

Philippine Rotary

MAGAZINE

NOVEMBER 2025

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Rotary 

ROTARY INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION

TAIPEI, TAIWAN | 13-17 JUNE 2026



Register and pay in full by 15 December 2025,
before prices increase, at convention.rotary.org.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Let us give with gratitude

This November, as we celebrate The Rotary Foundation, I invite you to consider not only what we give but why we give. The Foundation is more than a fund for projects. It is the beating heart of our promise that service, rooted in trust and friendship, can create lasting change.

Our Action Plan calls us to increase our impact, and the Foundation is how we make this vision real. Since 1988, Rotary and our partners have immunized nearly 3 billion children against polio. We have committed more than \$2.6 billion to this cause, and last year alone we directed \$146 million toward the final push for eradication. These numbers are significant, but the true impact is not in statistics — it is in the lives of children who will never again fear polio. It is in the hope restored to families and the peace built in communities once defined by disease.

But polio is only one story among many. Each year, Rotary Peace Centers train new generations of leaders who will transform conflict into dialogue and division into understanding. In 2023-24, nearly 100 new fellows began their studies, continuing a legacy of more than 1,800 peacebuilders from over 140 countries. When we invest in them, we are planting seeds of peace that will bear fruit for decades to come.

The Foundation also touches lives through

district and global grants, supporting projects large and small. A clean water well for a rural community, scholarships for young professionals, medical care in the wake of disaster — these are not temporary gestures, but steps toward dignity, resilience, and opportunity. This is how Rotary service becomes lasting impact. And when natural disasters strike, our Foundation allows Rotary to act quickly with disaster response grants.

Our Foundation is not about what we can do alone but what we can do together. Each contribution, no matter its size, joins with others to create a collective act of faith in humanity and in the future.

The last mile of any great journey is always the hardest. We see this in our final steps toward ending polio, in our work for peace, and in every project that seeks to lift people out of despair. Yet every time we give, we declare that our work will continue regardless of the challenge.

This November, let us give with gratitude, with joy, and with hope. Through our Foundation, we *Unite for Good*, and in doing so, we leave behind not only projects but a legacy of peace, trust, and Service Above Self.

FRANCESCO AREZZO

President, Rotary International



▲ ON THE COVER:
With help, one peace fellow can spark significant change: the strategies of a new class of peacebuilders. Photograph by Faid Elgziry.



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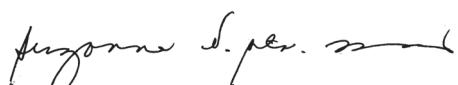
What's your leadership story?

Our "Unite for Good" District Governors and Club Presidents now find themselves at the midpoint of their terms. Over the past five months, they have begun to write the narrative of their leadership — one defined by service, purpose, and collective endeavor. With seven months remaining, this is a fitting time to pause and reflect: *How will their leadership be remembered? What enduring legacy will they leave behind?*

To leave a legacy is to create a lasting, positive impact on people and communities through meaningful actions and significant accomplishments. Such a legacy may be *tangible*, as in the construction of a schoolhouse, the establishment of a scholarship endowment, or the initiation of a sustainable project. It may also be *intangible*, as in the cultivation of goodwill, the creation of cherished memories, or the imparting of wisdom and inspiration. Whatever its form, a legacy endures in the hearts and minds of those who continue the journey long after the term of leadership has concluded.

Leadership within Rotary may be likened to a relay race — one that is not complete until the baton is faithfully passed to the next runner. The true test of a leader lies not only in running one's leg of the race with determination and grace, but also in ensuring that the baton is handed over smoothly and securely to the next leader. For if the baton is dropped, the entire team falters. Likewise, the term of a Governor or President is fulfilled only when their accomplishments, principles, and spirit of service are successfully imparted to those who will follow.

Ultimately, a true and lasting legacy is measured by what we inspire in others. It is a legacy built upon friendship, love, and integrity — one that directs future generations toward Rotary's Four-Way Test, upholding truth, fairness, goodwill, and friendship as the guiding principles of all endeavors.



SUE VILLA STA. MARIA
Chairman, PRMFI



"The true test of a leader lies not only in running one's leg of the race with determination and grace, but also in ensuring that the baton is handed over smoothly and securely to the next leader."

Philippine Rotary

THE MAGAZINE OF CHOICE

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Where leaders emerge and thrive

Being a District Learning Facilitator is a continuing source of energy, enthusiasm and fulfillment. Through more than four decades of being a Rotarian, the classification I've held is People Management, even while I had been privileged to serve in the executive branch.

To witness the emergence, growth and development of new Rotary leaders is truly a rewarding experience. Many of today's rising club leaders are entrepreneurs in technology-oriented organizations, or fast-rising managers in established organizations that are reinventing themselves to keep pace with the vectors of progress.

Rotary is providing learning resources that support the tapping of senior Rotarians into becoming Rotary Mentors. The Mentor need not be the Sponsor; in fact, it is preferable that the Mentor is different from the Sponsor, to afford both Mentor and Mentee to develop a robust relationship in being fellow Rotarians.

Mentors need to proactively check with their Mentee answering questions and helping the new member better understand Rotary. This should be enhanced through participation in club meetings and projects. Teaching the Mentee the basics of a "classification talk" and arrange for the new Rotarian to give a classification talk within the first two months of membership is also imperative.

The new Rotarian must also become aware of Rotary resources including: District Training Assembly, Rotary Leadership Institute, District Conference, Club's Ebulletin, Philippine Rotary Magazine and the Rotary International website.

It is also important for the new Rotarian to become engaged in a committee or activity that enables him or her to get to know fellow members better. Moreover, there must be early appreciation of the vital importance of The Rotary Foundation and how every Rotarian can support its programs through the Every Rotarian Every Year (EREY) program.

Getting together for lunch, coffee or dinner would also enable Mentors to develop a relationship with their mentees outside of Rotary.

In sum, there are multiple benefits that may be achieved through a positive Mentor-Mentee relationship. If carried out purposively, this will enable the mentee to become a renewed Rotarian who understands and exemplifies the ethos of service to humanity.



"To witness the emergence, growth and development of new Rotary leaders is truly a rewarding experience. Many of today's rising club leaders are entrepreneurs in technology-oriented organizations, or fast-rising managers in established organizations that are reinventing themselves to keep pace with the vectors of progress."

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sonny Coloma".

SONNY COLOMA
Editor-in-chief



D3820 FOCUS

HeartWorking District 3820

by Sue Villa-Sta. Maria

"We have just twelve short months to make a difference, to leave a mark, to bring change. Let us act with urgency, with passion, with integrity."

— D3820 Governor Jeremie S. Lo

Spanning a broad and vibrant territory in the southeastern Philippines, Rotary International District 3820 stands as a powerhouse of service, leadership, and compassion. The district encompasses Laguna, Batangas, Quezon (including Alabat Island), Oriental Mindoro, Marinduque, the entire Bicol Region (Camarines Norte, Camarines Sur, Catanduanes, Albay, Sorsogon, Masbate), Romblon, and Aurora.

This expansive district thrives through 129 Rotary Clubs and more than 4,000 members, supported by 92 Rotaract Clubs that cultivate the next generation of leaders.

At the helm is District Governor (DG) Jeremie S. Lo — affectionately known as JLo, whose year of service champions his personal rallying theme: "HeartWorking."

Firmly aligned with the RI theme, Unite for Good, DG JLo's leadership focuses on the three pillars that drive Rotary's mission forward: Membership and Club Growth, Support for The Rotary Foundation (TRF), and Public Image, highlighted by his legacy initiative — the iconic Rotary Marker.

LEADERSHIP NOT ABOUT BEING ONSTAGE

DG JLo began his term by carefully building his leadership team. Aware that a Governor's tenure is brief, he reminded them:

"We have just twelve short months to make a difference, to leave a mark, to bring change. Let us act with urgency, with passion, with integrity."

He emphasizes that true leadership is not defined by titles, positions, or popularity, but is grounded in responsibility and accountability. It is not about being onstage and being seen; it is about being on the ground: seeing others, working with them, lifting them up, and empowering them to lead.

Above all, DG JLo encourages every Rotarian to serve with a heart: "a heart that cares, that gives, and that serves out of love."

MEMBERSHIP AND CLUB DEVELOPMENT

Reflecting the spirit of Unite for Good, DG JLo encourages unity rooted in empathy, collaboration, and shared purpose. He stresses that every Rotarian's commitment to recruiting, nurturing, and retaining members strengthens Rotary's capacity to create lasting change.



As of September 2025, District 3820 has recorded a 100 percent retention rate in 140 out of 153 clubs, an impressive 91.5 percent. The top clubs in membership growth include RC Lipa South with 17 new members, RC Metro Mauban with 14, and RC Malvar and RC San Pascual with 13 each. Leading in total membership count are RC Downtown Calapan, 96, RC Bauan, 91, and RC Iriga, 89.

TRF GIVING THAT CHANGES LIVES

Rotary's heart beats strongest through generosity. District 3820 has long been a leader in supporting The Rotary Foundation (TRF), consistently topping Zone 10A in Annual Fund Giving, per capita contributions, and number of donors.

The TRF Appreciation and Celebration of Giving was held at the Makati Shangri-La, graced by the presence of TRF Trustee Chair and Past RI President Holger Knaack and spouse Susanne. Over 250 Rotarians, including Past RI Director Raffy Garcia, honored exemplary donors.

The district is preparing for another TRF Recognition Night in November 2025, where new donors will be celebrated. DG JLO aims to pursue a major Global Grant that will match or surpass the impact of notable achievements such as the Marinduque Hemodialysis Clinic. He continues to promote contributions through the EREY program to sustain Rotary's humanitarian mission.

ICONIC ROTARY MARKER

One of DG JLo's flagship initiatives is the Iconic Rotary Marker Project, envisioned as a Guinness World Record holder and a lasting symbol of Rotary's unity.

Set to rise in Bula, Camarines Sur along the Maharlika Highway, the towering structure—82 feet high and 65 feet wide—will be built of steel and stone to endure for at least 100 years.

It will feature a Helping Hands Wall, honoring the clubs and partners who brought the TRF vision to life.

The groundbreaking on August 17 gathered Rotarians, local government officials, and community leaders. Beyond serving as a monument, the marker stands as a reminder that every act of kindness strengthens communities and inspires service.

Complementing this initiative, clubs across District 3820 are installing Rotary markers in towns and cities, reinforcing Rotary's presence as a beacon of hope.

Recent unveilings include RC Bauan's second marker in Barangay Sto. Domingo and RC Cabuyao's marker in Barangay Sala.



Opposite top and above: "Unite for Good" Presidents mix learning and laughter at their Pre-PELS held at the New Town Plaza Hotel in Baguio City.

Below left: DG Jereemie Lo, fondly called "JLO," leads D3820 with a heart.



First and second row: At the Vibrant Seminar, DG JLO focused on the three pillars that drive Rotary—Public Image, The Rotary Foundation (TRF), and Membership.

Bottom row: “Unite for Good” Presidents mix learning and laughter at their Pre-PELS held at the New Town Plaza Hotel in Baguio City.



HEARTWORKING VILLAGES

At the core of DG JLO’s vision is the development of HeartWorking Villages—communities adopted by clubs and transformed through integrated initiatives addressing Rotary’s seven areas of focus:

- RC Nuvali: Launched its HeartWorking Village as “a dream built on compassion and collaboration.”
- RC Cabuyao: Sustained education and health programs, including school-based feeding initiatives in partnership with PTAs.
- RC Rosario Batangas: Implemented livelihood trainings, financial literacy, health missions, and

fellowships in Barangay Leviste.

- RC Downtown Calapan: Partnered with the Red Cross for its “Blood Offering, Blood of Life” initiative.
- RC Bauan: Delivered a Global Grant project with RC SaeJinju (Korea) to establish a Newborn Hearing Screening Facility at Bauan General Hospital.

These initiatives reflect Rotary’s commitment to compassion in action—feeding the hungry, uplifting families, and improving access to healthcare and opportunity.



Top row: District 3820 celebrates the groundbreaking of the Iconic Rotary Marker, envisioned to be the tallest Rotary marker in the world; TRF Trustee Chair, Past RI President Holger Knaack, speaks at the TRF Appreciation and Celebration of Giving held at the Makati Shangri-La Hotel.



Second row: RC Barako Batangas pays a courtesy call to Congresswoman Beverly Rose Dimacuha; The district is preparing for another TRF Recognition Night in November 2025, where new donors will be celebrated.

Bottom row: D3820 Rotarians celebrate TRF at Makati Shangri-La Hotel.



EDUCATION AND YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

Across the district, clubs support scholarships, school feeding programs, and literacy projects.

A flagship initiative is i-HEARTS Project 01 at Kabulusan Integrated National High School in Pakil, Laguna that provides a modern classroom, a computer lab, and sanitation facilities to enhance both learning and well-being.

Rotaract and Interact Clubs remain dynamic partners in service. As DG JLO affirms: “Rotaractors are not just our collaborators—they are our successors, the future of Rotary.”

Events such as the Rotaract-initiated Palarota-

ract 2025 strengthened camaraderie among young leaders through sportsmanship and fellowship.

RAPID DISASTER RELIEF

Disaster response has always revealed the district's compassion at its finest.

Through Heart at Work Relief Operations, clubs mobilize rapidly to support families affected by typhoons, floods, and fires.

- RC Batangas Barako Premier exemplifies this spirit with its “Kalinga ng Barako” program—swiftly responding to crises with the vow: “Sa gitna ng unos, may Barako na kikilos”



Clockwise from above: Clubs across the district are installing Rotary markers to reinforce Rotary's presence: RC Metro Malvar; RC Cabuyao; RC Tiaong-Hiyas; RC Bauan; RC Lipa; RC Batangas.



(In the midst of disaster, Barako helps).

- In Cabuyao, RC Cabuyao Circle and RC Tiaong-Hiyas distributed relief meals to flood victims.
- RC Bauan and RC Metro Bauan worked closely with Interact Clubs for flood and polio relief initiatives.

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

DG JLo encourages clubs to embrace digital transformation to improve collaboration and efficiency. Through strategic partnerships, clubs are adopting streamlined, paperless processes that make service more effective and sustainable.

