."
2. Place the chawan in front of you, bow, and say "thank you" to the host.
3. Take the chawan with your right hand and place it in your left hand. Steady it with your right hand and keep your appreciation to the host in your mind.
4. When the chawan is handed to you, the most beautiful side will be facing you. Appreciate it and then turn the bowl to avoid drinking from and soiling that side.
5. Drink your tea in three big sips.
6. After finishing the bowl, wipe off the rim with your index finger and thumb and then blot those fingertips with a piece of paper. Then turn your bowl with two motions to return it to the original position.



The Rotary Club of Taipei Peony Sa Dou draws members interested in the art of Japanese tea ceremonies.

emony. This includes a guide on how to accept the tea, what to say, and how to eat the cherry blossom-shaped wagashi sweet filled with tart fruit paste.

"Sadō calms the mind and promotes humility and respect," Lin says. "The philosophy is easily understood and accepted by people of all cultures because we all like to drink tea. Like the grand master Gensitsu Sen once said, 'When sitting at the tea table, there is no difference between the world's high and low, every individual is equal. Every country and every culture is treated equally.'"

At the end of the tea ceremony, guests are treated to a Japanese dance performance as members glide out onto the museum floor in lilac kimonos. Using red-and-white fans and white lace scarves, they demonstrate elegant, synchronized moves. They've performed similar dances at Rotary events and nursing homes as part of their Rotary service projects.

Dancer Verna Yeh says she hopes the performances they bring to Taiwan institutions can bring a little happiness to audiences. "Even in hospice we saw that their desire to live is still very strong," Yeh says, "and we want to give them encouragement."

The satellite club has also been assist-

ing volunteers and students from Taipei Medical University to offer free care on the island of Penghu, where many older people live alone. Members purchased equipment to provide X-rays and teeth cleaning. "We have students visit them and check on their medical treatment to see whether or not they are following the doctor's instructions to take their medicines, and we encourage the villagers to come [to a clinic] for health checkups," Lin says.

"More importantly," she adds, "club members seize every opportunity to host charity concerts and perform Japanese dance to raise funds for Rotary's flagship polio eradication campaign."

Yeh says this is one of the most rewarding parts of the club. "We want to keep doing this because we really enjoy dancing and performing," she says. "And we hope it will encourage people to join Rotary and serve their communities when they see us."

Lin is proud to bring something unique to the lineup of Rotary satellite clubs. "It's Rotary's first tea ceremony satellite club in the world," she says. "They don't even have one in Japan."

— MONICA ENG

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

## Student, teach thyself

The Peace Advocate Project empowers the next generation of peace ambassadors



It was the opening months of the COVID-19 lockdown, and students at Douglas Ewart High School in Newton Stewart, Scotland, were having trouble coping. “They came to us and said they were really struggling with their feelings and their thoughts during the pandemic,” recalls Jean Best. “They wanted to devise a toolkit so that all the youngsters at the school could help themselves.”

Fortunately, Best, who had a long career as a teacher and principal and as one of Her Majesty’s Inspectors of Education, was in a position to help the students help themselves. In 2014, at the Rotary International Convention in Sydney, Australia, she and her husband, Keith, had inaugurated a new program called the Peace Advocate Project. Dedicated Rotarians — today they are members of the Rotary Club of the Hub of Southern Scotland, and Keith is a past governor of District 1020 — the couple wanted to ensure that young people in their community and around the world would be prepared to serve as ambassadors for peace. Working with peace fellows from the Rotary Peace Center at the University of Bradford in England, they designed a program that would help them accomplish just that.

For her efforts, Best was honored in November 2017 when Rotary members gathered at the Palais des Nations in Geneva for Rotary Day at the United Nations. There, she and five other men and women were designated Rotary People of Action: Champions of Peace. In her remarks to an animated crowd, Best proclaimed, “Without peace in ourselves we will never advance global peace.”

With her focus on individual tranquility as a foundation for world harmony, Best was well equipped to assist the students taxed by the emotional rigors that accompanied the COVID lockdown. As it turned out, the students who reached out to Best were already well positioned to provide the help that they and their peers needed.

“During COVID,” Best explains, “we continued to work over Zoom



Celebrating 10 years of People of Action Honors



with our advanced peace advocates at Douglas Ewart. They were concerned because they didn't know what to do. There was nothing in the school curriculum that trained them to deal with what they were going through. But they also said, 'If we hadn't been trained in peace advocacy, things would have been even worse.'"

