

the Rotarian

ROTARY.ORG

AUGUST 2020

We do the hard work

**THIS IS
OUR MOMENT**

We bring people together

We solve problems



GET READY FOR CHANGE

Rotary is evolving,
and so is your magazine.

Our new look is coming
in the September issue.

President's message



Dear Rotarians, Rotaractors, and friends,

The year 2020 has brought monumental changes that have already included a global pandemic and a renewed call for social justice. We are reminded that we live in a constantly changing world, and Rotary is a reflection of that world.

We must be ready to listen and adapt, always drawing upon our core values of service, fellowship, diversity, integrity, and leadership. If we live these values and apply The Four-Way Test to all aspects of our lives, we will be prepared to lead at all times.

I am proud of how we have proven our ability to adapt. Faced with a pandemic, Rotary has not stopped. We moved meetings online and found new ways to serve. We turned the canceled 2020 Rotary International Convention in Honolulu into our first virtual convention. Each week, we are proving that Rotary is a flexible gathering that happens anywhere — in traditional meetings, on cellphones, and on computers. Rotary offers a way to connect for everyone who wants to, at any time, and will continue to do so.

Some have even told me that they enjoy Rotary's mix of online and in-person meetings more now than before! How can we build on this momentum and seize the opportunity to embrace change so that Rotary keeps thriving?

For me, supporting new types of clubs is key. They are no longer just experiments but a real part of Rotary today. In addition to traditional clubs, we have e-clubs, Rotaract clubs, cause-based clubs, and passport clubs. These help make Rotary more inclusive, more flexible, and more attractive to new members. Visit these clubs, exchange ideas and partner with them, and promote them to one another and to our communities.

We all agree that we need to grow Rotary, but sometimes we can get caught up in the numbers game and lose sight of the bigger picture. After all, an increase in membership is meaningless if next year, those new members leave our clubs. Let's grow Rotary sustainably. Rotary's flexible options for participation will engage members and show the community how we're different from any other club. Let's celebrate that Rotary is now less about rules and more about joining together in a variety of ways besides traditional meetings.

I recommend that each club hold an annual strategy meeting to ask — and honestly answer — if we are doing all we can for our members and if our club reflects the community we serve. We are taking this approach at the international level, too. I am proud that six women are serving with me on the RI Board of Directors this year, the most we have ever had. Let's keep Rotary moving in this direction at every level. We need more perspectives, more diversity, for Rotary to thrive.

It's fascinating to imagine how we will find new ways to adapt and stay nimble this year and beyond. But I am also inspired about what hasn't changed and never will in Rotary: the friendships, the networking, the ethics, and the service. Indeed, these are the values that make Rotary attractive to all.

As Rotary's founder, Paul Harris, said, we have to be revolutionary from time to time. Now is such a time. *Rotary Opens Opportunities* — countless ones — for us to embrace change that will strengthen us even as we remain true to our core values.

Holger Knaack

HOLGER KNAACK

President, Rotary International



 **BINISH**
Binish Desai
Waukegan
India
CENTRAL STATES ROTARY YOUTH EXCHANGE



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“Service reaffirms that we have value to add to the world.”

— Vivek Murthy (above)

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These 10 workers put service above self when it counted most.

As told to Frank Bures, Vanessa Glavinskias, Geoffrey Johnson, and Diana Schoberg

OPPOSITE: Binish Desai models the signature blue blazer bearing pins and badges collected during his Rotary Youth Exchange year. Desai's explorations have been scientific as well as geographical; see page 34. *Photography by* Chaitali Mitra

the Rotarian

JOHN REZEK Editor in chief

JENNIFER MOODY Art director

JENNY LLAKMANI Managing editor

GEOFFREY JOHNSON Senior editor

HANK SARTIN Senior editor

DIANA SCHOBERG Senior staff writer

JOHN M. CUNNINGHAM Associate editor

NANCY WATKINS Copy editor

VANESSA GLAVINSKAS Contributing editor

MARC DUKES Production manager

JOE CANE Design & production assistant

CYNTHIA EDBROOKE Senior editorial coordinator

KATIE MCCOY Circulation manager

Send ad inquiries and materials to: Marc Dukes, *The Rotarian*,
One Rotary Center, 1560 Sherman Ave., 14th floor, Evanston, IL 60201;
phone 847-866-3092; email adv@rotary.org

Media kit: rotary.org/mediakit

To contact us: *The Rotarian*, One Rotary Center, 1560 Sherman Ave.,
Evanston, IL 60201; phone 847-866-3206; email rotarian@rotary.org

Website: therotarian.com

To submit an article: Send stories, queries, tips, and photographs by mail
or email (high-resolution digital images only). We assume no responsibility
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To subscribe: Twelve issues at US\$12 a year (USA, Puerto Rico, and U.S. Virgin
Islands); \$16 a year (Canada); \$24 a year (elsewhere). Contact the Circulation
Department (phone 847-424-5217 or -5216; email data@rotary.org)
for details and for airmail rates. Gift subscriptions available at the same rates.

To send an address change: Enclose old address label, postal code, and
Rotary club, and send to the Circulation Department or email data@rotary.org.
Postmaster: Send all address changes to Circulation Department, *The Rotarian*,
One Rotary Center, 1560 Sherman Ave., Evanston, IL 60201.
Call the Contact Center: USA, Canada, and Virgin Islands (toll-free) 866-976-8279.
Elsewhere: 847-866-3000, ext. 8999.

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Copyright ©2020 by Rotary International. All rights reserved. Periodicals postage paid at Evanston, Ill., USA,
and additional mailing offices. Canada Publications Mail Agreement No. 1381644. Canadian return address:
MSI, PO Box 2600, Mississauga, ON L4T 0A8. This is the August 2020 issue, volume 199, number 2, of
The Rotarian (ISSN 0035-838X). Publication number: USPS 548-810.

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HELP THE ROTARY FOUNDATION RESPOND TO DISASTERS

Rotarians around the world are coming together to find solutions to disasters like the COVID-19 pandemic, but we need your help to fund these initiatives. Your donations to The Rotary Foundation can help Rotary clubs respond to needs both in their local communities and around the globe.

GIVE TODAY: rotary.org/donate

Got the message

I've been a big fan of *The Rotarian* for many years. Viewpoints is my favorite section, and I always start my reading there. "He Texts, She Texts" [May] came at the perfect time for me. The creatively formatted text conversation between Steve Almond and his seventh-grade daughter, Josephine, about the merits of having a cellphone resonated with me and my 11-year-old daughter. The article was a conversation starter about how she feels about beginning seventh grade without a phone and how to deal with the peer pressure that may come of it. She also pointed out that it was a story about cellphones and that there was an ad with a cellphone next to it!

For me as a parent, this was a win on multiple levels. It gave me the opportunity to talk to my daughter about an important topic. It reminded her that *The Rotarian* had relevant content for her, not just "boring stuff for adults." I keep *The Rotarian* in sight around the house to encourage my kids, ages 11 and 18, to pick it up and learn that Rotary is not just something I belong to — Rotary is a change-maker in the world.

In the same issue, "Never Too Young to Lead" reminded me of my own story. My term as club president began just weeks after I gave birth. My Rotary mentor helped by presiding at the meetings. We talked every week, and I was able to lead our club while home on maternity leave. I share that story when talking to new members and encouraging them to take an office within the club. Inevitably the hesitation is because it's not a good time in their life. I remind them: "There's never a good time. Did I ever tell you the story about when I became president?" **CLARE PAVELKA** *Lake City, Minnesota*



Secrets to success

"Never Too Young to Lead" in the May issue was fantastic. Being a district governor at any age is a big commitment, although being younger and balancing work, family, and other responsibilities may be even more difficult. I started my term when I was 43, and I would echo what many of the Rotarians featured in this article stated. My secrets include:

- Having an understanding and loving family. I could not have been a district governor without the support of my spouse.
- Having support from your employer. I started a new job six weeks before beginning my term, and if my new employer had not supported my Rotary work, I would not have taken (or stayed at) that job.
- Having a strong district leadership team. Being a leader requires trust and the ability to delegate.
- Having an amazing Rotary mentor.

A prior district governor was there for me when I first joined Rotary, when I became club president, when I served in other district roles, and when I became district governor. His guidance was immeasurable.

I hope we continue to see the number of younger governors grow, as well as the number of younger RI Board members (and possibly a Rotary president under the age of 60 in the not-too-distant future). Leadership and ideas from a younger generation will continue to transform Rotary and allow us to thrive in the future.

DAVID YEGHIAIAN
Green Bay, Wisconsin

Praise for poetry

I have been a Rotarian for over 20 years, and I have read almost every issue of *The Rotarian* during that time. "Every Leaf a Miracle" [Viewpoints, April] by Geoffrey Johnson is one of the most eloquent

pieces I have read. The timing, wording, and pointedness were right on amid the COVID-19 pandemic. It was like a poem especially written for those of us open enough to listen. Thank you, editors and publisher, and particularly Geoffrey, for the mindfulness of the article.

JOHN L. STUMP
Fairhope, Alabama

The circular economy and Rotary

Kudos to *The Rotarian* for an excellent interview with Matt Kopac, an incredible Rotarian ["Round Trip," April]. Matt has a refreshingly honest, nuanced, and complex assessment of the environmental challenges we face, but his message is hopeful in that Rotary can play an important part in meeting those challenges. I agree!

We are facing the worldwide challenge of the novel coronavirus. Yet as bad as the

Overheard on social media

In our April issue, we interviewed Birmingham, Alabama, Rotarian Sarah Parcak about her work as a space archaeologist. On Instagram, we polled you about your exploration dreams.

Would you rather:



Explore the stars

52%

OR



Explore the sea

48%



Discover ancient sites

74%

OR



Discover artifacts

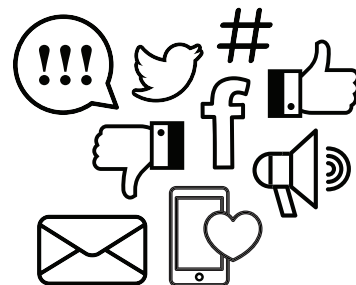
26%

Learn about the past
44%



OR

Learn about the future
56%



Check out Rotary International's Instagram story on 11 August for an interactive poll about your experiences as a member.

pandemic is, it's but a dress rehearsal for the challenges we will face of environmental degradation and climate change. Will we learn from the pandemic to be proactive, or will we wait until the conflagration is at our front door?

The world needs to transition quickly but deliberately to what Kopac calls a circular economy, minimizing waste, recycling, and when possible refurbishing and reusing countless products.

A big part of the challenge, as Kopac rightly points out, is that many of the costs associated with our linear economy are passed on to society. It's what economists call "externalized costs." Externalizing the environmental and social costs makes products like gas-powered cars, plastic-based merchandise, and poorly insulated homes and businesses that are heated and cooled by fossil fuels seem like screaming deals — but they're not.

Sooner or later we must pay the piper.

Here are two ways Rotarians can play a key role in speeding the transition to a circular and sustainable economy:

- Rotary clubs can take on projects that make a difference. Many clubs already have projects to install low-flush toilets, insulation, and energy-efficient lighting in homes; host zero-waste meetings and events; minimize the use of plastics in our communities; install water filling stations for reusable water bottles in schools and businesses; and bring energy-efficient cookstoves, tree planting, solar stations, water conservation, and sanitary toilets to the developing world. These are just a few of the amazing environmental projects Rotary clubs have taken on. Together we can make a difference.

- As noted the April 2019 issue ["Why Climate Change Is Rotary's Business"], we can support the bipartisan effort of the Citizens' Climate Lobby to have a revenue-

neutral carbon fee and dividend. This measure would fold much of the external social and environmental costs of fossil fuels into the cost of products. The gradually increasing fee is then returned to consumers. This sends a price signal to speed the transition to alternative energy.

With our entrepreneurial talent taking on the challenge, the transition to a circular and clean-energy economy will create millions of jobs and strengthen productivity and economic well-being, as happened in the switch from typewriters to computers and the internet.

As Kopac concludes: "There aren't always easy answers. That creates a challenge — and that's why you have to evaluate these questions carefully." Who better to lead this effort than Rotary? Let's not back away from the defining challenge of our time.

MERRILL GLUSTROM
Boulder, Colorado

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.

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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.



**A message from the
editor in chief
JOHN REZEK**

**For these
and all
Rotarians,
their moment
is now.**

In the magazine's nearly 110-year history, only one person has appeared in *The Rotarian* attired as a turkey. That was Tom Gump of the Rotary Club of Edina/Morningside, Minnesota, who showed up in his fowl finery for our August 2018 issue to demonstrate one of his tips ("be vibrant") for increasing club membership. Earlier this year, when then-RI President Mark Daniel Maloney convened a New Club Development Summit, he invited Gump to attend. "I had been focused on bringing members into *our* club," Gump told us. "Mark made me realize that we need to reach out and engage with people we haven't engaged with before. Let them experience what we all love, which is Rotary."

Gump, who is now governor of District 5950, came away with a new approach. "Bring together people with a passion for a cause if you want a new club to be successful," he says — which is why, over the past two years, his district has welcomed clubs devoted to the environment, veterans, and fighting human trafficking. (You can learn more about those and other innovative clubs in "Clubs Made to Order.")

As you will read in "Full Circle," a passion for Rotary and for helping others propelled inventor Binish Desai to charter a new club in his hometown in India. And passion compelled the 10 Rotarians profiled in "The World Stopped. They Didn't" to remain at their essential jobs when the coronavirus pandemic struck this spring. They stepped up and maintained their responsibilities to the rest of us. For these and all Rotarians, their moment is now.

And in this time of isolation and seclusion, we had a conversation with Vivek Murthy, a former U.S. surgeon general. His new book is called *Together: The Healing Power of Human Connection in a Sometimes Lonely World*. He found that loneliness — the lack of meaningful human connection — affects 55 million people in the United States and that our need to bond with others is as fundamental as hunger or thirst. Service is an effective path toward creating and maintaining those bonds. Murthy has other insights on how we can do that better — not just in this time of social upheaval and pandemic, but in the months and years ahead.



TOGETHER, WE

EMPOWER

Potential shines brightest when it's inspired. That's why Rotary clubs invest time and expertise in encouraging others to be the best they can be. Empowering those who have big dreams to achieve great things — that's what people of action do. **Learn more at Rotary.org.**

Rotary



PEOPLE OF ACTION

What sort of people read *The Rotarian*?

**People who make
their community
a better place.**

The Kigali Public Library, the brainchild of Rotarians, is a center for peacebuilding, education, and connection.

76% of our readers said working in their local community is their top priority.

