



MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT MONTH



MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT MONTH

The strength of Rotary lies in its people. It is our members – their energy and dedication – that make our projects, ideas, and impact in the community possible. That is why August is a special month, dedicated to membership development.

Development is not only about adding new members. It is about building strong and sustainable clubs where everyone feels valued and engaged. New members bring fresh ideas and different perspectives, while diversity of professions, ages, and cultures enriches our work and makes it more meaningful.

August is the time to ask ourselves some important questions: Are our members truly engaged? Do we give them opportunities for leadership and service? Do our meetings and projects reflect their interests?

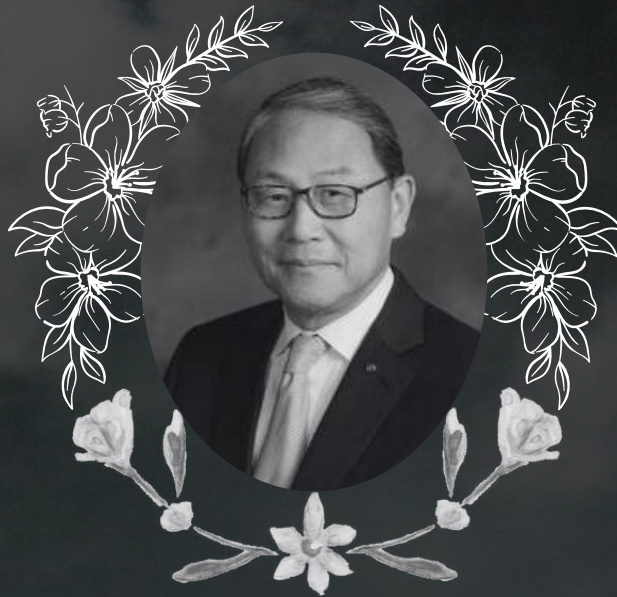
More and more clubs are exploring new models – hybrid meetings, satellite or “passport” clubs – that make Rotary more accessible to busy professionals or to those who want to support a specific cause. Flexibility is the key to the future.

At the same time, we must remember that new Rotarians need support and attention from day one. Genuine inclusion in the life of the club is what turns membership into a lasting commitment.

Our stories – of the change we create – are the most powerful tool to attract new friends and like-minded people. People want to be part of something greater, and Rotary gives them that opportunity.

August is an invitation to look both inward and outward – to appreciate our current members and to welcome new ones who will share our mission. Because membership development is not just a task, but an investment in the future of Rotary.

**EACH ONE
BRING ONE**



SangKoo Yun, Former RI President-Elect

SangKoo Yun, a consummate Rotary leader and businessman who had been selected to be Rotary International's president for 2026-27, died on 5 September, after months of treatment for pancreatic cancer. A member of the Rotary Club of Sae Hanyang, Seoul, Korea, Yun resigned as president-elect in August to focus on his medical treatment.

"SangKoo's passing is a great loss to the global Rotary family," says RI President Francesco Arezzo. "Yun's vision and contributions to Rotary will continue to inspire and motivate me and others. His legacy lives on in the hearts of Rotary friends and those whose lives were touched by his dedication to Rotary service."

May the Almighty grant peace to his noble soul and give strength to his family in this hour of grief.

His vision, dedication, and ideals will continue to inspire and guide Rotarians everywhere.

PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE



FRANCESCO AREZZO
ROTARY INTERNATIONAL
PRESIDENT
RY 2025-2026

August 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.

LARRY A. LUNSFORD SELECTED TO BE 2027-28 ROTARY INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT



**LARRY A. LUNSFORD
ROTARY INTERNATIONAL
PRESIDENT
RY 2027-2028**

Larry A. Lunsford, a member of the Rotary Club of Kansas City-Plaza, Missouri, USA, is the selection of the nominating committee to become Rotary International's president for 2027-28. He will officially become the president-nominee on 15 September if no other candidates challenge him.

Lunsford attended Truman State University in Kirksville, Missouri, on an academic scholarship, earning bachelor's and master's degrees in accounting. He first encountered Rotary when he received a Rotary Foundation Ambassadorial Scholarship to spend the 1981-82 academic year at the University of Newcastle in Australia.

A certified public accountant, Lunsford spent seven years working for Ernst & Young before joining a family-owned business, Bernstein-Rein Advertising, in 1990. He is currently executive vice president and chief financial officer for the Bernstein group of companies. He has held positions on the boards of the Kansas City Spirit Festival and the Variety Club as well as serving as director of a local bank and treasurer of the Epilepsy Foundation for the Heart of America. He has also served on Truman State University's alumni and foundation boards and received the university's Distinguished Service Award.

Lunsford joined the Rotary Club of Kansas City-Plaza in 1991 and has since served as district governor (2001-02), RI director (2013-15), and trustee of The Rotary Foundation (2021-25, vice chair 2024-25). He has been a member of RI committees, including the Executive Committee (chair 2014-15), Membership Growth Committee (chair 2016-18), and Nominating Committee for President of RI (chair 2023-24). He also has served on The Rotary Foundation's Executive Committee (chair 2023-24), Finance Committee (chair 2022-23 and 2024-25), and Participant Experience Committee (chair 2023-24).

Lunsford has been awarded The Rotary Foundation Distinguished Service Award, The Rotary Foundation Citation for Meritorious Service, and the RI Service Above Self Award. He and his wife, Jill Lunsford, have two children and one grandchild. They are Major Donors, Bequest Society members, multiple Paul Harris Fellows, Benefactors of The Rotary Foundation, and Sustaining Members.

OLAYINKA HAKEEM BABALOLA SELECTED TO BE 2026-27 ROTARY INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT



OLAYINKA H. BABALOLA
ROTARY INTERNATIONAL
PRESIDENT
RY 2026-2027

Olayinka Hakeem Babalola, a member of the Rotary Club of Trans Amadi, Nigeria, has been selected by the Board of Directors to become Rotary International's president for 2026-27. His term will begin on 1 July 2026.

The Board, guided by the RI code of policies, conducted a special session to select the organization's leader after the resignation of RI President-elect SangKoo Yun, who decided to step back from his Rotary responsibilities and focus on his recovery from recent cancer treatment.

Babalola began his Rotary journey in 1984 as a Rotaractor. He joined the Rotary Club of Trans Amadi 10 years later. His leadership roles include serving as district governor (2011-12), RI vice president (2019-20), and member of the RI Board (2018-20). He was also an active leader and participant in RI committees such as the End Polio Now Countdown to History Campaign Committee (2017-23) and the Nigeria National PolioPlus Committee (2013-present, adviser 2016-present).

Babalola received a university degree in engineering in 1988. He worked for 25 years in the oil and gas industry, holding senior positions in Shell PLC. He is the founder of two companies: Riviera Technical Services Ltd., an oil and gas infrastructure delivery company, and Lead and Change Consulting, an executive coaching and organizational performance advisory group.

Babalola's professional affiliations include the Nigerian Society of Engineers, the Institute of Safety Professionals of Nigeria, and the Association of Change Management Professionals. He is a member of Jericho Businessmen Club, an organization in his birth city of Ibadan that provides input to governments on economic and social policy.

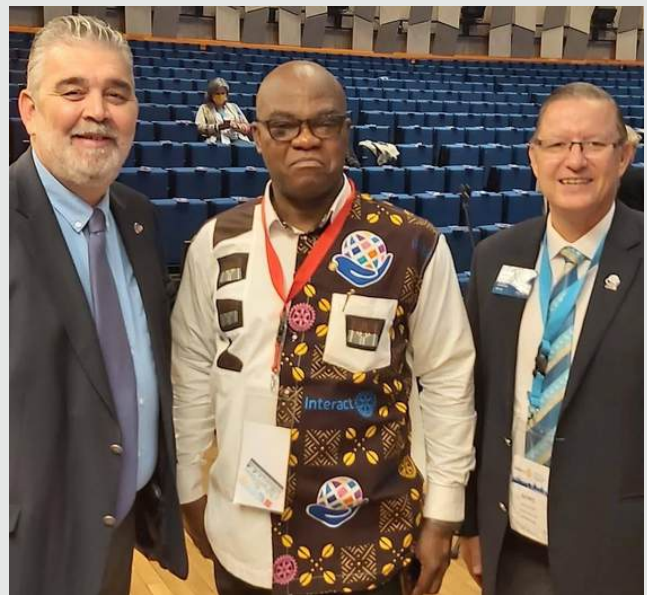


OLAYINKA HAKEEM BABALOLA SELECTED TO BE 2026-27 ROTARY INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT

Babalola and his wife, Preba, live in the city of Port Harcourt. He supports The Rotary Foundation with a named endowment and as an Arch Klumph Society member. A trustee of ShelterBox UK, he is a recipient of the Africa Centennial Heroes Award, the Regional Service Award for a Polio-Free World, the RI Service Above Self Award, and The Rotary Foundation Citation for Meritorious Service.

The president of Rotary International serves a one-year term, presiding over the Board of Directors and providing inspirational leadership for the organization. As the spokesperson for the global network, the president visits clubs around the world to promote Rotary's values and represent the organization at major events. Rotary chooses its president from members who have demonstrated extensive leadership experience within Rotary, including service as a club president, district governor, and member of the Board.

— 28 August 2025





September: Rotary's Basic Education and Literacy Month

September is the month when schools reopen in the northern hemisphere. Millions of children return to their classrooms, open their notebooks, and begin a new school year. For Rotary, this month is also the time to focus on one of our main causes: Basic Education and Literacy. It is a meaningful coincidence; while students start learning, we remind ourselves of Rotary's mission to make education possible for people of all ages.