HIGH-IMPACT COLLABORATION

District 3820 thrives through collaboration.

- RC Batangas Barako Premier's courtesy visit to Congresswoman Beverly Rose Dimacuha opened opportunities for sustainable programs.
- RC Cabuyao, RC Pila West, and Alay Kalusugan ng Pamilyang Pilipino formalized year-round eye care initiatives.
- RC San Pablo, in partnership with Japan-based organizations and donors, implemented "Wrapped in Love" — providing handwashing stations, wheelchairs, medicines, and maternal care kits.



END POLIO NOW

District 3820 remains unwavering in Rotary's global campaign to End Polio Now. Clubs organize motorcades, rallies, Zumbathons, and fun runs to raise awareness and mobilize advocacy.

Notable activities include *Takbo Kontra Polio* by RC Goa Partido and the *Ride to End Polio Now 2025*, a cross-provincial motorcycle fellowship led by the International Fellowship of Motorcycling Rotarians.

Across the district, celebrations of World Polio Day echo Rotary's message: the

fight continues until the world is finally and fully polio-free.

HEARTWORK LEGACY

DG JLo's HeartWork vision encapsulates the essence of District 3820—service grounded in unity, compassion, and purpose. From the towering Rotary Marker in Bula to the simplest act of kindness in HeartWorking Villages, Rotarians and Rotaractors of District 3820 embody a spirit of giving without expecting anything in return. ■

First and second row: DG JLo dutifully holds his Governor's Visits to the clubs: RC Sta Rosa Centro; RC Batangas Barako Premier; RC Pinamalyan Central; RC Lucena College Junction.

Bottom row: End Polio Now was vigorously campaigned across the district: RC Bauan, RC Metro Bauan, and Interact Club of Bauan; RC Naga and Rotaract Club of Naga.



First to third rows:
DG JLO graces the induction events:
RC Metro Lucena;
RC Cosmopolitan
Lucena; RC San
Pablo City; RC
Metro Mauban; RC
Rinconada.

Bottom row: DG
JLO at the induction
event of RC
Lipa South; The
International Fel-
lowship of Motorcy-
cling Rotarians.





Top row: RC Rosario Batangas brings food and educational supplies for day-care children; RC San Pablo City conducts a feeding program in a public school.

Second row: RC Atimonan Lakambini distributes eye-glasses to senior citizens; RC Buan holds a dental mission for school children.

Third row: RC Rosario Batangas Wheels of Hope; RC Buan in cooperation with RC Sin Jou turns over newborn hearing screening and testing kits.

Bottom row: RC Batangas Barako Premier conducts a feeding program and donates a wheelchair.

Jeremie Lo: Serving with heart

A man with courage, conviction, and compassion. He is a man who opted to take the road less travelled, the road where certainty is uncertain, the road where only the bold would dare to conquer, the road where only the visionaries dare to walk fearlessly. Because he serves with a heart, he is fondly called the HeartWorking District Governor (DG), more popularly known by his initials, JLo.

DG JLo earned his Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration from the University of Nueva Caceres. His pursuit of excellence led him to complete a Master's Degree in Entrepreneurship from the prestigious Ateneo de Manila University. He further enriched his global perspective through a graduate program at Harvard Business School.

Even before completing his formal education, HeartWorking DG JLo was already immersed in the world of business. He is committed to agricultural advancement, car dealership, manufacturing, and distribution.

PASSIONATE NATION-BUILDER

Beyond business, HeartWorking DG JLo is a passionate nation-builder. He plays active roles in the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Philippine Red Cross, and Habitat for Humanity. He also chairs the JLo Big Heart Foundation, which focuses on community empowerment and social development.

An adventurer at heart, he is also a former off-roader and served as Board Director and Vice President for Luzon of the National Association of Filipino Off-Roaders (NASFOR) and founding president of the Bicol Off-Road Club.

Aside from his dynamic role in various social and civic organizations, he served as *Hermano Mayor*, guiding and supporting religious and cultural activi-

ties with dedication and humility. His participation reflects not only his devotion but also his belief in the importance of preserving tradition while fostering unity and compassion among people.

Above all, he is a loving father to three children, who, despite understanding the weight of his responsibilities, admire his deep passion for service and commitment to making a difference.

ILLUSTRIOUS JOURNEY

HeartWorking DG JLo joined the Rotary Club (RC) of Naga in 2010 and rose through the ranks with distinction. In Rotary Year 2016-2017, he served as Club President under the banner of "All Star Presidents" led by the late PDG Dindo Katigbak.

As president of RC Naga, the club completed all district and presidential citation requirements, earning recognition as the Most Outstanding Club in the Platinum Category. JLo was also awarded as the Most Outstanding All Star Club President in the same category.

His journey to becoming District Governor of RI District 3820 is one of dedication, authenticity, and results. He believes that his business success is not just personal—it is a tool to uplift lives. This belief drives his desire to bring positive transformation not just to clubs but to the communities they serve.

VISION WITH A HEART

As HeartWorking District Governor, JLo's vision is simple yet powerful: empower leaders, engage clubs, and create lasting impact. He is passionate about unifying the district and encouraging deeper collaboration between clubs and district committees to improve service delivery and inspire action.

He is a man of integrity and humility—an embodiment of *Bayanihang May Puso*—inspiring Rotarians and



From top: DG JLo is a loving father to three children; His journey to becoming District Governor of D3820 is one of dedication, authenticity, and results.

community leaders to serve not for recognition, but for love of people and purpose.

His vision is clear: to make Rotary District 3820 a beacon of excellence, service, and unity in the Philippines and beyond.

Through bold initiatives, strategic empowerment, and a deep sense of purpose, he continues to lead the district with the same heart that first led him to Rotary—the heart that serves. ■

KUWENTO NG TAGUMPAY!

Ryan E. Miranda, Seaman at Palay Farmer | Victoria, Tarlac

Bilang isang seaman na nahilig sa pagsasaka ng palay, hindi ko akalaing matatagpuan ko ang isang produktong tunay na game-changer — ang **Biota Max™**. Isa ako sa mga unang gumamit nito nang in-offer ng **My Happy Farmer** sa tulong ni Sir Rolando Benosa, at hanggang ngayon, hindi na ako bumitiw.

Dahil sa Biota Max™, tumaas ang ani ko mula 5 tons hanggang 8 tons, kahit mabuhangin ang lupa! Hindi ko na rin kailangang gumamit pa ng fungicide o bactericide — preventive spray na lang ang gamit ko ngayon laban sa stemborer.



Nasubok din ang bisa ng **Biota Max™** nang mag-apply ako ng 8 dumptruck ng fresh chicken manure sa aking 1.4 hektaryang palayan. Sa halip na masira, lalo pang gumanda ang lupa ko, salamat sa tamang land preparation at tulong ng **Biota Max™**.

Noong tag-ulang, dalawang beses nabaha ang aking taniman. Nang humupa ang tubig at nagsimulang magkasakit ang palay, muling nakatulong ang **Biota Max™**, kasabay ng paggamit ng foliar (0-0-60). Unti-unting bumalik ang sigla ng palay at naiwasan namin ang pagkalugi.

Bilang financer ng aking mga kasamang magsasaka, mahalaga sa akin na siguradong may kita bawat cropping. Naniniwala akong magagawa ito sa pamamagitan ng tamang paghahanda, wastong pamamaraan, at siyempre, sa sikretoong malupit — ang **Biota Max™**.

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- *Bacillus laterosporus*
- *Bacillus licheniformis*
- *Bacillus megaterium*
- *Bacillus pumilus*
- *Paenibacillus polymyxa*

Beneficial Fungi Contents

- *Trichoderma harzianum*
- *Trichoderma viride*
- *Trichoderma koningii*
- *Trichoderma polysporum*

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RC MARIKINA VALLEY

Healthy moms, happy tots

by Andy Alcantara and Amy Alcantara

The Rotary Club of Marikina Valley, through the 7-in-1 High Impact Project, initiated a complete and inclusive Maternal and Child Health Care project in Purok 3 of Barangay Pintong Bukawe, a remote farming community. The beneficiaries of this project are largely composed of farmers and wives of farmers to provide them with access to basic healthcare and medical literacy.

The Healthy Moms, Happy Tots project delivered a wide array of free health services designed and intended for women and children. The women from the farming households were able to receive free Pap smear screenings to help support the early detection and prevention of cervical cancer. This is a life-saving intervention which is often unavailable for those in far-flung areas.

Pregnant and expectant mothers were also given full check-ups and counseling on proper prenatal care. The children from the community also received vitamins and supplements to strengthen their nutrition and immunity from sickness.

The program also included free circumcision for boys as part of their hygiene and preventive care, which is the very purpose of this intervention.

This project allowed the community to be educated and empowered. Mothers were given proper guidance on relevant topics such as maternal health, infant care, nutrition, disease prevention, and proper hygiene for the whole family. ■

The co-authors are president and past president, respectively, of the Rotary Club of Marikina Valley, D3800.



This page: The Healthy Moms, Happy Tots project of the RC Marikina Valley delivered a wide array of free health services for women and children. The women from the farming households were able to receive free Pap smear screenings to help support the early detection and prevention of cervical cancer. Pregnant and expectant mothers were also given full check-ups and counseling on proper prenatal care.





RC MARIKINA NORTH

‘Pagbasa tingo sa pag-asa’

by Tonipi Parungao

For the second straight year, the Rotary Club of Marikina North undertook its annual basic education and literacy project for the benefit of the kindergarten pupils of SSS Village Elementary School last Oct. 22.

This involved conducting story telling sessions to promote the habit of and love for reading by club members and spouses, as well as providing free snacks and distributing gift packs to the pupils, under the direction of project chair Past President Bong Ubaldo.

This year’s edition, under the leadership of President Mark Macallan, was an even bigger event, as funds from The Rotary Foundation through a District Grant enabled the club to scale it up and expand the scope to cover all the kindergarten pupils of the school.

Here, then, is Year 2 of the “Pagbasa Tungo sa Pag-Asa” service project, by the numbers:

424 kindergarten pupils. 424 Chick-enjoy meal sets. 424 gift packs (each containing assorted toiletries and a whistle for earthquake drills). 16 Rotarians, spouses, and family members. 15 other volunteers. 10 Adarna big books. 8 story tellers. 2 hours. 1 public elementary school. 1 District Grant. 1 Rotary Club United For Good! ■

The author is a Past District Governor of D3800.

RC MARIKINA VALLEY

‘CacaoNut’ for growth

by Andy Alcantara and Amy Alcantara

As part of the Rotary Club of Marikina Valley’s “7-in-1 High Impact Project,” and in partnership with the agriculture department of the Municipality of San Mateo, Rizal, the program “Cacao at Niyog, Hatid ay Asensong Malusog” promotes inclusive and sustainable community growth by introducing an intercropping method that integrates cacao and coconut, both economically and ecologically.

The innovative CacaoNut Program introduces an intercropping method that combines cacao and coconut within a single production system. Through this method, the productivity of land massively increases and strengthens the livelihood of farmers. It also helps in diversifying their income streams, improves the fertility of the soil, reduces the risk of erosion, and promotes climate adaptability.

To support the farmers’ economic upliftment, the Rotary Club of Marikina Valley initiated the donation of the 300 cacao seedlings. Cacao trees were distributed to about 100 farmers in Purok 3 during the first rollout.

The long-term goal is to support the Pintong Bukawe Farmers Association with about three hundred members to achieve a wider livelihood impact.

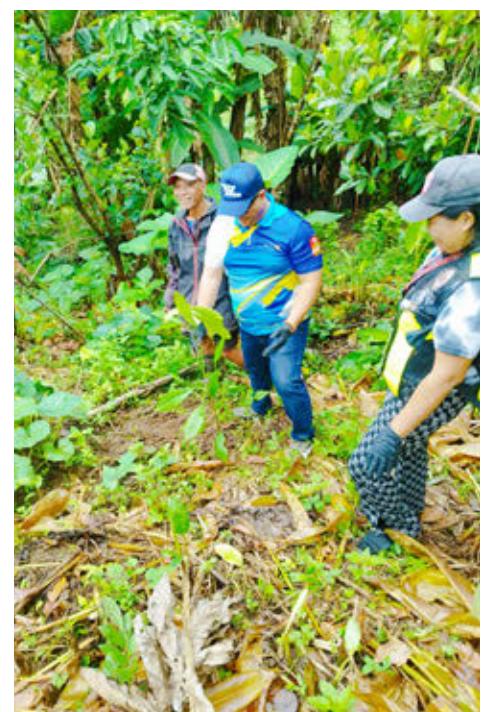
Pintong Bukawe is an ideal location as it has a mountainous yet highly arable terrain. It has rich soil, receives abundant rainfall, and has already established coconut trees.

The presence of an organized farmers’ association enhances the feasibility and sustainability of the program. First, it introduces high-value crops with relatively high and strong domestic and international demand. Second, it helps train and equip farmers with skills that would increase their yield and yield quality. Third, it adds opportunities to add more value to their crops and connects them with cooperatives or corporations for better profits. Lastly, it helps the environment through reforestation, erosion control, carbon sequestration, and community greening.

This initiative embodies the shared goal of the Municipality of San Mateo and the Rotary Club of Marikina Valley, which is to build self-reliant, eco-friendly, and economically empowered communities where every tree planted becomes a seed of progress and every harvest a symbol of hope. ■



This spread: To support the farmers’ economic upliftment, the Rotary Club of Marikina Valley initiated the donation of the 300 cacao seedlings. Cacao trees were distributed to about 100 farmers in Purok 3 during the first rollout.



RC SUBURBAN EAST RIZAL

Ride to end polio

by Roxanne Ticman

It all began as our collective passion. My husband, Assistant Governor for Zone 5A, Lemuelle Ticman and my sister-in-law, President of the Rotary Club of Suburban East Rizal, Loise Ticman-Canson, shared my love for cycling. We rode our bikes thrice a week in the morning before we became pre-occupied with our day jobs. Two years in cycling, passion eventually became a source of purpose.

RC Suburban East Rizal kicked off its first Ride to End Polio last October 11 in Antipolo City. A public image campaign to raise awareness of Rotary's work to eradicate Polio, over 60 cyclists joined donning their jerseys that prominently display End Polio Now.

