

Hill Echoes

Bulletin of Rotary Club of Thane Hills

Issue # 2 - August 2022

RI President: Jennifer Jones

Club President: Jayram Mendon

Club Secretary: Samir Limaye

DG: Kailash Jethani



Membership Month



President's Message

Rotary *Pranaam* to all Hillers....

It has been a month since the leadership change has happened. It just feels like yesterday. Time will never wait for anyone. My first duty is bestowing the belief of the club in me as a leader who can lead. I am humbled to be in the position of your president. The prospects are endless as far as what we will be able to accomplish this year. Networking and Social Media are very important to our club. Through the Rotary community, we use these tools to exchange ideas and build lifelong friendships with like-minded people. We can take advantage of the resources and activities available through our club, district, and Rotary International, to make our experience with Rotary both rewarding and fun. The dedicated team of Directors and Members are my pillar of strength. We will endeavor to explore new avenues of opportunities in serving our communities.

Most of the FAB Year Planning and Documentation is complete; Fund Raising and Execution are the next milestones to be achieved. All the meetings so far went as desired. However the Retention and increase in Membership will be primary targets along with the planned Projects.

Over the last one month, I have witnessed the real depth and strength of the club. The core of the club is its Members. They are from different walks of life with great Vocational experience and knowledge. There are members and their extended families working independently to do good for the society in whatever way possible. Me and my team will be bringing such members under our club umbrella and will give them the required support to do more.

August is the Month of Membership and increase of members plays a major role since it is a membership organization. Friendship, bonding within Members & fellowship will be the top most priority to make the club one big family, where each member has the sense of involvement and togetherness. This will in turn maintain the retention. Aim is to increase the Membership by adopting more service projects and delegation of teams for various service projects with the old and new member's combination.

RCTH Cricket team and Music lovers have shown their interest in community services and are involved more in club programs whether it is weekly meetings or fun activities. Our weekly program "Know Your Ann" is one of the major push to create more bonding among the members. I firmly believe that our extended families involvement is crucial for our organic growth.

- Jayram Mendon



Editorial

Friends, August is membership month. Membership is the backbone of any Rotary club or for that matter, any social organization. It's the people involved who make any organization. A strong membership is essential for functioning of Rotary club. Strong membership means strong bonding, the feeling of family. The club service avenue is meant to increase all these factors.

Interesting weekly meetings attract Rotarians to attend the meetings. The physical meetings are most important when it comes to bonding and friendship. Similarly, all activities of club like bulletin, social media contribute. Involvement in projects is further step that strengthens bond between participants and gives satisfaction of doing something for society. Involvement in projects is what binds Rotarians for long term and gives real satisfaction. Family get-togethers help in knowing each other's families, again a very good way of getting us closer. Bonding and trust among members is most important for working together. We have over hundred members because we have all these factors working.

We have through our club, carried out very good and big need based projects for society because of very strong trust developed due to strong membership culture. It's our responsibility to contribute to this culture through attending regular weekly club meetings. The regular meeting with friends will automatically lead to further steps to make the culture strong and good membership.

- Rajesh Salaskar

Guru Pournima



Teachers from Rotary family were felicitated on the occasion of Guru Pournima on 14th July during weekly meeting

RI President Jennifer Jones



Rotary International President Jennifer Jones wants members to **imagine the possibilities in the change they can make to transform the world.**

Jones, a member of the Rotary Club of Windsor-Roseland, Ontario, Canada, revealed the 2022-23 presidential theme, Imagine Rotary, as she urged people to dream big and harness their connections and the power of Rotary to turn those dreams into reality.

"Imagine, a world that deserves our best," Jones told incoming district governors on 20 January, "where we get up each day knowing that we can make a difference."

Jones, who will make history on 1 July by becoming Rotary's first female president, gave a live online address to precede Rotary's annual training event for district governors from around the world, the International Assembly.

Jones told the incoming governors about a chance she took when a member asked for assistance in getting a young peace activist out of Afghanistan during the U.S. troop withdrawal last year. At first unsure how she could help, she relied on "that certain Rotary magic" and contacted a former Rotary Peace Fellow she had met a few years earlier. Less than 24 hours later, the activist was on an evacuation list, and soon she was on her way to Europe.