N. ALTAN ARSLAN

PP 2005-2006 RC ANKARA KIZILAY

PDG 2018-2019 D2430

RPIC 2023-2026 ZONE 21B

The Power of Education

Education is the most powerful way to change lives. A child who learns to read not only discovers words, but also opens the door to dreams and opportunities. An adult who gains literacy skills finds confidence, new chances for work, and a brighter future for their family. Literacy is not just a skill — it is the key to peace, equality, and development.

Girls' Education

One of the most important parts of this mission is the education of girls. When a girl goes to school, her family, community, and even her country benefit. Yet many girls are still kept away from classrooms. Rotary clubs work to change this by providing scholarships, school supplies, and awareness projects that encourage families to support girls' education.

Rotary's Work in Zone 21B

Around the world, Rotary supports schools, trains teachers, builds libraries, and helps both children and adults gain literacy skills. In Zone 21B (which covers the Middle East, the Balkans, and the Caucasus) Rotary clubs are active in many education projects. They provide books and technology to rural schools, set up computer labs, help refugee children continue their studies, and give scholarships to those in need. These projects prove that Rotary's global vision creates real impact in local communities..

Our Shared Responsibility

September reminds us that education is not a privilege, it is a right. As Rotarians, we can all take part: by giving a child a book, supporting a student's dream, or helping an adult learn to read and write. Small steps can create big changes.

Conclusion

Let us always remember: literacy is the language of peace, and education is the key to a fairer world.

This September, let us work to spread the light of learning as far as possible. Rotary's strength lies in the hearts and hands of those who serve.

Unite for Good: When we unite our efforts, no challenge is too big. By standing together, we can ensure that more children go to school, more girls continue their education, and more communities are empowered. Rotary teaches us that real change happens when people unite for good.

Let's be together next month.

Rtn. N.Altan Arslan

PP 05-06 Ankara Kızılay RC

PDG 18-19 D.2430

RPIC 23-26 Region 25

FUSION SUMMIT 25-28 SEPTEMBER 2025

The Europe-Africa-Middle East Summit in 2025 to Be Named FUSION – A Symbol of Unity and Impact

The summit between Europe, Africa, and the Middle East, to be held in 2025 in Brussels, will bear the name FUSION, symbolizing the unification and merging of key elements aimed at creating meaningful impact on the international stage. The name reflects Rotary International's innovative message of opening up to civil society and the younger generation, calling for unprecedented collaboration.

Key Reasons for Choosing the Name FUSION:

FUSION of Europe, Africa, and the Middle East

The name symbolizes the union of three regions with rich cultural and historical identities. By bringing together Europe, Africa, and the Middle East, the summit aims to strengthen intercontinental ties, foster mutual understanding, and encourage cooperation on shared challenges such as sustainable development, peace, and economic prosperity.

A New Message of Openness from Rotary to Civil Society

The summit represents a meaningful convergence between Rotary International and the civic sector. This marks a new era of openness, with Rotary extending an invitation for closer partnership with civil society. By combining Rotary's resources, expertise, and networks with the innovation and enthusiasm of NGOs, the goal is to achieve greater impact and effective solutions to global challenges.

Embracing Rotary's Core Values

At the heart of the forum lie Rotary's core values: service, integrity, diversity, leadership, and fellowship. The fusion of these values ensures that initiatives and discussions are guided by ethics, inclusion, and the pursuit of the common good. This inspires participants to act with responsibility and conscience.

The word "FUSION" is written in a large, bold, black, sans-serif font. The letters are closely spaced, and the overall style is modern and impactful. The text is centered horizontally within the orange banner.

Breaking Barriers, Building Bridges
25—28 September 2025

FUSION SUMMIT 25-28 SEPTEMBER 2025

The Europe-Africa-Middle East Summit in 2025 to Be Named FUSION – A Symbol of Unity and Impact

Opening the Doors to the New Generation

The summit sends a strong message of openness to the younger generation, inviting them to join and enrich Rotary. By bringing together leaders, innovators, and thinkers of different age groups, this "fusion" fosters a dynamic intergenerational exchange, combining the experience of established members with the creativity and energy of youth. This inclusion promotes active youth participation in Rotary's mission and in global efforts for change.

Commitment to Concrete and Collaborative Action

The name FUSION highlights the importance of moving from dialogue to real action. The summit is committed to turning conversations into concrete, collaborative initiatives with tangible results. Through the united efforts of participants, real progress on key global issues can be achieved.

The name FUSION for the Europe-Africa-Middle East Summit 2025 carries deep symbolism. It embodies the unity of continents, innovative cooperation between Rotary and civil society, the integration of Rotary's core values, and the gathering of minds across generations — with a particular focus on inviting youth to engage. This fusion expresses a shared commitment to concrete action and aims to serve as a catalyst for enhanced collaboration and collective progress toward a better future.

More information available at: <https://rotary-fusion-summit.org/>

Presents

FUSION

Africa - Europe - Middle East 2025

**Bill Gates - Tim Cook - Jensen Huang - Peter Piot - Karen Boers
Vincent kompany Alain Rozié
Jensen Huang Jamila Louahed
Bernard Arnault - Ursula Von Der Leyen - Fabrice Murgia
Charlotte Adigéry - Justine Henin - Stephane de Groot**

25—28 Sept. 25 **Square Brussels**

Breaking Barriers, Building Bridges
Orro etum fuga. Ita cupitate
poribus. Uptas nim et volora aceati
connihitatus res essit atqui destibus

volut volorum quaecae nonsedi
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ienimus autem rerspel ectiam, tem
venis eos sam quibus.

Square Brussels,
Mont des Arts, 1000 Bruxelles

www.rotary-fusion-summit.org

VISIT 

Rotary
Zone 21&22



**Power of Goodness
Video Competition**

AWARD CEREMONY

FUSION

Breaking Barriers, Building Bridges
25—28 September 2025
Square Brussels



Friendship House ICC Booth



Saturday, September 27, 2025



3:45 pm

<https://thepowerofgoodness.com>

ICC & Public Image Summit Athens 2025

Dear Rotarian Friends,

The International ICC & Public Image Summit, to be held in Athens from November 13–16, 2025, is not just an event—it marks a major moment for Rotary International in Greece.

Prominent Rotary leaders from around the world will be with us.

It will be a gathering of leaders, ideas, and shared missions.

A gathering with a clear purpose: to demonstrate what Rotary means in action—unity, service, impact, and peace for the benefit of peoples.

This year, Greece—with its radiant light and rich culture—becomes the symbol of this revival.

And we are all called to welcome our fellow Rotarians and host them as true Rotarians should: with pride, dignity, enthusiasm, and unity.

Let us all come together—
Not just to attend, but to take the lead.
To show that Rotary is active, strong, and visible.

The Organizing Committee warmly awaits you in Athens for a constructive, high-quality conference, filled with friendship—and the spirit of Greece.

A promotional poster for the ICC & Public Image Summit. The background is a photograph of the Parthenon in Athens, Greece, under a clear blue sky. A white dove with an olive branch is flying in the upper right. The text is overlaid on the image.

ICC & PUBLIC IMAGE
PEACE & FRIENDSHIP
SUMMIT

ATHENS - GREECE
13-16
NOVEMBER
2025
ROYAL OLYMPIC HOTEL

Rotary 
District 2475

UNITE FOR GOOD

TAKE ACTION. GIVE LIFE.
UNITED FOR WORLD PEACE

www.royalolympic.com

THE SIXTH EDITION OF THE ZONAL VIDEO COMPETITION

“THE POWER OF GOODNESS”

Dear friends,

It is a pleasure to share that this Rotary year we will once again celebrate the zonal video contest “The Power of Goodness”, now in its sixth edition, jointly organized by Zones 21 and 22 of Rotary International.

What began as a simple initiative to highlight Rotary’s impact in local communities has become a meaningful tradition and one of the most anticipated events in our zones. Each year, the contest brings together inspiring stories that showcase commitment, empathy, and service above self from Rotarians across Europe and beyond.

At its heart, this contest reminds us that kindness is a transformative force. It connects people, changes lives, and brings light where it is most needed. Even the smallest gesture can spark a ripple of hope and inspiration far greater than we imagine.

✨ New this year — a SPECIAL category will honor projects that distinguish themselves through innovation, long-term impact, and unique contribution to the community. This is a chance to shine a spotlight on exceptional initiatives that go beyond expectations.

Details on deadlines and participation will be shared soon, with the contest set to launch in the autumn. As always, entries will be evaluated for creativity, impact, clarity of message, and alignment with Rotary values.

Rotary clubs from Zone 21 have a proud record of participation, presenting initiatives in education, public health, environmental protection, and more. Let us once again demonstrate that the spirit of service continues to thrive in our communities and inspire others to join us on this journey.

Now is the time to begin preparing your entries — concise, compelling videos that capture the essence of your projects and the difference they make. This contest is not only an opportunity to share your achievements but also to amplify the stories that unite and motivate us all.

Together, let us celebrate goodness — for the sixth year in a row, with renewed energy, creativity, and passion.

– **Arkan Apturahman, ARPIC D2482 Bulgaria**



Last Submission Date: 16 March 2026
<https://thepowerofgoodness.com>



NEW CATEGORY



NEW CATEGORY



Last Submission Date: 16 March 2026
<https://thepowerofgoodness.com>

GUIDELINES FOR FILMING A VIDEO FOR COMPETITION

“THE POWER OF GOODNESS”

1. **Plan the filming in advance.**

As you prepare your project or event, decide who will be responsible for filming, what equipment will be used, and which shots will be needed. Assign a dedicated person or team for this task.

