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BULLETIN OF ROTARY CLUB OF CALCUTTA METRO CITY

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One of the biggest achievements of modern India, post Independence, has been the successful landing of Chandrayan 3 on the lunar South Pole, now known as Shiv Shakti Point. It has propelled India as the leading Nation in Space technology and exploration and we saw a justified jubilation and celebration by every proud Indian across the globe. But space research and explorations have multifarious benefits to mankind which are often overlooked and many raise hue and cry about the expenditures. Let us have a look how this is beneficial to mankind Rotarians should be keenly following and utilise the benefits of such momentous scientific developments as it directly impacts some of the developmental that we do.

While the benefits of space exploration are often associated with scientific discoveries and technological advancements, its potential to alleviate poverty is an aspect that deserves our attention. Satellite technology has revolutionized communication, enabling better connectivity, information access, and e-commerce platforms in remote and underserved areas. Space missions have revealed valuable insights into the resources present in our solar system and beyond. Asteroid mining, for example, holds the potential to extract precious metals, rare minerals, and even water, which can be used for various purposes, including sustaining life and supporting space missions.

The successful extraction and utilization of these resources can open up new avenues for economic development and provide a means to uplift impoverished regions. Moreover, the knowledge gained from space exploration can enhance our understanding of Earth's resources, leading to more sustainable management practices and reducing the vulnerability of communities that rely on them. Satellites equipped with remote sensing capabilities have transformed our ability to monitor and manage natural disasters. They provide crucial data on weather patterns, climate change, and environmental conditions, enabling us to predict and respond to disasters more effectively. By igniting a passion for science and exploration, space missions can create a pipeline of skilled professionals who can contribute to the socioeconomic development of their communities, helping break the cycle of poverty. Sharing knowledge, resources, and best practices can accelerate progress in areas such as agriculture, healthcare, energy, and infrastructure development. Collaborative efforts can address global challenges and ensure that the benefits of space exploration reach even the most marginalized populations. Space exploration has traditionally been a collaborative endeavor, bringing together nations and organizations with diverse expertise and resources. As we continue to explore the cosmos, let us harness the power of space exploration to build a brighter future for all, where poverty is but a distant memory.

EDITORIAL
Subhojit Roy

Peace Is His Legacy

A Canadian District Fulfills its Governor's Dream of Learning Mediation with an Indigenous Nation

By **Etelka Lehoczky**

Dave Hamilton had a vision – a vision of peace. Ever since learning about Rotary's partnership with Mediators Beyond Borders International, he wanted to bring the group to his district to help people learn how to address difficult issues and approach conflict in new ways.



Dave Hamilton, 2020-21 governor of District 5040

Credit: Blake Cowan

When he was named to be the 2020-21 governor of District 5040 in western Canada, Hamilton began planning an ambitious agenda for the district conference. He hoped to gather Rotary members, MBI facilitators, and members of the Nisga'a Nation – an Indigenous

community in the area – to get to know each other and learn together.

"It was Dave's conference. He had wanted it to be something different from the usual," says John Anderson, a member of the Rotary Club of Tsawwassen (Delta). "Dave's focus was 'the family of Rotary,' and he wanted to expand that to the whole community."

Then, two things happened that forced a change of plans. In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic put a halt to in-person gatherings of all kinds. And on March 29, 2021, Hamilton died of prostate cancer.

Before his death, Hamilton had begun building relationships with members of the Nisga'a Nation. Leslie Robinson, the nation's youth engagement coordinator, says she'll never forget his dedication, strength, and courage.



A diagram from the mediation program connects the Four-Way Test to Nisga'a teachings.

Because COVID-19 made

it impossible to hold the conference as Hamilton had envisioned it, the planners decided to study mediation online instead. Then, they hoped, participants would

facilitate discussions about difficult topics in their clubs and communities. The program was designed and led by Lorelei Higgins and Scott Martin, two Rotary Peace Fellowship recipients who are now MBI mediators.

