

# Rotary Club Beirut Cosmopolitan

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Club Number 30893  
District 2452 Rotary International



## Marhaba

2023-2024  
September 2023 Issue

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**CREATE HOPE  
in the WORLD**



## Letter from the Editor

### PP Mona Jarudi

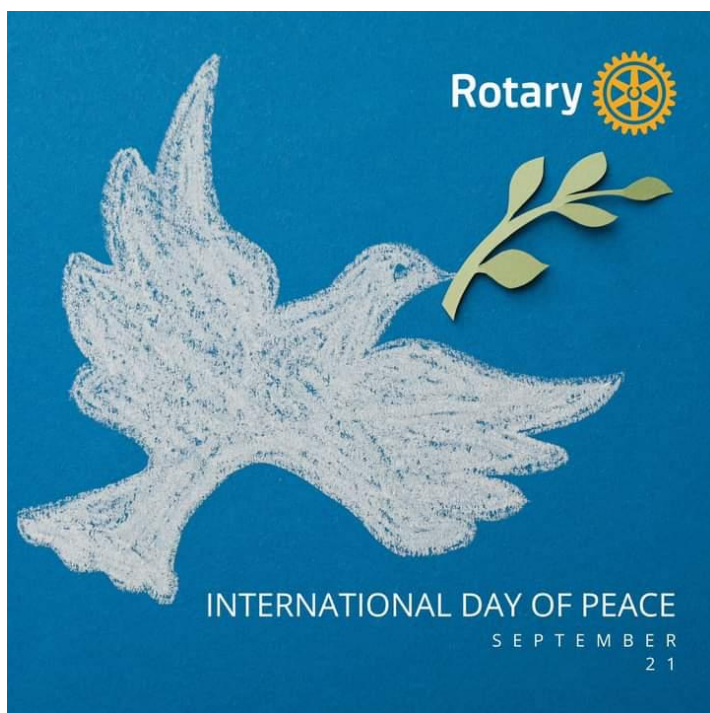
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September, in Rotary, is the month of Education and Literacy. It is also the month when Peace is celebrated on September 21 as the International Day of Peace. These are two very important areas of focus in Rotary. In fact, Rotary International President Gordon McInally, cites peace building as one of his primary goals this Rotary year and encourages virtual exchanges for Rotarians to overcome barriers and create new connections.

As a humanitarian organization, Peace is a cornerstone of Rotary's mission, and Rotarians have roles in promoting peace. The work we do in fighting disease, providing clean water and sanitation, improving the health of mothers and children, supporting education and growing local economies directly contributes to creating optimal conditions for peaceful societies. The Rotary Peace Centers have trained more than 1600 peace fellows to become catalysts for peace through their careers in government, education and international organizations. Rotarians have acted as mediators in areas of conflict to facilitate polio vaccinations for children and are always at the core of creating communities that are connected, inclusive and resilient, all pre requisites for peace and prevention of conflict. These are all avenues that promote Positive Peace. In RI President's words: "Peace is not a dream, and it is not passive. It's the result of working hard, earning trust, and having open conversations that maybe difficult. Peace must be waged persistently and bravely. Everything we do across our areas of focus has the potential to foster the hope that can make peace possible."

How does education tie in to peace building? Education is a fundamental human right that helps in creating more viable communities and should be maintained at all times and especially in times of conflict. It is an essential tool for economic development and eradication of poverty.

As a former UN Secretary General said: **"Education is, quite simply, peace building by another name"**.



# CHRISTOPHE ZOGHBI

FOUNDER & CEO OF ZAKA AI, INC  
AN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE & CONSULTING COMPANY  
"THE AI ERA: UNLEASHING A NEW WAVE OF POSSIBILITIES "

Business Meeting  
The Phoenicia Hotel

September 5, 2023

Artificial Intelligence, Chat GPT are two fields that are picking up steam and everyone is trying to jump onto this train to keep up with the times. Most people do not really grasp what this new wave all about, the session on September 5 was the venue to shed light on this important topic.

Our guest speaker is an accomplished engineer with extensive experience in various areas of Data Science and Artificial Intelligence (AI). As the Founder and CEO of ZAKA, an AI education and consulting company, Christophe is passionate about promoting the growth of the AI sector in Lebanon and the region.

