

Rotary

FEBRUARY 2025

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Ripples of hope and change

This month, as we come together for the International Assembly and the Presidential Peace Conference, we celebrate *The Magic of Rotary* — a unique blend of global connection, vision, and action that empowers us to create lasting change.

One of the most inspiring examples is our Rotary Peace Fellowship program, a cornerstone of Rotary's mission to build a more peaceful and just world.

For more than 23 years, Rotary Peace Fellowships have been transforming communities. Our Rotary Peace Centers, hosted at leading universities around the globe, have educated over 1,800 fellows who now work in more than 140 countries.

These centers cultivate expertise in fields like conflict resolution, sustainable development, and peacebuilding, preparing fellows to tackle some of the world's most pressing challenges. This program exemplifies how Rotary turns vision into action, creating a ripple effect of hope and change.

This month during the Presidential Peace Conference, we celebrate a significant milestone with the opening of our newest peace center in Istanbul. This center will focus on training leaders to address peacebuilding challenges in the Middle East and North Africa, further extending Rotary's impact.

Peace fellows are dedicated champions of transformation, addressing critical issues such as refugee resettlement, youth and women's empowerment, and reconciliation in conflict zones. Many founded vital organizations or hold leadership roles in governments,

nongovernmental organizations, and international institutions like the United Nations and World Bank.

One inspiring story is that of Ntang Julius Meleng, a 2024 Rotary Peace Fellow at Makerere University in Uganda. Through his Social Change Initiative, Julius has worked to empower young people in Cameroon to take active roles in peacebuilding and leadership.

His project provided training in conflict prevention, civic engagement, and leadership to youths and community officials in areas affected by conflict, equipping people to drive sustainable peace efforts.

Julius harnessed Rotary's global network to overcome obstacles, including limited funding and security risks, and make a meaningful impact.

The Rotary Peace Fellowship gave Julius the tools and support to turn his vision into reality. His work embodies *The Magic of Rotary* — the transformative power of connecting people, sharing resources, and uniting for a common purpose.

As we reflect on the achievements of our peace fellows and celebrate Rotary's enduring commitment to peace, let us also recognize the role that everyone in our network of 1.2 million members plays in creating magic through service.

Together, we can amplify our impact, inspire new generations of leaders, and build a brighter, more peaceful future.

STEPHANIE A. URCHICK

President, Rotary International



WELCOME

YOU ARE HERE: Lincoln, California

WINGS AND WHEELS: The annual air and car show in Lincoln kicks off at dawn with hot air balloons gliding into the sky. Throughout the day, pilots perform aerial acrobatics in a mix of military and civilian aircraft. On the tarmac, visitors can get up close to an impressive collection of airplanes and classic cars. A youth aviation expo features flight simulators, historical aircraft, and other artifacts from the Aerospace Museum of California. The Rotary Club of Lincoln is among the event sponsors. Club member William Alston captured this majestic moment at the August 2023 show.

NAMESAKE: Established as a railroad hub in the late 1800s, Lincoln is named for one of its founders, real estate magnate Charles Lincoln Wilson, rather than the 16th U.S. president. Nowadays, Lincoln is known for its rich clay, used in products such as architectural terra cotta and roof tiles.

THE CLUB: With 63 members, the Rotary Club of Lincoln is turning 100 this year. It sponsors programs to support literacy and combat youth substance use.

Rotary

MAGAZINE

FEBRUARY 2025

**CHIEF COMMUNICATIONS
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David Alexander

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MANAGING EDITOR

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DESIGNER

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Marc Dukes

EDITORIAL COORDINATOR

Vera Robinson

CIRCULATION MANAGER

Katie McCoy

CONTRIBUTING ROTARY STAFF

Art Director
Leann Arthur

Photographer
Monika Lozinska

Photo Editor
Diego Campos

Senior Graphic Designer
Vince Cerasani

Send ad inquiries to:

GLM Communications, 203-994-1883, cdunham@glminc.com

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Empowering Clubs to Create a Ripple Effect of Hope



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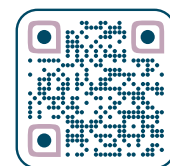
Born from the Rotary Club of Naples, FL, Meals of Hope has packed over 100 million meals across the U.S., addressing food insecurity while strengthening communities.

Clubs that host meal-packing events create lasting local impact:

- * Engage and retain members with a hands-on service project.
- * Build stronger bonds among members and the community.
- * Keep meals local, supporting families and seniors in need.

With 93% of expenses allocated to hunger programs, Meals of Hope embodies a commitment to selfless service.

Bring a meal-packing event to your club or district. Together, we can pack hope into every meal.



MEALSOFHOP.ORG

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Things aren't as bad as we think they are, musician David Byrne discovers

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ILLUSTRATION: TIAGO GALO; PHOTOGRAPHS: (COVER) SUNDAY ALAMBA/AP PHOTO, (OPPOSITE) MONIKA LOZINSKA



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The editors welcome comments on items published in the magazine but reserve the right to edit for style and length. Published letters do not necessarily reflect the views of the editors or Rotary International leadership, nor do the editors take responsibility for errors of fact that may be expressed by the writers.

STAFF CORNER

Haris Sofradzija

Regional membership officer

I have a lifelong fascination with international politics and world history. My mom is Croatian, and my dad's Bosnian. Growing up listening to my parents' stories triggered my interest in the Balkans, which didn't get talked about much in high school or college history classes. So, it's not surprising that I earned two bachelor's degrees, one in history and the other in Russian and East European studies. The first time I visited Croatia was in 1993 after Yugoslavia broke up into several independent republics. The trip influenced me tremendously.

Rotary gave me my first real job out of college. It was an ideal choice because I wanted to work for an international organization but stay close to home. I started in 1998 with the Philanthropy team in The Rotary Foundation before moving to the grants programs. After six years, I left Rotary and went back to Croatia to connect with relatives and learn more about the language and cultures.

The work of international election observers began to intrigue me in 1996, while watching TV coverage of the first general elections in Bosnia-Herzegovina following the Bosnian War. I began researching different pathways to become an observer. I discovered a group to help me in this quest: the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, which has over 55 participating countries from Europe, Central Asia, and North America, including the U.S. It organizes international election observation missions in its member nations. One preferred qualification is election-related experience. I had worked as a local election judge for many years. It took me about two years to complete other qualifications, including an interview and online courses and exams.

My first international election observation assignment was in 2007 in Albania. Since then, I've gone on 15 missions, covering countries from Eastern and



Southeastern Europe to the Caucasus and Central Asia. My most recent one was in the Republic of Georgia.

As a short-term observer, I'm normally deployed about a week at a time. I always work with a partner from a different country. We gather in the country's capital before traveling to various regions, both urban and rural, for election day. We visit as many polling stations as possible to see whether proper procedures are being implemented and monitor for any evidence of fraud. At the end of the day, we observe the vote counts.

I've met fellow observers who are either Rotarians or Rotary alumni on many of my missions. It's gratifying that we share the same value of strengthening democracy globally.

I returned to Rotary to work in 2005 and later became a regional membership officer, sharing membership strategies and resources with Rotary leaders to help clubs attract and engage members.

I enjoy traveling abroad to run races. I've completed a half-marathon in Dubrovnik, Croatia, and a 10K run in Paris. I have signed up for a half-marathon in Berlin this April. In the U.S., I've run half-marathons in Boston; Chicago; and Monterey, California. ■

ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Member benefits

RI General Secretary John Hewko recently **took to social media** to ask:

“What do you consider the most valuable benefit of being part of Rotary International?”

He kicked off the conversation with his own answer:

“For me, the advantages are clear:

- 1 Global Reach: Rotary enables us to make a significant impact in communities around the world.
- 2 Professional Growth: Membership offers opportunities for leadership development and expanding professional networks.
- 3 Community Engagement: Being a part of Rotary means working alongside a diverse group of leaders committed to service.

What would you add to the list?”



Here's some of what you had to say:

All of those are true, but they don't capture the heart, passion, and joy that is the fuel required to propel all of these impactful programs. The older I get, the more I appreciate the importance of authentic personal connections with people motivated to make their local and global communities better. That's what Rotary provides.

Morgan Mack-Rose, via LinkedIn

For me - global reach is number 1! Number 2 is making friends from around the world who share the same passions and values, and are driven to make a difference in their communities or in communities across the other side of the globe. These friendships last a lifetime.

Jennifer Scott, via Facebook

Friends. Happiness is how many friends you have who you could call at two in the morning if you have a problem. There is no place you can make as many close friends as in Rotary. There are lots of ways to do good and it is nice to try to save the world. But even if you save the world, you can't do it alone. It takes friends.

Bob Hope, via Facebook

The three benefits you listed are very important to me, as is friendship. I also am so very proud to be part of the orga-

nization working to end polio. That is my main purpose in Rotary. So the biggest benefit of Rotary for me is the chance to be part of the work to #EndPolioNow.

Julie Boswell, via Facebook

To me it is to guide next generations to believe in themselves and be creative. Creativity is joy. Follow the spark that ignites joy.

Jaana Kaarina, via Facebook

Rotary has allowed me to take a small idea and turn it into something truly significant having real life changing impact on tens if not hundreds of thousands of people. Before joining Rotary it would never have dawned on me that this was possible. The age-old excuse “but I'm only one person” is no longer an argument for doing nothing.

Mark Balla, via Facebook

I am always amazed how Rotarians leverage individual talents and capabilities to achieve greater things in our society.

Ikenna Okeke, via Facebook

It is our ability to come together and take action that creates a positive impact around the globe — regardless of our culture, religion, or other reasons to find differences — and still achieve what governments and corporations cannot. There is power in our numbers, and

Rotarians excel at creating opportunities and solving challenges.

Andrés Goyanes, via LinkedIn

Personally, I'm not so interested in the global reach - I joined Rotary back in the late '80s to make a difference to the local community ... It's also, in my view, a much easier sell of Rotary in rural areas like my current club to point out the help [we] give to the local community and the events we run than it is to lead with the international aspect.

John K Mitchell, via Facebook

I can't identify a “most valuable,” because the beauty of Rotary is its rainbow of benefits. Yes it's service, but also it's the building of trusting life-long relationships, both personal and professional, the development of leadership skills, the expansion of knowledge in learning of diverse cultures. The core values of Rotary says it all: fellowship, integrity, leadership, diversity, service.

Jim Nelson, via Facebook

Corrections: The January article “A burning issue” misstated the amount of carbon dioxide that researchers estimate was emitted from certain types of e-waste in 2020. The correct amount is 580 million metric tons. • The December Staff Corner column misstated the year in which Carla De Santo's daughter died. It was 2022.



THE SPECIALIST

Leave no pet behind

A first aid trainer puts the focus on saving our animal friends

I was volunteering with the American Red Cross to teach first aid classes when I found out the organization didn't focus only on human patients; they offered training to help pets too. I got certified to teach it, and when they discontinued classroom training, I went to animal-focused organizations to offer in-person classes. Half the class is CPR, and the other half is general first aid.

Pet first aid is far more challenging than human first aid. If one of us takes ill, we can call 911 and the professionals will come to the door, typically in five to seven minutes. That support is not available with an animal-only emergency. You're on your own.

Since professional first responders aren't coming, we can't do compression-only CPR, which is an option for humans. We have to do full CPR with chest

compressions and rescue breaths. For dogs, you close the mouth and breathe into the nostrils, and for cats, you put your lips over their mouth and nose.

The biggest challenge in delivering CPR is you have to maintain it while transporting the animal to the vet. You can't do 10 minutes of CPR at home, put them in the car and drive for 15 minutes, and expect a good outcome. If you don't have another person to help, the guidelines are to provide CPR for 20 minutes, while praying you actually do resuscitate them. It's not the expectation, but it can and does happen.

Prior preparedness is key. Nobody's coming to you, so you need to know where you are taking the injured animal. Where is the nearest 24-hour veterinary hospital? There are extra bits and pieces you can add to your human first aid kit to make sure it's ready and able to help with animal emergencies, things like a muzzle, a slip leash, and a nylon rope, which you can use to improvise a leash or a tourniquet.

The time I had to use these skills most recently was when I was called to help a cat that had been struck by a car. She was in the middle of the road, so I parked my car behind her so other cars had to slow down and move over. One of the first things we teach is making the scene safe. Fortunately, she was breathing and had a pulse, but she was unconscious. We got her to the vet, and in the end, she made a full recovery. ■

Peter Pay
Rotary Club
of San Ramon
Valley, California

Pet first aid
instructor



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DISASTER RESPONSE

The recovery playbook

After historic storms, Rotary clubs look to Florida's hard-earned wisdom

Pam Akins and her husband, Barry Levinson, were on the final days of a trip visiting Rotary friends in Sicily when Hurricane Helene sent 14 inches of water through their home near Sarasota, Florida, destroying major appliances, furniture, and their cars. But before they even got home, their Rotary network had leaped in to help.

“Rotarians from Barry’s club were already packing valuables from the house,” Akins recalls. “Rotary friends did several loads of laundry for us, and another Rotary friend took serving dishes, pots, and pans, and ran them through her dishwasher.”

The rapid response is part of a well-rehearsed script for Rotary clubs in Florida’s hurricane hot spots. Rotary members there have spent several years refining a recovery template that includes an online volunteer hub, logistical support, and more — all of it ready to go when disaster strikes.

That system was especially put to the test when a second powerful hurricane, Milton, wreaked havoc less than two weeks later, forcing Akins and Levinson to abandon their recovery work and join thousands evacuating.

As bad as it was in Florida, hundreds of miles to the north Helene punched far inland and stalled over the Appalachian Mountain hamlets of western North Carolina and eastern Tennessee — areas with little of Florida’s hurricane wisdom and response networks.

There, the storm dumped nearly 2 feet of rain in areas, causing mudslides and flooding that sent homes floating downriver and killing more than 120 people (across all states, more than 250 people were killed in the two storms). The devastation left thousands homeless and isolated or wiped out entire towns.

Patrick Eakes, an RI director from North Carolina whose zones cover much of the eastern U.S. and parts of the Caribbean, knew just where to turn for expert advice. “My first call was to Kelsey Mitchell,” he says. “I was like, ‘Look, I’m the director, but you’re the expert; tell me where we need to focus.’” Mitchell was a district governor-nominee in Florida when Hurricane Ian hit the state in 2022. In the aftermath of that storm, Mitchell helped bring Florida’s eight districts together to create detailed statewide recovery plans.