Higgins – an Indigenous relations consultant who is of Métis heritage – and Martin developed a program that blended Nisga'a teachings with Rotary tenets such as The Four-Way Test. They visited the Nisga'a community during Hobiye, the nation's new year celebration, and spent a few days getting to know the people and learning about their culture. Then, they folded Nisga'a ideas into the MBI program – in particular, that of sayt-k'il'im-goot. It means "one heart, one path, one nation."

The facilitators-in-training also practiced what's known as deep listening. For two minutes, one person would tell another what they thought about a topic. Then, the second person would use two minutes to "reflect back" what they'd heard the first person say. That receptive spirit was established at the beginning of each session with a meditative breathing exercise.

For Ardath Paxton Mann, a member of the Rotary Club of West Vancouver Sunrise, the seemingly simple exercise was a major reason why the program was so transformative. "It's probably been one of the most valuable experiences I've had in my 35 years in Rotary," she says.

About 50 Rotary members and Nisga'a community members took part in two online sessions per week for three months. The Rotary members then went back to their clubs to facilitate discussions on topics such as Rotary's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, membership issues, and mental health.

Robinson appreciated meeting new people in the program as well as acquiring new skills.

[Find out more about Rotary's partnership with MBI.](#)

Classrooms wired for success

To close the digital divide in Panama, they started with the teachers

By **Geoffrey Johnson**

It began, in Panama, with a simple backpack drive.

The Rotary Club of Panamá Norte loaded the packs with essential supplies and distributed them to grade schools throughout the country, a classic Rotary service project repeated in communities around the world. In this case, though, it led to something extraordinary – momentous changes in Panama's education system.

The spark that ignited it came from what the Rotary members witnessed while delivering those backpacks about 10 years ago. "One of the things that we saw was the disaster in terms of technology and in terms of the possibility of kids being able to learn with technology," says club member Enedely Escobar-King. "Most of the time what we found was that all of the computers were

destroyed, or they were to be discarded, or that teachers didn't know how to use them."

Over the next few years, club members continued to deliver backpacks but also laid the groundwork for a larger project to address the high-tech disaster they had encountered. Specifically, they turned their attention to two grade schools in Veracruz, a *corregimiento* (or township) about 10 miles southwest of Panama City, where the club is based.



Gwen Keraval

Working with the Rotary Club of Westchester (Los Angeles), the Panamá Norte club put together a global grant that received \$72,000 from [The Rotary Foundation](#), District 5280 (California), the club itself, and other sources. Among other things, it provided each school with 30 laptops for students; a smart, interactive whiteboard to digitize classroom presentations and tasks; and all the auxiliary hardware and furniture required for a high-tech, 21st-century classroom. To ensure the project's success, the grant also provided for extensive training of school staff and community leaders.

The club launched the project in 2018, and the new equipment and opportunities for learning were immediately embraced by teachers and students. At the end of the 2019 school year, the project had, by all appearances, been a success. One of the schools that participated was even chosen to take part in a nationwide academic competition, a first for the school and, despite failing to win, a laudable achievement.



Enedely Escobar-King addresses students in the digital classroom of a participating elementary school.

Escobar-King — she goes by "Nelly" — joined the Rotary Club of Panamá Norte in 2015 after a long career with UNICEF. Some projects she worked on with UNICEF were related to education, so when she retired and returned to Panama, she knew she wanted to remain involved in that area.

Escobar-King was motivated, in part, by the dire state of primary education in Panama. She points to the results of

the exams known as the Programme for International Student Assessment that are conducted by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. In the most recent results, Panama ranked 75th in science and 76th in math among 78 countries and geographic areas and 71st (out of 77) in reading.

With that in mind, as well as the unexpected development of the teacher shakeup in Veracruz, the Rotary Club of Panamá Norte posed an important question: "How can we get teachers already trained so that no matter where they are sent, they already have the technological tools they could use?"

The answer turned out to be quite simple: Want to get teachers trained? Go to the teachers' training school — in this case, the Normal School in Santiago, about 150 miles southwest of Panama City.

