

# ROTARY CLUB TO END HUMAN TRAFFICKING

# SEP/OCT 2025 NEWSLETTER



## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear Rotarians,

Thank you for your continued support, commitment, and passion for our Rotary Club to Ending Human Trafficking. Each of you plays a vital role in advancing our mission and strengthening the impact of our club. As I reflect on how far we have come and the determination with which our club has stayed its course, I am deeply inspired by the spirit of service and togetherness that unites us.



We are People of Action. One of Rotary's greatest strengths is the ability of members to come together to create lasting change and transform dreams of progress into reality. From eradicating polio to building peace, much of Rotary's global impact would not be possible without the dedication of members.

As we continue through the 2025–2026 Rotary year, I ask for your support in achieving our Rotary Club to Ending Human Trafficking Priority Goals. These include strengthening club membership, implementing our strategic action plan, contributing to the Annual Fund, engaging in social activities and service projects, and maintaining a strong online presence. In addition, we will prioritize leadership development and active participation in District training opportunities.

More clubs within and outside of our District are eager to collaborate with us on projects that address human trafficking across borders. Our District is home to generous partners who recognize the power of working together and leveraging resources to achieve lasting impact. We will continue to nurture these collaborations, amplifying the effectiveness of our projects and expanding our global reach.

I am especially grateful for the enthusiasm of our new members from around the world, who have embraced our mission with dedication and fresh ideas. Each member brings unique talents and perspectives to our club. I encourage you to actively participate, join a committee, and share your skills.

As Rotarians, we connect the world. Let us remember that no challenge is too big for us. Together, we are committed to creating lasting change and tackling one of the world's most pressing crises of human trafficking. Through raising awareness, educating children, youth, and communities, reducing risk factors that make populations vulnerable, and stopping the demand, we can make a difference.

**Together—we can make an even bigger impact.**

Yours in Rotary,  
Bassey Kooffreh.

President 2025–2026

Rotary Club to End Human Trafficking

## HIGHLIGHTS

[PRESIDENT'S LETTER](#)

[CONVENTION RECAP](#)

[SUCCESS STORY](#)

[BOARD UPDATE/CLUB NEWS](#)

[NEW MEMBER SPOTLIGHT](#)

[MAIN ARTICLE](#)

[EDI UPDATE](#)

[CALENDAR](#)

# Economic Development Initiative (EDI) Update



The Economic Development Initiative is moving forward with exciting momentum. Our first project is underway, and we are in promising discussions with three additional organizations. We are also collaborating closely with a fourth partner on our District Small International grant application.

## **1. New Project — Partnership with Communities for Conservation and Enterprise (CCED), Zambia:**

EDI has launched its first grassroots pilot project in the Kaluba Villages of Zambia, in partnership with CCED, to combat human trafficking by fostering sustainable economic opportunity. This initiative will help local youth build interconnected agricultural enterprises, supplying fresh produce to their own communities while creating long-term livelihoods. An executive summary appears below.

## **2. Prospect — She Steps Forward Coaching (SSFC):**

SSFC is a faith-based organization operating in Nairobi, Kenya, that supports women entrepreneurs through their first year of business. They are interested in partnering with us for ongoing mentorship and collaborative business growth support.

## **3. Prospect — Lift Up the Vulnerable (LUV):**

LUV is considering adding EDI's entrepreneur training program to its high school curriculum in South Sudan to improve job prospects for their graduates.

## **4. Partnership — Muslim Family Counseling Service (MFCS)**

While not yet directly linked to EDI, MFCS (Kumasi & Accra, Ghana) is partnering with RCEHT on a grant to support targeted job training to give women who are currently working on the streets an economic option. Members from our club, who work at Theodora Africa, have developed and are offering training and support for these ladies in Ghana! MFCS has also expressed interest in future EDI programs. We hope this collaboration will expand into other trafficking prevention efforts through economic development.