Their playbook includes how to set up bank accounts and websites to accept donations, mobilize volunteers, coordinate with partner organizations, and track essential equipment like debris trailers and water purification rigs. “They know how many chain saws they have in each district and where they are. It’s to that level,” Eakes says.

Now this recovery playbook is becoming a model for clubs and districts throughout the Southeastern United States. “What they have developed has really become a template for the rest of the zone,” says Eakes. “They have a lot of know-how and knowledge of what’s important and what to tackle first.”

Statewide planning in Florida

To learn more and get involved, visit rotary.org/disaster-response.



Hurricane Helene washed out roads like this one in Asheville, North Carolina, and caused mudslides and flooding that sent homes floating downriver.

began with monthly meetings between Mitchell's class of governor-nominees, who were motivated by the support that poured in after Hurricane Ian. They talked about lessons learned and how they could better support each other in the future. They pooled information and emergency contact lists into a single online file sharing site and agreed to meet daily when new storms approached.

The biggest leap forward came when a Rotarian from the district turned what had been a membership website into an online disaster relief hub. Visitors to the website, rotaryfl.org, can donate, request help, or volunteer all in one place. Volunteers can submit detailed information about what skills and resources they can offer, from physical labor and building materials to food delivery and organizing sup-

port. The data feeds into a master spreadsheet monitored by volunteers. Mitchell says the website will soon be able to automatically match volunteers with those requesting help and send the information to the appropriate district.

The Florida districts have also been working with Disaster Aid USA, an organization launched in 2010 by Rotarians to provide early disaster relief. Disaster Aid trains teams to "muck and gut," tarp roofs, operate chain saws, remove debris, and prep meals. In advance of each hurricane season, the organization works with Florida districts to prepare the team leads.

Mitchell and Eakes began texting right after Helene hit. They discussed specifics of the Florida plan, including how to set up a bank account and direct donations through their zones' website, a task

they completed in a matter of hours. "They had grant applications and a policy page that we've been able to borrow," Eakes says.

District governors from other hard-hit states joined Florida's daily video calls. Eakes was struck by how willing the Florida members were to help even as they grappled with the disaster in their own districts. "To me, it's the best of what Rotary's about," he says.

Alex "Alpo" Portelli, a district governor-elect from North Carolina, also began pumping Mitchell for details such as how to set up food kitchens to feed volunteers and which organizations could provide showers for emergency workers. A retired U.S. Army colonel with more than 30 years of experience in emergency operations, he managed the boots-on-the-ground response in western North Carolina.



BY THE NUMBERS

\$100 billion+

Likely cost of hurricanes Helene and Milton

95%

Share of uninsured losses from Helene

500 miles

Helene's path of destruction

Portelli put in 20-hour days connecting with responding agencies, putting together supply lists, and managing the deluge of donations. He directed Rotary volunteer teams dropping off supplies and stayed in contact with pilots airlifting materials by National Guard Black Hawk and civilian helicopters to mountaintop homes. And he coordinated with teams that hauled supplies up mountainsides by mule when there was no other way. "As a Rotarian, I couldn't be in a better position to do what we need to do to help others," Portelli says.

Several Rotarians donated warehouse space or secured space from business associates. In addition, district leaders worked with organizations like ShelterBox USA, an affiliate of ShelterBox Trust that allocated grant funding to support the Rotary districts' efforts.

Meanwhile in Florida, Rotary members had launched their statewide plan only to be interrupted by the approach of Milton. "I talked to one volunteer who had

helped muck and gut somebody's house in the Englewood area," says Mitchell. When he returned after Milton, the homeowners told him, "Hurricane Helene took all of our belongings, but Hurricane Milton took our home."

Recognizing the trauma of such losses, the Florida districts have spread word of the need for mental health supports. In Florida, a compassion team of professional therapists pays follow-up visits to homes where volunteers have helped. In North Carolina, Portelli and other Rotary members also made mental health a focus.

"PTSD is real, especially for those totally unaccustomed to calamity and disaster," says Portelli. "People suddenly find themselves without communications, washers, dryers, water. They mentally start to break down. We're doing everything we can to bring normalcy back to families, and especially children."

Mitchell is proud of the example her district has set. "We started with just a couple people respond-



Top: Hurricane Helene left scenes of destruction in Pinellas Park, outside St. Petersburg, Florida. Left: Members of District 6950 assisted residents there who suffered property damage.

ing in one neighborhood," she says. "It moved up to an entire city, then to our whole district, then to the state of Florida. Now we are looking at all the Southeastern states."

Mitchell believes every district, no matter where in the world, should have a disaster plan. "Disaster relief has not always been a top priority for people until it hits home," she says. "But everybody needs to have a plan. It's not just hurricanes; there's all kinds of disasters."

— ARNOLD R. GRAHL

Short takes

The 2023-24 Rotary Annual Report is now available to read at rotary.org/annualreport.

The new Rotary Impact Handbook gives members ideas on how to measure service projects' results. Download it at my.rotary.org/document/rotary-impact-handbook.





PROFILE

Peace passion

To give back, a peace fellow knew he had to join Rotary

Dan Noel Odaba
Rotary Club of
Nyeri, Kenya

Some people go to great lengths as Rotarians. Dan Noel Odaba went to great lengths just to become one.

Odaba joined in 2020, during the pandemic. His induction ceremony was held online. To be heard, Odaba took off his mask. And then his oxygen. “I was in the hospital with COVID,” he recalls, including five days in intensive care. But delaying his induction was out of the question. “I said, ‘If I have to die, let me die a Rotarian.’”

That passion was born during Odaba’s time as a Rotary Peace Fellow at Chulalongkorn University in Thailand in 2017. “I made a promise to give back 100 percent,” he says. “There was no way I could do that without becoming a Rotarian.”

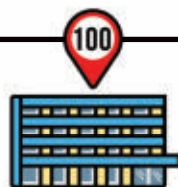
Odaba taught peace studies for more than 18 years before taking a break to complete the Rotary Peace Fellowship. For the program, he did a field study in Sri Lanka, learning about the conflict between the government and Tamil Tiger militants. He later earned a PhD in peace studies, using that case study for his dissertation.

Once a Rotarian, Odaba turned his attention to peacemaking through Rotary. He trained as a Positive Peace Activator through a partnership between Rotary and the Institute for Economics and Peace. He went on to share ideas from the Positive Peace framework with others, including the most recent cohort of Rotary Peace Fellows at Makerere University in Uganda.

In addition to mentoring the next generation of peacebuilders, he’s president of his Rotary club and speaks throughout his district about peace. “Rotary helped me gain insights into peacebuilding, and I wanted to give back,” he says. “That’s why I get so involved in Rotary.” ■

The 2024 Council on Resolutions concluded in October with the adoption of 18 resolutions for the RI Board to consider. Read them at my.rotary.org/cor/vote.

The RI Secretariat’s first international office, now known as the Europe/Africa office, opened in Zurich 100 years ago this month.



Rotary Peace Fellowship applications will be accepted through 15 May. Learn more at rotary.org/peace-fellowships.

People of action around the globe

By Brad Webber



United States

The Rotary Club of Bradley-Bourbonnais in Illinois has found jigsaw puzzles featuring scenes from the community to be a fitting fundraiser. In September, the club unveiled its third annual installment, featuring a bucolic scene of an 1850s barn. The club runs a photo contest each June to find images for the puzzles, offering a \$100 prize. It credits the photographer by name and promotes a link to the winner's website. "We're celebrating what our community has to offer," says Julia Mullikin. "People are looking forward to getting each year's puzzle." Club members staff tables at markets and enlist merchants and museums to offer the puzzles, which sell for \$30. "We use just about every portion of the box to promote our Rotary club," says Frank Koehler. Proceeds support scholarships, student recognition, and ShelterBox.



Mexico

District 5300 has provided homes for dozens of families in northern Mexico since 2008 through a tradition it calls "super builds," a yearly day of construction by Rotary members from California and Nevada. The 16-by-20-foot homes are built through a partnership with the California-based nonprofit Corazón. The \$18,500 cost per family pays for materials as well as school uniforms, books, and scholarships, says Robin Smith, of the Rotary Club of Las Vegas Summerlin, who has coordinated the initiative for nearly a decade. "There are clubs that give monetarily," she says. "There are also clubs that physically build the homes. Then we have clubs that are able to do both." The 2025 build is scheduled for 3 May.

67%

Share of Mexican tenants who spend more than 30% of their income on rent



Jamaica

Seven Rotary clubs and the Rotaract Club of Kingston came together to commission an interactive mural in the Jamaican capital. Scanning the painting with an app unlocks layers of additional information about topics including Rotary's areas of focus, how to join, and how to contribute to The Rotary Foundation. "This mural is more than just an artistic expression," says Steven Hudson, a past president of the Rotary Club of Kingston. "Each brushstroke symbolizes our dedication to these areas." The clubs teamed up with the painter Anthony "Taoszen" Smith and digital artist Kianne Patrice Hutchinson to produce the augmented reality project in collaboration with Kingston Creative, a nonprofit art hub that promotes unity and economic development. "We are able to showcase who we are as Rotarians" through the mural, says Melissa Anderson, of the Rotary Club of Kingston East and Port Royal. "We change lives, one community at a time, and we want others with a heart of service to join us."



Netherlands

A passion for peace prompted five Dutch Rotaract clubs to hold a symposium on conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo. On 21 September, the International Day of Peace, club members welcomed Pappy Orion, founder of a nonprofit called Focus Congo, who discussed his journey from child soldier to peacebuilder. The event included panel discussions on the humanitarian crisis and celebrated Congolese food, visual arts, music, and dance. "Our club adopted the project because we want to raise hands, raise awareness, and raise funds to raise hope in the region," says Nicholas Egunjobi, of the Rotaract Club of The Hague International. The event raised about \$7,400 for Orion's nonprofit. "The projects we are aiming to support include building and maintaining camps for internally displaced people," says Ana Zlatevski, a member of The Hague international club.



1899

Year the first peace conference at The Hague was held

Rotaract
Clubs of the Netherlands



Nigeria

A year after installing a borehole well and toilet at a primary school, members of the Rotary Club of Kaduna returned to satisfy another infrastructure need. "The school was without desks at the time of a needs assessment, and the children were sitting on the floor," Club President Portia Stephanie Aji says. A solution was at hand: School leaders had saved pieces of old furniture, and club members refashioned salvageable materials into desks and chairs. The club partnered with businesses and groups to provide the students with backpacks, dictionaries, notebooks, pens, and chalk at a hand-over ceremony in September during Rotary's Basic Education and Literacy Month.

74%

Literacy rate of Nigerian young people ages 15 to 24



1974

Year the National Gallery of Jamaica was established

Rotary
Club of Kaduna

GOODWILL

Specialists in the field

You learned of a need in a community. Now deploy the experts: a vocational training team.

Ramona Delmas shares a photo of a tiny infant on its back, bathed in the blue light of a therapy cradle used to treat jaundice. The device was donated through a long-term initiative that has revolutionized maternal and pediatric care at a hospital in Ángel Albino Corzo in the Mexican state of Chiapas.

The Rotary Club of Bishop Sunrise in California provided the machine to the facility. “Within three days, we had our first baby,” beams Delmas, a club member. “That machine turned this into a regional pediatric hospital in addition to an OB-GYN hospital.”

The global grant project, sponsored by the Bishop Sunrise club and the Rotary Club of Oriente de Tuxtla Gutiérrez, included multiple vocational training team visits to Chiapas over several years beginning in 2019. During the initial visit, medical professionals from California taught local doctors, midwives, nurses, and medical students emergency obstetrics skills and supplied equipment to support maternal care.

The COVID-19 pandemic forced a pause in the project, yet many doctors learned of the new equipment at the hospital and began traveling from all over to perform their surgeries there. As a result, the

California team scrapped a plan to perform elective surgeries during a return visit because the abundance of local doctors made it unnecessary. The project shifted instead to creating a pediatric unit after a new community assessment.

Delmas praises this ability to pivot and notes the lasting relationships that have resulted from the team visits. “The doctors, nurses, and midwives there can talk to our doctors in Bishop any day of the week,” she says.

By organizing vocational training teams, Rotary clubs can arrange for a group of professionals to visit another country to teach local professionals in a particular field or learn more about their own. Teams should have at least three members, including a team leader who is a Rotary member. Everyone on the team should have at least two years of related work experience.

The team’s activities must align with the goals of an area of focus and adhere to The Rotary Foundation’s conditions to qualify for a global grant. In addition, the team should address a need identified by the local community.

That was a priority for Gary Morgan, a member of the Rotary Club of Ballarat South, Australia. A decorated member of Forestry Australia, Morgan is well connected in the international fraternity of forest

fire management. At the request of district officers, he explored setting up a vocational training team to help prevent wildfires overseas. He decided to focus on Portugal, where a devastating fire season in 2017 had caused widespread damage and loss of life. Politicians were demanding a change in fire management practices.

“I’ve known the people in charge there [Portugal] for quite some time, and that made it easy,” Morgan says. “We had many online conversations before I even approached people for a team to make sure we really understood the situation, what they wanted, and why they wanted it.”

The team, supported by a global grant co-sponsored by the Rotary Club of Ponta Delgada S. Miguel (Açores), focused on methods of prescribed burns to mitigate wildfires, particularly in areas with eucalyptus, highly flammable trees native to Australia that also grow in rural Portugal.

Morgan recommends that teams be a manageable size and include people with the variety of skills needed to deliver on the objectives. His team included individuals with practical experience in fire suppression, an ability to manage people, a background in research, and an understanding of the policy side of fire management. He kept the team to four so all members could fit into one vehicle during trips into the field.

Delmas and Morgan both have found value in including professionals who are not members of Rotary. As the only Rotarian on her team, Delmas says nonmembers opened the project to greater funding and publicity.

“They learned so much, they became ambassadors for Rotary,” she says. “The next thing I knew, they were talking about Rotary to everyone. As a result, we received funding from organizations that we might not have.”

