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BEYOND THE BLADE: RC SAN MATEO HIGHLANDS OPERATION TULI 2025 WHO WE ARE, WHAT WE DO

# OUR MISSION

To inspire, inform, and connect our community through insightful stories, thoughtful leadership, and a shared commitment to progress, cultivating a sense of unity and empowerment for all.

WHAT WE ASPIRE TO BE

# OUR VISION

To inform, inspire, and unite Rotarians across the district by showcasing meaningful stories, impactful projects, and shared achievements. Through purposeful communication, the Governor's Monthly Letter strengthens connections, promotes Rotary values, and drives collective action toward lasting change.



Message from

#### DISTRICT GOVERNOR GINA T. SANCHEZ **ROTARY YEAR 2025-2026**

#### My dear fellow Rotarians,

It is with deep gratitude and a renewed sense of purpose that I officially begin this journey with you as your District Governor for Rotary Year 2025–2026. Stepping into this role is both humbling and inspiring, knowing that I walk alongside passionate servant leaders who continuously give their time, talent, and heart to serve others. The recent handover and induction ceremonies were more than a symbolic passing of the torch—they were a powerful reminder of the legacy we carry and the shared responsibility we embrace.

This year's Rotary theme, "Unite for Good," is a call to action. It invites us to come together, across clubs and communities, to amplify the impact we make. I am confident that District 3800 will once again rise to the occasion and set the bar for collaboration, innovation, and compassion.

Our first area of focus, Maternal and Child Health, is especially relevant to our country and our district. In the Philippines, maternal mortality remains a critical concern, and countless children still face barriers to basic healthcare, nutrition, and education. Within our very own communities —whether in Malabon, Navotas, Caloocan, Valenzuela, Marikina, Pasig, San Juan, Mandaluyong, or Rizal—there are mothers who lack access to prenatal care and children who are undernourished or underserved.

Rotary clubs in District 3800 are uniquely positioned to respond. Through medical missions, feeding programs, birthing center support, and education on maternal wellness, we have the power to bridge the gaps in health services and promote sustainable solutions. I encourage each club to adopt or enhance projects aligned with this focus. Let's also tap into partnerships with local health units, NGOs, and even fellow clubs to broaden our reach.

Together, let's be more than providers—we must be protectors of life, advocates of dignity, and builders of hope for every mother and child.

Thank you for your unwavering commitment. May we begin this Rotary Year with unity, purpose, and compassion.

In Rotary Service,

#### Gina T. Sanchez

District Governor, RY 2025-2026 Rotary International District 3800

# Editor's letter



# The Theme of the July Issue: Rotary's Commitment to Life — From Womb to World

Championing Maternal and Child Health Across Communities

#### Dear Fellow Rotarians,

Welcome to the first official issue of our Governor's Monthly Letter for Rotary Year 2025–2026!

Building on the energy of our special kickoff edition, we now set sail on a 12-month journey of storytelling, inspiration, and impact—one issue at a time. More than just a newsletter, this GML is a reflection of our shared spirit and a monthly celebration of what binds us all: Service Above Self.

For July, we open the Rotary year with a dual celebration: the beginning of a new leadership chapter under District Governor Gina T. Sanchez, and our focus on one of Rotary's most vital causes—Maternal and Child Health.

In the context of the Philippines—and particularly within our own District 3800—this theme strikes at the heart of urgent realities: limited access to prenatal care, rising child malnutrition, and gaps in essential health services. Yet, alongside these challenges is the power of Rotary. From each barangay we serve to every mission we conduct and every family we reach—we are creating change where it's needed most.

In this issue, you'll find stories of hope and action: service projects aimed at supporting mothers and children, inspiring club initiatives, and a heartfelt message from Gov. Gina—anchored in vision, empathy, and purpose.

Thank you for your continued passion, stories, and service. May this issue spark deeper collaboration, bolder leadership, and a year filled with meaningful impact.

To a strong beginning and a remarkable Rotary journey ahead!

