

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



**Dear Rotarians, Anns, and Annettes,**

It is with great pride and joy that I connect with you through this newsletter, reflecting on the incredible progress our club has made across various avenues of service. Our shared commitment to "Service Above Self" continues to drive us forward, and I am excited to update you on our recent achievements and ongoing projects.

**Health Initiatives:** Our dedication to health and well-being has led to some significant contributions. We recently donated ICU monitors to St. Thomas Hospital, enhancing their capacity to provide critical care. Additionally, we have several more health-related projects currently under implementation, furthering our mission to support and uplift those in need.

**Environment:** In our ongoing efforts to protect and preserve the environment, we recently dedicated an RO plant in a village near Madurantakam. This initiative is a vital step towards providing clean and safe drinking water to the community, demonstrating our commitment to environmental sustainability and the well-being of rural populations.

**Community Development:** Our community development projects remain robust, with continued focus on education and vocational training. The installation of STEM labs in schools and the Vidhya Sakthi program are just a few examples of how we are contributing to the future of our communities by empowering individuals with knowledge and skills.

**Youth Service:** Youth service remains a cornerstone of our efforts, with programs designed to foster leadership, character, and personal growth among young people. By nurturing the potential of our youth, we are investing in the future leaders of our society.

**Club Service Activities:** Our club service activities have been both enriching and engaging. From power speakers to weekly meetings featuring experts from various fields, we continue to expand our horizons. Membership development has also been a key focus, and I am pleased to welcome new members who bring fresh perspectives and energy to our Rotary family.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to all our directors, chairpersons, Rotarians, Anns, and Annettes for their unwavering dedication and support. Your collective efforts have kept our club in high esteem and made a significant impact on the communities we serve. As we look ahead, let us maintain this momentum by working together to create meaningful change and leave a lasting legacy. Together, we will continue to create magic in our community in the months to come.

Thank you for your continued commitment and service

Yours' in Rotary,

**Rtn. Muthu. P**

## NOTE BY EDITOR / ASSISTANT SECRETARY

Dear Rotarians,

I am thrilled to present this edition of our bi-monthly newsletter. The energy and dedication of our members continues to shine through in every project, meeting, and initiative we undertake. From community service projects to inspiring guest speakers, these past months have been nothing short of extraordinary.

In this issue, you'll find a recap of events over the last two months, updates on ongoing projects, and a look ahead at what's in store. Our calendar ahead is brimming with opportunities for fellowship tours, service, and growth, reflecting our shared commitment to making a difference both locally and globally.

Thank you for your continued passion and support. Do reach out to us and let us know your thoughts and contributions to the upcoming edition.

Yours in Rotary Service,

**Anuradha Prashant**

Assistant Secretary and Editor - The Eastern Bridge



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**Editorial  
Team**

P.E. Ramakrishnan



Sudarsan Ranganathan



Ramya Subramaniam

## THE SOUND OF MUSIC - MEGA IDHAYAGANAM AND ANNAPATHIRAM

*Rtn. N. Rammoorthy*

June 15th, 2024. The roads to Vani Mahal were choc-a-bloc with evening traffic. But that would not stand in the way of over 450 residents from 15 homes across the city and more than 100 RCMEians and their families from being a part of the annual gala event - Mega Idhyaganam and Anna Pathiram. A soul stirring event from the moment the curtains went up. Foot tapping songs from our Rotarians, Anns and Annettes was on par with professional singers supported by a wonderful live orchestra. Kudos to Rtn. Ramamoorthy and Rtn. Kannan for the many rehearsals and attention to details that made the event a memorable musical evening.

Rtn. Sudhir managed the Annapathiram side of things silently as he always does. His arrangements for dinner with the help of Rtn. Sai and the student volunteers of our community College ensured a filled mind, body and soul. The distribution of blankets to all the attendees was immaculate. The major donors for Mega Idhayaganam 2024 were, Rtn. Tarachand Dugar, Rtn. Balaraman and Rtn. Ravichandran. A special mention of gratitude to Rtn. Renuka Mohan Rao who encouraged 35 volunteers from the Nursing Course at Bheemanapet to volunteer at the event. Hot coffee for the guests - thanks to Rtn. Leo Srinivasan and his son, Rtn. Leo Venu. Biscuits were graciously arranged by Rtn. Radhika Satyanarayana. Finally, a special round of applause to the Anns and Annettes who volunteered in large numbers.

