



CALCUTTA POINTERS PRESENT THE CHATTER

December 2022
Vol. 2



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Pres: Rtn. Dr. Sujoy Majumdar
Secy: Rtn. Aditi Dey
Treasurer: Rtn. Sanjukta Majumdar
Editor: Rtn. Dr. Babita G. Saha

Welcome New Members!

RCCP welcomes four South Point alumni, proudly referred to as ex-Pointers, who joined us in July 2022, taking the membership tally to 37. This batch of new members brought in a variety of professions and experiences, and jumped right in with full energy from the very start.



Rtn. Dr. Dipanjan Basu, of SPHS 1993 batch, is a Professor at the University of Waterloo in Canada. He tries to connect science and spirituality in his quest for understanding life. He likes classical music and enjoys watching sports.



Rtn. Siddhanta Mukherjee is from the SPHS batch of 2009 and runs his family business in Medical instruments. He is currently pursuing an MBA in Canada. Congratulations to him for tying the knot on 3rd August 2022!

Rtn. Sugato Sanyal
Membership Chair



Rtn. Dr. Saumitra Ray is an acclaimed cardiologist based in Kolkata and an ex-Pointer from the same 1982 batch as the founding members of the club. He enjoys traveling, reading, music and food.



Rtn. Snehajyoti Saha, of SPHS batch of 2010, is an engineer based in Kolkata, India. He is an animal lover and an avid sports enthusiast.



Devyani, Anusuya, Atashi, Prasanta and Saumitra (July)
Anindya BR, Sudish, and Nivedita (September)
Aditi, Nabanita, and Satyajit (October)
Shipra, Sujoy, Sanjukta, Partha and, Siddhanta (November)
Anindya C. and Samita (December)



CONGRATULATIONS



Rtn. Dr. Sujoy Majumdar
Charter President, 2022-23
Rotary Club of Calcutta Pointers

Dear Fellow Rotarians,

It is a matter of immense pride and privilege to continue for the second year as the President of Rotary Club of Calcutta Pointers. Thanks to the tremendous enthusiasm shown by all of you, our second year has seen a flurry of activities, keeping pace with our spirit of "service above self." We welcomed 4 new members, all professionally established in their fields, Rtns. Dr. Saumitra Ray, Dr. Dipanjan Basu, Mr. Snehajyoti Saha, and Mr. Siddhanta Mukherjee, thanks to the tireless efforts of our Membership Chair, Rtn. Sugato Sanyal.

The year started with the completion of our ROTAVISION Commitment for 2021-22. We distributed 117 free spectacles at Kakdihi, East Midnapore, 107 free spectacles at Dhakuria Kali Bari, and more than 100 free spectacles at Haliyan, Bagnan. In addition, our club, aided by the District, donated two sewing machines to a sewing school run by Srijan at Kakdihi, thanks to the initiative of our club's Joint Secretary, Rtn. Anindya Basu Ray.

Our first project this year, the Education and Literacy Initiative for the children of the Kalighat area, was a collaborative work with Bondhu Collective and Health & Eco Defence Society (HEDS). It was initiated by Rtn. Nabanita Khan and supported by President-Elect Rtn. Dr. Raghu Sachindra Rao. We donated a laptop, a printer, and an LCD projector to the teacher and students of Batighar Pathshala, as well as necessary books for academic support. We were able to provide financial support for the running of the school for the entire year, and additionally, sponsored the salary for their maths and science teacher to reinforce learning in these areas.

Distribution of school uniforms to the underprivileged students of Seeta Chaudhuri Primary School, run by our NGO partner Nari Seva Sangha, was another noteworthy effort in this area initiated by Rtns. Madhumita Banerjee and Madhumita Gupta Chatterjee.

A Blood Donation Camp along with a Thalassemia Awareness Campaign was undertaken at the initiative of Rtn. Dr. Shipra Chowdhury in association with Merryland Nursing Home in Kolkata. Around 150 participants including Rtns. Soumya Priya Mukherjee and Sharmila Roy, the founder of our club, donated blood. Blood donation cards were passed on to the Thalassemia Society, following an initiative taken by the club Treasurer Rtn. Sanjukta Majumdar. Personally delivering a public awareness lecture on the importance of early detection was especially fulfilling to me.

