

ROTARY CLUB TO END HUMAN TRAFFICKING

NOV/DEC 2025 NEWSLETTER



PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear Rotarians,



Thank you for your unwavering dedication, your steadfast commitment, and the passion you bring to our Rotary Club to End Human Trafficking. We are part of a worldwide network of more than 1.2 million neighbors, friends, leaders, and problem-solvers who unite to take action and create lasting change. For more than a century, Rotary members have bridged cultures and connected continents, championed peace, fought disease, supported education, strengthened local economies, and protected the environment where they are needed most.

Our mission positions us at the forefront of addressing one of today's most pressing humanitarian issues by focusing on preventing human trafficking.

This year, our club continues its efforts through our Giving Challenge, which emphasizes prevention through opportunity. Human trafficking often takes root where opportunity is scarce, but hope grows when communities are equipped with the tools that build economic independence and strengthen resilience. Already, your generosity is creating real and measurable change. In Ghana, four women rescued from trafficking are completing a nine-month business and professional development program designed by our branch members in partnership with Theodora Africa, helping them rebuild their futures with confidence and purpose. In Zambia, 40 youth are being trained to launch ten agricultural enterprises that will create sustainable income, improve food security, and offer long-term alternatives to exploitation. Our club has also proudly supported a District Grant benefiting Avenues for Youth, strengthening our commitment to protecting young people.

These efforts embody Rotary's belief that when members work together, sustainable prevention is not only possible but inevitable. As we continue through the 2025-2026 Rotary year, I encourage every member to take an active role in strengthening our club. Our goals include deepening membership engagement, implementing our strategic action plan, contributing to the Annual Fund, participating in social and service activities, expanding our global partnerships, investing in leadership development through District training opportunities, and maintaining a dynamic online presence that reflects the power and purpose of our work. Rotary members everywhere contribute their skills, expertise, and resources to solve the world's toughest problems, and our club stands as a model of what collaboration, compassion, and determination can achieve.

I am grateful for the dedication of all our members both long-standing and newly joined. This year has brought passionate Rotarians from around the world into our club, and each one brings unique perspectives, strengths, and ideas that enrich our mission. I encourage every member to join a committee, participate actively, and lend your expertise to the journey ahead. Rotary thrives when each of us is engaged, energized, and willing to lift others through service. I invite you to support our Giving Challenge, share our message, and champion the belief that exploitation can be prevented when communities are empowered with knowledge, opportunity, and hope.

Rotary is more than an organization; it is a global community of people of action who see possibility where others see obstacles. Together, we are building pathways to safety, opportunity, and dignity for those most at risk. Thank you for your compassion, your leadership, and your unwavering commitment to ending human trafficking. I look forward to the impact we will continue to create together.

Warmly,
Bassey Kooffreh
President, 2025-2026
Rotary Club to Ending Human Trafficking

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STREETGRACE ANNUAL GALA

HIGHLIGHTS



On Thursday, November 6, 2025, **Street Grace**, one of the organizations we endorse, held its annual Gala and Fundraiser. The sold out event was hosted by Ernie Johnson with special guest Shaquille O'Neal.

We are proud to share that Veronica McDaniel, a member of the Rotary Club to End Human Trafficking, recently joined Street Grace as the Executive Director of Global Student Initiatives. Veronica has previously led successful global programs with Freest International, educating youth around the world on sex trafficking awareness and prevention. She founded Freest International in 2022 and in 2025 Freest merged with Street Grace.



Our own Cindee Sapoznik and several members of the **2myPlace** Board were also in attendance, showing support for this important work.

StreetGrace announced the development of a new **AI-based technology** designed to identify and stop online predators—an exciting and much-needed advancement in prevention and protection.

Veronica continues to travel globally, empowering young people with the knowledge and tools to stay safe and informed. 2myPlace remains equally committed to educating teens and young adults, helping them stay strong, aware, and protected

VISIT RCEHT SOCIAL MEDIA PAGES.



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.

Submitted by Cindee Sapoznik



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE LAUNCHES; PREPARES FOR EXPANSION



You will have noticed not a whole lot of communication from EDI throughout 2025. That is based on a simple premise. “Until you have results, there is no reason to be talking.”

Any of you who have been involved with ‘from zero’ start-ups also know it can take a lot of starting and stopping before you turn an idea into a successful, working, sustainable, scalable model.

