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Rotary has survived wars, cyclones, epidemics thanks to its most important resource, membership. It is the most talked about subject in Rotary, there might be a healthy debate whether service or contribution/donation is second most discussed/debated topic in Rotary or not. We have had many theories and initiatives towards a healthy increase in membership over the past century and it has always remained an unravelled mystery why the figures have not grown after a certain peak. But the irony is the fact that we all know the reasons and are actually clueless in trying to eradicate the problem. Over the decades I have noticed a few quick fix approach being adopted by RI Presidents and their teams, most have failed miserably, one of the disasters to me was when RI decided to induct Rotaractors as Rotarians, it has resulted in a cosmetic increase to 1.4 million about which very few Rotarians are convinced but has it resulted in any progress for the movement? What has been our experience in RID 3291? Oops, it no longer exists. Another initiative, EOBO, seemed interesting but unrealistic and it has turned out to be so. So overall most of the RI Presidents have failed to register a healthy growth and this has so many reasons. The impact of every leader must be seen 2-3 years after he/she gives up office for a proper evaluation.

In a District like ours, primarily economics and politics (within the clubs) is a major reason for lack of significant growth and the inability of the leadership to innovate with a vision for the next 5-10 years is a secondary reason. Maybe the leaders need to take a more collaborative approach with the club leaders towards creating the Plan of Action or the Vision statement that he or she would like to adopt.

The other day at a District meet I was listening to our past RI leader and every time he spoke about his own club's achievements I wondered about the fact that his audience mostly consisted of clubs with membership of 20 odd or less numbers, who had difficulties to make two ends of club receipts and expenses meet after fulfilling the financial obligations with ever increasing Dollar-Rupees exchange rate. I feel leaders need to be realistic, pragmatic and practical and take measures to minimise attrition which in turn can significantly increase membership figures as the organic process of induction is bound to happen.

We also need to realise that each club will have its own unique story of success, growth and vision it cannot be a copy paste of another. The difference of big and small or rich and poor is eternal and there is no shame in being small or poor in terms of numbers after all the small too have joined the movement with the same aspiration as the big ones. It is only about utilising the resources to the maximum and best. It is the eco system of a club which decides its fate and if there is a healthy relationship among members a club is bound to flourish. An important area of concern is peer pressure among Club Presidents to showcase success which mostly originate through WA group messages and constant social media feeds which leads to aspiration conflicts between the leaders and the club members (mostly the seniors). A fine balance is extremely important which can only lead to a healthy club.

So let us all hope that we are successful in retaining every member in our clubs on 30th June 2024 and Create Hope in the World!

EDITORIAL
Subhojit Roy

RI President's Message August 2023



At the 2023 Rotary International Convention in Melbourne, I asked all Rotary members to become champions in our effort to illuminate mental health needs near and far. This includes helping one another feel more supported, advocating for mental health services, and building bridges with experts in the field to expand access to treatment.

It's an important task and a big ask. But it's also something that should feel familiar to every Rotary member – because everything we do is in the spirit of caring, giving, friendship, and compassion, and has been from the beginning of our organization.

We've grown into an amazing global network of 1.4 million interconnected community leaders – leaders who share a deep commitment to doing good in the world. But what makes Rotary powerful isn't just what we do for the communities we serve. We also support and empower each other, by creating a safe space for our members to bring their whole, authentic selves. We show each other comfort and care.

These connections are deeply meaningful. The U.S. surgeon general recently declared loneliness a public health epidemic. Dr. Vivek Murthy said, "We must prioritize building social connection the same way we have prioritized other critical public health issues such as tobacco, obesity, and substance use disorders." I am proud of what Rotary has done across generations to build those kinds of social connections – and this magazine focused on loneliness and what Rotary can do about it in its January 2023 issue.

Our worldwide community and our foundational value prioritizing Service Above Self makes Rotary a powerful global advocate for mental health. A recently published study by Ohio State University found performing acts of kindness was the only one of three mental health interventions tested that helped people feel more connected to others. Study co-author David Cregg said, "Performing acts of kindness seems to be one of the best ways to promote those connections."

This research suggests what we've known all along – that doing good helps transform not just the communities we serve, but it also transforms us. As we put a greater focus on mental health, let's not think of this effort as something new to Rotary, but rather as something we can do better and as a result have a greater impact on ourselves and the people we serve.

We are not starting this effort from scratch. The Rotary Action Group on Mental Health Initiatives has been focused on these kinds of issues for several years – and we will be looking to members of that group for leadership as we continue to build awareness.

Mental health care fits comfortably within several of our areas of focus. As of May, there are 41 global grant-supported projects with a mental health focus. Many of them have tremendous promise, and we will be highlighting them in the months ahead.

