

# JAN/FEB 2025 NEWSLETTER

## President's Letter from co-president Michelle Seets **OUR CLUB'S TITLE ACCOMPLISHMENT FOR 2025**

Rather than making resolutions, I like to pick a "title accomplishment" for my year. A title accomplishment is a singular, standout achievement that encapsulates what I want to make happen that year. It could be developing a new class, learning a new technology tool, moving, or launching a passion project. It serves as the defining moment for that year.



In reflecting on our club, it looks like this is the Year of Branches. Our club's goals include building Branches of eight or more members in one geographic area so that we can act locally. Progress on that goal has exceeded expectations this year.



Our last newsletter featured an article about our West African Branch's networking and outreach efforts, and their activities are highlighted again in this month's newsletter.

Led by Benedicta Gbadegbe and Mary Fiadese, the members of our West African Branch are already making an impact in their area! From their initial meeting to get things rolling to their ongoing progress, exciting news continues to emerge from Ghana.

Join us at an upcoming Action Day to hear the full update and celebrate their achievements!



## HIGHLIGHTS

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The top experience by far for the Rotary Club to End Human Trafficking was the opportunity for 4 members of the West Africa Branch (our sub-club) group to attend the Ghana District 9104 Special meeting to welcome RI Trustee and former RI President Mark Maloney and his wife Gay. It was a beautiful event Mr. Maloney even acknowledged the work of the Rotary Club to End Human Trafficking (a club that was chartered during his Presidency).

The West Africa Branch is also composed of women who serve in the organization Theodora Africa, an organization that lifts African women out of the sex trade through professional training and employment. They also provide African social impact advocates with a genuine successful alternative. Mr. Jonas Ayi, Theodora Board member and member of the Ghana Rotary Club hosted the Branch members. According to all who attended, it was a fabulous evening!

Listening to Mark and Gay Maloney's achievements was a highlight of the event, fueling our optimism and underscoring the importance of continued growth. Building on this momentum, we plan to strengthen partnerships, raise awareness, and broaden our impact in Ghana and beyond. Together, we can harness the support gained from this visit to expand our initiatives and make a lasting difference in our communities

Here are some pictures from the event



Group photo of Mark and Gay Maloney, TGVA/W.A. Branch members and Michael Podolny





## RCEHT BOARD SUMMARY: FEB

Below are topics from the meeting on February 6.  
(The Board did not meet in January.)

Let a board member know if you have any questions or comments!

- **Approved two new members. A third was approved by electronic vote between meetings.**
- **President Benedicta Gbadegbe (West Africa Branch):**
  - Visiting other rotary clubs in Accra
  - Leading RCEHT presentation in February
- **Preparing for next year (July 2025 through June 2026):**
  - President Elect Bassey Kooffreh shared goals for his term (2025-2026) which included membership, strategic planning, social activities, and website & social media activities.
  - Open Board positions: President Elect, Economic Development Chair, Fundraising Chair, Public Relations Chair, and Branch Chair
- **RCEHT Regular Club Meetings:** Reviewed topics for first quarter of 2025

## CLUB SPECIFIC INFORMATION MEMBERSHIP TYPES

Each Rotary club can have Active as well as Honorary members, they may also add other designations. Ours are as follows:

1. **Active Members** are full voting members of the club who can hold any leadership position.
2. **Branch members** are full voting members of the club who can hold any leadership position. They are created when 8 or more members live geographically close and would like to organize local community efforts. They have their own organizational structure and leadership model.
3. **Organizational memberships** are all part of the same organization. We require that the organization name one primary representative who will be considered "the full paying member". Dues will be assigned to this member with the understanding that the organization will cover the costs. Subsequent members from that organization can join and pay a lesser dues amount, as determined by the board. All Organizational members will be full Rotary members, can hold office and vote. Organizations must be approved by the Board.
4. **Associate members** are members of another Rotary Club. All Associate members are considered full voting members, but they are not eligible to hold a board position.
5. **Honorary members** are not required to pay dues and have no voting rights. Honorary membership is used to recognize people who have distinguished themselves by meritorious service and embody Rotary ideals, or those considered friends of Rotary for their support of Rotary's causes.

## CLUB ENDORSEMENT



United Abolitionists stands as a beacon of hope, refuge, and restoration for the lives marred by the grim shadows of human trafficking.

## MEETING BASICS

We have social time 15 minutes before and after each Business Meeting.

We also have time allotted to share what you are up to regarding human trafficking.

You are welcome to invite others, just don't post the meeting link on social media and let [President@endHTrotaryclub.org](mailto:President@endHTrotaryclub.org) know who is coming so we know to let them enter the meeting space.

# NEW MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Jon L Proctor is the President and co-founder of Paladin Rescue Alliance, a 501(c)(3) anti-human trafficking NGO working in Thailand and Myanmar. Also, the CEO and co-founder of Paladin Mat Company, a for-profit business based in Thailand designed to provide sustainable living-wage jobs for rescued trafficking survivors.

Jon is interested in associating, and working with, like-minded action-oriented individuals who truly care about the eradication of human trafficking among children and women into the sex and labor industries. He is joining RCEHT as a full member.



