

Rotary

AUGUST 2026

MAGAZINE

Doctors
fight TB
with better
nutrition
page 14

When
lifequakes
jolt your
world
page 36

Rotary
Scholars'
48-year
friendship
page 52

**'I wanted to go
back into the
jail and help
the women.'**

Rotary members help
inmates find safety and
a new start page 26





Celebrate America's 250th anniversary with the DISH Declaration of Savings.

Get **\$250 off** and a 2-Year TV Price Guarantee.

LIMITED TIME! Offer Code: DISH250

Your Whole-Home Entertainment Solution

dish

Satellite TV
starting at

\$89.99/mo.

STARLINK

High-speed internet
starting at

\$55/mo.



Price may vary in select areas.

Call us today at **855-493-3157**
or visit your **DISH** local retailer!

Visit us online at **dish.com/rmag7**

Important Terms and Conditions: Requires credit qualification and 2-year commitment. Upfront activation and/or receiver upgrade fees may apply based on credit qualification. New and qualifying returning customers will receive \$10 off their bill for 25 months. America's Top 200 or America's Top 250 package required. Requires credit qualification, 2 year commitment with early termination fee and autopay. **Offer ends 8/12/26. Code: DISH250. 2-year commitment:** Early termination fee of \$20/mo. remaining applies if you cancel early. **Included in 2-year price guarantee at \$89.99 advertised price:** America's Top 120 programming package, local channels, and Hopper 3 Smart DVR for 1 TV. All packages, programming, features, and functionality and all prices and fees not included in price guarantee are subject to change without notice. Free standard professional installation only. Other restrictions apply. ©2026 DISH Network L.L.C. All rights reserved. Speeds are not guaranteed and based on U.S. P99 nationwide metric. This offer is valid for Residential service plans only. Service cancellation and failure to return kit rental subject to fee. Terms apply. Review the FAQs on starlink.com to learn more. Availability and price may vary based on location. All offers, plans, and prices subject to change without notice. TV and Internet billed separately. TV from DISH starting at \$89.99/mo. Internet from Starlink starting at \$55/mo.

dish



My challenge to you

Pace does not happen by accident. It must be pursued deliberately, built strategically, and woven intentionally into everything we do. That is the challenge I am placing before the Rotary world this year.

Rotary recognizes peacebuilding as one of our areas of focus. But I believe peace must be more than a category of work we set aside for certain projects. It must become a lens, one we choose to look through every time we plan, every time we serve, every time we ask what kind of impact we truly want to leave behind.

The Institute for Economics and Peace has identified eight Pillars of Positive Peace: well-functioning government, a sound business environment, equitable distribution of resources, acceptance of the rights of others, good relations with neighbors, free flow of information, high levels of human capital, and low levels of corruption. These pillars describe the conditions that make lasting peace possible. And when I look at them carefully, I see enormous potential for Rotary. Not because our work automatically advances peace but because it can when we are deliberate about it.

That is the key word: deliberate.

A water project does not build peace on its own. But a water project designed with the Pillars of Positive Peace in mind — one that asks how equitable access to resources strengthens community trust — can begin to lay that foundation. A vocational training program does not guarantee reconciliation. But one that inten-

tionally brings divided communities together around shared economic opportunity can start to build it. The project does not change. The intention does.

In Colombia, Rotary's Pathways to Peace and Prosperity program shows us what this looks like in practice. Working in communities shaped by decades of armed conflict and displacement, the program combines economic empowerment with conflict resolution training and community-led reconciliation. Peace was not a hoped-for side effect. It was central to the design. That is the standard I am calling all of us to follow.

As you plan your next project, whatever the focus area, I want you to pause and ask one question: How does this create the conditions for peace? Consult the Pillars of Positive Peace. Find where your work connects. Then, make that connection intentional. Share what you discover with your club, your district, and your community. The more we talk about peace as a practice rather than a destination, the more naturally it will shape everything we do.

This is not about doing different work. It is about doing our work differently, with greater awareness, greater purpose, and a clearer vision of the world we are trying to build. Every Rotary project carries potential. Our task is to unlock it, not by chance but by choice.

YINKA

President, Rotary International



WELCOME



Photograph by Eric Strand

YOU ARE HERE: Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, Minnesota

ADVENTURE AWAITS: As the name implies, the Boundary Waters stretches nearly 150 miles along the U.S.-Canada border. Located in far northeastern Minnesota, the Boundary Waters is home to more than 1,000 lakes linked by small trails, or portages, creating more than 1,200 miles of canoe routes visited by about 250,000 people annually. The wilderness area is home to moose, deer, black bears, beavers, otters, and the largest population of timber wolves in the lower 48 states.

PADDLE ON: Eric Strand, a member of the Rotary Club of Fergus Falls Sunrise in western Minnesota, typically visits the Boundary Waters a few times a year with his sons and another family. “Very seldomly does one make the effort to paddle in and not be forever drawn back into the wilderness,” he says. “It’s really magical.” Strand captured this photo on Kawishiwi Lake.

THE CLUBS: Minnesota is home to 148 Rotary clubs and eight Rotaract clubs, many of which are involved in clean water projects.

Rotary

MAGAZINE

August 2026

**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

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, 212-929-1300, jtobin@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 ©2026 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 ©2026 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 2026 issue, volume 205, number 2, of *Rotary*. Publication number: USPS 548-810. ISSN 2694-443X (print); ISSN 2694-4448 (online).

GENERAL OFFICERS OF ROTARY INTERNATIONAL, 2026–27

PRESIDENT

Olayinka H. Babalola
Trans Amadi, Nigeria

PRESIDENT-ELECT

Larry A. Lunsford
Kansas City-Plaza, Missouri,
USA

VICE PRESIDENT

M. “MMM” Muruganandam
Bhel City Tiruchirapalli, India

TREASURER

César Luis Scherer
Marechal Cândido
Rondon-Beira Lago, Brazil

DIRECTORS

Massimo Ballotta
Feltre, Italy

Christine Buering

Altenburg, Germany

Marshall Butler

West Jacksonville, Florida,
USA

Soffía Gísladóttir

Húsavík Nordurthing, Iceland

Thomas Anthony Gump

Edina/Morningside,
Minnesota, USA

Brian Hall

Covington, Louisiana, USA

Martha Peak Helman

Boothbay Harbor, Maine, USA

Emmanuel Katongole

Muyenga, Uganda

Jung-Hyun Lee

Hwasung Taeon, Korea

K.P. Nagesh

Bangalore Highgrounds, India

Kenichi Nakaya

Ashikaga East, Japan

Jennifer A. Scott

Greater Blue Mountains,
Australia

Takao Shinomiya

Osaka-Southwest, Japan

Wyn Spiller

Grass Valley, California, USA

Harriette Florence Verwey

Leiden-AM, Netherlands

GENERAL SECRETARY

John Hewko
Kyiv, Ukraine

TRUSTEES OF THE ROTARY FOUNDATION, 2026–27

CHAIR

Jennifer E. Jones
Windsor-Roseland, Ontario,
Canada

CHAIR-ELECT

R. Gordon R. McNally
South Queensferry, Scotland

VICE CHAIR

Vicki Puliz
Sparks, Nevada, USA

TRUSTEES

Francesco Arezzo
Ragusa, Italy

Ann-Britt Åsebol

Falun-Kopparvågen, Sweden

Cynthia W. Covington

South Jacksonville, Florida,
USA

Frank Ching-Huei Horng

Panchiao West, Taiwan

Chun-Wook Hyun

Seoul-Hansoo, Korea

Ijeoma Pearl Okoro

Port Harcourt, Nigeria

Carlos Sandoval

San Nicolás de los Garza,
Mexico

Dennis J. Shore

Hawthorn, Australia

Katsuhiko “Kats” Tatsuno

Tokyo-West, Japan

Francis F. “Tusu” Tusubira

Kampala-North, Uganda

Stephanie A. Urchick

McMurray, Pennsylvania, USA

Ananthanarayanan S.

“Venky” Venkatesh
Chennai Mambalam, India

GENERAL SECRETARY

John Hewko
Kyiv, Ukraine

Rotary 

A publication of Rotary Global Media Network

I AM RAISING FOR
**PEACE-
BUILDING
& CONFLICT
PREVENTION**



I AM RAISING FOR THE
**WORLD
FUND**



I AM RAISING FOR
**MATERNAL
AND
CHILD
HEALTH**



I AM RAISING FOR
**WATER,
SANITATION,
AND
HYGIENE**



I AM RAISING FOR
**DISEASE
PREVENTION
AND
TREATMENT**



I AM RAISING TO
**END
POLIO**



I AM RAISING FOR
**COMMUNITY
ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT**



I AM RAISING FOR
**BASIC
EDUCATION
AND
LITERACY**



I AM RAISING FOR
**DISASTER
RESPONSE**



I AM RAISING
**FOR THE
ENVIRONMENT**



RAISE FOR
ROTARY

FUNDRAISE FOR THE ROTARY FOUNDATION

Raise for Rotary is The Rotary Foundation's online peer-to-peer fundraising tool that allows you to raise money for the PolioPlus Fund, Disaster Response Fund, World Fund, or your favorite area of focus. Create a fundraiser to mark a special event or athletic challenge, then share with your social networks so others can help you do good in the world!

Start your fundraiser at
[**rotary.org/raise**](https://rotary.org/raise)

The
Rotary
Foundation



CONTENTS

On the cover: For years, Jodi Whitt cycled in and out of the Shawnee County jail in Topeka, Kansas. Now, she's helping lead a Rotary club program there to mentor female inmates.
Photography by Arin Yoon



August 2026
Vol. 205, No. 2

FEATURES

26

Beyond the wire

A Rotary club in Kansas helps women break the cycle of incarceration and elude dangers on the outside

By Emily Nonko

Photography by Arin Yoon

36

Lifequakes

Amid life's tectonic tumults, one bit of advice rises above others: Don't go it alone

By Kate Silver

Photography by Juan Diego Reyes

44

The bots you're looking for

From communication tasks to grant writing, clubs are tapping into AI tools

By Amy Hoak

Illustrations by Iván Bravo

- 1 President's message
- 2 Welcome

CONNECT

- 8 Staff corner
 - 9 Letters
 - 12 On the grid
- A puzzlemaker celebrates 20 years of crafting crosswords

OUR WORLD

- 14 Food as medicine
- TB advocates rediscover a weapon against the world's deadliest infectious disease
- 17 Intergenerational programming
- Rotary parents put a tech expert on the path to leadership
- 18 People of action around the globe
 - 20 When bigger is better
- Why Rotary's goal to grow to 1.25 million members by 2030 matters
- 22 Friends in high places
- On Kilimanjaro, a Rotarian reaches new heights of collaboration. The pickleball match was just a bonus.

OUR CLUBS

- 50 Virtual visit
- Rotary Club of Logan, Ohio
- 52 Where are they now?
- These 1978 Rotary Scholars have remained 'ambassadors of goodwill'
- 54 Dispatches from our sister magazines
 - 56 Club creation made easy
- Four steps to a vibrant new club
- 58 Trustee chair's message
 - 59 Calendar
 - 60 Programs of scale
- Rotary to scale proven water and sanitation initiative in Haiti
- 62 2027 convention | Crossword
 - 64 One of a kind
- This melon of mysterious origin has its own festival and ice cream flavor

ILLUSTRATION: BÁRBARA TAMILIN; PHOTOGRAPH: (OPPOSITE) SÉVERINE SAJOUS



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

-  rotary.org/magazine
-  rotary.org/podcast
-  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

Jor-El de Guzman

Product Manager

My father is a comic book aficionado.

He named me after his favorite character, Superman's biological father. I was born and raised in the Philippines. When I was young, my father moved to the United States. The rest of the family joined him in Chicago when I was 17.

I did not expect any language barriers at my new American high school because I spoke English well. But I quickly discovered that American English, with its slang, idioms, and pronunciation, sounded very foreign. I had to start over, learning the language and culture at the same time. Fortunately, I adapted quickly. After enrolling at Harper College, where I received an associate degree, I joined the International Students Club so I could help other young immigrants.

I worked my way through college, first at a grocery store and later at IKEA, where I helped manage logistics and inventory. IKEA invested in my future, helping pay my tuition to the University of Illinois Chicago, where I finished my last two years of college and earned my bachelor's degree.

I met my wife at Harper College. We both participated in the Harper Honors Program. She is Canadian-born, and her parents came from Hong Kong. We were married at Niagara Falls and incorporated both Chinese and Filipino traditions into our ceremony. Today, we have two children and have raised them to embrace their multicultural heritage.

After graduation, I worked for two technology companies, as data analyst and manager. Then, during my time as a stay-at-home dad during the COVID-19 pandemic, I realized that I wanted to work for an organization that creates meaningful impact.

I joined Rotary in 2022 as part of a 20-person team that supports Rotary's



Jor-El with wife Joyce, son Kal-El, and daughter Yuna.

financial systems and applications. We help ensure that critical processes, from club billing to expense reimbursement, run smoothly and reliably. When Rotary members are making a difference in their communities, I enjoy knowing that I played a small role in supporting them.

Outside of work, I am an avid gamer.

My brother and I saved money from working for our father to buy our first PlayStation. Years later, I camped outside a Circuit City store for 36 hours to purchase a PlayStation 3. Today, gaming remains a favorite way for me to stay connected with my brother, nephews, and children.

The Superman tradition continues in our family.

When my son was born, I named him Kal-El — the Kryptonian name of Superman. Meanwhile, my daughter, Yuna, is named after a character from my favorite video game, Final Fantasy X.

My native language is Tagalog. In college, I studied German and later took Japanese classes because of my love for anime. I also enjoy reading Chinese wuxia novels and Korean fantasy fiction.

— AS TOLD TO JILL JOHNSON

Letters to the editor

CHEERS TO A CHAMPION

Very impressed and proud that Rotarian Olivia Raley — a police department social worker in a small town in Kentucky [“People of Action: Champions of Tomorrow,” May] — has had such a major impact on mental health awareness among area youth. She is a true lifesaver!

Nathan M. Wise, Old Saybrook, Connecticut

BUG REPORT

The cover of *Rotary* magazine’s April issue describes Rotary members who are joining the quest to stop malaria, a disease spread to humans by the female *Anopheles* mosquito. When this mosquito is feeding, its abdomen and proboscis form a straight line, according to the *Oxford Textbook of Medicine*. These structures seem to be at right angles in the picture on the cover. This mosquito is probably a *Culex*, which does not spread human malaria.

Leslie M. Klevay, Grand Forks, North Dakota

I just saw the “Rotary in Review” email newsletter [10 April] and I would like to make an observation. The image in the email is of the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito, which transmits dengue, Zika, and chikungunya. The mosquito that transmits malaria is the *Anopheles*, which has a more uniform color.

It is not my intention to be impertinent; I simply don’t want Rotary to appear unprofessional to others.

Marcelo Artana, Buenos Aires, Argentina

Editor’s note: The mosquito pictured on the magazine cover and in the “Rotary in Review” email is in fact an Asian tiger mosquito (Aedes albopictus). However, the readers are correct that the species does not transmit malaria to humans. While we intended the image to serve only as a general representation of a mosquito, perhaps we should have been more mindful about which species we chose to show.



TIME TO TAKE ON MALARIA

I have spent a lot of time over the past 20 years working in Africa and have seen firsthand the terrible impact of malaria [the subject of “To catch a killer,” April]. With about 450,000 kids under 5 dying of malaria annually, surely it is way past time that Rotary International takes up the challenge in a manner similar to how it has supported the PolioPlus campaign for decades. Perhaps the project would be research-oriented, but surely the “prize” justifies more from Rotary than the current efforts documented in the article.

Jamie Kyles, Victoria, British Columbia

MAKE MORE MAPS

The April article “Rotary in maps” was super informative and educational. I suggest that Rotary produce a video or slideshow that would highlight these maps (and maybe a few more). Make this production available to every Rotary club around the world. It would be a great and easy way to educate not only our current membership but also our new Rotarians.

Frank Mallon, Novi, Michigan

THINK GLOBALLY

I read with interest the article about tiny homes [“Downsizing,” April] but was disappointed to see measurements only

OVERHEARD ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Our April issue included an update on Partners for a Malaria-Free Zambia, Rotary’s first Programs of Scale grantee. The three-year program trained 2,500 community health workers to treat malaria closer to people’s homes and led to the wider-scale Rotary Healthy Communities Challenge.

Training and retaining community health workers at this level shows the importance of investing in people, not just infrastructure.
Donald Daniel
► [via LinkedIn](#)

So proud of the work these Community Health Workers do. Blessed to be part of this life-changing project. #RHCC
Peter Ng’andu
► [via LinkedIn](#)

CONNECT

in U.S. units, with no equivalent metric units given. (Also missing was an interior layout of the homes.) Our magazine is for the world, not only the United States.

Gilbert Van Kerckhove, Beijing

READY FOR ACTION

I truly enjoyed President Francesco Arezzo's message about the Nigerian mother and her twins [April]. This story [in which a community health worker trained by a Rotary program helped deliver the babies at a short-staffed health center] reminds me of a quote I heard recently: When tough times come, we generally don't rise to the occasion. We fall to our level of preparation.

