

President's Letter

Dear Rotarians,

One of Rotary's greatest strengths is the ability of our members to come together to create lasting change, and The Rotary Foundation helps us transform dreams of change into reality.

From eradicating polio to building peace, much of the work we do around the world would not be possible without our continued support of our different Foundations.

The many foundations that exist within the rotary structure offer so many ways to change the world for the better. It is a great time to get to know your Foundation better and pursue causes that appeal to you.

Global grants support large international activities with sustainable, measurable outcomes in Rotary's areas of focus. By working together to respond to pressing community needs, clubs and districts strengthen their global partnerships.

District grants fund small-scale, short-term activities that address needs in your community and in communities abroad. Each district chooses which activities it will fund with these grants.

The Rotary Club to End Human Trafficking (RCEHT) also has its own Foundation that helps support projects around the world with a focus on economic development to prevent the scourge of human trafficking. Despite our Foundation's relative youth, this year alone our club has co-sponsored a global grant with the Rotary Club of Edina to prevent the illicit recruitment of the youth in Cuenca, Ecuador and co-sponsored two separate youth education programs in the states of Georgia and Florida.

Your gifts to our Foundation make these projects possible.

The Magic of Rotary does not appear out of nowhere. We create the magic with every new member inducted, every project completed, and every dollar donated to our Foundation.

Please join me in supporting The Rotary Foundation, and the RCEHT Foundation, and together, we will change the world for the better.

Yours in Rotary,
Lisa Podolny
Co-President 2024-2025
Rotary Club to End Human Trafficking



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Theodora Ghana Virtual Assistants (TGVA) is a Ghana-based social impact business. Its mission is to provide an exit for women who have had to resort to sex work to survive. It does this through a unique combination of training connected to direct employment. Further, the employment is providing virtual administrative services to small businesses and self-employed individuals in developed countries. This allows the women to be paid vastly more than they would get providing the same services in Ghana, a critical factor to give women a true, economically stable future.



TGVA's founder, Rotarian Michael Podolny, came to Ghana in February 2019. Attacking this problem of liberating women from sex work was far from his thoughts. However, upon arriving, he was introduced to the problem through others working to aid disadvantaged women. As he began to work with some of the women on a first-hand basis, he could see their incredible potential. He visualized the concept of using remote outsourced work as the driver to change the trajectory of their lives. Working with other Rotarians in Ghana, Michael developed a vision of not just employing these women, but empowering them through ownership. That led to the development of the Theodora program.

Today, TGVA has achieved goals few social impact enterprises have. It has transformed the lives of ten women in the past four years providing them the opportunity for a middle-class life in Ghana. It has achieved self-funding sustainability. The company's revenues provide 100% of the benefit (employment) to the women who participate in the program. How many social impact organizations can make that statement? The vision of employee ownership is just on the horizon. An Employee Ownership Trust is scheduled to be initiated in the first quarter of 2025. And the Theodora women have taken ownership of the mission to help women get free from sex work. They are all now members of the Rotary Club to End Human Trafficking with one sitting on the Board of Directors

None of this came easy. Our program was launched in April 2020 just as the Covid 19 pandemic was closing down our country and the United States. We had to scramble to figure out how to do training in a locked-down environment. Our funding dried up. We were forced to go to market with services before we were ready. Nonetheless, we persevered, overcame, and succeeded.

All this was accomplished because of an initial influx of capital from donations and fundraising. We are proud that we have a business we know can support us. But we are greedy. We want other Ghanaian women trapped in sex work to have the lifeline and future building we are enjoying. To do that we again need to raise new capital through additional donations and fundraising.

For all we have achieved, we have a lot more that needs to be done. The circumstances of our launch meant we raised less money than our plan called for. This led to compromises in the original model. The target for our current campaign is \$41,000. The goal of the 2025 campaign is to rectify some of these compromises. They are as follows.

- **Upgrade our computer systems** - Our current computer systems are outdated and do not support rapid work. They freeze during work hours and require many repairs. This causes frustrations and delays in the delivery of clients' work.
- **Add New Participants and Fulfill Our Mission to Help More Women** - We also plan on onboarding and training at least four more women. It takes six to nine months to fully onboard and train a participant to be fully utilized. During that period we need to pay trainers and provide them with a stipend so they stop sex work.
- **Improve Work Space and Work Conditions** - We also need to improve our working space. Our current office location is very far from where our people live due to the high price of office space. Most of the ladies come from afar and they have to sleep in the office to avoid the traffic and stress from commuting. This causes a lack of sleep because of the noises coming from the moving cars and traders. Others end up getting sick because there's no bed in the office for comfortable sleep.