Independence Day was celebrated with flag hoisting at the campus of Nari Seva Sangha, where our club participated in the Independence Day program organized by students of pre-primary and primary sections of Seeta Chaudhuri and Balwadi Schools. We donated free food packets to the children and donated saplings to be planted on the school grounds.

Our last mega project was a major environmental initiative in the Sundarbans, led by the club secretary Rtn. Aditi Dey, where we collaborated in a Mangrove Plantation Project in association with the Purbasha Eco Helpline Society (PEHS). During August 19-21, Rtns. Aditi Dey, Soumya Priya Mukherjee, Sujoy Majumdar, Raghu Sachindra Rao, Sutapa Roy, and Sanjukta Majumdar, along with their spouses Aditi Mukherjee, Aparajita Sen Majumdar, Mousumi Rao, and other family members participated in planting approximately 700 mangrove

saplings in the mudflats of Korankhali river near Kumirmari village of Sundarbans, under the stewardship of "Mangrove Man" Mr. Umashankar Mandal. We also donated fruit trees and vegetable seeds for supporting the livelihood of local women and donated education-related materials such as school bags and books for primary school children of the area.

In keeping with Rotary focus, we organized a Thalassemia awareness program at Gokhale Memorial Girls' College in Kolkata, initiated by the college principal and fellow rotarian, Dr. Atashi Karpha. On 16th November nearly 100 students took time out of their busy schedule to listen to the inspiring Thalassemia awareness lecture delivered by Senior Rotarian and Chairman of the District Thalassemia Awareness Program, Dr. Ramendu Hom Chaudhuri. Rotarians Dr. Sujoy Majumdar, Dr. Raghu Sachindra Rao, Dr. Kaushik Sil and Col. Soumya Priya Mukherjee attended and facilitated the program. Subsequently, on November 24th, we sponsored a Thalassemia screening program in association with the Serum Institute Thalassemia Foundation where 69 students and staff of the college participated. The results of the screening tests were delivered to the staff and students by Rtn. Dr. Karpha maintaining strict patient confidentiality.

RCCP ended the year true to its focus on medical and educational initiatives. On Dec 8th, in partnership with Supriya Ritwik Foundation, we distributed nutritious lunch to 280 underprivileged children from Seeta Chaudhuri Primary School and Balwadi School run by NSS, to students at Batighar Pathshala, and to the children at the Jan Seva crèche run by Society For Indian Children's Welfare, meticulously organized under *(Contd. on Pg. 5)*



BATIGARH PATHSHALA is an ambitious and rewarding project undertaken by Rotary Club of Calcutta Pointers (RCCP). We joined forces with Bondhu Collective towards the educational upliftment and wellbeing of a group of 45-50 children, predominantly from the red-light area of Kalighat. Bondhu Collective, a cohort of educators, artists, and professionals in sports and mental health was running an informal after-school facility for these children. With limited access to resources, especially during the pandemic, formal education took a pause for most children. Many got disinterested and were drawn towards social evils like drug abuse. The need of the hour was to re-induct them into the educational process and channelise their energy in creative and social activities such as sports, performing arts, and team activities, keeping their mental health needs in the forefront. While the school was operating during evening hours through crowdfunding and contributions from other NGOs such as Health & Ecodefence Society (HEDS), it was facing several challenges with lack of dedicated space, equipment and furniture, shortage of books for higher level classes, irregular funds, and, lately, local political resistance in running a school of this nature. As the first step in a long enduring relationship, RCCP was pleased to provide a laptop, a printer, a projector, and a computer table to enhance the teaching environment in the class room. Club members and donors also helped with text books, encyclopedia, storybooks, and other school supplies such as stationery, crayons, and colouring books.