Capturing your goodness in GML pages,

PP Dee B. Antang Editor-in-Chief, GML, RY 2025-2026



#### **ROTARY'S COMMITMENT TO LIFE**

Championing Maternal and Child Health Across Filipino Communities

In the heart of every community lies a universal truth — that the health and well-being of mothers and children shape the future of society. This July 2025 issue of the Governor's Monthly Letter (GML) highlights a cornerstone of Rotary International's service mission: Maternal and Child Health.

The cover imagery, a tender silhouette of a woman and a child against a warm wall, powerfully captures this month's theme — "From Womb to World." It is a poignant reminder that every child's journey begins long before birth, and that safe pregnancies, informed motherhood, and early child care are not privileges, but rights.

#### **Rotary's Life-Changing Impact**

Rotary Clubs across the Philippines — especially in District 3800 — have been quietly and faithfully working on grassroots projects to address the systemic challenges Filipino mothers and children face:

#### **Prenatal and Postnatal Medical Missions**

In underserved barangays, where access to OB-GYN care remains limited, Rotary organizes medical check-ups, vitamin distributions, and health talks. These efforts help prevent complications during pregnancy and birth.

#### **Nutrition Drives and Feeding Programs**

For children suffering from stunting and malnutrition, especially in impoverished rural areas, Rotary Clubs continue to support nutrition-plus feeding programs that go beyond the meal, incorporating growth monitoring and education for mothers.

#### Safe Birth and Midwife Kits

Through partnerships with local health units, Rotary supplies birthing kits to midwives and community health workers, ensuring hygienic conditions for safe delivery even in remote areas.

#### **Maternal Education & Breastfeeding Support**

Rotary recognizes that empowering mothers through knowledge is key. Clubs support seminars and workshops on breastfeeding, postpartum care, and early childhood development.

#### **WASH for Women and Girls**

Clean water and sanitation are essential to maternal health. Rotary-led **WASH** (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) projects ensure that birthing centers and schools have clean facilities, especially for adolescent girls facing menstrual health issues.

#### Local Clubs, Lifelong Change

These initiatives are not just big programs — they are local acts of love. From Rotarians who donate their weekends to mothers who now deliver safely because of a prenatal check-up funded by Rotary, the impact is personal and powerful.





In every society, the health and wellbeing of mothers and children reflect the true strength of its future. Here in the Philippines, despite significant strides in access to healthcare and public growing awareness, there persistent challenges that demand urgent and united action. Recent data from government and health partners offer a compelling snapshot both of progress made, and the critical work still ahead.

#### The State of Maternal Health

On average, over 3,900 babies are born daily in the Philippines. In 2023 alone, nearly 1.45 million live births were registered. It's encouraging to note that 92.3% of these births took place in health facilities, a sign of improved healthcare access and awareness. However, it is also a reminder of the need to reach the remaining 7% who still give birth at home—often in under-resourced, rural areas.

The country's Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) has dropped to about 78 deaths per 100,000 live births. More mothers now receive antenatal care (86%) and deliver with the help of skilled providers, but regional disparities continue to put some women—especially in BARMM and far-flung areas —at greater risk

#### **Challenges Facing Our Children**

Filipino children face their own battles early in life. While neonatal care has improved, stunting still affects 1 in 3 Filipino children under age five. The neonatal mortality rate remains at 14.2 per 1,000 live births, pointing to gaps in newborn care.

The first 1,000 days of life—often called the "golden window"—are crucial for a child's physical and cognitive development, and a call to strengthen support systems during this period.

#### **Teenage Pregnancy: A Rising Concern**

One of the more alarming trends is the resurgence of early pregnancies among Filipino girls. While the percentage of teenage births (ages 15-19) has declined to 5.4% in 2022, the number of girls aged 10-14 giving birth rose by 58% from 2020 to 2023.

This is not only a health issue, but also a human rights concern—often rooted in poverty, lack of education, and sexual abuse.