Delmas says vocational training teams enhance any grant project. “It’s hard for me to visualize a Rotary project without one.”

— ARNOLD R. GRAHL

Could a vocational training team increase your project’s impact? Learn about the grant options at rotary.org/grants.



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ESSAY

Martin and me

Words to live by from Dr. King, President Lincoln, and Rotary

By Charles D. Allen



I had heard the news the night before, sitting around the TV with my mother and my siblings. The next day, 5 April 1968, preparing, as I did every morning, to deliver the Cleveland *Plain Dealer*, seeing that newspaper headline reinforced the brutal reality: Martin Luther King Jr. was dead, shot by an assassin in Memphis. He had gone there to support striking sanitation workers, continuing to strive, even in his final days, to bend the arc of the moral universe toward justice.

A frequent visitor to Cleveland, King had long been a presence in our family, which is why there is more than just a history lesson in the stories that follow. There is a deeply personal connection, for these stories are a part of who I am.

In my mind's eye, I can see clearly on my grandmother's sitting room wall the pictures of Mahalia Jackson, President Kennedy, and Dr. King grouped around an image of Jesus Christ. And I vividly recall when, in August 1963 and again gathered around the TV, we watched the March on Washington, where Dr. King, standing on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, delivered his indelible I Have a Dream speech.

I was 8 years old, but even at that young age I listened carefully to what that man on the steps had to say and wondered what would become of him — and of us. In the 1950s, my grandmother had moved from Alabama to Cleveland to join my mom and other family members, as had my dad with his siblings. They were part of the historic Black migration from the Deep South. Filled with hope, my parents started a family and sought a new way of life in the North. On that August day in 1963, had we advanced even further toward that moment when, as Dr. King put it, we could all “sit down together at the table of brotherhood”?

And then my world exploded. In the summer of 1966, our east side Cleveland neighborhoods were the epicenter of arson, arrests, and death, all sparked by an incident that demonstrated that racism was still rampant, as much in the North as in the South. During the Hough Riots, as those six days of upheaval are known, there was a National Guard vehicle parked in the vacant lot next to our apartment building. I had a growing feeling that I lived in a world that had seemingly gone mad.

In such times of turmoil, my family looked to Dr. King for spiritual direction and hope. On that April morning in 1968, when I saw that newspaper headline — DR. KING IS SHOT TO DEATH — I worried that even hope had forsaken us. Eleven months before King's assassination, my father had died in a boating accident on Lake Erie, leaving behind my mother and her five children. At 12, I was the eldest, and earning money on my paper routes — *The Plain Dealer* in the morning and *The Cleveland Press* in the afternoon — was part of my contribution to the family. But I was uncertain about what prospects I might have in this world. I was already trying to figure out not only where to go to college but how I could ever afford it — and what would happen to my family were I to go away? I had lots of questions and not enough answers.

The week after Dr. King's assassination, my junior high school class went to Washington, D.C., over spring break. This was my first exposure to the world outside of Cleveland. We traveled by bus, stopping in Pennsylvania at the Gettysburg battlefield. At the time, America was transitioning into Lyndon Johnson's Great Society, so while there was discussion and debate about current events, there was not much time devoted to history. I didn't know a lot about the Civil War, and I don't remember if the teachers on that trip offered any insights about what had gone on at Gettysburg. For us young students, it was mainly a welcome break on a long and tedious bus ride.

In Washington, we made the usual stops. Among other places, we visited the White House grounds, the Smithsonian museums — and the Lincoln Memorial.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. had long been a presence in our family, which is why there is more than just a history lesson in my stories.

In retrospect, that was the moment in which my future began to take shape. I stood in awe beside the big marble chair where, in Daniel Chester French's monumental sculpture, Abraham Lincoln was seated. And I solemnly stood on the steps where, nearly five years earlier, Dr. King had delivered his most famous speech. I read the words etched in stone from Lincoln's second inaugural address, and though I do not remember which of those phrases resonated with me at the time, I somehow made the connection between Lincoln and King. That connection extended to the fields of Gettysburg and to what was happening then in American society at that crucial time in our nation's history.

I took those ideas back with me and shared them with my teachers and fellow students. Later I was recognized with my high school's first Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Award. And I made it to college, though my choice of schools surprised even me. There was a liaison officer from the Army Reserve who made regular visits to our school. He was looking for African American students who might consider going to West Point. Teachers pointed him in my direction, but this was a time of protests and too fresh memories of Kent State — when National Guard members killed four students amid an antiwar protest at that Ohio university — and I wasn't interested. But the liaison officer came back repeatedly talking about the possibilities that a full scholarship education would open up for me. Eventually he won me over.

There were a few bumps in the road — mainly a knee injury I suffered that delayed my entry by a year — but, with an appointment from Congressman Louis Stokes, I attended West Point. I intended to remain for only two years and then transfer to another school, but a funny thing happened: Once I was at West Point, I found my niche and committed to stay all four years. A 30-year military career followed, with overseas assignments in Germany, Honduras, and Korea. I went to grad school at Georgia Tech and taught for three years at West Point; I retired as a colonel in 2008, and today I am a professor at the U.S. Army War College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania.

I began teaching at the college before my military retirement from the Army, and I lived in government quarters. One

day my neighbor and colleague, another colonel, invited me to a breakfast Rotary meeting. I tagged along and liked what I saw. I met lots of great people from across our community, military and civilian, and I could see they were doing good things motivated by a motto I could get behind: Service Above Self. That was in 2004, and I've been a member of the Rotary Club of Carlisle-Sunrise ever since.

The better I get to know Rotary, and the more closely I study the writings and speeches of Dr. King, the more similarities I see between his teachings and The Four-Way Test. Consider, for instance, King's famous 1963 letter written from a jail in Birmingham, Alabama, where he had been confined for protesting, nonviolently, racial segregation. Midway through the letter, King emphasized the necessity of honestly identifying the country's social inequities. "Injustice must be exposed, with all the tension its exposure creates, to the light of human conscience and the air of national opinion before it can be cured." In other words, it's important that what we say is true.

Or during his I Have a Dream speech, when he noted that America had failed to fulfill its "sacred obligation" that everyone enjoy equal liberty and justice, was Dr. King not asking if our society had been fair to all? In his Nobel Peace Prize speech, when he emphasized the importance of "learning the practical art of living in harmony," was he not championing the importance of goodwill and friendship? And in his sermon entitled The Drum Major Instinct, he imagined the eulogy that might be delivered at his funeral. He asked that it not dwell on his many awards but merely note that he had "tried to give his life serving others." Whatever he had accomplished, he hoped it had been beneficial to all.

These days, whenever I'm in Washington, I try to visit with President Lincoln and Dr. King. When I stand beside that great stone chair at the Lincoln Memorial and read the inscriptions on the wall, the words that resonate for me appear in that hallowed passage from the second inaugural: "With malice toward none, with charity for all ... let us strive on to finish the work we are in." We made some progress on that work when President Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act of 1964 on 2 July of that year — the 101st anniversary of the second day of battle



When I read the inscriptions on the wall of the Lincoln Memorial, the words that resonate are: "With malice toward none, with charity for all ... let us strive on to finish the work we are in."

on the fields of Gettysburg.

And at the memorial to Dr. King, I remember the promise he made on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial that we would one day "hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope." That's a moment we can envision as we pass through the Mountain of Despair — the entrance to the King Memorial — and stand before the Stone of Hope: the monumental statue of Dr. King carved by Lei Yixin.

In February, we celebrate both Lincoln's and Rotary's birthdays; it's also Black History Month, a fitting time to remember not only the words of Dr. King, but the life he lived. Over the years I have heard and read that King may have been unduly idolized. Reflecting on that,

I think that Dr. King would have agreed with Nelson Mandela when he said, "I am not a saint, unless you think of a saint as a sinner who keeps on trying."

Dr. King faced and met the challenges of the past to give us our blessing of the present. It is now our challenge to create a future worthy of his hopes. As members of Rotary, we're fortunate to have the right words to guide us. ■

A member of the Rotary Club of Carlisle-Sunrise, Pennsylvania, retired Army Colonel Charles D. Allen is the Elihu Root chair of military studies and professor of leadership and cultural studies in the Department of Command, Leadership, and Management at the U.S. Army War College.



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Pietro Uzochukwu Macleo, Adama Mohammed, and Goddy Nhadi joined more than 100 Rotary observers during the presidential election.



THE OBSERVERS

An election
monitoring mission
in Nigeria presents
a pathway for
peacebuilding

By Kúnlé Adébàjò

Photography by
Andrew Esiebo



Pietro Uzochukwu Macleo had reasons to be worried. Nigeria was holding a tightly contested presidential election and he was coordinating scores of people who would be observing the process across the country. It could get rowdy, or worse, bloody. But what Macleo felt most of all when he woke up that Saturday morning in February 2023 wasn't fear. It was excitement.

Rotary districts in Nigeria, led by Macleo, obtained accreditation for more than 100 Rotary members to serve as official election observers. Rotarians headed to their assigned polling units in the country's 36 states and Federal Capital Territory on the mornings of the two general election days, three weeks apart: one, the

presidential and national assembly elections, and the other contests for governors and state assembly seats.

Macleo, now 37, knew how important this exercise was. Nigeria has a worrisome history of election violence, and further political instability in the country — Africa's largest democracy and one of its biggest economies — could have a ripple effect across West Africa and beyond. "I had some concerns about safety and security. But it was more excitement," he says. "We were making history."

For most of its first four decades of independence, Nigeria was under military rule and beset by widespread corruption and communal and ethnic violence. After a historic presidential election in 1999, Ni-

geria introduced democratic reforms. But efforts to share power between large populations of Muslims and Christians and other groups have had halting success, leading to continued tension. Instances and allegations of gross electoral malpractice have not helped. Between the end of military dictatorship and 2019, more than 1,400 people died in election violence.

The 2023 general elections seemed ripe for more unrest. The presidential election, on 25 February, was considered the tightest race since the country restored democratic rule. After Muhammadu Buhari, from the predominantly Muslim north, had served eight years as president, it was widely felt that power should return to the mostly Christian



south, but one of the biggest contenders was a candidate from the northeast. Another tinderbox: The ruling party was fielding a presidential candidate and vice presidential candidate who were both Muslims, a first since 1993 for running mates from a major party at the federal level. This fed conspiracy theories suggesting there was a plan to Islamize the country, with some even making false claims that the group's vice presidential candidate founded Boko Haram, the Muslim militant group in northern Nigeria.

Still, Nigeria had just amended its electoral laws and introduced advanced technology to accredit voters and transmit results, providing hope that these elections would be credible — and peaceful.

Between the end of military dictatorship in 1999 and 2019, more than 1,400 people died in election violence.

Opposite: Macleo led the election observation project. “I had some concerns about safety and security. But it was more excitement,” he says. “We were making history.” **Above:** Officials count ballots in front of party agents and observers at a polling station in Lagos during Nigeria's gubernatorial and state assembly election.

Early that morning, Macleo sent out a stream of reminders to the 131 election observers via WhatsApp: *Wake up, it's time. Remember your training. You only have business with election officials and the police. Don't engage with the media. Don't engage with voters. Don't forget to take your own water and snacks.*

At 6 a.m., Macleo left home wearing his navy Rotary election observer jacket

and green lanyard carrying his election observer ID that he would need to get around restrictions on movement across the country. He picked up a fellow Rotarian — the observers traveled in pairs — and headed to a spacious public primary school in the Garki neighborhood of the capital, Abuja.

Macleo joined Rotary when he was 28, a college student obsessed with bodybuilding. When he attended his first meeting of the Rotary Club of Abuja Wuse II in 2015 wearing a sleeveless, tight-fitting outfit, he felt like the odd one out among the gathering of middle-aged career folk. But he didn't let that discourage him. "I was instead inspired," he recalls. "I loved the way they conducted themselves."

He was studying political science at the University of Abuja and later focused his dissertation on elections, which spurred his interest in leadership and governance. He went on to earn doctorates in peace studies and international relations, and today, Macleo is as passionate about peacebuilding as he once was about bodybuilding.

His research led him to an understanding that the best pathways to peace are holistic, progressive, and inclusive. Rotary could help advance such an approach, he realized, because it already has a large network of individuals who are as driven as he is. "I saw an opportunity where you could mobilize people to address real issues on peace," he says.

When he became his Rotary club's president — its youngest — in 2019, he put the focus on projects centered around peacebuilding. That same year, he enrolled in the Institute for Economics and Peace's Ambassador Program, which helped him see how the eight Pillars of Positive Peace

could lead to tangible results in Nigeria.

In 2020, Macleo formed a foundation, which is establishing a network of Positive Peace advocates in Rotary clubs around Nigeria to implement projects. And in 2023, he participated in Rotary's Positive Peace Activator Program, an intensive learning opportunity for dedicated peacebuilders.

Voter education and election monitoring are not as tangible as drilling a borehole well, equipping a health facility, or building a block of classrooms. Still, Macleo believes they are just as crucial, if not more so. If you can get strong leadership, if people believe their votes are protected and will count, then a government might emerge that will serve effectively and remove the need for a borehole, a hospital bed, and a new block of classrooms in a lot of communities.

Goddy Nnadi, governor of District 9125 during the 2023 elections, agrees. In decades as a member, he has seen Rotary's work help people in meaningful ways. With the election observation program, he believes Rotary is doing more. "Some see Rotarians as those who impact people," Nnadi says. "This project impacts the system. The systemic improvement is what the nation needs. The reason is this: If we have a good election, you elect good people, and good people will make the state better."

All over the world, observers, both domestic and international, help improve the quality of elections. Observers hold authorities accountable, ensure fairness and transparency, build public confidence in the process, deter fraud, and document irregularities — especially crucial in fragile democracies. Their recommendations can lead to improvements in the political



process, and their presence builds trust.

"To observers, it's about the process, not the outcome," explains Mboho Eno, who leads the Media in National Elections project at the Abuja-based Centre for Journalism Innovation and Development. Nigeria's civil society organizations deserve credit for progress, Eno says.

Months before the 2023 elections, Rotary districts in Nigeria organized voter education events, including workshops in every state and trainings shared through social and traditional media. They reached over 100,000 people. One of them was Zigwai Tagwai, who attended one of the workshops in September 2022 at the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution in Abuja.

