

Rotary

MAY 2026

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Follow the youth

Shoki Wafula did not know what to expect when he was forced to leave his birth country of Uganda for South Africa. What he found was a Rotary community that welcomed him with warmth and friendship. That experience inspired him to help create a Rotaract e-club where young leaders from around the world could connect, develop their skills, and serve together.

Today, that community includes members across multiple continents who collaborate on leadership development, peacebuilding, and service initiatives. For Wafula, the experience reinforced the lesson that meaningful service begins with people who feel connected, valued, and empowered to lead.

His story reminds us why Youth Service Month is so important. Through Rotaract and programs like Rotary Youth Exchange, young people build leadership skills, develop global understanding, and discover the impact they can make through service.

Rotary's Action Plan calls on us to enhance participant engagement. At its heart, that goal asks a simple question: How can we ensure that participation in Rotary is meaningful and fulfilling for everyone? Youth programs and Rotaract provide a powerful answer.

When clubs mentor Rotaractors, host exchange students, or support youth leadership initiatives, they create opportunities for members to share their experience in ways that feel personal and rewarding. These connections deepen members' sense of purpose and strengthen the bonds within our Rotary family.

They also create lasting pathways into Rotary. Thousands of young people complete Rotary programs each year, and they carry those experiences with them throughout their lives. Many remain eager to stay connected.

Organizations such as Rotex International, an association of former Youth Exchange students, help Rotary program alumni continue serving as mentors, leaders, and advocates for our youth programs. As Rotex co-founder Hans Lee wrote in a recent reflection on Youth Exchange alumni, "exchange doesn't end when you return home."

When we welcome these young leaders into our clubs and activities, we strengthen the continuity of Rotary across generations.

During Youth Service Month, I hope every Rotary club reflects on how youth programs can enhance engagement for new and longtime members. Collaborate on service projects and invite youth voices into your planning and decision making.

Rotary's message to the world is that we can *Unite for Good*. Youth programs show us how that happens in practice — when generations come together, share ideas, and work side by side in service.

When we invest in young people, we are not only shaping future leaders. We are building a stronger, more connected Rotary today.

FRANCESCO AREZZO
President, Rotary International



WELCOME



YOU ARE HERE: Chennai, India

GREETING: Vanakkam

DETROIT OF INDIA: A major port and gateway for travelers exploring southern India, Chennai is a leading automobile manufacturing center, earning the city its nickname as the “Detroit of India.” In recent decades, Chennai has become a global IT hub. As a cultural capital, it is celebrated for Carnatic music, classical dance, historic temples, and vibrant south Indian cuisine.

MARINA BEACH: Stretching about 4 miles along the Bay of Bengal, Marina Beach (pictured here) is among the world’s longest urban beaches. Locals flock here to escape the tropical heat. The beach’s scenic promenade is lined with statues of locally important figures. Food stalls, shops, kiteflying, and impromptu games of beach cricket add to its lively atmosphere.

THE PHOTOGRAPHER: Siddharth Behl, a New Delhi-based photographer and a National Geographic Explorer grant recipient, captured this scene on a quiet stretch of Marina Beach while on assignment to document Rotary clubs’ role in nurturing the country’s young chess prodigies for the February issue of *Rotary*.

Rotary

MAGAZINE

May 2026

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How did Anna start to enjoy life to the fullest?

At the age of 56, a back operation left me dependent on a cane, significantly impacting my daily life. Simple tasks like going to the store or meeting friends became challenging, and I even had to cancel a long-awaited anniversary trip to Italy.

My husband purchased a scooter for me, but it was cumbersome and uncomfortable for everyday use, leaving me feeling more constrained than liberated. However, everything changed when I came across the ATTO SPORT. This remarkable scooter proved to be a game changer. Not only is it robust and reliable, but it also conveniently splits into two pieces, allowing me to effortlessly lift it into my car trunk on my own. I was even able to stow it in the overhead compartment on the plane, enabling us to finally take that trip to Italy! I am now independent once more, able to go wherever I please and do so with a striking sense of style. In fact, I now find that my husband struggles to keep up with me!



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On the cover: From a neighborhood pub to a commuter train to a tulip field — these are the places members are creatively raising money to stop polio. **Illustration by James Taylor**



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STAFF CORNER

Dan Conley

Team lead, executive communications

Growing up, I sensed that writing would be part of my life. In high school, I was known more for public speaking, as I became the Oklahoma state debate champion. I began gravitating toward journalism while working for my high school newspaper. So, I majored in journalism first at the University of Kentucky and then at the University of Missouri. The journalism program at Mizzou, as the school is known, emphasizes hands-on reporting, and I had the chance to write for two large dailies, the *Columbia Missourian* and the *Tulsa World*.

After graduating, I moved to Washington, D.C., as an editorial assistant to Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Richard Ben Cramer, who was writing his landmark book *What It Takes*. It explores the lives of eight candidates in the 1988 U.S. presidential election. Through the project, I learned about the inner workings of Washington and a talented author’s writing process.

In the late 1980s, I joined the Computer & Communications Industry Association, writing about emerging technology policies at a time when computers and telecommunications were just beginning to converge. Although we didn’t fully realize it at the time, my colleagues and I were reporting on the birth of the internet revolution.

I was offered a job as press officer for the governor of Virginia, Douglas Wilder, in 1991. The role required extensive speechwriting, which at the time I didn’t know much about. My background in debate and public speaking eased the transition. When Wilder entered the 1992 presidential race, I managed communications for his campaign.

In 1995, I moved to Chicago, where I spent 3½ years as a speechwriter and then deputy press secretary for Mayor Richard M. Daley. An adviser once described the mayor to me as “a short man with a short temper who uses short words.” It was quite



an apt description that guided me. City Hall was fast-paced and unpredictable. During my time there, I crafted an op-ed on the Clean Air Act for the mayor that ran in *The New York Times* and worked on several high-profile speeches for the 1996 Democratic National Convention.

I shifted directions and joined IBM in the late 1990s and later became a speechwriter for the American Dental Association. That experience eventually came in handy when Rotary elected two dentists — Gordon McNally and Francesco Arezzo — as presidents.

My job at Rotary is to help senior leaders develop speeches and shape their communications strategies. In 2024, I joined a cause-based e-club: the Rotary Club of Mental Health and Wellness District 5280.

Writing remains a deeply personal pursuit. In 2011, I read the book of 107 essays by Michel de Montaigne, the 16th-century French philosopher. They examine human nature and everyday life. Inspired, I challenged myself to write 107 essays in 107 consecutive days about modern equivalents to the topics covered in Montaigne’s collection. I posted them on my blog and continued revising them. Recently, I self-published my favorites. While my job at Rotary involves helping others tell their stories, my blog allows me to explore the subjects that matter most to me. ■

Letters to the editor

HEROES OF HUMANITY

Abraham Lincoln was not a Rotarian, but he embodied the principles of Rotary as well as any person in history, as described in Geoffrey Johnson's terrific article "The greatest Rotarian" in the February issue.

It got me thinking about other men and women in history who gave exemplary service above themselves and whether there is a role for Rotary to shine a bright light upon them. We have such an illuminating tool in the Paul Harris Society, which the Rotary Club of Syracuse, New York, recently used to honor Harriet Tubman.

Tubman, who lived her last decades in nearby Auburn, is arguably one of the most selfless souls ever to walk the earth. Her descendant Michele Jones Galvin is the co-author of *Beyond the Underground: Aunt Harriet, Moses of Her People* and a member of the Syracuse club. A beaming Jones Galvin accepted the Paul Harris Fellow honor on behalf of Tubman from Past District 7180 Governor Don Reese.

There are many others in history deserving of our recognition and honor. In a time when some seek to whitewash history or to bend its arc for political purposes, Rotary can stand tall by populating our legacy with true heroes of humanity here and around the world. Let us at least stand beside the luminaries of history, so that people will know where we stand.

Glenn H. Ivers, Syracuse, New York

SPECIAL EFFECTS

Rotary's 2026-27 president, Olayinka H. Babalola, "thinks a key to growing Rotary is realizing the effect it has on you" ["The game changer," February].

I used to keep pretty much to myself. Twenty years of scheduling speakers for the Jefferson City Evening Rotary Club has expanded my horizons. I have scheduled Missouri Supreme Court judges, members of Congress, mayors, and more.

Rotary has impacted my life. Rotary can impact the lives of others.

Frank Rycyk, Jefferson City, Missouri



PEACE AND CLIMATE

In "It's foundational" [February], Alison Sutherland wrote about the eight pillars that support Positive Peace. I believe, however, that this list is missing a critical ninth pillar: a stable climate.

A warming planet is causing increasing heat waves, droughts, wildfires, and crop failures, which in turn are causing a rise in conflicts and migration. These things all work against peace and make the eight other pillars much more difficult, if not impossible, to achieve. Without a stable climate, there will be less and less peace. Rotary, working within the environment area of focus, can help prevent still more warming and climate disruption. The children of the world are hoping we have the wisdom to do so.

Learn more about how you and your club can help by visiting the Rotary climate action team website at rcatnow.com.
Mitch Williams, Midhurst, Ontario

FEEL-GOOD FUNDS

I thoroughly enjoyed "Penny for your thoughts" [December] and agree wholeheartedly about the positivity this [collecting "happy dollars"] generates at club meetings. My club did not do this when I joined Rotary in 2011, but when another local non-Rotary service club held a happy dollars segment during a

OVERHEARD ON SOCIAL MEDIA

In January, we wrote about the efforts of Rotary members in Malaysia to improve mental health in the country. Among them is Bindi Rajasegaran, who got involved after her son-in-law died by suicide.

—
This hits home to me, I have lost family members to suicide. ... Thank you, Bindi, I'm so sorry for your loss, and amazed at your strength to take on this challenge!
Pamela Estelle Burkett
► [via LinkedIn](#)

This is Rotary at its best: listening first, standing alongside communities and turning compassion into practical, sustained impact.
Rudolph Habesch
► [via LinkedIn](#)

Thank you, Bindi Rajasegaran, for this initiative and thank you, all of Rotary, for the continuing interest in this crucially important subject.
Gordon McInally
► [via Facebook](#)

CONNECT



joint meeting, I took note of the smiles and good feelings expressed as a result.

When I became club president last year, I instituted “good news green,” where we collect cash from members who want to share something good. All funds raised in this manner go directly toward End Polio Now. Thank you so much for shedding light on one way we can say something good and do something good at the same time!

Jayna Huotari, Iron Mountain, Michigan

MENTAL FOCUS

Thank you for the excellent work on the December issue, about happiness and mental health. Mental health affects every one of us — directly or indirectly — and it’s time we continue to break the silence, raise awareness, reduce the stigma, and show that no one has to face their struggles alone.

According to the World Health Organization, depression is among the leading causes of disability worldwide. The economic impact of mental health disorders is staggering. Depression and anxiety alone cost the global economy an estimated US\$1 trillion each year. Every year more than 700,000 people take their own lives, and there are many more people who attempt suicide. Every suicide is a tragedy that has long-lasting

effects on the people who are left behind.

Time is ticking. What do Rotarians have to do to convince Rotary International to make mental health a new area of focus?

Lawrence Nyman, Canmore, Alberta

WHY WE GIVE

On a recent brisk Alaskan morning, I found myself sitting with a cup of coffee in hand, watching a moose wander through my yard, my Rotary pin fastened to my shirt — just thinking.

Thinking about Rotary. Thinking about service. Thinking about something we don’t always slow down long enough to ask: Why do we give?

The purpose has always been simple — and powerful: Doing good in the world.

Back in 1917, Rotary President Arch C. Klumph proposed creating an endowment “for the purpose of doing good in the world.” That idea grew into what we now know as The Rotary Foundation, beginning with a first donation of just \$26.50.

From that humble beginning, Rotarians have built one of the most respected humanitarian foundations in the world — supporting clean water, education, peace, maternal health, and disaster response, and helping bring polio to the brink of eradication.

From small towns to distant corners of the globe, the Foundation helps Rotary live out its promise: Service Above Self.

And here’s the truth: Your gift matters. Whether it’s \$26.50 or much more, it matters to the family drinking clean water from a new well. It matters to the child protected from disease. It matters to communities changed because someone cared enough to give.

So why do we give? We don’t give because we have to. We give because we want to. We want to help. We want to make a difference. We want to leave things better than we found them. That’s what makes Rotary special.

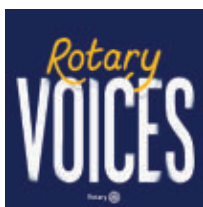
Marty Metiva, Wasilla, Alaska

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ON THE PODCAST

On a recent episode of *Rotary Voices*, musician, author, and Rotary Peace Fellow David LaMotte spoke to Rotary staffer Andy Sternberg about music as a bridge for peace and practical wisdom for everyday peacemaking. Listen at rotary.org/podcast.



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THE SPECIALIST

The fantasy fabricator

This Rotarian makes stuff up for a living

I grew up in a Wisconsin town of about 17,000 people. To pass the time, I would make short science fiction and horror films with my friends. I'd make costumes and rubber masks, sculpt monsters, and paint. Once I'd saved up enough money after high school, I loaded my crappy little car with my special effects books and makeup kit, pointed it west, and drove to Los Angeles.

For the first three years I worked on low budget horror films. My boss got a call from a company that needed a fake dead deer built for the film *Wyatt Earp*. Soon after, they called up and said, "Send Ted back over, we can use him for something else." That quickly turned into *Pulp Fiction*. They knew I was good with foam fabrication, so I ended up building bodies and gags for the film.

