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Disease Prevention and Treatment Month in Rotary's calendar underscores a commitment that has shaped global public health for decades. Rotary's most visible achievement—the near-eradication of polio—stands as one of the greatest humanitarian success stories of modern times. Since 1985, Rotary's leadership, funding, and volunteer mobilisation have helped reduce polio cases worldwide by more than 99.9 percent, proving that coordinated global action can defeat even the most entrenched diseases.

Beyond polio, Rotary's impact lies in strengthening healthcare systems in underserved and backward regions. Rotary-supported projects address preventable and treatable diseases through immunisation drives, sanitation-linked health initiatives, maternal and child healthcare, blood banks, dialysis centres, and affordable diagnostic services for conditions such as diabetes, cancer, and heart disease. In many remote communities, Rotary's mobile medical units and telemedicine facilities provide the first and often only access to qualified healthcare.

A defining feature of Rotary's approach is its emphasis on prevention over cure. By investing in awareness, early diagnosis, clean water, hygiene, and nutrition, Rotary reduces long-term healthcare burdens and improves quality of life. Equally important is capacity building—training doctors, nurses, and community health workers to ensure sustainability beyond project timelines.

Rotary's partnerships with the World Health Organization, UNICEF, governments, and local institutions multiply its impact, while Rotary Foundation Global Grants enable cross-border learning and scalable solutions. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Rotary's rapid response—oxygen plants, vaccination support, and community care—reaffirmed its relevance.

As Disease Prevention and Treatment Month reminds us, Rotary's quiet, consistent service continues to transform health outcomes worldwide, driven by a simple yet powerful principle: Service Above Self.

Subhojit Roy

Rotary Projects Around the Globe December 2025

By Brad Webber



United States

Acclaimed chef Vikas Khanna created a children's book, *Festivals at the Bungalow*, with support from the recently chartered Rotary Club of South West Florida District 6960. The club raised \$20,000 from U.S. and Indian Rotarians, other individuals, and businesses to print 2,000 copies of the illustrated book that are being distributed free to Rotary-led literacy initiatives. The book "takes children on a journey across India, showcasing how families come together to decorate, cook, and celebrate," says Priya Ahluwalia, who helped start the club with her husband, Mohit Pohani. "The combination of stories and recipes makes it both educational and engaging, sparking curiosity while fostering cultural appreciation." On 15 August, Rotarians joined Khanna in ringing the closing bell of the Nasdaq Stock Market in New York City to mark the book's publication.



South Africa

What started in 2016 as a casual dinner among friends has grown into an annual gala in Cape Town to raise money to help end polio. "We thought we'd raise some funds while enjoying a meal together. As the idea grew, I brought my Rotaract club on board," explains Rex IP Omameh, today a joint member of the Rotaract and Rotary clubs of Blouberg. At the 2024 gala, about 100 revelers enjoyed the paparazzi treatment as they strolled the red carpet. The party, attended by local luminaries, guests, and members of District 9350 Rotaract and Rotary clubs, raised money for Rotary's polio eradication efforts as well as a Rotaractor trip to Uganda to participate in a polio vaccination campaign. "Each year we see more people, especially young people, becoming passionate about polio awareness through this event," Omameh says. This year's celebration, which was scheduled for 8 November, is branded as Africa Unite: A Gala for Peace and Polio.



St. Vincent and the Grenadines

The Rotary Club of St. Vincent staged a "glow run" for good health in June in partnership with a fitness center. At dusk, about 500 participants carrying illuminated sticks brightened the streets along a scenic route starting from the cruise ship terminal in the islands' capital, Kingstown, reports club member Kimeisha Bailey. Businesses and medical facilities sponsored the family-oriented event. "This Glow Run is part of our club's ongoing commitment to disease prevention and treatment," Bailey says. The run also supported a District 7030 emphasis on promoting healthy lifestyles and encouraging Vincentians to stay active. "By getting the community moving, the club aims to raise awareness and take action," Bailey says. The club also offered a virtual workout session for families and a nutrition webinar.