SOURCE: 2016 *Rotarian* Reader Survey conducted by GfK MRI

our world



Fresh perspective

LAUREN HEINONEN
Rotary Club of Ann Arbor, Michigan

Even as a child, Lauren Heinonen was a scientist at heart, an answer-seeker, a problem-solver — by age six she was dissecting lobsters her mother brought home from the store. “She would entertain any kind of scientific question or interest that I had,” Heinonen says of

continued from page 11

her mother, a clinical researcher. Heinonen is now a project manager for DalCor, a small pharmaceutical company developing personalized medicine for patients with cardiovascular disease.

“I loved the idea of helping people in a tangible way,” says Heinonen, who began working for the company in 2016 while she was still a biological anthropology student at the University of Michigan. In 2017, she had her dream job but still felt that something was missing. “I wasn’t having the impact that I wanted to see every day in my life,” she says. “I stumbled upon Rotary.”

Rotary’s Four-Way Test sealed the deal. “I had never seen a group of people or an organization that held themselves to such high standards,” she says. “It gave me a reason to trust the people and trust the work that they were engaging in.”

Still, Heinonen hesitated; at 22, she would be the youngest member of the Ann Arbor club. “But so many people came up to me and said, ‘You have such a unique perspective and so many skills that we don’t have. We would love to learn from you.’”

Since joining, she has taken on a two-year stint as the club’s public image director. “I figured, ‘OK, I can probably figure this out quickly. Why don’t I see if they can use my help?’” Heinonen says.

“Lauren’s willingness to take a risk has rubbed off on the club,” says club member Rosemarie Rowney. “We are now more willing to try new things and become more technologically astute.”

Heinonen hopes the club’s enhanced online presence — along with recent shifts such as using video technology during the COVID-19 crisis — will help attract more young members. She’s also launching a satellite club that meets in the evenings to make Rotary more accessible to young professionals.

“I’m interested to see how Rotary will change in the next decade, or even sooner,” she says. “I hope it will continue to accommodate the desires and needs of young people.”

—NIKKI KALLIO



Radio days

FOR MORE THAN 50 YEARS, members of the Rotary Club of Cadiz, Kentucky, have hit the airwaves in April for their annual radio auction, talking up items ranging from a homemade fried apple pie to a handcrafted canoe — all to raise money for local initiatives.

In the past, the club would display auction items at a local church throughout the five-day event. Rotarians were featured on radio station WKDZ-FM to describe the items and encourage interested bidders to stop by the church to check out the goods on offer, to socialize, and to enjoy a snack.

In January, the Cadiz club had started organizing for this year’s auction and had already collected close to 100 items, including gift certificates to local businesses, yard equipment, and sporting goods. “Every year we get remarkable donations that catch people’s eye, and it was no different this year,” says Tim McGinnis, auction co-chair for the 41-member club. “People make rum cakes, banana puddings, or fried pies. There are people who bid \$100 for a rum cake.”

But as COVID-19 restrictions halted large gatherings this spring, the club canceled events associated with the auction, including a kick-off breakfast. It shortened the auction to two days and moved it online; photos and details of the goods were featured on the radio station’s Big Deals platform, which is usually used by local businesses to sell

gift certificates for products and services.

The club also reduced the number of volunteers needed for the event to a crew of six: three people who talked up the auction on the radio and three who staffed the phone lines to accept any donations. Bidding was all done online. “I was the co-chair, and I never left my house,” says McGinnis. “We were very sensitive to and respectful of the parameters of the shutdown.”

In previous years, the five-day auction raised as much as \$330,000; this year’s online auction brought in \$220,000 in only two days. The items up for bid included two basketballs signed by Ja Morant, an NBA star who played at nearby Murray State University,

“There are people who bid \$100 for a rum cake.”

which brought in a total of \$1,400. In a nod to current events, a case of 80 rolls of toilet paper went for \$160.

In recognition of the difficult economic times caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, people who made donations of any amount received a shout-out on the radio. “We knew a lot of people weren’t in a position to give us \$100 this year,” McGinnis says. “But they could give us \$5, and that \$5 is just as important to us as \$100.” —ANNEMARIE MANNION

“You teach them how to deflect and control and manage aggression without the intention to harm.”

Sombat Tapanya



A practice of peace

In a glass-enclosed dojo in the northern Thai city of Chiang Mai, Sombat Tapanya teaches children the principles of peace through aikido. Tapanya, a psychologist who has specialized in childhood trauma, has put to use insights he gained as a Rotary Peace Fellow at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok in 2016.

Throughout his academic career, Tapanya focused on anti-bullying efforts, violence prevention, and helping people who were abused as children improve their parenting skills. Now retired from Chiang Mai University, where he taught behavioral science to medical students, he runs a small nonprofit, the Peace Culture Foundation, which promotes peace in the community.

He also continues his work with local government agencies and global organizations, most recently with UNICEF Thailand and the University of Oxford as a principal investigator on a project to teach better parenting skills. And he has worked on the Mekong Project, which trains therapists from throughout Southeast Asia in how to effectively treat the lifelong effects of childhood trauma.

THE ROTARIAN: What is the idea behind the Peace Culture Foundation?

TAPANYA: If we create a culture within the family and in schools that says using violence against others is OK, that leads to abuse. It would be more beneficial to create a culture of peace, where you treat others with respect, kindness, and empathy, as opposed to being No. 1 at the expense of others. That's something we feel we need to instill in children. Aikido is part of that.

TR: How can a martial art teach peace?

TAPANYA: Aikido is a physical manifestation of the principles of respect, kindness, compassion, and being in harmony with others. The movement of aikido is all about blending, not clashing, opposing, or struggling. There is no competition; it's about maintaining your center and balance, and we emphasize the spirit of loving protection. You don't teach students to punch or kick; you teach them how to deflect and control and manage aggression without the intention to harm. We can use that metaphor in daily interaction: knowing when to stop before you hurt someone but to be assertive at the same time, not allowing people to step all over you. Being assertive, but not aggressive.

TR: When did you discover aikido?

TAPANYA: I started studying aikido in my late 20s in Connecticut, where I was in graduate

school. Before that I did Thai boxing and judo. But when I hit another guy, I feel the pain, so I didn't enjoy boxing. And judo was really competitive. When you lose, you feel sorry for yourself, and when you win, you feel sorry for the other guy. I'm not a very competitive person, so when I found aikido, I liked it right away.

TR: What can we learn from your recent work on bullying prevention?

TAPANYA: In collaboration with the Thai Ministry of Education and the Rak Thai Foundation, the Peace Culture Foundation did a national survey on school bullying. The preliminary results are very similar to what I found 10 years ago, which is that 40 percent of Thai kids are bullied on a regular basis. The most frequent form of bullying is verbal. That can be very hurtful if repeated, and it usually comes with peer rejection. If it becomes prevalent and part of the school culture, it creates a culture of disrespect.

That's why it's important to promote a respectful culture. The Peace Culture Foundation is developing a program called Cultivating Peace Culture in School. It will be a three-year project in a small elementary school near my dojo. Teachers and parents will learn about positive discipline and bullying prevention, and we will start an aikido club at the school. — ANNE STEIN

To see a photo of Tapanya and his class, turn to page 64.



People of action around the globe

A Heintzman & Co. piano made of crystal was sold at auction for \$3.2 million.

United States

The Rotary Club of Yakima Sunrise, Washington, has installed nine pianos in public spots where anyone can sit down and tickle the ivories. Sites include brewpubs, a shopping mall, and a coffee shop, and more installations are planned soon. The Painted Piano Project also provided stipends of \$300 to artists who decorated the donated instruments. “People stop to listen to the music or take a moment to examine the beautiful artwork,” says Nathan Hull, the club’s immediate past president. “The pianists play everything from Mozart to Van Halen, and that has been a lot of fun.”

United Kingdom

To raise funds for End Polio Now, the Rotary Club of Narberth & Whitland is selling Rotary-themed scarves designed by fashion and textiles student Mia Hewitson-Jones with help from graphics student Sam Stables, both enrolled at Pembrokeshire College. The scarves went on sale in 2019 after the club garnered approval from Rotary International for use of the logo. By April of this year, nearly 100 scarves had been sold and another shipment was on the way, says club member John Hughes. “We have sold a few in America and Canada,” adds Hughes. The idea of selling specially designed scarves was conceived by Mary Adams when she was president-elect of the club in 2016.

Romania

Faced with the coronavirus pandemic, the Rotaract Club of Cluj-Napoca “SAMVS” adapted an online mental health campaign on the club’s social media accounts, encouraging people to engage in satisfying activities, such as art. The social media campaign focused on “how to make the best of your #stayhome experience,” says club member Loana Vultur. More than 3,000 people have viewed the club’s posts on Facebook and Instagram. “No money was necessary,” Vultur says. “Our resources were our minds, creativity, and the will to help. In Romania we have the expression, ‘Make heaven from what you have.’”



Guatemala

More than 100 Guatemalan women have been helped financially by the Interact Club of Hillsdale High School in San Mateo, California; its sponsoring Rotary Club of San Mateo; and the nonprofit group Namaste Direct. Over the years, about 100 Hillsdale Interactors have joined chaperone Rotarians and teachers on trips to Antigua, a city in Guatemala's central highlands, to meet the women who have received grants funded through student-led fundraising events including "penny war" collections and taco dinners.

The site visits are eye-openers for the students, who see how microloans, financial literacy

workshops, and mentorship have empowered the women, says Namaste Direct's founder and chief executive, Robert Graham. He cites Namaste's policy of charging lower interest rates than many other nongovernmental organizations (loans range from a few hundred dollars to \$4,000), its adherence to Western consulting methodologies, and Rotary involvement as major reasons for the program's success. "Many women have corner convenience stores, while others purchase clothing and household goods in bulk for resale at the local market," Graham says. Other beneficiaries include a nut vendor, a chicken butcher, and a chocolatier.

India

In the Rotary Club of Vapi's first 20 years, club members oversaw the establishment of a school, a hospital, and a college. "Our club created an entire town worth residing in," says Ketan Patel. In 2011, seeking a way to honor the RI presidency of club member Kalyan Banerjee, the Rotarians embarked on a project to provide free kidney dialysis that continues to this day. Nearly 3,800 patients have received more than 32,000 procedures. "The entire treatment is free of charge," says Patel. The cost of the dialysis project is covered by Rotarian and community contributions, along with club fundraising.

— BRAD WEBBER

Nearly half of all Guatemalans live on less than \$5.50 a day.



Clubs around the world respond to the pandemic

SINCE THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC BEGAN, Rotarians — whether they are small-business owners, health care workers, teachers, or government officials — have been carrying out vital services as part of their day-to-day work. And as members of their Rotary clubs, they have also been coming up with creative ways to support people who are affected by the pandemic. In all parts of the world, clubs are playing a crucial role in providing the help their communities need most right now.

Carl-Ludwig Dörwald of the Rotary Club of Worpswede was frustrated by the lack of masks and protective clothing for medical workers in Germany. He had lived in China for almost 20 years and witnessed the SARS epidemic in Beijing, so he turned to friends there and managed to secure a shipment of masks. Fellow Rotarians in Germany have helped to organize distribution of the masks to hospitals in Bremen, Bremervörde, Munich, and Oldenburg. Rotarians from Germany, Austria, and

Switzerland are contacting Dörwald to offer their help. “We see what is needed in the crisis. We should intervene where we can help with our contacts, our knowledge, and our energy,” says Dörwald.

Elsewhere in Germany, Rotarians are involved in a project called Care4Bayreuth, which delivers food to people in need in that Bavarian town. Rotaract clubs are assisting with grocery shopping for people who cannot leave their homes as well as for medical workers.

It’s a similar story in France. The Rotary clubs of Boulogne-Billancourt, Fréjus, and Martigues Étang-de-Berre have been supporting doctors, nurses, firefighters, and other essential workers by organizing meals cooked by Rotarian chefs and providing rental cars for workers unable to use public transit. The Aubergenville-Seine-Mauldre and Verrières-le-Buisson clubs, meanwhile, are focusing on collecting for food banks, as well as organizing blood donations. Clubs in Annecy, Grenoble, Montpellier, Nîmes, and Versailles have been making protective visors and sourcing ventilators.

In Portugal, Rotarians are ensuring that hospitals have the necessary equipment to treat patients by procuring personal protective equipment.

In Turkey, districts have been raising money to purchase medical equipment requested by hospital administrators. Thanks to The Rotary Foundation’s decisions to



Opposite and above: Many Rotary clubs have tapped into their experience working with or running food banks to respond to the crisis. **Below:** Some clubs, such as the Rotary Club of Rolândia-Caviúna, Brazil, have made masks for hospitals and health care workers.

make disaster response grants available and to waive the international financing requirement for global grants focused on pandemic relief, District 2420 is working on a \$210,000 project to provide CT scanners, District 2430 has secured funding to supply at least one hospital with a ventilator, and District 2440 is aiming to fund 10 ventilators.

In Italy, clubs in District 2080 are also raising funds to purchase ventilators and protective gear for hospitals and have collected more than \$21,000 for masks. Clubs in District 2041 raised funds to buy protective gear for health workers at a field hospital set up at Milan's fairgrounds.

In Spain, clubs have launched a collective effort under the banner of "We respond against loneliness." Rotarians are providing telephone assistance for people living alone, offering advice, guidance, and a friendly voice on the other end of the line.

The Rotary Club of Madrid-Serrano in District 2201 has been leading a project in cooperation with the Rotary clubs of Arouca, Portugal; Milano Arco della Pace, Italy; Potsdam, Germany; and Tokyo Chuo, Japan. The project aims to supply three hospitals in Madrid with key medical equipment, including surgical masks, shoe covers, and sanitizing gel.

In Barcelona, a project to fund medical gear has been undertaken by the Rotary

clubs of Girona, Reus, and Tarragona. The Rotary clubs of Granollers-Barcelona and Vic-Osona have been providing computers to students studying from home.

In Brazil, the Rotary Club of Jandaia do Sul worked with a local university to produce hand sanitizer for residents. The Rotary Club of Itapejara D'Oeste collected cleaning and personal care products from supermarkets to donate to people in need. In General Câmara, Rotarians collected one ton of food, which was distributed to 80 families. Brazilian clubs provided safety equipment to medical workers. Members of the Rotary Club of Rolândia-

Caviúna made face masks themselves.

In Hong Kong, clubs have raised funds, packed medical supplies, and visited public housing to distribute masks and sanitizer. Clubs in Sri Lanka installed thermometers in airport bathrooms and produced posters to promote awareness about COVID-19 at schools. In Pakistan, the Rotary Club of Karachi Darakhshan distributed thousands of masks to residents. District 3700 and the Rotary Korea 2020-21 Governor Foundation donated \$125,000 to the Korean Red Cross. And clubs in Nigeria's Akwa Ibom state conducted a campaign in schools to raise awareness of the virus.

In England, the Rotary Club of Maidenhead Bridge formed a team of volunteers who are running errands for vulnerable people, including shopping for groceries, picking up prescriptions, mailing letters, and even walking dogs. The Rotary Club of Ware set up the Bricket Wood Rotary Community Corps with 23 volunteers who are helping with similar tasks (see page 57 for more about RCCs).