Working closely with the Bests, and repurposing what they had learned from their Peace Advocate sessions, the students began to assemble their toolkit. "To help everybody else in their school, they put daily posts on their school's Facebook page about issues like how to talk with parents," says Jean Best. "All sorts of things came up, and they did it for nearly a year. It was a phenomenal piece of work."

Best singles out a short video produced by a 16-year-old student. "It was all about the power of the mind and how the mind works," she says. "This was the piece that most helped students realize how they were reacting to the pandemic. And because it provided hints and tips, the video also showed them what they could do about their problems."

As things began to return to normal, Best assembled the posts and created a new online facet of the Peace Advocate Project. "The students didn't want to call it a mental health program," she says. "They wanted it to be known as a self-care program because they maintain that's what's necessary for survival. 'If we can get into the

habit of taking care of ourselves,' they reasoned, 'then we can start to help other people.' Which is great, because the Peace Advocate Project is all about helping young people empower themselves."

That was one of the pluses to the pandemic. There was a downside. As schools shut down, the peace project lost some of its momentum, losing its foothold in a few of the schools where it had established a presence. "Even when the schools were opening up again, we couldn't get back in because they were so busy catching up," Best says — and then she puts a positive spin on the situation: "Although COVID was a bit of a step back, it opened a few new doors for us." As the project re-established itself in schools in the UK, the pandemic shift to Zoom helped the project expand its reach to other countries, including Australia, Japan, and Mexico.

Best is especially proud of a new online program that linked two schools in Scotland with two schools in Kenya. "We trained all the youngsters at the same time," she says. "The students in each of the schools could see one another as they worked through the activities. It was all about building bridges between the two countries."

As the world emerged from its COVID cocoon, Best and her husband continued to expand their project. This year alone they added three new programs, including one that helped secondary school parents learn how to communicate

with their children. It was particularly impactful when introduced to Ukrainian parents who had resettled in the UK with their children. "We went through all our peace advocacy techniques on listening and how to get conversations going, and it worked really well," says Best. "Afterward, one mother came up to us in tears. She said, 'I can't thank you enough. I'd lost my son, and because of this, I got him back,' because now they could hold calm, meaningful, and sustainable conversations."

As she has in the past, Best continues to introduce her refined approach to thoughtful listening, fruitful conversations, and conflict resolution to other Rotary members for their use in and outside of Rotary. Jane Cooper, the 2024-25 governor of England's District 1210, praises the work done in her region. "Jean and Keith worked with our district officers and members, and the feedback was excellent," says Cooper.

In the end, Best stresses the long-term impact of the Peace Advocate Project and where its primary focus remains. "This is a program delivered by young people for young people," she says. "We strongly believe that once youngsters have been trained in peace advocacy, they will continue to use those skills in the years ahead."

— GEOFFREY JOHNSON

*This story is part of an occasional series celebrating Rotary's People of Action honorees. Learn more at [rotary.org/rotary-people-of-action](https://rotary.org/rotary-people-of-action).*



#### Jean Best

- **Peace Advocate Project**, 2014-present
- **People of Action: Champion of Peace**, 2017
- **District 1320 Rotary Peace Fellowships chair**, 2024-25

From left: Jean Best celebrates her Peace Advocate Project in Ireland in 2024; Best awards the project's blue peace flag to students at Douglas Ewart High School in Newton Stewart, Scotland, in 2020.

DISPATCHES FROM  
OUR SISTER MAGAZINES  
ROTARY THAILAND

## A path to flood recovery

By Thanijporn Khomson, Anurak Napawan,  
and Kamonchanok Piromsiripan



**Many longtime residents of northern Thailand** never expected floods so severe. It had been years since storms produced any flooding at all. But last August and September, major rivers overflowed their banks, damaging livelihoods, agriculture, and local economies. Rotary members, some of whom were among those affected, were ready and willing to help.

In Nan province, the home of Nithi Soongswang, a past governor of District 3360, was flooded with water up to a meter high. A surge from the Nan River quickly flooded areas nearby as well as in the city, where people were unprepared. Fortunately, the water drained into the main water basins, but three days of flooding significantly disrupted the local economy.

In Phrae province, the Yom River

overflowed and submerged roads in the city by over a meter, halting transportation and causing widespread damage. Sompong and Thanita Sangboonyanithi, both past presidents of the Rotary Club of Wiangkosai, also experienced flooding in their home, a first in all the years they had lived there.