We need your help because we are not yet able to make these kinds of investments alone. The women we are serving are more than statistics, they are mothers, daughters, sisters, and future leaders. The Theodora model has shown they can achieve and become self-sufficient, productive members of society.

We urge everyone to support us by donating to help us raise funds for the 2025 goal.

Your contribution offers more than financial aid, it offers HOPE, a path to FREEDOM, and the chance to DREAM again.

To donate kindly use this [link](#) or scan below



CLUB UPDATES



RCEHT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE GUIDE



THE ROTARY CLUB TO END HUMAN TRAFFICKING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE IS;

A Grassroots Business Formation and support system for fighting the root causes leading to trafficking.

- It provides training and funding to entrepreneurs in economically vulnerable areas.
- EDI goes beyond the business start-up and provides long-term guidance and support.
- We only work with programs that are already providing community assistance.

How can you help?

Stay aware of organizations and individuals that could be good collaborations with our program. These are:

- Rotary Clubs or other organizations looking for international projects to support.
- Rotary Clubs or other organizations that have funds committed for international projects.
- Kiva Loan or other small economic development donors.
- Rotary clubs or other organizations supporting international education programs that lack a job development component.

If you know of any of these, please bring them to the attention of:
Michael Podolny – michael.podolny@theodoraghana.com
Colin Christensen – colin@THNQ.ca
Gifty Amoako – gifty.amoako@theodoraghana.com

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.

CLUB FUNDRAISING DRIVE

The Rotary Club to End Human Trafficking (RCEHT) Board has identified three strategic priorities for the next 2 years. As with any organizational priorities, funding is usually required. With that in mind, we have estimated the financial needs to support these exciting initiatives. Because we are a small club with many of our members who come from countries where human trafficking is endemic, we cannot raise funds on our own. We are seeking your support AND ask that you reach out to your own networks in addition to ask them to support our club initiatives. Our initiatives for the next 2 years:

1. Economic Development: We are looking to provide seed funding to support entrepreneurs starting businesses as options to trafficking.

This Initiative:

- Focuses on geographic areas where trafficking is known to be a problem.
- Identifies candidates who are open to change and are ambitious despite the circumstances they are in.
- Recruits mentors who are passionate about the mission, empathetic, supportive, understand business, and are good teachers.
- Delivers core teaching (learning management system) in a manner easy for candidates to absorb.
- Provides capital and on-going support and community to overcome inevitable challenges.

FUNDING NEEDED for 2024-2026: \$2,000 USD

2. Support of our Club Branches and Branch members:

Our club has created “branches” in communities where we have a significant number of members. The goal is to maintain at least 2 branches with at least 10 people each. Our first branch in Ghana already has 12 people! Unfortunately, these members cannot afford the costs of membership, so we are looking for others to support these amazing people who have overcome so much and are improving their lives in their own countries.

There are two ways you can help:

1. Support an individual with their annual dues: 20 individuals at \$250 USD/year/person
2. Support a branch=2 branches at \$2,500 USD/year

FUNDING NEEDED for 2024-2026: \$5,000

3. Partner with other Rotary clubs for Rotary District and Global Grant matching grants

More clubs within our District are interested in projects that can impact other countries to end human trafficking. Our district has many clubs who are generous and great collaborators and know the power of leveraging dollars. Our club has already contributed \$500 to a grant that another Rotary Club was recently awarded for a Global grant of more than \$40,000. We want to continue to support great work with other clubs to increase the power of collaboration.

FUNDING GOAL FOR 2024-2026: \$2,000 USD

THE TOTAL FUNDRAISING GOAL FOR THESE PROJECTS ARE \$9,000. 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

President-Elect

We are thrilled to spotlight Mr. Bassey Kooffreh, who will serve as our club's President-Elect.

Mr. Kooffreh brings a wealth of academic excellence, professional experience, and visionary leadership to this role.

Currently a doctoral candidate and graduate research instructor in the Department of Criminal Justice and Legal Studies at the University of Mississippi, Mr. Kooffreh's expertise spans International Criminal Law, International Humanitarian Law, and Criminology.