We find materials in unexpected places. When my buddy was working on *Jurassic Park*, he threw a big ball at me and said, "Catch!" It was like catching air. He told me it was a syntactic dough being used in aerospace for wings. My friend was using it to make molds for the T. Rex. Now we use it all the time in the industry.

Audiences have gotten savvier in the last 10 to 15 years. It's all about the perfect marriage of digital and practical, or physical, effects. When we worked on *Iron Man*, the suit was going to be almost entirely digital. But we knew Robert Downey Jr. would be tinkering with tangible pieces like the helmet. The producers asked if we could make it fit him. Before you know it, we had a practical Iron Man suit.

If you want to become an FX artist, don't give up. After graduating high school, I told my junior high art teacher that my parents, despite being very supportive, didn't want me to go to Los Angeles. He said, "If you don't at least try to do this, you're going to be here in town 20 years figuring, 'Geez, where would I be if I had done that?'" If you really want to do it, it's as easy as telling yourself, "I'm going to go do that." Don't lose your passion. ■



Ted Haines
 Rotary Club of Los Osos, California
 Creature FX artist: *The Hunger Games*, *Avatar*, 300



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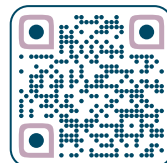


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POLIO ERADICATION

No needle, no fear, no pain

With jet injectors, polio vaccinators in Afghanistan build trust

By Omid Farooq

On a cloudy morning in Afghanistan’s Laghman province, Dr. Arsala set out for Alingar, a rugged, mountain-wrapped district he had visited many times before. After 12 years as a provincial polio officer, he knew the rhythm of polio campaigns: the early starts, the long drives, the predictable challenges. But this time felt different. He carried a new tool being introduced for the first time in Afghanistan’s polio program: needle-free injections.

From August to October last year, Afghanistan’s polio eradication program launched a three-phase campaign using the inactivated polio vaccine, normally administered through a traditional syringe with a needle. Used alongside the oral vaccine drops, it can boost immunity. The campaign across the eastern region aimed to protect more than 1.2 million children under the age of 5 from polio. Fifty districts, four provinces, and more than 10,000 dedicated polio workers joined forces — and uniting it all was a groundbreaking innovation never before used in the country’s polio eradication efforts.

Instead of shots, the vaccinators introduced jet injectors, spring-powered devices that deliver a tiny stream of vaccine through the outer layer of skin in a split second. There was no needle, no fear, and no pain. Just a quick press, a soft click, and protection delivered with a smile.

It was modern technology meeting some of Afghanistan’s most remote communities.

“This campaign is unlike any I have ever seen before,” Dr. Arsala

said as he held the jet injector in his hand. For him, this was not only about new technology; it was about building trust. “This is the first time such a device is being used in polio campaigns in Afghanistan. Delivering high-quality training is crucial. Vaccinators must feel confident before they go to the field.”

In a mosque in Alingar, vaccinators gathered, leaning forward with curiosity as trainers like Dr. Arsala and Dr. Jawaid, the district polio officer, demonstrated each step — loading the vaccine, positioning the injector, and administering the dose.

The device, made by a company in Colorado, delivers an intradermal injection into the thick layer of skin called the dermis. It’s simple to operate and requires minimal training. Administering an intradermal injection with a traditional needle, on the other hand, requires a high degree of training and skill.

This particular model of injector is designed specifically for the Global Polio Eradication Initiative to deliver what’s known as a fractional dose of inactivated polio vaccine, shown to afford virtually the same protection as a full dose when given over multiple rounds, while significantly reducing costs.

For many frontline polio workers, the campaign in Afghanistan was their first time using such technology.

“This is the first time they are seeing this device,” Dr. Jawaid said proudly. “We make sure they understand every part of it and feel ready to use it.”

For Mohammad Ibrahim, a vaccinator with five years of experience, the device felt like a doorway

To learn more and get involved, visit endpolio.org.

Zahir Islam uses a needle-free jet injector to administer a polio vaccine to a child in eastern Afghanistan. “Parents who had avoided injectable vaccines before now brought their children with confidence,” he says.



to the future. “It is much easier than needle injections,” he said. “I’m excited. I’m confident to go into the field and vaccinate children.”

And in the field, something remarkable happened.

In previous years, some caregivers hesitated as soon as they saw a needle. But now, the reaction was entirely different. Parents gathered around the vaccination sites, curious, relieved, and eager to learn more. “When they learned the device is needle-free and painless, they were eager to see,” said vaccinator Zahir Islam. “Some parents who had avoided injectable vaccines before now brought their children with confidence.”

Mothers smiled as their children barely flinched. Fathers watched with relief and admiration as the

process took just seconds. Community and religious leaders even publicly encouraged families to embrace the new method, praising it as safer, faster, and more comfortable.

The campaign didn’t just bring a vaccine — it brought renewed trust.

To deliver the best protection, campaigns can use both the oral polio vaccine, delivered with drops on the tongue, and the inactivated polio vaccine in a syringe. The oral vaccine interrupts person-to-person transmission, while the inactivated vaccine offers strong protection against paralysis.

With the jet injector, the experience became cleaner, quicker, and more acceptable — especially important among groups where fear of needles has created real barriers.

“We’ve done surveys among both

parents and the vaccinators,” says Ondrej Mach, leader of the research and product development team at the World Health Organization’s polio eradication program. “The vaccinators prefer it because it’s easy to use and there are no needles, and the parents prefer that as well because the children don’t cry. So, I think it probably is good for acceptance. There’s no blood. I’ve tried it on myself. It’s almost painless.”

The speed of training, which takes about an hour, is another advantage, he adds, and the devices can be a good investment in places that mount regular vaccination campaigns like Afghanistan and Pakistan, the only two countries where wild polio remains endemic.

Globally, these devices have already been used to vaccinate mil-



Scenes from the 2025 vaccination campaign to protect more than 1.2 million children in eastern Afghanistan. Vaccinators there learned to use needle-free jet injectors for the first time.

BY THE NUMBERS

1955

First polio vaccine introduced

99.9%

Worldwide reduction in polio cases since 1988

2

Countries where wild polio remains endemic

lions of children in places such as Somalia, Nigeria, and Pakistan. Now, Afghan children would benefit too. And in the hands of dedicated workers like Dr. Arsala, Dr. Jawaid, and thousands of vaccinators across the country's eastern region, this small device carried something much larger: the promise of a future free from polio.

By the end of the third phase, vaccinators across the eastern region had fully mastered the new technology. With each campaign day, they moved from child to child with growing confidence, proud to be part of a campaign that could

bring Afghanistan one step closer to ending polio for good.

The country's eastern region, once a key area of poliovirus transmission in 2022-23, has since made remarkable progress. Conducting the vaccination campaign further strengthens children's immunity and reduces the risk of poliovirus transmission in this region.

For Dr. Arsala, watching vaccinators use the jet injectors with ease, seeing communities welcome the technology, and witnessing children protected without fear became one of the most fulfilling moments of his long career.

As the campaign closed, Dr. Danish Ahmed, medical officer for the WHO East region, reflected on what it meant for the country's future. "This campaign is not only about vaccination," he said. "It is about giving children a safer, healthier future and bringing us closer to the dream of a polio-free Afghanistan." ■

Omid Farooq is a communications officer for the World Health Organization. A version of this story was originally published by the Global Polio Eradication Initiative. Learn more at polioeradication.org.

Short takes

The new Rotary Peace Center at India's Symbiosis University was officially inaugurated 26 January. Its first class of peace fellows will start next year. Learn more at rotary.org/peace-fellowships.



In January, Rotary member Ravishankar Dakoju pledged \$50 million to the Foundation — one of the largest individual contributions in Rotary's history.

PHOTOGRAPHS: Omid FAROOQ



PROFILE

Seeing the good

Through Rotary, a police officer expands her view of how to make a difference

Joanne Serkeyn
Rotary Club of
Lincoln, Ontario

In her early days of policing, Joanne Serkeyn had to confront a barrage of distressing events. The 9/11 attacks had just happened. And after returning to work from maternity leave, she endured multiple months with a lot of calls for homicides and other tragedies. “I felt like I was the Grim Reaper.”

She was starting to become cynical when her commander suggested she join Rotary. She eventually became president-elect of the Rotary Club of Ancaster A.M. in Ontario and was sent to the Rotary International Convention in England. “I walked into the House of Friendship and was gobsmacked,” she says. “I could not believe the good that was going on in the world.”

Serkeyn has served for 28 years at the Hamilton Police Service. She works as the DNA coordinator in the forensics unit. Over the years, she’s noted a connection between missing persons cases and human trafficking. At a Rotary institute event, she learned about Rotary Action Groups and got involved with one devoted to a cause close to her heart: ending slavery and human trafficking. “Rotary Action Groups rejuvenate people,” she says. “They make people passionate about Rotary.”

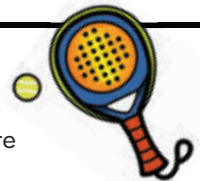
In July, Serkeyn will become the governor of District 7090, which encompasses 75 Rotary and Rotaract clubs throughout southern Ontario and western New York. She’s focusing on a districtwide initiative against human trafficking. “People think they can’t make a difference with human trafficking,” she says. “But together, we can move the needle. We have a social responsibility to protect our young. We have an opportunity to be proactive.”

— JP SWENSON

In 2024-25, Rotary Action Groups supported 2,168 projects, including 76 funded by The Rotary Foundation. Learn more at rotary.org/actiongroups.

The RI Board approved 132 members to receive the 2025-26 Service Above Self Award. They will be honored next month at the Rotary Convention in Taipei.

New Rotary Fellowships focused on fitness and wellness, German culture, and the sport of padel were recognized in March.

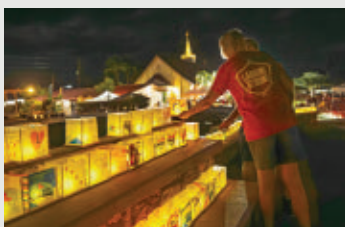


People of action around the globe

By Brad Webber

United States

The deadliest U.S. wildfire in a century killed more than 100 people and destroyed thousands of homes and businesses on the Hawaiian island of Maui in August 2023. Searching for healing and reflection, the community group Aloha Amplified organized a twilight walk and ceremony this past September, supported by District 5000's fire relief fund and the three Rotary clubs in Lahaina. Hundreds of people carried lanterns along a milelong route, joining together at the end in the revered song "Hawai'i Aloha." The event featured cultural entertainment and booths staffed by local groups, including Rotary clubs. Rotarians, many of whom lost their own homes and businesses, also volunteered at the event. "People know Rotary in Lahaina," says Joanne Laird, of the Rotary Club of Lahaina Sunset.



5,000

Maui residents displaced by 2023 wildfires



Costa Rica

Lush rainforests and world-renowned birding help draw hundreds of thousands of travelers to Costa Rica every year. That backdrop belies many needs, including for children in the country. Stéphane Dähler, a Swiss expatriate who works in the tourism industry, reports his Rotary Club of Belén, northwest of the capital of San José, is committed to improving education and health outcomes. In February, members worked at the Español School to assemble, sand, and paint 112 desks funded by the club, District 4240 in Costa Rica, and Rotarians from District 5280 in California. The following month, Belén Rotarians visited the Santiago Alpízar School to drop off books. To help fill gaps in health care, the club held a medical camp in rural Puriscal in December to offer blood screenings and a toy distribution. The club "has become a bridge that unites Costa Rican industry with the common good, showing that the private sector and volunteers can generate a positive and sustainable effect," Dähler says.



900+

Bird species in Costa Rica

Italy

The Rotary Club of Monfalcone-Grado revels in the history and charm of its northern Italian region, located northeast of Venice near the Slovenian border. A recent project helped ensure that information is accessible to everyone, including people with visual impairments. In December, members unveiled a multisensory panel explaining the story of the Church of San Proto in San Canzian d'Isonzo, just west of their community. The 15th century chapel sits atop foundations dating to the fourth century. The panel combines

educational content with tactile elements and Braille notations, with a placement designed for easy access by wheelchair users. "The church is located along an ancient Roman road and represents an important example of what we often call 'minor heritage,' meaning small sites with great historical and cultural value that deserve to be known and protected," says club member Paolo Messina. Rotary members participated in every phase of the project, says Messina, "from concept and design to approvals and installation."

79%

Italians who are Catholic



Rotary Club of Monfalcone-Grado



Tunisia

When Yassine Harzallah was alerted to overcrowding in a primary school, he paid a visit and witnessed children studying on the floor and in corridors, with their notebooks on their knees. He snapped a photo, and "that image alone was enough to convince every member of our club that we had a responsibility to act," says Harzallah, president of the Rotary Club of Ruspina Monastir. In December, the entire contingent visited the school, an hour drive from the club's base in Monastir city. Members brought supplies, including hygiene products, cleaning items, a printer, a wheelbarrow, shovels, and hoes. A member architect drafted blueprints and watched over a local contractor who assembled a modular room off-site at a reduced cost. In January the structure, a new reading room, was delivered.

30,000+

Book titles presented at 2025 Tunis City Book Fair



Rotary Club of Ruspina Monastir



Australia

Family violence is a major health and social issue in Australia, according to the national Institute of Health and Welfare. Rotary Safe Families focuses on reducing the stigma around recognizing the problem. This year the project, which was founded in 2018 and has a presence in 48 countries, is preparing to enlist Rotary clubs to sponsor a local school through a program called Towards Respectful Relationships. It fosters "safe spaces for kids to talk about family violence and respect," says program founder Dorothy Gilmour, a member of the Rotary Club of Hawthorn. "It has been a long, bumpy road to get Australians to discuss the taboo topic of family violence." More recently, though, "I have noticed that family violence is becoming less taboo."

