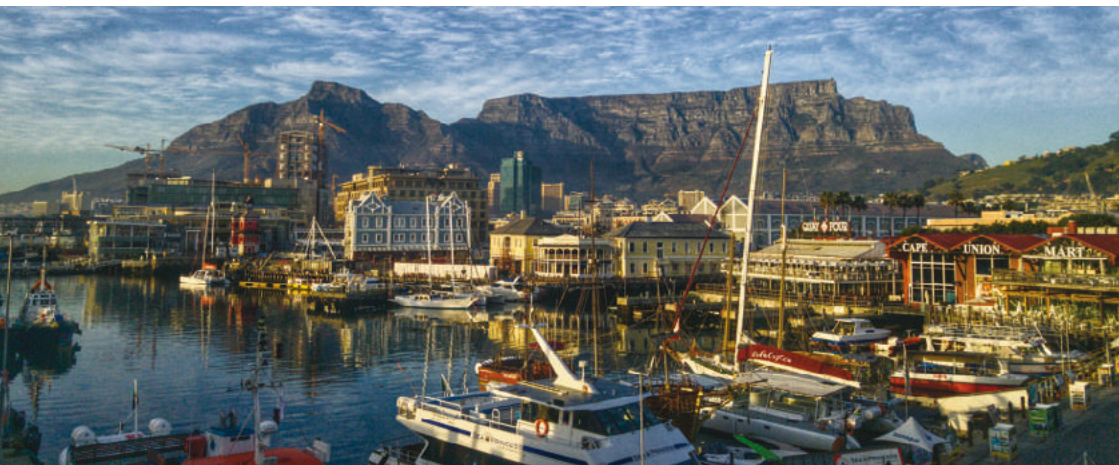


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WELCOME

Sarah van Heerden - Editor in Chief

Welcome to 2025! The dawn of a new year always brings with it a sense of fresh beginnings, new opportunities and hope for what lies ahead. It's an exciting time and as I sit down to write this, I'm reminded of how much we have to be proud of and grateful for – as individuals, as Rotarians and as citizens of the world.

Yes, it's easy to feel weighed down by the division and discontent we see around us. News feeds are flooded with conflict, crises and chaos and negativity seems to creep into every corner. But here's the thing – we get to choose what we let into our minds and hearts. Let's not allow negativity to live rent-free in our lives. Instead, let's take a moment to pause, breathe and focus on the good.

Why not try a little “negativity detox” this year? Start by setting some boundaries: turn off notifications from those doom-scrolling apps, skip the comment section on divisive posts and fill your days with uplifting stories instead. Practise gratitude – take five minutes each day to jot down what you're thankful for, no matter how big or small. And most importantly, take

action. When you focus on making a positive impact, even in small ways, it's amazing how your perspective shifts... and if all else fails, look to Rotary. Everywhere you turn, there are stories of people who refuse to let negativity define them. They're rolling up their sleeves, working together and making meaningful change. Whether it's providing clean water, mentoring young leaders, tackling environmental issues or simply showing compassion to those in need, Rotarians across the world are proof that there's far more good than bad out there.

This issue is filled with examples of that goodness – service, innovation and determination. I hope they inspire you as much as they've inspired me. Let's start this year by focusing on what unites us rather than what divides us. Together, we can make 2025 a year of hope, positivity and impact.

On behalf of myself and the Rotary Africa team, I wish you a fulfilling and inspiring year ahead. Here's to doing good, spreading joy and making a difference.

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Administration: Sharon Robertson

Chairperson: Andy Gray. **Directors:**

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Postal address: PO Box 563, Westville, 3630, South Africa

WhatsApp: +27 (0)64 278 1848

Email: rotaryafrica@mweb.co.za

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Stephanie Urchick
President, Rotary International

RIPPLES OF HOPE AND CHANGE

This month, as we come together for the International Assembly and the Presidential Peace Conference, we celebrate The Magic of Rotary - a unique blend of global connection, vision and action that empowers us to create lasting change.

One of the most inspiring examples is our Rotary Peace Fellowship programme, a cornerstone of Rotary's mission to build a more peaceful and just world.

For more than 23 years, Rotary Peace Fellowships have been transforming communities. Our Rotary Peace Centres, hosted at leading universities around the globe, have educated over 1,800 fellows who now work in more than 140 countries.

These centres cultivate expertise in fields like conflict resolution, sustainable development and peacebuilding, preparing fellows to tackle some of the world's most pressing challenges. This programme exemplifies how Rotary turns vision into action, creating a ripple effect of hope and change.

This month, during the Presidential Peace

Conference, we celebrate a significant milestone with the opening of our newest peace centre in Istanbul. This centre will focus on training leaders to address peacebuilding challenges in the Middle East and North Africa, further extending Rotary's impact.

Peace fellows are dedicated champions of transformation, addressing critical issues such as refugee resettlement, youth and women's empowerment and reconciliation in conflict zones. Many founded vital organisations or hold leadership roles in governments, NGOs and international institutions like the United Nations and World Bank.

One inspiring story is that of Ntang Julius Meleng, a 2024 Rotary Peace Fellow at Makerere University in Uganda. Through his Social Change Initiative, Julius has worked to empower young people in Cameroon to take active roles in peacebuilding and leadership.

His project provided training in conflict prevention, civic engagement and leadership to youths and community officials in areas affected by conflict, equipping people to drive sustainable peace efforts.

Julius harnessed Rotary's global network to overcome obstacles, including limited funding and security risks and make a meaningful impact.

The Rotary Peace Fellowship gave Julius the tools and support to turn his vision into reality. His work embodies The Magic of Rotary - the transformative power of connecting people, sharing resources and uniting for a common purpose.

As we reflect on the achievements of our peace fellows and celebrate Rotary's enduring commitment to peace, let us also recognise the role that everyone in our network of 1.2 million members plays in creating magic through service.

Together, we can amplify our impact, inspire new generations of leaders and build a brighter, more peaceful future.



By some measures, great progress has been made in building more peaceful societies around the world. Yet the reality of ongoing regional wars, skirmishes and violence globally reminds us how far we still have to go. These conflicts affect the humanity of us all, whether they occur far from us or in our own communities.

So, what can Rotary do to build peace?

As a global force for peace and conflict prevention, Rotary addresses the root causes of conflict. Our role at the 1945 United Nations charter is a testament to this enduring commitment. Another cornerstone of this work is the Rotary Peace Centres programme. Through The Rotary Foundation, these seven centres provide fully funded fellowships, empowering individuals to address the complex challenges of conflict and development.

More than 1,800 alumni now work in over 140 countries as champions of peace, creating lasting change in their communities. Consider alumni like Pablo Cuevas, a 2015 peace fellow who leads the Paraguay office of the International Organisation for Migration, aiding those displaced by crises. Leni Kinzli, a 2023 graduate, advocates for Sudan's humanitarian needs with the United Nations World Food Programme. Yuki Daizumoto, a 2007 peace fellow, supports life-changing agricultural and livelihood projects in

Afghanistan with the Japan International Cooperation Agency. These people embody Rotary's investment in peace.

This month, the Foundation Trustees will consider a plan to establish our eighth Rotary Peace Centre, in Asia, as part of our vision to have peace centres on every inhabited continent by 2030. But our commitment extends beyond the peace centres. Through Rotary's partnership with the Institute for Economics and Peace, we have trained over 300 Positive Peace Activators from 60 countries. Our forgiveness and social cohesion curricula help members heal communities. Through our Foundation grants and service, Rotary members are fostering peace by engaging with youths, strengthening civil society and resolving core issues that can lead to conflict.

