

Philippine Rotary

AUGUST 2025

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Rotary 

PRESS



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Rotary The Rotary International logo, which is a yellow gear with a central star and the word "ROTARY" around the perimeter.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



This month and every month

August is Membership Month, but our commitment to growth and connection is year-round. When we focus on growing Rotary, we grow our ability to serve, to lead, and to bring lasting change.

Membership growth isn't just about numbers. It's about opening doors. It's about inviting more people who are ready to give their time, talents, and hearts to a cause greater than themselves. When we welcome new members, we bring in fresh ideas and new energy. We expand our impact, strengthen our clubs, and ensure that Rotary continues to evolve with the world around us.

Remember, there is now great flexibility in fashioning nontraditional club models. I'm inspired when I see these innovative clubs thrive by offering new and prospective members more ways to connect and serve.

In Korea, the growth of satellite clubs has created opportunities for nearly 1,000 new members to find their place in Rotary. In Romania, the close collaboration between Rotarians, Rotaractors, and Interactors has built a pipeline of future leaders. In India, some Rotarians gather around a shared interest — whether it's professional development or a passion for service — and those connections deepen their commitment and their joy in being part of Rotary. And we've seen cause-based clubs thrive in regions as diverse as Southeast Asia, Africa, and Europe.

There's a common thread: Where clubs are

growing, membership is a priority and there is a willingness to try something new. Rotary is not limited to one structure or tradition. We are a global network of people of action, and that means there is room for many kinds of clubs, many ways to serve, and many paths into our organization.

This spirit of innovation is also guiding our efforts to reach new communities. In places where there has never been a Rotary club — or where a club once existed and faded — Rotarians are finding ways to grow Rotary. They are identifying areas of potential and building clubs that reflect the character and needs of their communities.

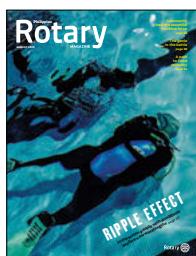
Every member plays a part in this journey. Whether you introduce a friend to your club, support a new meeting format, reconnect with program alumni, or simply share your Rotary story, you are helping our organization grow stronger and more vibrant.

No one owns a Rotary club. It is a gift we pass on to the next generation. When we nurture that gift, when we invite others to share in it, we ensure that Rotary continues to be a force for good.

Let's prioritize membership growth — not just in August but every month of the year. Together, through friendship, creativity, and shared purpose, we will grow Rotary and *Unite for Good*.

FRANCESCO AREZZO

President, Rotary International



▲ ON THE COVER:
Rotary club support
helps grow Diveheart
adaptive diving
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Kevin Serna



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CHARMAN'S MESSAGE

Rotary and the golden rule of humanity

Rotary International is not a religious organization. Membership is open to people of any faith—or none at all. Yet, Rotarians cannot avoid being part of the world's religious landscape.

A study by the Pew Research Center shows that today's global population is composed of Christians (28.8%), Muslims (25.6%), Hindus (14.9%), Buddhists (4.1%), Jews (0.2%), adherents of other faiths (2.2%), and the religiously unaffiliated (24.2%). Notably, Islam was the fastest-growing faith between 2010 and 2020.

Despite differences in doctrine, religions share core leadership principles that echo Rotary's 4-Way Test:

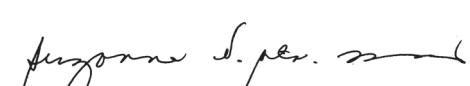
- 1. Integrity**—living authentically and truthfully.
- 2. Justice**—creating fairness and prioritizing the common good.
- 3. Compassion**—suffering with others and seeking to ease their pain.
- 4. Goodwill**—promoting harmony, unity, and peace.

These values converge in what is universally known as the Golden Rule: treat others as you would want to be treated.

- In Christianity: "Do to others what you would have them do to you."
- In Islam: "None of you have faith until you love for your brother what you love for yourself."
- In Hinduism: "This is the sum of duty: do not do to others what would cause pain if done to you."
- In Buddhism: "Whatever is disagreeable to yourself, do not do unto others."
- In Judaism: "What is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow-man."

The Golden Rule springs from human conscience, empathy, and the need for cooperation. Rotary's mission aligns with this timeless ethic—calling its members to lead with truth, fairness, compassion, and goodwill.

In this way, Rotary becomes not just a service organization, but a living embodiment of a globally shared moral foundation.



SUE VILLA STA. MARIA

Chairman, PRMFI



"The Golden Rule springs from human conscience, empathy, and the need for cooperation. Rotary's mission aligns with this timeless ethic—calling its members to lead with truth, fairness, compassion, and goodwill."

Philippine Rotary

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Rotary service rains on communities

August is typically the peak month of the southwest monsoon, which brings heavy rainfall, especially to Luzon and Visayas, with temperatures remaining high, ranging from 25 to 31 degrees. Due to climate change, there is a trend of increased intensity and frequency of extreme rainfall events and typhoons, which cause destructive flooding and landslides across the country.

Such is the scenario in which Philippine Rotarians ushered in the second month of this Rotary year. Clubs are humming with the vigor and vitality of Rotarians. Governor's visits and club inductions provide convergence opportunities at which Rotarians engage in lively fellowship that provides propulsion to service projects that uplift communities and give hope to people.

As citizens, Rotarians could not be insulated from the weighty socio-political milieu in which their clubs thrive and grow. We, too, are affected by the public outrage against flood control projects that are evidently awash in rampant graft and corruption. When no less than the President of the country calls on the people to report erring public officials, how could we not respond, or worse, just look the other way?

The vintage Rotary motto, "He profits most who serves best" lights the pathways of public service. Rotary service is rooted in ethical behavior that is defined in terms of adherence to The Four Way Test. Truth, fairness, beneficence to all concerned, and building goodwill and understanding are the fruits reaped by those who follow these timeless criteria.

Like torrents of rain, let our service projects permeate the grassroots as we observe Membership and New Club Development month. As we honor the dedication and impact of Rotarians in their communities and globally, we touch and uplift the lives of our brethren.



SONNY COLOMA

Editor-in-chief



"Let service permeate the grassroots and touch the lives of our brethren."



RC MAKATI GEMS

Christmas in July

by Maricris Lim

What began years ago with a few hundred children in Payatas has now grown into a large-scale celebration, reaching over 2,000 children and families each year.

As the Rotary year began, the Rotary Club of Makati GEMS (Go the Extra Mile for Service) of District 3830 led a celebration called Christmas in July, a joyful tradition inspired by a powerful moment launched at the 2010 Rotary International Convention in Montreal.

It was there that I was introduced to former Rotary International President Matt Caparas — the only Filipino to ever hold Rotary's highest office — through Past Rotary International Director Raffy Garcia III. That encounter changed everything. President Matt shared a simple but profound thought: "Let the Rotary year begin with joy. Make children happy on Day One."

And so we did.

What began years ago with a few hundred children in Payatas has now grown into a large-scale celebration, reaching over 2,000 children and families each year. On July 1, the Cuneta Astrodome became a place of magic — filled with the smiles of children, laughter, music, and the joy of knowing that someone cares for them.

But Christmas in July was more than just gift-giving and reading stories to the children.

Guided by Rotary's Seven Areas of Focus, the day's program included medical, dental, and eye care services for the parents, empowering them to care for their children. We were also joined by partners like the Soroptimists, who led sessions on values for girls, providing adolescent empowerment with topics such as drug prevention and



developing a strong drive to live their dreams. In all, the event ensured that while children and the youth play, their hearts and minds are also inspired to improve themselves.

Christmas in July was co-hosted by the Rotary Clubs of Makati, Makati Greenbelt, Makati Business District, Makati Dasmarinas, Makati Circle of Friends, Makati Premier District, Makati Cristo Rey, Makati Bel Air, Makati Bonifacio, Makati North, Makati Southeast, Healing Hands, Muntinlupa East, Muntinlupa Business District, the Innerwheel Club of the Philippines District 381 and Soroptimist International Makati Gems. ■

The author is charter president of RC Makati GEMS, D3830.



This spread:
Joy and hope are reflected in the smiles of the children. Gift-giving is major part of the event



Above: DG Reggie Nolido, First Lady Sue-Ann, Pasay City Mayor Emi Rubiano, RC Makati GEMS and co-host clubs celebrate "Christmas in July" at the Cuneta Astrodome with 2,000 children, adolescents and their parents for a day of compassion, service and love.



Second row:
Participants come in early to register.





First and second row: The children are treated to art sessions.



Third row: RC Makati GEMS President Tess Calixto-Robles and her sister, Pasay City Mayor Emi Rubiano, show the “love” hand sign; Rotarians from RC Makati Business District add joy to the event.



Bottom row: PDG Joji Tan, recognized by the Professional Regulation Commission as an outstanding professional in the field of dentistry, gives pointers on dental care; RC Makati Southeast President Vikki Pangan and Rotarian Marlo Flores distribute bags of goodies.



ZONE 10A LEARNING SEMINAR

Boosting Endowment and Major Gifts

Last July 17, Rotary Zone 10A brought together some of its most dedicated leaders for the much-anticipated Endowment/Major Gifts Chair (EMGC) Learning Seminar — a gathering that blended learning, fellowship, and shared purpose.

The seminar brought together the following participants: Charter President Edwin Tecson of District 3770, Past District Governor Johnny Yu of District 3780, Past President Susan Czudai of District 3790, PP Brill Chua of District 3800, PP Yolly de Castro of District 3810, District Governor-Elect Eric Santos of District 3820, Past Presidents Tanny Panahon and Jen Sison of District 3830, Past District Governor John Mark Sarraga of District 3870, Past President Yelcy Catulpos of District 3860, and Past District Governor Pichoy Ramirez of District 3770 as DRFC Observer.

It was organized and led by Endowment/Major Gift Adviser (EMGA) Edna R. Sutter, with facilitation by Past District Governor Oyan Villanueva, Regional Rotary Foundation Coordinator (RRFC) Riezl Reyes, Past District Governor Ernie Choa, and Fund Development Specialist (FDS) Gretchen Laurel.

The day opened with a stirring keynote address by Past Rotary International Director (PRID) Raffy Garcia, whose powerful words set the tone for the program ahead. He spoke of leading with purpose, igniting change, and embracing the true essence of Rotary service as daily commitments that transform lives. His message resonated deeply, serving as both a call to action and a reminder of every leader's responsibility to serve and lead with heart and vision.

The learning sessions commenced with PDG Oyan Villanueva's talk on Inspiring Change, encouraging participants to embrace transformative leadership

and the courage to challenge the status quo. This was followed by EMGA Edna Sutter's session on Your Role and How to Be Effective (E/MGC), which provided a comprehensive overview of the expectations, functions, and opportunities tied to the EMGC role. RRFC Riezl Reyes then shared valuable insights on The Importance of Teamwork, highlighting how collaboration across districts and clubs is vital to long-term success.

In the afternoon, the group transitioned into deeper learning with EMGA Edna Sutter's interactive session, Fundraising in Action (E/MGC), which showcased real-life case studies and offered actionable strategies to elevate fundraising efforts. Participants were divided into groups and tasked to analyze specific fundraising scenarios, culminating in creative presentations and role-playing exercises. Each group delivered excellent and relatable performances, demonstrating both innovation and practical application. These engaging presentations reflected the members' deep understanding of Rotary's mission and highlighted how effective storytelling, donor engagement, and team synergy can significantly enhance fundraising success. The activity not only encouraged collaboration but also brought out the creativity, wit, and leadership potential of each participant.

This was followed by PDG Ernie Choa's talk on Engaging Donors with Events, which demonstrated how impactful, well-planned events can serve as effective platforms to attract and retain donor support. The final learning session was led by FDS Gretchen Laurel, who discussed Inspiring Support for The Rotary Foundation and Rotary Tools for Success empowering participants with practical tools, digital resources, and storytelling techniques to boost engagement and giving.



Beyond learning, the seminar became the starting point for even greater achievements in the weeks that followed. Shortly after the event, Zone 10A recorded six new Major Gifts, with notable contributions from Ma. Salve Duplito of RC San Juan Supreme in District 3800, Michael Manuel Orfinada Romero of RC San Juan Neopolitan in District 3800, Charles Vincent Ong in District 3860, and Efren M. Martinez of RC Santa Maria in District 3770 and



Top row: The seminar drew together an inspiring roster of leaders that included Regional Rotary Foundation Coordinator (RRFC) Riezl Reyes, PDG Oyan Villanueva, Regional Rotary Foundation Coordinator (RRFC), PDG Ernie Choa, Fund Development Specialist (FDS) Gretchen Laurel, Charter President Edwin Tecson of District 3770, Past District Governor Johnny Yu of District 3780, Past President Susan Cudai of District 3790, PP Brill Chua of District 3800, PP Yolly de Castro of District 3810, District Governor-Elect Eric Santos of District 3820, PP Tanny Panahon and PP Jen Sison of District 3830, PDG John Mark Sarraga of District 3870, PP Yelcy Catulpos of District 3860, and PDG Pichoy Ramirez of District 3770 as DRFC Observer.



Middle row: Keynote speaker, Past Rotary International Director (PRID) Raffy Garcia, reminded every leader in the room that Rotary service is not just as an act, but a daily commitment that transform lives; PDG Oyan Villanueva challenged participants to be bold, transformative and courageous leaders that challenge the status quo; RRFC Riezl Reyes underscored that collaboration across districts and clubs is vital to long-term success.

Bottom row: EMGA Edna Sutter led an interactive workshop where participants tackled real-life case studies, offered actionable strategies, and presented creative solutions to elevate fundraising efforts; PDG Ernie Choa showed how meaningful, well-crafted impactful events can open doors to long-term donor relationships; FDS Gretchen Laurel equipped the attendees with digital tools, resources, and storytelling methods to boost engagement and giving.

EMGA Edna Sutter of District 3830 with two major gifts.