While setting up the infrastructure with modern equipment and learning tools was RCCP's first project with Batigarh, a second and ongoing project includes partially funding the monthly rent for a larger space for the school in collaboration with HEDS. The proximity of the new classroom to the community also ensured that the children can come and go independently and without having to navigate through crowded streets. More recently, we decided to also support the services of a science and maths teacher as the students needed reinforcement in these areas of study. Souvik Mukherjee comes with a story of his own. Having had to give up on his plans of higher education midway due to financial hardship, he is passionate about these students' futures and is a welcome addition to the team. His storytelling techniques and unconventional ways of making science fun have regenerated new interest in the subject. At Batigarh Pathshala, access to age-specific materials and learning-capacity-based education plans, along with engagement in sports and arts have lent a holistic support for the students and gradually steering them away from substance abuse or other harmful activities. They have started enjoying coming to school and continuing their formal education. Their ability to participate in performing arts and group activities is increasing their confidence and social skills. We are happy to keep supporting Bondhu Collective in their quest for learning and social change, and are privileged to be part of this inspiring team led by Smritiparna Sengupta and Abhijit Ray. It is indeed heart-warming for RCCP to see these young minds stepping forward towards a path of sustainable growth, learning, and a brighter future.



RCCP Team – Rtn. Nabanita Khan – Project Lead
Rtns. Aniruddha Bhattacharya, Dr. R. Sachindra Rao, Madhumita Banerjee,
Dr. Babita C. Saha, Madhumita Chatterjee, Soumya Priya Mukherjee,
Dr. Sujoy Majumdar, Sanjukta Majumdar, Anusuya Ghosh, Anindya Basu Roy



The Sundarbans, shundor bon in Bengali meaning a beautiful jungle, is losing her beauty! Sprawling over about 10,000 square kilometres across India and Bangladesh, it is the largest contiguous mangrove forest in the world, habitat of the majestic Bengal tigers, estuarine crocodiles and Indian pythons, and home to millions of impoverished and vulnerable people. Unfortunately, this unique ecosystem, which is also a UNESCO World Heritage site is now exposed to the threats of extinction.

Situated on the delta created by the rivers Ganga, Brahmaputra, Meghna and their distributaries, which drain out to the Bay of Bengal, the region forms an intricate network of mudflats and islands separated by anastomosing channels and tidal creeks. The interconnected channels and the archipelago of polygonal islands dappling the turquoise sea water form a natural labyrinth, creating a visual spectacle from the sky for those lucky to fly over this region. The vast stretches of mangrove canopy with their roots dangling in the water is a mesmerising sight if you are on a boat, but not without an eerie excitement in anticipation of a flash of the striped yellow. The stunning landscape shrouded in the mystery of the wild have created a culture of myths and folklore among the locals and have inspired many poetic minds. It is indeed painful to see this beautiful and unique ecosystem degrade - a poetic justice of mother nature silently expressing her anguish against our unscrupulous activities!

Mangrove forests are coastal ecosystems very important to the world. Currently, mangroves provide habitat for more than 300 threatened species across the world. Terrestrial animals like insects, reptiles, monkeys and tigers, and aquatic animals like fish, mollusks, crustaceans, and other species make

mangroves their home. Thus, they are hotspots of biodiversity and indirectly support the health of other biodiversity hotspots such as by trapping sediment that might otherwise smother nearby coral reefs. Mangroves also provide protection against flooding and erosion of coastal regions and, thus, provide invaluable benefits to coastal communities. They are the first line of defence against flooding and storm events and help save billions in property damages. In addition, these ecosystems play an important role in ensuring the wellbeing and livelihoods of people around the world. They generate income by harbouring fisheries, providing wood for building and fire, and supporting tourism. Mangroves provide nutrition, strengthen food security, help in poverty reduction, contribute to gender equality, clean water and sanitation, and support mental and spiritual wellbeing of communities. Further, mangrove thickets and their densely-woven root systems sequester carbon at a rate much higher than that of terrestrial forests and convert carbon dioxide to organic carbon at a higher rate than almost any other habitat on Earth. Moreover, mangroves can play a significant role in coastal management system, reducing the impacts of frequent storms and sea level rise that are a consequence of climate change.