In Wales, the Rotary Club of Cardiff East was already helping communities badly affected by spring flooding, and has now found ways to respond to the pandemic. The club makes a monthly food donation and offers financial support to the local food bank, an important resource during the crisis.

Adapted from a story by Dave King in Rotary magazine in Great Britain and Ireland.







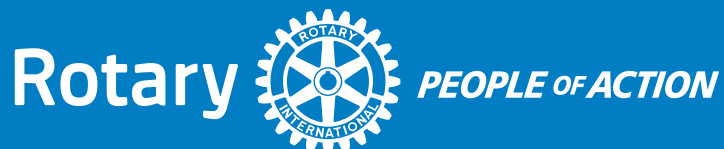
SNAPSHOT **Yaroslavl, Russia**

Randy Olson, a member of the Rotary Club of Sherwood Park, Alberta, and his wife, May, took a 10-day cruise down the Volga River in September 2019. On a stop in Yaroslavl, they visited the Church of Elijah the Prophet, which is now part of the Yaroslavl Museum-Reserve, a collection of historic sites. The church was built in the mid-1600s, a prosperous time for this trading city, as the lavish interior suggests. “When a sunbeam came through the large window and highlighted the dove, I knew to pause and enjoy the moment,” Olson recalls.

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Age of exploration

The best place to find yourself is in a map

by GEOFFREY JOHNSON

I pulled into the driveway at my sister-in-law's house. As I got out of the car after my hours-long journey, she came out onto the front step and looked at me and the thing I had tucked under my arm. Her incredulous expression gave way to laughter. "Is that a road atlas?" she asked.

It was, to be precise, the 2003 Rand McNally Road Atlas, already about 15 years old at that time, yet still good for navigating all sorts of North American car trips — from Kennebunkport to Ketchikan, from Medicine Hat to Monterey, or from Baton Rouge to Hudson Bay. I consult that bound collection of paper maps frequently in an attempt to capture the relationship between the place I'm in and the place I'm going, and between myself and the roads that lead there and back again. I can't seem to accomplish that with a GPS.

Maps can also be a way of charting a course to places I haven't yet been. One of the first things I did when I started as a senior editor at *The Rotarian* was to



hang a map of the world on the wall of my office. In the three years since, it has been invaluable. In the past, once I ventured beyond the boundaries of North America and western Europe, I was lost. Whenever "African Countries" (for instance) came up as a category on *Jeopardy!*, I would groan. But now, everything began to fall into place. With each Rotary project I investigated, with each interview I conducted, I would study the map to see precisely where in the world I was — if only in spirit — engaged.

Last year, as I prepared (or, as is my habit, overprepared) to write a story about the new Rotary Peace Center in Uganda, I studied up on the history of conflict in that region. Soon, the African Great Lakes — Victoria, Tanganyika, and Malawi, to name three — began to come into focus. Certainly I knew about them (or some of them), but I had not been able to point to them on a map as readily as I could Erie or Superior. But now I could visualize not only the lakes, but the rivers into which

they drained and the countries within whose boundaries they lay.

It's ridiculous to think I will ever comprehend the African Great Lakes with the same capacity as I do the Great Lakes of Canada and the United States, lakes I've swum in since I was a boy and whose storied shorelines I've navigated with confidence ever since. But now I can close my eyes and imagine traveling south from the shores of Tripoli through seven or eight African countries — I won't name them, though now

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I can — until I reach Cape Agulhas, where the Atlantic and Indian oceans converge and beyond which lies Antarctica 2,400 miles away, an expanse my imagination struggles to bridge.

To display our round planet on a flat surface, the map hanging in my office employs the Mercator projection, the familiar depiction of the world that has graced schoolrooms and nautical charts for centuries. This particular perspective of the world was advanced by the 16th-century Flemish cosmographer Gerardus Mercator, the supreme mapmaker of his day. That multilingual savant was the first person to use the word “atlas” to describe a bound collection of maps; he was also renowned as a craftsman of globes, both terrestrial and celestial. The epitaph at his tomb praises him as someone who revealed “the heaven and the Earth from inside and out.”

Mercator’s projection was a boon to navigators in the Age of Exploration. Using map and compass, they could now plot a straight course as they sailed unknown seas. That benefit, however, came at a cost. “All maps tell lies,” says John Rennie Short, a geography professor at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. “They ... exclude, they generalize, they exaggerate.” The lie of the Mercator map is one of distortion. To align in parallel ranks the invisible meridians that divide the globe, Mercator had to enlarge the areas at the poles. Thus, on Mercator’s map, as you travel in either direction from the equator, land masses grow exponentially larger than they actually are. Greenland ends up looking as big as Africa, a continent 14 times its size.

Modern cartographers have attempted to correct the misperceptions engendered by Mercator. In a 2001 episode of *The West Wing*, the White House press secretary C.J. Cregg (played by Allison Janney) sees for the

first time the map of the world promoted in the 1970s by the German historian Arno Peters. “The Mercator projection has fostered European imperialist attitudes for centuries and created an ethnic bias against the Third World,” argues a representative of a cartographers association before unveiling a map of the world where each country assumes its actual size and position on the globe.

“What the hell is that?” asks C.J.

“It’s where you’ve been living this whole time,” she’s told.

My favorite map (were I forced to choose one) was created 365 years ago by a French cartographer named Jacques-Nicolas Bellin. Like Mercator, Bellin was, as the scholar Mireille Pas-toureaux puts it, *un homme de cabinet*: “His method ... consisted of gathering existing maps, logbooks, and travel narratives, and in trying to synthesize them.” Despite his lack of on-the-scene observation, Bellin’s maps were extolled for their accuracy. In 1803, U.S. ministers consulted one of his maps as they tried to determine the exact boundaries of the vast Louisiana Territory that President Thomas Jefferson had acquired from Napoleon Bonaparte. The map was 39 years old; Bellin himself had been dead since 1772.

The Bellin map I admire is called *Partie occidentale de la Nouvelle France ou du Canada*. Many years ago, when I used to spend my nights proofreading legal documents, I was able to study an original of the map, which hung in an ornate gilded frame on the wall of a prestigious Chicago law firm. The map, rich in detail and beautifully engraved and colored, encompassed an area from the eastern shore of Lac Ontario to the western shore of Lac Superieur, and it showed some of the rivers that served as the original inland highways of the North American continent. At the foot of Lac Michigan, there was even a



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**Maps can be a
way of charting a
course to places
I haven't yet been.**

squiggle depicting the river Checagou, and beyond it the portage that provided access to the Mississippi.

An accommodating member of the Illini tribe had revealed that route to the explorer Louis Jolliet in 1673. In retrospect, the Illini (whose name we don't know) might have wished he had kept the information to himself. Among other things, Bellin's map identifies the lands occupied by the continent's original inhabitants: the *pays*, or country, of the Iroquois, the Erie, and the Fox, among others. Also indicated are the *ancien pays* of the Ottawa and the Huron — *ancien* because those native peoples had already been displaced. Perhaps it was a prescient, vengeful god who overturned Jolliet's canoe outside Montreal, causing the voyageur to lose the journals of his long expedition just as he was about to return home.

As I inspect Bellin's map today — I've a less splendid copy hanging in my home — I note also that it charts the journey of my life, from my boyhood in Toronto (Tejaiagon on Bellin's map) to my adult years in Checagou. Like Jolliet, I have lost things along the way. I used to be adept with a compass, capable of deciphering topographic maps at a glance, and able to identify the constellations by name. What I need now is a map that helps me recover those forgotten skills. Or one to consult in troubled times that would guarantee passage to a safer, more secure future. If, as a means of plotting a way forward, I could find a way back to my earlier self, I might even take direction from a feckless, flying boy: Second star to the right and straight on till morning. ■



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CLUBS MADE TO ORDER

These clubs keep things fresh with new ideas and new members

What is Rotary? It's a whole community of people who are members of Rotary and Rotaract clubs, of course, but it's also people who participate in programs such as Rotary Peace Fellowships and Rotary Youth Exchange. It's non-Rotarian members of Rotary Action Groups and Fellowships and of Rotary Community Corps. It's people who have volunteered on Rotary projects and people who are interested in Rotary's work and causes.

Rotary is the hub that brings all these people together, each with their own set of skills and expertise, to do good in the world. Today's Rotarians and Rotaractors continue to extend their reach beyond the boundaries of their clubs, their communities, and their countries. Their most ambitious endeavors invariably go beyond the organization to engage the participation of non-Rotarians. Each of those new affiliations has the potential to elevate Rotary's profile, improve its opportunities for success, and, when paired with new approaches to club structure, attract new members. The clubs, people, and projects profiled here can serve as inspiration to existing clubs — or to clubs yet to be.

Clubs for a cause have a positive effect



ver the years, Tom Gump has been successful in attracting members to his Rotary Club of Edina/Morningside, Minnesota. But he found himself tapping into the same pool of friends and acquaintances. Lately, Gump, who is now governor of District 5950, has become adept at a new strategy: starting new clubs by harnessing people's passions.

After learning that 88 percent of the members of new clubs were new to Rotary — which means those clubs weren't poaching members from existing clubs — he realized that many potential members simply need to find a club that is right for them.

Gump was also concerned about keeping the members Rotary already has. He cites another study that shows people who leave Rotary usually do so within three years of joining. "How do we get them to stay?" he wondered. The answer: "Bring together people with a passion for a cause."

Over the past two years, Gump's district has created four clubs. One of them is the Rotary Club of District 5950 Passport, which brings together members who had to leave their club because of a job change but wanted to stay with Rotary. The three others are cause-based clubs, beginning with the Rotary Club of Twin Cities Eco. "That was the club that got us started on the new club process," Gump says. "If we can do this with the environment, why not do it with other causes? That was right in front of us."

The next move was to help create the Rotary Club of Minnesota Veterans (District 5950), a first for Rotary. Chartered last fall, the club, with about 50 members, is thriving. Its first blood drive attracted 60 donors, and other projects help both veterans and people currently serving in the military. "Rotary is a perfect fit for veterans," says Brittany Ritchie Sievers, the club's former membership chair, who spent 10 years in the U.S. Army. "They have an innate need to serve their brothers and sisters in arms and their community."

And in May, in another first for Rotary, the district chartered the Rotary Club of District 5950 Ending Human Trafficking, an e-club with Karen Walkowski as its charter president. Its members include not only Minnesotans but people across the United States and in Thailand and the United Kingdom. "Rotary is the magnet that brings these people together," says Gump, "and all because we're reaching out to our community in a way we never did before."



The meteoric rise of a fun-focused satellite club

In May, amid the COVID-19 shutdown, the Rotary Satellite Club of London, Ontario, posted an invitation to its next online meeting. It read: “Are you missing human interaction? Do you want to meet new people who do good in the community? Not interested in putting on pants to do all this? Join us at 6:30 p.m.”

The pants-optional post was typical for the Canadian club, which attracts new members with a cheeky attitude combined with technological savvy. It was chartered in 2016 as an offshoot of the Rotary Club of London that was meant to be more accessible to younger people. A satellite club, which allows for groups as small as eight people to start a club by tapping into an existing club’s infrastructure, was an ideal way for the Rotary Club of London to plant the seeds for a new, independent club.

“The London club is an older and quite traditional club,” says Kirk Langford, a charter member of the satellite club. He means no disrespect. “The satellite model worked well because it provided us with the support and infrastructure of the Rotary Club of London, so we weren’t left to figure everything out on our own. Now we’re getting to the point where we’re ready to become our own club, which is exciting.”

The club, which previously met in a local pub, has used events such as dance parties and trivia nights — which moved online during the pandemic — to raise money for projects. A recent raffle provided the winner a year’s supply of beer from a local craft brewer.

“We certainly do have a lot of fun together,” says Langford.

“After all, if people aren’t having fun and enjoying themselves, they aren’t going to stick around. It’s turned us from a club of strangers who want to do good in the community into a club of friends — people you enjoy spending time with and want to know better.”

The club keeps things informal and economical. Heather Macdonald, the daughter of Rotarians and a recent college graduate, joined because it offered a low-cost avenue to lend a hand in her community. Now, she says, “I’m an active Rotarian and likely will be for life. I love my Rotary club and the people in it. We have a wonderful time together, it doesn’t cost us much, and we’re making the world a better place.”

With an eye toward the future, the Rotary Satellite Club of London now partners on events with the University of Western Ontario and Fanshawe College Rotaract clubs. “It provides a good opportunity to talk to those members about joining our club after they’re done with school,” says Langford.

Now who’s the old-timer?

“We have a wonderful time together, it doesn’t cost us much, and we’re making the world a better place.”

Create the club you wish existed

Lisa Hunter spent 12 years in Rotaract, joining several clubs as she moved around England. She also served on Rotary International's Rotaract Committee and as chair of Rotaract in Great Britain and Ireland. When she turned 30 in October 2011, she knew it was time to move on from Rotaract. "But I still wanted to be involved in the Rotary family," she says. "I'd given so much to it in the past and fundamentally believe in everything Rotary does and achieves."

The problem was that Hunter and her other friends in Rotaract couldn't find a club that fit their lifestyles. Hunter gathered the group in her home in Maidenhead, about 30 miles west of London, to compile a list of reasons that none of them, despite their enthusiasm for Rotary, had yet joined a Rotary club. It was a familiar litany: high costs, inconvenient meeting times, unreasonable demands on young professionals with new careers and families. "This clearly showed there were issues that had to be addressed," says Hunter. "So we talked about what we would want from Rotary — and the Rotary Club of Maidenhead Bridge came to be."

The eight-year-old club meets twice a month on Sundays in a local coffee shop. "This fits in with the style of our club," Hunter says. "It's relaxed and open to all, plus caffeine is needed on a Sunday morning. The meetings themselves are very informal: no toasts, no grace, not even a roll call. And you won't see any jackets and ties." Children are welcome, including

Hunter's nine-year-old daughter, who has attended every club meeting and event.

"Our club is very hands-on," Hunter says. "We focus on community needs and how we can roll up our sleeves to help. We are keen to be seen doing things, showing Rotarians in action and shouting about it at the same time. This fits in with the fact that our members do not have large amounts of disposable income. It's much easier to donate our time rather than hand over cash."

The club has nearly 50 members and continues to grow. "We attract members via our website and online marketing through Facebook, Twitter, Meetup.com, and Instagram," Hunter says. "Our posts are engaging and motivating, and, most importantly, they show our club in action." Members also work to establish and maintain relationships with local leaders in government and business. "They help us to promote our events and give us access to resources. We have proved ourselves as reliable and professional event organizers, and now we find those local leaders coming to our club and asking us to help them, which is wonderful."