- 7%- Share of Asian restaurants in the U.S. that serve Indian food
- 18 % -Proportion of children ages 13-17 in St. Vincent and the Grenadines who are physically active at least one hour a day



Mauritius

Putting "happiness" in your club's name is one way to set the agenda. "From the beginning, our mission was clear: Every initiative we undertake must contribute meaningfully to the emotional wellness of our beneficiaries," says Syam V.D. Mudhoo, a past president of the Rotary Club of Helvetia Happiness. The club even has an enforcer of ebullience of sorts called a director of happiness. That officer oversees such initiatives as "mindfulness moments" and "spontaneous laughter yoga." Social "FriYAYS," held monthly and open to guests, loosen the traditional meeting structure by including games and icebreakers "to surprise, delight, and recharge," Mudhoo says. "We also know that true impact begins within." Hence the effort members put into ensuring they are in good spirits themselves. "It's a lifeline."

- 1989 Last case of wild polio in South Africa.
- 1 in 2 People around the world will develop a mental health disorder in their life time.

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

Journey of self-empowerment leads to Rotary

By **Jonathan Black**



From homelessness to family turmoil, Janelle Hall faced many challenges. Now she's focused on helping others.

Image credit: Roshni Khatri

If this were a movie it would be a Hollywood salute to grit and gratitude, an inspirational biopic in which a determined woman survives life in a homeless shelter and repays the service organization that rescued her. Here is Janelle Hall, mid-2008, in her worn pink shelter robe, jobless after a turn mopping floors at a laundromat, a refugee from an in-law's tiny apartment with her then-husband and four young children.

"Hours from the street" is how Hall describes the day she and her family got admitted to the shelter in Clifton, New Jersey. This was shortly after a Rotary district governor had called on Rotarians to set up a program to help families like hers battered by the Great Recession, and one volunteer, Bonnie Sirower, who was a board member at a nearby YMCA, was told about Hall.

"She was looking for a hand up, not a handout," says Sirower, who was part of a team of Rotary members from District 7490 that spent weeks with Hall and others in need as part of the district program. They provided Christmas presents for her children, a wardrobe for job interviews, a bus pass to get her to those interviews, and then leads to a service organization that offered not only a job but child care for Hall's kids, free. "It was like divine intervention," says Hall.

The daughter of immigrant parents from Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago, Hall had flunked out of college, overwhelmed with challenges — small children, an emotionally abusive husband, and "bad decisions." So, with this chance for a second chance, the Rotary team helped locate a possible college and paid for her application fee.

"There weren't any computers at the shelter, forget a laptop," remembers Hall. "I wrote my essay with a pencil on purple copy paper. My acceptance letter was mailed to the homeless shelter and I still have it today."

Three years later she graduated from William Paterson University. Soon after getting a job, a coworker said, "C'mon, Janelle, why don't we get ourselves a master's degree!"

In Hall's biopic the pages begin flying off the calendar: a master's degree in public administration from Fairleigh Dickinson University in 2013; a doctorate in public policy and administration in 2020 from Walden University, where another coworker urged they both enroll for a PhD. "Guess who got her degree first?" Hall says with a grin.

Hall is now an adjunct faculty member at Seton Hall University in South Orange, New Jersey. She has been honored by local and state officials for her contributions to her community. She has written a motivational book titled *The Daughter of Destiny*, which maps her history and offers "8 steps [that] can lead you to personal empowerment."

In her own climactic, destined moment of self-empowerment, Hall became the executive director of the United **Passaic Organization**, a broad-based service group for the city that helps families in need — and the very organization that once helped pay her rent years ago when she was struggling. Her story, not surprisingly, has compelled attention, especially among Rotary members. Early in 2024, for example, there she was addressing 300 people at a Rotary presidents-elect learning seminar in Whippany, New Jersey.

Janelle Hall

PhD in public policy and administration, Walden University, 2020

Adjunct faculty, Seton Hall University, 2023-present

CEO, United Passaic Organization, 2021-present

"Let me introduce myself," she told the audience, whereupon she removed the pink bathrobe she'd pulled on earlier, the very robe she had worn in the homeless shelter, to reveal a striking blue dress and her proud empowerment. "I am a homeowner and college professor. I sit on the Board of Governors at Fairleigh Dickinson. I have my own business called Beyond Inspired. I am the CEO of the very organization that I once received services from."