2. **Use a drone when possible.**

For outdoor activities, aerial shots provide dynamics and add a professional look to the video.

3. **Include interviews.**

Record short interviews with participants, volunteers, organizers, or beneficiaries. Ask what the project means to them, how it made them feel, or what inspired them.

4. **Tell a story, not just document.**

Focus on emotions, action, and outcomes. Show people, not only activities.

5. **Capture the preparation phase.**

Behind-the-scenes footage of volunteers packing, organizing, or coordinating creates authenticity and highlights the effort behind the cause.

6. **Gather short statements.**

Even one or two sincere sentences from someone whose life has been touched can be very powerful. Seek authenticity rather than long monologues.

7. **Ensure good lighting.**

Whether indoors or outdoors, light is essential. Avoid dark rooms or shooting directly against the sun.

8. **Use stable equipment.**

Unsteady shots are distracting. If you don't have a professional camera, use a tripod or stabilizer for your phone.

9. **Film in horizontal format.**

For higher quality and compatibility with platforms such as YouTube, always shoot horizontally.

10. **Include close-up shots.**

Faces, smiles, and hands in action bring warmth and humanity to the story.

11. **Ensure clear sound.**

Use an external microphone if possible. In noisy environments, consider recording separately or adding narration afterwards.

GUIDELINES FOR FILMING A VIDEO FOR COMPETITION

“THE POWER OF GOODNESS”

12. Show the final result.

Present the completed project, the happy participants, and the overall impact achieved.

13. Build a timeline through your shots.

Show “before, during, and after” the event. This structure helps tell a complete story.

14. Capture audience reactions.

Smiles, applause, and emotions are living proof of the project’s impact.

15. Include children and youth (with consent).

If children are part of the initiative, ensure parental consent for filming. Their smiles often speak louder than words.

16. Add supporting images or archives.

If your project has history, use “before and after” comparisons, documents, or older photos to show progress.

17. Use music to enhance emotion.

Neutral, uplifting music reinforces the message. Make sure to use licensed tracks or free-to-use libraries.

18. Add English subtitles, especially when people are speaking.

Even short statements should be subtitled to ensure clarity and accessibility.

19. Display names and roles.

When showing someone speaking, add their name and role for context.

20. Start and finish with identity elements.

Open with a short title/intro and close with your club’s logo.

21. Include a message or a quote.

A powerful line or inspiring quote at the end can leave a lasting emotional impression.

22. Prepare a clear script before editing.

Decide what story you want to tell, in what sequence, and with which footage.

23. Show the impact achieved.

Highlight how lives were improved or what was accomplished. This is the heart of the contest — the lasting mark of kindness.

24. Respect Rotary branding.

Use the official Rotary logo, fonts, and colors. Guidelines are available at brandcenter.rotary.org.

You are not alone in this process! Contact us if you have questions!

– Arkan Apturahman, ARPIC D2482 Bulgaria

For years, in personal trainings, both as a participant and as an educator, we have talked about the art of explaining the issue or being able to explain itself in 30 seconds. I never imagined that this brief and concise introduction issue, which we call "elevator pitch" in elevator speech or in English, would carry me to the Reggio Calabria on the opposite shore of Sicily at the end of drawing to the south of Italy.

At the Peace Conference held in Istanbul in February, while trying to go down to the halls by elevator, Rtn, who tried to catch up with the elevator with a smiling face. The whole adventure started when I got Giampaolo Latella on board. Our 30-second elevator journey, which starts with which club is 38. While extending from parallel clubs to twin clubs, from there to preparations for the Mediterranean Peace Conference, from Positive Peace Activism to projects for women's empowerment, we have also sowed the first seeds of a great friendship.

The Mediterranean Peace Days Conference organized by the Reggio Calabria Rotary Club was held between 6-8 June. In the 3-day event, we talked about Peace in the Mediterranean with the Rotary Leaders from Albania, Greece, Kosovo, Morocco, Serbia, Spain, Tunisia, Turkey and Ukraine. We witnessed the touching call of our Rotary friend who joined the Palestinian Bethlehem RK via Zoom.

More than twenty speakers moderated by Giancarla Rondinelli, an important journalist in the country, we took turns in different panels dedicated to economic development in the Mediterranean on the issues of peacebuilding, equal opportunities in health and education, environment and sustainable energy. I was blessed with the opening speech of this great colorful event, of which I was the guest of honor. I talked about the roles of women throughout history, the importance of women in making social peace permanent, and the world examples that strong women should not be underestimated in social reconciliation.



As the only Turk and a woman representing our flag in this great international organization, I sang our National Anthem to this geography. I was thanked for bringing the Sylvia Whitlock award to Europe. I realized once again that friendships are independent of the language you speak rather than flags!

Every acquaintance is an opportunity.

Every sincere smile is the beginning of a new friendship.

Every extension is the seed of a new peace...

I thanked me for choosing to multiply with goodness because I am a Rotary by greeting the sun setting over Sicily with roses blooming in me, my hope is setting over Sicily.

I prayed for peace.

I renewed my hope.

Thanks Giampaolo Latella

Thank you Reggio Calabria

Thank you Italy 2102. Region

ARRFC, PDG Ayda Özeren



ZONE 21 2023-24 GOVERNORS REUNION TOOK PLACE IN TÜRKİYE

Making a difference in our communities, whether close to home or across the globe, is at the heart of why so many of us joined Rotary. Along the way, we are often rewarded with the gift of meeting remarkable people, building friendships in unexpected corners of the world, and discovering how deeply we are connected by shared values and a common drive to serve.

When you experience something as intense and meaningful as a governor year, those connections grow even stronger. Friendships forged during training sessions, dance floors, conferences, but also common projects or even when disasters struck, evolve into bonds that feel like family. Our Zone 21 is already wonderfully diverse, so when a group of DG classmates decided to organize a reunion, it became a special opportunity not only to strengthen those friendships but also to immerse ourselves in a new culture through the eyes of someone who calls it home



This year, the choice was Türkiye, hosted with warmth and generosity by PDG Ayda Özeren. From breathtaking sunrises to rich history, vibrant traditions, flavorful cuisine, and even the challenge of summer's scorching heat, Türkiye offered a magnificent backdrop for PDGs of 5 Districts and our families celebrating fellowship. Ayda welcomed us with open arms and gave us the priceless gift of experiencing her homeland.

We shared laughter, exchanged ideas and experiences, inspired one another, and created memories that will stay with us for a lifetime. Though we are long past Youth Exchange age, our time together in Istanbul and Çeşme carried that same spirit of discovery, joy, and connection.

Already, new projects are taking shape, and future reunions are being planned—with hopes of welcoming even more of our classmates, fellow Governors of Hope. Our gracious host, PDG Ayda, captured it best when she said: “Once governors, now family.” Those words perfectly reflect the kinship, gratitude, and joy we feel. Next reunion... loading!

By Sunchica Bulat Würsching



38TH INTERNATIONAL ÇANAKKALE STRAIT SWIMMING RACE

On August 30, the 38th International Çanakkale Strait Swimming Race brought together 1,434 athletes — including 254 international swimmers — in the historic waters of the Dardanelles. Organized by the Çanakkale Rotary Club under Rotary District 2440, the event once again united continents, cultures, and hearts through sport.

Starting from the European shore at Eceabat and finishing on the Asian side at Çanakkale Pier, swimmers covered the 6,482-meter course with strokes symbolizing friendship, peace, and solidarity. Inspired by the timeless legend of Hero and Leandros, the race conveyed a strong message of unity to the world.

Club President Sevil Ural highlighted the spirit of the day: “Every stroke was dedicated with gratitude to Gazi Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and all the heroes of our Independence Struggle. This event is not only a race, but also a celebration of Victory Day that promotes peace and fellowship.”

District 2440 Governor Adnan Sözeri emphasized Rotary’s role in bringing people together: “Today, we connected not only Europe and Asia, but also peace, friendship, and human values. As Rotarians, we take pride in building bridges of fellowship both in service and in sport.”

With the support of public institutions, sponsors, and 380 volunteers, the race was carried out with the highest safety standards. The women’s overall title went to 16-year-old Çiğdem Ezo Topaloğlu with a time of 56:03, while Steven Claes from Belgium won the men’s category in 51:03.

The Çanakkale Strait once again proved to be more than just a body of water — it became a symbol of history, unity, and Rotary’s enduring spirit of service.



38TH INTERNATIONAL ÇANAKKALE STRAIT SWIMMING RACE



The 20th edition of the Discover Anatolia Short-Term Youth Exchange Project was successfully completed this year in collaboration with the Rotary Clubs of Beysukent, Adana Koza, Adana Güney, Mersin, Samsun Atakum, Samsun İlkadım, Cappadocia, and Tandoğan.

Held between July 27 – August 10, 2025, the project hosted 13 young participants aged 14–17 from abroad. With the hospitality of eight clubs, these students had the opportunity to explore and experience different corners of Turkey. The cultural journey took them across Alanya, Konya, Mersin, Adana, Cappadocia, Samsun, and Ankara, where they discovered Anatolia's historical heritage, unique nature, and layered culture firsthand.