The club's first project, an Easter Family Fun Day in 2012, attracted 250 people and has become its signature annual event. The residents of Maidenhead appreciate that it is a free children's activity that promotes healthy lifestyles, Hunter says. "It's also a great event for the children of our members to help out at and put their ideas into play."

The club sets an annual goal of providing 1,700 hours of volunteer work — though last year, it surpassed the 2,400-hour mark. Among other things, it works with a local food bank, helping collect food donations each week. It has also boosted the profile of the food bank and other local charities through a program called (no kidding) Pimp My Community. "It's a great hands-on project that our members are passionate about," says Hunter. Members donate their time and expertise to help these organizations improve their branding, marketing, events, and websites, thereby elevating their impact.

"We've enjoyed pushing the boundaries of Rotary, changing opinions on what people think Rotary is and what a 'normal' Rotarian looks like," Hunter says. "I hope that other clubs consider sponsoring the formation of new Rotary clubs to attract younger people. And I want to see former Rotaractors take the lead to form new clubs. Be persistent and create change. Rotary really can be whatever you want it to be."

"We find local leaders coming to our club and asking us to help them, which is wonderful."





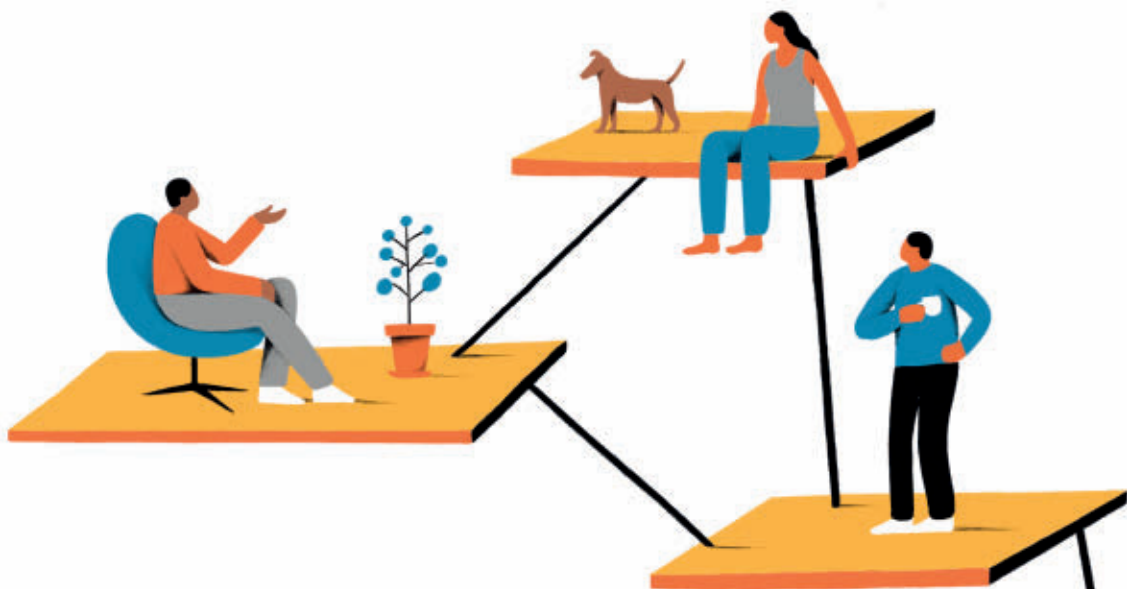
This club's lifeblood is collaboration

Chartered in Addis Ababa in 2004, the Rotaract Club of Abugida indirectly derives its name from Ge'ez, the classical language of Ethiopia, which includes the four characters 'ä, bu, gi, da. That may explain why the club, after 16 years, has so thoroughly mastered the ABCs of sustaining a healthy and productive club.

The club's vigor springs in part from its blood drives, which began the same year Abugida was chartered. Recognizing a high demand for blood and a limited number of donors, club members turned to the Ethiopian Red Cross Society, with whom they formed what member Dawit Solomon calls a "collaborative network." The initial blood drive attracted about 30 donors, mainly "fellow Abugidans and the Rotaract family at large." Today the quarterly blood drives attract more than 500 donors — which has prompted the Red Cross to expand the event to two days.

"Our impact, although small at the beginning, started a powerful movement within our community," Solomon says. "The club's initiative has motivated other groups and local celebrities to take part in the drive" — and the impulse has spread to other Ethiopian Rotaract clubs, who work on blood drives in conjunction with the Abugida Rotaractors. (The spring 2020 blood drive was canceled over concerns about the COVID-19 pandemic, but the club encouraged donations to Ethiopia's National Blood Bank.)

"Our club helped a great deal in meeting Ethiopia's need for blood," Solomon says. The project has also infused a vitality into the Abugida club, helping it attract new members and retain current ones — the alpha and omega of ensuring Rotary's future.



The ‘e’ is for expansive reach

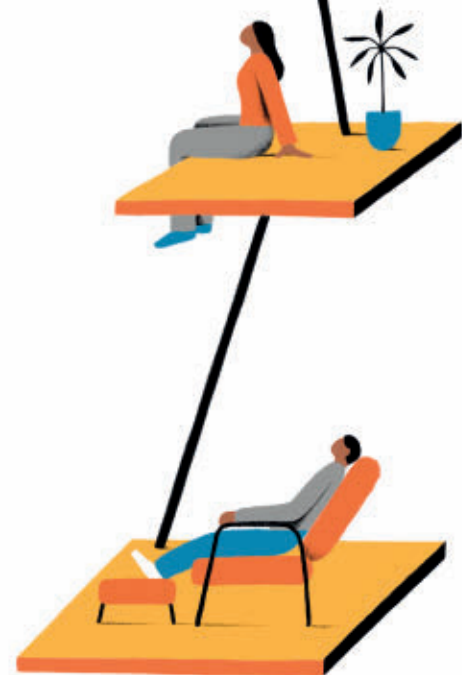
Judith Neal has proven that to be a Rotarian, you don’t necessarily need to follow the laws of time and space: The 2019-20 president of the Rotary E-Club of Southern Scotland lives in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin. Neal comes from a family of dedicated Rotarians. In 1982, she was awarded a Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarship. Newly married, she and her husband, Richard, traveled from the United States to the United Kingdom, where Judith studied at the University of Bristol. Years later, the couple spent time in Botswana and in Scotland while Richard, a mathematics professor, was on sabbatical.

In all those places, Neal attended Rotary club meetings. “I met people from all over the world, some of whom are now good friends,” she says. But one club in Scotland, she says, was much more traditional than most she had visited, with most members men over the age of 60. “It wasn’t my cup of tea,” she recalls.

One rainy day in Scotland, Neal met a woman who was walking her dog. The two got to talking, and Lynne Nelson told Neal about the E-Club of Southern Scotland. “The more she told me about it, the more it seemed like it would be a good fit.”

Originally chartered in 2010 as the Rotary Club of Edinburgh Park, the club had changed to an e-club model in 2014 as its members began to disperse to London, Singapore, and other parts of the world. “My husband and I travel quite a bit, and as long as we have an internet connection, I can always attend a meeting,” Neal says. “But the greatest appeal is the international aspect of our club. Our far-flung members communicate by email and video chat, and we try to get together once a year, usually in Scotland” — where she is still friends with Nelson, the woman with the little dog who, on a rainy day, introduced her to Rotary’s ability to transcend space and time. ■

“Our far-flung members communicate by email and video chat, and we try to get together once a year.”



Interested in starting a new club or learning more about ways to connect through Rotary? Visit rotary.org/start-club.

F U L L C



Walking near a landfill in his hometown of Valsad, Binish Desai discusses his plans to turn trash into treasure with Jinal Mehta, a member of the Rotary Club of Valsad.

I R C L E

**As a shy student, Binish Desai
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Now, with the members of his new
Rotary club, he's returning the favor**

.....

Every hero has an origin story.

"I was 10 years old when the entire journey started," explains Binish Desai. It began with a cartoon called *Captain Planet*, an animated TV series from the 1990s about an environmentalist with superpowers. Desai can still recite the show's refrain: *Captain Planet, he's our hero / Gonna take pollution down to zero!* "That tagline stuck in my mind," he says. "I wanted to do something to help Captain Planet."

Growing up in Valsad, a city on the Arabian Sea in west-central India, Desai was also a fan of *Dexter's Laboratory*, another animated TV show, this one about a boy scientist. "So I created my own lab in the corner of our living room in a TV cabinet. And I would always carry something called a 'bag of ideas,' where I would jot down different innovations of mine."

For instance, having learned about evaporation and condensation in school, he noticed the steam that escaped from the pressure cooker when his mother prepared dinner. He created a device to capture that steam, which would then return to its liquid state — water that could be used for gardening. "That was my first invention ever," he says.

"There is nothing that is useless in this world," Desai insists. "The concept of waste does not exist in nature. It's human consumption that creates it, so it's our responsibility to get rid of it. And in the process of converting trash into treasure, we can also generate a lot of employment."

In the nearly two decades since his *Captain Planet* days — Desai turns 27 this month — he has come up with more inventions; built and lost a company; founded, with his wife, several women's empowerment centers; and generally concocted ways to improve the lives of everyone in his very broadly defined community. Central to his success has been his involvement with Rotary, a relationship that was sparked by a family connection and nurtured by a year in the United States as a Rotary Youth Exchange student. Now, as a charter member of the Rotary Club of Vibrant Valsad, his life in Rotary has taken flight.

Somebody hand that young man a cape.

As Binish continued his scientific explorations, he kept inventing. "The one that led me to the person that I am today," he says, "was the brick. That happened when I was 11 years old."



One day in school, his best friend stuck a wad of chewed gum beneath a desk — and as fate would have it, the gum ended up getting stuck to Binish’s pants. He peeled it off as best he could and wrapped it in a piece of paper, intending to throw it away when class was over. Then he forgot about it. At the end of the day, when he finally retrieved it from his pocket, it was rock hard. “I thought, this is really different,” he recalls. “I said,

OK, I can make stone out of this. I was just a curious kid trying to figure out, why did this happen?”

At this same time, in school, Binish was learning about how huge numbers of people were living in crowded and unhealthy slums. He formed a new ambition: One day he would build the world’s least expensive house for those people — and he would build it with bricks made of chewing gum and waste paper.

Over the days and weeks and years that followed, Desai experimented with different ingredients and proportions, always trying to build a better brick. With each iteration he sought to understand what was lacking and what could be improved. He made small molds out of cardboard and began designing and processing small, durable bricks, with plans to build a dollhouse. “I had no idea how,” he says. “I went to cybercafés and looked up stuff on the internet. That’s how I learned the basics about how to construct a house.”

When he was 15, Desai completed the dollhouse using his bricks. He had demonstrated to his own satisfaction that his plan to build the world’s least expensive house was sound. “I started talking about my plan to my family and my friends,” he recalls. “People started laughing about it. ‘You have gone crazy. How can you make something out of paper and chewing gum? It’s not going to work.’”

At 15, Desai was a self-described introvert, and his self-esteem was low. With people laughing at his ideas, he had begun to doubt himself. But fate had another twist in store for the young inventor.

“In 2009 I got selected as a Rotary Youth Exchange student,” he says. “That’s why I owe a lot of who I am today to Rotary.”

Desai had applied for a short-term exchange, but things headed in a different direction when he went in for his interview. He told the Rotarians about his plans to build the world’s least expensive house, and he finally found the receptive audience he had been seeking. The Rotarians encouraged him to apply for a longer exchange, and he spent his junior year at Waukegan High School in Illinois, about 40 miles north of downtown Chicago.

One night, over a dinner of fried chicken, the floodgates opened. In an instant, the introvert had vanished, and he began telling his host parents, Patrick Jimerson and Theodora “Teddy” Anderson, about his bricks and his plans for the world’s least expensive house. After listening attentively, Jimerson asked if Desai had a patent for his bricks. (He did not.) He

also suggested that Desai might want to pursue this as a career.

By the end of his exchange year, Desai says, he had transformed into a different person. “I was friends with everyone, and everywhere I went, I would talk to people. I made new friends because I started sharing my inner thoughts about how I viewed the world.” With Jimerson’s help, Desai secured a patent for the formula behind his bricks. And when he returned home to India, he knew the exact direction he wanted his life to take.

Jimerson died in 2016, but Desai returns to Waukegan each December to visit with Anderson, just as he promised Jimerson he would. “Rotary Youth Exchange changes you forever,” he says. “Once an exchange student, always an exchange student. Now I have a family all around the world.”

Back home, Desai announced his plans to start a company, called B-Dream, to manufacture his eco-friendly bricks

**He formed a new ambition:
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from chewing gum and paper waste. The response was mostly negative. A profile of him in the local newspaper concluded (as Desai recalls) that he was “either an immense genius or the craziest person I’ve ever met. Only time will tell.”

Even his parents expressed their doubts, convinced that their son was going to throw away his life on an “imaginary” endeavor. Part of their concern stemmed from their fears about how the rest of Valsad would view his plans. “My family had quite a name in the community,” says Desai. “Someone working

with waste and coming from a family that was socially prominent was kind of taboo. ‘Hey, he’s bringing down the family’s name.’ All that pressure made my parents think they could not support this craziness of mine.”

Desai was undeterred. After graduating from high school, he enrolled at Veer Narmad South Gujarat University, where he would earn a degree in biotechnology. (He would go on to earn an advanced degree in environmental engineering.) While working toward his undergraduate degree, he persuaded a local paper



Opposite: At a women's empowerment center supported by the Rotary Club of Vibrant Valsad, women use Desai's special binder to create eco-friendly products from recycled paper waste. **This page:** Recycled paper is stored at the center and prepared for future use. Women later fashion the blocks seen here into lamps and other products.



Dhriti Desai (third from right) and Sonal Soni Patel (right), members of the Vibrant Valsad club, participate in a workshop at the center. **Opposite:** Women entrepreneurs make and package eco-earrings.

mill to let him take over a small abandoned parking lot on its property. The mill was already paying a large sum to another company to haul off its paper waste; in exchange for the lot and a significantly smaller sum of money, Desai agreed to haul away some of that waste himself. He also persuaded a chewing gum manufacturer to give him its offcut waste. (In the process of making chewing gum, Desai explains, some of the gum base is cut and thrown away before the sweetener is added.) With those materials and his patented blend to hold them together, Desai now had everything he needed.

Working in the open parking lot, Desai began making bricks. “I was the labor,” he says. “I would only get in two to three hours a day, because it would be evening by the time I reached the place. Working there was difficult, and then I had to go back home because I had an early morning train to catch to school.” Despite the

difficulties, after eight months, he had 4,000 bricks. The paper mill needed a watchman’s cabin, which Desai built, successfully demonstrating the feasibility of his vision. (Eventually the cabin was dismantled and the durable bricks were used to build the office from which Desai works today.) “I had made my first house,” says Desai. “Now it was time for me to start mass production.”

