

# Leading with peace

Posted on **July 19, 2024**

Past RI Vice President and Director Yinka Babalola was a Sarasota DGE HomeStay participant in 2010 and stayed with PDG Pam Akins

*By Olayinka Hakeem Babalola, 2019-20 RI Vice President and 2018-20 Rotary International Director*

I have been involved with Rotary for more than 40 years, beginning as a Rotaractor in 1983 and transitioning to a Rotarian in 1993. My journey in peacebuilding started from two fronts: my deep commitment to community service and my involvement in Rotary's structured peace initiatives. As a member of the Rotary Club of Trans Amadi, Port Harcourt, Nigeria, in District 9141, I have held numerous leadership positions including as club president, district governor, and past Rotary International director.



My passion for peacebuilding was sparked during my university days in Nigeria where we leveraged Rotaract to implement community improvement projects. This passion was further awakened when I became a regional Rotary Foundation coordinator (RRFC). In this role, I realized that while Rotary's focus areas were being addressed, peacebuilding was not as actively engaged by Rotarians. This observation led me to prioritize and advocate for more intensive peacebuilding activities within Rotary.

Through my role as an RRFC, I began to understand that many Rotarians and Rotary clubs were unsure how to engage in peacebuilding. They often lacked the necessary skills and capacity. To address this, I connected [Rotary Peace Fellows](#) with their respective districts to share their expertise and experiences. These interactions were crucial in demystifying peacebuilding and demonstrating practical ways Rotarians could contribute to this important cause, knowing that for more than 25 years, Rotary members have been investing in the [Rotary Peace Centers](#) program. Because of that commitment, more than 1,800 Rotary Peace Fellows have been trained through our peace centers to work in peace and development across the globe.

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— Past RI Vice President Olayinka Babalola leads a discussion on the Pillars of Positive Peace.

During this journey and hunger for learning more, I became a Rotary Positive Peace Activator. This program, developed by Rotary International in [partnership with the Institute for Economics and Peace](#), emphasizes the eight pillars of Positive Peace. These pillars provide a comprehensive framework for creating an environment where peace can flourish. I was invited to the East Africa Positive Peace Activators program as a guest and that inspired us to start the expansion of the program to West & Central Africa cohort, where I was trained and became a Rotary Peace Activator.

During my involvement with the [Rotary Peace Center at Makerere University in Kampala](#), Uganda, I've had the privilege of engaging with Rotary Peace Fellows. These fellows undergo extensive training and return to their communities to implement Social Change Initiatives, later sharing their progress and challenges. This hands-on approach is vital in fostering a practical understanding of peacebuilding.

On a personal level, my engagement with the Positive Peace framework has profoundly influenced my interactions and leadership style. For instance, in my

community, we applied the framework to understand and address issues such as school absenteeism, which was linked to unsafe routes frequented by drug dealers. By addressing the root causes, we created a safer environment for students, working with neighbors and understanding local governance.

My journey in peacebuilding with Rotary has been one of continuous personal and professional learning and active engagements. Rotary projects provide training that fosters understanding and provides communities with the skills to resolve conflicts and I believe that building capacity for peacemaking at every level is crucial and more needed than ever before.

I am optimistic about the future and remain committed to creating a world where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

For more insights into my journey and Rotary's peacebuilding initiatives, explore these pages on Rotary.org: [Rotary Peace Fellowships](#); [Rotary Positive Peace Program](#).

This entry was posted in [Promoting peace](#) and tagged [Rotary Peace Centers](#), [Rotary Peace Fellows](#), [Rotary Positive Peace Academy](#) by [Rotary International](#). Bookmark the [permalink](#) [<https://blog.rotary.org/2024/07/19/leading-with-peace/>].





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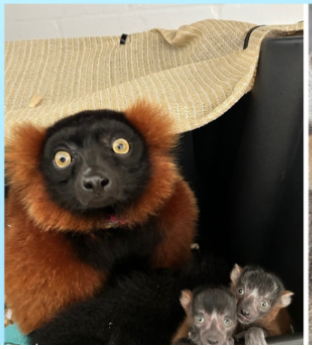
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**Rotary**

District 6960



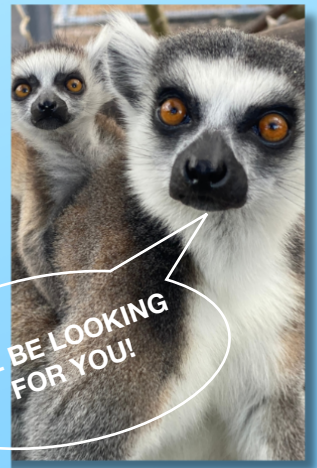




**Save the Date:  
October 29th**

## **Four Endangered Lemurs Born At FL. Lemur Conservation Foundation**

**Our tour date**



**The Lemur Conservation Foundation recently welcomed 4 baby lemurs representing 3 endangered species at its Myakka City reserve.**

**MYAKKA CITY, FL — Four lemurs representing three endangered species were recently born at the Lemur Conservation Foundation's 130-acre reserve in Myakka City, the organization said in a newsletter.**

**The first lemur to arrive this season was an endangered collared brown lemur, Chandler, born to Isabelle and Vincent in April.**

**The next were critically endangered red ruffed lemur twins, Furry and Fuzzy, born to Zazabe and Ranomamy later that month.**

**The fourth infant, an endangered ring-tail lemur named Orchard, born to Dalia and Goose in May, is the latest to join the Lemur Conservation Foundation's lemur colony.**

**"We are very proud of the keepers for the excellent care they provide, and of the babies themselves, who are making a significant contribution toward saving their species from extinction," Deborah Robbins Millman, the foundation's executive director, said. "Of the more than 110 species of lemur, 98% are threatened with extinction, making our work here so critical."**

**Lemurs are native only to Madagascar, and populations there continue to plummet, because of several factors, including destruction of the rainforest, illegal hunting and predators.**

**Founded in 1996, the foundation, which is accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, works with the AZA's Species Survival Plans to ensure the long-term health and genetic diversity of managed lemur populations through managed breeding, scientific research, education and art.**

**Tiffany Razzano,  
Patch Staff**