



2300th Regular Weekly Meeting

I'M PROUD
TO BE PART
OF ROTARY

Rotary  PEOPLE of ACTION

RID 3291
Rotary
Garden Reach



Light

WEEKLY NEWS LETTER

February 11th, 2025 - Vol. 47 No. 29

Attendance:16

Birthday Greetings
Feb 15th : Aditya, Son of Rtn. Santosh Singh

Anniversary Greetings
Feb 11th : Spouse Sharmishtha & PP Chinmay Pal
Feb 17th : Spouse Jyotsna & PP Tapan K Roy

2025-26 Presidential Message Address at the International Assembly, Orlando

Good morning, Bom dia, Buenos días, Bonjour, Buongiorno, Guten Morgen, o-HAI-yo go-zai-mas, JO-un ah-CHIM im-ni-da, esteemed Governors and Leaders of Rotary.



Last year, we gathered here to address the Governors-elect of 2024-25. At that time, I spoke as the President-nominee of Rotary International, highlighting membership growth as our organization's top priority, most valuable asset, and greatest challenge.

Today, as I stand before you as President-elect, I am more convinced than ever that our collective focus on membership is essential to securing Rotary's future.

Rotary's greatest asset is not our history, our projects, or even our unmatched global reach. It is our members — the best-qualified team of volunteers on the planet. I learned this lesson early on, during the Atlanta Convention, when a representative from one of our Polio partners praised the extraordinary dedication of our members. That recognition from an outsider deepened my understanding: Rotary's greatest gift to the world is its people.

Today, I want to share our road map to membership growth and revitalization, guided by three essential pillars: innovation, continuity, and partnership. These principles are not just strategies. They are a call to action to rejuvenate Rotary, to attract new voices and perspectives, and to strengthen our service to communities worldwide.

The world is changing, often at a dramatic pace. Technology, social expectations, and economic conditions evolve constantly, and Rotary must evolve with them. As Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa wrote in "Il gattopardo" ["The Leopard"], "For everything to stay the same, everything must change."

Innovation is how we adapt to this changing world. It's not just about welcoming younger members but also engaging senior individuals seeking purpose and connection.

At 68 years old, I know first-hand how fulfilling it is to find a community of peers.

Consider the example of my home club, Santo André, a thriving legacy club with 150 members. My wife, Denise, helped charter a Satellite Club, creating a space for almost 50 remarkable women to lead in their own way.

Satellite clubs, cause-based clubs, enterprise clubs, and passport clubs are examples of the flexibility we need to attract a diverse audience. While these models may not work everywhere, they offer us the opportunity to reach future Rotarians outside our traditional frameworks. Future Rotary members are out there. We must meet them where they are.

During my travels — more than six laps around the globe in the past 18 months — I've observed that the healthiest districts share one critical feature: consistent, united leadership. Districts thrive when governors build on their predecessors' efforts, ensuring programs and strategies continue seamlessly year after year. Conflict at the top, by contrast, is a time bomb that often results in declining membership.

Let me share some inspiring moments from this journey. In Nigeria's District 9141, I saw the incredible impact of building wells and commissioning school chairs in underserved areas. In Pakistan, I visited Smart Villages, where Rotary helped populations affected by the devastating 2022 floods move from survival to a better future.

In Mumbai, India, I met children receiving lifesaving care through a Rotary grant for congenital heart disease, and in another region, I witnessed ambulances lined up outside a palliative care hospital, each bearing The Rotary Foundation logo, supporting breast cancer detection, dental care, and eye exams.

In Lampung, Indonesia, Denise and I had the privilege to witness a microeconomic transformation for 700 families, to multiply farmers' family incomes on rice paddies.

Continuity is not about uniformity; it's about alignment. When District leaders work together, envisioning Rotary beyond their governor year, they set the stage for long-term success. Rotary already faces the unique challenge of annual leadership transitions. Let's not make it harder by fragmenting our efforts. Instead, let's build a legacy of collaboration that future leaders can build upon.