More than 10 different groups and motorists united in this campaign, namely: Monton Philippines, Alcoplus Rubbing Alcohol, Fittitos and Fittitas, Lifecycle Bike Shop, Aspire Pro, Team Bakit List X Row4Boys, Valley Golf Cycling Club, Standard Insurance Cycling Team, Team Pilipinas, Haven of Angels Memorial Chapels, Paceline Cycling Hub, and Factor PH Cycling Team. They were joined by members of the Rotary Club of Iron Wheels. There were also individual riders who participated.

Clad in our End Polio jerseys—some had End Polio stickers on their helmets or bikes—we took our bikes from Shell Marcos Highway in Cainta to Sumulong Highway with a quick stop at the RC Rizal Premier's Rotary Marker. From there, we went to Daang Bakal Road and concluded the ride in Dulo Cafe in Taktak, Antipolo City where we enjoyed some coffee and chit-chat.

We learned that the father of one of the cyclists, Atty. Butch Marasigan, is a polio survivor and this inspired him to join the campaign. His father contracted the disease in his mid-twenties prompting him to stop everything until he recovered. After his father's disease, his family has never been the same.

Polio knows no borders. Without vaccination, it can quickly spread from one person to another or one country to another. The Ride to End Polio is our voice, as cyclists, to call the public to act and eradicate polio now!

President Loise Ticman-Canson and her fellow Rotarians plan to launch a series of End Polio rides hoping to raise funds and awareness for End Polio Now. ■

The author is a member of the Rotary Club of Suburban East Rizal.



From top: The Ticmans with one of their cycling groups Fittitos & Fittitas in Taktak Food Park, Antipolo City; AG Lemuelle Ticman, GP Loise Ticman-Canson and Rtn. Roxanne Ticman with non-Rotarian cyclist friends in Taktak Food Park, Antipolo City; (L-R) Good President Marie Loise Ticman-Canson, Zone 5A Asst. Governor Lemuelle Ticman, Rtn. Roxanne Ticman.





Clockwise from top left:
Good President Marie Loise Ticman-Canson;
Quick stop at the RC Rizal Premier's Rotary Marker;
Cyclists call to End Polio Now in Daang-Bakal Road in Antipolo City; Zone 5A Asst. Governor Lemuelle Ticman leading the Ride to End Polio awareness campaign; Non-Rotarians wearing End Polio Now jersey off for the awareness campaign; Ride to End Polio crew along Sumulong Highway.

RC SAN MATEO HIGHLANDS

A better life for Ara

by Prisco S. Rivera, Jr. and Mark Jay Dagat

In the quiet island town of Anda, Pangasinan, lives Ara (not her real name), a courageous 10-year-old whose strength and resilience inspire everyone who meets her. Born with a congenital anal malformation, she has faced medical challenges far beyond her years.

Ara's family lives in a nipa hut. Her father works as a fisherman and her mother a housewife, raising several younger siblings. The family struggles daily to make ends meet, and Ara's condition has prevented her from attending school, contributing to low self-esteem and feelings of isolation.

The Rotary Club of San Mateo Highlands (RCSMH) first met Ara last year during a service project in her hometown, organized with the help of resident club members. From that first encounter, it was clear that Ara's story would ignite a spirit of compassion and action among Highlanders.

Her journey is at the heart of the club's continuing project, "Giving Hope for a Better Life," which earned RCSMH the district's Best Club Project on Disease Prevention and Treatment in Rotary Year 2024–2025 and is considered as the club's Most Significant Project. Every visit, every donation, and every act of care reflect Highlanders' commitment to transform lives through empathy and action.

Since last year, Highlanders have gone above and beyond to ensure that Ara's basic needs were met, carefully preparing her for the complex surgeries ahead. Recognizing that she lacked the necessary weight for her operations, they provided nutritious milk, essential vitamins, groceries, toiletries, and colostomy bags, all critical for her health and recovery.

Last July 31, Ara was transported by an ambulance to Jose Reyes Medical Center

by an ambulance provided by the Anda LGU. She was accompanied by her parents and a club member.

While awaiting further tests, Ara, her mother, and her father stayed at Past President Denia Pinning's residence in San Mateo, Rizal.

Highlanders have also ensured Ara's journey includes moments of normalcy and joy. Visits to the mall, trips to fast-food chains, and playful experiences — simple things many take for granted — brought laughter and light into Ara's life and created cherished memories for her parents as well.

On Aug. 22, Ara underwent a successful anoplasty, to restore the anus to its proper position and function. She now undergoes regular anal dilation therapy, a difficult but crucial part of her healing. Each procedure, therapy session, and doctor's visit brings Ara closer to the healthy, happy life she deserves.

Her fight is not hers alone—it is shared by Highlanders, generous donors, and an entire community who surround her with love, prayers, and unwavering support.

Ara's courage has inspired other Highlanders to become deeply involved in her journey. PDG Virgilio Farcon, Jr., PDG Augie Soliman, DG Gina Sanchez, and SAG Roland Cardoniza have generously contributed to her medical expenses, demonstrating the power of leadership rooted in compassion.

During the Governor's Visit last Oct. 25, she met Governor Gina Sanchez and Senior Assistant Governor Roland Cardoniza who provided financial support to her journey even before meeting her. ■

Prisco S. Rivera, Jr. is the Charter President of the Rotary Club of San Mateo Highlands, of which Mark Jay Dagat is Immediate Past President.





OUR CLUBS



JOINT PROJECT

Library for Tambuan

by Mews Lunn

The joint efforts brought about the inauguration of the newly repaired and enhanced Tambuan Elementary School Library and Development Center on Nov. 14, 2025.

Rev. Fr. John Jerome "Jay" Velarde of St. John The Baptist Parish, Diocese of Kalibo, officiated the blessing ceremony.

During the program, there was the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), formalizing the commitments of all partners.

The MOU was signed by the President Ronald Cillo of the Rotary Club of Forbes Park; Vice-President Leo Franklin Magno, representing Pres. Nora Helber of the Rotary Club of Metro Kalibo; Principal Joven Iledan of Tambuan Elementary School, Past President Mews Lunn, representing Fort Atkinson High School Interact Club President William Adelmeyer,

Ms. Shareen Imperial-Igcas, representing Principal Janet Guzman of Infant Jesus Academy Kalibo, and Mr. Lester Rogan of the Tambuan Elementary School Alumni and Teachers Association.

The signing was witnessed by Ms. Blenda Tamayo, TES Learner Government President, Club Secretary Fem Magno, and Youth Service Director Lester Cadungan.

Rotary Club of Forbes Park provided a crucial cash grant, from the special literacy project of D3830 Gov. Reggie Nolido, to fund the repair, enhancement, and completion of the library's physical structure.

Rotary Club of Metro Kalibo (D3830), donated a toilet with lavatory (contributing to WASH goals), as well as books and other essential library materials. This club is also responsible for the project's assessment, comprehensive documen-

tation, monitoring, and partnership reporting.

Fort Atkinson Interact Club (D6250), USA, an international partnership that donated educational tools, including a 58-inch television and new bookshelves. Infant Jesus Academy Kalibo, committed to ensuring the center's long-term viability by providing capacity building and training for the Library-in-Charge, alongside a donation of library materials and children's books,

The Tambuan Elementary School Alumni/Teachers Association (TESATA) sponsored the provision of materials like window glass, augmented labor, and other essential equipment, and Tambuan Elementary School successfully managed the coordination, repair, and physical completion of the building.

Kalibo Cable TV Network provided media coverage. ■





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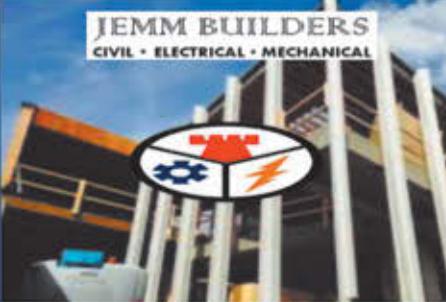
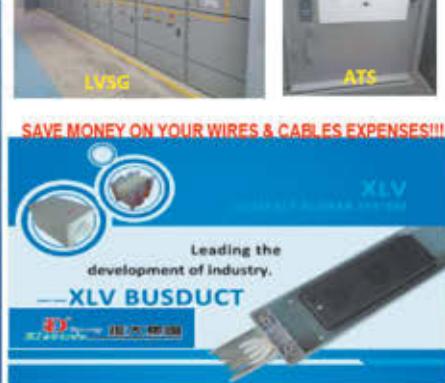




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COUNCIL OF LEGISLATION

A Pinoy delegate's experience

by Edgardo 'Boyet' Limon

Since Rotary's first convention in 1910, changes to Rotary's constitutional documents were decided by delegates at the annual Rotary International Convention. In 1977, the Council on Legislation (COL) became Rotary's official legislative body, meeting independently every three years, to deliberate on proposals from clubs, districts, and the RI Board.

Last-Minute appointment

I just returned from the cold and windy city of Chicago after representing District 3830 in the COL which took place from April 13 to 17, 2025 at the Hyatt Regency in Chicago, Illinois.

While other delegates are appointed three years ahead, I barely had a few months to prepare for this major assignment. I was asked to replace our District's representative who begged off for health reasons.

Typically, a Representative has three years to prepare for participating in the CO by engaging in research, consultation, and training. RI offers an online course and training through the Rotary Institute. One must be familiar with the official documents such as the RI Constitution, RI Bylaws, Standard Rotary Club Constitution, and the Manual of Procedure. I took a series of diagnostic tests on all of these.

Delegates were given a book of proposed enactments and was expected to solicit district feedback. I could have assisted the clubs in my district to prepare proposals with purpose, effect, and financial impact statements, had I more time.

COL in Session

The COL functions much like a parliament, with each of the 530 Rotary districts represented. In Chicago's largest hotel, we debated, discussed, and voted

on legislative changes that would guide Rotary's future.

RI President Stephanie Urchick asked us, "What can we do to grow Rotary and what actions can we take to have the biggest possible impact on people around the world?" She reminded us that our decisions "affect every member, and the millions of people whose lives are changed through Rotary service." With this sense of responsibility, we worked diligently—five days of deliberations from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.—adhering strictly to the Rules of Procedure to ensure order.

Beyond the sessions, dinners with fellow representatives and RI officers provided welcome opportunities for fellowship and exchange of insights.

Meeting with RI President

On April 17, the last day of COL, President Stephanie convened a private meeting with the ten COL Representatives from the Philippines. The discussion touched on several matters, including the reasons Manila was not advanced as a potential host city for a Rotary International Convention.

The conversation later turned to Rotary elections. President Stephanie urged the COL Representatives to exercise leadership in promoting integrity in the process. She emphasized that election challenges should be filed only on legitimate, meritorious grounds—not because the proponents are "sore losers". Her message was clear: it is time to "stop unnecessary election challenges" and inspire a culture shift toward constructive engagement.

President Stephanie voiced concern that the Philippines had become the global leader in what she described as "destructive, divisive, and time-wasting challenges," surpassing another Asian country that had previously held that distinction "by a mile." Such disputes, she noted, consume an inordinate

amount of the RI Board's time that would be spent better by focusing on Rotary's humanitarian work and organizational growth.

She shared that the Board had already taken disciplinary measures in response to persistent issues, including the suspension of an entire district in Asia and the expulsion of a District Governor. Fortunately, recent legislation approved by the Council on Legislation now makes it more difficult to file unsubstantiated challenges.

President Stephanie appealed to the Philippine Representatives to lead by example—to put an end to avoidable, non-meritorious challenges. All ten Representatives pledged their full commitment to support this call for change.

In a clarificatory email message later sent by President Stephanie, she said "my understanding was that too many (of the election challenges) is a result of 'Wow, I didn't win. I need to challenge' and that appeared to be a wrong reason to challenge."

Post-COL reflections

Participating in the COL deepened my appreciation for the magnitude of Rotary's heritage. The legislation we worked on governs more than 45,000 clubs with over a million members in 220 countries and territories.

When I accepted the role, I knew little about the COL. Now, I see it as a testament to the wisdom and foresight of Rotary's leaders—a system designed to keep Rotary strong, relevant, and united through the years.

The 2025 COL Representatives from the Philippines are Past District Governors: Nonette Tiam, D3770; Penny Policarpio, D3780; Oyan Villanueva, D3790; James Dee, D3800; Connie Beltran, D3810; Chit Lijauco, D3820; Boyet Limon, D3830; Mark Ortiz, D3850; Bing Garcia, D3860 and Tess Navales, D3870.



Top row: A view of the hall where 530 delegates from 220 countries and territories participated in four days of rigorous legislative discussions on 86 enactments.



Second row: Philippine COL Representatives raise points of clarification during the discussions on the proposed enactments. (L-R): PDG Mark Ortiz of D3850; PDG Rolando "Oyan" Villanueva of D3790; PDG Rufino "Penny" Policarpio of D3780; PDG Edgardo "Boyet" Limon of D3830.



Third row: COL Representatives from the Philippines meet with RI President Stephanie Urchick, (from left) PDG Penny Policarpio, PDG Oyan Villanueva, PDG Ma. Nonette Tiam, PDG Mark Ortiz, PDG Connie Beltran, PDG Chit Lijauco, RI President Stephanie, PDG James Dee, PDG Boyet Limon, PDG Bing Garcia, PDG Tess Navales, Spouse Joan Policarpio, and (behind) RI Director Tom Gump; Paraphernalia on each COL Representative's desk indicates meticulous preparations for the event.



Bottom row: Philippine COL Representative James Dee (D3800) with Past RI President Mark Maloney; Philippine COL Representatives Penny Policarpio (D3780) and Oyan Villanueva (D3790) meet then-Incoming Director Jennifer Scott of Zone 10A; RI President Stephanie Urchick with Philippine COL Representative Connie Beltran (D3810); Philippine COL Representative PDG Edgardo "Boyet" Limon (D3830) with Past RI President John Germs.

