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RID 3291
Rotary
Garden Reach



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Light

WEEKLY NEWS LETTER

2276th Regular Weekly Meeting &
1st Board Meeting
Attendance: 17

THE MAGIC OF ROTARY

One of the biggest service organisations in the world whose only mission is to provide Service to who are in need.

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Be a Rotarian today.

Hi this is Aadesh Gandhi from Adoni, Andhra Pradesh (Rotary District - 3160) and today 24th July marks 1 year of me returning to India after a tragic incident happened with me.

I want to share my Story with all the people out there how **Rotary** saved me in my most difficult time.

So, I had been to Thailand with my friends for a vacation. We were a group of 4 people. We were in Phuket and had taken motorcycles on rent to roam around the city is when I met with an accident. I got slipped away and was diagnosed with fibula fracture. My friends were in shock and unable to digest what just happened because we were in a whole other new country and don't know how to react to this incident. I was taken in an ambulance to the nearest hospital for the treatment. We did not know the local language we did not know anyone in the city. We were unaware of the procedures by hospital and the treatment. My friends were all afraid to contact my family in India and inform them about the incident. It took a lot of courage to make a call and inform my family. Thankfully my Father reacted very calmly and patiently listened to the whole incident. It was a big relief to me and friends that my family did not panic in such time. Then my father and my uncle started contacting people who can help us with the situation. Then my father got an idea and he dropped a message in his Rotary travellers group seeking help for me and as usual Rotary never disappoints anyone, someone from the group replied to my father's text asking all the details of me and the incident.

She was Mrs. Gayathriji from Chennai. My father then sent all the necessary details to her and had a talk with her about the situation. She asked my father to calm down and told him that I'll do all the possible help to get back your son to India. Then she gave a contact from her team Mr. Dineshji.

My father gave all the details to him and talked to him on the call and told him everything and that's it Dinesh Uncle was like a superhero to us he worked out things so fast that I was transferred to another hospital in an hour's time and as he knew the local language he talked to the hospital authorities and cleared all the necessary formalities. I still remember he was picking up the phone in just one ring even at midnight. He was not with us present there but he was continuously on call and sorting out the things for us. The next day I was done with my operation which was successful and 2 days later I came back to India just like how our departure was scheduled. Whenever I still think of that trip it's hard for me to digest that how can a person who met with an accident, been operated there and come back to India within 3 days. It was nothing but just a miracle to me. All thanks to Gayathri ji and her team. Special thanks to Dinesh Uncle who was just exceptional.

I would never forget his good deeds in my entire life. Hope to meet you definitely soon.

Long Live Rotary!!!

-Aadesh Gandhi.

Son of Rtn. Prashanth M Gandhi

Rotary Adoni, RID 3160



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Leading with Peace

Olayinka Hakeem Babalola, 2019-20 RI Vice President

I have been involved with Rotary for more than 40 years, beginning as a Rotaractor in 1983 and transitioning to a Rotarian in 1993. My journey in peacebuilding started from two fronts: my deep commitment to community service and my involvement in Rotary's structured peace initiatives. As a member of the Rotary Trans Amadi, Port Harcourt, Nigeria, in District 9141, I have held numerous leadership positions including as Club President, District Governor, and Past Rotary International Director.

My passion for peacebuilding was sparked during my university days in Nigeria where we leveraged Rotaract to implement community improvement projects. This passion was further awakened when I became a regional Rotary Foundation Coordinator (RRFC). In this role, I realized that while Rotary's focus areas were being addressed, peacebuilding was not as actively engaged by Rotarians. This observation led me to prioritize and advocate for more intensive peacebuilding activities within Rotary.



Through my role as an RRFC, I began to understand that many Rotarians and Rotary clubs were unsure how to engage in peacebuilding. They often lacked the necessary skills and capacity. To address this, I connected Rotary Peace Fellows with their respective districts to share their expertise and experiences. These interactions were crucial in demystifying peacebuilding and demonstrating practical ways Rotarians could contribute to this important cause, knowing that for more than 25 years, Rotary members have been investing in the Rotary Peace Centres program. Because of that commitment, more than 1,800 Rotary Peace Fellows have been trained through our peace centres to work in peace and development across the globe.

During this journey and hunger for learning more, I became a Rotary Positive Peace Activator. This program, developed by Rotary International in partnership with the Institute for Economics and Peace, emphasizes the eight pillars of Positive Peace. These pillars

provide a comprehensive framework for creating an environment where peace can flourish. I was invited to the East Africa Positive Peace Activators program as a guest and that inspired us to start the expansion of the program to West & Central Africa cohort, where I was trained and became a Rotary Peace Activator.