His scholarly focus includes critical issues such as War, Armed Conflicts, Post-Conflict Reconstruction, Transnational Organized Crimes, and Legal Policy. His work has been widely recognized, with publications in prestigious peer-reviewed journals and presentations at leading conferences such as the American Society of Criminology (ASC) and the Southern Criminal Justice Association (SCJA).

Beyond his research, Mr. Kooffreh is an accomplished educator, having taught Criminal Law, Criminal Procedure, and Criminal Evidence across multiple jurisdictions. His academic journey began at the University of Calabar, where he earned both his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Law. Prior to his current academic pursuits, he spent over a decade as a legal expert and served as a Law lecturer at the University of Calabar in Nigeria.

As President-Elect, Mr. Kooffreh's deep understanding of legal systems and global criminal justice issues, coupled with his commitment to education and leadership, promises to bring a fresh and impactful perspective to our club. We look forward to seeing how his leadership will shape our future endeavors.

Congratulations to Mr. Kooffreh on your new position with the club!



Membership chair

We are thrilled to spotlight Antoinette "Toni" Lucas, our newly elected Membership Chair, whose journey and passion make her an inspiring addition to our leadership team. Nominated by the board, Toni brings a wealth of experience and a heart for justice to her new role.

Currently in her third career, Toni has worn many hats over the years, including legal secretary, office manager, and certified lay minister. Her diverse professional background is complemented by a rich personal life as a dual citizen of the USA and the UK, proud mother of four children, and a cherished matriarch to dozens of grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Justice is at the core of Toni's values, a commitment she has upheld for over a decade. Her interest in combating human trafficking was sparked by a powerful talk from Christine Caine more than 10 years ago. Since then, Toni has been a steadfast advocate for justice and a voice for the voiceless.

As Membership Chair, Toni's dedication and multifaceted skills promise to enrich our club's community, fostering a space where all members feel valued and supported. We are excited to see how her leadership will help us grow and thrive.

Welcome, Toni! We look forward to the impactful work ahead.

WEST AFRICAN BRANCH UPDATE

One of the primary goals of our Branches is to spread the word about Rotary Club to End Human Trafficking to Rotary Clubs in their areas. Benedicta Gbadegbe, Head of the West Africa Branch located in Accra Ghana has begun to do just that.

On November 9, Past President Rotarian Jonas Ayi of the Accra-Premier International Club (a powerful supporter of the EDI program in Ghana) invited Benedicta to attend their club's meeting which featured the visit of the current District Governor, Florence Maame Hagan. Benedicta was asked to talk about her work with Rotary Club to End Human Trafficking and Theodora Africa. To paraphrase Mr. Ayi,

"Today I attended our meeting with Benedicta. She was most appreciated. She gave an eloquent and clear introduction of RCEHT and Theodora. Our members were highly appreciative of her comments and I felt so proud."

Benedicta is an outstanding example of the results programs fighting trafficking can show. She is a powerful voice for our club and our mission.

Benedicta and Mr. Ayi are third and fourth respectively on row standing



This is a Youth summit Veronica McDaniel hosted in the metro Atlanta, Georgia area on December 2nd.



ANTI-HUMAN TRAFFICKING YOUTH SUMMIT

MONDAY, DECEMBER 2, 4:30-7:30 PM

Atlanta International School
Lademacher Performing Arts Center (LPAC) Ground Floor, Main Building
2890 N. Fulton Dr, Atlanta, GA 30305

STUDENTS IN GRADES 5-12 AND TEACHERS OF ALL LEVELS ARE INVITED TO LEARN ABOUT THE FIGHT TO END HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND FIND WAYS TO HELP.

After the general session, students will be divided into breakout rooms for discussion.

Students will leave with plans for forming a student-led group and/or plans for #myfreedomday in March 2025.

SPEAKERS INCLUDE:

Alia El-Sawi,
Department of Homeland
Security Investigations

Titania Jordan
Bark Technologies

Brooke Ruffin,
Street Grace

STUDENT LEADERS:

Hana Gertsacov (Galloway)
Kaixuan Guo (AIS)
Ellie Ryan (Riverwood High School)

RSVP Here
by November 20 or
email
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.



EXAMINING FACTORS PREDICTING SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AMONG VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Bassey, our club's president-elect, attended the 2024 Annual Meeting of the American Society of Criminology in San Francisco Marriott Marquis on Wednesday 13th November, 2024. He presented a paper titled "Examining Factors Predicting Sexual Exploitation Among Victims of Human Trafficking" at the meeting.