So let's work together to erase the stigma associated with emotional well-being, raise awareness of mental health needs, and improve access to preventive and interventional mental health services.

Together, we will *Create Hope in the World*.

R. Gordon R. McNally
President 2023-24

Mário César Martins de Camargo of Brazil selected to be 2025-26 Rotary International President



Mário César Martins de Camargo, a member of the Rotary Club of Santo André, São Paulo, Brazil, is the selection of Nominating Committee for President to become Rotary International's president for 2025-26.

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Nominating Committee for President to become Rotary International's president for 2025-26. He will officially become the nominee on 15 September if no other candidates challenge him.

De Camargo plans to boost Rotary's public image by working from the top down.

"Rotary today has strong competition for members and funds," he says. "We need to rejuvenate the brand, especially in some zones. We should utilize post-pandemic meeting tools ... to allow the president to address Rotarians all over the globe. We also need to develop more long-term partnerships with political, community, and business leaders. Let's emphasize our greatest asset: 1.4 million volunteers."

He also hopes to improve Rotary's process for appointments and governance.

"Rotary should adopt a more transparent system to appoint volunteers for positions, with clear criteria and data-based evaluation of results," he says.

De Camargo was president of Gráfica Bandeirantes and has been a consultant to the print industry in Brazil. He has also served as president and chair of several printing and graphics trade associations, including the Brazilian Association of Graphic Technology and ABIGRAF, the Brazilian Printing Industry Association.

He has served on the board of Casa da Esperança (House of Hope), a hospital sponsored by his Rotary club that serves 150,000 children with disabilities every year.

De Camargo studied in the U.S. and Germany and holds degrees from EAESP-Fundação Getúlio Vargas in business administration and Faculdade de Direito de São Bernardo do Campo in law. He was a Youth Exchange participant to Minnesota, USA, in 1974-75, which inspired a lifelong commitment to the program.

A Rotarian since 1980, de Camargo served as his club's Youth Exchange Officer in 1981, at age 24. He has served Rotary as director, trustee, RI learning facilitator, committee member and chair, and task force member.

De Camargo and his wife, Denise, are Major Donors and Benefactors of The Rotary Foundation.

Membership Makeover: Invigorate Your Club

Create the club you crave

Illustrations by Cristina Spanò

Rotary Club of Harrisonburg-Rocktown, Virginia



Five years ago, Meghan Schenker-Fulcher, then a teacher in Harrisonburg, Virginia, decided it was time to join Rotary. "As a non-Rotarian," she says, "it started with a passion to connect more people in our community to Rotary's mission: Service Above Self."

Schenker-Fulcher visited several clubs but couldn't find one that fit her schedule. "They weren't necessarily a good fit for educators ... and others who had 9-to-5 jobs but still wanted to give back."

In retrospect, the solution was obvious: Can't find a Rotary club that works for you? Create one that does. Joined by two other women from the community, Schenker-Fulcher pooled their brainpower, as she puts it, "to create what we thought would be an ideal Rotary experience for both ourselves and other women in our community."

The three spent several months thinking through the kind of club they wanted. "We spent the summer of 2019 holding informational sessions, which allowed people to hear our story, understand the why, and get inspired to join," Schenker-Fulcher explains. "This also helped us to see if this [club] would really be a good fit for the community."

That careful planning paid off. Chartered in September 2019, the Harrisonburg-Rocktown satellite club, an offshoot of the Rotary Club of Harrisonburg, today has 36 members – and 26 of them are women. To ensure its relevancy, the club conducts annual strategic planning sessions, where it establishes major objectives for the year. "It helps us to keep things fresh and moving forward," says Schenker-Fulcher, the chair of the club's seven-person membership committee. "That helps us not only to retain our members, but to grow our club."

Plan projects that pack punch

Rotary Club of Singapore



Members of the Rotary Club of Singapore attach a lot of importance to projects, says James Lee, immediate past president. "They want to see the impact of their contributions and efforts on the people and communities they serve," he says. "We keep them updated about the progress and challenges of our local and overseas projects, and we invite them to sign up and contribute to the ones they are interested in. This gives them a sense of involvement and belonging."

The signature project of the club, which has sponsored 28 global grants since 2013, is Help the Children, serving communities in the East Java province of Indonesia. "What started as a small ad-hoc project supporting 20 underprivileged school children morphed into multipronged, multicycle global grant projects spanning the last 15 years," Lee

says. "It's helping communities and up to 60 schools to uplift basic literacy and basic education among students and teachers."

In 2010, a small delegation from the Singapore club visited the project in Indonesia for the first time. That trip led to an annual visit by up to 80 club members and their families. "Our participants spend three days with the pupils, teachers, and parents who have benefited from our project," Lee says. "They come back feeling inspired and motivated by the positive changes they have witnessed."