In the same period, three new Named Endowment Funds were established: The Noel Laki Cuico and Vilma Lugnasin Cuico Endowment Fund in District 3800, The Enrique Santos and Maria Elena S. Santos Endowment Fund in District 3800, The Rotary Club of Fort Bonifacio Global City Endowment Fund in District 3830, and The Jojo and Marilou Ong Endowment Fund.

The spirit of giving was further reflected in twenty-four new Major Donor level advancements, with District 3800 leading with ten new achievers, followed by District 3770 with four. These milestones highlight the commitment of EMGCs and Rotary leaders in inspiring generosity for The Rotary Foundation.

By day's end, the seminar had strengthened relationships, sparked fresh ideas, and reaffirmed the value of working together for a common goal.

And in the days that followed, the results spoke for themselves, proof that when Rotary leaders unite in learning and service, the impact extends far beyond the seminar room, shaping communities, inspiring greater giving, and ensuring that Rotary's mission thrives for generations to come. With a shared vision, strategies, and steadfast collaboration, Zone 10A looks toward a future where good plans and good partnerships yield even greater results for the causes they uphold. ■



RC PASIG SUNRISE

When service meets sunrise

How Project SIKAT brought light, hope, and lasting change to Castilla, Sorsogon

by Luanne Penano

Basta't tayo'y magkasama, laging mayroong umagang kay ganda..." ("As long as we are together, there's always a beautiful morning.")

In the quiet, often-overlooked community of Barangay Poblacion in Castilla, Sorsogon, these familiar lyrics became more than just a song—they became a reality.

On a bright morning in July, the Rotary Club of Pasig Sunrise returned to the town not as visitors, but as kin. Years prior, the club had stepped foot on this same ground to deliver service with sincerity. This time, they returned with something even more powerful—Project S.I.K.A.T.

Rooted in the spirit of Sunrise—the very heart of the club's identity—and inspired by Rotary International's Seven Areas of Focus, Project SIKAT (an acronym that also means "ray of light" in Filipino) evolved from a simple initiative into a comprehensive movement. A powerful response to Rotary's call to "Increase Our Impact."

But more than that, Project SIKAT is a love letter to the community.

Above left:
United for good: Members of RC Metro Sorsogon (D3820) and RC Pasig Sunrise (D3800) come together for a group photo, proudly giving a thumbs up after the successful turnover of Project SIKAT.

Above right: RC Pasig Sunrise donates and installs 20 solar-powered street lights as part of our commitment to sustainable service and community upliftment.

The Power Behind Each Letter: S.I.K.A.T.

Solar Light Donations. Twenty solar-powered streetlights were constructed and installed, transforming unlit, unsafe areas into secure spaces. These lights are more than infrastructure—they symbolize renewed dignity and peace of mind. The installation process showcased Bayanihan, the Filipino spirit of community collaboration, with donors, workers, and residents uniting to light up their neighborhood.

Investment in Farming. Three farm hand tractors were donated to empower local farmers—replacing backbreaking manual labor with tools that increase efficiency and yields. It was not simply equipment; it was a message of respect for their livelihood, their labor, and their legacy.

Kalikasan at Kalinisan na Kinakalinga (Caring for Nature and Cleanliness). To promote environmental responsibility, the club initiated tree planting and distributed waste drums for better sanitation. These small yet symbolic actions serve as a call to protect and preserve the environment for future generations.



Top row: From left to right: PP Alex Sotto (RCPS), HWP Nonie Marquez (RCMS), GP Lester T. Lisano (RCPS), Pres. Rosemarie France (GKHA), Brgy. Chairman Edwin Desampano, and DGN Japps Callos (RCMS, D3820) pose for a ribbon-cutting ceremony to mark the official turnover of 20 newly installed solar light poles under Project SIKAT.



GP Lester Lisano tests a brand-new diesel hand tractor, part of RCPS's economic and community development program for the GK community.

Second row: Club Presidents HWP Nonie and GP Lester, together with Brgy. Capt. Edwin Desampano and Kgw. Bryan Arjona, joined forces for a tree planting activity near the new community garden at the GK site.

GP Lester distributes GTS (Goodness Through Service) tote bags containing maintenance meds, OTC medicines, vitamins, supplements, and first aid kits to 50 families, received by each household's head or senior member.

HWP Nonie Marquez of RC Metro Sorsogon, a longtime sister club of RC Pasig Sunrise, assisted in the house-to-house distribution of grocery packs with 10 kilos of rice to 50 GK community households.

A

Abot ang Kalinga at Alaga (Extending Care and Compassion). Each household received essential goods including grocery packs and 10 kilos of rice. For Past President Alex "Nonong" Sotto, this act of giving was deeply personal—it was his birthday wish to give back to the hometown that shaped his values and service.

T

Tulong Mula sa Puso (Help from the Heart).

Access to basic health needs was prioritized through the distribution of first-aid kits, maintenance medications, and vitamins. In communities where access to healthcare can be limited, these small packages can mean the difference between struggle and survival.

Beyond the Acronym: A Deeper Commitment

Project SIKAT went further. The club helped establish a community vegetable garden, unveiled a Rotary Marker to commemorate the partnership, and signed a five-year Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the Gawad Kalinga Kapitbahayan Homeowners Association—solidifying a long-term commitment to the people of Castilla.

These actions made one thing clear: this was not a drop-by mission. It was a deliberate, enduring promise.

Roots That Run Deep

Leading the charge was President John Lester Lisano, a proud Probinsyano and former Rotaractor of Metro Sorsogon (2012–2013), now paying for

ward the values he learned in his youth. Alongside him was his mentor and fellow native son, Past President Alex Sotto, whose guidance and heart remain vital to the club's direction.

Their leadership was complemented by the steadfast support of their long-time sister club, the Rotary Club of Metro Sorsogon (RI District 3820)—a partnership spanning over a decade. Under the dynamic leadership of Heart-Working President Nonito "Nonie" Marquez, District Governor Nominee Josefa "Japps" Callos, and Club Adviser PP Edgar "Ed" C. Balasta, the local alliance was crucial to the project's success.

Together, they exemplified what Rotary is all about: community, continuity, and collective impact.

A Movement, Not a Moment

With over 50 households served and more than 300 lives touched, Project SIKAT is proof of what happens when Rotarians choose to Unite for Good—when compassion fuels action, and action becomes lasting change.

At the Rotary Club of Pasig Sunrise, Sunrise is more than a time of day. It is a way of doing service—illuminating, inclusive, and impossible to ignore.

May this sunrise never set.

And may every community touched by Rotary feel the same light, warmth, and enduring hope that Project SIKAT cast across the fields, homes, and hearts of Castilla, Sorsogon. ■

RC PASSPORT ONE MARIKINA

Lifelines for needy patients

by Ben Calderon

When the world shut down in 2020, the Rotary Club of Passport One Marikina (RCPOM) did not. As COVID-19 spread and elective surgeries ground to a halt, a new need began to loom large, a need that would reveal the resilience of a community and the power of partnership: the life-saving creation of arteriovenous (AV) fistulas for indigent dialysis patients. What started as a response to a crisis has grown into a high-impact medical mission, one that has changed the trajectory of hundreds of lives and the narratives of families who once faced the unthinkable: a chronic, life-sustaining treatment blocked by the absence of accessible vascular access.

The start of RCPOM's AV Fistula Creation Medical Mission lies in urgency and collaboration. The pandemic laid bare a troubling reality: an increasing number of dialysis patients were dying due to complications arising from the lack of specialized surgeons who could perform AV fistula creation — a vital step in long-term hemodialysis. An AV fistula, surgically connecting a patient's vein and artery, provides a durable, lower-risk access for dialysis treatments. When this critical procedure is unavailable or delayed, patients face repeated needle sticks, infections, reduced dialysis efficacy, and, tragically, higher mortality.

From this painful observation, RCPOM conceived a bold, structured solution. The project forged a triad of partnerships with PATACSI (Philippine Association of Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgeons, Inc., not limited to its actual initials here but representing a network of PATACSI-affiliated surgeons) and Taytay Doctors Multispecialty Hospital. The arrangement was simple in principle but profound in impact: surgeons from PATACSI would waive their professional fees to perform the AV fistula creation, Taytay Doctors would offer the operating rooms, and RCPOM would cover medical supplies, medications, and all operational costs for the patients. In a time of economic strain and healthcare scarcity, generosity collided with necessity to birth a lifesaving program. The per-surgery cost, ranging



from Php35,000.00 to Php65,000.00, reflects the nuanced realities of access needs and the resources required for each case. For many indigent patients, this figure would have been impossible without the mission's subsidized framework. The beneficiaries are the indigent hemodialysis patients from Rizal Provincial Hospital Systems in Taytay, Binangonan, and Rodriguez — communities that, until now, bore the extra burden of navigating a healthcare system stretched thin by the pandemic and geographic barriers.

The mission unfolds in a carefully orchestrated sequence designed to safeguard health and maximize success. It begins with a pre-surgery medical examination and consultation, a critical step to assess overall health, comorbidities, and suitability for fistula creation. Vein mapping follows, a non-invasive imaging process to identify the healthiest vessels and tailor the surgical approach to each patient's anatomy. Only after this thorough preparation does the actual surgical procedure take place, conducted by PATACSI surgeons headed by RCPOM's Service Project Director, Dr. Jay Alejandre, who brings years of specialized expertise to the operating room. In the days

Above: Rotary Club Passport One service project director, Dr. Jay Alejandre, TCVS, conducts a pre-medical examination of a dialysis patient at Casimiro A. Ynares Memorial Hospital in Rodriguez, Rizal, before undergoing an AV Fistula Creation surgery. Rotary Passport One has been conducting an AV Fistula Creation Medical Mission quarterly since 2020 and has saved the lives of over 500 dialysis patients from the Rizal Provincial Hospital Systems, who continue to live productive lives.



after surgery, post-surgery medical examinations monitor healing, detect potential complications, and ensure the fistula matures properly for dialysis use.

Preparation is substantial—about two weeks, to ensure the health and safety of each patient. This window allows clinicians to optimize nutrition, manage diabetes or hypertension, address anemia, and arrange post-operative care and rehabilitation. It also creates an opportunity for families to learn about fistula care, care for catheter alternatives if needed, and understand the signs of potential complications that require timely medical attention. The impact of the RCPOM's AV Fistula Creation Medical Mission is measured not only in the number of surgeries performed but in the transformations that follow. Since its inception in 2020, the project has saved the lives of over 500 dialysis patients who continue to live productive lives. That figure reflects more than a single medical intervention; it embodies a continuum of care, stability, and hope. For many families, a successful fistula means predictable, efficient dialysis sessions, improved quality of life, and the ability to plan for a future.

From top: Rotary Club Passport One service project director, Dr. Jay Alejandro, TCVS (background, center), poses with the dialysis patients from the Rizal Provincial Hospital System (RPHS) who will undergo an AV Fistula Creation Surgery at Taytay Multispecialty Hospital.

Rotary Club Directors (left to right) Ben Calderon, Carla Quintos, Emily Tiozon, Dr. Jay Alejandro, Dr. Socky Ramirez, and Camia Damasco gather at the Doctors' Lounge of Taytay Doctors Multispecialty Hospital.

reeducation for children, return to work, and the restoration of daily routines that had been disrupted by dialysis-related unpredictability.

What makes this initiative especially powerful is the human value it carries for patients and their families. When a patient finally receives a fistula and can resume regular, safe dialysis, the relief is palpable. Spouses regain sleep that had been stolen by worry about medical costs and treatment interruptions. Parents regain confidence in their ability to support their families without the constant fear of financial collapse. Children return to school with fewer tensions about their parents' health and the family's financial stability. In many households, the fistula is not just a medical device; it is a bridge to a more ordinary, meaningful life.

The story behind the numbers is equally compelling. PATACSI surgeons, volunteering their expertise, carry a professional dedication that transcends fee-for-service models. Their decision to waive professional fees speaks to a community ethos: that life-saving care should not be determined by a patient's wallet. The Taytay Doctors Multispecialty Hospital contributes the physical space—the operating rooms, where the delicate work of fistula creation takes place. RCPOM, bearing the project's operational responsibilities, orchestrates the supply chain of medical materials like sutures, sterile equipment, imaging consumables, and medications, and covers the costs of pre-operative testing and post-operative medications that keep patients' experiences humane and dignified.

The project's financial model, while transparent in its intent, is anchored on generosity and sustainability. The cost of a single AV fistula creation procedure, while significant, becomes manageable when a diverse base of donors and corporate partners shares the burden. RCPOM has positioned the mission not as a one-off charity event but as a scalable program with expansion potential as more individuals and corporate donors express interest. This is essential in a region where demand for reliable dialysis access will continue to grow, given population trends and the steady need for ongoing renal care.

Beyond the clinical and financial aspects, RCPOM's AV Fistula Creation Medical Mission highlights a broader truth: high-impact service is achievable through structured collaboration. The project is a blueprint for how non-profit organizations, professional societies, and private healthcare facilities can align toward a singular, humane objective. It demonstrates that when specialized skills, clinical infrastructure, and philanthropic resources converge, patients who were once invisible in the health system gain visibility and agency over their health outcomes.

OUR CLUBS

The ongoing commitment of RCPOM to sustain the project is both a tribute to the donors who have backed the mission and a pledge to the communities that depend on it. With the interest of more individual and corporate donors, the program has the potential to reach more indigent patients across the Rizal Provincial Hospital System (RPHS), expanding to other municipalities in need and reducing treatment disparities that persist in low-resource settings. Each new partnership strengthens the pipeline of care—from pre-operative assessments that ensure patient readiness to post-operative follow-up that guarantees fistula maturation and durability.

The human stories behind the statistics are the enduring memory of this mission. There is the patient who arrived with compromised energy and a mounting fear of dialysis-related infections, who, after surgery, could once again greet dawn with a renewed sense of possibility. There is the mother who described the fistula as a “second chance” for her child’s future—the chance to attend school, to participate in community life, and to dream without the constant reminder of medical fragility. There are families who learned to navigate the health system with greater confidence, no longer overwhelmed by the costs and complexities of life-sustaining treatment.