I'm thankful that this clinic worker was prepared to save this woman and her babies. And I'm grateful Rotary had a part in her preparation for such a moment.

Stan Adamson, Springfield, Missouri

A PATH TO PEACE

I am struck by Hiroko Tsuchiya's statement that two horrific acts of terror propelled her commitment to peace and development [Staff corner, April]. Too many people are energized by violence as an excuse to inflict more harm; it's refreshing and heartening to hear of someone energized to spread peace. Imagine this world with even just a few Hirokos in significant leadership positions around the globe.

Jennifer L. Cunningham, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania

LIVE IT UP

I was interested to read the article about the kidney patient in Canada [Rotary Canada, "Care close to home," April]. I have chronic kidney disease and cancer and am on dialysis at our local hospital. I had a stem cell transplant for multiple myeloma in 2014, having

had chemo for a year before the operation. After the transplant I had a massive heart attack and my heart stopped. The amazing staff saved me, and now I am the 2026-27 governor of District 1240.

As chair of the hospital's Renal Unit Patient Group, I arrange days out for kidney patients on dialysis and organize a Christmas party. I love the volunteering I do at the hospital and with Rotary and other organizations I belong to. Don't ever look back; always look forward to achieve what you want to give to your community. Rotary definitely gives me the will to live.

Gloria Nichols, Chelmsford, England

A RAVE FOR ROTARY

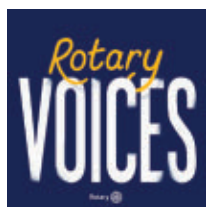
I want to express my appreciation for your magazine's exceptional breadth and the quality of its content. I have read the magazine consistently since 1997 and its growth is remarkable. Each issue brings together a wide range of topics with clarity, depth, and thoughtful curation. Thank you for producing work that informs, engages, and genuinely enriches its readers.

Pat Miller, Madison, New Jersey

ALL EARS

Rotary Voices is a high-quality podcast that I enjoy very much. My only complaint is that the episodes are too infrequent. I'd love to hear more from Rotary via the podcast.

Chuck Reynolds, Waupaca, Wisconsin



ON THE PODCAST

Rotary President Olayinka H. Babalola was the special guest on a recent episode of *Rotary Voices* hosted by Rotary's general secretary, John Hewko. Babalola discussed polio eradication in Africa, membership opportunities, and his personal journey to Rotary. Listen at rotary.org/podcast.

Audio versions
of select
stories for
improved
accessibility

Give
us
a
listen

[rotary.org/
magazine](https://rotary.org/magazine)

Meet the Beauty in the Beast

Discover this spectacular 6½-carat green treasure from Mount St. Helens!

For almost a hundred years it lay dormant. Silently building strength. At 10,000 feet high, it was truly a sleeping giant. Until May 18, 1980, when the beast awoke with violent force and revealed its greatest secret. Mount St. Helens erupted, sending up an 80,000-foot column of ash and smoke. From that chaos, something beautiful emerged... our spectacular *Helenite Necklace*.

**EXCLUSIVE
FREE**

**Helenite Earrings
-a \$99 value-
with purchase of
Helenite Necklace**



Helenite is produced from the heated volcanic rock of Mount St. Helens and the brilliant green creation has captured the eye of jewelry designers worldwide. Today you can wear this massive 6½-carat stunner for *only \$99!*

Make your emeralds jealous. Our *Helenite Necklace* puts the green stone center stage, with a faceted pear-cut in a luxurious gold-finished setting. The explosive origins of the stone are echoed in the flashes of light that radiate as the piece swings gracefully from its 18" luxurious gold-finished chain. Today the volcano sits quiet, but this unique piece of American natural history continues to erupt with gorgeous green fire.

Your satisfaction is guaranteed. Bring home the *Helenite Necklace* and see for yourself. If you are not completely blown away by the rare beauty of this exceptional stone, simply return the necklace within 30 days for a full refund of your purchase price.

JEWELRY SPECS:

- 6 ½ ctw Helenite in gold-finished setting
- 18" gold-finished chain

Limited to the first 600 orders from this ad only

Helenite Necklace (6 ½ ctw)..... Only \$99 +S&P

Helenite Stud Earrings (1 ctw) \$99 +S&P

Helenite Set ~~\$198~~ Call-in price only \$99 +S&P
(Set includes necklace and earrings)

Call now to take advantage of this extremely limited offer.

1-800-333-2045

Promotional Code HNN263-07

Please mention this code when you call.



Rating of A+

Stauer® 14091 Southcross Drive W., Dept. HNN263-07
Burnsville, Minnesota 55337 www.stauer.com



Necklace enlarged to show luxurious color.

"My wife received more compliments on this stone on the first day she wore it than any other piece of jewelry I've ever given her."

- J. from Orlando, FL
Stauer Client

Stauer... *Afford the Extraordinary.®*



THE SPECIALIST

On the grid

A puzzlemaker celebrates 20 years of crafting crosswords for this and other magazines

When I was 12, my mother encouraged me to learn how to solve crossword puzzles in the newspaper. I was really interested in words and wordplay.

In law school in 1977, I created a crossword that got published in the Arkansas bar association's quarterly magazine. But the task was so time-consuming, I decided to put it aside until personal computers and the internet could be invented.

In 2003 I read an interview with crossword constructor Merl Reagle in Delta's in-flight magazine. The way he talked about what he got out of doing crosswords and how he went about it was very intriguing to me. I thought, now's the time to do it. Since then, I've published about 1,500 puzzles in venues like the *New York Times*, *Arkansas Living* magazine, and Simon & Schuster puzzle books.

Victor Fleming
Rotary Club
of Little Rock,
Arkansas

Crossword
puzzle
constructor

Constructing a crossword puzzle is a four-step process: theme development, grid construction, filling the grid, and writing the clues. You've got to do them in order. To develop a theme, you might see an ad or a road sign that gives you an idea for a clever phrase, and then you think up two other clever phrases. Sometimes that's enough, though usually you need to do research. Writing clues is always fun, but if done correctly, it's the most time-consuming part. I wouldn't send a puzzle to the *Times* if I hadn't spent at least two hours just on the clues.

At the 2005 American Crossword Puzzle Tournament, I performed a crossword-related song I wrote. Some people shooting a documentary there saw me toting my guitar around and asked to record my rehearsal. That's what you see in the movie *Wordplay*. Before its release, somebody notified Rotary that I was in the film. The magazine ran an article about me in July 2006, and I made a crossword to go with it. After that, I was asked to do it monthly.

Every day, we all engage in problem-solving, and we come up with imperfect solutions. Sometimes they'll only hold until tomorrow, or maybe the rest of the week. But with a crossword puzzle, if you get it all right, that's the one thing you'll do perfectly that day. And it's good to have that one little bit of perfection. ■



Your Club has the power to feed your neighbors this year.

As you plan your Rotary year, a Meals of Hope meal packing event belongs on the calendar.



Your members want to do something that matters in their own community. Meals of Hope meal packing events make that possible **in two hours.**

Food stays local,
every meal feeds
a family in your
own community

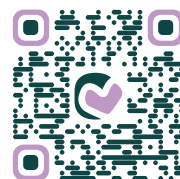
Lowest price
meal packing
events in the
market

Events scale
from 25 to
4,000+
volunteers

Builds member
engagement and
strengthens
retention

Draws new members in through shared purpose.

PLAN your event @ [MEALSOFHOP.ORG](https://mealsofhope.org)



17
Parental
guidance

20
1.25 million
members by
2030

22
On the
mountaintop

FIGHTING DISEASE

Food as medicine

Rediscovering a weapon against the deadliest infectious disease, TB advocates look to better nutrition

At a clinic in the city of Coimbatore in southern India on a recent afternoon, a 29-year-old man with tuberculosis comes in for his medication and receives something extra: a small white tub of powder. It's a nutritional protein supplement, one that's vitally important, as malnutrition is closely linked to the lung disease. The man is severely underweight at just 38 kilograms (84 pounds) with a dangerously low body mass index. A clinic worker snaps his photo, jots down his information to help with real-time treatment monitoring, and sends him on his way with instructions to return in two weeks.

The man is among hundreds of patients receiving the nutritional supplement with their TB medications thanks to a project led by the Rotary Club of Coimbatore New Town and supported by a Rotary Foundation global grant. Local health officials first approached the club in 2024 asking for help with their severely undernourished TB patients, amid a renewed appreciation globally of the link between the disease and nutrition. "At that time, many patients were suffering from severe weight loss, weakness, low immunity, and difficulty continuing TB medication due to a lack of proper nutrition," says Pakshirajan Durai Murugan, the club's charter president and project lead.

Even before it sought grant funding, the club was able to raise about \$4,000 to launch an immediate pilot intervention. They recruited around 200 highly vulnerable TB

patients with low BMIs and provided them with the supplement for three to four months. The twice-daily supplement, which makes a slightly sweet drink when mixed with water or milk, gives patients an additional 25-30 grams of protein per day. Many patients gained about 1 to 2 kilograms (2 to 4 pounds) in the program. "Even a small weight gain is encouraging in TB recovery, because many patients normally continue losing weight during illness," says Durai Murugan.

Tuberculosis is the world's deadliest infectious disease. In 2024, nearly 11 million people were infected and more than 1.2 million died. The *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* bacteria mostly infects the lungs and spreads through coughing, sneezing, talking, or even laughing. Once cast into the air, the bacteria can linger there for hours. This puts other members of a household at very high risk of infection. As a result, around 1 in 4 people in the world have been infected, though only 5 to 10 percent of them develop active, symptomatic disease. For the rest, their immune systems are able to keep it under control. That is, until something weakens those defenses, such as an HIV infection, diabetes, age — or malnutrition.

Undernutrition is a leading risk factor for TB, and it's responsible for about 1 million new cases per year, according to some estimates. Half the people with TB in India have a BMI below the 18.5 threshold considered healthy for an adult, and about a quarter are below 16, notes Pranay Sinha, an assistant profes-

Learn more and
get involved at
rotary.org/our-causes.



Above: Health workers and youth cadets participate in a rally on World TB Day in Assam, India, in March. **Right:** An artist paints a mural on a wall of the District Tuberculosis Hospital in Kochi, India, to raise awareness of the disease.

sor at Boston University's School of Medicine and an infectious disease physician at Boston Medical Center. He calls the figure "appalling."

For most people exposed to the bacteria, their immune system catches the germs in the lungs and traps them in a cluster of cells called a granuloma. But a lack of food robs the body of the energy and nutrients needed to maintain this defense, letting the bacteria break the blockade and spread through the body.

The problem compounds itself. During an infection, the immune system releases proteins called cytokines to fight the invader, but these chemical messengers can also break down muscle tissue and suppress the body's response to hunger signals. The result is a massive energy gap where the body needs more food than normal while the individual eats even less. "In India, we come across people with TB who have BMIs of 10, 11, and 12, which I did not know was compatible with life," says Sinha, an expert on the role nutrition plays in TB outcomes. "It's unbelievable."

This focus on nutrition isn't a



new approach. Wealthy countries saw spectacular cuts to TB rates before effective medicines were introduced in the 1950s thanks to public health measures that included better nutrition. But the adoption of lifesaving medications pushed nutrition to the margins, explains Sinha. "We've built TB elimination around diagnostics and prescriptions — precise, scalable, the same X-ray, pill, or vaccine in New York as in New Delhi," he says.

"Food is messier, more per-

sonal, harder to standardize. And we've treated that messiness as a weakness. But empirically? Food is a more effective TB intervention than any available vaccine. We've been underutilizing it."

The only vaccine currently available is more than 100 years old, and for four decades no new medications reached patients. That's starting to change with promising vaccines in clinical trials and three new compounds approved in the last 14 years.

Meanwhile, food and nutrition are in the spotlight again. Last year, the World Health Organization released guidelines for the first time calling for nutritional support to all undernourished TB patients, as well as food assistance to prevent TB in household contacts in places of food insecurity. That recommendation was driven by a landmark 2023 study that was the first randomized trial to show that giving food and supplements to household contacts cut their risk of contracting TB by almost half in the following two years.

India has also invested in nutrition. Since 2018, all TB patients receive a cash transfer each month to pay for food. The positive response from both patients and government TB officials to the Coimbatore Rotary club's 2024 pilot encouraged members to scale up the program. They secured a \$35,000 global grant, which is currently providing supplements to 950 patients for the duration of their treatment, and that number is expected to expand to a total of around 1,500 patients until mid-2027.

Since widening the rollout of these supplements to TB patients of any weight, the district has seen mortality rates drop from 7 percent to 4 percent. This is due in part to recent improvements in diagnosis, treatment, and monitoring. But it's also because patients are far more likely to return for their medication now that they're receiving the nutritional powder, says Dr. Murugaiyan Sakthivel, deputy director of TB medical services in Coimbatore district.

One reason that's true is that improved nutrition can make it easier to tolerate medications. Dr. Zolelwa Sifumba knows this firsthand. She contracted multidrug-resistant TB at age 22 as a medical student in



Top: Pranay Sinha, a Boston University expert on the role nutrition plays in TB outcomes, at work in the field. **Bottom:** Members of the Rotary Club of Coimbatore New Town display the nutritional supplement.

Cape Town, South Africa. Instead of taking the usual two to five tablets per day, Sifumba had to take 21. "When you haven't had anything to eat, the side effects just feel a lot more pronounced," she says. "So I'm immediately nauseous, meaning it's even harder to keep pills down."

Sifumba moved home, where her mother cooked proper, nutritious meals. That made a big difference to Sifumba's recovery, and the experience left her passionate about TB prevention, tackling stigma, and supporting patients. Today, Sifumba is a clinician, researcher,

and activist for better TB care.

The Rotary Foundation has awarded more than \$2.7 million in dozens of global grants for TB prevention and care around the world since 2013. Such support is especially important as governments cut aid programs. While acknowledging the challenges, Boston University's Dr. Sinha is optimistic overall, pointing to India's success. "I see progress," he says. "That's the joy of being in this field at this time. I really do see minds changing."

— RUBY PROSSER SCULLY

BY THE NUMBERS

11
MILLION

People infected by TB annually

\$2.7
MILLION+

TB global grants since 2013

-3
PERCENTAGE POINTS

Drop in mortality rate in targeted district of India

Short takes

In April, simultaneous polio vaccination campaigns in Afghanistan and Pakistan reached more than 57 million children.



As part of the Environmental Xperience event in Dallas in April, Rotary members organized an environmental sustainability conference that showcased projects from around the world.



PROFILE

Intergenerational programming

Rotary parents put a tech expert on the path to leadership

Yassine Harzallah
Rotary Club
of Ruspina
Monastir, Tunisia

As a child, Yassine Harzallah regularly accompanied his parents on service activities: His father was a two-time president of the Rotary Club of Monastir; his mother was a president of the associated Inner Wheel club. “I often say that I have been a Rotarian since the age of 1,” he says.

Harzallah, now 32, followed their example. He assembled 15 high school students to start an Interact club, served as president of a Rotaract club, and co-founded the Rotary Club of Ruspina Monastir, chartered in 2025. “The most beautiful thing about Rotary is that it connects generations — those who built the path and those who continue walking it,” Harzallah says.

A computer science engineer, Harzallah focuses on artificial intelligence. The confidence he gained in Rotaract spurred him to apply for the Next Einstein Forum, which supports young scientists from Africa. He was selected as Tunisia’s 2016 representative.

Then, Harzallah pitched an AI-based global health concept to United Nations leaders. That presentation garnered the attention of the Obama Foundation, which chose him for its Leaders Africa program in 2018. The program included a confab attended by top African business and political leaders as well as the former U.S. president.

“When [Barack Obama] spoke with me, he immediately asked about Tunisia and the progress of my initiatives,” Harzallah recalls. “That moment reinforced something I have believed since my first experiences with Rotary: Real change often begins with individuals who decide to serve their communities.” — BRAD WEBBER

Southern Star Rotex, an organization of District 9640 (Australia) Rotary Youth Exchange alumni, won the 2025-26 Alumni Association of the Year Award.

Look back at Rotary’s 2025-26 achievements in General Secretary John Hewko’s Report to Convention at rotary.org/conventionreport.

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.

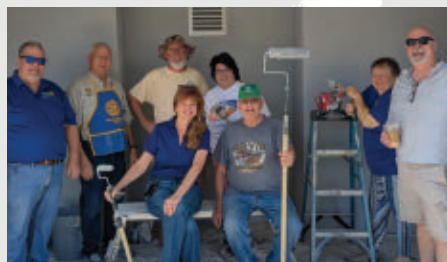
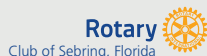


People of action around the globe

By Brad Webber

United States

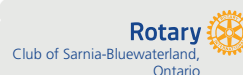
After a popular home improvement show turned its cameras on Sebring, the small city in south central Florida saw an influx of tourists seeking to experience the bucolic charms depicted in HGTV's *Home Town Takeover* program. There was just one problem: The area lacked a loo for the lookie-loos. In April, the Rotary Club of Sebring opened a public restroom off the town circle after a monthslong construction project. "Having safe, functional restrooms with climate control, changing stations, and disabled accessibility seemed like a no-brainer," says club member Debra Weiser. Club members offered pro bono professional services for engineering, construction, air conditioning, and other electrical work; another painted the structure at a discount, and Rotarian city officials sped permit approvals and fee waivers.



