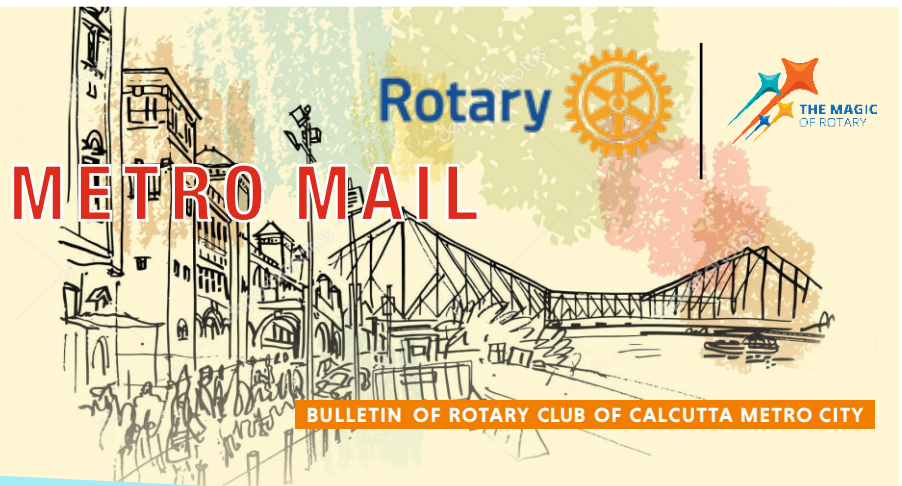


RI President: Rtn. Stephanie Urchick
Dist. Governor: Dr. Krishnendu Gupta
Club President: Rtn. Sunando Sen
Club Secretary: Rtn. Dipu Mullick
Club Editor: Rtn. Subhojit Roy

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Disruptive PR, an innovative approach to public relations, breaks away from traditional norms to deliver powerful and attention-grabbing campaigns. It focuses on creating fresh narratives, leveraging digital platforms, and engaging audiences in unexpected ways. For an organization like Rotary International, which seeks to address global challenges through impactful service, disruptive PR can be a game-changer.

By emphasizing storytelling, disruptive PR helps highlight Rotary's grassroots efforts, from eradicating polio to advancing literacy and clean water initiatives. Viral campaigns, interactive digital experiences, and influencer partnerships can amplify Rotary's message, reaching younger, tech-savvy audiences while sustaining engagement with traditional supporters.

For instance, leveraging social media challenges or live events can enhance awareness of Rotary's causes, such as blood donation drives or education campaigns. Disruptive PR also thrives on real-time responsiveness, enabling Rotary to address crises or celebrate milestones effectively, ensuring its voice remains relevant and authoritative.

Additionally, this approach fosters partnerships with dynamic brands and thought leaders, enabling Rotary to expand its visibility and influence. By adopting disruptive PR strategies, Rotary International can enhance its ability to inspire communities, attract new members, and secure funding, ensuring its mission to serve humanity thrives in an ever-evolving digital age.

Subhojit Roy

The Goal is Accessibility and Advocacy

By **Arnold R. Grahl**



The Blind Football Uganda league was founded by a member of the Rotary Club of World Disability Advocacy.

Courtesy of Blind Football Uganda

Three visually impaired players navigate a soccer pitch, guided by the rattle of the ball and their calls of "voy" (Spanish for "I'm going") to avoid collisions. Wearing blackout masks for equality, they listen as a sighted guide calls out directions from behind the goal. One player breaks free and scores past the sighted goalie.

"Scoring against a sighted goalie feels incredible," says Gad Reuben Tumusiime of Uganda's Blind Football league team, Strong Spirits. "Blind football is a step toward freedom for disabled people, surprising many with what we can achieve."

This movement began in 2021 when Jagwe Muzafaru, inspired by the 2016 Paralympics, founded the league to empower players and provide new opportunities. Through his efforts and equipment support from the International Blind Football Foundation, Muzafaru not only coaches but also facilitates internships for players, showcasing their talents beyond the pitch. "Being part of the Rotary Club of World Disability Advocacy has connected me globally and motivated me to do more," he says.

Ken Masson, a long-time Rotarian from Massachusetts, played a pivotal role in this journey. He helped establish the Disabilities Advisers Group, which evolved into a cause-based Rotary club in 2021. The club rapidly gained members, uniting advocates worldwide. "People join for the cause," Masson explains, "and then realize the larger importance of Rotary."

The club focuses on advocacy through monthly talks, online summits, and digital campaigns. Speakers like Grace Ndegwa, who shared her journey with spina bifida, and Daniel Lubiner, who introduced a braille-teaching device, inspire members globally. The club also supports inclusive education, accessibility, and a range of disabilities, including lesser-known ones like postpolio syndrome.

