

NOVEMBER 2025

Rotary

AFRICA | SOUTH

12 Connected to the
UN and beyond

17 Childhood
blindness

27 Bats, Braais,
Bragging





ROTARY INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION

TAIPEI, TAIWAN | 13-17 JUNE 2026



Register and pay in full by 15 December 2025,
before prices increase, at convention.rotary.org.

Contents

4	Welcome
5	RI President's Message
6	Foundation Trustee Chair's Message
7	Convention Countdown
8	The Magic of Our Foundation
9	Coming Up
12	The Liaisons
14	Write it Right
15	Wheelie Warriors
17	Childhood Blindness Relief
20	Koos turns 90
21	A shared heartbeat
22	Skills, Service, Fun!
23	Healthcare in Marsabit
24	Impact in Pretoria
25	Making Lives Better Youth Explore Futures
26	Rotarians Provide Health Access
27	Bats, Braais, Bragging
28	Appel Project Begins
29	Pads With Purpose
30	Lead with Service
31	Parrot Habitat Restored
32	Africa in Brief
34	Recognitions & New Members



WELCOME

Sarah van Heerden - Editor in Chief

November marks Rotary's celebration of The Rotary Foundation. It is a time to reflect on what the Foundation makes possible, such as polio eradication, clean water, literacy, maternal health, education and, more quietly, peace.

The projects in this issue show that peace is not just a programme or a distant goal. It is something real. It happens when a child learns in a safe classroom, when a family drinks clean water or when a young person sees a path to a better future.

As clubs prepare to wind down for the year, there is still time to think ahead. The new year brings new energy, and it is an ideal opportunity to plan how to engage more meaningfully with young people. That starts with a shift in approach. Ask what they want to achieve. Ask what support they need. Ask how they want to work. Then step back and let them lead.

Rotary's strength has always come from its structure. Clubs and districts are trusted to lead in ways that reflect their own communities. If we want to connect with youth in a way that lasts, we need to offer them the same autonomy.

Meaningful youth engagement goes beyond asking for help at events. It involves inviting them into decision-making. Give them real roles. Let them lead a fundraiser or organise a school visit. If the club has a youth-focused project, ask them how it could be improved. If it doesn't, ask what issues matter to them most.

Younger members can offer fresh insight into areas clubs may not yet be reaching. Their networks are different. So are their skills. Ask for input on digital outreach, event formats or speaker ideas. Let them design a flyer or script a video. Invite them to attend planning sessions, not just final briefings.

It also helps to meet them where they are. Visit their campus or hold a meeting in a space they already use. If transport is a barrier, arrange lift-sharing. If schedules don't line up, explore digital check-ins. Engagement improves when young people feel heard, trusted and included.

This issue recognises efforts at all levels. Thank you to the clubs who shared their work. Your stories show where Rotary stands today, and where the next generation is ready to take it.

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Chairperson: Andy Gray. **Directors:** Greg Cryer, Peter Hugo, Natty Moodley, Joe Otin, Lee-Ann Shearing, Jankees Sligcher

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This November, as we celebrate The Rotary Foundation, I invite you to consider not only what we give but why we give. The Foundation is more than a fund for projects. It is the beating heart of our promise that service, rooted in trust and friendship, can create lasting change.

Our Action Plan calls us to increase our impact and the Foundation is how we make this vision real. Since 1988, Rotary and our partners have immunised nearly 3 billion children against polio. We have committed more than \$2.6 billion to this cause and last year alone we directed \$146 million toward the final push for eradication. These numbers are significant, but the true impact is not in statistics, it is in the lives of children who will never again fear polio. It is in the hope restored to families and the peace built in communities once defined by disease.

Polio is only one story among many. Each year, Rotary Peace Centres train new generations of leaders who will transform conflict into dialogue and division into understanding. In 2023-24, nearly 100 new fellows began their studies, continuing a legacy of more than 1,800 peacebuilders from over 140 countries. When we invest in them, we are planting seeds of peace that will bear fruit for decades to come.

The Foundation also touches lives through

district and global grants, supporting projects large and small. A clean water well for a rural community, scholarships for young professionals, medical care in the wake of disaster, these are not temporary gestures, but steps toward dignity, resilience and opportunity. This is how Rotary service becomes lasting impact. And when natural disasters strike, our Foundation allows Rotary to act quickly with disaster response grants.

Our Foundation is not about what we can do alone but what we can do together. Each contribution, no matter its size, joins with others to create a collective act of faith in humanity and in the future.

The last mile of any great journey is always the hardest. We see this in our final steps toward ending polio, in our work for peace and in every project that seeks to lift people out of despair. Yet every time we give, we declare that our work will continue regardless of the challenge.

This November, let us give with gratitude, with joy and with hope. Through our Foundation, we Unite for Good and in doing so, we leave behind not only projects but a legacy of peace, trust and Service Above Self.

FRANCESCO AREZZO

President, Rotary International



Foundation Trustee Chair's Message

Undeniable impact

Many of you will remember the theme I chose as RI president in 2020-21: Rotary Opens Opportunities. I remain passionate about these opportunities and I know you do too.

As we celebrate Rotary Foundation Month, let's reflect on the many ways the Foundation makes the world better. Rotary is extraordinary and the Foundation amplifies that impact.

I encourage all of you, in Rotary and Rotaract clubs, to discover this for yourselves. Go beyond the local level and engage with The Rotary Foundation globally. You can partner with clubs to boost literacy in Guatemala or fight malaria in Zambia. You can make a difference with clean water initiatives reaching millions or maternal health programmes saving lives across continents.

It doesn't stop there. Through major impact projects like Programmes of Scale, we're pursuing

bold initiatives that push Rotary's potential to create lasting change further. Greater impact and greater visibility: this is our path forward.

Many of you have asked about the status of Rotary's biggest impact project in history, our long-term commitment to polio eradication. Recently, RI President Francesco Arezzo, International PolioPlus Committee Chair Michael McGovern and I met with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and the army leadership of Pakistan. Everyone is fully committed to eradicating polio once and for all. We were absolutely convinced by the work of Pakistan's emergency operations centres, where experts plan and coordinate vaccination.

While some governments scale back support for polio eradication, Rotary remains committed to its pledge to raise \$50 million again this year. This meeting reaffirmed our unwavering commitment to finishing this historic mission.

