



Rotary

# Spectrum



RI District 3291

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## Our Rotary club meets in the Metaverse

Posted on January 2, 2023 by Juana Maria Serrano Marin, president of the Rotary Club of Metaverso, District 2203, Spain



Member avatars sit in a virtual room with a deep purple backdrop in a recent meeting of the Rotary Club of Metaverso



Juana Maria Serrano Marin

A few months ago, a guest speaker at my husband's Rotary club told the group about the vast possibilities of the Metaverse as a virtual meeting place. Not long after, a person on our district's membership committee suggested that my husband form a new club – in the Metaverse.

The Metaverse is a collection of online spaces where users can explore virtual and augmented reality. Users can create avatars to represent themselves, then interact virtually with objects and settings. Wikipedia defines the Metaverse as “a network of 3D virtual worlds focused on social connection.” Early components of Metaverse technology have been used in video game design for at least two decades. But increasingly, businesses and other entities are using the technology to reach people and create social connections online.

My husband and I are both familiar with the Metaverse. We don't have any specific interest in virtual reality, but we're intrigued by the possibilities for using the Metaverse as a meeting point and a place for easily accessible digital information.

### A platform in Spatial

Not long after the club meeting, I began dabbling (with my husband's help) on a 3D metaverse platform called Spatial. I started building a virtual space for our proposed club. As the idea rolled forward, we attracted more and more interest and gathered enough prospective members to propose a Metaverse-centered club to our district officials.

After an in-person training session in Alicante on 12 November, along with other necessary procedural steps, we were ready to

announce ourselves as one of the first Rotary clubs in the Metaverse. We were admitted into Rotary on 28 November, with 15 women and six men. Our club's average age is 42, with two members who are 20 years old, one having transferred from a Rotaract club.

This meeting format has real advantages. Flexible and innovative, it attracts a diverse membership base and helps us reach new demographics. That's in keeping with President-elect R. Gordon R. McNally's desire for new clubs that will allow Rotary to exist everywhere, in a style that suits everyone who wants to be part of the organization and help us do good.

The club isn't just another E-club. Meetings are held in our virtual space on the Spatial platform. There are virtual meeting spots, places to view greetings from other members, and areas where you can learn about Rotary and our local and international projects. Visitors can create their own avatars and move around the space, interacting with the environment and other visitors. They don't need headsets or any other dedicated equipment to join in. The controls can be manipulated with a keyboard or simple mobile device menus.

### Avatars unite

What makes this platform so immersive is that, after just a few sessions, people identify with their avatars online and experiences become “personal.” It's quite different from just taking part in a Zoom meeting or videoconference.

Of course, while our regular meetings are held in our virtual space, we also plan to meet face-to-face. We all like to hug, talk, and share moments together in person. We had an in-person training session on 12 November, and everyone who came was very excited. It was so gratifying to see how much interest there was and how much people wanted to learn.

I'm sure our meetings and offerings will grow and adapt as the metaverse grows and adapts. Just like any other club, we plan to serve and seek out projects that better our communities in the real world. In the future, no doubt, we'll also find causes we can address in the virtual space. To explore this exciting new venture, come check us out.

## Rotary + Academia: Growing Win-Win-Win Opportunities

Posted on January 5, 2023 by Elaine Hernandez, Ph.D. & Luis R. Torres-Hostos, Ph.D., members of Mission Rotary Club, Texas, USA Learn how local universities and Rotary clubs can be valuable partners in service

In our quest to understand the critical needs of our communities and to identify actions that our club can take in response to these needs, **the Mission Rotary Club has tapped into a valuable resource that is right in our backyard and comes with no consulting fees attached: our local universities.** Universities are typically large repositories of knowledge, expertise, skills, and resources, and The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV) is no exception. UTRGV is growing into a regional powerhouse with over 32,000

We meet calendar months' 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Saturdays at GPT Group, JC 25, Salt Lake, Kolkata 700098 at 6.00 PM