Right: The COL Representatives were welcomed at the Hyatt Regency Chicago by RI Director Chew Gim Bok. From Left: PDG Boyet Limon, PDG Ma. Nonette Tiam and Spouse Cris, PDG Connie Beltran, PDG Chit Li-jauco, Spouses Mency Villanueva and Joan Policarpio, PDG Oyan Villanueva, Director Chew, and PDG Penny Policarpio



2025 COL enactments

The 2025 Council on Legislation passed legislation to:

- Increase RI dues by US\$3.50 initially and US\$3.75 for each of the next two years
- Lower the required number of charter members for a new club to 15 (from 20)
- Permit the board to test new governance models in districts
- Give the RI Board the option to remove a member for good cause instead of terminating a whole club
- Provide for either the election or selection of club officers (except club presidents)
- Allow club directors to be considered officers on the club board
- Eliminate the admission fee for new clubs
- Require the RI five-year financial forecast to include updates on process improvements and cost-reduction measures
- Flexible district conferences: Districts are no longer required to hold an annual conference, with typical conference actions now possible at legislative meetings or through club ballots
- Expand criteria for zone boundaries: Culture and language can now be considered alongside Rotarian numbers when redrawing zone boundaries.
- Update training names: Training seminars were renamed to Presidents-elect Learning Seminar and Club Leadership Learning Seminar.
- Adjust deadlines for legislation: The deadline for districts to submit proposed legislation was moved to March 31 of the year before the council
- The Council meets every three years. Afterward, the general secretary issues a report on the actions taken by the Council. Clubs will have at least two months after the report is sent to submit their opposition. The council's adoption of legislation is suspended if the measure receives opposition from clubs representing at least 5% of the votes all clubs are entitled to cast
- The RI President and Directors are observers in the COL and cannot vote



From top: The event enables the Filipinos to meet an old friend from another country; The representatives did not fail to attend the Holy Week rituals at a Catholic church; A much-needed dinner break at a famous pizza restaurant in Chicago.





Far left: A memorable feature of the Filipinos' tour was a visit to the home of RI Founder Paul Harris at 10856 S. Longwood Drive, Chicago.



Left: A view of the home of Paul Harris from a pathway.

Left: At the Rotary Room, which was funded through the generosity of Past RI Director Raffy Garcia and family.



Third row: PDG Connie Beltran (D3810) leafs through an old copy of The Rotarian; PDG Connie, with other foreign COL Representatives, at the Paul Harris home.



Bottom row: The ladies pose against the Trump International and Hotel Tower; A pose with the beautiful Chicago cityscape as the backdrop; PDG Chit Lijauco (D3820) poses before "Wings of Mexico," a sculpture by Mexican artist Jorge Marín symbolizing the immigrant journey, at the Magnificent Mile.

One Heart, Many Hands:

How Rotary and Physicians for Peace Forged a Symphony of Service in Iloilo

ILOILO CITY, Philippines — What happens when two forces of service unite? You don't just get a project. You get a movement. Iloilo City was electric. This was an alliance in action. It was a powerful testament to what happens when we lock arms for one another. At the center? **Physicians for Peace Philippines (PFPP)**, driven by the vision of **Chairman and President, Dr. Josephine Bundoc, M.D.**, and the **Rotary** spirit, both living out their unwavering commitment to **“Service Above Self.”**

Together, they poured their hearts into the **Community Hearing Health-care and Mobility Program**. This wasn't some simple medical outreach. It was a declaration that every single life matters. That dignity isn't negotiable. And that no one in the community gets left behind.

This was not a mission built in isolation. It was a symphony of service, made possible by the incredible generosity of a private group, **Philippine-Japan Manning Consultative Council (PJMCC)**, a friend and donor of PFPP whose former Chair is also a Rotarian from the Rotary Club of Intramuros, **Rtn Emmanuel “Manny” Regio**, whose sponsorship formed the financial backbone of this entire endeavor. Their belief in the cause provided the fuel. And orchestrating the on-the-ground magic was the **Quota Club of Iloilo together with Rotary Club of Metro Iloilo**, whose members were the tireless engine of mobilization, rallying volunteers and weaving together the intricate logistics with local partners. This was the very soul of bayanihan — a coalition of hearts beating as one.

A CONVERGENCE OF PURPOSE

Walking into the venue, St. Martin's Court at Assumption, Iloilo, you could feel the energy. It was a canvas of hope.



Banners told the story of this shared purpose. You had **PFPP's “Teach One, Heal Many”** resonating right next to **Starkey's “So the World May Hear.”** And it just hit you: these were not just words. No, this was the real deal. This was the “why” that pulled everyone together. The doctors, the audiologists, the nurses, and that whole army of volunteers. They all showed up for one luminous reason. To give back hearing. To give back movement. And to bring back hope.

The program was a masterclass in targeted impact. One team, armed with otoscopes and expertise, brought the gift of sound to those who had lived in silence. Life-changing hearing aid fittings, made possible through a partnership with the **Starkey Foundation**, didn't just open ears; they opened worlds.

At the same time, another team was tackling the gift of movement. This was the mobility drive; a pure torrent of empowerment. They weren't just handing

out standard wheelchairs. They had specialized ones for tough cases like cerebral palsy, each given with precision and real care, a gift from another partner of Physicians for Peace Philippines, The Church of Jesus Christ Latter Day Saints Charities. And the reason it all ran so smoothly? You have to give it to the **RC of Metro Iloilo** and the **Philippine Red Cross-Iloilo Chapter**. Their team did the heavy lifting, coordinating the entire flow to make sure this help wasn't just random. It got to the specific people who had been waiting, some of them praying, for this exact day.

THE HUMAN PROOF OF SERVICE

But the true measure of this mission wasn't in the numbers. It was in the human stories that unfolded, one after another.

We saw it right there, in the eyes of twin siblings. Both deaf and mute, they walked in with the weight of the world on their shoulders. But they walked out transformed. Smiles just lit up their



faces as they heard, really heard, with clarity for the first time. They gestured to us, making it clear these weren't just devices. They were a promise. A promise of a brighter academic future.

We felt it in the profound relief of **Sister Iris Clark**, a beloved sister at the college, who had been immobilized by a years-old back injury. Her old wheelchair had given up. As she settled into a new one, perfectly fitted to her needs, her words were simple but carried immense weight: "I am truly, deeply blessed."

And then, a moment would just capture the beautiful, complex reality of family love. A family stepped up. The daughter had severe cerebral palsy, the son, mild autism. Their father, just looking on with such quiet pride, explained that his son... he was the one who was his sister's primary caregiver. The specialized wheelchair they received, complete with a foldable desk for easier feeding, wasn't just a piece of equipment. It was a tool that honored

their family's bond. The father's promise echoed the spirit of the day: "My son promises to continue caring for his sister and work hard, regardless of his own condition."

A BLUEPRINT FOR THE FUTURE

Ms. Lyne Abanilla, PFPP's COO and Rotary Governor from Rotary International District 3810,

captured the essence of the mission in her opening remarks. "Our goal is not just to provide medical aid but to empower people," she declared. "To give them the tools to live fuller lives. Hearing and mobility are basic human needs that connect us to the world, and today, we're making those connections possible."

This Iloilo event is a powerful blueprint for how to get things done. It's the magic that happens when **Rotary's "Service Above Self"** motto partners with the incredible, hands-on skills of **Physicians for Peace Philippines**. And when you fuel that partnership with the focused generosity of sponsors like **PJMCC** and the community-rallying power of groups like the **Rotary Club of Metro Iloilo** and **Quota Club Iloilo**, the results just go off the charts. It's exponential.

And as the day wound down, the hall... it was just filled with the music of life. That quiet anticipation from the morning? It was gone. All that laughter, all that conversation. You could literally

hear the sound of hope being reborn. That whole symphony of service in Iloilo just proved a timeless truth: healing is so much more than just medicine. It's about connection. It's about compassion. It's about showing up for one another. And in that, **Physicians for Peace, Rotary**, and their partners are, and will always be, one.



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GOVERNMENT CHANCELLOR

From vastly different countries and cultures, the first fellows at Rotary's Istanbul peace center unite around a shared purpose



By
ETELKA LEHOCZKY

Photography by
FAID ELGZIRY



May Peace Prevail On Earth
Dünyada Barış Kalıcı Olsun



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The 13 peace fellows in the first class at the new Rotary Peace Center in Istanbul have similar priorities, from supporting migrants to empowering women.

otary's new peace fellows converged on Istanbul's Bahçeşehir University from countries thousands of miles apart: Egypt, Bulgaria, Kenya, Jordan, and beyond. But they lost no time in finding out what they had in common.

"Where else on Earth would I have met with an Israeli participant and sat and talked and debated and laughed together?" says Suaad Abdo, a Yemeni fellow who now lives in Germany. "Having different opinions can enrich our discussions and expand our horizons."

Abdo is one of 13 fellows in the first class at Rotary's most recently opened peace center, the Otto and Fran Walter Rotary Peace Center at Bahçeşehir. Over the course of their yearlong professional development certificate program, which they began in February, the fellows are learning the theory and practice of sustainable peace, conflict resolution, and diplomacy. After 10 weeks studying together at the center, they returned home to carry out social change initiatives they designed.

This may be a vastly diverse group of fellows, but they have similar priorities: protecting children, empowering women, and — the most common concern — supporting migrant populations. The proximity of armed conflict is another reality

they share, making their time in Istanbul much more than a period of detached scholarship.

"Either they are coming from countries that are conflict-prone, or they're coming from other countries that are going to be affected as a result of conflicts in the Middle East-North Africa region," says Yüksel Alper Ecevit, the center's executive director. "The projects that our fellows are designing, each in their own areas of expertise, are going to be very important for the resolution of conflicts through peaceful means."

Suat Baysan, Rotary's host area coordinator for the program, got to know the fellows during a field visit to the area affected by the 2023 Turkey-Syria earthquakes and a concert featuring music from the fellows' home countries. He was impressed by their determination to recruit partners that could maximize their impact.

"Maybe just one peace fellow alone cannot do anything. But if they can convince governments and civilian organizations to get involved, they can start small initiatives which can grow," he says. "That's what they were all thinking: 'Yes, I am one person, but I might spark a huge change.'"

We caught up with five of the fellows to learn about their lives, their social change initiatives, and their hopes for the future.

SUAAD ABDO

YEMEN



Suaad Abdo (foreground) poses with participants in a computer skills workshop for migrants in Germany that she organized as part of her social change initiative.

PHOTOGRAPH: (TOP) COURTESY OF SUAAD ABDO

Suaad Abdo first made the connection between education and women's rights when she was a university student. A girl in her neighborhood in Sanaa, Yemen's capital, wanted to attend college, but the girl's guardians refused to allow it.

"That got me thinking. I realized that the way I lived — the way my parents raised me — wasn't the same for everyone. The society I lived in had a different reality," says Abdo, 43.

It's no wonder then that Abdo has prioritized education in her own life. She's studied in Malaysia, Ethiopia, and Germany and holds two advanced degrees: an MBA and a master's degree in public policy with a focus on conflict studies and management. She was inspired to pursue the latter by the violence she witnessed in her home country during the Arab Spring uprisings of the early 2010s. She wasn't at the pro-democracy demonstrations that were targeted by government loyalist gunmen, but she felt the danger as she encouraged her neighbors, particularly her female neighbors, to vote in elections that followed.

The whole experience left her with new questions. "I wanted to understand: What does democracy mean?" she says. "When conflict happens, what kind of decision making is behind that?"

Abdo got a scholarship to study in Germany and planned to stay only long enough to complete her master's degree.

But while she was there, Yemen was once again gripped by political violence as the country's Houthi rebels seized control of the capital in 2014. She stayed on, learned to speak German, and came to see Germany as her home.

Abdo sought out work assisting the large numbers of migrants arriving in Germany in the mid-2010s. After volunteering as a translator at a government reception center and working at a nongovernmental organization that provided care to migrant children, she went on to lead a team at the International Organization for Migration that helped migrants returning to their home countries.

Abdo unites her two areas of interest — democracy and migration — in her social change initiative to forge relationships between female migrants and German women who act as mentors. The migrant women learn the basics of the German language along with computer and financial skills. The German women learn the migrants' stories.

"I wanted to create a space where they could ask uncomfortable questions like, 'You wear a headscarf. What does that mean to you?'" Abdo says. She quickly discovered they were inclined to talk about what they had in common.

"Women are women everywhere, regardless of where they come from," she says. "They talk about family, about kids, about love, about career. These issues are universal."

MORAD AL-QADI

JORDAN

Morad al-Qadi cultivates peace by cultivating people. Whether he's helping community groups write grants or bringing refugees and local leaders together over dinner, he's always seeking to awaken untapped potential. He's even staged interactive theater productions that make the audience part of the show — to prove that no one should be sitting on the sidelines.

"I'm not a professional actor, but I participated in five interactive plays that promoted peace. We'd present a story and then ask someone in the audience, 'If you're in my shoes, what are you going to do?' says al-Qadi, 37. "Then we'd ask the audience, 'OK, what do you think about what they did? Could you suggest a different solution?' And people would start coming up with better solutions to peacefully resolve the conflict."

For his social change initiative, al-Qadi is training 10 young journalists to hone their media literacy skills. Then he plans to guide them in developing an online awareness campaign and other tools to educate the public about media literacy.

"This awareness campaign can be promoted widely in Jordan, addressing hate speech, misinformation, disinformation, and fake news," he says. "It will show people how these problems affect social cohesion, social stability."

In his previous work, al-Qadi addressed an issue of importance to many of the other peace fellows: unrest in response to influxes of migrants.

In Jordan, he has helped people who fled the civil war in neighboring Syria. One of his most pivotal projects was teaching conflict resolution to more than 100 community leaders and police officers around Jordan. All the leaders had dealt with escalating tensions. Before al-Qadi came along, they usually just called in the police.

"The police were like, 'OK, what should we do? Send them back to their country.' That was almost always the decision: If there's a Syrian involved in a conflict with a Jordanian, just send the Syrian back," al-Qadi says. "It was like sending them to their deaths."

Al-Qadi has also traveled to Turkey for an initiative that helped Syrian community organizations function more effectively. He showed eight small organizations how to apply for funding, develop long-term plans, and organize peacebuilding activities. One such project, Arts for Peace, brought Arab and Kurdish musicians together. Each group of musicians taught the other how to play traditional instruments, and the project concluded with a joint concert.