8
Public restrooms per 100,000 people in the U.S.

Canada

The annual used book sale of the Rotary Club of Sarnia-Bluewaterland in Ontario has been a fixture for more than 25 years. "We all realized we were in this because we loved books, we wanted to encourage others in the community to access great books at a reasonable price, and, yes, it was a wonderful way to generate funds to support local nonprofits," says coordinator Dale Wilcox. In January, the sale raised more than US\$42,000, with leftover books being distributed to several organizations and groups, including a Canadian Armed Forces unit stationed in Latvia. "Troops are already digging into the massive collection and finding a good book to keep at their bedside or take into the field," Lt. Col. Colleen Grebstad reported in a letter to the club.

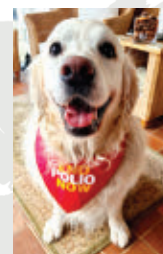
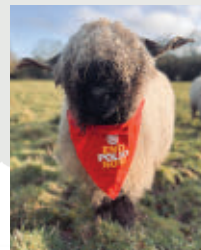
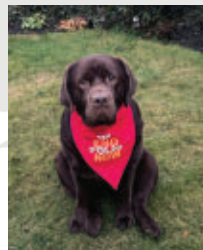


10,000+
Books published annually by Canadian companies

United Kingdom

When members of the Rotary Club of Borderlands (Passport Group) heard about the PolioPlus Society Kennel Klub, they excitedly enrolled their furry friends. An extension of the district-led PolioPlus Society, the Kennel Klub allows pets (well, their owners) to pledge at least \$100 per year to PolioPlus and, in return, receive a pet-purrfect red End Polio Now bandana. “The Kennel Klub welcomes animals of any kind,” says Borderlands club member Beth Thomson, “and whilst ours are mainly dogs, there is a pet sheep (a Swiss Valais Blacknose) in there too!” The club, chartered in 2023, has 100 percent PolioPlus Society membership, donating about \$5,500 per year to the cause. While the club hasn’t brought the pets to its breakfast meetings — “I suspect it would be a recipe for chaos,” Thomson says — it did persuade Past RI President Gordon McNally (whose wife, Heather, was the club’s 2025-26 president) to sit for a photo shoot with Kennel Klub idols Mabel, Angus, Applepip, Tess, Todd, Cora, and Fleet.

Rotary
Club of Borderlands
(Passport Group)



58%

People
in the UK
who buy
their **pets**
birthday
gifts



Thailand

Golf ball drops using cranes or drones might be ubiquitous, but the Rotary Club of Chiang Mai International, in a lush, hilly northern province of Thailand, takes it to new heights. In the sixth edition of its charity ball drop on 31 January, the club hoisted a tethered hot-air balloon to launch 300 labeled golf balls onto a green. Balls landing nearest, or in, the hole garnered gift vouchers. This year’s event netted about \$4,000 for the club’s projects for children. While the drop is only a minor fundraiser for the club in terms of receipts, “the event attracts a lot of attention in our community and worldwide and is a good contact point for new donors and new members,” says club member John Schorr.

Rotary
Club of Chiang Mai
International

1.2 billion

Golf balls sold worldwide
each year

GOODWILL

When bigger is better

Rotary's goal is to grow membership to 1.25 million members by 2030. Why does that matter?

By Tom Gump

In October 2023, the Rotary International Board of Directors did something it had never done before. It set a numerical membership goal. It's a bold vision: to grow Rotary to 1.25 million members by 1 July 2030, in celebration of the organization's 125th anniversary.

At first glance, the number feels ambitious. But when broken down, it becomes both practical and achievable. Reaching that goal requires net growth of approximately 25,000 members per year — about 2 percent annual growth over the next five years. This is not exponential expansion. It is steady, intentional growth.

Not every Rotarian — and certainly not every prospective member — fully understands the urgency of growth. Yet the reasons are compelling. Robust membership leads to stronger service, increased giving, and a story more likely to entice others to join.

Growth brings new energy, diverse perspectives, and expanded capacity. New members introduce skills, ideas, and leadership potential. They enable clubs to take on larger projects and create greater impact. Each new member strengthens not just the club but the entire Rotary network.

For many clubs, a goal of 2 percent annual growth is both realistic and necessary. Others that are already growing may sustain higher rates. What matters most is that growth is approached intentionally — through goal setting, planning, and ongoing evaluation.

No single formula will work for every club. Each community is different, and each club must find its own path. What follows are a few ideas to help your club get started. But one truth applies everywhere: Hope alone is not a strategy.

1 Growth is a team effort

The most successful clubs understand that growth is not the responsibility of one person. It requires a team — often a dedicated membership committee — focused on both attracting new members and strengthening the experience of those already in the club.

Beyond the club, leaders can draw on a wide network of support, including district teams, regional coordinators, and Rotary staff. Tools such as club health checks and member satisfaction surveys provide valuable insights, but their effectiveness depends on how they are used.

Lasting growth happens when clubs and leaders work together, aligned around a shared goal and supported by shared resources.

2 A new approach to welcoming members

Each year, more than 30,000 people express interest in joining Rotary. Many are younger professionals, and a growing percentage are women — audiences Rotary is eager to engage. Yet historically, only about 10 percent of these inquiries result in membership.

To address this gap, Rotary has introduced a new prospective member system in partnership with Salesforce, a cloud-based customer relationship management platform. The system takes a “club-first” approach, helping individuals find clubs that align with their interests and expectations. It also uses automated communication to keep prospective members engaged while they explore Rotary.

This shift represents more than a technological upgrade. It reflects a deeper commitment to creating a welcoming and responsive experience — one that reflects the values Rotary seeks to embody.

3 Recognizing and reinforcing growth

An often-overlooked element of membership growth is recognition.

Rotary has long celebrated generosity, particularly through its Foundation. But growth deserves recognition as well. When members invite others to join, they are directly contributing to the organization's future.

Acknowledging those efforts — through personal recognition, letters, or programs that celebrate sponsorship — reinforces a powerful principle: What gets recognized, gets repeated.

4 The club experience defines everything

People remain in Rotary because of how it makes them feel — connected, valued, and inspired. Every club develops its own culture through its leadership, relationships, and traditions. That culture shapes the experience for every member and guest who walks through the door.

Clubs that succeed in growing and retaining members tend to be intentional about that experience. Their meetings are engaging and worthwhile. Their service is meaningful. They create opportunities for genuine connection and belonging. And they foster trust in leadership.

Leadership at the club level is especially critical. The tone set by a club president often determines whether members feel energized or disengaged. In many ways, the future of Rotary is shaped in these everyday moments — through the quality of conversations, the strength of relationships, and the sense of purpose members feel. ■

RI Director Tom Gump was 2025-26 chair of Rotary's Membership Growth Committee.

Find resources to help you through your club's membership journey at rotary.org/membership.

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

Friends in high places

On Kilimanjaro, an expectant father reaches the heights of Rotary collaboration.
The pickleball match was just a bonus.

By Jeff Weier



It's a little before midnight and someone is shaking me awake as if my tent were on fire. It is not. It is, however, approximately the temperature of a meat locker. On Neptune.

It's a very early beginning to what will be our sixth and longest day scaling Mount Kilimanjaro. Since we began our climb — on 4 August 2025, at 7,760 feet on the mountain's southeastern slope in Tanzania — we have hiked about 19 miles, in the process climbing nearly another mile and a half above sea level. This is, literally, rarefied air.

Reluctantly, I climb out of my sleeping bag. I pull on every item of clothing I brought with me, including a few things I had forgotten I packed. I am still cold.

We set off for Uhuru Peak, the mountain's summit, at a slow pace. It would be overly generous to call what we are doing "hiking." A more precise term would be "controlled vertical shuffling while questioning every life choice."

Our guide keeps repeating "*pole pole*"; pronounced *po-lay po-lay*, it means "slowly slowly" in Swahili. He says the phrase so many times it becomes the rhythm of my heartbeat pounding in my ears like a subwoofer at a nightclub I desperately want to leave.

We approach Gilman's Point — the lowest of Kili's official summit points — at sunrise, though the sun doesn't so much rise as erupt. At an altitude of more than 18,000 feet, the colors are intense. The glaciers to our left catch the light first, shifting from black to gold to blazing white in minutes. Below, a sea of clouds stretches to the horizon, where deep purple bruises into orange, orange mushrooms into red-gold, and gold smears into pink.

The outline of Mawenzi, Kilimanjaro's jagged neighbor, cuts across the sky like a dark saw blade. For a moment, the world turns inside out. I can feel the collective realization among my fellow climbers: Oh, this is why people do this. For this absurd, impossible view over the world.

IF YOU HAD ASKED ME a few weeks earlier why people climb Kilimanjaro, I could have come up with all sorts of reasons: personal challenge, spiritual clarity, Instagram clout, losing a bet at a Rotary meeting. I traveled there for all of

those reasons, plus one more: to participate in one of the highest environmental and medical research collaborations. The opportunity to establish a staggeringly awesome pickleball record was only icing on the cake.

My companions on the climb were an impressive bunch: world-class scientists, entrepreneurs and explorers, a NASA veteran, and representatives from the United Nations and UNESCO. There were also young people from Kenya, Tanzania, and New York City.

And then there was me, a health care professional, expectant father, and Rotarian. As we began our climb, I was a month into my term as president of the Rotary Club of Whitehall-Bexley. Based in Columbus, Ohio, our club, as well as our district (6990), had a special stake in the climb. With money from our club and a matching district grant — and an assist from NBR Cares and Pulse at the Peak — we had purchased three handheld ultrasound scanners that would see service on the mountain and later find a permanent and welcome home at nearby Marangu Lutheran Hospital.

The day before we began our climb, several of us visited the hospital, which has 80 beds and serves a population of 400,000 people. Dr. Goodluck Malle, the hospital's chief medical officer, showed us a small room with a single ultrasound machine. "This is where your scanners will live," he said. "They are small, but they would make a big difference." He explained that the devices will help the hospital expand its imaging capabilities, not only for obstetrics but for cardiac scans, trauma assessments, and field diagnostics in nearby villages.

One of my companions, Dr. Michael Grinn, unpacked a scanner and con-

nected it to his phone. The screen bloomed to life, showing the ghostly white lines of someone's heartbeat. The local clinicians leaned in, murmuring approval in Swahili. Within minutes they were making their own scans. "You see," said Dr. Malle, "we will keep it busy."

Outside, a free health clinic was underway, a collaboration between the hospital and local Rotary clubs (Dr. Malle is the president of the Rotary Club of Marangu). For many in the long line of waiting patients, this would be their only medical consultation all year.

As we watched this slow choreography of compassion, one of the porters who would assist our climb asked to try the ultrasound. We scanned his chest, showing him his heartbeat. "So that is me," he said softly. "I am alive inside."

IN 2003, WHILE ON ASSIGNMENT in Nairobi for the United Nations Federal Credit Union, Tim Challen was shot in the leg during a robbery. Hoping to ameliorate some of the societal conditions that may have led to the robbery, Challen created the Kilimanjaro Initiative. The organization uses high-altitude climbs, a boxing club, and other programs to help young people develop into, as its website puts it, "agents of positive change." Today, the Kilimanjaro Initiative is run by graduates of those programs.

An honorary member of the Marangu Rotary club, Challen is among the 39 climbers participating in what is the 20th Kilimanjaro ascent sponsored by his organization. As always on these climbs, he is joined by a handful of young people from different parts of the world. They include Sheila, a young woman from Nairobi's impoverished Kibera neighborhood. She joined the organization's Trinity Boxing Club and rose through the ranks to earn a spot on Kenya's national boxing team. "I am a champion not just in the ring but in life," Sheila proudly asserts.

Another climber is Dennis Lundoe Nielsen, the CEO of a design and communication agency in Denmark. This is Nielsen's sixth Kili climb. His PDAid Foundation partnered with the Kilimanjaro Initiative to establish a recently opened youth center on 10 acres outside of Mount Kilimanjaro National Park.

Our climb coincides with the UN's International Year of Glaciers' Preservation. Led by Daniel McGinnis, an environmen-

At this altitude, the
colors are intense.
The glaciers catch
the light first,
shifting from black
to gold to blazing
white in minutes.

OUR WORLD

tal scientist at the University of Geneva, and Alfred Said, a hydrologist at Tanzania's University of Dodoma, we conduct tests that will help ensure the health of the so-called Kilimanjaro water tower, the natural reservoir of glaciers supplying water over a network that extends for hundreds of miles. I even collect water samples for the Byrd Polar and Climate Research Center at Ohio State University.

We're also joined by the Norwegian explorer Borge Ousland, whose IceLegacy project is dedicated to protecting the polar regions. Dr. Grinn, the co-founder of Pulse at the Peak who earlier demonstrated the ultrasound scanner at Marangu Lutheran Hospital, conducts high-altitude physiological studies. Each evening, when I am too tired to take another step, the doctors and scientists use the scanners and other devices to collect "data" from us, turning a perfectly good mountain into a medical experiment.

I am blessed to be among these people. It's one of the advantages of being a Rotarian: the opportunity to work alongside skilled, like-minded individuals to improve ourselves, our communities, and our world.

Two days before we began the climb, I made an online call back to my fellow club members in Ohio. We joked for a few minutes, and I turned my screen so they could see Kilimanjaro looming in the background.

And then I reminded everyone about all the good that the equipment our club had purchased would do on the mountain and in the hospital. I saw the faces of my friends back home shift from amusement to pride, that quiet kind of Rotary pride that comes when aspirations are transformed into action.

REACHING UHURU PEAK — the roof of Africa — was somewhat anticlimactic. Or, more accurately, it was *ante*climactic. Too exhausted to truly appreciate what we had accomplished, that realization, and the celebration, would come only after we had descended Kilimanjaro and found the time to ponder everything that had happened.

That's OK. I'd already had some rewards that I enjoyed in the moment. The day before, six hours prior to beginning our death march to the summit — an inescapable nightmare of "step-breathe-doubt-repeat" — we had improvised a net,

outlined a court, and, at 14,530 feet, played what I suspect was the highest pickleball match ever. (The jury's still out.)

The game, if you can call it that, was more like a piece of performance art about the futility of human ambition. The final score might have been 11-4; it might have been purple-sandwich. "Who won?" someone asked, and my partner and I replied simultaneously, "Altitude."

"But," I added, "we got second place."

As for transcendent mountaintop moments, my own personal breakthrough had arrived the morning of our "hike" to the summit as we watched the sunrise at Mawenzi Tarn — "tarn" being a Scottish word for "lake that's given up on life and is just going through the motions." It didn't help that this was our last source of water before we made the final push to the summit.

But I wasn't thinking about any of that as we stood beneath Mawenzi Peak and I watched the rising sun illuminate the

glacier line. Instead, I found myself thinking about time, about change, about how even mountains are temporary, and about glaciers disappearing faster than we can measure them. And about a daughter who would inherit whatever world remained.

During our ascent, I thought about my unborn daughter so often that she started to feel like a climbing partner I hadn't met yet. And I thought that maybe one day I could confidently tell her that her father had helped save a glacier — or at least measured it.

And if one day my daughter asks me why I climbed Kilimanjaro while she was still gestating inside her mother, at least I will be able to say: "Sweetheart, it was for science, for climate, for global collaboration. And also because Daddy is not smart enough to say no to cool ideas." ■

Jeff Weier was the 2025-26 president of the Rotary Club of Whitehall-Bexley in Ohio. His daughter was born in February.



During their ascent of Mount Kilimanjaro, climbers provided or helped collect medical and environmental data. At the summit, Jeff Weier (bottom right) celebrates his personal achievement and his club's and district's contributions to the climb and to the long-term health of the region's residents.



GAMBACORTA
— LAW —



IMMIGRATION LAW WITH A PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE

*Trusted guidance for families and
employers navigating the U.S. immigration system*

**CONSULAR PROCESSING & VISA INTERVIEWS
OVERCOMING VISA DENIALS & 221(g) HOLDS
WAIVERS OF INADMISSIBILITY (I-601, I-212, 212(d)(3))
FAMILY & EMPLOYMENT IMMIGRATION FROM ABROAD
GREEN CARDS & NATURALIZATION
US & VIETNAM OFFICES**

*"Our team is fluent in
English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Tagalog, and Thai."*

SCHEDULE YOUR CONSULTATION TODAY.

ZOOM CONSULTS ARE FREE.



ILLINOIS OFFICE

5250 Old Orchard Road,
Suite 300, Skokie, IL 60077
847-752-5782

TEXAS OFFICE

10777 Westheimer Road,
Suite 1100, Houston, TX 77042
281-674-7658

ARIZONA OFFICE

2266 S. Dobson Road,
Suite 200, Mesa, AZ 85202
602-759-7480

VIETNAM OFFICE

33 Le Duan Street, District 1,
Ho Chi Minh City
gambacortlaw.com



Rotary

+



WhatsApp



Follow Rotary International's
new WhatsApp channel!
Find us in Channels or
Updates in the app.



