



MARCH IS WATER, SANITATION & HYGIENE MONTH



FRANCESCO AREZZO
President 2025-26

Presidential Message March 2026

Water connects us all. From a river in a remote forest to a stream running past a city neighborhood, freshwater ecosystems sustain humanity. Yet these waters are increasingly under strain. Pollution, overuse, and climate pressures remind us that protecting freshwater is a global challenge.

Rotary has always believed change begins within communities. Now we are working to see how far the impact of community action can travel. When local service is connected, measured, and shared, it becomes a force that extends beyond geography and borders.

A water project led by the Rotary Club of Panamá Nordeste exemplifies this idea. The project served Indigenous communities in Panama's Darién province, a region accessible only by canoe and small boat. With no roads, limited electricity, and reliance on untreated river water, families faced serious health risks.

To reach these communities, Rotarians had to rethink how supplies and services could be delivered. Working with a partner club in the United States and a specialized water organization, they introduced solar-powered water treatment systems for an area without access to an electrical grid. Local leaders were trained to operate and maintain the system, ensuring that clean water would continue flowing long after installation crews departed.

The results were immediate. Children who once missed school due to illness returned to classrooms. No longer needing to haul water from rivers, adults gained time and strength to work and support their families. What began as a water project became a foundation for healthier, more resilient communities.

This is how we extend our reach: combine local leadership with global partnerships, technical expertise, and long-term thinking.

That same spirit is at the heart of Rotary's partnership with the United Nations Environment Programme through the Community Action for Fresh Water initiative. Around the world, Rotary and Rotaract clubs are restoring waterways, protecting wetlands, and safeguarding vital freshwater sources. By collecting data to map and measure this work, we can better understand its impact and show how local service contributes to worldwide solutions.

Data is not an end. It is a tool that helps us learn and improve so that Rotary's service delivers real, measurable change. Each project entered and each waterway restored adds to a shared story of stewardship and responsibility. You can learn more and get involved at communityactionforfreshwater.org.

As we observe Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Month, I encourage you to reflect on the freshwater systems that sustain your community and the role Rotary can play in protecting them.

When we connect local action to a global vision, we strengthen Rotary's ability to make lasting change. Together, by extending our reach and working side by side, we truly *Unite for Good*.



Rediscovered charter inspires next 100 years of service

By Stuart Locke, President, Rotary Club of Middletown, Ohio, USA

blog.rotary.org:: February 19, 2026



Something truly remarkable occurred for our club in November. Our original charter, lost for more than 100 years, was discovered by a real estate agent as they were clearing out an old home in Middletown to sell it. The charter was buried in a pile of garbage in the basement and the agent had the smarts to recognize that the framed document might be worth saving.

Our club was chartered on 12 May 1925. According to newspaper accounts from the time, the inaugural dinner was attended by more than 300 Rotarians and guests from throughout southwest Ohio.

Many prominent people in Middletown were involved in the founding of our club.

At our 16 December meeting, we had the excitement of donating our rediscovered charter document to the Middletown Historical Society, where it will go on display. It's in remarkably good shape, with no water damage or such.

I have been a member of our club for 36 years and seen plenty of highs and lows. Like most service clubs, we have struggled to retain membership. Recruitment and fundraising are always a focus. But our members are committed and have a true heart of service.

Supporting education

Many years ago, we established our own 501(c)3 foundation to provide scholarships to local educational institutions, primarily Miami University Middletown. Our most significant fundraiser involved selling fruit (grapefruit and oranges) in early December to the Middletown community. For many years, we raised over \$20,000.

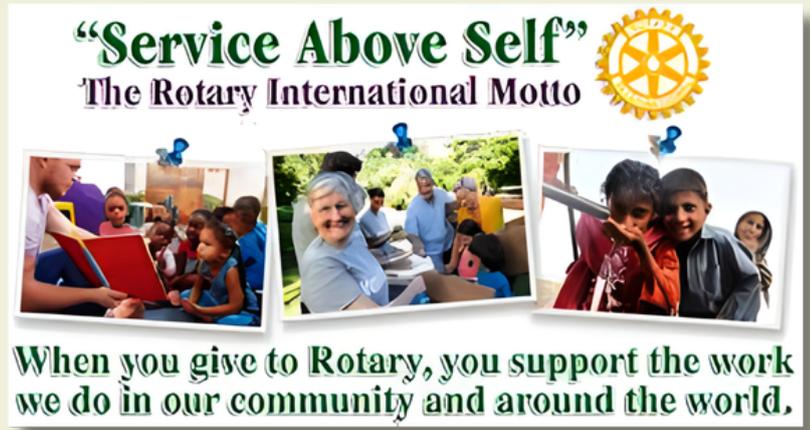
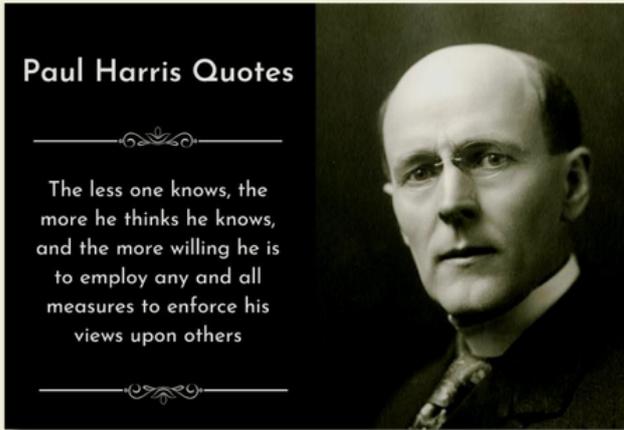
While our foundation closed five years ago, we were able to give \$750,000 to Miami University in an endowment fund for scholarships. Another \$230,000 went to Cincinnati State for the same purpose. Our endowment will enable students to receive a substantial amount of funding for their college education. We were awarded a special award in 2024 from Miami University for our donation to their foundation.