This special project was not only a trip but also a strong reflection of Rotary's mission of building peace, understanding, and friendship in the world through youth exchange. As it has for the past 20 years, Discover Anatolia once again built bridges between cultures and left unforgettable memories in young minds. Rotary changes lives, youth transforms the future.

Discover Anatolia continues to embody Rotary's core values of fellowship, service, diversity, integrity, and leadership through youth exchange. By spending time together, young people from different cultures developed international understanding, while the hosting clubs brought Rotary's ideal of service into practice. This project is not merely a journey; it is the vision of Rotary's contribution to world peace taking root in young hearts



THE POLIO AWARENESS CLIMB', ON MOUNT KAÇKAR

Türkiye's fourth-highest mountain, on August 29th, 30th, and 31st, was carried out by Ordu Rotary Club member PP. Meltem Erbaş, along with her husband Özcan Erbaş, and their two sons, Ege Erbaş and Alp Erbaş.

We began our hike from Yukarı Kavrun Plateau on August 29th with our camp loads and reached Mezovit Camp after an approximately four-hour hike.

On the morning of Victory Day, August 30th, we began our ascent to the summit at 4:00 AM and reached the summit around 9:00 AM.

During our climb and at the mountain summit, we unfurled our Turkish, District, Term, and Club flags, as well as Polio banner, and documented these moments digitally.

We began our return descent from the summit around 4:00 PM. We returned from the Mezovit campsite to the Yukarı Kavrun plateau with our camp loads and completed our activity.

Rtn. Vedat Şekeroğlu
Rotary Club of Ordu
Presedent 2025-2026



THE JOURNEY IN DOING SERVICE ABOVE SELF

District 2440 Press Conference



Rotary International District 2440 began the 2025-2026 term with strong and determined steps.

Accordingly, press conferences held in Izmir, Bursa, and Bodrum conveyed the message of "Unity in social service, determination in common goals."

Led by District 2440 Governor Adnan Sözeri and with broad participation from the District Rotary clubs, the main theme of the press conferences was this year's Rotary International slogan, "Unite for Good."

ARPIC ALAEDDIN DEMIRCIOĞLU
DISTRICT 2420/2430/2440



THE JOURNEY IN DOING SERVICE ABOVE SELF

Rotary Club of Marmaris "Science,Culture and Art Summer Course" D2440

SCIENCE,CULTURE AND ART SUMMER COURSE FOR CHILDREN

It was an inspiring day at the Science, Culture, and Arts Summer Course organized by the Rotary Club of Marmaris.

We taught our children on three different topics:

🌳 Our Trees and Environmental Awareness

To increase awareness of nature, we discussed the importance of trees in our lives and explored our environmental responsibilities together.

🥗 Healthy Nutrition

Under the guidance of dietitian Serra Tüzün, we learned the fundamentals of a healthy life and reviewed our eating habits.

🎨 The Language of Art with Origami

We blended patience, creativity, and aesthetic sensibility through origami. The moments when paper came to life captivated us all.



THE JOURNEY IN DOING SERVICE ABOVE SELF

Rotary Club of Marmaris "Selimiye Village Headman's Library", D2440

SELİMİYE VILLAGE HEADMAN'S LIBRARY

The Marmaris Rotary Club opened its library at the Selimiye Village Headman's Office. This library will be a home not only for books, but also for solidarity, education, and hope. Let's continue working together for a brighter future!

They thanked former Club President Avni Güner and his esteemed wife, Gamze Güner, for their contributions to this meaningful project, the İstanbul Eminönü Lios Rotary Club for providing book support, and all their generous friends.



THE JOURNEY IN DOING SERVICE ABOVE SELF

Rotary Club of Kusadasi "Peace Camp, D2440

The Kuşadası Rotary Club organized a peace camp for children with its families. Various activities and entertainment took place throughout the camp. These included:

- * Making an origami crane to be sent to Hiroshima Peace Park, Japan
- * Rock painting, children's games, Survivor Peace Tales, Yoga,...
- * Several Traditional Folk dance workshops, music, and entertainment
- * A museum tour exploring the history of the olive, a symbol of peace.



THE JOURNEY IN DOING SERVICE ABOVE SELF



ARPIC SERTAÇ GÜMÜŞ
DISTRICT 2452

Rotaract Club of Kyrenia Cosmopolitan – Presidential Handover 2025–2026

On Friday, 15 August 2025, the Rotaract Club of Kyrenia Cosmopolitan proudly marked the transition of leadership at its Presidential Handover Ceremony, where Past President Feriha Tuğca Ulukurt (2024–2025) graciously passed the mantle to President Merve Güralp (2025–2026), ushering in a new term of service and commitment.

Although a formal event, the ceremony took place in a warm and friendly atmosphere, attended by Rotaractors, Rotarians, and friends. During the evening, the club celebrated the achievements of the past year, conveyed heartfelt appreciation to the outgoing president and board, and welcomed the new leadership team under President Merve Güralp. Past President Feriha highlighted the key accomplishments and milestones of her term, extended gratitude to the team, the club, and sponsors, and shared reflections on the meaningful impact of their collective work. Appreciation certificates were also presented to acknowledge the contributions of dedicated members, further underscoring the spirit of recognition and camaraderie that defines the club.



THE JOURNEY IN DOING SERVICE ABOVE SELF

ROTARY AND ROTARACT CLUBS UNITE IN “EXPRESS TO PROGRESS” - LEBANON D2452

A Powerful Act of Peacebuilding and Collective Healing in Beirut

On August 3, 2025, members of the Rotary and Rotaract family in Lebanon came together with over 200 community members to transform one of Beirut's most wounded streets into a space for healing, remembrance, and hope. The initiative, titled “Express to Progress”, was held on Pasteur Street, directly facing the silos and ground zero of the Beirut Port Explosion, to mark the 5th memorial of one of the most devastating days in Lebanon's modern history.

Led by the Rotary Action Group for Peace – Lebanon Chapter, in collaboration with Rotary and Rotaract Clubs from across the country, this community-led project embodied Rotary's mission to promote peace, build connections, and take action in times of need.

Through art, movement, storytelling, expression activities, and silent reflection, the event welcomed people from different generations and backgrounds—survivors, youth, local leaders, and grassroots organizations—to stand side by side in an act of collective healing.



THE JOURNEY IN DOING SERVICE ABOVE SELF

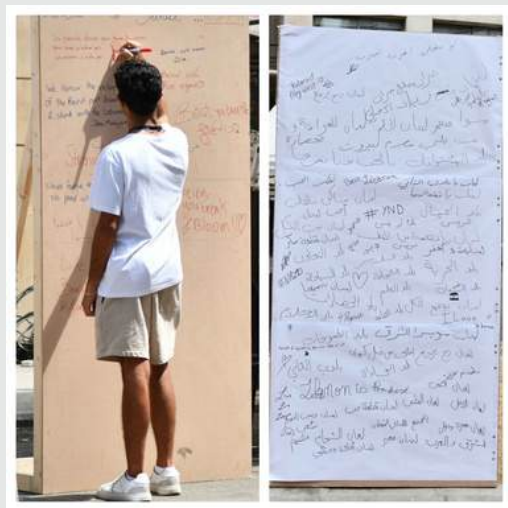
ROTARY AND ROTARACT CLUBS UNITE IN “EXPRESS TO PROGRESS” - LEBANON D2452

A Powerful Act of Peacebuilding and Collective Healing in Beirut

This wasn't just a remembrance—it was an act of reclaiming our streets, our emotions, and our voice as a community. It showed how peacebuilding begins with presence, participation, and creative expression. In a country where pain is often politicized or ignored, this was a reminder that healing is possible when people come together with purpose and empathy.”

— Anhal Kozhaya, Organizer of this event - Chairperson of the Rotary Action Group for Peace – Lebanon Chapter & Positive Peace Activator

“Express to Progress” is a living example of Rotary’s belief in service above self and the power of local leadership to create meaningful, lasting impact. The organizers extend their deepest gratitude to every club, partner organization, and volunteer who contributed to this day of remembrance, renewal, and unity.



THE JOURNEY IN DOING SERVICE ABOVE SELF

Podcast Launch: "Aley and Beyond" - Interact Club of Aley - Lebanon D2452

We proudly launched our very own podcast series, Aley and Beyond, marking a first for our club.

This initiative aims to create a platform where we can openly discuss and tackle pressing local and global issues. Through this project, we hope to inspire mind opening conversations and foster awareness in our community.

For the first time, we hosted a full-day event bringing together a few Interact clubs from across Lebanon: Tripoli Maarad and Tripoli Cosmopolis. The day began with a peaceful yoga session, followed by a visit to the renowned local symposium to showcase our town's cultural heritage. After sharing lunch together, we participated in a fun and creative cake decorating workshop. We ended the day around a bonfire, sharing stories and building new friendships. With around 40 attendees, the day was a huge success and a great example of collaboration and community spirit.



THE JOURNEY IN DOING SERVICE ABOVE SELF

Rotary Club of Manama vocational visit to Sofitel - Bahrain D2452

RC of Manama members enjoyed a delightful vocational visit to Sofitel's Fiamma Restaurant, where Executive Chef Marco Terranova hosted the group for a light, hands-on cooking experience. Under his guidance, participants prepared four different dishes, while he shared valuable culinary techniques, insights, and professional tips from his extensive experience.



THE JOURNEY IN DOING SERVICE ABOVE SELF

The Rotaract Club of Bahrain participated in the Education program - Bahrain D2452

The Rotaract Club of Bahrain are honored to have their Professional Development Director, Lujayn Al Hajairi, an Ezone alumna, was invited as a Guest Speaker at Education Zone's Student UK Pre-Departure Event targeting the SDG 4 Quality Education.