TRAVEL
WITH

TravelwithSusanG.com

207-852-8595

Treat yourself to a
life-changing experience.
Ask to travel with
other Rotarians.



NGO BOOKS

**BOOKKEEPING
SERVICES**

Helping club treasurers
maintain accurate books

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

ngobooks.org
720-486-5543
sales@ngobooks.org

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



Beyond the wire

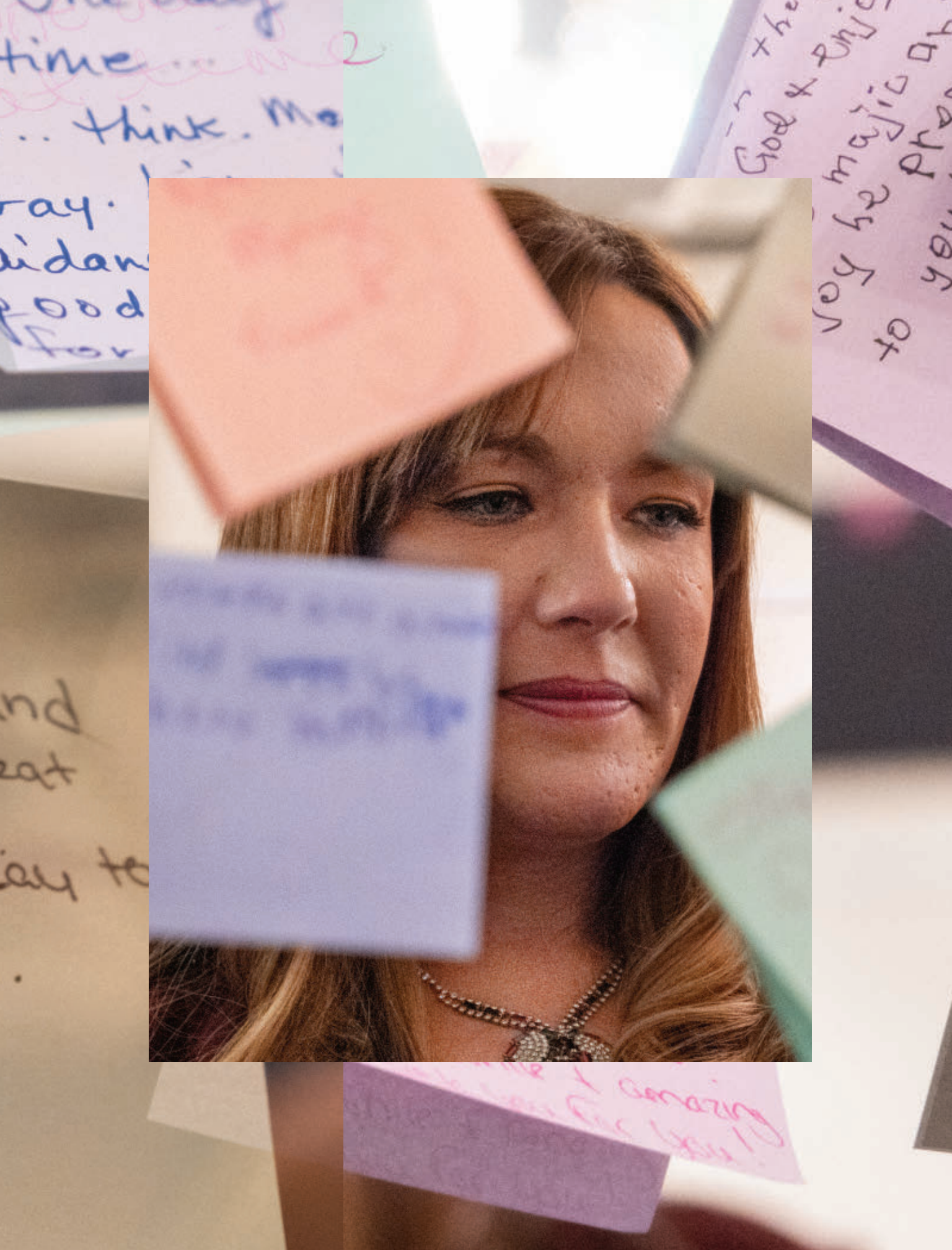
A Rotary club
in Kansas helps
women break
the cycle of
incarceration
and elude
dangers on the
outside

By
Emily Nonko

Photography by
Arin Yoon

You are so
beautiful a
Capable of gr
thing, its odd
ask for help





time... think. Mo

pray.
aidan
food
for

nd
eat
ay to

God & this
vey he magic of
to you

Amazing & amazing
I love you
Love

Amazing & amazing
I love you
Love

Up until
a few
years ago,

Jodi Whitt's trips to the Shawnee County jail in Topeka, Kansas, began with an arrest and an anxious wait in a bare intake cell for up to 72 hours. Her incarcerations lasted 30 days or so, until an abrupt release without resources or support — nothing but the clothes on her back. She'd fall back into her addiction, return to the jail, repeat the cycle. "I spent years in and out of the jail — it wasn't like I had one stay here," she says. "I had a revolving door of incarceration for over 20 years."

Things began to change in 2019. She got sober, committed to treatment, and pushed herself to try new things, like enrolling in a University of Kansas technology education program designed for formerly incarcerated women. A few years later, she made a decision that would change her life — and the lives of so many other women. "I wanted to go back into the jail and help the women, because that's where I needed the help," she says. "That's where I needed the intervention."

Little did Whitt know where that sentiment would lead her. A local Rotary club formed in 2021 to combat human trafficking, and its members asked her to join their mentorship program to help women transition to life outside of jail. As Whitt's involvement grew, the club established itself as a key reentry service provider in Shawnee County, fundamentally interrupting the cycle of incarceration for many women there.

Now, most mornings Jodi Whitt starts her day by doing her hair and makeup, feeding her cat, and then driving to the jail, where her desk is decorated with affirmational quotes, a ceramic white unicorn, and a small, blue-fringed *Magic of Rotary* banner. Surrounded by office supplies and resource handbooks waiting to be delivered, she opens her laptop and begins a new day — not as an incarcerated woman but as someone who helps and supports them.

Perched on a swivel chair, Whitt takes it all in from the comfort of her cozy office. "Sometimes I don't believe it's true," she says. "Sometimes I can't believe this is my life now."

PATTI MELLARD IS A LONGTIME TOPEKAN with an infectious Midwestern supermom energy. The Rotary Club of Community Action Against Human Trafficking is her passion project, formed to fight this widespread scourge through prevention education, survivor assistance, and advocacy. Topeka Mayor Spencer Duncan aptly describes Mellard as "stubborn in the right way, doesn't take no for an answer, doesn't let things get her down."

Human trafficking is the term used when an individual or group uses force, fraud, or coercion to compel another person into some kind of labor, which can include the commercial sex trade. There are misconceptions that it doesn't take place in the United States or that foreign-born individuals are the only victims. But human trafficking can happen to anyone, anywhere — including Topeka, Kansas.

Mellard wasn't thinking about the jail when she started the club, one of a growing number of cause-based Rotary clubs in the U.S. dedicated to fighting human trafficking. But a few of the club's early members told Mellard that when women were released from the Shawnee County jail, vulnerable and unsure of where to go, traffickers were often waiting for them in the parking lot. At prisons and jails across the country, traffickers search online records to identify targets and track their release dates, promising women housing or money and sometimes even posting their bail as leverage.

That realization was the inception of what is now the club's largest project: Intersection to Care, which began with the support of a Rotary Foundation global grant in 2022. The initiative has effectively transformed the way the Shawnee County jail oper-





Left: The Shawnee County jail is home to Intersection to Care, a reentry program created by the Rotary Club of Community Action Against Human Trafficking.

Above: The cause-based club is the passion project of Patti Mellard, whom Topeka's mayor describes as "stubborn in the right way."

Previous pages: A photo illustration shows Jodi Whitt reading notes of affirmation displayed at an exhibit of artwork created by program participants.

ates. What began as a program providing basic resources and mentorship has grown to include classes in technology, movement and meditation, health, and art therapy, as well as supportive housing and on-demand doula services. All told, Intersection to Care has assisted more than 1,000 women since 2022, including 134 in the first five months of this year.

With the help of Whitt, Intersection to Care perfected its system of supporting women the moment they leave the gate. Now, she or other volunteers wait outside to take newly released women to safe housing. Sometimes the urgency of their task stares them right in the face. Once, when Whitt was waiting in the parking lot, a trafficker was standing right beside her, lying in wait for the woman about to be released. "I was not scared of him," says Whitt. When the woman emerged from the jail, Whitt put her into her car and drove the woman to safety.

PERHAPS NO AMERICAN INSTITUTION better reflects the vulnerabilities of its community than the local jail. "The jail is the gatekeeper to the criminal justice system," as Brian Cole, director of the Shawnee County Department of Corrections, puts it. He says that its purpose is to ensure safety and security while people await sentencing into the state or federal prison system or until they are released (if no charges are filed). But that's not all that jails do. Increasingly, they have become way stations for people experiencing mental illness, addiction, homelessness, or other vulnerabilities. Are jails equipped to address those needs? Cole's answer is an immediate no.

When Cole started working as an officer at the jail 37 years ago, there were six women incarcerated at Shawnee. Today there are more than 100 — a surge that reflects a national trend. Between 1980 and 2023, the number of incarcerated women in the United States ballooned by over 600 percent, driven in large part by tougher drug sentences. Adding to the increase is the fact that jail or prison facilities frequently lack gender-responsive care and reentry services. "I hate to say this," Cole says, "but there was never any care for females in jails."

In Topeka, changing the culture around incarceration and reentry into society has been several years in the making. In 2018, native Topekan Kristen Shook began working for Mirror Inc., a local nonprofit that assists formerly incarcerated individuals as they reintegrate into the community. She helped develop the Shawnee County Reentry Council in 2021 and launched a podcast, *Reentry Reframed*, to share people's stories about leaving prison and jail. "It's been transformative in helping shift cultures and our community as a whole, because now [former inmates'] voices are at the table and they're the ones who are providing insight," Shook says.



Rotary members pack care kits for women in the jail. Above: (from left) Alexis Tracy, Kristen Shook, Tracy Broxterman, Chelsea Porter, Madinah Hazim, and Felecia Cunningham. Below: (center) As always, Patti Mellard stands ready to lend a hand.





Intersection to Care has assisted over 1,029 women since 2022 and is working with 51 women inside the jail this year.

In 2022, Shook invited Whitt onto the podcast for an interview that led to a new collaboration. She asked Whitt: “What are your hopes? ... Your next year, two years, five years, what would you like to see as your impact?” Whitt’s answer inspired Shook: She said that she wanted to help women *in* the jail. Two weeks later, Shook learned about the Rotary club’s plans to start a mentorship program. Shook, Whitt, and Mellard connected and formed a powerhouse trio working closely with Cole and other jail staff to bring Intersection to Care to the facility.

At first, Mellard and other members of the Rotary club provided supplies to women inside the jail, such as composition journals, ear plugs, reading glasses, and community resources packets. They also gathered supplies to distribute to women upon release, things like food vouchers, bus passes, cell phones, and care kits full of clothing and personal hygiene items — all of which are still a core part of what Intersection to Care offers.

But in January 2023, with the launch of the mentorship program, Intersection to Care became a more hands-on service provider. Club members completed trauma-informed training to serve as mentors to women before and after their release. The pairs meet at least once a week inside the jail, with mentors offering ongoing emotional support. Mentors have picked their mentees up from the jail and helped facilitate resources upon their release. The program has since offered mentoring services to more than 120 incarcerated women and has trained 17 Rotarians to be mentors, including Whitt, who joined the Rotary club in 2023.

The initiative grew quickly from there. Mellard has the distinct ability to identify a need and deftly network until she can fill it. “We were thinking we needed a health class,” she says, “and a Rotarian’s wife was at the Shawnee County Health Department. I reached out to her to see if she would do it, and she was on board right away.”

That person was Shelley Ramos, health promotion coordinator with the department, who also knew Shook through her job. “If anybody else had said, ‘Would you like to go into the Shawnee County jail and do this?’ I’d think they were crazy,” says Ramos. “But because it was Patti and Kristen, who I trust and have faith in, I knew it was the right thing.”



A large photograph of a woman with short, graying hair, wearing an orange V-neck jumpsuit over a white shirt. She is sitting in a hallway with light-colored walls and a dark baseboard. Her hands are clasped in her lap, and she is looking upwards and to the right with a slight smile. A small tag with '2x' and a triangle symbol is visible on her jumpsuit pocket. A light blue diamond-shaped graphic is overlaid on the top right of the image, containing a quote in cursive script. To the right of the main image are three smaller, partially visible photographs: the top one shows hands clasped, the middle one shows a person in a white shirt and red shorts standing in a room, and the bottom one shows a person in a dark hoodie.

*"The people here,
they take your
brokenness and
put it together.
They tell you, you
can do this and
you're worthy
of it, even though
you don't feel
that way."*



Left: Skeptical at first, Linda Swopes gained confidence while participating in the Intersection to Care classes.

Above: What began as a program providing basic resources and mentorship now includes classes

in art therapy, movement and meditation, and technology, as well as housing and doula services.

Ramos, who is now also a member of the Rotary club, began leading a class in 2024 that addresses common health concerns among incarcerated women, including addiction and domestic violence, while also celebrating milestones like birthdays. She coaches them on the reentry process and on how to utilize county health resources. The work even led to changes at the health department. “We’re creating a survey so we know what is working and what we need to do to change, so that everything can be a measurable outcome,” Ramos says. The department now visits the men’s quarters at the jail four times a year, and Ramos is advocating to introduce regular classes.

There are many more examples of the organic, grassroots growth that’s come to define Intersection to Care. Mellard’s daughter suggested supporting new mothers; that resulted in a partnership with the Topeka Doula Project, which visits women at the jail. A woman who heard about Intersection to Care reached out to Mellard to express interest in leading a movement class; she now visits the jail twice a week, playing upbeat music from her phone while leading exercise routines. Whitt, who took the University of Kansas’s technology class early in her sobriety, became determined to get those classes into the jail. In late 2023, the club purchased laptops to make it happen, and Whitt started teaching the class the next year.

Linda Swopes, who is currently incarcerated and has battled a long-term addiction, learned about program offerings from Whitt. “I thought it was BS,” Swopes says. But she took a chance with the technology class. Before long she had joined the health class and the art class, too. “It’s like the people here, they take your brokenness and put it together,” she says, breaking down into tears. “They tell you, you can do this and you’re worthy of it, even though you don’t feel that way.”

“I will let you know that it’s not happening at any other jail I’ve ever been to,” says Racheal, another incarcerated woman, who asked to be identified only by her first name to protect her privacy. Many women expressed similar surprise at receiving this kind of support inside a jail. Racheal participated in all the classes and became a peer mentor for the technology class. “The programs are on your own terms and what you’re willing to put in,” she says. “There’s no forcing.”

TWO CRUCIAL COMPONENTS ENSURED the success of Intersection to Care. First, in the summer of 2024, the project hired Whitt as a resource liaison and secured approvals for her to work inside the jail. Her lived experience was key. “We had three other women in Jodi’s role, and it wasn’t the right fit,” explains Mellard. “Those people had a master’s, they had a license.”

But Whitt had something they didn’t. “I had a criminal record,” she says, and that helped her con-



Above: Lakesha Robinson, an Intersection to Care participant, admires her artwork on display in Topeka's arts district.

Below: *Healing in Color: Stories of Strength & Hope* featured work by women in the art therapy classes and attracted a packed house.

Right: Jennifer Montgomery, a Rotary Peace Fellow, started the trauma-informed arts program at the jail in 2025 and is its facilitator.





On the podcast

To hear more stories from the Intersection to Care program, listen to our two-part Rotary Voices podcast series. The episodes feature interviews with (from left) Hannah McLain, Chelsea Porter, and Racheal. Visit rotary.org/podcast.

nect with the women. Time and time again, the women reflected on what it meant to see Whitt in a leadership role. “You know, she’s been in her addiction and she’s been clean,” says Swopes. “She reached back and she grabbed me, and she told me that I have a choice and that I’m worth this.”

Next, Intersection to Care expanded its focus on housing support. “I would leave here and have nowhere to go — the only place I had to go was the dope house,” Whitt says of when she was in and out of jail. “I really had no safe, stable place and no real support, and that’s why I was stuck in those revolving doors.”

In January 2025, the Rotary club received a \$60,000 grant to subsidize housing for women within the Oxford House of Kansas, a network of self-run, self-supported recovery homes. That March, they hired Alexis Tracy — a formerly incarcerated woman who went through the Intersection to Care programs and stayed at an Oxford House — as housing coordinator. They have since helped more than 75 women secure housing after leaving jail.

Tracy helps women apply to live in an Oxford House home while still incarcerated, then supports them as they set up their lives out of jail. She is also part of the Intersection to Care mentorship team and a member of the Rotary club. Tracy never imagined herself as a Rotarian. “Until I went to jail,” she says, “I didn’t know that they were doing this kind of work.”