As the project moves forward, its leaders and partners are calling for continued community involvement. The call to action is clear: help more dialysis patients access life-saving AV fistula creation. Contributions enable pre-surgical optimization, surgical capacity, postoperative monitoring, and sustained medical supplies. They empower surgeons to volunteer their expertise and healthcare facilities to allocate space for essential operations. They enable families to keep faith that a loved one can lead a productive life despite chronic kidney disease.

If you envision a future where no patient dies because they cannot access a vital surgical procedure, you are already part of the solution. This continuing RCPOM service project stands as a powerful reminder that when compassion meets expertise and resources, lives are transformed, families are steadied, and communities become more resilient. The mission is not only about saving lives—it is about enabling lives to be fully lived again.

Closing with conviction, the impact is undeniable: more than 500 lives saved and counting, a network of surgeons and hospitals united for a common good, and a model for sustainable, high-impact medical philanthropy. The project has proven that a crisis response can become a lasting lifeline. Now more than ever, it invites further support, greater participation, and broader advocacy to ensure that every indigent dialysis



From top: Rotary Club Passport One service project director, Dr. Jay Alejandre, leads the team of surgeons during the AV Fistula Creation Medical Mission at Taytay Doctors Multispecialty Hospital for the benefit of indigent dialysis patients from the Rizal Provincial Hospital System (RPHS).

patient in Rizal and beyond can receive the AV fistula creation they so urgently need.

Unite with the Rotary Club of Passport One Marikina in this essential mission. Donate, volunteer, or advocate—because every fistula opened is a doorway to a healthier, more hopeful life. Let us come together to save lives, restore livelihoods, and reaffirm the universal promise of care without barriers. ■

The author is a past president of RC Passport One Marikina.

Rotary Club Passport One Directors (left to right) Emily Tiozon, Dr. Socky Ramirez, and Camia Damasco prepare hygiene kits and medicines for patients who undergo AV Fistula Creation surgery at the Taytay Doctors Multispecialty Hospital for their post-surgery care.

R.I. DISTRICT 3800

No club left behind

by Anthony N. Paruñgao

In stark contrast to the practice in prior Rotary Years, DG Gina Sanchez has deliberately scheduled her official albeit non-traditional Governor's Official Visits to clubs below charter strength earlier than most, or at the start of RY 2025-2026. They enjoy priority in the scheduling.

This is pursuant to her policy of "No Club Left Behind", where she and her team will be laser focused on the status and strength of small clubs, all of which will be given close monitoring and guidance.

As of 24 July 2025, five (5) such Governor's Visits had already been completed for the following clubs: RC Greenfield District, RC Metro Cainta, ReC Inner Heart, ReC Marikina, and ReC San Juan.

These non-traditional Visits are done at no cost to the clubs concerned, and are sometimes hosted by DG Gina herself at her Bad Bowl restaurant in Robinson's Magnolia. More often than not, the DG's entourage, which includes chairs of the membership, service projects, and public image committees, is even more numerous than those of the club being visited.

No templates are prescribed for the club's plans and programs. To make it easier for these clubs, the emphasis during these Visits is on best practices to grow and engage members, implement impactful projects, and enhance public image, as well as concrete strategies to strengthen the club. The atmosphere is more casual or informal, and truly interactive.

These non-traditional official Visits have so far been well-received, and the results are promising indeed. It is hoped that by the end of the Rotary, there will be no so-called "weak" clubs in District 3800. ■

From top: RC Greenfield District, ReC Marikina, RC Metro Cainta, ReC Inner Heart, and ReC San Juan



RC MARIKINA WEST

The future of farming

A solar-powered irrigation system transforms a farming community with a sustainable solution

by Radian Fantone

Top row, clock-wise: Drone shot of the solar panels for the irrigation system; Storage of water obtained from the river source; Electrical mechanism which provides electricity generated by the solar panels going to the pumps.

Middle photo: Technical turn-over and training of beneficiaries for maintenance.

Bottom photo: Group photo of Filipino and Japanese Rotarians with the Pagsangahan town mayor and other municipal officials, and representatives of the beneficiaries.

What started as an idea became a reality that transcended several Rotary years! A story on how a collaborative project came into fruition thru the efforts of Rotarians from two countries. This is the story of Global Grant # GG2350722 titled “Solar Powered Irrigation System (SPIS) for Pagsangahan (Quezon Province) Farmers; a high-impact project!

The IDEA that started it all
During Rotary Year (RY) 2020-21 under the leadership of then-President Paul Chua—with the assistance and support of Past President Argel Cabatbat, a partylist congressman back then representing farmers, and Mr. Danny Carranza, a kind soul advocating also the plight of farmers—the Rotary Club of Marikina West (RCMW)—popularly known as The Golden West—submitted a project proposal of a solar powered irrigation system at the ‘Rotary Showcase’ (now called ‘Service Project Center’) looking for international partners.

Project background

The project aims to increase the production capacity of farmers by installing solar powered irrigation system (SPIS) at Barangay Pagsangahan, San Francisco, Quezon Province, Philippines.

The direct beneficiaries of the project are the members of Pagsangahan Irrigators Association SFQ. The organization has 68 rice

farmer-members who cultivate an estimated area of 1.5 hectares each. The estimated average yield of rice farmers is 80 “cavans” per hectare. One “cavan” is a sack of rice weighing approximately 50 kilograms. The entire barangay will also benefit from the project as the expected increase in yield will result in increased income for rice farmers, ensure access to the staple of other community members, and increased movements of goods and services in the local market due to increased buying capacity of farmers.

SPIS benefits includes the following: (1) increase farming cycle productivity and income by enabling more efficient and flexible irrigation scheduling and management; (2) provide a reliable source of energy in remote areas such as the target location of the project where fuel and transportation of it is costly; and (3) can reduce greenhouse gas emissions from irrigated agriculture.

The project consisted of 2 units of 10HP Centrifugal Pump coupled to 7.5kW Electric Motor, each powered by Solar Panels through Variable Frequency Drive (Pump Inverter). Aside from the pumps and solar panels, the project also includes construction of a Pump House and Catch Basin.

The approximate land area where the components are installed is 350-400 square meters. There are existing canal linings (water distribution) already with approximate length of 2.8 kilometers (total) and out-of-scope for this project.





In addition, a technical turnover was also held by the Contractor to the farmer-beneficiaries on how to maintain the equipment for sustainability in the years to come.

Initial Contact

By RY 2022-23, the project was picked up by the Rotary Club of Sasebo North (RCSN), R.I. District 2740 (Japan) and contacted RCMW thru its website www.rcmarikinawest.org. RCSN's main contact was President Nominee Kenichi Konishi who was in constant communication with RCMW's Past President Radian Fantone. After several email correspondences and calls between the two Rotarians, RCSN sent a delegation of three to discuss the specifics of the project in-person by going to the Philippines on 13-16 November 2022. It was then-President Vincent Bartolome that took care of the delegation during their initial Philippine visit.

After which, the RCSN delegation went back to Japan to discuss the project proposal and was approved by their general membership.

Asked why RCSN decided to pursue the proposed project, they mentioned that both clubs shared common milestones such as being chartered on the same year—1984—and having the almost the same number of Rotarian members at around 37-40.

Ocular Inspection

RCSN came back again to the Philippines on 4-9 April 2024 during RY 2023-24, under then-President Renny Domingo, to personally conduct an ocular inspection of the actual proposed project site. This time, RCSN had sent two Rotarians.

Challenges

The planning and coordination of this project wasn't always smooth. There were 'bumps' on the way

as RCMW almost wanted to discontinue the project due to busy schedules and other commitments of those involved. However, then-President-Elect (PE) Kevin Delfino's (now the Club President for RY 2025-2026) strong will and determination to continue with the project inspired other RCMW members to continue in pursuing the project. The desire to 'do good in the world' prevailed amongst the Rotarians.

Project Funding

Finally, under then-President Magnum Agpaoa during RY 2024-25, it was the culmination of said global grant project as funding was approved by The Rotary Foundation (TRF) on 29 August 2024 in the amount of US\$ 90,853.00.

President Kevin Delfino, an engineer by profession, led the execution of the project coordinating with The Rotary Foundation, the



From top: Explaining the MOU to the president of the farmers' group; Meeting with the beneficiaries at San Francisco, Quezon; Group photo of RC Sabeno North delegation with RC Marikina West members and spouses at Club Filipino.



contractor, the beneficiaries, the international partner (RCSN), as well as the host partner (RCMW), and all other aspects related to this global grant project.

Turnover Ceremonies

Upon completion of the said project, delegates from both RCMW and RCSN travelled a 10-hour, one-way journey by land, going to San Francisco, Quezon province for the

turnover over ceremonies. Aside from land travel, it took another 30 minutes trekking on muddy fields to the actual solar irrigation equipment. The Rotarians' dedication, hard work, and effort to the project was all worth it as there were genuine happiness and appreciation from the farmer beneficiaries.

Representatives from RCSN (Japan) were Immediate Past President Shinya Matsuda, Past Pres-

ident Takahiro Murase, President Nominee Kenichi Konishi, and Rotarian Hidekazu Mitani while from RCMW (Philippines) were President Kevin Delfino, Immediate Past President Magnum Agpaoa, Past President Radian Fantone, Past President Argel Cabatbat, and Rotarian Mark Josue.

It is but fitting that the actual turnover of the project to the beneficiaries was held on 23rd February 2025—the 120th founding anniversary of Rotary witnessed by San Francisco, Quezon then-Mayor Kresna Fernandez.

Side effects

Due to the camaraderie and shared effort by both clubs, they agreed to make their relationship official and take their combined efforts beyond local borders by signing a Sisterhood Agreement which happened on 11 April 2025 in Sasebo, Japan. The signing ceremony was an emotional and beaming occasion witnessed by Rotarians from both Clubs who had worked hard to fulfill this alliance. The presidents of both clubs made the sisterhood agreement official, as represented by President Magnum Agpaoa (of RC Marikina West) and President Shinji Kumon (of RC Sasebo North).

So now, what's next?

On 23-27 May 2025, our sister-club of 33 years—the Rotary Club of Taipei Tienmou (RCTT)—visited the Philippines and were hosted in cool Baguio City and festive Clark. During our Coordination Meeting, RCMW led by President Kevin Delfino presented our plans for another Global Grant project with the same concept of a solar powered irrigation system, but the beneficiaries this time would be farmers from Pila, Laguna. After a few minutes of the RCTT delegation discussing among themselves, the group gave a resounding YES to the proposal!

The project proposal is currently in-progress and being prepared for submission this RY 2025-2026. ■

The author is a Past President of the Rotary Club of Marikina West

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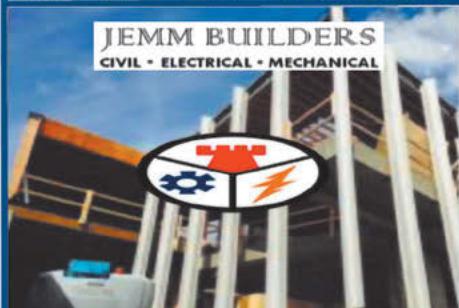


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RC WACK WACK

Roots of hope, shields of strength

by Shirley Panganiban

In 2004, the coastal towns of Infanta, Real, and Nakar in Quezon were swallowed by a deluge that will never be forgotten. Torrential rains fell relentlessly, and with the forests stripped bare and coastal defenses weakened, the water had nowhere to go but through homes, fields, and lives. The flood took lives, swept away livelihoods, and left behind not only mud and debris, but also a haunting lesson. When we neglect nature, we invite disaster:

“We are not just planting mangroves. We’re planting security, food, and a future for the next generation.”

Mission takes root

It was against the memory of that tragedy that the Rotary Club of Wack Wack (RCWW) set out on a journey: one that began quietly in 2008 under the leadership of then-President Wawie Decampong, together with RCWW Environmental Chair, Past President Al Vizcocho. What started in Infanta grew year after year, branch by branch, until in 2021 when Mayor Joel Diestro of Real, Quezon extended a heartfelt invitation: bring the mangrove mission to Barangay Cawayan.

On July 27, 2025, the mission came alive once again. More than a hundred volunteers—Rotarians, community leaders, law enforcers, justice advocates, environmental stewards—made the journey from Manila to the port of Ungos, then by boat to Barangay Cawayan.

Before planting began, the Municipal Environment and Natural Resources Office briefed everyone on the science of mangrove planting—how each *Rhizophora mucronata* must be anchored firmly to withstand tides and time.

By day’s end, 6,000 new mangroves stood in neat lines along the shore—young, fragile, but full of promise.

Convergence: Justice and Service

The event brought together the five pillars of judicial justice, namely: Law enforce-

ment; Prosecution; Judiciary; Reformation; and Community.

Participants included the following: Philippine National Police; National Prosecution Service; Bureau of Correction; Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP); Parole and Probation Administration; Court representatives; and the Rotary Clubs of Wack Wack, Mandaluyong, Tiger Mandaluyong, and the Rotaract Club of Pleasant Hills.

Community leaders present included the following: MENRO Head Bryan Potestades; DENR CENRO Ronaldo; Barangay Cawayan Chairwoman Rowena F. Escama; Barangay Ungos Chairman Ineng Dugayo; and Parole and Probation Administration Rep. Cisco Oliver Maniebo

Legacy and impact

Through a Memorandum of Agreement with the Sangguniang Bayan of Real, this 10-hectare stretch of Barangay Cawayan is now the RI District 3800 Mangrove Sanctuary.

Originally part of a Parole & Probation Administration program, the planting gave individuals a chance to rebuild their lives while restoring the environment.

Over 30,000 mangroves have been planted in Real since 2021. Each seedling is a promise to the next generation.