At President Stephanie Urchick's Peace Conference in Istanbul this month, we will celebrate this work and the first class of the Otto and Fran Walter Rotary Peace Centre at Bahçeşehir University.

Remember that you are also ambassadors of peace through service projects, exchange programmes and as supporters of The Rotary Foundation.

My wish for 2025 is for peace to take root and flourish ever more widely, with Rotary playing an increasingly meaningful role in that noble pursuit.



Rotaractors will lead again at the Rotary International Convention in Calgary this June. Photo courtesy of Dani Zavala.

2025 Rotary International Convention Countdown

ROTARACTOR FRIENDS FOR LIFE

Rotaractors bring the party! The proof is in their photos and videos documenting the Rotaractor experience at the Rotary International Convention. Group shots of members flashing peace signs or blowing kisses are captioned “Rotaract friendship for life” or “My family from around the world.”

These friends pose at host city landmarks, sometimes holding shopping bags and crave-worthy drinks like tall cups of milky boba tea. “If you are able to go to one convention, at least try it,” says Daniel Zavala, a member of the Rotaract Club of San Joaquín based out of Venezuela. “Try it because it will change your life. You are going to plan your vacations all around the convention.” We can’t wait to see Rotaractors’ cowboy hat selfies in Canada at the rodeo or on the iconic Peace Bridge in Calgary.

Whether they’re at their first convention or

their fifth, Rotaractors say they are wowed by the flag ceremony at the opening session and the inspiring speakers. One scheduled for Calgary is David LaMotte, who gave a TEDx talk and wrote a book exploring how heroes don’t change the world on their own. He took a break from a folk music career to become a Rotary Peace Fellow.

Rotaractors’ convention snapshots show that the serious work of Rotary is full of joy. They don’t simply attend the convention — they help lead it, staffing House of Friendship booths and speaking at breakout sessions. In Singapore last year, Rotaractors leading a session about transitioning to a Rotary club suggested mutual empathy to strengthen bonds among members of different ages. Rotaractors will lead again in Calgary 21-25 June. After all, Rotary + action = Rotaract.



Still the Magic of Rotary!

Dr Patrick Coleman - Rotary Foundation
Major Gifts Advisor

If we have learned anything over the past few years, it is that news must be confirmed by reliable sources – and such reliability is rarely found on social media platforms!

recently appeared on my Facebook feed.

Two photos of the Statue of Liberty, supposedly taken more than 100 years apart, are being shared with claims that they provide evidence disproving significant sea level rise – a well-documented consequence of climate change.

CLAIM: Two photos of the Statue of Liberty, taken in 1898 and 2017, disprove sea level rise.

FACT: Viral images fail to account for tidal fluctuations, while New York's sea level rise has been extensively documented.

The term “fake news” refers to false stories that are deliberately spread, often to generate advertising revenue. Sadly, people are

Here is one example that has been circulating on the internet for a few years and

inclined to believe almost anything, as long as it aligns with their pre-existing opinions.



Even mainstream media has been accused of spreading fake news to boost audiences and, by extension, advertising revenue.

In the real world, we have ways to confirm whether information is valid or fabricated. Trusted sources like scientists, doctors, teachers, or engineers often help distinguish fact from fiction. However, even some of these sources have been known to use “creative facts” to support or refute reality.

Biblically speaking (you knew this was coming!), the scriptural law of witnesses requires that “in the mouth of two or three individuals shall every word be established” (Deuteronomy 19:15). This principle is reiterated in 2 Corinthians 13:1 and 1 Timothy 5:19. Even then, false witnesses – or perjurers – are not hard to find. Fame and fortune can make dishonesty easier to perpetuate.

Even social media “fact checkers” have been found to overreach their remit, allowing political or emotional biases to cloud their judgment of the facts. META/Facebook is

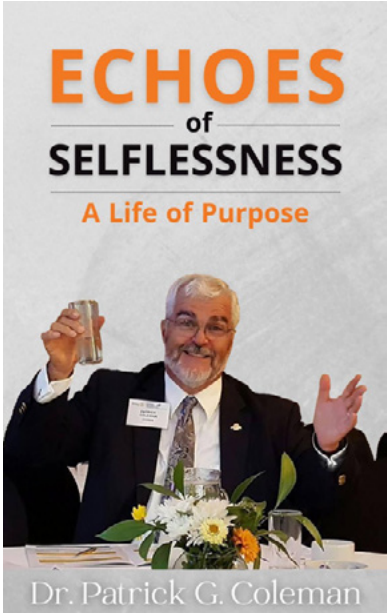
now transitioning from fact-checking to “community notes” as a replacement. Will this work? I am sceptical. Does it mean the majority gets to decide if something is real?

In Rotary, our Four-Way Test emphasises as its primary point: “Is it the truth?” In my book, I wrote, “The Founding Fathers of Rotary had incredible foresight when they adopted and stressed High Ethical Standards as one of our key values.” (*Echoes of Selflessness – A Life of Purpose*; Chapter 25 – *Rotary Values and Ethics*).

These high ethical standards remain the cornerstone of our reputation as we prepare to celebrate Rotary’s 120th anniversary.

Let us continue to strive for honesty, fairness, goodwill and mutual community benefit in everything we do – both in and outside of Rotary activities.

Service Above Self is more than a motto, it is a way of life. We live it because we choose the “Magic of Rotary” over the illusion of success!



ECHOES
of
SELFLESSNESS
A Life of Purpose

Dr. Patrick G. Coleman

ON SALE NOW!

My hope is that once you have read this book, you will appreciate that it is possible to live a life of service whilst empowering others and additionally being successful in your personal and professional life. You will learn to leave footprints of care and compassion as your legacy - Geeta Manek

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Peacebuilding through **Diverse Voices**

Interview by Gülin Eva Geloğulları,
Journalist & Rotary Peace Fellow

Whenever I interact with Nigerian people, I am reminded of the famous TED Talk, *The Danger of a Single Story*, by author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. In her speech, she highlights

the importance of diverse narratives and warns against the reductive influence of stereotypes on our perceptions of ethnicity, socio-cultural backgrounds and national identity. She underscores the value of listening to multiple stories to foster a deeper and more nuanced understanding of others.

This month, we have the privilege of introducing Olusina Ajao, a Rotary Peace Fellow from Nigeria. Olusina is one of many dedicated Nigerian peacebuilders striving to create a better society. He serves in the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, applying his interdisciplinary training to promote peacebuilding in his work. He is a strong advocate for amplifying the diverse voices of Nigerian youth and harnessing their energy as a force for peace. A graduate of the Rotary Peace Centre at Makerere University in 2022, Olusina remains an active contributor to the Rotary Peace Fellowship Alumni Association's Africa Chapter.

How did you become interested in peacebuilding?

Growing up in Nigeria, I witnessed firsthand the devastating impacts of violent conflicts on individuals and communities. Entire communities have been ravaged by violence, resulting in killings, the destruction of livelihoods and the loss of properties. My own experience of being forcefully displaced during my undergraduate studies due to one of the conflicts in North-Central Nigeria deepened my understanding of the complexities of violent conflict. This personal experience ignited a passion within me to pursue a career in peacebuilding.

Tell us about your current role and how it relates to peacebuilding.