Rotary election observers often received a warm reception and were seen as a neutral and trusted voice. "I was amazed at the passion and commitment of our members," Adama Mohammed says.

Observers hold authorities accountable, ensure fairness and transparency, build public confidence in the process, deter fraud, and document irregularities.







Tagwai, a young civic engagement advocate, heard about the program through a network she belongs to on WhatsApp. At the session, Nigeria's Independent National Electoral Commission demonstrated a device being introduced at the general elections that uses biometric data such as facial recognition and fingerprints to verify and accredit voters. Tagwai learned the basics of the reformed electoral process, how best to go about voting, and the responsibilities of citizen observers. She passed this information on to scores of other young people in her network.

The workshop also led Tagwai, who had already completed the IEP curriculum for peace ambassadors, to further engage with the Rotary network. She was accepted into the Positive Peace Activator Program and has since collaborated with Rotary members on peacebuilding activities. "There are shared values," she says.

Left: Nigeria's four district governors in 2023, including Goddy Nnadi, supported the project. **Above:** Pedestrians in Abuja walk past a banner from the police force carrying a message calling for peace during the elections.

That preelection work by Rotary districts, supported by Nnadi and the country's three other district governors at the time — Omotunde Lawson, Mightyman Aye Dikuro, and Grace Okaro — is what enabled them to meet the criteria to serve as official observers in the 2023 general elections. When they discovered in January 2023 that they had been selected, they put out a call for Rotarians to volunteer. The response was so overwhelming they had to narrow the pool to club presidents and past and present district officers. The Rotary observers went through robust training, collected their identification cards, and eagerly awaited the big day.

As Macleo and his partner made their way to their first polling place, they hit an immediate snag: aggressive security that restricted their movement, observer tags or not. By the time they got to the site at a school, they met a large crowd of voters already waiting. When officials finally opened the gate, voters swarmed chaotically inside.

As officials set up materials, Macleo observed someone suspiciously taking pictures of voting items. "I knew from the

training with INEC [the election commission] that was not allowed," he says. Since interacting with voters was prohibited too, he reported the person to security agents.

More than 3,000 voters cast ballots at a dozen polling stations located around the school as roughly 20 security agents stood by to prevent any outbursts of violence. As in many other places, the voting was peaceful, especially during the early hours. There was an atmosphere of merriment. "People brought food and drinks because the queue was long," Macleo says.

"We don't care about who won or who lost. We were looking out for inclusivity."

From the school, Macleo moved on to another area of the Garki neighborhood. The crowd there wasn't as big, and the voting process was better managed. Afterward, he visited a voting site at a post office. By the end of the day, he had observed more than 20 polling stations.

Adama Mohammed had a similar experience. She left home at 7:30 a.m. and didn't return until after observing the evening Muslim prayer, past 6 p.m. Driving around in her red SUV, she visited at least 23 polling stations in the upscale Maitama area of Abuja, home to foreign embassies, restaurants, and shops. She was constantly on the move, drinking from her water flask and munching on finger foods to replenish her energy. She was excited to soak in as much information as possible. "I didn't sit down anywhere," she says.

An Abuja-based lawyer and a member of the Rotary Club of Abuja Maitama, Mohammed says she is driven to advocate for people who need help, especially women and children. She joined Rotary because she saw an opportunity to do this on a bigger scale. She was particularly keen on the election observation project because she was "conscious of the importance of the democratic process and electing good leaders," she says. She enjoyed connecting with other Rotary election observers across the country through WhatsApp. "I was amazed at the passion and commitment of our members," she says.

Throughout the day, Rotary members exchanged photos: polling places in Nigeria's modern urban metropolises and those in rural communities of dirt roads and mud and thatch houses; people waiting in plastic chairs for poll workers to set up, and others tracing a list of voters on a wall. A picture uploaded to WhatsApp by an observer in northeastern Nigeria shows a traditional leader dressed in a white boubou, a flowing garment, and flanked by aides — one stands behind him, holding a ceremonial umbrella so big he has to use both hands.

Macleo noticed several problems as the day progressed. The distribution of voters was lopsided. One polling place could have over a thousand voters and another steps away would have only 50. After waiting in line for several hours, some voters found out they'd been re-assigned to vote someplace else. There wasn't adequate support for people with



“You don’t just start addressing these issues overnight. It has to be systemic.”

physical and visual disabilities, and there were hiccups with uploading the counted results.

While moving from one polling unit to another, Macleo frequently checked the WhatsApp group of observers to see how others were faring. “The BVAS [biometrics] machine has failed to work and the PO [presiding officer] has sent for the technician. Voters waiting,” one observer in Cross River state wrote. Another observer in the city of Yenagoa noted that national election officials had yet to arrive. “Security forces are around. Voters are getting agitated.”

There were updates, too, about the warm reception that Rotarians received.



Opposite: Rotary members in Nigeria are working with young people such as these Rotary Youth Leadership Awards attendees to help them avoid being drawn into political violence. **Left:** Macleo now heads the Nigeria chapter of the Rotary Action Group for Peace.

“Voters who knew about Rotary or who have been Rotarians or are currently Rotarians were happy to see Rotary actively involved in supporting a peaceful election,” a member in Abuja wrote. “Exactly,” someone replied. Another Rotarian in Akwa Ibom state observed that he even met people who expressed interest in joining the organization. And voters drew the attention of at least one of the Rotary observers, a member in Niger state, to suspicious activities. “They saw us as neutral and trusted us,” he said.

Among other problems, some voters had to wait until the following day to complete their ballots. And advanced voting technologies, key reasons for hope in the

reliability of the results, did not function dependably, observers noted. These observations were shared with the electoral commission and other key stakeholders in an 83-page report, which called it “a ‘successful’ election — however imperfect.”

“You won’t find any partisan information in our report,” Macleo says. “We don’t care about who won or who lost. We were looking out for inclusivity. Was the process inclusive for people living with a disability? Was it inclusive of the aged? Was it inclusive of women? Were the rules and regulations followed? What transpired? Could it trigger conflict?”

Litigation over the presidential election delayed the gubernatorial voting by

a week. In the end, Bola Tinubu, the ruling party candidate, was named president.

After a campaign period marred by a level of political violence comparable to previous years, the election day voting proceeded largely peacefully despite some pockets of violence. Reducing election violence opens the door to peacebuilding, Macleo says, especially among young people, who have sometimes been vulnerable to recruitment by political groups to carry out attacks on candidates, voters, and election commission offices.

Rotary districts in Nigeria are now designing a project to create peace education clubs at schools and in communities across the country that could be integrated, Macleo envisions, into Rotaract and Interact clubs. It teaches young people about issues such as cultism, gang violence, peace, tolerance, human rights, civic responsibilities, drug use, cyber-crime, and so on.

One of the hopes is that they’ll avoid being drawn into political violence. “The election period opened our eyes to the fact that some actors fan the embers of hate, of disinformation, ethnicity, bias,” Macleo says. “You don’t just start addressing these issues overnight. It has to be systemic. You address the issue to make sure there are no available hands for them to use, and that’s from building capacity for the youth.”

To support the work, Nigerian Rotarians chartered a national chapter of the Rotary Action Group for Peace, with 200 members and more than 2,000 affiliates, including Rotary members, Rotaractors, Rotary Peace Fellows, and others — and with Macleo at the helm.

While funding has been a challenge, Macleo sees great potential, not just in Nigeria, but for peace-loving Rotary members around the world. “By joining Rotary, I saw an opportunity where you could actually mobilize people to address real issues on peace. That was the catch for me,” he says. “We are at the vanguard for the eradication of polio. That’s the same kind of imagination I have for peace.” ■

Управљање и програмирање

Едукативно средство: mBot2

Визуелно програмирање: Make Blocks



Никола М

$$1 + \sqrt{2} \quad 1 + \sqrt{2} =$$



$$1 + \sqrt{2}$$

(ROTARY + USAID) x MBOTS

= A TECH-SAVVY FUTURE FOR SERBIAN STUDENTS

The equation mBot

ROBOT



DRS. KO



Photography by
MONIKA LOZINSKA

In May
2020,

during the earliest months of the COVID-19 pandemic, Rotary International and USAID announced an exciting new endeavor. Called Hearts of Europe, the initiative aimed to foster collaboration, networking, and friendship among Rotary clubs in the United States and select central and Eastern European countries.

“At this challenging time, we believe Hearts of Europe is a fantastic opportunity to rebuild the bonds of cooperation between communities and nations,” said John Hewko, the general secretary and CEO of Rotary International and The Rotary Foundation. “If we can seize this opportunity, we will pave the way for a healthier and more prosperous future.”

USAID called the collaboration an example of what it and Rotary do best: They both empower communities to help themselves and lay the foundations for a better future.

Administered through The Rotary Foundation’s global grants program, Hearts of Europe has to date approved 21 projects in Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Ukraine. The partnership has provided nearly \$2 million in funding, with 57 percent of that money coming from Rotary — and, says Sam Kendall, a strategic relations officer for Rotary, there are more projects in the pipeline. Originally scheduled to conclude in 2023, the partnership was extended another two years and will wrap up this summer.

Last April, Monika Lozinska and Aleks Iricanin, two members of Rotary’s visual media team, traveled to Serbia to take a close look at one Hearts of Europe global grant project. Anticipating an increased demand in Serbia for IT professionals skilled at robotics and programming, the Rotary Club of Beograd-Čukarica in Belgrade and the Rotary Club of St. Simons Island in the U.S. state of Georgia collaborated on a project that distributed 500 programmable mBots to primary schools in Serbia. They also provided training programs to about 150 teachers in 100 schools to better prepare them to teach students the fundamentals of robotics, electronics, and programming.

Lozinska and Iricanin visited with teachers and pupils from four schools. They also attended the Knowledge for the Future Festival, where about 300 students from 63 schools — narrowed down from 1,112 schools in earlier tournaments — competed in a demonstration of their skills with mBots and drones. One team emerged triumphant, but, thanks to Rotary and USAID, all the kids went home winners.

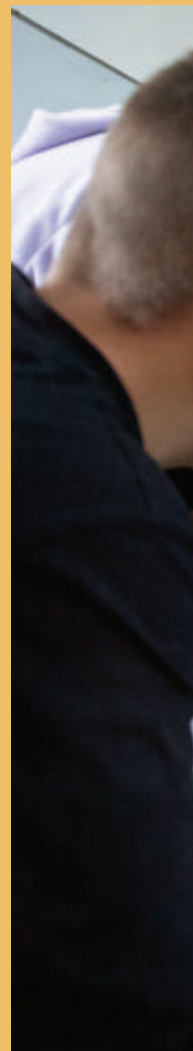


↑ “The children are fascinated” by mBots, says Nadica Gavrilović (above), who teaches engineering and technology at Filip Kljajić Fića primary school in Belgrade. “They’re really interested in programming robots — seeing how they move and what they can do.”

↻ A student (top right) makes an mBot adjustment at Svetozar Marković primary school in Belgrade.

⇨ Students at Ivo Lola Ribar primary school in Ruma (right) watch raptly as a schoolmate demonstrates what a well-programmed mBot can do.

(Previous pages) Renderings of mBots share a crowded blackboard with scientific scribbles and games of tic-tac-toe at Filip Kljajić Fića school.





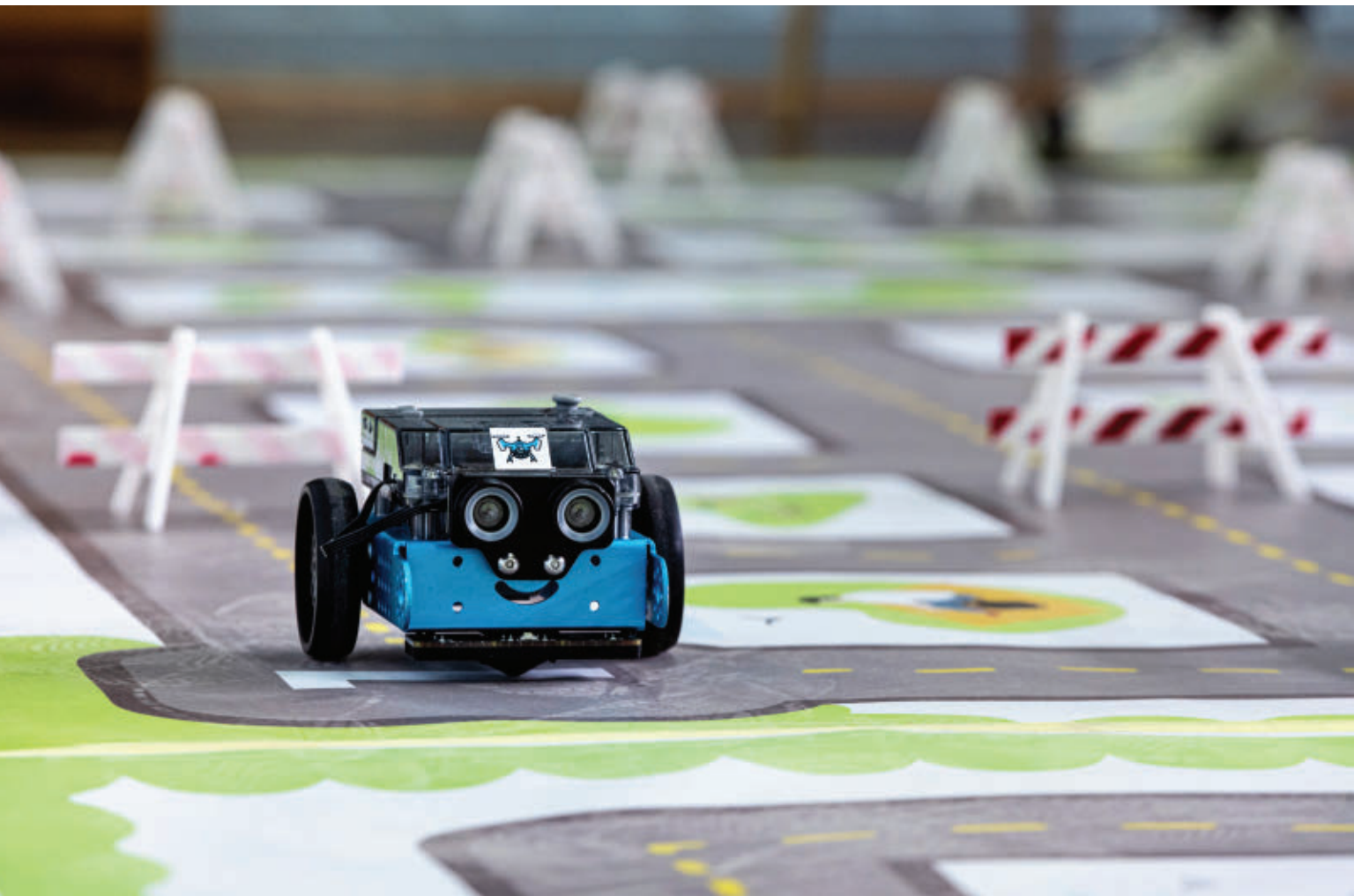


↑ At Filip Kljajić Fića school (above), a delighted Milica Rakonjac shows off her mBot, which seems equally enchanted with her.