THE JOURNEY IN DOING SERVICE ABOVE SELF

RC of Manama was honored with a Certificate of Appreciation from Dr. Al Alwai - Bahrain D2452

The Rotary Club of Manama was honored with a Certificate of Appreciation from Dr. Al Alwai, CEO of the Primary Health Centers, in recognition of their support for maternal care classes.





RID 2475 – DG'S MONTHLY LETTER (AUGUST 2025)

**MESSAGE OF RID 2475 DG
STEFANOS ANASTASOPOULOS**

**ARPIC MARIA MASTORA
DISTRICT 2475**

Dear members of our Rotary family, dear friends,

August is a month of vacation, rest, and renewal for all of us. It is a month when we "recharge our batteries" so that we can return in September strong, ready to get back to work and ready to move forward with all our processes and programs. It is also a period of reflection, where we can think about who we are, what we do, and how we can become better.

August, for Rotary International, is dedicated to members. And here I would like to emphasize that Rotary's growth begins with attracting new members. We need people who will not just come to be members of a club, but to become active cells of contribution and creation. People who are willing to contribute, whose values and principles align with ours, who are willing to share our vision and feel at home in Rotary. We must seek out these people, inspire them, and invite them to become our companions.

As part of this effort to renew and grow, we must also take advantage of the modern opportunities Rotary offers us to create new types of clubs. Beyond the traditional clubs we know, today we can establish clubs with different forms of operation, thematic clubs, or clubs that mainly utilize technology and online presence. This flexibility allows us to reach out to people who want to serve but cannot join a traditional club model, opening up new avenues for participation and contribution. So let's view these new possibilities not as an alternative, but as an opportunity to enrich and strengthen our Rotary family.

But growth is not limited to attracting new members.

Our existing members are our cornerstone. We owe it to them to give them a voice and a role, space to express themselves and create, opportunities to participate in actions, programs, and decision-making processes. We must involve them meaningfully and provide them with opportunities for continuing education through seminars, workshops, and networking.

THE JOURNEY IN DOING SERVICE ABOVE SELF

DG'S MONTHLY LETTER - AUGUST 2025

MESSAGE OF DG 2025-26

STEFANOS ANASTASOPOULOS

Activating members who are not currently participating as much as they would like is just as important as recruiting new members. Because the real strength of a club is not measured solely by the number of its members, but by how many of them are active, enthusiastic, and committed.

My official visits to clubs got off to a strong start, particularly in the islands but also in other areas. Yes, there are long-standing challenges that will need efforts to be resolved. But I also saw something more important: members who love Rotary, who know its power, and who want to use it to help their communities. It is our responsibility to give them the tools and support them to do so, and that is what we will do.

At the same time, all of this year's projects are already on track for implementation. Significant projects are being prepared within the framework of District Grants, with many noteworthy ideas, while the implementation of major projects in the District is also progressing.

The extensive tree planting program has a special place among them. It is not just a tree planting initiative; it is a response to the environmental crisis we are experiencing. Our tree planting aims not only to substantially increase forest wealth and restore burned or degraded areas, but above all to cultivate environmental awareness. We want every tree we plant to be a seed of responsibility, a symbol of hope, a promise for the future. We want to inspire local communities, mobilize young and old, and show in practice that change starts with us—with our own actions today.

The recent fires that are destroying priceless natural resources, plant and animal life, human lives, urban environments, and entire communities are a wound that affects us all. These are images we must not become accustomed to. Rotary cannot and must not remain indifferent. Through projects such as tree planting, environmental education initiatives, and the personal example of each member, we can bring hope where there is loss and leave a positive mark for future generations.

In closing, I would like to remind you of this year's message: Unite for Good. Let us all move forward together with unity, solidarity, and faith in the power of cooperation. Let us be the voice that inspires, the hands that create, and the hearts that open paths of hope. Because when people join forces for good, the result exceeds every dream and every expectation. With every member we inspire, with every tree we plant, with every bridge we build, we weave the future of a world United for Good.

With appreciation and rotarian love,

Stefanos Anastasopoulos

RID 2475 - Governor 2025-2026



Stefanos Anastasopoulos
District Governor 2025-26
RID 2475 / GREECE

THE JOURNEY IN DOING SERVICE ABOVE SELF

RID 2475 - ROTARY CONTINUOUS LEARNING SEMINAR

Rotary Continuous Learning Seminar held in Heraklion, Crete, was completed with great success, in the presence of DG Stefanos Anastasopoulos, and with the participation of all Rotary Clubs on the island. Attendance was impressive, and the dynamic presence of Rotary members once again confirmed their deep commitment to ongoing information, training, and cooperation. The program included in-depth and well-structured speeches covering all the issues that concern modern Rotary—from basic principles and values to the critical issues of membership development, public image, service activities, and community outreach. Speakers from Athens and Rotary clubs in Crete contributed their knowledge, experience, and passion to the success of the day. At the same time, there was a lively exchange of views, ideas, and concerns among colleagues. Participants had the opportunity to strengthen bonds of friendship, get to know each other better, and lay the foundations for future collaborations.

Crete has once again proven that it is a vibrant Rotary hub with energy, vision, and faith in the potential of our organization. Warm congratulations to the speakers Kosmas Choutouriadis RRFC, Dora Kemou PDG, Rachel Topalidou As.G., Nontas Charontis As.G, Konstantinos Saridakis As.G., Giorgos Lapidakis P, all participants, and of course the Rotary clubs of Heraklion and Heraklion Kazantzakis, who co-organized the seminar, for their excellent wor



THE JOURNEY IN DOING SERVICE ABOVE SELF

RID 2475 - RC RHODOS KOLOSSOS

RC Rhodes-Kolossos donated an ERMA B-111 neonatal bilirubinometer to the Andreas Papandreou General Hospital of Rhodes to meet the needs of the Pediatric Clinic.

The medical device was delivered by the President of the Club, rtn Spyros Dalianis, to the Deputy Director of the Hospital , Mr. Michael Sokorelos, in the presence of RID 2475 DG Stefanos Anastasopoulos, and members of the Club. The donation was approved by a relevant Joint Ministerial Decision, while the purchase of the specialized medical equipment was covered entirely by the Club's own resources.



THE JOURNEY IN DOING SERVICE ABOVE SELF

RID 2475 - RC KOS

RC Kos donated a defibrillator to the Special Forces Unit of the island. The donation was made by the head of the Rotary Foundation's Annual Giving Subcommittee, rtn Stavros Axarlis, to the Commander of the 5th ETEH, Lieutenant Colonel (Infantry Army) Theodoros Dakoulas. The Commander of the Special Forces Unit expressed his gratitude for the donation of the defibrillator and emphasized the importance of having such equipment available, in the context of the rigorous training of personnel.





THE JOURNEY IN DOING SERVICE ABOVE SELF

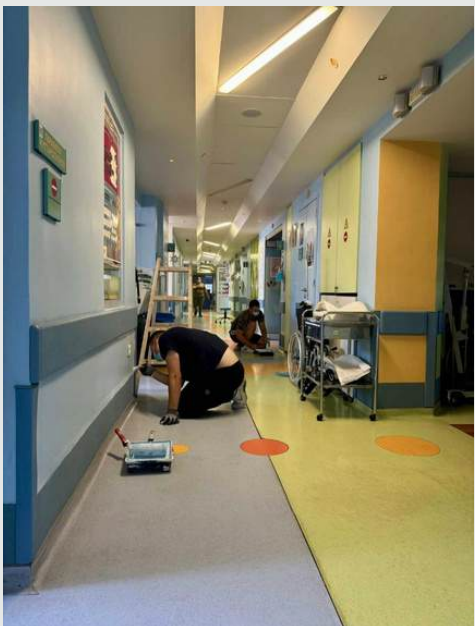
RID 2475 - RC THESSALONIKI

The renovation of the Neonatal Oncology Department at the Hippocrates Hospital in Thessaloniki has been completed by the Rotary Club of Thessaloniki, as an act of substantial social contribution and responsibility!

The project was implemented with the contribution of sponsors and members of the Club, who made dignity, quality of life, and hope for the youngest and most vulnerable patients their top priority.

The care of newborns undergoing cancer treatment is not about numbers, statistics, or protocols. It is about human lives at their most fragile moment! It is about their first breaths, which deserve safety, dignity, and hope!

A BIG THANK YOU to everyone who contributed in any way to this great effort by the Rotary Club of Thessaloniki! Our members, who are the backbone of our club! Mr. Stefanos Tziritis of Isomat company, who generously and sensitively donated the antimicrobial paints!



THE JOURNEY IN DOING SERVICE ABOVE SELF

RID 2475 - RC KIFISSIA

Support for fire victims in Limassol from RC Kifissia

With a sense of solidarity and social responsibility, RC Kifissia, through "Humanity Greece", completed an important humanitarian mission to support our fellow citizens affected by the fires in Limassol, Cyprus.

Essential items—food, hygiene products, and clothing—were collected and sent, a small act of love that conveys a big message: We are with you! Solidarity does not stop at borders.

We stand by those in need!



**KINDNESS IS THE
GIFT THAT KEEPS
ON GIVING.**



THE JOURNEY IN DOING SERVICE ABOVE SELF

RID 2475 - RC KERKYRA

Ceremony for the delivery of two 12,000 BTU energy-efficient air conditioning units to the gynecology clinic of the Corfu City Health Center

Warm thanks to all the members of RC Kerkyra and especially to the newly elected president, Mrs. Christina Triviza, for the very useful donation of two air conditioners for the Gynecology Department at the Corfu Health Center.