For Mona Arsenault, a polio survivor and advocate, joining the club has expanded her horizons. "Ken taught me to be an advocate, not just a support group leader," she says. Similarly, Danilo Souza, São Paulo's director of digital accessibility, joined after learning about Rotary's commitment to inclusion. He advises clubs in Brazil on technology-driven accessibility, a crucial area post-pandemic.

Masson continues to steer the club, fostering individual efforts and addressing both familiar and lesser-known disabilities. "It's a huge world, and I want to save it every day," he says. Together, the club exemplifies Rotary's mission of empowering individuals and creating global impact.

Make Your Club Communications Accessible

Rotary clubs often communicate digitally through their websites, newsletters, or social media accounts. One way you can help make that information accessible to everyone is by following standards from the nonprofit World Wide Web Consortium, built on four key principles:

Perceivable : Users can distinguish content using their senses, which might mean visually or primarily through sound or touch.

- Provide a text alternative to convey information in charts, images, recordings, and other content that isn't text, allowing conversion to other forms such as braille or speech.
- Use colors that contrast enough to distinguish the foreground and background.

Operable : Users can control interactive elements, including through assistive technology like voice recognition or screen readers.

- Make sure people can use a keyboard for controls, forms, or other interactive elements, as some people don't use a standard mouse.
- Provide enough time for people who need longer to read instructions, type text, or complete other tasks.

Understandable : Users can comprehend content.

- Use simple language free of undefined abbreviations and jargon, which helps text-to-speech technology.
- Ensure website navigation and features are consistent and operate predictably.

Robust : Users can choose the technology they prefer to interact online.

- Make sure your content is compatible with current and future technologies, including assistive technologies.

This story originally appeared in the January 2025 issue of Rotary magazine.

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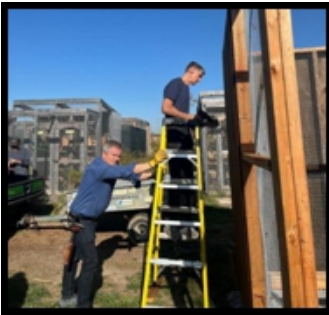
Rotary Projects around the Globe - January 2025

By **Brad Webber**



United States

After New Orleans signed a sister cities agreement with its French namesake, Orléans, in 2018, Rotary clubs in the two cities forged their own international ties. Looking to celebrate the connection, the New Orleans club discovered that both cities have Joan of Arc festivities and select a high school student to represent the French national heroine in parades and events, says Gayle Dellinger, a member of the Louisiana club. In true Rotary fashion, the clubs decided to create an exchange opportunity for their cities' "Joans." In June, the American "Joan," Marley Marsalis, a member of the legendary jazz family and a pianist herself, visited Orléans as a guest of French Rotarians. This month, the American Rotarians will host the French "Joan," Maylis Boët. The Joans ride in each other's parade and visit historical sites. "It gives you hope for the future and gets you excited," New Orleans club member Sarah Dickerson says. "It's so uniting for absolutely everybody involved."



Canada

Since 2020 the Rotary Club of Toronto has supported the **Toronto Wildlife Centre**, which rehabilitates 300 species of sick and injured animals. The club has donated more than \$18,000 to construct enclosures for bats, mourning doves, woodpeckers, water birds, squirrels, and groundhogs. Hammers and drills in hand, club members Kurt Kroesen, Stuart Muirhead, and Michele Guy joined other volunteers and employees in October to assemble a structure for red squirrels. Nathalie Karvonen, the organization's founder and executive director, lauds the Rotarians for their devotion. "Their generosity is giving hundreds of wild patients each year a safe space in which to prepare for a healthy life back in the wild," she says.

- **1920 St. Joan of Arc canonized**
- **6,000 Animals treated each year at the Toronto Wildlife Centre**



England

A cavalcade of 120 vintage vehicles, including tractors, steam lorries, and penny-farthing bicycles, rolled into the Mortimer Fairground in June for a fundraiser of the Rotary Club of Reading Matins. The Transport Through the Ages event drew about 4,000 people and raised more than \$13,000 for charities. The idea came from similar shows held during celebrations of the Platinum Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II and the coronation of King Charles III. "We are delighted at the success of the event and the amount of money raised for the charities we feel so passionate about," says Club President Valerie Robinson. The resulting fanfare has encouraged the Rotarians to reprise the fundraiser in the future, says club member Carrie Wise.