Unfortunately, mangroves have seen a decline driven by land conversion for aquaculture and agriculture, coastal development, pollution and overexploitation. Approximately 145,000 square kilometres of mangroves remain, which points to a significant loss of world mangroves over the last four decades. Consequences of mangrove loss include impoverished livelihood, lower economic growth, declined human security, and a poorer quality of life for

local communities and coastal populations. In the Sundarbans, almost half of the mangrove forest has been cut down for supplying fuel wood and land reclamation for settlement and aquaculture, a result of increasing population pressure. Indiscriminate prawn seed collection, refuse and sewage discharge from urban areas, spillage of toxic pollutants as well as trash in the tourist spots, and decline of a few rivers and channels over the last century have only exacerbated the situation. In addition, recent cyclonic storms like Aila and Amphaan significantly damaged the Sundarbans with storm-water surges, tidal inundation, saline water invasion, and flash floods.

Notwithstanding, not all hope is lost. Research shows that mangroves have come and gone over geologic time scales and at considerable speeds. In fact, ancestral mangroves can be traced back to 65 million years and mangroves have waxed and waned since then. Fluctuations of sea level have disturbed mangroves for a few thousand years. Thus, mangroves are resilient and persistent, and that is good news! If human exploitation can be controlled and systematic restoration activity is undertaken, then mangroves can be restored.

Experts suggest that a holistic approach is necessary to design a restoration program. First, the water flow and precipitation patterns (hydrology) of the mangrove site should be determined. Then, the ecology of the individual species, i.e., their reproduction patterns, propagule distribution, and successful seedling establishment procedure should be ascertained. It is also necessary to assess how the previous mangrove environment changed that currently prevents natural colonisation by the existing species. Further, the



topography of the forest is important because subtle topographic changes impact tidal flooding depth, duration, and frequency. A hybrid solution involving a gradient of engineering structures such as dykes alongside mangroves may be the best way forward. Creation of a favourable hydrologic condition by construction or breaching of dykes, construction of appropriate tidal channels, and proper site selection with conducive growth condition is necessary before actual planting of propagules, collected seedlings or cultivated seedlings are done. Blindly building a nursery, growing mangroves, or planting some areas currently devoid of mangroves (like a convenient mudflat) may not work if the actual reason why mangroves are not already there is determined. This requires a planned approach involving the government, local communities, coastal engineers, planners, and decision makers with proper evaluation of restoration cost early during the design process and with a systematic monitoring program in place so that a sustainable solution is obtained. Many national agencies and international organisations have come forward for restoration of mangroves. Rotary International President Shekhar Mehta announced in 2021 at the COP26 summit that mangrove restoration will be a focus of Rotary's environmental work. Rotarians and Rotaractors planted mangrove trees at the Bonefish Pond National Park in Nassau (Bahamas) in 2017. In the Indian side of the Sundarbans, the Rotary Club of Calcutta Pointers recently undertook a project of financially supporting the plantation of mangrove saplings in the islands. Both the governments of India and West Bengal have taken multiple initiatives to restore the Sundarban mangroves. In addition to government support, individual efforts and contributions by not-for-profit organisations towards scientific restoration of the mangroves

and elevation of quality of life for the local communities have improved the situation in the recent past. However, there is a lack of a masterplan. Synergies are lacking and often there is a disconnect and conflict between different government agencies and between the governments and local community members. Moreover, corruption, smuggling and poaching, often supported by the impoverished and semi-educated local communities, hinder the restoration efforts. Thus, a lot more must be done. Restoration of the Sundarban mangroves requires a holistic approach that includes eradication of poverty and gender bias in the local communities, imparting education to the local population, and women empowerment. An integrated vision on achieving both the wellbeing of the local communities and restoration of the mangrove ecosystem is required. In this scheme of things, Rotarians can play multiple important roles in Sundarbans restoration!

Did you know!

The Rotary Club of Calcutta became the first Rotary club chartered in India on January 1, 1920. Today, more than 3,000 clubs operate throughout the country, including the Rotary Club of Vapi, home to 2011-12 RI President Kalyan Banerjee. R.J. Coombes is credited with starting India's first club.