## **Executive Summary — CCED & EDI Cooperative Project**

The Rotary Club to End Human Trafficking's EDI, in partnership with CCED, is launching a grassroots pilot in Zambia's Kaluba Villages—home to 18,000 people living on less than \$1 a day. Economic vulnerability drives trafficking and exploitation here: women are pushed into survival prostitution, and young men are drawn into illegal poaching.

CCED, trusted in the region for over a decade, has already implemented a profitable beekeeping venture. Building on this success, the new project addresses food insecurity by training 40 promising young leaders to form 10 small, interconnected agricultural enterprises. These groups will receive business training, farming inputs, and ongoing mentorship, enabling them to supply fresh produce to their own communities—reducing reliance on distant markets and creating sustainable livelihoods. A three-year analysis projects profitability in the first year. This initiative has the potential to become a scalable model for rural economic transformation—replacing exploitation with dignity, self-reliance, and resilience.



# A Reluctant Rotarian Walks into an International Rotary Convention

**Erin Maloney** (RCEHT Board Member) attended the 2025 International Rotary Convention in Calgary, Canada in June. It seemed like a good time to go, since Erin lives in the province of Québec (though over 3500 kilometers due east of Calgary). More importantly, she wanted to support her brother Mark Maloney, who was finishing up his four-year term on the Rotary Foundation's Board of Trustees.

For those of you who do not remember, Erin is a "reluctant Rotarian". Her first views of Rotary were mixed. She always believed in Service -- though more "in spite of" herself rather than "above" herself. But, she did not see that actually being a Rotarian really helped in Service, or at least in the kind of Service she believed in.

It was in attending the 2020 online Aloha! Rotary Convention that she first heard about clubs that are cause-based and international. She was cautiously excited, and asked to join RCEHT.

Below are a few positive and negative thoughts about the convention (according to Erin Maloney):

Though her mother-tongue is English, Erin was disappointed that the people who planned the Calgary Convention did not speak one word of French. She understands that the province of Alberta is anglophone, but the federal government of Canada is bilingual (French and English) -- at least in theory. She likes to see at least a bonjour mentioned in federal events throughout Canada. She was happy that they promoted the First Nations and their languages, but she would also like to see the promotion of francophones as a rich and important part of Canadian culture.

A few people at the House of Friendship pressured her to "join their side". Erin grew up in the US Midwest, where people tend to think for a very long time before deciding anything... such as in seasons or harvests. Pressure for her actually acts in an opposite way, making her want to run away.



Erin loved meeting people involved with anti-human trafficking, especially RCEHT associate member Seema Balwani and activist Jennifer Montgomery, from the **Magenta Girls Initiative**. The three of them were able to spend quite a bit of time together.

Four of the speakers at the opening, general, or closing sessions stood out to her:

- Nobel Peace Laureate Ms. Tawakkol Karman, who encouraged -- or ordered? -- us each to be the voice of his or her own conscience
- Actress and feminist Ms. Geena Davis, who encouraged us to "quit dying from politeness"
- Dr. Isabel Scarinci, MD from the University of Alabama at Birmingham, who talked about HPV awareness and eliminating cervical cancer
- Dr. Rosemarie Truglio, PhD and Senior Vice President of Curriculum and Content for the PBS children's show Sesame Street (in the United States), who told us to shift away from perfectionism and not to be afraid to make mistakes

Erin is happy that she went to the convention, and looks forward to the one in her "district" in Minnesota in 2028.

# NEW MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



**David C DeMers** has been a Rotarian for 14 years and recently was District Governor for District 7120. Spent 35 years in law enforcement.

“I have a passion for educating people, especially youth, about human trafficking. Working on bringing a curriculum for students in New York State.”



**David C DeMers**

David is joining RCEHT as an Associate member.



**Clare D Lillis**

**Clare Lillis** joined Rotary in 1996 and has 28 years of perfect attendance and has held many club and district leadership roles, including District Governor (D5960) 2007-08.

In 2017, he helped form two district human trafficking task forces along with Karen Walkowski and continued working in the D5960 task force as we work to educate our clubs and engage them in projects fighting HT in their communities.