THE JOURNEY IN DOING SERVICE ABOVE SELF

RID 2475 - RC THESSALONIKI ALEXANDER THE GREAT

RC Thessaloniki "Alexander the Great Hellas" donated 564 bottles of bottled mineral water to the Greek Red Cross for our fellow citizens and vulnerable groups who, due to weather conditions, have increased needs.

In these difficult times, collaborations with the prestige of Rotary and the Greek Red Cross give us a breath of humanity!!!

We thank the Greek Red Cross for the opportunity it gave us to contribute to its work!!!



THE JOURNEY IN DOING SERVICE ABOVE SELF

RID 2475 - RC THESSALONIKI

The Rotary Club of Thessaloniki, always sensitive to social policy issues, donated a drone* on August 23, 2025, to the Municipality of Polygyros, which oversees civil protection for the entire Prefecture of Chalkidiki, the Police and Fire Department of the Prefecture of Chalkidiki.

A drone* that will be used by all of the above services for their needs due to its lack.

The Mayor of Polygyros, George Emmanouil, after thanking our Club for the donation, referred to the excellent cooperation they have with Civil Protection, the Fire Department, and the Police, and specifically that they are a force to be reckoned with, all together! He congratulated Civil Protection, emphasizing that they are people who, defying danger, work selflessly to relieve and protect society from difficult conditions.

Drone: DJI Mavic 3 Pro Cine

Premium Combo (DJI RC Pro) FPV Drone with 5.1K camera.

Flight time: 45 min.

Control range: 15,000 m.

Exceptional video recording capabilities and triple camera system.



THE JOURNEY IN DOING SERVICE ABOVE SELF

RID 2475 - RC RHODOS

Signing of a Cooperation Protocol between the Municipality of Rhodes Directorate of Social Policy and Health and RC Rhodos

On the last day of July—designated in the Rotary Calendar as the month dedicated to Maternal and Child Health—the Directorate of Social Policy and Health of Rhodes Municipality and RC Rhodos signed a Cooperation Protocol. The purpose of this protocol is to establish a framework for collaboration and coordination between the two parties in the context of their shared commitment to supporting vulnerable social groups, meeting their basic needs, and strengthening social cohesion and solidarity within the local community.

The signing ceremony took place in the ceremonial hall of the City Hall of Rhodes and was officiated by Rhodes Mayor, Alexandros Vasileios Koliadis, and RC Phodos President, Dr. Beatrice–Calliope Servou, in presence of RID 2475 DG Stefanos Anastasopoulos, Deputy Mayor for Social Policy, Solidarity, and Equality, Thomas Sotrilis, Director of the Directorate of Social Policy and Health of the Municipality of Rhodes, Christina Karagianni, RID 2475 AG Rachil Topalidou, and RC Rhodos Secretary, Evanthia Boni.



THE JOURNEY IN DOING SERVICE ABOVE SELF

Plamen Tsvetkov

District Governor 2025-2026

Rotary International

District 2482 - Bulgaria

Monthly Message- August



**ARPIC ARKAN APTURAHMAN
DISTRICT 2482**

ПЛАМЕН ЦВЕТКОВ

Дистрикт гуверньор 2025-2026

Ротари Д2482 България



**UNITE
FOR
GOOD**

Dear Rotary friends – Rotarians, Rotaractors, and Interactors,

August is here – the month of Membership and New Club Development. A theme that has always been key to the sustainable future of Rotary. Today, more than ever, we face the challenge of maintaining our numbers while building a true, inspired, and thriving community. Members are the very heart of our organization. The growth and vitality of our clubs remain our essential commitment.

This year's presidential theme – United for Good – is both an inspiring message and a clear path for action. Unity and partnership are the keys to greater impact. Our mission has remained unchanged for more than a century. At the same time, the world is changing rapidly. That is why we must have the courage to embrace the challenge of CHANGE – through innovation, continuity, and collaboration, while never losing our essence. Let us focus our efforts on delivering quality projects for the people we serve, and inspire them to join us.

Growth must not only be in numbers – it must be in quality as well. Membership is not just a task, it is an opportunity. This means opening our doors to new people, creating new clubs in new formats. Seeking out communities and places where Rotary and Rotaract clubs do not yet exist, or where they have ceased to exist. Every place with a need for service and friendship is an opportunity for a new beginning. A Rotary club is not just something given. Rotary is a valuable legacy – one we are responsible to pass on to those who come after us.

THE JOURNEY IN DOING SERVICE ABOVE SELF

Plamen Tsvetkov District Governor 2025-2026

Rotary International District 2482 - Bulgaria Monthly Message- August

July gave me the opportunity to meet many of you – in Balchik, Varna, Provadia, Burgas, Sozopol, Kyustendil, Dupnitsa, Troyan, Lovech, Cherven Bryag, Vidin, Montana, and Berkovitsa. Everywhere I went, I met people with open hearts, new members, ambitious projects, and a desire for growth. I felt the power of friendship. This confirmed my belief that where there is leadership and a shared purpose, Rotary can truly flourish.

We also held our first strategic leadership training of the year, which we will build upon in August. Exciting events are ahead – the Rotary Summer Celebrations in Bansko, and the Traditional Governor's Cup Golf Tournament, which has the potential to grow into an international event. We will also mark the Shipka Epic at the end of August. In September, Brussels will host an international meeting of Rotarians and Rotaractors from 154 districts (FUSION – GNLS & GELS). In October comes the international mathematics competition in Burgas. In November – the Forum for Vibrant Clubs and the ICC International Meeting together with the Public Image Forum in Athens.

Friends – Invite! Inspire! Create!

Let August be only the beginning of a lasting effort. Because when we are together – in ideas, in action, in friendship – then we are truly United for Good

With respect and friendship,
Plamen Tsvetkov
District Governor 2025–2026
Rotary International



THE JOURNEY IN DOING SERVICE ABOVE SELF

Leadership as a Journey

Leadership is a journey—it is not a momentary state or a position held. It begins from within—with a clearly defined purpose and the willingness to lead others in a direction you believe in. A true leader doesn't need recognition or a prominent place in the hierarchy. They are the natural, often invisible presence people instinctively look to in times of uncertainty.

At the heart of leadership lie values that are revealed through action. Integrity, empathy, and courage—these are the three pillars on which trust is built. They are not declared with words but proven through consistency and the choices made in difficult moments.

Every form of leadership begins with a vision. It is the clear sense of direction you wish to pursue. A vision that remains only in your mind is merely a dream. To come to life, it must be shared and understood. People need to see themselves in it in order to walk the path together.

A leader knows how to communicate in a way that hears not only what is said but also what is left unspoken. They understand different perspectives and weave them into a shared understanding. When they speak, they do so with clarity and honesty—building trust and confidence.

Leadership is also the care for the growth of those around you. It is the ability to recognize potential and to create space for it to unfold. To encourage. To support. To step aside and share the spotlight when someone else is ready for it.

To be a leader means to walk with purpose and persistence, with a willingness to serve a cause greater than yourself. It is a continuous journey of learning—alongside the people who walk with you.

The greatest recognition comes in the moment they continue confidently—even without you.

Tanya Georgieva – DPIC, D2482 Bulgaria

THE JOURNEY IN DOING SERVICE ABOVE SELF

Offer a Hand, Not Aggression

Knives in backpacks. Fights in the bathrooms. Words that cut deeper than fists.

Too often now, the headlines tell of children hurting other children. Of classrooms filled with silence that screams. Of teachers unsure where to begin. Of parents who learn of the violence only when it's too late.

School aggression is no longer an isolated "incident." It is a symptom of a system in distress—a society that has grown numb to the fear in a child's eyes.

The project "Extend a Hand, Not Aggression" was born from this pain—but also from a place of hope.

Hope that we can restore trust. That we can build a new language—one of empathy instead of insults. That we can create safe spaces where every child feels protected, heard, and accepted.

What have we achieved so far?

Together with a team of psychologists and educators, we developed a therapeutic board game designed to support children who have experienced or witnessed violence and bullying in schools. The game was piloted in a protected and controlled environment, with the involvement of professionals and strict adherence to confidentiality and ethical standards.

This gave us valuable insights—and the confidence that we are approaching the issue with the necessary care, sensitivity, and professionalism.

What's next?

Our next step is to move beyond the protected setting and bring this tool into real school environments—guided by trained facilitators, dedicated teams, and a clear support framework.

Why is this project different?

Because it doesn't look for someone to blame. It looks for understanding. For solutions.

It works not only with the children who have been hurt, but also with those who have shown aggression, with the bystanders, and with the ones who want to help but don't know how.

"Extend a Hand, Not Aggression" is not just a project—it's a stance. A call to action. An outstretched hand—not only to children, but to every adult willing to reflect, to change, and to be part of the solution.

THE JOURNEY IN DOING SERVICE ABOVE SELF

What lies ahead?

We're not stopping here. We believe in the impact we've already made—but we know more is needed.

We dream of expanding the project: reaching new schools and communities, training new teams, and providing access to tools and knowledge where there have been none.

If you believe that every child deserves a safe and secure childhood...

If you believe that empathy can be taught, and that kindness is not a weakness but a strength—
Join our network.

Because change starts with one conversation.

With one hand, extended.