Mellard subsidizes Rotary membership dues for Intersection to Care mentors and the women coming home from jail, so the club, which now has about 60 members, is a mix of formerly incarcerated women, longtime Rotarians, and others in Mellard’s network. By becoming Rotarians, she says, “it helps them understand our whole mission.”

The mission, and the diverse group of Topekan it has engaged, was on full display one evening this March in the city’s arts district. *Healing in Color: Stories of Strength & Hope*, a display of artwork from women participating in Intersection to Care’s trauma-informed arts program, attracted a packed house that included Mayor Duncan. Mellard had approached him to explain the importance of the project’s work when he was running for office.

Jennifer Montgomery, a Rotary Peace Fellow who started the art class in 2025, offered the keynote address. A formerly incarcerated woman with

artwork on display shared remarks. In the crowd, Director Cole and other jail staff mingled with formerly incarcerated women. Mellard, Shook, and Whitt moved among the crowd strategically: They secured approval from Cole for a pizza party at the jail that evening and spoke to the mayor about their program’s success and the need for more funding to continue supportive housing work. (A few days later, a local women’s charitable organization awarded them \$10,000 to accomplish that.)

Whitt was invigorated — “I spoke with the mayor!” — but also exhausted: “I’m ready to go home and sit with my cat.” As attendees dispersed, she remembered a woman would be released from the jail the next day, and she confirmed with a staffer that everything was in place to receive her. “We’ve got this down to a science now. It’s all set in place,” Whitt says. “The ones who were released months ago are now waiting for the ones being released now.”

Whitt, who has stood at the exit gate many times now, pondered the hurdles ahead for this woman and hoped for her success. Then, she posed for a final group selfie at the art show, said her goodbyes, got in her car, and went home. Whitt would be back at the jail tomorrow, where she’d recount the evening to the incarcerated women who could not attend — and then she would help one more woman come safely home. ■

If you are in the U.S. and suspect someone is being trafficked, please call the **National Human Trafficking Hotline** at 1-888-373-7888.

In Canada, call the **Canadian Human Trafficking Hotline** at 1-833-900-1010.

To learn more about the Rotary Club of Community Action Against Human Trafficking, visit rccaaht.org.



Lifequakes



When seeking solid ground
amid life's tectonic tumults,
one bit of advice rises above others:
Don't go through it alone

By Kate Silver



Photography by Juan Diego Reyes

When Tia Coppus' husband, Ethan, died of cancer, a fog came over her. At just 38 years old, she felt as though she'd lost half of herself. Then came the silence.

This was October 2021, and for 19 months, it had just been her and Ethan locked away from the world to keep COVID out. During that time, she'd forgotten how to be alone. And she'd forgotten how to be around other people. When a friend invited her to a Rotary dinner meeting soon after the funeral, she wasn't sure she was capable. "I'm thinking, I don't even know what to do," Coppus recalls. "I haven't been out since March of 2020. What if I'm not OK?"

Rotary had been an important part of Coppus' life since 2014. In fact, she attended her first meeting just a few months after Ethan's diagnosis, and the Rotary Club of Cary-Kildaire in North Carolina quickly became an outlet just for her. Every Thursday night, she could meet with friends and laugh. As her husband endured the side effects of chemotherapy and clinical trials, Rotarians were there for her. They raised money to send the couple on a bucket-list trip to Colorado; they dropped off meals and checked in; they even sang Christmas carols in the driveway during the pandemic.

So she decided to go to dinner.

From the moment she arrived, she found herself hugging new members and old friends. She laughed at people's stories. She made eye contact with a recent widower. And she realized she wasn't alone. "Grief is like a complete destruction of your life and your normalcy. You just don't know where to go, where to start," she says. "Rotary put a path in front of me that I could take."

The lifequake

There's a name for the type of crisis that Coppus was living through. Author Bruce Feiler calls these disruptions "lifequakes" because they can shake a person to the very core. "The damage they cause can be devastating, they're higher on the Richter scale

of consequence, and their aftershocks can last for years," Feiler writes in his 2020 book, *Life Is in the Transitions*.

Feiler, who was once a Rotary scholarship recipient, became interested in the subject after going through a series of lifequakes himself; they involved his own cancer diagnosis, financial troubles, and a sick and suicidal father. He traveled across the United States collecting stories from people in all 50 states and then mined those stories for patterns. He calculated that an individual could expect some kind of disruption, big or small, about every 12 to 18 months. "That's more often than many people see a dentist," he says.

He attributes that frequency to the fact that our lives are no longer linear. In the past, many of us had expectations that seemed straightforward: one job, one partner, one political belief system, one identity. Yet modern life is filled with curves, and it's often defined by multiple jobs, multiple partners, evolving political belief systems, fluid identities.

Most of the changes we get through OK, but a few of them reach lifequake status. On average, Feiler calculates that adults tend to experience three to five of these more consequential lifequakes, which last about five years each. "We think the stable periods are normal," says Feiler, "but in fact, the transition is equally normal."

Learning to navigate these changes is a must. When a lifequake happens, the first and most important step, says Feiler, is deciding you want to go through the transition. Then, the support of a community can be instrumental. "Don't go through it alone," says Feiler.

In an active group, whether it's a church, a support group, or a service organization, people can tell their stories, they can meet others who have been through similar transitions, and they can be a part of something that's bigger than themselves.

By Feiler's count, half of the adults around us are going through a transition at any given time — and the rest aren't far behind. With that in mind, we reached out to Rotary members about events that caused fundamental shifts in their lives. Each story we heard started out with a plot twist: death, divorce, retirement, struggles with identity. As they wrote their next chapter, the individuals found community, purpose, hope, identity, and resolve, all with the support of their clubs.



Following the death of her husband, Tia Coppus found the support she needed with her Rotary club.



“We think the stable periods are normal, but in fact, the transition is equally normal.”

Community

Montana is famous for its majestic, rugged beauty. That's what drew Leigh Larson and her husband to Great Falls in 2022. But when their marriage crumbled soon after the move, Larson found herself profoundly alone. Quickly, she learned that the seclusion and isolation that make those wild landscapes possible can break a person. "There were whole weeks where I wouldn't leave the house," says Larson. "I didn't see anybody."

As a self-employed web and graphic designer, she knew she needed to build her professional network, even as she was enduring a personal crisis. So she reached out to the local chamber of commerce. "If you want to be with the movers and shakers," they told her, "you should check out the Great Falls Rotary club."

At her first meeting, Larson noticed the club's social media and photography needed updating, so she volunteered to help. Before long, she was asked to assist with social event planning, which immersed her in the local scene as she toured organic farms and museums and checked out different restaurants. The Rotarians she met were eager to help her get settled, whether that meant introducing her to others in the area or teaching her the ways of Montana. "A few of them offered to help me with either firearm or bow-and-arrow safety," she says. She took them up on it.

Settling into her new rural life, Larson started learning the ropes. When her car broke down on the side of the highway in

an area with no cell service, she was reminded that, yes, she needed to be tough; and also that survival out there depended on people helping other people.

For that, Rotary has been a hub. It's fostered professional connections and close friendships, along with a deeper understanding of who her neighbors are and what they need. In those early days, Larson was looking to network. What she found was a community that, today, feels like home. "I look after them," she says, "and they look after me."

Purpose

For many years, community service had been a part of Gabe Gloden's life. He'd been an AmeriCorps member, and he even got his master's degree in nonprofit management. But when he married and had kids, his priorities shifted. He didn't feel like he had extra time to give. Parenthood, after all, can feel like its own lifequake.

Then, he went through a divorce. As he and his two young children rebuilt their lives together, Gloden was feeling unmoored, disconnected from the community around him. In therapy, he began to understand that he had an opportunity to shift his focus to activities that were important to him.

Around that same time, a colleague asked if he'd be interested in joining a nontraditional Rotary club she was starting for families. The Family Service satellite club of the Rotary Club of Bloomington Sunrise, in Indiana, would meet monthly for service projects that kids and parents participate in together.

Gloden was energized by the idea. "I could engage my children around the value of service," he says, "and I also saw this as an opportunity for us to have a social experience outside of the house."

Since 2024, Rock, who is 10, and Beatrice, 11, have helped fill book bags with food for kids, sorted items at food pantries, weeded gardens, and served as extras in a movie made by an arts organization. They've also gotten to know the other like-minded families in the club, who are committed to making Bloomington a better place. Gloden says that by participating regularly in something that's bigger than themselves, all three have grown. "Service is not just about the action and the outcome you expect to have with the organization you're volunteering for," he says. "It's also about the change that takes place in the volunteer."

Glenys Robertson came to a similar realization: that in moments of upheaval, helping others can be steadying. Like Gloden, she went to her first Rotary meeting at a time when she felt broken. She'd endured a traumatic divorce while living in Spain and then moved back to her native Britain to pick up the pieces. A friend invited her to a meeting at the Rotary Club of Grantham, where she was touched by the warm welcome.

At the time, she was partially retired and had time to fill in her schedule. When club members asked her to help run the district's Disability Games, she eagerly agreed. The day of the event, she ran herself into the ground, making sure everything went smoothly. At the end of it all, a young athlete embraced her. "She said, 'This is the best day I've ever had,'" Robertson recalls. "And I cried, because I was just so tired, but so elated, because I thought this is what Rotary is. Rotary gives you joy because you are doing and giving."

Robertson threw herself into more service projects and, as time passed, took on leadership roles with the club. She saw that the more she gave, the more she healed. Today, at age 75, she's an assistant governor of District 1070. Although she's retired, she says she's busier than ever. And she wouldn't have it any other way. "If we are altruistic, we get so much more out of life," she says. "I got my mojo back."

Hope

In 2025, John Weiss completed his second term as president of the Rotary Club of Morro Bay, California, and his daughter, Jessica Bailey Weiss, started her first. The passing of the baton would turn out to be more significant than either of them knew.

John had been a dedicated Rotary member since Jessica was a teenager. In 2011, he helped charter the Rotary Club of Morro Bay Eco to draw in younger, more environmentally conscious members, and he let Jessica know that she'd be helping. "He asked me if I wanted to be treasurer or secretary," she says with a laugh. "That was the choice. He didn't ask me, do you want to join?"

At club meetings, Jessica saw her dad from a new perspective. Although he'd been something of a workaholic while she was growing up, in Rotary, he was a playful, funny guy whom



From left: Leigh Larson (second from right) joins other Rotary women at a brunch; Gabe Gloden takes part in a service project alongside his children; and Glenys Robertson poses with a young chef at an awards event sponsored by clubs.

“It taught me the value of venturing outside of

everyone liked. He seemed to especially enjoy recruiting new Rotarians and mentoring members.

In 2017, John was preparing to serve as governor of District 5240 when he learned he had a rare form of cancer. One day, he was gearing up to visit the district's 73 Rotary clubs, and the next, doctors were saying he might not survive five years. It was the ultimate lifequake, but he wasn't budging from his plan. “He didn't want to step down,” says Jessica. “He didn't want to quit.”

Through various treatments and nine surgeries, John carried out his Rotary duties in the years that followed, often attending virtual meetings from his hospital bed. As he defied his doctor's expectations, living past six years, then seven, Rotary gave him hope and purpose. In the eighth year, he trained his daughter to be president. And when he died on 4 September 2025 at age 66, he did so knowing the club was in good hands.

Jessica is grateful that her term as president followed her father's because it meant they got to spend so much time together preparing for the handoff. Now, she's comforted by the outpouring of support from Rotarians who loved her father deeply. “It feels like his legacy is living on,” she says. True to that legacy, after her father died, Jessica didn't miss a meeting.

Identity

Gregor Baum thought he was living the dream. In 2021, he moved from his native Germany to Rocky Mount, North Carolina, to attend North Carolina Wesleyan University on a tennis scholarship with the aim of going pro. Then, at the first practice of the year, an intense pain wracked his back. A doctor told him that because of the injury, he might not be able to safely play tennis again.

Without tennis, Baum wasn't sure who he was and fell into a deep depression. When a counselor encouraged him to explore new interests, he thought back to a Rotary Youth Exchange trip when he was 17. He had traveled to La Paz, Mexico, and learned to communicate with his host family even though they didn't speak the same language. “It taught me the immense value of venturing outside of my comfort zone — where true growth and transformation happen,” he says.

Now, outside of his comfort zone once again, he started a Rotaract club on campus where students could talk about challenges and setbacks of their own and find a way forward. Along the way, he developed a journal for students called *The Inner Journey Journal*, filled with questions that encouraged users to reflect on their experiences and grow from them.

Today, resilience is Baum's identity. After graduating, he became a life coach and speaker, and he continued developing journals, including one designed for Rotary members called *The Rotary Mindset*. He's now pursuing his master's degree in organizational leadership at Jacksonville University in Florida, where he's the president of another Rotaract club that he helped charter. Baum encourages people to move beyond their comfort zone and transform their pain into purpose. And he still credits Rotary with pushing him to do more. “Rotary has not only changed my life but also provides me with the chance to uplift others,” he says.

For Peggy Halderman, the pivot came much later in life. After retiring from what she calls “the best job on the planet” — three decades of working for the National Park Service — she saw a blank canvas in front of her. She enrolled in culinary school, thinking she'd like to launch a personal chef business; she joined the Rotary Club of Golden, Colorado, where her husband was a longtime member; and she started volunteering. While helping at a local nonprofit, a chef told her about an issue that stopped her in her tracks: hidden child hunger. The hundreds of kids in Golden who receive federal assistance for their meals at school often don't have reliable access to food on weekends and school breaks. “A fury broke out in me,” says Halderman. “And I said, Not in my backyard.”



From left: John Weiss and Jessica Bailey Weiss; Gregor Baum with his host dad during his Rotary Youth Exchange in Mexico; and Peggy Halderman (bottom row, third from left) at the White House Champions of Change ceremony.



my comfort zone — where true growth and transformation happen. ☺☺

She took the issue to her Rotary club's board, and they told her to fix it — they'd pay. She set up meetings with city officials, nonprofit leaders, and school administrators, and in 2008, the Golden Backpack Program was born, with a mission to provide healthy meals to students and their families. "All I had to do was share the news and the community sprang into action," she says. "Doors started opening."

Word about the program spread well beyond Colorado. In 2013, Halderman was recognized as one of the Champions of Change by the White House, and, later, Rotary highlighted her work in its People of Action campaign. By the time Halderman stepped away from the nonprofit organization, which is now called BGOLDN and serves people of all ages, it had delivered 500,000 meals to area kids in about 10 years.

Now, as she approaches her 78th birthday, Halderman has moved on to her next chapter: She's taken on a mentoring role and loves introducing others to Rotary so they can pursue their passions and achieve their own dreams. "I love bringing people in," she says, "And I love helping people get to 'yes.'"

Resolve

When Tia Coppus attended that first Rotary dinner after Ethan died, she took the most important step that a person can take following a lifequake: She decided she wanted to go through the transition.

That evening, Coppus knew that if she were able to make it through a meal and perhaps even find a way to enjoy herself, she could then do other things as well. She felt more confident about having conversations with other people, and she could learn how to buy groceries for only one person. In time, she could even use the word "widow." "It really was a lot more than just eating dinner and socializing," she recalls. "It was helping me reenter the world."

In those early days of grief, there were times when she didn't want to get out of bed. But she started to put things on the calendar — coffee with a Rotary member here, a service project there. Before long, her schedule filled with activities that brought meaning, connection, and even joy. During her darkest times, she had a source of positivity. And when she was ready, she started to give back to the organization.

Today, almost five years since that meeting, Coppus is an assistant governor of District 7710. "We will never move on, but we have to move forward, like the sun rises tomorrow," she says. "Rotary gives you so many steps forward. It reminds you that even when you're the one who's used to giving, it's OK to receive." ■

The bots you're looking for



From communication tasks to grant writing, clubs are tapping into AI tools

By
**Amy
Hoak**

.....
Illustrations by
**Iván
Bravo**

Your club has an idea for a service project, one that could improve lives in your district or perhaps on the other side of the world. But it's one thing to have a great idea and another to pull off a successful, sustainable project. Now, more Rotary members are turning to a new "thinking partner" or "brainstorm friend" to reach that goal: artificial intelligence.

AI can maximize productivity by assisting with everything from compiling research to identifying blind spots, says technology consultant and trainer **MUHAMMAD ABDULAZIZ** (one of several Rotary experts consulted for this story). That could help clubs speedily turn the seed of an idea into a service project backed by district or global grant funding. Elsewhere, for communication tasks like writing newsletters, setting agendas, and taking notes, Rotary members are discovering how AI platforms such as ChatGPT, Claude, Google Gemini, Microsoft Copilot, and more can help.

"Use AI not to replace your mind, not to replace your skills, your creativity," says Abdulaziz, a member of the Rotaract Club of El Tahrir in Egypt. Instead, think of AI as a partner that can bring a different perspective to whatever you're working on, one that might not occur to you given your own background and education. "Use AI to open a new dimension that you cannot think of yourself," he says.

