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BULLETIN OF ROTARY CLUB OF CALCUTTA METRO CITY



The need to build consciousness among young adults about donating and volunteering is quite important and perhaps should be made mandatory in a country like India where the disparity of demand and supply is premium. As per the WHO, blood donation by 1% of the population is generally the bare minimum for meeting a nation's most basic blood needs. According to a recent data, India fell short of the WHO standard by 1.9 million units (or 15%). Considering the mixed health care system (public, private and not-for-profit) with a huge proportion of unregulated private sector, changing epidemiological and demographic pattern, inequitable distribution of health services, and ever-increasing population size, the estimation or forecasting of blood requirements in India has been a challenge. Similarly there is a wide gap between patients who need transplants and the organs that are available in India. An estimated around 1.8 lakh persons suffer from renal failure every year, however the number of renal transplants done is around 6000 only. An estimated 2 lakhs patients die of liver failure or liver cancer annually in India, about 10-15% of which can be saved with a timely liver transplant. Hence about 25-30 thousand liver transplants are needed annually in India but only about one thousand five hundred are being performed. Similarly about 50000 persons suffer from Heart failures annually but only about 10 to 15 heart transplants are performed every year in India. In case of Cornea, about 25000 transplants are done every year against a requirement of 1 lakh. Rotary needs to play a crucial role in spreading awareness on organ donation! The clubs need to Organise a short awareness session given by us at your office, college, school, club or anywhere else. Help us get more of your friends, colleagues, relatives and others know more about organ donation. Those who are reading this an appeal that you reach out to young adults through your Rotaract, RCC and partner organizations, seek out your colleagues in your work place, Chamber of Commerce and institutions and make people aware that every donation made helps save a crucial life. RC Calcutta Mahanagar has recently launched a bloodline app, register yourselves and help others register. A similar bloodline app is being run by another new club RC Calcutta Newbies. So let us make our affiliation with Rotary meaningful, let us all start a donation campaign, pledge your organs, donate blood and be a volunteer. Let us not set big goals as setting goals shall limit your reach rather let us dedicate ourselves to the process of volunteering. Que sera sera, whatever will be, will be, the future is not ours to see.....

EDITORIAL

Subhojit Roy

# City of Evanston celebrates 68 years as home to Rotary International World Headquarters



EVANSTON, Ill. (Aug. 23, 2022) – With ten commemorative signs posted throughout Evanston this week, the city proudly marks its 68th year as home to Rotary International World Headquarters, where a diverse global team of 700+ professionals support the work of Rotary's 46,000 clubs worldwide to strengthen communities and improve lives.

"Rotary has been an economic anchor for decades, not only as one of our largest employers, but surprising to some, one of the largest property taxpayers in our city," said Paul Zalmezak, City of Evanston's Economic Development Manager. "Rotary's reach goes beyond corporate staff shopping and dining at local businesses. With its global membership, Rotary contributes over \$1 million to our local economy with more than 2,000 international visits annually. We are proud to house an organization that is transforming communities and positively impacting lives around the world."

The commemorative signs are located on the east side of the Sheridan Road curve and the intersections at Dempster and McCormick; Sheridan and Lake; Sheridan and Ridge; Howard and Ridge; Howard and Chicago; Golf and McCormick; Golf and Crawford; and near the Metra and CTA hubs at Davis and Church.

On display in the lobby of One Rotary Center, located at 1560 Sherman Ave., are exhibits that are open to

the public from 9 a.m. – 5 p.m., Mon.-Fri. and 8 a.m. – 12 p.m. Saturday, except on major U.S. holidays, that showcase Rotary's causes, including promoting peace, fighting disease, providing safe water and sanitation, supporting education, saving mothers and children, growing local economies, and protecting the environment. Rotary's top priority is the global eradication of polio. Rotary launched its polio immunization program, PolioPlus, in 1985 and in 1988 became a leading partner in the Global Polio Eradication Initiative.

One Rotary Center is open to tours by appointment and conference rooms offering fully-equipped, state of the art spaces and capabilities for a wide variety of safe, COVID-compliant gatherings and meetings, events, seminars, panel discussions, corporate gatherings and more are available. Contact [visitors@rotary.org](mailto:visitors@rotary.org) to learn more about hosting an event at One Rotary Center.

## The next act with his play, *Visions*, a Rotarian has turned his addiction into art and provided new roles for former addicts.

In the winter of 1989, Robert Lo Bue experienced an awakening: He wanted to join the theater.

Lo Bue was working on the assembly line at an automotive plant. Nearing 40, he had no acting experience to speak of and a long history of drug and alcohol abuse. No matter. He auditioned for a production of *The Passion Play* near his home in Cliffside Park, New Jersey, and landed the part of Young James the Apostle.

His Alcoholics Anonymous sponsor was not pleased.

Lo Bue heeded the warning and bided his

time. A year later, he landed his first role. This episode became the basic template of *Visions*: a series of raw, unfiltered vignettes showing addicts hitting bottom and finding grace. "The play is for people in the early stages of recovery," Lo Bue, seated at the kitchen table of his current home in Teaneck, explained. "They don't have the greatest attention spans, so you've got to show them what they know: those bottoms. Boom, boom, boom."