That has been the last year and a half in a nutshell. A lot of conversations. A lot of proposals. A lot of potential projects, starting and falling by the wayside.

However, during the last half of 2025, we have FINALLY gotten our breakthroughs. Two different projects, one in Zambia and one in Ghana, were not only initiated but have begun to be implemented, AND have successfully received funding via RCEHT. These are the:

- The Mukungule Agriculture Enterprise Project Grassroots Economic Development Initiative, Zambia, Africa, partnering with Communities for Conservation and Enterprise Development (CCED) of Lusaka, Zambia
- Specific, Employment Focused Job Training for Disadvantaged Women partnering with Muslim Family Counseling Service, Kumasi & Accra, Ghana, in conjunction with the Rotary Club of Accra-Spintex, Ghana

While these are very different projects, they have a number of things in common that will be the focal point of our efforts in 2026.

- The designs create direct pathways to meaningful employment and income creation.
- They follow specific methodologies that can be replicated.
- The turnaround time from training to income is very short
- The models created have wide applicability.

Our goal in 2026 will be to be much more focused in our service offering to potential partners (hopefully), leading to a larger number of projects being launched, affecting many more women.

Come to our presentation at the February 12, 2026, meeting, when we will present our EDI models in detail and our action plan for you, the club, to help bring it to life.

This is not just important to our mission...It is very important!

The following was published in Bloomberg News on November 13, 2025

“Africa Needs 1 Billion Jobs by the End of the Century. Where Will It Find Them?”

“Sub-Saharan Africa will see 1 billion people enter the labor force between now and the end of the century, according to Bloomberg Economics analysis of UN Population Division data.

Most countries on the continent already struggle to provide sufficient jobs. For every two people that joined Congo’s working-age population between 2005 and 2020, only one job was created on average, a pattern repeated across Nigeria, Ethiopia and other large states, according to Bloomberg Economics analysis of International Labor Organization data.”

Think about this. If a billion young people enter the work force and only 500 million find jobs, what happens to the rest? How many will be enslaved in some way or another?

JOB CREATION HAS TO BECOME THE FOCUS

And while EDI is doing its part, implementing the models that will actually create jobs, **you can do your part by donating to the RCEHT Foundation.** Every job start-up requires capital to get it going. By building the Foundation resources, we build the ability to get more and more jobs created.

Submitted by Michael Podolny



HELP US REACH OUR \$10,000 GOAL

Prevention Through Opportunity: Help Us Reach Our \$10,000 Fundraising Goal

Human trafficking begins with vulnerability. When people lack economic opportunity, education, or local support, exploitation becomes far more likely. That's why the Rotary Club to End Human Trafficking is focusing this year's \$10,000 fundraising campaign on prevention through opportunity.

Our mission goes beyond rescue. We aim to change the conditions that make people vulnerable in the first place.

Building Opportunity Where It's Needed Most

Your support fuels:

- **Seed funding for economic development** in high-risk communities
- **Support for Rotary branch members** in Ghana and other regions on the front lines of prevention
- **Matching dollars that unlock larger Rotary grants**, multiplying our global impact

This work lives through our **Economic Development Initiative (EDI)** – a strategy that invests directly in people, entrepreneurs, and communities.

Prevention Through Empowerment

In Ghana, four women who survived sex trafficking are taking their first steps toward new beginnings.

Through a Rotary District 5950 Grant led by our club, these women are receiving business and personal development training that equips them with the confidence, skills, and tools to build independent, sustainable futures.

The training is designed and delivered by members of our club's Ghana Branch, who also work with Theodora Africa.

This isn't just training – it's transformation.

Our club's **impact is multiplied** when we work with others. Recent collaborative projects include:

- **Costa Rica:** Brick-oven construction to support a community bakery
- **Ecuador:** Anti-trafficking education programs
- **Minnesota:** Creating study spaces for transitional youth
- **Uganda:** Training women to produce reusable sanitary pads so girls can stay in school

These projects show that when Rotarians unite, lasting prevention becomes possible.

Zambia Project Launch: A Transformational First Step

This year we launch our first major EDI project in the **Kaluba Villages of Zambia**, home to 18,000 people living on less than \$1 per day. Extreme poverty has long fueled exploitation here – but together, we're changing the story.

