

# Rotary

JANUARY 2024

MAGAZINE

Rotary Flight 2024, you are cleared for takeoff page 11

Exclusive: Rotary's first first gentleman tells all page 34

Preventing cervical cancer: a statistical snapshot page 54

## THE RACE TO SAVE LIVES



As the opioid crisis tightens its grip on communities across America, Rotary members step up to help break its hold page 24

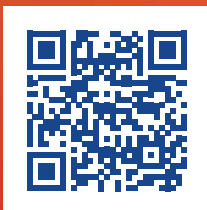


# CREATE HOPE in the WORLD

When we nurture peace, opportunities,  
and one another, we help heal the  
world and create lasting change.

## Let's create hope by:

- Confronting stigmas, expanding access, and raising awareness about the importance of mental health
- Fostering understanding and strengthening connections through virtual exchanges
- Unlocking the power of girls and women around the world



Learn more at  
[rotary.org/initiatives23-24](https://rotary.org/initiatives23-24)



## Light the path out of dark days

In difficult times like these, it's impossible to avoid feeling heartbroken over the devastation and loss of life caused by war and destruction.

Rotary always stands against harming and displacing civilian populations and using armed aggression instead of pursuing peaceful solutions. We advocate for the observance and respect of international law. We believe in strong action to defend and promote peace, even in the darkest of times.

But we also take our position as an international, nonpolitical, nonreligious organization seriously. To respect the global perspectives and experiences of our members, and to work most effectively in our peacebuilding efforts, we do not choose sides in conflicts.

Rotary is made up of 1.4 million people in communities all over the globe who are united in our commitment to building a peaceful world. We strive to ensure that our words and actions prioritize the health and safety of our global membership and the communities where we live and serve.

Our members seek to offer humanitarian assistance to those affected by conflict, and our global reach requires that we promote peacebuilding and conflict prevention with cross-cultural, cross-border connections and friendship through Rotary.

For decades, Rotary has harnessed these connections to carry out service projects, support peace fellowships and scholarships, and establish programs like Rotary Peace Centers to help build lasting peace. Our members also take action to promote Positive Peace, addressing the underlying causes of conflict,

including poverty, discrimination, ethnic tension, lack of access to education, and unequal distribution of resources.

Rotary members who wish to wage peace can use district grants and Rotary Foundation global grants to support projects with other Rotary members that help refugees and displaced people, provide medical support, and more worldwide. Members can also work with or join peace-focused Rotary Action Groups, Friendship Exchanges, Fellowships, and intercountry committees. And District Designated Funds or district cash can support our peacebuilding and conflict prevention efforts.

Members and nonmembers alike can learn more about peacebuilding through the Rotary Positive Peace Academy, a free online course available to anyone with an internet connection. You can find it at [positivepeace.academy/rotary](https://positivepeace.academy/rotary).

There is no denying that incidents of violence and atrocities being perpetuated around the world seem to be escalating. Global peace is fragile, and the stakes are getting higher.

Still, we know that it is possible to bring all people together to work toward a shared goal. Rotary members do so every day in every part of the world. May our ability to unify in common purpose be a spark that helps light the path out of these dark days.

Together, let's *Create Hope in the World*.

**R. GORDON R. MCINALLY**  
*President, Rotary International*



# WELCOME



---

**YOU ARE HERE:** Carmel, Indiana

---

**WELL ROUNDED:** Carmel has an unusual claim to fame as the roundabout capital of the U.S. Jim Brainard, a member of the Rotary Club of Carmel who served as the city's mayor for 27 years, encouraged roundabout construction after witnessing the benefits while studying at Oxford University in England. Carmel's roundabouts now number 150. Rotarian Nancy Heck, the city's community relations director, says more are planned, and by 2025 there will be fewer than five stoplights left.

---

**A VIRTUOUS CIRCLE:** Roundabouts force cars to slow, making intersections safer for pedestrians. Crashes involving injuries in Carmel have declined about 80 percent, says Heck. And without red lights, cars burn less gasoline, reducing emissions.

---

**THE CLUB:** With about 140 members, the Rotary Club of Carmel has a robust community presence, says President Arnold Elston. Rotary volunteers run CarmelFest each July for Independence Day. With a parade, fireworks, food, and entertainment, the event attracts families from around the state. "Everyone is willing to pitch in and everyone has a voice," Elston says of the club.

# Rotary

MAGAZINE

January 2024

**EDITOR IN CHIEF**

**Wen Huang**

**ART DIRECTOR**

**Jacqueline Cantu**

**MANAGING EDITOR**

**Jason Keyser**

**PRODUCTION MANAGER**

**Marc Dukes**

**SENIOR EDITOR**

**Geoffrey Johnson**

**DIGITAL EDITOR**

**Kristin Morris**

**SENIOR STAFF WRITER**

**Diana Schoberg**

**EDITOR**

**JP Swenson**

**EDITOR**

**John M. Cunningham**

**EDITORIAL COORDINATOR**

**Vera Robinson**

**COPY EDITOR**

**Rose Shilling**

**CIRCULATION MANAGER**

**Katie McCoy**

**Send ad inquiries and materials to:**

Marc Dukes, *Rotary* magazine, One Rotary Center, 1560 Sherman Ave., 14th floor, Evanston, IL 60201; phone 847-866-3092; email [adv@rotary.org](mailto:adv@rotary.org)

**Media kit:** [rotary.org/mediakit](http://rotary.org/mediakit)

**To contact us:** *Rotary* magazine, One Rotary Center, 1560 Sherman Ave., Evanston, IL 60201; phone 847-866-3206; email [magazine@rotary.org](mailto:magazine@rotary.org)

**Website:** [rotary.org/magazine](http://rotary.org/magazine)

**To submit an article:** Send stories, queries, tips, and photographs by mail or email (high-resolution digital images only). We assume no responsibility for unsolicited materials.

**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 (847-424-5217 or -5216; [data@rotary.org](mailto: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](mailto: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 ©2024 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 ©2024 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 January 2024 issue, volume 202, number 7, of *Rotary*. Publication number: USPS 548-810. ISSN 2694-443X (print); ISSN 2694-4448 (online).

## GENERAL OFFICERS OF ROTARY INTERNATIONAL, 2023-24

**PRESIDENT**

**R. Gordon R. McNally**  
South Queensferry, Scotland

**PRESIDENT-ELECT**

**Stephanie A. Urchick**  
McMurray, Pennsylvania, USA

**VICE PRESIDENT**

**Patricia Merryweather-Arges**  
Naperville, Illinois, USA

**TREASURER**

**Drew Kessler**  
North Rockland (Haverstraw),  
New York, USA

**DIRECTORS**

**Antônio Henrique Barbosa de Vasconcelos**  
Fortaleza-Alagadiço, Brazil

**Alberto Cecchini**

Roma Nord-Est, Italy

**Ghim Bok Chew**

Bugis Junction, Singapore

**Patrick D. Chisanga**

Nkwazi, Zambia

**Eve Conway-Ghazi**

Redbridge, England

**Daniel C. Himelspach**

Denver Mile High, Colorado, USA

**Jeremy S. Hurst**

Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands

**Hans-Hermann Kasten**

Aachen-Frankenburg, Germany

**Muhammad Faiz Kidwai**

Karachi Karsaz, Pakistan

**Lena J. Mjerskaug**

Enebakk, Norway

**Anirudha Roy Chowdhury**

Calcutta Mega City, India

**Yoshio Sato**

Okayama-South, Japan

**Beth Stubbs**

Maryville, Tennessee, USA

**T.N. "Raju" Subramanian**

Deonar, India

**Yeong Ho Yun**

Masan South, Korea

**GENERAL SECRETARY**

**John Hewko**  
Kyiv, Ukraine

## TRUSTEES OF THE ROTARY FOUNDATION, 2023-24

**CHAIR**

**Barry Rassin**  
East Nassau, Bahamas

**CHAIR-ELECT**

**Mark Daniel Maloney**  
Decatur, Alabama, USA

**VICE CHAIR**

**Bharat S. Pandya**  
Borivli, India

**TRUSTEES**

**Martha Peak Helman**  
Boothbay Harbor, Maine, USA

**Chun-Wook Hyun**

Seoul-Hansoo, Korea

**Jennifer E. Jones**

Windsor-Roseland, Ontario,  
Canada

**Holger Knaack**

Herzogtum Lauenburg-Mölln,  
Germany

**Hsiu-Ming Lin**

Taipei Tungteh, Taiwan

**Larry A. Lunsford**

Kansas City-Plaza, Missouri,  
USA

**Geeta K. Manek**

Muthaiga, Kenya

**Aziz Memon**

Karachi, Pakistan

**Akira Miki**

Himeji, Japan

**Greg E. Podd**

Evergreen, Colorado, USA

**Carlos Sandoval Delgado**

San Nicolás de los Garza,  
Mexico

**Dennis J. Shore**

Hawthorn, Australia

**GENERAL SECRETARY**

**John Hewko**  
Kyiv, Ukraine





≡ **ENTER TO WIN** ≡

**A Fully Restored**  
**1967 Corvette Convertible**  
**327/350 4-Speed!**



**Rotary**

Club of Broomfield  
[www.BroomfieldRotary.org](http://www.BroomfieldRotary.org)



Sweepstakes End  
April 17, 2024  
Drawing Date  
April 25, 2024



Scan QR Code for  
**25% MORE** Entries

# COVER

January 2024  
Vol. 202, No. 7

## FEATURES

### 24

#### First response

With opioid addiction stuck at crisis levels, Rotary members join the race to save lives

By Elizabeth Hewitt

### 34

#### The true confessions of Rotary's first first gentleman

On 1 July 2022, Jennifer Jones became Rotary's first female president — which left her husband, Nick Krayacich, in a unique, challenging, and at times enviable position

### 40

#### A survivor's legacy

Sam Harris lost his childhood to the Holocaust. He is making sure a new generation of young people can thrive.

By Neil Steinberg

Photography by Monika Lozinska

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

## CONNECT

- 8 **Staff corner**
- 9 **Editor's note**
- 11 **The specialist**  
An aircraft dispatcher keeps the friendly skies safe

## OUR WORLD

- 12 **A solution hiding in plain sight**  
Inexpensive vitamin B9 can prevent spina bifida. Why are thousands still born with the condition?
- 15 **News you can use**  
An educator goes from *Rotary* reader to *Rotary* doer
- 16 **People of action around the globe**
- 18 **Birth of a hospital**  
Working among the Batwa people of Uganda, a California doctor discovered the power of collaboration, the joy of service, and a slice of heaven
- 22 **Giving is an investment strategy**  
A financial adviser got more business by giving back and says you will too

## OUR CLUBS

- 48 **Virtual visit**  
Rotary Club of San Miguel de Allende-Midday, Mexico
- 50 **Rotary in the news**
- 54 **A preventable killer**  
Why cervical cancer deaths remain high, and what Rotary is doing about it
- 56 **Trustee chair's message**
- 59 **Calendar**
- 60 **In memoriam**  
James L. Lacy, 1930-2023
- 61 **Rotary Action Groups | Foundation retains top Charity Navigator rating**
- 62 **2024 convention | Crossword**
- 64 **Share the love**  
Celebrated in song and verse, kimchi is at the heart of Korean traditions

**On the cover:** Rotary clubs are part of a movement by community organizations and local governments to equip people with nasal spray treatments to reverse opioid overdoses.

Photo by Matthew Hatcher



# 64





Rotarian and Holocaust survivor Sam Harris stands outside the Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center. International Holocaust Remembrance Day is 27 January.

STAFF CORNER

## Nancy Hoffman

*Manager of gift acceptance and administration,  
The Rotary Foundation*



**I'm a lifelong Evanstonian** and come from a family with a long history of love of the outdoors — fishing, camping, and hiking. My mother loved fishing. She and my father would take us children on marathon camping and fishing trips with other families. Thanks to my parents, I have become an avid nature lover.

**Nowadays, I often go on wilderness treks** with my two daughters, Anna and Grace. Every year we paddle into the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness in northern Minnesota. We have gone hut-to-hut hiking in Norway, trekking in the Sacred Valley in Peru, and section hiking on the Appalachian Trail. I've always enjoyed snorkeling and am a certified scuba diver.

**Lawyering runs in the family.** My father was a trial lawyer. Even in grade school, I knew I wanted to follow his career path, in part because it was a profession that many women didn't pursue at that time. I wanted to do something that was a little off-limits. Now one of my daughters is in law school, following the family tradition. I paid my way through law school, working for an insurance company during the day and attending classes at night. After graduation, I was hired by a large national law firm. As a commercial litigator, I honed my writing, public speaking, and analytical skills. However, the job involved a lot of traveling. I had small children and my work-life balance was out of whack. So, I took time off to raise my children.

**Later, I became hooked on philanthropy.** Since I'm good with numbers and budgeting, I served on a volunteer basis as a treasurer on the boards of several nonprofits, such as the McGaw

YMCA in Evanston and the Women's Board of Chicago's Adler Planetarium.

**In 2010, I joined The Rotary Foundation** where I worked with a donor advised fund and then became a planned giving officer, before moving to the operational side of fundraising. My team supports our professional and volunteer fundraisers worldwide, administering major gift pledges, named endowments, bequest commitments, realized estate gifts, and District Designated Funds. I oversee gift and pledge agreements, ensuring that gift proposals comply with Foundation policy. I also evaluate proposed gifts of complex assets, primarily real estate, for the Gift Acceptance Committee.

**While participating in a National Immunization Day in India in 2016,** I fell in love with the country. One of the things I enjoy about travel is learning more about a country's history. India's rich history is everywhere you look. I have gone back several times. My first business trip abroad after COVID-19 restrictions were eased was to Delhi and Goa. My nephew joined me later and we traveled to Kerala, a southern Indian state famous for its beautiful beaches, tea and spice plantations, wildlife sanctuaries, and food.

**I am a big history nerd.** When current events seem overwhelming, I retreat into reading about my favorite eras, especially Tudor England with its pageantry, soap-opera-like storylines, and exceptionally dark politics.

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

- rotary.org/magazine
- on.rotary.org/podcast
- yourletters@rotary.org
- @rotary
- /rotary
- @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.

## Editor's note

### THE POWER OF STORIES

I met Norm Rogers while booth-hopping for story ideas inside the House of Friendship during the 2022 Rotary International Convention in Houston. Rogers, a member of the Rotary Club of District 7730 Passport in North Carolina, happened to be staffing a kiosk with blue coin buckets. As I paused to pick up a brochure, he told me the incredible story behind those blue buckets and the Coins for Alzheimer's Research Trust, or CART Fund, which raises money from Rotary members to support Alzheimer's research.

He told me about the late Roger Ackerman, a Rotary member in Sumter, South Carolina, who founded CART after losing his mother-in-law to Alzheimer's. And Rogers mentioned his wife, Nancy, who struggled with the disease for a decade before her death at age 61. To honor her, Rogers had joined the CART effort. He and other Rotary members drive hundreds of miles each year to visit Rotary clubs and encourage others to donate. Over the past 25 years, CART has raised \$11 million to put toward the search of a cure.

We featured the story in the May 2023 issue of this magazine and on our podcast. The response was overwhelming. The podcast episode broke a listenership record. Letters and phone calls poured in, both to the magazine and to CART. One anonymous Rotary member in North Carolina wrote a \$1 million check.

This is what *Rotary* magazine does best: inspiring and uniting Rotary members, prompting them to take action, and motivating members of the public to join this great organization of ours.

None of this would be possible without subscribers like you. For nearly all of its 113-year history, this magazine has been solely supported by subscriptions and advertising. Last year's \$1 an issue subscription price was the same as it was in 1992, even though the costs of producing quality global journalism have surged and ad revenue has declined.

The RI Board of Directors last year approved a *Rotary* magazine subscription fee adjustment. Starting this month,



the fee is increasing from \$1 per issue to \$1.50. For those living outside the U.S. and Canada, the fee for the print issue is increasing from \$2 to \$3 due to high postage cost.

This new rate will allow *Rotary* magazine to continue investing in high-quality content as well as our digital transformation. As we preserve and improve our traditional print magazine, you also have the choice to receive the digital edition available on smartphone, tablet, and computer. In 2022, the magazine created its *Rotary Voices* podcast, home to insightful conversations with experts and Rotary members as well as audio versions of our most compelling stories. And last month, we launched a re-envisioned *Rotary* magazine website at [rotary.org/magazine](https://rotary.org/magazine), which enables us to bring you even more timely Rotary stories in engaging formats.

The story of Rogers and other Rotary members who have turned pocket change into research on Alzheimer's inspires us to maximize your investment and build a vibrant Rotary information powerhouse.

We thank you for your support. Through inspiring Rotary stories — your stories — we help connect you with this amazing global movement that is Rotary.

**WEN HUANG**

*Editor in chief*

# SINGAPORE

to attend the  
**Rotary International  
2024 Convention**

## Pre and Post Convention Tours

- Vietnam/Cambodia
- Malaysia
- Thailand
- Bali, Indonesia
- Japan



Airfare to  
Singapore

71 years experience taking  
Rotarians to Rotary Conventions

### HOWARD TOURS

(800) 475-2260 toll free  
(510) 834-2260

Travel@HowardTours.net  
www.HowardTours.net

www.facebook.com/HowardTours  
CA Seller of Travel: 101526-10

**MIRACLE  
IN THE  
MARA**

An Unforgettable Story of a  
Young Maasai Warrior's Vision

TERRY PHILIP WILSON

Stories from Rotarian visits  
to southwestern Kenya

Available on Amazon

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

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

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

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

**WHAT WILL YOU  
WATCH TODAY?**

[www.youtube.com/rotaryinternational](http://www.youtube.com/rotaryinternational)

watch. learn. connect.

**FIND A CLUB**

ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD!



Get Rotary's free Club Locator app and find a meeting wherever you go!  
[www.rotary.org/clublocator](http://www.rotary.org/clublocator)



## THE SPECIALIST

# Eye on the sky

*An aircraft dispatcher keeps  
the friendly skies safe*

**studied aviation flight technology** at Purdue University. In addition to taking standard courses, I had flight lessons three days a week. I also trained in Boeing 727 simulators, like the ones used in commercial airline pilot training. By graduation in 2009, I had my commercial pilot's license.