Ten years ago, we chartered an Interact Club at Monroe High School that continues to expand and now has over 30 members. They hold fundraisers and participate in District 6670 Rotary projects and activities. We are now trying to re-establish a Rotaract club at Miami University Middletown, and potentially a new Interact club at Middletown High School.

Toward the next century of service

Our 50-some members are busy throughout the year with many activities and fundraisers, including concerts at the Sorg Opera House in Middletown, annual participation in Earth Day, and multiple service projects with the Middletown Salvation Army. We also build beds for the Butler County Sleep in Heavenly Peace organization and continue to award college scholarships to needy students every year.

We celebrated our centennial earlier this year. Receiving our rediscovered charter document was an exciting reminder of our roots and commitment to serve. Our members are excited for our next century of Service Above Self.



‘Reimagining matter’: Nobel laureate invents machine that harvests water from dry air

Natricia Duncan Caribbean Correspondent

www.theguardian.com :: February 21, 2026



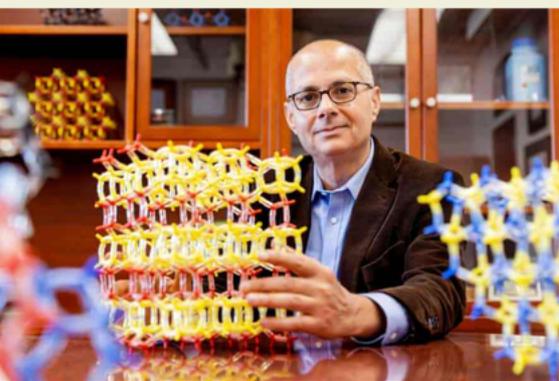
Omar Yaghi’s invention uses ambient thermal energy and can generate up to 1,000 litres of clean water every day

A Nobel laureate’s environmentally friendly invention that provides clean water if central supplies are knocked out by a hurricane or drought could be a life saver for vulnerable islands, its founder says.

The invention, by the chemist Prof Omar Yaghi, uses a type of science called reticular chemistry to create molecularly engineered materials, which can extract moisture from the air and harvest water even in arid and desert conditions.

Atoco, a technology company that Yaghi founded, said its units, comparable in size to a 20ft shipping container and powered entirely by ultra-low-grade thermal energy, could be placed in local communities to generate up to 1,000 litres of clean water every day, even if centralised electricity and water sources were interrupted by drought or storm damage.

Yaghi, who won the 2025 Nobel prize in chemistry, said the invention would change the world and benefit islands in the Caribbean, which are prone to drought. He added that it could be a solution for countries needing to get water to marooned communities after hurricanes such as Beryl and Melissa, which left thousands without water.



Omar Yaghi is a professor of chemistry at the University of California, Berkeley.

“Hurricanes such as Melissa or Beryl unleashed heavy flooding, destroying homes and crops and impacting thousands of lives in the Caribbean. This devastation is a stark reminder of the urgent need for enhanced water supply resilience in vulnerable areas, particularly small island nations susceptible to extreme weather events,” Yaghi said.

The invention, Yaghi added, could provide a climate-friendly and sustainable alternative to other water sourcing options such as desalination, which may pose a threat to ecosystems when concentrated salty brine is released back into the ocean.

Last month, a UN report said the planet had entered a “global water bankruptcy era” with nearly three-quarters of the world’s population living in countries classified as water-insecure or critically water-insecure.

“Around 2.2 billion people still lack safely managed drinking water, 3.5 billion lack safely managed sanitation and about 4 billion experience severe water scarcity for at least one month a year,” the report said.



Damage caused by Hurricane Beryl in 2024 on Union Island in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

In the three-island Caribbean nation of Grenada, which was devastated by Hurricane Beryl in 2024, Yaghi’s invention offers a ray of hope, particularly for Carriacou and Petite Martinique, which bore the brunt of the disaster and face a triple threat of storms, drought and coastal erosion.

“The technology’s ability to function off-grid using only ambient energy is particularly compelling for our context,” said the Carriacou government official and environmentalist Davon Baker.

Carriacou and Petite Martinique, which are still experiencing the after-effects of Beryl, are forced to import water from Grenada to deal with dry seasons, which appear to be getting more intense and longer every year.