Desai used his bricks to build

about 70 houses, but he found they were in even greater demand for the construction of public toilets. In 2014, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi had launched a nationwide campaign called Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, or the Clean India Mission. Its goal was to reduce litter, encourage recycling, and end the practice of open defecation. Because Desai could manufacture public toilets at 40 percent of what it cost his competitors, his product was in great demand.

The toilets were also Desai’s ticket back into Rotary. “Rotary has been running in my veins ever since I was born,” he says. His grandfather was an honorary Rotarian, and since 1994 his father has been a member of the Rotary Club of Valsad, the same club Desai joined in 2015. As ever, he had grand ambitions. “It’s easy to become a Rotary member, but it’s very difficult to become a Rotarian,” he says. “I wanted to be a Rotarian.”

Desai began by proposing a sanitation project to the club’s president: installing two public toilets made with his bricks in a rural village near Valsad. His role model was none other than Rotary’s founder. As Desai recounts with some delight, “Paul Harris’ first service project was also a community toilet,” part of a “comfort station” movement in Chicago in 1907. The toilets in the village were the first of several that Desai would install with his club, but his experience there had a greater impact on his thinking than he expected.

“We call them women entrepreneurs, not women workers. To honor them, all of these products bear their fingerprints. It gives uniqueness to the products we make.”

As the Rotarians installed the toilet, a woman approached Desai. “Why are you building a toilet here?” she asked angrily. “I cannot feed my own daughters. How would I be able to maintain this thing?” Desai had no answer. He wanted to help her, but he didn’t know how. The answer would come in time.

Desai’s business thrived, but needing investors to provide the funds to fulfill his contracts to build toilets across India, he slowly lost control of his company. Ultimately he was forced out and left with nothing — except for his patent on the binder that was essential to the manufacture of his low-cost, environmentally friendly bricks. Desai started a new company, EcoEclectic Technologies, which works with industrial companies to recycle paper, plastic, and metal waste into products such as paving blocks and artificial wood panels. “That’s what I like to call a disruptive innovation,” he says. “It’s something that changes the perspective of people in a positive way. They start seeing things in a way that helps change the community. It’s not just about creating a particular product, but actually being helpful and breaking through the barriers that society has created.”

Desai analyzes his products by scrutinizing the “triple bottom line,” looking at things from financial, social, and environmental perspectives. “All three things together, kept under one balance,” he says. “That’s the basis of all our products.” That kind of thinking earned Desai a spot on *Forbes*’ 2018 list of Asia’s top social entrepreneurs under 30. It also earned him a new sobriquet: the Waste Warrior.

The new company also provided answers to the questions posed by the woman upset by the installation of a public toilet in her rural village. With his wife, Dhriti — the couple married in January 2019 — Desai founded a micro-social enterprise called Eco Lights Studio. The company employs women in rural India to make lamps, clocks, jewelry, and other products from industrial waste. The women work from their homes on their own schedule and earn significantly more than they would at the menial jobs otherwise available to them. “We call them women entrepreneurs, not women workers,” says Desai. “To honor them, all of these products bear their fingerprints. We highlight this. It

gives uniqueness to the products we make.”

Desai had one more grand plan up his sleeve: “I got together 30 young professionals and I said, ‘Let’s start a new Rotary club and create a difference in the community.’” Chartered in October 2018 with a membership that included many second-generation Rotarians, the Rotary Club of Vibrant Valsad took on, as one of its first projects, the creation of a women’s empowerment center, a facility where local women can acquire the skills to make a better life for themselves and their families. Eco Lights Studio is a partner in the venture, and Desai intends it to serve as a model for women’s centers in other towns. Today, his once-trepidatious parents express pride in their son’s accomplishments.

“The main idea is not just to create employment, but also to uplift these women,” says the Waste Warrior. “It’s always been my goal to help someone in need. I hope to give back to Rotary and to the community what Rotary has given to me” — exactly as Captain Planet and Paul Harris would have it. ■

Additional reporting by Andrew Chudzinski.





VIKTOR MILLER GAUSA

VIVEK MURTHY

Loneliness — the absence of human connection — is twice as prevalent as diabetes in the United States. A former surgeon general tells us what we can do about it

VIVEK MURTHY GREW UP HELPING OUT in his parents' medical practice, filing charts and cleaning the office as he watched the way they built connections with their patients by taking the time to listen to what they had to say.

When he became America's top doctor — the 19th U.S. surgeon general, a position he held from 2014 to 2017 — he went on a listening tour himself. Some of the problems people told him about were things he anticipated: opioids and obesity, diabetes and heart disease. He also talked to Elmo of *Sesame Street* about vaccines and called for addiction to be recognized as the health problem it is rather than a moral failing.

But one unexpected topic became a recurring theme: loneliness, which “ran like a dark thread through many of the more obvious issues that people brought to my attention,” Murthy writes in his new book, *Together: The Healing Power of Human Connection in a Sometimes Lonely World*.

A 2018 Kaiser Family Foundation report found that 22 percent of American adults say they often or always feel lonely — that's 55 million people, twice the number

that are diagnosed with diabetes. Australia pegs its problems with loneliness at around 25 percent of its adult population. The United Kingdom has a similar figure. And other countries in Europe and Asia are struggling with double-digit percentages. “My guess is that most of these survey numbers are underestimated, because most people still don't feel comfortable admitting that they are lonely — whether that's to an anonymous person administering a survey or even to themselves,” Murthy said in an interview with *The Rotarian*.

Before becoming one of the country's youngest surgeons general at age 37, overseeing 6,600 public health officers in more than 800 locations, Murthy partnered with Rotary clubs and other service organizations in India to set up community events for an HIV/AIDS education program that he co-founded with his sister, Rashmi. He also co-founded the nonprofit Doctors for America and the software technology company TrialNetworks.

Murthy spoke with senior staff writer Diana Schoberg by phone in April from Miami, where he was staying during the COVID-19 pandemic.

THE ROTARIAN: Hypothetically speaking, is a Tibetan monk in seclusion lonely?

VIVEK MURTHY: Loneliness is a subjective state — it's not determined by the number of people around you, but by how you feel about the connections in your life. People who are surrounded by hundreds of others, whether they are students on a college campus or workers in a busy office, may be lonely if they don't feel those are people with whom they can fully be themselves. Others who may have only a few people around them may not feel lonely at all if they feel good about those relationships and good about themselves.

For a monk to exist in complete isolation and not feel lonely, he would have developed a very deep spiritual practice and built a strong connection to God and the divine.

“Service shifts our attention from ourselves to other people.”

TR: In your book, you describe someone who found his purpose and connection in the military. How can we find that sort of team environment?

MURTHY: People who have served in the Peace Corps together can often experience similar bonds. People also have that deep shared experience in times of natural disasters — not just the shared pain and trauma of a disaster, but also the shared joy and inspiration of the response to that trauma. People who have been a part of an organization where they have a deep sense of mission and where they've sacrificed together for the cause can also experience the bond.

How do we create more opportunities for experiences like that? Part of that has

to do with how we prioritize social connections as we get older. To many people, it seems almost like an indulgence to prioritize their relationships. They have responsibilities to their families, their kids, and their work, and it's a question of where relationships fit in.

TR: What role can Rotary play?

MURTHY: What is powerful about organizations like Rotary is that they are rooted in service. Service shifts our attention from ourselves, where it increasingly is focused when we feel lonely, to other people and in the context of a positive interaction. Service reaffirms that we have value to add to the world. One of the consequences of loneliness when it's long-lasting is that it can chip away at our self-esteem and lead us to start believing that the reason we're lonely is that we're somehow not likable. Service short-circuits that.

Right now, people want to help. What they don't know is where to go to actually do something meaningful. Organizations can provide those opportunities. That can be extraordinarily powerful. When I started doing community work, one of the principles I was taught is that people come to the table for the mission, but they stay at the table for the people. It's hard to sustain even the worthiest mission without building a strong sense of connection between the people who are participating.

TR: What can we build into our clubs to foster that sense of belonging?

MURTHY: Shared experience, shared mission, and the opportunity to understand each other more deeply create deeper connections. We've touched a little bit on the shared experience and shared mission part. But the opportunity to understand each other more deeply is something you can facilitate with a little bit of structure.

When I was the surgeon general, we did an exercise called “Inside Scoop.”

That turned out to be far more effective than the happy hours and group picnics that we had been doing before. At each weekly staff meeting, one person would show pictures to share something about their lives. It was so useful because it didn't take much time at all — five minutes during a meeting. But it created an atmosphere where it was OK to share and it was OK to bring some part of yourself that was not work-related to the table. And that ended up being the key to helping people understand each other and learn about each other.

TR: How can technology help us connect in a healthy way?

MURTHY: Despite all of the tools we have for staying in touch with each other, technology is a double-edged sword. Just as it can be used for strengthening our connections, it can contribute to their deterioration.

When you use technology to strengthen social connections, it can happen in a few ways. For example, you can connect with people you might otherwise not be able to connect with. When I was younger, the only affordable way we had to connect with my grandparents or cousins in India was to write them a letter, which took two weeks to get there, and a response would take two weeks to come back. Now, we can talk much more frequently because we can videoconference with them at next to no charge. That is a great example of how to use technology for the better.

Another example would be when we use online platforms as a bridge to offline connections. So if I'm coming to Milwaukee for a talk, I can post that on Facebook. And if that helps my friends get in touch with me and meet up, that's a great way to facilitate in-person connection.

TR: Is there anything we're learning because of COVID-19 about communication that will help us as we go back to being in-person communicators?

MURTHY: For many of us, the absence of physical contact with other people has

made it all the more clear how essential in-person interaction is. And how there really isn't a full substitute for it. We can get close with things like videoconferencing, but it's just not the same.

Also, it's become more apparent that it's not just your family and friends that make a difference as to how connected you feel; it's the interactions that you have with neighbors and community members and strangers. There's something powerful in receiving a smile from someone. Those moments have a significant effect on lifting our mood.

TR: Is loneliness something that can be diagnosed? Is it medically recognized?

MURTHY: Loneliness can be assessed; the UCLA Loneliness Scale is one example. But it's not the kind of condition that we currently would diagnose as an illness, per se. Loneliness is a universal condition that people experience for varying periods in their life. It's a natural signal that our body gives us when we're lacking something that we need for survival, which is social connection. In that sense, it's very similar to hunger or thirst. Our social connections are just as vital to our survival as food or water. If we feel lonely in the absence of adequate social connections for a short time, we can use that signal to reach out and spend more time with a friend. But when loneliness lasts a long time, we start to run into trouble with it affecting our mood and having a long-term effect on our physical health.

Doctors and nurses should be aware of loneliness, because it's likely present in the lives of many of the patients that they care for and likely having an impact on the health outcomes that they're trying to address. But we should be cautious about making people think that loneliness is an illness. There is already a fair amount of stigma about loneliness that makes people feel that if they're lonely, they're socially deficient in some way. Not everyone who is lonely is broken. Nor do we need a new medication

or medical device to solve the problem of loneliness. I think what we need is to re-center ourselves and refocus our lives on relationships.

TR: Because of the coronavirus, people are staying home for the good of all people — not necessarily for themselves, but so they don't pass the virus to vulnerable populations. Why doesn't that message translate for vaccines?

MURTHY: It's a fascinating and disturbing phenomenon. There were times when people were more accepting of the need to vaccinate in order to protect not only their own kids, but also other kids. What has happened over time is that misinformation has proliferated. Some of it has been based on erroneous studies. Some of it has capitalized on fears that parents had about their children developing conditions like autism around the same time they were getting vaccines, even though the two aren't related. It is emotionally charged — we're talking about people's children here.

When a threat is new, people tend to come together because there is an immediate danger and they've got to figure out how to save themselves. But the longer that threat continues, the more likely you are to get misinformation, especially if the effort to contain the threat is painful. And in the case of COVID-19, it is painful.

While the response to COVID-19 and the resistance to vaccines feel very different, there are similar risks. All of us want this to end as quickly as possible, and if a source that we trust starts to tell us that this is a hoax or there's an easy way out, some people are going to believe that. Not because they're bad people or uneducated, but because in the face of continued pain, all of our minds will look for a way out.

TR: What are the best responses to someone who refuses to vaccinate their children?

MURTHY: We have to understand what's driving people's concerns. Is it because

of a personal experience? Is it because someone that they trust had a bad experience? One of the worst ways you can deal with misinformation is to shut other people down and to make them feel that they're ill-informed or that you don't respect them.

The second thing that's important is to be vulnerable and open to sharing your own story. If you have a child and struggled with a similar decision, or if you felt the pain of seeing your child being poked with

“Loneliness is a natural signal that our body gives us when we're lacking something that we need for survival.”

a needle, it's important to share that. It's easier for two people who share a human experience to talk about a complicated issue than for two strangers to do that.

Beyond vaccines, I'm thinking about political polarization in our country and in the world. We have lost so much of the power of our connection with each other. We've allowed our relationships to be edged out and deprioritized — not just with family and friends, but also with our neighbors and community members. As a result, it's become harder for us to talk about difficult issues like health care, climate change, or any number of big issues that we're facing as a society. If we can't engage in healthy dialogue, we can't solve big problems. ■

Rotary Action Groups connect Rotary members and friends who want to work together toward a shared mission such as water or the environment. Find out more at rotary.org/actiongroups.

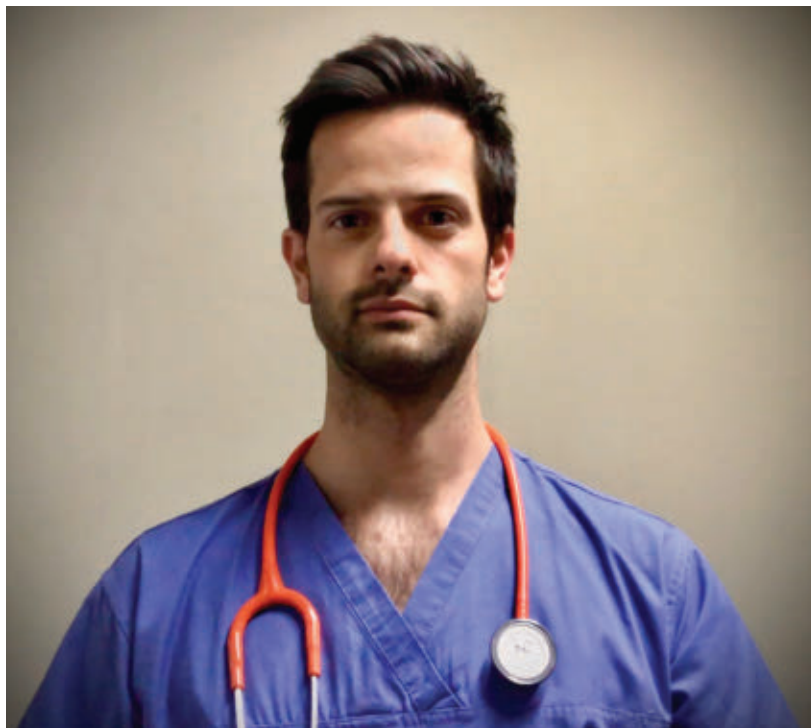
THE WORLD STOPPED.