From the desk of the President... Contd. from Pg. 2

the leadership of Rtn. Madhumita Banerjee. On Dec 15th, Rtn. Soumya Priya Mukherjee led the team in completing the project "Ushnotar Sporsho" (or Touch of Warmth) alongside newly established partner Shrii Mallika Foundation, and distributed warm blankets to the distressed and needy people in Jaynagar. The distribution took place in collaboration with the Sankalpa Trust for Empowerment at Tulsighata and Vivekananda Social Welfare Society at Ranaghata, and was featured online by Pran Patrika. Lastly, on Dec 20th, in partnership with PEHS, we visited and donated school kits to children in the Chorgheri area of Sundarbans, as a precursor to the inauguration of the Purbasha Rural Children Centre, the construction of which will be yet another ambitious project to be taken up by the club next year.

To summarize, in a short span of 6 months, the members of Calcutta Pointers have contributed significantly to improving the lives of the impoverished and marginalised members of our society as well as to spreading awareness on important environmental and medical issues among people. I hope that, with all your support, we will continue our work towards the betterment of our communities and create more lasting changes in the days ahead.

Long live Rotary Club of Calcutta Pointers!

Sundarbans Diaries

By Aditi Dey



Rotary International has been supporting the environment for a long time, but it recognised the need to make “Supporting the Environment” a focus area in 2020. The rise in population across the globe, extensive conversion of land for agricultural use, and climate change have resulted in various adverse effects on the flora and fauna. In the southern part of West Bengal, the mangrove forests were cut down to start fisheries. Furthermore, multiple recent cyclones damaged the residual mangroves greatly, making a collective effort at replanting mangroves the need of the hour.

Calcutta Pointers have joined ongoing Rotary initiatives to plant mangroves systematically with the help and expertise of an on-ground organisation involved in such work, Purbasha Eco Helpline Society (PEHS), headed by Umashankar Mandal, often referred to as the “Mangrove Man of the Sundarbans”. He witnessed his home and hearth destroyed in 2009 by cyclone Aila and decided to fight back by collecting mangrove seeds, typically from river beds during low tides, and planting them in nurseries. Once the saplings from the seeds grew to about one or two feet in height, they would be replanted on suitable mudflats along the tidal rivers of the region, where they would be able to set down deeper roots and gradually create a green wall along the river side. Mr. Mandal, a teacher by profession, with the support and commitment of his family, had started this work with a group of about 30 women, which soon ignited the interest of other communities from nearby villages of Kakmari, Kumirmari, Shukumari, and others, and has now culminated in a complete economic, educational, and healthcare ecosystem around mangrove plantation. The women are compensated for their planting work in kind with clothing, food, sanitary napkins, seeds for growing vegetables, educational material for children, and setting up of poultries and health camps.

Post cyclone Aila, the state government rebuilt many dam-like walls along the tidal rivers in Sundarbans, which usually protect the villages and agricultural land from surging tides during a cyclone. However, cyclone Amphan destroyed many of these walls and saline water entered the agricultural land. Interestingly, the areas where the mangroves were planted remained protected, leading more people to realise that the protection obtained from natural mangrove barriers are better than that from man-made structures. Over the years, the Forest Department has encouraged Mr. Mandal and his team by assigning areas for planting and looking after the saplings, while several NGOs and individuals across the world supported with funds to carry out his commendable work. Rotary Club of Calcutta Pointers connected with him this year to discuss the current requirements of the villagers and the best scenario for planting mangrove saplings. Funds were



raised from members and friends, and a dedicated team headed to the Sundarbans to lend a hand. Our team consisted of Rtns. Sujoy Majumdar, Sachindra Rao, Sanjukta Majumdar, Soumya Priya Mukherjee, Sutapa Roy and me, along with some of our family and friends who were equally enthusiastic and passionate about the cause. We drove to Gadkhali, about 3 hours from Kolkata, where we met with Mr. Mandal and his team. Due to inclement weather and choppy waters, we had to postpone our work for the next day. After an overnight stay, we headed off to Kumirmari village and was rewarded with a very interesting ceremony to start our mangrove planting project. The local village women worshipped the boat with river water for the work to be successful and journey to be safe. It was a beautiful earthy occasion for us city folks.