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students across fourteen colleges and schools, over 1,300 faculty members, and deep expertise from business and entrepreneurship, engineering, computer sciences, and medicine, to social determinants of health and the arts. *Many faculty and students have become Rotarians and have enriched our clubs.*



*Growing Next Generation FARMERS is a project made in partnership between Mission Rotary Club and the Mission Consolidated Independent School District with expert support provided by The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. The FARMERS Program teaches teenagers from a predominantly agricultural community that agricultural careers can expand far beyond the fertile fields of South Texas into new opportunities in technology, science, food security, and social work.*

We have identified the potential of university students undertaking studies of local conditions as part of their academic programs. The results of these studies can then be translated into an effective community needs assessment for any service projects, including those supported by a Rotary Foundation Global Grant. This has created a win-win-win opportunity in which Rotarians acquire evidence that can lead to successful projects and global grant applications, students receive academic credit toward graduation, and the university advances real-life applications of the knowledge being taught.

One example of this partnership at the local level is our study on food insecurity that identified the local trends in hunger and poverty, knowledge that was then incorporated into our US\$50K Global Grant with the Mission Consolidated Independent School District (MCISD) entitled *Growing Next Generation FARMERS*. With support from The Rotary Foundation in 2022, *Growing Next Generation FARMERS* is a partnership of our Mission Rotary Club, several UTRGV units—including the School of Social Work, School of Environmental, Earth, and Marine Sciences, the Robert C. Vackar College of Business and Entrepreneurship, the Center for Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Advancement, and the UTRGV Office of Sustainability—and MCISD. *Growing Next Generation FARMERS* will teach high school students advanced approaches to food sciences—incorporating drones and greenhouse technologies—and help secure the next generation of food scientists.



*FARMERS School garden at Veterans Memorial High School*

On the global front, we have a growing partnership with all our UTRGV partners along with the Texas A & M University School of Public Health, Baylor University Collaborative on Hunger and Poverty, Zamorano Pan-American Agricultural School in Honduras, the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Honduras (National Autonomous University of Honduras, UNAH in Spanish) Department of Social Work, and the Universidad Rafael Landívar Faculty of Health Sciences in Guatemala. With these partners, we are developing a new Global Grant proposal titled *Growing Sustainable Aquaponics Programs in South Texas, Honduras, and Guatemala*. For example, UNAH Social Work students are fulfilling their national service requirement by conducting community assessments in Quimistan, Santa Barbara, and La Libertad, Honduran municipalities that are experiencing significant out-migration. They are examining the social and economic factors that contribute to the out-migration of youth and the reintegration of returned migrants back into their communities. Participating students are placed with the local authorities to engage multiple stakeholders in diagnosing and prioritizing the needs of their communities, identify strategies municipalities can employ to prevent out-migration, and help to strengthen municipal development plans.

These partnerships are good for our work in Rotary, good for our communities, and good for the universities and their students. We must continue to forge these opportunities and leverage our combined expertise to address our most pressing problems. Partnering with university students, Rotary and Rotaract clubs can strengthen their capacity to conduct effective needs assessments that can lead to successful, well-designed service projects that address the root cause of local challenges.

## Rotary delegates attend Climate Change conference



**COP27**  
SHARM EL-SHEIKH  
EGYPT 2022

Posted on January 5, 2023 by Judith Diment, Dean, Rotary Representatives Network to the UN and International Agencies

I was delighted to have the chance to lead the Rotary delegation to the United Nations Convention on Climate Change, COP27, in Egypt in November. It's a privilege that came my way as dean of the Rotary Representative Network to the United Nations and International Agencies.



The worldwide climate change conference is held every year by the UN, this year attended by more than 100 country delegations and 1,600 IGOs and NGOs. After 13 days of intense negotiations, the attendees reached some truly consequential agreements. It was a real thrill to see.

Rotary's delegation to the convention also consisted of President Jennifer Jones; Dr. Chris Puttock, co-founder of the Environmental Sustainability Rotary Action Group (ESRAG); Mohamed Delawar, Rotary's representative to the Arab League; and Keith Madden, the Rotary staff manager for environment. Rotary has had Observer status in the UN since its formation in 1947.

