

I BELIEVE
and therefore
anything is possible



RID 3291
Rotary
Garden Reach



Light

WEEKLY NEWS LETTER

November 19th, 2024 - Vol. 47 No. 18

2289th Regular Weekly Meeting
Attendance: 26

Birthday Greetings
Nov 25th Spouse Rubina, Wife of Rtn. Tanmoy D Mahapatra

Building an Organisation Prajavani

Having founded an organisation inspired by the teachings of Swami Vivekananda more than 28 years ago, a question often asked of me is “How has your organisation managed to grow into a large one managed by a team of highly committed people today?” People often ask me if there is a deliberate, purposive management or leadership strategy that the organization has deployed to achieve the seemingly difficult challenge of a group of young like-minded persons working together for nearly three decades. After all, Swami Vivekananda had mentioned in one his talks that it was a challenge for two Indians to work together. He had said, “If 2 Indians get together, then they will fight over the 3 ideas that they get and fall apart in 4 minutes”.

The answer lies in another simplistic, yet profound and practical saying of Swami Vivekananda. He wrote that three things were needed to make an organization and a Nation great –

- (1) absence of jealousy and suspicion,*
- (2) conviction in the power of goodness and*
- (3) doing good and helping all those who want to do good.*



Team work is truly possible only when the team members not only have respect and love for each other but also learn to operate with a high level of trust, reciprocity and interdependence. This is possible only when there is absence of jealousy and suspicion. The situation of the world around us may look despondent, but needs a lot of positive and constructive action. The environment today can appear bleak and discouraging to young people who set out with noble ideas. Self-doubt can be dreadful at times and one is constantly challenged by a seemingly hopeless situation. One needs tremendous strength and faith in oneself to persevere at such times. The belief that good will always triumph is not only a truthful reality but can serve as a very good motivator and keep the spirit alive in times of such extreme crisis. The change that we hope to bring about can seem small, insignificant and hopeless when one looks at the larger picture. While this need not be necessarily true, it can wear us down and push us to inertia. It is only then does the statement of doing good and helping all those who are doing good truly has a profound and practical meaning.

Swamiji was always a very practical man and knew the difficulties that ordinary men would face. It is for us to internalize what he said and raise above the ordinary and take ourselves, our organisations and our Nation towards greatness.

Empower lives with your generosity

Bharat Pandya, TRF Trustee

The Rotary Foundation's mission is simple: "to enable Rotarians to advance world understanding, goodwill, and peace through the improvement of health, support of education, and alleviation of poverty." Over the years, it has grown into one of the most respected humanitarian organisations in the world with contributions supporting a wide range of projects aimed at addressing critical global challenges.



As we celebrate Diwali, the festival of lights, it is time to light up other lives through TRF and its many worthwhile programmes. Rotary's projects are designed with sustainability in mind. Whether it's providing water filters, setting up health clinics, or empowering local entrepreneurs, the Foundation's initiatives focus on long-term solutions, helping communities become self-sufficient over time.

TRF has consistently earned high ratings from independent charity evaluators like Charity Navigator for its financial transparency and efficient use of funds. More than 92 per cent of contributions are spent directly on

programmes, ensuring that donations make a real difference. In fact, Charity Navigator has given TRF a 4-star rating for the 16th year in a row.

The Foundation's top priority is the End Polio Now campaign. Rotary members have contributed more than \$2.7 billion and countless volunteer hours to protect nearly three billion children in 122 countries from this paralysing disease. Rotary's advocacy efforts have played a role in decisions by governments to contribute more than \$10 billion to the effort. Ending Polio is not about the money, but about saving and protecting the children of the world.

It is important to support our End Polio Now Fund. Join the PolioPlus Society in your district and engage all members in this historic moment when we are so close to ending polio forever. And don't forget that the Gates Foundation continues to amplify Rotary's donations to polio eradication with a 2-to-1 match for every dollar.

Ancient texts tell us that anonymous giving is the best form of giving; where neither the donor nor the recipient knows one another and where the giving helps the recipient become self-reliant. Foundation giving is just that 'best' form of giving. When we give to TRF we do not know who will benefit in which part of the world; but the good wishes and the silent blessings of the beneficiaries will come to the donor again and again.