On the ground, we duck-walked through dense mud to reach and inspect a “shelaighar” (sewing classroom) being set up with external funds for providing a vocational training option to the village women. By that time, the women had organised the saplings and were ready to travel to the designated mudflats by Gorankhali river. As we reached the location we were pleasantly surprised to see that women from nearby villages had also assembled to help the Kumirmari women, reaffirming the local people’s faith in Umashankar’s work. The whole process of planting saplings in deep mud is not for the faint-hearted but we were able to contribute in our limited capacity. We also distributed fruit-tree saplings of lemon and jamun (Indian blackberry) among the women who helped us plant the saplings. We then arrived at Chargheri, Mr. Mandal’s native village which was devastated by Aila in 2009. We saw that the mangroves Mr. Mandal and his family had started planting post Aila have now grown into a heavy curtain that provides effective protection against cyclones. We also visited a small local club room currently serving as an informal pre-school for children 7 years of age and under. We had carried with us school kits for the children and it was a

rewarding moment to see the happy faces of these children who lined up to get notebooks, pencils, erasers, crayons, and wooden jigsaw puzzles of alphabets and numbers. Next morning, we visited a small village, Shukumari, to participate in the “Amar Gramer Rannaghar” (kitchen of my village) project that Mr. Mandal had started. We donated bags of various vegetable seeds that the women could grow and use not only to support the nutritional needs of their families but also to sell the vegetables at local markets. The rain could not dampen our enthusiasm as we managed to visit multiple villages, talk to villagers and assess their needs. We realised that a lot needs to be done in the area – men need to find suitable employment so that they don’t have to go to the cities, children have to be educated and kept safe, and women need to be trained in various skills for earning their own livelihood.



Project Gallery

CLUB PROJECTS

JULY-DEC 2022

NARI SEVA SANGHA
SEETA CHAUDHURY PRIMARY SCHOOL
UNIFORM DISTRIBUTION &
INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATION

SPECTACLES DISTRIBUTION
KAKDIHI, EAST MIDNAPORE; DHAKURIA
KALI BARI; HALYAN, BAGNAN;



SEWING
MACHINE
DONATION
SRIJAN SEWING
SCHOOL



SEETA CHAUDHURY
PRIMARY SCHOOL

FOOD PACKET DISTRIBUTION
BALWADI SCHOOL

JAN SAVA CRÈCHE

BATIGHAR PATHSHALA



Project Gallery

CLUB PROJECTS

JULY-DEC 2022

BLOOD DONATION
MERRYLAND NURSING HOME



BLANKET DISTRIBUTION
JAYNAGAR



SCHOOL KIT
DONATION
PURBASHA
RURAL CHILD
EDUCATION
CENTRE



THALASSEMIA AWARENESS &
SCREENING
GOKHALE MEMORIAL GIRLS' COLLEGE



Fundraising & Fellowship



Calcutta Pointers initiated the "Birthday Fundraiser", a new fundraising initiative this year in which the club members donate towards project funds on their birthday each year. The club also published its very first calendar showcasing photographs captured by club members, under the leadership of Rtn. Partha N. Mitra, the club Foundation Chair. All proceeds from the sale of the calendars will be allocated towards funds for future rotary projects.

The new member induction ceremony on July 31st provided a welcome opportunity for camaraderie and celebration among club members. Rotary pins were presented to our new members Dr. Dipanjan Basu, Dr. Saumitra Ray and Snehajyoti Saha, as well as overseas members Rtns. Jayanta Banerjee and Dr. Sanjiv Banerjee who were previously unable to attend the club's charter celebration. The dinner event was held at Club Verde Vista and attended by Rotarian members and their families. Calcutta Pointers also celebrated the very first Overseas Rotary Meet and Pinning ceremony on Dec 10th attended by Rtns. Anirudhha Bhattacharya, Dr. Babita G. Saha, Devyani Bagchi Chaudhury and Nivedita Sanyal at Babita's residence in San Mateo, California.