These are the continuing tasks for ensuring that mangroves flourish as nature’s living shield:

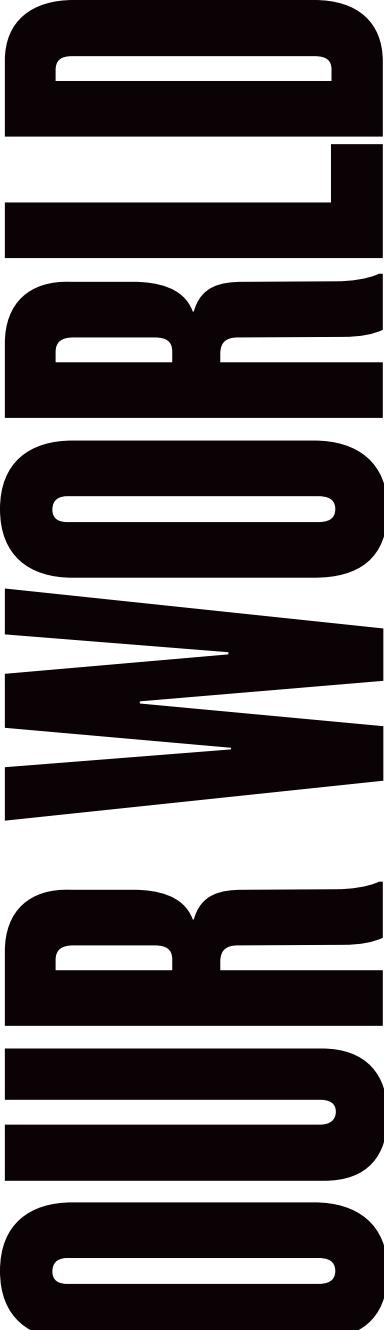
- Wave Breakers: Reduce wave height by up to 65%
- Flood Fighters: Slow and absorb flood-waters
- Fish Nurseries: Provide breeding grounds for marine life
- Carbon Capturers: Store up to four times more carbon than rainforests
- Erosion Stoppers: Trap sediment and prevent soil loss

As the boats pulled away from Barangay Cawayan, the horizon seemed a little greener, the waves a little calmer, and the future—if only for a moment, a little safer. ■





This page:
Photos depict array of activities conducted by Wack Wack Rotarians in partnership with the people of Barangay Cawayam in Real, Quezon. Planting mangroves is aimed at creating a sustainable environment for flora and fauna to flourish at the grassroots. Community involvement sparked by Rotarians' civic spirit brings off beneficial outcomes.



FIGHTING DISEASE

An invisible army

Numbering in the millions, community health workers form an essential yet often overlooked frontline force

Koko Patience Samuel remembers how it felt to save a new mother's life.

On that day in 2023, she arrived for her shift at a rural health clinic in Nigeria to find a patient hemorrhaging after giving birth. Samuel immediately used an antishock garment that applies pressure to slow the bleeding. Then she quickly reviewed her options.

"We were able to refer some cases to higher-level facilities. So we rushed her to the health center," she says. "We got her out of [danger], and she was fine. It was amazing."

Samuel is a community health worker trained in maternal and child health care through Together for Healthy Families in Nigeria, a Rotary Programs of Scale grant recipient. She's also part of a vast, but sometimes overlooked, workforce in public health. Around the world, millions of community health workers provide essential frontline care in low- and middle-income countries. They're not medical professionals, but they can perform basic health interventions and advise people on topics including maternal and child health, nutrition, vaccination, and family planning.

They support everything from routine care in their home communities to large-scale campaigns by major global health and aid organizations, often traveling long distances to reach unserved people in rural areas. With a projected global shortfall of 11 million health care providers by 2030, community

health workers are expected to increasingly fill gaps.

"Their responsibilities are ballooning because people realize how great they are," says Svea Closser, a professor at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, who has studied community health worker programs in numerous countries, including Ethiopia, India, and Pakistan. "But sometimes the remuneration and support have not kept pace with the expanding responsibilities."

With the growing reliance, the World Health Organization and others are calling for fair pay and for better training and support for the world's estimated 4.7 million community health workers, around two-thirds of whom are women.

Some of the largest community health worker programs, including initiatives in Pakistan, India, and Ethiopia, only employ women. "A lot of countries prefer women, partially for really good reasons, like they are better suited to address maternal and child health. They're just socially better positioned to do it," says Closser. "But there are also, potentially, some more problematic reasons, like you can get women to work for less pay."

Linet Otieno, who teaches sex education in Siaya County, Kenya, has volunteered without pay for around seven years, she says, because the work is rewarding in other ways. She does work for both the Kenyan Ministry of Health and a nonprofit, the ABCs of Sex Education, which received funding from a Rotary Foundation global grant in 2020.



Visit [rotary.org/our-causes](https://www.rotary.org/our-causes) to find more information and get involved.



"I love my job. I love serving the community because I get to interact with so many people," Otieno says. "People appreciate the services that we offer to them. When you see somebody in the community that you've assisted in some way, you just feel motivated, because you get that recognition."

Still, Otieno sometimes encounters situations that are far more complex than she's been trained to handle — such as when she learns that a child is being physically or sexually abused. "We always report to the [community] chiefs. And at times we'll get the families called in for a talk," she says, while noting there's little more she can do. "It's never easy."

Community health workers also experience abuse and violence themselves. A study Closser co-authored in 2023 found that female community health workers around the world were frequent targets

both within their programs and in their communities. "These workers are really at the bottom of the health care hierarchy," says Roosa Tikkannen, another co-author of the study. "Sometimes the perpetrators are actually their supervisors. So just do you even report to?"

In 2018, the World Health Organization released its first-ever guidelines for community health worker programs, including a recommendation for fair pay. Since then, researchers and advocacy groups have called for workers to receive contracts, more extensive training, better oversight, and better pay — or any pay. Following through on those recommendations has the potential to make the sector a driver of economic growth by creating good jobs, particularly for women, while also ensuring more people have access to health care.

In many parts of the world, community health workers provide the

only care that people receive. And their contributions are far-reaching. Community health workers have participated in efforts that have reduced AIDS-related deaths by nearly 70 percent since 2004. These workers also treat more than half of malaria cases in some parts of the world, including 10 districts in Zambia where Partners for a Malaria-Free Zambia, another Rotary Programs of Scale grant recipient, trained and equipped 2,500 community health workers.

While that program relies on volunteers, other Rotary-supported initiatives do pay community health workers. A 2020-22 Rotary grant-funded program in South Africa, in partnership with the University of Pretoria, paid slightly more than the South African minimum wage at that time of around \$1.50 per hour.

Pakistan, one of the two countries where the wild poliovirus remains endemic, employs nearly

Clockwise from left: Community health workers perform outreach for the Together for Healthy Families in Nigeria program; Linet Otieno receives a certificate for her work in sex education; Koko Patience Samuel, who is trained in maternal and child health, says the job "gives me joy."



Community health workers gather for a meeting in Karachi, Pakistan, in 2022. Pakistan employs nearly 450,000 community health workers in its efforts to eradicate polio in the country.

450,000 community health workers in its efforts to eradicate the disease. As trusted community members, they play a key role in administering vaccines and spreading word to family and friends that vaccination is safe.

"It is very important for people to have social and emotional attachments to the workers who end up at their doorsteps. It's like, 'The people from within us would never harm us,'" says Israr Ul Haq, a social and behavioral change specialist for UNICEF who helps oversee Pakistan's community health worker program. "That social buy-in is very important. After many years of this program, more than 95 percent of people open their doors to get their children vaccinated."

In other countries, too, the trust that the workers establish in their communities, often by going door to door, is making a difference, including by connecting families to ser-

vices. "It's different from house to house," says Rebaone Madzivhandila, a research assistant at the University of Pretoria, who oversaw community health workers as part of the Rotary-supported South African project. "It depends on what challenge a particular household is facing. If it's malnutrition or food insecurity, then the community health worker will bring in a dietitian to assist. If a household is facing social issues, then they will bring in a social worker."

That kind of work is not limited to developing countries. In the United States, for instance, about 63,000 community health workers connect people with local health resources, counsel people who have been discharged from hospitals, and educate communities about chronic conditions such as diabetes and asthma.

In Nigeria, Samuel is paid a \$10 monthly stipend, but she is also

driven by the importance of the work and the results she can see, as when her community shed some of its cultural resistance to talking about subjects like birth control. "When the program started, we had family members who didn't want us to come in and speak about family planning to their wives and daughters," she says. "But with the advocacy we had from the state midwife, everything was sorted out. She came and organized community meetings and made them understand the need for child spacing and other activities."

Samuel, who has been doing the job for four years, particularly appreciates the opportunity to teach her community about good health practices. "I love the fact that I'm able to educate people, to reach out to them," she says. "And their feedback is positive, so it gives me joy. I'm providing knowledge they need to know." — ETELKA LEHOCZKY

BY THE NUMBERS

7 out of 10

Jobs in the health and social care sectors worldwide that are held by women

4.7 million

Estimated number of community health workers

13%

Projected 10-year growth of community health worker jobs in the U.S.

Short takes

In April, the RI Board recognized the Rotary Action Group for Girls' Empowerment, the first action group to be established since 2021.

Nominations for the Sylvia Whitlock Leadership Award, which honors a member working to advance women in Rotary, will be accepted this month. Submit via rotary.org/awards.



PROFILE

Hope away from home

In Rotary, an Afghan transplant finds family and purpose

Zi Azizi
Rotary Club of
St. Petersburg,
Florida

In a May webinar, Rotary's Youth Advisory Council shared how Rotary members can support young people. Watch at my.rotary.org/webinars.

Rotary and the Gates Foundation extended to 2029 their partnership to end polio, including the foundation's 2-to-1 match of funds Rotary raises up to \$50 million per year.

When Zi Azizi was born, his mother gave him the nickname Omid, which means hope in the Afghan language Dari. "None of us know what is going to come in life," he says, "but she had a feeling."

Growing up in war-torn Kabul in the 1990s, Azizi had reason to feel hopeless at times. Rocket and artillery fire surrounded him. When the Taliban captured the city in 1996, his parents lost their jobs. He taught himself English by watching TV via a satellite dish that the family took down during the day to escape notice.

Things improved after the Taliban fell in 2001. After high school, Azizi got a job at a shipment center in Kabul's international military and diplomatic enclave, which eventually led to work with a U.S. defense contractor. He took university business classes at night. But by the time he earned his bachelor's degree in 2013, he worried about the safety risks of continuing to live in Kabul.

A scholarship from a U.S. non-profit brought Azizi to St. Petersburg, Florida. In 2019, he learned about Rotary from a Facebook post. Inspired by the organization's work to end polio, he joined the Rotary Club of St. Petersburg and became an enthusiastic participant in its service projects. Last year, Azizi served as public image chair and coordinated relief efforts after hurricanes Helene and Milton struck the area.

Now the club's president-elect, he looks forward to advancing a literacy project in local schools. Thousands of miles from his homeland, Azizi sees Rotary as a family and a source of purpose: "I'm here to help, to make good friends, to create a positive impact, and enjoy life." — JOHN M. CUNNINGHAM

The Rotary Youth Exchange alumni association of District 5190 (parts of California and Nevada) won the 2024-25 Alumni Association of the Year Award.



MAKING WAVES

Divers with
disabilities
find peace
in the water

BY KATE SILVER

PHOTOGRAPHY BY
KEVIN SERNA



"It's one of the only places in the world where I don't need my wheelchair," Bill Bogdan says poolside.

MORE THAN A DOZEN SCUBA DIVERS dot the pool's turquoise waters, swimming in groups of threes and fours in dark wetsuits and face masks. Excited chatter, splashing, and the occasional squeal of delight pierce the humid, chlorine-scented air, a contrast to the frigid conditions outside on this January morning.

To the uninformed observer, the people in the pool at a high school in suburban Chicago are indistinguishable from one another. But Jim Elliott, a member of the Rotary Club of Downers Grove, Illinois, knows the different groups, and why they're here: the instructors who are leading the sessions, the dive buddies serving as safety companions, and the rookie divers, who are learning to navigate deep waters with autism, brain injuries, paralysis, and other conditions. Some family members, too, are learning to dive. They're all gathered for a monthly open pool session hosted by Diveheart, a nonprofit that Elliott founded that teaches people with disabilities using an approach known as adaptive diving.

Bill Bogdan approaches the edge of the pool. It's an exciting day for the 55-year-old father, a volunteer and a member of the organization's board of directors: Two of his children are learning to scuba dive in preparation for a family trip to Mexico this summer.

As his kids listen intently to the instructor, Bogdan decides to join everyone in the pool. His muscular arms flex as he lowers himself out of his wheelchair. He lands roughly on the ground, then shifts his legs, which are paralyzed, into the water and pushes himself in. He surfaces with a smile. "It's one of the only places in the world I can go where I don't need my wheelchair," he says.

WHEN ELLIOTT LAUNCHED DIVEHEART in 2001, his vision was simple: He wanted to introduce people with limited mobility to scuba diving, a sport that he loved. Intuitively, he thought someone with, say, a spinal cord injury could benefit from the sensation of weightlessness in the water. He hoped to make scuba more accessible and welcoming to all.

"The thrill for me is when a diver first looks down, and they go, 'Oh my God, I'm standing up. I'm not in my wheelchair,'" Elliott says.

What he quickly learned, however, is that "scuba therapy," as Elliott and others call it, can benefit people with a whole array of physical, cognitive, and mental conditions. In addition to training divers with paralysis, including people with paraplegia and quadriplegia, Diveheart has trained people with cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, limited vision or blindness, ALS, autism, and post-traumatic stress disorder, among other conditions.

Diveheart instructors and volunteer buddies go through dive training as well as "empathy training" so they can be sensitive to adaptive divers' needs. That may mean restricting their legs or arms, for example, and relying on other people to place and remove their face mask.