Thank you for your dedication to The Rotary Foundation. It is your acts of caring, kindness and generosity that play an essential role in advancing our mission to do good in the world. That is the magic of The Rotary Foundation.

Great Camaraderie

Rasheeda Bhagat

The great camaraderie between the incoming *RI President Mario de Camargo* and *past RI President KR Ravindran* was palpable at the Madurai event, right from the time the two met and greeted each other, through their meeting on the podium where they exchanged a spontaneous hug, and when the latter introduced the former, in a departure from the usual AV presentations that Rotarians have watched ad nauseum. Ravindran said that at the Lisbon Convention, one "PDG caught my attention not because of his striking good looks, or because he was a South American, but because of the way he presented himself and the clarity with which he put forward his position. I thought he is bound to go places. And my instincts were right!"

Defining the hallmark qualities of an outstanding leader, Ravindran said "such a leader needs to be an



understanding person, show compassion and have empathy. He should have the strength of mind, the ability to act as a strong-minded officer and to possess knowledge and determination to provide leadership during difficult times such as the Covid pandemic or the 9/11 attacks.”

RI was a very complex organisation, and one needs to have “a clear mind to be able to lead the RI Board and persuasively Chair meetings. You have to be able to think on your feet, and direct the people on the Board... who are people of substance from different continents. Mario has demonstrated already that he has the capacity to do that.”

He recalled a near-crisis situation just before the Sao Paulo Convention; “there was a meeting in President Gary Huang’s office and we were thinking of cancelling the convention, when one of us said let’s get Mario involved. Mario came in and salvaged that convention.”

The past president added: “In order to be RI President, one has to be a showman as you are the face and front of a very complex organisation. Mario is a showman, he is charming, as you all saw today, he is able to sit with all of you and pose for photos. To be the President, one needs communication skills to be able to inspire and motivate audiences all over the world. There is nobody of better wit and substance as your incoming president. He speaks so many languages... English, Spanish, German, a little of French, Italian and of course Portuguese. If he stays with you a few days in Madurai, he’ll start speaking Tamil as well!”

To be an RI President, one also needed to be a clever lawyer, to understand and differentiate between right and wrong, interpret the voluminous constitutional documents and disseminate effective instructions to both the staff and other leaders. Mario has all these qualities, and will make a great president.”



Both of them shared a background in printing, packaging and publishing. De Camargo had till recently run a huge printing company, which he sold a couple of years ago and is today a much sought-after business consultant. Having served in various professional organisations and trade bodies in leadership positions “he is a global figure even without Rotary. I have served with him on TRF; he is bold, well read and makes decisions which are not always popular but best for the organisation. The fourth Brazilian to become an RI President, he comes down hard on stewardship issues and is very particular about how TRF funds are used. With a keen business mind, he looks at ways of cutting expenditure, operating more efficiently, and we are going to get a brilliant, highly motivated, disciplined, hardworking and supremely self-confident president heading Rotary in the coming year.”

In response, de Camargo had this to say: “Ravi rescued me from the Rotary freezer. Some PDGs are sometimes punished and left in the freezer because they do not always agree with the senior leaders and I was left in the freezer for 6–7 years, till I was rescued by Ravi. He made me a (TRF) Trustee before I was elected RI Director. So, I never cease to say ‘thank you Ravi for having seen me when nobody else did.’

Addressing PRID Basker, who was in the audience, he added: “Basker was in the Nominating Committee which selected me as President. So, if I do well, I will accept the compliments, if not I’ll give you Basker’s cell phone number!”



TRF and its Coin-operated Magic Wands

In Rotary we all have access to magic wands that enable us to tackle various challenges in our communities. But there is just one problem — these magic wands are coin operated. None of these will work unless you put the time, effort and resources now and for the future,” said TRF Trustee Chair Mark Maloney. Addressing Rotarians of RID 3234 in Chennai, he urged them to extend their generosity to support The Rotary Foundation. “With these coin-operated magic wands, you can eradicate polio, foster peace in a world grappling with unrest, provide sustainable solutions for clean water and sanitation, invest in teachers to promote learning, and help rehabilitate those affected by natural disasters.”