The Rotary Club of Calcutta Pointers would like to extend their appreciation for donations made this year towards club funds and specific projects from members, supporters and organisational sponsors.

MEMBER DONORS:

Aditi Dey, Anindya Basu Roy, Aniruddha Bhattacharya, Atashi Karpha, Babita G. Saha, Devyani B. Chaudhury, Indrajit Bose, Jayanta Banerjee, Madhumita Banerjee, Madhumita Chatterjee, Nabanita Khan, Paramita Chowdhury, Partha N. Mitra, Sachindra Rao, Sanjukta Majumdar, Sarbari Ghose, Shipra Chowdhury, Soumitra Roy, Soumya Priya Mukherjee, Sugato Sanyal, Sujoy Majumdar, and Sutapa Roy

NON-MEMBER DONORS:

Indranil Ghosh, Mahua Pal, Param Roychowdhury, Parikshit Roy, Ranabir Dasgupta, and Shankar Sengupta

ORGANISATION SPONSORS:

Indoco Remedies Pvt Ltd., ITC Ltd., Merryland Nursing home, Novo Nordisk India Pvt. Ltd., and Supriya Ritwik Foundation.



Upcoming Projects

- ★ Calcutta Pointers will be joining hands with PEHS and Umashankar Mandal in constructing a building in Chargheri village, Sundarbans, soon to become the permanent space for the Non Formal Purbasha Rural Child Education Centre. This will provide a safe space for approximately 38 preschool children, an educational and care centre where they can be engaged with arts and crafts, and basic learning skills while their mothers work in the fields.
- ★ A Health camp has been planned for the students at Batighar Pathshala, where a medical check-up and counselling will be provided by Dr. Juni Ghosh, Senior Paediatrician at SSKM hospital. This is a member sponsored project organised by Rtn. Anusuya Ghosh in memory of her mother.
- ★ RCCP will be working on their very first project towards access to clean water and sanitation in collaboration with AD Block Club in Salt Lake to partially sponsor construction of 2 toilets. These will be used by the parents of students at Laban Hrad Vidyapith, a government school in the community known for high-achieving students.



Rtn. Madhumita Banerjee

Universe has its own time for opening the door of opportunities and tread the path of novel work. I feel blessed and content to have played a pivotal role in the execution of two projects with Nari Seva Sangha (NSS), an organization striving for self-reliance of women. As part of the first project, we distributed on Women's day, 8th August 2022, khadi silk sarees and "Tant" cotton clothes made by underprivileged women housed at NSS, to showcase their Batik and block printing skills on sarees. For the second project, we distributed school uniforms, shoes, and snacks to the students of Seeta Chaudhuri Primary School, a school for underprivileged children run by NSS and named after the founder. We chose Independence Day for this project as education is "The Tool" to live independently for any human being. Today as a rotarian, I derive an immense sense of completeness and peace of mind to have built up a strong rapport and human connection with an esteemed organization such as NSS and the people behind it. Completing a project is not worth it until and unless we touch the soul and win a smile - "service to others is the rent you pay for your room on Earth" ... Mohammed Ali.



Rtn. Jayanta Banerjee

The top two reasons people join Rotary are to give back to their communities and to connect with like-minded leaders and friends. At this stage of my life, it is important for me to give back, and what could be a better platform than a club with childhood friends to support social causes close to my heart. We

at Calcutta Pointers enjoy the camaraderie with like-minded friends and professionals, and club projects offer additional opportunities to develop enduring friendships (the advantage here is that we are already friends since childhood!). Even though I am far away from my country of birth, because of RCCP I have the opportunity to give back to my people through those I trust. Additionally, life gets to a fulfilling full-circle when it brings back childhood memories of camaraderie when we meet in person or over video calls. Cheers to Rotary Club of Calcutta Pointers!



Rtn. Col. (Retired) Soumya Priya Mukherjee

Life as a part of "Calcutta Pointers" is more enriching and fulfilling because RCCP has thrown open before me an array of opportunities to interact and work with the less privileged strata of our society. The process has realigned my conscience, urging my inner core to create a long lasting change in our society and

ourselves. The many programs I have been part of, have helped me realize that "Service above Self" is critically essential and that if we join hands, we can move a few steps forward. My experience of the unique Sundarban project has made me realize that we need to rediscover ways and means towards diversifications in sustainable socio-cultural community projects so that the quality of life of underprivileged people can be rejuvenated. Indeed, life has come to a full circle being a part of Calcutta Pointers.