Rotary's history with polio eradication teaches us an invaluable lesson: Alone, we can achieve great things, but together, we can change the world. Partnerships with organizations like the Gates Foundation, WHO, and UNICEF have been instrumental in our US\$23 billion investment over 40 years to eliminate polio. We would never have made this much progress alone.

So why not apply this lesson to membership growth? Partnering with business associations, professional organizations, and academic institutions can help us attract quality members while embracing diversity in professions and perspectives. Such partnerships eliminate the false dilemma of quantity versus quality. By reaching out to professionals who share our values of service and engagement, we can expand Rotary's capacity to do good in the world.

Ultimately, all our achievements, projects, and partnerships depend on our members. Membership growth is not just about numbers. It's about renewing our collective strength and ensuring our mission endures.

First, we must acknowledge that no one lives forever. The only hedge against aging clubs is the constant admission of new members.

Second, our capacity for service grows with our membership. More members mean more hands to help and more resources to invest in our communities.

Third, succession planning is critical. Clubs either grow or dwindle. There is no such thing as stable membership. We must make recruitment and retention a core value, passing it from one generation of Rotary members to the next. By doing so, we ensure that Rotary remains vibrant and impactful for decades to come.

Rotary members are people of action. We don't wait for change to happen; we make it happen. And what do people of action do? We unite for good.

And that is our Presidential message for 2025-26: Unite for Good!



In a world often divided, Rotary stands as a beacon of unity and hope. Our projects bring together people of all races, religions, genders, ideologies, and economic backgrounds, uniting us in a shared purpose: to do good in the world. Rotary inspires us to be better people, to serve others, and to create a lasting impact.

As you leave this room today, I urge you to focus on learning the best strategies for growing Rotary in your districts. Rotary has invested a great amount of time and money in this assembly, not for speeches and fanfare, but to equip you with the tools to lead effectively. Our return on this investment will be measured not in dollars but in the new members we welcome, the innovative clubs we create, and the lives we change through service.

And as you carry out this mission, don't forget one of Rotary's greatest joys: making friends around the world and having fun.

Together, let's embrace this journey of growth, service, and connection. Let's build a Rotary that unites for good and ensures a brighter future for all.

Thank you!



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Ambassadors of Peace

Mark Daniel Maloney, TRF Trustee Chair

By some measures, great progress has been made in building more peaceful societies around the world. Yet the reality of ongoing regional wars, skirmishes, and violence globally reminds us how far we still have to go. These conflicts affect the humanity of us all, whether they occur far from us or in our own communities.



So, what can Rotary do to build peace?

As a global force for peace and conflict prevention, Rotary addresses the root causes of conflict. Our role at the 1945 United Nations charter is a testament to this enduring commitment.

Another cornerstone of this work is the Rotary Peace Centers programme. Through The Rotary Foundation, these seven centres provide fully funded fellowships, empowering individuals to address the complex challenges of conflict and development.

More than 1,800 alumni now work in over 140 countries as champions of peace, creating lasting

change in their communities. Consider alumni like Pablo Cuevas, a 2015 peace fellow who leads the Paraguay office of the International Organisation for Migration, aiding those displaced by crises. Leni Kinzli, a 2023 graduate, advocates for Sudan's humanitarian needs with the United Nations World Food Programme. Yuki Daizumoto, a 2007 Peace Fellow, supports life-changing agricultural and livelihood projects in Afghanistan with the Japan International Cooperation Agency. These individuals embody Rotary's investment in peace.

This month, the Foundation Trustees will consider a plan to establish our eighth Rotary Peace Center in Asia as part of our vision to have peace centres on every inhabited continent by 2030.

But our commitment extends beyond the peace centres. Through Rotary's partnership with the Institute for Economics and Peace, we have trained over 300 Positive Peace Activators from 60 countries. Our forgiveness and social cohesion curricula help members heal communities. Through our Foundation grants and service, Rotary members are fostering peace by engaging with youths, strengthening civil society, and resolving core issues that can lead to conflict.

At President Stephanie Urchick's Peace Conference in Istanbul this month, we will celebrate this work and the first class of the Otto and Fran Walter Rotary Peace Center at Bahçeşehir University.