1 in 4

Australian women who have experienced violence by an intimate partner

Rotary Club of Hawthorn

GOODWILL

Connect for good

Six ways to nurture a sense of togetherness in a Rotary club

By Gurjeet S. Sekhon

In a world that often feels fragmented and fast-paced, the yearning to belong — to feel seen, heard, and valued — remains one of our deepest human desires. For members of a Rotary club, cultivating a true sense of belonging isn't just important; it is foundational.

When people feel they belong, they stay. They lead. They serve with heart. They grow. But such a culture doesn't happen by chance. It is built intentionally layer by layer, conversation by conversation, heart by heart.

Here's how Rotary clubs can weave a tapestry of belonging.

1. Create space for every voice

Consider the story of a young violinist in a community orchestra — quiet, unsure, often overlooked. One day, the conductor pauses and asks for her interpretation of a musical passage. That simple gesture gives her the courage to speak. Her insight transforms the music and her place within the group.

In Rotary, we must intentionally seek out the quiet voices: the new members, the young professionals, people from underrepresented backgrounds, or those who are simply unsure where they fit in. Are we inviting their input in meetings? Are we offering meaningful roles in planning or service?

2. Celebrate contributions, big and small

A well-known story from NASA in the 1960s tells of a janitor who, when asked what his job was, replied, "I'm helping put a man on the moon." He saw his role,

however humble, as essential to the mission.

We must do the same in Rotary. Celebrate the member who brings food to meetings. The one who sends birthday wishes. The quiet presence who always has a kind word. Recognize them in meetings, in newsletters, and personal notes. Let every member know: *You matter. Your work matters.*

3. Build through storytelling and shared experience

Human beings connect through stories, not statistics. One small-town book club once asked each member to share the book that most changed their life. The evening turned into a powerful journey of laughter, reflection, and connection.

Rotary clubs can work to deepen connection and humanize our mission. Invite members to share their "Rotary moment," a story of service, a lesson learned, or why they joined. Host "Rotary story nights." Feature personal spotlights in your meetings or newsletters. These stories remind us that we're not simply part of a club; we're part of each other's journeys.

4. Design with inclusion, not just intention

A global tech company once changed the timing of its leadership training after discovering that evening sessions excluded working parents. With a simple schedule shift, participation doubled.

Clubs can ask: Are our meeting times and venues accessible to working professionals, caregivers, and older people with mobility needs? Are communications

inclusive of languages and levels of digital fluency? Are we making it clear not just in words but in structure that everyone belongs?

5. Foster moments of connection beyond service

A Rotary club in Nairobi, Kenya, once visited a rural school to plant trees. Afterward, instead of leaving, members stayed to play soccer with the students. That spontaneous moment sparked an ongoing relationship that led to mentorship, support, and a lasting bond.

Service may be our foundation, but friendship and fun are our glue. Organize informal coffee mornings. Plan cultural nights, hikes, or movie evenings. Encourage members to bring family, friends, and stories. When we build friendships, not just committees, we stay connected for the long haul.

6. Lead with empathy and purpose

During the height of the pandemic, a hospital administrator made nightly phone calls to every staff member. She didn't call to give orders. She called to listen. That act of empathy, more than any directive, restored morale and unity.

Rotary leaders can check in with members not only about projects but about life. Celebrate birthdays and milestones. Be present in times of joy and hardship. When leaders lead with compassion, members follow. Rotary becomes more than a service organization; it becomes a family. ■

Gurjeet S. Sekhon is a past governor of District 3070 (India) and member of the Rotary International Membership Growth Committee.



This story originally appeared on Rotary 360. Read about other people of action and submit your own inspiring posts at blog.rotary.org.

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ESSAY

The darkness before dawn

After a horrific night, a UK policeman welcomes a new day

By Steve Martin



O

n 6 October 1985, a Jamaican woman died of a heart attack during a police search of her home in Tottenham, a district in North London. For

portions of that neighborhood plagued by poverty, high unemployment, and poor living conditions, the woman's death was a tipping point. What followed was one of the most chaotic riots ever in the streets of Britain, hours of unimaginable havoc that culminated with the brutal killing of a police officer by an angry mob.

It was a night that changed my life forever.

Forty-one years ago, I was a naive 19-year-old police officer. I loved everything about my job and walked my beat in North London with great pride — and with a bit of apprehension. Being a cop in the 1980s wasn't easy.

On that fateful Sunday afternoon, what had started out as a relatively quiet shift took a dramatic turn at about 6 p.m. I was posted with a group of officers, and we heard terrifying pleas for help on the radio. They came from a group of officers who had answered a call to the Broadwater Farm estate, a public housing complex in Tottenham.

Once the police had arrived, their van was surrounded by an enraged crowd of people. The entire housing complex became engulfed by a mob of masked rioters who began setting fire to vehicles and throwing missiles and petrol bombs at the police.

My group of officers was named Serial 502. There were 11 of us, mostly inexperienced young constables mixed in with some older community cops from a nearby London suburb. We were led by Sergeant David Pengelly. We quickly gathered some riot equipment, loaded it into a van, and drove to Broadwater Farm. Smoke was everywhere, and the sky glowed a bright orange from all the fires. Lines of police stood solid under a barrage of thrown objects.

We were directed to one side of a six-story building where it was very quiet. After a short while we were told to head inside and protect a fire crew battling a fire at a shop that threatened the lives of the people living above it. As we made our way into the building, Sergeant Pengelly asked one of us to stay at the doorway to guard our exit. That officer was Keith Blakelock.

We made our way to the scene of the fire along the open walkways that lined the rectangular interior of the housing complex. As we reached the mezzanine level, I could see there was a large opening in the middle of the complex that provided a view of the parking lot at ground level. I'm not ashamed to say that I was really nervous at this stage. I had never been in a situation like this before.

As we formed up, I noticed a large number of rioters gathering in the parking lot. Suddenly, rioters appeared in front of us as well. There appeared to be hundreds of them, throwing bricks, bottles, and other objects that smashed into our heads. We were trapped.

I became aware of the overwhelming smell of petrol as the hurled bombs landed all around us. The whoosh of the ensuing flames was frightening, and the smoke sucked the air from my lungs. I couldn't see anything, but somehow I could still hear Sergeant Pengelly shouting at us to keep together and retreat.

We reversed and headed back down the stairs. The rioters were right on top of us, swinging machetes and big knives against our helmets and our riot shields. As we descended, I stumbled and twisted my ankle, and I was struck by something as I reached the ground level. We were now totally surrounded by rioters, and I ran through the crowd swinging my truncheon and my shield.

As I emerged from the parking lot, I saw two crowds of people, one small and one large. I ran toward the smaller crowd and struck them as hard as I could. Beyond them I could see that one of my fellow officers was being attacked by that larger mob as he lay on the ground. The rioters' arms moved up and down as they

I noticed a large number of rioters gathering in the parking lot. Suddenly, rioters appeared in front of us as well. We were trapped.

swung at the prostrate body with their machetes and knives.

As I ran toward them, I could feel my senses begin to shut down. I lost my vision. Everything went black and orange. Sound became muffled. I was in so much pain and I had nothing left. I knew that if I fell, I would not make it out, but I could feel I was starting to lose consciousness. Suddenly I was aware that two firemen had scooped me up and carried me the last few yards to safety.

As I sat on the side of the road, totally stunned, my gravely wounded colleague Keith Blakelock was carried out from the crowd, which had started to disperse. It was a sight that will never leave me. Authorities would later determine that Keith had been stabbed 40 times; the wounds appeared to have been inflicted by machetes, knives, axes, and swords. Keith was rushed to the hospital, but honestly, he was already dead.

I went to hospital but was later discharged. There were various injuries across the group. One of my colleagues, Dick Coombes, was hit with a machete across his face several times and received horrendous injuries.

As the years passed, I would attend services, memorials, and court dates. Keith's wife, Elizabeth, was always there, but I couldn't bring myself to look at her. I was embarrassed and ashamed. I felt that I had let her and the family down.

Survivor's guilt is very real, and it is something that eats away at you if you don't seek help. In those days, there was no help for officers. It wasn't until a few years later when I fell ill that I was diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder. No one had heard of this in the 1980s, and as a young cop, I told nobody about my psychic distress, worried that it would damage my career.

In 1988, three years after the riots, I was humbled to receive the Queen's Gallantry Medal from Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. I had an unforgettable day at Buckingham Palace. It was a proud day for my family and for the other Serial 502 members, each of whom, including Keith Blakelock, received the Gallantry Medal. Sergeant Pengelly was given the prestigious George Medal, which is awarded to British and Commonwealth civilians for acts of great bravery.

In 1990 I married Maria and we moved to northwest England, where



Known as the Broadwater Farm riots, the violent civil unrest of 6 October 1985 in Tottenham, North London, caused extensive damage to property and automobiles. About 250 police officers suffered injuries; more than 50 of them required hospitalization, and one officer, Keith Blakelock, was brutally slain. Today, one of Blakelock's sons and a grandson are police officers.

I joined the Merseyside Police as a member of the canine unit. I was doing something I had always wanted to do.

Around this time, I was approached by the Rotary Club of Neston and asked if I wanted to apply for a Group Study Exchange. I was struggling. I still carried the guilt of that night with me and I had occasional nightmares about it. I just thought I had to get on with it. A trip to Australia on a Rotary Group Study Exchange was just the thing for me. And what an experience it was.

Apart from the usual things that a Group Study Exchange experience brings — the opportunity to share vocational and cultural ideas and experiences with other men and women — something significant happened to me while I was in Australia. I met a police superintendent

at a district conference, and he offered to take me out for a day. Like two old cops, we talked endlessly about “the job.”

Gary was a great listener, and I told him about my experience on that night at Broadwater Farm. It turned out that Gary was a critical incident debrief expert, so he was in a good position to tell me why I felt like I did and how I could help myself. No one had ever talked to me like that before. He seemed to properly assemble all the scrambled pieces of an elaborate jigsaw puzzle. That chance meeting, made possible by Rotary, meant the world to me.

Following my Group Study Exchange, I became a Home Office-approved dog trainer, the youngest Merseyside police had ever had. (The Home Office is the UK's Interior Ministry.) I also went on

to become an explosive detection and counterterrorist search trainer. I would never have achieved any of those things without my involvement in the Group Study Exchange.

I will never forget the opportunities Rotary has given me, and in the 20-plus years since I joined Rotary, I have tried to give back in kind. I am especially pleased that Rotary is focusing more on mental health. Having struggled for years with those issues, I was gratified when Gordon McNally highlighted mental health during his year as president of Rotary International.

These days I usually speak with Keith's family around the anniversary of his death. Elizabeth has conducted herself impeccably over the years, and she and Keith have a son and a grandson who are now policemen. The whole family is an inspiration to me.

I have only recently started to speak publicly about the events of that night at Broadwater Farm. It began after I was asked to speak at a Rotary leadership event. My remarks were received very well, despite it being quite an emotional moment for me. I hope that my presentation will highlight the issues around PTSD and keep the name of Keith Blakelock out there for everyone to remember.

I was delighted to invite one of the firemen who saved my life to attend a Rotary conference where I spoke. It was an amazing experience for us both, and we remain in frequent contact. While my presentation is obviously a serious matter, it also covers other aspects of my career, which allows me to introduce some humor to lighten the atmosphere. Last year I delivered my speech to my first police audience. Once again, it was an extremely moving experience for me and some of those in the room who felt close to the incident and had also suffered from survivor's guilt.

I have learned to live with what I witnessed that night in Tottenham, and I have accepted that I will take those images to the grave. I hope that others can one day find that same peace.

A member of the Rotary Club of North Wales & Northwest England Passport, Steve Martin is a 2027-29 RI director-nominee. A version of this essay originally appeared in the April 2025 issue of Rotary Great Britain and Ireland. ■



FROM LEFT: RI staffer Chris Brown and Evanston Nouveau club members Sofia Martin, Julie Aubry, and Tom Woods raise a glass against polio with brewer Cesar Marron.

**So you
want to
end polio?**

Far from the vaccination front lines, the fight to end the disease begins in everyday spaces, from a **neighborhood pub** to a **commuter train** to a **tulip field**. At the center of it all, no surprise, are enterprising Rotary members just like you.

by
ETELKA LEHOCZKY





The Evanston Nouveau club collaborated with Cesar Marron and Sketchbook Brewing Co. to create a limited-edition brew to raise money for polio eradication. Its name: Purple Pinkie.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY
MONIKA LOZINSKA



In a college town on the shores of Lake Michigan, beer drinkers gather in a wood-paneled taproom to sample brews with names like Snowy Owl, Secret Stuff, and Funkin' for Jamaica. Cute beer names are part of the charm at Sketchbook Brewing Co. in Evanston, Illinois. But one of October's recipes owes its moniker to something much larger than whimsy.

"Purple Pinkie is named for the mark that children are given when they're vaccinated against polio," says Julie Aubry, a member of the Rotary Club of Evanston Nouveau. She's referring to the splotch of indelible ink dabbed on a child's pinkie to show they've already been vaccinated — a symbol of the historic campaign to rid the world of the disease.

That backstory is an opening to meaningful conversations that go far beyond the intricacies of craft brewing. "We like to think of it as an educational opportunity to bring awareness to the fact that polio has not been eradicated, that it is still a fight that Rotary and other organizations are fighting," Aubry says. Even the wheat ale's distinctive taste is connected to the larger story: The brewers add coriander, pomegranate, and citrus zest in homage to the culinary flavors of Afghanistan and Pakistan, the only two countries where wild polio remains endemic. But this is not just about raising awareness. Aubry's club collaborates with Sketchbook to create the limited-edition Purple Pinkie beer to direct proceeds to the eradication effort.