Robert Lo Bue staged the first performance of *Visions* in September 1991 at a drug treatment facility.

Image credit: Courtesy of Robert Lo Bue

In September 1991, *Visions* debuted at Integrity House, a drug treatment facility in Secaucus. "Afterwards, this big guy came up to me; he was weeping like a baby," Lo Bue says. "Women who had lost their kids to addiction were hugging us. From that moment on, I realized that this play was the gift that I had to give the world."

Of course, delivering the gift of live theater can be a precarious financial proposition, especially if you insist, as Lo Bue does, on never charging for tickets. This is where his unlikely collaboration with Rotary began. In 2002, as part of National Recovery Month, he was invited to Washington, D.C., to stage the play for an audience that included members of Congress. The catch was he had to raise the money to transport his cast and crew of 22.

As he struggled to come up with the funds, Lo Bue's mind traveled back to his childhood, when members of a local Rotary club would visit his elementary school. On a whim, he contacted the Rotary Club of Maywood, New Jersey, and was astonished when they helped underwrite the trip. "I never did forget that," he says.

When COVID-19 struck in early 2020, *Visions* went on an indefinite hiatus. "I was getting cabin fever real bad," Lo Bue said. "I started thinking about Rotary again, and how welcoming they had been. So I joined the nearby Rotary Club of Fort Lee."

For Mary F. (like others in this story, she asked that her last name not be used), the bottom came on the night she prayed for God to end her life. She says, "The sick part about that was I didn't think my kids would get along without me. So I said, 'Please let my kids come with me.' I mean, that's crazy stuff." Her suicidal thoughts led her into recovery two decades ago, where she met Lo Bue.

In *Visions*, Mary plays the wife in an abusive marriage opposite her second husband, Joe, who is also in recovery. Like other veteran performers, Mary speaks at a lot of rehab facilities, where she has encountered young mothers. "I can see in their faces that they want to break free of the drinking and drugs," she says. "I honestly believe God saved my life so I can carry this message."

When Nina S. joined the cast, her role was familiar. "Bob cast me as Monique, the hooker," Nina noted with a sly smile. "Which makes sense because I've worked in that field."

Not that Nina has ever felt typecast. The 61-year-old retiree has played half a dozen roles in her two years with *Visions*. She's been a cop, an addict trying to buy drugs, an abused wife, and a doctor. Nina attributes her range to the fact that she has been acting for most of her life. "You gotta be able to act to walk the streets because you're scared all the time," she says. "But you gotta pretend like you're so tough that you can handle any situation, even when you can't."

During her years of addiction, Nina suffered a harrowing sexual assault and tested HIV-positive. But for her, the bottom was the Christmas when she abandoned her three young children to buy dope. "I told them, 'I'm gonna be back. I'll be back. I'll be back.' I didn't come back."

Nina has been clean for 26 years, and acting in *Visions* has been an integral part of her recovery process. "When we do the play, I always identify with Monique, because she tests HIV-positive too," Nina says. "But then, at the end, you see her in the circle at a

During her two years in *Visions*, Nina S. has played



six different roles.

Mike S. still remembers when he met Lo Bue, after peeking in on a *Visions* rehearsal after a meeting. "It was like watching my life. Bob saw me there and he said, 'Hey, you wanna help out?' I started with moving equipment. Then somebody wouldn't show up and all of a sudden I found myself in the play." Talk to enough of the actors and you realize that this method of recruiting is something of a Lo Bue trademark.

Mike hit his bottom three decades ago: "I was facing 10 years in jail, so strung out I looked like someone with stage 4 cancer. I called my dad, who had always bailed me out before, and he said, 'Mike, I'd rather throw my money in the garbage than get you out.' I could hear my sister screaming in the background, 'Leave him in there, he needs rehab!' They were 100 percent right."

It's no coincidence that Mike's decision to join *Visions* marked the true beginning of his sobriety. "Look," he says, "I'm not a great actor. But all the parts I play are me anyway. I was a drug dealer. I was in jail. It just breaks me down when I watch the scenes, and I've been watching them for 27 years now. Even when I just think about it — " Mike paused. He was tearing up. "I've watched grown men in jail cry when we perform. And when I leave the stage, I feel like a million dollars. No drug ever did that for me."

After the potluck, Lo Bue led a convoy to a nearby church for rehearsal. For the next two hours, he led his cast through a brisk rehearsal of a dozen scenes. There were plenty of flubbed lines and missed cues, but there were also moments of transcendent power.

Lo Bue was especially focused on Jimmy, a 77-year-old who was playing a role known as the Tramp. Over the course of the play, the Tramp transforms from a neatly attired career man to a homeless alcoholic swaddled in rags, and experiences what has become a recurring theme in Lo Bue's world: a moment of awakening that brings him into recovery. Jimmy played the moment to

the hilt. He caterwauled, "I don't have to live this way anymore!"