Engaging members through meaningful responsibility

To better engage members, Rotary needs to "adapt and retool," Jones said, using her hometown as an example. Windsor was once the automotive hub of Canada. But after plant closings left thousands without work, the city needed to retool, in the same way an auto plant would, preparing for new parts or a new model. Now, Jones said, Windsor is a leader in agribusiness and medical and aerospace technology.

For Rotary, "finding the right 'part' to engage each member should be our core function," Jones said. "It comes down to the comfort and care of our members."

Engaging members is crucial to retaining members, she said, adding that we need to ask members what they want to get from Rotary and give them meaningful responsibilities.

"It is our offer of hands-on service, personal growth, leadership development, and lifelong friendships that creates purpose and passion," she said.

Imagine, a world that deserves our best where we get up each day knowing that we can make a difference

Embracing change also means embracing new club models, Jones said, as she asked the incoming governors to form at least two new innovative or cause-based clubs during their term. "Let's make sure we engage our members so they love their clubs and their Rotary experience," she added.

RI President also announced the appointment of a Rotaract member as a Rotary public image coordinator and said that she has included Rotaractors on several committees and will assign some Rotaractors as president's representatives.

"We have been entrusted with leadership in our great organization," Jones said. "Now it is up to us to be brave and intentional in our actions, and let others help us lead."

Jones noted that Rotary has little time left to achieve the RI Board of Directors' goal of having women make up 30% of Rotary's members by 2023. Rotary has achieved this in more than 110 countries, she said, but it has a long way to go. She pointed out that Rotaract has already achieved 50% female members.

To raise Rotary's profile, Jones plans to hold a global impact tour that will include talking with leaders about working together to address the world's most pressing challenges. "Rotary opens these doors and we need to harness our connections, to deepen these relationships and create new partnerships," Jones said. "And the best part is, this can happen at every level of leadership."

Jones closed her address by saying that although we all have dreams, acting on them is a choice we make. When an organization like Rotary dreams about big things like ending polio and creating peace, she said, it becomes our responsibility to make them happen. "You don't imagine yesterday," Jones said, "you imagine tomorrow."

District Shukriya



Blood Donation Camp at Vasant Vihar Club on 1st July

Total of 68 units were collected.



**Blood Donation Camp at
Puranik Builders on 22nd
July for thalassemia
patients. Total 26 units were
collected. ➡**



Tree Plantation

More than 100 trees were planted in Yeoor on 9th July. Students from Pawar school also joined in the project.



Rotary Projects 2021-22

Project: Infrastructure Implementation for Handicapped Friendly City



This year we are taking up a novel project. We are all residents of Thane city that has become overcrowded. The infrastructure provided by govt is already overloaded for common healthy citizen. The section of society that's not physically fit because of reasons like old age, physical weakness or disability, as well as pregnant women suffer the most when it comes to movement in the city. We want to address this situation. We want to provide facilities at important places that will address this situation.



The project is divided in three phases/categories

- 1 - Provide lifts for the walk over bridges/skywalks on highways
- 2 - Provide handrails, ramps and staircase railings in public places like parks, hospitals, Local road crossovers, lakes etc. in Manpada Majivade Prabdhag Samiti
- 3 - Survey and implementation of phase 2 in all city



Project - Cold room and water generation

We plan to provide cold storage room for about 40 tons of agriculture produce. This will also generate water that can be used for any purpose.

Project - We are also supporting AATMAN academy to address the needs of special children

Objectives

- To identify inclusion-based challenges of children with varied disabilities.
- To offer a holistic learning program to transition into Inclusive education classroom.
- To bridge the gap between one on one therapy and classroom learning.

- To educate and support parents in their needs as primary caregivers of children with special needs and help transition into inclusive education.
- To offer simulated setting for children with special needs in order to prepare them for inclusive classes.
- To supplement the children with special needs in order to equip them for a smooth journey into inclusive settings.
- To create awareness within the community regarding need for early recognition and intervention for children with special needs.
- To support schools in the transitioning children with special needs from AADI program to main stream class and guide them for the way forward. Creating a strong & supportive ecosystem

This program also aims to empower the parents to be advocates for their child's special needs and pave the path for Inclusive Education in their child's school.