Generative AI applications, which create content based on user prompts, are tools that can quickly sort through vast amounts of information online. Ask a question and you'll get an answer in seconds. Follow-up questions will help refine the answer and pinpoint what you need.

"Artificial intelligence is like a room full of experts waiting for you," says **STEW MARTIN**, a member of the Rotary Club of Lake Oswego, Oregon. He has used generative AI extensively as part of his work in the Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Rotary Action Group and as a member of The Rotary Foundation's Cadre of Technical Advisers. "It's like 1,000 or even 10,000 experts, depending on your topic, and they've scouted everything that's available. It's not behind closed doors, and they're waiting for you to talk to them."

Of course, there are limits to AI's capabilities and no shortage of concerns about how much we



should let it infiltrate our lives. Privacy and ethical worries, as well as the environmental toll, linger in the background of many conversations about the emerging technology. Its potential to eliminate jobs also fosters unease.

Still, encouraged by AI's potential to aid clubs' efforts, optimistic members formed the Artificial Intelligence Rotary Fellowship to help clubs get better acquainted with AI. Abdulaziz co-founded the fellowship and serves as its general secretary. "The fellowship gathers professionals from all over the world in one place, talking about AI, learning from AI, sharing projects, initiatives, and so on," he says.

Many of those conversations happen online, through social media channels and a variety of workshops. Last year, **PETER BOSCH**, a member of the Rotary Club of Waukesha, Wisconsin, and past governor of District 6270, spoke at a webinar aimed at helping novice users incorporate AI in their work, giving tips on constructing queries on popular AI platforms. A recording of that and other webinars can be found on the fellowship's Facebook page.

Fellowship members are also bringing AI education to in-person events. **BARBARA SARING**, a member of the Rotary Club of München-Residenz, Germany, and an assistant governor of District 1842, recently helped organize an event in Munich for her district that gave people an AI primer while also raising money for the disaster relief organization ShelterBox. At the event, participants visited quick-learning stations to discover AI's benefits — and its limitations.

Even AI's biggest acolytes acknowledge that it does have drawbacks. Missing context, unreliable sources, or outright false information within its answers makes it essential that users verify its output. Bosch's advice is to treat AI like your "favorite intern," critically examining every answer it gives. "It has book smarts on everything from human relations to facts and science, but not necessarily a lot of street smarts," he says.

But using AI's assistance for research and tedious tasks can free up Rotary members to focus their attention on the efforts that inspire and reward them — the work for which they joined Rotary in the first place.



Leave it to the copywriter

AI can help Rotary members update websites, create social media posts, and write newsletters. In many cases, they'd be wise to take the help, says **CHUCK CORRIGAN**, a member of the Rotary Club of Naperville Downtown, Illinois, and a past governor of District 6450. "We're trying to use volunteer hours to do good projects for the world and for our communities," Corrigan says. "Certainly, we don't have all the time in the world to do these things. And if we can save some time for our projects, why wouldn't we use these tools?"

Corrigan has seen AI assist in club business in several ways, like creating promotional posters or social media advertisements, compiling meeting notes through transcription apps like Read Notetaker and Otter.ai, and translating email conversations with applications like iTranslate and DeepL. Club and district leaders could turn to AI to write a meeting agenda by inputting discussion points and having an AI tool organize them, providing a framework to be used as a starting point. AI could also help clubs structure their newsletters.

AI is a "force multiplier," Saring says, a support tool that can help level up the good work for which Rotary is known. In her district in Germany, a customized chatbot was created and trained in specialized Rotary knowledge. Members there use it to learn about the organization and help them with their Rotary duties.

✓ : Rotary International recently created AI guidelines for members. Download them at my.rotary.org/new-ai-guidelines-members.

? : Not sure whether AI is appropriate for a particular Rotary task? Write the Rotary Support Center at rotarysupportcenter@rotary.org for guidance.

Strategize about membership

When it came time to brainstorm ways to build and retain membership, one Rotarian turned to AI. A member of the Rotary Club of Minneapolis, **SHARON BLOODWORTH** put ChatGPT to work during her tenure as governor of District 5950 in 2024-25. “I would ask it: ‘If you have community groups that are declining, what are the ways that you can reverse that?’” she says.

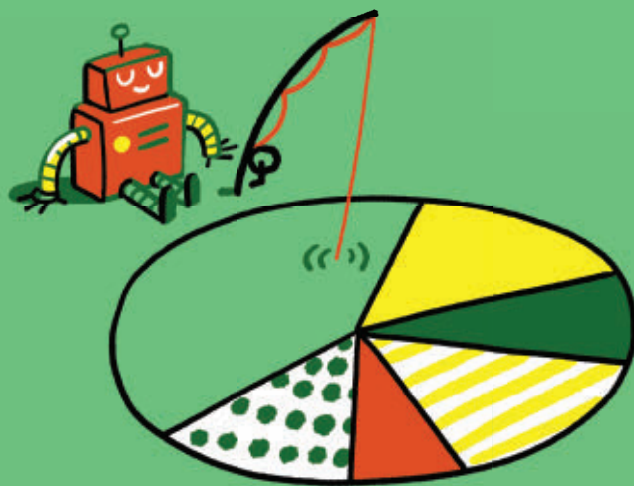
Bloodworth wanted to get Rotary in the public eye during her year as governor, so she held her district conference at the Minnesota State Fair. AI helped her create compelling marketing blurbs, generating pitches for events people wouldn’t want to miss. The effort helped increase member retention in a district that had been losing about 100 members a year, she says. During her tenure, those losses shrank to 14.

In Bosch’s Wisconsin district, members used AI to create differentiated messaging to reach the various kinds of people who are drawn to Rotary. “You have the person who really loves service, wants to be a real mover and shaker in their community,” he says. “You have the person who has made it big in whatever their field is and wants to give back. You have the person who is fairly well connected in the local philanthropic community but wants to be better connected.” Different outreach strategies can be used for all of them, a sophisticated marketing strategy made accessible through AI.

Generation gaps can also be bridged using AI, adds Abdulaziz, who has used it to understand and communicate with people of different age groups.



PUNCH UP YOUR FUNDING PITCHES



A successful grant application begins with developing a strong, fully formed idea for a project, Corrigan says. AI can help refine goals and tailor a project to a specific community.

“You can use deep research tools, either through apps like ChatGPT or tools like Perplexity, which can do great jobs of diving in, getting very deep research into an area,” Corrigan says. “For example, if you were in a country where you’re trying to reduce infant mortality, these tools can pull a lot of data very quickly and make our applications a lot stronger by helping to identify the sources we need for a community assessment.”

In addition to offering background information, AI tools can also generate surveys to help you identify community needs. “Give it some general parameters and say: ‘Here’s my goal, here’s what my audience is, here’s what I’m trying to accomplish,’” Corrigan advises. “It does a great job of spitting out the outline of a survey. When you get the survey results, the tool can help you analyze them.”

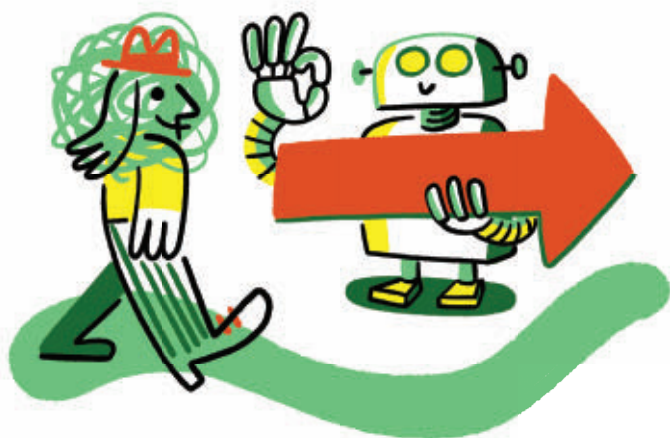
To reduce the number of AI hallucinations and mistakes, some members working on grants like to use NotebookLM, a Google product that allows users to feed specific, trusted sources into the application for it to draw upon. That extra step can provide more accurate results.

Other duties as assigned

Whether a club wants to run a membership campaign or plan a gala, AI can be a way to get started. It also can guide people who have taken on unfamiliar tasks.

“For example, Rotarians can be shy about asking others to join,” Bloodworth says. “So you could ask ChatGPT, ‘For somebody who’s shy, tell me the five best ways that they can ask someone to join Rotary.’” When posed with a similar query, ChatGPT advised that Rotary members keep the invite simple; invite prospective members to do something specific, like work on a service project; share why they joined; invite people by message or email; and ask for the person’s opinion first, then tell them what Rotary does and ask if they’re interested. ChatGPT also offered to write up a 10-second invitation script and had hints on how to find people who’d likely accept.

Is it the best advice? Not always. But at least AI provides a place to start, producing suggestions for the user, who can then determine their worth. Quoting a techy friend, Bloodworth says that AI “is a little bit like a Magic 8 Ball: If you shake it, it’s going to give you 10 different answers.”



PITFALLS AND TRADEOFFS

In fact, numerous studies have focused on the technology’s missteps, as Bloodworth points out. For example, a recent report by the BBC and the European Broadcasting Union found AI platforms routinely misrepresent news content. According to the research, 45 percent of all AI answers had at least one significant issue, including problems with accuracy, sourcing, and distinguishing opinion from fact. Thirty-one percent of AI responses had serious sourcing problems.

Despite its flaws, AI is expected to increasingly touch our lives in years to come. Promising developments are predicted in health care, which could help improve access to services throughout the world, according to a recent Microsoft report. AI is also expected to make large strides in research.

While skeptics may have the urge to steer clear of using AI, they could find that avoidance works to their detriment. “It’s here to stay,” Corrigan says, adding that Rotary members should be open to using AI. “If we want to maximize our impact, then we need to jump on board to some extent and take advantage of the opportunities that it gives us to do more good work.”



How to get started

Ready to experiment with AI?
A few pieces of advice:

Start with what you know:

Many people will have heard of at least a couple of applications. Pick whatever feels most comfortable to you. Then, choose a simple task to get a sense for how the tools work. “If you’re going on a trip,” Martin suggests,

“let it help you plan things to see and do. If you’re buying a car, give it some specs, tell it what you want, let it do some research for you.”

Expand by trying other

apps: Once you have a feel for AI’s uses and limitations,

experiment with other apps. NotebookLM, for example, allows you to select your own sources, which can help generate more reliable information. As Bosch points out, Grammarly can help edit your writing to make it more succinct.



Concerns, considerations

AI tools have the potential to make our work more efficient. But there are some costs to embracing the technology.

ENVIRONMENT

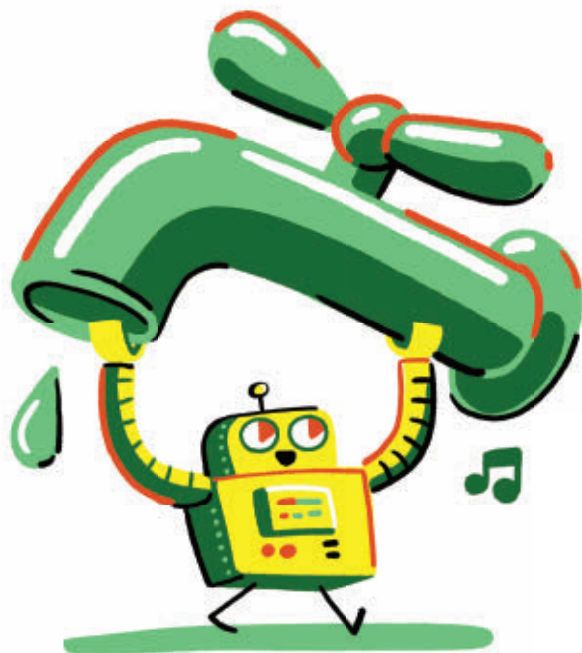
As investment in AI grows, so does its impact on the environment. The warehouse-size data centers that store, process, and distribute massive volumes of information require equally massive amounts of energy and water to run and cool machinery, adding to strains on resources.

How much of a strain? A study led by Cornell University researchers recently estimated that AI is on target to put an annual 24 million to 44 million metric tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere by 2030. That's equivalent to adding 5 million to 10 million cars to U.S. roads. They also predicted AI would drain 731 million to 1,125 million cubic meters of water per year, an amount equivalent to the water used by 6 million to 10 million Americans annually. That said, efforts are underway to make data centers more efficient.

PRIVACY

Experts caution users of generative AI not to overshare. That goes not only for your own information but that of others — say, the recipient of a project funded by a global grant. “We’ve got to be careful that when using these tools we’re not disclosing things or sharing things that we shouldn’t be sharing,” says Corrigan.

For example, a contract or a financial statement could be analyzed by AI, “but then,” he says, “the information that I fed into it is now part of the public domain, and we don’t want that, so we don’t do that.” Similarly, Corrigan adds, if you’re partnering with, let’s say, an orphanage in another country, any sensitive information should be withheld from AI



interactions since it could be used by a technology company to further train AI. Provide too many details and you might risk violating someone’s privacy.

The amount of information stored by an app after an AI conversation is not always clear. User settings are often available that can keep your information private, but trusting a platform also means trusting it in the future as the industry expands and policies adapt. That’s why it’s better to steer clear of including personal or sensitive details in prompts. Instead, use generalities or redact personal data.

When it comes to sensitive information, don’t share it with AI — or anywhere online for that matter, says Abdulaziz.

ETHICS

Finally, a word on ethics. Remember that AI draws its answers from the web — sometimes from other people’s creativity, Corrigan says. If AI illustrates a social media post, for example, it’s essentially taking someone’s intellectual property.

Even if you’re OK with that, your audience might not be. If a social media post looks like it’s “AI slop,” Corrigan says, it could easily turn people off.

Don’t get too personal:

It’s easy to get comfortable with the AI bots due to their friendly tone, but financial information and sensitive personal data — basically anything you wouldn’t make public — should be left out of your queries.

Try out more complicated queries:

Now, put on your Rotary hat and see how these tools might help optimize tasks for your club. For example, Martin says, if you’re starting a project, describe it, tell the AI tool as much as you know (minding, of course,

not to enter any personal or sensitive information), and then ask it tough questions. For tips on wording queries, Bosch recommends checking out the platform Section Coach for help. But above all, he adds, practice with the different AI tools — and share

your successes and insights with other members.

Question everything: You can ask AI to monitor itself, check its answers, and look for additional resources, Martin adds. But applying human judgment remains essential.

OUR CLUBS

VIRTUAL VISIT

Pancakes with potential

Rotary Club of Logan, Ohio

An elementary school-aged girl hops out of her family car outside a county fairgrounds building in this Appalachian foothills town to find out the cost to eat at the pancake breakfast inside. \$8.

She asks the people out front if the fundraiser accepts cards. Without hesitation, Rotarian Sherry Kilbarger says she has extra tickets to give away and invites the girl and her family inside for the all-you-can-eat pancakes. Plus sausage links and OJ. A woman walking out of the building into the spring sunshine overhears the exchange and hands Kilbarger two more tickets to share.

Looking out for the kids in this small town is a top motivation for members of the Rotary Club of Logan, Ohio. Nestled among rolling hills, the area is popular with visitors for its miles of hiking trails that wind through gorges with waterfalls, awe-inspiring rock formations like

a natural bridge of stone, and dazzling fall leaves. The club provides bikes to local kids at Christmas and holds a popular fishing day each spring when the state's nature officials stock Rose Lake with trout. "Because we are a small club, the things that we do are community-minded," Kilbarger says. "We want our youth to have opportunities."

The Logan club expects to earn about \$3,000 from the pancake breakfast, its largest fundraiser, which has been gathering neighbors over syrup drizzles for more than 50 years. Club members make the most of every dollar, accomplishing as much as they can for the community, where the percentage of people living in poverty is well over twice the national rate.

One club project provides duffle bags filled with a blanket, toiletries, socks, and underwear for children going into foster care or young people staying in group homes. The club also awards stipends to young people who are joining the workforce, learning a trade, or starting a two-year educational program. Those funds for work clothes, tools, personal protective equipment, or other basics are in addition to college scholarships the club distributes. And for the town's high school, the club contributed \$20,000 toward an indoor sports facility, digging into its reserves from decades past when the pancake breakfast and an arts fair brought in more money.

Given how well they organize their projects, it's apparent that these Rotarians are dynamos at working with local leaders and drumming up sponsors and donations to stretch the good that \$3,000 in flapjack profits can do. Jim Robinson, a City Council member who has organized

the pancake breakfast for a decade, has hawking tickets to the people who can afford them down to a science. He encourages those who have a conflict with the date (or who want to avoid the carbs) to give the tickets away — or he jokes that they can eat the paper tickets themselves, as long as they donate \$16, the price for two. Many people round up and hand over a twenty.

These Rotarians also work their connections to recruit sponsorships for the annual fishing day, Get Hooked on Rotary; those sponsors include Walmart, a canoe livery, and a local boot manufacturer. The sponsors' support supplements the club's \$500 contribution, which is matched by \$500 from Rotary District 6690, allowing the group to give away T-shirts, more than 100 fishing poles, four bicycles, canoe trips, and toys.