He recalled participating in a medical mission in Zimbabwe in March 2020. “PRIP Rajendra Saboo was leading a team of 20 Indian doctors who performed 3,200 medical procedures in just one week. They worked tirelessly, conducting cataract surgeries, dental procedures, and removing tumours without expecting any form of remuneration. They even trained local doctors so that they could continue to change lives. This experience left a remarkable impression on Gay and I. We could feel the impact of our Foundation there,” he said.

Referring to TRF’s goal to build an Endowment Fund of \$2.025 billion by 2025, he said, “When this goal was announced in 2017, 2025 seemed to be a long time away. But the target year is now upon us. As a team let’s all work together to achieve this goal.” He called on each Rotarian to lead by example and contribute generously. “Take ownership of the magic wand by donating \$100 to the Polio Fund and \$1,000 to the Annual Fund. Every dollar matters — it could provide life-saving polio drops to a child, reduce maternal and child mortality, immunise women against cervical cancer and empower our people of action so that they can create lasting change around the world,” he said.



Earlier TRF trustee Bharat Pandya acknowledged the generosity of Rotary donors. “To every single one of you who has given to the Foundation this year, and in years past — on behalf of the trustees, Rotarians and the countless beneficiaries you’ve impacted — thank you for your unwavering support,” he said. He highlighted the sacrifices of over 100 health workers killed in Pakistan over the last decade — many of them women — simply because they went door-to-door to immunise children against polio. “We owe it to those who have lost their lives and those who continue to risk theirs — to support polio prevention as a tribute to their sacrifice.”

Pandya shared details about TRF’s latest initiative, the Programs of Scale, which awards \$2 million grant over a 3–5 year period to an impactful community programme. The first grant was awarded to the ‘Malaria-free Zambia’ programme. “Its success in reducing malaria-related deaths caught the attention of the Gates Foundation and World Vision, leading to an additional \$20 million contribution, with Rotary matching it with \$10 million.” This \$30 million initiative, known as the ‘Rotary Healthy Communities Challenge’, will address child mortality caused by malaria, diarrhoeal diseases and pneumonia in four countries — Zambia, Nigeria, Mozambique and the Democratic Republic of Congo. “Can you imagine the impact this funding will have over the next three years, addressing some of the top killers in that part of Africa? This is why we need the Foundation,” he said.

RID 3234 DG NS Saravanan, thanking the AKS members and major donors, announced that the district has garnered a commitment of \$2 million contribution to TRF. He urged every Rotarian, rather than the “select few who make repeated contribution,” to step up and contribute.

DGE Vinod Saraogi thanked TRF for approving a GG of \$54,000 which will help the district treat 100 children with congenital heart disorder from Uganda. The medical project is being executed in partnership with Rotary Kampala Ssesse Islands, Healthy Hearts Foundation, the Uganda Hospital and the Indian Association in Africa. The surgeries are being performed at the Kamakshi Hospital and the Namar Heart Hospital in Chennai. Maloney felicitated PDG S Krishnaswami with the ‘Regional Service Award for a Polio-free World’.



Japanese sport turns Trash-pickup into a Competition

Hiroyasu Goami, Rotary Fukushima

In Japan, picking up trash is a sport. SpoGOMI, or Sport x Trash Pickup, began in Japan in 2008 and involves teams competing to pick up the most trash. Fukushima prefecture has the dubious distinction of being one of the worst in Japan for waste generation. We have been hosting a SpoGOMI tournament every year since 2021 to reduce waste and raise awareness about littering.

We held our fourth tournament in Fukushima on 28 September, with 93 teams and 410 participants. The organization that sets the rules for SpoGOMI (which approved our event) said we had the largest number of participants ever for such a tournament. We were very pleased, as it shows that people's interest in trash collection is growing. We are accomplishing our goal of educating the community and helping protect our environment from this waste.

For our event, each team consisted of three to five people. Teams included members of Rotary, Rotaract, and Interact as well as family members, co-workers, classmates, and friends. One of the appeals of the game is that anyone, from small children to the elderly, can easily participate.

The rules state that members of a team must remain within 10 meters (32 feet) of each other and not run. Each team has 50 minutes to cover a 1.3-kilometer-size (.8 mile) area located around a city centre. Points are awarded for the amount and type of trash. For example, cigarette butts are worth 100 points, plastic bottles 40 points, heavy bottles and cans 20 points, non-burnable glass and metal 5 points, and so on. The winner is the team that earns the most points, so a strategy is definitely necessary.