Even as he witnessed inspiring moments like this, al-Qadi sought to teach a crucial, uncomfortable lesson.

"Unfortunately, most of these organizations think that they will come up with an intervention and then peace will happen, which is not true," he says. "They need to understand that sustainable peace is not a short-term process. It's continuous."





CAMPUS EXPERIENCE

Highlights of the fellowship's first 10 weeks at Bahçeşehir University

For his social change initiative, Morad al-Qadi is using media literacy training to address hate speech, misinformation, and disinformation.

- **Coursework:** sustainable development; conflict resolution; and diplomacy, mediation, and cooperation
- **Workshops:** conflict resolution simulation and an interactive roundtable on peace in the Middle East-North Africa region
- **Training:** specialized sessions on leadership and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals through Bahçeşehir's International Leadership Research and Application Center and CIFAL İstanbul at the UN Institute for Training and Research
- **Field visits:** to the Turkish capital of Ankara, the Black Sea coast, and earthquake-affected areas to learn about government policy, sustainable agriculture, cultural heritage, and disaster management and recovery
- **Community engagement:** exploration of arts and culture, including food customs, Anatolian weaving, and perfume making traditions

SHEE KUPI SHEE

KENYA



As the son of a Kenyan mother and a Somali father, Shee Kupi Shee is committed to helping refugees integrate into Kenyan society.

Shee Kupi Shee knew from childhood that he wanted to help refugees. You could even say it's in his blood. In Kenya, border communities like Shee's hometown of Kiunga have long seen influxes of Somalis seeking relief from conflict and drought-induced food shortages. As the son of a Kenyan mother and a Somali father, Shee identified with the native residents *and* the refugees. He got a close-up view of the hardships the migrants faced.

"At 5 years old, I saw my aunt being treated as a refugee," says Shee, 40. "She was not allowed to mix with us. She was not allowed to talk to us. She was confined to a camp close to the border. Once, I was taking her a plate of rice and fish and I was told, 'No, you can't come at this time. Come tomorrow.' So I saw a lot of indifference."

Shee's neighbors stigmatized the newcomers, saying they were probably criminals. But Shee disagreed.

"There's no difference between me and a refugee," he says. "We're all human beings. We have one blood. We are all created by God."

That view is still tested today in his home region near the Somali border, where Shee works for the local government. The area experiences frequent incursions by the Somali militant group al-Shabab. That sometimes makes it impossible for Shee to do his job of connecting far-flung communities there with government services.

Militants have planted land mines on the roads, requiring Shee to get creative to help his constituents, particularly the region's Aweer people, whose traditional hunter-gatherer way of life is under threat from the spillover of conflict. He's flown in Kenyan military helicopters to deliver supplies to them and accom-

pany teachers coming from other areas. In 2017, a military vehicle carrying children to school hit a roadside bomb, killing eight people.

Shee had the idea of renting a boat to carry children to school instead. The plan didn't prove sustainable, but that didn't dissuade Shee from his determination to help the remote community.

"They have a right to have their say," he says. "They have a right to development, and they have a right to have their voices included in government decision making."

Shee also remains committed to helping Somali refugees integrate into Kenyan society. His social change initiative aims to foster understanding between native Kenyans and Somalis in Kiunga village. By teaching the two groups about each other's culture and showing them what they have in common, he hopes to prevent conflicts over the area's scarce land, food, and water.

"I want the word 'refugee' to be ripped out of the vocabulary of Kiunga," he says. "Every person should be called a sister, a brother, a cousin — not a refugee."

"There's no difference between me and a refugee. We're all human beings. We have one blood. We are all created by God."

Angela Antonova brims with infectious enthusiasm. Back in 1995, that enthusiasm helped her create Bulgaria's first professional organization for social workers even though the former communist country hadn't had them for many years.

"Social work was a totally new profession for countries in Central and Eastern Europe, the former socialist countries," says Antonova, 58. "Raising awareness and building public understanding of the role and value of social work, including in building peace and preventing conflicts, is essential for the profession's success."

In 2023, her enthusiasm fueled the launch of a program to provide psychological support to health practitioners working with Ukrainian refugees. "These people started to experience the symptoms of their clients," she says. "When you are working constantly with traumatized people and you're being bombarded with horrific news, you're vulnerable to vicarious trauma." The program included an anonymous helpline so practitioners could reach out without fear of being stigmatized.

And this year, Antonova's enthusiasm propelled her all the way to the Rotary Peace Center in Istanbul. "Please write with big, big, big letters how thankful I am to all the Rotarians who made this opportunity possible for me," she says.

She's already on the hunt for funding to expand her social change initiative, which helps Bulgarian children separated from their parents develop resiliency and coping skills. "We call the phenomenon self-parenting children," she says. "These are children who are left behind. Their parents leave Bulgaria for the United States or Germany, somewhere they can work for higher incomes, but their children remain without parental support."

"Please write with big, big, big letters how thankful I am to all the Rotarians who made this opportunity possible for me."

Without that guidance, those young people may turn toward crime or radical militancy as adults, or they disappear altogether, she says. About 47 child migrants disappear every day in Europe, according to the group Lost in Europe.

Antonova's project aims to forestall these dark outcomes with a simple strategy: It sends the children to school. In specialized classes the children learn skills to function in society. Perhaps as important, they also get the chance to socialize with other children. One of the classes' most popular offerings is the "love bank," where the children can deposit envelopes containing affectionate messages for one another.

Antonova says that about 150 children have officially completed the program, while many more have turned up for the classes without being enrolled. She hopes to expand the program if she can find other funding sources or other NGOs with which she can partner.

"These young people are vulnerable to antisocial behaviors and radicalization," she says. "This gives them an alternative. They see that they can fulfill their dreams without using violence."

Buoyed by early success, Angela Antonova plans to expand her social change initiative, which helps Bulgarian children separated from their parents.



**ANGELA
ANTONOVA**

BULGARIA

MARIAM EL MASRY

EGYPT

Mariam El Masry knows that making an impact sometimes means recognizing opportunity when you see it. While launching her social change initiative, which involves teaching Sudanese refugees how to make and sell handicrafts, she met some migrants who instead hoped to learn a different skill.

"I found a group of young men and women who'd either worked in the media before or were simply interested in learning about film directing," says El Masry, 51. "Their goal was to make short films documenting their daily lives in Egypt. I found this idea very new and pertinent."



So she took that on as well. And while grappling with the practicalities, she happened to meet a director. "He teaches filmmaking for very reasonable prices, sometimes even for free," she says. "So now this will be a little side initiative beside my big one."

El Masry chose to help Sudanese refugees in particular because Egypt and Sudan, besides sharing a border, are close historically and culturally. "They are the most numerous refugees in Egypt today after the [onset of] war in Sudan, and they face many difficulties," she notes. "Refugees today represent the most serious humanitarian crisis."

This is the first time El Masry has spearheaded a project — or projects — that involves this much fieldwork. She has spent nearly two decades working at the Arab League, with a break when she got a scholarship to complete a master's degree in Middle East politics at the University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies.

At the Arab League, El Masry worked for a time in the disarmament and nonproliferation department, where she reported on the Iranian nuclear program. Currently she monitors the politics of West African countries and the creation of a new African-Arab



New to large-scale field projects, Mariam El Masry enjoys collaborating and exchanging ideas with other fellows over their WhatsApp messaging group.

center for exchanging information on migration.

As someone who spends much of her time "writing reports and attending meetings," El Masry was thrilled and a bit nervous to undertake her social change initiative, not to mention launching the second one. She has found the other peace fellows to be invaluable sources of advice and encouragement, especially the indomitably outgoing Suaad Abdo.

"At the beginning I was a bit lost," El Masry says. "I got a lot of opinions from my friend

Suaad, because she's doing something similar. We encourage each other. All the fellows have a WhatsApp group, and we exchange ideas."

Staying in touch with the other fellows has emboldened El Masry. She hopes to launch a third initiative that would train Sudanese refugees who are lawyers to advise other refugees about their legal rights.

"At the beginning I thought, 'The easy way out is to just stick to one thing,'" she says. "But then I said, 'Why not, if I have the opportunity?'" ■

MEET THE OTHER BAHÇEŞEHİR PEACE FELLOWS



**Musferah Mehfooz,
Pakistan**

Engaging religious leaders
for social change and
addressing climate-driven
gender-based violence



**Jenna-Lee Strugnell,
South Africa**

Peacebuilding in Somalia
through social media and
digital dialogue facilitation
training



**Md Harun Or Rashid,
Bangladesh**

Empowering youth
through peace education,
community service, and
leadership training



Nasreen Memon, Pakistan

Increasing access to quality
education and mentorship
for youth and girls with
community-led solutions to
stop child marriage



Mohamud Ahmed, Somalia

Building social cohesion among
youth affected by conflict through
community dialogue, educational
and psychosocial support, and
peacebuilding skills



Gabriel Bell, U.S./Israel

Mobilizing resources and
partnerships for the care
of vulnerable street
children in Senegal



Karla Jordan-Youns, U.S.

Facilitating peace skills
workshops and structured
dialogue for youth and families
in post-conflict Iraq



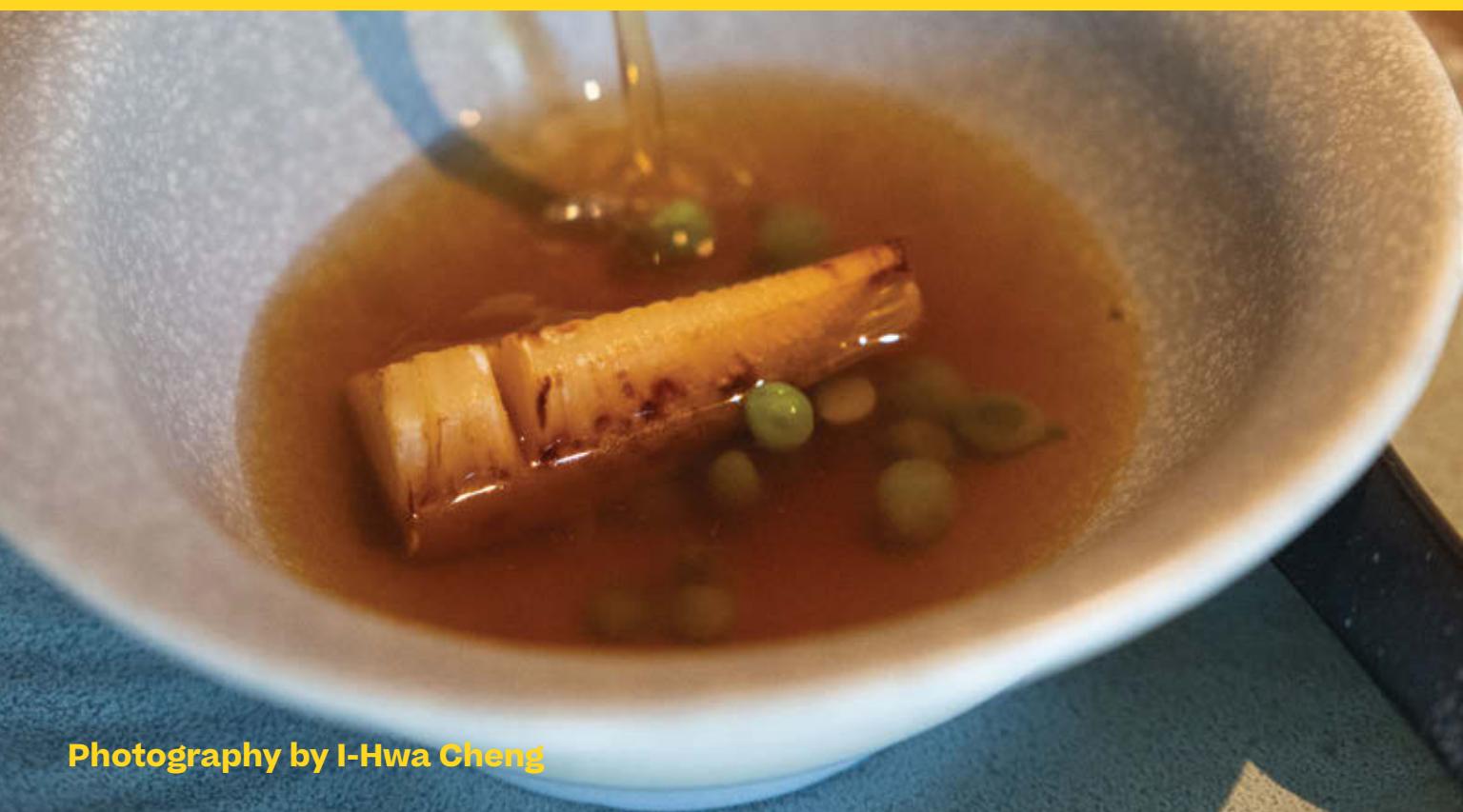
Havva Şeyda Bodur, Turkey

Helping women from Syria
and the Middle East-North
Africa region enter the
labor market

2026 CONVENTION



TASTES OF TAIPEI



Photography by I-Hwa Cheng



From night markets to tea plantations, an American chef leaves no avenue unexplored as he tastes his way through Taipei. Find out what flavors he'll never forget. Then, get ready to pick up the culinary journey yourself during the 2026 Rotary International Convention.



By Rick Bayless



FOOD STALLS FAMOUS FOR QUALITY

I was a few steps into the Ningxia Night Market when the sweet potato balls caught my eye. The golden and purple spheres glistened as the cook pulled a tray from the hot oil and hoisted them into a stainless steel bowl the size of a kid's bathtub. The problem was I couldn't figure out how to extract myself from the human river that bore me along so I could order a bagful of what my gut told me I would likely never forget.

Now, sweet potatoes might not be top of mind when you think of Asian cuisine. But from their birthplace in the Americas, the tubers boarded huge galleons as early as the mid-16th century, traveled across the Pacific to Manila, and then slowly wandered from one Asian culture to another, finding warm — if not celebrated — welcomes nearly everywhere. That diffusion reached Taiwan, where the potatoes now attract long lines when cooked, mashed, mixed with other tuberous starches, and transformed into those shiny little balls.