Aubry and other Evanston Nouveau members are gathered on the eve of World Polio Day 2025 to tell Sketchbook's patrons about Purple Pinkie and the cause it supports. Erecting a large banner by a table in the middle of the bar, Aubry and Tom Woods arrange raffle prizes and a display that includes a vaccine cooler and a surprisingly cute plush toy in the shape of the polio virus. Customers can get Purple Pinkie on tap and take home four-packs of specially designed cans — purple, of course, featuring an arm raised triumphantly, pinkie extended.

A bespectacled young man named Dan, a student at nearby Northwestern University, grabs a four-pack from the cold case. "I usually do a mix of different varieties, so I'll probably add this to the repertoire. It seems interesting," he says. "When you can support a good cause, it's always great. Unfortunately, with the current state of the world, polio has become more of a topic than it probably should be."

Evanston Nouveau members got the idea for Purple Pinkie in 2022. "We were thinking about creative ways to get people interested in polio," says Club President Gerald Farinas. "A lot of clubs do 'pints for polio,' where they'll partner with a tavern and

get them to contribute a couple of bucks from each drink. We thought, 'We've got to go beyond that.'"

Working with Sketchbook, the club crafted a unique, memorable beer and an effective fundraising plan. Each fall, Sketchbook donates a dollar from each pint of Purple Pinkie served on tap and another dollar for each four-pack sold. The campaign contributes \$2,000 to \$3,000 to the antipolio effort. That may not sound like much, but multiplied by many hundreds of fundraisers across the globe, these World Polio Day efforts drive Rotary closer to its annual fundraising goal of \$50 million.

There's something in it for the club's partners at the brewery too. "The Rotary club makes a good amount of noise around it, so we get noticed. All the buzz helps a lot," says Cesar Marron, Sketchbook's head brewer and managing partner. "It looks very different from our normal cans, so it brings in a lot of questions. It's super unique."

A couple of days later, the club held another Purple Pinkie event at Sketchbook's other taproom in neighboring Skokie, Illinois. Attendees got the chance to meet members of the Chicago Stars, a National Women's Soccer League team the club has collaborated with before. Such connections have a

lot to do with the fundraiser's success, Farinas says. It was natural to reach out to Marron, whom some members were acquainted with. And to design that eye-catching Purple Pinkie can, the club tapped a staff member at Rotary's world headquarters in Evanston, Chris Brown, an artist who has designed album covers and one other beer can for the brewery.

"It's easier to go where you already have these relationships than to look for the best possible business partner you can think of," Farinas says. "We could have done that, but then the negotiation would probably have been much more difficult. It's easy to approach people you already know."

Now that's some treasured taproom advice. What else can we learn on a global tour of World Polio Day fundraising efforts? Plenty. Key among the findings: This is a golden opportunity for clubs to connect to the power of Rotary's global network, bond your members through a meaningful long-term project, increase your visibility in the community, and, just as importantly, have some fun.

THE CLUB'S TIP:

Be bold. Purple Pinkie was a quirky concept, and it got people's attention. Partnering with a well-known local merchant further amplified the club's reach.



Doughnuts for dollars

United States

As a franchise owner for Dunkin', the largest doughnut chain in the United States, Dave Baumgartner knows more about flour, frosting, and deep-frying than fundraising. But when Margo Hughes, the franchise marketing manager and fellow member of the Rotary Club of Knoxville, Tennessee, suggested he sell purple-frosted doughnuts for World Polio Day 2018, he knew a good idea when he tasted it. Seven years later, he's helped clubs across the American South and Northeast raise \$7.7 million for polio eradication. It hasn't all been smooth frosting: He once mistakenly shipped five buckets of purple icing overnight to a baker in another state. Still, "it's been a great program," he says. "People need to feel good about eradicating polio worldwide, and that takes some education."

DAVE'S TIPS:

Reach out to merchants you know. "It's all about relationships. If Rotarians have connections, they can do something like this."

Work with Rotary leaders. "We're moving toward having district governors run the program in their areas, and I'll take responsibility for sourcing the doughnuts."

CAR-FREE, POLIO-FREE

Rwanda

The city of Kigali, Rwanda's capital, holds car-free days two Sundays a month to promote physical fitness and environmental awareness. Thanks to Rotary and Rotaract clubs across the country, participants in October also learned about polio eradication. Wearing bright red shirts and waving colorful banners, around 2,000 Rotary members led a Walk Against Polio around the city before gathering at a stadium for a mass workout. "We had an opportunity to speak directly to the public at the stadium," says Alexis Muderevu, president of the Rotary Club of Kigali. "There was also a press conference for newspapers and television." The presidents of Rwanda and Senegal attended the stadium event, and the Rotary members raised about \$7,000. "We had not planned to collect donations from the public; we did it among ourselves. After the fundraising campaign was completed, many people had made contributions," Muderevu says.



ALEXIS' TIP:

Build relationships within your local government. "Rotary is doing many actions in Rwanda, particularly in the area of health. The government views this positively. Whenever Rotary wants to do something, we've always had government support."



Why you should care

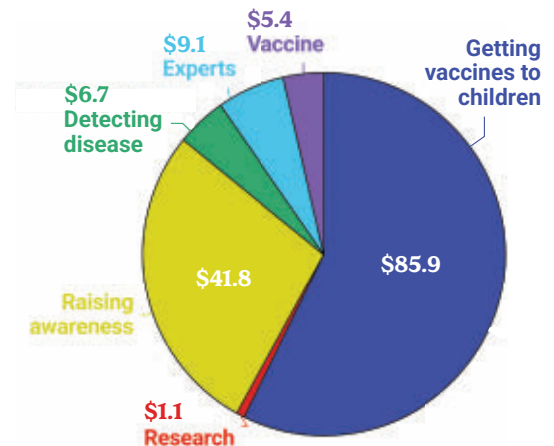
Rotary and its partners in the Global Polio Eradication Initiative have reduced polio cases by 99.9 percent, and only two countries, Afghanistan and Pakistan, still see small numbers of wild polio cases. Why should you care when the numbers seem so isolated?

To maintain gains and finish the job takes work, much of it behind the scenes, including through vast networks of labs and sophisticated disease surveillance.

The 2022-29 GPEI budget for finishing the job totals \$6.9 billion. A partnership between Rotary and the Gates Foundation raises up to \$150 million each year to contribute to the effort. Here's how that money is used:

HOW THE MONEY IS SPENT

2024-25 spending, in millions



A SOUND INVESTMENT

Switzerland

The strains of Tchaikovsky and Dvořák filled the air at the Culture and Congress Centre in Lucerne, Switzerland, on 27 October. The renowned Stuttgarter Philharmoniker performed a benefit concert for attendees from across Europe and around the world. Organized by Rotary districts in Switzerland and Germany, the concert raised around \$85,000 for the Global Polio Eradication Initiative. The concert's impact went beyond one night since Rotary members met with representatives of governments and the World Health Organization at events leading up to it. "It was advocacy and awareness around the whole of Switzerland," says Christian Schleuss, a member of the Rotary Club of Hagen/Westphalia, Germany. "They had a big presence in television and media the week before. It was an important part of this event."



CHRISTIAN'S TIP:

Give it time. "The direct planning for the concert started a good year beforehand."

A MADE-FOR-SOCIAL MOMENT

Mexico

On a sunny day around Halloween, students at Universidad de Monterrey in Mexico gathered for a fundraiser involving, well, pumpkins of course. The Rotaract Club of Universidad de Monterrey provided paints, brushes, and a supply of pumpkins for attendees to decorate. As students, they didn't have much cash to donate, but more importantly, the event raised awareness around campus about Rotary, the fight against polio, and the club's other activities, says Club President Lizbeth Palacios Martínez. And students spread the word further by posting about the event and their holiday decorations on social media.

LIZBETH'S TIP:

To reach people in their 20s, do something eye-catching. "Give younger people visuals they can photograph for their social media channels."



Petals against polio

Netherlands

What could be more Dutch than tulips? Since 2014, Rotary districts in the Netherlands have harnessed this prized symbol of their country's identity to raise money to fight polio. They sell End Polio Now tulips — or, more accurately, their bulbs — to gardeners across Europe. The clubs contracted with a grower in the province of North Holland to create a new variety of tulip, whose red-and-yellow petals match the End Polio Now colors. In response to concerns about the tulip industry's environmental impact, the districts recently began selling organic bulbs as well. "The market and the local authorities like to have organic tulips. So this year, for the first time, we offered them also," says Siebe Stellingwerff Beintema, a member of the Rotary Club of Voorhout. The organic bulbs made up a fifth of the 2025 orders, and the fundraiser brought in around \$175,000.

SIEBE'S TIPS:

Try new things even if you can't predict the outcome. "There were way more orders for organic tulips than I expected."

Get in touch with new generations of Rotary decision-makers. "Every year, we try to meet with all the district governors, current and incoming, and explain what we have done."



World Polio Day 2025 by the numbers

\$979,296

TOTAL ONLINE GIVING
TO POLIPLUS FUND

Of that,
\$382,334

was pledged through the
Raise for Rotary platform

from
2,603

donors

through
194

fundraising
pages

TILL THE END OF THE LINE

Australia

In any great effort, it's often said that the last mile is the hardest. Mark Anderson knows all about that, literally. He can tell you, for instance, just how long it takes to ride all 190 or so stops on the public rail network in Sydney: more than 18 hours. Starting at 4:30 a.m. and riding until close to midnight, Anderson and his son Dave traverse the system every World Polio Day. They've been at it since 2018. Members of area clubs, including Anderson's Rotary Club of Beecroft, join in for part or all of the journey. Riders collect pledges for each station they visit, bringing in about US\$70,000 in 2025 and US\$572,000 since the fundraiser began. The effort is personal for Anderson, whose father had polio and had to wear leg braces as a child. The marathon rides are wildly popular with the media, and Anderson has gotten used to conducting live radio interviews throughout the day. He even found himself speaking live on national TV as he rumbled along on the train. "They rang and said, 'ABC national news wants to pick it up. Do you have Zoom on your phone?'" says Anderson, who is a regional major gifts officer for The Rotary Foundation. "Then the producer from ABC rings and says, 'You're going to air live in three minutes.' That blew me away."



MARK'S TIP:

Don't lose hope when bureaucrats say no. "We've now got permission from the New South Wales transit system to do fundraising at the stations. Up until now, they've said no fundraising at stations or on trains. But this year, their media department started promoting the event."

How to get started

Raise for Rotary is a simple online fundraising platform that you and your club can use to create a campaign and seek donations on behalf of The Rotary Foundation and its fund to end polio. Learn more and be part of history at raise.rotary.org.

**World Polio Day 2026
is 24 October.
Start planning your
fundraiser now!**

Light a fire

United States

When they heard that Indian Rotarians were circulating an Olympic-style torch to celebrate the country's polio-free status, district End Polio Now coordinators Nancy Barbee and Colleen Bonadonna were intrigued. What if they were to carry the torch on a similar journey across North America, winding up at the 2025 Rotary International Convention in Calgary, Alberta? When they were able to obtain the now-well-traveled torch, Barbee and Bonadonna set out on a winding route across the center of the U.S. From Tennessee to Illinois to Minnesota to South Dakota and beyond, they visited Rotary clubs and spoke at schools and town halls. Local clubs served as their advance teams at each stop. "Every place we went, we tried to do some big public image event," says Barbee, a member of the Rotary Club of Jones County, North Carolina. "Our job was to bring awareness and education, to explain why we need to continue. It was their job to get the press there and do follow-up afterward." The pair raised \$600,000 for polio eradication with their odyssey, collecting donations through the Raise for Rotary crowdfunding portal.

NANCY'S TIP:

Create a fundraising campaign with the Raise for Rotary online platform and share your progress. "When you use it, make sure people know that they don't have to donate through the platform. They can make an offline contribution and let you know, and it still counts toward the total."



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Nancy Barbee and Colleen Bonadonna carry the torch across North America, taking selfies at One Rotary Center; with Edina, Minnesota, Rotarians Tom Gump, Bocar Kane, and Paul Peterson; at the convention with then-Rotary President Stephanie Urchick; with Trustee Vice Chair Greg Podd; and under St. Louis' Gateway Arch.



Returning

By
Michaela Haas

Photography by
Maddie McGarvey



to



the

Conservation burials, green cemeteries, and environmental convictions are reshaping how some people think about death

earth

A Dixieland band led the way.

The musicians walked slowly down a mowed path through restored prairie; trumpet and clarinet cut through the late-afternoon air. Friends carried handmade prayer flags. Laughter mingled with song as the procession crossed the meadow. When it stopped, a violinist played “My Old Kentucky Home.” The family of the young woman, who was celebrated as an adventurous spirit and the “life of the party,” passed around a bottle of Kentucky bourbon, each taking a sip, then pouring some into the grave before helping shovel the soil back into place.

Amy Henricksen, a member of the Rotary Club of Mount Vernon in Ohio, remembers this ceremony vividly, not only because it was deeply personal but because it marked the first interment at Kokosing Nature Preserve, a conservation burial ground she helped create in the picturesque countryside near the small college town of Gambier. Here lie graves among native grasses, wetlands, and woodland. There are no elaborate



headstones, no concrete vaults, no embalmed bodies. Over time, the land itself becomes the memorial.

Ceremonies like this one remain uncommon in Canada and the U.S., but interest is growing in conservation burial, a form of natural burial that restores and permanently protects the historic or native ecology of the land while returning the body directly to the earth. For some, the motivation is environmental. For others, it’s spiritual, cultural, or personal. For some Rotary members, the choice also reflects a lifelong commitment to stewardship and service.

