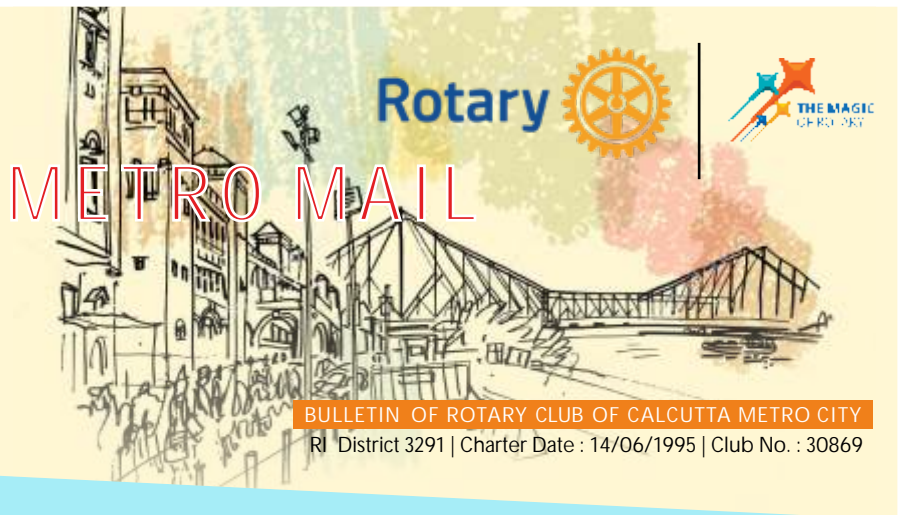


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Service organizations like Rotary face significant challenges in fundraising, even with strong ratings and a large membership base. One major issue is donor fatigue; repeated appeals for contributions can overwhelm potential donors, especially in a landscape crowded with charitable causes. Additionally, economic downturns and inflation can tighten personal budgets, making people less willing or able to donate.

Another challenge is the competition for funds, as many nonprofits vie for limited resources, leading to donor attrition. Even with high ratings, Rotary may struggle to distinguish its projects from others in a saturated market. Furthermore, transparency and accountability are increasingly demanded by donors, requiring organizations to demonstrate the tangible impact of their projects.

Lastly, internal challenges such as outdated fundraising strategies and a lack of digital engagement can limit outreach and effectiveness. Without modernizing approaches and leveraging technology, service organizations risk alienating younger, tech-savvy donors. To overcome these challenges, Rotary must innovate in fundraising, engage members actively, and clearly communicate the impact of their work.

Subhojit Roy

A New Tool to End Cervical Cancer



Rotarian brings promising screening technology to Kenya

Dr. Richard Godfrey, a member of the Rotary Club of Niles (Fremont), California, visited Kenya to help establish a new screening method for cervical cancer and train local medical staff on the process. Courtesy of Richard Godfrey

I'm parked on the side of the road in western Kenya in pitch-black darkness, completely lost. Kevin, my local friend, lent me his car, but in remote Siaya County, there are no road signs, lights, or any sure way to locate his house, and taking a dirt-road detour can deliver one into a ditch deep enough to swallow a car. So I wait for him to find me.

As a retired surgical oncologist, I'm in the region to deliver a new screening program that detects cervical cancer in its early stages and to perform surgery at Matibabu Hospital in the Lake Victoria region. My visit is part of a Rotary project to prevent cervical cancer, the most common cause of mortality for women throughout Sub-Saharan Africa.

Dr. Richard Godfrey

How Rotary is helping

Rotary clubs in District 5170 (California) and the nonprofit PINCC (Prevention International: No Cervical Cancer) have introduced a new genetic screening technology for HPV and are providing training to local medical providers. At the 2023 Rotary International Convention in Melbourne, Australia, Rotary announced United to End Cervical Cancer in Egypt as the [recipient of Rotary's third annual Programs of Scale award](#), which comes with a \$2 million grant from [The Rotary Foundation](#).

While I have removed some 10,000 cancers in 35 years as a surgeon in busy California hospitals, I know that early detection is crucial in controlling cancer of all types. And cervical cancer is the one cancer we can eliminate globally. Why? Like polio, it's caused by a virus, the human papillomavirus (HPV). An active immune system can clear the virus, but a weak one fails to prevent HPV from causing cancer. Women with HIV face a sixfold risk of cervical cancer, and in Kenya both HIV and HPV are widespread.

Dr. Richard Godfrey, a member of the Rotary Club of Niles (Fremont), California, visited Kenya to help establish a new screening method for cervical cancer and train local medical staff on the process.