During those trainings, in particular, Elliott says he feels his Rotary pride coming through. It's challenging work, learning how to best help an individual who may not be able to communicate verbally, or who uses a wheelchair and must be safely moved to and from a boat and into the water. By their very nature, he says, the sessions are guided by a sense of Service Above Self. The values of Rotary are the values of Diveheart.

Diveheart sessions near its Downers Grove headquarters take place in pools and deep quarry lakes in Illinois and Wisconsin, and there are affiliate Diveheart chapters elsewhere in the United States and the world. The nonprofit has built relationships with resorts and trained dive operators globally, and it leads group trips to places like the Caribbean islands of Cozumel, Grenada, and Roatán. Often, entire families will join those trips, and for many it's their first international adventure.

"I tell people this really isn't about scuba diving," says Elliott. "This is about taking an individual with a disability and creating a paradigm shift. So now it's not 'Johnny in a wheelchair.' It's 'Johnny the scuba diver.' And then they go on and they take on other challenges."

AFTER AMBER RANGEL was paralyzed from the chest down in a waterskiing accident and nearly drowned, she wanted nothing to do with water. Prior to the accident, the 20-year-old was a semiprofessional barefoot waterskiing athlete, tearing along the water in slalom and tricks competitions. Afterward, all it took were a few droplets of water splashed on her face while bathing to trigger her emotions.

This new reality, including using a wheelchair, felt stifling. "A lot of my friends were leaving for college or starting families, or just doing the coolest stuff that a 20-year-old could do," she says. "And I was having incontinence issues and scared to shower."



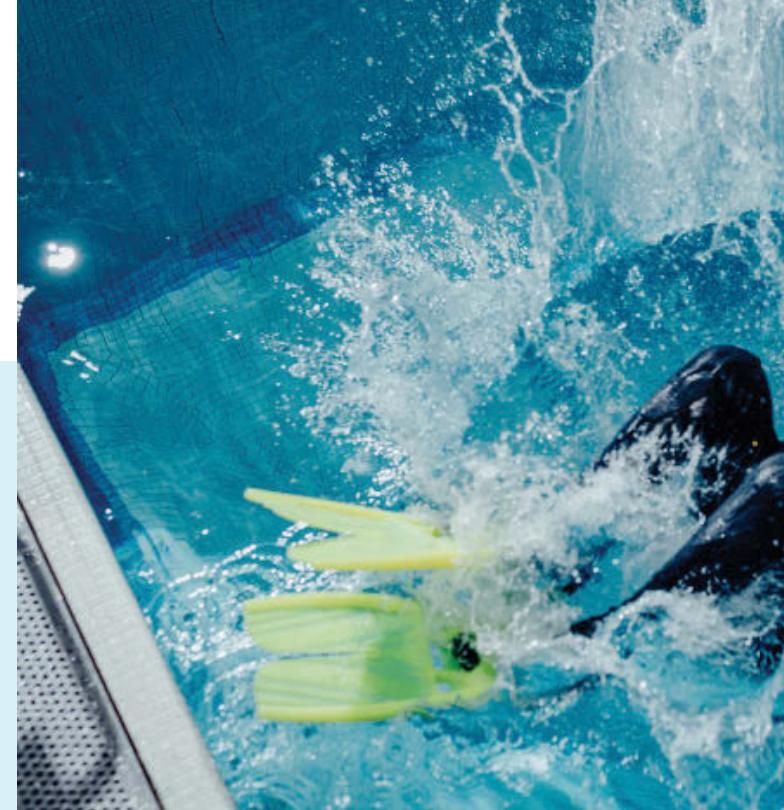
Through their nonprofit Diveheart, Rotary members Tinamarie Hernandez and Jim Elliott introduce people with an array of disabilities to "scuba therapy."



From top: Amber Rangel prepares for a pool dive at the University of Illinois in 2022, and heads out for a dive in Utila, Honduras, in 2016.



“I WANT TO GET OUT OF THE WHEELCHAIR. THIS WAS A CHANCE TO DO SOMETHING DIFFERENT AND TO DO SOMETHING NEW.”



Rangel found she enjoyed adaptive snow skiing, and two of her instructors, also volunteers with Diveheart, encouraged her to consider diving. She sat with the idea for a long time before accepting the invitation. She worked through her fear of the water, and when she got in the pool, she started to see possibilities. “This was a chance to do something different and to do something new,” she says. She felt relieved to be in the water standing, weightless, and far away from her wheelchair.

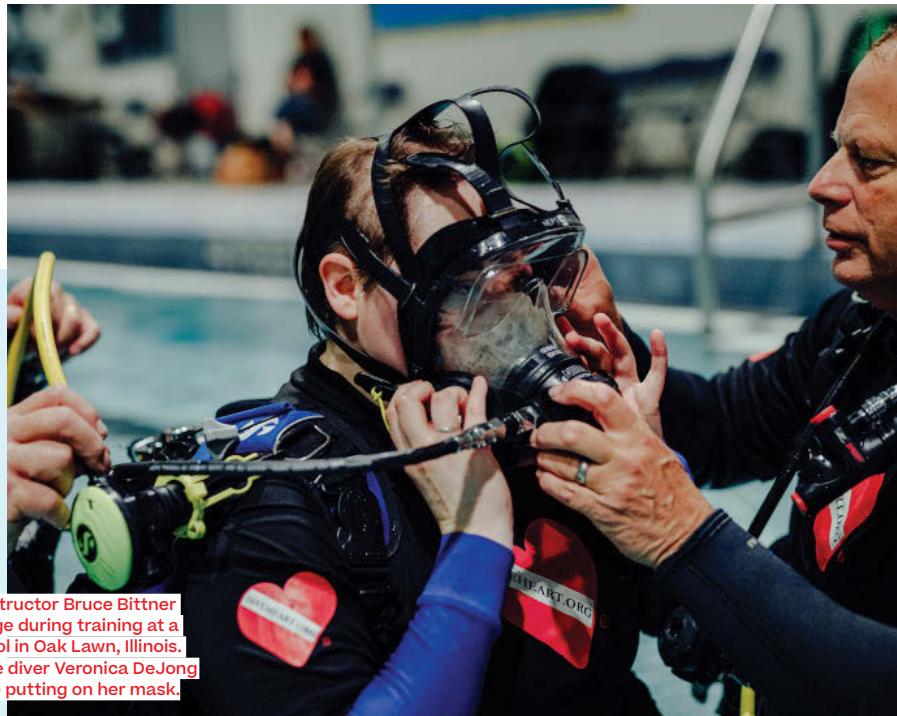
Until then, Rangel hadn’t thought much about traveling, but she was drawn to the idea of diving in the ocean. She joined a Diveheart group trip to Cozumel, off Mexico’s Yucatán Peninsula, and it lit a fire in her. Soon after, she traveled to Honduras and dove with Diveheart instructors. She found that diving was a pas-sageway to serenity and feeling weightless — more about the sensations than the sights. “I want to get out of the wheelchair,” she says. “And I like to be able to just float.”

Those early travel experiences built her confidence, so much so that she returned to Honduras every few months solo, diving by day and staying with a local or in a hostel by night. She liked the people there and found it was easier to get around in a wheelchair than back home. “I struggled more making it to a Starbucks in Chicago than I struggled making it in Honduras,” she says. “People just treated me differently there.”

Those trips helped her work through a lot of anger, she says. In Honduras, she realized that she still had control over who she was and



Left: Diving instructor Bruce Bittner takes the plunge during training at a high school pool in Oak Lawn, Illinois. **Right:** Adaptive diver Veronica DeJong gets some help putting on her mask.



the person she wanted to become. She booked more international trips — sometimes diving, sometimes not — visiting Bali, Iceland, Tulum.

Prior to her injury, Rangel had dropped out of high school. She needed an education and a steady income to keep diving and exploring the world on her terms. She got her GED, enrolled in college, and in 2024, at age 30, she graduated with honors from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Now, she's in the process of applying to law school. And she credits scuba diving for continually pushing her to do better and to be better, both in the water and on land.

IN THE EARLY DAYS, Elliott hung flyers in dive shops to find participants, volunteers, and instructors. He talked up the fledgling organization at Rotary club meetings, joining Rotary himself in 2003.

"Rotary has been a super support system for us, from the beginning," says Tinamarie Hernandez, Diveheart's executive director, also a member of the Rotary Club of Downers Grove. "It's important to be a part of the community and that's what Rotary is."

Following a presentation to a club in Oak Lawn, for example, Elliott met the superintendent of Oak Lawn Community High School, who offered him access to the school's pool. Today, it's Diveheart's longest-running pool program, at more than a decade.

Word spread about the organization, fueled in no small part by Elliott's knack for storytelling

and his media connections. Stories splashed across NBC, CNN, *Money* magazine, *Success* magazine, and other outlets, and interest soared. In 2008, U.S. Army veteran Tammy Duckworth, who lost her legs in the Iraq War, made news when she dove with Diveheart. At the time she was the director of the Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs; today she's a U.S. senator.

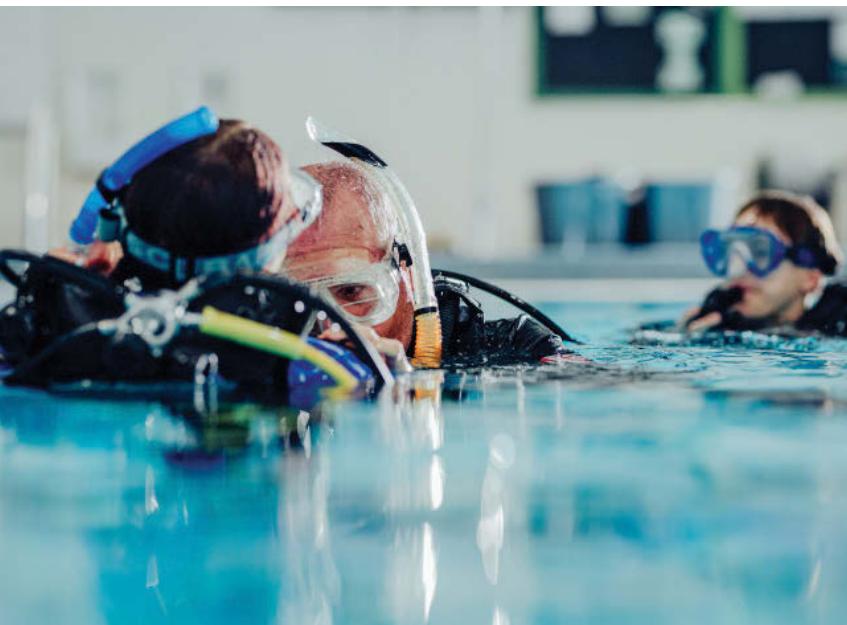
As dive instructors in other cities reached out to inquire about starting their own adaptive diving chapter, Elliott told them to first make sure to get Rotary members involved. "We don't start up a program unless the person we're working with sets up Rotary meetings," says Elliott. "They are absolutely instrumental."

In 2010, Diveheart had a booth at the Rotary International Convention in Montreal. There, Elliott met Rotarians from Haifa, Israel, who wanted to set up a diving program for kids with autism. He worked with them to raise money for scuba gear and other equipment.

Around the world, Elliott estimates that around 50 adaptive diving nonprofits have started thanks to the training and support of Diveheart. While a handful of those are considered Diveheart chapters, most are independent nonprofits. "Our goal now is to grow adaptive scuba around the world and keep improving our training practices to be the standard-bearer for best practices," he says.

Diveheart has also captured the attention of medical professionals. Elliott regularly speaks at medical conferences about the benefits of scuba therapy. At diving trade shows, Diveheart hosted adaptive scuba symposiums that drew researchers, physicians, professors, and therapists. And in recent years, Diveheart began offering continuing education units for people in the medical field.

Some small research studies indicate that diving may have measurable benefits for people with post-traumatic stress disorder, autism, and physical disabilities. Richard Moon,



who researches diving medicine at Duke University School of Medicine, says that, anecdotally, diving is known to improve a person's mood, alleviate depression and anxiety, and help people relax. "People often tell me, 'Well, I'm very anxious, but once I get in the water, I have a terrific time,'" he says.

Moon became acquainted with Diveheart through a physician colleague. "There are a lot of reasons why some people shouldn't dive, at least by the book," he says. "To be able to take people who are handicapped in various ways and allow them to dive is a fabulous thing."

VERONICA DEJONG LEARNED about Diveheart two years ago while attending a support group for people with traumatic brain injuries. At the time, she was 29 years old and didn't know how to swim.

Just three years prior, DeJong had a headache that grew so severe she was vomiting and seeing double. At the hospital, she learned she had blood clots throughout the venous sinuses of her brain that were causing pressure to build on her optic nerves. "I had all of the symptoms of a stroke," she says.

In the aftermath, she was still seeing double. Vision therapy has helped, but her spatial awareness and depth perception remain altered, as does her short-term memory. Multitasking can be overwhelming, and she's no longer able to drive.

When DeJong heard about Diveheart, she loved the idea of throwing herself into something new and different. While afraid of the water, she felt emboldened by her recent health emergency. "I just kept telling myself, I handled blood clots in my brain. I can do this."

Over time, she made her way from the shallow end of the Oak Lawn pool to the deep end, learning to swim as she learned to scuba dive. In the water, she doesn't have to worry about whether she'll trip and fall like she does on land. Plus, she always dives with buddies who are aware that she has memory challenges, and she knows they have her back.

In 2024, DeJong traveled to the Cayman Islands with a

**STUDIES POINT TO
MEASURABLE BENEFITS FOR
PEOPLE WITH PTSD, AUTISM,
AND PHYSICAL DISABILITIES.**

group of women through Diveheart and dove in the ocean for the first time. Storms limited the actual time diving, but the trip, overall, felt like a victory. It was DeJong's first time leaving the U.S. and made her feel like anything was possible. "Everybody has different abilities. I'm just redefining what my abilities are," she says. "Accepting my new normal has been difficult but doing it through Diveheart has been amazing."