In this presentation, Mr. Zoghbi delved into the captivating world of AI. A phenomenon that's not just about technology, but is increasingly becoming a pivotal part of our everyday lives. He started with an accessible introduction to what AI actually is, debunking the myths and misconceptions that surround it. Then, he took us through a journey through its brief but impactful history, demonstrating its evolution from a mere concept to the transformative force it is today.

Using real world examples, the speaker highlighted how AI is reshaping various industries, from healthcare and education to finance and transportation, and explored how its making a difference in our personal lives, from virtual assistants to personalized recommendations.

Beyond the present, we cast a glance into the future, revealing the immense possibilities that AI holds, while also sensitively addressing its challenges and ethical implications.

This talk aimed to inspire curiosity and a deeper understanding of AI. It was supposed to empower us to recognize and embrace the wave of possibilities it brings. Whether we were all able to understand all the science behind it, we are definitely more enthused now to step into the exciting, AI-powered future.



Artificial intelligence is about providing machines with a kind of **intelligence** that is mainly attributed to **humans**.



# DR. KEVIN SALIBA

SENIOR DOCTOR AT HAGROUP CRUISES  
ROTARY CLUB BEIRUT COSMOPOLITAN MEMBER

## "VIRTUAL TOUR OF HIS CRUISE SHIP AND CLASSIFICATION TALK"

Business Meeting  
Via Zoom

September 19, 2023



As we navigate life's multiple paths, we never know how the winds guiding our sails will blow and in which direction they propel us. This classification talk from our own Rt. Dr. Kevin Saliba is a perfect example of life and the different cards one is dealt.

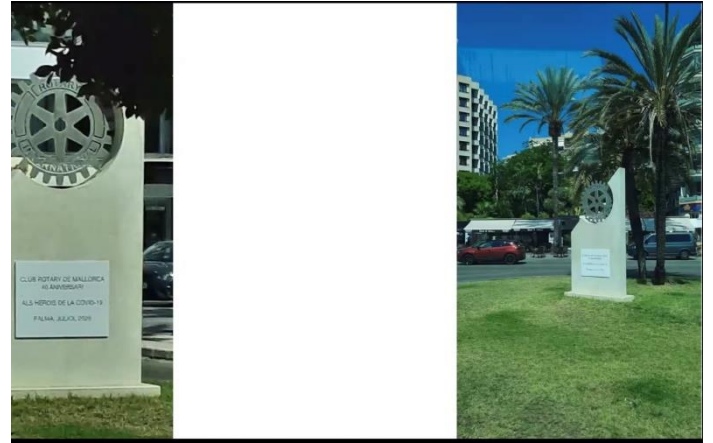
From being a doctor at the American University Medical Center in Beirut, to a doctor aboard a cruise liner is life changing, and it all happened within a short time. Kevin took us through a visual experience of his role as a doctor on the cruise ship, the meticulous operation they run, interesting cases they face. His rank as second officer gives him special privileges and affords him all the perks like joining the captain's table for formal dinners and meeting very interesting people on board. He started his job cruising the Mediterranean but his live presentation was from the shores of New Zealand, after being in Fiji, Australia etc.

Working on Board is definitely not different than working in a hospital. They are equipped to deal with any kind of emergency and condition and they do so with the utmost adherence to safety measures.

After sharing with us pictures of all the ports of call and the life he leads, he summed up his talk in few words: they work hard and play hard. Throughout all of this interesting stage in his life, Kevin's focus remains to go back to Beirut for few months after his tour to enjoy his beautiful young family whom he misses every minute.

Wishing Kevin, a very successful journey in the sea of life!



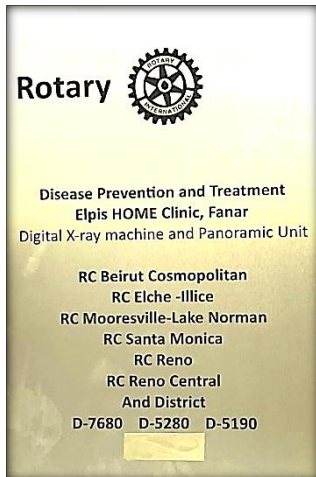




# PROJECT HANDOVER

## ELPIS H.O.M.E

### GG2231878



One of the values that Rotary Club Beirut Cosmopolitan prides itself on is the work and service projects it does for the community at large. Most recently, on September 13, Rotary Club Beirut Cosmopolitan handed over a big project that has been initiated 3 years ago and was interrupted by Covid.