#### **Summary Table: Key Indicators**

Indicator	Philippines (Latest)	Target or Context
Maternal Mortality Ratio	84 per 100,000 live births	Target: <70
Neonatal Mortality Rate	14.2 per 1,000 live births	WHO global target: ≤12
Under-five Mortality Rate	~26 per 1,000 live births	SDG Target: ≤25
Child Stunting (Under 5)	28.80%	Regional (SEA): 21.8%
Adolescent Birth Rate (15–19 years)	~47 per 1,000	Improving, but still high

(Sources: Macrotrends, Healthy Newborn Network, WHO/UNICEF, Global Nutrition Report)

#### **Systemic Barriers to Health**

Despite numerous health programs, structural inequities remain. Mothers in remote regions are significantly less likely to receive complete prenatal care or give birth in equipped facilities. Postnatal care within 48 hours is as low as 44.5% in some provinces.

## What's Being Done—And What We Can Do

The Department of Health (DOH) has made primary care and universal health coverage (UHC) national priorities. Expanded access to safe childbirth, micronutrient supplementation, and reproductive health services are now being emphasized at the barangay level.

As Rotarians, we are uniquely positioned to help:

- Sponsor health seminars in local communities
- Support feeding and nutrition programs for children
- Advocate for reproductive health access
- Equip barangay clinics with essential supplies

#### **A Shared Responsibility**

Mother and child health is not just a statistic—it is the heartbeat of every community. Rotary's call to "Unite for Good" is more than a slogan—it is a mission to protect those who cannot protect themselves. Let us build a future where no mother fears childbirth, and every child is given a fair start in life.

#### **Full Source Citations to Include:**

- Philippines maternal mortality rate, 2023 data from Macrotrends and World Bank estimates
- Neonatal mortality rate and child health trends from Healthy Newborn Network and WHO/UNICEF data
- Stunting prevalence and breastfeeding data from Global Nutrition Report/South-East Asia profile
- Regional disparities and inequities analysis from DHS-based studies
- Subnational Initiative metrics and DOH-WHO-KOICA partnerships in advocacy and program impact





R.I. District 3800 marked the start of RY 2025-2026 with the inspiring "Goodness for Kids" project, a dynamic two-day series dedicated to promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI).

More than 500 Rotarians from all over the district joined District Governor Gina Sanchez on July 1 and 2, 2025 in five (5) separate locations to do good for almost a thousand beneficiaries consisting of indigent, disabled, abandoned, orphaned, deprived, indigenous, differently-abled, or underprivileged special children.

To begin with, 150 Rotarians from CAMANAVA converged at the Valenzuela School of Mathematics and Science in the early morning of July 1 to turn over 12 wheelchairs to children with physical disabilities, and provide lunch boxes, tumblers, dental supplies, and ecobags containing food items to 300 SPED students.

Later, at around lunchtime of the same day, 120 Rotarians from San Juan and Mandaluyong were at the Pinaglabanan Shrine to conduct parlor games dubbed 'Palarong Pinoy Edition' and story-telling sessions for, and distribute school supplies and food to, 300 public elementary school children. In the afternoon, a fun-filled arts workshop and special painting contest were held for 70 children with special needs at the Special Children Educational Institute in Pasig. All these were undertaken in partnership with the Knights of Columbus.

The following morning, or on July 2, 2025, 150 Rotarians from Rizal were at the Libis Elementary School in Antipolo to plant trees with 214 Dumagat tribe children, who enjoyed story-telling activities, underwent medical and dental check-ups, avail of free haircuts, and receive vitamins, dengue kits, and food items.

Finally, in partnership with PCCI-Marikina, 130 Rotarians from Marikina, San Mateo, and Rodriguez trooped to Cottolengo Filipino that afternoon to show kindness to 35 abandoned, differently-abled, and orphaned children, by turning over medical, hygiene and cleaning supplies, and food items, among others. A cash donation was also given to the institution.



