



ROTARY CLUB OF WINNIPEG NEWSLETTER

MAY 2026



The mission of Rotary is to "provide service to others, promote integrity, and advance world understanding, goodwill, and peace through [the] fellowship of business, professional, and community leaders".

May is Youth Service Month in Rotary! - This month, we celebrate the energy, passion, leadership and impact of young people across the Rotary family. From Interact and Rotaract to RYLA and Youth Exchange, Rotary continues to empower the next generation of changemakers through service, leadership development and global connections.

Youth are not just the future of Rotary — they are leading today. Through meaningful projects, cultural exchange, mentorship and fellowship, young leaders are creating lasting change in their schools, communities and around the world.

To every Interactor, Rotaractor, RYLA participant, Youth Exchange student and young leader making a difference: thank you for embodying Service Above Self and inspiring hope for a brighter tomorrow.

Together, we are building leaders, strengthening communities and creating a better world — one young person at a time.



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UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS: May - Oct 2026

Rotary Club of Winnipeg

June 3, 2026, In-person Meeting at the **Winnipeg Winter Club** with a presentation by **The True North Foundation's**, "Project TI – A mental Health program for high school students."

June 7, 2026, Walk in the **Pride Parade** with Rotary

June 13 – 17, 2026, The **2026 Rotary International Convention** is in **Taipei, Taiwan**.

June 17, 2026, In-person Meeting at the Winnipeg Winter Club with **Rotary President Frank Cosway** with his "Reflections on the Rotary Year 2025 – 26."

June 22, 2026, **Volunteering** at **Harvest Manitoba**, starting at **5:30 pm**.

August 26, 2026, **Habitat for Humanity BUILD. 10 Volunteers needed.**

August 27, 2026, 1:00 pm. Rotary at the **Winnipeg Goldeyes Baseball Game**. All Rotarians and guests are being invited to attend. This is a great opportunity to invite family, friends and Rotary Alumni to attend.

Tickets are \$18.50 or 2 tickets for \$37.00

Purchase Tickets on-line. Transfer finds to: club@rcwacf.ca

In the memo section indicate: "**Rotary Ball Game**"

For additional Information contact John Melnick at: Jmel34229@gmail.com

September 11 – 21, 2026, Peace Days Festival

<https://www.peacedays.ca>

October, 2026 – Polio Eradication Concert – Volunteers Needed

For more information, Contact Nancy Cosway at: ncosway@mts.net

Volunteer Opportunities

- May 24 – St John's Park Fun Day – 5 volunteers
- June 7 – Walk in the Pride Parade with Rotary
- June 22 – Harvest Manitoba 5:30 pm
- Aug 26 – Habitat for Humanity all day

Contact our Volunteer Coordinator

Jerusha jerusha.onyimbo@gmail.com

call or text at 204-396-5677



NORTHERN MANITOBA PROJECTS:

This virtual gathering brought together partners from Northern Indigenous communities across Manitoba, alongside the Rotary Club of Winnipeg and the Graham C. Lount Family Foundation, to celebrate and reflect on the ongoing work of the Rotary Club of Winnipeg's Honouring Indigenous Peoples Committee.

Representatives from 7 communities that we work with attended (St. Theresa Point, Bloodvein River, Nisichawayasihk (Nelson House), Lac Brochet, Tataskweyak (Split Lake), and Mathias Colomb First Nation (Pukatawagan)) shared powerful stories of community-led initiatives supported through this partnership. These included winter clothing distribution, bunk bed projects, sewing programs, sports equipment, Elder support, land-based learning, and youth mentorship.

Throughout the conversation, a consistent theme emerged: the importance of relationships, responsiveness, and trust. Many participants spoke to the care, compassion, and dedication of Strini Reddy, and the role of flexible, partnership-based support in allowing communities to respond to their own priorities in meaningful and timely ways.

Community members highlighted tangible impacts:

- Increased youth engagement through summer and land-based programs
- Cultural revitalization through language, sewing, and Elder involvement
- Improved well-being through access to basic needs such as clothing, beds, and hygiene supports
- Strengthened leadership opportunities for youth, including Junior Chief and Council initiatives

A particularly moving moment during the gathering included a traditional song and drumming shared by the Junior Chief from Pukatawagan, reflecting the deep cultural strength and leadership emerging across communities.