Lampang province was no different, with several towns and districts experiencing heavy flooding, especially in the Hang Chat and Ko Kha districts, where water overflowed into farmland and affected more than 500 homes. Rotary members in Lampang used flat-bottomed boats to transport food and water to affected residents.

Heavy rains caused the Kok and Lao rivers to overflow, flooding houses, especially in Thoeng, Muang Chiang Rai, and Phan districts.

Runoff from inundated forests and mudflows crossing from Myanmar submerged the Mae Sai district. Residents said the area had not flooded so badly in the past 60 years.

### Rotary Centre in Thailand brings aid

In October, a team from Bangkok-based Rotary Centre in Thailand, led by Niwes Khunavisarut, a past governor of District 3340, along with members of the Rotary Club of Maesai and representatives of the Kuang Meng Foundation, brought essential supplies funded by the Thai Rotary District Foundation to the north. Traveling by truck, the team found that the dried mud on the roads had turned to dust. Numerous volunteers and officials were clearing the area with excavators, trucks, and mud vacuums.

↑ When multiple floods struck northern Thailand, Rotary members were quick to respond with supplies, volunteers, and funds.



The team used the house of Khun Pueng, daughter of the community leader, as a relief distribution point. She explained that the Ban Pam Kwai community was once a buffalo pasture. Today, it has 120 households, and the road floods every year. This time, however, flooding occurred twice and the water was unusually forceful. Flooding in September inundated the entire first floor of her house, with water marks still visible above the doorframe. The second round of flooding, a month later, reached waist-high. Rotary was the first organization to provide assistance to the community, distributing blankets and other relief supplies.

The Rotary Club of Maesai demonstrated Rotary's strength and dedication. Past President Vanit Yotharvut recounted how the club received an overwhelming amount of donated food and other supplies, although the goods proved difficult to deliver. During the first week, rescue teams from Myanmar were hired to carry food over the water and across barriers. After the water receded, Rotary members aimed to deliver more supplies but encountered mud-clogged roads. The club used mud excavators and trucks to help clear the road.

Furniture and household items had been piled up as waste, with no place to dispose of them. Volunteers organized a cleaning day, but the excessive mud (2 meters high in some areas) meant that even half a day's work only cleared one corner of a temple hall. Heavy machinery couldn't access homes, so military aid was needed. This disaster highlighted the population density of the community, which will require extensive time, infrastructure repair, and funding to fully recover.

The Rotary Club of Mae Chan requested 150,000 baht (US\$5,000) in disaster funds from The Rotary Foundation, with the club adding 100,000 baht (US\$3,000) and District 3360 adding 30,000 baht (US\$1,000), totaling 280,000 baht (US\$9,000) by the end of the project. Rotary members from Chiang Mai province brought necessities such as bedding. Thirayud

Watanathirawoot, a past governor of District 3340, donated hundreds of rice cookers, and the Satya Sai Foundation donated 200 bedding sets. The Rotary Club of Jomtien-Pattaya set up a water filter that could produce up to 10,000 liters (2,600 gallons) of clean water per day. Additional monetary donations came from various sources, totaling about 200,000 baht (US\$6,000).

### Rotary Centre team expands its reach

After helping flood victims in Lam-pang province and Mae Sai district, the Rotary Centre team traveled to Chiang Mai province to join Apisak Jompong, governor of District 3360, and the team led by Adisorn Seksonwiriya, District 3360's community service chair, and members of the Rotary Club of Chiang Mai. The group coordinated with the Ban Waen subdistrict in Hang Dong district, arranging for flood victims to receive relief supplies and cleaning equipment at the community hall.

A gift to The Rotary Foundation directed to the Disaster Response Fund helps communities in crisis across the globe. Make a contribution at [my.rotary.org/donate](https://my.rotary.org/donate).



In some areas, roads were submerged by more than a meter of water, causing widespread damage and hindering relief efforts.

In this area, floodwaters rose to about a meter, damaging many belongings. Most of the flood victims were older residents who were unable to clean their homes. Residents expressed a need for additional bedding and blankets.

The next destination for the Rotary Centre team was Sukhothai province. While in Chiang Mai province, the team received a message from Saowanee Supakamonseenee, president of the Rotary Club of Sukhothai, that Si Samrong district was still heavily flooded. Finally, the water subsided, allowing the team to deliver relief supplies as planned.

