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## NEXT MEETING

Wednesday  
27<sup>th</sup> November 2024  
at 7.00 PM  
at Rotary Cochin  
Balbhavan



BULLETIN OF THE ROTARY CLUB OF COCHIN

# THE COCHIN ROTARIAN

Volume 89, Issue 20, 20<sup>th</sup> November 2024

## WHAT IT WAS TO BE A ROTARIAN: A JOURNEY THROUGH TIME

In an engaging address on November 13<sup>th</sup>, Rtn. PP V.N. Venugopal took us on a reflective journey through the past and present of Rotary, tracing its roots, evolution, and impact. With wit and a touch of nostalgia, he brought to life the ethos of Rotary and its transformation over the decades.

### A Legacy Rooted in Friendship

Rotary was founded in 1905 by Paul Harris and his friends in Room 711 of the Unity Building, Evanston, Illinois. What began as a small gathering fuelled by Harris's hunger for friendship has grown into a global service organization spanning over 150 countries. Rotary's mission of comfort, happiness, and life improvement has touched countless lives. Feared and banned by dictators like Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, and Ayatollah Khomeini, Rotary has stood resilient as a beacon of goodwill and fellowship.

### Rotary in India and Cochin

Rotary arrived in India in 1921 with the establishment of the Rotary Club of Calcutta and later Madras. The Rotary Club of Cochin, chartered in 1937, began as a gathering of senior professionals and civil servants, meeting at the iconic Malabar Hotel. In its early days, membership was seen as a status symbol—a "piece of social furniture."

The club's first community project in 1941—a fundraiser for cyclone re-



lief—collected ₹636, a significant sum at the time. Over the years, Rotary's focus shifted from socializing to actively engaging with communities, evolving into a vibrant force for meaningful change.

### A Changing Landscape

Reflecting on Rotary's evolution, Rtn. Venugopal emphasized the shift from formality to action. Today, Rotary embraces community engagement, with members rolling up their sleeves to address real-world needs. He lauded initiatives led by dynamic Rotarians, showcasing how the club now balances youthful energy with the wisdom of experience.

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Despite its growth, Rtn. Venugopal acknowledged challenges such as the occasional prioritization of financial metrics over community impact and the need for merit-based leadership selection. Yet, he expressed confidence in the leadership's ability to address these concerns, ensuring Rotary remains true to its mission.

### **Personal Reflections and Rotary's Essence**

Rtn. Venugopal's personal Rotary journey began in 1979, when strict attendance and classification rules encouraged camaraderie. He fondly recalled wearing the Rotary pin daily and receiving thoughtful reminders to maintain engagement. The sense of belonging and lifelong

friendships cultivated through Rotary, he said, remain unmatched.

He humorously noted how fellow Rtn. PP Dr. Sujit Vasudevan's metronomic birthday wishes have been a source of joy, often surpassing family traditions in their precision. These gestures, he observed, exemplify the unique camaraderie that Rotary fosters.

### **The Path Ahead**

As Rotary continues to evolve, Rtn. Venugopal urged members to embrace its principles wholeheartedly. He reminded young professionals that success can coexist with compassion, urging them to push boundaries and explore new avenues for service.

Quoting Shakespeare and Robert Browning, he encouraged optimism and resilience, concluding with

an inspiring metaphor: "Two men looked out of the window. One saw the mud, the other saw the sunshine on the horizon. Let us stand together, shoulder to shoulder, look out of the window, and enjoy the sunshine that is Rotary."

### **Final Words**

Through humour, history, and heartfelt reflection, Rtn. PP V.N. Venugopal reminded us of the enduring power of Rotary to create meaningful connections and drive positive change. As we move forward, let us draw inspiration from his words and commit ourselves to building a brighter future through Rotary.

*"Grow old with me; the best is yet to be."*

**By Rtn. PP V.N. Venugopal**

## **SPREADING SMILES: A HEARTWARMING VISIT TO NITHYASAHAYASADAN GERIATRICS & PALLIATIVE CARE, MARADU**

On 12<sup>th</sup> November, our Rotary team embarked on a meaningful journey to Nithyasahasadan Geriatrics & Palliative care, Maradu, a haven for elderly residents, to deliver essential items as part of our ongoing community service initiatives. This project, aimed at improving the quality of life for the residents, was made possible through the collective efforts and generous contributions of our members.

The items donated, including wheelchairs, hydraulic coats, and cardiac tables, were valued at approximately ₹1,00,000. Rtn. Gayatri Krishnan was gracious enough to sponsor some more items on the list and we thank her for her contribution.

We arrived at the center at 10:30 AM, where we were warmly wel-



comed by Sr. Dr. Annie Sheela, director of PS Hospital and WINGS Senior Living. A tour of the facility left us truly inspired. The center was immaculately clean, well-organized, and radiated warmth and care. The elderly residents seemed cheerful, interacting joyfully with each other, reflecting the nurturing

environment created by the team of young and dedicated nurses and nuns.