St. Theresa Point First Nation

School and community members shared updates on a range of initiatives supporting students and families. A summer learning program was noted for increasing youth engagement and reducing incidents of vandalism and arson. Ongoing supports have included winter clothing, evacuee supplies during forest fires, and sports equipment such as skates and a skate sharpener. The growth of the school sewing program, with students creating mitts, vests, and other items, and preparing for an upcoming fashion showcase was highlighted. They also spoke about the impact of land-based programming, including how quickly winter gear was sourced so students could participate fully in community activities.

Bloodvein River First Nation

The Vice Chief and Councillor, shared plans for an upcoming WRENCH bike program on April 20th, which will include a youth workshop and community repair clinic, with longer-term goals of establishing a youth-led bike and recreation space. A community program leader, spoke about a range of community supports including hockey, quilting, and daycare programming, as well as the importance of wraparound care—sharing a powerful example of supporting a youth in crisis to access mental health services.

NORTHERN MANITOBA PROJECTS:

Additional reflections were shared via written message by the Guidance Counsellor, who described ongoing work with Elders in schools to support language revitalization and cultural learning with students from Nursery through Grade 10. She noted the meaningful distribution of quilts to Elders, which were received with deep appreciation. She also shared plans to expand access to culturally relevant books and to launch a Teen Awareness program focused on supporting youth with hygiene products and life skills.

Nisichawayasihk First Nation (Nelson House)

Through a written message, Education staff highlighted the impact of the bunk bed project, which provided 25 bunk beds (50 beds total) to community members. Additional supports included LEGO, arts and crafts supplies, winter clothing, and recreational materials. Gratitude was expressed for the responsiveness and advocacy that made these initiatives possible.

Lac Brochet First Nation

The school principal, shared how a connection with Strini led to meaningful support for Elders, including the provision of quilts. Students play an active role in organizing Elder appreciation events, preparing meals and delivering gifts. These initiatives have strengthened intergenerational connections and community care, with the next gathering planned to follow the Easter break.

Tataskweyak (Split Lake)

Education staff spoke about a range of initiatives including access to books, hockey equipment, clothing, bunk beds, and sewing machines. The sewing program has enabled students to create coats and other garments, culminating in an upcoming fashion show. Support has also extended to land-based programming and access to additional funding opportunities, including the Indigenous Youth Mentorship Program.

Mathias Colomb First Nation (Pukatawagan)

A Band Councillor, outlined community priorities including improving graduation rates, strengthening youth leadership, and revitalizing Cree gospel singing. A Junior Chief shared his commitment to cultural revitalization and youth engagement, including learning songs from Elders. He offered a moving drum song during the gathering. Plans are underway to connect further with leadership to explore how best to support these priorities.

Throughout the gathering, participants expressed deep appreciation for the leadership and care of Strini Reddy, and for the role of partnership-based support in enabling timely and community-driven responses.

The meeting closed with gratitude and a shared commitment to continue building relationships grounded in trust, respect, and reciprocity. There was also interest in gathering in the future to honour Strini's contributions alongside the communities he has supported.

INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS

Rotary Club of Winnipeg Donate Generators for Schools & Kindergartens in Ukraine

Please see the letter below from the Rotary Club of West Ottawa. We responded to their request for funds assisting to purchase generators for schools and kindergartens. Costs of generators varied between \$667 to \$2,500. We contributed \$2,500 to assist with this project.

Dear Rotary Club of Winnipeg

On behalf of the Rotary Intercountry Committee Canada–Ukraine, we would like to express our heartfelt gratitude and sincere appreciation to your club members and leadership for your outstanding support and leadership in implementing the humanitarian project for Ukraine.

Thanks to your generous contribution, together we have been able to bring light, warmth, and hope to communities living in areas without electricity—where, even in the harsh conditions of darkness and cold, everyday life continues.

With your support, we have successfully delivered generators of various capacities to more than 50 locations, including heating points, kindergartens, schools, orphanages, refugee centers, medical institutions, and shelters for elderly people. We worked directly with communities in the Kharkiv, Zaporizhzhia, Kyiv, Zhytomyr, Dnipropetrovsk, and Volyn regions.

We would also like to highlight the incredible efforts of Rotary Clubs in Ukraine, whose volunteers ensured efficient logistics and fully transparent, fast distribution of the generators.

This project is ongoing. Unfortunately, as the number of damaged energy facilities continues to grow, so does the need for support. Therefore, we remain committed to continuing this important work.

We would be happy to share with you photos of the recipients and the impact your support has made. Please accept our deepest gratitude, and we kindly ask you to share this message of appreciation with your fellow club members.