Spearheaded by District Governor Gina Sanchez, this initiative resonates strongly with R.I.'s message, "Unite for Good". The district's Inclusivity was showcased by partnering with various groups, in the of meaningful collaborative outreach for children, as well as by fostering an environment where all children are given opportunities to thrive. The focus on DEI ensures that Rotary's service also extends equitably to diverse communities.

The "Goodness for Kids" project is not only a powerful kickoff to a year of service, but also builds upon Rotary's strategic pillars of innovation, continuity, and partnership. It is hoped these will inspire Rotary clubs to sustain their engagement and create more impact in the months to



# FROM LITTLE HANDS TO LIMITLESS POSSIBILITIES.







# INDUCTION & HANDOVER

JULY 5, 2025

GRAND BALLROOM, SOLAIRE NORTH,
QUEZON CITY, PHILIPPINES





Rotary Club of Marikina West Inc



# KABATAAN PARA SA KINABUKASAN AT PAARALANG PANTAO

Paaralang Pantao is a a free school at the foot of the Garbage Mountain, which means "Humane School" or "School of Humanity." It has been founded to help children long deprived of formal education. Reasons vary: widespread extreme poverty, children having no birth certificates, or their uneducated parents barely realizing the need to send their children to school. Leticia B. Reyes (who is now the Principal) opened Paaralang Pantao when told of the plight of such underprivileged children and asked by weary parents to help educate their sons and daughters.

The official opening of Paaralang Pantao took place in 1989. The school as it began was a small shed covered by a simple bare tinplate roof with no ceiling. It had four walls, but there were no floor planks of wood. Placed in the classroom were plain handmade desks and chairs as they were contributed by the parents. There is no requirement for uniform or tuition in Paaralang Pantao. All applicants will be admitted as long as they are willing to learn and have reached a certain age, and are assigned to appropriate classes according to their age and abilities.

With their utmost generosity and will power to strive for education, our Club initiated a project together with the help of Institute of Integrated Electrical Engineers-Metro Central. Full rehabilitation of wires that were dilapidated through years were done. New lighting fixtures, outlets, switches and CCTVs were installed also. Aside from electrical works, repainting of roofs and repair of cabinets were implemented with this project.

Upon turnover, two units of air-cooling fan and a 55" smart TV were donated in the school to boost the kids' learning enthusiasm. Fire extinguishers and magnetic mosquito nets were given to provide safety within the school. Food and rice were also donated for the school together with school supplies. Among those from RC Marikina West present were Good President Kevin Micole Delfino, RCMW Spouses Association President Krizelle Megu. The day was concluded with the help of IIEE-Metro Central Stephanie Oviedo, together with her team that conducted an electrical assessment on the school's panelboard system to finalize its safety.





#### **PROJECT**

S.I.K.A.T.

A Comprehensive Community Service Initiative by the Rotary Club of Pasig Sunrise, Aligned with Rotary's Seven Areas of Focus

"Basta't tayo'y magkasama, laging mayroong umagang kay ganda. Pag SIKAT ng araw, may dalang liwanag sa ating pangarap... haharapin natin."

- Lyrics from "Umagang Kay Ganda" by Ray-An Fuentes and Tillie Moreno





Rooted in the very spirit of the club's name— Sunrise—Project S.I.K.A.T. (which translates to "ray of sunlight") was envisioned to bring hope, light, and lasting impact to communities in need. Coincidentally, SIKAT also became a meaningful acronym representing a major, multi-component initiative that embodies Rotary International's strategic goal of Increasing Our Impact.



Additionally, we also have the establishment of Community Garden and the unveiling of the Rotary Marker in the same project location.

This year's kick-off project was led by Good President John Lester Lisano, a proud Probinsyano, guided by his mentor Past President Alex "Nonong" Sotto. Together, they continued their shared commitment to bring the spirit of Rotary into the heart of underserved provincial communities.