Spending time with the residents and the team was a deeply enriching experience. It was heartening to see how the care provided goes beyond basic needs, fostering a sense of belonging and community. The smiles





but about connecting with those we serve and making a tangible difference in their lives. This project exemplified the spirit of “Service Above Self,” leaving us all with a renewed sense of purpose and commitment.

The Rotary Club of Cochin also donated a treadmill to the Assisi Special School, Cherthala

**By Rtn. Gautam Sreedharan**

and gratitude we received made this project immensely fulfilling.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to Rtn. Varghese Nettikadan for his steadfast dedication and support in bringing this project to fruition. His efforts have been instrumental in ensuring the success of this initiative.

As Rotarians, we are reminded that service is not just about giving



## ROTARY MEMBERS ASSIST WITH HURRICANE HELENE AND MILTON RELIEF EFFORTS

Kelsey Mitchell grimly sums up the effects of two subsequent hurricanes on the state of Florida, USA.

“When this storm came through, it put an even bigger mess on top of the mess we already had,” says Mitchell, the governor of Rotary District 6960 in Florida. “We had to stop working in all the flooded areas and go back to preparing for the storm.”

Mitchell’s district was one of several where members were working to help those impacted by Hurricane Helene, which hit the southeastern United States at the end of September. Now, in the wake of Hurricane Milton, members are once again organizing relief efforts.

“We work with our local partner

organizations, which we already support, to identify the communities that have the most need and least ability to provide for themselves,” Mitchell says. “We already had a disaster committee on the state level. The district governors had been meeting every month to prepare a response, and since the hurricanes hit, we have met almost every day.”

Hurricane Milton made landfall on 9 October in Florida as a powerful Category 3 storm. Mere weeks before, Hurricane Helene battered areas in and around the Caribbean, the Gulf of Mexico, and parts of the United States’ Eastern Seaboard. Storm surges and heavy rains produced extreme flooding throughout the region. More than 250 people have died in the U.S. states of Flor-

ida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia. Other countries and areas that experienced severe flooding include the Cayman Islands, Cuba, Honduras, and Mexico.

Sandra Lilo, a member of the Rotary Club of Seminole Lake, Florida, USA, says she’s lucky that her house wasn’t destroyed.

“Of the 80 houses on my street, probably 78 took water. I and my next-door neighbour did not,” she says. “Some of my neighbours took 4 feet of water. There are 2 or 3 feet of muck in most people’s houses.”

Even if they and their fellow club members weren’t directly affected, Rotary members all over the south-



eastern U.S. immediately offered funds, supplies, and their own labour. Members of the Rotary Club of Alpharetta, Georgia were just spared the hurricanes' devastating effects, and quickly began collecting supplies and raising money for people in neighbouring states.

"One of our members owns a cabinet-making business, so he had a trailer. We reached out to a few clubs in the area and compiled a list of needs, and we completely stuffed the truck with supplies," says Jeff Davis, the club's president. "The trailer is 10 to 12 feet long and 6 or 7 feet tall, and it was literally stuffed."

A club member drove the truck to a supply drop-off site in North Carolina. The club is also raising money to buy generators. In Florida, members are helping to remove sodden drywall and flooring from flood-damaged houses.

"You have to get the wet stuff out as fast as you can to prevent mold," says Ed Hallock, another member of the Seminole Lake club. "Otherwise, it destroys the whole living space."

The Rotary Club of Dunedin North, Florida, USA, rented a 26-foot moving truck to collect donations. It was filled with shovels and rakes, cases of water, garbage bags, and utility knives to cut up and remove wet carpet. The club has set up four distribution centers where people can get supplies.

"This is why you are a Rotarian," says Mark Middleton, a member of the Dunedin North club and a district governor-nominee. Dunedin North has five members whose homes were destroyed.

"We have multiple clubs going to homes, mucking out and gutting these houses. Drywall has to be cut out as high as the water line, and all flooring has to be cut out," Middleton says. "What a blessing it is that we can help and be there for them. You become close to your Rotary family. When we can support and help each other, it becomes impactful."



**DISASTER RELIEF**

TOGETHER, WE  
**TRANSFORM**

Rotary

Rotary Zones 33/34 #RotaryShares #RotaryZones3334 #ElevateRotary

The Rotary Foundation has awarded three \$25,000 Disaster Response Grants to provide food, medication and supplies to areas affected by the hurricanes. Many Rotary clubs are collecting and distributing supplies, raising funds, and assisting those affected. Here is information about some of the efforts:

Source : <https://www.rotary.org/en/rotary-members-assist-hurricane-helene-milton-relief-efforts>

By Arnold R. Grahl and Etelka Lehoczky



Rtn. George Dominic	21 Nov
Rtn. Jogesh Shelat	22 Nov
Rtn. Thomas Tharakan	25 Nov



Rtn. K.J. Jose / Rtne. Beena	24 Nov
Rtn. Vijay Narayan Govind / Rtne. Gayatri	25 Nov