↗ On 20 April, at Belgrade's Ranko Žeravica Sports Hall (top right), students prepare for the Knowledge for the Future Festival.

↘ Three of the 300-plus students participating in the festival competition (right) make sure everything is good to go with their mBot.







↪ Vladimir Lalošević (top left), a member of the Rotary Club of Ruma and assistant governor of District 2483, where the mBots were distributed, sits with his daughter, Teodora, an mBot aficionado. “I want to learn how to program,” she says, “so in the future I can make new robots that can help us.”

↪ When it comes to mBots, these boys (top right) just want to have fun, which is not only allowed but encouraged and one of the secrets to the project’s success.

↪ Vladimir Matić (right), a member of the Rotary Club of Beograd-Čukarica and a leader of the Hearts of Europe global grant mBot project, reviews the results of the mBot competition at the Knowledge for the Future Festival.







⇌ And the winner of the Knowledge for the Future Festival competition is ... Nadica Gavrilović and her jubilant students from Filip Kljajić Fića school.

“Through organizing competitions, we get information about what the children have learned,” says Vladimir Lalošević. “And we definitely think we are on the right path.”



Where all news is good news

Things aren't as bad as we think they are, David Byrne discovers



Illustration by
Cristian Barba Camarena



In October, people found their seats at the Town Hall theater in New York City, not just for a concert or a comedy show, but both — and more. This variety show celebrated the fifth anniversary of *Reasons to be Cheerful*, a nonprofit online magazine offering good news in a market often dominated by doom and gloom headlines.

But these aren't your average feel-good stories about a firefighter helping a cat down from a tree. *Reasons to be Cheerful* reports on evidence-based solutions to some of the world's most pressing problems, from poverty to climate change. In fact, you may have read some of the publication's articles in this magazine. *Rotary* republishes the outlet's stories from time to time, and the two publications collaborate on other pieces.

Musician and writer David Byrne, a Rock & Roll Hall of Famer with Talking Heads and Grammy winner for a music film, got into the good news business in 2019. What started as a personal project has evolved into a full editorial and administrative team publishing an optimistic story most weekdays. Over the past five years, *Reasons to be Cheerful* has published about a thousand such stories, and Byrne sees no end in sight.

In September, NPR journalist Scott Simon talked with Byrne for the *Rotary Voices* podcast ahead of *Reasons to be Cheerful's* fifth anniversary celebration. Byrne discussed the origins of *Reasons to be Cheerful*, the stories that have stuck with him, and his personal reflections on cheer in the modern world. What follows is adapted from their conversation. Listen to the full interview at on.rotary.org/podcast.



From top: David Byrne takes to the stage to celebrate *Reasons to be Cheerful*'s fifth anniversary. Joining him are comedian Fred Armisen, circus artist Ellie Steingraeber, and drum line Fogo Azul.



Why did you start *Reasons to be Cheerful*?

Like a lot of people, I get up in the morning and read the newspapers over coffee and grapefruit. I end up getting my stomach in a knot, anxious and angry, and that lasts into my day. I realized this is not good for me, not good for my health, and it's not solving any of the problems I'm reading about.

So, when I saw a story about something that seemed hopeful, especially about someone who had actually solved one of the problems out in the world somewhere, I saved it in a folder. And then I started writing about these things myself, basically saying, "Things are maybe not as bad as we think they are."

The social media algorithms and our own evolutionary bias make us pay more attention to bad news or things that might threaten us or scare us than we would to things that are hopeful. It's a kind of survival instinct. I thought maybe we can redress that balance a little bit, because there are things that people have found solutions for and things that are hopeful out there, and they just don't get the clicks that the bad news does.

I realized, maybe we can be a counterweight to that and maybe we can do this in a more formal way. So, I started working with editors, writers, a web designer. We started doing two stories a week and now we're up to five. I'm surprised there's that many stories.

What recent story has stayed with you?

One of the most popular in recent months was about the removal of dams [on the Penobscot River] in Maine. These dams weren't generating much electricity or power. They were built when logging was a huge industry in Maine, and they provided some mechanical power to run the mills. But those are long gone and now dams like these just stop the fish and back up the water, so the water becomes stagnant. Little by little, they have been removed.

The good news is the fish and the wildlife have all started to come back. The predators that feed on the fish — the eagles, raccoons, and bears — they have all started to come back. This life along the river has become more vibrant. From the human point of view, the river has become a better place and the real estate values, which suffered when the river

was stagnant, have gone up. It's a more desirable place to live.

So this is a story that tells people it's possible to make a difference?

It is possible to make a difference. And then we go into the details of how this was done, all these efforts, which might not be everyone's cup of tea — the mechanics of how change like this happens. But it's important to know how it happens. It's not a magical snap of the fingers.

What have you learned through five years of putting out *Reasons to be Cheerful*? For one thing, does that figure surprise you?

I'm surprised that financially we've managed to hang in there and we're doing all right. I'm surprised that we keep finding stories. I genuinely thought that at some point we'd scrape the bottom of the barrel and be like, "OK, that's it for the good news." The other things are more administrative. I learned that there are always changes and shifts in the team, and eventually it settles into something, and you go, "Ah, now people are doing what they like, and they're doing it well." And I can step back a bit because we're working with really good people. It's very nice when that happens.

You don't have ads or paywalls, right?

No, though we did try ads for a little while. We run on membership. We ask people to pay what they wish. There's no set fee, but that helps us, as well as occasional philanthropic donations. We do talks — I went to Maine and did a talk with some of the people involved in the dam removal. So we can bring in a little bit of money here and there.

Do you still fill yourself up with news?

Yes, I still read the papers when I get up in the morning, but now at least I have an alternative. If I need some therapy, let's say, after getting myself all worked up reading what's happened overnight, I can turn to some things like, "Oh, here's some people who've done something hopeful."

Now, if I'm having a dinner conversation with friends and they start talking about a subject and how terrible and hopeless it seems, I go, "Ah, but did you know, these people in Vienna, here's how they solved their housing problem?" or

something like that. And I'll say it shortly and not make a pompous speech, but it means I can counter the negative stories.

Have you ever had to scrounge or are the stories somehow always there?

Surprisingly, the stories are there. But as the founder of this thing, I push for evidence that a solution is a real solution, and not just a wish or a good idea or somebody trying something out. The reader needs to see that this has actually been successful and gives some measure of success. Sometimes it's a bit of a struggle getting that kind of data. You don't always get handed data and numbers and evidence that are exactly what you want. Sometimes you have to look for it.

Tell us about the relationship that you have with Rotary. *Reasons to be Cheerful* articles appear in Rotary magazine, for example.

I'll be honest, it surprised me. My impression was that Rotary's an institution that you're aware of in every town that you pass through when you're driving around the country. I didn't know that much about what Rotary does. I think Rotary has shifted a little bit, and some of our interests have aligned. We've done stories together and we'll probably do more in the future.

You've written about technology and isolation. Are you concerned about loneliness?

Not so much for myself. I see people socially all the time, and I'm also a person who doesn't mind being alone at times. A lot of my work entails me being alone. But I also feel that technological developments have been isolating us.

You see people walking down the street looking at their phones and that's how they connect with other people. Now, it's nice to connect with other people, but to my way of thinking, that's not really a connection. You miss a lot of what a human interaction is when you just do it over social media or phone.

Increasingly, we can relate to other people, do our shopping and this and that without ever coming in contact with another person. Granted, having a little interaction with a salesperson is not maybe the biggest thing in the world, but they are a human being. And there's a

certain thing that happens when you're dealing with a human being. I do worry about those things being gradually taken away from us.

How do we avoid being overwhelmed by all the discouraging circumstances in this world?

I would say getting together with friends, colleagues, and small groups. I joined a book club recently. I think I knew just one of the people in it before I joined. I don't always like the books we read, but it's always great to get together and talk about them. Little projects, gardens, book clubs, or sports. I think that getting together is really a healthy thing that makes people feel better.

Can I ask you about riding your bike through New York City during the COVID-19 pandemic? This wasn't just to get from point A to point B, right? This was a journey of discovery.

I'm someone who uses a bicycle as a means of commuting and getting around. New York is pretty flat, so it's pretty easy. And during COVID, I quickly discovered that here's a way where you can remain socially distanced but still get together with some friends and explore.

A lot of cities have sprawl, but New York is just really big. We decided little by little to ride through all these different neighborhoods that we weren't familiar with. We went to the Bronx, to Jackson Heights and Flushing in Queens, and ended up at the airport on one ride. And of course, since it was early in the pandemic, not a single plane was flying. We'd come back from a ride and go through Times Square, which was almost empty except for a few what seemed like befuddled tourists who had somehow ended up there. And it seemed to me they were asking themselves, "Well, what do we do now?" You could hear birds. It was an eerie moment, but you could hear birds everywhere.

I hope this isn't a stretch, but is that also kind of what you're doing with *Reasons to be Cheerful*: helping us hear the birds?

Yeah, I'll take that! They're there. They're doing their best to shout above the traffic and the ambulances and everything else. We often can't hear them, but if you can clear a little space, they're there. ■

OUR CLUBS

VIRTUAL VISIT

Meet globally, act locally

Rotary Club of Freetown, Sierra Leone

As Sybil Bailor was preparing to begin her term as 2023-24 president of the Rotary Club of Freetown, Sierra Leone, she faced an immediate challenge. Not only were her club's members missing meetings but many had left the country entirely.

"We were coming up to the general elections in Sierra Leone. There is usually tension and unrest around election time," she says. "Most of our members traveled out of the country during the elections. We needed to strategize how to engage members and continue our meetings."

It was an all-too-familiar problem. The struggle to stay in touch with far-flung loved ones is widespread in Sierra Leone. The country's civil war, which lasted from 1991 to 2002, displaced an estimated 2 million people, about half the population.

But Bailor found that another catastrophic event, the COVID-19 pandemic, had indirectly provided a way forward. Online gatherings had become an option. By holding meetings over video calls for a few months, the club reached members traveling in other countries and connected with people who'd left Sierra Leone years ago.

"We had former members from the Sierra Leonean diaspora who were able to join meetings as guests, and even non-Sierra Leoneans were joining," Bailor says. "We had people from Nigeria, Australia, and other parts of the world."

The members of the Freetown club may be hard to reach at times, but they're consistently enthusiastic. Chartered in 1963, the club is the oldest in Sierra Leone, and it has sponsored a variety of ambitious projects, including one that provides access to clean water.

This effort is essential in Sierra Leone, which faces a widespread water crisis. About a third of the population lacks access to basic drinking water services and must travel far to collect water or else drink from unprotected sources such as rivers and ponds. Drinking contaminated water leads to diarrheal disease, one of the country's main causes of death.

To address this, the Freetown club partnered with the Rotary Club of Fishers, Indiana, on a project called Water is Life. Since the project began in 2008, the clubs have funded more than 200 borehole wells

for schools, hospitals, and communities. Borehole wells are narrower and deeper than traditional wells, so they're more reliable water sources.

"We identify communities that really need facilities. We did quite a lot in schools, because sanitation is very key in schools," club member Christian Kamara says. "We hand over the boreholes to communities and also train them in terms of how to sustain the wells." In addition to this training, the club encourages recipient communities to form maintenance committees that charge users a small amount of money so that, when something goes wrong with the pump, they have money to fix it.

The club also oversaw the expansion of a small dam in the nearby town of Hastings. The old structure wasn't functioning optimally, and the town's population was growing. Forced to collect water from impure sources, residents were developing health problems at increasing rates.

"We asked, How do we ensure that we provide water to that community?" says Kamara. "We made the dam much bigger, so that it's been able to service the community. The source of the water is up in the mountains. Now the community is able to collect much more water from that stream."

Club member Christopher Forster, a member of The Rotary Foundation Cadre of Technical Advisers, was particularly

Read about the Rotary Club of Freetown's Helping Babies Breathe initiative at rotary.org/fighting-their-first-breath.



Members of the Rotary Club of Freetown, Sierra Leone: (from left) Christian Kamara, Christopher Forster, and Sylvia Bailor (a relative of Sybil Bailor).

proud of the dam project because of something one of the Hastings residents told him. “Somebody from the community said he’s lived there for about 30 years, and Rotary was the very first organization that came to the community and offered to give them something without asking for something in return,” he says.

The club’s members are also excited about three projects that promote women’s health and economic empowerment. They sponsored multiple cervical cancer screening events last year in the Freetown area and elsewhere in Sierra Leone. In 2022 they launched a program called Helping Babies Breathe in cooperation with the Rotary Club of Palm Harbor, Florida. It has trained more than 650 nurses, midwives, and other health workers to resuscitate babies who aren’t breathing at birth, a leading cause of death in Sierra Leone.

Then there’s an upcoming project to teach local girls traditional dyeing and soap making, skills they can use to earn a living. The club is cooperating with the Rotary Club of Prospect/Goshen, Ken-

tucky, which has contributed \$6,000 to the planned \$30,000 budget.

“Our girls are vulnerable in Sierra Leone,” says Nemata Majeks-Walker, who served as the club’s first female president, in 2002-03. “Instead of being street girls, instead of being unemployed, we want them to be able to engage in some skill that will give them a livelihood,” she says.