The document focuses on identifying and understanding the factors that predict sexual exploitation among victims of human trafficking. Key aspects of the study include the methods traffickers use to control victims, the types of sexual services victims are coerced into, the nature of the relationship between victims and traffickers, and how different female age groups are impacted.

The study uses data from the Counter-Trafficking Data Collaborative (CTDC) covering 2002-2019, and applies Biderman's theory of coercion to analyze the control mechanisms used by traffickers, such as debt bondage, threats, sexual abuse, and psychological manipulation. The research also identifies which age groups are more vulnerable, revealing that younger females are at higher risk of sexual exploitation.

The study concludes that traffickers' methods of control, such as the use of threats, sexual abuse, and false promises, significantly predict sexual exploitation. Additionally, the study finds that victim-recruiter relationships, including intimate partnerships, play a crucial role in the likelihood of exploitation. The findings emphasize the importance of focusing on age vulnerability, highlighting that older women (30 and above) are less likely to be trafficked for sexual exploitation.

The paper suggests that law enforcement and victim assistance programs could use these insights to better target interventions and prevent exploitation.

TO READ MORE, click the [link](#).

ERIN MALONEY FINALIST FOR VOLUNTEER PRIZE IN QUÉBEC

RCEHT member **Erin Maloney** was surprised to have been nominated for a Québec-wide prize. She was even more surprised when she found out that she was one of three finalists for a 2024 Solange-Chalvin prize, in the category of "Volunteer who assisted people in learning French".

Erin was nominated by the [Adult Education Center that serves her region](#), basically the towns and villages surrounding the city of Sherbrooke, Québec -- especially Magog, Val-des-Sources and Windsor.



As background, Erin moved to Windsor (Québec) during the summer of 2021 with an intermediate knowledge of French. In January 2022 she enrolled in the province-sponsored French courses, finishing the final "advanced" level 18 months later.

Erin found the courses rewarding because she learned not only French but also more about the culture of living in Québec.

Before even finishing her courses, Erin discovered that the teachers at the Center where she started her classes were struggling to teach the 25+ students in the evening courses at Val-des-Sources. She proposed to her former teacher Madame Marie-Mai Barlow that perhaps she could somehow help, as a sort of "volunteer teachers' aide".

Erin volunteered there one evening a week for over a year. She found it to be a "win-win" situation, in that she was able to improve her own French while assisting the teachers and students, the latter being primarily temporary workers, who even in "free" places like Québec can be victims of human trafficking.

Erin would like to continue volunteering with the Center. Unfortunately, however, French courses for temporary workers have been suspended for an undetermined period, starting November 1, 2024.

Nevertheless, the ceremony took place on Friday, November 8 in Montréal with Monsieur Jean-François Roberge, the Minister of Immigration, Francisation and Integration. Erin was very happy that Madame Sophie Mailhot, the person from the Center who nominated her, could attend the ceremony. They are together in the photo.

Information about the Solange-Chalvin prize as well as the winners and finalists in each category is available [here in French](#).



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.

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.

CLUB BASICS

The Board meets the 1st Thursday of every month. We hold General Club meetings the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of every month. We have many leadership opportunities and ways to get involved and support club operations.

ROTARY'S ORIGIN STORY

The first Rotary club was started in Chicago, Illinois, USA, in 1905 by an attorney named Paul Harris. Harris wanted to bring together a group of professionals with different backgrounds and skills as a way to exchange ideas and form meaningful acquaintances. In August 1910, the 16 Rotary clubs then in the United States formed the National Association of Rotary Clubs, now Rotary International. In 1912, Rotary expanded to a few more countries, and by July 1925, Rotary clubs existed on six continents. Today, there are over 46,000 clubs worldwide with over 1.4 million members.

Rotary was founded on principles that remain at the heart of the organization today. These principles reflect our core values — integrity, diversity, service, leadership, and fellowship, or friendship. Our core values emerge as themes in our guiding principles.

For more information about Rotary's history, go to rotary.org/history.

DID YOU KNOW...

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



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

ACTION DAY

Presented by co-presidents Lisa, Michelle and Karen.

DATE

Dec 12, 2024 @ 7:00 AM CT (US / Canada)

TOPIC

Rotary 101.

Come learn about Rotary. Who we are, how we started and some of our history.

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