The program will also enable the parents to handle/address their child's specific learning needs in an inclusive classroom

The AATMAN academy has developed AADI program to address the special children's needs

Who is the AADI Program for?

- 1) Children between the age of 3 - 8 years who
 - a) are diagnosed with special needs
 - b) are showing visible signs of having challenges
 - c) may be at risk of any disability

2) School going children between the age of 3 - 8 years who need support to supplement their learning journey in mainstream classrooms.

3) Out of school learners between the age of 3 - 8 years who have had no exposure to school program.

About the AADI program

The primary focus of the AADI program is individualized, flexible pace learning through small group instructions.

The key focus is on flexibility and dynamic learning. It consists of a series of small group intervention activities that pan out for 2.5 hours each day.

Parents can choose between the following options -

- a) thrice a week
- b) five times a week

This 2.5 hour will consist of customized inputs and interventions depending on the child's needs. However, the focus will be on socialization and community connect.

Project –Orthopaedic prosthetics for poor patients

Dr Abhay Kulkarni will be carrying out Hip replacement surgeries at Kalwa hospital

We will be sponsoring 10 patients with Kit etc

We all Rotarians can participate in any of the projects by sharing expertise, giving time required for various aspects of the projects.

Recognition of PDG Ashes Ganguly

Rotary honors individual Rotarians and Rotaractors who have demonstrated exemplary service to the foundation and have received the citation for Meritorious Service at least four years prior. PDG Ashes Ganguly is the recipient of this award.



The Distinguished Service Award is the Rotary Foundation's highest service recognition and is given to Rotarians who have demonstrated exemplary service to the Foundation.

What is unique about the award is what it represents. Trustees of The Rotary Foundation give this award to those Rotarians who have rendered exceptional service to the Foundation beyond the district



level or for an extended period of time. No more than fifty (50) Distinguished Service Awards are presented every year.

Recipients must have received the Citation for Meritorious Service at least four years prior to be eligible for this award, which is given only to those who have demonstrated active service; one who has contributed only financially is not considered for this award.

Mandir Mystiques

Morning 8 a.m..... Sound of bells and conch....Oh! Its temple time.....Run, run, run.....This was a daily ritual in my childhood days in my beautiful, quaint hometown in Kerala. Without a visit to the village temple during the 'arti' or 'deeparadhana', we were not entitled to even a morsel of food at home. Ditto in the evenings; the *Sandhya kala aradhana* was equally important for us. In a nutshell, the temple was intertwined into the daily lives in the age old Indian settlements ... not without a reason. It was believed that the village temple deity showered the residents with bounties such as food, shelter, protection etc. The inhabitants of the village owed their all-round well-being to HIM.

The ancient temples of India have many a tale to tell. They are not mere monuments or structures; they are the fountain heads of numerous age old dynasties and civilizations. They have borne testimony to countless historical facts (time of construction, people's beliefs, the extent of development etc), incidents (like wars and accession), chronicles (of succession) etc. These temples of yore are the links between history, geography, mythology, anthropology, archaeology and many other studies,

Just a couple of weeks ago, I was fortunate to visit many temples in Tamil Nadu. I have started looking into some aspects of these temples like never before. I am pleased to record a few things about three of these temples

Let me first mention the Sankarankoil temple near Tirunelveli which is a thousand-year-old structure. This is a temple where Lord Shiva, pleased by Gomathi Devi's (a form of Parvati) penance, appeared in a form which is partly Shankar (Shiva) and partly Vishnu (Narayana). Shiva also wanted to proclaim to the warring devotees that 'Hari' and 'Haran' are one and the same. One cannot take his/her eyes of the idol in which the right side has a snake around the neck and locked tresses indicating Shiva ... and the left side has the conch and the *chakra* indicating Vishnu. Imagine the accuracy in the construction of the temple; the sunlight of dawn enters the sanctum of Shankara Lingam Swamy (the main deity here) on the days of equinox in March and September every year. One cannot help marvel at the carvings and the huge courtyards surrounding the three sanctums in the temple



Corridor in Nelliappar temple

The next temple I visited was the Nelliappar temple of Tirunelveli city. The main deities are Nellaippar (Shiva) and Kanthimathi (Parvathi). There are two independent temples linked by the long 'chain mandap'. There are a number of

inscriptions all over the temple premises. Built on almost 14.5 acres, the temple has an imposing Rajagopuram. The Nandi mandapam is also very inspiring. Nearby, is the mani mandapam, where there are two huge stone pillars with sub pillars. These pillars produce musical notes when struck; and needless to say, this leaves you awe struck!