I work with the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, a law enforcement agency, where I serve as the Deputy Head of the Gender Unit. This position allows me to draw on my peacebuilding expertise to promote gender mainstreaming, gender equity and youth empowerment, as well as to address gender-based violence. Additionally, I work as a crisis management officer, collaborating with other experts to implement interventions for crisis incidents across Nigeria.

What do you enjoy most about working

with youth? Can you share a challenge you faced and how you overcame it?

Youth make up a significant portion of the world's population. Many find themselves victims of conflict, participants in disputes, or instruments of peacebuilding. Many young people are also deeply dissatisfied with societal conditions and often vulnerable to being drawn into violent conflict.

My work with youth focuses on raising awareness about the devastating effects of conflict, fostering conflict prevention and equipping them with essential peacebuilding skills. I believe that engaging and empowering young people through peace education and training is crucial to transforming them into agents of peace and development.

One significant challenge I've faced is addressing the deeply ingrained frustrations of some youths who feel marginalised. To overcome this, I employ a combination of dialogue, peace education and practical opportunities to empower them, encouraging their active participation in community-building activities.

Did any course at Makerere University significantly impact your career? What advice would you give to new peace fellows starting this programme?

I was fortunate to be part of the first cohort at the Makerere University Peace Centre in 2021. One unique aspect of the programme is its blend of theoretical knowledge and practical field experiences, which are carefully designed to build the capacities of Peace Fellows.

Courses such as conflict analysis, youth in conflict, gender and women in conflict and inter-religion studies were especially instrumental in shaping my career. These courses provided me with firsthand knowledge and expertise, which have been invaluable on my peacebuilding journey.

To new fellows, I would advise making the most of this opportunity by dedicating their time and energy to fully embrace the



Olusina Ajao emphasises the importance of raising awareness about the devastating effects of conflict, promoting conflict prevention and equipping young people with essential peacebuilding skills. He believes that engaging and empowering youth through peace education and training is vital to transforming them into agents of peace and development.

programme. Grasp every available skill and piece of knowledge, as this fellowship is uniquely designed to build your capacity and expertise in peacebuilding.

If you had to highlight a unique trait of Nigerians, what would it be?

Nigeria's uniqueness lies in its ability to maintain unity amidst its remarkable diversity. The country is home to over 500 languages and numerous ethnic and cultural groups, yet Nigerians have developed the resilience to thrive together despite adversity. This capacity

for unity in diversity makes Nigeria a model of resilience.

Nigerians are also renowned for their hospitality and generosity, making visitors feel welcome and at home. Other nations can learn from Nigeria's ability to celebrate differences while fostering harmony and coexistence.

How do you define peace?

Peace is a state of freedom from all forms of violence and threats, where everyone can thrive in harmony, with their fundamental human rights upheld.

2026/27 Rotary Peace Fellowship applications open

Support local leaders

The Rotary Peace Fellowship develops leaders dedicated to preventing and resolving conflicts across the globe. Each year, Rotary selects up to 130 peace and development leaders to receive fully funded academic fellowships at one of its peace centres.

These centres offer tailored curricula, including a master's degree programme and a professional development certificate programme, aimed at equipping fellows with the skills needed to foster peace in their communities and beyond.

The application process for the 2026-27 Rotary Peace Fellowship opens in February 2025. Prospective candidates are encouraged to prepare their applications and submit them to their respective Rotary districts by **31 May 2025**.

To learn more about the Rotary Peace Fellowship or to apply, visit www.rotary.org/en/our-programs/peace-fellowships.



By Etelka Lehoczyk

As Sybil Bailor was preparing to begin her term as 2023/24 president of the Rotary Club of Freetown (D9101, Sierra Leone), she faced an immediate challenge. Not only were her club's members missing meetings, but many had left the country entirely.

"We were coming up to the general elections in Sierra Leone. There is usually tension and unrest around election time," she says. "Most of our members travelled out of the country during the elections. We needed to strategise how to engage members and continue our meetings."

It was an all-too-familiar problem. The struggle to stay in touch with far-flung loved ones is widespread in Sierra Leone. The country's civil war, which lasted from 1991 to 2002, displaced an estimated 2 million people, about half the population.

But Bailor found that another catastrophic event, the COVID-19 pandemic, had indirectly provided a way forward. Online gatherings had become an option. By holding meetings over video calls for a few months, the club reached members travelling in other countries and connected with people who'd left Sierra Leone years ago.

"We had former members from the Sierra

Leonean diaspora who were able to join meetings as guests - even non-Sierra Leoneans were joining," Bailor says. "We had people from Nigeria, Australia and other parts of the world."

The members of the Freetown club may be hard to reach at times, but they're consistently enthusiastic. Chartered in 1963, the club is the oldest in Sierra Leone and it has sponsored a variety of ambitious projects, including one that provides access to clean water.

This effort is essential in Sierra Leone, which faces a widespread water crisis. About a third of the population lacks access to basic drinking water services and must travel far to collect water or else drink from unprotected sources such as rivers and ponds. Drinking contaminated water leads to diarrhoeal disease, one of the country's main causes of death.

To address this, the Freetown club partnered with the Rotary Club of Fishers (D6560, USA) on a project called Water is Life. Since the project began in 2008, the clubs have funded more than 200 borehole wells for schools, hospitals and communities. Borehole wells are narrower and deeper than traditional wells, so they're more reliable water sources.

"We identify communities that really need facilities. We did quite a lot in schools, because



Members of the Rotary Club of Freetown, Sierra Leone, Christian Kamara, Christopher Forster and Sylvia Bailor (a relative of Sybil Bailor).

sanitation is important in schools,” club member Christian Kamara says. “We hand over the boreholes to communities and also train them in terms of how to sustain the wells.” In addition to this training, the club encourages recipient communities to form maintenance committees that charge users a small amount of money so that, when something goes wrong with the pump, they have money to fix it.

The club also oversaw the expansion of a small dam in the nearby town of Hastings. The old structure wasn’t functioning optimally and the town’s population was growing. Forced to collect water from impure sources, residents were developing health problems at increasing rates.

We asked, “How do we ensure that we provide water to that community,” says Kamara. “We made the dam much bigger, so that it’s been able to service the community. The source of the water is up in the mountains. Now the community is able to collect much more water

from that stream.”

Club member Christopher Forster, a member of The Rotary Foundation Cadre of Technical Advisers, was particularly proud of the dam project because of something one of the Hastings residents told him. “Somebody from the community said he’s lived there for about 30 years and Rotary was the very first organisation that came to the community and offered to give them something without asking for anything in return,” he says.

The club’s members were also excited about three projects that promoted women’s health and economic empowerment. They sponsored multiple cervical cancer screening events last year in the Freetown area and elsewhere in Sierra Leone. In 2022 they launched a programme called Helping Babies Breathe in cooperation with the Rotary Club of Palm Harbor (D6950, USA). It has trained more than 650 nurses, midwives and other health workers to resuscitate babies who aren’t breathing at

birth, a leading cause of death in Sierra Leone.

Then there's an upcoming project to teach local girls traditional dyeing and soap making, skills they can use to earn a living. The club is cooperating with the Rotary Club of Prospect/Goshen (D6710, USA), which has contributed \$6,000 to the planned \$30,000 budget.

"Our girls are vulnerable in Sierra Leone," says Nemata Majeks-Walker, who served as the club's first female president, in 2002/03. "Instead of being street girls, instead of being unemployed, we want them to be able to engage in some skill that will give them a livelihood," she says.