**My goal was to fly for a commercial airline.** At that time, U.S. airlines were shedding staff in the aftermath of the financial meltdown. So, I planned to join the U.S. Navy, but severe injuries from a boating accident grounded me for a year. I joined a major airline in 2013, eventually becoming an aircraft dispatcher. I work at the company's network operations center in Chicago, or, as some call it, the brain of an airline. It's the 24/7 hub where 2,500-plus daily flights are planned and managed.

**Aircraft dispatchers are known as “the pilots on the ground.”** We have extensive training in navigation, aviation weather, and aircraft systems, and

many of us are pilots. The captain and the dispatcher are jointly responsible for the safety of every flight. A commercial flight cannot operate without the dispatcher. We plan every aspect of the flight, including the runway, route, altitude, speed, and amount of fuel. I typically plan about 30 flights and have 15 flights in the air that I'm following during my shift. One of the biggest challenges is weather. Dispatchers are responsible for routing flights around storms. Turbulence is another major safety concern. We're constantly monitoring the system and alerting pilots. So when you're on a flight and you see the “fasten your seat belt” light, it's because a dispatcher like me has messaged the pilot.

**We are also responsible for in-flight mechanical issues.** Recently, I had a technical issue on a transpacific flight. The captain called me via satellite, and I conferenced in a mechanic to troubleshoot. Ultimately, the captain and I had to decide: Are we safe to continue? In this case, we were. Commercial aircrafts are built with redundancy so when something fails, there's typically a backup, and that backup often also has a backup.

**My advice to Rotary travelers is to book the first flight of the day.** Typically, the plane has been inspected overnight and it's ready to go. And if the flight does get canceled, there will typically be a later one. — AS TOLD TO MICHAEL C. HARRIS

**Ashley Ness**  
■ Rotary Club  
of Evanston  
Nouveau, Illinois  
■ Aircraft  
dispatcher

## MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH

# A solution hiding in plain sight

*Inexpensive vitamin B9 can prevent spina bifida. Why are thousands born each year with the condition?*

**T**he highlands of Ethiopia are filled with lentil farms. It's a mighty legume rich in the natural form of folate, a vitamin recommended for women who can become pregnant to help prevent congenital defects that result in life-long medical problems or even death. And yet, when Patricia O'Neill and her late husband, Marinus "Dick" Koning, traveled from their home in Bend, Oregon, to Ethiopia for a humanitarian visit several years ago, they encountered people who had no idea. In one emotional exchange, a farmer told them he wasn't aware that the neural tube disorder his child was born with might have been caused by a lack of folate, a substance in the lentils he sold.

"He was just heartbroken," recalls O'Neill, president of the ReachAnother Foundation, a philanthropic organization focused on treating and preventing neural tube defects in children, including spina bifida. She and Koning, who was a surgeon and member of the Rotary Club of Redmond, Oregon, founded the organization in 2009 after an earlier visit to Ethiopia. "People first have to be aware of the problem, and then understand there is a solution to the problem — and that it's not just treatment, it's also prevention," O'Neill says.

Every year, more than 300,000 children worldwide are born with neural tube defects, such as spina bifida, when the spine fails to form properly in the first month of pregnancy. Another defect, hydrocephalus, involves a buildup of fluid in the

brain. Both are treatable but often cause serious impairments and require complex, lifelong care. And the condition anencephaly is an untreatable, fatal brain defect. Most of these cases could be prevented with folic acid, the synthetic form of folate. (Folate is also known as vitamin B9.) People need enough folic acid in their bodies before or shortly after becoming pregnant to help prevent these conditions at birth, and they can get the necessary amount through a dietary supplement or fortified food staples.

Ethiopia is particularly affected: More than 25,000 babies are born there each year with neural tube defects. About 80 percent of women of childbearing age in the country had blood folate concentrations low enough to cause a risk of birth defects if they had a baby, according to a recent study.

A growing number of Rotary members are working to change that. Their mission is to educate people around the world about folic acid, connect with policymakers to advocate for fortification of foods with the micronutrient (as some countries, including the United States, have done for decades), and help affected children get medical help.

Children born with severe cases of spina bifida, for example, often need multiple surgeries throughout their lives. They may have problems walking, have seizures, or require catheters. "And it doesn't go away," says Jogi Pattisapu, a retired pediatric neurosurgeon based in Orlando, Florida, and member of the Rotary Club of Lake Nona. "It's not like

**15**  
From Rotary reader to Rotary doer

**18**  
A doctor discovers the joy of service

**22**  
Giving is an investment strategy

Visit [rotary.org/our-causes](https://rotary.org/our-causes) to learn more about Rotary's work in maternal and child health and get involved.



By comparison, one case in the U.S. will cost a lifetime of care, in excess of a million dollars.”

Given the vastness of Rotary’s network and the generosity of its members, Peeler and others are hopeful that preventing more of these birth defects is within reach. “It’s almost a moral imperative, isn’t it? I mean, we have to do it,” says Jonathan Yaeger, also a member of the North Atlanta club.

With the help of a Rotary Foundation global grant, a project in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, is underway to provide folic acid supplementation to women who have already had a child with a neural tube defect. Compared to the general population, these women are at a significantly higher risk for a future pregnancy to be affected, and a high dose of the vitamin has been shown to reduce the chance of a neural tube defect in children born later. The project is a partnership between the Rotary clubs of North Atlanta and Addis Ababa-West.

Meanwhile, in India, another global grant is helping pay for children to receive spinal surgeries and aftercare, says Els Reynaers Kini, a member of the Rotary Club of Mumbai Sobo. Parents, especially in rural

somebody broke their leg and you fixed it. It’s unfortunately an ongoing, revolving door of issues.”

But those medical complications are only a shadow of the problem, explains Yakob Ahmed, a Rotarian in Ethiopia and country director of ReachAnother Foundation. Other pregnancies end in miscarriage or stillbirth, or are terminated when neural tube defects are identified prenatally. All of the outcomes have

implications not only for the children who deal with them directly but for their parents too. “So you can imagine the scale of this problem globally,” Ahmed says.

Preventing the problem, whether through vitamin supplements or food fortification, is affordable, says Ralph Peeler, a retired physician and member of the Rotary Club of North Atlanta. “It costs a few cents per person [per year] to fortify food.

**Top:** The Rotary Club of Visakhapatnam, India, co-hosts a spina bifida seminar for aspiring medical students. **Below:** A shipment of folic acid arrives in Ethiopia for a global grant-supported project.



BY THE NUMBERS

300,000

Number of children born each year with neural tube defects

1 in 100

Prevalence in low- and middle-income countries

80%

Portion of women of childbearing age in Ethiopia with folate deficiency

areas, often don't know how to help a child born with spina bifida and lack critical support, she says. "So they're not necessarily investing much in these children. As a result, typically these children don't go to school. They're being sidelined," she says.

In Colombia, Sonia Uribe, a member of the Rotary Club of Nuevo Medellín, is director of Fundación Mónica Uribe por Amor, which helps children with spina bifida. The foundation also developed a campaign with support from Rotary clubs to educate teenage girls about folate and good sources of it, including lentils, peas, and broccoli.

But perhaps the most impactful frontier is fortifying the food supply in more countries. Enriched foods, from breads to cereals and more, make it easy for many people to get the vitamin, helping ensure women have enough early in pregnancy to guard against birth defects. The World Health Organization passed a resolution last year recommending folic acid fortification. "One of

the most equitable interventions that one can do is to put folic acid in something everybody eats," says Godfrey Oakley, director of the Center for Spina Bifida Prevention at Emory University's Rollins School of Public Health and member of the Rotary Club of North Atlanta.

In the 1990s, Oakley was instrumental in the effort to fortify foods with folic acid in the United States, while supervising the birth defects division of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Eighty other countries are also fortifying cereal grains with folic acid. Yet more than 100 countries still don't have folic acid fortification programs, for reasons ranging from a lack of political will and concerns from the food industry to competing public health priorities. Oakley and others are hopeful Rotary's web of connections can help raise awareness and motivate policymakers to take action on fortification.

It's been more than 30 years since a pivotal trial showed unequivocally

that taking folic acid starting before pregnancy can prevent most cases of neural tube defects. The failure of so many countries to require mandatory fortification is a tragic missed opportunity, says Victor Hoffbrand, author of the book *The Folate Story: A Vitamin Under the Microscope*.

Over the years, science has shown fortifying foods is safe, he says. What's more, it not only reduces birth defects but also combats a type of anemia that affects men and women. "The hope is that there will be universal fortification for every country," Hoffbrand says.

As Rotary continues its efforts, neural tube defects have the potential to become much rarer than they are today, Rotarians say. "This is about healthy kids and having maternal and child health," O'Neill says. When family members are healthy, it also puts less financial strain on caregivers and contributes to a productive workforce overall, she notes. "I don't see how that can't be a win-win." — AMY HOAK

Jennifer Jones, 2022-23 Rotary president, (center) visits Fundación Mónica Uribe por Amor in Colombia in 2023 with current RI Vice President Pat Merryweather-Arge (left) and Past RI Director Suzi Howe. The foundation helps people with spina bifida.

Short takes

Past RI President Jennifer Jones promoted the Global Polio Eradication Initiative in a video shown at the Global Citizen Festival in New York in September.



For World Mental Health Day, 10 October, Rotary organized a discussion on prioritizing mental health with RI President Gordon McInally and advisers. Watch it at [on.rotary.org/10oct-yr](https://on.rotary.org/10oct-yr).





PROFILE

# News you can use

*An educator goes from Rotary reader to Rotary doer*

**Robin Singer**  
Rotary Club  
of Falmouth,  
Massachusetts

In 2021, Robin Singer happened to pick up her cousin's copy of *Rotary* magazine. "I found out," she says, "that Rotary members are very involved in the empowerment of girls and women." That resonated with Singer, who for 15 years had been volunteering for Her Future Coalition, a U.S.-based organization that provides educational and economic opportunities to girls in India and Nepal who have survived, or are at risk of, being trafficked and enslaved in brothels.

In the magazine, Singer also learned about the Rotary Action Group Against Slavery. Intrigued, she had a conversation with the president of her local Rotary Club of Falmouth, Massachusetts. He persuaded Singer to join and "make your passion your freshman project." Singer's passion was helping those at-risk girls.

"Two years later," Singer says, "our club has a very active program doing just that." Supported by other Rotary members in District 7950 (Rhode Island and southeastern Massachusetts), club members are teaching math, science, and other classes over Zoom video sessions with girls at a school in a remote mountain village in Nepal.

But there was a problem: "Our Zoom program had frequent interruptions due to the poor electrical grid" in the village, Singer says. Her letter about the program, published in the October 2022 issue of *Rotary*, led to an introduction to the Environmental Sustainability Rotary Action Group — which in turn led to the installation of a solar power unit in Nepal that provided a reliable electricity source. Problem solved.

Next up, Singer has plans to install a computer lab at the school, another opportunity, she hopes, for Rotary and *Rotary* to step up and help. — GEOFFREY JOHNSON

ILLUSTRATIONS: GETTY IMAGES

In October, Rotary renewed for three years its partnership with Ashoka, an organization that aims to make everyone a "changemaker."

The Rotary Foundation will accept nominations in January and February for the Distinguished Service Award. Learn more at [rotary.org/awards](https://rotary.org/awards).

The United Nations recognizes 24 January as International Day of Education, in celebration of education's role in peace and development.



# People of action around the globe

By Brad Webber



### United States

The Rotary Club of the Lower Keys, Florida, is known for the Independence Day festival and fireworks display it sponsors in Big Pine Key. At last year's event, the night had a sweet send-off: the creation of a massive Key lime pie in celebration of Monroe County's bicentennial. Rotarians joined local chefs Kermit Carpenter and Paul Menta as they scooped free samples of the pie, which spanned a precise 13.14 feet in diameter. The dimension, harking back to the mathematical constant pi, squeezed past a 12.25-foot creation made in 2018 by a Florida business; its producers were awaiting certification of the grand concoction — made of Key lime juice and condensed milk spread atop a graham cracker crust — as the world's largest. The precise tally of servings was unclear, but club member Keara McGraw says it's safe to say it was "a lot."



# \$6 billion

Value of the global market for used cooking oil in 2022

### Brazil

Improper disposal of household cooking oil is not only an ecological hazard, it's also a missed opportunity to recycle the waste into new products. Oil poured down drains also increases water treatment costs. Members of the Rotaract Club of Penápolis in São Paulo state distributed 400 funnels to help residents collect oil in bottles, along with pamphlets explaining the benefits of recycling and how to do it. Members of a recycling cooperative in Penápolis gather the bottled oil and sell it to be turned into biodiesel, homemade soap, paints, resin, and animal feed. "It's essential to reduce and prevent pollution in all its forms," says club member Lucas Silveira de Campos.



# 1493

Year Christopher Columbus introduced citrus seeds to the West Indies



### Finland

Rotary members are working with the Finnish Environment Institute to collect, categorize, and measure trash in the Baltic Sea. “Scientists have little time for this kind of work,” explains Liisa Stjernberg, a past governor of District 1420 and a member of the Rotary Club of Helsinki City West. Stjernberg, the Finland country coordinator for the Environmental Sustainability Rotary Action Group, leads a group of volunteer members from her district who monitor blue algae blooms, raise funds for research, and promote marine conservation. In September the group enlisted 22 Rotary Youth Exchange students to join a measurement outing off the islands of Suomenlinna. They fished out trash including polymer fibers and shock tube detonators used in construction, Stjernberg says. Afterward they took up their oars for another cause: the Rotary-led “Rowing for Herring” longboat regatta, which drew 300 participants.



Rotary  
District 1420

242

Recorded fish species  
in the Baltic Sea

### Nepal

Dr. Anand Jha, a pediatrician and past president of the Rotary Club of Birganj, noticed that many children in his region of Nepal, about 50 miles south of Kathmandu, were underweight. “Most parents would feed only [cow’s] milk to their children,” says Jha. “As a result, the children were mostly iron-deficient,” a condition easily addressed with an improved diet. Since 2018, Jha has conducted 11 conferences on child nutrition, attracting as many as 80 parents at each session. The events include discussions of problems parents face, including, he says, the challenge of steering children from junk food. “I try to give them practical solutions. The biggest mistake that parents make is that they do not plan the diet” and fail to consider the nutritional value of foodstuffs, he says. Members of the Birganj club assist with the logistics and the management of the sessions.



19%

Share of  
Nepalese  
children under  
age 5 who are  
underweight

Rotary  
Club of Birganj

### South Africa

The Rotary Club of Polokwane, northeast of Johannesburg, has given new meaning to the expression “waste not, want not.” The club has helped train more than 550 preschool teachers and caregivers to turn common household waste items — cardboard tubes, plastic sticks, egg cartons, newsprint, and more — into craft projects for children. In 2017, the club teamed up with Shayne Moodie, founder of an initiative called Empty Toy Box Education, to train rural educators to engage children with such projects. Club members collect recyclables and supplies such as glue and scissors, assist with the training, and provide the certificates for teachers. “The early childhood development program has been the most successful, sustainable program offered by our club in recent years,” says club member Ursula Moodie, who is Shayne’s mother. The program has reached as many as 17,000 preschoolers, the club estimates.



4 in 10

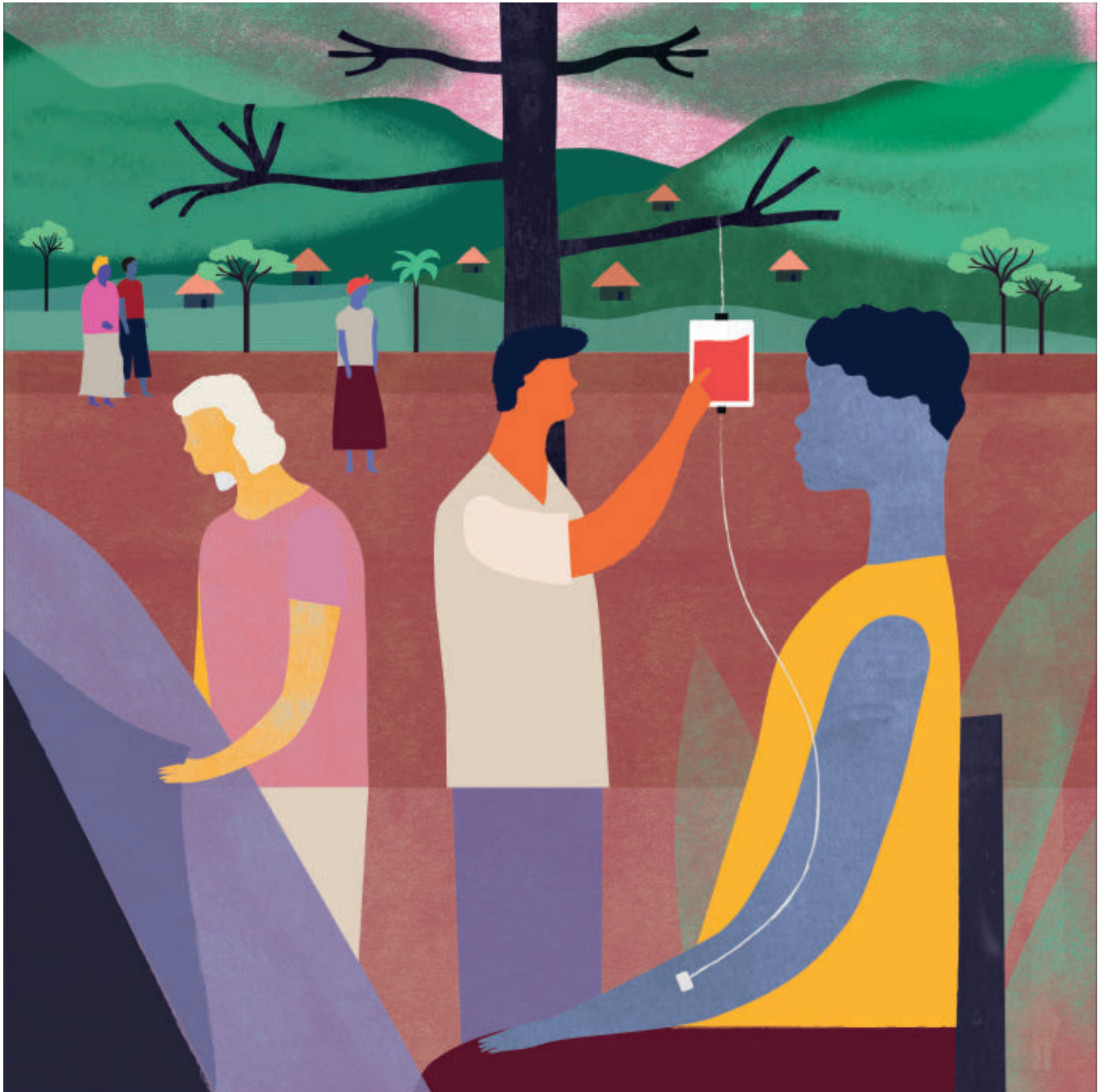
Children ages 3-4  
worldwide enrolled  
in early childhood  
education

Rotary  
Club of Polokwane

# Birth of a hospital

Working among the Batwa people of Uganda, a California doctor discovered the power of collaboration, the joy of service, and a slice of heaven

By Dr. Scott Kellermann



**I**n the late 1970s, my wife, Carol, and I spent two and a half years working at a mission hospital in Nepal. When we returned to the United States, I established a medical practice, but we decided that every year we would volunteer as a family in a needy part of the world.