In Si Samrong district, 50 households had experienced two rounds of flooding. Some residents had relocated to temples, while others paddled boats to collect relief supplies. For people who could not leave home, the team delivered relief supplies and cleaning equipment by boat.

The fieldwork allowed the team to witness the dedication of clubs in the region, such as the Rotary clubs of Doi Prabaht, Muang Ko Kha, Mae-sai, Chiang Mai, Sukhothai, Sawankhaloke, and Sawankhaloke North. Despite facing their own challenges, members demonstrated selflessness and generosity, embodying the true spirit of Service Above Self.

Rotary clubs across District 3360 assisted affected communities, providing supplies, cleaning equipment, and drinking water. Rotarians in Chiang Rai and Chiang Mai provinces set up a mobile kitchen to prepare food for flood victims, showcasing Rotary's spirit of friendship and cooperation.

"In every crisis, there is an opportunity to build friendships," concludes Seksonwiriya. "Let us continue doing good for the community, with compassionate hearts, together." ■

*Thanijporn Khomson is a past president of the Rotary Club of Doi Prabaht, Lampang. Anurak Napawan is a past governor of District 3360 (Thailand). Kamonchanok Piromsiripan works with the Rotary Centre in Thailand.*



TRUSTEE CHAIR'S MESSAGE

## Get to know us

**When most people join Rotary**, they know little, if anything, about The Rotary Foundation.

Membership Month is a great time to highlight the powerful connection between membership and our Foundation.

People who are drawn to Rotary care deeply about their communities and want to make a substantive difference. They're looking for meaningful, hands-on ways to serve — and the Foundation helps make those opportunities possible.

Cause-based Rotary clubs are one exciting way new members are finding purpose in Rotary, and these clubs also bring fresh energy and activity to our Foundation. I invited Marisol Chianello, president of one such club, to share her perspective:

*"As a nonprofit attorney, I long believed I didn't have the time to be part of Rotary. But when I heard about a new cause-based e-club — the Rotary Club of Mental Health and Wellness District 5280 — I felt I had to be part of it.*

*In just three years, our club has done a lot to support mental health needs in Southern California and awarded thousands of dollars in scholarships to graduate students in the field, including one this year to a student in Uganda.*

*Just a few months ago, we were approved for our first global grant to provide a mix of in-person and digital mental wellness sup-*

*port to survivors of the 2023 earthquakes in southeastern Turkey.*

*Through our service, we've attracted new members from across the United States, including women and younger members who might not have otherwise joined Rotary.*

*Cause-based clubs like ours offer a meaningful entry point for people committed to a specific cause — backed by the global reach and Foundation support of Rotary."*

Marisol's story reminds us what's possible when Rotary service meets Foundation support. I wonder how many cause-based club members knew the full extent of Foundation resources when they began. How many existing clubs could partner with these groups on grants?

As we build new Rotary and Rota-ract clubs and welcome new members, let's keep The Rotary Foundation at the forefront. The Foundation enriches the membership experience, supports club growth, and deepens our impact.

The Rotary Foundation is more than just a source of funding; it is an invitation to endless opportunities. It's a living expression of who we are as Rotary.

The Foundation, too, can be a vital part of every member's experience when they join us or start a new club.

**HOLGER KNAACK**

*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.



## CALENDAR

# August events

### GIDDYAP!

**Event:** Gallop4Rotary

**Host:** Rotary Club of Del Mar, California

**What it benefits:** Scholarships and local youth organizations

**Date:** 1 August

Del Mar Rotarians invite fellow Rotary members to join them for an exciting day of horse racing, fun, and fellowship at the renowned Del Mar Thoroughbred Club. The seaside racecourse, which has hosted multiple Breeders' Cup World Championships, was co-founded by crooner Bing Crosby and memorialized in his song "Where the Turf Meets the Surf." The day's featured race is the Real Good Deal Stakes, with a \$150,000 purse.

### ALL QUACKED UP

**Event:** Ducky Derby

**Host:** Rotary Club of Aspen, Colorado

**What it benefits:** Local nonprofits and scholarships and international projects

**Date:** 2 August

Each year, people "adopt" as many as 25,000 yellow rubber ducks and watch as they are released into the Roaring Fork River and float downstream. The person whose adopted duck is first past the finish line earns \$10,000 and the chance to win \$1 million. Since the event was first held in 1992, it has expanded into a daylong festival, with live music, games, food trucks, and more.