Meanwhile, the club continues to hold a

mix of in-person and online meetings. Some are hybrid events, with some participants attending in person and others joining via the internet. Even though the elections have passed, many members still travel outside the country regularly to visit family, says Lara Taylor-Pearce, the club's vice president.

"Between June and November, people are away on vacation. If you want to talk to people from December until May, they are in town," she says. "We're all buddy-buddies to a large extent. We like to chitchat. I prefer the physical meetings when I'm in town, but when I'm away, the online meetings really work for me."



Healing in a Divided World 2025 PRESIDENTIAL PEACE CONFERENCE

Come celebrate the new Rotary Peace Center, and connect with others committed to peacebuilding at this special, one-time event led by Rotary International President Stephanie Urchick in Istanbul, Türkiye, 20-22 February.

Attend the conference to build on Rotary's contributions to promoting peace by exploring:

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- Technology, media, and peacebuilding
- Environmental issues in peacebuilding
- Making peace last



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“Clubs and districts have access to tremendous expertise across the globe through Rotary Action Groups, the Cadre of Technical Advisers, and district resource networks. These collaborations can support a club through the entire project cycle.”

The **ROTARY ACTION PLAN** INCREASE OUR ABILITY TO **ADAPT** WITH HAUWA ABBAS

Hauwa Abbas, of the Rotary Club of Abuja Metro, Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria, is serving as a member of the RI Programs Committee through 2027, is a member of The Rotary Foundation Cadre of Technical Advisers, and serves on the board of the Rotary Action Group on Mental Health Initiatives. She has also served District 9125 as assistant governor and international service chair. She's a public health consultant who founded the Silver Lining for the Needy Initiative, which is dedicated to improving living standards in Nigeria.

Q: Why should clubs care about their impact?

HAUWA: Impact is important for clubs to consider because the program you're trying to develop or do has the potential to create positive long-term change and provide measurable improvements in the community that wouldn't have happened otherwise. The best way to approach impact is to involve the community by engaging with the gatekeepers through interviews, surveys, or focus group discussions. This will help identify gaps and guide planning. Community assessment is vital for all intended interventions. We may go into a community thinking X is what they need but discover that they have far more pressing needs.

Q: What do clubs need to do to focus on impact?

HAUWA: The first thing is to build a good team. Having a good team with different skill sets, like technology, programming, financing, and writing, gives whatever you're about to begin a head start.

The second thing is to ensure that we facilitate learning. In my experience, a mindset of adaptation and flexibility is important in anything you do, especially when working with a group of volunteers. Things will not always go your way. Being able to respond with a positive attitude to setbacks and challenges and being willing to explore creative ways to achieve set goals are part of the learning process and also translate to personal growth.

There are also hundreds of courses available on the Rotary Learning Center, something many members are not aware of. I always encourage clubs to ask their members to go on the Learning Center to do the training related to their particular committee. They'll gain more technical knowledge or skills toward whatever it is they want to plan.

And the third thing is to collaborate. I cannot overemphasize the power of collaboration, especially with our Rotary network. Clubs and districts have access to tremendous expertise across the globe through Rotary Action Groups, the Cadre of Technical Advisers, and district resource networks. These collaborations can support a club through the entire project cycle. Clubs also need to be able to identify corporate organizations and other NGOs that have the same shared vision or values that they can partner with. Financial contributions aren't the only benefit of partner

collaborations. Working with government partners can enrich the impact and sustainability of a project. Collaboration means that whatever you do is going to have a bigger impact and can actually be scaled up.

Q: You've taken us through why our clubs should care about impact, but can you tell us how Rotary members should think about impact?

HAUWA: I'll use the word *collaboration* again. Clubs should think about impact through collaboration. Sometimes, people feel like they can't combine their interests into one. You'll see people who are more passionate about the environment, others who are passionate about health, and others who are passionate about education. But there's no reason why they can't all be integrated into one program or multiple activities.

Rotary clubs should also involve Interact clubs or Rotaract clubs. It's another avenue to involve them in your programs and gives you more hands on deck. So why not collaborate with the Rotaract community or your Rotary Community Corps as well? That actually increases volunteer input as well as the number of volunteers involved.

Developing and implementing an effective project requires planning, acquiring resources, promotion, and the evaluation of results. Rotary can guide you step by step through your next project, no matter the scope, from start to finish. Visit rotary.org/actionplan to learn more about impact.



**Learn what your club can do at
rotary.org/actionplan**



Light a Fire Under Your Club

Members say they thrive with clear, specific goals and the continuity they provide

A rainbow of colours brightens the scorecards Hilda Addah shows members of the Rotary Club of Accra-South (D9104, Ghana). The activity is a monthly exercise to let members know how the club is doing on its goals.

Red on the homemade scorecards means a goal is behind schedule, while yellow reflects progress is on track and green indicates a pace ahead of schedule. The system has been in place for about five years and Addah, the club president, says it's helping to reveal achievement gaps and drive improvement. Committee members are motivated to keep their goals out of the red.

Many successful clubs have one thing in common: goal setting. When club leaders plan for the future, they provide their club with direction and purpose. Setting goals in areas such as membership growth, service projects and club experience motivates members and inspires them to work together with a common

purpose.

Rotary Club Central makes it simple. Accra-South club leaders set and track their goals in this online goal-setting tool for Rotary and Rotaract clubs. “Rotary Club Central is a very simple and user-friendly tool,” Addah says. “It helps me as a leader to follow and track progress.”

While club leaders can use Rotary Club Central to set goals and record accomplishments, members can use it to view the club's progress. New club leaders can use previous goals to make informed decisions about the club's future and set up to three years' worth of goals. They can adjust goals as needed, always planning three years ahead.

Planning for multiple years is important to ensure continuity and ease transitions in leadership.

“Some things, which come out of strategic planning, you can't do in a short period of

time,” says Tony Winter, secretary and past president of the Rotary Club of Batavia (D6440, USA). “We also deliberately wanted some goals to stretch out longer to span different leadership teams and instil consistency in our club.”

To start setting goals in Rotary Club Central, club leaders can use the club’s current situation as the baseline and its strategic plan as a guide for the next three years. Clubs should make sure incoming leaders have a My Rotary account and report their role in My Rotary to ensure they have access to the online tool.

The Batavia club learned there’s no such thing as too much communication. It decided in 2021 to use Rotary’s Club Health Check to kick-start the goal-setting process. The club sought input from the dozen new members who had joined during the COVID-19 pandemic and was thrilled when most of them took part in a visioning session, Winter says. The club used the feedback to set goals, create a strategy and develop an action plan.

“The information we got from that session was vital in telling us, in combination with the health check, what we needed to start doing, what we needed to keep doing and what we needed to change,” says Winter. “It was something we had never done before. It was a big step forward and gave us maybe a dozen

items to work on over the next three years.”

Quantifying goals and regularly reporting progress to members can light a fire under a club, Winter says. “There’s a big difference between saying, this year let’s do some social events and this year we are going to do six social events,” he says. “Once you put that number on it, it becomes somebody’s responsibility to get that done. When you don’t quantify it, it’s just a statement.”

Club President Margaret Perreault instituted a quarterly assembly this year to report to members on the club’s progress, complementing the updates featured in the club newsletter.

“Overcommunicating is a healthy strategy for a club,” Perreault says.

The Batavia club also uses Rotary’s Member Satisfaction Survey at least once a year to fine-tune objectives and identify new needs.