The third temple is the very famous Meenakshi temple at Madurai. This houses the fish eyed Goddess 'Meenakshi' and her consort Sundareshwarar (Shiva). The temple is a very ancient one and was the famed seat



Madurai Meenakshi Temple

of Tamil Sangam literature. It is so enormous that one can spend hours and wonder at the architectural splendour of the structure. The city roads radiate from the temple complex and follow the '*Shilpa Shastra*' guidelines for a city design. The outer walls have four towering gateways which serve as entrance gates. There are many shrines inside but the main ones are that of Meenakshi and Sundareshwarar besides a huge Ganesha idol. The other popular features are the lotus pond and the thousand pillared hall which is replete with sculptural masterpieces. There are 14 *gopurams*, all of them decorated with images of deities, saints and scholars.

I certainly had some personal experiences to share. As one does the *pradakshina* (circumambulation), one certainly feels the vibes of the mantras besides the trail of history left behind by the rulers. If we imagine that some day, centuries ago, our ancestors would have walked the same path in the temple, we are certain to get goose bumps! These temples take back to our roots, our lineage!

Temples served a plethora of functions in ancient times. Besides being thought of as an abode of the deities and gods, they also doubled up as granaries; this proved handy in storing buffer stock and consequently, helped in feeding hungry mouths in times of famines. They also served as fortresses; the huge gates offered protection against invading enemies. People took refuge inside the temple premises when enemies attacked the region. There were lands, ornaments, money etc attached to the temple treasury; these added to the wealth and assets of the kingdom. Temples also served as libraries for manuscripts and acted as centres of learning. They also had huge kitchens and could thus provide food and shelter to people. In all, the temple played multifarious roles those days.

Today, devotees throng temples with prayers on their lips and desires in their hearts. Temples provide succor to troubled souls and give them the hope that their illnesses and problems will recede and good times will result..... A temple acts as a panacea for many people, in every sense!

The temples of the bygone era are the sites wherein history blends with mythology and where the boundaries between facts and myths have disappeared over the years. Our motherland is home to thousands and thousands of these glorious temples; it's time we take utmost pride in them and preserve them for posterity.



-Radhika Padmanabhan

Membership in Rotary

Membership in Rotary has been a bugbear. There has been a sizable number of members leaving Rotary and hence more than the need to induct new members is the need for retaining members has become more important. Every RI President in the past few years has been harping on the increase of members in Rotary by both retaining the current members and inducting new ones.

The question is always being whether to induct members just for membership shake or prune on the quality of members inducted.

As far as RCTH is concerned we are lucky in that all our new members do fit into the requirements for Rotary demands. The pandemic did put a lot of pressure on Rotary membership induction and retention but our past Presidents have done a wonderful job in retaining members and adding new members. The mantra given by RIDA. S. Venkatesh is for friendship with in club members.

Most of the Rotarians are not taking enough interest in getting to know the club members. New members have to be taken care of by assimilation and thereby retention. They should feel that they are wanted and Rotary's a fireside get togethers now really needs focus. Infact the onus really is on the veteran members. Unfortunately it is painful to find veteran Rotarians hardly taking any role. It is always a set of some Senior Rotarians and some newcomers who are into active roles in Rotary which is true for RCTH also. Friendship is a tool for membership retention. RCTH is

at the forefront in this regard. It is heartening to note that in RCTH new members have stood by in all major projects.

Quality of the member cannot be defined. The four-way-test of Rotary can be a larger tool but still not accurate enough for identifying new members. As RID Venkatesh comments that let all the clubs decide today that the members will contribute their bit to convert the clubs in to a group of close friends all equitable and inclusive.