“I was the president of the board of directors of a faith-based nonprofit, Renew Hope, that advocates for and mentors women survivors of human trafficking, and I continue serving on the board.”

He is joining RCEHT as an Associate member.





This summer, I completed a 500-mile bike journey to Lourdes, France, to raise awareness and funds against trafficking and modern slavery. My goal was to finish what I started two years ago from North Norfolk, England. I support Voices4Freedom, a U.S.-based nonprofit that has freed 6,000 individuals from descent-based slavery in NW India. Their approach involves educating children and empowering communities to fight against slavery. This time, I had support from a friend with a campervan, though I faced challenges due to a French heatwave with temperatures reaching 100°F.



Please consider giving to this worthy 401c cause and become a modern abolitionist giving people back their agency and freedom. You can truly set the downtrodden free.

The link to donate to this Voices4Freedom project is here  
<https://funraise4freedom.funraise.org/fundraiser/simon-john>

For readers' amusement (although at the time, not always entirely to mine), below are photos of two of the places to which a quirk of my biking satnav sent me; and below those, a sublime view along the Issigny river in St Germain de Confolens in Charente, France.



The journey had its challenges, including wrong turns, lack of rest spots, steep hills, and extreme heat, which led to heatstroke and a minor accident requiring hospital treatment. However, these struggles paled in comparison to the daily suffering of the enslaved, who lack the upsides of life's ups and downs, which we often take for granted.

As my grandson was later to observe I certainly eat well for my troubles! If not in France then where? I seemed to eat like a horse and yet 10 days after the ride ended had still lost more than half a stone. The ride was full of dense woodlands, pretty hidden rustic lanes, field after field of sunflowers and the vineyards of Cognac. There were expansive views of lovely rivers,

Some of the place names were unforgettable including Castelmoron sur Lot where I enjoyed a morning coffee and sheltered from about the only downpour I can remember.

I cycled through picturesque medieval villages, past joyous weddings and peaceful churchyards. The South remains a much softer France than the North. And every uphill climb has its reward: the downhill dash - at one point I recorded 42mph. On one day my son and grandson joined me in Bergerac and we had a good ride together before an excellent late lunch.

It was satisfying to have completed this pilgrimage after being hit by a bus halfway last time."

Submitted by Simon John

# Club News

## 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.

## RCEHT BOARD SUMMARY: AUG/SEP 2025

There was no RCEHT Board meeting in July. Below are **topics** from the meeting on August 7.

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

- **Welcoming of 2025-26 RCEHT President Bassey Kooffreh**
- **Two new members:**
  - David DeMers (Associate)
  - Clare Lillis (Associate)
- **Programs & Projects:** Voted to endorse **Street Grace**, a faith-based nonprofit organization that is eradicating the sexual exploitation of children through prevention, protection, policy, and pursuit
- **EDI (Economic Development Initiative):**
  - A new project in Zambia
  - Two prospects: in Kenya and Sudan
- **Treasurer's update**
  - Dues coming in & payments going out
  - Account Balances:
    - Operating: \$10,000
    - Foundation \$9,600

**Upcoming club meeting topics:** reviewed and planned

## 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.





# DIGNITY KIT      Restoring the Dignity of Women & Girls in Uganda

## PROJECT:

### Global Grant #2579763



**Host Club:** Rotary Club of Kasangati, D9213, Uganda

**International Partner:** Community Action Against Human Trafficking, D5710, Kansas, USA

This project was brought forth by **Faron Barr**, one of our Associate Members, member of Topeka South Rotary Club and Rotary Past Governor of District 5710 -- 2020-2021.

## Project Overview

The Dignity Kit Project addresses the challenge of menstrual hygiene management for women and girls in Uganda. By producing and distributing reusable sanitary pads, the initiative empowers girls and young women in both urban (Mengo Kisenyi, Kampala) and rural (Bwera Sub County, Kasese District) communities.