Without testing, a woman usually doesn't realize she has cervical cancer until she develops bleeding, loses weight, or has more advanced signs of disease. Once cervical cancer spreads, it is rarely controlled even with surgery, radiation, and chemotherapy—treatments rarely available in low-income countries.

With Ampfire, the new genetic testing system I'm delivering, patients can test themselves at home using a brush to swab fluid and cells from the cervical surface. They then place the tip of the brush in a tube that gets transported our laboratory at Matibabu Hospital, which has a machine that can test up to a thousand samples per day. It takes only two days to set up the equipment, and the lab technician can manage testing independently.

The clinic staff communicates the results to patients through WhatsApp, and makes appointments for those who test positive, around 20%, to undergo further screening. Those who test negative are asked to return in three to five years, a major advantage of this method over the less accurate pap smears. Grants from the Rotary clubs of Merced and Oakland, California, made it possible to purchase the equipment. As many as a million women ages 30 to 60 need testing in the region, so we are just getting started.

The Boda girls are women motorcycle taxi owners and health advocates who provide safe and free transportation for women in rural areas of Kenya to critical services. Supported by Tiba Foundation, the Boda girls have tripled the number of women being screened for cancer and increased hospital births by 67%. Tiba Foundation believes empowering women to support women's access is a key to rural health outcomes.

Cervical cancer inequity –

Few diseases reflect global inequities as much as cervical cancer. Globally, 346,000 women die from the disease each year – one every minute and a half. In 2022, nearly 94% of the deaths occurred in low- and middle-income countries. The World Health Organization (WHO) has set a goal to help all low-income countries achieve its triple-intervention targets by 2030:

- fully vaccinate 90% of girls against human papillomavirus (HPV), the principal cause of cervical cancer, by age 15
- screen 70% of women twice by age 45
- treat 90% of the women with cervical cancer

In the U.S., about 13,820 cases of invasive cervical cancer will be diagnosed this year, and more than 4,300 women will die. Doctors are concerned because screening rates are dropping, especially in rural regions, and vaccine hesitancy has increased since COVID-19. HPV is estimated to be the most common sexually transmitted infection in the United States and also impacts men as it can cause mouth, throat, and penile cancers. The American Social Health Association estimates that about 75–80% of sexually active Americans will be infected with HPV at some point in their lifetime.

Several countries, including Belgium and Austria, have made HPV vaccines mandatory for young girls; many others offer them for free to encourage voluntary vaccination.

RI President Stephanie Urchick to host the special event with the theme 'Healing in a Divided World'

By Etelka Lehoczky



At a time when conflict, inequality, and displacement have put many communities in crisis, pursuing a commitment to peace is challenging. That doesn't deter RI President Stephanie Urchick and other Rotary members who are organizing a presidential peace conference for early next year.

"Rotary is an organization founded on the principle of advancing world understanding, goodwill, and peace. It is our responsibility to promote peace," says Urchick, who has made this topic a focus of her presidency. "I am expecting the conference will help showcase Rotary's role in peacebuilding."

The event, with the theme "Healing in a Divided World," will occur 20-22 February at the Hilton Istanbul Bomonti Hotel & Conference Center in Türkiye. It will build on Rotary's contributions to

promoting peace and explore how to reduce polarization in communities, technology's role in peace and development, how peace and environmental issues intersect, and opportunities to create sustainable peace.

"The idea of a conference dedicated to healing in our divided world holds significant promise," says conference planning committee chair Afak Alpay, a member of the Rotary Club of Istanbul-Sisli and a past director of Rotary International.

The conference will also highlight the new Otto and Fran Walter Rotary Peace Center at Bahçeşehir University in Istanbul, one of seven Rotary Peace Centers around the globe. The center launched in February 2024 and will welcome its first class of fellows in early 2025, just in time for the conference.

"The first group of Rotary Peace Fellows at Bahçeşehir will be joining us during the peace conference to learn more about Rotary's peacebuilding programs and share their experiences with us," says Murat Çelik, a member of the Rotary Club of Istanbul-Sisli and the conference's host organization chair.

Participants at the conference will discuss current issues and ways to create more peaceful, inclusive and resilient communities. Because peacebuilding and conflict prevention is among Rotary's areas of focus, many other people throughout the organization can bring their perspectives to the conversation.