What excites me most is seeing how each of us can make a real difference through our Foundation. I urge everyone, especially newcomers to Rotary, to explore these opportunities. Find your passion among our areas of focus and discover projects to support, especially through global grants.

We members fund, sustain and deliver these projects. That's why the Foundation consistently earns top ratings from Charity Navigator. If you don't want to lead a project, you can still be part of the Foundation through annual support.

Our fundraising goal for 2025-26 is an ambitious \$500 million. Your gift this month will create countless opportunities.

We have incredible opportunities before us and the impact we achieve together through The Rotary Foundation is exponential. The proof is undeniable.

HOLGER KNAACK
Foundation Trustee Chair



CONVENTION COUNTDOWN

A first-timer's guide

When you arrive in Taipei for your first Rotary International Convention, you might feel momentarily overwhelmed, in a good way, among thousands of members from all corners of the world.

“Entering the convention, we’re all bright-eyed. We’re all looking around like, Whoa, there are so many people,” said Charvi Shah, of the Rotaract Club of the University of Calgary. She was excited to learn from younger members leading breakout sessions and to greet in person the global Rotaractors she networked with over the years, a group met up at a Calgary arcade one night.

People often head first to the House of Friendship to explore festive displays and interactives. It’s the convention’s Main Street and a friend is waiting on every corner. Learn about clubs’ projects, partner organisations’ offerings, helpful tools from Rotary staff and many options to pursue your passion.

The event that many members say gave them their first sense of their place in Rotary’s gigantic family is the opening ceremony and its flag ceremony tradition when each Rotary country has its moment on the stage. Cheer your loudest!

To learn what the convention is like, ask a member who’s been. Many first timers say they didn’t want to miss out after friends’ enthusiastic descriptions of previous conventions such as those in Singapore, Melbourne and Houston.

In Calgary at his first convention, Anthony Agama, of the Rotary Club of Ngora in Uganda, registered right away for the next one, 13-17 June 2026 in Taipei. “You get to be part of a congregation of like-minded people who treasure change in their communities,” he says. “The Rotary Convention is a must-attend for everyone to celebrate love, love for humanity, love for progress, love for service.”

Learn more at www.convention.rotary.org.



Our Magic Foundation

PDG Patrick Coleman, Member of the Rotary Action Group for Community Economic Development

Holger Knaack, Past Rotary International President and current Trustee Chair, often reminds members that it is not just the Rotary Foundation, it is our Rotary Foundation.

Established in 1917, the Rotary Foundation was created to support Rotary International's humanitarian goals by funding sustainable service projects. Its mission is to advance world understanding, goodwill and peace through health, education and poverty alleviation. It is supported entirely by voluntary contributions from Rotary members and the public.

Many Rotarians are surprised to learn how much the Foundation has achieved in its century-long history. What began as a modest endowment has grown into one of the world's most effective humanitarian funding arms. Over the decades, it has supported thousands of projects in more than 200 countries and geographic areas.

A turning point came in 1985 with the launch of the PolioPlus programme, Rotary's global effort to immunise every child against polio. In 1989, the Global Polio Eradication Initiative was formed. This public-private partnership coordinates global efforts to end polio, with Rotary as a founding member and key partner.

The results have been far-reaching. In recent years, vaccination campaigns supported by

Rotary have reached over 33 million children in Southern Africa, 8.7 million in Mozambique, 3.2 million in Guinea and 6.5 million in Kenya and Uganda.

A 2024 campaign in Gaza targeted more than 600,000 children under the age of 10.

The Foundation also supports projects in seven key areas of focus: peacebuilding, disease prevention, water and sanitation, maternal and child health, education, local economic development and environmental protection. These grants are driven by Rotary clubs, designed to meet real needs and delivered in partnership with communities.

Oversight is managed by a board of trustees and regional committees. The Foundation's long-standing record of transparency and accountability has earned it Charity Navigator's highest rating for 17 consecutive years. Its most recent score is a full 100 percent (see www.charitynavigator.org/ein/363245072).

The Foundation's work is not magic. It is the outcome of collective effort, good governance and consistent commitment to service.

To mark 108 years of impact, Rotary members are encouraged to consider a donation of R108 or \$108 as a gesture of support and gratitude for the continued ability to do good in the world.

Coming up...

DECEMBER 2025

DISEASE PREVENTION AND TREATMENT MONTH During this month, Rotary clubs and districts highlight and engage in projects that combat diseases like polio, malaria, and HIV/AIDS, and focus on broader health issues such as mental health and access to basic healthcare.

JANUARY 2026

23 January - **ROTARY CLUB OF WORCESTER D9350 Charity Golf Day:** Worcester Golf Club. Four balls R3,000, includes steak braai and evening function, live music and lots of prizes. Contact Mark Pelteret at +27 71 889 1413

JUNE 2026

13-17 June- **ROTARY INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION, Taipei, Taiwan:** Join fellow changemakers from around the world to share innovative projects, exchange best practices and form enduring friendships. The convention is packed with exciting breakout sessions, speakers and more. All RI events take place at Farglory Dome (Taipei Dome) and Taipei Nangang Exhibition Center (TaiNEX) unless otherwise indicated. See: www.convention.rotary.org and www.rotarytaipei2026.org

Email info about your club's upcoming events to rotaryafrica@mweb.co.za

Rotary  Rotary Africa Magazine

SUBSCRIPTION NOTICE

Subscription rates from 1st January 2026

Digital 6-month rate: R141.75

Rotary Africa magazine subscriptions are billed bi-annually in January and July of each year. **We do not have access to ClubRunner or My Rotary and rely on clubs for member updates.** Clubs will be billed according to the mailing lists in our records. Please ensure that we have all the correct information!

DEADLINE

The cut-off date for membership updates for the January to June 2026 billing period is the 20th December 2026.

Credits will not be processed on notifications of resignations or changes in subscription choices received after invoices have been sent out.

New subscribers will be invoiced pro-rata as notifications are received.