AS A CHILD, JIM ELLIOTT had a life filled with colorful characters, each with their own challenges. His father was an Army veteran who used a wheelchair and orthotic braces to get around. "I grew up dodging wheelchairs at the VA hospital," he laughs.

Later, Elliott's daughter, Erin, was born blind. When she was about 9 years old, kids at school teased her about her eyes, and she became obstinate. "She threw down her cane and refused to learn Braille," he recalls.

This was in the late '80s, and a coworker told Elliott about an organization called the American Blind Skiing Foundation, which teaches people with blindness and visual impairment how to ski while accompanied by guides. Within days, Erin was hitting the slopes, and her dad saw her confidence grow. She'd go to school and tell stories about her weekends on the slopes, giddy with her new identity: She was a skier. At the same time, Elliott became a ski guide and volunteered with the organization for about 25 years — long after Erin had grown up and moved on. "I saw it change a lot of lives," he says.

For as long as he can remember, Elliott was eager to try new things and prepare for any scenario. He studied journalism in college in the 1970s, at a time when oceanographer Jacques Cousteau was delighting TV viewers with his underwater discoveries.

"As a young journalist, I thought, if I ever meet someone like Jacques Cousteau, I better know how to scuba dive," Elliott says. He was captivated by the world he found underwater. "It was like being a superhero, just hovering in the middle of an intersection," he says. "The body, mind, and spirit experience was so powerful for me, I knew at some point I wanted to be an instructor."

It was much later in life — after raising a fam-



Left: Diving instructor
Bruce Bittner assists
divers in the pool.
Right: Adaptive diver
Adarsh Akula prepares
his equipment poolside.



Right: Tinamarie Hernandez prepares her dive tank before entering the pool.

Opposite: Madelyn Bogdan, learning so she can dive with her dad, gazes across the pool.



ily and leading a successful career as a media advertising sales executive — that he returned to the idea of teaching people to dive. He wanted to see scuba diving change lives in the same way he'd seen skiing do so. He left his job and his six-figure salary to start Diveheart, hoping to build a small nonprofit in the Chicago area that used local pools and maybe took a trip to a quarry or the coast from time to time. He had no idea just how much adaptive diving would resonate, or how much Rotary would help to foster its growth.

Looking to the future, Elliott has his sights on the next ambitious goal: the Diveheart deep pool project, which will be built on donated land north of Chicago. He's been working with architects and engineers to design a pool that would be the deepest in the country, at 130 feet, enabling divers to descend to ocean-level depths without having to travel to the coast or navigate weather disruptions. Diveheart is raising money to construct the pool, which will have multiple levels in a patented telescoping design. When built, it will be used for research, rehabilitation, education, and training, and will offer vocational opportunities to people of all abilities.

WATER HAS BEEN AN IMPORTANT PART of Bill Bogdan's life for as long as he can remember. When he was just 8 months old, he

was diagnosed with a type of cancer on his spine called neuroblastoma. The removal of the tumor resulted in paralysis in his legs. Swimming and water therapy helped strengthen his muscles, and his parents put in an above-ground pool. A friend from high school got him interested in scuba diving, leading him to pursue certification through the Handicapped Scuba Association.

Bogdan still gets emotional when he remembers his first diving trip in the Bahamas when he was in his 20s. The dive crew wouldn't let him take his wheelchair on the boat, because they worried it wouldn't be stable in the choppy water. At first, he was reluctant to leave the chair behind — he was rarely apart from it. But once he got in the water, he felt like a different person. "For three hours, I almost forgot that I had a disability, because I was able to do three dives," he says. "And the whole time, no wheelchair, no nothing. I was in the water, going swimming, checking out the marine life, checking out the coral, just having a blast."

He was thrilled to later learn about Diveheart and joined the organization as a volunteer, eager to help other people with disabilities experience diving. His experience has also inspired everyone in his family to learn to dive — first, his wife and oldest daughter, and now, the two children at the pool today.

If all goes according to plan, their first ocean dive as a family will happen this summer on a Diveheart trip to Cozumel. It's something Bogdan has dreamed of for years, and he can't wait to tell the stories when he gets back.

"I always tell people, don't let your disability be your handicap," he says. "There's nothing you can't do." ■

▶ Experience a Diveheart pool session in our video story at youtube.com/rotaryinternational.



As they transmute trash into treasure, Interactors in Peru learn the magic of Rotary

THE GENIE IN THE BOTTLE



PHOTOS BY
MONIKA LOZINSKA

A

As Raquel Lozano Fernández explained, the mission was twofold. The 2024-25 president of the Rotary Club of Lima, Peru, Lozano is also the adviser for the Interact Club of Abraham Valdelomar, which is sponsored by the Lima club. Under the guidance of Lozano and other Rotarians, the Interactors embarked on an ambitious project to transform plastic bottles and other recyclable materials into eco-bricks. The bricks were then used to create tables and chairs for the Bellavista school in Independencia, a municipality north of Lima's city center.

As part of the project, the Interactors included the Bellavista students in crafting the eco-brick furniture, thereby providing a useful lesson in environmental sustainability. But that was only one facet of the project. Under the guise of *la gincana* — connection-based games, songs, and activities — the Interactors also conducted social-emotional workshops with the younger students, thereby picking up lessons in leadership and confidence building along the way.

Last November, Monika Lozinska and Aleks Iricanin, two members of Rotary's Visual Media team, visited with Lozano, the Interactors, and the students at Bellavista. As the pictures on the following pages reveal, there's more going on in Lima than an admirable recycling project. "All the kids really like and listen to Raquel," says Lozinska. "It's in her heart to be with younger generations."

As for the relationship between the older and younger students, the Rotary staff duo report that the kids were all happily, well, "interacting." Mission accomplished.





This page: Britani Alejos Cucho, a student at Bellavista school, compresses scraps of plastic into a recycled plastic bottle to create an eco-brick. The eco-bricks will later be used to make tables and chairs for the school.

Opposite page, top: The completed eco-bricks are prepared for the furniture-building phase of the project.

Bottom: The Bellavista school is in Independencia, a municipality north of the city center of Lima, Peru.

“INTERACT CLUBS BRING TOGETHER YOUNG PEOPLE TO DEVELOP LEADERSHIP SKILLS AND DISCOVER THE POWER OF SERVICE.”

— RAQUEL LOZANO FERNÁNDEZ





Opposite page:
Raquel Lozano Fernández (in cap), a member of the Rotary Club of Lima and the club's adviser to the Interact Club of Abraham Valdelomar, explains the next phase of the process to the students and Interactors.

Above: Lozano hugs Romina Abigail Solia (left) and Valeria Reymundo Zabrono, two of the Interactors participating in the eco-brick project and the social-emotional workshops at the Bellavista school.





“THIS WORK FILLS YOU AS A PERSON AND DEVELOPS YOU IN BOTH LEADERSHIP AND EMPATHY.”

– CAMILA VELASQUEZ CASTILLA



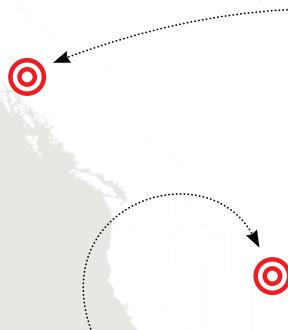
Opposite page:
Interactors
Camila Velazquez
Castilla and
Joaquin Camacho Solis show
off a chair con-
structed from
the eco-bricks.

Below: On the
steps of the
Bellavista school,
Rotarians, In-
teractors, and
students display
the fruits of their
labor — and
their newly
acquired sense
of camaraderie.



People of action around the globe

By Brad Webber



United States

To help people affected by the financial crisis of 2008, the Rotary Club of Summit County (Frisco) began serving a weekly dinner free of charge in the Colorado ski town. Sixteen years later, they haven't stopped. In January, the club and its partners served their 200,000th meal. "The housing and mortgage crisis deeply affected people in Summit County, so in November 2008 I went to a nonprofit in the county and asked the director what was needed to help people through it," says club member Deborah Hage. "For people displaced, living in their cars, or sofa surfing, there was no way for them to prepare meals with the food being distributed by the food banks and pantries." On a typical Tuesday night, 100 to 500 people — children, families, retirees, and even donors who simply enjoy the camaraderie — come together to share restaurant-quality dinners and good company.

Rotary
Club of Summit County
(Frisco), Colorado



750,000+

Volunteer hours at
Summit County dinners
since 2009



Canada

Dogs are feeling especially lucky in the Yukon territory thanks to the Rotary Club of Whitehorse-Rendezvous, which bakes, packages, and sells pet treats to raise funds. The club's annual dog biscuit sale has generated about CA\$3,000 since it began three years ago. Proceeds benefit the Mae Bachur Animal Shelter and the Food Bank Society of the Yukon in Whitehorse. "This fundraiser brings Rotarians together for enjoyable social occasions in our various homes, and local people love the biscuits for their dogs," says Kevin Rumsey, immediate past president of the club. Rumsey's mother created the recipe, which includes pumpkin and peanut butter. "We always sell out," he adds. "We even deliver to people's homes."

Rotary
Club of Whitehorse-
Rendezvous, Yukon

\$3.3 billion

Value of retail sales of dog
food in Canada in 2024

9

Cooperatives
for deaf
people in
Rwanda

Greece

In December, the Rotary E-Club of Greece began delivering wheelchairs to archeological sites and museums throughout the country. Through May, the e-club and three other clubs — Halandri, Preveza, and Psychico — had distributed 17 wheelchairs valued at \$2,600. Benefiting institutions included the Aegean Maritime Museum on Mykonos, the Archaeological Museum of Patras, ESIEPIN Press Museum, and the Museum of Cycladic Art. “This is a large-scale project covering almost all of Greece, with deliveries planned for 14 museums and archeological sites,” says George Stavropoulos, immediate past president of the e-club.



Rwanda

The Rotary Club of Kigali Golf is passionate about more than just hitting the links. Within months of its formation, the club began supporting programs to foster entrepreneurship within the deaf community and other underrepresented groups. In November the club delivered more than a dozen sewing, knitting, and textile heat-press machines to the Rwanda National Union of the Deaf and to Empower the Future, an organization supporting mothers of former street children. The equipment, valued at about \$8,500, was paid for with member donations as well as a golf tournament (naturally). “We look forward to building a long-term partnership with the Rwanda Union of the Deaf, Empower the Future, and other organizations supporting marginalized communities,” says Tabvi “Mellow” Motsi, a member of the club’s public relations committee.



2020

Wheelchair lift
and special paths
installed at the
Acropolis

681 A.D.

Gounsa temple
originally constructed

Korea

In March, the largest wildfires in Korea’s history swept across the country’s southeast, scorching nearly 120,000 acres and forcing more than 37,000 people to evacuate. Rotary districts swiftly assessed the needs and delivered food, water, hygiene kits, and other essential supplies to shelters and affected communities. Rotarians were able to reach even more people in need through \$100,000 in funding from The Rotary Foundation. Rotary members also assisted with clearing orchards and with home demolition in devastated areas. Some even provided heavy equipment, including to assist with reconstruction of the historic Gounsa temple in Uiseong. “Disasters like these strike without warning,” says Ung Seop Jeong, immediate past governor of District 3590. “No one is truly prepared, but Rotary is always there for the community.”



ESSAY

An unexpected education

For a well-schooled nurse, a life of global service was its own classroom — and a path to Rotary

By Ann Evans



In 2008 I traveled from the United States to England to take a course on international health consultancy. Later I made the short list to join a team from Liverpool Associates in Tropical Health that was destined for southern Sudan. There we would assess the health of what would, in 2011, become the newest nation in the world. But on the last cut, I failed to make the team. That's when I decided to join Dr. Jill Seaman to see how I could help her. It would be a profound learning experience.

I had first met Jill in western Alaska where I was working as a nurse practitioner and educator with Alaska Native Corporations. Based in Bethel for several months a year, Jill provided health care in Indigenous Yup'ik communities. The rest of the year she worked in Sudan, where she treated infectious diseases, especially kala-azar, a deadly parasitic disease caused by the bite of sand flies. When Jill arrived in Sudan, the cases of kala-azar were rising. An epidemic was brewing.

In 1997, *Time* magazine designated Dr. Seaman, "an unassuming but iron-willed American woman," as one of its Heroes of Medicine. "In an eight-year struggle against the disease," the magazine wrote, "Seaman developed a wealth of clinical expertise in treating thousands of kala-azar patients, perhaps more than any other single doctor in history." A MacArthur "genius grant" would follow in 2009.

Jill was also my hero. She had first mentioned joining her in Sudan when we met in Alaska. I had long wanted to use my extensive education and my decades of work experiences to make a difference in a place where so many have so little. Jill's work sounded intriguing, but I wasn't a physician and knew nothing about tropical diseases. When we first talked, I worried I wasn't a good fit for what she needed. Then the offer to help her arrived. I eagerly accepted, little realizing that Sudan would provide an unexpected education of its own. It would also be my introduction to Rotary.

In Old Fangak, an isolated community in southern Sudan, I surveyed a challenging situation — poor sanitation, severe hunger, and a dramatic rise in kala-azar cases, most of which would result in death if not properly treated. Jill's initial

plan for me to teach her Sudanese medical staff was abandoned amid the spike in cases. Soon I was learning how to diagnose and treat diseases I had never heard of. I extended my six-week stay to 10 weeks after our patient load approached 1,000 people a day.

After another worker arrived, I departed for Nairobi where I had a few days before my international flight. While waiting I received an email from Liverpool. Within a few minutes I was discussing an opportunity to consult with the Ministry of Health in southern Sudan. I accepted the offer and returned to the United States. Within days I was in Juba, which today is the capital of South Sudan, conducting a six-week consultation on the role of community midwifery in combating the extraordinarily high rate of maternal mortality in southern Sudan. That consultation led to two more. By then I was hooked, even though (I'm embarrassed to admit) my earlier ideas about volunteering and working in the developing world were less selfless. Instead, I had imagined joining a project somewhere like Costa Rica, spending a week helping out, then moving on to the beach for a month or so.