JON PROCTOR



DEANNA  
JENSEN-VALLIERE

Deanna M Jensen-Valliere has a background in the hotel/tourism industry as well as local Chambers of Commerce. She had been a Rotarian on and off since 1992 and value the work that Rotary does locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally. And has always believed in volunteering.

She's been involved in human trafficking awareness and prevention since 2015, and has served on the Board of Braking Traffik, the Board of the Iowa Network Against Human Trafficking, the District 6000 Rotary Action Group Against Slavery Task Force and the liaison for the District 6420 Rotary Action Group Against Slavery Task Force. She has also done training sessions with hotels on human trafficking awareness.

Deanna is joining RCEHT as an associate member.

Kevin J. Miller has 24 plus years working with severely emotionally and mentally disabled men who were convicted criminals. He has been Involved in volunteer projects for ending trafficking for 4 years. He wants to engage in the solution.

Kevin has expertise in Organizing and developing organizations, team building, Abnormal Psychology knowledge, long-term work with sex offenders and severe antisocial personality disorders, such as trauma and exploitation survivors, trauma treatment and recovery knowledge. He is joining RCEHT as full member.



KEVIN MILLER



## ROTARY TIMELINE

**1905** Paul P. Harris convenes **first Rotary meeting** in Chicago, Illinois.

**1907** **First service project** - public toilets to improve sanitation in the city.

**1910** Members representing 16 Rotary clubs gather at the first Rotary Convention and create the **National Association of Rotary Clubs of America**.

**1912** Rotary becomes an **international organization** with the chartering of the Rotary Club of Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

**1912** [The chartering of a club in London, U.K.](#) puts Rotary in Europe.

**1917** An endowment is established “for the purpose of doing good in the world,” which becomes a precursor to **The Rotary Foundation** which is formally named in 1928.

**1919** Rotary charters a club in Montevideo, Uruguay which brings Rotary to **South America**.

**1919** A Rotary club is chartered in Manila, Philippines bringing Rotary to **Asia**.

**1921** Rotary reaches **Oceania and Africa**.

**1943** Rotary adopts [The Four-Way Test](#), one of the world's most widely printed and quoted statements of business ethics.

**1957** [Paul Harris Fellow recognition](#) is established in 1957 to show appreciation for and encourage substantial contributions to the Foundation.

**1962** The [first Interact club](#) is certified at Melbourne High School, in Florida, USA. Interact empowers students in intermediate and secondary school to learn leadership skills.

**1968** Rotary [certifies its first Rotaract club](#) at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte in the U.S. Rotaract is created as a program for college-age students and young professional.

**1975** Rotary clubs have been facilitating student exchanges since the 1920s. In 1975, Rotary recognizes **Rotary Youth Exchange** as an official program administered by clubs and districts.

**1979** A multi-year grant project to immunize children in the Philippines [launches Rotary in the fight to eradicate polio](#)

**1987** [Women join Rotary clubs throughout the U.S.](#) following a decision by the U.S. Supreme Court. In 1989, women join clubs worldwide.

**1988: Peace Forums and advocacy:** The Foundation holds its [first Peace Forum](#).

**1999:** Foundation Trustees approve the [creation of the Rotary Centers for International Studies in peace and conflict resolution](#)

**2014: Progress against polio:** India was once thought to be one of the most challenging places to [end polio](#). In 2014, India goes three full years without a case of polio caused by the wild polio virus and the World Health Organization (WHO) South-East Asia region is certified polio free. In Nigeria sustained efforts to vaccinate children, who previously couldn't be reached because of a lack of security in the country's northern states, finally results in that country reaching the three year milestone. The WHO African region is certified wild poliovirus-free in 2020.

### DID YOU KNOW...

The name **Rotary** was selected by early members because meeting locations rotated among their offices.

### Join our Rotary network to end human trafficking

Traffickers are organized, so we need to be too. The Rotary Club to End Human Trafficking (RCEHT), a 100% virtual club, is building our Rotary network via our Associate members, who are already members of community-based Rotary clubs. RCEHT hosts 2 meetings a month where Rotarians everywhere can join to share ideas, listen to speakers related to ending human trafficking, and network with others committed to this fight. Associate members are also invited to support our club's Economic Development Initiative where we are working to implement solutions in high risk areas via our local Branches.

If you would like to learn more, please join us at an upcoming meeting by E-mailing [President@endHTrotaryclub.org](mailto:President@endHTrotaryclub.org) or contact our membership chair at [membership@endHTrotaryclub.org](mailto:membership@endHTrotaryclub.org).



## #MYFREEDOMDAY 2025 UPDATE

**Presented by: Veronica McDaniels**

Did you know, 12 million children are trapped in slavery right now? **#MyFreedomDay is on March 11th** and is all about raising awareness of modern-day slavery and celebrating the importance of freedom.

For this year, the organizers are hoping to engage at least one school from every country. All they are asking is for students to make a **short :12 second video** holding up a sign that says **#MyFreedomDay** – a simple yet powerful way to stand in solidarity. Any number of students - from 1 to 1,000 - can take part. Right now, schools from over **150 countries** are participating. The best part? **It's completely free** to take part and every school will be included on television and broadcast via CNN International around the world! You can learn more in Leif Coorlim's [message](#).