ROTARY IN AFRICA

REG.NO. 1971/004840/07

NOTICE TO ALL MEMBERS*

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – 21 NOVEMBER 2025 AT 09H00

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of Rotary in Africa will be held at 728 Main Road Northdene, Durban, KwaZulu Natal, South Africa on Friday 21 November 2025 commencing at 09h00. A zoom meeting link will be made available to those who wish to join the online meeting. Kindly send your zoom link request to rotaryafrica@mweb.co.za

AGENDA

1. Call to order and announcements
2. Confirmation of the minutes of the last Annual General Meeting held on 15 November 2025.
3. Chairman's report
4. Editor's report
5. Treasurer's report and submission of annual financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2025.
6. Appointment of Auditors
7. Election of directors to serve on the Board for a period of 2 years. In terms of the Company's Article of Association, the following directors are due to retire from the Board:
 - i. Greg Cryer D9370
 - ii. Peter Hugo D9350
 - iii. Joe Otin D9212
 - iv. Jankees Sligcher D9400

Being eligible, the abovenamed individuals make themselves available for re-election together with any other nominations that may be submitted to the Secretary by close of business on Friday 14th November 2025. Nominations must be emailed directly to Rotary in Africa at rotaryafrica@mweb.co.za.

8. To conduct or transact any other business pertinent to an Annual General Meeting.

**All District Governors, District Governor Elects and Past District Governors of Rotary District 9200, 9210, 9211, 9212, 9213, 9214, 9220, 9250, 9270, 9350, 9370 and 9400 are ex officio members of Rotary in Africa. A member may appoint a proxy to attend and vote on their behalf, provided that such appointment is advised to the Secretary at the offices of the company at least 48 hours before the meeting.*

Members can also attend online (contact us for a link).

PDG Natty Moodley

Secretary

19 September 2025

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TELEPHONE: 083 701 5951

SUCCESSFUL PROJECT PLANNING BEGINS HERE

Two Rotary guides — **Conducting Community Assessments** and the **Rotary Impact Handbook** — can lead to more effective and meaningful service projects by helping you:



**MAKE BETTER-
INFORMED
DECISIONS**

**MEASURE
YOUR
OUTCOMES**

**BUILD
STRONGER
COMMUNITY
PARTNERSHIPS**

**PLAN FOR
SUSTAINABILITY**



**CONDUCTING
COMMUNITY
ASSESSMENTS**



**ROTARY
IMPACT
HANDBOOK**

The liaisons

The Rotary Representative Network keeps us connected to the UN and beyond

Rotary and the United Nations have been partners since the beginning. Rotary consulted in the drafting of the organisation's charter back in 1945 and shared values are written into the document, explains Cyril Noirtin, dean of the Rotary Representative Network, RI's volunteer liaisons to the UN. "Rotary and the UN have shared goals. We call them our areas of focus and the UN calls them Sustainable Development Goals, but we're all trying to resolve humanity's most pressing challenges," he says.

Noirtin and about 20 other members of the Rotary Representative Network liaise with UN agencies and other international organisations. This year, the network includes three Rotaractors.

Appointed annually by Rotary's president, the representatives have many purposes: They promote Rotary, monitor UN agencies' work and report back and build connections between Rotary clubs and the technical experts within these agencies.

Noirtin is the representative to UNESCO, which is based in Paris. He attends meetings such as UNESCO's General Conference. At the last two conferences, "I was invited to take the floor for three minutes in front of all the country leaders and I was able to speak about Rotary and what we do," he says. "We can have coffee, we can have lunch and we connect people."

One outcome has been the development of shared programmes. After Rotary Day at UNESCO in 2006, for example, Rotary and the IHE Delft Institute for Water Education (which operates under the auspices of UNESCO) developed a strategic partnership to provide educational fellowships for water experts. "What is interesting is that now the project has ended, but local clubs are continuing," Noirtin explains.

Contact a representative to find out how you can collaborate with key international organisations: rotary.org/rotary-representative-network.

"The network is one of the best-kept secrets of Rotary," Noirtin says.



UN Environment Programme

Following Rotary Day at the UN in 2018, UNEP and Rotary District 9212 established the Adopt a River for Sustainable Development pilot programme, which evolved into Rotary and UNEP's official partnership: Community Action for Fresh Water.



Commonwealth of Nations and European Union

The advocacy work of Rotary representatives has contributed to multimillion-dollar commitments in support of polio eradication from organisations such as the European Union and the Commonwealth of Nations.



UNICEF

In 2022, Rotary and UNICEF debuted the Local Collaboration Framework, which provides guidance on working together. Projects resulting from the framework include a nine-country vaccination campaign in the South Pacific, a humanitarian aid programme in Sri Lanka and school violence prevention work in Nairobi, Kenya.

1 NEW YORK

UNICEF; UN headquarters

2 WASHINGTON, D.C.

Organisation of American States;
World Bank

3 PARIS

UNESCO; Organisation for Economic
Co-operation and Development

4 LONDON

Commonwealth of Nations

5 BRUSSELS

European Union

6 GENEVA

UN office at Geneva; World Health
Organisation

7 ROME

World Food Programme; Food
and Agriculture Organisation;
International Fund for Agricultural
Development

8 CAIRO

League of Arab States

9 ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

African Union; UN Economic
Commission
for Africa

10 NAIROBI, KENYA

UNICEF in Kenya; UN Environment
Programme

PHOTOGRAPHS: ANDREA DEKROUT,
MARK LEHN, THIES IBOLD



Rotary will commemorate the UN's anniversary on 11 December at the San Francisco War Memorial building, where the UN charter was signed 80 years ago. Register at rotaryun80.org.



WRITE IT RIGHT

Every project has a story worth telling. But what makes a Rotary Africa article work?

START WITH ACTION.

Your first sentence must draw readers in with a vivid moment... a delivery being made, a child reacting, or Rotarians working hands-on. Avoid starting with dates or club names. Introduce the club early, but never in the first line.

FOCUS ON IMPACT.

Who was helped? What changed? Ground the story in facts, not feelings. Avoid summaries, praise or editorialising. Readers want to see the real work, clearly and simply described.

USE EVERYDAY LANGUAGE.

Keep your sentences varied and direct. Avoid dramatic phrasing, abstract statements or over-explaining. Write the way you would tell the story to someone who wasn't there.

INCLUDE QUOTES WHEN POSSIBLE.

A strong quote can carry the tone of your article. Keep it short and specific and always include the speaker's full name.