During my involvement with the Rotary Peace Center at Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda, I've had the privilege of engaging with Rotary Peace Fellows. These fellows undergo extensive training and return to their communities to implement Social Change Initiatives, later sharing their progress and challenges. This hands-on approach is vital in fostering a practical understanding of peacebuilding.

On a personal level, my engagement with the Positive Peace framework has profoundly influenced my interactions and leadership style. For instance, in my community, we applied the framework to understand and address issues such as school absenteeism, which was linked to unsafe routes frequented by drug dealers. By addressing the root causes, we created a safer environment for students, working with neighbours and understanding local governance. My journey in peacebuilding with Rotary has been one of continuous personal and professional learning and active engagements. Rotary projects provide training that fosters understanding and provides communities with the skills to resolve conflicts and I believe that building capacity for peace-making at every level is crucial and more needed than ever before.

I am optimistic about the future and remain committed to creating a world where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.





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Called by a cause: Rotary Club of Mental Health & Wellness

Dinah Eng

Over the years, whenever Maribel Khoury-Shaar's Rotarian husband suggested she join Rotary, the busy doctor declined. But when she learned that a Rotary club dedicated to mental health and wellness was forming, she jumped on board.

It came at just the right time for the primary care physician. After the pandemic started, most of her patients were anxious and depressed, and she was getting burnt out as a health care provider. "This club reinvigorated my life because I was around like-minded people who wanted to do the right thing," says Khoury-Shaar, President of the Rotary Club of Mental Health & Wellness in District 5280, which covers parts of Los Angeles County in California. The club meets online and welcomes members to join from anywhere in the world. Its current members include professionals in the mental health field and others who hold the issue close to their hearts.

The club, chartered last May during Mental Health Awareness Month in the US, is one of the first cause-based Rotary clubs to focus on mental health and wellness and was the idea of Guity Javid, the 2021-22 Governor of District 5280. It's one of a growing number of cause-based clubs around the world.

The year before Javid's term, the district had already chartered one cause-based club, District 5280 Rotarians Fighting Human Trafficking. Javid identified three other causes that were personal priorities and helped launch these clubs: Mental Health & Wellness, Rotarians for Environmental



Action, and Rotarians in Service for Equality (R.I.S.E.), which focuses on LGBTQ+ concerns.

"I was pleasantly surprised at the number of Rotary spouses who might never have joined Rotary, but for these causes," Javid says. "We also attracted younger members. Mental health has been a huge crisis during the pandemic. People were isolated, and many turned to alcohol and drugs to cope." Eliminating the stigma associated with mental health is a priority, she adds.

Mental health and especially the issues of depression, anxiety, and suicide have caught the attention of Rotarians worldwide. In addition to the new club, there is a Rotary Action Group on Mental Health Initiatives as well as a partnership between Rotary International in Great Britain and Ireland and the non-profit Bipolar UK.

While the Mental Health & Wellness club is relatively new, members have launched notable initiatives, including an effort to award \$5,000 in scholarships annually to students pursuing graduate-level work on mental health. Members assembled and distributed coping kits containing stuffed animals, supportive cards, and other items to children with burn injuries. And they promoted mental health and wellness among school-age children through the Inspiring Kindness initiative, a collaboration with other clubs, schools, and the Alex Montoya Foundation.

Another priority is serving military veterans, including by helping refurbish an American Legion post in Glendale, California.

Club member Marisol Chianello, an attorney in Glendale, became the point person for that project. She joined the club because she's dealt with mental health issues herself and wanted to create resources for others, she says. Her





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husband is a Gulf War veteran, and when one of his friends told her about the American Legion post's challenges, she immediately wanted to help.

"Half of the space had to be rented out for income to survive," Chianello says. "The other half was used for storage and was filled with uniforms, medals, and military memorabilia. With support from other district clubs, we cleaned it up and reopened the space." The location now has a space where veterans can seek calm and, eventually, referrals to resources to improve their mental health. Chianello says the American Legion is working with the club to determine how Rotary can help maintain the site.

Club President-elect Judith Verduzco, a therapist in Glendale, was also drawn to join because of the club's focus. Like Khoury-Shaar, Verduzco has a Rotarian husband who encouraged her to become a member.

In addition to building on projects underway, Verduzco says her focus will be on suicide prevention and partnering with organizations that provide mental health services and promote awareness of the issue. "As a clinician, I encourage my clients to call 988 in the event of a crisis," she says, referring to the national Suicide and Crisis Lifeline modelled on the 911 system and launched last year.

According to the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, the number of suicides in the United States increased 4 percent from 2020 to 2021, after declines in 2019 and 2020. "My vision is to call attention to the magnitude of the problem," Verduzco says.

She is interested in research on community gardening's mental health benefits. She plans to collaborate with other cause-based clubs and cities in Los Angeles County to create what are known as tranquillity gardens, to try to provide peace and hope to underserved communities.