Meanwhile, the club continues to hold a mix of in-person and online meetings. Some are hybrid events, with some participants attending in person and others joining via the internet. Even though the elections have passed, many members still travel outside the country regularly to visit family, says Lara Taylor-Pearce, the club’s vice president.

“Between June and November, people are away on vacation. If you want to talk to people in December through May, they are in town,” she says. “We’re all buddy-buddies to a large extent. We like to chitchat. I prefer the physical meetings when I’m in town, but when I’m away, the online meetings really work for me.”

— ETELKA LEHOCZKY

A STRONG CONNECTION

The members of the Rotary Club of Freetown, Sierra Leone, are experts in online and hybrid meetings. Here are their tips for successful virtual gatherings:

- Pick a time that’s convenient for people in different time zones.
- Avoid technical snafus by testing all equipment in advance, including microphones, cameras, and your internet connection.
- To make visitors feel at home, begin the meeting with a round of introductions.
- Use visuals to keep everyone on the same page. Ask for slide presentations in advance or write notes on a whiteboard with a camera pointed at it.
- Make a point of engaging with remote participants. Solicit their opinions, check several times whether anyone has questions, and ask for their feedback after the meeting.
- Keep an eye on the meeting chat where remote attendees may make comments.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Ghost story

A pioneer in Black horror fiction resurrects her forgotten uncle



As a Rotary Scholar at the University of Leeds, Tananarive Due discovered Nigerian literature. "It was a whole new world for me."

In 1937, 15-year-old Robert Stephens died while imprisoned at the notorious Dozier School for Boys in Marianna, Florida, likely the victim of a stabbing. Eighty-six years later, a reincarnate Robert Stephens was again imprisoned, only this time he landed in the Gracetown School for Boys, a fictional Florida prison found within the pages of *The Reformatory*, an award-winning 2023 novel.

Tananarive Due, the novel's author, is a former Rotary Ambassadorial Scholar, a lecturer in the African American studies program at UCLA, and, says the *Los Angeles Times*, a pioneer in the Black horror genre. She's also the great-niece of the real-life Robert Stephens and the daughter of two renowned civil rights activists. A self-described "freedom lawyer," her father, John Dorsey Due Jr., helped innovate the movement of civil rights cases to federal venues to overcome the bias of Southern courts. Rather than pay a \$300 fine for attempting to integrate a whites-only lunch counter in Tallahassee, her mother, Patricia Stephens Due, spent 49 days in a Florida jail in 1960; that same year she suffered permanent eye damage when she was tear-gassed during a protest march.

"My parents were basically my first superheroes," says Due. "Their courage and their commitment to not just Black rights but to human rights left a very strong impression on me. It was a pretty extraordinary household."

Due began writing at a young age, motivated on one occasion by the death of a man while she was growing up in Miami. In 1979, following a high-speed chase, white police officers used clubs and heavy flashlights to beat Arthur McDuffie, a 33-year-old Black insurance salesman and former Marine. Police tried to hide what happened, saying in a report that McDuffie was injured when he lost control of his motorcycle; the medical examiner's office, however, said he died from blows to the head. An all-white jury acquitted the men despite other officers' testimony about the cover-up. Riots broke out across Miami, and 14-year-old Due was devastated.

Photograph by Frank Ishman

"I really believed in my heart that that page [of racial injustice] had been turned," she recalls. "I was sitting in my junior high school cafeteria and they were playing this ridiculous Muzak trying to placate us. I felt like I was losing my mind. Then I wrote this poem, and all of a sudden I felt better. I could breathe again."

Called "I Want to Live," the prose poem envisioned a utopian society where racial, ethnic, and religious distinctions had vanished. It concluded, "Maybe that sounds like heaven, but if I lived there right now, I'd call this society hell."

Her equanimity restored, Due went home and told her mother about the poem. "She said, 'You're so lucky that you can express those feelings in writing.' That was the first time I realized that writing wasn't just a dream I had."

In 1987, Due graduated with a bachelor's degree from Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism in Evanston, Illinois. Rotary International has its headquarters in that Chicago suburb, but it wasn't until she returned home to Florida that Due learned about Rotary. "I thought I was going to try to get a master's in creative writing," she remembers. "But a friend from church asked, 'Have you heard about The Rotary Foundation scholarship?' It almost seemed too good to be true."

Due received the scholarship and attended the University of Leeds in England. She earned a master's in English literature, albeit with an unexpected focus. "I fell down a rabbit hole with Nigerian literature," she says, describing her first encounters with the works of the Nobel laureate Wole Soyinka, the Booker Prize winner Ben Okri, and Chinua Achebe, author of *Things Fall Apart*. "It was a whole new world for me."

In 1995, while working as a feature writer and columnist for the *Miami Herald*, Due published her first book, *The Between*, which *The New York Times* called "part horror novel, part detective story and part speculative fiction." Due leaned into her inclination toward horror in the books that followed, including *The Living Blood* (2001), which

won the American Book Award, and the 2022 graphic novel *The Keeper*, which she wrote with her husband, Steven Barnes. That trend continues in *The Reformatory*, a compulsively readable novel that frighteningly melds supernatural horrors (especially "haints," or ghosts) with the horrors of Black life in the Jim Crow South — a place, Due says, where "it's actually the human monsters that are scarier than the ghosts."

As for her preference for the horror genre, Due credits her mother, "a die-hard horror movie fan," as well as the eye-opening and heart-pounding experience of reading Stephen King's *The Shining* when she was 16. In *Freedom in the Family: A Mother-Daughter Memoir of the Fight for Civil Rights*, the book she co-wrote with her mother, Due alludes to her deepest childhood fears: loss and death.

As with her earlier books, *The Reformatory* helped alleviate those fears, especially with the opportunity it provided not only to imagine an alternative fate for her great-uncle, but to rescue him from oblivion. Until she received an unexpected call from the office of Florida's attorney general — explaining that her distant relative might be buried at the Dozier School — Due was unaware that she had a great-uncle named Robert Stephens. Any evidence of his existence had been erased from her family's history.

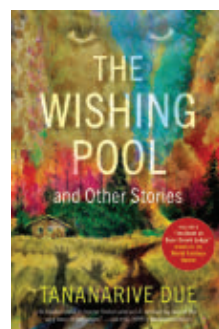
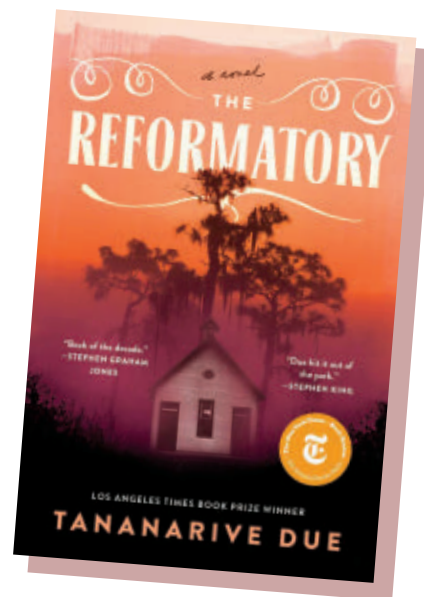
After multiple visits to Marianna with her father, Due resurrected that history. To honor her parents, she also hid a few Easter eggs in her novel. The fictional Robert's fearless and psychic sister is named Gloria; that was the middle name of Due's mother, who died in 2012. And the dexterous NAACP lawyer who fights for young Robert's freedom is named John Dorsey, an homage to Due's father.

"I believe I may have discovered the remedy for my childhood fears of death and loss at last," Due writes in her final passage in *Freedom in the Family*. "Remembering is the one and only thing that can make time stand still."

— GEOFFREY JOHNSON

Tananarive Due

- **Rotary Ambassadorial Scholar**, 1987-88
- **Master's in English literature**, University of Leeds, England, 1988
- **Book awards for *The Reformatory***: Bram Stoker, Shirley Jackson, Chautauqua, the *Los Angeles Times*



"I'm a horror writer at heart," says Due, and most of her books are fiction, though she briefly considered writing the "true-life horror" story of her great-uncle as a work of nonfiction.

DISPATCHES FROM
OUR SISTER MAGAZINES
ROTARY CONTACT,
BELGIUM & LUXEMBOURG

A backup for humanity, under the Arctic ice



↑ The entry door to the seed vault is 1,000 kilometers away from the North Pole.

Documentary photographer Christian Clauwers, of the Rotary Club of Antwerpen-Oost, has been traveling around the world for more than a decade to capture the effects of global warming. His photos show what is in danger of being lost, and in that sense they are a major wake-up call. For his latest project, he

managed to gain exclusive access to the world seed bank on Spitsbergen in the Svalbard island group.

“Only three people have a key to the Global Seed Vault, where ‘spare copies’ of food crop seeds from around the world are kept. The repository, deep in the permafrost, acts as a ‘backup’ for national seed

banks, documenting and safeguarding local crops. This protects their biodiversity from potential catastrophes, such as natural disasters, devastating wars, or advancing climate change,” Clauwers says.

On one of his expeditions to the high Arctic, Clauwers happened to catch sight of the monumental entrance to the seed bank. He immediately became fascinated by what would be behind that heavy door. “You have to imagine: You are there at 78 degrees north latitude, and 1,000 kilometers away is the North Pole. In between there is virtually nothing. There is a bone-dry desert climate. And just here, the Norwegian government has built a facility to serve the global community, a kind of safety net for the genetic diversity of our agricultural crops.”

It took Clauwers more than six months to gain access to the Global Seed Vault. Eventually, one of the people in charge granted permission. “He realized that I didn’t want to get in for kicks or to capitalize on it professionally. It fit into my overall narrative about the fragility of our Earth and the protection it deserves,” he says. “We met a few months later at Longyearbyen airport. After all the passengers on my flight had left, he came to pick me up. While he stocked a new shipment of seeds, I was free to walk around the seed bank. I had the immense good fortune that just that day, Cary Fowler, the American agricultural expert who is a co-founder of the world seed bank, was also present. I was able to interview him for the book I am currently compiling.”

Duplicates of 1,301,397 seed samples from almost every country in the world are stored under the ice. The total storage capacity accommodates some 4.5 million copies.

The seeds are kept in airtight containers at a constant temperature of about minus 18 degrees Celsius [about 0 degrees Fahrenheit]. This keeps them storable for a long time. When Syria's national seed bank was badly damaged during the civil war there, the Global Seed Vault proved its worth. Syrian scientists came to collect seeds to replenish their collection. "The seeds are at the end of a 130-meter-long tunnel leading to three freezing chambers, designed to withstand any catastrophe," Clauwers says. "Ironically, climate change is also making itself felt here: In 2017, meltwater seeped into the bunker and flooded the access tunnel. Fortunately, the storage rooms themselves remained safeguarded."

Wooden crates

Clauwers was able to take a look at the forerunner of the Global Seed Vault. "In an abandoned coal mine, also on Svalbard, the Nordic Genetic Resource Centre stored 20 wooden crates with seeds of Scandinavian plant varieties as early as 1986," he says. "Each crate contains the same seeds. One is opened every five years to check the viability of the seeds, and for any pathogens. The experiment will continue until the last samples have been analyzed, in 2086."

There is a third international storage center on Svalbard, albeit of a different order. The Arctic World Archive stores data of a cultural, historical, and scientific nature considered essential to humanity. "The data is stored on a special pellicle [thin film] developed by the Norwe-

Clauwers' book *Frozen Heritage, Arctic Vaults and the Future of Our History* was published in November.



The bank contains duplicates of 1,301,397 seed samples from almost every country in the world.



Christian Clauwers (center) contributed some of his photography to the Arctic World Archive, a storage facility designed to protect data in the event of a global calamity.

gian company Piql. It is designed to last for thousands of years," Clauwers says. "The data is captured analogously and digitally, so it will remain readable even if current technology were to be lost. The idea behind this is to protect crucial data of humanity should a global calamity occur. The site is designed to be resistant to nuclear attacks and electromagnetic pulses."

Countries, institutions, organizations, and companies can store data in the Arctic World Archive. Clauwers himself made the first Belgian contribution there: a number of photos that bear witness to climate change. "It includes 26 photos from my project in the Pacific, which documents how islands like Tuvalu, Kiribati, and Marshall Islands are in danger of disappearing because of rising sea level. In this way, I want to give islanders a voice," he says.

One past midnight

"The current climate evolution saddens me," Clauwers says. "I am a born optimist, but as far as the climate is concerned, it is one past midnight. Irreparable damage has been done. The consequences are hard to predict but are becoming visible everywhere. I am constantly in contact with top scientists and poli-

cymakers. We have entered a phase where we need to minimize the damage. Unfortunately, society does not seem to perceive the climate issue as acute lately. ... I regularly give lectures to high school students. I feel they want to take responsibility, and that makes me hopeful."

That Rotary has also made the environment and climate a focus in recent years is warmly welcomed by Clauwers. "That has even been the decisive factor for me to become a Rotarian. Rotary also regularly enables me to spread my message," he says. "Some time ago, for instance, I was in the Philippines, where I had the opportunity to give talks at the Rotary clubs of Manila and Cebu. These were about a photography project on the Olango archipelago, which is also in danger ... due to its low elevation. I also gave a lecture in Hawaii in 2023 at the Rotary Club of Honolulu Sunset. Even there, the consequences of global warming are visible. Being among Rotarians is always nice. Moreover, I like to reach out to them with insights about climate change. In the end, everything starts with knowledge, and I try to transfer that, by means of my photos, in a visual way."

— STEVEN VERMEYLEN

HANDBOOK

Stampede style

You've made your plans to attend the Rotary International Convention in Calgary (21-25 June) and intend to stick around for the Calgary Stampede (4-13 July). So one question predominates: How do I dress like a cowboy or cowgirl?