Although we were concerned that it might rain, it turned out to be a perfect day for picking up trash: cloudy and not too hot or cold. The competition started at 10 a.m. with a shout of "picking up trash is a sport." One young participant even commented, "The trash looks like treasure."



Once collected, the litter is separated into recyclables, burnable, and non-burnable, and then weighed to calculate the points. During the 40 minutes it took to weigh the garbage and calculate points, the local Fukushima Torio High School dance club put on a passionate performance.

Team "CLEAN JAPANDA" was declared the winner, having picked up 9.3 kg (about 20 pounds) and earned 1,554.6 points. The team of five co-workers won by a landslide, beating the second-place team by nearly 500 points. The total amount of garbage collected by all teams was about 230 kg (about 500 pounds).

At an award ceremony, we gave out prizes to the top five teams, as well as teams that placed in round numbers (such as 70th and 80th place). Participants said they were surprised how much trash was picked up and expressed a desire to do it again next year.

Because the event is focused on the environment, special measures were taken to have as low an impact as possible. Fuel cell and electric vehicles were used, and the trophies were made from recycled wood produced in the prefecture.

The problem of plastic marine litter is becoming serious worldwide. It is feared that, by the year 2050, the volume of marine litter will exceed the number of fish. Seventy to eighty percent of marine litter comes from cities. When it rains, city litter washes into waterways, which then flow into the sea.

To keep nature beautiful for our children and grandchildren, we must become a recycling-oriented society that produces less waste and recycles instead of throwing everything away. Awareness is paramount. This initiative is a step in that direction. What's more, it's wonderful that we can take action while letting people know what Rotary is about. I would like to expand these efforts.

Why not try "SpoGOMI" in your area?



Minutes of the 2288th J-RWM held on November 12th, 2024 at BNR Officers' Club, Garden Reach

1. President Biswajit Saha called the J-RWM to order and requested the Rotarians to rise for the National Anthem.
2. As per protocol, Presidents Rtn. Susmita Mukherjee & Rtn. Meena Khatun of Rotary Calcutta Dalhousie & Rotary Calcutta Park Point was requested to call their meeting to order and next proceedings which was duly carried out.
3. Pre-Children's Day program was successfully conducted at Bharatgarh Rotary School with fun games, drawing competition, poem recitation and dances by the students of the school.
4. PN Dr. BN Jha briefed the members about the forthcoming medical camp at Bediagram on November 17th, 2024.
5. PP Dr. Sumanta Dasgupta introduced guest speaker Dr. Arnab Gupta, of Dr. Saroj Gupta Cancer Centre, Thakurpukur. An audio-visual presentation by Dr. Arnab Gupta – "Engineering Your Lifestyle" – Focussing on Cancer Awareness was presented to the members and the members listened with apt attention and appreciated the AV.
6. PP Tanu Roy proposed to Dr. Arnab Gupta to have a vaccination drive for Cervical Cancer in collaboration with SGCCRI.
7. Token of Appreciation to Dr. Arnab Gupta was presented by all 3 clubs.
8. PHF pin and Certificate was presented to PN Dr. BN Jha by PDG Ajay Law and Club Foundation, Chair PP Tapan Roy.
9. Token of Appreciation was presented to PP Prosenjit Barua, for completing 25 glorious years in Rotary.
10. President Biswajit presented the token of appreciation to the Presidents of Rotary Calcutta Park Point and Rotary Calcutta Dalhousie.
11. Tote bags were presented to all members present by Saroj Gupta Cancer Centre and Research Institute.
12. Club Secretary conducted the club business.
13. On confirmation of the minutes, President Biswajit terminated the meeting.

Teach the Children How to Think Rather Than What to Think.
The Way You Are Going to Implant the Seeds It's Going to Bloom in That Way.
So, Be Kind Towards the Kids.

Happy Universal Children's Day



WE MEET EVERY TUESDAY AT 7.30 P.M. AT B. N. R. OFFICERS' CLUB, GARDEN REACH, KOLKATA - 700 043
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