### TAKE ME OUT TO THE BALL GAME

**Event:** Family Day at the Ballpark

**Host:** Rotary District 6460 (Illinois)

**What it benefits:** Local projects and scholarships

**Date:** 9 August

Rotary members and their families and friends will cheer from the left-field stands at St. Louis' Busch Stadium as



### GRAB A CRAB

**Event:** Crab Feast

**Host:** Rotary Club of Annapolis, Maryland

**What it benefits:** Local nonprofits

**Date:** 1 August

A summertime tradition now in its 80th year, this celebration of local seafood draws upwards of 1,000 people to Navy-Marine Corps Memorial Stadium. A ticket pays for unlimited food and drink, from Maryland's famous blue crabs to barbecue beef sandwiches, hot dogs, corn on the cob, watermelon, draft beer, and soda. All waste from the event, including 20,000 pounds of crab shells, is turned into compost that the club sells at the end of the year.

the Cardinals take on the Chicago Cubs. Since 2004, this family-friendly baseball outing has raised nearly \$600,000 for basic education and literacy projects organized by clubs in the district, who will be recognized during a pregame ceremony on the field. Tickets are available to the public.

### FARM-FRESH FARE

**Event:** Sausage & Brew Festival

**Host:** Rotary Club of Hobart, New York

**What it benefits:** Local projects and nonprofits

**Date:** 23 August

This festival in the Catskills region of New York features mouthwatering dinners of grilled sausage, corn on the cob, and other seasonal vegetables, all from farms within 30 miles. Local craft beers

and ciders will also be served. Attendees will enjoy dancing to live music from afternoon to evening. Activities for children include face painting and hayrides.

### CALLING ALL CAR ENTHUSIASTS

**Event:** Car Cruise

**Host:** Rotary Club of Ledyard, Connecticut

**What it benefits:** Local scholarships

**Date:** 30 August

Gearheads won't want to miss this annual car show with more than 250 classic and modern vehicles on display. The event includes food, raffles, games, and music played by a DJ. In addition, the club is partnering with a local Cub Scouts pack to host a Pinewood Derby. The event has raised more than \$65,000 over the past nine years.

**Tell us about your event.** Write to [magazine@rotary.org](mailto: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.

PROGRAMS OF SCALE

# Waging peace

Rotary partnership with the World Food Programme seeks to break Colombia's cycle of violence





**Rotary has awarded** a \$2 million Programs of Scale grant to Pathways to Peace and Prosperity in Colombia. The initiative, a partnership with the United Nations World Food Programme, will strengthen conflict resolution skills while addressing persistent inequality, social exclusion, food insecurity, and poverty caused by prolonged violence and armed conflict in the country.

“Pathways to Peace and Prosperity in Colombia showcases the joint efforts of Rotary Peace Fellows, Peace Activators, Cadre members, Districts 4271 and 4281, and the sponsoring Rotary Club of San José de Cúcuta,” 2024-25 Rotary Foundation Trustee Chair Mark Maloney said in announcing the grant at the Rotary International Convention in Calgary. “Congratulations to all of the Rotary members in Colombia.”

Colombia ranks among the countries with the highest income inequality and the most unequal distribution of land and has experienced decades of conflict over access to resources. Despite progress made since 2016 peace accords, Colombia remains one of the least peaceful countries, with the fourth lowest level of societal safety and security, according to the Institute for Economics and Peace’s 2024 Global Peace Index. The conflict has displaced or otherwise affected nearly 10 million people. More than half of internally displaced people live in poverty. Colombia also hosts the largest population of migrants and refugees from Venezuela.

Conflict, hunger, and migration form a vicious circle, explains Nils Grede, country director for the World Food Programme in Colombia. “People are hungry and poor, therefore, they compete over limited resources, which leads to conflict,” Grede says. “If we can ensure people have enough to eat, or as we say, have access to an adequate diet for a healthy life, we can reduce migration and conflict.” The World Food Programme was awarded a Nobel Peace Prize in 2020 for its work with food security and peace.

Pathways to Peace and Prosperity in Colombia will build on successful projects of both organizations to create four Positive Peace hubs that will expand access to economic opportunities and social welfare programs as well as strengthen the capacity to resolve conflict through dialogue, negotiation, and mediation.