Lee also points to the club's diverse membership – its 192 members represent 22 countries – as another reason that it has attracted and retained so many members over the years. "Being able to be involved in communities far from Singapore but close to our hearts," he says, "means that we are constantly engaging our members and bringing them closer to the communities that they have left behind or are engaged in for economic, business, and personal reasons."

Connect to amplify impact

Rotary Club of Roswell After Hours, Georgia



The Roswell After Hours satellite club began last year with 14 members. A year later, membership has increased to 22, and the club's chair, Brooke Foxman, is optimistic that it will continue to grow.

That's thanks in part to

the opportunity the club provides for members to connect with one another, with the community, and with their sponsor club, the Rotary Club of Roswell, known affectionately among the group as Big Rotary.

"Our founding members are a group of 20-somethings who were craving in-person camaraderie when the world was opening up again after the pandemic," she says. "We target people who want to do good for the community while making connections and building relationships. We get to be a group of young people with a love and heart for service. That's what Rotary was built on."

Because most club members are young professionals, their work schedules made it difficult to attend the Roswell club's weekly lunch meetings. To accommodate members' schedules, meetings are held after regular work hours – hence the club's name – at a local brewery. "We delegate 30 minutes for a premeeting hangout, so we can get a beer and catch up on personal things," says Foxman, who notes that the club is structured around networking, service, and fun.

Foxman says that the club benefits from sustaining its connections with Big Rotary. Roswell members occasionally speak at the After Hours club. "Their advice to us as young professionals is something we're super grateful to have," she says.

And members of both clubs volunteer for service projects and activities by either group, increasing the impact, for instance, of a fundraiser for Star House, a local nonprofit that helps at-risk children. "There was music and dancing, and we were serving our community," says Foxman. "We had so much fun, and we actually met several new potential members."

Don't forget the fun

Rotary Club of Halifax Harbour, Nova Scotia



Roswell After Hours isn't the only club that likes to have fun – though fun, as Louisa Horne explains, can wear different guises.

A past district governor and a member of what she describes as the “irresistible” Rotary Club of Halifax Harbour, Horne acknowledges that her club organizes social activities for members. But fun? “Fun is a byproduct of being engaged in things you're passionate about,” she says.

Formed in 2021 from the merger of the decades-old Halifax and Halifax Harbourside Rotary clubs, Halifax Harbour is organized into three teams. The We Connect People team focuses on member engagement, including fun activities that members can pursue together (think ghost tours, ax throwing, and seasonal celebrations). The We Transform Communities team plans and organizes local and international service projects, and the We Fund Sustainable Projects team does exactly what you would expect: coordinates fundraisers, such as an annual rib festival that's raised more than \$500,000 since 2015.

The club, Horne explains, has surveyed current and past members “to make sure we're not missing something in terms of their talents and interests. We're intentional about looking in the mirror and being honest about how we're doing. We are OK with and celebrate that different people want to do different things.”

As a result, the club has attracted a diverse membership in terms of age, nationality, and sexual orientation. “When new people come to a meeting, they see themselves reflected in the room,” Horne says. “Diversity feeds more diversity. Transformational and cultural change within a large organization is not a quick fix. As long as we have strong leadership and continue to leverage the passions of the people we have and the people we want to attract, and as long as we're agile risk-takers and maintain our level of diversity, we will continue to be irresistible.” And fun.

This story originally appeared in the August 2023 issue of *Rotary* magazine.

Club Health Check

The doctor will see your club now

Just as routine doctor visits help people identify health risks before they become serious, Rotary's club health check can diagnose problem areas and prescribe remedies. Club leaders will find a checklist to assess their club's well-being in the areas of club experience, service and social events, members, image, and business and operations, along with an array of resources to treat any problem areas. Regularly consulting those resources can help maintain your club's health and preserve its value for club members and the community. A few examples follow, but review the entire document to ensure you're taking full advantage of these valuable tools.

CLUB EXPERIENCE

The problem: Members don't feel they are participating in the Rotary experience beyond the club.

The prescription: Connect members with various Rotary programs. For instance, encourage them to sponsor an Interact club, organize a Rotary Youth Leadership Awards event, or

create a scholarship. And remind members they might want to join a Rotary Fellowship or a Rotary Action Group.

SERVICE AND SOCIAL

The problem: Members feel there are not enough regular occasions for socializing and networking.

The prescription: Put one or two members in charge of organizing social events throughout the year.

The problem: Members worry about the effectiveness of the club's projects.

The solution: Connect with members of The Rotary Foundation Cadre of Technical Advisers to get guidance on service projects.

MEMBERS

The problem: Club membership is stagnant or declining.