“It’s an ongoing challenge. People evolve, things evolve,” Winter says. “You need to get out in front of things. You have to constantly communicate back to the club. It’s the only way to plan.”

- ARNOLD R. GRAHL

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To support long-term planning, RI directors will appoint regional plan team leads to coordinate customised plans for their regions, aligned with Rotary’s Action Plan. District leaders will share their region’s plan with presidents-elect to use in their goal setting. Start planning your club’s future at rotary.org/clubcentral

Coming up...

25 APRIL 2025

ROTARY CLUB OF WORCESTER (D9350) 25th of April 2025. The GiGi Classic is a golf tournament for ladies that CANNOT play golf. It is a day filled with loads of prizes and lots of laughs. For more information please contact Marcelle 083 290 9677 or Leonie 072 268 3299.

www.gigiclassic.co.za

Love

Beyond Borders

The surprise proposal that connected two Rotary districts.



The newly engaged couple, Richard Kalungi and Barbara Nyakato.



Bev Frieslich with Richard, Barbara and President Owen Govender.



The happy couple with some of the Rotarians involved in the 'undercover mission': Marge Upfold, Lee-Ann Govender, Bev Frieslich, Richard Kalungi, President Owen Govender, Barbara Nyakato, Ray White, Gillian Anderson, Peter Gray, Susan O'Hagan Ward.



Love has a unique way of transcending boundaries and for Rotarians Richard Kalungi and Barbara Nyakato, it bridged the distance between Uganda and South Africa in the most unforgettable way, writes *Kim Gardner*.

It all began with an email. Dr Richard Kalungi, a medical doctor, social entrepreneur and dedicated member of the Rotary Club of Kampala South (D9213), sent a heartfelt plea to Bev Frieslich of the Rotary Club of Cape of Good Hope (D9350). He wanted to propose to his girlfriend, Barbara Nyakato, who is also a Rotarian from Kampala South, during her visit to Cape Town. "I don't do this because I'm rich, but because I believe it will be an amazing way to start our marriage journey," he wrote in his email.

His vision was clear: a surprise proposal in a picturesque location, with the enthusiastic support of Rotary members to make it extraordinary.

The email sparked a chain of events that showcased Rotary's global spirit of unity. Bev, along with the Cape of Good Hope Rotarians, quickly rallied to make Richard's dream a reality. "The response from our club was an enthusiastic 'Yes! Let's do it!'" Bev recalled.

Richard's meticulous plan included key elements: a beautiful location, natural flowers, a diamond ring and a celebration dinner. With these ideas in mind, the wheels were set in motion. Richard's excitement was palpable as he shared, "I'm working around the clock to secure funds for my flight and accommodation." His determination to make this moment unforgettable was inspiring.

Richard arrived in Cape Town on 1 December and was hosted by Bev in her home for three nights. Together, they shopped for the perfect ring and a new outfit to mark the special occasion. Meanwhile, Barbara was blissfully unaware of the elaborate 'undercover' plans unfolding behind the scenes.

On 3 December, everything was set. Barbara was invited to Bev's home under the guise of being welcomed as a visiting Rotarian. Richard's belongings were hidden and he quietly made his

way to Fish Hoek Beach, where the proposal would take place.

As Barbara arrived, unsuspecting of the surprise awaiting her, Bev drove her to the catwalk, a scenic spot overlooking the ocean. "She seemed quite at ease and not suspecting any of the intrigue that had gone before," Bev recounted. But the moment Barbara saw Richard waiting for her on the catwalk, the truth dawned. Tears of joy streamed down her face as she took in the sight of Richard, kneeling with a sparkling diamond ring in hand.

"Who can resist a man on his knee with a diamond ring?" Bev exclaimed. Overcome with emotion, Barbara accepted the proposal amidst cheers and applause from Rotarians and onlookers alike. Even passengers on a passing train joined in, their shouts of glee adding to the celebratory atmosphere.

The newly engaged couple, accompanied by their Rotarian family, retired to the Galley, a local venue where a celebration dinner awaited. Laughter, toasts and heartfelt speeches filled the room as everyone shared in the joy of the occasion. Professional photographer Justine Creswell, a soon-to-be Rotarian, captured the magic of the day with stunning photographs that will forever preserve the memories.

Reflecting on the experience, Bev said, "This was Rotary inter-district collaboration at its best. It was a perfect exercise in enthusiastic teamwork and support on all sides."

For Richard and Barbara, this surprise proposal was more than an engagement; it was a testament to their shared values of service, love and unity. As they embark on this new chapter together, their story serves as a beautiful reminder that love knows no borders and that, with a little help from friends, dreams can become reality.



In November, Rotarians from South Africa, Botswana, Eswatini, Mozambique, Italy, Malta and San Marino gathered for the signing of a Inter-Country Committee (ICC) agreement. These agreements represent a bold commitment to fostering peace, collaboration and sustainable development across borders.

At the ceremony, Rotary leaders emphasised the significance of this partnership. District Governor George Senosha (D9400) echoed these sentiments, calling the signing a historic milestone. “This MOU is a beacon of hope and a catalyst for action. It will bridge gaps, foster

peace and drive meaningful transformation in countless lives.”

Video presentations highlighting the work Rotary has already undertaken in these countries, preceded the formal signing of the agreement.

As the ceremony concluded, attendees were reminded of Paul Harris’ words: “Friendship was the foundation rock on which Rotary was built and tolerance is the element which holds it together.”

This signing was not just about diplomacy - it was about people coming together to shape a brighter future.

Join the Movement for Peace

2nd Africa ICC Peace Forum, Cape Town 2025

The Rotary Inter-Country Committee invites all Rotarians to attend the 2nd Africa ICC Peace Forum, at Cape Town’s Vineyard Hotel from 25-27 April, 2025. This event will bring together thought leaders, Rotarians and changemakers dedicated to fostering peace and sustainable development across Africa and beyond. Attendees can look forward to dynamic discussions, inspiring keynote addresses, expert panels, impactful networking opportunities and guided tours, including the ‘Footsteps of Africa’ bespoke tour and a visit to the Nelson Mandela Exhibition at Cape Town City Hall. Be part of a movement to shape Africa’s future. Book your place today: <https://iccppeaceforum-capetown.org/>



**TOGETHER, WE
END POLIO**



A Collaborative Triumph

To celebrate World Polio Day, Rotarians joined a webinar (titled Polio Briefing for Rotarians in the African Region) that was hosted by the World Health Organisation Regional Office for Africa (WHO AFRO).

It was tailored for Rotarians in the African Region and highlighted Rotary's commitment to eradicating polio, showcasing a robust blend of funding, milestones achieved and cross-border collaboration efforts that have positioned Africa closer to a polio-free future.

FUNDING: THE LIFEBLOOD OF POLIO ERADICATION

Rotary International has demonstrated its unwavering support through substantial financial contributions. To date, over \$176.6 million has been allocated towards polio outbreak response efforts. For the fiscal year 2023/24 alone, Rotary's funding reached an impressive \$66 million. These funds have supported critical activities, including social mobilisation, campaign monitoring, deploying technical surges, conducting training sessions and strengthening disease surveillance.

Countries like the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Madagascar, Nigeria and

Mozambique have been key beneficiaries. These investments have empowered local health systems to mount swift responses to outbreaks, enhancing the region's capacity to combat polio and other preventable diseases.