The Positive Peace hubs will train 1,000 “champions of Positive Peace” in conflict resolution in four communities. These

include two cities with a significant presence for both Rotary and the World Food Programme: Cúcuta, a city that borders Venezuela, and Buenaventura, Colombia’s main Pacific port and a drug trafficking hotspot. Two more hubs will also be set up in rural communities near those cities.

The conflict resolution training draws on previous projects promoting Positive Peace, including one that trained more than 200 Colombian Rotaractors on the eight Pillars of Positive Peace, and another that trained young people ages 14-18 in leadership for peace. “There have been very positive results,” says Gladys Maldonado of the San José de Cúcuta Rotary club. “Some of these young people have applied to Rotary Peace Centers, and others work in schools. This has shown us valuable results regarding peace projects in Colombia.”

Of the 1,000 peace champions, 300 will receive advanced training as coaches to support vulnerable populations in navigating the country’s existing social protection systems. Many of those most in need are unaware of the programs and are the least likely to access them without such support. The program will equip four community-led information kiosks for this purpose, building on a previously suc-

cessful initiative of the World Food Programme. The 300 coaches will also receive seed funding for social initiatives.

The other 700 will receive seed funding, technical assistance, mentorship, and market linkages to strengthen their businesses or improve their employability, allowing them to generate better incomes and be more resilient to poverty and violence.

“Rotarians bring a lot of experience as many of them run businesses themselves and all of them are closely integrated into their local communities and economies,” Grede says. “Rotarians and the World Food Programme here can complement each other perfectly to help those most in need as WFP brings the knowledge of how to set up and run programs, but Rotarians are best positioned to connect participants with opportunities.”

Two Rotary Community Corps will also be organized through the program to support the work of the hubs and ensure the project’s long-term sustainability.

“Peace involves many things. It means a better relationship with neighbors, a better financial situation. If people have food to provide for their families, they won’t become desperate and join illegal groups that give them easy money,” Maldonado says. “Peace is not just the absence of war.” ■

## FINALISTS

### Empowering Families, Growing Futures: Improving Maternal and Infant Care in East Africa

■ **Location:** Uganda

■ **Area of focus:** Maternal and child health

■ **Proposal:** In Uganda, eight Rotary districts have partnered with Bulamu Healthcare and other partners since 2023 to improve the skills of health workers delivering maternal and newborn care. This project would build on those successes in more than 200 partner health facilities, training more than 500 maternity workers and 1,500 students and serving more than 500,000 mothers and their babies over four years.

### Mental Health Support for Youth in Florida

■ **Location:** United States

■ **Area of focus:** Disease prevention and treatment

■ **Proposal:** Rotary members in Florida previously worked on connecting federally qualified health centers with training resources. This project would build on that approach, training and supporting 1,000 pediatric primary care physicians at all 54 health centers in Florida to safely and effectively manage mild to moderate cases of anxiety, depression, and ADHD in the primary care setting. Many of these cases are never addressed, or it takes years to access specialized care. This would allow youth with more severe and complex cases better access to more specialized care.

To learn more about the impact of Programs of Scale awardees, visit [my.rotary.org/programs-scale-grants](https://my.rotary.org/programs-scale-grants).

2026 CONVENTION

# Vacation made easy



**Rotary members are an adventurous bunch** and use the annual convention as a chance to explore the sights and culture in the host city and the surrounding region, often exploring with a group of RI friends. When you're in Taipei 13-17 June for the Rotary International Convention, you'll find endless getaway options — many right near the event.

Mountains are always within reach from this metropolis. A short distance from the exhibition center, board the Maokong Gondola outside the Taipei Zoo (pandas and native scaly pangolins inside!). Ride up the slope to reach hiking trails that pass mountainside terraces of oolong tea farms, or stop at a teahouse to slurp up dumplings and slowly sip a cup of tea made from the plants growing nearby.

An exploration of Taipei may take you to night market food stalls, hot springs, a

museum of ancient treasures, or the observatory at the top of the tower that dominates the skyline: Taipei 101. And you can visit one (or more!) of Taiwan's thousands of temples for varied faiths and folk deities.

Your family or travel companions are welcome at the convention. The more the merrier when we're thinking big together about how to improve the world. Big-stage sessions are inspirational extravaganzas that dazzle the audience — with Rotary traditions including the flag ceremony, world-altering figures like Nobel Prize winners, and unforgettable singers, dancers, and other performers.