Elpis H.O.M.E stands for Hope for Health Outreach Middle East, a USA based association founded by Lebanese American doctors to support clinics for the underprivileged in Lebanon and regionally.

RCBC as the lead host on this Global Grant, supported by Spanish and American Rotary Clubs and Districts, gave a Digital X-ray machine and a Panoramic Unit valued at \$58 K. This clinic serves around 15,000-20,000 patients a year for almost all kinds of treatments.

Many thanks go to our partners Rotary Club Elche-Illice, Rotary Club Moorsville-Lake Norman, Rotary Club Santa Monica, Rotary Club Reno, Rotary Club Reno Central and D-7680, D-5280 and D- 5190 and of course The Rotary Foundation without which support nothing will be possible.



# SERVICE PROJECT

## Book Donation In Collaboration With Rotary Club Beirut Cedars

September 18, 2023

In accordance with RCBC's theme for RY 23-24, Importance of Education for Development, Rt. Joelle (Olga) Feghali distributed 1750 books to a needy school. The book drive was initiated by Rotary Club Beirut Cedars who generously shared the donation with other clubs.

As September is the month for Education and Literacy, the book donation was given to the school St. Coeur Ain Najem to promote reading among the young students.



## Looking for a Literacy Project?

### Books Literacy Project

Rotary Club  
Beirut Cedars has  
100 cartons of novels &  
general books in French  
from RC Guadeloupe &  
ICC France-Lebanon (\$0.1/  
book)

50 cartons of schooltext  
books - could be sent to  
free schools (no cost)

50 cartons of mixed books  
(novels & encyclopedias)  
in Arabic, French, English  
collected in Lebanon (no  
cost)

Would you like any?



# REACHING OUT

American University of Beirut  
ABLE SUMMIT 2023

September 2023

On September 14 and 15, President Amal Talhouk attended the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual ABLE SUMMIT Conference at AUB featuring international and local speakers from global, industrial and local academic organizations.

ABLE SUMMIT is one of a kind not only in Lebanon, but in the region. It focusses mainly on Digital Accessibility in Higher Education for People with disabilities (PwD).

The whole world has become aware of the Importance of Inclusion concerning PwD in academia as well as in business.

Educators as well as businessmen are well aware now that (PwD) are an efficient section of citizens that have been forever ignored. They have realized that the best tool that can help, mainly university students nowadays, is Digital Accessibility.

Rotary Club Abouja- Nigeria Visit

September 2023



International Rotarians from Rotary Club Abouja – Nigeria were visiting Beirut for a few days. Club President Amike Aken'Ova contacted P Amal Talhouk to visit our club with two of her club members. They attended our club meeting on zoom and were invited to dinner by P Amal and few board members. Both parties enjoyed learning about each other's cultures and club activities.

The clubs' banner exchange happened the following day in Al Bustan Hotel. A symbolic gift on behalf of the club was offered to P Amike with the promise of building on the amicable relations established between the two clubs!

This visit is a testimony of how Rotary Connects the World!



# FELLOWSHIP

The Talhouk Castle/ Makarem Cultural Center  
& Deir El Shir- Bmekkine

September 30, 2023

For few hours, and in the most beautiful setting, we traveled back in time to an interesting period in our Lebanese history. Under the sprawling shade of the trees, in the courtyard of the Makarem Cultural Center, Mr. Samir Makarem together with President Amal Talhouk engaged us with a narrative about its history, its origins and how the center/ fortress changed hands from the Talhouk family to the Makarems in 1973.

The history of the Talhouk family in Lebanon, particularly the District of Aley, is a significant chapter in the history of the region. Their origin is from the Arabian Peninsula, Bani Asad tribe, moved to Iraq, on to Damascus then Hauran upon an invitation from the Shehabs where they stayed 200 years. They fought the crusaders and pushed them back out of Hasbaya. In 1244, after a dispute with Al Shehab in Hasbaya, they moved to Beirut and bought most of the land around the old wall of Ras Beirut, mostly the Hamra region. The Hamra Emirs fought and deposed the Talhouks, who later were able to decimate, the Hamra Emirs and regain their properties. In time, the Talhouks moved to Aitah in Mount Lebanon, built the fortress beginning of the 15th century in Aitah, where it was a Serail, A Court and a Dungeon.