An evening that brought together every RCMEian and their family closer to the community. Truly music that played from the hearts.





## MISSION TO EN-VISION: PROJECT ARCORE

*Rtn. Divya Siddharth, Director - Youth*

RCME's tryst with Aravind Eye started precisely 6 years ago in June 2018 when we, at RCME, came to this new hospital in search of some worthy projects in the avenue of health. Our journey with Aravind since then has been nothing but delightful with 4 initiatives reaching thousands of beneficiaries. The idea of training eye care professionals, not just their own, but also those graduating from other institutions reflects their totally selfless approach. Aravind's mission of spreading its wide knowledge and experience for the common good and community at large is also in consonance with Rotary's motto 'Service Above Self'.



This particular project is a **unique combination of the avenues of health and vocational development**. The addition of Alcon, Zeiss, Aurolab and Essilor as industry partners is bound to have a great impact on eyecare professionals in this part of the world.

**Our international partner club, RC Irvine, represented by PP Rtn Harish Murthy**, has been our steadfast ally in several Global Grants projects over the years. Several partnering clubs were involved such as RC Madras Coromandel (contribution by DG Rtn Ravi Raman), RC Madras Central (contribution by DGN Rtn Vinod Saraogi), Rotary Club Mission Viejo, USA, Rotary Club Monarch Beach Sunrise, USA, Rotary Club of Sleaford, UK. The other major contributors to this project include Access Healthcare Services Pvt Ltd, Mr Venkatesh Ramarathinam R. B. Agarwalla & Co, Red Heart Foundation (Dr Sai Satish – a great supporter of our club's Healing Tiny Hearts project), Dr. T N Krishnaswami and Smt. Janaki Ammal Charitable Trust (Trustees Mr Ashwin Ramanakumar, and our own Rtn Archana Ramanakumar), Exeter Premedia Services Pvt Ltd. and Smart Value Equisearch Pvt Ltd.

It takes many many hands to bring a vision to reality - RCME with the unconditional support of many within RCME have seen this go live at Arvind Eye Care through Project ARCORE.





# THE BEGINNING OF MAGIC YEAR 2024-2025



## PROJECT VASTHIRAM

A project that ties in the 3 basic needs of life is close to every RCMEian's heart. Annapathiram and Idhayaganam fill the souls with nourishment, while Project Vasthiram aims to elevate an individual's self respect and dignity in society through the donation of new clothes to those who need them.

The new year of the board commenced with anna pathiram and project vasthiram as the first activities of the members at **Vishranthi - home for the aged.**



## INSTALLATION OF THE BOARD 2024-2025

The new board ushering in the year of Magic 2024-25 was installed by District Governor. Rtn. Saravanan. The new board under Rtn. Muthu's presidency was installed on June 26th, 2024 at Welcomhotel in a ceremony marked by a fusion of tradition with fun.



# HEALING TINY HEARTS

***Rtn. Dr. Sandhya Arun Kumar, Director - Health***

In a determined effort to make a profound impact on the lives of underprivileged families with babies born with heart anomalies, The Rotary Club of Madras East, in collaboration with LTIMindtree and Apollo Children's Hospital, launched the fourth edition of Project Healing Tiny Hearts.

Over the past three years, Project Healing Tiny Hearts has identified and treated 1500 babies born with heart anomalies through rural camps organized by RCME and Apollo Children's Hospital. These babies, once facing uncertain futures, now lead normal, healthy lives thanks to this initiative.

The inauguration of the fourth phase of this noble project at Apollo Children's Hospital was celebrated on July 2nd, 2024. The event was highlighted by the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Rotary Club of Madras East and LTIMindtree to perform 750 paediatric heart surgeries across the country. The project with a contribution of Rs.3 crores by our CSR partner, LTIMindtree has now enabled more tiny hearts to beat across India at Apollo Children's hospital locations in Chennai, Bhopal and Guwahati.