PROVIDE PHOTO CAPTIONS.

Make sure everyone in the picture knows the photo is being submitted for publication and name each person clearly. Full names and locations help bring your story to life.

ARTICLES MUST BE 400-700 WORDS.

If your content is shorter than that, it may be edited into an extended photo caption instead.

DON'T BE AFRAID TO TRY.

Don't worry about writing perfectly; our editorial team will assist and polish your piece. Your job is to start strong. The better the raw material, the better the finished product.

So, tell your story. Make it local, make it real and make it Rotary Africa ready.



Rotarians Ashleigh Schaap and Rian Currie of the Springs Gold club bring energy to the event. *Photos: Action in Motion - facebook.com/actioninmotion.za*

Wheelie Warriors

Wheelchairs hurtled down the Formula K Karting Race Track in Benoni as cheers, laughter and music filled the air. On 2 August, the Rotary Club of Springs Gold (D9400) transformed the circuit into a stage for the Wheelie Warriors Race Day, a lively spectacle with a serious purpose: raising awareness of the challenges faced by differently abled people and funds to provide mobility equipment to those who need it most.

The idea came from past assistant governor Louise Schaap, who wanted an event that would be both inclusive and fun while addressing a real community need. The result was a first-of-its-kind race day where teams of four used their own wheelchairs or donated wheelchairs to compete in relays, obstacle courses and a final 940m lap of the track.

Rotarians from across the East Rand rallied together, with the clubs of Benoni Aurora,

Benoni van Ryn, the E-Club of East Rand and Germiston joining Springs Gold in organising and taking part. The collaboration was as much about fellowship as it was about showcasing Rotary's ability to bring communities together for meaningful impact.

The 100m Dash Relay was a crowd favourite. Participants alternated between pushing and being pushed, testing both teamwork and stamina. The Obstacle Relay added to the challenge, with teams navigating a tricky course. Racing chairs were decorated and branded creatively, the only rule being that propulsion had to come from human power.

Biker Hart Radio, an internet station, kept the atmosphere alive with music and commentary, while family and friends cheered from the sidelines. Despite the wet and windy weather, the excitement never wavered as children, parents, businesses and clubs threw themselves

The Wheelie Warriors train of decorated wheelchairs ready for the final race around the 940m circuit.



into the spirit of the day.

The build-up to the event generated strong interest in the community, with local newspapers carrying stories in advance. This publicity sparked an unexpected outcome: Cheapest Wheelchairs, one of the supporters, received orders for 18 wheelchairs, all of which were donated under the Wheelie Warriors banner for Mandela Day on 18 July.

The day itself drew praise for its creativity and the way it allowed participants to step into

the shoes of wheelchair users, if only for a few minutes. It was an eye-opening experience that balanced fun with empathy, and competition with compassion.

The exposure has already led to requests for mini Wheelie Warriors races at biker rallies, schools and social events. Ekurhuleni Metro has also shown interest in supporting future race days as part of efforts to make the municipality more wheelchair-friendly.



Plans are already under way for the next Wheelie Warriors Race Day. If the energy, camaraderie and impact of this year are anything to go by, the event is set to grow into a highlight of the East Rand Rotary calendar.



Though resources are scarce and challenges persistent, missions like these show what can be achieved when service meets strategy and when visionaries come together to restore sight itself. Dr KV Ravishankar makes notes after examining a young patient.

Childhood Blindness Relief

The paediatric wards of Tamale Eye Hospital in northern Ghana saw a week of focused, life-changing work in late September as a team of international eye surgeons carried out complex procedures on children born with vision impairments.

Led by Dr KV Ravishankar and Dr Uma Ravishankar of the Rotary E Club of Bangalore (D3191), the surgical mission formed part of a long standing global effort to prevent childhood

blindness. The Ravishankars, both ophthalmic surgeons based at Usha Kiran Eye Hospital in Mysore, India, were joined by Dr Luxme Hariharan from Madison, Wisconsin, USA.

Between 21 and 27 September 2025, the team performed 36 eye surgeries on 28 young patients suffering from cataracts, squints and droopy eyelids. Without this intervention, these children would have faced a future of unnecessary blindness.

This was the 28th overseas mission for the team, who continue to serve under-resourced communities in India and abroad. Across three decades, their outreach has extended to Zambia, Nigeria, Guinea, Kenya and The Gambia, including service on board Mercy Ships. Their work has also reached Latin America and Bangladesh.

Support came from a wide network of Rotary clubs, Rotarians and partner organisations. Indian clubs included the Rotary E-Club of Bangalore, Rotary Bangalore Abilities and the Rotary Club of Ivory City in Mysore. Rotarians and clubs from the United Kingdom, United States, Canada, Channel Islands, Portugal and several African countries also contributed. The Accra Industrial and Rotary Premier International clubs hosted the team and provided on-the-ground support.

Additional backing came from Global Sight Solutions, Rotary Doctors Bank UK and Combat Blindness International. Friends and colleagues from India and the United States also supported the mission, with some choosing to remain anonymous. The team's commitment to eye health has resulted in more than 2 500

procedures performed during 28 visits to Africa. In India, they have conducted over 100 000 surgeries, with every third operation provided at no cost to the patient.

Working abroad presents logistical and infrastructural challenges, yet the motivation remains the same. "We are overwhelmed after every visit," said Dr Ravishankar. "There are always more children who need surgical care than we can possibly help."

One mother, whose child regained sight after cataract surgery, was so overcome with emotion that she offered to cook for the entire team. For several missions in Ghana, Rotarians such as Naveen Pandey have hosted the visiting doctors in their homes and treated them like family.

The need remains vast. Sub Saharan Africa is estimated to have more than 80 000 children living with preventable or treatable blindness caused by cataracts.

"If avoidable blindness were made a primary area of focus by Rotary International and The Rotary Foundation, the impact could be transformative," said Dr Ravishankar. "This is a global health crisis, and large scale funding is needed to address it at the community level."



Dr Luxme Hariharan and Dr Judith Simon with Dr Ravishankar (back).