These 10 workers
put service above self when
it counted most



THEY DIDN'T

As told to Frank Bures, Vanessa Glavinskaskas, Geoffrey Johnson, and Diana Schoberg in April and May



Giovanni Cappa

Emergency room physician
Rotaract Club of Pavia, Italy

I am a medical resident in one of northern Italy's university hospitals. We're a big emergency room, one of the biggest in Italy. We're at the epicenter of this huge storm.

When the coronavirus hit Italy, the first cases in China had been recorded just two months before. A lot of research came out day by day, so we had briefings every morning. Guidelines about drugs and ventilation parameters would change daily. We would discover new things about the disease's pathology and have to adapt.

In the first days, we had waves of patients. Many emergency rooms in the region collapsed — hospital personnel got infected, or the hospital didn't have the ability to accept coronavirus patients. So we received patients from other parts of the region too. We didn't have space. We had patients everywhere. We set up a new

emergency room in a day, but we were lacking things we were used to having, like computers for administering the logistics. That was just a little thing. There were many times we didn't have enough oxygen supply for everybody.

We had to make many difficult choices. Many coronavirus patients cannot breathe when they come in. They're in respiratory distress and they need ventilation. We had patients walk into our emergency room and collapse. People were so scared. The small number of beds in intensive care were filled instantly. Coronavirus patients don't spend one or two nights there; they spend weeks.

We were used to giving all the best medical care to anybody who needed it. That wasn't the case anymore. We needed to use our resources with common sense. We needed to prioritize care to the people who would survive. It was catastrophic medicine. Shortly after, the Italian society for anesthesiologists published guidelines to help make those decisions.

We would tell families that their loved ones didn't make it, and we couldn't

let them see the body. They would implore us for a farewell, but we couldn't let them. Those were some of the hardest moments.

We are used to working in cotton scrubs. They're really comfortable. The emergency room is quite hot, and we need to move a lot. At the end of February, we got the orders that we had to wear full gear every day, for 13 or 14 hours in a row. It's like full body armor, and it makes you sweat. It's challenging because in an emergency room you have to move fast and make precise maneuvers, and now you have to do those things in bulky gear. And you can't even make your patients feel better with a smile. You lose the human connection.

The silver lining is that we're learning a lot. We keep facing really strange and difficult situations. We are working together, young residents and more experienced physicians. There is real teamwork; the whole hospital is collaborating because we have a common enemy.

It's not easy. It's something none of us were prepared for. The huge amount of work distracts you from the emotional aspect. There is so much to do. Even though we see a lot of death, we are saving a lot of lives. You try to be strong for your patients and for the families you are trying to help.

Many doctors and nurses are burned out. Many got sick. Many of my colleagues have not seen their families since the beginning of the outbreak. Many moved to another flat, away from their loved ones. They're scared they might infect family members.

We've had huge support from the community. We've had help from Rotary clubs and Rotaract clubs. Every day we receive donations from restaurants, or people buy pizzas and have them sent to the emergency room. These are simple acts, but it makes us really happy to know that outside these walls, the community is thanking us for the work everyone is doing. We feel the gratitude.



Ryan Blancke

Public works official
Rotary Club of York, South Carolina

I am the assistant public works director of York County, South Carolina. We're a small community; the population in the county is 281,000. We have a little over 250 employees in our public works department. Under public works, we have road maintenance, water and sewer utility, landfill and trash collection, recycling, animal control, vehicle maintenance, and other things. All of those are essential functions. Whether we have trees down, or snow and ice, or

a pandemic, we still have to provide all of those services.

In March, we started to see more cases of the virus in our area. There was already a shortage of masks, especially the N95 masks. We have 16 collection centers where people drop off their recyclables, and we try to protect those frontline staff who are dealing with not only people, but their trash. Right now, because everybody is at home and they're cleaning out their garages, our landfill and recycling centers are flooded. We're not able to sort some of the commingled recyclables right now, so they're going to the landfill.

Sometimes I'll tell somebody I work for York County Public Works and they'll nod. But typically they don't know what that means. As long as your toilets are flushing and you have water coming out of your faucet and a place to put your trash, you don't even think about it. But if those

“Right now, because everybody is at home and they’re cleaning out their garages, our landfill and recycling centers are flooded.”

things weren't there, it would be a big deal.

A lot of restaurants and other places in the area are doing promotions for nurses and frontline workers. None of our guys are asking for it, but I know they don't get the same kind of support, even though the federal government recognized public workers as essential critical infrastructure workers. But I would say the mood is positive. They've all been great. They just keep showing up and saying, “I work for York County Public Works.”

Victoria Vergara Wocasek

Respiratory therapist

*Rotary Club of Des Moines and
Normandy Park, Washington*

I was in the Philippines visiting one of my Rotary club's water projects when the coronavirus first hit. I was traveling in remote areas and not really watching the news. I started to notice people wearing masks, and by the time we got to Manila, I realized the severity of it.

When I got back to the United States on 10 February, most people were saying, "It's not here yet." I went back to

work, and we were going to get trained in several weeks on how to properly don and doff PPE [personal protective equipment]. But the day before the training, we had a patient who met the criteria to be tested for COVID-19, even though he hadn't traveled outside the United States. I took care of him that morning on my first rounds. By the second rounds, the critical care physician told me to put a mask on because the patient was being tested for the corona-

virus. That's when it started to get real.

For the month of March, I was just in survival mode. I was working 50 to 60 hours a week. We all just buckled up and did our best. But it was very scary. I would come home crying. March was overwhelming, with the number of people dying. The intensive care unit felt like a war zone. We were seeing DNR [do not resuscitate] and DNI [do not intubate] orders written on windows for the person inside the room.

I remember one patient who was critically ill. She was on maximum support and maximum drugs. She was on the highest setting on the ventilator. Her story was so sad. She had lost several family members to the coronavirus. I took care of her one day, and when I came back the next day, she was gone. She was young — under 60 — and she had a DNR posted on her door.

“For the month of March, I was just in survival mode. I was working 50 to 60 hours a week. We all just buckled up and did our best. But it was very scary.”

One of the worst parts was the toll it took on my co-workers. People started not to look like themselves. Everyone's tired and exhausted. We dealt with death and the critically ill before the coronavirus, but with this, it's just so much. Now I think we are getting used to it. It's just what we do.





Aruna Tantia

Obstetrician/gynecologist
*Rotary Club of Salt Lake
 Metropolitan Kolkata, India*

I have been practicing for more than 25 years, and I've probably delivered more than 2,000 babies. About 60 babies are delivered every month at the hospital system where I work. Luckily, none of the mothers have tested positive for COVID-19 so far.

I recently delivered a baby while wearing full PPE. It was a high-risk pregnancy. She thought she would need a cesarean section, but her labor pro-

gressed well, and finally, wearing masks and PPE, we succeeded in delivering the baby. The mother was so happy.

Patients are scared. There have been a few cases at other hospitals where women have tested positive after delivery. They have to send the mother to one of the designated COVID-19 hospitals, and the baby is isolated. No breastfeeding, nothing. You don't want the baby to be infected because of the mother.

I feel so fortunate to be able to work during this time and be useful to society. I am really honored. It's a tough time. I don't know when it is going to be normal again. Until then, the patients cannot be left without care. We have to take care of ourselves and then take care of the patients.

Laura Jennings

Senior services director
*Rotary Club of Sun Prairie,
 Wisconsin*

I am the director of support services and activities at the Colonial Club, a nonprofit that provides services to senior adults. Before the coronavirus hit, I scheduled all the programming. We had 20 to 25 programs going on here on any one day. We also delivered hot meals five days a week, and we had 30 to 35 people who came to eat in the building every weekday.

After we closed the building, we weren't able to do those in-house programs. Now I help with the program to deliver meals. We opened up our meal program to anyone who requested it and who qualifies as a senior. We went from 100 meals a day to almost 160.

To minimize the risk to our drivers and our seniors, we changed our delivery schedule. Instead of delivering a hot meal five days a week, we deliver two meals on Monday and three on Wednesday. We



used to have five drivers, but most of them were retirees, and they stopped delivering because of the risk of exposure to the virus. A lot of great people stepped up. Now we have 12 drivers on each day that we deliver. Several of our Rotarians

“This has been very difficult for our seniors stuck at home. For many of them, this is where they came to socialize.”

now deliver meals, and our Sun Prairie club donated \$2,000 to the meal program. This has been a real community effort.

This has been very difficult for our seniors stuck at home. For many of them, this is where they came to socialize. And we miss having them here. The building is so quiet. I feel we are still helping them, but we want to get them back. I hope that someday soon we'll return to normal.



Bill Booker

Funeral director

Rotary Club of Little Rock, Arkansas

I am the president of Roller Funeral Homes, which operates about 30 funeral homes across Arkansas. COVID-19 has affected all the families we serve. We can't allow more than five people to come to the funeral home to make arrangements, because no more than 10 people can be in our facility at any one time. It pretty much eliminates a visitation or a wake.

Families whose loved ones died from the virus couldn't be with them as they were dying. It's another layer of stress — to die of something you hadn't even heard of a few months ago, and then have a situation where it could run through your entire family. That weighs on people.

Nothing has ever struck as much fear and concern through our staff as this virus. You worry about taking the virus home to your own family. We provide personal protective equipment to all our staff and offer a mask to any family mem-

ber who would like to have one. Everyone wears masks at the services.

My own mother died from heart failure on 15 March. Losing her was hard, but it has allowed me to share with other grieving families that I, too, had to go through the same issues of not being able to have extended family at her funeral. People need to hug, shake hands, look each other in the eye, shed a tear, or laugh together. Now we encourage people to blow kisses. Many talk to each other from 6 feet away and put their hand on their heart.

“Nothing has ever struck as much fear and concern through our staff as this virus.”

People ask me if I ever see a good funeral. I tell them yes, when there's laughter through the tears. Part of grieving involves not just sadness, but humor. Even now, you have to remember the good times.



Michael Rhind

Cruise ship officer
Rotary Club of Forres, Scotland

I am the second officer on a large cruise ship that normally carries about 1,200 passengers and almost 900 crew members. We were cruising from South America to Antarctica when the COVID-19 outbreak started. At first, we felt lucky — there were no cases on board, so we felt like we were the safest place in the world. But after the cruise line announced we would be pausing all operations fleetwide, we docked in Buenos Aires. Before arriving in Argentina, everyone on board had their temperature checked and we were confirmed healthy, so they allowed some passengers to disembark; some of them planned to fly home from there. At midnight the following evening, Argentina imposed a national quarantine. Its borders were closed and all flights canceled. At the time, we had 200 passengers ashore who had to come back from the airport to the ship or they would be stuck in Argentina.

People started getting sick a few days after these passengers got back on the ship, and no country would allow us to dock and disembark. We tried Montevideo, Rio de Janeiro, and then Barbados. Barbados allowed one critically ill passenger to get off and be medically evacuated to the United States for treatment. Finally, after almost a month of sailing, we approached Miami, where we were allowed to dock. Sadly, two passengers died a few hours before we made it to Miami. Others who were in critical condition were immediately taken by ambulance to nearby hospitals.

The process of disembarking all but 13 international guests took five days in total. During those five days, we would periodically call ambulances so ill passengers and crew could be transferred to area hospitals for more care. The remaining passengers and crew members had to stay on board for a 14-day quarantine before the United States would allow the passengers to disembark. In total, six people died, including one of our crew members, a guy in his late 40s. As you can imagine, that really rattled the crew's morale. It's hard on many of us mentally. We're stuck in a steel box with the virus — there's nowhere we can go.

Once our quarantine ended, the rest of our passengers were allowed to disembark, but five unlucky guests on board still can't get flights to their home countries. We also still have hundreds of crew members from all over the world. So the cruise line came up with a solution to get everyone home: Later this week, five ships are going to meet in the Atlantic between Florida and the Bahamas and use our lifeboats to exchange passengers and crew. Our ship will sail to Asia, another will go to Europe, another to South America. We're essentially going to operate a bus service to get people back home.

I was supposed to go home to Scotland about two months ago, but now I'll be on the ship until at least the end of June. My mum is worried about me, as any mother would be. She asks if I'm eating and sleeping well, and while it's not ideal to be stuck here, I know others have it much worse. I have a warm bed, enough food, and a job. I'm also glad I can be of service and help other people get home.

I usually work on the ship for three months, and then I have three months off.

“People started getting sick a few days after these passengers got back on the ship, and no country would allow us to dock and disembark.”

That's why I joined Rotary — when I'm at home, I like to spend my time volunteering. At 24, I'm the youngest person in my club by far, but I really enjoy it. I've been attending our meetings from the ship via Zoom. It's good to see the faces of the other members, and they are always eager to hear my updates. It provides me with a welcome bit of home.

Jan Goetz

Hospice nurse
*Rotary Club of Albemarle,
North Carolina*

I have been a nurse for 43 years, and this will be my 16th year doing hospice care. I love what I do. I can't imagine doing anything else. It's a privilege when families allow us to walk this journey with them. It's a very sacred time. They allow us into their homes, and we become part of their family, and they become part of our family. It's not just a job; it's a ministry.

Everything changed with this virus coming around. Imagine facing a terminal illness: You've been told you've got six months or less to live. The family is dealing with that. They've come to the conclusion that hospice is what they need. They decide, "We want comfort care; we just want to enjoy the time we have left." People are fragile anyway, and suddenly this virus hits.

Most of the patients we visit are at home, but we also have patients in nursing homes and assisted living. All of a sudden, those nursing homes and assisted living places are locked down. Even for our home patients, their families are not allowing people to visit. Not only are our patients dealing with their terminal illness, but now they can't spend time with the people they love. I have a patient with pulmonary fibrosis. Her whole life is her grandchildren and her great-grandchildren, and she has not seen them for weeks. It breaks my heart, because we don't know that she'll live long enough to spend time with them again.

As hospice workers, we're trying to keep our people safe. We want to make sure COVID-19 stays out of their homes. So the hardest part for us is not being able to love on our patients and their families. The people who go into hospice care have a heart for people and a heart for the dying. Most of us are touchy-feely

people. The first thing we do when we arrive at a home is hug our patients and our families, and we can't do that now. It tears us apart. We're losing that personal part of what we do. We try to be a smiling face, but that's tough to do when you're wearing a mask.

We have to get close enough to take our patients' vital signs. We use those times to get close to people, to touch them. It's really the only chance we have. At the end of my visit, when I'm at a safe distance, I take my mask down. The families see my face, and we smile. But it's not the same. When I finally leave the home and I'm back in my car, I cry. It's very, very difficult.