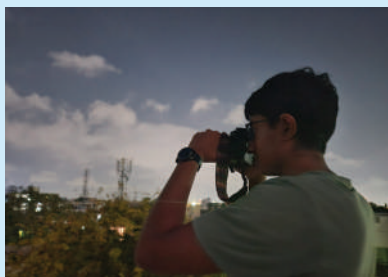
The MOU signing was graced by distinguished guests including Mr. Paneesh Rao, Chief Sustainability Officer of LTIMindtree Foundation, Ms. Preetha Reddy, Vice Chairperson of Apollo Children's Hospital and Rtn. Muthu P, President of the Rotary Club of Madras East.

Rtn. N.S. Saravanan, District Governor RID 3234, members from RCME, LTIMindtree and Apollo Children's Hospital Ms. Preetha Reddy, Vice chairperson of Apollo Children's Hospital said "pure intent to serve is the root cause for the project." While Paneesh Rao, Chief sustainability officer, LTIMindtree Foundation assured the number of surgeries will rapidly grow from 750 to greater heights, through the dedication shown by the doctors of Apollo. Rtn Muthu P, President of Rotary club of Madras East also added this is one of the best projects of the Rotary year.

This partnership aims to continue providing critical medical interventions for children born with heart anomalies, ensuring they receive the necessary treatment to lead healthy lives.







## JAPAN "DARSHAN" - TRAVELOGUE

**Annette. Darshan Ravi**

*Darshan, is a student of class 11, and passionate about photography. Capturing a taste of Japan through his lens and words.*

Japan is a beautiful country, serene, clean and full of amazing photo opportunities. When we decided we were going to go on a vacation to Japan, the first thing I packed up was my camera. That was all I needed. Capturing the beauty of this country in just a few pictures was going to be difficult. But I was going to do my best.

We landed in the land of the rising sun, as it rose over Osaka. The plan was to spend the day in Kyoto visiting the various castles and temples there. The Osaka airport was a huge, shiny building right by the sea and it was quite the sight after a long red-eye from Kuala Lumpur. Once we got past immigration, we went to collect our bags. Surprisingly, all our bags came in no time at all and we were off to Kyoto.

**Kyoto:** The Nijo castle is an extremely serene and beautiful place with lush greenery, canals and a breathtaking view of Kyoto. It's also a place that shows the duality of Japan. The Nijo castle is a beautiful place showcasing Japan's storied culture, where one would find kimono-clad women having a peaceful walk. But, just a few kilometres away at the railway station, the scene is completely different. Everywhere you look, there are Japanese businessmen in black suits running to their trains.

The shift in scene is quite contrasting, you see everyone looking into their phones while going home after a long day's work. There was just one major attraction that was open 24/7 in Kyoto. And this was the Fushimi Inari shrine. Fushimi Inari is a shinto shrine known for the hundreds of bright red gates - tori gates.

On our second day before we left for Nagoya, we visited the Kiyomizu Dera temple, which is supposed to have one of the best views of the Kyoto skyline. The sights there are nothing short of breathtaking and a trip to Kyoto isn't complete without it.



**To Nagoya by Shinkansen:** The journey to Nagoya took just about half an hour despite the 130 km distance thanks to the blistering fast Shinkansen. The only reason we were in Nagoya was because I had convinced my parents to take me to the Toyota Kaikan Museum, which is about an hour away from Nagoya. The Kaikan museum was less of a museum and more of a massive showroom where Toyota showcases their latest and greatest. After that detour, we were back to a normal, tourist itinerary with a stop at the SC Maglev and Rail museum opposite Legoland Japan.

**TOKYO** Tokyo was AMAZING. The streets of Akihabara at night are spectacular and the Yodobashi Akiba store is just mind-blowing. Yodobashi's Akihabara store is the biggest electronics store in the world with over 7 floors filled with various types of gadgets and tech. It's massive and you could really spend an entire day there looking at all the unique things there.

On our last day, I got a new camera and I was really excited to take photos with it. That night when I was at the top of the Tokyo Skytree, I took out my camera and I set it up to take a photo of the Tokyo Skyline. Little did I know, my camera's auto high ISO setting resulted in horrible looking dots and green fringing in my photos. I was devastated. Luckily though, in this day and age of AI, I was able to get rid of these artefacts and get a good photo of the eye-catching Tokyo tower. I was happy again!