This project is implemented as part of *INSPIRE: Enhancing national support for the prevention, intervention, and response to violence against children, and empowering victims*—co-funded by the European Union and the Workshop for Civic Initiatives Foundation (WCIF).

#INSPIRE #WCIF #EndViolenceAgainstChildren



NATIONAL COMMEMORATION – 148 Years of the Battle of Shipka
Hikes of Friendship and Gratitude – With Rotary in the Footsteps of the Heroes

148 ГОДИНИ
Шипченска
епопея

Rotary
Club Gabrovo



*Ротари клуб Габрово Ви кани да присъствате
на честванията по случай 148-та годишнина
от Шипченската епопея*

30 август 2025г.

8:00 ч. - Панихида в памет на загиналите
в шипченските боеве, Соколски манастир

Походи

8:00 Узана - връх Шипка

8:30 Соколски манастир - връх Шипка

9:00 Храм паметник "Рождество Христово" гр.Шипка - връх Шипка

*Единни за добро,
единни за свободата*

THE JOURNEY IN DOING SERVICE ABOVE SELF

In the Footsteps of the Heroes – A Short Travelogue from the Culminating Day of 148 Years of the Shipka Epic

The day began with the ringing of bells and a solemn requiem in the Sokolski Monastery. Among the fresh coolness of the monastery courtyards, the prayer, led by Father Ruslan, gathered Rotarians, friends, and dozens of pilgrims, who set off to walk their path in the footsteps of the volunteers. “We must be united – as 148 years ago, so today,” said the priest, and these words seemed to give the tone of the whole day. Shortly after the service, the voices of the hikers filled the paths. Three were the routes, symbolically named “Marches of Friendship and Gratitude – with Rotary in the Footsteps of the Heroes.”

The first, from the Sokolski Monastery to the peak, gathered over 80 people – among them Rotarians from Gabrovo and Sevlievo, dozens of friends, but above all the children from the “Young Mountaineer” tourist society – Petrich, who for eight years now have been coming at the invitation of Rotary Club Gabrovo together with their leader Gergana Sandakchieva.

The second march – from Uzana to the peak – gathered over 30 participants, among them the chairman of the Gabrovo Municipal Council, Kliment Kunev, with his family, friends, and the deputy chairman of the Municipal Council, Nikolay Grigorov, who led the group with patriotic charge.

The third march, from the Memorial Temple “Nativity of Christ” in the town of Shipka, gathered Rotarians, Rotaractors, and friends from the clubs in Stara Zagora, Nova Zagora, Sliven, and Kazanlak. More than 20 people climbed the steep steps to the Monument of Freedom, carrying in their hearts the living memory of the deed.



THE JOURNEY IN DOING SERVICE ABOVE SELF

In the Footsteps of the Heroes – A Short Travelogue from the Culminating Day of 148 Years of the Shipka Epic

When the hours approached noon, the peak was already filled with patriots from all over the country. The solemn part began with the acceptance of the honor guard of the 61st Stryamska Brigade by the Chairperson of the National Assembly. The high clergy held a requiem in memory of the fallen, and exactly at 12:00 the ceremony of laying wreaths and flowers began. Among them, a special place was taken by the wreaths laid on behalf of Rotary District 2482, Rotary Club Gabrovo, and Rotary Club Sevlievo – a sign that the gratitude of the Rotarians is alive and profound.

Into the strictness of the military ritual flowed the warmth of a symbolic message – a puzzle of twenty rectangles, assembled by the Rotarians, whose two sides bore the inscriptions: “148 Years Shipka Epic” and “United for Good.” This puzzle, breaking protocol for a moment, brought a smile and reminded that the power of unity is the greatest weapon – both then and now. With applause from those present, the patriotic chants of the young mountaineers were honored.

After the ceremony, the reenactment of the battles, presented by the National Society “Tradition,” came to life. In the smoke of cannons and the gunfire, under the cry “Hurrah!” the spectators seemed to be transported back in time. Vazov’s “The Volunteers at Shipka” came alive before our eyes – not as verse, but as a living picture of heroism.

The photo-documentary exhibition “The Long Road of Our National Anthem,” prepared by the Shipka-Buzludzha National Park-Museum, added yet another layer of memory to the day. The panels with documents, photographs, and musical scores told the story of “Mila Rodino” and its predecessors. Symbolically, the exhibition will continue its path – from the peak to Gabrovo – to remind that our anthem, too, is a child of struggle, memory, and unity.



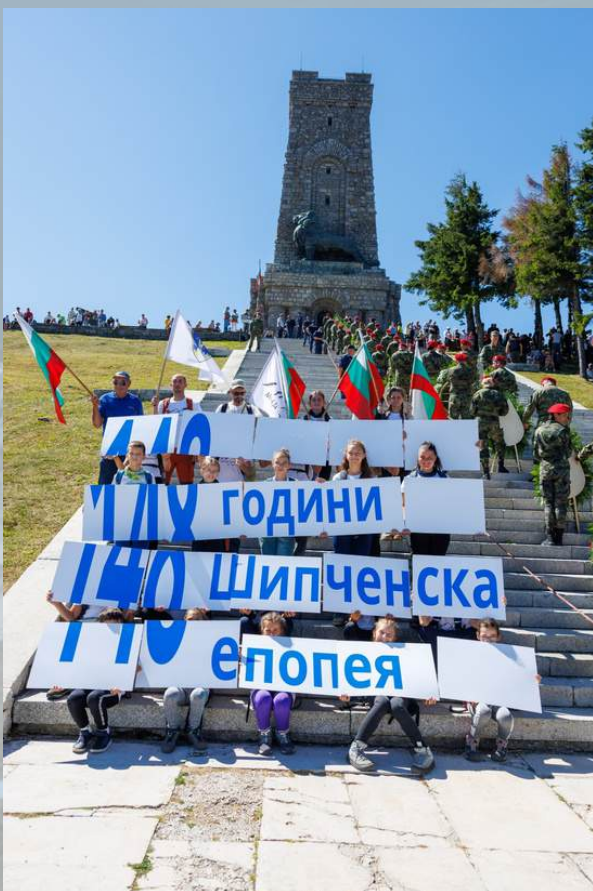
THE JOURNEY IN DOING SERVICE ABOVE SELF

In the Footsteps of the Heroes – A Short Travelogue from the Culminating Day of 148 Years of the Shipka Epic

The whole day carried within it the warmth of the late-August sun – gentle, yet filled with pathos and gratitude. The children played and smiled, the veterans of the tourist societies shared memories, and the Rotarians combined tradition with the message of the present.

The theme of the Rotary year – “United for Good,” announced by the Governor of Rotary Bulgaria, Plamen Tsvetkov from Rotary Club Ruse-Danube, seemed to come alive in full strength on this day. It became not a slogan, but a lived reality – in the steps along the trails, in the prayers on the peak, in the children who learn heroism not from books, but from the living touch of the place where history was written in blood and honor.

Thus ended the day of the 148th anniversary of the Shipka Epic – not as a museum event, but as a living travelogue of feelings, footsteps, and unity. For just as once our heroes defended freedom at the cost of their lives, so today we are obliged to guard their memory – united, strong, and grateful.



THE JOURNEY IN DOING SERVICE ABOVE SELF

5th Balkan Architectural Workshop in Kardzhali – Inspiration for the Future

From 22 to 28 September 2025, **Rotary Club Kardzhali** will host the Fifth Balkan Student Architectural Workshop, in partnership with **Momchilgrad Municipality** and **Rotary Club Momchilgrad**.

The project, launched as an initiative of the **ICC Committees of Turkey and North Macedonia**, has already been established as a platform for exchanging ideas and fostering friendship among young architects from the Balkans. This year, the workshop will bring together 12 architecture students from Bulgaria, **Turkey – Rotary Club Istanbul Şişli**, **North Macedonia – Rotary Club Skopje Kamen Most**, and for the first time, **Greece – Rotary Club Amaroussion**. Each country will also be represented by a mentor who will play a leading role in the work of the teams.

The students will be divided into three or four international teams, each developing its own concept on the assigned theme – the creation of a **Cultural Center at the Thracian Sanctuary in the village of Tatul**. Participants will enjoy complete freedom in their approach, with results presented in the form of drawings, 3D visualizations, or animations.

At the end of the workshop, the projects will be compiled on up to four A1 panels per team and presented at a special final exhibition, open to institutions, professionals, and the general public. **All project proposals will be officially handed over to Momchilgrad Municipality as a potential foundation for future real-world implementation.**

The Union of Bulgarian Architects plays a significant role in supporting the preparation of the event, while mentoring is entrusted to four architects, including the **Chief Architect of Momchilgrad Municipality, who authored the design brief for the students.**

The final evening will be marked by a formal fellowship dinner, bringing together students, their mentors, representatives of the Union of Bulgarian Architects, and Rotarians.

The Balkan Student Architectural Workshop is far more than an academic initiative – it is a meeting of cultures, ideas, and dreams. Through it, Rotary once again proves that friendship, dialogue, and cooperation are the strongest foundations upon which our common future can be built.



ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT FOR THE GOVERNOR'S CUP, BANSKO – AUGUST 9, 2025

🏌️♂️ Golf, Adventure, and Fellowship in Bansko 🏔️

At the beginning of August, tradition came alive once again with the annual Governor's Cup Golf Tournament, held at the stunning Pirin Golf & Country Club. The Saturday event was marked by precise shots, great spirits, and a truly vibrant atmosphere. The tournament concluded with an official award ceremony, hosted by District Governor Plamen Tsvetkov and the President of Rotary Club Bansko–Razlog, Dimitar Iliev.