Remember that you are also ambassadors of peace through service projects, exchange programmes, and as supporters of The Rotary Foundation.

My wish for 2025 is for peace to take root and flourish ever more widely, with Rotary playing an increasingly meaningful role in that noble pursuit.





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Rotarians & family of Rotary Garden Reach condole the passing away of Charter Member, Rtn. Amar Ghosh on February 4th, 2025. The club fondly reminisces the Services he rendered towards Rotary during membership tenure and thereafter.

We, at Rotary Garden Reach pray our sincere homage to the departed soul. Om Shanti!



Bridging Generations

We should have fun and enjoy the fact that we are creating magic. While we're changing people's lives, we're also enriching our own," said RI President Stephanie Urchick, addressing a gathering of 46 DRREs and DRRNs at the Kochi Rotary Institute. She stressed the importance of fun and engagement in sustaining interest and participation in Rotary's initiatives.

She highlighted the need for collaboration and smooth transition from Rotaract to Rotary. *"Misconceptions exist on both sides, Rotarians often view Rotaractors as inexperienced; Rotaractors see Rotarians as outdated and disconnected. Mutual learning, especially reverse mentoring, is essential for growth,"* she noted, emphasising that Rotary is not just for older individuals, but for anyone passionate about service.

Referring to the landmark decision to elevate Rotaract at the 2019 CoL, she said more structured measures are needed to make this transition effective. She urged district leaders to actively engage Rotaractors and sustain their initial enthusiasm. "There is something for everyone. The challenge lies in identifying the spark and nurturing it. It's easy to get somebody to come into our world. But retention requires effort," she said.

The RI President praised Rotaract for fostering inclusivity and diversity. "Rotaract clubs are already achieving milestones in gender diversity, with 50 per cent female representation globally, compared to Rotary's sub-30 per cent. Strengthening diversity leads to stronger organisation." She suggested forming satellite clubs for Rotaractors that can "help bridge the gap while preserving their vibrant culture."

Institute Convenor RI Director Anirudha Roychowdhury expressed concern over the dwindling Rotaract strength. "India has the largest contingent of Rotaractors, yet we lost 17,000 Rotaractors this year. We bank on you for fresh ideas; you are the future of Rotary," he said, and called to Rotary and Rotaract clubs to work together and collaborate for effective service projects. "Your energy is vital, but you must embrace the legacy of Rotary to take our prestigious organisation into the future."

RI Director Raju Subramanian noted that Rotaract membership has drastically dropped since the introduction of membership dues. "Weigh the benefits of being a part of Rotary, the personal development it offers, the amount of good you can give to your community and the networking opportunities. Rotary extends its hands to help you become better individuals," he said, and observed that no Rotaract district has come up with a global grant project, a transformational aspect of the **'Elevate Rotaract'** resolution.



PRID Mahesh Kotbagi called upon them to "identify the less privileged around you and give them the opportunity to grow. Whatever you do, maintain your integrity."

RIDE M Muruganandam recalled his days as a Rotaractor. "Times have changed, but one thing remains clear: the importance of a structured approach, or cadence, in our work," he said, and highlighted Rotary's three critical aspects — its strength, its unwavering commitment to service and embracing responsibility.





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“Rotary is not just a name — it’s a movement, a platform that unites 1.4 million people through shared values and a commitment to service. Together, we protect not just the health and wealth of India but of the world. Let us continue to grow, inspire and lead with purpose.”

Highlighting India’s achievement, he said, “Rotary India is thriving. India stands tall, not just in numbers but in the quality of service we deliver. Out of over 220 countries, India ranks second in growth and service.” He urged the youngsters to “embrace responsibility. Rotary offers everyone this opportunity — to step up, take charge and create meaningful change.”

Muruganandam also shared the 1:2:3 formula that he, along with RIDE K P Nagesh, will focus on to strengthen membership. “For every new Rotarian inducted, two Rotaractors and three Interactors must be inducted. Similarly, for every new Rotary club, two Rotaract and three Interact clubs must be chartered,” he said. He encouraged Rotaract clubs to organise RYLAs for Interact clubs in government schools.