"We expect a variety of peacebuilding stakeholders, including our partners, trustees, and directors; some of the 1,800 peace center alumni; members of our Rotary Action Group for Peace; and others with an interest in advancing peace," Urchick says. She adds that she's eager to meet the new center's first group of peace fellows after being inspired by the scholars she's encountered at other peace centers.

In addition to addressing many topics related to peacebuilding, conference participants will have the opportunity to attend local events organized by the host committee. Çelik says the gathering may even expand and enhance the definition of peace itself.

Conference sessions will promote approaches to conflict resolution that are based on empathy and critical thinking. With these skills, Alpay says, current and future generations can find ways to resolve disputes without violence.

Another essential element of the peacebuilder's work, he adds, is hope: "I believe hope is a powerful force that drives action and inspires change."

With transplant changes afoot, Rotary members push to end global organ shortages

By Neil Steinberg



Anil Srivatsa drives an SUV plastered with stickers and slogans across India on a quixotic mission: to teach as many of the country's 1.4 billion people as he can about the importance of organ donation.

He's one man in his truck, often accompanied by his wife, driving from town to town for several weeks each year to try to increase India's organ donation rate, because it ranks among the world's worst.

For Srivatsa, the mission is intensely personal. Ten years ago, he donated his left kidney to his brother, Arjun Srivatsa, a neurosurgeon and a member of the Rotary Club of Bangalore, who had chronic renal failure. On his driving tours, Srivatsa sleeps in a rooftop pop-up tent on his SUV. One of its decals says "Kidney donors are sexy!" He speaks to a Rotary club if there is one in town — there are more than 4,000 in the country — or he assembles what residents he can when there's not.

India trails most of the world in organ donation for varied, sometimes complicated reasons, including a simple lack of information, inadequate transplant care hospitals in rural areas, and distrust among families of potential donors about how organs will be used. But major shifts are happening with donation regulations and initiatives in India and other countries, giving organ donation its strongest spotlight in years. That includes attention affixed on early experiments in the U.S. and China with transplanting gene-modified pig organs into humans as one potential solution for shortages. And a 2023 U.S. law that will overhaul the national donation system to try to break up an inefficient monopoly and reduce organ shortages.

Education and access

While kidney transplants are increasing, their high cost keeps them out of reach for a large portion of Mexicans. Rotarians have used multiple global grants for the project, guiding donors and recipients through the process leading up to the surgery and quelling fears about donors' health afterward, similar to how Srivatsa counsels people in his travels across India.

Clubs in India have been particularly active promoting the issue, with education sessions for factory workers and college students, rallies of people with banners and flags who walk city streets, and events to encourage people to pledge to donate their organs when they die.



Srivatsa, who divides his time living in Bengaluru (formerly called Bangalore) and New Jersey in the U.S., has also done drives to counter transplant myths across Asia, Australia, Europe, and North and South America. He circles the globe to address business groups — in December he went to Bali to talk to Pepsi executives. He estimates he has spoken to more than 270,000 people in 58 countries on over 1,000 occasions, many of those at Rotary clubs.

He helped start the Interact Club of Venky Yoda, which stands for youth organ donation awareness, at the Venkateshwar International School in Delhi. The Interactors worked with his club to launch a chatbot recently that teaches people about organ donation. Srivatsa, who has helped form two other clubs, also worked with the [Rotary Action Group for Blood Donation](#) to add organ donation to the group's mission (and its name) to increase Rotary members' focus on the issue. The group already has hundreds of members dedicated to supporting blood drives, so the expansion to include organ donation advocates will be a powerful force.

Srivatsa uses his experience of giving his brother a kidney to show that donors live normal, healthy lives. "When people say I sacrificed a lot to give a kidney to my brother, I don't believe that was sacrifice," he says. To demonstrate how active post-transplant life can be, the brothers took a grueling mountain bike tour in 2015, six months after their operations. They competed in the [World Transplant Games](#) in England in 2019 and in Australia in 2023, with medals for Arjun in golf and Anil in cricket ball throwing and race walking.

Removing hurdles

Despite grassroots efforts by Rotary members, the [World Health Organization](#) estimates that transplants cover only about 10 percent of need. Many people waiting for kidneys survive only through the debilitating process of dialysis, where their blood is cycled through a machine and washed of toxins that are usually removed by healthy kidneys. (See the author's essay about helping his cousin on dialysis and trying to give him a kidney.) But dialysis isn't available everywhere or is too expensive for many people around the world. In India and many countries, the use of organs donated from people who died is minuscule, and transplants are limited mostly to kidneys from living donors.