EVERY
ROTARIAN
EVERY
YEAR



ROTARY FOUNDATION MONTH

November is Rotary Foundation Month, a time to celebrate and support the life-changing work of our Foundation. Since The Rotary Foundation began, it has awarded more than US\$6.5 billion to help members transform communities locally and globally. We are deeply grateful to Rotary members like you who make Doing Good in the World possible.

GIVE TODAY: rotary.org/donate

LEARN MORE: rotary.org/foundation



Rotarian Koos van Eeden is congratulated by members of the Rotary Club of Knysna at his 90th birthday celebration. Right: President Murro-Wayne Spies with Koos.

KOOS TURNS 90

Laughter and stories filled the Knysna Yacht Club as members gathered to celebrate the 90th birthday of long-serving Rotarian Koos van Eeden.

The Rotary Club of Knysna (D9350) hosted the event on 2 September in honour of Koos, who first encountered Rotary through his father, a past president of the Rotary Club of Ceres. “Like all presidents, he needed more members, so who is easier to get than your son?” he said with a smile.

Koos holds a special place in the history of

the Knysna club as the only member still active who attended its charter ceremony 63 years ago. At the time, he was representing the Ceres club and timed the visit to coincide with his mother-in-law’s birthday. Not long after, he relocated to Knysna and formally joined the club in 1993.

He served as club president in 1999 and, in recognition of his long-standing commitment, was named an Honorary Rotarian in 2023. He remains actively involved in the club’s work and continues to reflect Rotary’s motto of Service Above Self.



SHARE YOUR PROJECTS

Email stories and photos (of at least 1mb in size) to rotaryafrica@mweb.co.za.



Rotarians Monique Labat and Julie Streicher, Samantha Adams (Health Service Manager, The Pebbles Project), Rotarian Maryna Ulyate, Yasmine Ramaekers (intern doctor) and her father, Rotarian Geert Ramaekers of the Rotary Club of Genk-Noord in District 2140 Belgium.

A shared heartbeat

Rotarians support medical internships in South Africa

Rotarians from opposite sides of the world met in the Cape Winelands to celebrate shared values of service and youth development. During a recent visit to South Africa, members of the Rotary Club of Genk-Noord in Belgium connected with the Rotary Club of Stellenbosch (D9350) through a project that combined health outreach with hands-on learning.

The visit took place while Yasmine Ramaekers, daughter of Rotarian Geert Ramaekers, was completing a medical internship at The Pebbles Project. Based in the Stellenbosch area, the project provides healthcare, early childhood development and family support services to farming communities across the Western Cape.

Rotarians Maryna Ulyate, Julie Streicher and Monique Labat hosted the Ramaekers family at the project site. Geert was accompanied by his wife Anja and daughters Charlotte, Sofie and

Yasmine, who met with the Pebbles team to learn more about its work and impact.

Health Service Manager Samantha Adams and fundraiser Liesl Ahlers guided the group through the organisation's operations. They shared details of the mobile health clinics, education support and nutritional outreach that form the backbone of their rural programmes.

Yasmine worked alongside the Pebbles health team for two months as part of her post-graduate training. Her time with the project created a natural connection between the two Rotary clubs, reinforcing the value of international fellowship and practical service.

The visit concluded with informal discussions on healthcare challenges, youth engagement and the role of community-based support. Following their time in the Cape, the Ramaekers family continued to Bela-Bela in Limpopo Province before returning to Belgium.

Skills, Service, Fun!

With seven active Interact clubs supported by local high schools, Knysna is a town where youth service is thriving. Each club is guided by a dedicated teacher and supported by members of the Rotary Club of Knysna (D9350), whose youth committee works year-round to nurture leadership and connection among these young changemakers.

To support the new executive teams appointed for the upcoming school year, the club recently hosted its annual Interact Training Day. The event brought together office bearers from all seven clubs, along with Interactors from two schools supported by the Rotary Club of Plettenberg Bay (D9350).

Held at a central venue in Knysna, the day gave Interactors the chance to learn about their roles, share ideas for future projects and explore ways to work together. Sessions were led by Rotarians and included overviews of club responsibilities, group discussions and informal networking.

Interactors were also introduced to the broader structure of Rotary and given insight into opportunities beyond their school clubs. The day encouraged collaboration between clubs and opened the door for joint initiatives that could be developed in the months ahead.



Fun and games are a standard part of the day.



High school Interact presidents pictured with Rotary Knysna President Murro-Wayne Spies (back).

Games and team-building activities were part of the programme, with crowd favourites like balloon netball and the barnyard mixer generating plenty of laughs. These sessions offered a balance between learning and light-hearted fun, helping new teams to form stronger bonds from the start.



Residents wait to be seen by volunteer medical staff during the Rotary Club of Nairobi-Utumishi's outreach at Lependera School in Marsabit County.

Healthcare in Marsabit

In a remote corner of northern Kenya, residents of Lependera in Marsabit County received free healthcare support through a medical outreach organised by the Rotary Club of Nairobi-Utumishi (D9212). The one-day event took place at Lependera School and was held in collaboration with the African Inland Church.

Local families accessed basic health services, including consultations, screenings and medication. Volunteer doctors and nurses were supported by Rotarians and community leaders who helped coordinate logistics and patient flow throughout the day.

Marsabit is one of Kenya's largest and most sparsely populated counties, where distance

and limited infrastructure often restrict access to healthcare. The outreach aimed to close that gap, even if temporarily, by bringing essential services directly to the community.

The partnership between Rotary and faith-based organisations in the region has grown over the years. Through shared resources and networks, these collaborations enable a wider reach and ensure that assistance is delivered in a respectful and community-led way.

The Nairobi-Utumishi club continues to support initiatives that respond to immediate local needs. Its members are involved in education, sanitation and health programmes, with a focus on rural and under-resourced areas.

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District Governor Dr Angélica Salomão joins members of the Rotary Club of Pretoria-Hatfield during her official club visit, which highlighted community service, inclusive leadership and local partnerships.

IMPACT IN PRETORIA

Visitors to Brooklyn Lodge were met with stories of practical impact, inclusive leadership and community connection as District Governor Dr Angélica Salomão spent the day with the Rotary Club of Pretoria-Hatfield (D9400). The club's latest projects, growing partnerships and new approach to leadership were all highlighted during the visit, which brought together members, friends of Rotary and Assistant Governor Doulien Knopjes

Club President Judith Aguga opened the meeting with a summary of the year's activities and introduced the current board. She also presented the club's newly adopted rotational presidency system, introduced in 2024 to support broader member participation and grow leadership capacity.