FROM GOLF COURSE TO GRASSLAND

Though her background is in business and health administration, Henricksen was hired in 2013 by Kenyon College’s land trust to create a business plan for a conservation burial ground. She was drawn to the idea because she was already interested in green burial for herself. “I liked the idea of just going back to the earth,” she says with a smile.

Once a golf course, the Kokosing Nature Preserve opened in 2015, and 23 acres of restored prairie are designated for burial, with another 22 acres planted in native grasses and wildflowers for future expansion. Henricksen became its first steward and is now director of the land trust. She joined Rotary last year after past talks to the Mount Vernon club about her work.

Rotarian Amy Henricksen helped create a conservation burial ground that preserves land around an Ohio college. “This is not just a cemetery.”

When the Kokosing preserve opened, she recalls, many people did not realize that green burial was even an option. “They thought embalming and a cement vault were required by law. So we had to do a lot of educational outreach when we first began.”

Kokosing is certified at the highest level by the Green Burial Council, a designation that requires a legally binding, permanent conservation agreement, active restoration of the native habitat, and a perpetual care trust to ensure long-term land protection.

The distinction matters. A “green burial” can simply mean no embalming to preserve the body longer and a biodegradable casket or shroud, while conservation burial explicitly ties death care to land preservation.

“This is not just a cemetery,” Henricksen says. “It’s a conservation project.” This type of preservation takes the added steps of promoting healthy ecosystems with diverse plant life, animals, and insects. It safeguards culturally



Previous pages:
Nature's details
emerge at Kokosing
Nature Preserve
in Ohio each time
a person is buried
among wildflowers.



important landscapes for future generations to enjoy and prevents development to protect water sources, forests, fertile soil, and other natural resources, Henricksen explains.

She sees a clear parallel with Rotary's environment area of focus. "You're protecting land, restoring habitat, and helping people have meaningful conversations about death," she says. "That feels very Rotary to me."

What struck her in the beginning — and still does — is how physical and participatory these burials are. Families often carry the body, lower it into the ground, and shovel soil. The work is slow, deliberate, sometimes exhausting.

At Kokosing, one family buried an avid golfer after placing wooden golf tees on his casket, along with a hummingbird's nest he had found shortly before he died. Others wrap their loved ones in handmade quilts.

"For a lot of people, that physical act is cathartic," Henricksen says. "It's working through grief."

RECLAIMING DEATH FROM INDUSTRY
Emphasis on family agency runs through the conservation burial movement.

Over the past century, death care in Canada and the U.S. has become increasingly professionalized. Embalming, sealed caskets, concrete vaults, and formal visitation hours became normalized, even though these practices are cultural conventions rather than requirements.

Conservation burials push back gently against that model. "We're not pretending we're doing anything other than returning someone to the earth," Henricksen says. "There's no need to hide the body, the process, or the reality of death."

She has seen people who initially planned cremation change their minds after experiencing a conservation burial for a loved one. "They realize how meaningful it is," she says. "And they want that for themselves."

The modern conservation burial movement took root in the Appalachian Mountains. The Ramsey Creek Preserve in rural South Carolina opened in 1998

Burial defined

Green or natural burial

Avoids embalming fluids and concrete vaults, uses biodegradable shrouds or simple coffins. Minimizes environmental impact but does not necessarily involve land protection or restoration.

Conservation burial

Follows green burial practices and takes place on land managed for high ecological and social value, with long-term protection, low burial density, and active habitat restoration.

Source: Memorial Ecosystems, from the founders of the first U.S. conservation burial ground

and later became the first certified conservation burial ground in the U.S.

Billy and Kimberley Campbell bought a dilapidated 33-acre farm with a goal to restore and preserve it. Their idea was radical in its simplicity: use burial fees to fund conservation.

The Campbells bury the dead or their ashes in biodegradable shrouds or plain wooden boxes, and they hand dig the graves. Like at the Kokosing preserve, they invite the families to participate as much as they want to. "Physical work is a good distraction when you're stressed and grieving," Kimberley Campbell says. A simple, flat natural stone chosen by the family marks each grave, blending seamlessly into the landscape.

Ramsey Creek Preserve sports no manicured lawns, but thriving woodland with oaks, birches, and maples. The Campbells ripped out kudzu vines and other invasives, nurtured native plants, and rewilded the land. In spring, sugar maples and mountain laurels color the hills pink. Bobcats, fox, deer, and even a black bear roam the preserve.

The site served as a laboratory to develop best practices in conservation burials. The Campbells dislike the terms "natural" or "green" burial, because the definitions can vary and sometimes mask corporate greenwashing. The Campbells dismiss ideas like human composting, one newer alternative meant to reduce emissions by decomposing the body in a container with organic material. Some people who choose this method like its environmental benefits and that it leaves survivors with compost that they could spread like ashes from cremation. Other companies marketing themselves as sustainable death care businesses make burial suits and coffins infused with mushroom spores to speed decomposition.

The Campbells are convinced the investments in such ideas would be better spent protecting land. "The land is the burial suit," says Billy Campbell, a medical doctor. He defines conservation burials as serving a higher conservation purpose. "We call it CPR for the land: conservation, preservation, restoration."

People drawn to Ramsey Creek for conversation burials are as diverse as the land. Evangelicals, atheists, environmentalists, and traditionalists have chosen the preserve as their final resting

place. Some want to support the site's ecological mission, while others simply appreciate the serene setting or the lower cost compared with many conventional burial options. At the request of its clients, the preserve includes designated Jewish and Muslim areas and has had one Hindu burial.

What began as an experiment has inspired a movement. About 60 percent of Americans say they are interested in green burial options, according to a funeral industry survey.

The Campbells' company, Memorial Ecosystems, advises people who wish to establish conservation burial grounds. In the early days, people traveled from as far as California to bury their loved ones at Ramsey Creek. Now the Campbells can direct them to the Conservation Burial Alliance, a nonprofit founded in 2016 that lists more than a dozen conservation burial sites across the country.

The price of a greener burial

Cremation with funeral and urn: Median U.S. price \$6,280

Green burial: Can cost more than cremation but usually less than conventional burials, according to Ontario funeral home owner Krystal Riddell

Conservation burial: Ramsey Creek Preserve in South Carolina, \$3,000 to \$4,000. Kokosing Nature Preserve in Ohio, about \$5,000 including a \$2,500 tax-deductible land trust donation.

Conventional burial and funeral: Median U.S. price \$8,300

Other cemeteries designate areas of their grounds for more ecological options, like burials without a concrete vault. Throughout the U.S. and Canada, over 500 cemeteries offer green burials, nearly a fourfold increase from 2015.

Historically, families and communities were responsible for their own dead. As society evolved, death became a business, handled by professionals. The Campbells are encouraging families to reclaim their role in death care.

Globally, many cultures have long practiced simple, low-impact burials. Muslim and Jewish traditions, in particular, emphasize minimal intervention and respect for the body as part of a natural cycle.

In that sense, the green burial movement in the U.S. and Canada is less a radical departure than a rediscovery. "What we're doing is not new but has been tried and true for thousands of years," Billy Campbell emphasizes. "We have lost the skill of taking care of our dead. We gave that task away. And in doing so, we've become disconnected from death."

At Ramsey Creek, those lessons are being rediscovered, and in the process, death is being rewilded — one burial at a time.

THE ENVIRONMENTAL MATH OF DEATH

The environmental appeal is often what prompts people to explore greener burials. In some countries, a conventional burial typically includes embalming fluid containing formaldehyde, a steel or hardwood casket, and a reinforced concrete vault. Estimates cited by the Green Burial Council indicate that U.S. cemeteries bury millions of board feet of wood, millions of gallons of embalming fluids, and thousands of tons of concrete and steel every year.

Cremation, often assumed to be greener, has its own environmental footprint. Cremation chambers operate at temperatures near 1,900 degrees Fahrenheit and burn fossil fuels for several hours. According to some estimates, each fire cremation releases about 500 pounds of carbon dioxide, similar to driving an average gasoline car for about 650 miles, along with other contaminants down to the mercury in dental fillings.

For people who've spent considerable time thinking about environmental im-



“We have lost the skill of taking care of our dead. We gave that task away.”



Many families take on the slow, deliberate work of a natural burial, lowering the body into the ground and shoveling soil. **Above left and left:** At Ramsey Creek Preserve in South Carolina, people are buried in rewilded woodland where bobcats, fox, and deer roam. **Above right:** The service for Lincoln Boyd Stevens, a philosophy professor, at Kokosing Nature Preserve in 2020.



Following her own advice, attorney Cindy Cunningham has discussed her final arrangements.

pact, the numbers can prompt reflection. Karen Kendrick-Hands, active in the Environmental Sustainability Rotary Action Group and a member of the Rotary Club of Madison, Wisconsin, describes herself as a “lifelong air-pollution watcher.”

Only recently, after a heart attack prompted reflection, did she connect those concerns to her own end-of-life plans. “I started wondering whether cremation really aligns with my values.”

Her perspective began to develop after her mother died in 1988. Kendrick-Hands declined embalming and chose a simple casket, with a small, private graveside service and later a church memorial. “My aunt was outraged,” she recalls. “She thought we were denying my mom a decent Christian burial. But there’s nothing inherently Christian about a fancy casket and a made-up body.”

She and her husband are considering Natural Path Sanctuary, a green burial ground outside Madison that supports a farm incubator and peace and justice initiatives. The process prompted her to consider training as a death doula, a professional who offers emotional and prac-

tical support to people and their families with the end-of-life process. “It’s really a gift to your family members to offer guidance, a respectful closure, and freeing them for the next step of the grief process,” she says. “Otherwise, they don’t know what you wanted.”

For Judith Black, of the Rotary Club of Marblehead Harbor, Massachusetts, conservation burial feels less like innovation than continuity. “This is how Jews have always buried our dead,” she says. “Dust to dust, earth to earth.”

Jewish traditions avoid embalming and favor simplicity: The body is washed, wrapped in a shroud of natural material, and buried in a plain pine or oak box, or directly in the ground.

Black recalls the recent burial of her husband’s son, who died at 45 and was buried at Eloise Woods Sustainable Natural Burial Park in Texas. “He was wrapped in a simple cotton shroud,” she says. “Those who loved him carried him. And then we all took turns shoveling soil.”

That physical act mattered. “You love this person. You’re saying goodbye. You put some muscle into it.” Black is seeking

Your memorial, your way

So you want a green burial with your favorite song playing and jokes in the eulogy?

You need a plan. And it might not work like you think.

Attorney **Cindy Cunningham** (pictured left), of the Rotary Club of Mount Vernon, Ohio, shares the do’s and don’ts for estate planning to ease decision-making pressure for grieving family members.

DON’T include memorial instructions in a will.

That document often is not reviewed until days or weeks after someone dies, too late for loved ones’ decisions about a memorial.

DO consider prearranging services and prepaying.

And in Ohio, for example, you can sign a legally binding document to assign a person to carry out your plan.

DON’T assume the money you leave behind will pay the bill.

Loved ones may be surprised to learn that someone typically signs a contract agreeing to pay for the memorial, often requiring the person who paid to wait for reimbursement until the estate is settled.

DO speak up and tell your loved ones what you want.

Estate planning is about communication, not just signing documents.

Bottom: Rotarian Judith Black says of natural burial, “This is how Jews have always buried our dead. Dust to dust, earth to earth.” **Right:** At rest in the peace of the woods at Ramsey Creek Preserve.



a green burial site. “I like the idea that a tree could grow out of you, its roots reaching down as you decompose.”

A SPECTRUM OF CHOICES

About 6 in 10 Americans and even more Canadians — about three-quarters — are cremated, not least because that is often the more affordable choice. “Cremation is dominant,” confirms Rotarian Krystal Riddell, president of the Green Burial Society of Canada. “But when people start exploring the environmental implications, some begin to look for alternatives.”

If they don’t choose a green burial, some families scatter cremated remains in designated natural areas. Memorial parks are experimenting with wildflower meadows and reduced mowing.

And many traditional cemeteries now offer green burial sections. When Riddell founded her funeral home, Essentials Cremation and Burial Services, in the Niagara Region of Ontario nine years ago, a nearby cemetery was coincidentally opening its own green burial section, Willow’s Rest, a 2-acre space with wildflowers and trees. Riddell, a member of the Rotary Club of

St. Catharines South, says green burial isn’t meant to replace conventional burials or cremation but rather to add an option for people who want a more environmentally conscious approach. “The most important message is that families today have a variety of meaningful death-care options, and each family should feel empowered to choose what best aligns with their values, culture, and needs.”

Her first green burial client was a woman with multiple chemical sensitivity. “Throughout her life, she struggled with fragrances and chemicals,” Riddell says. “Knowing that I could honor her wish of bringing her back to nature and she could be one with the earth again was so important to her.”

Riddell holds a monthly “Green Burial Café” online for anybody with questions about green burials. “Sometimes people are not mentally prepared to see a body in a shroud,” she has learned. “They expect to see a casket. But when people see how beautiful it can be, they’re embracing it.”

What stands out to her most is how people interact with these spaces. At Willow’s Rest, she has observed a

woman who talks to the flowers at her daughter’s grave and feeds the squirrels. “Instead of just sitting there, looking at a stone, she’s talking to a living organism, which is just beautiful.”

Across the varied choices, one theme recurs: planning matters. “Someone who has had to bury a parent who didn’t have a plan,” Henricksen says, “often decides they want to give their children a gift by making those decisions ahead of time.”

That gift is clarity — about burial or cremation, about ceremony, about place.

For some Rotary members, conservation burial feels like a final expression of service: to family, to community, and to the land itself.