"I don't think he's angry," Lo Bue said gently. "I think he's bummed out."

Jimmy delivered the line again, this time in a more subdued tone. "Better," Lo Bue said.



*The people who help bring Visions to life (clockwise from top left): Annie, Mary F., Jimmy, Nate, Robert Lo Bue, Nina S., Mike S.*

The actors in Lo Bue's theater all share his sense of mission.

Kimberly, who joined the troupe three years ago, had struggled to find her footing in recovery for years. She blew off two college scholarships and later watched two friends die of their addictions. "Everywhere I went, alcoholism just followed me," the interior designer explained. "Because recovery isn't just about going sober. For it to stick, you need a sense of service and unity. That's what I got when I joined this play. We built this family, where the goal is to carry the message to the next suffering addict."

It's this sense of Service Above Self that led Lo Bue to pen *Visions* all those years ago. "I could have just kept going to the recovery rooms and telling my story," he says. "I chose a different path. Like, I know I've done a lot of crappy things in my life, but I was also able to build this little world where the cast and crew can heal themselves and help heal the world."

*Steve Almond's 12th book, the novel All the Secrets of the World, was published in May.*

# PRIP Shekhar Mehta meets Vice President of India Jagdeep Dhankar



PRIP Shekhar Mehta said after the meeting with VP of India, "Had a great meeting with the Vice President of India Hon'ble Jagdeep Dhankar. It's always an enriching experience meeting him, was humbled by his praise for my stint as the President of Rotary International."



## Freedom from Cancer- A Seminar



Rotary Club of Calcutta Metro City supported RC Adi Bhowanipore in hosting a seminar on Freedom from Cancer. The panellists included Drs Manish Kumar, Anirban Deb, Sayed Hassanajuman, Sudipta Bandopadhyay and Sanjoy Roy. PP Rtn Dr Chanchal Goswami moderated the entire seminar on different aspects of cancer and speakers covered topics as pulmonology, radiology, surgical oncology. The seminar was inaugurated by PDG Dr Amitava Mookherjee. The club was represented by President Rtn Amrita Basu, IPP Rtn Bandana Das and Rtn Shanker Das.

# Coming Up:

- 3rd September'22- District Governor's Official Club Visit
- 5th September'22- Teacher's Day Celebration
- 25th September'22- Health & Eye Camp at Entally
- 26th September'22- 'Sports as a Career for Girls' to celebrate International Girl Child Day RC Calcutta Metro City in association Government of UK at British Deputy High Commission

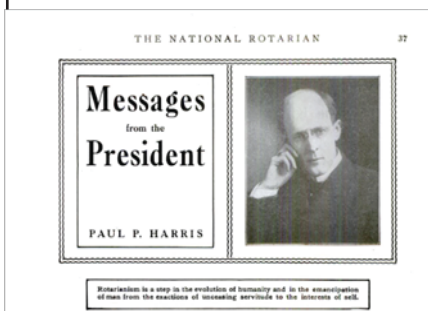
# Greetings

Happy Birthday - Subarna Bhadury for 7th September!

Happy Birthday - Jharna Mitra for 10th September!

Happy Birthday - Debankur Saha for 13th September!

# From the archives -



**The Cost of a Frown.**  
It cost me the painful consciousness of the fact that I had let one more of life's opportunities slip past unimproved and that I had hurt some one needlessly.

**The Profit of a Smile.**  
It was not a hand me down, ready made grinlet. It came when I was feeling particularly well and I couldn't have stopped its coming.  
It won me another smile and an item of business and the thought of it and the business it had won provoked still another smile which brought me a glad welcome home, helped the dinner along and encouraged slumber and dreams that were not unpleasant.  
I have seen one spontaneous smile displace the gloom of a toiling, sweating swearing throng as effectively as the sun dispels a mist. Don't fail to inventory your smiles. They are great assets, and stand in the same relation to success that frowns do to failure.

**Acquaintance, the Foundation of Success.**  
Here's to success, real success, your success, my success, the world's success; and here's to the foundation of success, the practicalized, scientific, sterilized, vitalized foundation of your success, my success, the world's success—acquaintance, the dynamics and harmonics of Rotary.

**Do any Except Rotarians Benefit from Rotary?**  
They certainly do, Sir. Rotarians acquire the habit of helpfulness within the Rotarian fold, but the influences are as the ripples that follow the fall of the pebble in the still mill

pond. They pass on and on in ever enlarging circles.

**Fare Ye Well!**

Now, at the close of this, my last year of activity in the National Association, and just before the drop of the curtain in the final scene of the last act, I shall give myself the honor of a moment's pause before the footlights while I make a low bow and with heartfelt sincerity tremblingly repeat the old stereotyped but soulful words: "Thanking you one and all, on the part of my little company, and myself, for your very kind attention, I bid you God speed, Fare ye Well!"

PAUL P. HARRIS.  
(Attorney-at-Law, No. 127 North Dearborn Street, Chicago.)



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