In line with Rotary's pillar of Building Partnerships, a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was signed with the Gawad Kalinga Kapitbahayan Homeowners Association, led by President Rosemarie France, ensuring a five-year collaboration. Furthermore, Auspicia Inc. joined as a corporate partner, strengthening our shared mission to create sustainable and meaningful change in the adopted Gawad Kalinga community in Barangay Poblacion, Castilla, Sorsogon.

With the unwavering support of the entire Rotary Club of Pasig Sunrise, Project SIKAT successfully reached 50 households, impacting at least 300 individuals with concrete and transformative assistance.

This endeavor was also made more impactful through the involvement of long-time partner and sister club, the Rotary Club of Metro Sorsogon (RI District 3820), led by their heart-working President Nonito Marquez, alongside District Governor Nominee Japps P. Callos. Local leaders such as Barangay Captain Edwin Desamparo, Parish Priest Fr. Wilson Bryan Estuye, and Municipal Councilor lan Llona were also present to witness and support the initiative.

What started as a plan for a single impactful act—either the donation of solar lights or farm machinery—evolved into a multi-faceted service project, inspired by District Governor Gina Sanchez's call for "Goodness Through Service," and Rotary International's global message to "Unite for Good."

True to their legacy of high-impact, one-time multi-area projects, every Sunriser selflessly contributed their time, talent, and treasure—transforming Project SIKAT into a powerful embodiment of Service Above Self.









S

Solar Light Donations ( with construction & installation of 20 posts)

**Investment in Farming (donation of 3 farm hand tractors** 

K

Kalikasan at Kalinisan na Kinakalinga (environmental & sanitation advocacy)



Abot ang Kalinga at Alaga ( distribution of rice and grocery essentials)

Tulong Mula sa Puso (provision of vitamins OTC medicines, maintenance medications, and first aid kits)



### **BEYOND THE BLADE**

#### **RC San Mateo Highlands Operation Tuli 2025**

**by IPP Mark Jay Dagat** 

On July 19, 2025, a meaningful act of service unfolded in Sitio Maarat, Brgy. Malanday, San Mateo, Rizal, where the Rotary Club of San Mateo Highlands, in heartfelt collaboration with the LGU and Rotaract Club of San Mateo Highlands, conducted Operation Tuli — a medical mission dedicated to promoting the health and dignity among the youth.

This initiative offered free circumcision services to at least 30 young boys, aged 7 to 14, many of whom would not have had access to such care otherwise. But the event went far beyond a simple procedure. It became a symbol of selfless service and hope, echoing the Rotary principle of Service.

What set this mission apart was not only the medical intervention but the genuine care that came with it. Medical professionals - a proud Highlanders went the extra mile. They didn't just administer procedures; they gave time, knowledge, and compassion. Each child received not only proper medication and multivitamins but also valuable health education — practical guidance on wound care and healing, delivered with kindness and patience to empower both the children and their families.

With the dedicated support of Rotarians and Rotaractors, the event created a safe, welcoming space, where every child was treated with dignity and reassurance. Their smiles, once nervous and unsure, turned into bright reflections of newfound confidence and gratitude.

Highlanders' Beyond the Blade-Operation Tuli project was more than a medical mission. It was a living testament to Rotary's enduring promise: to touch lives, to build healthier communities, and to serve without expecting anything in return. It reminded everyone involved — and the entire community — that true service is not just about what we give, but how we give it: with heart, humility, and purpose.

Through impactful programs like this, the Rotary and Rotaract Clubs of San Mateo Highlands continue to champion the cause of the underserved — nurturing the present, and safeguarding the future — one life, one act of compassion at a time.









#### A quick, candid pulse check from across **Rotary District 3800!**

Each month, the GML tosses out one playful question and gathers real, insightful—and sometimes unexpected answers on how the "Unite for Good" journey is unfolding.

For this July issue, the GML checks in with our dynamic Good Presidents with one lively question:

#### "First 30 days down! What's the ride been like so far?"



My first month as Club President has been truly amazing! I'm thrilled to see all our GPs united and working together, especially Zone 8 - their enthusiasm is contagious! I'm also deeply inspired by Gov Gina's leadership style, which emphasizes inclusivity and support, ensuring no club is left behind.