MILESTONES ACHIEVED: A TESTAMENT TO PROGRESS

The African region's polio eradication efforts have delivered remarkable results. Since 2022, an astounding 186.9 million children have received multiple doses of oral polio vaccine (OPV), with 409.3 million doses administered in total. These achievements have been pivotal in maintaining immunity and interrupting virus transmission.

As of 2024, Africa has reported zero cases of wild poliovirus for the second consecutive year. This success follows the closure of the wild poliovirus outbreak in Southern Africa in May 2024, reaffirming the continent's polio-free status. While the region has made significant strides, challenges remain, particularly in eradicating variant poliovirus type 2 (cVDPV2) outbreaks, which require sustained momentum and high-quality immunisation campaigns.

COLLABORATION: THE BACKBONE



The Rotary Club of Flamingo-Welkom (D9370) held an impactful fundraising event for polio eradication. The club created a replica of an iron lung and invited 10 business people to spend 30 minutes in the iron lung. While in the iron lung, the participants collected donations for their 'medical expenses.' This innovative approach proved highly successful, raising nearly R34,000 for polio eradication. Above: Zack Lombard checks on patient Marti Will.

OF SUCCESS

Rotary's success in Africa is a testament to the power of collaboration. Countries such as Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe have worked together tirelessly, demonstrating that collective action yields unparalleled results. Programmes in Zambia have emphasised hygiene education to combat both polio and cholera, while Chad has engaged government officials and traditional leaders to foster community awareness.

In Mali, innovative strategies such as establishing polio clubs in schools and engaging women's organisations have extended the reach of vaccination campaigns. Meanwhile, in the DRC, health workers operating in security-challenged regions have been equipped with distinctive vests for identification, ensuring uninterrupted access to vulnerable communities.

Rotary's cross-border initiatives, such as the Lake Chad Basin Plan, have further enhanced collaboration. By synchronising

vaccination campaigns and engaging high-risk populations, these efforts have strengthened routine immunisations and addressed gaps in vaccination coverage.

SUSTAINING THE MOMENTUM

Despite significant achievements, the path to complete eradication requires sustained efforts. To close the remaining gaps, Rotary and its partners must continue prioritising community engagement, robust surveillance and timely funding. Additionally, supplementary immunisation activities using the novel oral polio vaccine type 2 (nOPV2) will be critical in halting variant outbreaks.

As Rotarians reflect on the accomplishments shared during the briefing, one message resonates clearly: together, we end polio. By leveraging the collective will, expertise and resources of Rotary International and its partners, a polio-free Africa is not just a goal - it is an imminent reality.



To learn more about the club's project go to: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mlh_jY9x5Jk

Hands of Hope

For many, the loss of a limb can be a life-altering event, filled with challenges and uncertainty. But for Silas Kiprop, a determined 21-year-old clinical medicine and surgery student from Kenya, it became a story of resilience, generosity and newfound hope - thanks to the incredible work of the Ellen Meadows Prosthetic Hand Foundation and the dedicated Rotarians who made his transformation possible.

Silas lost his dominant hand in a tragic farming accident in 2022. The accident could have ended his aspirations of becoming a medical professional, yet his spirit remained unshaken. For over a year, he adapted to life's challenges, determined to continue his education and serve others in the healthcare field.

Then, in September 2023, hope arrived. Through the LN4 Hand Project and the members of the Rotary Club of Nairobi Utumishi (D9212) Silas received his first

prosthetic hand at a medical camp in Kilifi. The impact was immediate - he could now perform everyday tasks with greater ease, regaining a sense of independence he once thought lost. But as he adjusted, he realised he needed a smaller prosthetic to enhance comfort and functionality.

His request was met with the same compassion that first changed his life. Thanks to the swift coordination between the LN4 Hand Project, the Rotary Club of Nairobi Utumishi and Dr Rotarian Mussadiq Mir, Silas received a perfectly-sized prosthetic hand in Nairobi in September 2024. The moment was life changing.

"I am already experiencing the benefits of the new found functionality it provides," Silas shared in a heartfelt letter to the LN4 Team. "This generous gift has not only given me hope but also empowered me to continue my journey with renewed determination."



The Rotary Club of Pinetown's dedication to improving education in KwaNdengezi has positively impacted approximately 10,000 children in a community of 100,000 people.

Full STEM Ahead!

For over a decade, the Rotary Club of Pinetown (D9370) has been transforming education in the KwaNdengezi township through a range of impactful initiatives. One of its flagship projects is the KwaNdengezi Learning Centre, established in partnership with Ambassadorial Scholar Dr Erin Raab, a Stanford PhD graduate who played a crucial role in inspiring and coordinating the project. This centre, equipped with repurposed containers and classrooms, serves as a hub for education, providing vital resources to the community.

To address transport challenges faced by students and teachers, the club has also established the Khethiwe Satellite Learning Centre, located four kilometres away from the main facility, near large schools.

A key aspect of the club's efforts is its emphasis on promoting STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) education. Classrooms are equipped with TVs and USB drives containing the ITEL (Intelligence Transfer Educator to Learner) system. It provides a comprehensive range of educational materials (focusing on STEM subjects) and includes lectures, past exam papers and study aids.

The club also organises Saturday classes across four local schools, where trained educators and volunteers provide additional support in STEM. These sessions currently attract an average of 30 learners per school each week.

To bridge the gap between tertiary education and township schools, the Rotary Club of Pinetown has partnered with the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), led by Professor Joseph Rukema. This aims to integrate university students into township educational projects, providing mentorship and support to high school learners. It began with an introductory meeting attended by 100 university students, faculty staff and Rotarians, marking the start of a significant partnership. UKZN students now work closely with the Rotary club, bringing their expertise and enthusiasm to help learners navigate the complexities of STEM subjects.

In addition to mentoring, the partnership has resulted in the creation of a monthly Youth Forum, spearheaded by President Margaret Keogh. The forum provides a platform where learners connect with university mentors, receive guidance and gain insights into higher education opportunities.



A large contingent of stakeholders, including Rotarians, 10 village heads, community leaders, the local chief and representatives from World Vision Zimbabwe visited Musingwa Primary School to view the completed phase one.



A MEANINGFUL JOURNEY

Members of the Rotary Club of Highlands (D9210), led by President Henry Tsambalagwa and Past District Governor Stella Dongo, embarked on a remarkable 680km return trip to Muzarabani.

Musingwa Primary School, located in the Muzarabani District, northeast of the Muzarabani growth point, has been the focus of an ambitious project. In partnership with the Rotary Club of Ocala (D6970, USA) and World Vision Zimbabwe, the club has spearheaded the construction of two classrooms and ablation blocks as part of an ongoing initiative to uplift the school and its surrounding community.

In November, the members of the Rotary

Club of Highlands visited the project site to witness the completion of the first phase, which included two newly constructed classrooms and essential ablation facilities. PDG Stella Dongo ensured the day's logistics were seamlessly managed, allowing the event to run smoothly.

The Musingwa Project is the flagship initiative of the Rotary Club of Highlands. Funded through a Global Grant valued at an impressive US\$120,000 from The Rotary Foundation, the project is already transforming lives. While the first phase is complete, the club is eagerly preparing for the next stage, which will involve drilling a borehole to provide clean water to the school and community.



The visitors enjoyed a township tour under the guidance of local tour operator Gerald Sigcu from Thole Tours.