Once I extricated myself from the enthusiastic crowd, I discovered what I can only describe as pure delight. Those

pingpong-sized spheres, known as *di gua qiu*, were unexpectedly hollow and lightly sweet, with a hint of the sweet potato's characteristic earthiness. I laughed a little as I popped another and then another into my mouth.

The Ningxia Night Market is famous for the quality of its food stalls. Head of the list, at least in my opinion, is Yuan Huan Pien Oyster Omelet. I could watch the ballet of red-aproned cooks working the circular griddles for hours. The briny sweetness of the oysters, the chewy-tender texture of the batter, the richness of the egg, the lightness of the greens — it was obvious why locals line up for hours to tuck into one of these beauties.

The next hour was a blur of fried taro balls with preserved egg yolk and pork floss, perfect mochi with pulverized toasted peanuts and sesame for dipping, and those pork belly-filled, fold-over steamed buns (here called *gua bao*) that have become popular across the United States. Though everyone had warned me away, I fell in love with — or maybe it's more accurate to say I had a momentary crush on — stinky tofu. I contend that anyone who's taken with punchy blue cheese like Roquefort will like this medium-firm tofu that's been marinated in a complex fermented brine.

DIHUA STREET

For the sheer pleasure of it, I've practiced cooking Asian food all of my adult life, relying on well-respected guides like

the Wei-Chuan Cooking Books for the techniques to a perfect stir-fry. My wife, Deann, brought back our home's copies of *Chinese Cuisine* and *Chinese Snacks* from her year teaching English in Taiwan back in the 1970s.

What I didn't know is that the soy sauce the books were likely calling for has a different taste than others. Better. The artisan local soy sauce is made from black — not the typical yellow — soybeans that ferment for months. Tasting Taiwanese soy sauce for the first time is like that first taste of Pappy Van Winkle's 23-year-old bourbon when you've only been used to Jim Beam 4-year. Rich and round, complex and satisfying.

I discovered my favorite artisan soy sauce in, of all places, a meat-product store along Dihua Street. I loved wandering the area's lively shops, their goods spilling out onto the sidewalks. Piles of tropical fruit, thousands of spice packets and jars, a variety of dried seafood that made my head spin. That was where I found the famous tree-grown mountain pepper (maqaw) that seasons many Taiwanese dishes. And that was where I found the great soy sauce, in Jiang Ji Hua Lung, a nationally renowned store owned by Rotarian Hsien-chiao Chiang. The store specializes in cured, dried pork — think of it as pork jerky — that's gently seasoned with soy and sugar. I found the compressed heart shapes formed from chopped jerky and the pork "paper" — so thin it crunched like a sweet, salty potato chip — to be wondrous.

Above, from left: At Taipei's markets, you'll find crab, fried taro balls with preserved egg yolk and pork floss, and oyster omelets; a Japanese tea ceremony; chef Rick Bayless (in blue) tours a tea plantation. **Right:** Bayless inspects lobsters at a seafood restaurant.



TEA AND TRUFFLES

Driving southeast from Taipei, we wound our way through mountain peaks and past farmhouses with adjoining rice paddies before descending into Yilan County. As far as my eyes could see, the earth was filled with cabbages. Straight row after straight row, field after field, creating a haphazard patchwork of brassicas.

Clearly, in a world of supply and demand, Taiwan appeared to have enough cabbages, which led one local farmer, Jinrong Huang, an Indigenous village chief, to work with Rotary on an outside-the-box idea. At Jinrong's farm, nearly a decade before, he had planted a grove of oak trees, and, for the last few years he's been inoculating the earth beneath them with spores he hoped would grow into truffles — an agricultural product with vastly more value than the overplanted cabbages.

Jinrong got out of his car wearing heavy leather boots and a resolute look. His two squirmy dogs shot into the trees like they'd been exploded from a gun. One dog went straight to the base of a tree and, with a constant, fast whimper, wagged his tail so forcefully that I thought he might hurt himself. These were the dogs he was training to hunt the truffles.

A few more minutes down the valley, we came to Yaba's Mountain guesthouse. Nestled in a bend of the road, the simple two-story structure kept watch over the dozens of long, tightly packed rows of jade-color tea bushes that rose high up the mountain. We piled into the back of a small four-wheel drive truck and then bumped our way up the rutted road to the top.

Other than the beautiful vistas and the thrill of running your hands through the

Rick Bayless is the chef and co-owner of award-winning restaurants including Frontera Grill and the Michelin-starred Topolobampo in Chicago. He is the host of public television's Emmy-nominated *Mexico: One Plate at a Time*, an award-winning author, a philanthropist, and a YouTube creator.

small, densely packed leaves of the camellia plants — tea is in the camellia family — visiting a tea plantation is less exciting than visiting a place that grows, say, berries or peaches. There's nothing fresh to taste. As with coffee and vanilla, tea's brilliant flavors develop during the fermenting, drying, and/or roasting process.

Back down at the guesthouse, we watched our host give a quick rinse to a big cup he'd filled with the balled-up dry leaves of lightly fermented, high-mountain oolong tea from the fields we'd just seen. Then he filled the cup, let it steep a minute or so, and strained the liquid off into porcelain cups for us to taste. It was richly complex, fresh, and gently floral with a hint of bitter, a hint of sweet. Working over a perforated stainless steel box to catch splashes, our host was fast and slapdash, re-steeping and straining the leaves, round after round, for us to taste how the flavor evolved. (My favorite was the second steeping.)



► Rick Bayless talks about his community projects and culinary diplomacy in this 2023 episode of the *Rotary Voices* podcast: on.rotary.org/bayless-podcast.



The flavors hovered in my head like the fading notes of an unrivaled string quartet. It was unlike any tea I'd tasted.

Q TEXTURE

We hadn't been more than three hours off the plane when we found ourselves descending the stairs at the Regent Taipei hotel into the open dining room of the Azie restaurant, where we met our hosts, Rotarians Jimmy Chih-Ming Lai and Wenny Lin. We were there to eat beef noodle soup, one of Taiwan's standout dishes. While beef noodle soup sounds commonplace, the Taiwanese version is unique, even thrilling. Brought by immigrants to the island in the middle of the 20th century during the Chinese Civil War, it is considered emblematic of the island's cooking. There's a simpler, clear version that is rich with beef bone broth, and there's a thicker, richer version that's seasoned with spicy Sichuan fermented fava bean paste (doubanjiang) and, if you wish, Sichuan peppercorns.

We drank a remarkable cold sparkling oolong tea as we tucked into the steaming bowls of goodness. For me, all that deliciousness was almost eclipsed by the noodles themselves. These weren't like the typical wheat-flour noodles I was expecting. Instead, they had a slight chewiness to them, a little resilience, a little bounce. I asked to speak to the chef. They were made partially with yam flour, he said.

That's when I began to understand what the Taiwanese call "Q texture." People on this island are obsessed with texture, and one of their favorites is that brilliant spot between resilient and soft, chewy and tender, sticky and gummy. I encountered it, too, in the night market's spectacular oyster omlet and celebrated mochis.

TAIWANESE BREAKFAST

When my wife lived in Taichung in the 1970s, she fell in love with Taiwanese breakfast. She has told me about sitting in roadside stands, dipping the crullers called youtiao into warm doujiang (soy milk) and relishing every minute of it.

So, when Henry Hsieh, an energetic young Rotarian with a food-centric Instagram account, picked us up one morning for a visit to the Binjian Market, I was secretly hoping that breakfast would be the first stop. Not only was he planning breakfast, he was planning it at the legendary Fuhang Soy Milk, the

Michelin-recognized spot that draws more than 5,000 people on some days.

The line of people patiently waiting to get into Fuhang stretched for more than a city block. "People start lining up at 5 a.m. for their 5:30 open," Henry laughed. With a swift grin, he said, "Follow me."

Like a school of salmon swimming upstream, we worked our way through the crowd. We followed Henry toward a kitchen on one end of what appeared to be a food court. A young guy with a backward baseball cap gave Henry a joyful hug, then waved us into the kitchen. Turns out Henry's friend is the grandson of the people who started Fuhang.

We watched as cooks rolled out thick, rectangular breads and passed them to others to slap on the sidewalls of barrel ovens, cooking them to a rich golden brown. Other cooks coated thinner rectangles with sesame. Further on, cooks deeply creased strips of yet another dough to fry into youtiao. The rhythm was captivating, the production astounding. The scene felt almost operatic.

The young man handed Henry a bag and we made our way back to the car. We couldn't cut the hour-long line, but we could get takeout. I hadn't imagined that my first taste of the legendary Fuhang restaurant would be in the back seat of a sleek, late-model black sedan, but I couldn't wait to dip my crunchy-fresh youtiao into warm soy milk — some of the best, nuttiest I've tasted.

QUICK FOOD OPTIONS

7-Elevens Numerous locations

Try one of the many packaged entrees that you can warm in the provided microwaves and enjoy in the shops' dining rooms.

Nanmen Market Da'an District

Find more than 200 vendors across four floors, including a popular food court serving Taiwanese specialties.

Above, from left: Tea is served with an assortment of complimentary snacks; Bayless and his wife, Deann, enjoy beef noodle soup; a bounteous sampling of the island's seafood; preparing crunchy breakfast youtiao; Bayless, Henry Hsieh, and his mother, Catherine Hsieh, at the market; Bayless puts the finishing touches on his creatively flavored chicken thighs. **Right:** Bayless chats with the chefs at Wildwood, where wood-grilled fish and steaks are the house specialty.



KITCHEN COMRADES

Henry had arranged for me to cook with a couple of other chefs at his restaurant Wildwood, a sleek, comfortable spot that specializes in wood-grilled fish and steaks. Preparing food alongside chefs in another country is an opportunity I jump at. Even when we don't share a language, the communication through food — the way we handle it, the way we combine flavors, the way we work with fire — is fluent and full.

Jarry Liu, Wildwood's chef de cuisine, built a wood fire for us to cook on. Rotarian Jay Liu had driven up from Taichung to be my other comrade in the kitchen and attend the Rotary meeting happening at the restaurant later that night.

I thought chef Jarry was going to grill some fish to show off a specialty at Wildwood, but he couldn't stay away from the chicken cockscombs I'd found at the Binjian Market. Before I knew it, he'd started braising the fleshy crests from the birds' heads, and then he gave them a brief tour on the grill and a lively adornment with pickled red onions and cilantro. They were spectacular.

By the time I started grilling my chicken thighs to flavor with a blend of herbs, roasted garlic, green chile, and lime, chef Jay was deep into another poultry dish, the famous Taiwanese three-cup chicken. Its preparation involves braising the chicken with sesame oil, rice wine, and soy sauce. Then you sweeten the reduced cooking liquid to a shiny glaze and garnish the dish with Thai basil and red chiles.

We talked fire and its infinite possibilities. We talked ingredient proportions and history and the role of food in

cultural identity. We talked childhood and how our tastes are crafted by family and community, about how those tastes become so deeply rooted that they feel like the very fabric of our beings.

FOOD FROM THE HEART

Of all the brilliant food we'd enjoyed, the meal we ate at a food kitchen established by Rotarians in Taipei was one of the most memorable. The enterprise started out in 2016 as a service project to reduce food waste by salvaging leftover produce and turning it into meals for low-income families, older adults living alone, and others. Through a Rotary Foundation global grant, the members transformed an unused city building into a gleaming stainless steel kitchen where they teach unemployed people to make box lunches,



To register for the convention, scan the QR code or visit convention.rotary.org.



and, with the help of volunteers, get them delivered to those in need.

We climbed the stairs to the second story meeting and teaching facility and found spots around the table. When I opened the paperboard box that was set in front of me, the careful beauty the cooks had created greeted me like a broad smile. The flavors were so simple, so homey, so perfect. They nourished and filled me with happiness — a happiness particular to all food made with love. ■





A mother's gift

Sustained by donations from nursing women, milk banks provide a lifeline to vulnerable newborns



By Elly Fishman

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF MARINI

The morning Typhoon Haiyan made landfall in 2013, the sky above Manila turned a bruised gray. At the Dr. Jose Fabella Memorial Hospital in the Philippines' capital city, phones started ringing. Dr. Estrella "Star" Jusi, then head of the hospital's milk bank — one of the first in the country — picked up one call after another about its stores of donated breast milk. The city of Tacloban had been devastated by one of the most powerful typhoons ever recorded. Power was out. Water was scarce. Newborns in the city's neonatal intensive care units, especially the smallest and sickest, were in critical need.

The Department of Health needed donated breast milk fast. Jusi mobilized. She called the country's other milk banks to pool reserves. Coolers were packed and labeled. With roads blocked and commercial flights grounded, she worked with military officials to secure space on an armed forces transport plane.

A neonatologist from Jusi's team volunteered to accompany the frozen milk. Over multiple trips, the milk bank delivered 86 liters of pasteurized donated milk — liquid survival for babies with no other lifeline.

MILK BANKS EXIST TO MEET A NEED that often goes unspoken: What happens when a mother can't breastfeed her newborn? Maybe the baby came early, too small to latch. Maybe the mother is recovering from surgery, or her milk hasn't come in. Maybe it's the first chaotic week of life, and nothing is going to plan.

Formula can be a safe alternative for healthy, full-term newborns. But for fragile infants, milk donated by nursing women who produce extra to share with other moms is often the safest, most viable option available. Breast milk has been shown to lower the risk of life-threatening conditions, including necrotizing enterocolitis, an intestinal disease common in preterm babies. The World Health Organization and UNICEF recommend donated human milk as the preferred feeding option for an infant when a mother's own milk is unavailable, especially for low-birth weight and preterm babies.

Even before the typhoon hit, malnutrition was a critical concern in Tacloban and across the Philippines, especially among premature infants. According to WHO, more than 1 in 4 Philippine children under 5 are stunted, a condition caused by chronic undernutrition that can impair physical and cognitive development. Among low-birth weight and preterm infants, lack of access to breast milk further increases the risk of infections, developmental delays, and death.

"We want to ensure that the babies will be given or will have the best start in life, even if they are premature and sick," Jusi says.

In the last decade, the Philippines has built one of the most robust human milk bank networks in Southeast Asia. What began as a single Rotary club's experiment has grown into a model replicated in 39 hospitals across the archipelago, supported by more than 30 Rotary Foundation global grants.