Rtn. Dr. Kaushik Sil

I had heard about the Rotary and Rotarians from magazines that used to come at home during my childhood. I always dreamt of being one of them, and life gave me an opportunity when RCCP invited me to join them. It has been an exciting journey since then, discovering a new facet in

myself, of seeing the world in a very different perspective, as well as interacting with a wonderful group of people committed to selfless service. I am still in the learning phase but wish to be an active Rotarian helping out people in need under the mentorship of senior members. The fact that we are from the same school has helped in ease of interaction and, God willing, we will take the club to new heights. Long live RCCP and Rotary.

Did you know?

The world's first service club was founded on 23 February 1905 when lawyer Paul Harris and three friends met in a small office in downtown Chicago. They named their new club "Rotary" to describe the practice of meeting in rotation at the members' various places of business.

Members Speak... (Contd.)



Rtn. Jayanti Chakravarty

It is indeed a great privilege to be a part of the Rotary Club formed by ex-South Pointers. All of us are in some way or the other associated with social work for the poor and underprivileged among us whether in India or abroad. Also, thanks to Sharmila Roy, the founder of this club, for this

opportunity to reconnect with our childhood friends. Although it is not possible to be personally present for the execution of various projects, it gives me peace and contentment that I am associated with this wonderful world of charity and can still contribute in some way.



Rtn. Anusuya Ghosh

Joining the Rotary Club of Calcutta Pointers has given me a clear idea of social service and how it can be achieved in a planned way. Participation in some of the projects have helped me understand the implications of poverty and the needs of the deprived strata of the society,

while some others showed me various ways towards women empowerment. In the coming years, involvement in other projects will further enrich me. Last but not the least, I met many of my wonderful seniors of SPHS and this would not have been possible without being a part of the Rotary Club of Calcutta Pointers.

Editor's Notes



Dear Readers,

This year has been fruitful for us Pointers as we ventured into new territories and broke new grounds, staying steadfast in our resolve to bring positive change in our communities. So did we make the difference we set out to make?

The analyst in me is trained to look at outcomes in the form of numbers and matrices, and we went above and beyond these markers. However, when I look back on what we achieved this year, I see a child's face light up anticipating some tasty treats, a spark in a student's eyes when they open a book, a teenager finding themselves outside of a volatile home front, a single mother resting easy with the promise of a sustained livelihood, and endangered communities feeling safer against the wrath of nature. As we move forward together in this journey, I hope we keep reminding ourselves to do whatever we can, no matter how big or how small, as we should never underestimate the enormous value of a single act of kindness.

Welcome and congratulations to our newly formed Newsletter team!



Editor: Babita G. Saha
Asst. Editor: Dipanjan Basu
Design: Aditya Sil and Babita G. Saha
Content Editors: Nivedita Sanyal and Dipanjan Basu
Media/Graphics: Snehajyoti Saha
Member Coordination: Gargee Dutta

A well-deserved applause to the Newsletter team and all our members for bringing this special issue of "The Chatter" to life. While it was longer than originally planned, this issue is unique, as all content here is contributed by members and is a collective product just like our work as rotarians. A special thanks to Aditya Sil for taking on design responsibilities even before a formal induction to the club, Dr. Dipanjan Basu for the thought-provoking feature article, Aditi Dey and Nabanita Khan for the up-close and intimate look at their project experiences, Dr. Sachindra Rao for sharing the photos to mark the special moments, Snehajyoti Saha for his valuable inputs and pitching the fun facts about Rotary, Nivedita Sanyal for her all-round support and commitment throughout this long and painstaking process of newsletter publishing, and Gargee Dutta for keeping us connected to the content writers across many time zones.

-- Rtn. Dr. Babita G. Saha
Editor of "The Chatter" from Calcutta Pointers.