Early on, when members learned that many of the kids, about 150 this year, were arriving at the lake without breakfast, they started serving grilled hot dogs and chips, says member Damon Kuhn. He came up with the idea for the event, now in its 18th year, when he joined Rotary and wanted to do something for the town's children. One time, when a girl caught a 7-pound bass, he got it mounted for her.

Kuhn is president of Valor Retreat, a recreational site under development near Logan that will take advantage of the tranquil Hocking Hills to provide a free retreat for military veterans who are recovering from their service or have post-traumatic stress disorder. The Logan club has partnered on fundraisers with the retreat as it builds accessible cabins and pursues plans to bring in horses for equine therapy.



Looking out for local kids is a motivator for the Rotary Club of Logan, including (from left) Damon Kuhn, Chad Grow, Sherry Kilbarger, Andrew McGhee, and Jim Robinson.

Robinson says that the club is also working with the chamber of commerce to try to promote Rotary membership to young business owners. He talks with people who are curious about Rotary and some of its areas of focus — from providing clean water to supporting education — as well as Rotary’s role in the push to end polio. And Kilbarger adds that the group is discussing whether to start a satellite club or a group that would emphasize social gatherings more than traditional weekly meetings over lunch.

Brendan Johnson, a member in his 20s, says that he’s ready to try to recruit more members, and he is also considering re-starting river and highway cleanups the group used to organize. But he, too, is in the club “especially to help the kids — get them Christmas gifts with our bike drive,” he says. Currently a sausage links server, Johnson also expects to someday take over planning the breakfast.

Because raising funds isn’t the breakfast’s only purpose, Robinson says that the club is intent on keeping the meal affordable. He enjoys seeing so many residents sharing a meal face-to-face, chatting, and catching up with the neighbors they bump into. “Society is becoming less and less interactive,” he says. “People don’t even go out to eat anymore.”

But here, as tables fill and the pancake makers work more quickly, Kuhn, who for years has mixed buckets of batter, shares his secret for tasty cakes — adding vanilla. It works: People line up to grab a second stack of the pancakes with the potential to provide children in Logan a little help or simply some happy memories.

— ROSE SHILLING

THE ART OF TASTY CAKES

The special griddles the club uses were crafted in 1988 by late Rotarian Ed Runge, an engineer and machinist. Rotarians still use the two drum-shaped cookers Runge designed, each with a revolving griddle disk. Three or four Rotarians stand at a cooker; one uses a big metal

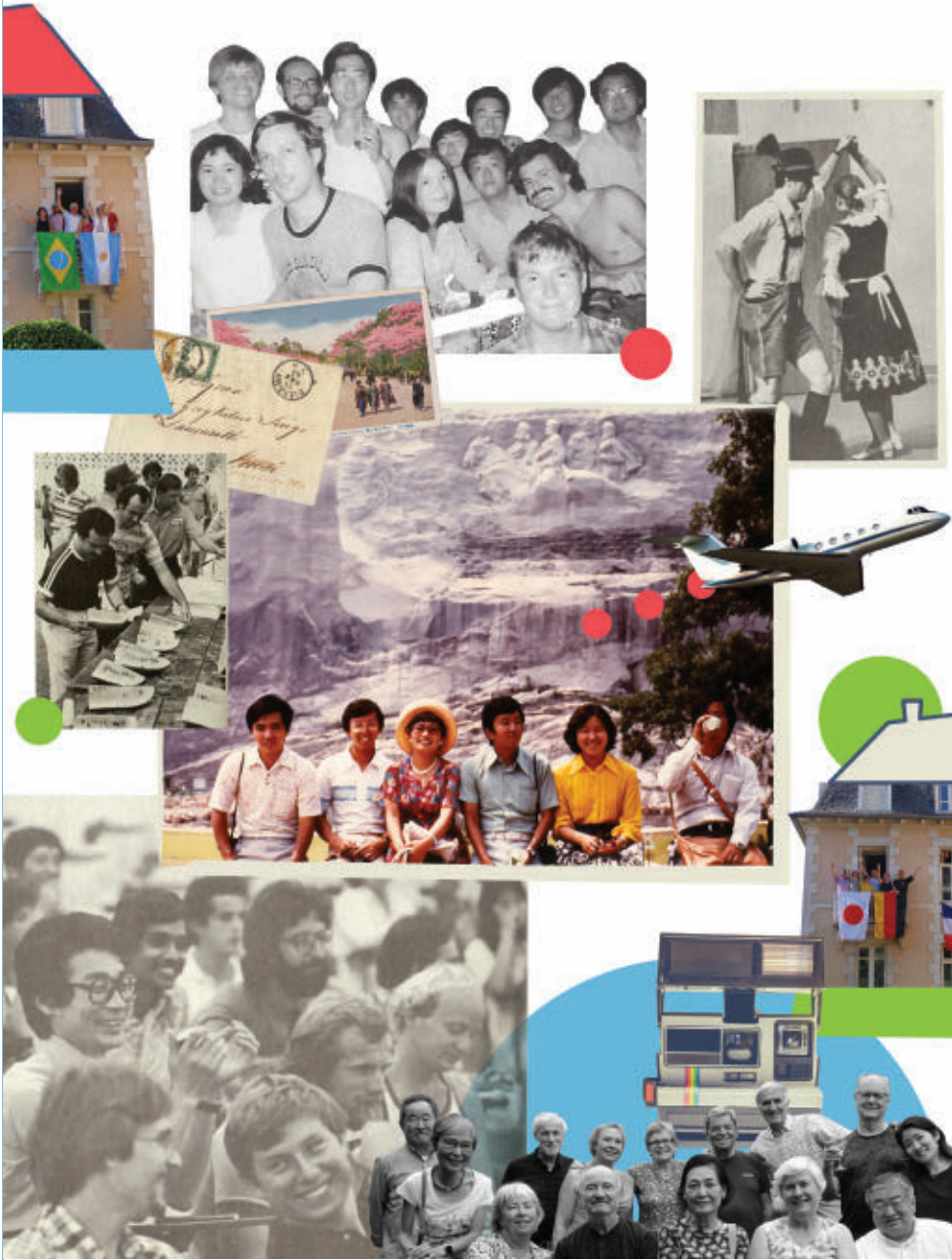
batter dropper to plop circles on the rotating griddle while the others flip, until, after two rotations, the cakes are cooked to a golden brown. “The pancake goes around, gets flipped, goes around, and they tend to come out really well,” Robinson says. “We’ve got it timed up pretty good.”



WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

The friendship network

These 1978 Rotary Scholars have never stopped being 'ambassadors of goodwill'



After classes, students made their own entertainment, including a weekly “Watermelon Day,” a talent showcase, and road trips to the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge and Disney World.

In the summer of 1978, more than 100 international students about to begin their graduate studies around the U.S. first came together in a small town in Georgia to brush up on their English. In what could have been a reality TV show setup — if the genre had existed back then — the students from some 30 countries had to pile into the dorms of a college in farm country, learn to get along, and make their own fun. They had a blast.

“That time together was so precious,” remembers Mayumi Lincicome of Japan, who, like the others, received support from a Rotary Foundation scholarship. “Everyone was very serious about learning, believed in international relationships and individual freedoms,” she says. “I learned how big and varied the world is but that, ultimately, we are all the same. That summer took so much fear out of me. You could just go out and connect to people.”

Another remarkable outcome: Nearly 50 years later, many of the students — from Argentina, Brazil, France, Germany, Japan, Norway, and beyond — have stayed in touch and even gathered for reunions.

What was it about that summer that made these friendships possible?

In part, it was the program's structure. At the time, many international Rotary scholarship recipients studying in the U.S. began their year taking English classes together at what was then known as Georgia Southern College in Statesboro.

After classes ended for the day, students made their own entertainment. Manfred Lange of Germany recalls a weekly “Watermelon Day” organized by the professor and Rotarian in charge of the program, who brought a truckload of watermelons for the scholars to enjoy. There was also a showcase for students to perform a talent or share a cultural experience from their homeland. They got up close with alligators on a boat trip through the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge. Some more resourceful souls even man-

aged to find cars and caravanned 300 miles to Disney World.

"When you get stuck in a car for half a day's ride, then you really know each other," remembers Martin Plikk, from Sweden. While riding the famed Space Mountain roller coaster, one fellow student fainted into Plikk's arms. "That bonded us at least for that time."

Patrick Grégoire, from France, attributes the enduring relationships to the environment and the alignment of the scholars' lives. "The friendships you develop in your 20s are your friendships for life," he says.

The students were figuring out who they were and what they wanted to do with their futures.

When classes began in the fall, the cohort of Rotary Scholars went their separate ways. Lincicome went off to Ohio University to study American and British literature, Lange went to Caltech to study geophysics, Plikk went to the Colorado School of Mines for geophysical engineering, and Grégoire went to the University of Missouri for agronomy. At the end of the first semester, Grégoire recalls, a core group of 12 got together — and squeezed into an apartment meant to hold four — to ski the Rocky Mountain slopes in Colorado over the winter holidays. Around Easter, he says, others gathered in California.

Eventually, life began to fall into a rhythm. The scholars worked toward advanced degrees and moved on to more schooling or careers. Lincicome taught Japanese at Tufts University before becoming a language interpreter; Plikk worked first in London and then in Norway in the oil industry; and Grégoire grew the international business of a French seed company. For his work in geophysics, Lange studied meteorite impacts on the icy moons of Jupiter and Saturn and eventually became a glaciologist and polar scientist. He went on to become the founding director of the Energy, Environment, and Water Research Center at the Cyprus Insti-

tute. Along the way, he became a Rotarian and helped select future scholarship recipients.

"This scholarship was the beginning of my life in Rotary," he says. "I became a Rotarian because I felt the scholarship had been such a great experience and Rotary was an organization worth being a part of."

While not everyone in the group has joined Rotary, the spirit of the scholarship program has carried over into the rest of their lives. Grégoire was part of the Rotary Scholar Alumni Association in France. Lincicome and her husband have hosted and supported international students attending Bowdoin College near their home in Maine. And Plikk still has the banner for the Rotary club in his hometown that nominated him for the scholarship. "Throughout these five decades, we have never stopped being ambassadors of goodwill," Grégoire says.

Aside from the occasional business trip that took one scholarship recipient into another's orbit, holiday greeting cards and letters were the main way the group stayed in touch. They've shared similar milestones such as having children around the same time and, more recently, entering retirement.

When Grégoire and his spouse, Marie-Claude, hosted a 20th-anniversary gathering at a family chateau in central France in the late 1990s, many scholars attended with their children. A number then began sending their children to stay with their friends' families over school holidays. "It was the start of a new generation's friendship," Grégoire says.

Grégoire and Marie-Claude also hosted the scholars for a 40th anniversary at their home in Rodez. After that, "we decided that if we were waiting another 20 years, we would be dead, so we shortened the window between meetings," Grégoire says. Midway through 2025, Lange hosted a reunion in a rented house in Winterberg, Germany. Grégoire says that preparations are underway for a 50th-anniversary reunion in 2028. He says the organizers hope to contact about 45 fellows with whom they aren't in touch.

"It really underlines the value of The Rotary Foundation's scholarship program," Lange says. And while the summer English language course is no longer offered as a prelude to today's studies, scholars are building powerful friendships and networks alongside professional credentials. Ones that last a lifetime. —JOE ENGLEMAN

Nealy 50 years later, many of the 100-plus international students who first came together in Georgia are still in touch.



DISPATCHES FROM
OUR SISTER MAGAZINES
ROTARY-NO-TOMO (JAPAN)

Functional fashion



Masahiro Tanji Shinto shrine

In Shinto, there is a set of guiding principles similar to The Four-Way Test. Known as the Guiding Principles of Shinto Life, they are recited by shrine personnel at the beginning of meetings. This three-point creed emphasizes gratitude to the deities, service to others, and prayers for world peace.

Motoaki Sagara Gas sales

At my company, we have six guidelines called the Criteria for Laughter, inspired by The Four-Way Test. These are illustrated in comic form in our employee handbook and serve as a reference when making difficult decisions.

The criteria are: Is it funny? Is it true? Is it ambitious? Can it be sustained over time? Is it beneficial? And is there a clear scenario for when we stop?

Tsuneo Hibino Chinese cuisine

I have worn a chef's coat for 53 years.

What I value most in my work is never compromising on my cooking. Even today, I still make mapo tofu every morning to check its taste.

A great chef once said that cuisine connects people through love. I cook every day with joy and heartfelt care, while remaining thankful to customers who support us.

Minako Sato Interpreter, translator, English teacher

As an interpreter and translator, I place great importance on the speaker's intentions and feelings.

In my English classes, participants range in age and proficiency. I encourage all to speak and to learn about culture, not just language. I want them to feel that being able to speak English can change their world.

Yuko Ida Building maintenance

Our company strives to create comfortable building environments.

My ancestors include Ohmi merchants, who were known for their belief that what's good for the seller is good for the buyer and good for society.

I am grateful to Rotary for introducing me to new people and knowledge. The joy of the weekly meetings is unbeatable.

At their meetings, members of the Rotary Club of Fukushima, Japan, typically wear formal suits. Then one day, when members showed up in their work clothes, it sparked a lively exchange about the meaning of vocational service.



Nagayuki Sato
Cardboard
manufacturing

Our company manufactures and sells packaging materials, primarily cardboard boxes used for transportation. As times and lifestyles change, the functions required of packaging materials have become increasingly diverse.

Recently, we created New Year's kadoomatsu decorations made from cardboard. We bring your ideas to life with cardboard!

Miyake says
bear spray and
a bear bell are
"indispensable
for newspaper
delivery."

Kazuhide Miyake
Newspaper
distribution

Unlike social media, newspapers still rely on trust that they're telling the truth. For distributors, that trust is preserved by keeping our promise to deliver newspapers on time.

Daily delivery can also contribute to community safety and peace of mind. On occasion, piled-up newspapers have helped us notice when something was wrong with elderly people living alone.

Hayato Suzuki
Professional
soccer club
management

I do not normally wear a uniform for front-office work and was surprisingly nervous to attend our club meeting in one. I even brought an official Japan Professional Football League match ball to meet everyone's expectations. When people said, "It suits you!" I didn't show it on my face, but I was truly happy inside.

Kyoichi Suzuki
Physician

Our club's workwear meeting was inspired by one of Rotary's Avenues of Service that encourages members to contribute their vocational talents. The meeting's themes were: "What do you value most in your work?" and "How do you apply The Four-Way Test at work?" The conversations about real-life experiences were far more meaningful than any abstract discussion.

HANDBOOK

Club creation made easy

4 steps to a vibrant new club

You want to revitalize your Rotary club or start a new one altogether, but you don't know where to start. Your district leaders and Rotary staff are here to advise you. If you'd like some additional support through the process, there's an app for that — and a team of club innovation experts who can help.

The app, designed by the North American Club Creation team in Rotary Zone 33, takes you through a four-step process for refreshing or chartering a club — whether it's a stand-alone, companion, satellite, or impact club.

After creating an account, you'll set up a meeting with one of 27 specialists from the club creation team who will walk you through four consecutive steps, starting with your vision for your club. "We don't talk about attracting members until we get to step three," says Patrick Longano, a North Carolina assistant governor who co-created the process with Chris Jones, a past Rotary membership coordinator, now a member of Rotary's Membership Growth Committee. "You're never going to be able to sell, or attract people to, your club if you can't sell the vision of what you want your club to be in the community."

Within the app, which is available at clubcreationteam.org, you can send a prospective member an email providing a form for all their essential information. It then compiles that data into a spreadsheet that the club creation team can use to submit a charter application to Rotary International.

"We put a procedure in place that follows a system proven to get results," Longano explains. "We have to figure out a way to all row in the same direction." — ARNOLD R. GRAHL

Looking for additional ideas and resources? Visit rotary.org/membership and scroll to the "start a club" section.

1

Club visioning

The specialist helps the Rotary members dream up an ideal club, consider what community needs it will address, and envision how it will make an impact.



2

Construction and cultivation

The specialist answers questions and helps resolve concerns that can arise such as: “How come they’ll pay less?” or “Will this draw members from my club?”

3

Membership attraction

The specialist works with the club to set a target number and date and create buckets to represent subsets — essentially community segments that haven’t been reached — that will be essential in meeting its goals.

4

Celebrating the club charter

As Longano explains, “We always say, it’s three steps and a party.”





TRUSTEE CHAIR'S MESSAGE

Care without borders

As I sat beside my father in the hospital, listening to the quiet rhythm of machines that now spoke more steadily than his own voice, life felt stripped down to its essentials. Serious illness has a way of doing that. It reveals what matters most, and it reminds us — sometimes gently, sometimes painfully — of what should matter to all of us.

My father was facing advanced cancer. The path was uneven and often cruel, yet even in that difficult space I was struck by a simple truth: Every person, everywhere, deserves access to care that honors their dignity. Not just treatment but compassion. Not just medicine but the assurance that their life holds value.

Watching nurses move with practiced grace and doctors offer both honesty and hope, I was struck by the thought that millions will never experience this level of support. Not because their lives matter less but because access to care remains uneven across countries and communities. This is not a political argument; it is a human one.