**GP Rose Ann Manangan** RC Southern Mandaluyong



The first Rotary month was an absolute whirlwind, but it was an incredible start. We hit the ground running with multiple projects, both club and joint ones, and a successful fundraiser, and I'm immensely proud of how our club rose to the challenge. I believe we've set a strong foundation for the year ahead.

**GP Jo-Al Delgado** RC Tiger Mandaluyong



My first month as Club President has been both exciting and humbling. I've really enjoyed learning and growing alongside my fellow Good Presidents—sharing stories, laughs, and lessons. Big thanks to our district officers and Gov. Gina Sanchez for their steady guidance and encouragement, which, combined with the passion of our club, make me excited for what's ahead as we continue to serve with purpose and heart.





It's been a heart-full first month: a blend of planning, laughing, learning, and serving. I've been working closely with our amazing members to plan meaningful projects, and I honestly feel so supported by the team's energy and commitment. It's beautiful how even the seemingly small things we do together can create ripples of lasting impact — and that's what keeps me excited for what's ahead.

#### **GP Kitchie Pingol** RC Mandaluyong East



One month down as Club President - what a ride it has been!

Full of challenges, learnings, and meaningful service. Grateful for the support and excited for what's ahead!

#### **GP Lhen Manlangit** RC Mandaluyong North



Inspiring special children in their skills in drawing arts is one memorable event as I start my first month as a Good President. It was self fulfilling at the same time as emotional as I can be since my specialty is about maternal and Child Health. I love to work with children and this as a Good President made me feel so Good.

### **GP Edgard "Egay" Reyes** RC Mandaluyong Central



This is my happiest as Good President, together with the LSENs we learned that when God is in your heart you have peace.

#### **GP Angeli Ancheta** RC Mandaluyong West



It's a privilege to be one of the United for Good Presidents as our club helped the children of scavengers in Payatas called Paaralang Pantao. Rehabilitation of the school, Smart TV, equipment and school supplies were executed. Nothing is happier than seeing the smiles on innocent little angels knowing something could be done to support their education.

#### **GP Kevin Micole Delfino** RC Marikina West



In my first month, I felt both excited and challenged stepping into my new role. It was a time of learning, adjustment and discovering the responsibilities that come with leadership. Despite the pressure, I felt a strong sense of purpose and fulfillment as we launched our first project.

#### **GP Marianne Sherryl Espinosa**

RC Valenzuela East



My first month as President of the Rotary Club of Pasig East has been both fulfilling and humbling. Changing lives through service is the legacy we keep, and with Gov. Gina Sanchez providing all we need, we feel prepared, valued, and ready to take on whatever comes our way. Whatever it takes—we're here to serve.

#### **GP Angel Gonzales**

RC Pasig East



The Governor's Monthly Letter (GML) is more than a publication—it's a celebration of service, leadership, and impact. This Rotary Year, we invite YOU to help us bring its pages to life.

Whether you're a passionate Rotarian or a proud Project Partner, your story matters—and the district wants to hear it.

#### SHARE YOUR ROTARY JOURNEY

Tell us what moved you to serve. What project changed your perspective? What keeps your Rotary heart beating?

#### GET FEATURED IN THE GML

This is your platform. Showcase your business, organization, or advocacy—especially if it aligns with Rotary's causes and values. Let others know how you're making a difference in your own way.

#### **BUILD NEW CONNECTIONS**

Through the GML, your voice reaches over a thousand leaders, change-makers, and future collaborators in District 3800 and beyond. It's the perfect space to grow your network and strengthen your impact.



Let's unite for good—one story, one partnership, one issue at a time.

Connect with us at **3800gml@gmail.com.**We'd love to feature your Rotary story, your business, or your community impact.





# GOVERNOR'S MONTHLY LETTER

**JULY 2025 ISSUE** 