My trip to Japan was probably the best one I've ever had and I'd love to visit this magnificent country again.

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT: CONVERSATIONS WITH MS. GAUTAMI TADIMALLA

The roads from Ambattur and Akkarai met at Kottupuram on a balmy Thursday afternoon. The scrumptious spread on the table provided the ideal backdrop to a healthy exchange of experiences on working towards community development and empowerment. The lunch was hosted by Senior members of Rotary club of Madras East - Rtn (PP) Mr. S.S. Rajasekar. Rtn (PP). Mr. P.E. Ramkrishnan and Rtn Anuradha Prashant engaged in conversations with Ms. Gautami Tadimalla, founder - Life Again Foundation (LAF) on making a difference by bringing in positive change.



**Rtn. Anu Prashant (AP):** Often, I wonder, how does an individual's zeal to contribute to society integrate with a voluntary organisation's vision? Do organisations such as Rotary and Life Again taste success in fulfilling individual aspirations of service?

**Ms. Gautami Tadimalla (GT):** It takes a community to empower another. Organisations sometimes confuse the purpose of existence by giving a basket of fruits, and thereby stymieing the possibility of growing a fruit orchard. But if sustained growth and development must be holistic and stand the test of time, what one needs is empowerment and not mere freebies.

**Rtn. Rajasekar and Rtn. P.E. Ram:** True. Our experiences of working on projects like Annai Satya Nagar, Winners Bakery, vocational centres, Sarvodaya and Tiny Hearts are a testimony to that. The common thread tying these projects is the underlying fact of creating a self-awareness amongst the beneficiaries and bringing them together as a community working towards a holistic change.

**Rtn. P.E. Ram:** Looking ahead, what do you think can be the areas where community engagement can bring a difference?

**GT:** My observations are based on experiences through travel and interactions with citizens across rural Tamil Nadu. The 3 pillars of development, especially amongst women, that need voluntary organisational support are education, health and employment. Beyond policymakers and governmental machinery, organisations should direct individual and corporate funding in creating awareness and sparking the road to change. LAF is in the process of creating a repository of data and using the power of technology to enable transformation by easing the access to relevant information.

**Rtn. Rajasekar and GT:** The possibilities of rural development are immense. There is wealth in waste, power in vocational education and growth in self-sustained models in the largest sector – agriculture. Designing and implementing an integrated model of community development holds the key to transforming lives by building positive relationships.

**Rtn. AP:** So, where do you think organisations such as RCME and LAF can come together to make a difference?

**GT and Rtn. Rajasekar and Rtn. P.E. Ram** Adopting clusters or villages, establishing and supporting vocational centres, empowering women to be the fulcrum of societal change and using sports as a tool to bring a community together are some of the areas where the two voluntary organisations could collaborate.

The meeting ended on a sweet note with desserts and a promising future of individual visions coming together for a common purpose.



## LETTERS FROM GERMANY: A NOTE OF APPRECIATION FROM THE ROTARY CLUB WILHELMSHAVEN-FRIESLAND

The Rotary Club Wilhelmshaven-Friesland (WHV-FRI) has been committed to improving educational opportunities in Namibia for many years. All our members are always happy to see with how much enthusiasm and commitment the Namibia-Team is using our regular donations and to see how the help is received by the school children. With a vision to work with Indian schools, the club's search for a partner club led to The Rotary Club Madras East (RCME) in Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

Thus the new Global Grant "Sarada Vidyalaya – Smart Education Together" (SV-SET) was born. Sarada Vidyalaya is a girls' high school in a district of Chennai, where even less privileged girls can enjoy a good education. The three project modules proposed included "smart classrooms" for multimedia and digital teaching to improve learning standards; Improved building safety by installing fire hoses; and finally, renewable energy management through the installation of a solar panel system on the roof. Training for teachers is also being considered to underline the sustainability of the measures.

In January 2023 the Foundation Chairman of the Rotary Club WHV-FRI had the opportunity to visit the School Sarada Vidyalaya on a Saturday and spend a very impressive time at the school. The whole school class, the principal, the teachers and delegates from RCME were explaining the smart classroom facilities and presented the way how smart training works while the German Representative used the opportunity to use the tool for a spontaneous talk about Europe and Germany highlighting the importance of good education.