RIDE Nagesh stressed the need for a mindset shift among both Rotarians and Rotaractors to foster better collaboration. “Rotarians need to stop viewing Rotaractors as “kids” and recognise their potential, while Rotaractors should appreciate the experience and wisdom Rotarians bring. Rotaractors excel in adopting new technologies and innovative approaches. Rotarians should acknowledge this strength and integrate these ideas into their traditional methods for mutual benefit. The future of Rotary depends on this understanding,” he said.

He suggested Rotaract clubs should sponsor Interact clubs and inspire Interactors to join Rotaract. For better coordination between the Rotaract and Rotary leaders of districts, Nagesh suggested a joint session for DRREs and DGEs at the upcoming Disha training seminar.

More than membership, let’s build a ‘Community’

Sukumaran Nair, Rotary Hiranandani Estate, RID 3142

Before eagerly urging people to join Rotary, it’s essential that they understand its roots — its purpose.

Just like every life born into this world, Rotary was born with a meaning, shaped by the vision of one man: Paul Harris. His idea was simple yet profound, professionals from diverse backgrounds coming together to share ideas, foster friendship and find purpose in service. This was never meant to be just another club; it was the start of a movement. Over the years, Rotary’s mission grew to encompass global humanitarian efforts, like the fight against polio, which began in 1979 and has reduced the disease from 125 affected countries to just two.

Rotary is not just a place where people gather to socialise. It’s a family bound by values, by the passion to make the world better. I remember joining Rotary after moving into a township with thousands of residents. Frequent travel for work made it hard to connect, but with Rotary, I was instantly part of a community — a family of 40-plus members who welcomed me. Our bond grew quickly, and soon we weren’t just acquaintances; we were partners on meaningful projects to uplift the underprivileged in our community. It’s incredibly moving to see the diversity in background, age and social status, all coming together with a shared goal of creating change.

The beauty of Rotary is that it shouldn’t focus on simply inducting members. It needs volunteers with open hearts who feel a natural call to contribute. Rotary should be a place where people join for projects they resonate with, bringing along their families and friends. This transformation from wanting to be part of something bigger to needing to be part of it is what creates enduring bonds. Like the bubbles of champagne in fermentation, these connections become inseparable, creating a vibrant, lasting community.

Too often, in the drive to meet age and gender quotas, clubs bring in members who may not truly align with Rotary’s values, and they quickly realise they don’t fit. I remember attending a meeting in Bangladesh where the club president highlighted the “three Ts” for membership: Talent, Time and Takka (money). Members need to bring creative solutions, make time for meetings and projects, and understand that doing good often requires resources. True involvement means more than paying dues — it’s a commitment of heart and hand.

Gender equality is crucial, but pushing too hard for specific demographics can distract from Rotary’s mission. I’ve never felt gender-based barriers in my club or any other club that I’ve visited. Instead of quotas, Rotary needs citizens who bring informed perspectives and passionate hearts — people who want to connect deeply, serve authentically and make lasting impact. Rotary needs not just hands, but hearts to foster enduring bonds, both with our members and those we aim to uplift through our service.

Let’s break down boundaries, set aside divisions, and become a united Rotary. Together, we can achieve more, inspire others and drive larger, more impactful projects as a testament to the power of one — **One Rotary, One World.**





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How we increased Major Donors by 50 percent

Maurizio Mantovani, Endowment/Major Gift Advisor, Rotary District 2050, Italy

It was a special day for The Rotary Foundation in Italy on 1 July 2024. At the launch, all incoming governors were recognized as Major Donors. This remarkable achievement was the culmination of an extraordinary two-year period, during which there was a 53% increase in the number of Major Donors in Italy and an impressive 87% growth in Legacy Gifts.

But this was not a random result. It was the outcome of relentless effort, a well-defined strategy, and a collective commitment involving numerous Rotarians, teams, and professional fundraising staff from Zurich. Step by step, we built a path that led to a shift in the culture of giving and strong mobilization around the Foundation's cause. Along this journey, there were challenges and difficulties, but also many satisfactions and valuable lessons learned.