🏆 Overall Golf Winners:

- 1st Place – Matthias Hermann & Paul Hermann
- 2nd Place – Dimitar Kondev & Kristian Aleksiev
- 3rd Place – Lyubomir Sheitanov & Vladimir Nikolov

🟦 Rotarian Golf Ranking:

- 1st Place – Sotir Nemov & Spas Nenov
- 2nd Place – Petar Radushev & Dimitar Bachvarov
- 3rd Place – Hristo Mihailovski & Radoslav Naydenov

🌲 Alongside the golf competition, Rotary Club Bansko–Razlog also organized an adventure challenge at the foot of the Pirin Mountains. Guided by maps and compasses, Rotarians from clubs across the country embarked on the quest for the “Rotarian Treasure.” It was a dynamic, exciting, and emotional experience that brought participants closer together while enjoying the beauty of nature.

The weekend proved once again the essence of Rotary spirit – fellowship, shared joy, and creating lasting memories together. 🌟



THE JOURNEY IN DOING SERVICE ABOVE SELF

RC Ćuprija Morava: Visit to the Rotary Club Budva

During the month of August, when most members are away on vacation, many clubs in the district postpone or cancel their regular weekly meetings, this has never been the case with RC ĆUPRIJA-MORAVA. Regardless of the number of attendees, our Rotarians gathered, served and socialized in the club's premises because "the wheel" must not stop! In addition, President Goran Jelacic took the opportunity to schedule an official visit to RC BUDVA with the team on vacation in Montenegro. A reception and gala dinner were held at the "Splendid" hotel on this occasion. A wonderful opportunity for people to get to know each other better and connect in their efforts to provide much more "United for good"!

PDG ALEKSANDAR RADOJICIC
DISTRICT 2483



THE JOURNEY IN DOING SERVICE ABOVE SELF

RC Šabac: Joint meeting of the clubs at the Center for Professional Development

In our Rotary club Šabac, a pleasant gathering was held with a joint meeting of the clubs from Šabac and Valjevo, with the presence of friends from the clubs from Sombor and Ruma.

The special value of the evening was given by the lecture of our honorary member, prof. Ph.D. Slobodan Marković, an expert in international public law, on the topic "What is Rotary?". Professor Marković reminded us of the values and mission of Rotary, but also of where and how Rotary clubs should go in modern society, balancing between the interests of the public, private and civil sectors. The evening was spent in true Rotarian spirit - with the exchange of ideas, friendship and inspiring conversations



THE JOURNEY IN DOING SERVICE ABOVE SELF

RC Budva: 15th Great Rotary Summer Party/National day of the Rotary of Montenegro

On Saturday, August 16, 2025, the 15th Rotary Summer Party, also the National Day of Rotary in Montenegro, was successfully held, a traditional summer gathering of Rotarians from the country and abroad. About 130 Rotarians from Montenegro, District 2483 and abroad, their friends, business associates and family members, gathered in the "Vista" restaurant this time, gathered on the occasion of a large global grant from Montenegrin clubs for the purchase of teaching materials and aids for the education of children with special educational needs. On this occasion, €11,200 was collected, which will be directed to the given goal. In addition to the host, members of RC Budva, the ceremony was attended by representatives of RC Podgorica, RC Bar, RC Kotor, RC Ulcinj-Ulqin, E-club Montenegro, RC Budva, RC Novi Sad Alma Mons, RC Belgrade Avala, RC Belgrade Kalemegdan, RC Belgrade Skadarlija, RC Belgrade Neimar, RC Belgrade Avala, RC Belgrade Čukarica, RC Zrenjanin, RC Smederevo, RC Kraljevo, RC Zenica (BiH), RC Tržič Naklo (Slovenia), RC Hvar and RC Rijeka (Croatia), RC Skadar (Albania), RC Berengaria Limasol (Cyprus) and RCT Beijing (China).

President Milijana Vukotić, as well as Veliša Stamatović, Governor of District 2483, a member of RC Budva, welcomed the gathering on behalf of the hosts, wishing the guests good fellowship and service in the spirit of Rotary. Milica Radoman, a pianist, and the "Toć" ensemble performed in the cultural and entertainment part of the program, and the guests were greeted, now traditionally, by RC Budva with a performance of the song "Za milion godina" under the leadership of Željko Vasović. In addition to personal donations, the successful evening was also contributed by the funds collected during the humanitarian lottery and the painting auction, which was donated to the Club for this noble cause by the academic painter from Budva, Jelena Papović.

Milijana Vukotić, president 2025–2026.



THE JOURNEY IN DOING SERVICE ABOVE SELF

RC Belgrade Stari Grad: "STARI BELGRADE ROTARY ADVENTURE 2025" - HUMANITY IN A GALLOP FOR CHILDREN'S SMILE

On August 16, 2025, in the natural and historical surroundings of the Zobnatica complex and the former castle of the Terlei family from the 19th century, the humanitarian event "Old Belgrade Rotary Adventure 2025" was held, which is traditionally organized by the Belgrade-Stari Grad Rotary Club.

In the spirit of friendship and humanity, this unforgettable event brought together a community dedicated to supporting those who need help the most today. The event was dedicated to collecting additional funds for the provision of daily meals for children from the "Home for Street Children" in Belgrade. The distribution of these meals is traditionally organized by the Rotary Club of Belgrade - Old Town every Rotary year on October 16, when the World Food Day is celebrated.

The event would not be possible without the support and engagement of our friendly clubs. We especially thank the Rotary Club of Zrenjanin, the Interact Club of Zrenjanin and the Rotary Club of Mihajlo Pupin, as well as the families of members of the Rotary community, for their presence and solidarity.

Thank you to everyone who, through their involvement, enables the children from the Shelter to receive what should be a basic human right, not a privilege - a warm meal and the feeling that they are not forgotten.



THE JOURNEY IN DOING SERVICE ABOVE SELF

RC Valjevo - Hanging out on the Gradac river

On the estate of the Janjić family, next to the beautiful river Gradac in Degurić near Valjevo, the members of the Valjevo Rotary Club organized an unforgettable summer get-together for club members, their families and friends.

The day began with a gathering and breakfast with local specialties such as Valje gibanica, after which the participants enjoyed a variety of activities of their choice - swimming, sunbathing, fishing, walking, games such as chess and badminton, but also horse riding and cross-country riding in the nearby equestrian club.

In the afternoon, all present gathered for a joint lunch with traditional beans with ribs, watermelons, melons and a refreshing drink chilled in the clear water of the Gradac river.

The presence of friends from E-club, RC Šabac, RC Ruma, RC Sremska Mitrovica and RC Pančevo brought special joy to the gathering, which gave an additional spirit of friendship and connection between the clubs.



THE JOURNEY IN DOING SERVICE ABOVE SELF

RC Pljevlja: 14. Balkan Rally - Gastro; Action for the Pljevlja Day Center

Rotary Club Pljevlja, Rotary Club Kaštel Split and Rotary Club Split Plus jointly implemented a humanitarian action within the 14th Balkan Rally-a-Gastro; held from August 22 to 24, 2025 in Pljevlja. During this three-day gathering of Rotarians and motorcyclists, €2,500 was collected for the Pljevlja Day Center to equip the salt room, which will enable children using the center a modern form of therapy and significantly improve their quality of life. This action has a special significance for the local community of Pljevlja, because it contributes to the health and development of children, and it is also an important step in the affirmation of the Rotary Club of Pljevlja, which, with its engagement, confirms the mission of Rotary - serving the community.

Balkan Rally – international friendship on two wheels

The Rally brought together participants from several countries, and the route covered six countries and more than 3,000 kilometers of driving: Croatia, Montenegro, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Greece and Albania. A special part of the trip was a visit to Pljevlja, where Rotarians, motorcyclists and friends from District 2483 and District 1913 together donated funds to the Day Center.

Gastronomic and cultural experiences

In addition to its humanitarian character, the Rally was also a gastronomic adventure - the participants had the opportunity to enjoy the rich and varied cuisine of the region during their journey:

- Dalmatian specialties at the start in Split,
 - traditional Montenegrin table in Pljevlje and Durmitor,
- Macedonian and Albanian specialties, especially lamb and fish, those Greek taverns at the foot of Meteora.

This combination of adventure, gastronomy and humanity made the meeting of Rotarians special, and the collected funds remain a permanent value for the community. The action once again showed the strength of the Rotary community and the spirit of "Unite for Good" - united for good, across borders, through friendship and humanity.



THE JOURNEY IN DOING SERVICE ABOVE SELF

RC Čuprija Morava: Traditional visit to Manasija monastery in Despotovac

The Days of Spiritual Transformation have become a wonderful spiritual tradition, throughout August Despotovac and its surroundings strive to mark important historical events with rich cultural and artistic content and to attract or present their spiritual heritage to the largest possible circle of people. The ČUPRIJA-MORAVA Community Center supports such noble efforts and has long introduced the practice of being present and participating in them in a certain way. During the traditional visit to Manasija, a donation for the renovation of the monastery dormitory was agreed with the elder, Archangel Pavle. A little later, a regular meeting was held at the "Excalibur" restaurant, during which a donation to those affected by the fires in southern Serbia as part of the district campaign was confirmed. Almost every meeting and outing of Rotarians from the Pomoravsk and Resavsk regions is crowned with a fitting lecture given by our oldest member, Berislav Petković Beli, on the topic of Despot Stefan Lazarević.



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