ROTARACT NEWS:

Reflections on attending the District Leadership Seminar

By Yann Tchen Koffi, Club President

Rotaract Club of the Universite de Saint-Boniface

Presented to the Rotary Club of Winnipeg Downtown, May, 2026

Opening Remarks & Acknowledgements

President, Distinguished Rotarians, dear friends—

First and foremost, thank you. Thank you for this floor, for this moment, and for the generosity of allowing Fatim and me to stand before you today and share what we learned. It is a privilege to speak in this room, among people whose dedication to the Rotary ideal has shaped not just this club, but this community.

But the thank you I most want to express is a deeper one. When the Rotary Club of Downtown Winnipeg chose to send Fatim and me to the District 5550 Leadership Seminar, you did more than cover a registration fee. You sent a message — to us, and to our entire club — that you believe in us. That you see in us the capacity to lead, to grow, and to carry this organization forward.

That belief is not something we take lightly. We carried it with us every moment of that weekend, and we carry it still. So on behalf of the Rotaract Club of the Université de Saint-Boniface — thank you.

Walking Into That Room

I want to be transparent with you, because I think you deserve honesty more than polish.

When Fatim and I walked into that seminar room, surrounded by Assistant Governors, club presidents, DGE Catherine Skene, DGND Jude Chigbo — seasoned Rotarians from across this entire district — there was a moment where I quietly asked myself: "Are we ready for this?"

We were, without question, the youngest people in that room. But what struck me almost immediately was that no one made us feel like outsiders. We were welcomed as leaders — not leaders in training, not future leaders — but leaders, right now, with a seat at the table and a voice worth hearing. That culture of inclusion and mentorship that you, as a sponsor club, have modeled for us — it lives in that district room too. And I now understand where it comes from.

What I Learned: Create Lasting Impact

The theme of this year's DLS is "Create Lasting Impact," set by Rotary International President-Elect Yinka Babalola. As I sat in those sessions, I began to understand that this theme is not simply an inspiration — it is a discipline.

We were taught to distinguish between input, output, outcome, and impact. An event is an output. A well-attended meeting is an output. But real impact — the kind that changes lives, shifts behavior, and strengthens communities long after our involvement ends — that requires intentionality, measurement, and follow-through. As a new president, that framework changed how I see my role. My job is not to keep the club busy. My job is to ensure that what we do actually matters — to our members, to our campus, and to the broader Winnipeg community that you have served for so many years before us.

The Club Experience — A Lesson in Leadership

One of the most impactful sessions addressed the club experience as the primary driver of member satisfaction and retention. Rotary International's own research is clear: people don't leave clubs because of dues or scheduling. They leave because they no longer feel that they belong, or that their leadership listens, or that their service creates real change.

That session made me reflect on what kind of president I want to be. Your club has, over the years, built something remarkable — a culture of genuine fellowship, of meaningful service, of members who show up not out of obligation, but out of conviction. We are watching and learning from that example. We want to build the same thing at Saint-Boniface, adapted to the realities of our university community.

My commitment to our members — and I say this to you as our mentors as well — is to lead with transparency, with humility, and with genuine care for the experience of every person who walks through our door.

Our Role in the Rotaract-to-Rotary Pathway

The seminar was equally candid about a challenge facing our district: despite having over 130 Rotaractors across 5 clubs in D5550, the pathway from Rotaract membership to full Rotary membership remains underdeveloped. The barriers are real — financial, structural, and cultural.

But this is where I see the most meaningful opportunity for our partnership. You — the Rotary Club of Downtown Winnipeg — are not simply our sponsor. You are our bridge. The relationship between your club and ours is precisely the kind of human connection that can turn a Rotaractor into a lifelong Rotarian.

We want to actively work with you to strengthen that bridge. We want our members to know your members. We want joint service opportunities, shared events, and mentoring relationships that make the transition feel natural — not daunting. That is a goal I am committed to pursuing this year, with your guidance.

What We Commit to Going Forward

You invested in us. Here is what we intend to do with that investment.

First, we will conduct a member experience survey to understand what our club members need and how to better serve them — before we assume we already know.

Second, we will apply the input-output-outcome-impact framework to our service projects, ensuring that what we do creates genuine, measurable change in our community.

Third, we will actively pursue a closer working relationship with your club — because we recognize that we grow faster, and serve better, in partnership than in isolation.

And fourth, we will grow. Our goal is to reach at least 30 active members by the end of this Rotary year, with a majority engaged in meaningful service. We want to bring you a report at the end of this year that makes you proud of your decision to send us to that seminar.