- **The strength of the team**

A key contributor to success was the team we built. At the start of my tenure, I quickly realized that fundraising in Italy could not rest solely on the shoulders of the endowment/major gift adviser or the regional Rotary Foundation coordinators. Instead, it had to become a shared commitment embraced by a broader network of individuals actively present in the field to represent the Foundation's voice in clubs and among members who never attend international, national, or other meetings.

Building on what had already proven to be a winning idea from my predecessor, I created a large, well-structured team that could ensure continuity. Each district has its own representative dedicated to Major Gifts and the Endowment Fund, and these representatives began working with me as a team. With regular training sessions, clear and measurable objectives, and consistent monthly monitoring, this team became an integral part of our strategy and success.

- **The key role of District Governor**

District Governors in Rotary are figures of great authority. Their influence and direct support are essential to motivating clubs and, above all, encouraging members to actively engage with the Foundation. The governor's example is a powerful source of inspiration: through their actions and decisions about the team supporting them in the district, they can significantly impact the growth of fundraising efforts.

Meeting governors during their governor-nominee and governor-elect years, attending seminars at Rotary Institutes, and having the opportunity to discuss with them as an E/MGA the necessity of appointing specific district representatives for Major Gifts were crucial steps.

Governor involvement increased significantly during this period. So much so that the newly started Rotary year began with the participation of all Italian governors, who have now all become Major Donors.

- **Cultivating relationships: targeted events and concrete actions**

Major Donors, even those who contribute significantly, often lack sufficient opportunities to connect with the Foundation, learn more about its work, and reinforce their commitment and the reasons that initially drove them to give.

We decided to organize an annual National Summit for Major Donors and Bequest Society members in Italy. This regular event provides donors with the opportunity to meet, engage with peers, hear the stories of other supporters, receive direct updates from the Foundation, and listen to contributions from the organization's senior leaders. It has now become a cornerstone event, a must-attend for Italian Major Donors. Many attendees often bring along friends and loyal supporters of the Foundation, who, in turn, are inspired to give themselves, creating a virtuous and fruitful cycle of generosity.

- **The importance of Rotary staff**

Fundraising is a complex activity that requires specific and cross-functional skills. I am very grateful for the qualified and professional support I received from the staff in Zurich, the Italian Major Gifts Officer, as well as the staff in Evanston. My personal advice to the E/MGAs who will undertake this extraordinary role is to make the most of the opportunity and build a strong, structured partnership with the staff, so that the plans and efforts in the field are translated into concrete results.

- **Maintaining focus on goals and celebrating achievements**

Setting clear and measurable goals for each year, as well as for the entire three-year period, is essential to keep the team focused, monitor progress, and adjust the course when necessary. When I started my assignment, I set myself the goal of recruiting 50 new Major Donors each year. I succeeded and even surpassed this target.

For the third year, we decided to raise the bar. Our goal is to organize a "One Million Dollar Lunch," scheduled for May 2025. The team is motivated and ready to achieve this goal, and I am excited to celebrate our success soon!





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Minutes of the 2299th RWM held on February 4th, 2025 at BNR Officers' Club, Garden Reach

- 1. President Biswajit Saha called the RWM to order and requested the members to rise for the National Anthem.**
- 2. President Biswajit welcomes AG Rtn. Subhashis Ghosh to the top-table. Members reciprocates with a warm round of applause.**
- 3. Since today being the Assistant Governor's official visit, other issues were not included in the agenda to allow full time for the AG's checking of documents.**
- 4. President Biswajit Saha thanked the Assistant Governor for his valuable inputs and guidance. He also appreciated the efforts of club members in ensuring compliance and efficiency. PP Dr. JK Singh was asked to give the Vote of Thanks to AG Subhasish.**
- 5. The President and the members agreed to have the DG's Official Visit in the Library Hall on March 4th, 2025.**
- 6. Club Secretary conducted the club business.**
- 7. On confirmation of the minutes of the last meeting, President Biswajit terminated the meeting.**