The prescription: Create a membership development plan, while teaching members your club's process for proposing new members and explaining that they can also refer qualified prospects to other clubs. Online resources also provide tools to help diversify club membership and connect with prospective members.

IMAGE

The problem: The club has an anemic online presence.

The prescription: Find a member with the skills and the time to create and manage your club's website and social media pages.

BUSINESS AND OPERATIONS

The problem: The club has difficulty planning and setting goals.

The solution: Have the club board meet at least quarterly to review the club's strategic plan, measure its progress toward established goals, and adjust bylaws and other documents as needed.

Enhance your Rotary experience through meaningful engagement activities

Catch up on the Cultivating Effective Projects webinar series

Thank you to all who took part in the exciting five-part webinar series designed to support effective, sustainable projects in local communities and around the world. These webinars offered tools and strategies to help everyone plan, find resources for, implement, and evaluate projects, including youth service projects.

If you missed any of the webinars, you can review the recordings on demand:

Promoting Projects: Tell Your Story

Planning a Project: Design for Results

Finding Project Partners and Resources: Build an Effective Team

Measuring Results: Demonstrate Your Impact

Expanding Reach: Partner With Youth in Service

Remember that district resource networks can help your club connect to peers to plan well-designed projects. Contact your districts international service chair to connect with nearby project planning experts, such as members of Rotary Action Groups.

Plan ahead for Celebrate Community Week

During the week of 11-17 September, Rotary and Rotaract clubs worldwide are collaborating with local Kiwanis, Lions, and Optimist clubs on service projects that address health and wellness, food insecurity and hunger, education and literacy, and the environment. When we work together, there's no limit to the positive impact we can create in our communities. So start planning today!

Contact the Service and Engagement team for help developing projects or connecting with the other organizations' clubs – or with questions related to Celebrate Community Week. Remember to:

Mark yourself as “going” on the Celebrate Community 2023 Facebook event.

Share pictures on social media during the week using the hashtag # Celebrate Community. Help Rotary *Create Hope in the World* with these three initiatives Rotary International President R. Gordon R. McNally encourages us to come together in 2023-24 to offer our time, talents, and resources to *Create Hope in the World* through three key initiatives:

Prioritizing mental health

Building peace through virtual exchanges

Empowering women and girls Visit the Rotary Service in Action blog to learn more and get started or expand your participation in these initiatives.

Upcoming events showcasing Rotary's partners

Rotary-Peace Corps Week

The third annual Rotary-Peace Corps Week, 18-22 September, highlights the service partnership between Rotary International and the U.S. Peace Corps. Partnering for Peace, a group of Rotary members and returned Peace Corps volunteers, invites Rotary members, Rotary Peace Fellows, and the wider Rotary community to learn about this partnership and how it connects people for meaningful service globally.

Identity, Belonging, and Migration – MBBi's 2023 Peace Congress

Rotary's service partner Mediators Beyond Borders International invites you to its 10th International Peace Congress, 13-17 November in Nairobi, Kenya. The event is designed to address some of the most significant impacts of climate change, social unrest, and political shifts on individuals, families, communities, and countries around the globe. Learn more and register online.

Programs of Scale grant recipient announced

United to End Cervical Cancer in Egypt is the recipient of Rotary's third annual Programs of Scale award. The Egyptian initiative aims to reduce the number of cases of cervical cancer in the country while raising awareness and improving women's access to preventive care. The four-year program in and around Cairo will vaccinate more than 30,000 girls ages 9-15 against HPV, provide cancer screenings for 10,000 women, and launch a public awareness campaign to reach 4 million people.



Rotary Club Of Calcutta Metro City and Omkarnath Mission observed the 77th Independence in a day long program with economically challenged students of Ved Vidyapeeth run by the mission.

The flag was hoisted by His Holiness Maharaj of the mission along with legendary santoor player and Hony member Pandit Tarun Bhattacharya, PP Rtn Subhojit Roy, PP Rtn Arindam Ghosh and the Mission Secretary Priyanath Chatterjee. The boys and the assembly sang the National Anthem and followed by chanting of Vedic hymns.

A tree plantation campaign was launched by the mission and Rotary Club Of Calcutta Metro City by planting of a Tulsi sapling and a drive to plant 2 lakh tulsi saplings across Bengal was initiated on the occasion by the two organizations.

A cheque of Rs 5,000 was handed over by PP Rtn Sunando Sen for the food expenses of the underprivileged ashramites boys.

The mission and our club also announced a blood test camp on Sunday 20th August'23 and Rotary Club Of Calcutta Metro City shall also be part of the PARAMPARA series for the young students showcasing our ancient culture and its facets and strengths dedicated towards Nation building.



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