During the Ottoman Empire rule, the Talhouks were one of five Druze Feudal Lords in Lebanon. The Aitah Fortress was sold to the Makarem family in 1973. It has been beautifully kept and maintained, housing countless treasures including calligraphies by Samir's grandfather who was renowned in Lebanon for his master work especially calligraphy on rice grains. Every room had its charm and every level of the center has a unique story to tell.

From there we traveled to Deir el Shir in Bmekkine/Souk el Gharb, where the Talhouks offered the land to Aleppo Catholic Basilican Monks and protected them in the savage civil war in Mount Lebanon in 1860. Both parties are proud of their outstanding relationship and inherited traditions which started 164 years ago. Needless to say, the Deir boasts of beautiful panoramic views overlooking Beirut.

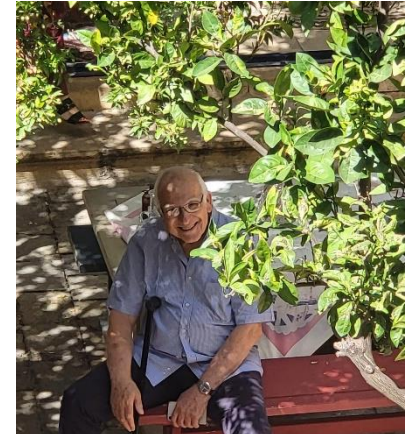
This was an epic day where we were reminded of the beauty of Lebanon, its rich and diverse history and culture. It was a day of pure fellowship and great fun which was shared lovingly by our Rotarian friends from Rotary Club Metn Gate and Rotary Club Beirut Center.













# ROTARIANS IN ACTION

## Rotarian Christine Arzoumanian Ghazarian



Rotarian Christine Arzoumanian Ghazarian, a professor with the Faculty of Business Administration & Economics at Haigazian University, was invited to participate and represent both Lebanon and the University in the "Empowering Business Schools with Digital Transformation" forum which took place in Dubai, UAE from September 5-6, 2023.

This forum was organized by World Learning and sponsored by the US Department of State as part of their "Leaders Lead On-Demand" Program. Thirteen countries from the MENA region participated in this event, and the participants were able to explore the transformative power of digital technologies in business schools today. The focus of the forum was professional development for Faculty, Integration of AI and Chat GPT Models in education, Interactive Learning tools, and making digitalization and technological innovation in academia an indicator for accreditation.

## Rotarian Abbas Sibai

Abbas Sibai, a valued member of our Rotary Club, has reached a significant milestone by being appointed as a Policy Leader Fellow at the European University Institute (EUI) in Florence, Italy, for the 2023/24 academic year.

This prestigious opportunity attracted 680 applicants from 110 countries and saw only 20 individuals selected.

The Policy Leader Fellowship is tailored for mid-career policy professionals with diverse backgrounds, emphasizing practical policy-making experience.

Abbas's extensive expertise and unwavering commitment to driving social change and fostering community development made him an exceptional choice for this coveted position. As a Fellow, he will dedicate his efforts to examining civil society in EU neighboring regions and proposing sustainable reforms. His work at the EUI will have a profound global impact while upholding the core values of Rotary—peace, goodwill, and community development. Additionally, Abbas has been elected as the Fellows' representative on the Executive Committee. This committee convenes to oversee the day-to-day management of the Institute, prepares decision-making.





## IN MEMORIUM

Rotary Club Beirut Cosmopolitan sadly lost one of its founding members Rt. Mazen Farra after a long battle with failing health.

Mazen's love for the club and his dedication to service was an example to all. He was a kind gentleman with a benevolent spirit and a big heart. His unwavering support and kindness to others will never be forgotten. Even through the hardest times he was facing, he made sure he stayed a loyal member to the club.

May God rest his soul in eternal peace. He will be missed by us all.





### August Birthdays

Joseph Akl (5)

Amal Talhouk (7)

Haytham Kurdi (19)

### September Birthdays

Rabab Safieddine (1)

Sylva Guiragossian (9)

Christine Arzoumanian (21)

The End