This was certainly not the last project that was set up together with friends in India and the Rotary Club WHV-FRI is proud and happy to have expanded its international focus.





## POWER SPEAKER SERIES - BROUGHT TO YOU BY CLUB SERVICES

The first of the power speaker series saw a visionary and an excellent speaker as our guest on **July 10th**. Kalpathi Suresh - Executive Director and Chairman of Veranda Learning Solutions Limited spoke on India's education renaissance focusing on emerging trends, needs and impact. The speaker highlighted learnings from his experiences in the education and training industry to the strides it needs to make to become a valuable sector.



Chairperson Rtn. Shanthakumar introduced the speaker and the session was Moderated by Rtn. Neelakantan. The evening was well attended despite a heavy downpour and the eclectic spread at Taj Connemara. complemented the thought provoking session.





## WEDNESDAYS WITH ROTARY

If Tuesdays are synonymous with Morrie, Wednesdays are always with RCME. A new venue welcoming the group (pun intended !), amazing spreads curated by Rtn. Sowmiya Skandan - the evenings just got better.

**Installation night:** The year got off to a thematic start with the new board installation on **June 26th**. Chaired by Rtn. Dr. Rohini Rau, the evening saw rotarians in a full attendance in festive traditional wear. A carnival like atmosphere, with funky introductions of the new board members, the evening set the tone of what one can expect this year - fun, splendour and some good projects to work with.





## CANDID MOMENTS WITH SHARAD HAKSAR

*By Rtn. V.A. Ramash*

This was the first weekly speaker meeting after President Muthu P took over the reins of the club. Interestingly, the Thai-based high-tea spread was curated by Rtn. Sowmya Skandan, living in Singapore. The members settled in for the meeting that started at 7:00 PM sharp; RCME being well known for its punctuality.

After the customary announcements were made by various Board members, a new member, Dr. Alamelu Arvind was inducted into our club. The process was led by Rtn. Praneshwari in a crisp and systematic manner. The member introduction was done by Rtn. Magesh Pattabiraman, handing over the lapel pin by PP Rtn. Srinivasa Rao and finally, 'introduction to Rotary' by PP Rtn. Venkatakrisnan. We then moved to the main part of the evening's program, the introduction of the guest speaker that was delivered by Rtn. Sumeet.



As the speaker, Mr. Sharad Haksar, took over the mike from the Secretary and requested the lights to be dimmed, we knew an interesting session was to start shortly. However, what unfolded was much more than that. No one from the audience would have expected or anticipated the wide range of photographs; stunning, exquisite and extraordinary, to say the least, was brought out on the screen one by one; with interesting anecdotes and explanations on how Sharad was able to capture each of the frames to such clarity and conviction.

Each of the pictures was so endearing that we could not help asking Sharad whether they were photoshopped or just naturally taken. Obviously, it was the latter.

What came out in a very pronounced and appreciable manner was the patience he has shown to take each of these pictures, at different parts of the world, in different weather conditions and almost all of them, at such unearthly hours.

He was also emphatic to highlight that he would patiently wait and avoid taking photos, when people were moving around the location that he was focusing on. Surprisingly, not even a single photograph had a single person crossing or figuring in the frames of the pictures.

It was undoubtedly a mesmerising and a rewarding evening for the audience, as Sharad took us through the nuances of how photography should be approached and celebrated.





# THE CLIMB: PUSHING LIMITS ON EVEREST AND LIFE

*By Rtn. Revathi Sanjeev*



Rajasekar Pachai, the first Tamil civilian to climb Mount Everest, shared his remarkable journey in an inspiring talk with rotarians. Born into a fishing community, Rajasekar's playground was the sea. His multifaceted background in competitive sports eventually led him to seek the ultimate challenge: climbing the highest peak in the world, Mount Everest.

## Early Life and Motivation

Rajasekar's growing up years instilled in him a love for adventure and resilience. His diverse experience in various sports honed his physical and mental endurance. However, he yearned for a challenge that would push him to his limits. The towering heights of Mount Everest became his goal, embodying the pinnacle of human endeavour and determination.