"We're losing that personal part of what we do. We try to be a smiling face, but that's tough to do when you're wearing a mask."

I am not the hero in this situation. Our patients and our families rise to the occasion and deal with the hand that they've been dealt the best they know how. Through all this, they are the ones who are the heroes.





Renee Richardson-Wendee

Assisted living facility administrator
Rotary Club of Oceanside, California

When the stay-home order first came down, I suddenly went from being “the adored administrator” to “the warden.” Families were getting really angry with me. But then they saw how bad it was getting.

My residents are all elderly. My youngest here is 86 years old; most of them are in their 90s. Currently I’m taking care of eight assisted living residents, who are on total lockdown. We have no guests whatsoever coming in to see them. No family

members are allowed in to see their loved ones. For the residents, it’s really, really difficult. Their lives have been cut off from their daughters, their sons, their grandkids. They’re only seeing me and their caregivers. It’s heartbreaking.

A lot of them are bewildered. One of my residents said to me yesterday, “I don’t like you anymore.” I said, “Why not?” She said, “Because of the mask. I want to see the face behind the mask.” I said, “I can’t take it off. I’m wearing it to protect you.” Another one, who has a bit of dementia, thinks she did something

wrong and that’s why she has to stay in her room and eat alone.

It’s a tightrope you walk. We only can go from work to home, home to work. We can’t shop, because it would be too dangerous if we brought the virus into our facility. As the administrator, I have the families to take care of, the residents to take care of, and the caregivers to take care of, because they’re scared as well. A couple of nursing homes here in California had to evacuate residents when staff members did not show up to work.

I’ve been in the industry for almost 32 years. It’s my passion. But a couple of Sundays ago, I had worked for 21 days in a row, 16-hour days. The adrenaline drives you. But that Sunday, I got up and said, “I have to go to work ... but I can’t go to work ... but I’ve got to go to work ... but I can’t go to work.” It was a wake-up call. I had to figure out a balance. Now I’m generally home by 6 p.m. I try to work only about four hours on Saturdays and Sundays.

We’re starting to fall into a normal pattern. The first couple of weeks were chaotic, but now it’s more of a routine. We’re playing games with residents in their rooms. We’re bringing extra staff in, so there’s someone who can take people out in their wheelchairs for a walk, sit in the rose garden, or play the card game Phase 10 with them. Some of the residents are getting used to it, but the ones with mild dementia aren’t. Every day it’s new to them. You have to explain over and over: “No. We’re not sick. You’re not sick. We’re wearing masks because we don’t want anyone to get sick.”

The rest of the world is going to be more relaxed in opening up, but I think they’re going to keep the elderly facilities pretty much on lockdown. I don’t know if it’ll always be this strict; there might be opportunities where they’ll say, “OK, family, if you wear gloves and a face mask and if you sit 6 feet apart, yes, we might let you in.” But this population is the most vulnerable. If the virus gets in here, these residents would not be alive for long.

Giancarlo Grassi

Homeless outreach executive

Rotary Club of Palermo Teatro del Sole, Italy

I am the president of a non-profit that serves homeless and impoverished people in the city. It was started by Rotary clubs in the Palermo area. We prepare and distribute meals, collect clothes and other necessities, and provide showers using a traveling van equipped with running water. None of that has changed. What has changed is that we're serving more people because of the coronavirus.

We used to serve 25 to 30 families each week. Now it's 100, totaling around 300 people. Many of these people had been making money by doing under-the-table work, which they lost because of the lockdown restrictions. So our predicament is not only figuring out the logistics of serving people through the lockdown, but also dealing with an increased number of people in need.

Some of the new families we serve are in their homes, so instead of cooking

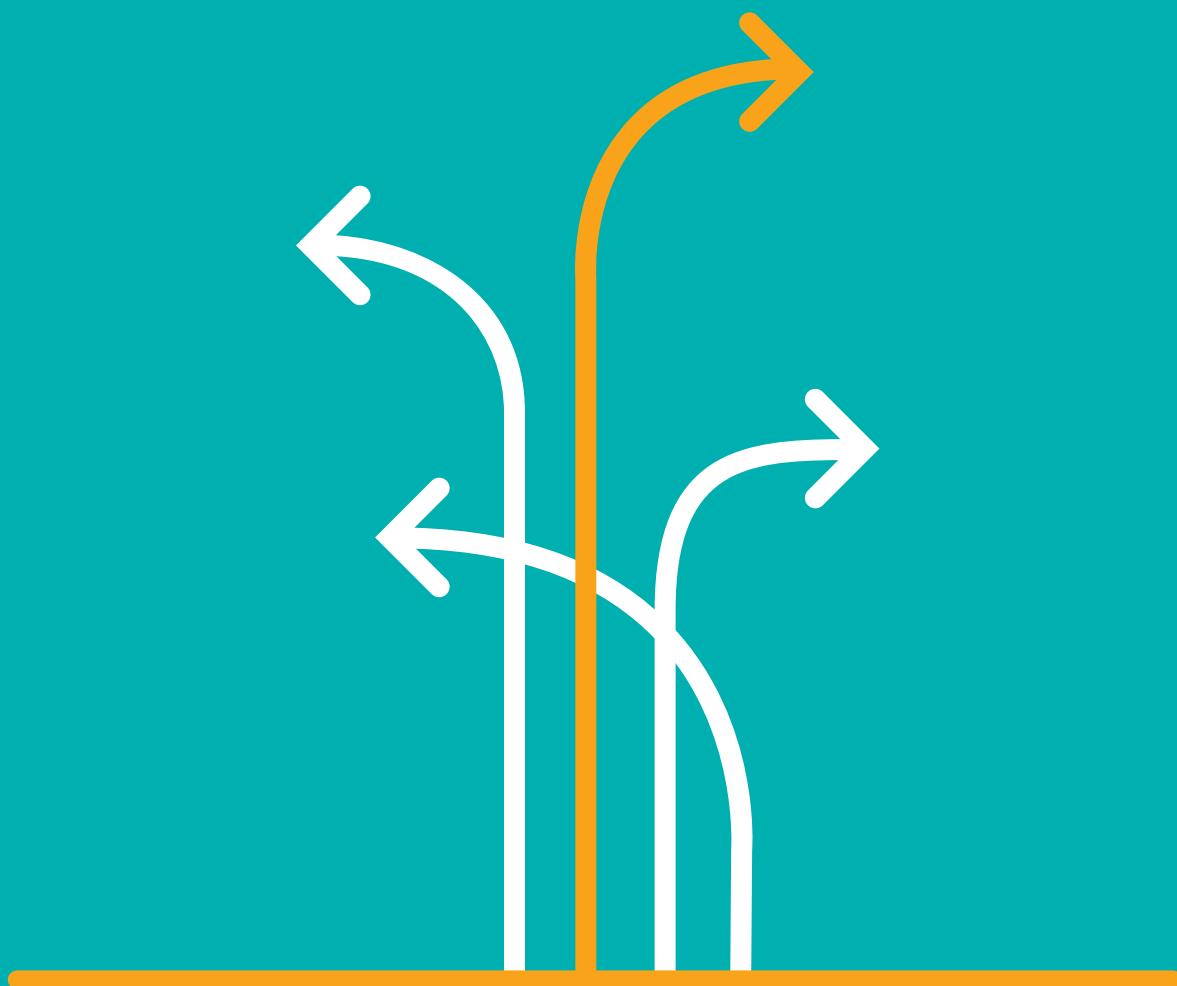
meals for them, Rotarians on motorbikes deliver food to them. We're also working with the city government to help people fill out the forms to receive food vouchers. People can't go to city hall to do this like they used to, but we are able to reach them.

Once volunteers began showing up with masks and gloves, the people we serve understood the situation was serious. They used to hug us to show their appreciation. Now they can't. Nobody involved in the project that we know of has been infected with the coronavirus — no volunteers and none of our 80 homeless beneficiaries. The precautionary measures we have taken are working.

“We have a network of about 80 Rotarians who volunteer, plus 50 people who are not Rotarians. Lately this number has increased.”

Every time we get together to serve, I'm probably there. When we're handing out clothes and supplies, I'm there. When we're going around with the mobile shower van, I'm there. When we're organizing to get all the food onto motorbikes to be delivered, I'm there. But I'm not on my own: We have a network of about 80 Rotarians who volunteer, plus 50 people who are not Rotarians. Lately this number has increased. People are calling to ask if we need any help. There are usually three guys who go around delivering food on motorcycles. Today there were 10. People want to help. ■





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our clubs



Worldly good

Rotary Club of International Mexico City

In the summer of 2019, Shamar Edwards received an email about a meeting to be held in the upscale Polanco district of Mexico City. Around 200 people were on the email list, all potential members of a new club: the Rotary Club of International Mexico City, dreamed up by 2000-01

continued from page 55

RI President Frank Devlyn and his friend Larry Rubin, a longtime member of the Rotary Club of Chapultepec, in Mexico City.

Edwards, 34, was born in Jamaica and grew up in New York City, where he worked in finance. Later, he moved back to Jamaica for a job at the Brazilian Embassy in Kingston. But he fell in love with Mexico while on a vacation there, and he moved to Mexico City in 2017. “I was working in corporate offices,” he says. “But I didn’t like the robotic lifestyle. I didn’t feel free. So I decided to leave and go live a better life, and it was an excellent decision. I’ve been happy here every day.”

There are tens of thousands of expatriates like Edwards in Mexico City. Rubin, who grew up in both Mexico and Cleveland, and Devlyn, a Mexico City resident who was raised on the border between El Paso, Texas, and Ciudad Juárez, saw that no Rotary club was serving that group. For several years,

especially our club, is a place where expats can be part of the community and also contribute to it. It’s not only networking; it’s networking for a cause.”

Edwards had heard of Rotary, so when he got the invitation, he says, “I was intrigued. I’ve been in a lot of different organizations, and this one had a good purpose that I could get behind.” At the initial meeting, he asked the organizers how Rotary had affected their lives. Rubin spoke about his commitment to service, his ability to give back, and how Rotary brings people together to create friendships and community. That hit home with Edwards and he decided to join, along with 21 others.

Once the group had formed, the new members began dividing up duties and looking at potential projects. As they celebrate their first anniversary, they’ve already completed several, including working with the American Legion and with Regus, an international office space firm, to donate a year’s worth of toiletries, clothes, and other necessities to an orphanage and hold a holiday *posada* (a reenactment of the Nativity) for the children there, complete with piñatas.

They also organized a Christmas dinner for families whose children were being treated for cancer at the Asociación Mexicana de Ayuda a Niños con Cáncer. And they put together a book drive for a library for female inmates at a prison in Almoloya de Juárez. “I was browsing Instagram, and I saw a post from a woman who was collecting books for the prison library,” says Ortega. “I thought, ‘This is easy. We don’t need a grant. We don’t need fundraising. We don’t need anything. We just need to join forces.’”

The club set a goal of collecting 500 books and ended up with more than 2,000. “I can’t tell you how many books I lugged,” says Edwards. “But it was very rewarding. We crushed our goal. We underestimated ourselves. It showed the

capacity of what we could do.”

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the club donated antibacterial gel and face masks to medical workers at the Hospital General de México. The supplies were delivered by Edwards and fellow club members Eric Rojo and Lorena Ezcurdia. The club also delivered bags of groceries to people who were employed at its meeting venue, the Club de Industriales, which closed during the pandemic.

The club members have plans to revitalize community spaces in a part of Mexico City called Azcapotzalco through art, tree planting, and social workshops. They have also worked to attract high-caliber speakers, including the Belgian ambassador, a top political consultant, and the founder of one of Mexico’s political parties.

Still, a club full of expatriates does pose some difficulties. “The opportunity and the challenge of this club is that we are all international,” says Naike Hechem, who has worked in more than 15 countries. “We travel a bit too much. So sometimes we are not here. But we can visit a club wherever we are and see what they are doing in Minnesota or Miami or the UK.”

A month after the book drive, the women at the Almoloya de Juárez prison sent the Rotarians a video. The women passed the camera around and said how grateful they were for the books that now filled their library.

“That was so fulfilling,” Edwards says. “When that happened, I thought, ‘This is why I’m here. This is exactly why I joined this organization.’” — FRANK BURES

“Mexico City is a true melting pot.”

they discussed the idea of an English-speaking club that could bridge the Mexican and expatriate communities, and they finally put together a list of potential members — expats living in Mexico City as well as Mexicans with international experience and perspective.

“Mexico City is a true melting pot,” says Ariadna Ortega Castro, who works as the club’s manager. “But the city didn’t have an international club. Rotary,

Previous page: Edvard Philipson (from left), Ariadna Ortega Castro, and Shamar Edwards of the Rotary Club of International Mexico City.

FRANK DEVLYN, 1939-2020

Shortly before this issue went to press, we learned that Frank Devlyn, who served as Rotary International president in 2000-01, died on 27 May at age 80. *The Rotarian* will run a tribute to him in an upcoming issue.

4 QUESTIONS ABOUT

Rotary Community Corps with Maria Concepcion “Cha-Cha” Camacho

Governor, District 3830 (Philippines)



1 What is Rotary Community Corps (RCC)?

Rotary Community Corps is a program that is close to my heart and to the hearts of all Filipino Rotarians. Past RI President M.A.T. Caparas, who is from the Philippines, started it here in 1986. He saw that there were many opportunities for Rotary projects in communities — too many for clubs to do by themselves. The idea was to help community members use their labor and skills to improve their own lives. RCCs cooperate with sponsor clubs and take a Rotary approach to their community work.

2 How do Rotary clubs and RCCs collaborate?

Rotary clubs sponsor RCCs. When they work together on a project, the RCC takes the lead on implementation while Rotarians help make it happen. To get an RCC started, building trust with the community is the first step. My club, the Rotary Club of Makati-San Lorenzo, had been working for years in Calawis, a remote community of indigenous Dumagat people. They were skeptical of us at first. They have seen many outsiders drop in with food or quick help, take a picture, and then leave. Even our first club projects with them were more like handouts. But our club gained their trust after working with them through the years and doing a community assessment. They wanted to learn

new skills and organize so that they could take their produce farming to the next level. So we established an RCC.

3 What did success look like for your RCC?

It represented a complete paradigm shift for the community. Farmers went from slash-and-burn agriculture, which contributed to mudslides and flooding, to having a self-sustaining, community-based agricultural enterprise. Through the RCC, they learned how to take products the community was already growing, like bananas, bamboo, and vegetables, and improve their standards so they could market the products more profitably. Our club worked with the former PinoyME Foundation, a social enterprise founded by former Philippine President Cory [Corazon] Aquino, to train the RCC members in business skills and accounting. We also linked the RCC up with government officials and microfinance lenders while helping them write a business plan. Our single RCC grew to five, and there are now about 400 members, mostly women, who help run the agro enterprise. Families own business shares, incomes have increased, and money is circulating in the community.