Among Rotary members with a personal link to the issue are Prashant and Hemali Ajmera, a couple in India who hit the legal hurdle requiring a residency certificate in Gujarat state, where Hemali Ajmera was getting dialysis treatments and needed a kidney transplant.

The two, who are both Canadian citizens, learned about the requirement in spring 2022 when Prashant Ajmera went to a Gujarat hospital to register his wife to receive a transplant from a deceased donor, he says. "I made the application, and in four days I heard back from the police department: Your wife is a Canadian citizen so is not entitled to a domicile certificate in the state of Gujarat. So the hospital will not take her as a patient."

The federal government adopted a policy in March 2023 that forbids domicile requirements for those seeking deceased-donor organ transplants, along with lifting a ban on people older than 65 receiving such transplants. "Doctors came to me and told me this was the big hurdle, and it has been removed, making one less complication in the process," says Ajmera, who speaks to Rotary clubs about the complexities of India's organ donation rules.

Srivatsa's SUV is his home on the road for weeks long treks to reach Rotary clubs and anyone else he can gather to address hesitancy about organ donation.

Before the legal battle could be resolved, however, Hemali Ajmera's condition deteriorated, forcing her to get a kidney transplant from a living donor — her sister. The operation was performed in February 2023 at a hospital recommended by a Rotarian doctor, and Hemali Ajmera later moved her membership to the Rotary Club of Organ Donation. "Rotary has helped me in all my life, connection after connection, doctor after doctor, all because of wonderful Rotary," Prashant Ajmera says.

To help others in considering whether to donate, Srivatsa's foundation published a book, *A Rotarian's Guide to Organ Donation*, edited by Hemali Ajmera.

Prashant Ajmera pushes for Rotary members to play a wider role in promoting organ donation. No one expects progress to be easy, but members are in it for the long haul.

Srivatsa says members sprinkled in communities across the globe are in a strong position to push systemic changes that improve organ donation and get people's attention on how to prevent conditions, such as heart disease and diabetes, that can lead to organ failure. "Me passing through, making one passionate speech then walking away is not optimum. You need someone on the ground always there pushing the agenda."

CLUB NEWS

Thalassaemia Awareness



Rotary Club of Calcutta Metro City organized a Thalassaemia Awareness Camp at the Indian Institute of Mother & Child, Sonarpur campus on Saturday 20th July '24.

PP Rtn Subhojit Roy introduced the speaker and the subject to the audience. PP Rtn Dr Arabinda Ray, Chairman, District Thalassaemia Awareness & Prevention Committee, RID 3291 gave a formal presentation with an audio visual on thalassaemia followed by PP Rtn Jharna Mitra conducting a Q & A with the audience.

The program was attended by 70 young girl students, women and also delegates from Italy and Finland. The club President Rtn Sunando Sen was also present and coordinated the program.

The session was followed by a discussion with the administrator of IIM&C for the year long program and activities for RY 2024-2025.

Bagh Divas - Preserving Tigers



On 27th July, Rotary Club of Calcutta Metro City partnered with SHER to celebrate “Bagh Divas” at La Martiniere for Girls School Hall.

Our club was represented by PDG Shyamashree Sen, PP Rtn Subhojit Roy, PP Rtn Sunetra Dagupta, Club Secretary Rtn Dipu Mullick, PP Rtn Arindam Ghosh, Rtn Shankar Das, Rtn Dipanwita Banerjee and President Sunando Sen. Forest officers, security guards who play an active role in wildlife conservation and wild life photographers and conservationists were felicitated.

Mr. Vijay Bedi, a Green Oscar & Emmy winner, presented an engrossing and beautiful audio-visual on his wild life photography. His presentation of our Nation Anthem using wildlife/nature's videos and sound bytes was a treat to watch. PP Rtn Sunetra and PP Rtn Subhojit felicitated the recipients on behalf of the club.

The partners included Nikon, Guardbank and La Martiniere Girls School Nature Club.

Tree Plantation - Rebuilding the Environment



On 28th July, on the occasion of World Conservation Day, Rotary Club of Calcutta metro City in association with HariMitti Foundation, planted trees donated by PDG Shyamashree Sen and President Rtn Sunando Sen at a Green Verge in the New Town Action Area II.

The trees planted were of Neem, Arjun, Indian almond, Jamun and Radhachura.

The club was represented by PP Rtn Subhojit Roy and the Club President Sunando Sen.

Greetings

Wedding anniversary greetings to PP Rtn Bandana & Rtn Shankar Das for 11th August!!!