India

After heavy rains triggered flooding and landslides in India's northeastern state of Tripura in August, the Rotary Club of Agartala City and the Rotaract clubs of Agartala City and Agartala Central mobilized to help. The clubs set up relief camps providing food, clothing, health care, and medicines in Agartala, reaching 400 people. During a second phase, club members distributed groceries and sanitary pads among 125 families in a remote village that was devastated by the floods. "Villagers lost all their belongings. Farms and agricultural crops were destroyed," says Agartala Rotary club member Anannya Das. Rotary members also organized clinics in the region where patients could see pediatricians, eye specialists, dermatologists, and general practitioners, including Rotarian doctors.

- **905,000+ Automobiles manufactured in the UK in 2023**
- **Over \$200 billion Estimated cost of natural disasters worldwide in 2023**



Philippines

Members of the Rotaract Club of Calumpit are passionate about supporting young people with disabilities through skill development and advocacy. As part of their Breaking Barriers initiative, they've recorded podcasts on the rights and challenges of people with disabilities. In August, Rotaractors and members of the Rotary Club of Calumpit visited an elementary school, offering hygiene kits, medicine, and school supplies to 160 students with disabilities, as well as mentoring in reading, writing, and art. "The event was met with overwhelming positive feedback from participants, who appreciated the thoughtful activities and valuable resources provided," says Rotaract Club President Daniel Balingit. A session for caregivers was especially well received, he says. "It offered a safe space for mothers to share their experiences and gain insights into managing the mental health and psychological needs of their children."

This story originally appeared in the January 2025 issue of Rotary magazine.

Club News

Rotary Club of Calcutta Metro City Partners with British Deputy High Commission to Celebrate Leadership in Disability Cricket



In a landmark event celebrating the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, the British Deputy High Commission Kolkata, in collaboration with the Indo-British Scholars'

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Association (IBSA), Rotary Club of Calcutta Metro City, and Connections, spotlighted the leadership potential of disabled cricketers and emphasized inclusion, resilience, and the transformative power of sport.

The event, titled 'Amplifying Leadership in Disability Cricket,' brought together inspiring disabled cricketers from the West Bengal Cricket Association for Differently Abled. It

served as a powerful platform to discuss the challenges and opportunities in disability cricket and the role of sports in fostering accessibility and equal opportunities.

Speaking on behalf of Rotary Club of Calcutta Metro City, Subhojit Roy reaffirmed Rotary's unwavering commitment to inclusion and the mainstreaming of differently-abled sportspeople. He emphasized the need for a level playing field, increased exposure, and resources to support these athletes. "Rotary's focus on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) aligns perfectly with the objectives of this initiative. We hope prominent cricketing leagues, such as the Bengal Pro T20 League, will support and promote Disability Cricket, recognizing its potential to inspire and unite communities," he said.

The event also featured insights from international disability cricket experts, Jane Powell, Performance Manager for Disability Cricket at the England and Wales Cricket Board, and Rob Tipping, Head of Cricket Programmes at Lord's Taverners. Joining virtually from London, they shed light on initiatives that raise awareness and support for disability cricket in the UK and beyond.

Andrew Fleming, British Deputy High Commissioner to East and Northeast India, alongside esteemed panelists Sarbani Bhattacharya, Ritushree Guha, and Utpal Majumdar, highlighted the critical importance of breaking barriers in sports, promoting accessibility, and creating equitable opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

The event saw enthusiastic participation from Rotary leaders, including Past District Governor Shyamashree Sen and Club President Sunando Sen, alongside distinguished guests and sports enthusiasts committed to the cause.

This collaborative celebration underscores the shared vision of empowering differently-abled athletes, fostering inclusion through sports, and amplifying their leadership potential. Rotary Club of Calcutta Metro City remains steadfast in its efforts to champion such transformative initiatives, paving the way for a more inclusive and equitable society.

The program was part of Rotary's Inclusion initiative.

Blanket Distribution



PDG Shyamashree Sen, President Sunando Sen PP Subhojit Roy along with PP Partha Sengupta (RC Calcutta Amory), visited Madhakhali in East Medinipur to distribute blankets for the underprivileged beneficiaries. Rotary Club Of Calcutta Metro City donated 50 blankets procured from Rotary District 3291, while another 100 (A total of 150) from Presidents and team members of RY 2016-17 were distributed on the occasion.

PDG Shyamashree Sen spoke on the occasion along with local dignitaries. The program was coordinated by social activist Chaitanyamoy Nanda.

Forthcoming Programs

Sammelan - Annual District Conference of RID 3291- January 3rd-5th '2025, Nicco Park, East Pavillion - Members are requested to register alongwith their spouses/guests