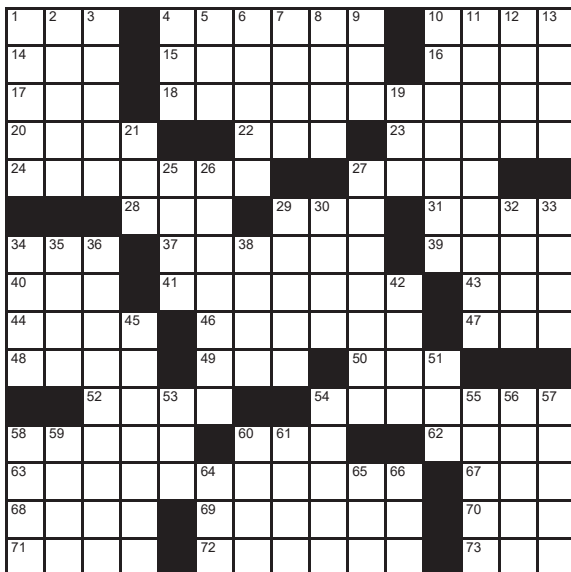
Build your travel plan around exciting convention exhibitions that everyone will enjoy. Plus, Rotary organizers in Taiwan will design exclusive experiences and tours to make seeing the island a snap. Your next vacation is planned! ■

Learn more and register at [convention.rotary.org](https://convention.rotary.org).

CROSSWORD

## Colorful terms

By Victor Fleming  
Rotary Club of Little Rock, Arkansas



Solution on **opposite page**

**ACROSS**

- 1 Part of FWIW
- 4 Sailor guy
- 10 Cultural start?
- 14 Fishbowl accessory
- 15 Composure
- 16 It may be fenced
- 17 Airport rental
- 18 Kind of worker
- 20 "I \_\_\_ my wit's end!"
- 22 1 of 100 in D.C.
- 23 "I Am Woman" singer
- 24 "Another problem?!"
- 27 *The French Connection* cop
- 28 Former nuclear agcy.
- 29 Miracle-\_\_\_
- 31 A bunch
- 34 Consumer protection org.
- 37 Went to a diner, perhaps
- 39 Craft store bundle
- 40 \_\_\_ and vinegar
- 41 Drink paired with beef
- 43 Boy in a Johnny Cash song
- 44 Ares' father
- 46 Ketcham's cartoon menace
- 47 \_\_\_ *Sun Also Rises*
- 48 Sandwichy cookie

- 49 Add-\_\_\_ (extras)

- 50 EMT's forte
- 52 Don \_\_\_
- 54 See 38-Down
- 58 Amphitheater levels
- 60 Steph Curry's org.
- 62 Artist's "Done!"
- 63 1877 Anna Sewell novel
- 67 "Dear old" family member
- 68 "Auld Lang \_\_\_"
- 69 Brain twister
- 70 Prevarication
- 71 Fail's opposite
- 72 Ascertain
- 73 Significant stretch

**DOWN**

- 1 Pertaining to old Peruvians
- 2 Manuel's "I love you"
- 3 Sipper's device
- 4 Cutting tool
- 5 Book between Gal. and Phil.
- 6 Best guests' roster
- 7 Bit of dust
- 8 Prayer ender
- 9 SNL network
- 10 Pollen reaction
- 11 Ghana, formerly
- 12 Kind of trip
- 13 Mock humble reply to a compliment
- 19 \_\_\_ pro nobis
- 21 Old United rival
- 25 Use one's ears
- 26 Responded to
- 27 Naughty, say
- 29 Academic robes
- 30 Archaeological site
- 32 Dude, in slang
- 33 Dagger of yore
- 34 Annoying person
- 35 Brauhaus beverage
- 36 Casual denim wear
- 38 Garden in 54-Across
- 42 *College GameDay* airer
- 45 Footnote data
- 51 Foul caller
- 53 "That's a big \_\_\_"
- 54 Gun barrel measurement
- 55 Emulate a crab
- 56 "... the bombs bursting \_\_\_"
- 57 Better half of a 45, usually
- 58 Abbr. in a recipe
- 59 Ehrenburg, Kovalchuk, or Frank
- 60 Hawaii's state bird
- 61 Minnows, often
- 64 Board partner
- 65 HBO competitor
- 66 China's Sun \_\_\_-sen





Rotary 

# ROTARY'S SERVICE PROJECT CENTER

SHARE STORIES.  
FIND PARTNERS.  
BE INSPIRED.