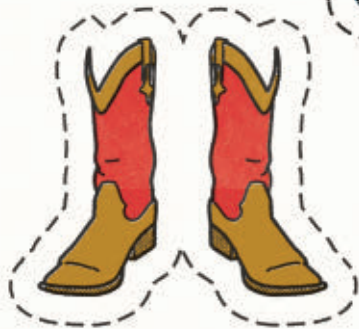
"You can't overdo it at Stampede," insists Holly Allen, general manager and designer/milliner at Smithbilt Hats. "More is more." A recommendation from her colleague, the stylist and wardrobe consultant Connie Polancec: "Denim — and anything fringe." Shannon Baker, chief brand officer at Alberta Boot, seconds the "denim everything" look. "Canadian tuxedo all the way, baby!" Read on for more tips from our cowpoke couturiers. And if you haven't registered, saddle up, pardner: convention.rotary.org.

BOOTS

Craftsmanship, high-quality leather, durability, and comfort make a difference. One great pair beats three mediocre ones.



POINTED TOE



CLASSIC WESTERN



SQUARE TOE

HATS

A cowboy hat is mandatory. If you don't have one, are you even Stampeding? The classic

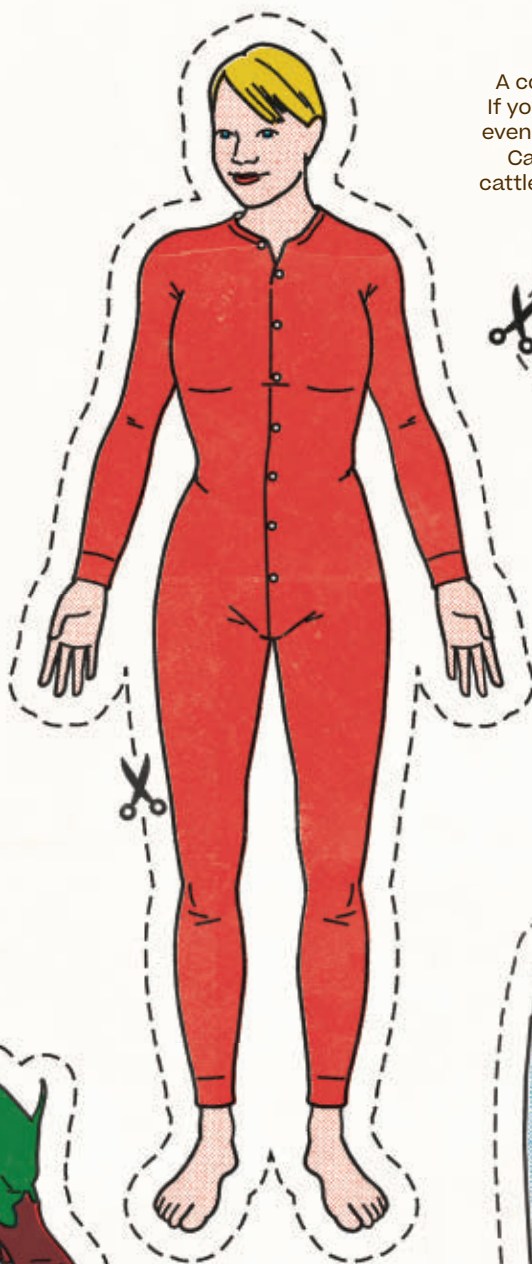
Calgary chapeau: a white cattleman with a red hat band.



CATTLEMAN



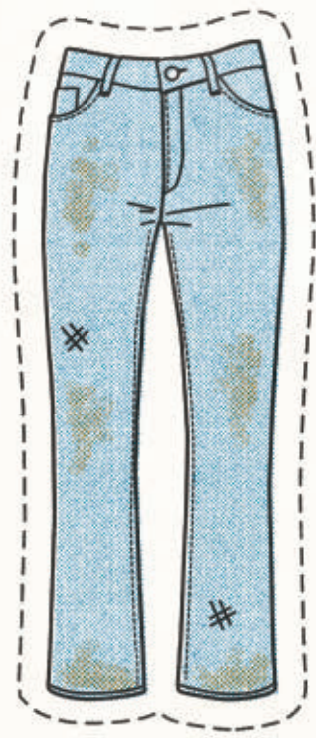
THE JAKE



PANTS

Distressed denim jeans are de rigueur.

Fringed leather chaps require some cowboy swagger and can be awfully warm on a hot July day. But if you want to unleash your inner bronco buster, go for it.



WORN JEANS



JOSEE FASHION HAT



BULL RIDER

SHIRTS

Go with solid colors or plaids with Western yokes and pearl snaps — or, to really stand out, an elaborately embroidered gunslinger-style shirt.

WESTERN YOKE

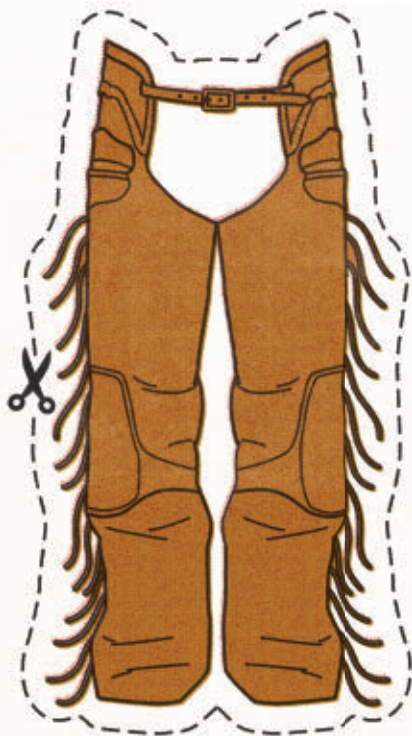


BELT BUCKLES

You want a great belt with a bold buckle, ideally a fairly substantial piece of etched silver big enough to signal planes.



GUNSLINGER



CHAPS OVER YOUR PANTS

ACCESSORIES

Put on statement silver and turquoise jewelry. For women, fringe, fringe, and more fringe. Scarves, bandanas, and wild rags, or a bolo tie if you feel saucy.



BANDANA



WILD RAG
(larger than a bandana)



BOLO TIE

DON'TS:

Unless it's a family heirloom or you won it yourself, don't wear a rodeo championship belt buckle. And skip the spurs: You don't want to be a poser.

DO'S:

Take a moment to learn about the First Nations cultures that inspire elements of Western wear. Keep it authentic, focus on quality, and make sure to have a blast at the Greatest Outdoor Show on Earth!

WHERE TO SHOP:

Smithbilt Hats

914 11th Street
SE; 403-244-9131;
smithbilthats.com

Alberta Boot

121 10th Avenue
SE; 403-263-4623;
albertaboot.com

Lammle's Western Wear

211 8th Avenue
SW; 403-266-5226;
lammles.com

Cody & Sioux

1312A 9th Avenue
SE; 403-264-2489;
codyandsioux.com



TRUSTEE CHAIR'S MESSAGE

Ambassadors of peace

By some measures, great progress has been made in building more peaceful societies around the world. Yet the reality of ongoing regional wars, skirmishes, and violence globally reminds us how far we still have to go. These conflicts affect the humanity of us all, whether they occur far from us or in our own communities.

So, what can Rotary do to build peace?

As a global force for peace and conflict prevention, Rotary addresses the root causes of conflict. Our role at the 1945 United Nations charter is a testament to this enduring commitment.

Another cornerstone of this work is the Rotary Peace Centers program. Through The Rotary Foundation, these seven centers provide fully funded fellowships, empowering individuals to address the complex challenges of conflict and development.

More than 1,800 alumni now work in over 140 countries as champions of peace, creating lasting change in their communities. Consider alumni like Pablo Cuevas, a 2015 peace fellow who leads the Paraguay office of the International Organization for Migration, aiding those displaced by crises. Leni Kinzli, a 2023 graduate, advocates for Sudan's humanitarian needs with the United Nations World Food Programme. Yuki Daizumoto, a 2007 peace fellow, supports life-changing agricultural and livelihood projects in Afghanistan with the Japan International Coopera-

tion Agency. These individuals embody Rotary's investment in peace.

This month, the Foundation Trustees will consider a plan to establish our eighth Rotary Peace Center, in Asia, as part of our vision to have peace centers on every inhabited continent by 2030.

But our commitment extends beyond the peace centers. Through Rotary's partnership with the Institute for Economics and Peace, we have trained over 300 Positive Peace Activators from 60 countries. Our forgiveness and social cohesion curricula help members heal communities. Through our Foundation grants and service, Rotary members are fostering peace by engaging with youths, strengthening civil society, and resolving core issues that can lead to conflict.

At President Stephanie Urchick's Peace Conference in Istanbul this month, we will celebrate this work and the first class of the Otto and Fran Walter Rotary Peace Center at Bahçeşehir University.

Remember that you are also ambassadors of peace through service projects, exchange programs, and as supporters of The Rotary Foundation.

My wish for 2025 is for peace to take root and flourish ever more widely, with Rotary playing an increasingly meaningful role in that noble pursuit.

MARK DANIEL MALONEY

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.

CALENDAR

February events

LOVE IS IN THE AIR

Event: Cupid's Bow Bash

Host: Rotary Club of Fredericksburg, Texas

What it benefits: Local and international projects and scholarships

Date: 14 February

The club's 11th annual Valentine's Day party features a multicourse catered dinner with live music performed by Bob Appel, a traditional country singer based in Austin, and his band. There is also a door prize and a silent auction. With this year's bash doubling as a celebration of the club's 75th anniversary (it was chartered 8 February 1950), organizers expect over 200 people to attend.

STARRY, STARRY NIGHT

Event: Evening of Elegance and 50th Anniversary Gala

Host: Rotary Club of The Woodlands, Texas

What it benefits: Local projects and scholarships

Date: 15 February

For nearly two decades, this annual dinner celebration has been a popular club fundraiser. This year's theme is "Night of Stars: 50 Years of Illuminating Our Community," and the guest of honor is Julie Martineau, a longtime club member who helped lead a project that provides temporary housing to medical patients from out of town and their families. The program includes auctions and video highlights from the club's history.

GUMBOLICIOUS

Event: Taste of Gumbo and More

Host: Rotary Club of Port Arthur, Texas

What it benefits: Local nonprofits and scholarships

Date: 22 February

Port Arthur is considered the Cajun

Past RI President Richard King and his wife, Cherie, at the 2001 Rotary Convention in San Antonio.



FIT FOR A KING

Event: Richard D. King Tribute Dinner

Host: Rotary Club of Niles (Fremont), California

What it benefits: Richard D. King Endowed Fund for Rotary Peace Centers

Date: 2 February

Held at the Blackhawk Museum in Danville, this gala event honors the legacy of Rotary's 2001-02 president, who died in 2023. Tickets include dinner, silent and live auctions, music from a high school jazz band, and speeches from Rotary leaders including President Stephanie Urchick and Rotary Foundation Trustee Chair Mark Maloney.

capital of Texas, and the club's annual gumbo cook-off celebrates one of the best-known culinary traditions of that culture. This year, the food fest will include even more dishes to try, as local restaurants have been invited to participate alongside the teams of gumbo chefs. The event has raised nearly half a million dollars since it began in 1986.

FOR THE WINGS

Event: Florida Craft Brew and Wingfest

Host: Rotary Club of Vero Beach Sunrise, Florida

What it benefits: Local projects

Date: 22 February

This festival features more than 250 craft beers from Florida and beyond, plus chicken wings prepared in a variety of ways, from smoked to fried to grilled. Other food for sale includes pizza, burg-

ers, and pretzels. The family-friendly event even offers a root beer tasting contest for kids. Four bands will entertain the crowd.

HIT THE JACKPOT

Event: Dominion Royale

Host: Rotary Club of Globe, Arizona

What it benefits: Local nonprofits and scholarships

Date: 22 February

The club's signature fundraiser is a lively casino night at the Cobre Valley Center for the Arts. Attendees can try their hand at classic casino games including blackjack and roulette while they enjoy catered appetizers and tunes played by a DJ. Raffles will be held throughout the night. This year's theme is steampunk, with a costume contest for those who dress accordingly.

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



“Clubs and districts have access to tremendous expertise across the globe through Rotary Action Groups, the Cadre of Technical Advisers, and district resource networks. These collaborations can support a club through the entire project cycle.”

The **ROTARY ACTION PLAN**
INCREASE OUR
IMPACT
WITH HAUWA ABBAS

Hauwa Abbas, of the Rotary Club of Abuja Metro, Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria, is serving as a member of the RI Programs Committee through 2027, is a member of The Rotary Foundation Cadre of Technical Advisers, and serves on the board of the Rotary Action Group on Mental Health Initiatives. She has also served District 9125 as assistant governor and international service chair. She's a public health consultant who founded the Silver Lining for the Needy Initiative, which is dedicated to improving living standards in Nigeria.

Q: Why should clubs care about their impact?

HAUWA: Impact is important for clubs to consider because the program you're trying to develop or do has the potential to create positive long-term change and provide measurable improvements in the community that wouldn't have happened otherwise. The best way to approach impact is to involve the community by engaging with the gatekeepers through interviews, surveys, or focus group discussions. This will help identify gaps and guide planning. Community assessment is vital for all intended interventions. We may go into a community thinking X is what they need but discover that they have far more pressing needs.

Q: What do clubs need to do to focus on impact?

HAUWA: The first thing is to build a good team. Having a good team with different skill sets, like technology, programming, financing, and writing, gives whatever you're about to begin a head start.

The second thing is to ensure that we facilitate learning. In my experience, a mindset of adaptation and flexibility is important in anything you do, especially when working with a group of volunteers. Things will not always go your way. Being able to respond with a positive attitude to setbacks and challenges and being willing to explore creative ways to achieve set goals are part of the learning process and also translate to personal growth.

There are also hundreds of courses available on the Rotary Learning Center, something many members are not aware of. I always encourage clubs to ask their members to go on the Learning Center to do the training related to their particular committee. They'll gain more technical knowledge or skills toward whatever it is they want to plan.

And the third thing is to collaborate. I cannot overemphasize the power of collaboration, especially with our Rotary network. Clubs and districts have access to tremendous expertise across the globe through Rotary Action Groups, the Cadre of Technical Advisers, and district resource networks. These collaborations can support a club through the entire project cycle. Clubs also need to be able to identify corporate organizations and other NGOs that have the same shared vision or values that they can partner with. Financial contributions aren't the only benefit of partner

collaborations. Working with government partners can enrich the impact and sustainability of a project. Collaboration means that whatever you do is going to have a bigger impact and can actually be scaled up.