The Pretoria-Hatfield club's portfolio includes support for Khafilwe Thusano, a safe space for children in Pretoria West. Through this partnership, the club provides stationery, blankets, mattresses, gas and Christmas gifts. Other ongoing initiatives include a wheelchair distribution programme, car parking income projects, the Lesotho Outreach, Life Skills for Youth, Vision Board for Youth and a conflict

resolution programme in partnership with UNISA. The club also supports the Scienza exhibition, which introduces high school learners to careers in science.

Paul Harris Fellow Moses Marota shared a personal account of his community's journey with Rotary. Since 2018, the club has partnered with residents in Zebediela on a range of initiatives that began with school repairs and grew to include tree planting, food relief, borehole installation, wheelchair provision and income-generating activities. The community has since launched a training centre and employment projects with Rotary's support. Moses also called for more Rotary presence in rural areas.

In her remarks, Dr Salomão praised the club's diverse service efforts and encouraged its continued focus on inclusive leadership. She recommended extending life skills programmes to involve boys and teachers and suggested that member engagement could be deepened through stronger internal connection.

Following the meeting, the District Governor visited Khafilwe Thusano to view the project first-hand and meet the centre's team.

Making Lives Better

Rotarians from the Rotary Club of Durban Bay (D9370) recently visited William Clark Gardens Children's Home with a clear goal in mind: How could Rotary help?

The answer came in the form of a long list of needs. Thanks to coordinated efforts and determined fundraising, many of those needs were met. The club donated a new washing machine, bedding, cleaning supplies, kitchenware and other items to the home.

Rotarian Brenda George led the initiative and worked with various stakeholders to make the donations possible. The response from the children was immediate and moving. Smiles, laughter and visible relief filled the home as the

new items arrived. "Seeing the smiles on the children's faces and knowing we are making a real difference in their lives is something I will never forget," she said.

This outreach follows another project by the club at Ningizimu Special School in Montclair. There, Rotarian Lindiwe Mvubu identified a safety concern in the school's play area, which had been bare, uneven ground. The club responded by installing astroturf, turning the space into a safer, more enjoyable place for the children to play.

Both projects reflect the Durban Bay club's ongoing commitment to supporting vulnerable children and schools in its community.



Learners heard from professionals during a career day hosted by the Rotary Club of Reservoir Hills, which focused on real-world exposure and informed career decision-making.

Youth Explore Futures

High school learners from Reservoir Hills and surrounding areas spent the day asking questions, meeting professionals and exploring real-world career options at a career day hosted at RP Moodley School.

The event was organised by the Rotary Club of Reservoir Hills (D9370) and included pupils from AD Lazarus Secondary and Reservoir Hills Secondary Schools. Learners engaged directly with presenters from the South African Police Service, legal and firefighting services, the visual arts sector and representatives from Pax College.

Professionals offered a clear look into their

day-to-day work and shared the training or studies required to enter each field. Students were encouraged to ask questions, and many took the opportunity to explore career paths they had not previously considered.

The career day was structured to support informed decision-making among youth and encourage practical conversations about post-school options. Educators and learners praised the event's format, which focused on relevance, interaction and clarity.

This initiative forms part of the club's continued focus on youth mentorship and educational outreach.



Through teamwork and health education, Rotarians helped reinforce trust in public health efforts and showed that they are, in the words of one volunteer, truly united for good.

Rotarians Provide Health Access

Rotarians in Harare joined forces with local health authorities for a measles and rubella vaccination campaign that ran from 6 to 10 October 2025. The outreach included vitamin A supplementation to strengthen children's immune systems and prevent avoidable illness.

Working at clinics and schools around the city, the Rotary Club of Chitungwiza (D9210) played an active role in supporting frontline efforts. Among the volunteers was a retired nurse who used her medical background to assist with vaccinations at local clinics.

One of the key sites was the Dr Shennan Clinic, where Rotarians collaborated with nurses and community health workers to ensure

smooth delivery of the campaign. Support also reached a private school in Mount Pleasant, highlighting Rotary's commitment to engaging communities across different sectors.

Rotarian involvement focused on mobilising caregivers, helping to manage queues, registering patients and offering hands-on assistance with post-vaccination monitoring. The club also helped raise awareness on the importance of timely immunisation and vitamin A supplementation.

The campaign was part of a wider national initiative targeting measles and rubella outbreaks, both of which remain serious health threats for children under five.



Epilepsy South Cape Karoo celebrates their well-earned win and successful trophy defence.

Bats, Braais, Bragging

Knysna Rotarians face Epilepsy South Cape Karoo in their annual cricket match.

The Knysna Sport Academy echoed with good-natured banter and the occasional crack of leather on willow as the Rotary Club of Knysna (D9350) joined forces with the Knysna Cavaliers Cricket Club for their annual match against Epilepsy South Cape Karoo.

Now a long-standing fixture on the local calendar, the event has become more about fellowship than fast bowlers. Dubbed the Rotary Cavaliers for the day, the team took to the pitch with no shortage of enthusiasm, backed by the Cavaliers' steady hands and cricket know-how.

The opposition, however, was in fine form. Epilepsy South Cape Karoo opened with a solid batting line-up and quickly built momentum. The Rotary Cavaliers gave chase with flashes of clever fielding and bold singles, but their innings closed short of the target. The final score

was an impressive 142–83 to Epilepsy South Cape Karoo.

Despite the scoreboard, the mood stayed light throughout, fuelled by “creative” interpretations of cricketing technique and a flexible approach to the rules by umpire Elwin Thompson. At the prize giving, Epilepsy lifted the Rotary–Epilepsy Floating Trophy once again.

After stumps were drawn, players and spectators gathered around a well-earned braai, proving that while cricket may split teams, boerewors always brings people together.

The match was spearheaded by Rotarian Mike Smerdon, who doubled as both organiser and braai master. The club extended thanks to the Cavaliers for their sportsmanship and partnership, and to all who contributed to another memorable day.



A tour of the project was undertaken during District Governor Maria Angélica Salomão's visit to the club.