Visit the **Service Project Center**  
at [spc.rotary.org](http://spc.rotary.org) today!




**NGO BOOKS**

## BOOKKEEPING SERVICES

Helping club treasurers  
maintain accurate books

- ✓ Financial Statements
- ✓ Membership Dues
- ✓ Bill Payments
- ✓ Annual Budgets
- ✓ Annual 990 Tax Filing

[ngobooks.org](http://ngobooks.org)  
720-486-5543  
[sales@ngobooks.org](mailto:sales@ngobooks.org)

We handle the numbers  
so you can  
focus on  
making an  
impact.




# Rotary VOICES

## Podcast

Insightful interviews | Magazine audio | Immersive stories | News roundup



Do you need **Rotary-branded merchandise**?

Then shop with Rotary-licensed vendors, many of which are local Rotarian-owned businesses.

Shop now at  
[on.rotary.org/shop](http://on.rotary.org/shop)

A	R	E	T	O	E	D	E	S	S	A	P
E	L	I	E	A	G	N	E	N	S	A	S
D	A	D	Y	A	U	T	B	K	C	L	A
I	N	I	F	I	N	B	A	N	S	I	E
S	I	S	E	N	E	G				J	U
	R	C	P	R	S	N	O	S	O	R	O
H	E	T	S	I	N	N	E	D	S	E	Z
E	S	U	E	S	N	I	M	R	E	L	O
N	A	R	Y	A	T	O	U	A	T	B	B
S	B	S	O	G	O	R	O	G	E	C	A
	C	A	R	C	A	N		T	A	H	W
Y	D	E	D	R	E	N	S	S	A	T	A
A	R	L	T	O	C	E	I	H	W	C	A
T	O	L	O	B	A	P	L	O	A	T	N
I	A	G	I	N	A	M	A	S	E	A	S

[on.rotary.org/podcast](http://on.rotary.org/podcast)



Rotary 



## Just peachy

A Colorado classic ripe for the picking

**Colorado is famous for** breathtaking mountain vistas, outdoor adventure, beer, and plenty of sunshine. But unless you're a local, you may not know Colorado for its fruit — specifically the Palisade peach, which graces roadside stands, farmers markets, and grocery stores throughout the month of August.

Jan Keyton began selling the precious peaches out of her garage 25 years ago as a fundraiser for her Rotary club. The project has blossomed since then, and the club sold hundreds of cases one August afternoon in 2024 (one of those cases went to an in-the-know Illinoisan who crossed multiple states for a chance to taste one). Several area clubs host similar fundraisers. "Everyone waits for them to come in August," she says. "They're fabulous. What we receive and sell is about the size of a softball."

**FRUIT FARMS:** Palisade is a town on the Colorado Western Slope (the part of the state west of the Continental Divide) where the Colorado River carved a verdant valley. The microclimate of the valley floor is a boon for fruit growing, including the namesake peach and other stone fruit, as well as pears, apples, grapes, and more.

**HOW TO:** "Eating them fresh is probably the number one thing we do with them, before making anything else," Keyton advises. But if you've bought an 18-pound case, there's still plenty of fruit to cook with, even after you've eaten your juicy fill. Keyton suggests peaches over ice cream, peach crisp, peach clafouti, or a blueberry peach cobbler. Or, consider her follow-up text message: "I forgot to tell you about the peach bourbon slushy!"

—DIANA SCHOBURG

**Jan Keyton**  
Rotary Club  
of Highlands  
Ranch, Colorado

What food is your region famous for? Tell us at [magazine@rotary.org](mailto:magazine@rotary.org) and you may see it in an upcoming issue.



# Taipei Host Organization Committee

# WELCOMES YOU



Sacred temples, cloud-busting skyscrapers, mountain getaways,  
incomparable food, and a dazzling nightlife:

**Come explore Taipei, home of the 2026 Rotary International Convention.**

## 2026 Rotary International Convention

TAIPEI, TAIWAN | 13-17 JUNE 2026

Register and pay in full by 15 December 2025,  
before prices increase, at [convention.rotary.org](https://convention.rotary.org)





# ROTARY INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION

TAIPEI, TAIWAN | 13-17 JUNE 2026



Register and pay in full by 15 December 2025,  
before prices increase, at [convention.rotary.org](https://convention.rotary.org).