Recently District Governor Pankaj Shah of RI District 3131 put up a novel program to crystallise his immense respect for silver hair Rotarians who have long served a community through Rotary and continued to do so for at least 25 years and above and he honoured the Rotarians in the district clubs. He felt that this kind of honouring will help in motivating the new members as well as veterans to bring them together and active.

It is sometimes disturbing to find that only a section of the club is active either in participating in the projects by their physical presence or at least writing cheques.



Let us hope Rotary membership will flourish in the days to come.

- PP V. Chandrasekharan

Ballad

Plastic..... a menace

Once upon a time, long long ago,
The Earth was green, the sky blue,
Our lives peaceful and joyous
As refreshing as the morning dew!

Mountains sparkled, rivers gurgled
Leaves rustled, their music unmuffled
Bees hummed, wild animals roared,
With gay abandon, spirited birds soared.

When all thought it would get better, ,
And happy hours to last forever
A diabolic devil did suddenly enter
Ruling Earth, right, left and centre.

The powerful polymer here and there,
Spreading his tentacles everywhere
Smiling in factories, offices and homes
In stations, roads and aerodromes!

Life without him seemed very dim
All and sundry at his fancy and whim
He was easy to handle and unique
Use and throw stuff, his name Plastic

He took giant strides at a quick pace,
Sustainability sank without a trace,
With heavy clout and forceful might,
His use multiplied each day and night

Animals swallowing him choked in pain,
Birds suffocated and cried.... in vain
He clogged the gutters and the drain
His behavior so mean and profane!

Plastic released many a toxic fume
As he burnt in fire, he spelt doom
Poisonous Furan, mercury, dioxin
Added to his dirty baggage of sin

Cancer, asthma and respiratory issues,
Ruined nervous system and tissues
Caused rash, nausea and headache
Polluted soil, every stream and lake.

This plastic monster non-biodegradable
Very very hazardous n unsustainable
Burning plastic has led to climatic change
The delicate balance in Nature derange



Greenhouse gases rising in the sky
Temperatures going incredibly high
Drainage lines under severe strain
Unseen floods again and..... again

Every problem has a solution
There's many for plastic pollution
Attitudinal change is the way
To keep this plastic devil at bay

Refuse, Reuse, Recycle for survival
Stop burning plastic for Earth's revival
Congregate and plan your action
Segregate waste and ensure enactment

Refuse plastic wherever you can
Enforce a stringent, strict ban
Avoid using plastic with sincerity,
Say 'No to plastic', loudly, with clarity !!



- Radhika Padmanabhan

Membership development in an NGO

The bane and boon of every organization becomes a bigger issue when the organization is a voluntary association of people.

In such setups bringing in members is a comparatively easier job. You may want to join because of someone you know say a friend, relative, neighbour or business associate. For similar reasons of building a bigger social network or for business prospects.

However, as time goes on you see a churning of members leaving. A small percentage is acceptable for genuine reasons like relocation, transfer, added job or family responsibilities.

The challenge is retention when members simply want to leave. Though they do give some plausible reasons it becomes very difficult to sift thru these reasons and find out why they are leaving.

I think it is a little like gardening. As a newbie gardener we tend to go to the nursery and pick up various plants that we like. We also select the best manure, soil, planters and even the right tools. We may also ask basic questions about where to place them and when to water them. Then guided with this knowledge we bring them home and plant it at designated places. Each morning we rise and tend to them. If time permits, we also check on them in the evenings. We click lots of pictures of them. A new shoot or leaf or flower puts us in a happy mood and we are ready to rock.

Sometimes inspite of all the nurturing the plant just fades away. Or it shrivels up or simply rots. This makes us so dejected that we are ready to give all of them away. While somewhere a plant which never got pampered slowly and steadily grows and even starts thriving. We are also able to graft it and get some more pots ready.

Similarly, I feel it is the job of leader and his/her team to bring in fresh blood into the team. This sparks off an energy or excitement within the member plus they bring in fresh perspectives to the known challenges and new ideas or resolutions come forth.

It is also our collective goal to bring in new avenues of social work. Things done ages ago may no longer appeal or apply. As the world progresses those days are left behind there are new things and new challenges that come up. We should be ready for these. E.g. Lockdown taught all of us to be digital savvy, in our own way.