In the summer of 1987, we assisted in starting a youth baseball program at an orphanage in Cochabamba, Bolivia. It was a perfect fit for my two young sons. While they were building a baseball field and instructing the children in the art of throwing, batting, and fielding, I assisted with Rotary International's polio eradication efforts in remote villages of the Andes.

This time when we returned to the U.S., I discovered that several of my friends were members of Rotary. They talked to me about Service Above Self and encouraged me to join. This was the beginning of a wonderful partnership that would sustain me during my many ventures in the years to come.

In the summer of 2000, we were asked to perform a medical survey of people from the Batwa Pygmy group of the Bwindi Impenetrable Forest in southwestern Uganda. Initially, Carol was unsure about working there, but her hesitancy was trumped by the desire to get to know the people who lived in that part of Africa.

The Batwa were the ancient inhabitants of the Bwindi Impenetrable Forest. But in the early 1990s, the forest was designated a national park and a UNESCO World Heritage Site to protect mountain gorillas and other endangered species. As a result, the Batwa were evicted from their homeland, and, as our survey revealed, their lives had grown exceedingly dire. They had an estimated life expectancy of 28 years and an annual income of \$25.

Despite the desperate circumstances and harsh conditions, Carol felt like she had come home. The Batwa people's survival was in jeopardy, and she was moved by their plight. She shocked me by suggesting that, this time when we returned to the U.S., we sell our possessions and relocate to Uganda to assist them.

There was no denying that, in all of our travels, the Batwa were the neediest people we had encountered. Without interventions, we believed, they would

cease to exist. I asked myself, "If not us, then who?" After careful consideration and much prayer, it was obvious to us that we should serve.

It required a massive effort to downsize. We sold two homes and a part interest in a hospital, and I turned my California medical practice over to two other doctors. A year later, in 2001, unburdened by possessions, we returned to Uganda.

Delivering medical services was a challenge as there were no hospitals or clinics in the region. The only option for treatment was to bring services to people through mobile medical clinics. We drove as far as the road allowed and then carried our medical supplies to villages at the edge of the forest. While I unpacked medicines and unfolded mats for examinations, Carol pitched our tent, where we would spend the night.

Vigorous drumming by the Batwa spread the message that health care was available. Typically, our clinics attracted 300 to 500 patients per day. Our intensive care unit was established under the shade of a tree. Children, semicomatose from the ravages of malaria, lay on mats while IVs, hung from the tree's branches, dripped lifesaving quinine into their veins.

The work was exhilarating; this was medical practice in its purest form. The vast majority of diseases we encountered were infectious and, with simple regimens, they were treatable. Being surrounded by daily miracles and grateful patients was a true gift.

---

**We drove as far as the road allowed and then carried our medical supplies to villages at the edge of the forest.**

In the process of living among the Batwa, we came to learn their language, culture, and traditions. Another benefit of our new lifestyle surprised us. When we lived in California, Carol continued to further her education, while I had a busy medical practice, ran an indigent care center, and engaged with the Rotary Club of Nevada City 49er Breakfast. Exchanging that hectic lifestyle for the simplicity of life in a tent was a gift to us. We talked long into the night regarding how, as a couple, we could deal with the travails we faced. In the process we learned to love each other in ways we never thought possible.

I was exceedingly grateful to be loved by, accepted, and integrated into the Batwa community. In the United States, we tend to be goal oriented. This is in contrast to life in that part of Africa, where it's all about relationships.

After we'd spent a few years providing mobile clinics, the village elders became convinced that we needed to establish a permanent clinic. They approached us and asked, "Can we work together to prevent the deaths of our pregnant mothers and our children?" From this collaboration was born Bwindi Community Hospital. With the community's support and the generosity of several donors, we were able to construct an outpatient unit and a maternity unit.

Once the hospital's initial structures had been completed, along came our many Rotarian friends. Through a grant from The Rotary Foundation, District 5190 (parts of California and Nevada) sent a container outfitted with the first X-ray unit in our region. Best of all, a Rotary team came to assist with the installation. Another Foundation grant was secured to facilitate rainwater collection, protect springs, and provide sanitation to prevent diarrheal diseases. After seven years, when the grant was finally closed, diarrhea rates had dropped more than 50 percent.

Rotary Foundation grants provided equipment for surgical, pediatric, and medical units, as well as neonatal and adult intensive care units, at the Bwindi Community Hospital. But as the hospital grew, so did the headaches for Carol and me. We were ill-equipped for the challenges of administration, logistics, accounting, and human resources.

Once again, help came from Rotary, in particular, from Jerry Hall, a past gover-

nor of District 5190 and, at the time, the vice president of Rotary International. What's more, Jerry, who came to the Bwindi to help with the installation of medical equipment, was a strategic planning consultant.

In learning about our administrative dilemmas, the very first question that Jerry asked was, "What are the factors that would end this hospital immediately?" The most obvious one was a rebel incursion from the nearby Democratic Republic of Congo. Another was the loss of the hospital's two main champions: Carol and me.

Jerry's next words to us markedly shifted the trajectory of our work. "You have given much to the Batwa and to this hospital," he said. "Perhaps it's time for you to relinquish the responsibilities, to relax, and enjoy your time at the Bwindi. I'll help you."

Carol and I wept. Not only was Jerry's advice impeccable, we realized that we had a friend who would assist in bringing this transition to fruition.

We developed a strategic plan for the hospital and began transferring responsibility to the Ugandans. Over the next year, we hired additional staff. The transition took time, but our efforts paid off with the establishment of a sustainable medical facility. Today, Ugandans lead and manage an award-winning 155-bed institution — and in 2013, the hospital started the Uganda Nursing School Bwindi, which is now rated as one of the country's finest nursing schools. As an added bonus, Carol and I discovered that our smiles had returned.

I currently spend five to six months a year in Uganda. I remain on the hospital board, I'm still engaged with fundraising, and, when I am in Uganda, I consult on difficult hospital cases. The Bwindi Community Hospital was chosen as a site for viral research through a National Institutes of Health-funded program called EpiCenter for Emerging Infectious Disease Intelligence, where I am a senior consultant. In collaboration with the University of California, Davis, the program is searching for novel viruses that may spill over from animals to humans, with one goal being to prevent future pandemics.

Over the years, hundreds of Rotarians have visited Bwindi Community Hospital, bringing everything from

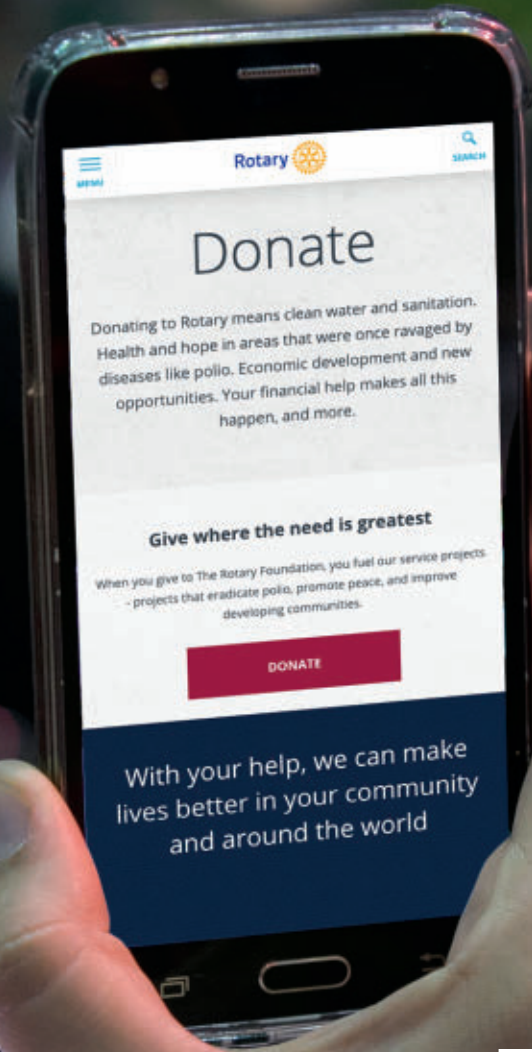


We developed a strategic plan for the hospital and began transferring responsibility to the Ugandans. The transition took time, but our efforts paid off with the establishment of a sustainable medical facility.

administrative talent to medical expertise to information technology. Our projects have received much support from Rotary International; from Past District Governor Rick Benson, of the Rotary Club of Westport, Connecticut; from the Rotary clubs of District 5190 and other California Rotary clubs, as well as the Rotary clubs of Kihihi, Kabale, and Mbarara in Uganda, and from many generous donors. With Rotary's help, the Batwa are freeing themselves from their cycle of poverty.

My time in Africa has been the best of my life. I gained a true understanding of the gift of relationships and the joy derived from service. All this was done in collaboration with committed members of Rotary. I encourage them all to come to the Bwindi, where they will touch a slice of heaven. ■

*A physician specializing in tropical medicine, Scott Kellermann is a proud member of the Rotary Club of Nevada City 49er Breakfast in California.*



EVERY  
ROTARIAN  
EVERY  
YEAR

## ROTARY DIRECT: EASY, FAST, SECURE

The Rotary Foundation's recurring giving program, Rotary Direct, makes your regular giving faster, easier to manage, and even more secure. You can schedule a monthly, quarterly, or annual donation that empowers Rotary members to change lives in communities close to home and around the world.

**ENROLL TODAY:** [my.rotary.org/rotary-direct](https://my.rotary.org/rotary-direct)



## GOODWILL

# Giving is an investment strategy

A financial adviser attracted more business when he gave back and says you will too

By Derrick Kinney

**O**ver 25 years ago, I became a financial adviser to help people reach the goals that were important to them. Money was the tool that could provide for their families and help them enjoy the life they'd always wanted. I was determined to help them achieve their goals by managing their money wisely.

As I got to know my clients, I came to realize something else. While there were many financial advisers my clients could work with, unbeknownst to me, I was differentiating myself from the rest of them. Like any business, my customers could just as easily buy the product or service I was selling from another investment adviser. My firm was the only firm in town that was making giving an important part of its investment strategy — using some of our profits to support education and causes that benefited our local community. I lost count of the number of times during my career when a client or potential client said to me, “We’re working with you because we saw a picture of you in the newspaper giving an award to a student at a local school,” or, “We saw you on television being interviewed about investment advice, and we’ve heard of your contributions to the community.” The more I gave back, the more people wanted to work with me. I became the giving investment adviser.

The perception people have of you is important in any business, and positive perception leads to

profitability. When people perceive you as a giver, they think of you as someone who cares about their community, and they’re more likely to trust you. It makes for causal relationships because now they’re not just working with you; they’re working with both you and the causes you’re a part of, and that becomes what’s important to them too. They are part of something bigger.

“It’s good business. Giving back is, in fact, a way to get more,” agrees Jason Feifer, editor in chief of *Entrepreneur* magazine. “You obviously have to create a sustainable business in order to operate and to do good. But what I have found over and over again in the companies that I talk to is that when they figure out ways to really connect with communities, and to really support those communities, they engage and excite their own team members, they create a better, stronger culture of people who are excited to show up to work every day and to be a part of this mission, and they also attract new customers.”

Feifer cites numerous research studies that demonstrate the willingness of consumers to spend more and make purchasing decisions because they feel aligned with a company’s mission. “If you’re going to survive as a business in times like these, then you have to go beyond just offering a product or service. You have to be really meaningful to people in their lives. And so I think that, in a way, this is going to be a filtering moment. And the companies that are really

crystal clear about their mission are the ones that are going to thrive, and the other ones may not have a place in this new world.” Ultimately, as Feifer himself has said, it’s not about what you do, it’s about why you do it.

In her book *Do Good at Work*, Bea Bocalandro makes a compelling case that those who pursue a social purpose, who are givers throughout their careers, end up doing better financially. “It’s the power of all people living out their inner giver, getting things done,” she says. “We all have that potential.”

My friend Moody is a well-known orthodontist in my community. How did he get to be so popular? Besides excelling at his craft and creating great-looking smiles, many years ago Moody connected his dental practice to what I call his generosity purpose: helping children in Africa get quality dental care. He and his family, along with dental and non-dental friends from the community, periodically set up dental clinics in rural areas where children and their families can get emergency and pain-relieving care. His patients are always talking to him about his experiences.

You want your children to receive high-quality orthodontic care. Combine that with playing a small part in helping to make the world a better place? That’s a real winner. As a business owner, it’s a special moment when you experience a point of intersection between doing what you love and loving how it makes the world better. ■

A member of the Rotary Club of Arlington, Texas, Derrick Kinney is the author of *Good Money Revolution: How to Make More Money to Do More Good*, from which this column is excerpted. Listen to an interview with Kinney on the Rotary Voices podcast at [on.rotary.org/podcast](https://on.rotary.org/podcast).



# The **ROTARY ACTION PLAN**



Is your club looking for ways to create more meaningful service projects?  
**The Action Plan can help.**



Learn about increasing your club's impact:  
[rotary.org/actionplan](https://rotary.org/actionplan)



THRALL LIBRARY

# FIRST RESPONSE

With opioid addiction stuck at crisis levels, Rotary members join the race to save lives

By Elizabeth Hewitt



## MATT PFISTERER WAS IN HIS OFFICE AT A PUBLIC LIBRARY IN MIDDLETOWN, NEW YORK, WHEN A COLLEAGUE IN THE SECOND-FLOOR CHILDREN'S ROOM CALLED TO TELL HIM THAT SOMEONE WAS SUNBATHING ON THE LAWN OUTSIDE.

This sounded odd to Pfisterer, who suspected it might be a medical situation. He headed outside, bringing along a security officer. In the grass, they found a woman drifting in and out of consciousness. Ants were crawling on her shirt. They ran inside, had someone call 911, and grabbed a naloxone kit. Pfisterer remembers his hands shaking as he got the medication ready and sprayed it into her nose. About 30 seconds later, she sat up.

The timing of the episode, which took place in 2016 at the Middletown Thrall Library, was fortuitous. Just three weeks earlier, a social services provider had offered a community training in administering naloxone, a drug that rapidly reverses opioid overdoses. Pfisterer, his assistant, and multiple security guards signed up. In recent years, as the nationwide opioid crisis had hit their small community 50 miles northwest of New York City, they had found themselves calling emergency responders several times to help overdosing patrons. “Before the general news is out, people in libraries know what’s going on,” says Pfisterer, director of the Thrall Public Library District. “They’re on the street, right? They’ve got their ear to the ground.”

The opioid crisis has tightened its grip on communities across America. More than 80,000 people in the U.S. died of overdoses involving opioids in 2022, almost quadruple the total in 2010. In response, people like Pfisterer are equipping themselves with the overdose-reversing drug naloxone with help from local governments and community-based organizations, including Rotary clubs. The approach is turning high school students, transit workers, and music festival staff into de facto first responders.

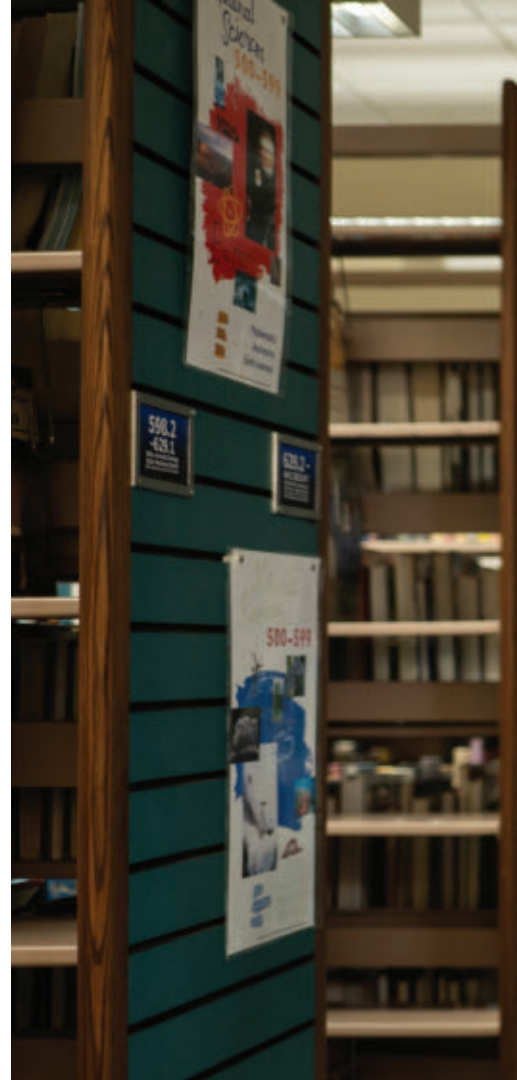
Efforts are building to tackle opioid addiction before it begins, and telemedicine policies from the COVID-19 pandemic make it easier for people to get treatment. But experts say there’s still a

long way to go before the crisis subsides. In the meantime, naloxone is becoming a key tool for reducing stigma and saving lives. “We all have loved ones, family members, friends who may be experiencing problems with drug use,” says Magdalena Cerdá, director of the Center for Opioid Epidemiology and Policy at New York University Grossman School of Medicine, “so having naloxone readily available to respond is important.”

**T**he opioid crisis has been mounting since the 1990s, when millions of patients began receiving prescriptions for powerful painkillers like OxyContin that had just come on the market. Over time, some people developed substance use disorders and turned to street drugs, particularly heroin, which was often cheaper than pills. Around the mid-2010s, a synthetic opioid started to spread: illicit fentanyl, easier to produce than heroin and up to 50 times as potent, making it much easier for people to accidentally take too much.