Through our partnership with Communities for Conservation and Enterprise Development (CCED):

- **40 youth leaders** will receive training in entrepreneurship and sustainable agriculture
- **10 agricultural enterprises** will be launched
- **18,000 residents** will benefit from improved food security, employment, and economic stability

This is Prevention Through Opportunity in action.

Why This Work Matters

"If we are serious about ending human trafficking, we must address the lack of opportunity that fuels it."

EDI allows us to do exactly that. Right now we are:

- Training 40 Zambian youth to build agricultural businesses
- Supporting four women in Ghana as they rebuild their lives through business education
- Partnering with Rotary clubs worldwide to expand prevention, education, and economic empowerment

You Can Help Shape What Happens Next

Your generosity builds pathways to safety, resilience, and independence.

Your contribution expands opportunity.

And your support brings us closer to our \$10,000 Prevention Through Opportunity goal.

Donate today and help us transform the systemic conditions that allow human trafficking to take root.

To donate, use the link below or scan the QR code to donate. Thank you for your support!

https://www.paypal.com/donate/?hosted_button_id=525MMAAWSPK54



Prevention of Sexual Abuse in Chiang Mai, Thailand 2025.

Produced by the [Gate Theatre](#) and supported by [BABSEACLE Foundation](#), Restive Souls is part of an ongoing public education initiative promoting access to justice and community awareness. Restive souls is more than a theatrical performance; it is a stark and uncompromising expose of the pervasive horrors of modern slavery that continue to afflict our world.

The production immerses audiences in the harrowing investigation led by Detective Max Soto, whose unwavering pursuit of justice uncovers the raw and deeply personal testimonials of five courageous survivors. Once ensnared in the nightmarish realities of forced labor and sexual exploitation, these individuals now bravely share their truths, allowing their voices to resonate with a compelling urgency that cannot be ignored.

For Audiences: This performance contains strong language, mature content, and explicit scenes. Viewer discretion is advised. Recommended for adults and older teens with parental guidance.

SEATECT is proud to be one of the sponsors of this work.



Buy your tickets today:
<https://www.tickettailor.com/events/thegatetheater/group/1844247>

Story by Stephan Turner & Jerry Nelson

Commemorating 25 Years of UNSCR 1325

To mark the 25th anniversary of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, Positive Peace Activators and Rotarians María Julia Moreyra (Rotary Club to End Human Trafficking, Argentina) and Marcia Tarrago (Rotary Club Sembrador, Uruguay) presented a special [video](#) at the National School Rafael Hernández in La Plata, Buenos Aires Province.

[This video](#) brings together powerful testimonies from women who have applied Resolution 1325 in their work and reflects on both the progress achieved and the challenges that remain within the Women, Peace, and Security agenda. Participants included Rotary Peace Fellows, members of the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), Rotarians, gender-based violence experts, and two of the 1,000 women nominated for the 2005 Nobel Peace Prize by PeaceWomen Across the Globe (PWAG).

Students from the National School attended the presentation, highlighting Rotary's continued commitment to engaging and empowering the next generation.

Diplomatic representatives from Chile and Norway, a retired Argentine colonel with peacekeeping experience, and the president of local NGO Fulac also shared reflections on the significance of 25 years of UNSCR 1325.

This event was made possible through the Positive Peace Activators Program, a partnership between Rotary International and the Institute for Economics and Peace.

Presented by María Julia Moreyra

RCEHT BOARD SUMMARY: SEP/OCT/NOV 2025

Below are **topics** from the meetings on September 4, October 2, and November 5.

- **Brainstorming:** future speakers and action days
- **New members**
 - Board member: Mark Zoro (Member at Large)
 - Associate member: Brandi Voth
- **Projects and Funding**
 - Project Protect: educational program in Indonesia approved
 - Ghana: district grant update
 - Treasurer's report
 - Review of fundraising strategic priorities and plan
- **Economic Development Initiative update**

Progress with our joint venture in Zambia with Communities for Conservation and Enterprise Development (CCED). A full update will be given at a club meeting in February.
- **Public Relations**
 - Mary Mensah is doing an exceptional job editing speaker recordings and uploading them to our [YouTube](#) channel.
 - Mary Fiadese is doing a great job with our newsletter.