But the transformation goes beyond numbers. There was a change in the mindset of Calawis residents as they gained new skills

and confidence through the RCCs. They began to feel empowered to make their own decisions and do their own planning and budgeting. Now, if they need assistance from the mayor's office, they call the mayor themselves. It also changed how our Rotary club saw service and how we give our time and share our resources and expertise. It was not just another project for us. We saw it as one that will impact people's lives forever.

4 What's the advantage of working with an RCC?

Today, there are more than 10,000 RCCs in 107 countries and geographical areas, in both rural and urban locales. RCCs are successful around the world because through them, a Rotary club finds a natural partner to implement a project in the community. This makes projects stronger. The RCC program will continue to grow as long as sponsor clubs remember to recognize the dignity of RCC members and their contributions to the success of the project and achievement of the goals. We should also remember this: The people we want to help know best what their problems are and what they need. They can think for themselves. We just need to guide them a little and connect them to our networks.

— JOSEPH DERR



Change agents

Rotary Club of Atlanta Metro, Georgia

Chartered: 2019
Original membership: 20
Membership: 31

CLUB INNOVATION:

The club is designed to offer a seamless transition for young professionals who want to advance their careers and their Rotary lives. Focused on networking and mentorship, the club partners with other philanthropic organizations for volunteering opportunities, easing some of the organizational responsibilities of club members.

SPANNING THE AGES:

Atlanta-area Rotarians have a long-standing focus on youth. Their robust RYLA infrastructure and a statewide student leadership program for international collegians are hallmark efforts. Looking to the future, the Rotaract Club of Atlanta gave rise to the nascent Rotary Club of Atlanta Metro.

Despite playing an active role as a past president of the Rotaract Club of Atlanta, Alisha Rodriguez assumed that her demanding job would preclude joining a Rotary club. Rodriguez had heard that a lot of Rotary clubs required a large time commitment and that new members often “would get thrown into committees and get overworked,” she says.

To David Gordon and Warren Turner, then members of the Rotary Club of Dunwoody with long involvement in guiding the Rotaractors, Rodriguez’s apprehensions were familiar. So Gordon and Turner took action, enlisting Rodriguez and others to charter the new club. “Some of them came from Rotaract and some were friends of Rotaractors,” says Turner. “We circled back with Rotarians from our club who had left. They found this type of model more accommodating and appealing.”

To make the service and club commitments manageable, the club emphasizes volunteer partnerships. “We have structured volunteer opportunities by building relationships with other organizations,” rather than inaugurating projects from scratch, says Rodriguez.

“The only charity we encourage members to support financially is The Rotary Foundation,” says Gordon. “We support other charities with manpower, intellectual as well as physical.” The club works with some of those charities in conjunction with the Rotaract club and other Rotary clubs.

An informal mentoring system is in its infancy, but Gordon already has seen strong bonds forged. “We’ve just started it,

pairing people slowly but surely,” he says. The older members also learn from the younger members, Turner says. “The younger people are much more comfortable with emerging technologies. We probably prefer email. They prefer Slack.”

“We try to keep the balance between the young members and older members,” says Gordon. As a smaller club, it has avoided the cliques that sometimes develop within larger clubs, Turner notes. “A trap that a lot of Rotary clubs come across is you tend to bond with the same group of people,” he says. “Here, because we’re a smaller club, you’re forced to talk to everybody. It’s about having a conversation, listening to what’s important to people.”

The club meets twice a month but has sometimes replaced a regular meeting with a fellowship session at different locations, such as an upscale pub with bowling. The club has often held social events at a hotel that, despite its location in Atlanta’s trendy Buckhead area, charged the club only \$100 for its event space. And a joint meeting with the Atlanta Rotaract club is held every two months.

“It’s a less formal club and people really enjoy it. It’s a group of friends and we try to keep it that way,” says Gordon. “We’re spending a lot of time making sure that our members are happy and that they want to join in.”

—BRAD WEBBER



From top: Club members volunteer at the Adult Disability Medical Healthcare 5K/1K Run; with the Rotaract Club of Atlanta, the club co-hosted an event with Georgia Supreme Court Chief Justice Harold Melton (right).



CONVENTION COUNTDOWN

Tall tale

Standing at 1,667 feet, the Taipei 101 Tower will be impossible to miss when you are in Taipei for the 2021 Rotary International Convention from 12 to 16 June. When the tower opened in 2004, it was the tallest building in the world, a title it held until it was surpassed by Dubai's Burj Khalifa in 2007.

The design of Taipei 101 is rich with cultural significance. The number of occupied floors, 101, suggests going one better than 100, a number associated with perfection. The upper part of the tower above the base has eight sections of eight floors each — eight being an auspicious number associated with prosperity and good fortune. The stacked shape evokes a stalk of bamboo, a traditional building material throughout Asia. And like a stalk of bamboo, the tower is designed to be flexible and structurally resilient in the face of typhoon winds or even an earthquake.

The big attraction, of course, is the chance to go up. There is an enclosed public observatory on the 89th floor, and the truly brave can head to an outdoor observation deck on the 91st floor. If the thought of that makes your head spin, you can still enjoy the luxury shopping mall in the atrium. From any angle, Taipei 101 is a must-see destination that deftly blends tradition and modernity, just like the city it watches over.

—HANK SARTIN



Learn more and register at
convention.rotary.org.



A message from **Foundation Trustee Chair** **K.R. Ravindran**

There is a world of difference between a problem and a challenge.

If a honeybee faces a giant hornet alone, the bee has a problem. But if the honeybee faces the hornet with a swarm of other bees, then it is the hornet that has a problem.

This is true in nature, but it is also the human predicament. So when the situation I confront is greater than the resources I have, then it can be termed as a problem. However, if the resources I have are greater than the situation I am faced with, then it is just a challenge. Sometimes we overestimate our problems and underestimate our ability to overcome them.

The COVID-19 pandemic seemed like a situation that might overwhelm The Rotary Foundation. But as things have progressed, we have not allowed it to do so. As of 4 June, we have funded 208 disaster response grants for \$5.2 million and 169 new global grants at \$13.8 million — all in three months. We have leveraged individual Rotarians' generosity with Foundation funds and in many cases other corporate funds to make projects larger and more impactful.

We never allowed the pandemic to overpower us. Indeed, history shows that Rotarians are a curious breed. We are visionaries, an idealistic lot that dreams big dreams of a better world. At the same time, we are resilient and able to withstand challenges that others might succumb to.

We were not idle during the pandemic lockdowns. We raised funds and did projects just as we would have if there had been no lockdown. We remembered that it's the same business that we always do — reaching out to people in distress — except the methodology by which we did it changed.

Our process of preparing and delivering the projects changed.

The way we communicated what we did changed.

The Rotary Foundation is more than 100 years old and has already weathered many storms — some of them mild and others devastating to the world. Thanks to the strength, sacrifice, and compassion of Rotarians and the level to which they have extended themselves, I believe the Foundation will continue to face the future with renewed hope and inspiration.

Our Foundation will emerge from this pandemic much stronger and more resilient as long as you continue to have trust and faith in it.

K.R. RAVINDRAN

Foundation trustee chair



Telethon raises funds for COVID-19 response

More than 65,000 people worldwide watched the #RotaryResponds virtual telethon on 2 May, which raised more than a half-million dollars for COVID-19 disaster response efforts.

In the online event hosted by Past RI President Barry Rassin and Past RI Director John Smarge, members from around the world showed how their clubs and communities are fighting the pandemic caused by the novel coronavirus. The money that was raised, more than \$525,000, was enough to fund at least 21 Rotary disaster response grants to pay for projects related to the pandemic.

The telethon, coordinated by Rotary Foundation Trustee Jennifer E. Jones, featured video messages from 2019-20

RI President Mark Daniel Maloney and other Rotary senior leaders, along with Alejandro Giammattei, president of Guatemala; Josephine Ojiambo, former Kenyan ambassador to the United Nations (and current Rotary representative to UNICEF Kenya); Andrew Mitchell, member of the UK Parliament; Karina Gould, member of the Canadian Parliament; and UK television personality Zara Janjua. In addition, Jones talked with Peter Hotez of the Baylor College of Medicine about efforts to develop a COVID-19 vaccine. Musical entertainment included performances by violinist Aäron Blomme, a member of the Rotary Club of Koksijde-De Panne-Veurne, Belgium, and singer-songwriter Tara Watts.

“You [Rotary members] have risen to the occasion and adapted to the COVID-19 pandemic, proving that the world needs Rotary now more than ever,” said Maloney. “I have never been more proud to be a Rotarian.”

Watch the #RotaryResponds virtual telethon on YouTube:

on.rotary.org/ytlive2may.

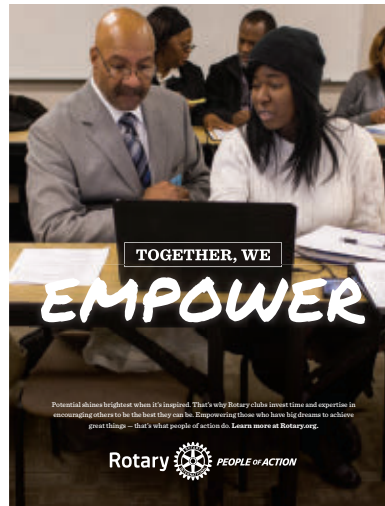
Donate to support COVID-19 response efforts at **on.rotary.org/drfr**.

Telethon participants included Peter Hotez and Jennifer E. Jones (top row, from left); Aäron Blomme (center row, left); and Barry Rassin and John Smarge (bottom row, from right). The event highlighted the COVID-19 responses of Rotary members around the world.

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Go to **rotary.org/brandcenter** for step-by-step guides, easy-to-follow templates, and ideas and inspiration to tell your club's story.

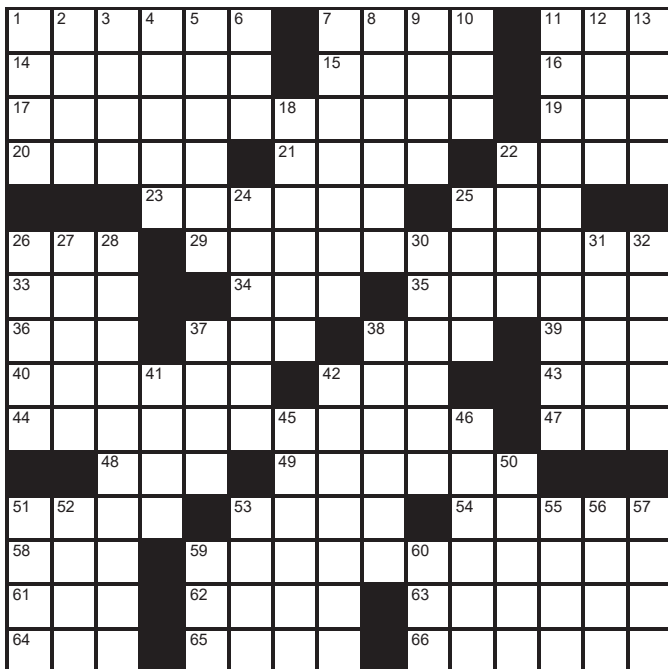
Help spread our inspiring message around the globe.



MEMBERSHIP MONTH

by Victor Fleming

Rotary Club of Little Rock, Arkansas



Across

- 1 Bring about through force
7 ____ & Stitch (2002 animated film)
11 Showed the way
14 Equally tidy
15 Sent a cyber-message to
16 Essay topic
17 Start of a timely poetic quip
19 By way of
20 *Li'l Abner* character Hawkins
21 Former Israeli leader Barak
22 Boo kin
23 "This is inequitable!"
25 Soak (up), as gravy
26 Diciembre o enero
29 Part 2 of the quip
33 Fruity ending?
34 Sit ending
35 Blew off steam
36 Spy outfit, for short
37 "No ____ do!"
38 Clinch, with "up"
39 Financial planner's rec
40 Like some sires
42 Cape ____, Mass.
43 '30s Giant slugger
44 Part 3 of the quip

- 47 Highlands negative
48 San Francisco's ____ Hill
49 Shortsighted
51 Afternoon snoozes
53 Six-legger's feeler
54 Cheese-covered chip
58 Timeline segment
59 End of the quip
61 Director Craven
62 On ____ (how some write)
63 Checkers player's call
64 Prof's helpers
65 Corn covering
66 "Be right with ya"

Down

- 1 Some shelter adoptees
2 Agcy. that inspects workplaces
3 City west of Tulsa
4 Lacquer ingredient
5 Brief roles
6 DDE's 1940s command
7 Element No. 3
8 Self-introduction from actor William?
9 Beyond off-color
10 "____ on a Grecian Urn"

- 11 Magical romantic brew
12 Pennsylvania port or lake
13 Precious
18 *SNL* alumnus Kevin
22 Loo's American cousin
24 Veneer
25 Slow cooker content, perhaps
26 Big parrot
27 Pulitzer winner Wharton
28 Ticket good for all the games
30 Bring into balance
31 Sealy competitor
32 Social engagement online
37 ____ appeal
38 Acts inquisitive
41 Art colony near Santa Fe
42 Query to a fisher
45 Mirror reflections
46 Welcome, as a new year
50 Chili con ____
51 Grown eff
52 Domain
53 ____ platter
55 Gear elements
56 Actor Cronyn
57 Grp. influencing oil prices
59 Fireplace fleck
60 Boxing win, for short

Solution on page 24

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last look



MONIKA LOZINSKA/ROTARY INTERNATIONAL

DONATE

Sombat Tapanya teaches children the principles of peace through aikido. He uses the martial art to help students learn how to be assertive, not aggressive — a principle that holds true in life as well. (Read more on page 13.)

Tapanya is putting to use insights he gained as a Rotary Peace Fellow at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, Thailand, in 2016. Support the Rotary Peace Centers and other peace initiatives through a gift to The Rotary Foundation. Contribute at rotary.org/donate.

JOIN

Rotary Action Groups are independent, Rotary-affiliated groups made up of experts in a particular field. They provide technical expertise to clubs and districts on their service projects. The Rotary Action Group for Peace offers guidance to those wanting to further peace efforts. Find out more at rotarianactiongroupforpeace.org.

ACTIVATE

Between 2020 and 2022, 150 new Rotary Positive Peace Activators will be trained in six regions around the world through the strategic partnership between Rotary and the Institute for Economics and Peace. Positive Peace Activators are Rotarians, Rotaractors, Rotary Peace Fellows, and other Rotary stakeholders who demonstrate a commitment to peacebuilding, attend an intensive 20-hour training program on the Positive Peace methodology and framework, and make a two-year commitment to offer support to Rotarians. Activators can provide presentations or longer training to Rotarians on Positive Peace or support peace grant development. Want to get connected to an activator? Contact Summer Lewis, the Rotary-IEP Partnership coordinator, at summer.lewis@rotary.org.

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