What’s more, because fentanyl is cheap to make, it’s often mixed in other drugs, like heroin or cocaine, or pressed into counterfeit pills meant to look like prescription medicine. Fake pills are especially dangerous for an increasing number of people self-medicating with drugs bought through social media. From mid-2019 through 2021, 84 percent of adolescent overdose deaths involved illicit fentanyl and about a quarter involved fake pills, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. People can overdose on fentanyl without even knowing they’re taking it. This has led to a particularly dangerous moment. “The main challenge is the lethality of the drug supply that is leading to an unprecedented number of people dying from overdoses,” says Cerdá.

As overdoses skyrocket, naloxone is becoming a critical tool to help stop



these deaths. Known by the brand names Narcan or Kloxxado, the drug reverses overdoses by binding to opioid receptors in the brain, blocking the opioids in the bloodstream from having an effect. A study in Pennsylvania published in 2022 found that people who received at least one dose of naloxone following an opioid overdose were 11 times more likely to survive. And contrary to concerns that its availability would encourage people who use drugs to take more risks, it does not lead to increased opioid use, studies have found.

This is why, over the last two decades, state policies and community-level programs have worked to put naloxone within reach of people who may need it. Most states have some version of laws allowing pharmacists to provide naloxone on request without a doctor’s prescription. And in 2023, the U.S. Food and



Drug Administration approved Narcan to sell over the counter — a “big game changer,” according to Cerdá.

Naloxone can now be found in U.S. supermarkets, convenience stores, and gas stations, on shelves like ibuprofen or aspirin. People can even buy it online. That change is in addition to the wide-ranging efforts to make naloxone accessible across communities. School nurses’ offices carry it. Service plazas along the turnpike in Ohio stock it. Many restaurants and bars keep naloxone on hand. Music festivalgoers at Lollapalooza in Chicago were handed doses this year, and New Hampshire distributes overdose-response kits to businesses. Some cities are even placing naloxone alongside defibrillators used for cardiac arrest in public places such as libraries and community centers.

Pfisterer, the librarian, says every staff

member who attended the first training with him in 2016 has administered the drug. The library had about a 3½-year stretch with no overdoses, but last winter, two people were revived. He offers training to interested staff members once a year. Since the most common type of naloxone is a nasal spray (it can also come in a syringe), it doesn’t take much time or expertise to learn how to administer it. “The more people that are prepared to deal with an event, the safer everybody is going to be,” he says.

Still, there are barriers. Cerdá notes that people don’t always feel comfortable asking for naloxone, and many pharmacies choose not to stock it even if they’re permitted to. Plus, the cost of buying naloxone over the counter can be prohibitive for many people, Cerdá says. A two-dose kit retails for about \$45 without health insurance. Still, the ef-

**Matt Pfisterer, director of the Thrall Public Library District in Middletown, New York, offers naloxone training to his staff. “The more people that are prepared to deal with an event, the safer everybody is going to be,” he says.**

forts are part of a broader push that is raising awareness and reducing stigma around naloxone, which Cerdá sees as significant. “If we normalize it,” Cerdá says, “people are much more likely to A, have it, and B, use it.”

**O**n a Wednesday evening in late June at the YMCA in Southgate, Michigan, Steve Ahles instructed a group of 14 people on what to do if they come across someone who may have overdosed on opioids. Once a person is unconscious, the retired firefighter and Rotary member told trainees, lay the person facing up, insert

the naloxone nozzle into the nose and spray it. Then, get the person into the recovery position lying on the side, and be sure to call for emergency responders. Even if it turns out the person is not experiencing an opioid overdose, naloxone is safe to give.

The training was the first public session Ahles had led. A member of the Rotary Club of Southgate, he had learned how to teach others to use naloxone through Project Smart, a multifaceted initiative of the Rotary Action Group for Addiction Prevention, North America chapter. The project mobilizes Rotary clubs in the U.S. to address opioid overuse from prevention to treatment. Project organizers have developed programs for schools, including 30-minute age-specific education presentations and drug-free clubs for students. Another component involves distributing medication disposal kits to households, to destroy old prescriptions before they're misused. The initiative also includes efforts to connect people with treatment options and telehealth providers that prescribe medication for opioid use disorder.

One of Project Smart's most active initiatives so far is an effort to expand naloxone access by teaching Rotary members and others to lead training sessions in their communities. Larry Kenemore, a retired paramedic and a Rotarian who helped launch the initiative, estimates more than 1,000 people in a dozen states have been taught how to use naloxone. People who attend are given kits to take home and asked to report in when they use one so the action group can track the impact. In one recent report, a police officer in Arkansas whose department was trained through the project said that he used the medi-

1. Retired firefighter Steve Ahles and Tara McFarland, members of the Rotary Club of Southgate, Michigan, lead a community naloxone training.
2. Participants learn what signs to look for to identify a possible overdose.
3. The easy-to-use nasal spray is safe, even if it turns out the person is not experiencing an overdose.
4. Samantha Appleton (left) and her son attend the training session, held at a YMCA in Riverview, Michigan, in October.





1



2



3



4

cine twice, to revive a pregnant woman and a teenager, Kenemore says.

Ahles' first trainees in Southgate included several Rotarians, YMCA staff members, and a few people who found the event on social media. One woman told Ahles that one of her family members uses drugs. "It was a concern of hers that maybe this should be kept around," he says.

As the fire chief of Southgate, Ahles was involved with an effort to distribute defibrillators in the 1990s. "I don't see this as any different," he says. "It's just a tool that can help save lives that's readily available to the public, doesn't really require any specialized knowledge. You simply have to learn a couple of things."

Researchers have estimated widespread distribution of naloxone to emergency personnel and other people likely

to encounter an overdose could reduce overdose death rates by more than 20 percent. A study published in 2019 found that North Carolina counties where naloxone kits were passed out had lower overdose death rates than counties without distributed kits. While advocates are working to make naloxone more widely available, research shows that it's particularly effective in the hands of people who use drugs or are likely to be bystanders. The idea is to make its public presence common, so it's readily at hand whenever needed. "I think it's really important for everyone, essentially, to have access to naloxone," Cerdá says.

In a parking lot tucked behind a building on a busy street in Cincinnati, white letters glow on a vending machine 24 hours a day: "Stay safe." Drivers can pull their cars alongside it, roll down their window, punch in a code, collect their items, and drive away. The machine doesn't offer sodas and candy bars. Instead, it's stocked with naloxone, strips that test substances for

the presence of fentanyl, safer sex kits, pregnancy tests, and more.

The Cincinnati HIV-prevention organization Caracole placed the vending machine outside its office in 2021 as a midpandemic effort to support vulnerable residents when in-person services weren't possible. The organization takes an approach known as harm reduction, which tries to lessen negative outcomes for people who are not ready or able to completely stop engaging in risky behavior, explains Director of Prevention Suzanne Bachmeyer.

That idea is controversial, with critics concerned that it could encourage drug use. But some elements of the strategy are being more widely embraced. Fentanyl test strips, for instance, have been considered illegal drug paraphernalia in some states. Now, they're increasingly recognized as lifesaving tools, and at least 20 states have decriminalized them since 2018. They're also becoming more widely available on college campuses and elsewhere amid an increase in counterfeit pills meant to resemble popular med-

**Left:** Steve Ahles sees no difference between naloxone and defibrillators. "It's just a tool that can help save lives," he says. **Right:** Larry Kenemore of Project Smart visits Rotary clubs around the country to raise awareness.



PHOTOGRAPHS: (AHLES) MATTHEW HATCHER; (KENEMORE) COURTESY OF LARRY KENEMORE





Suzanne Bachmeyer, the director of prevention for Caracole, stands beside a vending machine stocked with naloxone outside the nonprofit organization's offices in Cincinnati.

ications for everything from anxiety to attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder.

Caracole's vending machine, which almost 1,600 people had signed up for as of October 2023, was among the first in the country. Now, the machines — some stocked only with naloxone, others carrying a wider array of items — are popping up on New York City street corners, in rural health centers, in bus terminals, and at police stations. Based on Caracole's experience, Bachmeyer believes the machine is a "best practice" for distributing supplies.

To date, clients report that testing strips they got from Caracole's machine have detected fentanyl in drugs about 5,800 times. And people used naloxone from the machine to reverse overdoses almost 3,500 times, according to clinical pharmacist Daniel Arendt, an assistant professor at the University of Cincinnati who partnered with Caracole to track the machine's impact. "We found that the best bang for your buck in terms of just overall dollars spent in harm re-

duction is when naloxone is given to the community who is at risk," says Arendt.

Anybody can register to get a code to access the free items in the vending machine, a process that takes a couple of minutes by phone or in person. The registration process helps track how the machine is used. But those brief conversations are also starting points for new connections, Bachmeyer explains. Many people who first interacted with Caracole through the vending machine later came to use other services, like HIV testing, prenatal care, or help for domestic violence. She says multiple people have sought assistance connecting to treatment for opioid addiction.

Part of the intention of tracking Caracole's vending machine was to learn from the experience to inform other communities, according to Arendt. Now, the organization has consulted with more than 50 public health officials and others interested in setting up similar programs. The vending machine has turned out to be more successful

than organizers expected, Arendt says, though it's no silver bullet. "This is a Band-Aid. This is not something that is going to solve everything," Arendt says. "It's something that we're hoping will help because this current system doesn't work well enough that these things aren't needed."

Carol Katz Beyer knows the opioid crisis well. Her oldest son, Bryan, died in 2016 of a fentanyl-related overdose. Four days after Bryan's unveiling ceremony, a Jewish custom traditionally held near the anniversary of burial, his younger brother Alex also died of an overdose involving fentanyl. "The empty chairs, the holidays, the ripple effects of the loss and trying to carry on and trying to, you know, honor their legacy and their memory, because

they were just the funniest, smartest, goofiest ...” Beyer says, trailing off. “It’s not something a family ever forgets.”

The two brothers were always close growing up in New Jersey, Beyer recalls. They shoveled snow together, they skateboarded and snowboarded. They were a part of the same friend group and went to the same parties. And they experimented with drugs together. Once Beyer’s sons started using drugs, she says, navigating treatment options was extremely challenging. They tried out-of-state residential options. Over the course of years, the cost of treatment reached more than \$500,000.

Both young men made strides, Beyer says. Bryan attended Johnson & Wales University, and Alex graduated from Full Sail University. But the road to recovery is not straightforward, and they faced stigma, strict rules, and other challenges.

At times, Suboxone, a medication taken daily that can reduce symptoms of withdrawal and cravings, helped Alex in his recovery. But there were barriers that made it hard for him to continue taking it. Once when he was discharged from a recovery program, he was placed in a sober living home that did not allow residents to have medications for opioid use disorder, Beyer recalls.

Beyer’s experience has made her an advocate for improving policies and treatment options related to opioids. She has led community outreach for nonprofits including Project Opioid, and through her work she’s pushed for more availability of evidence-based treatment options, including medications like the one her son used.

In the past, she explains, many people viewed medications that treat opioid addiction as trading one drug for another. But she says the approach is akin to treating any other disease, like taking insulin for diabetes. “Some folks may not need or want to be on it,” Beyer says. “Other individuals may need it for a short term. Others may need it for life.”

Andrew Kolodny, medical director of the Opioid Policy Research Collabora-

tion at Brandeis University, emphasizes that overdose deaths can be prevented by expanding access to medications that treat opioid use disorder. “To this day, one of the main policy failures is a failure to recognize that this is an epidemic of opioid addiction, an epidemic of people with a preventable, treatable disease,” he says. “If you miss that piece of it, you miss more of the upstream interventions, like prevention and treatment of opioid addiction.”

People whose treatment involves medications like buprenorphine (which is in Suboxone) and methadone are less likely to relapse or fatally overdose. “If we really want to see deaths coming down in the United States in the short run, you would want to see that everyone who’s opioid-addicted can much more easily access buprenorphine than they can heroin or fentanyl,” Kolodny says.

Dr. Arun Gupta sees the impact that medication can have on people’s recovery. A Rotarian and the chair of Project Smart’s treatment program, Gupta has specialized in addiction medicine since 2006, and he is a strong advocate of medication-assisted treatment. Eighty-five percent of his patients are stable and in long-term recovery. “They have jobs, they excel in work, they excel in education, they’re back with their families, they go to church, they buy new houses, they buy new cars,” he says.

Despite evidence demonstrating the effectiveness of medication for supporting recovery, many people don’t receive it. Nationwide, 87 percent of people with opioid use disorder are not taking medication as treatment. One of the main challenges, according to Gupta, is a shortage of physicians willing to prescribe buprenorphine. There is stigma around treating addiction, he says. Doctors also have to comply with strict regulations, putting them at legal risk if they misstep.

A federal policy change at the end of 2022 removed one barrier: Physicians are no longer required to get a waiver to prescribe buprenorphine, a shift that theoretically makes prescribing the medicine

**Dr. Arun Gupta, of the Rotary Club of Monroe, Michigan, specializes in addiction medicine and advocates for medication-assisted treatment. He chairs Project Smart’s treatment program.**

---

easier. Gupta is skeptical that will make a difference on its own. Treating addiction requires expertise, he says, and many doctors are unwilling to take on the issue.

Another COVID-era change has been promising. Federal regulations historically required patients to be evaluated in person to get their prescriptions. But early in the pandemic, rules were relaxed, allowing physicians to meet with patients and prescribe buprenorphine via telehealth — filling a gap in their existing treatment or giving them time to connect with a longer-term provider.

The pandemic-era rules are not permanent, and the federal rules for telehealth prescribing going forward are still being debated and revised. But research indicates telehealth leads to higher retention rates in treatment than only in-person services. Patients and doctors reported benefits like flexibility, with few downsides, and there was little evidence that the drug was more likely to be diverted and misused.

Beyer recalls that when her sons were navigating recovery, the model for addiction treatment was “tough love.” Over the years, she has seen more leaders and community members come to understand that such a punitive approach doesn’t work. Many responses are politically contentious. But there have been shifts, and with that, a cause for hope. Beyer sees more widespread agreement around the importance of medications for opioid use disorder. She’s noted a growing awareness of mental health issues, which often correlate with substance use. The crisis continues to take a toll every day. But, she says, “I like to think that as a nation, we are coming together around some of these complex issues.” ■

---

*This story is a collaboration between Rotary magazine and Reasons to be Cheerful, a nonprofit online magazine.*

---

The Rotary Action Group for Addiction Prevention is a Rotary International recognized global entity that brings together Rotary members and friends with expertise and a deep commitment to addressing addiction. Learn more at [rag-ap.org](https://rag-ap.org).

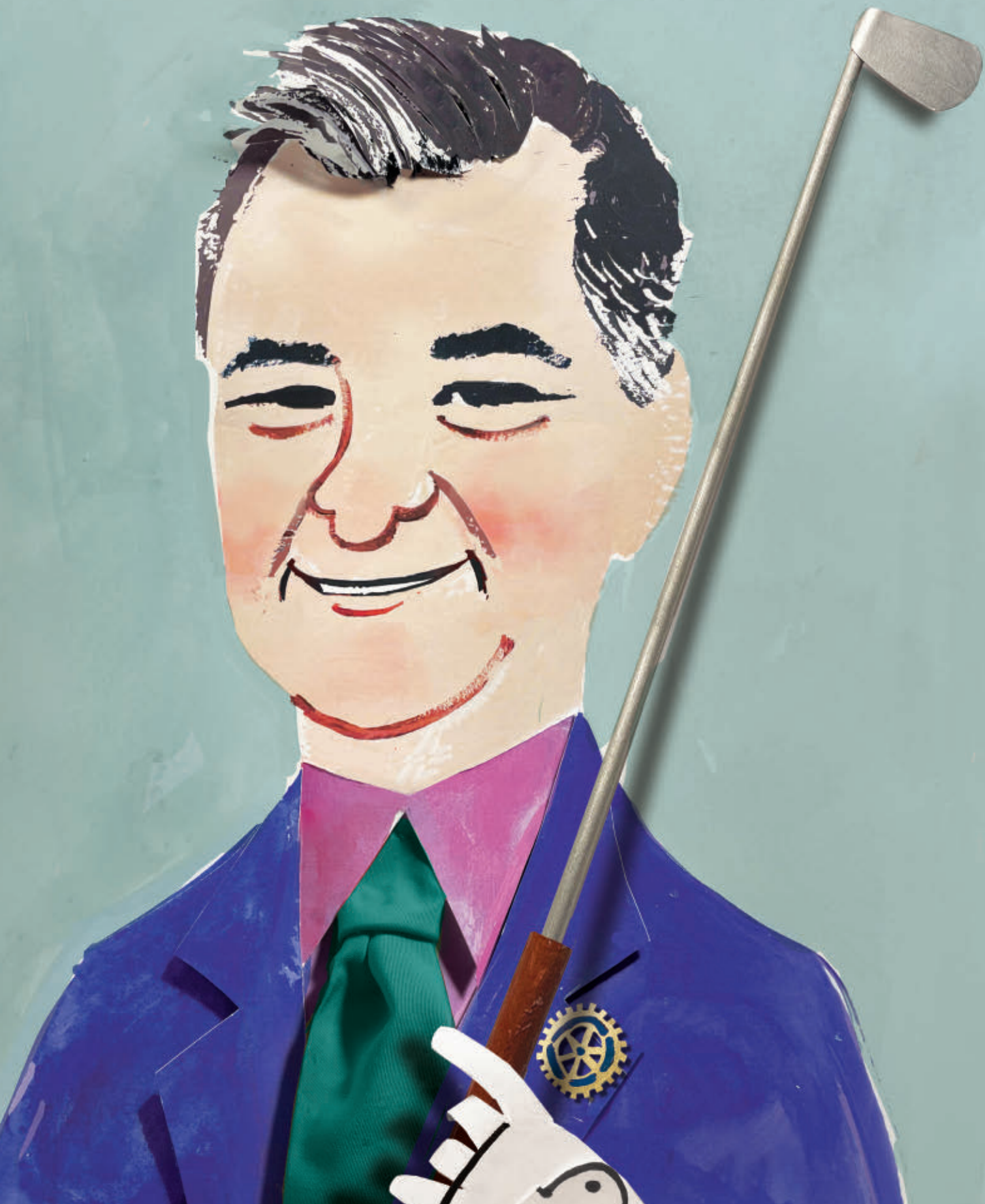


The true  
confessions

of Rotary's *first*  
first gentleman

On 1 July 2022, Jennifer Jones became Rotary's first female president — which left her husband, **Nick Krayacich**, in a unique, challenging, and at times enviable position

ILLUSTRATION BY RYAN MCAMIS





**JENNIFER AND I WERE** in our hotel room in Pune, India, enjoying one of those rare restful moments we'd come to cherish during her demanding yet rewarding year as Rotary president. There was a knock at the door. I opened it to discover Mahesh Kotbagi, the RI director who lives in Pune. Mahesh said he'd like me and Jen to go to a wedding. We were delighted to accept his invitation, not knowing yet that the wedding was to be our own.