Rotary Club to End Human Trafficking Foundation News

- Seema Balwani joined the Foundation Board.
- Support the Lake Minnetonka Excelsior Rotary club with \$500 for their female empowerment project in Costa Rica: bread making ovens to be used for a new business by ladies in the community.
- Rotary Global Grant support: \$1,500 (\$500 from club, \$1,000 from two Board members) to support a menstrual dignity project in Uganda.
- Rotary Global Grant support: From Maple Grove Rotary: \$500 for clean water and improved sanitation for the rural village of Darou Salaam in Senegal.
- \$750 funding for Project Protect.

While linked to our club, the Foundation is a separate organization.

Shining a Light on an Invisible Crisis: Child Domestic Work

Child domestic work remains one of the most hidden forms of child labor—taking place behind closed doors and often overlooked in policy, research, and social protection systems. An estimated **17.2 million** children worldwide work as domestic workers, facing conditions that range from nurturing to dangerous, exploitative, or abusive.

On **December 2**, Free the Slaves and the Freedom Fund will host a global webinar, **Child Domestic Workers: Research and Practice**, to confront these challenges and elevate both evidence and action.

This two-part event brings together leading researchers, advocates, and practitioners from across Africa and Asia to explore what we know—and what we must do—to protect child domestic workers.

Session 1: Research – Understanding the Realities

Featuring experts whose work shapes global understanding of child domestic labor:

- Dr. Annabel Erulkar, Population Council — a leading authority on child marriage, migration, and domestic work
- Orondaam Otto, Founder, Slum2School Africa — whose organization has supported more than 685,000 children in underserved communities
- Aye Thiri Kyaw, LSHTM — presenting new research on harms and well-being using qualitative comparative analysis

Session 2: Practice – Innovations From the Field

On-the-ground leaders will share promising strategies from Nepal, Kenya, Myanmar, Ethiopia, Liberia, and Nigeria, including:

- Ruja Pokhrel, CWISH (Nepal) — pioneering child protection and labor-risk prevention
- Dr. Marta Furlan, Free the Slaves — translating research insights into community-led solutions

This webinar is designed for practitioners, policymakers, researchers, and anyone committed to child protection.

Child domestic workers deserve visibility, rights, and safety—and that begins with informed, evidence-based action.

Join this important conversation and help shape global solutions that protect children worldwide.

Register [here](#):

Submitted by Susan Burkholder

NEW MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



Brandi Voth

Brandi Voth is an entrepreneur, author, and social impact leader dedicated to empowering others to live with purpose. As the founder of The Power Hat Co. and The Power Project, she creates economic opportunities for survivors of trafficking and encourages purpose-driven leadership.

She seeks to join the RCEHT because the mission aligns closely with her work mentoring and employing survivors

Her experience leading social impact initiatives and collaborating with global partners through the Freedom Business Alliance equips her with practical insight and valuable resources. By joining the club, she aims to contribute her expertise to developing sustainable solutions and expanding economic empowerment for at-risk communities.

She is joining RCEHT as an associate member

MEMBERSHIP TYPES

Our membership types are as follows:

1. **Active Members** are full voting members.
2. **Branch members** are full voting members. 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. There is one full paying primary representative. Subsequent members from that organization can join and pay less. All are full voting members. 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 club's 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.

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 or contact our membership chair at membership@endHTrotaryclub.org.



EMPOWERING SURVIVORS THROUGH SKILLS, DIGNITY, AND OPPORTUNITY



The Rotary Club to End Human Trafficking is proud to lead a District 5950 grant that supports an economic development initiative in Ghana. This project is designed to equip women rescued from sex trafficking with the skills, confidence, and professional tools they need to build sustainable, dignified futures.

Through our partnership with Muslim Family Counseling Services (MFCS)—an organization engaged in outreach and rescue work—women have been identified and have started training. In addition to equipment, our grant funds scholarships so the ladies can focus on learning without relying on sex work for income.

A Comprehensive Training Program for Long-Term Success

Designed by Ghanaian branch members of our club who themselves exited the sex trade and rebuilt their lives, the curriculum reflects both lived experience and professional expertise. Four of these women—now thriving professionals at Theodora Africa—are generously giving their time to teach and mentor the participants. Theodora Africa is an organization that offers Virtual Assistant training as well as employment opportunities.