The idea took root in 2013, when Renato Cantos, then president of the Rotary Club of Timog-Quezon City, was searching for a signature project. A fellow Ro-

tarian's wife suggested members visit Fabella Hospital. There, they met Jusi, who had been running a milk bank since 2008. "It was the first time that I heard about a human milk bank," Cantos says.

That year, his club helped secure a global grant to purchase a new pasteurizer, allowing the milk bank to continue operating after its original machine began to fail. Since then, the club has helped establish milk banks in several additional hospitals and supported other area clubs as they've embarked on similar projects. Rotary clubs' support, along with that of private donors and the Department of Health, has helped expand the number of facilities from five to 39. One 2019 master's thesis by a student at De La Salle University in Manila even proposed a standardized Rotary global grant template for milk bank projects.

THE CONCEPT OF MILK SHARING is centuries old, rooted in the historical practice of wet nursing when women breastfed another person's child. But formal breast milk banks only began to appear in the early 20th century. The world's first was established in Vienna in 1909, followed shortly after by one in Boston. For decades, milk banking quietly served a niche role in neonatal care, until the AIDS crisis of the 1980s shuttered many programs over fears the virus could be transmitted through donors' milk.

In the decades that followed, renewed research and new safety protocols revived the practice. Milk banks began to adopt standardized methods such as pasteurization that heats milk to a precise temperature for 30 minutes to eliminate pathogens while preserving nutrients. They also implemented rigorous donor screening processes to ensure safety, similar to when people donate blood. These protocols reassured clinicians and public health officials, helping reestablish trust in donated milk as a viable and safe feeding option.

In Western Australia, the Rotary clubs of Belmont and Thornlie, along with Belmont Rotarian Stan Perron, were behind the establishment of the country's first modern milk bank in 2006, decades after informal milk sharing within towns' maternity wards had faded. Similar timelines have played out in countries around the world.



The Rotary Foundation has awarded nearly **100 global grants** toward human milk bank projects.



Left: At the Mothers' Milk Bank of the Western Great Lakes, a small sample of milk from each donor is tested for the presence of harmful bacteria. **Right:** Milk from multiple donors is pooled to ensure nutritional consistency and a robust antibody profile.

Today, Brazil is widely considered the global leader in milk banking. Two dozen Rotary Foundation global grants have supported some of the 200-plus centers across the country. The Brazilian model, built into the public health system, has inspired similar efforts across Latin America, including in Colombia and Mexico. South Africa has developed a network of milk banks, often tied to hospital-based neonatal units. Still, in most low- and middle-income countries, milk banks remain rare.

North America, too, has seen a rise in milk banking. In the United States and Canada, 11 million ounces of donated breast milk were distributed in 2024 — a 10 percent increase from the previous year, according to the Human Milk Banking Association of North America, which sets guidelines for pasteurized donor milk.

The Mothers' Milk Bank of the Western Great Lakes is one of the more than 30 nonprofit milk banks accredited by the association. Cofounded by a former Rotary staff member and supported with donated funds from multiple Rotary clubs over the years, the Chicago-area milk bank serves more than 90 hospitals in Illinois and Wisconsin. The organization has seen explosive growth since it opened its first processing facility in 2015, going from three employees to 25 and moving last year into a new facility, one of only two in North America with a bottling conveyor belt.

Prescreened mothers drop off their milk for donation at “milk depots” throughout the region, where volunteers ship it frozen in insulated containers to the milk bank for processing and pasteurization. “Some of

our moms make tons of milk,” explains Susan Urbanski, the milk bank’s program manager. “Nobody wants to see something so precious go to waste.”

Urbanski says that some moms needed donated breast milk themselves when their babies were first born, but after receiving lactation support, they went on to successfully breastfeed and want to give back. In that way, milk banks don’t replace breastfeeding — they support it. Some moms discover their baby is intolerant to something in their diet. Their milk is still good, just not for *their* baby. And some moms donate after a loss through bereavement programs like one offered by the Chicago-area milk bank. “That’s a really special part of nonprofit milk banking that sometimes gets overlooked,” Urbanski says. “The goal is to honor the baby’s legacy, to make meaning out of a devastating situation.”

IN CHRISTCHURCH, NEW ZEALAND, the idea began with frustration. Yvonne Hiskemuller, a midwife and member of the Rotary Club of Garden City Christchurch, had worked with the milk bank at a hospital in town, but she quickly saw its limits. The service didn’t extend beyond the neonatal intensive care unit, and there was no plan to support mothers once they left the hospital. “It was clear that was never going to happen,” says Hiskemuller. So she turned to Rotary.

Liz Courtney, then a district governor, immediately saw the potential. As a mother of five, including a set of triplets, Courtney knew firsthand the complexity of early feeding. Together, she and Hiskemuller gathered a small group of committed women — Rotarians, lactation experts, other volunteers — and spent the next four years fundraising, navigating bureaucracy, and slowly building a community-run alternative.

The result, launched in 2018, was a community breast milk bank hosted at a different Christchurch hospital, St. George’s. The repository runs on a lean infrastructure: three freezers, a pasteurizer, and a small army of volunteers, many of them Rotarians, midwives, and nurses. But its reach has been immense.

On any given day, the milk bank is a flurry of motion. Donors drop off bags of frozen breast milk, each labeled, tracked, and stored meticulously. Screening is rigorous, involving questionnaires, blood tests, and freezer logs. Volunteers pasteurize an average of 8 liters per week, a process that takes six to eight hours and requires sterile gowns, temperature checks, and detailed logs.

The recipients are typically newborns in fragile health or born to people who are recovering from surgery or have delayed milk production. One baby, too frail yet for heart surgery, needed milk at home in a rural community about 150 miles north of the Christchurch milk bank. Her doctors believed that if she was fed formula, she wouldn’t survive long enough to reach the operating table. The only option was to feed the baby donated breast milk.

A nurse sent word to the Rotary club-supported milk bank in Christchurch, and the team there said yes immediately, even though the request fell outside the typical service area. A refrigerated truck company, Big Chill, transported the frozen milk free of charge.

Courtney recalls other people who were diagnosed

with cancer during their pregnancies, preparing for surgeries when their babies arrived and unable to breastfeed. The milk bank stepped in, providing milk for those critical first days.

Over time, the bank has become a hub not just for milk but for knowledge. With Rotary clubs’ help, a longtime midwife who volunteers at the milk bank got trained as a certified lactation consultant and began offering breastfeeding classes for expectant mothers. The sessions, hosted at St. George’s Hospital, are free and growing.

The milk bank now supports the entire Canterbury region that’s home to Christchurch. As of June, it has provided safe donated breast milk to more than 2,700 babies. And perhaps more importantly, it has changed the way people in the community talk about feeding, need, and new motherhood. “Now that there’s an alternative to formula,” adds Hiskemuller, “there’s been quite a big groundswell of movement to recognize that donor breast milk is a far superior choice.”

THE STORY OF HUMAN MILK BANKING, at its core, is a story about people. About the mothers who donate milk they’ll never see consumed. About doctors and midwives who reroute their days to hand-deliver supply. About local volunteers who track every ounce, label every cooler, and field every emergency call.

Perhaps that’s why looking back on the past decade of work in the Philippines can be an emotional experience for Renato Cantos. What began with a grant application has helped transform not just hospitals but a culture. One that treats mothers not merely as patients or providers but as partners. One that sees babies, even the tiniest and sickest, as worthy of care, of investment.

“This was the first project that I did, and continue to do, because of the love for it,” Cantos says, “realizing the impact that it provides to those who are in need.” ■

What began with a grant application has helped transform not just hospitals but a culture.

From right: Liz Courtney and Yvonne Hiskemuller speak with a nursing mother donating breast milk at a Rotary club-supported milk bank.





People of action around the globe

By Brad Webber

United States

A talent showcase held by the Rotary Club of Carpinteria in California has raised more than \$325,000 since 2009. The club has used the funds for service projects, including purchasing about 300 musical instruments for children and awarding around 100 college scholarships. A sellout for the 16th straight year, April's showcase presented a range of entertainers, including dancers, musicians, storytellers, comedians, and jugglers. "All of our members play a role in one way or another" in organizing the show, says Club President David Powdrell. "Find what brings you joy and get involved" is our motto." Several participants over the years have gone on to become professional entertainers, including Will Bremner, who found success on the television series *The Voice*, and magician Mark Collier.

28
Seasons
of the
television
series
The Voice



Canada

When leaders at the Rotary Club of St. Thomas in Ontario noticed a lack of engagement, the club adapted by adjusting its schedule to allow more time for service. The result has been astonishing, with an energized mission and growing interest by prospective members, says Barbara Warnock, immediate past president of the club. "Meeting every week was a deterrent to new members, and we felt that we needed to have more active participation in local projects," says Warnock. The club now meets the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month, with the other Wednesdays designated for volunteering at two local organizations: Grace Café, a street mission and soup kitchen, and Harvest Hands, which collects and distributes edible foodstuffs that would ordinarily have been discarded. "Our Rotarians have embraced this work to contribute to feeding those in need," Warnock says.



US\$18 million+

Value of food products rescued by Harvest Hands



1,978

Publicly funded
primary schools
in Scotland

Scotland

The Rotary Club of Elgin supports numerous initiatives for youth, including a Rotaract club, an Interact club, and several RotaKids clubs, which are a program of Rotary International in Great Britain and Ireland to build citizenship and leadership skills in children under 12. At the Greenwards school, RotaKids clubs are a go-to activity, reports teacher Kirstin Mustard, one of four club leaders. In February, the RotaKids held a rummage sale, collecting about \$100 for The Rotary Foundation. In June, they sponsored a walk that raised about \$3,200 for Harry's Hat, a charity for the condition hydrocephalus, a buildup of water in the brain. That organization assisted the family of one of the youths. Stephanie Urchick, 2024-25 RI president, visited that month and was treated to a performance based on a history project. "It was truly inspiring to see the passion, creativity, and compassion shown by the pupils," she says. "Their community spirit shines through."

Rotary Club of Elgin

India

The Rotary Club of Coimbatore Cotton City designed a project to raise awareness about the illicit practice of caging and trading wild parakeets. Volunteers meticulously placed nearly a ton of millet grains in a 1,200-square-foot artwork depicting the clipping of a parakeet's wings. "Each grain represents hope," says Niketu Shah, a club leader who directed the project, part of a larger effort by an animal rescue organization and supported by the state forest department. The artwork was completed in May at a shopping center. Last year, the club helped provide the forest department with an X-ray machine for birds. In captivity, many birds suffer from disease and stress that reduces their lifespan.

Rotary Club of Coimbatore Cotton City



11

Native wild
parakeet
species
in India

\$525

Monthly salary
of entry-level
schoolteachers
in the Philippines

Philippines

Many people in the Philippines lack access to affordable dental care. To address the problem, members of the Rotary Club of Bacolod Central launched Project Smile, which provides dental care to teachers at public schools. Rotarians screen recipients and schedule extractions, fillings, and fittings. The club pays the costs not covered through the volunteer care of the Negros Occidental chapter of the Philippine Dental Association and supplemental funding from the local congressional office. Thus far, the project has delivered 55 dental makeovers. "These dedicated heroes often choose to spend their own money to supplement their teaching needs rather than on their personal health and well-being," says club member Maria "Toks" Lopez.

Rotary Club of Bacolod Central





TRUSTEE CHAIR'S MESSAGE

Undeniable impact

Many of you will remember the theme I chose as RI president in 2020-21: *Rotary Opens Opportunities*. I remain passionate about these opportunities and I know you do too.

As we celebrate Rotary Foundation Month, let's reflect on the many ways the Foundation makes the world better. Rotary is extraordinary, and the Foundation amplifies that impact.

I encourage all of you — in Rotary and Rotaract clubs — to discover this for yourselves. Go beyond the local level and engage with The Rotary Foundation globally. You can partner with clubs to boost literacy in Guatemala or fight malaria in Zambia. You can make a difference with clean water initiatives reaching millions or maternal health programs saving lives across continents.

It doesn't stop there. Through major impact projects like Programs of Scale, we're pursuing bold initiatives that push Rotary's potential to create lasting change further. Greater impact and greater visibility: this is our path forward.

Many of you have asked about the status of Rotary's biggest impact project in history — our long-term commitment to polio eradication. Recently, RI President Francesco Arezzo, International PolioPlus Committee Chair Michael McGovern, and I met with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and the army leadership of Pakistan. Everyone is fully committed to eradicating

polio once and for all. We were absolutely convinced by the work of Pakistan's emergency operations centers, where experts plan and coordinate vaccination.

While some governments scale back support for polio eradication, Rotary remains committed to its pledge to raise \$50 million again this year. This meeting reaffirmed our unwavering commitment to finishing this historic mission.

What excites me most is seeing how each of us can make a real difference through our Foundation. I urge everyone — especially newcomers to Rotary — to explore these opportunities. Find your passion among our areas of focus and discover projects to support, especially through global grants.

We members fund, sustain, and deliver these projects. That's why the Foundation consistently earns top ratings from Charity Navigator. If you don't want to lead a project, you can still be part of the Foundation through annual support.

Our fundraising goal for 2025-26 is an ambitious \$500 million. Your gift this month will create countless opportunities.

We have incredible opportunities before us, and the impact we achieve together through The Rotary Foundation is exponential. The proof is undeniable.

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.

IN MEMORIAM

A passion for service

SangKoo Yun, 1949-2025



SangKoo Yun, a consummate Rotary leader and businessman who had been selected to be Rotary International's president for 2026-27, died 5 September, after months of treatment for pancreatic cancer. He was 75. A member of the Rotary Club of Sae Hanyang, Korea, Yun resigned as president-elect in August to focus on his medical treatment.

"SangKoo's passing is a great loss to the global Rotary family," said RI President Francesco Arezzo. "Yun's vision and contributions to Rotary will continue to inspire and motivate me and others. His legacy lives on in the hearts of Rotary friends and those whose lives were touched by his dedication to Rotary service."

Yun grew up in Seoul. His father served as the Korean president in the early 1960s. Instead of following his father into politics, Yun traveled to the United States to pursue his interest in architecture. He received bachelor's and master's degrees in architecture from Syracuse University.

After returning to Korea in the 1980s, Yun founded Dongsuh Corp., which engineers and markets architectural materials. He later started Youngan Corp., a real estate and investment venture.