For the record, Jen and I were already married, 26 years ago in Windsor, Ontario. Just to make sure it took, we repeated the ceremony in Korea at the Rotary Convention in Seoul in 2016. So I was pretty sure Jen and I had successfully tied the knot, jumped the broom, shattered the glass. Whatever marital tradition you prefer, we were without question husband and wife.

That is why it took a little while to figure out what was going on as people dressed us up in royal garb: Jen in a spectacular sari and me in a big turban, bejeweled jacket and pants, and shoes with pointed toes. Outside our hotel we were picked up by a flower-laden, horse-drawn carriage and clip-clopped across town to where the wedding was to be held.

And there it was, a big picture of me and Jen above the grand announcement:

“the wedding ceremony of Jennifer Jones and Nick Krayacich.” Up on stage, in front of about 250 people, we went through an elaborate Rajasthani wedding ceremony. There were Hindu priests and seven or eight rituals with the spices and fire and all those things. It was amazing. Where else would you not only get to witness that kind of ceremony but actually participate in it? It was one more in a yearlong series of marvelous cultural experiences that Jen and I shared together during her whirlwind term as Rotary's president. Plus, I was marrying Jennifer, something I'd happily do again.

In fact, I did just that at yet another ceremony before we left India — which, for those of you keeping score, made wedding number four for Jennifer Jones and Nick Krayacich.

**AS THE TIME APPROACHED** for Jennifer to serve as president-elect and president, I decided to take a two-year sabbatical from my medical practice to join Jennifer in this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. The timing was perfect for me. I had been working intensely during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, both at my private primary care practice and as the medical director of a 160-bed nursing home. I was burnt out and antici-

pated that my sabbatical would provide a healing, energizing boost for me.

Our journey across 55 countries over the next two years did just that, though it turned out to be both exhilarating and exhausting. It was not unusual to have 16-hour days, with Jen giving multiple speeches at multiple events. On some occasions, three or four events turned into seven or eight, all of which Jen handled with incredible grace.

My most important role throughout that journey was to be there for Jen, to serve as her rock, her sounding board, and her support system. If I were going to dispense any advice to club presidents, district governors, or Rotary trustees, it would be this: Without the support of someone who is important to you, the job is almost impossible to do. That's not to say it can't be done, but it's that much harder. So whenever and wherever you find that critical support, embrace it. It's key.

There was one more thing I kept in mind. Jennifer was a significant figure in Rotary's history. Over the course of her presidential year, all the attention was going to be on her, and rightfully so. I had to stay in the background, and I was fine with that. My self-confidence has always been intact. I know who I am. If



**My travels with President Jennifer** (from left): I read with school children when we visited the 25-year-old Guatemala Literacy Project; Jen and I harvested cabbages during our Imagine Impact Tour stop in Taiwan; in Zambia, we met with community health workers who were participating in Partners for a Malaria-Free Zambia.

someone wasn't as secure, they may have had a difficult time with that. But I was, and it was an amazing experience.

As we traveled, we would normally stay in one location for one to three days and then repeat a similar schedule at the next location. Everywhere we went, members of Rotary seemed to draw inspiration from a personal visit by Rotary's president. Our visit to Turkey was especially moving. After a series of earthquakes devastated that country in early February, Turkish Rotary members mobilized to help the many victims. One Rotarian had lost members of his family in the quake. In spite of that, he and his team worked tirelessly to provide shelter camps, a medical clinic, supplies, and so much more. The resolve of everyone we met was remarkable, and the fact that Jen and I were there — concrete evidence that Rotary cared — provided inestimable reserves of comfort and hope.

Unlike Jennifer, who loves them, I'm not a fan of airports and airport lounges. While I always enjoyed the destination,

I didn't much care for the to-ing and fro-ing. Nor did I grow used to the rock star treatment we received. We were usually met at the airport by hundreds of Rotarians and members of the media. In Southeast Asia there were pictures of Jennifer covering the baggage carousel, plastered on billboards, and strung across highway overpasses.

In several countries the president of Rotary is considered a state guest and given the heavy security to match. It was a surreal experience to travel with a truck carrying several armed guards ahead of us, another behind, as well as an ambulance where the attendants knew our blood types in case of an accident. In Africa we often drove on the opposite side of the road to avoid traffic, with the security folks waving frantically for the oncoming drivers to move over while we passed. When necessary, those same folks provided more than traffic control. In Pakistan, where we'd been giving polio immunizations for about two hours, security learned that some insurgents had become aware of what we were up to. We were whisked out of the area immediately.

At most events, excited Rotarians seeking photographs and autographs mobbed Jennifer. Celebrities have the paparazzi; we have the Rotarazzi. I

would often be left well behind, almost forgotten until organizers realized I was missing for the requisite photo of me and Jen. I inwardly smiled, waiting for the waving hand and the cry of "Where's Nick? Come, come, Nick!" Like a weakened salmon swimming upstream, I finally reached the destined spot and posed alongside Jennifer, now smiling outwardly. And always happy to do so.

I did have my occasional moment in the spotlight. Jennifer fell ill in Grenada, and after tending to her, I delivered her lunchtime speech. Because I had heard Jen speak so many times, and because we are both devoted to Rotary and its causes, I think I was successful in delivering her message to the group. I actually enjoyed my time at the microphone, perhaps a little too much. Fortunately, Jen recovered quickly — a less modest man might credit the superb medical care she had received — and she was able to deliver a few remarks at the end of the luncheon.

One other bit of advice for future first gents: This is a one-off opportunity that will never come your way again. Once you realize that being an integral part of the presidential year is a gift and a privilege, it's pretty hard not to be anything but excited about getting up every day and starting anew. Things don't always go



as expected, so don't stress out. Things are going to happen, good, bad, and otherwise, so be in the moment and enjoy it.

**EACH TIME I ATTENDED** a presidential event, I left with more friends than I'd arrived with. That's always been my experience with Rotary, this endless opportunity for new friendships and connections. And these new friends are all really good people doing great works and projects. Because they're like-minded people, we always have lots in common and much to talk about. In that way I've met many extraordinary people with surprising passions, professions, and pastimes.

As we espoused the virtues and raised the profile of Rotary, Jen and I had the privilege of meeting multiple heads of state. At a reception in Buckingham Palace, we talked with King Charles III for several minutes, and he was very kind and personable and knowledgeable about Rotary. He's a big environmental activist, and I talked with him about mangrove restoration. He understood the importance of mangroves, and he was pleased to learn that the environment had become Rotary's newest area of focus.

Luckily Jennifer wasn't hauled away to the Tower of London when, in violation of all royal protocol, she placed her hand

on the arm of the newly crowned monarch as he shook her hand. ("Well, he started it!" she cried afterward.) Actually, I thought Jennifer showed great restraint. If it moves, Jen will hug it. She just loves people; it's one of her magical powers. Given that, I thought King Charles got off easy, though it was definitely his loss.

In Barbados we met with Prime Minister Mia Amor Mottley. She is one impressive human being, an incredible leader with a great sense of purpose about the environment, social justice, and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. At the Vatican, we had a front row seat outdoors when Pope Francis celebrated Mass. Like King Charles, the pope is an honorary member of Rotary, and after Mass, he came over to speak with us. He'd just been released from the hospital and looked frail. Jennifer explained that, on behalf of 1.4 million Rotary members around the globe, we were bringing greetings and wishes of good health. The pope replied, "Please ask all the Rotarians to pray for my good health." I thought that was quite telling, for the pope to ask that of our members. It really humanized him.

I almost missed my chance to say hello to Prince Albert II of Monaco. When I discovered that, contrary to what

I'd expected, I wouldn't be allowed to join Jennifer for her meeting with the prince, I decided to explore St. Nicholas Cathedral, where Princess Grace and Prince Rainier are buried. The cathedral has a beautiful organ, and as a past church organist, I really wanted to see it.

Meanwhile, Jen and the prince's 15-minute meeting had turned into an hourlong conversation. When Prince Albert learned that I and Jen's brother, Darren, had been excluded from the meeting, he said, "Get them in here." I was half a mile away when I got the call, and I had to run from the cathedral to the palace. There I learned that the prince, an Olympic bobsledder for Monaco from the 1980s to the early 2000s, was planning to vacation in Canada, where he would be hosted by Chris Lori, a member of the Canadian bobsled team at the same time. Small world! I'd gone to high school with Chris and his twin brother, so the prince and I had an immediate connection and a nice conversation. He was the most down-to-earth, nicest guy.

We found that to be true of all the prime ministers and heads of state. Whether they were elected to office or born into it, the ones that we met were regular human beings, some with extraordinary capabilities. Just like Jen.





**From left:** (top and bottom) In Kiribati, Jennifer and I took photos and sat in on the Give Every Child a Future project, where Rotary members and UNICEF are developing immunization programs in nine South Pacific island countries; at the Rotary International Convention in Melbourne, my tailor-made purple suit was a sensation.

**DESPITE THE MANY DEMANDS,** being the first gentleman did have its perks. Golf's my passion, and I got to play in some of the most unexpected places, including the jungles of Nepal. The Rotary Club of Himalayan Golfers meets outside Kathmandu at the Gokarna Forest Resort, which boasts a spectacularly beautiful 72-par, 18-hole golf course situated nearly a mile above sea level. There are monkeys all over the place, and they come out on the fairway, steal your golf ball, and take it back into the forest. When that happens, you get a free drop on the fairway.

In Japan, I got to play at the prestigious Kasumigaseki Country Club, where they held the golf tournament for the delayed 2020 Tokyo Olympics. I was the guest of Masahiko Uotani, a member of the Rotary Club of Tokyo. We spent four hours walking the course, and he turned out to be a super nice guy. Because it can enhance the conversation, I always ask people what they do. Masahiko said, "I

have this cosmetics company called Shiseido," which I knew nothing about.

But when I got back to where we were staying and told Jen I'd met this really nice Rotarian who owned a cosmetics company called Shiseido, she was flabbergasted. "Shiseido! Why didn't you tell me who you were meeting?!" I said I didn't know, he was just a nice guy I went golfing with. But Jen did get to meet Masahiko later that night at dinner, and we met him again at the convention in Melbourne and got a great photo with him.

I also received wonderful gifts. We arrived in Bangladesh late one night and didn't get to our hotel until after midnight. We had an event early the next morning and wanted to get some sleep, but waiting in our room was a tailor. Our hosts said that they wanted to make me a purple suit because that's Jen's color, and they wanted me to wear it at the morning event. So there I am at two in the morning getting measured for a suit. Sure enough, it was ready the next morning, and in all the photos shot that day, I'm wearing that lovely purple suit. Sure, I'm bleary-eyed, but I look terrific.

**WHEN HER YEAR WAS DONE,** Jen captured exactly how we both felt. "The tank is empty," she said, "but the heart is

full." As a Rotarian myself, and an incoming district governor in 2024-25, I found it an absolute honor and pleasure to witness the passion, positivity, and projects of the committed Rotary members around the world. They are making such a difference in their local and global communities: eliminating malaria in Zambia, educating girls in Guatemala, and establishing life-changing medical facilities in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. They're providing clean water to an entire country in Haiti, fostering global harmony at the Rotary Peace Center at Makerere University in Uganda, and supporting chestnut and truffle farming in Taiwan. I often thought to myself, "Where would the world be without Rotary?"

Seeing what Rotarians are doing around the world has literally restored my faith in humanity — and reinvigorated my already strong love for my wife. Her year as Rotary president was Jennifer's time to shine, and she did, magnificently. I was happy to stand alongside her and bask in that glow.

Jen's year as president strengthened our already-strong marriage. Together, we not only survived but thrived, becoming better human beings and better partners. That is why I can't wait until our next wedding ceremony. Fifth time's a charm. ■

“My heart...  
will never let  
me forget the  
sight of liberty  
my eyes saw  
on the first night  
in America.”

**Sam Harris**  
Deblin and Czestochowa survivor



*International Holocaust  
Remembrance Day is 27 January,  
the anniversary of the liberation  
of Auschwitz-Birkenau.*



# A survivor's legacy

Sam Harris lost his childhood to the Holocaust. He's making sure a new generation of young people can thrive.

**By Neil Steinberg**

Photography by Monika Lozinska

**Sam Harris** is passionate about it. He will meet you, even though he is 88 years old and uses a walker, in the somber industrial entrance of the museum he helped create, an institution dedicated to making sure the awful, important story that he lived is told, years after he is gone and his voice, among the dwindling firsthand accounts, is finally silenced.

That wasn't always the case.

For many years Harris, a former insurance executive and a member of the Rotary Club of Northbrook, Illinois, didn't want to talk about how the Nazis had come for him when he was a small boy. He didn't want to talk about the terrible hunger. The fear. The machine guns. His murdered parents. The cattle cars. The concentration camps. It was old news, ancient history. What would be the point? He was an American now. First an American boy, living in Northbrook, a comfortable suburb north of Chicago. Then an American man who could choose for himself what to discuss. Or not discuss.

His refusal went on for years. "I knew it troubled him, that it was all inside of him," says his wife of 62 years, Dede. "He just never spoke about his past. I could see it festering."

The reluctance was complicated. He didn't want people to feel sorry for him. And if he became successful, he wanted it to be because of who he was, not because of what happened to him, he explains, settling into a chair in the small but well-stocked library of his museum. If someone detected an accent and asked where he was from, he'd toss the question back: Where do you think I'm from? And if the person said "New York," Harris would say, "Yes, exactly! New York." Or if someone said, "Germany," he'd say, "Germany, yes, how did you know?" And smile.

A trained social worker, Dede Harris eventually sat her husband down by a crackling fire one evening. "I asked him to tell the story," Dede recalls. "It seemed to have broken through that impasse. Once he was able to verbalize the feelings, he had to be open to other people."

It began slowly. At a 1977 meeting of the Rotary Club of Wilmette, Illinois, Harris met a member, Rabbi William Frankel, who grew up in Vienna. Like Harris, Frankel had fled the Nazis, only he used his past as a springboard to a life of activism. Frankel had marched with the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. during the U.S. Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s and was prominent in Catholic-Jewish outreach efforts. He befriended Harris and convinced him that he owed it to future generations to tell his story.

Around that time, a group of neo-Nazis

planned a demonstration in Skokie, a Chicago suburb that was half Jewish at the time and home to many Holocaust survivors. Though a lengthy legal battle prevented the demonstration, activists like Rabbi Frankel believed silence and inaction were no longer an option. Waiting and hoping while evil rises to its feet was never a smart strategy.

Meanwhile, Arthur Butz, an associate professor of electrical engineering at Northwestern University in Evanston, about 10 miles from where Harris lived, published a book with the claim that the Holocaust was a myth perpetuated by the Allies and Zionists. Frankel called Harris to express his abhorrence of the book. "Sam, I know it's hard for you, but it's time for you to talk," Frankel urged him.

In Frankel's basement, the rabbi interviewed Harris on video camera. "And it was the first time really, I was able to talk," says Harris. "I said to myself, I'll never do this again. But he showed this to everybody in the congregation. And it was packed. And then he passed that around to other rabbis. That was all because of Rotary."

So more than 30 years removed, Harris opened up about his once unspeakable past.

**A** living link from that lost prewar Jewish world, through one of the darkest chapters in human history, to today, Harris arrives an exuberant bundle of energy in the lobby of the Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center — rolling in with a three-wheeled walker, yes, but in a crisp blue shirt, smiling and joking, his wife by his side. He passes a montage of Jewish faces — one of them his own. Many are gone; but he is not. "I have told you this not to weaken you," reads a line running through the faces, "but to strengthen you."

The youngest of seven, Harris was born Szlamek Rzeznik in Dęblin, Poland, in 1935. His father was a sofer, a scribe who writes and restores the Torah and other holy writings. At 4, he was just old enough to remember the last moments of normalcy — the Sabbath dinners, weekend visits to his grandparents on a horse and buggy. A final taste of ordinary life, the sweetness of love and laughter that would allow him to endure what was coming.

It was September 1939. "I remember distinctly sitting around having lunch," he says. "We heard noises in the sky. The German Luftwaffe [air force] was flying in to destroy the Polish air force. Dęblin had an airfield. Soon, those same airplanes came after people. I saw

"I asked him to tell the story. It seemed to have broken through that impasse. Once he was able to verbalize the feelings, he had to be open to other people."

**Right:** Sam and Dede Harris pose outside of the Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center.





“I was in the line with my dad ... and heard noises of shooting. All I could do was to look up at the sky. I felt that a guardian angel was there to protect me.”

death for the first time.” Nazis quickly occupied Dęblin and Jewish families were forced into a ghetto. Food became scarce. Harris’ elder sister Rosa was forced to work at a slave labor camp at the airfield and was able to bring back a little food for the family.

One day in 1942, trucks carrying Nazi soldiers rolled into the ghetto. Carrying guns with bayonets, they herded Jews to the town’s marketplace. “If someone refused or didn’t walk fast enough, the soldiers would stab or shoot the person,” says Harris.

Cattle cars were waiting nearby to ship Jews to an extermination camp. The destination, Harris believes, was the camp near the village of Treblinka in the east of Poland, where an estimated 700,000 to 900,000 Jews were murdered. “I was in the line with my dad who was holding my hand,” says Harris. “Since I was so small, I could only see people’s legs and heard noises of shooting. All I could do was to look up at the sky. I felt that a guardian angel was there to protect me.”

Harris’ father pushed the boy out of the line and instructed him to run. Fortunately, the Nazi soldiers didn’t notice and he sprinted away. He saw his sister Sara hiding behind some bricks. The two children crouched and watched quietly as their parents, cousins, brothers, sisters, and neighbors stepped toward the cattle cars. That was the last time Harris saw them.

Harris and Sara reunited with their older sister Rosa. Since they were constantly hunted, Rosa snuck them into the forced labor camp. Harris was too young to work and would be shot if he was discovered. His job was to hide.