At the Kokosing preserve in Ohio, one family planted native sunflowers on their loved one’s grave. Each summer, the bright yellow patch grows tall, bending with the prairie grasses in the wind.

The bourbon has soaked into the soil. The band has long since packed up and gone.

What remains is a grave that disappears into wildflowers — and land that will outlive us all. ■

PHOTOGRAPHS: COURTESY OF JUDITH BLACK, RAMSEY CREEK PRESERVE

Secrets^{of} the influen

STARTER STEPS:

1

Capture It

Take photos or videos of people, projects, and events.

4

Brand It

Tag your club and Rotary International, include a location, and use hashtags like #PeopleOfAction.

5

Make It Accessible

Add alternative, or alt, text: a brief description of images to make them accessible to people with limited vision.



cers

Want to post more about Rotary on social media but not sure where to start? We asked a few Rotary influencers for their secrets to creating share-worthy social content. Each of them gave us their thinking behind recent posts on common Rotary subjects.

ILLUSTRATION BY **TIANYI YOU**



2

Create It
Edit your visuals into an engaging format.

3

Tell It
Add a short caption: what's happening, why it matters, and the impact.

6

Invite Engagement
Ask questions, share links, and encourage conversations.

7

Post It
Share it across all of your social channels.

INCLUDE MANY VOICES

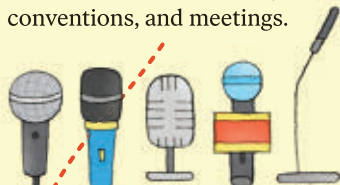
Daniel “Dani” Zavala

The post:

When I was at the Rotary International Convention in Calgary, Alberta, last year, I interviewed people about why they love Rotary. I decided to create this content because we need to highlight how multicultural Rotary truly is. We are a unique community of leaders, integrating every culture and background.

The goal:

By showing this diversity, I invite others, no matter where they are, to join Rotary while encouraging current members to attend our conferences, conventions, and meetings.



Add subtitles where possible

Tips:

- **Post as much as you can.** Use your social media platforms to share your events, projects, or club moments.
- **Take advantage of all the resources Rotary provides.** That’s exactly what I did in the video by using the spaces available at the convention.
- **Don’t worry if you don’t know much about trending hashtags or videos.** Just show real experiences and real people. Share them in the most genuine way possible, and your audience will connect with it. In Rotary, we are people of action, and that is the best story you can tell.



Get inspired

Members of Rotary’s internal influencer program bring Rotary to life through real stories, moments, and connections. Follow the 2026-27 class on Instagram for more content ideas.

Alex Arevalo

Rotaract Club of the Woodlands, Texas
@alexarev1

Anniela Carracedo

Rotaract Club of NSU, Florida
@anniela.ca

Armando Coviello

Rotary Club of Jumeirah-Dubai, United Arab Emirates
@instacoviello

Daniel Zavala

Rotaract Club of San Joaquín, Venezuela
@danirotary

Dhruvi Shah

Rotary Club of Winnipeg, Manitoba
@dhruvi.shhh

Divya Sharma

Rotary Club of Winnipeg, Manitoba
@divyasharmx

Elise Nassif

Rotaract Club of Wandsworth, England
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Ignacio Gonzalez

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Lamech Opiyo

Rotaract Club of Nairobi Central, Kenya
@lamechlamarch

Lana Bahram

Rotaract Club of Dresden, Germany
@lanaforp

Leif Eineder

Rotex District 1930, Germany, and Rotary Youth Advisory Council
@_justleif

Maria Manuela Córdoba

Rotary and Rotaract clubs of Bogotá Centenario, Colombia
@mmanuelac

Maria Vittoria Gargiulo

Rotary Club of Global ROOTS – District 2101 and Rotaract Club of Campus Salerno dei due Principati, Italy
@mavidrac

Nicole Peña

Rotary Club of Nuevo Medellín, Colombia
@tupersonafavoritax100

Priya Ahluwalia

Rotary Club of South West Florida District 6960, Florida
@priyahluwalia

Tatty Chavez

Rotaract Club of Jacksonville Beaches, Florida
@tattythinks

Tiffany Ervin

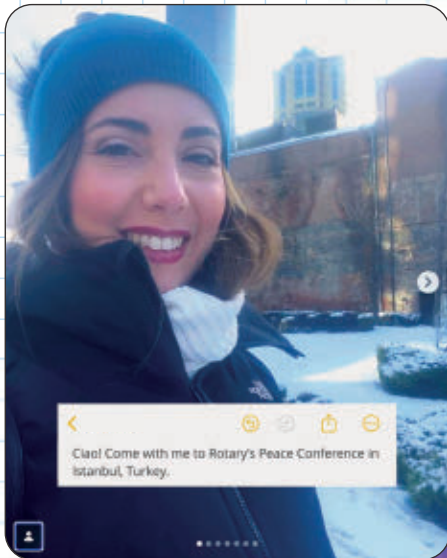
Rotary Club of Alzheimer’s Research, North Carolina
@tiffanyervin

Viviana Bennett

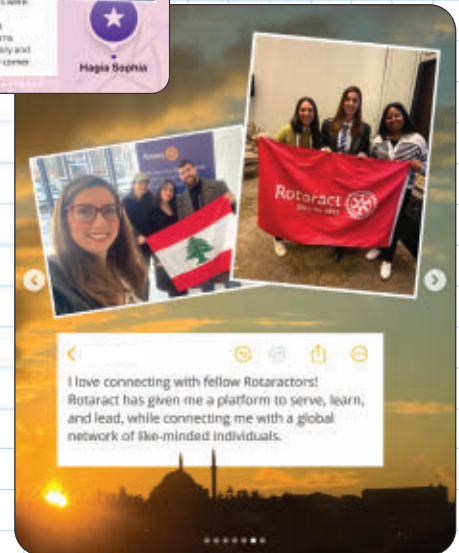
Rotaract Club of Plano Community, Texas
@vivi_bennett

SHARE WHAT YOU DID AT A ROTARY CONFERENCE

Maria Vittoria “Mavi” Gargiulo



Like Mavi, you can annotate your own photos in the Instagram app!



The post:

I created this post to share my experience at Rotary’s Presidential Peace Conference in Istanbul. I wanted to share what I was experiencing in that exact moment: the atmosphere, the energy, the people, the sense of purpose that fills these Rotary gatherings. I chose a carousel format because it mirrors the way I absorb events myself, in the tiny moments that tell a bigger story. A single photo felt too flat for something that was alive, fast-paced, and full of movement. The carousel allowed me to bring people along with me, almost as if they were walking through the day by my side.

The goal:

I wasn’t trying to craft something perfect or strategic; I just wanted to be honest about what the day felt like. I wanted to share the experience with people who follow me, many of whom I’ve met across different Rotary events over the years. We only see each other sporadically, sometimes from one side of the world to the other, but these posts help keep us connected. It was also a reminder, to them and to myself, of how powerful events like this can be.

Tips:

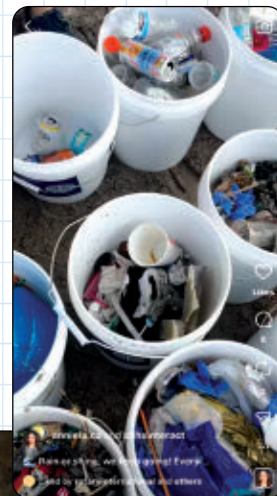
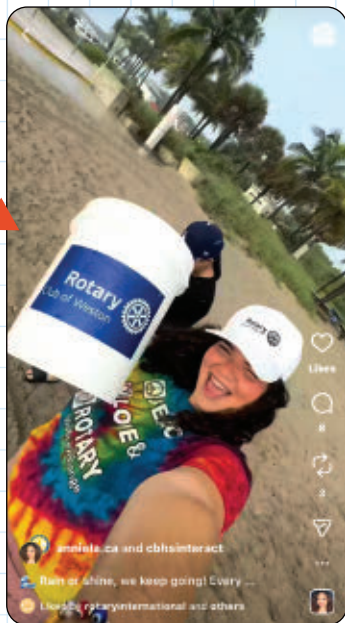
- **Show people.** Rotary is built on relationships. Faces, gestures, and human warmth tell that story far better than logos or staged photos ever could.
- **Use whatever format feels natural.** A carousel, a short video, a single candid photo — there’s no right or wrong. Choose the format that helps you express the moment clearly.
- **Always come back to the “why.”** Why did this moment matter to you? Why did it stay with you? Why might it inspire someone else? If you can answer that, your content will always have depth.
- **Don’t try to perform.** You don’t need to become a professional to share something meaningful. Just tell your story the way you’d tell it to a friend.
- **Embrace imperfection.** People instantly recognize authenticity, and it always goes further than something overly polished.

SUMMARIZE A SERVICE PROJECT

Anniela “Anni” Carracedo



Record more angles than you think you need



Capture a range of environmental and detail shots

The post:

This video showcases the monthly beach cleanup that my Rotaract club does with local Interact and Rotary clubs. When I'm capturing an event, I'm always thinking about how to clearly communicate the what, who, and why. That's especially important when you're trying to turn a four-hour service project into a few seconds of video. I prioritized shots that showed people actively serving, the results of the cleanup, and visible Rotary branding. The format needed to be fast, engaging, and real, while still telling a complete story about our work and why it mattered.

The goal:

My goal was to highlight the collaboration between Interact, Rotaract, and Rotary. I wanted people to see how powerful it is when all generations come together to serve. The response showed it worked. People were sharing the post and engaging with it across our community.

Tips:

- **Record longer clips than you think you need.** Long shots can be reused and cut down into multiple short clips later. Editing is where the story really comes together.
- **Don't just post posed photos.** Share the moments before and after the picture, when people are talking, laughing, and being themselves. That's what feels real.
- **Know the audience you're trying to reach.** I'm an older Gen Z and most of my peers are on Instagram, so that's where I focus.



Priya included photos of all the new members



Skip shots of empty plates or people eating. Focus on interaction and speeches.

SHOW WHAT HAPPENS AT A CLUB MEETING

Priya Ahluwalia

The post:

This post captures the energy, growth, and vibrancy of one of our Rotary club meetings. We had over 52 people in the room, multiple generations, and so many inspiring updates and recognitions. I chose a highlight-style format because several meaningful moments were happening at once: new member inductions, student involvement, community partner announcements, service updates, and recognitions. A clean, bullet-point layout made it easy for viewers to quickly grasp the depth of our club's work while keeping the tone uplifting and celebratory.

The goal:

I wanted to showcase the vibrancy and momentum of our club, not just the agenda. I wanted people to instantly feel “wow, something exciting is happening here.” The post helped raise awareness and visibility for our club, strengthened our storytelling, and positioned our club as a place where meaningful work gets done and genuine connections are consistently made. Several people reached out afterward expressing interest in visiting a meeting, which showed that the post did exactly what it was meant to do.

Tips:

➤ **Keep it visual.** Photos and short videos outperform text alone. Capture candid smiles, hands-on service, and intergenerational involvement.

➤ **Tell a story.** Don't just recap. Highlight why the moment mattered.

➤ **Keep the tone modern.** Rotary today is energetic, youthful, and diverse. Let your language and format reflect that.

➤ **Use carousel posts for big events.** They allow you to showcase multiple angles and achievements without overwhelming the viewer.

➤ **Include a gentle invitation.** A nudge to “Join us,” “Come visit,” or “Be part of the impact” helps convert interest into action.



OUR CLUBS

VIRTUAL VISIT

It's monumental

Rotary Club of Custer,
South Dakota

It would be, quite simply, the largest sculpture in the world: a colossal likeness of Crazy Horse, the Oglala Lakota chief, on a galloping stallion carved into the granite of a mountain in the Black Hills of South Dakota. But in 1949, about a year into the project, sculptor Korczak Ziolkowski ran into a vexing problem. He needed stairs. Lots of them.

“It was a very tedious process, and he just wasn’t moving as fast as he wanted, so he put a request out to the community,” says Marguerite Cullum, a retired staff librarian at the Crazy Horse Memorial, which manages the site.

Answering the call was the nearby Rotary Club of Custer. The members’ task was to help assemble a 700-foot wooden staircase running from the valley floor to the top of Thunderhead Mountain. They formed a human chain, passing each piece of lumber — 29 tons of it — from person to person up the side of the mountain to help construct the 741 steps. “Think how risky that was for them,” says Cullum, a past president of the club and its current

secretary. “And they went and did it, and, as far as I know, they were the only ones that showed up. I couldn’t find that any anybody else attended.”

Thus began a long-standing collaboration and friendship between the Custer club and the Crazy Horse Memorial Foundation, which would grow beyond the monument to establish a museum and an educational institution, Crazy Horse Memorial University, that offers college credit in several academic programs and prepares Native American students to succeed in higher education.

Whitney Rencountre II is chief executive officer of the memorial today. He is Crow Creek Hunkpati Dakota from the Crow Creek Sioux Tribe. Because the foundation runs solely on donations and accepts no government funding, partners like the Rotary club are critically important. “As a nonprofit organization, we rely on collaborations and those many volunteers through the years to help us advance the work, our mission, and our dream here,” Rencountre says.

The idea for the monument began in the late 1930s with Lakota Chief Henry Standing Bear, who watched Mount Rushmore taking shape 10 miles away elsewhere in the Black Hills and wanted to show that his people had great heroes. The man he chose to honor was his cousin, Tasunke Witko, whose name translates to His Horse Is Wild or Crazy Horse, a leader best known for defeating Lieutenant Colonel George Custer and the Army’s 7th Cavalry at the Battle of Little Bighorn.