Every family deserves the same chance at healing. Through my years in Rotary, I have come to understand that The Rotary Foundation shows us how this belief is shared across cultures and nations.

At a time when international development funding for disease prevention

and treatment is contracting, vital health projects risk losing momentum. Our Foundation — and you, our members — provide the community-driven support needed to keep that from happening.

We are funding vaccines in Pakistan, training health workers in Mozambique, and strengthening fragile health systems in Guatemala. Through the Foundation, international cooperation is not an abstract ideal. It is a responsibility, achievable when people choose to act with generosity, partnership, and shared humanity. I am so proud of our collective leadership.

Sitting there, holding my father's hand as he drifted in and out of sleep, I was reminded of how fragile and precious life is. The measure of a just world is not found in its wealth or its power but in how fiercely it protects the vulnerable.

My father's fight was personal; sadly, he died in June. But the fight for equitable, compassionate health care that honors every life equally is universal. It belongs to all of us. Through your generosity and commitment to our Foundation — and through the simple act of caring across borders — we move closer to a world where no one is left behind.

JENNIFER JONES

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?

MEMBER CODE OF CONDUCT

All members (Rotarians and Rotaractors) are expected to:

1. Act with integrity and high ethical standards in their personal and professional lives
2. Treat others fairly by using respectful language, being supportive, fostering a welcoming environment, and honoring all individual member characteristics
3. Use their professional skills through Rotary to improve people's quality of life in their own communities and elsewhere in the world
4. Avoid behavior that reflects adversely on Rotary or other Rotary members
5. Follow all codes of conduct for any Rotary-related event.

CALENDAR

August events

THE CRAFTING CROWD

Event: Craft Show

Host: Rotary Club of Lititz, Pennsylvania

What it benefits: Local nonprofits and scholarships

Date: 8 August

More than 400 vendors display and sell their handmade wares in downtown Lititz at this outdoor event. A town tradition for nearly a half century, the show is expected to draw more than 50,000 people. After filling their shopping bags with crafts, visitors are encouraged to dine at a nearby restaurant; those short on time can grab a bite from several food trucks stationed along the streets.

GO FOR A RIDE

Event: Criterium Festival

Host: Rotary Club of Edwardsville, Illinois

What it benefits: Local and international projects

Date: 15 August

This festival features a series of high-speed bike races that draw hundreds of cyclists seeking to win a portion of the \$15,000 prize purse. There are also free races for kids and a casual community ride. All races take place on a closed street circuit in downtown Edwardsville. Participants and spectators can enjoy live music and food and drinks throughout the day; a kids' zone includes an art tent and games.

PASS THE SYRUP

Event: Pancake Breakfast

Host: Rotary Club of Gloucester, Massachusetts

What it benefits: Local and international projects

Date: 15 August

For more than 45 years, the club has served up stacks of flapjacks at this



ENTER THE DRAGON

Event: Lake Superior Dragon Boat Festival

Host: Rotary Club of Superior, Wisconsin

What it benefits: Local nonprofits, including Second Harvest Northland

Dates: 21-22 August

At this annual event, dozens of teams paddle dragon boats, a type of watercraft that originated in ancient China, in a bay off Wisconsin's northern coast. The festival begins on Friday night with a 5K run/walk followed by sprint boat races in which the vessels are illuminated by glow sticks. On Saturday, a series of traditional 400-meter boat races are held. Both days feature food trucks, a beer garden, and music.

annual breakfast. The Saturday morning event kicks off the two-day Gloucester Waterfront Festival at the historic Stage Fort Park, where English settlers arrived in 1623. Funds raised through the breakfast have supported club projects ranging from the installation of a playground at the park to the donation of generators to a school and a medical center in Rwanda.

GOLDEN YEARS

Event: Seniors Trip to Barkerville

Host: Rotary Club of Quesnel, British Columbia

Date: 20 August

This outing, which the club has organized since 1962, brings more than 100 senior citizens to an old mining town that was at the center of an 1860s gold rush and is now a living history museum. The expedition starts with tea and biscuits at the Quesnel branch of the Royal Canadian

Legion, followed by a bus ride to Barkerville, where participants can explore dozens of restored buildings. The experience includes a boxed lunch and a ticket to a performance at the town's theater.

FAMILY-FRIENDLY FUN

Event: Town Fair

Host: Rotary Club of Amherst, Massachusetts

What it benefits: Local nonprofits and scholarships

Dates: 28-30 August

The club's annual fair is a beloved summertime activity in the quaint New England college town of Amherst, where poets Emily Dickinson and Robert Frost once lived. For three days, the town common is filled with carnival rides and attractions, including a Ferris wheel, a merry-go-round, and a climbing wall. Food and drinks will be on sale.

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



PROGRAMS OF SCALE

A life-changing collaboration

Rotary to scale proven water and sanitation initiative in Haiti

In rural Haiti, only 55 percent of people have access to at least basic drinking water services — water from an improved source that requires no more than a 30-minute round trip to collect it. And even for those who do, conflict, recurring natural disasters, and poor management can often disrupt access, leaving millions of Haitians highly vulnerable to waterborne illnesses.

In May, Rotary announced a program called Collaboration for Sustainable

Water and Sanitation Systems in Haiti, which will scale a national initiative led by Rotary clubs in Haiti and the Caribbean. The new effort aims to improve access to clean and safe water, sanitation, and hygiene while strengthening demand, governance, and sustainable use for approximately 70,000 people in three local government areas by 2030.

Collaboration for Sustainable Water and Sanitation Systems in Haiti builds on the work of the Haiti National Water,

Sanitation and Hygiene Initiative, or HANWASH, carried out with Haiti's water and sanitation agency, Rotarian-founded Haiti Outreach, and other non-profits and governmental bodies. Implementing partner HANWASH Inc. has found proven success with an approach featuring local leadership, improved delivery, and government alignment. Over nearly a decade, the program has worked with 11 water service providers to maintain infrastructure and sustain paid access to clean water and sanitation.

“Rotary, through its HANWASH program, supports the Haitian government's efforts to achieve the goals of access to clean, safe drinking water for all as well as ending open defecation in rural and peri-urban communities,” says Edwige Petit, director of sanitation at Haiti's water agency.

In this new program, Rotary mem-

bers will serve as trusted conveners who bring together government, civil society, and other water program implementers around a shared vision and plan. The role of Rotary members is evolving from direct implementers to champions of sustainable, systems-level change.

The program will strengthen community capacity to develop, maintain, and expand pay-for-service clean water and sanitation services using three main methods:

1. Increase demand. The program will work with women and other local leaders in 40 urban and rural communities to build demand for high-quality water services and promote the benefits of fee-based clean water access and healthy hygiene practices, including handwashing and avoiding open defecation.

2. Expand and sustain access.

The program will coordinate the construction and restoration of clean water systems while training local operators and community leaders to strengthen governance and ensure sustainable management and monitoring of water services.

3. Strengthen governance.

The program will drive accountability and community buy-in. Water service providers in the selected communities will contribute 10 percent of their revenue to regional and national regulatory bodies to further expand clean water and sanitation services.

“In a fragile setting like Haiti, clean water and sanitation is one of the biggest challenges the country faces, and Rotary aims to address it head on,” says Marlène Gay, a member of the Rotary Club of Petion-Ville in Haiti.

The model is based on work by Haiti Outreach, co-founded by Neil Van Dine, a member of the Rotary E-Club of WASH. Since 1997, Haiti Outreach has helped direct the development of a community-led model for safe water access in rural Haiti built on durable infrastructure, local leadership, and long-term management. This approach has reached more than 300,000 people across 550 communities and helped shape water and sanitation practices nationally. “We are proud to partner through Rotary to

help scale this Haitian-led model across the country,” Van Dine says.

Collaboration for Sustainable Water and Sanitation Systems in Haiti is the sixth recipient of Rotary’s Programs of Scale award — an annual competitive grant process that awards funding to an evidence-based program that aligns with one of Rotary’s causes and has the capability to scale up and help more people. The programs are sponsored by Rotary members in collaboration with local communities and partner organizations.

“Rotary members across the Caribbean and Haiti are working side by side with local partners to deliver lasting solutions that protect health and strengthen communities,” says 2025-26

Rotary International President Francesco Arezzo. “By supporting Collaboration for Sustainable Water and Sanitation Systems in Haiti, Rotary will be able to help more people gain access to safe water and sanitation — one of the most basic human needs — and lay the groundwork for a healthier, more resilient Haiti.” ■

An external review of Programs of Scale is underway to help Rotary build on the success of the initiative, which provides members with resources to implement large-scale, high-impact programs. The Rotary Foundation Trustees will receive the final findings and recommendations in October. Because of the timing, there will not be a 2027 application cycle.

FINALISTS

Home management of malaria in Papua New Guinea

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

■ **Proposal:** Rotarians Against Malaria Papua New Guinea has been combating malaria in the country since 1997 and began training community volunteers to test and treat people for malaria in 2020. The effort has reached 25 percent of the high-burden communities and trained 2,700 community volunteers. The program now seeks to train and support an additional 2,100 volunteers in order to reach another 25 percent of the high-burden communities. This would allow residents to be diagnosed and treated for malaria faster, reducing severe illness and death for 500,000 people.

Empowering highland communities in Thailand

■ **Areas of focus:** Water, sanitation, and hygiene; community economic development

■ **Proposal:** This program aims to support 126 villages inhabited by traditional cultures collectively known as highland peoples. Almost 90 percent of households in these villages lack a reliable water supply, and when children are affected by waterborne illnesses, families spend 40 percent of their limited income on care. To address these needs, the program seeks to establish community-owned water and sanitation systems and strengthen community-based enterprises centered on coffee cultivation, livestock production, and traditional crafts.

To learn more about the impact of Programs of Scale awardees, visit my.rotary.org/programs-scale-grants.



Park Güell

2027 CONVENTION

Stay for a vacay

An added bonus of any Rotary International Convention is how it transports you to the heart of an exciting cultural destination — and Barcelona is no exception. The host city for the 26-30 June convention is one of the world's hottest tourist destinations, drawing millions to experience its vibrant street life, stunning art and architecture, and rustic Catalan cuisine.

It's also one of the best bases for exploring southern Europe and the Mediterranean. So, after you've discovered a world of cultures in the convention's House of Friendship and taken in the global entertainment and inspiring mainstage events, consider staying in Spain or touring Europe for a quick and easy vacation.

Barcelona is home to a wealth of family-friendly attractions, from the fairy-tale vibe of Park Güell to the sandy beachfront at La Barceloneta. To venture farther afield, the city's easy rail and air connections can whisk you off to the resort islands of Mallorca and Ibiza. Or head inland through Spain's mountainous north to the lush Atlantic coastal region, the endpoint of the fabled Camino de Santiago pilgrimage route.

Barcelona's high-speed rail hub also connects you to Madrid and other major cities throughout Spain as well as across the border to Paris, Lyon, Marseille, and other French cities.

Looking for travel buddies? Join one of the exclusive experiences and tours that Rotary's convention planners are designing. Or bring your family and travel companions with you. They will love the convention's big-stage sessions with their dazzling entertainment, renowned inspirational speakers, and stirring moments (think opening flag ceremony!). It's a vacation made easy. ■

Registration opens in September. Sign up for email updates and special promotional rates at convention.rotary.org.

CROSSWORD

Time for a change

By Victor Fleming
Rotary Club of Little Rock, Arkansas

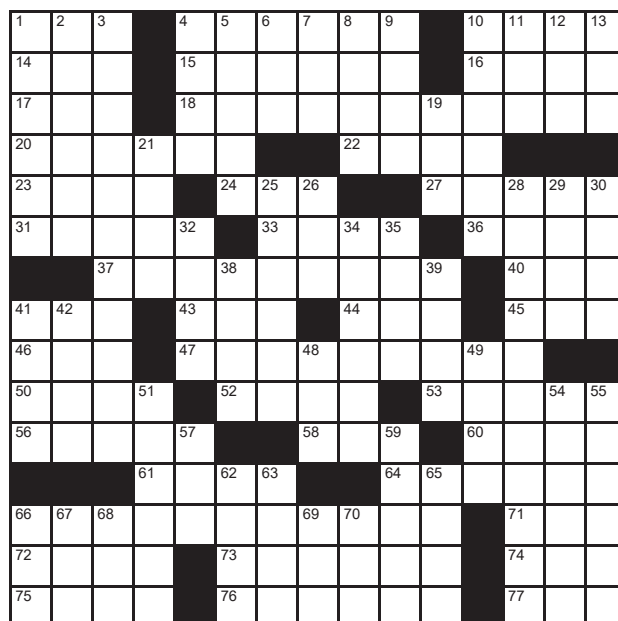
ACROSS

- 1 "Say again?"
- 4 Sicilian volcano
- 10 Land size meas.
- 14 Smeltery input
- 15 "Sakes alive!"
- 16 Naturalist John
- 17 Not yet slated (abbr.)
- 18 *Life Is in the* ____ (2020 book by 66-Across)
- 20 Have a chat with
- 22 Hard rain?
- 23 "... a lamp ____ my feet"
- 24 Swampy ground
- 27 Nut in a pie
- 31 Iranian faith
- 33 *The Secret of* ____
- 36 "Great" dog
- 37 Facing adversity, figuratively
- 40 Hosp. workers
- 41 ____ *Doubtfire*
- 43 DiCaprio, to his friends
- 44 35mm camera design
- 45 Gobble up
- 46 Greek isle
- 47 Concept defined in the article on p. 36
- 50 Counterfeit coin
- 52 Star of *Elephant Boy* (1937)
- 53 Atlanta's train system
- 56 Anti-slip shoe part

DOWN

- 1 Home-spa device
- 2 Champaign's neighbor
- 3 Medical 47-Across
- 4 Suffragette Lucretia
- 5 Beat rhythmically
- 6 Author LeShan
- 7 Bill featuring Hamilton
- 8 Poet Ogden ____
- 9 Met moment
- 10 Flashed one's pearly whites
- 11 Quid pro ____
- 12 Hr. division
- 13 Tax collection agcy.
- 19 Gratuity

- 21 Meditation question
- 25 ____ kind
- 26 *Saving Private Ryan* extras
- 28 Professional 47-Across
- 29 Quindlen or Sewell
- 30 Robin's home
- 32 "____ all be okay"
- 34 Muslim place of worship
- 35 Disney-owned streaming service
- 38 "____ an Englishman" (*H.M.S. Pinafore* song)
- 39 Baby buggy
- 41 Catch-all category (abbr.)
- 42 Biscuit alternative
- 48 Decline
- 49 Pitcher Jim who won 16 Gold Gloves
- 51 Petrol container
- 54 Color, as a T-shirt
- 55 Fainthearted
- 57 "Fore" site?
- 59 Economist's finding
- 62 ____ effort
- 63 Cambodia's Phnom ____
- 65 Vicinity
- 66 Audi competitor
- 67 Spanish king
- 68 "Anchors Aweigh" org.
- 69 Branch of the U.N.
- 70 *Hamilton* composer ____-Manuel Miranda



Solution on page 63



One of a kind

This melon of mysterious origin has its own festival and ice cream flavor

The origin of the Howell Honey Sweet melon is the stuff of lore. What's mostly agreed upon is that the first one was planted in 1925 by August Schmitt, a horticulturist in southeast Michigan's Livingston County, which remains the only place you can get a genuine Howell Honey Sweet. But whether it was found by accident from a melon Schmitt ate at an Ohio restaurant, obtained from the melon-farming brother of a friend, or created from a competition among local farmers, well, maybe there's a seed of truth in all of them.

The melon itself is "like a cantaloupe but fleshier and juicier," says Howell Rotarian Sandie Cortez. It's typically harvested during the first two weeks of August and celebrated at the annual Howell Melon Festival. That's where Rotary comes in.

A FESTIVE SPIRIT: The first Howell Melon Festival was held in 1960. Centered on a parade, it featured "melon maids" who — instead of throwing candy to spectators like some marchers — handed out melons. Now, the festival's melon delights include melon mimosas, melon wine, melon milkshakes, melon cupcakes, and ...

MELON ICE CREAM: After a local ice cream shop stopped making melon ice cream, Howell's Rotary club took it on. "It's awesome to be able to bring a tradition back," Cortez says, "to celebrate something fun." Rotarians work with a local dairy, which delivers the dessert in 3-gallon pails. The treat is scooped for sale ahead of time with the help of 150 volunteers, including Rotarians, Interactors, and Cub Scouts. "You can't do it out on site," Cortez explains. "The lines get too long." ■

Sandie Cortez
Rotary Club of
Howell, Michigan

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

THANK YOU TO OUR: DIAMOND-LEVEL SPONSOR



GOLD-LEVEL SPONSORS



SILVER-LEVEL SPONSORS



SUPPORTER-LEVEL SPONSORS

Business Connect

Cal India Travel

Digibionic Lifestyle Co., Ltd.

Japanese Head Spa



BARCELONA



ROTARY INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION

SAVE THE DATE

BARCELONA, SPAIN | 26-30 JUNE 2027

Registration opens in September 2026 at convention.rotary.org.