While I was in Juba, my friend Ray Buchanan, a founder of Stop Hunger Now (now known as Rise Against Hunger), joined me. We chartered a plane to take us to Jill in Old Fangak, where we learned of the need for a school and the completion of an unfinished women's center. Soon I became the country representative for Stop Hunger Now, which provided me with a calling card that I found invaluable for entry into the

I eagerly accepted, little realizing that Sudan would provide an unexpected education of its own. It would also be my introduction to Rotary.

government circles and nonprofit organizations where I advocated for assistance.

Over the course of a few years, the concrete block women's center got a roof, windows, and doors. It became the headquarters for a new school that opened with 1,300 students and 13 classrooms, as well as additional classrooms in the women's center. Stop Hunger Now sent two large shipping containers filled with food that we shared with two neighboring schools and Jill's medical project.

When Ray returned to Old Fangak he brought along the past chair of the board and the director of field operations at Stop Hunger Now. All three of them were Rotarians. Meanwhile, a friend who had a project in southern Sudan had introduced me to a Ugandan man, Emmanuel Ecodu, who was working in Juba. My friend explained that Emmanuel had been a Rotaractor in Uganda; a Rotarian for more than 15 years, he's currently a member of the Rotary Club of Juba Airport. A crucial part of my education in Africa had just fallen into place.

Emmanuel became a trusted ally, procuring materials from Juba and Uganda, shipping them to Old Fangak, arranging flights and accommodations, and managing purchases and bank accounts. He continues to be a vital part of my work. Soon he became vital to Jill's South Sudan Medical Relief project as well as the Alaska Health Project South Sudan. Begun in 2008 by mutual friends of Jill and mine, the latter organization has, among other accomplishments, completed more than 100 boreholes, delivering safe water to areas of South Sudan that didn't have access to that necessity. In time I joined the boards of both organizations, and by now I've lost count of the number of times I have traveled to South Sudan, where the work continues.

In 2015, after moving back to North Carolina, I met some Rotarians assisting with an art fair in Durham. Within days I joined a Rotary meeting, expressed my interest in international work, and was invited to join the Rotary Club of Durham and participate on the grants committee. I jumped in with both feet and started writing a grant for improving a local park, as well as grants for Jill's project in South Sudan.

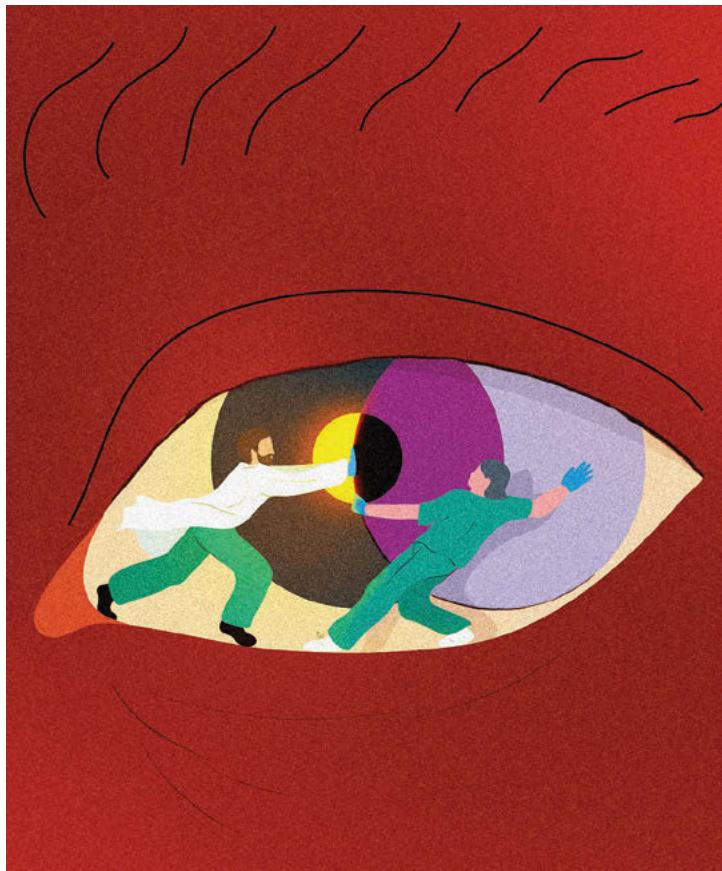
I moved to the Charlotte area in 2022, and there I became a member of the

Rotary Club of Charlotte International. Within 24 hours of joining, I wrote my first grant so as to meet the impending submission deadline. Soon I was simultaneously the lead on grants in District 7710 and District 7680 (both in North Carolina) for projects in South Sudan.

In 2022, I was in South Sudan with Jill working with the Himalayan Cataract Project. There I met Dr. Lloyd Williams, the director of the Global Ophthalmology program at Duke University, known colloquially as Duke GO. Working with the Himalayan Cataract Project, Dr. Williams regularly traveled to South Sudan to treat blindness. I watched as he performed a brief cataract surgery, which included the insertion of an inexpensive lens replacement. A day after the operation, a blind person had recovered his sight. That experience changed my life — another watershed moment in my ongoing education.

Inspired by Dr. Williams' passion for this work, I'm now devoted to expanding Rotary's involvement in avoidable blindness and vision impairment. In 2023, the Charlotte International club presented a portable operating microscope to Duke GO for Dr. Williams to use in his work in South Sudan. (My daughter Deanna, who next year will succeed me as club president, concocted an ingenious fundraiser — \$80 for Mom's 80th birthday — to celebrate my special birthday while raising funds for the microscope.) In March Deanna and I traveled to Liberia with the co-founder of Cure Blindness to participate in a cataract surgery event and speak at the Liberian Ophthalmic Association's annual meeting. And in April I traveled to Nepal with members of the Seva Foundation, which develops sustainable programs worldwide to preserve and restore sight. In Kathmandu we attended the 2030 In Sight Live conference presented by the International Agency for the Prevention for Blindness. And so my education continues.

Working with Rotarians, writing grants, and completing projects that make a difference is exhilarating. As a nurse, nurse practitioner, and educator, I had always been in a service role. Rotary turned out to be the perfect vehicle to fulfill my desire to be of service in the developing world. After decades of work and travel, I have found my tribe, people



Rotary turned out to be the perfect vehicle to fulfill my desire to be of service in the developing world.

with the vision and the heart to make a difference in the world. Through working on grants, I saw the checks and balances that protected the assets that made those grant projects possible. The Rotary Foundation was clearly the right repository for the financial resources that Carl (my husband and fellow club member) and I had set aside for humanitarian work. In 2022, we were inducted into the Arch Klumph Society at the Rotary International Convention in Houston; the following year we participated in an elevation ceremony at the convention in Melbourne and again this year in Calgary.

Seeing so many dire challenges around the world, and knowing there are resources and people committed

to solving them, motivates me to keep going. I want to spend the rest of my days working alongside people who care about those who need help, both locally and internationally. At the beginning of my recent presentation in Liberia, I announced that all speakers have a bias. I always like to know a speaker's biases, so I showed a slide of my two youngest grandchildren. And these children, I said, are *my* bias. I believe they and all children deserve a better, fairer world. We are all one family — which is why class remains in session. ■

Ann Evans, FNP, MS, DrPH, is president of the Rotary Club of Charlotte International, North Carolina.



TRUSTEE CHAIR'S MESSAGE

Get to know us

When most people join Rotary, they know little, if anything, about The Rotary Foundation.

Membership Month is a great time to highlight the powerful connection between membership and our Foundation.

People who are drawn to Rotary care deeply about their communities and want to make a substantive difference. They're looking for meaningful, hands-on ways to serve — and the Foundation helps make those opportunities possible.

Cause-based Rotary clubs are one exciting way new members are finding purpose in Rotary, and these clubs also bring fresh energy and activity to our Foundation. I invited Marisol Chianello, president of one such club, to share her perspective:

“As a nonprofit attorney, I long believed I didn’t have the time to be part of Rotary. But when I heard about a new cause-based e-club — the Rotary Club of Mental Health and Wellness District 5280 — I felt I had to be part of it.

In just three years, our club has done a lot to support mental health needs in Southern California and awarded thousands of dollars in scholarships to graduate students in the field, including one this year to a student in Uganda.

Just a few months ago, we were approved for our first global grant to provide a mix of in-person and digital mental wellness sup-

port to survivors of the 2023 earthquakes in southeastern Turkey.

Through our service, we’ve attracted new members from across the United States, including women and younger members who might not have otherwise joined Rotary. Cause-based clubs like ours offer a meaningful entry point for people committed to a specific cause — backed by the global reach and Foundation support of Rotary.”

Marisol's story reminds us what's possible when Rotary service meets Foundation support. I wonder how many cause-based club members knew the full extent of Foundation resources when they began. How many existing clubs could partner with these groups on grants?

As we build new Rotary and Rotaract clubs and welcome new members, let's keep The Rotary Foundation at the forefront. The Foundation enriches the membership experience, supports club growth, and deepens our impact.

The Rotary Foundation is more than just a source of funding; it is an invitation to endless opportunities. It's a living expression of who we are as Rotary.

The Foundation, too, can be a vital part of every member's experience when they join us or start a new club.

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?

ROTARIAN CODE OF CONDUCT

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

As a Rotarian, I will

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

GOODWILL

Join the club

Sharing my Rotary stories attracted new members — it will work for you too

By Hashim Taqvi



When I first joined Rotary in 2014, I immersed myself in the Rotary experience. I actively participated in our district's events and training sessions and met amazing people. These opportunities and connections offered me invaluable insights into the world of service and leadership. I quickly and fully embraced Rotary's mission and, inspired by my mentors, became a committed Rotarian focused on making an impact.

During district training and interactions with senior Rotarians, I learned the importance of always wearing your Rotary pin. It's not just a symbol of pride but also a conversation starter.

One day, my friend Tariq Shah noticed my Rotary pin and asked me about it. I took the opportunity to share the inspiring history of Rotary, how it came into existence, and the story of its first-ever project — a public washroom in downtown Chicago to address sanitation issues.

I also shared an powerful story about a combined project undertaken by nine Rotary clubs in Mississauga, Ontario. We partnered with the Rotary Club of Myanmar to rescue 400 women from slavery, provide them with vocational training, and empower them with sewing machines

to build a sustainable livelihood. It was a challenging yet rewarding project that was successfully completed, leaving a profound impact on the lives of those women.

Hearing these stories left a strong impression on my friend. Within a few days, he decided to join our Rotary club, inspired by the meaningful work we do.

This strategy of sharing Rotary's history and impact has helped me sponsor many members, both friends and acquaintances. The stories of service and transformation resonate deeply and inspire others to join our mission of making a difference in the world.

Since then, I've sponsored 30 additional members and brought even more members into Rotary by chartering new clubs.

Here are some tactics that have worked for me over the years:

1 Building relationships: Focus on nurturing genuine relationships and understanding individual passions for service. This has helped me connect prospective members with Rotary's mission in a meaningful way.

2 Highlighting the Rotary impact: Make sure that prospective members see the broader impact Rotary is having — from community initiatives

to global programs — while making them feel that they too can contribute meaningfully.

↑ Hashim Taqvi (left) with two people he sponsored as members, Majid Kazmi and Zohir Hasanbhai.

3 Engagement and mentorship:

Encourage new members to participate in events and training sessions to build their confidence and engagement. Guiding them step-by-step helps them envision themselves as active Rotarians.

4 Leveraging stories: Share personal anecdotes of how Rotary has transformed lives — both for those we serve and for members themselves. Your examples are a powerful motivator.

Your efforts to sponsor new members will not go unnoticed. When I was recognized as a Membership Society member, I received a letter from Past RI President Gordon McInally. I recently reached the silver level of the Membership Society for New Member Sponsors. This is an honor not only for me but for my club and district. ■

Hashim Taqvi is the immediate past president (2024-25) of the Rotary Club of Mississauga, Ontario, in District 7080.

The Membership Society for New Member Sponsors includes four recognition levels: **bronze** for Rotary members who sponsor 25 to 29 new members into their club, **silver** for those who sponsor 30 to 49 members, **gold** for those who sponsor 50 to 74 members, and **platinum** for those who sponsor 75 or more. If you sponsor a new member, you'll receive a thank you email from Rotary later that month. Once you reach 25, you'll receive an email letting you know that you are eligible to join the Membership Society.

Learn more about the Membership Society for New Member Sponsors and visit the virtual gallery of its members at rotary.org/membershipociety.

BREAKING NEWS

Olayinka Hakeem Babalola selected 2026-27 RI President

Olayinka Hakeem Babalola, a member of the Rotary Club of Trans Amadi, Nigeria, has been selected by the Board of Directors to become Rotary International's president for 2026-27. His term will begin on 1 July 2026.

The Board, guided by the RI code of policies, conducted a special session to select the organization's leader after the resignation of RI President-elect SangKoo Yun, who decided to step back from his Rotary responsibilities and focus on his recovery from recent cancer treatment.

Babalola began his Rotary journey in 1988 as a Rotaractor. He joined the Rotary Club of Trans Amadi six years later. His leadership roles include serving as district governor (2011-12), RI vice president (2019-20), and member of the RI Board (2018-20). He was also an active leader and participant in RI committees such as the End Polio Now Countdown to History Campaign Committee (2017-23) and the Nigeria National PolioPlus Committee (2013-present, adviser 2016-present).

Babalola received a university degree in engineering in 1988. He has worked for 25 years in the oil and gas industry, holding senior positions in Shell PLC and carrying out projects on four continents. He is the founder of two companies: Riviera Services Ltd., an oil and gas infrastructure delivery company, and Lead and Change Consulting, an executive coaching and organizational performance advisory group.