Fate would also intervene. Another pris-

oner at the camp, an Austrian Jew named Hermann Wenkart, spotted a Nazi soldier whom he had served with in the Austrian army during World War I. The soldier, Eduard Bromofsky, had been wounded in a battle, and Wenkart had saved his life by dragging him to safety. Bromofsky introduced his rescuer to his fellow SS officers, who, impressed by Wenkart’s past bravery, made him head of the prisoners.

In 1944, when the Nazi troops fled the advancing Russians, they moved the Jewish slave laborers to a concentration camp near Częstochowa in southern Poland to make bullets for the front. Before the retreat, Wenkart arranged for an officer to sign a letter to authorities in Częstochowa, asking them to spare the lives of his daughter, Ruthi, and the other children arriving there.

Meanwhile, Harris and his sisters reached Częstochowa, where a guard quickly tried to pull Harris aside. “My sister Rosa was crying and I didn’t want to go,” he recalls. “Well, he [the guard] kicked me right in my little chest.” The guard grabbed Harris and deposited him in a room with four other children, all of whom were to be shot the next day. One of those children was Ruthi.

Wenkart saw that the letter was handed to a Nazi in charge of the camp. Initially, the officer



**Above, left:** Harris’ cracked leather belt is on display at the museum. “This belt is the only thing that I have left from being in the concentration camps,” he says. **Inset:** Harris’ sisters, Rosa (left) and Sara, and Harris at an orphanage in Poland after liberation in 1945.



only agreed to spare Ruthi. Wenkart shook his head with a demand: "Either all or none." The Nazi officer eventually conceded and let the children in the camp.

During the day, Harris existed in shadows. He slept in a women's dorm and constantly wet his bed because he was afraid of going to the latrine, where prisoners who had attempted to escape were hanged. "My bedding was made from a straw burlap bag and it was getting rotten," he says. "I lay on top of it and got infected with fleas and lice. They were all over my ears and my whole body was pink."

In January 1945, the Soviet army liberated the Czestochowa camp. Harris was so hungry that when a fellow prisoner brought him a lump

of butter from a kitchen, he ate the whole thing and became sick.

With rags for shoes, Harris hitchhiked back to Dęblin with other survivors, but their homes were occupied by civilians. Harris and Sara were subsequently put in an orphanage after Rosa had married a Viennese Jewish man. In 1946, Rosa managed to smuggle both Sam and Sara from Poland to Austria and arranged for them to be adopted in the U.S. After a rough Atlantic crossing, they arrived in New York in 1947. "The three words I learned on the ship were 'yes,' 'no,' and 'Coca-Cola,'" Harris remembers.

What was America like to a boy who had grown up in a small Polish town and spent the past five years in one horrific camp or



another? “I was chewing gum,” he says. “We had white bread. I remember Americans sitting down with their feet on their desk, leaning back in their chairs, eating steak. I thought it was pretty darn good.” The two siblings were adopted by different families. “Nobody wanted two kids from the concentration camps,” he points out. So, he was adopted by the Harris family and moved to Northbrook, and Sara lived with a family in Chicago.

Growing up, he wanted to be “just an American boy.” He was in every club, president of his class, and popular among classmates, who had no idea what he had been through. “I made a specific thought in my mind that I would build a brick wall, concrete wall around my head, and not talk about it.” That was during the day when he could control his thoughts. But at night, disturbing dreams would break through the wall. “My adoptive mother would sit and cry with me when I was screaming,” he says.

Harris attended college and began building a successful career in the insurance business. As his business grew, he joined Rotary in 1967. A cousin who was a member of the first Rotary club, in Chicago, brought him to a meeting. “I really liked it,” Harris says, “and I’ve been a Rotarian ever since.”

**I**n 1978, NBC ran its miniseries *Holocaust* over four nights. Watched by over 100 million Americans, it is credited with imprinting the word “Holocaust” into common use. That same year President Jimmy Carter set up a commission that would lead to the establishment of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C.

What would become the Illinois Holocaust Museum was also getting its start. What Harris calls “a small little bitty museum” opened in a storefront in Skokie in 1984. Contributions trickled in. And in 2006, the Glencoe Public Library donated records of the Nuremberg trials.

Harris recorded his story in a book, *Sammy: Child Survivor of the Holocaust*. But in the 1990s, he realized his storefront, and even his book, weren’t enough. But how would he create a museum? Where to start? Being an active Rotarian was key. “I was at a roundtable with a bunch of Rotarians,” says Harris. “I said, ‘Hey, I just volunteered last night to build a museum.’ They all wanted to be part of it. I had a person who vowed to help me raise the money, a person to find the land, a person to do the architecture. My first committee was in Rotary. They all volunteered to work with me.”

As the museum neared completion, Harris

I said, “Hey, I just volunteered to build a museum.” The Rotarians all wanted to be part of it. I had a person to help raise the money, a person to find the land, a person to do the architecture.





**Left:** Harris with his adoptive sister Sue Harris in Illinois. **Above:** Harris with Rotary friends and family: (seated, from left) Dede Harris, Carlos Frum, Ron Bernardi, (standing) Sandra Frum, Paul Clements, Elke Friedman, and Paul Munk.

emphasized the importance of it not being a mere memorial, but something alive, part of the community. “The purpose of the museum is to educate people,” says Harris. “The further we are from World War II ... gas chambers, killing all these people — people don’t know.”

A recent survey of Americans under 40 found that 12 percent had never heard the word “Holocaust.” Nearly half could not name a concentration camp, and 63 percent didn’t know the number of Jews murdered during the Holocaust. In the late 1980s, Harris joined a successful campaign to require Illinois public schools to teach the history of the Holocaust.

The museum opened in 2009 in a severe gray and white building, designed by the distinguished architect Stanley Tigerman, who intended the structure to echo the industrial horror of the Holocaust and represent a journey from darkness into light. It combines artifacts — concentration camp uniforms, a cattle car used to transport victims, drawings and other personal effects — with timelines and narratives to help visitors grasp the ungraspable.

Rotary members continue to play an active role in supporting the museum. Rotary clubs in Illinois have sponsored field trips there for Rotary Youth Exchange students, one of whom

took Harris’ book home to Japan, where her father translated it. Several clubs organized an event there in 2013 in honor of Sir Nicholas Winton, a Rotarian who helped rescue 669 children, most of them Jewish, during World War II.

Harris became actively involved in youth education through Rotary, with its Interact youth program and with Rotaract. “That was the best thing I did for Rotary,” says Harris. Those young people worked at community and senior centers, raised money, and made contact with other clubs abroad. “I don’t want the brutal tragedy to happen to other children simply because of their race,” says Harris.

As he gives a quick tour of the museum, Harris, who is the institution’s president emeritus, gestures to a cracked brown leather belt — his belt — now an exhibit under glass. “This belt is the only thing that I have left from being in the concentration camps,” he says, pulling open a drawer containing the relic, along with his adoption papers. “It would speak of the hunger in a child’s tummy, it would speak of the deaths and suffering it saw. It broke apart into two pieces. And I tried to show that physical beings can be broken apart, but the human spirit, meaning me, my spirit remains unbroken. And so many others, too.” ■

# OUR CLUBS

**VIRTUAL VISIT**

## At home in an adoptive land

Rotary Club of San Miguel de Allende-Midday, Mexico

**San Miguel de Allende**, rising up out of Mexico’s central highlands, has been a magnet for tourists and expatriates since American artists began flocking here in the 1930s. They were drawn by the cobblestone streets lined with colorful homes, the colonial architecture, and the traditions of local artisans. As if under the city’s spell, many never left.

Together with longtime residents, the newcomers helped establish the city as an international arts center. This revived the fortunes of a place that a century prior had fallen into decline with the diminished production of nearby silver mines that had generated riches during centuries of Spanish rule. The city, founded in the 16th century, is recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

In 2005, a handful of the city’s expats chartered the Rotary Club of San Miguel

de Allende-Midday to channel their time and resources into service projects, continuing a long tradition here of newcomers partnering with local nonprofit organizations. “From the beginning, it’s been projects, projects, projects,” says longtime member Gary Peterson, originally from California. “Our focus has always been on projects and fellowship.”

In many ways, the group is like other Rotary clubs started by people who relocated to other countries for work or retirement, including Bocas del Toro in Panama, Chiang Mai International in Thailand, and Tokyo Hiroo in Japan. These clubs provide expats an opportunity to continue doing Rotary service using their own language while acclimating to their new communities. The San Miguel de Allende-Midday club has also been a particularly effective bridge for newcomers to form a deeper connection through friendships and service with their adoptive community and vice versa.

One of its longest-standing projects involves working alongside local organizations like the Centro de Desarrollo Agropecuario (Agricultural Development Center), or CEDESA. Together, they form collectives with female leaders in rural communities and train them to build and manage drinking water cisterns. “By connecting with organizations like CEDESA, it allowed us to demonstrate the value of why we are doing what we are doing,” says Club President Joe Ruffino, who moved to San Miguel in 2017 from upstate New York and bought a small pizzeria.

Lee Carter, immediate past president, agrees. “At the very beginning, we realized

we had no credibility in the rural communities and for us to go out and work there would be ridiculous,” says Carter, who has lived in San Miguel for more than 30 years. “CEDESA works directly in communities. They are our inroad.”

Alongside the service, members of the club have formed friendships beyond the expat community that they might not have otherwise. “It has been the greatest pleasure in the water projects to get to know and work beside these amazing women,” Carter says. “I have been friends with many of them for over 10 years. It is these relationships that keep me involved.”

But despite all that, until recently, something was missing. The club was predominantly male expats. At the start of his 2022-23 presidential year, Carter set out to recruit more women, young people, and native residents. As a result, the club’s membership has nearly doubled since then. Now, more than a third of its 48 members are women, and eight are bilingual Mexicans, including several young adults.

“It’s been amazing,” says José De Anda Pérez, one of those young adults, a dual member of the Rotary club and the Rotaract Club of San Miguel de Allende. “Working with both has opened my mind to creating opportunities to help the community. I want to learn how to plan projects and bring that knowledge back to my Rotaract club.”

The club’s efforts to empower women and girls have also helped it diversify its membership. The club partnered with the international organization Days for Girls to provide washable menstrual products



Members of the Rotary Club of San Miguel de Allende-Midday (from left): José De Anda Pérez, Carla Cadena, Joe Ruffino, Andrea Spessard, and Lee Carter. The club serves as a hub of cultural exchange.

## HOW TO ESCAPE THE EXPAT BUBBLE

Working with the local community is an important part of any Rotary service project, but it is especially important for an international club of expats. As vice president of community service for the Rotary Club of San Miguel de Allende-Midday, Andrea Spessard connects with members every meeting to learn how they want to get involved. The club has organized around project teams instead of committees and encourages every member to be on a project. She shared these additional tips for engaging the local community:

**Start with an assessment.** “We want to ensure we understand what the community’s need is and not just our perspective of it,” Spessard says.

**Collaborate with local organizations.** The San Miguel de Allende-Midday club partners with some of the area’s more than 100 nongovernmental organizations. That helps the club tap into their local knowledge and credibility.

**Involve community leaders.**

The greater San Miguel area includes about 500 rural communities. In their cistern project, the club provides funding, resources, and training, but the communities build the cisterns themselves. “They have the pride of ownership and learn how to maintain them,” Spessard says.

**Stay connected.** The rainwater harvesting cisterns are made of concrete and covered with waterproof paint. “Every few years they need to be repainted,” Spessard explains, “and we make that a Rotary project too.”

for more than 1,700 girls in the fifth and sixth grades. And the club works with Niñas Sabias (Wise Girls) to educate the girls about menstrual health and empower them to understand their worth and potential. “I think this project more than anything else has opened people’s eyes to Rotary being more than they thought,” says Carter.

Andrea Spessard, who leads the club’s service project teams, has seen the results firsthand. She was invited to attend a sixth grade graduation ceremony last June for a girl in the program who was initially reluctant to go on to secondary school. “Through our program she was empow-

ered, learned how important education is, and developed a connection with a teacher who believed in her and encouraged her to stay in school.”

The club also supports a school for people with hearing impairments. An initial global grant helped expand the capacity of the school, which provides education and vocational training in skills like woodworking, sewing, and cooking. A new global grant is funding a vocational training team including educators from the National Technical Institute for the Deaf in Rochester, New York, to provide teacher training in San Miguel and surrounding areas. “About 60 young people have gone

through the school,” says club member John Doherty, who helped establish the school. “We’ve had kids come in cowering in a corner. Now they are fully engaged 10- or 11-year-olds.”

The club also holds a mix and mingle every Monday night with the Rotaract club and the Spanish-speaking Rotary club in the city to form friendships and practice language skills. It’s one of the ways the club has become a hub of cultural exchange. “We have plenty of people come to the meeting who are visiting or guests,” says Ruffino. “They may not want to join Rotary, but they just come to learn.”

— ARNOLD R. GRAHL

## ROTARY IN THE NEWS

# In Ukraine, bullets pierce through childhood. US nonprofits are reaching across borders to help.

By Terry Collins, USA Today

*Editor's note: This story, published 18 September 2023 in USA Today, features a New Hampshire-based aid organization, Common Man for Ukraine, that works with Rotary clubs to provide about \$140,000 a month in aid focused on helping children who lost loved ones or their homes in the war. Two of the nonprofit's founders are Rotarians.*

**Tears flowed around the room** as Alina Ilchuk's letter to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy was read aloud.

The 11-year-old mentioned her father, Serhiy Ilchuk, who was hailed as a hero after being fatally shot by Russian troops while evacuating around 300 Ukrainians near Kyiv about a month into the war. Alina told Zelenskyy that she and her family remain in deep mourning over her dad.

"I have a dream that the war will end because kids are growing up without their parents, like me. I really want to see my dad and hear his voice," said Alina's letter translated into English. "I really want to believe that he will come home soon, but it is not true because now he is in heaven ... he will not feel any pain anymore."

Other Ukrainian kids who lost their fathers wrote similar grief-stricken and heartfelt letters to Zelenskyy. The notes were part of a healing exercise during a retreat for 30 Ukrainian kids held last month by Common Man for



Ukraine, a small New Hampshire-based humanitarian aid nonprofit. The organization funds these monthly trauma counseling and healing retreats, where about 400 kids have participated in 11 sessions in a mountainous area in Zakopane, Poland, since the war started.

"We want to help give these kids a voice, give them the power to talk about these difficult feelings," said Susan Mathison, a Common Man for Ukraine co-founder. "This too is a part of the war that needs to be heard."

The nonprofit is among the numerous aid organizations big and small globally that fear for the mental and physical well-being of a

↑ U.S. nonprofit Common Man for Ukraine co-founder Alex Ray, a Rotary member, inspects a van that was part of a convoy sending food and other supplies from Poland to Ukraine in May 2023. Ray, who owns a chain of popular New Hampshire family-owned restaurants called Common Man, has donated more than \$1 million in aid to Ukrainian children who lost a loved one during the war with Russia.

reported more than 5 million Ukrainian children who've had their lives disrupted because of the war. Many kids with their families have fled Ukraine to other countries, including Poland, Romania, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia.

Aid workers said they are struggling to get more resources to help the kids deal with their grief, emotions, and in some cases, upheaval. Common Man for Ukraine said it may run out of funding at year's end.

"My thinking is there are about 1.5 million Ukrainian children who need support," said Dr. Irwin Redlener, co-founder of the Ukrainian Children's Action Project, a New York-based nonprofit that also

provides humanitarian aid. “That’s a huge number.”

### ‘These kids’ pain and suffering’

The actions of these American advocates for Ukrainian kids come as Ukraine’s first lady Olena Zelenska said recently in a BBC interview that the war has even taken a toll on her children. Zelenska told the network that she and her kids currently don’t live with Zelenskyy because of the war.

“The family is separated,” Zelenska said. “We have the opportunity to see each other, but not as often as we would like. My son misses his father.”

Zelenska added that the uncertainty of living with war has come at an emotional cost for her children.

“It pains me to watch that my kids don’t plan anything. At such an age, young people. My daughter is 19. They dream of traveling, of new sensations, and emotions. She does not have such an opportunity,” Zelenska said. “There are limitations in time in what you can allow yourself, they exist, and we somehow try to live within them.”

Mathison said the setbacks for Ukrainian kids living through the war led her and three others to create Common Man for Ukraine. The nonprofit has raised nearly \$3 million of its \$10 million goal to provide kids with food, relief supplies, and counseling since it formed last year.

“That’s the collective lens we look through when we see this war,” Mathison said. “These kids’ pain and suffering.”

### Need ‘overwhelms the capacities’ of small humanitarian aid groups

Earlier this month, Regina De Dominicis, UNICEF’s regional director for Europe and Central Asia, reiterated the toll the war is having on Ukrainian children, this time after a child was reportedly killed in a market area in the Donetsk region of eastern Ukraine.

De Dominicis cited a United Nations figure that at least 1,715 Ukrainian children have either been



↑ As the Russian invasion of Ukraine intensified in early 2022, Steve Rand (left) and his partner, Susan Mathison, along with another couple, Alex Ray and Lisa Mure, asked each other: “What can we do to help?” The four co-founded Common Man for Ukraine. The nonprofit funds monthly retreats where about 400 Ukrainian kids have participated in sessions in Zakopane, Poland, since the war started.

killed or maimed since the war. She went on to say that every attack and life lost, whether it is a child or a child’s loved one, “etches lasting wounds deeper” into young people’s collective mental well-being.

“This war continues to play out as a war on children, with repercussions which could reverberate for generations,” De Dominicis said. “These attacks have to stop. Children must be given the chance to experience peace. Yet again, we call on all parties to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure, and to abide by their legal and moral obligations to protect children.”

Both Redlener and Mathison said their nonprofits are doing what they can. Redlener said there are about a dozen or so similar groups in the United States alone that he’s aware of assisting kids in Ukraine. He said those organizations work closely with overseas aid groups such as Sincere Heart in Lviv, Ukraine; the Association of Ukrainians in Victo-

ria, Australia; Sunflowers Kids Club in the United Kingdom; and others in Western Europe and Israel.

“But even if you add up what we are all doing, it’s not enough,” said Redlener. “The number of Ukrainian children who need special services simply overwhelms the capacities of these organizations that want to take care of them.”

He said “a devastating combination” of widespread psychological trauma and education disruption, first because of the COVID-19 pandemic and now “a war with no end in sight,” has severely wounded Ukrainian kids.