“We’re currently considering comprehensive recovery and resilience strategies, and the atmospheric water-harvesting technology Prof Yaghi developed addresses several critical challenges we face: the high cost and carbon intensity, as well as the contamination risk, of water importation; vulnerability of centralised systems to hurricane damage; and the need for decentralised solutions that can operate when traditional infrastructure fails,” Baker said.

Yaghi, who grew up in a refugee community in Jordan, said he was inspired by the hardships he endured in a home with no running water or electricity. Giving his Nobel prize banquet speech, he recalled water arriving at his desert community from the government once every week or two.

“I remember the whisper through our neighbourhood, ‘the water is coming’, and the urgency as I rushed to fill every container I could find before the flow stopped.”

Describing the invention as “a science capable of reimagining matter” he urged leaders to “remove barriers, protect academic freedom” and “welcome global talent”.

“On climate, the hour for collective action has already arrived. The science is here. What we need now is courage – courage scaled to the enormity of the task – so we may gift the next generation not only carbon capture, but a planet worthy of their hopes,” he said.



Minutes of the Virtual 2167th RCM of RC Calcutta Jadavpur held on Google Meet, on February 18, 2026 at 6.30 PM.

President Rtn. Sudipta Kundu called the meeting to order and welcomed the members present.

- National Anthem was led by Rtn. Manas K. Ghosh and joined by all.
- Then, President Rtn. Sudipta briefly talked about the projects that have been carried out, in between:
 - On February 06, 2026, RC Calcutta Jadavpur successfully executed a landmark health project, providing life-saving Cervical Cancer (HPV) vaccinations to 85 young girls at Sri Ramkrishno Ananda Ashram Girls High School at Naktala. The success of the drive was the result of a seamless collaboration between RC Calcutta Jadavpur, the school authority, Naktala Setu Sanskritik Sangstha, CNCI, and the Serum Institute. Rotary Club of Belur deserves a special mention, as it provided the vaccines and arranged the vaccinators for the project, which was supervised by CNCI personnel under the Rotary International Global Grant Project. RC Calcutta Jadavpur was represented by as many as 10 members.
 - That on February 13, 2026, Rtn. Manas K. Ghosh and himself, visited a Glaucoma Camp at Berachapa, North 24 Parganas, led by Rtn. (Dr.) Asim Sil. The camp was aimed to visit the beneficiaries, talking to them personally and following up on the patients post-surgery and also eye check-up of all the beneficiaries. The beneficiary families were overwhelmed with the presence of Rtn. (Dr.) Asim Sil and others to discuss their issues.
 - The next batch of beautician and tailoring training courses at Sarenga village have been going on successfully.
 - That the graphic designing course at Santospur Rishi Arobindo Balika Vidhyapith has also been going on, led by Rtn. Subrata Kundu.
 - The club has started providing monthly monetary support for a tuition teacher to the home for street children in Kalikapur, Kolkata. Monthly contribution would partially be provided by Rtn. (Dr.) Saiful Anam Mir for the remaining part of the Rotary Year.
- Further, President Rtn. Sudipta announced a few upcoming projects and requested the members to make it convenient to participate:
 - The next batch of beautician and tailoring training courses at Sarenga Village will continue.
 - The graphic designing course at Santospur Rishi Arobindo Balika Vidhyapith will also continue, led by Rtn. Subrata Kundu.
 - The club plans to collect and distribute old clothes to needy people at Sarenga, Bankura on February 22, 2026. Clothes would be collected from fellow members and assembled together by him and taken to the venue by himself. Members were requested to join him for the project.
 - The proposed cricket match would be held sometime next month and members will be duly notified about the exact date and venue in due time after booking the turf.
- Upon the request of President Rtn. Sudipta, PP Rtn. Partha Sarkar and PP Rtn. (Dr.) Kunal Ray briefly talked about the LBC Fund-Raiser which was a grand success. Many members of the club were present for the event at Rabindra Sadan and the same was enjoyed by one and all. The fund raising event itself was a huge success and members were praised for their involvement in organising the same, collection of funds as well as for their individual donations. District Officials present, expressed their gratitude to all the clubs involved for such an event for the cause.
- President Rtn. Sudipta announced that the AG Visit is slated on March 18, 2026, followed by the Official Club Visit of District Governor Rtn. (Dr.) Ramendu Homchaudhuri on April 01, 2026. He urged fellow members to participate on both the occasions.
- Next, Secretary Rtn. (Dr.) Saiful Anam Mir conducted the club business and extended birthday greetings to PP Rtn. Partha S. Sarkar falling on February 23, Ms. Rita Chanda w/o of Rtn. Bhaskar Chanda falling on February 28 and Rtn. (Dr.) Soma Banerjee falling on March 03. Further he extended anniversary greetings to Ms. Rakhi Sarkar & PP Rtn. Partha S. Sarkar falling on February 20, Ms. Anju Tibrewal & Rtn. Anup Tibrewal falling on February 28, and Ms. Sharmistha Kundu & Rtn. Subrata Kundu falling on March 03.
- Minutes of the 2166th meeting, was confirmed by the members present and the meeting was concluded, with thanks to everyone.