Closing Thoughts

You know, Paul Harris founded the first Rotary club in 1905 on a simple but radical idea: that professionals from different backgrounds could come together, build genuine relationships, and use those relationships to serve others. More than 120 years later, that idea is still the most powerful thing about this organization. Not the grants, not the programs — though those matter enormously. But the relationships. The human connections that cross generations, backgrounds, and experience.

The relationship between your club and ours is one of those connections. And I do not take that lightly.

We came back from that seminar not just with notes and handouts, but with a renewed sense of purpose. A deeper understanding of what it means to lead. And a genuine commitment to honoring the trust you placed in us.

The seminar's overarching message will stay with me for a long time: "Together, we see a world where people unite and take action to create lasting change — across the globe, in our communities, and in ourselves." That world is built one club at a time, one relationship at a time. And with your continued support, we intend to do our part.

Final Acknowledgements

To the Rotary Club of Downtown Winnipeg — your sponsorship, your mentorship, and your faith in two young Rotaractors from Saint-Boniface has meant more than words can adequately express. We will honor it through our actions.

To District 5550 and all the leaders who organized and facilitated the DLS — thank you for creating a space where a young Rotaract president could sit alongside district leadership and feel truly seen.

To Fatim, my Vice President — thank you for being an outstanding partner and representative of our club throughout this experience.

And to every member of our Rotaract club at Saint-Boniface — we went to that seminar for you. Everything we learned, we bring back for you. This year is ours to build together.

Service Above Self.

Thank you.

END POLIO NOW – A ROTARY CAMPAIGN

The 8 Rotary Clubs of Winnipeg, along with the 1.2 million Rotary Members around the world, have been working since 1988 to eliminate Polio in the world.

Rotary's first polio project was to vaccinate children in the Philippines in 1979. Inspired by that successful vaccination campaign, Rotary went on to become a founding partner of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative in 1988, which has reduced polio cases around the world by 99.9 percent. Many people have heard of Polio but few know that it still affects children around the world.

October 24th, World Polio Day is a time for Rotary Members, public health advocates, and all who want a world free from polio to come together, recognize our progress in the fight to end polio, and talk about actions we need to take to end polio for good.

Save the Date for the Concert October 24th at 7 pm and the Unitarian Universalist Church, 603 Wellington Ave.

If you want to be involved in the planning and implementation contact Nancy Cosway at:

ncosway@mts.net



SLEEP IN HEAVENLY PEACE (SHP)

Rotarians in partnership with Sleep in Heavenly Peace (SHP) built 51 Beds

On May 2, 2026, 46 volunteer Rotarians and Friends built 51 beds in 4 hours. For the first time, we had several groups of volunteers participating including; Rebecca Deng & 7 friends from First Lutheran Church, Juliana & 7 Brazilian friends, Francis & 7 Francophone friends, Jessie & 4 members of the new Red River College Rotaract Club.

At the start of the Build, Bonnie Emerson & Jim Thiessen, Co-Presidents of Sleep in Heavenly Peace (SHP) shared a few words on the on-going evolution of the Partnership between the Rotary Club of Winnipeg & SHP over the past 3 years. (See their message below.)

At the end of the Build a group photo was taken and Bonnie Emmerson presented Rotarian Nancy Cosway with a Thank You plaque for all the support provided to SHP by the Rotary Club of Winnipeg Rotarians, Family & Friends.



SLEEP IN HEAVENLY PEACE (SHP)

Bonnie & Jim's Opening Remarks:

"Sleep in Heavenly Peace is a non-profit Canadian charity that brings community volunteers together to build and then later install, hand-made twin sized beds for children who do not have a bed of their own. Their motto is: **"No kid sleeps on the floor in our town"**

Since the launch of Sleep in Heavenly Peace Winnipeg in 2020, the organization has shared a strong and meaningful partnership with Rotary International and local Rotary clubs throughout the community. In many ways, Rotary's motto **"Service Above Self"** helped inspire the very foundation of the Winnipeg chapter. Chapter co-presidents Jim Thiessen and Bonnie Emerson had long admired the work Rotary was doing locally and around the world, particularly its commitment to peacebuilding, humanitarian aid, and supporting vulnerable communities.

That inspiration became deeply personal in 2019 when Bonnie was selected to attend Rotary Peace Fellowship training in Thailand. Jim joined her for the final two weeks of the program, where he witnessed firsthand the impact Rotary members were making through service and community leadership. Motivated by what they experienced, Jim returned home determined to create something meaningful in Winnipeg. Soon after, the first steps toward establishing a Sleep in Heavenly Peace chapter began. The work started humbly, with the very first beds being built in the basement of Jim and Bonnie's home.