In March, a study by Ukrainian Children’s Action Project revealed about 28 percent of children were separated from a family member in the past year and 24 percent experienced some form of shelling or bombing. The study, which surveyed 2,000 mothers, grandmothers, and guardians across the country, showed that for the Ukrai-

nian children not attending school, 60 percent of their parents said it was because their kid's school was closed and another 37 percent said they were afraid to send them.

The study also suggested that Ukrainian kids' mental health sharply declined during the war. About 55 percent of parents polled reported their children being bothered by loud sounds, such as bombs and gunfire, 41 percent of parents reported their children being irritable or apathetic, and 1 in 4 of those parents surveyed said their children showed traumatic experiences participating in games or activities.

And for those Ukrainian children with a loved one who died in combat, that experience only compounds the trauma, Redlener believes.

"This trauma that millions of Ukrainian children are going through may impede their long-term ability to meet their optimal potential," said Redlener.

### Small-town Americans entering the war zone

As the Russian invasion of Ukraine intensified in early 2022, Mathison, who lives in Plymouth, New

**"This war continues to play out as a war on children, with repercussions which could reverberate for generations."**

Hampshire, said she and her partner, Steve Rand, along with another couple, Alex Ray and Lisa Mure, asked each other: "What can we do to help?"

Send food? Clothes? Supplies? Cash?

All four live pretty good lives as small-town retirees. Mathison spent 30 years with the U.S. Forest Service. Ray owns a chain of popular family-owned restaurants called Common Man. Mure was a longtime public health advocate, and Rand is a third-generation owner of a century-old local hardware store.

"We've always believed in helping others and making a social

impact," Mathison said. "This is a calling to us."

Local Rotary club leaders Ray and Rand reached out to a Rotary club in Zamość, Poland, asking how they could help. Within days, the four co-founders of the newly created Common Man for Ukraine traveled to Poland with supplies and met with 15 Rotary club presidents from the region who had projects underway or in development.

Ray then donated \$1 million to the nonprofit and challenged his friends to help fundraise another \$1 million in humanitarian aid. After a couple more trips to Ukraine and Poland touring makeshift orphanages and refugee and counseling centers, Common Man for Ukraine decided to focus on Ukrainian children displaced by the war.

Mathison said the on-the-ground experiences, especially seeing kids who are far from their homes, schools, and communities, are hard to ignore. Common Man for Ukraine said it has donated about 800 tons of food, 10,000 sleeping bags, and hundreds of generators to orphanages and safe houses, as well as thousands of hours of counseling throughout western and central Ukraine. The nonprofit spends about \$140,000 monthly, Mathison said.

She describes Ukraine as "a complex puzzle of terror and normalcy" and its people have "both fear and courage, along with an unshakable spirit" that they will win the war.

Mathison said she occasionally gets asked why the nonprofit is helping Ukrainian kids when the group could help kids in the U.S.

↓ Alex Ray (left), Susan Mathison, and Steve Rand meet a girl during a healing retreat in May 2023 for Ukrainian children who have lost a loved one during Russia's war with Ukraine.



PHOTOGRAPHS: COURTESY OF COMMON MAN FOR UKRAINE



She usually responds unapologetically, mentioning she's president of her local Habitat for Humanity and each of the co-founders do charitable work domestically as well.

"I say there is enough good to go around, enough need to go around, you can do what you can do, and what these kids are going through (in Ukraine) is enough for me," she said.

### Doesn't matter what country help comes from

Common Man for Ukraine collaborates closely with Ryszard Luczyn, a Rotary Club of Zamość Ordynacki member in Poland. He helps coordinate the convoys of 20 vans delivering tons of food to orphanages and safe houses. Luczyn also helps with monthly counseling retreats in Poland's Tatra Mountains for Ukrainian children.

An insurance company owner, Luczyn told *USA Today* via email that he appreciates working side by side with the Common Man co-founders. He admires their 24-hour overseas trips, which typically include a flight to Warsaw, Poland, then a train ride to Lublin, Poland, followed by a van ride to Chelm, Poland.

From there, the co-founders often spend a day helping Polish

↑ Common Man for Ukraine founders pose with Polish Rotary partners Ryszard Luczyn (second from right) and Piotr Jankowski (far right) before departing in a convoy loaded with food, sleeping bags, and generators for children's safe houses in Ukraine.

and Ukrainian Rotary volunteers load up vans with supplies to cross to the Ukrainian border the following day for distribution.

"Help for children is needed. It doesn't matter what country that help comes from," Luczyn said about his Common Man for Ukraine colleagues. "These four are very involved in giving aid; they personally participate in convoys, and they load and unload cars with humanitarian aid with their own hands. They risk their own lives."

Mathison said their nonprofit wants to do more than just wire funds. "We want to do the real work," she said.

### 'These kids will help rebuild Ukraine'

The kids who attend Common Man for Ukraine monthly retreats share an unfortunate trait. They lost a loved one to war. The kids live throughout Ukraine with their mother or other relatives. They come either by train or by bus to Lviv and are then taken by a charter bus funded by the nonprofit to Poland.

While the retreats consist of hiking, playing soccer, making arts and crafts, and writing, those activities are weaved into group and indi-

vidual therapy sessions. Certified psychologists, volunteer teachers, and Polish Rotary club members work with the Ukrainian kids to share their thoughts, Mathison said.

The goal is to help kids cope with their grief, Mathison said. But she added some kids also can't resist looking at their phones to monitor the war's movements (and if they may have lost any loved ones) through an app called *Повітряна тривога*, which means Air Alarm in English.

"These kids will help rebuild Ukraine one day," Mathison said. "They are going to be future leaders of this country and will have to know how to deal with adversity. We want to give them the tools and the strength to be the best they can be."

One therapy exercise included the children writing their hopes and fears in letters to Zelenskyy. Tatyana Zhaga, 11, lost her father, Volodymyr Zhaga, in combat in May. She wrote that she supports the Ukrainian armed forces' counterattack.

"I want to get our territories back. I, as a daughter of a hero of Ukraine, want all of our heroes to live really good and come back alive," said Tatyana's letter translated into English. "I am dreaming about a meeting with you and your family. Also, I am dreaming about our victory. Together, we are a power."

Mathison said the kids enter the retreats as strangers "but leave as brothers and sisters. They create a network of support we hope will last a lifetime."

Luczyn said last month he delivered the children's letters to the Ukrainian consul in Krakow, Poland. He is confident the letters will reach Zelenskyy's office.

Mathison said she looks forward to her seventh humanitarian aid trip to the region in October, hopefully with the news Zelenskyy has read and responded to the kids' letters and more funding to continue their efforts.

"I think we're making a small dent in an enormous problem. Our work is far from over," Mathison said. "We're not finished." ■

HANDBOOK

# A preventable killer

Why so many people are still dying of cervical cancer, and what Rotary is doing about it

Women diagnosed with cervical cancer are almost twice as likely to die than those diagnosed with breast cancer. Yet cervical cancer is a disease that is preventable and treatable. What’s going on?

About 90 percent of the women killed by cervical cancer — more than 340,000 in 2020 — live in low- and middle-income countries, where access to prevention, screening, and treatment is severely limited. And reproductive care remains a taboo topic, even when it means people are dying as a result.

The Rotary Foundation has awarded more than \$10.3 million in global grant funding for cervical cancer projects since 2014, and other Rotary projects, such as an initiative in Alabama, have tackled this issue outside of global grant funding. In addition, \$2 million was awarded to United to End Cervical Cancer in Egypt as part of the third annual Programs of Scale competition. The Foundation awards these grants to evidence-based programs that align with at least one of Rotary’s causes and are ready for expansion to create larger-scale change.

The four-year program in and around Cairo will vaccinate more than 30,000 girls ages 9 to 15 to prevent infection with the human papillomavirus, which causes the disease. It will provide cancer screenings for 10,000 women — allowing for early detection and treatment — and launch a public awareness campaign to reach 4 million people, helping address cultural misconceptions that may deter people from seeking care.

For Cervical Cancer Awareness Month in January, we examined the state of the disease around the world, and what Rotary members are doing about it.

## Your Foundation money at work

Countries and geographical areas where global grants have funded cervical cancer projects in the past 10 years

116

Global grants awarded to fund cervical cancer projects since 2014

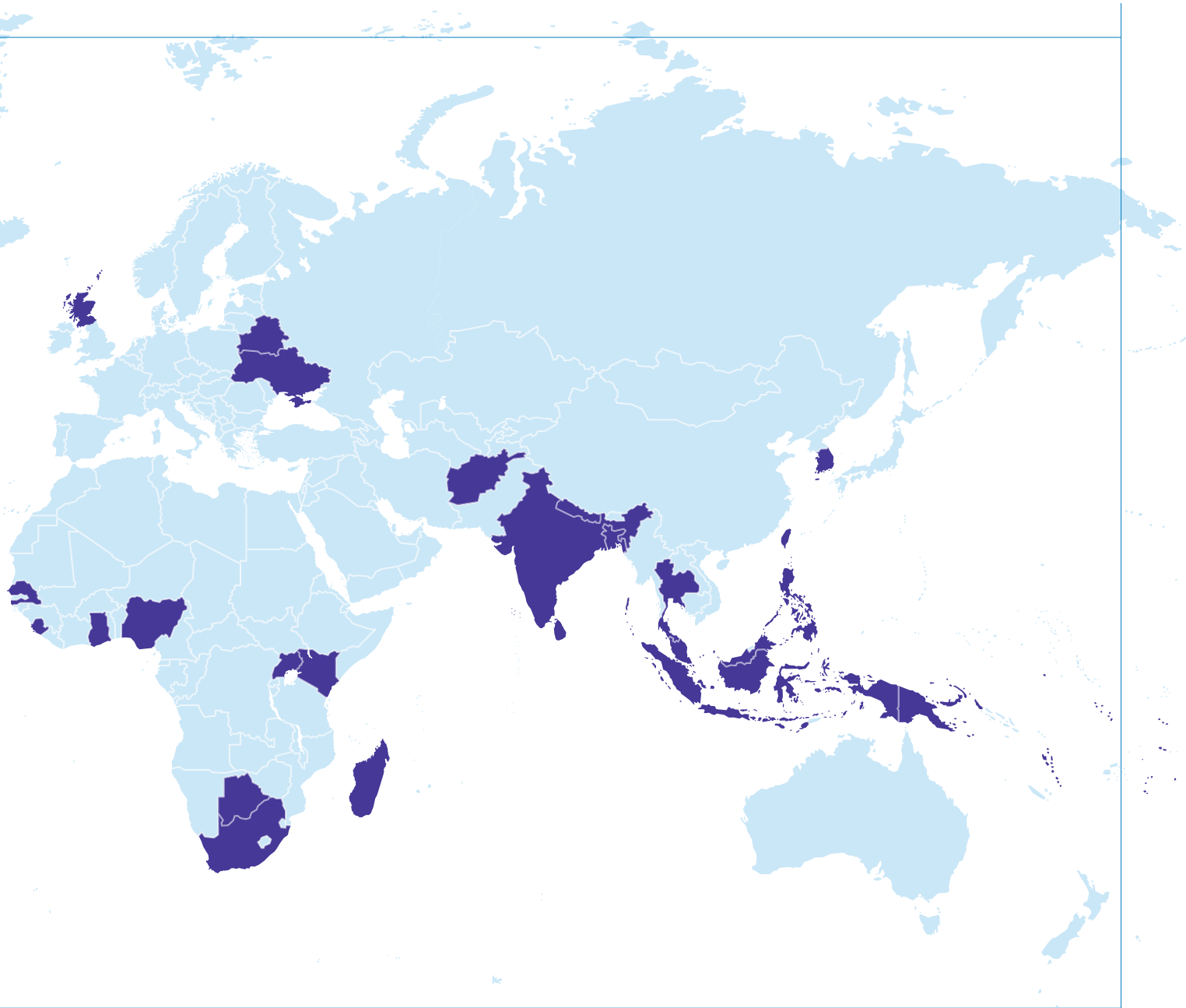
91%

Share of cervical cancer deaths in low- and middle-income countries, where access to prevention, screening, and treatment is severely limited

604,127

Number of people diagnosed with cervical cancer in 2020





### How HPV infection can lead to cervical cancer

Cervical cancer is primarily caused by the human papillomavirus, a group of more than 200 related viruses, some of which are sexually transmitted. Nearly all sexually active people will be infected with HPV at some point in their lives; most of these infections are harmless, but some high-risk HPV viruses can progress to cancer. HPV vaccinations before a young person becomes sexually active can prevent infection, and therefore cervical cancer. The cancer develops slowly, with five to 20 years between the first cellular changes to the actual development of cancer. Screening for abnormal cells and treatment when necessary can stop the disease from progressing and save lives.





TRUSTEE CHAIR'S MESSAGE

# Make the Foundation yours

**The new year ushers in promise and hope,** a time to resolve to do things differently. We can do more than just hope for the best. We can take steps — big and small — to make changes in every aspect of our lives, including Rotary.

Here's a New Year's resolution to consider: Remember that The Rotary Foundation belongs to you. The Foundation is a global force, doing our good work in the world. Just like anything that belongs to you, it requires care and attention. How can we do this?

First, get to know your Foundation better this year. Did you know that in 2023, the Foundation achieved a maximum four-star rating from Charity Navigator for the 15th consecutive year? This places your Foundation among the world's top charities. Why do we consistently receive this honor? It's because we are financially strong, have a broad reach, and are highly effective with the gifts you give: 91 percent of funds are allocated to program awards and operations.

Another way to engage with your Foundation is to support it through a gift, every year. We've set an ambitious fundraising goal of \$500 million this year, and I'm confident that, with your support, we will achieve it. This year, I'm especially counting on those Rotarians and Rotaractors who have not yet contributed to make their first gift. Because

The Rotary Foundation is an excellent steward, you can be confident that your gift will make a difference, whether it's in polio eradication, literacy initiatives, peace education, or any other area in which we excel.

In 2024, resolve to share the Foundation with others. The Foundation is too great to keep to ourselves. Spread the word during your fundraisers and events. Let the public know that The Rotary Foundation plays a significant role in everything we do, including in our many partnerships. Anyone can support the Foundation, even people who are not in Rotary.

Lastly this year, take action. Your Foundation is waiting for you to roll up your sleeves and make use of its resources to make the world a better place. Seek out global or district grant projects. Consider partnering with a Rotaract club in 2024 to support a grant or collaborate on one. Team up with Rotary and Rotaract clubs in your area to plan your biggest million dollar dinner fundraiser or End Polio Now event.

Whatever you decide to do in 2024, commit to keeping our Foundation in your plans. I can't wait to hear about all the great things we will accomplish this year.

**BARRY RASSIN**

*Foundation trustee chair*

## SERVICE ABOVE SELF

### THE OBJECT OF ROTARY

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

**First** The development of acquaintance as an opportunity for service;

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

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

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

### THE FOUR-WAY TEST

Of the things we think, say or do:

1. Is it the **truth**?
2. Is it **fair** to all concerned?
3. Will it build **goodwill** and **better friendships**?
4. Will it be **beneficial** to all concerned?

### ROTARIAN CODE OF CONDUCT

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

As a Rotarian, I will

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



# ARE YOU LISTENING?

Subscribe to our podcast for immersive storytelling from *Rotary* magazine, and take us with you on your next commute, road trip, or walk.



Rotary magazine's best storytelling — now available everywhere podcasts are found.

**DOWNLOAD • LISTEN • SUBSCRIBE**  
[on.rotary.org/podcast](https://on.rotary.org/podcast)

# GREAT CLUBS DON'T HAPPEN BY ACCIDENT

Be intentional about providing your members with a great club experience.

Our **MEMBERSHIP ASSESSMENT TOOLS** can help you get started.



Get to know new and prospective members with the **member interest survey**.



Identify groups in your community that are underrepresented in your club using the **diversity assessment**.



Create a plan to invite more people to visit or join your club with the **prospective member exercise**.



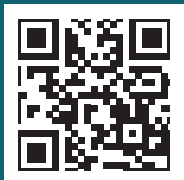
Meet members where they're at in their membership journey using the **retention assessment and analysis**.



Learn what your members want and keep your club relevant with the **member satisfaction survey**.



Understand why members are leaving your club with the **exit survey**.



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

Rotary 

## CALENDAR

# January events

### A GEM OF AN EVENING

**Event:** OPAL Awards Gala

**Host:** Rotary Club of Boca Raton, Florida

**What it benefits:** Local scholarships

**Date:** 13 January

The annual red carpet gala honors Boca Raton's "outstanding people and leaders" — those who have demonstrated a commitment to improve the community through philanthropy, professional leadership, and volunteer service. Attendees will enjoy a reception with cocktails and hors d'oeuvres, followed by an elegant dinner and awards presentation. This year's honorees include club member Patricia McCarthy, a longtime donor to The Rotary Foundation.

### EASY DOES IT

**Event:** The Race for the Rest of Us 0.5K

**Host:** Rotary Club of Fairhope  
Sunset, Alabama

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

**Date:** 13 January

Those intimidated by 5Ks need not fear this race, which is designed for all ages and abilities. It's only a half-kilometer (0.3-mile) long, costumes are encouraged, and a station at the route's midpoint sustains runners and walkers with sausage-topped doughnuts. All participants receive a commemorative shirt and medal, with trophies for the best costumes. A post-race celebration includes refreshments and live music.

### A PLEASANT PATH

**Event:** Peachtree City Half Marathon & 5K

**Host:** Rotary Club of Peachtree City, Georgia

**What it benefits:** Local charities

**Date:** 13 January



### RIGHT ON CUE

**Event:** Slab-O-Rama

**Host:** Rotary Club of Bullhead City, Arizona

**What it benefits:**

Local projects

**Dates:** 12-13 January

Grilling teams from across the country flock to Bullhead City for this barbecue competition, which awards \$20,000 in prizes across eight categories, including pork, chicken, brisket, and ribs. A separate Kids-Q contest on Friday is open to budding pitmasters ages 7 to 16. The event, which takes place in a club-supported park along the Colorado River, includes a beer garden, a cornhole tournament, and live music.

In its inaugural year, this race winds through Peachtree City, a leafy suburb south of Atlanta. The scenic, moderately flat route includes a portion of the city's 100-mile network of paved paths, which are typically trafficked by golf carts. (Residents have registered more than 9,000 of the vehicles.) Each participant receives a tech shirt and a commemorative medal, and refreshments await runners crossing the finish line.