With each accomplishment the room erupted in cheers, almost drowning out her conclusion: "And all the accomplishments I shared with you are thanks to the magic of Rotary."

"It took her almost an hour to leave the ballroom after her speech," Sirower reports. "Everybody kept wanting to talk to her. And she made a promise to me at that time that she would start her own Passaic Rotary club to replace the one our district had lost during COVID."

Within months, Hall had recruited 25 members and soon after, in February 2025, the Rotary Club of Passaic was officially chartered with Hall now serving as its president.

The club has already hosted its first retreat and is planning an international service trip to the Dominican Republic, which won't be Hall's first trip out of the country. In 2024 she was part of an organized trip to Ghana that she describes as a "quest for spiritual growth" and part of efforts "to reunite ... Africans and the global diaspora." The most meaningful part for her turned out to be a visit to an orphanage where Hall distributed 250 schoolbooks donated by a childhood friend and school principal, Tiffany Crockett, who is also a charter member of Hall's Rotary club.



Janelle Hall helped charter the Rotary Club of Passaic in February and serves as its president.

Image credit: Roshni Khatri

“You surround yourself with change agents. You want to challenge one another,” Crockett says in describing her longtime relationship with Hall.

Hall’s own journey has had no shortage of challenges. She says her husband did not physically abuse her but chipped away at her sense of self in other ways: verbal abuse, denial of control, restriction of access to friends, and a growing isolation. At age 21, “young [and] inexperienced,” Hall married a man nearly twice her age. “My family essentially disowned me because of the choice I made,” she writes in *The Daughter of Destiny*. She nevertheless kept her father company in the months before his death from leukemia in 2019 and helped her siblings take care of their mother, who had Alzheimer’s, until she died in 2021.

There is much to be thankful for. Her children are grown; three of them are currently in college. Hall herself has “taken back ownership of my name.” “My divorce is final!” she writes in her book. “When the judge banged his gavel, he gave me full custody of my destiny.”

“Your journey in life is how you use your success to help others,” Hall says. “Things may seem dim or dark for a reason. It’s up to you to be a beacon so others can understand that darkness is just temporary.” Roll credits. Close curtain.

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

Club News

Wash In School Joint with 5 Rotary Clubs



WASH IN SCHOOL project at Shree Sarada Vidyalaya E n t a l l y , w a s inaugurated by DG D r . R a m e n d u Homchaudhuri in

presence of PDG Shyamashree Sen and 40 Rotarians from the 5 participating clubs and from a few other clubs were present.

Our club was represented at the inauguration by PDG Shyamashree Sen, PP Rtn Subhojit Roy, PP Rtn Firoz Mohammed, Rtn Dipanwita Banerjee, Club Secretary Rtn Arindam Ghosh and Club President Rtn Sunando Sen.

Our club intends to take up another project at the school by providing lights & fans in the class rooms. This will be, once again, a joint initiative of the 5 clubs and a few other clubs.

The DG was so impressed with the collaboration of 5 clubs in this WASH project that he announced a donation of 1,00,000 from the District for further upgrade work in the school.

(Reported by President Rtn Sunando Sen)

Thalassaemia Awareness Program with IPER



Our club in association with IPER, have organised a Thalassaemia Awareness Camp at IPER, today. Our club's Treasurer PP Rtn Subhojit Roy was the key note speaker. Around 50 to 60 people (Students+Guardians) was there. Thanks to PP Rtn Subhojit for his outstanding deliberation which has enthralled the audience. Our sincere gratitude to our PP Rtn Jharna Mitra for her initiative.

The Club was represented by PP Arindam Ghosh (Club Secretary), PP Rtn Dipu Mallick, PP Rtn Rajnish Kapur, PP Rtn Jharna Mitra and Secy-Elect Rtn Dipannita Banerjee.

(Reported by PP Rtn Arindam Ghosh)

Greetings
Wedding Anniversary
 Rtn Devasruti & Biswarup
 for 6th December!
 Namrata & Rtn Preetam
 Ghosh for 10th December!

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Rotary

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