"We've done a lot in a short period of time," Verduzco says. "We meet virtually twice a month, but outside of that, I want to create opportunities for fellowship and service. Mental health affects everyone, and this club is a great way to get friends involved so that we can stay connected while doing good."

5 ways Members can revolutionize Rotary



RI General Secretary, John Hewko, during his annual keynote address on the #Rotary24 stage, he shared 5 ways members can revolutionize Rotary:

-  *Make your club brand new: think of ways to address your club's challenges*
-  *Embrace new club models*
-  *Focus on achieving more by doing less: focus your resources on well-planned projects based on community assessments*
-  *Look for and find allies everywhere*

 *Embrace new technologies*

When it comes to growing our membership, we can't wait around for someone to provide us with a magical solution. Each of us needs to take the initiative. Because we all have the potential to address this issue. We have the potential to be an organization that constantly evolves to reflect a changing world. How can you evolve your club or projects?





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Medica & RID 3291 launch Paediatric & Cervical Cancer initiatives on National Doctors' Day

Medica Group of Hospitals, the largest private healthcare network in Eastern India, has partnered with Rotary District 3291 to launch a significant National Doctors' Day initiative.

In a press statement, the healthcare services provider said that this collaboration aims to raise awareness and conduct screenings for cervical and paediatric cancer, targeting underserved communities in West Bengal.

The initiative's primary objective is to provide essential healthcare services and support to these communities.

AKS Dr. Krishnendu Gupta, the new District Governor of Rotary District 3291 and Professor & Unit Head, the Department of Obstetrics & Gynaecology at Vivekananda Institute of Medical Sciences, attended the event as the Guest of Honour. He was joined by several distinguished medical professionals, including Prof. Subir Ganguly, Senior Consultant and Advisor in Radiation Oncology; Sourav Datta, Senior Consultant & Director of Medica



Oncology; Arunava Roy, Senior Consultant & Head of Gynaecologic Oncology & Women Cancer Initiative; Sayan Das, Senior Consultant & Head of Radiation Oncology; Harsh Dhar, Head and Consultant of Head Neck Cancer Surgery, Skull Base Oncosurgery; Abhay Kumar, Head of Urology, Uro-Oncosurgery & Robotic Surgery Specialist; R. Udayan Lahiry, Managing Director of Medica Group of Hospitals; and Ayanabh DebGupta, Joint Managing Director of Medica Group of Hospitals.

DG Dr. Krishnendu Gupta emphasised the importance of cervical cancer prevention and screening, stating, "Our primary focus this year is cervical cancer prevention and screening. Like our efforts in polio eradication, our goal in the coming years is to eradicate cervical cancer through joint initiatives with Medica Hospital. With over 150 Rotary clubs in Kolkata and surrounding areas, we can reach communities that need it most. Leveraging the expertise of Medica's oncologists, we aim to impact the early detection and treatment of cervical cancer significantly. Additionally, we will support paediatric cancer patients from underprivileged families through our **Life Beyond Cancer** initiative, providing financial assistance for initial treatments."

Prof. (Dr.) Subir Ganguly highlighted the goal of narrowing disparities in access to vital screening services, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas. He stated, "Our efforts aim to ensure quality healthcare reaches every corner, recognising the urgency and need to bridge this healthcare gap."

Sourav Datta, Director of Medica Oncology, underscored the hospital's commitment to providing superior cancer treatment, stating, "Medica has taken a leading role with organ-specific cancer surgery and advanced technology for detection and treatment. Our partnership with Rotary will help mobilise resources to reach the last mile population and ensure comprehensive screenings for cervical cancer."

R. Udayan Lahiry, Managing Director of Medica Group of Hospitals, expressed the importance of extending cancer care to rural and semi-urban areas, noting, "Our cervical cancer screening camps will raise awareness about prevention and early diagnosis, working hand in hand with Rotary and other local bodies."

Ayanabh DebGupta, Joint Managing Director of Medica Group of Hospitals, emphasised the responsibility to connect with district communities and bridge the care gap, remarking, "Our Oncology team conducts regular screening camps and awareness sessions to sensitise more people about cancer."





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Pink autos to empower Women

The staid-looking Chennai Convention Centre sported a vibrant look with 100 pink -autorickshaws parked on its grounds, with 100 women, all dressed in khaki overcoats, with pink collars on which the Rotary Wheel was embroidered, all excited and ready to drive the vehicles home. **Project Pink Auto** is an endeavour of RID 3233 (bifurcated from RID 3232) to mark the installation of its Charter Governor, Mahaveer Bothra. PRIP Kalyan Banerjee adorned the collar on the new governor and handed over the vehicles to the assembled women. The project which was launched in 2020 by RID 3232 aimed to empower less privileged women by giving them financial freedom.