### ART WITH HEART

**Event:** Cape Coral Art Festival & Market Place

**Host:** Rotary Club of Cape Coral, Florida

**What it benefits:** Local projects

**Dates:** 13-14 January

A staple in southwest Florida for nearly 40 years, the two-day festival welcomes more than 100,000 people annually to admire the creations of hundreds of artists and artisans from around the world.

Juried works, including paintings, photographs, sculptures, crafts, and jewelry, are displayed along Cape Coral Parkway, with an additional exhibit of local students' art. The event offers live music, food vendors, and booths showcasing area businesses.

### PICTURE THIS

**Event:** Fine Arts & Crafts Festival

**Host:** Rotary Club of Venice-Nokomis, Florida

**What it benefits:** Local youth programs

**Dates:** 20-21 January

About 100 artists will exhibit their work at the Venice Airport Festival Grounds for this show, established in 1991 by club members inspired by the Cape Coral art festival. In addition to the art, the event includes live music, food trucks, family activities, and an antique and classic car show. Thousands of people are expected to attend, and children under 10 get in free.

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

IN MEMORIAM

# Dream achiever

James L. Lacy, 1930-2023



**James L. Lacy**, a past Rotary International president who was passionate about improving the lives of children and dedicated to raising funds for Rotary’s polio eradication efforts, died 4 October at age 92.

Lacy, a member of the Rotary Club of Cookeville, Tennessee, for over 50 years, served as RI president in 1998-99. His presidential theme, *Follow Your Rotary Dream*, urged members to turn their dreams into action to address community concerns, particularly the needs of children.

“For me, a Rotary dream fulfilled is seeing children who were suffering become happy and healthy, their lives filled with new opportunities,” he said at the 1999 Rotary International Convention in Singapore. “I realized I could not fulfill this dream on my own, but I knew that with all of us working together — side by side, with hands and heart — we could begin to make this dream come true.”

“Jim Lacy was an advocate for children,” recalls John F. Germ, a fellow Tennessean who served as RI president in 2016-17. “He initiated the Children’s Opportunities Grants program,” which funded projects benefiting children, “and was extremely active in polio eradication. He was instrumental in getting the [PolioPlus] program started.”

A longtime advocate for government support for polio eradication, Lacy played a critical role in securing hundreds of millions of dollars in U.S. funding toward the effort. He served on The Rotary Foundation’s Polio Eradication Advocacy Task Force for the United States from 2000 to 2017, for most of that time as its chair. In 2018 the Foundation honored him with a PolioPlus Pioneer Award for his founding role in the program.

Lacy joined the Cookeville club in 1964 at age 34. He led a Group Study Exchange trip to England in 1977-78 that he said “opened [his] eyes to the internationality of Rotary” and became one of his fondest memories. He served as president of his club in 1978-79 and district governor in 1980-81.

He credited his parents with instilling in him a love of community service. “[They] always taught me to share with those who are less fortunate,” he told this magazine in 1998. “I have always felt empathy for those in need. My parents engrained in me that with opportunities, you also have obligations. I have always enjoyed volunteer work and this feeling has led to my many years of service in Rotary.”

Lacy served as RI director in 1988-90 and Foundation trustee in 1994-97 and 2000-04. In addition, he served on numerous Rotary committees. He received The Rotary Foundation’s Citation for Meritorious Service, as well as its Distinguished Service Award and RI’s Service Above Self Award. He was a Major Donor, along with his wife of 74 years, Claudine, who survives him.

Lacy was the owner and chair of a confection company, Gilliam Candy Brands, which he bought in 1986 and sold in 2004. Before that, he was president of an investment firm and a real estate developer. He also served in the military in 1952-54 and as a member of the Tennessee House of Representatives in 1967-70.

In 2005, the Rotary Club of Cookeville established the James & Claudine Lacy Fund to enable local schools to provide clothes and other items to students in need. The club named the fund in recognition of Lacy’s service as RI president and his dedication to helping children around the world. — ARNOLD R. GRAHL

With deep regret, we report the deaths of **Richard D. King**, Niles (Fremont), California, who served RI as president in 2001-02, director in 1989-91, and district governor in 1982-83; **Mohamed Benmejdoub**, Casablanca, Morocco, who served RI as director in 1986-88 and district governor in 1973-74; **Neville Hackett**, Oadby, England, who served RI as director in 1993-95, president of Rotary International in Great Britain and Ireland in 1991-92, and district governor in 1980-81; and **Jorge Aufranc**, Guatemala Vista Hermosa, Guatemala, who served RI as director in 2016-18 and district governor in 2003-04.

Next month’s issue will feature an obituary of King.

In addition, we report the deaths of the following Rotarians who served RI as district governors:

**Cheickna Sylla**

Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire, 1991-92

**Jose F. Ravano**

Monroeville, Pennsylvania, 2000-01

**Jiro Kawatsuma**

Tokyo Yoneyama Yuai, Japan, 2002-03

**Hirohiko Oshima**

Nagoya, Japan, 2004-05

**Humberto B. Santos**

Praia, Cabo Verde, 2006-07

**Gary Welch**

Ankeny, Iowa, 2010-11

**Tatsuo Hiki**

Utsunomiya Yoto, Japan, 2011-12

**Sam Kwaku Worentetu**

Accra, Ghana, 2016-17

**Moon-Soo Cho**

Busan-Kwangbok, Korea, 2020-21



# Rotary Action Groups

**Rotary Action Groups help clubs and districts** plan humanitarian service projects on various focused topics. The groups are organized by Rotarians, Rotaractors, and Rotary Peace Fellows with skills and interest in a particular field. Membership is open to people who want to share their expertise to make an impact or support action groups' projects and activities. Action group members have the opportunity to engage in meaningful service activities outside their clubs, districts, or countries.

↑ Clubs can draw on Rotary Action Groups to enhance their projects. A river cleanup project in Mexico was supported by the environmental sustainability and water, sanitation, and hygiene action groups.

**Addiction prevention**  
rag-ap.org

**Alzheimer's and dementia**  
adrag.org

**Basic education and literacy**  
belrag.org

**Blindness prevention**  
rag4bp.org

**Blood, tissue, and organ donation**  
ourblooddrive.org

**Clubfoot**  
rag4clubfoot.org

**Community economic development**  
ragced.org

**Diabetes**  
rag-diabetes.org

**Disaster assistance**  
dna-rag.com

**Endangered species**  
rag4es.org

**Environmental sustainability**  
esrag.org

**Family health and AIDS prevention**  
rfha.org

**Food plant solutions**  
foodplantsolutions.org

**Health education and wellness**  
hewrag.org

**Hearing**  
ifrahl.org

**Hepatitis**  
ragforhepatitis  
eradication.com

**Malaria**  
ram-global.org

**Menstrual health and hygiene**  
ragmhh.org

**Mental health initiatives**  
ragonmentalhealth.org

**Multiple sclerosis**  
rotary-ragmsa.org

**Peace**  
rotaryactiongroup  
forpeace.org

**Refugees, forced displacement, and migration**  
ragforrefugees.org

**Reproductive, maternal, and child health**  
rotaryrmch.org

**Slavery prevention**  
ragas.online

**Water, sanitation, and hygiene**  
wash-rag.org

## IN BRIEF

### Foundation retains top Charity Navigator rating

**For the 15th consecutive year,** The Rotary Foundation has received the highest rating — four stars — from Charity Navigator, an independent evaluator of charities registered in the U.S.

The Foundation earned the recognition for adhering to best practices in the nonprofit sector and executing its mission in a financially efficient and responsible way, demonstrating strong financial health and a commitment to accountability and transparency.

“We are delighted to provide The Rotary Foundation with third-party accreditation that validates their operational excellence,” says Michael Thatcher, president and CEO of Charity Navigator. “The four-star rating is the highest possible rating an organization can achieve. We are eager to see the good work that Rotary is able to accomplish in the years ahead.”

Charity Navigator is a research and ratings tool that helps donors find reputable organizations working on the causes they care about. It assesses nonprofit performance in four key areas: the impact of an organization's programs compared to their cost; the organization's stewardship practices for donations and its financial health, including its transparency, efficiency, and sustainability; its leadership, strategic development, and ability to adapt to changes; and its overall culture and connectedness to the people and communities it serves. ■

Find out more by emailing or visiting the website of the group you're interested in, or by writing to [actiongroups@rotary.org](mailto:actiongroups@rotary.org).

2024 CONVENTION

# Convention is for families



Sentosa Island, Singapore

**Picture this: You get the chance to treat your family** to an unforgettable vacation in one of Asia's top sunny destinations. How? By bringing them along to Singapore for the Rotary International Convention. You'll already have your hotel and flight booked, with a great base for sightseeing because the venues are close to museums, adventure parks, and activities for all ages. By registering as guests, your loved ones can enjoy the big-name entertainers and inspiring keynote speakers at the 25-29 May convention and join you and the entire Rotary family in *Sharing Hope With the World*.

Book tours in Singapore and nearby countries on the Host Organization Committee site, [rotarysingapore2024.org](http://rotarysingapore2024.org). Stay on the island to learn about food, sustainability, or the nation's rich culture. Or hop to Bangkok, for example, to take

in the city's famed street life and wander the ruins of the ancient city Ayutthaya, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

In Singapore, here are just a few family-friendly spots. At the Marina Bay Sands complex hosting breakout sessions, an ArtScience Museum exhibit transforms your drawings into computerized art on a "lush digital jungle" canvas you walk on.

Adjacent to the National Stadium convention site is a small water park on top of a building with sweeping skyline views. Splash-N-Surf has a kids playground and a wave pool for prebooked skim-boarding.

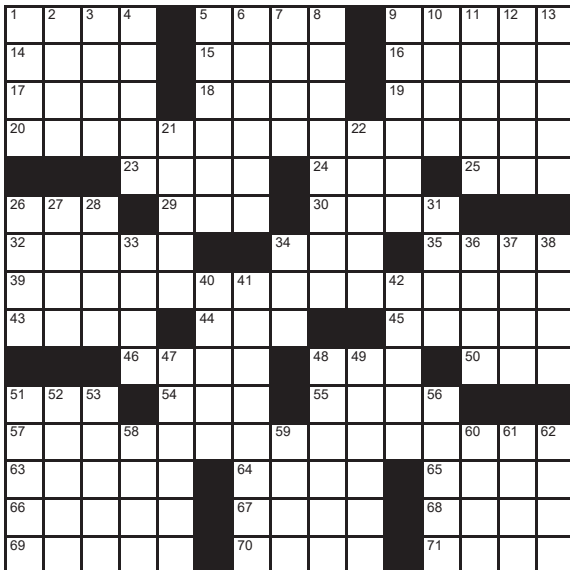
Venture to Singapore's Sentosa resort island (take the cable car!) to explore S.E.A. Aquarium, Universal Studios Singapore with its Jurassic Park zone, or Skyline Luge where you zoom down tree-lined trails on carts. — EVA REMIJAN-TOBA

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

CROSSWORD

# January emphasis

By Victor Fleming  
Rotary Club of Little Rock, Arkansas



Solution on **page 10**

**ACROSS**

- 1 Pound adoptees
- 5 Branch of math, briefly
- 9 Texas historical site
- 14 Part of Q.E.D.
- 15 Movie director Kazan
- 16 Bedsheets and such
- 17 Kedrova of acting
- 18 Arm or leg
- 19 12-month stretches
- 20 The Rotary Foundation's Cadre members provide it via their vocational experience
- 23 Netlike fabric
- 24 U.S. group that oversees MPG values
- 25 Be a benchwarmer
- 26 Upside?
- 29 New World grp. since 1948
- 30 Computer keyboard key
- 32 \_\_\_\_\_ Hilda
- 34 Aging vessel
- 35 Still contending
- 39 Efforts that benefit from members' vocational skills
- 43 Finger jab
- 44 Leaving \_\_\_\_\_ Vegas
- 45 Baker or O'Day
- 46 66 and others (abbr.)
- 48 College address ender

- 50 Country on the Med.
- 51 Group of vineyards
- 54 Laser beam
- 55 *Beany and Cecil* boat Leakin' \_\_\_\_\_
- 57 District group through which members share vocational expertise
- 63 Big tournaments
- 64 Animal shelter
- 65 Award created by *The Village Voice*
- 66 "I know them already"
- 67 \_\_\_\_\_ Reader
- 68 Repetitious learning
- 69 Lyric lamentation
- 70 Those, in Havana
- 71 Campus bigwig

**DOWN**

- 1 Animal skin
- 2 Pennsylvania port or lake
- 3 Absorbent powder
- 4 Lesley of *60 Minutes*
- 5 Toyota model of yore
- 6 "\_\_\_\_\_ Restaurant"
- 7 Ohio city named after a world capital
- 8 San Francisco symbol
- 9 Three-peat placer in 1978's Triple Crown

- 10 Schreiber who played Ray Donovan
- 11 Diarist Nin
- 12 Thank you, to Henri
- 13 Advent
- 21 Judd or Watts
- 22 Is \_\_\_\_\_ (probably will)
- 26 Recipe meas.
- 27 Big Stuf cookie
- 28 "Pulled" meat
- 31 Security interest
- 33 "Get \_\_\_\_\_ it!"
- 34 Gore and Harris
- 36 CBS military drama
- 37 Microscopic beginning
- 38 Mikhail Romanov, e.g.
- 40 "On a \_\_\_\_\_ day ..."
- 41 Crossworder's delight
- 42 Day trip, say
- 47 Dependable
- 48 Extreme weather cause
- 49 Popular farm tractors
- 51 *A Beautiful Mind* star
- 52 Beat back
- 53 1972 Bill Withers hit
- 56 "May I speak to you briefly?"
- 58 Blood type, for short
- 59 Has lunch
- 60 Bassoon's kin
- 61 Hayworth or Moreno
- 62 "Peachy \_\_\_\_\_!"





# ONWARD TO *Singapore*

## FOR ROTARY INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION 2024

Preconvention flight and tour  
packages now available.



Thailand

Vietnam +  
Cambodia

Malaysia

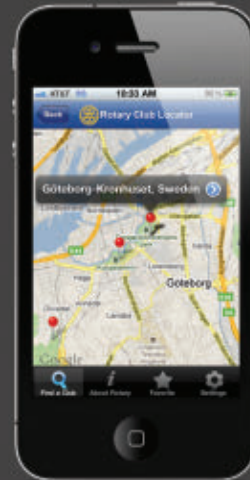
Call/WhatsApp: +1-868-388-2937  
conventiontours@socaislands.com  
socaislands.com/conventiontours

Tours curated  
for Rotarians,  
Rotaractors  
and Friends.



# FIND A CLUB

ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD!



Get Rotary's free Club Locator app and find a meeting wherever you go!

[www.rotary.org/clublocator](http://www.rotary.org/clublocator)

# wheels of hope

Wheels of Hope raises funds to build hand cranked tricycle wheelchairs to transform the lives of polio survivors in Nigeria.



## MOBILITY CHANGES EVERYTHING!

### Better Health and Greater Opportunities

Wheelchairs enable polio survivors to go to school, learn a trade, get a good job and raise a family.

### Greater Emotional and Social Well Being

Wheelchairs enable polio survivors to live a life of dignity, independence, respect, and inclusion.

You can join us in this international  
project to transform lives.

[wheelsofhope.net](http://wheelsofhope.net)



Rotary  
Club of Traverse City



Wheels of Hope is a project of The Traverse City Rotary Club



## Share the love

Celebrated in song and verse, kimchi is at the heart of Korean traditions

**Before refrigeration,** Koreans fermented their vegetables to help them last through winter, creating the side dish kimchi that remains a beloved part of the country’s culinary tradition to this day. Every autumn, families and friends gather to create the year’s stock, a ritual called gimjang. Rotary members from all over South Korea participate as well, buying hundreds of cabbages and pairing them with ingredients such as radishes, garlic, ginger, and chile powder. They deliver the product to homes where making kimchi is challenging, preparing their neighbors for the winter ahead.

“Traditionally, making kimchi is about sharing love with your neighbors,” says Tae-Rim Lee, a past president of the Rotary Club of Seoul-Shinsa. “It’s unimaginable for someone to spend a winter without kimchi.”

**IN SONG:** There are over 300 recognized types of kimchi, made from everything from cabbage and radish to mangoes or strawberries. Lyrics from a popular 1980s song go, “If there was no kimchi / How can I eat rice? ... Can’t live without kimchi / Kimchi is the best.” Thirteenth-century poet Yi Gyubo wrote, “Fermented pickles are perfect for summer / Salted kimchi is a side dish all winter long.”

**A TREAT IN ALL SEASONS:** Kimchi matures into a tangy delicacy. In spring, you can easily prepare kimchi stew with the remaining aged kimchi. In a large pot, place pork belly and a head of cabbage kimchi, drizzle sesame oil, and add broth. Simmer until it’s done. It’s a treat you can finally enjoy after surviving the long and harsh winter.

— SEOHA LEE

**Tae-Rim Lee**  
Rotary Club of  
Seoul-Shinsa

# Stephanie Urchick *invites you to* Help Rotary Strike Out Polio

Stephanie A. Urchick, 2024-25 RI president, invites 25 PolioPlus supporters to her hometown of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA, to **Help Rotary Strike Out Polio at the \$1 Million Baseball Game.**

Starting 1 December 2023, the first 25 Rotary Foundation supporters who donate US\$10,000 or more to the PolioPlus Fund will be invited to join RI President Stephanie Urchick and General Secretary John Hewko to cheer on Major League Baseball's Pittsburgh Pirates from a private suite at PNC Park on 23 July 2024.

***Attendees' transportation and accommodation expenses are not included.***

When matched 2-to-1 by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, these gifts will result in an additional \$1 million in funding to support Rotary's work to eradicate polio worldwide.

Space is limited, so interested donors are encouraged to register right away. Contact Kevin Kelly, Rotary Foundation major gifts officer, at [kevin.kelly@rotary.org](mailto:kevin.kelly@rotary.org) or +1-847-866-3205.

The Rotary Foundation thanks Bob Brooks, 2023-24 president of the Rotary Club of Delmont-Salem, Pennsylvania, for hosting this special event.



The  
**Rotary**  
Foundation



Make new connections and reunite with friends at Rotary's biggest event of the year!

# 2024 ROTARY INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION

SINGAPORE | 25-29 MAY 2024



Register today at [convention.rotary.org](https://convention.rotary.org)