Rotary Collaboration

We are also collaborating with our host club in Ghana, The Rotary Club of Accra-Spintex. They will manage the purchase and distribution of student equipment, ensure transparency in fund disbursement, and work with MFCS to confirm that the training site is appropriate and fully equipped.

We would like to thank the Lake Minnetonka-Excelsior, Maple Grove, and Chanhassen Rotary Clubs. Their collaboration and donations in support of this grant allowed us to maximize our District's funding opportunities. We would also like to thank The Rotary Club of Edina and The Rotary Club of Excelsior who also donated funds in support of this grant. We could not make this happen without you!

How Can YOU Become a Part of This Successful Initiative?

Your donation to our Foundation directly strengthens this Ghana training program for trafficking survivors. Here is what your contribution makes possible:

- **\$50** – Provides a mattress for a trainee who does not have stable housing
- **\$600** – Funds trauma counseling for four trainees

These investments protect survivors today while empowering their independence for tomorrow.

DONATE TO OUR FOUNDATION

Our primary focus this year is our Economic Development initiative where we are looking to provide seed funding to support entrepreneurs starting businesses as options to trafficking.

THE TOTAL FUNDRAISING GOAL FOR OUR PROJECTS ARE \$10,000.

If just 1/2 of our mailing list gave \$100, we would blow past our goal. So please consider a donation now!

LINK FOR DONATIONS:

https://www.paypal.com/donate/?hosted_button_id=525MMAAWSPK54



ROAD TRIP

When possible, Erin Maloney tries to meet members of our virtual Rotary club "in person".

On a trip in September to see family and friends, Erin flew from Montréal, Québec to Nashville, Tennessee where she was able to meet Dr. Bassey Kooffreh, PhD and current RCEHT President. An assistant professor at [Fisk University](#), one of 99 historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) in the United States, Bassey introduced her to many of his colleagues in the Department of Criminal Justice where he gives courses. (Erin was thus happy to have her RCEHT business card to hand out!) Bassey and Erin smiled as they shared a bit of their mutual love of statistics. In addition, the two of them toured the renowned [Carl Van Vechten Gallery](#), one of many historical treasures on Fisk University campus.



Presented by Erin Maloney

A few days later on her way to Chicago, Illinois, Erin stopped by Albany, Illinois to see RCEHT Board member Toni Lucas, where they toured around her town. Toni also showed her the United Methodist Church where she is a minister and welcomed her as a guest to a monthly supper for "Twin Rivers After Five", a division of Stonecroft Ministries -- even making sure that Erin had vegetarian options! Erin also liked seeing the [Windmill Cultural Center](#) in the neighboring town of Fulton. Further, Erin enjoyed hearing more of Toni's life and was surprised to learn that she had lived many years near where Erin herself had grown up, in Southern Illinois.



Erin hopped on the plane from Chicago to Montréal, then returned to her home à l'Estrie du Québec. She enjoys finding RCEHT members when traveling "around the world" and encourages others to do the same!

CALENDAR & UPCOMING EVENTS

2025-26 LEADERSHIP TEAM

Our club is full of opportunities to serve. See below for a brief description of our many Board positions, committees and task forces.

Reach out to the RCEHT President via president@endhtrotaryclub.org with any questions or interest in helping! Good ideas don't get implemented without the hands to get the job done. Many thanks to those who are already stepping up to volunteer!

Welcome the 2025-2026 Board of Directors

President: Basseyy Kooffreh

Immediate Past President: Lisa Podolny, Michelle Seets & Karen Walkowski

President Elect: **OPEN**

Secretary: Michelle Seets

Treasurer: Karen Walkowski

Membership: **OPEN** - Lisa Podolny acting

Programs and Projects: Erin Maloney

Foundation Chair: Lisa Podolny

Fundraising: Mary Fiadese

PR: **OPEN**

Director(s) at Large: Maria Julia Moreyra, Mark Zorko, & 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

Laura Dryjanska

DATE

December 11, 2025 @7:00 AM CT

TOPIC

Psychological Perspectives on Human Trafficking

Visit our [website](#) to learn more

Current Committee make up for next term

- Economic Development: Michael Podolny
- Branch: OPEN
- Speaker: Maria Julia Moreyra
- Sunshine: Toni Lucas
- Social: Anne Delain Clark

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 know who is coming so we know to let them enter the meeting space.