And here are some other ideas, resources, and messages from other organizations in preparation for #MyFreedomDay on March 11. Nonprofits and companies can support students in these efforts locally and on social media, as well:

- All school walkout in honor of those trapped in modern slavery
- Host a Fair Trade/ethically sourced products fashion show or food sale. See the guide [here](#).
- Host a panel discussion with local experts
- Host a color run
- Organize a stand for freedom
- Create a school-wide art installation with messages of freedom
- Host a student concert
- Host a movie night that raises awareness of the issue
- Organize petition signing and letter writing to companies and local lawmakers
- Bring in curriculum to train faculty, staff, students, and parents on the dangers of human trafficking
- Host a film festival dispelling myths about trafficking
- At the very least post to social media, what makes you feel free and include #myfreedomday in your post.

Good luck with your planning, please fill out the [Google Form](#) with your plans.

### [#MyFreedomDay](#) March 11, 2024

[CNN Freedom Project's](#) global student-led day of action against human trafficking. Save the date March 11th, 2025. For examples from last year's 8th annual event see [here](#). We have had billions of impressions on social media in over 140 countries and thousands of students participate and we aim to further that impact this year!

Find a list of resources [here](#). Please reach out to me with any questions at [vmcdaniel@aischool.org](mailto:vmcdaniel@aischool.org)

### NEWSLETTER SUBMISSION

Please complete [this form](#) to submit relevant information or news you would like to share with the club in the next month's release. The more we collaborate and connect with each other, the stronger our club is in creating effective change to achieve our Rotary mission.



## IN A SMALL TOWN, A SMALL DEBATE ABOUT HUMAN TRAFFICKING

RCEHT Board Member Erin Maloney often takes walks with her friend "Marie" in their petite ville in the Eastern Townships of Québec (Canada). From time to time, Erin has mentioned Rotary and her club's cause. While Marie still doesn't really understand "Rotary", Erin feels like Marie now has a better grasp of the problems with human trafficking.

Last week, Marie was at a supper party without Erin. Someone casually mentioned, there's no such thing as human trafficking. Marie piped in, *mais oui!* There IS human trafficking. You know Erin! She's in some kind of organization -- I can't remember the name of the organization -- but it fights human trafficking. It exists!

And, another person said, *oui*, human trafficking does exist. And the first person was surprised, but not in denial.

**Moral of the story:** Now a few more people in a small, non-English-speaking town know a bit more about human trafficking, and will perhaps look at the world in a slightly different way. (They do not, however, know a thing about Rotary.)

## DID YOU KNOW?

January 11, 2025 was National Human Trafficking Awareness Day, aka #WearBlueDay, in the US. Throughout the month, Blue Campaign hosts several special events and educational activities, with a spotlight on #WearBlueDay.

Why blue? It's the international color of human trafficking awareness.

The theme for 2025 was Preventing Trafficking, focusin on a holistic approach to prevent trafficking by recognizing its connections to other forms of violence and abuse, such as labor exploitation, online harassment and abuse, and interpersonal violence.

Every year, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime estimates that the majority of persons are trafficked from Asia to Europe.

# CALENDAR & UPCOMING EVENTS

## 2024-25 LEADERSHIP TEAM

Many members work together to keep our club moving forward. Without their time and dedication things would simply not get done. Many thanks to our newly elected leadership team for stepping up and tackling the task needed for our club to thrive!

### **BOARD MEMBERS**

- Co-Presidents - Lisa Podolny, Michelle Seets, Karen Walkowski
- President Elect - Bassey Kooffreh
- Past President / Foundation Chair - Lisa Podolny
- Treasurer - Karen Walkowski
- Secretary - Mary Fiadese
- Director - María Julia Moreyra

### **Committee Chairs on the Board**

- Programs & Projects - Erin Maloney
- Membership - Toni Lucas
- Public Relations - Michelle Seets
- Fundraising - Karen Walkowski
- Economic Development - Michael Podolny

### **Committee Chairs not on the board**

- Speaker - Maria Julia Moreyra
- Social - Anne DeLain
- Branch - Michael Podolny
- Sunshine - Toni Lucas

## STANDING MEETINGS

The General Meetings are held on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of every month @ 7:00 AM CT (US / Canada). Visit our website for details.

## UPCOMING MEETINGS

### **SPEAKER MEETING**

Presented by Horacio Pacheco

### **DATE**

Feb 27, 2025 @ 7:00 AM CT (US / Canada)

**TOPIC:** Cyber Crime.

Mr. Pacheco is a United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime Program (UNODC) graduate in Vienna, Austria. He has undergone professional training for stakeholders in implementing the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (SE4U) and its Review Mechanism.

For more information, check out the [website](#)

VISIT RCEHT SOCIAL MEDIA  
PAGES.



## Rotary International Convention

21-25 June 2025  
Calgary, Canada

Theme: Magic All Around

See <https://convention.rotary.org> for more information