He was a humble servant with honesty and fairness at his core and a leader who always led through action, said Past RI President Dong Kurn "D.K." Lee, who shared a Rotary district with Yun. "We were close like brothers and it is difficult to bear this grief. Every step he took opened new paths, and every seed he planted has grown into a tree of hope. We will never forget him."

Yun joined Rotary in 1987, when he helped charter the Sae Hanyang club. He worked to promote Rotary Youth Exchange and served on his district's

scholarship committee. These interests evolved into a lifelong passion for service, especially international service. He traveled the world to visit dozens of Rotary Foundation grant initiatives he either led or helped organize.

One of these projects was Keep Mongolia Green, for which Yun served eight years as co-chair. The initiative planted windbreak forests in the Gobi Desert to alleviate dust storms, which frequently affected nearby regions of Mongolia, China, and Korea. Its success helped inspire the Mongolian government to take further action to counter desertification. Yun received a Friendship Medal from the president of Mongolia for spearheading the innovative project.

Yun served Rotary as a director and trustee as well as a member of numerous committees, including chair of the Foundation's Executive Committee and Programs Committee. Together with his spouse, Eunsun Yang Yun, he was a Rotary Foundation Benefactor, a Major Donor, and a member of the Arch Klumph Society, the Paul Harris Society, and the Bequest Society. He also received the Foundation's Distinguished Service Award.

Yun anticipated that his term as RI president would offer the opportunity for him to preserve and amplify Rotary's long-standing traditions.

"I do not see myself as a lone leader, but as one link in a strong, unbroken chain — a chain forged by the wisdom and dedication of those who came before me, and held firm by the strength of those who stand beside me today," he said in a recorded address to members attending the Rotary Convention in Calgary, Alberta, in June.

Yun is survived by Eunsun, two adult children, and several grandchildren. ■

With deep regret, we report the death of **Genshitsu Sen**, Kyoto, Japan, who served RI as Rotary Foundation trustee in 1998-2002, director in 1988-90, and district governor in 1975-76.

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

Arthur C. Clough Jr.
Meredith, New Hampshire, 1986-87

Lou Gerard
Redding, California, 1994-95

Ryotaro Ishii
Matsudo East, Japan, 1995-96

Michael Hill
Henderson, New Zealand, 1999-2000

Ross White
Nanaimo, British Columbia, 2002-03

Joe Pratt
Raymond Area, New Hampshire, 2003-04

Ken Linkhorn
North Shore, New Zealand, 2004-05

David Haradon
Longwood, Pennsylvania, 2016-17

John Weiss
Morro Bay, California, 2017-18

David Anderson
Wausau After Hours, Wisconsin, 2022-23

THE ROTARY FOUNDATION

Arch Klumph Society

2024-25 honorees

Named for the founder of The Rotary Foundation, the Arch Klumph Society was established to recognize the Foundation's most generous donors — those who have contributed \$250,000 or more.

This distinguished society includes about 1,700 supporters from more than 50 countries and geographical areas. Their generosity enables the Foundation to continue its mission of advancing world understanding, goodwill, and peace through the alleviation of poverty, the support of education, and the eradication of polio.

The members listed below were recognized in the 2024-25 Rotary year through a formal induction or elevation ceremony.

Recognition levels as of 30 June 2025; locations according to club affiliation



PLATINUM CHAIR'S CIRCLE

Contributions of \$5,000,000-\$9,999,999

Ravishankar and Paola Dakoju, India

FOUNDATION CIRCLE

Contributions of \$1,000,000-\$2,499,999

Charles and Ann Eisemann, United States

Gloria Ann and Carl C. Evans, United States

Daniel O. Joraanstad and Robert E. Hermann, United States

Antonio I-Tson and Addie Soo, Taiwan

Bruce and Pat Williams, Canada

Ching-Hua Yen and Shu-Fen Lai, Taiwan

CHAIR'S CIRCLE

Contributions of \$500,000-\$999,999

David Saint John and Maureen C. Anderson, United States

Rick and Totney Benson, United States

Huang-Chia Stephen Chang and Yu-Fen Yang, Taiwan

Kochouseph Chittilappilly and Sheela Kochouseph, India

Toyoaki and Naomi Fujibayashi, Japan

Ron Harris, United States

Mahinder K. Jain and Sarita Jain, India

Roger and Lorri Kaufman, United States

Sourabh Khemani and Joshita Davar Khemani, India

Sashi and Urmila Pandey, Nepal

Rick and Nikki Powers, United States

Shobana and Ravi Raman, India

Christopher H. Schneider and Ute A. Schneider, United States

Preston Seu and Donna Shaver, United States

Lyn and Alex Stroshin, Canada

James Carl Thompson and Janice Ann Thompson, Canada

Oakley and Dena Van Slyke,
United States

Tonya L. Watson and Stephen K. Cervantes, United States

Kevin and Jennifer Weist, United States

TRUSTEES CIRCLE

Contributions of \$250,000-\$499,999

Samir and Alka Ahuja, United States

Dave and Susan Amankwah, Ghana

David F. Arnn, Sr. and Carol B. Arnn,
United States

Linda and Jim Bauer, United States

Hemant and Gitanjali Bhasin, India

Lars Borgestrand, Norway

Marco Cecala and Rebecca Wilks,
United States

Heewoo Chae and Eunkyung Ko,
Korea

JungFa Chang and BiHua Jhang,
Taiwan

Chang Sen, Taiwan

Chao, Tien-Shin Falton & Chao, Fang Ching-Cheng, Taiwan

Case, Chen Chang and Chao Ti Lin,
Taiwan

Chi-Hua Cheng and Ying-Tzu Tsai,
Taiwan



Arch Klumph Society honorees visiting One Rotary Center explore a gallery that features etched-glass portraits of the society's members.

Basker Chockalingam and Malathi Basker, India

Gil G. Chua and Grace P. Chua, Philippines

Venson Chuang and Yueh Mei Chan, Taiwan

Marjorie A. Cole, United States

Ligia I. Corredor, United States

Pamela A. and D. Paul Crawford, United States

John E. and Jane W. Curtis, United States

Chikako Demura, Japan

Milind Deshpande and Meera Deshpande, India

Patrick and Kristen Eakes, United States

R. Mark and Kit Fields, United States

Suzanne and Charles Fienning, United States

Charles and Alicia Foster, United States

Joseph P. and Martha Ely Goralka, United States

Myeong Ho Ha and Keum-Hee Jang, Korea

Hyung Soo Han and Ok Soon Lee, Korea

Joo Hee Han and Jongmin Lee, Korea

Seunghun Han and Suyeon Bae, Korea

James R. and Anita R. High, United States

“My connection with Rotary has given my life great meaning. Through service to my community, I have experienced firsthand how small acts of kindness and generosity can make a significant difference.”

— *YoungSun Park and MiTae Kim, Korea*

“It’s the lives that we change; it’s the things that we accomplish. That’s why I say that Rotary is the vehicle. We have the steering wheel; we have the vision. The Foundation is the fuel that makes good things happen in the world.”

— *Gloria Ann Evans, United States*

Dong-Lung Hsieh and Shu-Yen Ko,
Taiwan

Benison Hsu and Joyce Liou, Taiwan

Shirley S. Hu and Hsiao T. Hsia,
United States

PH Huang and Maggie Lai, Taiwan

M.R. Jaishankar, India

Masahiro and Atsumi Kanno, Japan

CheonSik Kim and SoonJeong Yoon,
Korea

Eung Seo Kim and Kyung Hee Kim,
Korea

Kwang Tae Kim and Juseon Byun,
Korea

PHOTOGRAPHS: JOANNA BIBANGCO, JOE UNDERBAKKE



Above: Arch Klumph Society honorees await the start of a ceremony at Rotary headquarters in May. **Right:** Tonya L. Watson and Stephen K. Cervantes receive a society membership certificate from Rotary leaders Mark Maloney and Stephanie Urchick at a June donor summit in Calgary, Alberta.



P.H. Lai and Sally, Taiwan

Lee Ji Won and Jeon Yoon Hee,
Korea

Li-Hsin Liao and Hung-Jung Chin,
Taiwan

Wen-Ta Liao and Hui-Shen Liang,
Taiwan

Ronald L. and Sandra S. Mabry,
United States

Meera Tina Markanda, United States

Darrel and Edith Martin, Canada

Hideo and Naomi Matsuda, Japan

Navas Meeran and Shereen,
India

Felipe and Rocío Meza, Mexico

Krishnan G. Nair and Rajashree V. Nair, India

YoungSun Park and MiTae Kim,
Korea

Vicki and Timothy Puliz, United States
and Scotland

S. Gautami and Venu S. Rao,
United States

Glen and Jeanette Richardson,
Canada

Thomas R. and Elizabeth Miller Roesel, United States

Brian and Gwen Rothwell,
Canada

Mark G. Scolnick and Irma Cole,
United States

Verne P. Seehausen, United States

Young Jin Shin and Kyung Sim Lee,
Korea

Byongsik Soh and Wonok Lim, Korea

Michael and Donna Steffenson,
United States

Lalitha and Narasimhan Subramanian, India

Hsin-Chuan, Tsai, Taiwan

Rich Turnbull and Marie Turnbull,
United States

James and Naomi Williams, Canada

ITION



Left: Chair's Circle member Shobana Raman shares a moment of joy with the audience at the May ceremony in Evanston. **Above:** Honorees gather with Maloney in the Arch Klumph Society Gallery in October 2024.



2026 CONVENTION

A first-timer's guide

When you arrive in Taipei for your first Rotary International Convention, you might feel momentarily overwhelmed — in a good way — among thousands of members from all corners of the world.

“Entering the convention, we’re all bright-eyed. We’re all looking around like, Whoa, there are so many people,” said Charvi Shah, of the Rotaract Club of the University of Calgary, at her first convention, in her Canadian hometown this year. She was excited to learn from younger members leading breakout sessions and to greet in person the global Rotaractors she networked with over the years — a group met up at a Calgary arcade one night.

People often head first to the House of Friendship to explore festive displays and interactives. It’s the convention’s Main Street, and a friend is waiting on every corner. Learn about clubs’ projects, partner organizations’ offerings, helpful tools from Rotary

staff, and many options to pursue your passion.

The event that many members say gave them their first sense of their place in Rotary’s gigantic family is the opening ceremony and its flag ceremony tradition when each Rotary country has its moment on-stage. Cheer your loudest!

To learn what the convention is like, ask a member who’s been. Many first-timers say they didn’t want to miss out after friends’ enthusiastic descriptions from Singapore, Melbourne, Houston, and on and on from their years of conventions.

In Calgary at his first convention, Anthony Agama, of the Rotary Club of Ngara in Uganda, registered right away for the next one, 13-17 June in Taipei. “You get to be part of a congregation of like-minded people who treasure change in their communities,” he says. “The Rotary Convention is a must-attend for everyone to celebrate love — love for humanity, love for progress, love for service.” ■

Learn more and register at convention.rotary.org.

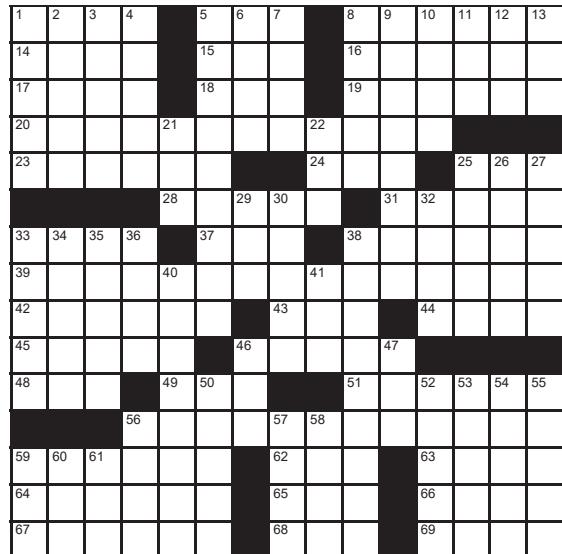
CROSSWORD

Prez braces for duty

By Victor Fleming
Rotary Club of Little Rock, Arkansas

ACROSS

- 1 Arrangement of the hair
5 Bit of brandy, say
8 Army identification
14 With 35-Down, 39-Across's spouse
15 Offshoot of punk rock
16 Interweave
17 ___ and groan
18 “Guess ___?”
19 Erupted suddenly
20 2025-26 RI presidential message
23 “Breaking Up Is Hard to Do” singer Neil
24 “A long time ___”
25 Audiophile's collection
28 Affixes (to)
31 Imam's book
33 It might be induced
37 Saving Private Ryan craft (abbr.)
38 The “D” in FDR
39 2025-26 RI president
42 The Far Side cartoonist
43 Ben___
44 Plane assignment
45 Completely foreign
- 46 ? and !
48 “___ for Two”
49 Alehouse fixture
51 Daiquiri alternative
56 Profession of 39-Across
59 “Help me out here”
62 Certain church lady
63 Ancient Andes native
64 With 55-Down, 39-Across's home
65 “It's no ___!”
66 Aquatic mammal
67 Bikini Atoll activities, once
68 Wild blue yonder
69 “___ with my little eye ...”
- 13 A H.S. dropout might earn one
21 Cardiac readout, briefly
22 Argon or neon
25 Hot trend
26 Tony of Taxi
27 Nose, slangily
29 Battleship initials
30 ___ Sketch
32 Barcelona cheers
33 B's musical equivalent
34 Papal cape
35 See 14-Across
36 L'___ aux Meadows (Canadian historic site)
38 Certain funds used for political purposes
40 Stark unlikeness
41 Flags of ___ Fathers
46 Speedometer reading (abbr.)
47 Word with Jose or Juan
50 Book full of legends?
52 “Who's there?” answer
53 Food speakers
54 BMI alternative
55 See 64-Across
56 Bach composition
57 Big burden
58 Nightfall
59 Lingerie buy
60 “Dig in!”
61 Get on in years



Solution on **opposite page**

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Chairman of the Board



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GOOD**

AKS SHERYLL ANN MESINA
United Chosen President



TOGETHER, WE

END POLIO

Rotary



PEOPLE OF ACTION