Those first beds would soon make a lasting impact. Through a referral from Rotarian David Newman, the beds were delivered to the home of Rebecca Deng, who was sponsoring her sister and nephews to Canada from a refugee camp. One of the young boys had never slept in a bed before. That first delivery became a powerful reminder of why the organization existed — to ensure that every child has a safe, comfortable place to sleep and feel at home.

Since that first build, Rotary has remained one of SHP Winnipeg's most dedicated community partners. Rotary members have volunteered countless hours building and delivering beds for children across Winnipeg, while also helping expand the organization's reach far beyond the city. Over the past three years, Rotary clubs have sponsored a total of 250 beds for children in five northern Indigenous communities throughout Manitoba and 200 beds for children in Winnipeg. Much of the Northern effort was spearheaded by Rotarian Strini Reddy, whose leadership and commitment were instrumental in organizing and driving the initiative to bring beds to children and families in these remote communities.

Among those who have been especially instrumental in the partnership are Rotary Club of Winnipeg members Frank and Nancy Cosway. Their leadership, advocacy, and ongoing support have played a significant role in helping SHP Winnipeg grow its impact within the community. In addition to supporting numerous bed builds and community initiatives, Frank and Nancy also helped facilitate the purchase of a much-needed delivery vehicle, allowing SHP Winnipeg to address a growing backlog of bed applications and ensure more children receive beds in a timely manner.

Together, SHP Winnipeg and Rotary continue to demonstrate how compassion, partnership, and service can create lasting change for children and families across Manitoba."

Submitted by:
Frank Cosway

D5550 DISTRICT CONFERENCE HELD IN NEEPAWA, MB., MAY 8-9, 2026:



From Left to Right: Brenda Newman, Nancy Cosway, Taiseer Shareif, Eva Vida, Jorrel Camuyong, Jerusha Onyimbo, David Newman & Frank Cosway



Rotary Exchange Students



Taiseer, Ramesh Ferris & Nancy



Niigaan Sinclair

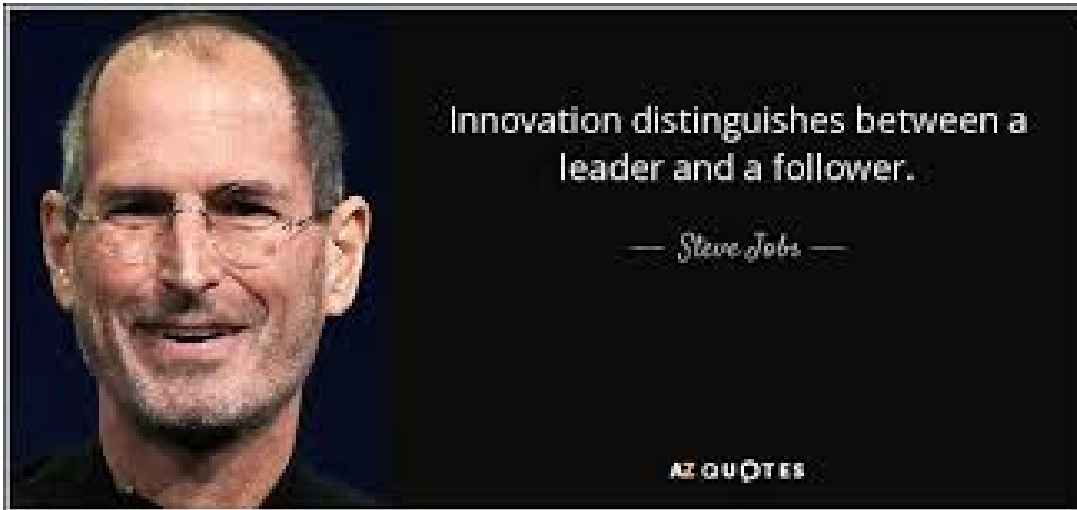
SOCIAL MEDIA LINKS:

Please check out the following Social Media platforms for the Rotary Club of Winnipeg on **Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn, Instagram.**

The Club has set up a **What's App** platform for the **Rotary Club of Winnipeg Group.** This is a great way to share information, network and keep informed on our club activities. Some of you have been added to the group.

Others need to set-up their **What's app account** and then you can join the Rotary Club of Winnipeg What's App group. Contact Nancy Cosway (ncosway@mts.net) for assistance.

facebook



Prepared by :

Oluwafemi (Femi) Adebayo, Editor
Talk & Text: 431-334-5111
femi_mat@yahoo.com