Canadians in Knysna

A group of 12 Canadians recently descended upon Knysna as part of a Rotary Friendship Exchange. Initiated by Rotary in 1984, this is a programme which affords Rotarians the chance to visit other countries and stay in the homes of local Rotarians. It's a great way to make new friendships across international borders, learn about a different country and gain insight into local community projects run by the host Rotary clubs.

This group came from four clubs, the Rotary Clubs of Kentville, New Minas Sunrise, St John's East and Florenceville (D7815), situated in the Eastern Maritime area of Canada.

Their tour started in Cape Town where they visited some of the beautiful sites of the Mother City before departing for Mossel Bay, Oudtshoorn and George and then moving on

to Knysna. They were met on the afternoon of Monday 11 November and enjoyed an alfresco supper at the home of Mike Mills and his wife Sue, of the Rotary Club of Knysna (D9350). They even had a taste of home on meeting Knysna's Past President Herb Hunter and his wife Janet, who hail from the same area of Canada. The visitors were impressed with South African hospitality!

Tuesday saw the Canadians and their hosts heading off on a township tour, led by Gerald Sigcu from Thole Tours. The first stop was the Learning Tree Pre-School in Khayaletu, a Rotary-supported project. Sigcu then invited the group to his home in Concordia where he had laid on tastings of various traditional Xhosa dishes. This was followed by a drumming session at the LoveLife Centre, much to the

amusement of some workers who watched. The regular Tuesday lunch meeting of the Rotary Club of Knysna (D9350), at the Knysna Yacht Club, enabled the visitors to learn about the structure and activities of the club and to engage with a broader group of local Rotarians, while enjoying views of the estuary.

A trip to Plettenberg Bay was arranged for the next day. It began at the Wednesday market

at Old Nick Village and included a tour of the Mungo weaving mill. This was followed by lunch with members of the Rotary Club of Plettenberg Bay (D9350) at Zoox in the Bitou River valley and a guided historical tour, which the Plettenberg Bay club had helped to demarcate with plaques and QR codes.

After returning to Knysna, the touring group split up to explore South Africa further.



Knysna's seven Interact clubs are as diverse as the schools they represent, differing in size, culture and the needs of their communities.

A Legacy of Service

The Rotary Club of Knysna (D9350) opened a new avenue of service in 1994 by chartering the first Interact club at Oakhill College, an independent school that was just two years old at the time. The headmaster, keen to host an exchange student, saw the establishment of an Interact club as the perfect step forward.

Recognising the opportunities Interact offers to high school learners, Rotarians worked to expand the programme. In 1996, a second Interact club was chartered at Knysna High School, a public school in town. By 1999,

two more clubs were established at township schools: Knysna Sekondêr in Hornlee and Percy Mdala in Khayaletu.

During this time, the Knysna Rotary Cycle Race had become an annual event and Interact members from the four clubs were invited to assist with registration. Their contributions were rewarded financially, with the funds serving as a resource for future service projects. Selected Interactors also began attending programmes such as Adventure into Citizenship and RYLA (Rotary Youth Leadership Awards) in Cape



The Interact Club of Oakhill celebrated its 30th anniversary and asked its 30 past presidents to each donate R30 towards an anniversary project. The response was overwhelming and a significant amount was raised. Many former presidents also shared video clips of their Interact memories, which were inspiring for the current Interactors and staff members alike.

Town, returning enriched by the experience.

In 2005, the Interact Club of Heatherhill was formed, thanks to John Dickens, a young Zimbabwean who had participated in Youth Exchange in Canada. Upon returning, he was eager to share the benefits of Interact. His parents had moved to Knysna during his time abroad and he became the club's first president. Their inaugural project was Rally to Read, an initiative by a South African car company to promote literacy in rural schools. Heatherhill has since changed ownership and is now Keurbosch, but its small Interact club continues to serve the community.

Knysna Montessori School, which later expanded to include a high school, chartered its Interact club in 2008. The club initiated a unique project, hosting visiting teams in the school hostel during holidays. They played a key role during the 2014 District Conference (Discon), providing accommodation for exchange students and a Vocational Training Team (VTT) group. The Interactors impressed everyone by servicing the rooms and preparing breakfasts daily.

The most recent addition to Knysna's Interact

clubs is Concordia High School, a township school established in 2013. The club's teacher advisor Andile Njovane, had previously been with Percy Mdlala School. Soon after moving to Concordia, he successfully launched an Interact club. This school also hosted Knysna's first Rotarydent programme, where Interactors assisted international dentists in their work.

Knysna High School has also twice received a Presidential Citation from Rotary International. All the clubs contributed to painting the children's wards at the old Knysna Hospital, showcasing their collaborative spirit.

While the cost of transport has limited trips to Cape Town, local initiatives have taken their place. Each year, the Rotary Club of Knysna hosts a two-day Know Your Town event for Grade 10 Interactors and a RYLA Leadership Camp for Grade 11 Interactors. Training sessions for Interact board members, teachers and Rotarians are held annually in August.

Several dedicated Interact teacher advisors have been recognised as honorary Rotarians and both teachers and Interact presidents are invited to lunch meetings on World Interact Day every year.



EarlyActors eagerly awaiting Santa's arrival.

Christmas Party Fun!

The EarlyAct Club at Outeniqua Primary School, sponsored by the Rotary Club of George (D9350), recently concluded another heart-warming community service project. EarlyAct, an initiative supported by Rotary, provides young learners with opportunities to practise active citizenship in a culturally diverse, democratic society within an interconnected world.

“A few years ago, we became aware of the Milestone Development Programme (MDP) at Bethesda,” explained Danielle Barnard, teacher and EarlyAct coordinator at Outeniqua Primary. “The initiative focuses on a stimulation project for children aged two to six with developmental delays, many of whom come from disadvantaged families. Over the past few years, we have reached out to these children on various occasions. This year, we wanted to do

something special for them while also paying tribute to those transitioning to Grade R. Our EarlyActors more than rose to the challenge.”

The EarlyAct members, with support from their parents, put together take-home parcels, gifts, baked cakes and arranged other treats for a celebratory gathering.

On the day of the visit, around 50 enthusiastic EarlyActors arrived at the MDP area at Bethesda. With Santa lending a hand, they distributed gifts, cakes and snacks to the children before spending time playing with them in the play area.

“We are so proud to be associated with the Outeniqua Primary EarlyActors,” said Charles Rowe, president of the Rotary Club of George. “Their efforts reflect the leadership, compassion and community spirit that our country so greatly needs.”



The project also serves as a valuable life lesson, highlighting the importance of community service and the impact of even small acts of kindness.

Gimmicky Project

For over a decade, the Rotary Club of Dundee (D9370) has hosted a unique and impactful community project: a simple yet powerful food drive. As shoppers enter a supermarket, they are offered the opportunity to give a R2 coin or are asked to buy a non-perishable food item. These donations, whether a tin of baked beans or any other essential, are collected by the club as shoppers exit.

The supermarket supports the project by showcasing a variety of suitable food items as examples of what shoppers can buy to donate. Inspired by a similar project undertaken by

another club years ago, this annual food drive has become a cornerstone of the Dundee's community service efforts.

This year, the club collected approximately R21,000 worth of food, building upon the R25,000 raised previously.

The entire project was remarkably efficient, requiring only five hours of dedicated volunteer time. At precisely 12:30 pm, representatives from the chosen beneficiary organisations (SPCA, a local children's care centre and three homes for the elderly) arrived and collected their share of the donations.



Rotarians ensured that 70 children had an amazing Christmas party last year.