This effort will enable girls to stay in school, avoid health risks, and reduce vulnerability to coercive situations—all while restoring dignity and breaking down harmful stigma.

## The Challenge

In Uganda, cultural taboos often prevent open discussion about menstruation and reproductive health. Many girls lack the knowledge, resources, and support to manage their menstrual cycles safely and confidently.

Key barriers include:

- **Cost:** Disposable pads cost approximately \$1.50 per month, unaffordable for families living on less than \$1 a day.
- **Access:** Over 80% of women and girls in underserved areas lack consistent access to sanitary pads.
- **Health Risks:** Improvised materials—rags, tissues, or leaves—are unsanitary, ineffective, and can lead to infection.
- **Education Impact:** A girl may miss up to 45 school days per year due to lack of sanitary pads, contributing to school dropout, early marriage, and even entry into sex work.

## Project Outcomes

1. Reduced stigma surrounding menstruation in project communities.
2. Increased availability of quality, reusable sanitary pads.
3. Improved menstrual hygiene management among girls and young women.
4. Fewer infections related to menstrual hygiene.

Monitoring and evaluation will be led by Jennifer Montgomery, Rotary Peace Fellow and founder of Magenta Girls Initiative.

## Implementation Plan

- Hire two professional trainers.
- Train 20 women (10 in Mengo, 10 in Bwera) in reusable pad production.
- Purchase and distribute 20 sewing machines plus needles, thread, and related supplies.
- Create a sustainable training-of-trainers model to expand impact across communities.

This grant is ready to submit, but additional financial support is needed to fully fund the work.

## Learn More

Faron and Jennifer presented on this project at our September 11, 2025, meeting at 7:00 AM CT on Zoom.

If you or your club members are interested in learning more, please visit our [YouTube page](#).

**VISIT RCEHT SOCIAL MEDIA PAGES.**



# How Students can Partner with Street Grace to Prevent Human Trafficking in Your Community



Presented By Veronica McDaniel

Thank you for your interest in learning how your community can take action against human trafficking. As a new school year begins, we encourage students and schools to consider partnering with [Street Grace](#) as part of their prevention efforts.

As Executive Director of International Student Initiatives, I'm excited to welcome you to the anti-human trafficking movement and introduce some of our youth programs that empower students to protect themselves and advocate for others.

## Youth Leadership Academy (YLA)

Now in its third edition and available online, [YLA](#) is designed for middle and high school students. Here's a quick overview:

- 6–7 modules, each 30–45 minutes
- Flexible delivery: in-person (led by Street Grace or your trained staff with a facilitator guide) or online
- Student workbooks available in English and Spanish
- Completely free of charge

## Resources for Schools & Students

We've developed tools to help students become advocates for themselves and their peers:

- [Student-Led Group Playbook](#) – a guide for students interested in starting anti-trafficking clubs at their schools
- [Ethical Consumption Guide for Teens](#) – to help young people make informed, socially responsible choices
- Downloadable resources available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#)

## Get Connected

Join our growing network—now reaching schools in 33 countries across six continents.

Follow us on Instagram:

**@streetgrace\_studentinitiatives**

Educators and students can fill out this [form](#) to be part of our expanding global community. Together, we can equip the next generation to stand against human trafficking.

Street Grace is the most recent group our club has endorsed, and we are excited to promote their efforts!

## 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).





# 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](mailto: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:** Bassey Kooffreh

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

**President Elect:** OPEN

**Secretary:** Michelle Seets

**Treasurer:** Karen Walkowski

**Membership:** Toni Lucas

**Programs and Projects:** Erin Maloney

**Foundation Chair:** Lisa Podolny

**Fundraising:** Mary Fiadese

**PR:** Open Position

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

## 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

Mark Maloney - RI President 2019-20

### DATE

September 25, 2025 @7:00 AM CT

### TOPIC

**Rotary Foundation news**

The impact of changes in international development funding upon Rotary Foundation programs

## 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](mailto:President@endHTrotaryclub.org) know who is coming so we know to let them enter the meeting space.