The conference was hosted by the Egyptian Government in Sharm el Sheikh, a city on the southern tip of the Sinai Peninsula. I last visited Sharm el Sheikh in 2006, and I didn't recognize the new conference center, expanded airport, and five-star resort hotels that have sprung up all along the edge of the Red Sea. The town has also been revamped, with a huge new mosque at its center.

#### Opening ceremony

President Jones attended the opening ceremony on 7 November, one of 30 NGO delegates invited to do so out of 10,000 at the conference. I attended the keynote address by U.S. President Joe Biden on 13 November. Rotary also hosted three gatherings and participated in events for delegates and the public.

The conference concluded with a breakthrough accord on 19 November. Every party present – representing almost 200 nations – signed on to an agreement to provide “loss and damage” funding for vulnerable countries hit hard by climate disasters.

The conference's achievements didn't end there. Against a difficult geopolitical backdrop, the participants reaffirmed their commitment to limiting global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. The participants also agreed to ramp up their efforts to cut greenhouse gas emissions and increase their support for efforts of developing countries to adapt to the inevitable impacts of climate change.

But the creation of the specific “loss and damage” fund was a particularly important achievement, since it was the first time such a measure had been adopted.

As inspiring as those results were, I was almost as excited about what we managed to achieve on behalf of Rotary.

#### Protecting mangroves and other measures

Working with the Rotarians from Egypt, we highlighted Rotary's mangrove forest restoration projects at two events. The first event, Nature-Based Solutions: Mangroves and Beyond, built on the round-table discussions Rotary held on mangroves at last year's climate conference. This meeting gave us new connections for the mangrove projects as well as ideas for next year's conference, which will be held in the United Arab Emirates.

The second event, Nature-Based Solutions: Egypt included high-level government officials and delegates from NGOs and academia. The Egyptian delegation showed a video outlining a dozen nature-based solutions from clubs around Egypt. Our

Rotary delegation presented the mangrove projects, ESRAG and the need to collect data. Reem Abdel Meguid and Jones announced a new Sharm el-Sheikh global grant of more than \$100,000 for a Nabq mangroves project. It really showed how Rotary's “People of Action” can get things done in hours and days!

The evening presidential reception, with Jones as host, was attended by more than 60 delegates, including the governor of South Sinai, representatives from many federal governments, and local dignitaries, along with three Egyptian government ministers: Minister of Culture Nivine Youssef Mohamed Al-Kilany, Minister of Youth Ashraf Sobhy, and Minister for Social Solidarity Nivine El-Kabbag. El-Kabbag announced in her speech that she would have her agency donate \$50,000 to the Nabq mangrove project.

I also attended many other side events and had one-on-one meetings with many civil society leaders and government representatives. I was impressed by the progress since last year's conference, especially with the amount of new research, innovation, and investments made to try and find solutions for climate change.

### Brief outline of the Global Grant 1991152

**Purpose:** ‘Fight against Anemia in Women’

**Objectives:** Treat women of Anemia by screening and treatment and prevent by educating them

**Title:** ‘Matri-Raksha’ - protection of mothers

**Scope of work:** Provide screening camps, minor and major surgeries, medicines, awareness training, healthcare professional training and providing diagnostic equipment at community health centers

**Coverage:** Both districts of 24 Parganas, West Bengal, India

**Sponsors:** Rotary clubs of Salt Lake Metropolitan Kolkata of District 3291, India and Nidau-Biel, Biel-Bienne, Biel-Buttengen of District 1990, Switzerland:

**Grant Partners:** Rotary Foundation India, the Rotary Foundation of Rotary International,

**Associates:** Related Government and civic bodies, NGO's

### Rotary Foundation raises more than \$1 million for Giving Tuesday

The Rotary Foundation raised more than \$1,111,000 in support of Giving Tuesday 2022. Thank you to everyone who gave in support of this global day of giving so that together we can keep Doing Good in the World.