Santa on the Vaal

The Rotary Club of Vanderbijlpark once again hosted its annual Kids' Christmas Party on the banks of the Vaal River and it proved to be a resounding success.

Seventy children from local primary schools enjoyed a variety of fun-filled activities, including a slip and slide, ball games, a piñata, a jumping castle and more. Given the heatwave currently sweeping the area, the slip and slide was undoubtedly the most popular attraction. Face painting also drew plenty of eager participants and added a splash of colour and creativity to the day.

To keep up with the children's boundless

energy, an abundant supply of food was on offer. Watermelon, pizzas, hamburgers, ice cream and other treats ensured the young partygoers remained fuelled and happy.

The highlight of the day, however, was the arrival of Santa. To the delight of everyone present, he even performed a few dance moves alongside club President Adri Roos, creating a magical and unforgettable moment.

Rotarians and friends worked tirelessly to ensure the children were well-fed and entertained while enjoying a day of fun and fellowship.



PP Jenny Wesson (second from left) with members of Harties Feral Cat Rescue at the Village Mall.

Purr-fect Support

The Rotary Club of Brits Hartbeespoort (D9400) has supported the vital work of Harties Feral Cat Rescue for several years. Recently, the project was incorporated into the club's Environment portfolio, underscoring its commitment to sustainability and community welfare.

As part of this ongoing partnership, the club hosted and supported Harties Feral Cat Rescue at the Village Mall. A number of Rotarians were on hand to assist, including PAG Alice Meyer, who wrapped parcels to help raise funds for the organisation.

Harties Feral Cat Rescue, founded by Joanne Kontaxopoulos-Rabe in May 2017, is a 100% volunteer-run, registered non-profit public benefit organisation. It is dedicated to curbing the uncontrolled breeding of free-roaming cats. The foundation is pro-life and envisions a community where no kittens are born on the streets and no free-roaming cats are left without access to food, water and shelter.

The organisation's mission is to improve the lives of feral cats and eliminate the suffering

caused by uncontrolled breeding through the humane practice of Trap, Neuter and Return (TNR). Volunteers adhere strictly to the globally accepted TNR programme, which involves humanely trapping feral cats, sterilising them and returning them to their outdoor colonies.

Currently, the organisation is the guardian of more than 1,200 cats spread across the greater Hartbeespoort area. Since its inception, Harties Feral Cat Rescue has neutered or spayed over 4,000 cats.

The TNR method is a humane way of managing feral cat populations. Cats are trapped using safe and effective traps, often baited with fish to attract them. Once a cat enters the trap, it is safely transported to a vet for sterilisation. The following day, the cat is returned to its colony.

Harties Feral Cat Rescue firmly believes in keeping cats within their colonies. Their goal is not to remove cats but to give them the opportunity to live healthier lives, free from the constant physical trauma of reproduction.

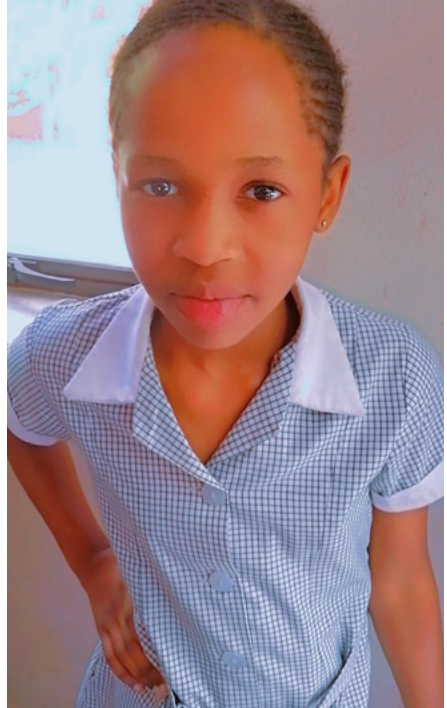
AFRICA IN BRIEF



The Rotary Club of Durban Clairwood-Park (D9370) welcomed Past District Governor Jim O'Meara to one of its recent meetings. PDG O'Meara captivated the audience with his engaging insights into the transformative power of global grants and fascinating stories of his Rotary experiences. The evening also provided an opportunity to celebrate Sarita Sirohi's instrumental role in the Hygiene and Sanitation Project at Phoenix Secondary School. This impactful initiative, made possible through a global grant, has significantly improved hygiene conditions for students. PP Sirohi personally funds the ongoing maintenance of these vital facilities. At the meeting are PP Sarita Sirohi, PDG Jim O' Meara and PP Gona Naidoo.



The Anns of the Rotary Club of Helderberg (D9350) treated the residents of Lancelot and Camelot to a delicious Christmas tea in December. Enjoying the afternoon that was filled with happy laughter and singing are Cecelia Rhode and Alta Steenkamp. Rotary Anns Pauline Brinkworth, Gayl Boone and Mieke MacDonald also attended the happy event.



Princess (above) and Harmony (above right) Eguzoroibe are two young women whose lives changed thanks to the Rotary Club of Johannesburg's (D9400) Educational Development Fund and Assistance Committee (EDFAC) project. Princess, a talented athlete, was selected for the Golden Lions U16 Schools Rugby team and Harmony won a scholarship to Jeppe Girls' High School for 2025. These achievements are a direct result of the quality educational support and mentorship provided by the EDFAC project.



The Rotary Club of Amanzimtoti (D9370) and Kingsway High School held a Cuppa for Cancer outreach day. Funds raised during the event were donated to Khanya Hospice, to support its vital work within the local community. At the Cuppa for Cancer are Past President Neil McDonald, who is also the CEO of Khanya Hospice, President Aneska Dupont and volunteer Lydia Gumedede.



One hundred hectares of land was sponsored on Marion Island by the Rotary Club of Knights Pendragon (D9400). This significant contribution to the Mouse-Free Marion (MFM) project places the club among an elite group of 12 donors on the MFM Donor Honour Roll. Rotarian Jim Rankin spearheaded this initiative within the club. His consistent efforts, including a dedicated golf day and ongoing support from club meetings, increased the club's sponsorship from 10 hectares in 2022 to 100 hectares. Jim recently received a prestigious Owl Award from BirdLife South Africa (BLSA) acknowledging his contribution to the conservation of South African birds and their habitats. With Jim Rankin is Yvonne Pennington of BirdLife South Africa.



The Anns of the Rotary Club of Helderberg (D9350) donated back-to-school packs to the children at Helpende Hand School on the Strand. The pack included all the stationery a child would need for school, from general stationery and books to calculators and geometry sets. The Anns presented the packs, worth about R16,000, to school principal Joey Lotter. At the handover are Rotary Anns Carol Vader, Gayl Boone and Mieke MacDonald. The excited children are looking forward to a well prepared start to their new school year.



President June Pettitt and Rotarian

Maryna van der Bergh, of the Rotary Club of Melkbos (D9350), with the Interactors of Melkbosstrand High School (MHS) who treated the children at Vaatjie Moravian Primary School to a Christmas party. Each child received a Secret Santa Box and a Christmas cracker. The secret Santa Shoeboxes were generously donated and subsequently distributed amongst the learners by Santa, with the help of his Interact 'elves', which included MHS Head Boy Ntsika Mtokwana. Excited faces eagerly awaited this special occasion to share memorable moments with the Interactors.

Right: President June Pettitt of the Rotary

Club of Melkbos and Ntsika Mtokwana, the headboy of Melkbos High School.



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