Q: You've taken us through why our clubs should care about impact, but can you tell us how Rotary members should think about impact?

HAUWA: I'll use the word *collaboration* again. Clubs should think about impact through collaboration. Sometimes, people feel like they can't combine their interests into one. You'll see people who are more passionate about the environment, others who are passionate about health, and others who are passionate about education. But there's no reason why they can't all be integrated into one program or multiple activities.

Rotary clubs should also involve Interact clubs or Rotaract clubs. It's another avenue to involve them in your programs and gives you more hands on deck. So why not collaborate with the Rotaract community or your Rotary Community Corps as well? That actually increases volunteer input as well as the number of volunteers involved.

Developing and implementing an effective project requires planning, acquiring resources, promotion, and the evaluation of results. Rotary can guide you step by step through your next project, no matter the scope, from start to finish. Visit rotary.org/actionplan to learn more about impact.



Learn what your club can do at
rotary.org/actionplan

IN BRIEF

Rotary starts a celebrity ambassador program

Rotary International launched a celebrity ambassador program in September, welcoming Kat Graham, Sibongile Mlambo, Gaby Moreno, and Archie Panjabi as Rotary ambassadors for 2024-25.

“We are pleased to announce this initiative, especially with the help of these remarkable individuals who are devoted to using their platforms to make the world a better place,” said Rotary President Stephanie Urchick. “As Rotary’s work has touched each of the ambassadors, we’re honored for them to amplify our organization’s impact and vision.”

Through traditional and social media, events, advocacy, and more, ambassadors will have the opportunity to immerse themselves in Rotary’s work and engage with supporters.

↑ KAT GRAHAM *actor, singer, producer*

“I have been fortunate enough to have a long history with Rotary, from promoting women’s health and safety around the world to gathering with Rotary members in California to promote peace. Rotary empowers regular people to become extraordinary change-makers by launching their unique initiatives using their unique skills and passions. By doing so, they improve the lives of others far beyond their communities. I’ve seen the profound difference Rotary members make, and I’m honored to serve as a Rotary ambassador.”



↑ SIBONGILE MLAMBO *actor, producer*

“I had the incredible opportunity to travel to Uganda with Rotary and see their work firsthand. Witnessing their dedication to helping refugees and their unwavering commitment to peace left a lasting impact on me. Rotary members show respect for those displaced, empowering them through education, job training, and more, helping to create the conditions for stable, sustainable,

and peaceful communities. As a Rotary ambassador, I will enthusiastically help to amplify their message of hope and resilience.”

↖ GABY MORENO *musician, producer*

“Returning to my home country of Guatemala with Rotary exposed me to the life-changing impact its members have had on early education and literacy in the country. I met children who now are inspired to dream big, and who have been given the tools necessary to make their dreams a reality. As a Rotary ambassador with deep personal connections to its members, I want to help spread the word about this remarkable organization that’s giving hope to so many children around the globe.”

↖ ARCHIE PANJABI *actor, producer*

“My first visit to India at the age of 10 opened my eyes to the heart-breaking reality of children suffering from polio. Years later, I returned to administer the polio vaccine and witnessed the dedication of health workers, inspiring my commitment to this cause. For over a decade, I’ve proudly served as a Rotary polio ambassador and continued the fight to eradicate polio while shining a light on the full scope of the vital work Rotary members undertake to create a brighter future for all, from safeguarding our environment and improving maternal health to providing clean water and promoting peace.”

🎧 **Celebrity ambassador Gaby Moreno spoke to us about her life, career, and experience with Rotary. Listen at on.rotary.org/podcast.**



THE ROTARY FOUNDATION

2023-24 Service Award for a Polio-Free World

The Rotary Foundation Trustees established the Service Award for a Polio-Free World to honor members who have made outstanding contributions to Rotary's polio eradication efforts. Members can nominate individuals for regional or international service. The 71 members listed received the 2023-24 award.

INTERNATIONAL SERVICE

Numbers correspond to the photos above.

Enrique Guillermo Andres (3), Philippines
Dilip G. Bhavsar (6), India
Lindsey J. Cancino (9), Bahamas
Sridhar Jagannathan (2), India
Eon-Ji Kim (5), Korea
Mukesh Malhotra (8), England
Lay Heng (Josephine) Ng (4), Malaysia
Peter Teahen (1), United States
Michel Zaffran (7), France

REGIONAL SERVICE

Regions are as defined by the World Health Organization.

AFRICA

Illo Adam, Niger
Oluwatoyin Debby Coulthard, Nigeria
Nebeyu Aseferachew Dilnesahu, Ethiopia
Yvonne Kumoji-Darko, Ghana
Abeselom Samson, Ethiopia

AMERICAS

Jorge Aufranc, Guatemala (posthumously)
Thomas Gump, United States
Katherine Hahn, Canada
Jack Haugen, United States
André Luis Hentz, Brazil
Jayne Hulbert, United States
Antônio Otacílio Lajús, Brazil

Lucimar Lacerda Melo, Brazil
Nelson Soares de Melo, Brazil
Pedro José Prá, Brazil
Fernando Antonio Quintella Ribeiro, Brazil
Sergio Romero Barradas, Mexico
Mark Scolnick, United States
Owen P. Standley, United States
Sonia Beatriz Uribe Lopez, Colombia
Zoraida Vela, Uruguay

EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

Bashir Ahmad, Pakistan
Shaikh Ashiq Ali, Pakistan
Rabil Butt, Pakistan
Imran Ghaznavi, Pakistan
Mian Shaukat Masud, Pakistan
Muhammad Fayyaz Qureshi, Pakistan
Jahangir Khan Sherpao, Pakistan
Raees Zaidi, Pakistan

EUROPE

Montse Bosch Pasola, Spain
Roger Byrom, England
Herbert Ederer, Austria
Theodoros Panagos, Greece
Keith Paver, England
Axel Ruetz, Germany
Jean-Jacques Titon, France
Lothar Weber, Germany

SOUTHEAST ASIA

Suresh Chandra Agarwal, India
Jitendra Dhingra, India
Mutasim Billah Faruqui, Bangladesh
Subrata Ghosh, India
Girish Govind Gune, India
K. K. Johri, India
Krishnaraj A. Kunja, India
V R Muthu, India
Vinay Kumar Sripad Pai Raikar, India
Subhojit Roy, India
Jayant Sastry, India
Sajjan S. Seth, India
Krishnaswami Soundararaja, India

WESTERN PACIFIC

Robert Aitken, Australia
Ma. Lourdes Enriquez (Lou) Capili, Philippines
Huey Juan (Joanne) Kam, Singapore
Sixto Kwan, Philippines
Ana Maria Lorenzana, Philippines
Roger Hung Koon Ng, Singapore
Takashi Nikkawa, Japan
Joyce Ogden, Australia
Philip Ogden, Australia
Sik Ling Or, Hong Kong
Estela Maribel Tan Vilela, Philippines
Benedicto Jose P. Verzosa, Philippines

Nominations for the Service Award for a Polio-Free World are accepted each year between 15 July and 1 October. To learn more, visit rotary.org/awards.

2025 CONVENTION

Rotaractor friends for life



Rotaractors bring the party! The proof is in their photos and videos documenting the Rotaractor experience at the Rotary International Convention. Group shots of members flashing peace signs or blowing kisses are captioned “Rotaract friendship for life” or “my family from around the world.”

These friends pose at host city landmarks, sometimes holding shopping bags and crave-worthy drinks like tall cups of milky boba tea. “If you are able to go to one convention, at least try it,” says Daniel Zavala, a member of the Rotaract Club of San Joaquín based out of Venezuela. “Try it because it will change your life. You are going to plan your vacations all around the convention.” We can’t wait to see Rotaractors’ cowboy hat selfies in Canada at the rodeo or on the iconic Peace Bridge in Calgary.

Whether they’re at their first conven-

tion or their fifth, Rotaractors say they are wowed by the flag ceremony at the opening session and the inspiring speakers. One scheduled for Calgary is David LaMotte, who gave a TEDx talk and wrote a book exploring how heroes don’t change the world on their own. He took a break from a folk music career to become a Rotary Peace Fellow.

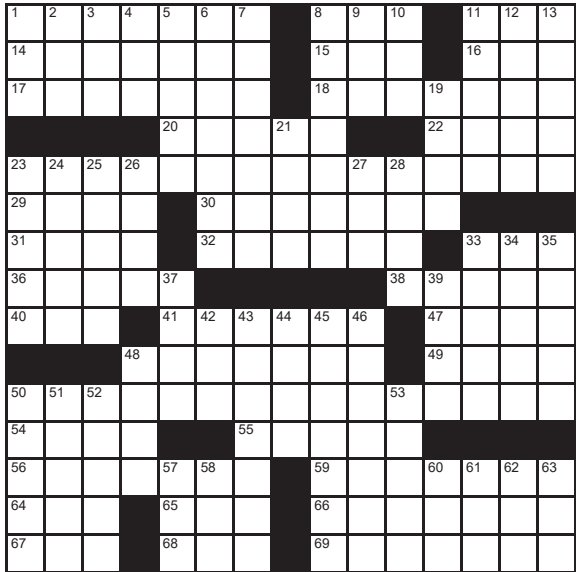
Rotaractors’ convention snapshots show that the serious work of Rotary is full of joy. They don’t simply attend the convention — they help lead it, staffing House of Friendship booths and speaking at breakout sessions. In Singapore last year, Rotaractors leading a session about transitioning to a Rotary club suggested mutual empathy to strengthen bonds among members of different ages. Rotaractors will lead again in Calgary 21-25 June. After all, Rotary + action = Rotaract. ■

Learn more and register at convention.rotary.org.

CROSSWORD

Middle East meetup

By Victor Fleming
Rotary Club of Little Rock, Arkansas



Solution on **opposite page**

ACROSS

- 1 Drugs that inhibit the synthesis of cholesterol
- 8 Nicki Minaj’s genre
- 11 15 Apr. form preparer
- 14 British admiral Nelson
- 15 ___ and flow
- 16 Billable units (abbr.)
- 17 With 23-Across, theme of 50-Across
- 18 What a hustler may pull
- 20 Popeye creator
- 22 Avoid being seen
- 23 See 17-Across
- 29 ___ the Explorer
- 30 Pronunciation omission
- 31 Change copy
- 32 Top-row mark?
- 33 Elevs.
- 36 Beef eater’s choice
- 38 Connect with
- 40 How-___ (instructional books)
- 41 Booster club members, often
- 47 1962 Bond villain
- 48 Exultant feeling
- 49 To see, in Marseille
- 50 Rotary gathering in Istanbul this month

- 54 Rebuke to Brutus
- 55 Palais du ___ (Marseille landmark)
- 56 Justice ___ Brown Jackson
- 59 President Stephanie, who will lead 50-Across
- 64 Acne treatment brand
- 65 “... two if by ___”
- 66 Swiss resort
- 67 Aliens, for short
- 68 Barley beard
- 69 USC or Arkansas at Little Rock athletes

DOWN

- 1 “Be quiet!”
- 2 Golf club part
- 3 Coach Parseghian
- 4 1960s chess master Mikhail
- 5 “Who’s there?” response
- 6 Capital of ancient Assyria
- 7 While soaked with water
- 8 Invigorate
- 9 Org. for arguers?
- 10 Frontline network, initially
- 11 Church singers
- 12 Automatic-transmission letters
- 13 Plant ___

- 19 Ending with tele-
- 21 Go for ___ (swim)
- 23 That is, in Latin
- 24 Acknowledge tacitly
- 25 Pisces neighbor
- 26 Almanac contents
- 27 To ___ for (very desirable)
- 28 Refuses to
- 33 Long-legged bird
- 34 Bar mixer
- 35 Be noisy in bed
- 37 Curly cabbage
- 39 “... ___ baked a cake”
- 42 Body of water in Quebec
- 43 Ideal
- 44 Vietnam’s Ho Chi ___
- 45 Type of auto insurance
- 46 Wide of the mark
- 48 S. Amer. country
- 50 Black tea from Sri Lanka
- 51 Writing in digital format
- 52 Court figures (abbr.)
- 53 Boxer Marciano’s first name at birth
- 57 Cryptologic grp.
- 58 Passover observer
- 60 The ___ (Uris book)
- 61 “Embraceable You” lyricist Gershwin
- 62 Blitzer’s channel
- 63 Bout enders



Healing in a Divided World 2025 PRESIDENTIAL PEACE CONFERENCE

Connect with others committed to peacebuilding at this special, one-time event led by Rotary International President Stephanie Urchick in Istanbul, Türkiye, 20-22 February.



Register today at
rotary.org/istanbul25

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interviews

Magazine
audio

Immersive
stories

News
roundup

on.rotary.org/podcast



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Customizable comfort food

Feijoada is a bean stew that veggie lovers make their own

The word feijão means “bean” in Portuguese, and so feijoada is simply bean stew. But it’s more than that: The hearty dish, often served with white rice and a glass of red wine, is pure comfort food. In northern Portugal, where José Alberto Oliveira lives, feijoada à transmontana, thought to be the original variety, was born from resourceful rural communities in the Trás-os-Montes region. People combined beans with vegetables, especially cabbage, and various cuts of pork and sausage to create a filling meal for the winter months.

Oliveira has been vegan since 2006, so he puts his own spin on his region’s traditional dish, using oyster mushrooms, smoked tofu, and vegan chorizo in place of the meat. “In the end you think it’s the traditional plate,” he says. “It’s very similar.”

FEIJOADA’S FORMS: Feijoada à transmontana is believed to be the genesis of feijoadas found in other parts of Portugal and around the world. In Brazil, feijoada is considered the national dish, though cooks there use black beans rather than the typical white or red beans in Portuguese feijoada. Oliveira also mentions tripas à moda do Porto, a similar bean dish from the city of Porto that includes tripe; he subs in oyster mushrooms. “It has a similar texture to pork intestines,” he says.

VEGANS UNITE: Find more vegan inspiration with the Rotary Fellowship of Vegans. Oliveira is a co-founder and board member. The group, which got its start in 2023, has more than 80 members. Learn about them at rotaryfellowshipofvegans.org. — DIANA SCHOBURG

José Alberto Oliveira
Rotary Club of
Braga Norte,
Portugal

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