The Foundation would like to recognize the following clubs for their engagement:

#### Top fundraising clubs

Rotary Club of Taipei Northeast, Taiwan  
Rotary Club of Kaohsiung West, Taiwan  
Rotary Club of Taipei Fullwealth, Taiwan

#### Top donor participation clubs

Rotary Club of East Nassau, Bahamas  
Rotary Club of Hamamatsu South, Japan  
Rotary Club of Highlands, Texas, USA

#### Top online giving clubs

Rotary Club of East Nassau, Bahamas  
Rotary Club of Yuan Lin Central, Taiwan  
Rotary Club of Hamamatsu South, Japan

Thank you for supporting The Rotary Foundation on Giving Tuesday!

3-Jan-2023

## Presidential message of January 2003



**Jennifer Jones**  
*President 2022-23*  
*January 2023*

Rotary recently surveyed our members and found something that should be unsurprising but still caused many of us in Rotary leadership to sit up and pay attention: The single most important factor in member satisfaction is the club experience. How at home you feel in your club, how rewarding club meetings are, and how engaged you feel in service projects.

I have seen this firsthand across the Rotary world this year. When members feel an emotional connection to their club, they cannot imagine leaving. And that connection is often forged in “Rotary moments,” when people feel that special connection to the people around them and the impact of their service. Our Imagine Impact Tour is all about shining a light on those Rotary moments and encouraging our members to tell their stories.

But there’s something else that makes an enormous difference in building and sustaining that connection. It’s the comfort and care of our members — both Rotarians and Rotaractors. As my Rotary friend Todd Jenkins says, “People can’t see how you think, but they sure can see your actions.”

We are in the relationship business, and if we take care of each other — genuinely show concern for each other — then we will make friends for life, and we will do anything to widen that circle of friendship.

The question is: How do we live with our eyes wide open and do the things that really matter? We do this by taking time for each other, actively listening to one another, and treating every Rotary member as equally valuable — no matter how long we have been a member or what position we hold.

People like me in Rotary leadership can offer all kinds of advice about how to make your club experience more valuable. But

what’s most important is for everyone in every Rotary club to speak up and listen to one another. We should never be afraid to share with our fellow Rotary member what we expect to get out of our membership and have an open discussion about how to make that happen.

To lead a Rotary club is to invite such dialogue and to be willing to try new approaches. Good leadership is giving it away. Propping others up. Allowing others to feel the victory.

I have one last request for club leaders. We still need to do more worldwide to increase our female membership. It’s up a bit this year, but I know we can and must do better. Rotary is growing again. As I write this, we’re just a handful of members away from surpassing 1.2 million Rotarians again. So let’s redouble our efforts to bolster our clubs with great new members, then keep them for life by providing comfort and care.

### QUOTE

*The distinction between the past, present and future is only a stubbornly persistent illusion. —Albert Einstein*

### UNWIND

*God always likes to know again and again what you want. It is not that He forgets your Dreams Prayers; but He loves to check your passion towards your desire!*

*We have solutions to all the problems, when they are not ours!*

### Birthdays of members in January 2023

PP Uma Shankar Agarwal on January 9, 2023

VP Indrakumar Bagri on January 10, 2023

Club Treasurer Ashok Kumar Surana on January 10, 2023

PP Dr Aruna Tantia on January 19, 2023

### Anniversaries of members in January 2023

Spouse Sushila & Treasurer Ashok K Surana on January 19, 2023

Spouse Dr Nandita & PP Dr Ankush Bansal on January 28, 2023

*January is Vocational Service Month*

### TAILPIECE

#### Time, passing



Wilkes spent more than 30 hours photographing Yosemite for this picture, which was used on the cover of the January 2016 issue of National Geographic magazine. “I was literally on the side of a cliff, capturing the stars and the moonlight as it transitions, the moonlight lighting El Capitan,” says Wilkes. “I also captured this transition of time throughout the landscape. The best part is obviously seeing the magical moments of humanity as time changed.”