APPEL PROJECT BEGINS

One classroom at a time, learners at Appel Combined School are seeing the difference a ceiling, fresh paint and working lights can make.

The Rotary Club of Haenertsburg (D9400) is currently refurbishing the small rural school, which serves learners from grades 5 to 9. The school operates with limited staff and facilities, despite its deep roots in the local farming community.

During a recent club visit, District Governor Angélica Salomão was shown the work under way. Although it was a school holiday, the principal returned to welcome the group and share the school's history. Appel Combined was first built in the early 1950s by local farmers who donated land and materials. The original four classrooms were followed by a hall and one more classroom, all funded and constructed by neighbouring farmers.

The current project began when Irene

Laemmle, owner of The Door Group, received damaged desks for repair. This led to a wider commitment from the Haenertsburg club to continue refurbishing the classrooms.

The first room was completed during the July school holidays and involved replacing rotten roof beams, installing ceiling boards, fitting LED lights and repainting the interior and exterior.

The project is ongoing, and the club continues to receive support from The Door Group, which is supplying new doors and additional ceiling materials, and remains involved in desk repairs. ZZZ and Denny Mushrooms are assisting with transport.

The goal is to create a healthier, more motivating space for learners. With each improvement, the club aims to give rural children a better place to learn.



PDG Pardeep Ahluwalia, Simmy Ahluwalia and AG Ash Maharaj deliver the sewing machine.

PADS WITH PURPOSE

A sewing machine might not look like a tool for education, but in Chatsworth, it's helping school girls stay in school.

The Rotary Club of Durban-Morningside (D9370) has launched a project to provide re-usable sanitary pads to girls in under-resourced communities. The initiative, supported through the Inter Country Committees (ICC) network, aims to reduce school absenteeism linked to period poverty.

The project began after Assistant Governor and ICC District Chair Ash Maharaj read a report showing that more than 2 000 schools in one province lacked basic sanitation. Without access to proper products, many girls were forced to miss class or use cloths, newspaper or socks during menstruation.

"This is a mammoth task, and we are very excited as a club and district," said Ash. He described the initiative as a pilot that could be expanded to other provinces depending on

funding.

Support came through ICC relationships, including from PDG Pardeep Ahluwalia of the Rotary Club of West Ottawa (D7040, Canada) and Simmy Ahluwalia of the Global Passport Club, who donated two sewing machines. These were delivered to the Aryan Benevolent Home in Chatsworth, where they will be used for training and local production.

"The idea is to empower people here with sewing skills and distribute locally, rather than face the cost and delays of shipping finished products," said Ash. The team also opted for re-usable pads to reduce environmental waste.

Additional donors included Sunday Smith of the Rotary Club of Potsdam, Shelly Harris, Rotary Club of Kingston and Hala Jawab of the Global Passport Club.

Ash acknowledged the guidance of former ICC Chairs PDG Kevin Dersley and PDG Maddy Webber in launching the project.



Jan-Louis Kasselmann and Kian Pienaar admire the woodworking in the shop

Lead with Service

The EarlyAct Club at Outeniqua Primary School recently completed its latest community service initiative, bringing support and encouragement to Emmaüs, a protective work centre for adults with mental disabilities.

EarlyAct, sponsored at primary schools by Rotary, provides young learners with opportunities to practise active citizenship in a diverse and interdependent world.

“We have been aware for some time of the splendid work done at Emmaüs,” said Danielle Barnard, Outeniqua Primary teacher and EarlyAct coordinator. “We wanted to do something special for them, but also raise awareness.”

Emmaüs supports about 85 beneficiaries. Residents participate in kitchen, laundry and garden work, as well as arts, crafts and woodworking projects that are sold in the on-site

store. The hostel accommodates up to 48 people.

The EarlyAct learners, with support from their parents, collected and donated non-perishable food and toiletries. Mediclinic also contributed linen, blankets and towels. On the day of the visit, about 20 EarlyActors toured the premises, delivered the goods and spent time engaging with the residents.

Dr Nico Venter, principal of Outeniqua Primary, explained, “Part of our mission as a school is providing emotional and social support in the development of our learners towards adulthood, and EarlyAct provides a forum for answering this responsibility.”

“Their initiatives embody the leadership, compassion and community spirit our country needs,” said President Wilhelm van der Vyver, of the Rotary Club of George.



Rotarians plant Outeniqua yellowwood saplings as part of a local reforestation effort to support the highly endangered Cape Parrot, South Africa's only endemic parrot species, now found in just a few forest patches.

Parrot Habitat Restored

High above the village of Haenertsburg, along a scenic ridge where the local cemetery overlooks the forest, a quiet act of restoration took place on Heritage Day. Members of the Rotary Club of Haenertsburg (D9400) gathered to plant 50 Outeniqua yellowwood trees and four wild plum trees, contributing to the future of both the landscape and the species that depend on it.

The project followed a talk earlier this year by Daryl van der Merwe, a BSc graduate with a master's degree in conservation biology, who spoke to the club about the endangered Cape Parrot. The Cape Parrot is the only parrot species endemic to South Africa. Once found widely in montane forests along the eastern escarpment, its range is now fragmented into a few small patches, mostly in the Amathole and KwaZulu-Natal mist-belt forests.

The parrot's diet is highly specialised: it feeds predominantly on the kernels of yellowwood trees (*Podocarpus* and *Afrocarpus* species) and some associated wild forest fruits. Because

yellowwoods bear fruit only intermittently every few years, the birds must fly long distances, sometimes up to 90km, to find sufficient food.

With fewer than 1,500 birds thought to remain and habitat loss, disease and nest-site shortage all contributing to their decline, preserving and expanding native habitat has become a conservation priority.

By planting Outeniqua yellowwoods and wild plums the club is helping restore both food sources and potential nesting trees for the parrots.

The Haenertsburg club chose the cemetery site for its ecological potential: the planted trees are expected to provide food, shelter and improved connectivity for the parrots and other forest-dwelling species in years to come.

This planting forms part of the club's Preserve Planet Earth initiative and reflects its commitment to local biodiversity, scientific education and community-led restoration.