Accompanying one of the women beneficiaries was Vaishnavi, a transwoman who is successfully earning a livelihood from the earlier project. She said, “We came to Rotary broken and battered, and it provided us with autorickshaws, helping us rebuild our lives and regain confidence. When I met Shanti Selvam, chair of the Pink Auto initiative, she and her team treated me with respect and dignity. I am grateful to Rotarians for making me who I am today. Many women here are survivors of domestic abuse, abandonment and poverty, and they have all turned to Rotary for support.”

Lakshmi, another beneficiary, learned about the initiative through a WhatsApp group. “I registered and received my auto within a month, and it helped me to earn a living and enhance my income,” she said. Beyond the financial benefit, club members frequently called her for their commutes, “paying me well for the service. Shanthi Ma’am has also informed us about various Rotary programmes for women which we could benefit from.”

At the installation event, two vans were donated to Ramachandra Hospital, Chennai – one for cervical cancer screening and another to be used as a mobile hospital for rural medical camps around Chennai.

Delighted at seeing over 1,500 people attending the event, Banerjee remarked, “This looks like one of our global conferences. The Rotary service done in this District (3232) is remarkable and among the best I have seen in India.”

Extending his best wishes to Bothra on his leadership journey, he urged him to initiate collaboration with the government to address environmental issues, as this was the need of the hour, he said.

PDG Muthu Palaniappan highlighted Bothra’s leadership in impactful projects such as COWIN. During the Covid lockdown, Bothra planned and executed the distribution of 36,000 grocery kits, costing 3.6 crore, involving 96 clubs from RID 3232 and the Guinness World Record-setting Rotary **My Flag My India** campaign in 2014.

Ramamurthy Natarajan from Rotary Madras Mount became an AKS member by handing over a cheque for 2.1 crore to PRIP Banerjee as his contribution to TRF.

A Peace Pole was handed over to DG Bothra by AKS member Ambalavanan M, who explained that “there are around two lakh peace poles worldwide. This pole will be installed in Dharmapuri, Tamil Nadu, serving as a reminder of the goodwill and peace that Rotary is promoting.”

An Annette Council was installed at the event.





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The Rotary Club and the Lions Club are both community service organizations, but they have some key differences:

- 🌐 **Focus:** The Rotary Club's primary focus is on community and international service projects, while the Lions Club's main emphasis is on serving local communities.
- 🌐 **Membership:** The Rotary Club typically has a more diverse membership, drawing from various professional backgrounds. The Lions Club tends to have a membership that is more homogeneous, often centred around specific professions or industries.
- 🌐 **Structure:** The Rotary Club is organized into geographic districts and has a more formal, centralized structure. The Lions Club has a less centralized structure, with more autonomy for individual clubs.
- 🌐 **Activities:** Both organizations engage in community service projects, but the Rotary Club tends to have a broader range of international projects, such as disaster relief and global health initiatives. The Lions Club is known for its focus on vision-related programs, such as vision screenings and eyeglass donations.
- 🌐 **Leadership:** The Rotary Club has a more defined leadership structure, with a president, board of directors, and various committees. The Lions Club has a more decentralized leadership model, with individual clubs electing their own officers.

Overall, while both the Rotary Club and the Lions Club are service-oriented organizations, they have distinct differences in their focus, membership, structure, and activities.

Minutes of the 2275th RWM held on July 22nd, 2024 at BNR Officers' Club, Garden Reach

1. President call the meeting to order and requested the members to rise for the National Anthem.
2. President discussed about the follow-up Medical Camp to be conducted at 'Sanhati' the old age home at Santragachi. It was decided that the medical camp will be held on August 25th, 2024 at Sanhati Home. Necessary arrangements to be done as per requirement.
3. The medical camp and Kowgachi, Shyamnagar to be held on August 11th, 2024. The logistics of which will be decided in the following meeting.
4. President informed all the members about the visit of our club to Ramakrishna Gayatri Sevashram, an orphanage being run by a couple with 15 children at Dongaria near Birlapur, Budge Budge. It was also proposed to visit the place on August 15th, 2024 for flag hoisting and having lunch with all the inmates and examine their needs to take up the issue further.
5. IPP Shweta mentioned about the progress of Bharatgarh Rotary School and President suggested to conduct a basic examination to evaluate the progress made by the students in the first year of commission.
6. PN Dr. BN Jha introduced Mr. Angshuman Das who is an employee of SE Railway. Mr. Das is interested in joining a Rotary club. He was advised to attend couple of meetings and projects to understand the organization and then submit his application.
7. PN Dr. BN Jha proposed to have Water Purifier Kiosks at 4 places within a radius of 6 kms from BNR.
8. The Club Secretary conducted the Club business.
9. On confirmation of the minutes, President Biswajit terminated the meeting.

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