In 1939, Standing Bear wrote to Ziolkowski, a Boston-born sculptor who

had assisted at Mount Rushmore, to invite him to take the job. Ziolkowski began construction in 1948 and devoted the rest of his life to the project until his death in 1982 at age 74.

Each year, more than 1 million people visit the memorial, which remains a work in progress. The 87-foot, 6-inch-tall face was finished in 1998, and sculptors are working on other parts of the mammoth artwork, such as the 263-foot outstretched arm.

While the monument is not without critics — some object to the reshaping of a sacred mountain or contend that the some of the funding could have gone directly to tribes — the Rotary club is dedicated to its relationship with the organization. “Crazy Horse is an important part of Custer,” says Club President Jason Ferguson. “And we want to be partners with entities like [them because their] mission is great.”

That mission includes themes important to Rotary members. Intended to honor all Indigenous people of North America, the memorial, according to its website, “stands as a reminder of the importance of reconciliation, respecting differences, embracing diversity, striving for unity, and appreciating life’s deeper meaning as it has always been represented in Native American cultural values.”

With an annual donation, the club has supported the Crazy Horse Memorial University, where hundreds of Native students have earned college credit through short academic programs and gone on to pursue degrees at other colleges and universities. “They get wrap-around support to help them understand



Clockwise from top left: sculptor Korczak Ziolkowski with Chief Henry Standing Bear; the Rotary Club of Custer on a tour of the mountaintop; Rotary members formed a human chain to move lumber needed for stairs to assist the sculptor; members of the club today.



what [is needed] to be successful in college,” Rencountre says. The school, which also offers internships at the memorial, partners with Black Hills State University and hopes to one day receive its own accreditation. The memorial foundation has also awarded more than \$2 million in scholarships.

Over the years, the club has invited representatives of the university and the memorial to present at meetings and share their work and progress. “We appreciate when they come and educate us

on what’s going on up there because it’s just fascinating stuff,” Ferguson says. The club had a chance to observe the monument’s progress firsthand when members toured the top of the mountain. “The view up there is unbelievable,” Ferguson adds.

The club has also relied on the memorial as a venue for events like a Christmas party and its wine-tasting and raffle fundraisers. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the memorial offered the club a conference room to host remote and socially distanced meetings after the group could

no longer gather at its usual location. “That was a huge thing to keep us pulled together, that we didn’t dissolve. We’re still going strong,” says Cullum, who was a club president during the pandemic. “It’s a good bond. It’s good to know that we can ask for help.”

Rencountre shares that sentiment: “The Rotary collaboration that we’ve had through the years has really helped us to advance the work of the mission and the dream, the vision of Crazy Horse Memorial.”

— KRISTEN POPE

A MEMORIAL WITH A MISSION

A look at the purpose of the Crazy Horse Memorial Foundation:

- Finish the world’s largest sculpture to honor Crazy Horse and all Indigenous people of North America
- Provide educational and cultural programming to encourage reconciliation and unity
- Serve as a repository for Native American artifacts, arts, and crafts
- Operate the Crazy Horse Memorial University to provide a pathway to higher education for Native students

HANDBOOK

Paradise regained

In the Pacific Northwest, Rotarians restore a once-thriving wilderness

In May 1792, Lieutenant Peter Puget of Captain George Vancouver’s *HMS Discovery* explored the bays and inlets along the coastline of the inland sea south of what is today Seattle. Puget Sound, as it came to be known, has been changing ever since, and not always for the better.

In South Puget Sound, development, tourism, agriculture, and fires have decimated the local ecosystem, endangering many species of plants, butterflies, birds, animals, reptiles, and amphibians. But led by nature-loving Rotary members, volunteers are redeeming a small piece of what’s been lost.

Working alongside the Northwest Youth Corps, other Rotary clubs, and high school and college students in Lakewood, Washington, the Rotary Club of Clover Park is restoring a 90-acre unit within the 5,790-acre South Puget Sound Wildlife Area. Having fallen into disrepair after a loss of state funding, the area has again become a hub for wildlife study and ecological education.

After countless hours of work, the volunteers have planted thousands of indigenous plants and grasses, revived an overgrown paved trail, added new fencing, and installed interpretive signs. They have also expanded wildlife habitats and created an interpretive area where people of all ages can learn about flora and fauna.

“This is one of the last undeveloped areas in our city limits,” says Alan Billingsley, the Clover Park club’s service project chair. “It’s our goal to preserve it for the enjoyment of generations to come and allow people to take advantage of the educational element that is an integral part of the South Puget Sound Wildlife Area.”

— GEOFFREY JOHNSON





What the wild things are

Peer among the oak trees and prairie grasses of South Puget Sound and there you will see:

- 1 Taylor's checkerspot butterfly
- 2 Puget blue butterfly
- 3 Golden paintbrush
- 4 Rose checker mallow
- 5 Mazama pocket gopher
- 6 Western gray squirrel
- 7 Oregon spotted frog
- 8 Pacific pond turtle
- 9 Streaked horned lark
- 10 Vesper sparrow



TRUSTEE CHAIR'S MESSAGE

A shot at the future

Our largest program at The Rotary Foundation is PolioPlus, followed by a significant new initiative called the Rotary Healthy Communities Challenge, which emerged from the first Programs of Scale initiative in Zambia. Through this work, we are combating malaria, pneumonia, and diarrheal diseases — the three leading killers of children under 5 in Africa.

A healthy child still needs an education, and education is where futures are built.

Rotary is finding ways to invest in the next generation through partnerships and creative approaches. **Johan Denolf**, of the Rotary Club Damme, Belgium, and **Nirmal Rijal**, of the Rotary Club of Kathmandu Mid-Town, Nepal, share one remarkable example:

In the mountains of Nepal, the children of Melamchi Ghyang village had no school. In 1985, a teacher named Purna Gautam set out to change that, founding a school on the promise that no child would ever be turned away. For many girls and boys, it became a lifeline against threats such as child labor, early marriage, and human trafficking.

In 1999, Hilde Kuypers, a Belgian humanitarian, was so moved by Gautam's mission that she founded KetaKeti, a nonprofit, to support it. KetaKeti and the Rotary Club of Damme built a partnership while the club helped the community recover from a 2015 earthquake.

In 2024, the Rotary Club of Damme —

working with the Rotary Club of Kathmandu Mid-Town and 15 clubs from Belgium and Germany, with support from District 2130 — united around a \$175,000 global grant.

The project brought solar energy to the school, eliminated dependence on firewood for cooking, powered a medical post, and launched reforestation and environmental education.

By 2025, enrollment had climbed to 440 students. Rotary clubs committed to three years of teacher salary contributions. By 2027, the school aims to be self-sustaining through an alumni fund, matched dollar-for-dollar by KetaKeti Belgium. What began as one teacher's promise has become a story of global friendship and the power of education.

Through a Rotary Foundation global grant, hundreds of Nepalese children now have a genuine shot at the future they deserve. Most remarkable of all: The school's own alumni are now helping secure that future for the next generation. That is the sustainable, generational impact Rotary endeavors to create.

There are countless such stories waiting to happen. With your commitment and The Rotary Foundation behind you, you can be part of one.

HOLGER KNAACK

Foundation trustee chair

SERVICE ABOVE SELF

THE OBJECT OF ROTARY

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

- First** The development of acquaintance as an opportunity for service;
- Second** High ethical standards in business and professions, the recognition of the worthiness of all useful occupations, and the dignifying of each Rotarian's occupation as an opportunity to serve society;
- Third** The application of the ideal of service in each Rotarian's personal, business, and community life;
- Fourth** The advancement of international understanding, goodwill, and peace through a world fellowship of business and professional persons united in the ideal of service.

THE FOUR-WAY TEST

Of the things we think, say or do:

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

MEMBER CODE OF CONDUCT

All members (Rotarians and Rotaractors) are expected to:

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

CALENDAR

May events

DUMP YOUR JUNK

Event: E-Waste and Recycling Event

Host: Rotary Club of Walnut Grove, California

What it benefits: Local nonprofits

Date: 2 May

For a third year, the club has partnered with the Sacramento Regional Conservation Corps, an organization that provides job training to young people, to hold this recycling event at the Walnut Grove Library. People can drop off their old electronic devices, including televisions, computers, cellphones, printers, and stereo equipment, and the conservation corps (a registered e-waste handler) does the rest.

THE SPRING THING

Event: That Day in May

Host: Rotary Club of Oakwood, Ohio

What it benefits: Local nonprofits

Date: 16 May

The club devotes more than 1,000 volunteer hours to this community festival, an annual tradition in Oakwood for more than half a century. The day begins early with a series of races (10K, 5K, and a 1K fun run) and a pancake breakfast. The afternoon brings a parade, a car show, a dog show, and a baseball game played by former Oakwood High School athletes. In conjunction with the event, an 18-hole golf tournament will be held 18 May.

BIZ KIDS

Event: Children's Business Fair

Host: Rotary Club of Weston & Wayland, Massachusetts

Date: 16 May

This event provides 6- to 14-year-olds with the opportunity to be entrepreneurs for a day. The children think up a business idea and then launch it at the fair, marketing real goods or services



STRANGE BUT TRUE

Event: Mike the Headless Chicken Festival

Host: Rotary Club of Fruita, Colorado

What it benefits: Local and international projects

Dates: 29-30 May

Back in the 1940s, Fruita was the home of a physically peculiar chicken named Mike whose owners toured him across the country as a sideshow attraction. Today, the town celebrates its unusual claim to fame with an annual two-day festival of "fun, feathers, and pure weirdness." Highlights include a 5K race, a chicken exhibition, a Peeps-eating contest, and a community chicken dance. Rotary members run the beer garden.

to the hundreds of people who attend. Organizers say the experience sparks the kids' creativity and gives them confidence and leadership skills.

GET TEED UP

Event: Birdies Over Bunkers Charity Golf Classic

Host: Rotary Club of Point West-Sacramento, California

What it benefits: California Eagles and local children's nonprofits

Date: 18 May

Held at the Valley Hi Country Club in Elk Grove, this tournament raises funds primarily for the California Eagles program, which teaches golf and life skills to people of all ages with varied disabilities or medical conditions. The Point West club has supported the program for more than 30 years. In addition to donating money,

many members volunteer during the five-month season to help coach the athletes.

SWING, BATTER, BATTER!

Event: Petaluma Wiffle Ball Tournament

Host: Rotary clubs of Petaluma, Petaluma Sunrise, and Petaluma Valley, California

What it benefits: Local nonprofits and local and international projects

Date: 30 May

Thirty-two teams compete across four baseball fields at this double-elimination tournament, which lets adults rediscover a favorite childhood activity. The day also features a home run derby with a \$400 prize for the contestant who hits the most. Food and drinks for sale include barbecue tri-tip sandwiches, beer, and wine. A portion of the proceeds goes toward two Bay Area nonprofits that support children with disabilities.

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

PEOPLE OF ACTION

Champions of tomorrow



MARIA MANUELA CÓRDOBA AGUIRRE

**Rotary Club of Bogotá Centenario,
Colombia**

Maria Manuela Córdoba Aguirre founded Rotary en Señas (Rotary in Sign Language) to bring together young Rotary members and deaf youth for bilingual workshops on communication, leadership, and other activities. The program's deaf participants act as facilitators and leaders, while hearing volunteers gain skills in inclusive communication and sign language vocabulary.

Aguirre developed Rotary in Sign Language after consulting with families, interpreters, and other organizations and learning of a lack of accessible spaces and leadership opportunities for deaf children and teens. She designed the bilingual methodology, forged partnerships, and ensured the viewpoints of young deaf people remained central. She also developed the monitoring and evaluation framework, collecting data and testimonies to establish the project's impact. The result is a replicable model of inclusion and empowerment.

Rotary in Sign Language's workshops and activities give deaf youth more spaces to learn, express themselves, and lead. The program has strengthened the self-esteem and autonomy of the participants while building lasting connections.



DERRICK KABUYE

**Rotaract Club of Kampala South,
Uganda**

Derrick Kabuye helped turn a rural Ugandan school facing multiple challenges into a thriving educational facility. Nyakijumba Primary School had unsafe classrooms, poor sanitation, and limited teaching materials. It lacked early childhood education facilities. Dropout rates were high, especially among girls lacking support for menstrual health.

With the Educate a Community Project, Kabuye led members of the Rotaract Club of Kampala South to make improvements at Nyakijumba that could also serve as a model for rural education. The project constructed a five-classroom addition, renovated existing structures, and established an early childhood development program. A borehole well now provides clean water. More than 545 girls have received menstrual health education, and girls are supplied with reusable pads to help them stay in school. The school's enrollment grew from 60 pupils in 2016 to 274 last year.

Kabuye has led the project since 2019. He has recruited local and international clubs, monitored construction, and promoted the project in the community. He's worked at the site, planted trees, and gathered data for annual impact reports.



RAYMOND "ARKY" MANNING

**Rotary Club of Metro East Taytay,
Philippines**

Raymond "Arky" Manning, a law student and local elected official, developed a youth-led effort to reform his district's community-based dispute resolution system, which suffered from inefficiency and mistrust.

The project transformed the mediation system in the city of Taytay's San Isidro district, introducing digital case management, early interventions, and continuous training for mediators. In the Philippines, these community-based systems settle minor civil and criminal cases outside of formal courts.

Besides training 30 adult mediators and 20 youth peer mediators, project leaders guided local youth to create antiviolence and mental health awareness campaigns and operate "mediation cafes." The project reduced case resolution times by 70 percent, increased community trust, and saved families and the government money. Today, it has a conflict settlement rate of more than 99 percent and a similarly high rate of compliance with resolutions.

Manning built partnerships with schools, faith groups, nongovernmental organizations, and government agencies to promote the project. It provides a model for community-based justice that can be replicated throughout the country.