Working with the Rotary Club of Kansas City-Plaza in Missouri, as well as other clubs in Panama, the Panamá Norte club applied for and received a global grant of more than \$230,000 for what they called the Paul Harris Interactive Digital Classrooms. Six of the classrooms would be installed at the Normal School, and another classroom at each of the two nearby grade schools where the apprentice teachers would do their in-class training.

This time, the grant would again provide the high-tech equipment needed for the classrooms. But the emphasis was elsewhere.

Students in the Rotary-sponsored digital classrooms showed a higher level of engagement.

From the beginning, the project was a model of collaboration among Rotary members, the Normal School, Panama's ministry of education (Meduca), the Universidad Tecnológica de Panamá, and the Normal School's parent-teacher association. Lessons learned from the Veracruz experiment were invaluable as the project in Santiago took shape.

For help in designing the curriculum, the Panamá Norte club turned to the Universidad Tecnológica de Panamá, which put them in touch with Dillian Staine, a professor at the Universidad Latina de Panamá.

Not only will the Santiago project enhance the abilities of those teachers at the Normal School but it will have what its creators call a "multiplier effect." According to the calculations laid out in the global grant, each teacher, once graduated and posted in a school, will have 30 students in a classroom. Over just one year, that means that as many as 2,500 students would be beneficiaries of the project.

What's more, those newly posted teachers will have the opportunity to train other teachers at their new schools in the innovative digital teaching techniques they learned at the Normal School. At press time, Panamá Norte, working with Meduca, the Rotary Club of Las Vegas WON, and other clubs in Panama, was preparing to submit an application for another global grant. If approved, it would provide funds three times greater than those awarded to the Santiago project and allow the digital interactive classrooms to expand across Panama.

Panama's future may well depend on that.

Rotary Calcutta Metro City in Action



Rotary Club of Calcutta Metro City in association with Omkar Nath Mission and supported by Agilus Diagnostics (formerly SRL Ltd) conducted a day long blood test and health camp at Dunlop on 21st August'23. Mostly senior citizens and people living in the neighbourhood totalling 155 persons checked themselves for blood sugar, creatinin, TSH, H B L a c ,

Haemoglobin, Bone Density Examination, Blood pressure and more.

President Amrita Basu, PP Rtns Subhojit Roy, Arindam Ghosh, Sunando Sen along with Hony Rotarian Tarun Bhattacharya.

Our next camp is scheduled on 1st October near Bandel. Details to be shared well in time

Thalassaemia Awareness Camp at Sonarpur



Rotary Club of Calcutta Metro City conducted a thalassaemia awareness camp at Sonarpur in association with Indian Institute for Mother & Child on 30th August 2023. The total number of beneficiaries was 66.

DGN Dr Ramendu Homchowdhury conducted the camp and he followed it up with an interactive session. His presentation also included tips and advises on good and healthy living.

The club has also published a pamphlet on how thalassaemia occurs through a diagram and text. It has been published in both English and Bangla.

President Amrita Basu along with PP Rtns Jharna Mitra and Sunando Sen attended the camp.

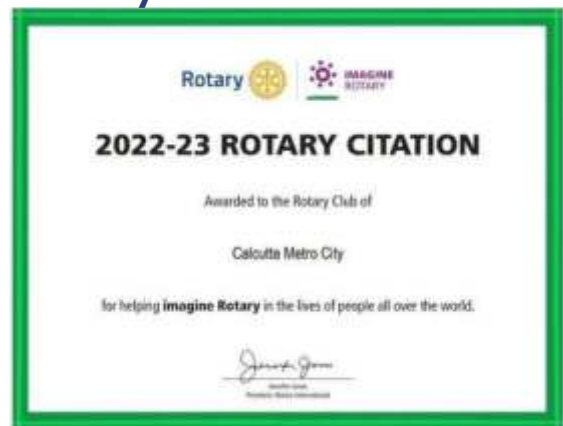
Coming Up



Rotary Club of Calcutta Metro City and District Committee for Intellectually Differently Aabled, RID 3291 shall felicitate SPECIAL EDUCATORS on the occasion of the Teacher's Day on 5th

September 2023, 6pm. The program is being organized in association with the BIG LEAP INCLUSIVE SCHOOL.

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