Babalola's professional affiliations include the Nigerian Society of Engineers, the Institute of Safety Professionals, and the Association of Change Management Practitioners. He is a member of Jericho Business Club, an organization in



his home city that provides input to governments on economic and social policy.

Babalola and his wife, Preba, live in the city of Port Harcourt. He supports The Rotary Foundation with a named endowment and as an Arch Klumph Society member. A trustee of ShelterBox UK and director of the Safe Blood Africa project, he is a recipient of the Africa Centennial Heroes Award, the Regional Service Award for a Polio-Free World, the RI Service Above Self Award, and The Rotary Foundation Citation for Meritorious Service.

The president of Rotary International serves a one-year term, presiding over the Board of Directors and providing inspirational leadership for the organization. As the spokesperson for the global network, the president visits clubs around the world to promote Rotary's values and represent the organization at major events. Rotary chooses its president from members who have demonstrated extensive leadership experience within Rotary, including service as a club president, district governor, and member of the Board. ■

Above: Babalola began his Rotary journey in 1988 as a Rotaractor. He joined the Rotary Club of Trans Amadi six years later. His leadership roles include serving as district governor, RI vice president, and member of the RI Board.

A path to flood recovery

By Thanijporn Khomson, Anurak Napawan,
and Kamonchanok Piromsiripan



Many longtime residents of northern Thailand never expected floods so severe. It had been years since storms produced any flooding at all. But last August and September, major rivers overflowed their banks, damaging livelihoods, agriculture, and local economies. Rotary members, some of whom were among those affected, were ready and willing to help.

In Nan province, the home of Nithi Soongswang, a past governor of District 3360, was flooded with water up to a meter high. A surge from the Nan River quickly flooded areas nearby as well as in the city, where people were unprepared. Fortunately, the water drained into the main water basins, but three days of flooding significantly disrupted the local economy.

In Phrae province, the Yom River

overflowed and submerged roads in the city by over a meter, halting transportation and causing widespread damage. Sompong and Thanaita Sangboonyanithi, both past presidents of the Rotary Club of Wiangkosal, also experienced flooding in their home, a first in all the years they had lived there.

Lampang province was no different, with several towns and districts experiencing heavy flooding, especially in the Hang Chat and Ko Kha districts, where water overflowed into farmland and affected more than 500 homes. Rotary members in Lampang used flat-bottomed boats to transport food and water to affected residents.

Heavy rains caused the Kok and Lao rivers to overflow, flooding houses, especially in Thoeng, Muang Chiang Rai, and Phan districts.

Runoff from inundated forests and mudflows crossing from Myanmar submerged the Mae Sai district. Residents said the area had not flooded so badly in the past 60 years.

Rotary Centre in Thailand brings aid

In October, a team from Bangkok-based Rotary Centre in Thailand, led by Niwes Khunavisarut, a past governor of District 3340, along with members of the Rotary Club of Maesai and representatives of the Kuang Meng Foundation, brought essential supplies funded by the Thai Rotary District Foundation to the north. Traveling by truck, the team found that the dried mud on the roads had turned to dust. Numerous volunteers and officials were clearing the area with excavators, trucks, and mud vacuums.

When multiple floods struck northern Thailand, Rotary members were quick to respond with supplies, volunteers, and funds.

The team used the house of Khun Pueng, daughter of the community leader, as a relief distribution point. She explained that the Ban Pam Kwai community was once a buffalo pasture. Today, it has 120 households, and the road floods every year. This time, however, flooding occurred twice and the water was unusually forceful. Flooding in September inundated the entire first floor of her house, with water marks still visible above the doorframe. The second round of flooding, a month later, reached waist-high. Rotary was the first organization to provide assistance to the community, distributing blankets and other relief supplies.

The Rotary Club of Maesai demonstrated Rotary's strength and dedication. Past President Vanit Yotharvut recounted how the club received an overwhelming amount of donated food and other supplies, although the goods proved difficult to deliver. During the first week, rescue teams from Myanmar were hired to carry food over the water and across barriers. After the water receded, Rotary members aimed to deliver more supplies but encountered mud-clogged roads. The club used mud excavators and trucks to help clear the road.

Furniture and household items had been piled up as waste, with no place to dispose of them. Volunteers organized a cleaning day, but the excessive mud (2 meters high in some areas) meant that even half a day's work only cleared one corner of a temple hall. Heavy machinery couldn't access homes, so military aid was needed. This disaster highlighted the population density of the community, which will require extensive time, infrastructure repair, and funding to fully recover.

The Rotary Club of Maechan requested 150,000 baht (US\$5,000) in disaster funds from The Rotary Foundation, with the club adding 100,000 baht (US\$3,000) and District 3360 adding 30,000 baht (US\$1,000), totaling 280,000 baht (US\$9,000) by the end of the project. Rotary members from Chiang Mai province brought necessities such as bedding. Thirayud

Watanathirawoot, a past governor of District 3340, donated hundreds of rice cookers, and the Satya Sai Foundation donated 200 bedding sets. The Rotary Club of Jomtien-Pattaya set up a water filter that could produce up to 10,000 liters (2,600 gallons) of clean water per day. Additional monetary donations came from various sources, totaling about 200,000 baht (US\$6,000).

Rotary Centre team expands its reach

After helping flood victims in Lampang province and Mae Sai district, the Rotary Centre team traveled to Chiang Mai province to join Apisak Jompong, governor of District 3360, and the team led by Adisorn Seksonwiriya, District 3360's community service chair, and members of the Rotary Club of Chiang Mai. The group coordinated with the Ban Waen subdistrict in Hang Dong district, arranging for flood victims to receive relief supplies and cleaning equipment at the community hall.

A gift to The Rotary Foundation directed to the Disaster Response Fund helps communities in crisis across the globe. Make a contribution at my.rotary.org/donate.



In some areas, roads were submerged by more than a meter of water, causing widespread damage and hindering relief efforts.

In this area, floodwaters rose to about a meter, damaging many belongings. Most flood victims were older residents unable to clean their homes. Residents expressed a need for additional bedding and blankets.

The next destination for the Rotary Centre team was Sukhothai province. While in Chiang Mai province, the team received a message from Saowanee Supakamonseenee, president of the Rotary Club of Sukhothai, that Si Samrong district was still heavily flooded. Finally, the water subsided, allowing the team to deliver relief supplies as planned.

In Si Samrong district, 50 households had experienced two rounds of flooding. Some residents had relocated to temples, while others paddled boats to collect relief supplies. For people who could not leave home, the team delivered relief supplies and cleaning equipment by boat.

The fieldwork allowed the team to witness the dedication of clubs in the region, such as the Rotary clubs of Doiprabaht, Muang Ko Kha, Mae-sai, Chiang Mai, Sukhothai, Sawnkaloke, and Sawankhaloke North. Despite facing their own challenges, members demonstrated selflessness and generosity, embodying the true spirit of Service Above Self.

Rotary clubs across District 3360 assisted affected communities, providing supplies, cleaning equipment, and drinking water. Rotarians in Chiang Rai and Chiang Mai provinces set up a mobile kitchen to prepare food for flood victims, showcasing Rotary's spirit of friendship and cooperation.

"In every crisis, there is an opportunity to build friendships," concludes Seksonwiriya, community service chair for District 3360. "Let us continue doing good for the community, with compassionate hearts, together." ■

Thanijporn Khomson is a past president of the Rotary Club of Doiprabaht, Lampang. Anurak Napawan is a past governor of District 3360 (Thailand). Kamonchanok Piromsiripan works with the Rotary Centre in Thailand.

2026 CONVENTION

Vacation made easy



Rotary members are an adventurous bunch and use the annual convention as a chance to explore the sights and culture in the host city and the surrounding region, often exploring with a group of RI friends. When you're in Taipei 13-17 June for the Rotary International Convention, you'll find endless getaway options — many right near the event.

Mountains are always within reach from this metropolis. A short distance from the exhibition center, board the Maokong Gondola outside the Taipei Zoo (pandas and native scaly pangolins inside!). Ride up the slope to reach hiking trails that pass mountainside terraces of oolong tea farms, or stop at a teahouse to slurp up dumplings and slowly sip a cup of tea made from the plants growing nearby.

An exploration of Taipei may take you to night market food stalls, hot springs, a

museum of ancient treasures, or the observatory at the top of the tower that dominates the skyline: Taipei 101. And you can visit one (or more!) of Taiwan's thousands of temples for varied faiths and folk deities.

Your family or travel companions are welcome at the convention. The more the merrier when we're thinking big together about how to improve the world. Big-stage sessions are inspirational extravaganzas that dazzle the audience — with Rotary traditions including the flag ceremony, world-altering figures like Nobel Prize winners, and unforgettable singers, dancers, and other performers.

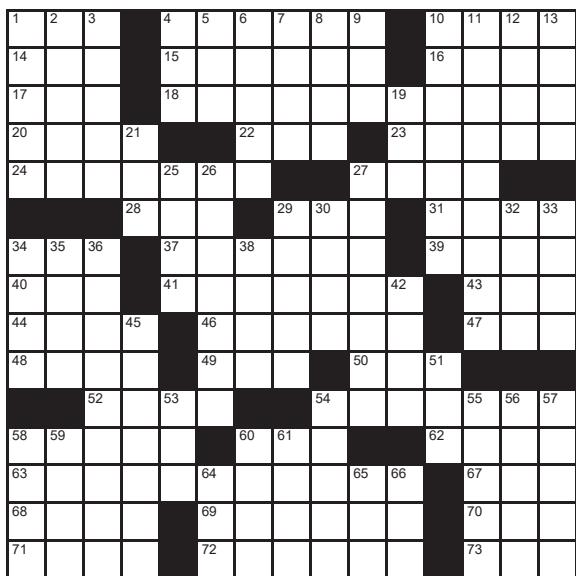
Build your travel plan around exciting convention exhibitions that everyone will enjoy. Plus, Rotary organizers in Taiwan will design exclusive experiences and tours to make seeing the island a snap. Your next vacation is planned! ■

Learn more and register at convention.rotary.org.

CROSSWORD

Colorful terms

By Victor Fleming
Rotary Club of Little Rock, Arkansas



Solution on **opposite page**

ACROSS

- 1 Part of FWIW
- 4 Sailor guy
- 10 Cultural start?
- 14 Fishbowl accessory
- 15 Composure
- 16 It may be fenced
- 17 Airport rental
- 18 Kind of worker
- 20 "I ___ my wit's end!"
- 22 1 of 100 in D.C.
- 23 "I Am Woman" singer
- 24 Another problem?!"
- 27 The French Connection cop
- 28 Former nuclear agcy.
- 29 Miracle-__
- 31 A bunch
- 34 Consumer protection org.
- 37 Went to a diner, perhaps
- 39 Craft store bundle
- 40 ___ and vinegar
- 41 Drink paired with beef
- 43 Boy in a Johnny Cash song
- 44 Ares' father
- 46 Ketcham's cartoon menace
- 47 ___ Sun Also Rises
- 48 Sandwichy cookie
- 49 Add-___ (extras)
- 50 EMT's forte
- 52 Don ___
- 54 See 38-Down
- 58 Amphitheater levels
- 60 Steph Curry's org.
- 62 Artist's "Done!"
- 63 1877 Anna Sewell novel
- 67 "Dear old" family member
- 68 "Auld Lang ___"
- 69 Brain twister
- 70 Prevarication
- 71 Fail's opposite
- 72 Ascertain
- 73 Significant stretch
- 19 ___ pro nobis
- 21 Old United rival
- 25 Use one's ears
- 26 Responded to
- 27 Naughty, say
- 29 Academic robes
- 30 Archaeological site
- 32 Dude, in slang
- 33 Dagger of yore
- 34 Annoying person
- 35 Brauhaus beverage
- 36 Casual denim wear
- 38 Garden in 54-Across
- 42 College GameDay airer
- 45 Footnote data
- 51 Foul caller
- 53 "That's a big ___"
- 54 Gun barrel
- 55 Emulate a crab
- 56 "... the bombs bursting ___"
- 57 Better half of a 45, usually
- 58 Abbr. in a recipe
- 59 Ehrenburg, Kovalchuk, or Frank
- 60 Hawaii's state bird
- 61 Minnows, often
- 64 Board partner
- 65 HBO competitor
- 66 China's Sun ___-sen

J. Alfonso L. Katigbak
Chairman of the Board



KatigbakRoofing.com

Rotary
Club of Manila

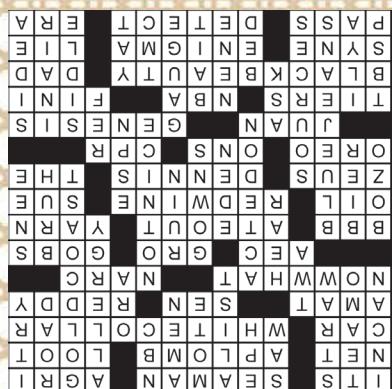
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PROUD MEMBER
Rotary



"Every Mother Matters,
Every Child Counts"

PRESIDENT TERESITA TOLENTINO FAMILIY DAY

1000 pieces, 1000 sets - 1000 sets
1000 pieces, 1000 sets - 1000 sets
1000 pieces, 1000 sets - 1000 sets
1000 pieces, 1000 sets - 1000 sets



directly benefit 100 pregnant women
by 100 and surrounding underprivileged
communities.

ASSISTANCE PACKAGES

- MILK PACKS
- FERROUS SULFATE VITAMINS
- BABY BREASTFEEDING & PILLOWS
- HAMPIGNON T-SHIRT W/ JOHN BROWN
- HEALTH TALKS & NUTRITION CONFERENCES
- CONSULTATION WITH DOCTORS

Rotary

Club of Aseana Manila
District 3810



AKS SHERYLL ANN MESINA

United Chosen President
RY 2025-2026

TOGETHER, WE

SAVE LIVES

Rotary  PEOPLE OF ACTION