AFRICA IN BRIEF



At Ningizimu Special School in Montclair, Durban, the outdoor play area was little more than a patch of uneven, bare earth. For learners with special needs, this presented daily safety risks during breaks and activities. Rotarian Lindiwe Mvubu from the Rotary Club of Durban Bay (D9370) recognised the need for a safer space and proposed a practical solution. With support from the club, the area was resurfaced with astroturf, creating a soft, levelled surface where children can now play freely and safely.



The 2025/26 Unite for Good presidents from the five Rotary clubs in Bulawayo (D9210) accompanied District Governor Marshal Chilenga on a visit to the Mpilo Renal Unit, where they met with staff and learned more about local health needs (above). During his time in the city, the District Governor also attended a combined Rotaract event to engage with young leaders and joined Bulawayo's Rotarians for a shared social gathering that strengthened connections across clubs.



September was about meaningful service

and vibrant community engagement for the Rotary Club of Potchefstroom Mooi (D9370). As part of Basic Education and Literacy Month, members spent time at local schools, including King Edward Private School, where they read to Grade R learners and introduced the children to Rotary's values in a fun and accessible way. The visit aimed to nurture a love of reading while planting early seeds of service.

In support of the annual Cupcakes for CANSA initiative, the club once again raised funds and awareness for cancer support services. Cupcakes were sold to the public and also donated to residents of the Uitkoms old age home, where the gesture brought smiles and a welcome treat to many.

The club's ongoing projects include the Vincent Project and Wool Project, both in collaboration with Mike's Kitchen Potchefstroom. The Vincent Project supports children with essential needs and developmental support, while the Wool Project collects and distributes handmade items to vulnerable individuals in the community. To round off the busy month, club members, partners and guests enjoyed a lively day of fellowship at the Bult Oktoberfest, hosted at Die Local at Impala. The event provided a chance to relax, reconnect and celebrate the spirit of Rotary after a productive season of service.





After years of collecting thousands of plastic bottle caps, members of the Rotary Club of Blouberg (D9350), together with Interactors, Rotaractors and community volunteers, were able to donate a wheelchair to a local man in need. With the support of Orion in Atlantis and Shonaquip, the team not only identified a suitable recipient but also ensured that the chair was modified for comfort and usability. This milestone reflects the club's long-standing commitment to practical service and environmental impact. The project also saw two carloads of caps removed from beaches and public areas, reinforcing the club's focus on sustainability and community well being.



DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that the first official Rotary International flag, featuring the gear wheel emblem, was flown in Kansas City, Missouri, in January 1915? Just four years later, the same flag travelled over the South Pole with Richard E. Byrd's expedition, making it one of the earliest Rotary symbols to reach Antarctica.



Volunteers filled tables with basic groceries as a long row of hampers took shape in Phoenix and Reservoir Hills. The Rotary Club of Reservoir Hills (D9370) organised its annual food hamper drive, which this year provided meals and essentials to 250 people. The distribution included prepared meals, non-perishable food and extra clothing supplied by the Anns of Reservoir Hills. Rotarians packed and delivered the hampers with help from family members and friends of the club. The effort focused on ensuring every recipient was treated with dignity. The project was made possible through donations of money and goods by local supporters. The club coordinated with volunteers to reach beneficiaries across both areas.

Rotary Club of Kyalami (D9400)

President Pierre Rossouw delivers a brand new wheelchair to Cluny Farm Centre in Johannesburg. The wheelchair was received by general manager Moira Short, assistant Portia and one of the residents. It had been donated to the club by a local family after the passing of their patriarch, who never had the chance to use it. Wanting the chair to benefit someone in need, the family entrusted it to Rotary. Cluny Farm provides lifelong residential care and work opportunities for adults with intellectual disabilities, and donations like this one help improve daily life for its residents.





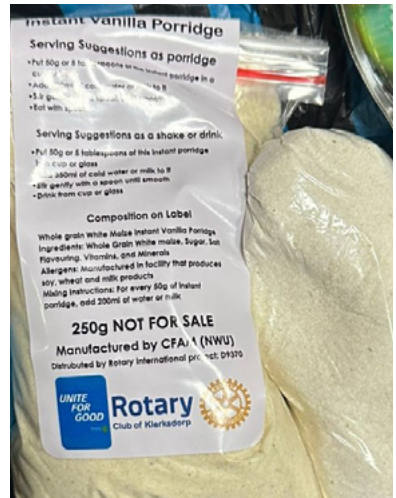
Rotarians from multiple clubs gathered for an evening of shared fellowship during a recent visit by District Governor Steve Shone (D9370). Among the guests was Guikana, an exchange student from Italy, along with members visiting from Johannesburg and Lesotho. The event was hosted by the Rotary Club of Reservoir Hills (D9370) and took place as part of the DG's scheduled club visits. District Governor Shone delivered an address focused on the impact of service projects and the importance of active member engagement. He encouraged clubs to continue building strong relationships within their communities and across the district.



The Rotary Club of Klerksdorp (D9370) recently welcomed returning guest Rotarian Tim Dagori from Kenya. Known for his enthusiasm for South African rugby and his ongoing connection to the club, Tim has become a familiar and well-liked visitor. During his latest stop in Klerksdorp, he presented a banner from his home club and gifted a supply of authentic Kenyan coffee. The coffee will be auctioned to raise funds for the club's service projects. Tim's visit was marked by shared stories, friendship and a strong sense of Rotary fellowship. With Tim is President Willie Venter.



Each week, more than 800 people receive hot meals through the soup kitchen at the Klerksdorp Community Centre (KCC). The Rotary Club of Klerksdorp (D9370) supports this effort by delivering vegetables and soup ingredients to help sustain the programme. With help from friends of Rotary, donors and community partners, the club ensures a steady supply of fresh produce and staples that enable the soup kitchen to continue its service. In addition to weekly support, the club also contributes to the centre's bi-annual celebration events. This support provides residents with a more festive meal and an opportunity to come together as a community.



NEW MEMBERS

Welcome your club's new members to our wider Rotary family! Send their names and photos to us at: rotaryafrica@mweb.co.za.



Gavin Olivier is a new member of the Rotary Club of St Francis Bay (D9370).



Reward Ekeh is a new member of the Rotary Club of Fourways Main Reef (D9400).



Rosemary Anderson was recognised as a Paul Harris Fellow by the Rotary Club of Vanderbijlpark (D9400).

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