As we bring in members from varied professional fields, we also attract people with varied interests and passions. It is therefore very important to nurture both these avenues the professional and the personal.

We can therefore rotate our key speakers and try to get achievers from such common fields. Similarly, we can have more informal sessions that spark interest.

Another thing that we can do is nurture more of family nights. In the sense fellowships that revolve around getting the kids and spouses involved. This way we can not only build up our camaraderie amongst our own members and also have them good mouth around. A family that enjoys being part of Rotary will make it a bigger and better place.

Special days or festivals or lesser-known festivals unique to a particular region can be celebrated to help us know more about the customs and traditions of various regions. It also helps foster friendship.

Annett's can talk about new avenues in education, sports or start-

ups' and we can help them connect to stalwarts.

Ann's or Partners can give us a multitude of ways of creating fellowship programs that also leads to more areas of service.

Recognising academic achievements aside we can also look at small successes at workplace.

Use more of the variety that this country offers be it in what we wear, eat, climates etc and build excitement around say Weaves, Unusual Food, Interesting places to visit etc. A member who shares it will not only be passionate about his background but can also give us unique insights about the region. This helps us to connect better.

The theme of each one get one makes no sense if we are losing members every year. Instead, each one nurture one can help build stronger relationships. New members sometimes feel lost when old groups continue talking about the good old days. Instead, why not talk about the present. Our conversations have to be engaging as well as inclusive.

If we focus on the ills of an organization there will be no end to it, rather let's take one good thing from each year and carry it forward.

Finally like the budding gardener we have to understand that each plant has its own need; some thrive in less light while some need to be the centre of attraction. Some of us maybe creepers who need constant support while others can manage on their own.



Our job is to constantly clean the foliage, check the soil, clear the pests and water them as per their needs. Let's go green and make others go green with envy.

To friendships old and new.

-Ann Aneetha Satish

Installation of IFRM 3142



Installation of IFRM 3142 with our smiling Past President Shirish, the Chairman & BOD, at hands of Chief Guest IFRM VC India & Sri Lanka, Rtn Paddy (at the centre in Blue jacket) from our Club itself! Hillers Rock! RID3142 Music Lovers Rotarians.

Inner Wheel Report

In the month of July we had flurry of activities though it was first month of the year.

- We sponsored education for 26 girl students at school at Wakdi.
- Blood donation camp along with Rotary Club of Thane Hills at Vasant Vihar.

Apart from this we also provided students with raincoats, gifted watches as prizes for students scoring good marks and provided midday meals at Wakdi school. We also provided groceries and



other provisions for inmates of Ganesh Old age home.

35 trees planted in Kandivli forest on 1st July

Blood sugar and hemoglobin detection camp in Association Jeevan Asha - beneficiaries 60

Conducted program on "Safe and unsafe touch" For students of class 3 to class 7. Total of 265 children were covered.



- Mala Sachdev

Rotaract Report

We started this year on a high note doing our very first project Drop Of Hope with our parent club and other Rotaract clubs on board, successfully collecting 63 units.

Grooming one's digital skills is also of utmost importance, we further conducted a poster making or as we call JPEG making session for the team to learn, make some beautiful creative and artwork.

Moving forward we helped our parent club with the project Reforestation where the aim was to neutralise carbon, beautify a certain land whilst planting trees and ensuring the greenery is maintained.



Marketing 1o1 was a project conducted by Rtn. Subramaniam Kumar the topic was how can one market or increase

the reach of its project and his valuable insights really made us strengthen our though process wondering how we can improve our communication skills.



We cannot call off a month without a sports project further this month we played a Friendly Throw-ball match with the aim of inculcating the sporting spirit and inclining the Hillers towards physical activities.

Last but not the least we conducted a session about psychology wherein we got an experienced speaker with the aim to empower an individual with their mental well-being so that they value and prioritise their mental health.



In the upcoming month we have some amazing projects lined up few of them are Raksha Patra, World Entrepreneur's Day, International Dog Day, Brand Rotaract Our Installation ceremony and much more.



- Ritika Agarwal