Rotary has recognized six members as People of Action: Champions of Tomorrow. The honorees, all of them age 30 or younger, champion youth-led initiatives in areas ranging from education and conflict resolution to inclusion and mental health. “These honorees are creating more peaceful and resilient communities today, and unlocking their own potential to become the next generation of service-minded leaders,” Rotary President Francesco Arezzo said. Rotary’s annual People of Action Honors highlight scalable projects resulting in long-term change. — ETELKA LEHOCZKY



OLIVIA RALEY

**Rotary Club of Bardstown,
Kentucky**

Olivia Raley has led a project to reduce stigma and raise awareness around youth mental health through educational campaigns and visible symbols of hope. Known as the Nelson County Yellow Tulip Project, the initiative brought together dozens of organizations to plant tulip bulbs and create 22 Hope Gardens at schools, parks, jails, shelters, and police departments around the county.

Besides planting and maintaining the colorful gardens, more than 100 young volunteers create educational materials and lead workshops about mental health.

Raley, the first social worker employed by the Bardstown Police Department, coordinated and promoted the project. She secured funding, mentored participants, led workshops, and established a framework for gathering and measuring outcomes. The project’s impact was visible in its first year, with surveys showing an increase in young people’s comfort with discussing mental health issues and greater awareness of resources. Partnerships with schools, law enforcement, and health providers led to a 20 percent increase in youth accessing counseling services.



MARIA GRAZIA RAVA

**Rotaract Club of Faenza,
Italy**

Maria Grazia Rava helped address a critical lack of first aid training in her province of Ravenna, Italy. Local schools did not offer regular classes in first aid techniques, leaving students unprepared for emergencies such as cardiac arrest, choking, or trauma. Rava helped develop How to Save a Life, a training program supported by Rotary and Rotaract clubs throughout the region.

How to Save a Life taught CPR and related techniques to 2,000 students in 40 schools. Students reported that they gained knowledge and confidence from the lessons, while teachers observed increased responsibility and composure during emergency drills. Parents and school leaders praised the training program, and many schools requested that the lessons be repeated annually.

Drawing on knowledge she acquired in medical school, Rava ensured the program’s results were accurately measured and reported. She designed participant questionnaires, coordinated data collection, and gathered qualitative feedback to refine the program’s training approach. Her leadership helped transform the pilot program into a scalable, districtwide model.



VANSH SAINI

**Rotaract Club of Delhi Genesis Midwest,
India**

Vansh Saini leads an initiative to address educational inequality for children in Delhi. After discovering gaps in academic instruction, life skills, and awareness of health and sustainability, members of Interact and Rotaract clubs created the Empowerment Academy. It offers children ages 6 through 15 weekend classes in basic education, life skills, hygiene, career development, and first aid.

The Empowerment Academy has educated more than 150 children since its founding in 2022 and provided educational materials to students who couldn’t afford them. Forty volunteers have contributed a total of 1,000 hours to the program. The young participants have improved their literacy, confidence, and career readiness, and families report reduced stress. The volunteers benefit as well, gaining leadership and project management skills.

Saini transformed the project from a basic life skills initiative into a comprehensive educational program. He mobilized volunteers, introduced teaching internships, and established a robust monitoring framework. By tracking attendance, volunteer engagement, academic progress, and resource distribution, Saini made it possible to validate the program’s outcomes and ensure accountability. ■

IN BRIEF

For Sylvia Whitlock Leadership Award winner, success is collective



Mayan Raslan, the 2026 recipient of Rotary’s Sylvia Whitlock Leadership Award, espouses a particular view of success: It isn’t genuine if you achieve it alone.

“When you succeed, let others rise with you,” she says. “If you’re alone, this is not success.”

That ethos has guided Raslan throughout her career as a project manager and in her work as a fundraiser for Rotary and other organizations. A member of the Rotary Club of Cairo Royal in Egypt, she is committed to elevating other women to leadership roles.

That’s one reason she was honored with the award named for Sylvia Whitlock, the first female Rotary club president, who has gone on to lead change for women around the world through Rotary. The award recognizes people who, like Whitlock, have worked to advance women in Rotary.

Raslan “has a special talent for recognizing potential in others and gently, yet powerfully, encouraging them to take on greater roles,” says Mohamed Delawar Aly, a member of the Rotary Club of Sheikh Zayed ECO, Egypt, and a past district governor. “Her example has motivated so many to embrace leadership roles they may not have initially seen for themselves.”

Raslan, who earned a doctorate in management and administration from Cairo University, has lent her talents to an array of organizations. In addition to serving in numerous leadership roles in Rotary since she joined in 1999, she is the president of the Egyptian Feminist Union, president of the Alliance for Arab Women, and a trustee of the Banque Misr Foundation for Community Development.

As governor of District 2451 in 2016-17,

Raslan sought to increase the number of female members and leaders. She announced a special award for clubs that increased the number of women by 25 percent. Today, the district’s membership is 54 percent female. But she made her biggest impact with a district task force on women’s empowerment that became a permanent committee.

“The number of women in leadership positions in the district was very low,” Raslan says. “So I appointed women as chairs and co-chairs for projects and committees.”

The women’s empowerment committee has provided microloans to female heads of households, sponsored vocational and leadership education, and shown women how to prepare for the job market.

Raslan demonstrated her commitment to shared achievement by leading a multi-year project that began when a government official asked in 2016 whether Rotary could build a school in the Fayoum governorate, south of Cairo. At first, she was daunted.

“He was speaking to me, and I was seeing nothing. Where would I even start?” she recalls. “But one of my old friends in Rotary, an engineer, said, ‘Why are you worried? Let’s talk to someone who’s already built a school.’ And that was the first step.”

The school opened in 2020 with two classes of kindergartners. It has about 800 students today and was recently honored by the Egyptian government. For Raslan, it’s the ultimate proof that all true achievements are shared.

“As you are rising as a leader, give opportunities to others. Leaders create leaders,” she says. “Success is collective. It’s never just individual.”

— ETELKA LEHOCZKY

IN MEMORIAM

With deep regret, we report the death of **Mike Pinson**, Killeen Heights, Texas, who served RI as director in 2002-04 and district governor in 1994-95.

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

James E. Simmermon
Oakmont Verona,
Pennsylvania, 1982-83

C.C. Collie
Park Cities (Dallas), Texas,
1985-86 and 1987-88

Stephen A. Peters
St. Petersburg Sunrise,
Florida, 1988-89

Peter Hans Gut
Küsnacht-Zürich,
Switzerland, 1994-95

James Behr
Northern Allegheny
(Pittsburgh), Pennsylvania,
1997-98

Hank Heffernan
Yakima Southwest,
Washington, 1997-98

Tomoshige Tachibana
Yanagawa, Japan, 2004-05

Raju Paul
Calgary Heritage Park,
Alberta, 2006-07


Brian Amey
Newtown, Connecticut,
2012-13


Alexey Kutsenko
Sochi, Russia, 2018-19

Barton Goldenberg
Metro Bethesda, Maryland,
2019-20

Bernhard Stiefel
Furtwangen-Triberg,
Germany, 2025-26


Learn more about the Sylvia Whitlock Leadership Award and view a gallery of past recipients at rotary.org/sylvia-whitlock-leadership-award-gallery.



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2026 CONVENTION

For lifelong learners

Breakout sessions are your one-stop shop for in-depth learning, inspiration, and networking at the Rotary International Convention 13-17 June in Taipei, Taiwan. Robin Hollingsworth, of the Rotary Club of Franklin, Kentucky, said last year at her first convention that the sessions hook people and make them convention regulars. “You’ll have to keep coming for the number of workshops alone and their quality and magnitude.”



**TAIPEI
BREAKOUT SESSION
HIGHLIGHTS:**

Happiness in Rotary

Members are clear: The club experience is the most important factor in their connection to Rotary. Learn simple techniques that make members happier with their clubs.

AI for good

Calling technology novices and savvy artificial intelligence users: Get actionable ideas to use AI in Rotary for positive change in health, disaster response, and more.

You are Rotary’s storyteller

Steal these ideas to build Rl’s image and you’ll help your

community get to know Rotary AND attract new members.

Generations unite!

Young Rotary leaders share their tips for engaging younger members and getting generations working together.

Bend your club to fit

Rotary evolves, and so must its clubs. Try an innovative or flexible club model: hybrid, cause-based, or corporate, to name a few.

Members nearly quadrupled

Learn how a club that ballooned from 11 to 40 members in two years overcame challenges through better engagement, more awareness of Rotary, and a welcoming culture. ■

CROSSWORD

Next generation

By Victor Fleming
Rotary Club of Little Rock, Arkansas

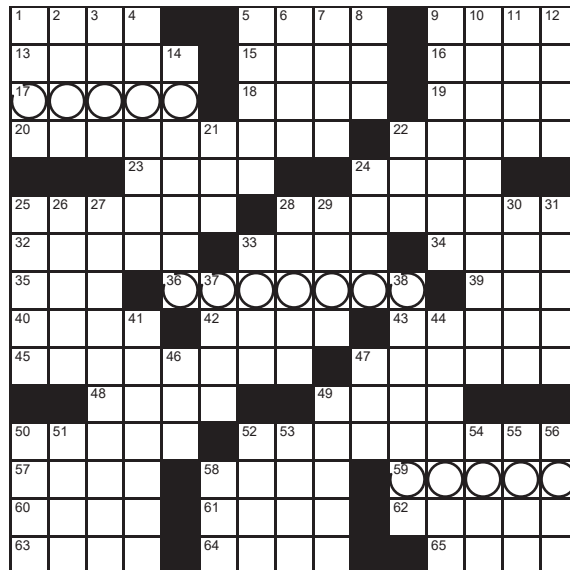
ACROSS

- 1 Curl of smoke
- 5 Schindler’s ___
- 9 21-Down’s meal
- 13 One-time Red Sox slugger Tony
- 15 SportsCenter ailer
- 16 Aviation prefix
- 17 Early stretch of life
- 18 Came back to earth
- 19 100-meter dash, e.g.
- 20 Explain the meaning of
- 22 ___ Secretary
- 23 Pork ___
- 24 50% off event
- 25 Final chapter, often
- 28 Two-choice phrase
- 32 Airline of yore
- 33 Home loan agcy.
- 34 Canadian gas brand
- 35 In’s opposite
- 36 Contribution to others’ welfare
- 39 1950s school dance
- 40 Laine of song
- 42 Celine of song
- 43 Unique item in a Scrabble set
- 45 Paper replica
- 47 R.E.M. singer
- 48 Michael and kin
- 49 Contaminant-free

- 50 Cross start?
- 52 Himalayan peak
- 57 Grand Theft ___
- 58 Distinctive air
- 59 May or December
- 60 Just more than a jog
- 61 Allied group
- 62 Murphy or Redmayne
- 63 Stereotypical business letter addressees
- 64 Formally transfer
- 65 Hot under the collar

DOWN

- 1 “The ___ Am” (2000 Eminem song)
- 2 Anemic one’s need
- 3 Dirty reading
- 4 Shin neighbor
- 5 Rotary’s young people help them ___ the value of 36-Across
- 6 Anagram of lies
- 7 Barbecue need
- 8 Big bang cause?
- 9 “Nobody doesn’t like ___” (old slogan)
- 10 Part of RYLA
- 11 Free Willy whale
- 12 “Still I Rise,” e.g.
- 14 Pizza ingredient, casually
- 21 Farm animal
- 22 ___-jongg
- 24 Detached, in mus.
- 25 Distinctive time
- 26 Abdul or Cole
- 27 12- to 18-year-old club member
- 28 Ambassador
- 29 Words from one who’s anted
- 30 “___ Mio”
- 31 What new hires are shown, after “the”
- 33 “Get a ___!”
- 37 Ancient region south of the Dead Sea
- 38 Superlative
- 41 Small stock purchases
- 44 Steering system components
- 46 AFL-___
- 47 Ford Explorer, e.g.
- 49 What Rotary’s student exchange program builds
- 50 Lion and tiger
- 51 Cosmonaut Gagarin
- 52 Army mascot
- 53 Put one’s foot down
- 54 Prefix with -morph or -plasm
- 55 Agitate
- 56 “... I ___ wed”
- 58 Abbott Elementary network





Solution on opposite page

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



Put a ring on it

Maltese honey rings are sweet enough to marry

Honey rings are a quintessential treat in Malta, but the name is something of a misnomer. The ring-shaped pastry is filled not with honey but with treacle or molasses. “But there is some method to the madness,” explains John de Giorgio. “The Maltese word for treacle is ghasel iswed, which means black honey.”

To make honey rings, or qaghaq tal-ghasel in Maltese, pastry dough is rolled into long thin strips. Then the filling, a granular paste of either treacle or molasses, sugar, semolina, citrus zest, and spices such as cinnamon, cloves, or anise seed, is spread in the center. The dough is rolled around the filling and then shaped into a ring. The pastry is scored so the molasses starts to ooze as it bakes.

HOLIDAY FAVORITE: The Maltese have been baking honey rings for centuries. One is featured in a painting from 1762 that adorns a wall inside a former Jesuit retreat. They have traditionally been considered a Christmas treat, featuring the zest of oranges and tangerines that are in season at that time of year, though these days they can be purchased year-round.

GIFTABLE: Honey rings are more snack than dessert. “You wouldn’t serve it after a meal, but it would be something you’d have with a cup of tea,” explains de Giorgio, aide to RI President Francesco Arezzo. And while some families bake them at home, they’re easy to find at grocery stores and bakeries. “We often buy honey rings at the airport shop to give as gifts,” de Giorgio says. ■

John de Giorgio
Rotary Club
of Malta

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