He described the rigorous physical training, the meticulous planning, and the mental fortitude needed to tackle Everest. Rajasekar highlighted the importance of acclimatisation, a process involving

repeated ascents and descents to adapt to the mountain's harsh conditions. This rotation up and down the mountain was crucial to prevent altitude sickness and ensure a successful climb.

Rajasekar's journey was fraught with challenges. From the unpredictable weather conditions to the physical toll on his body, every step was a testament to his perseverance. He recounted moments of doubt and exhaustion, but also the unwavering determination that kept him moving forward. His narrative painted a vivid picture of the mountain's beauty and brutality, offering a glimpse into the life of an Everest climber.

Rajasekar's talk was nothing short of inspirational. His story captivated the audience, prompting numerous questions throughout the presentation. Attendees were eager to learn more about his experiences, the specifics of his preparation, and the mental strategies he employed to overcome the challenges. Rajasekar's responses were insightful, providing a deeper understanding of the complexities involved in climbing Everest.





## ROTARY QUIZ NIGHT: MADRAS TO CHENNAI

On July 18, 2024, the Rotary Club of Madras East had the pleasure of hosting a dynamic quiz program led by renowned quizmaster Abhishek Bharath. The event, filled with three rounds of thrilling excitement, centered on the themes of Chennai cinema and cricket, providing a rich learning experience for all participants.

The quiz saw enthusiastic participation from six teams, with members joining in even up to the last minute. The teams were captained by Rotarians. Arjun Parthasarathy, Radhika, PE Ram, Swaminathan, Madhavan, and Ann. Radhika, each bringing their unique knowledge and competitive spirit to the table.

The evening was not just a test of knowledge but also a celebration of camaraderie and curiosity. Quizmaster Abhishek Bharath's expertly crafted questions and engaging style kept everyone on the edge of their seats.

The competition was fierce, but it was the team led by Arjun Parthasarathy that ultimately emerged victorious, showcasing their exceptional knowledge and quick thinking. Their triumph was met with applause and admiration from fellow participants and spectators alike.

The Rotary Club of Madras East looks forward to hosting similar events in the future, continuing to foster a spirit of learning and community engagement.





## FELLOWSHIPS - TEMPLE TRAILS: WALKING THROUGH HISTORY AND HERITAGE

Living in a city steeped in history and heritage, a simple walk around our neighbourhood unearths a treasure trove of knowledge. RCME as a part of a fellowship initiative planned a temple trail series. The first being a walk around Kapalesswar temple, Mylapore. The walk was led by Rtn. Vijay Kamalakara. and took the walkers around the history of Mylapore, weaved into the temple's location.



Winding up with sumptuous breakfast. a Sunday well spent.

The second was a stopover at “**Eri Katha Ramar**” on August 10th 2024, near Madurantakam en route to the Project Sarvodaya launch. The stories, architecture, facts mixed with myths around the locales all provide a flavour of a city that stretches beyond our imagination.

The walk was led by Rtn. Archana Raghuram, a green rotarian with an avid interest in history and relevance to our today.

A planned talk by an eminent historian on temple architecture is also in store in the coming months. Some snapshots of moments when time travel into the past became a reality.

## KNOW YOUR ROTARIAN - SUDHAN MUTHU PALANIAPAN

*Interviewed by Rtn. Kalpana Karthikeyan*

**K:** Hi, Sudhan. Glad to meet you. So let's start at the very beginning. Tell me something about yourself.

**S:** Hi Kalpana, I am a Civil engineer with 21 years of experience. In the business of tensile structures & retractable roofing. I have been running a company in Ayanambakkam called Foresight Roofings LLP since 2003. The company is also into an export-focused business of water treatment plants.

**K:** Interesting business. What about your family?

**S:** I am a resident of Mogappair. My wife is also into the business - takes care of finance and purchase activities. We are parents to two children, a daughter who is studying architecture (1st year) and a son in 10th standard.

**K:** That's a busy life at work and home. So what are your hobbies?

**S:** I love reading books and teaching. I am a follower of Mahatria and Infinitheism which helps me have a balanced outlook at work and home. I love watching/listening to podcasts. My favourites being the ones by Rajiv Talreja and Ranveer.

**K:** What is your passion and how do you reflect on your experiences?

**S:** I love mentoring and as I mentioned teaching. I do work with SMEs, as a mentor and am passionate about this avenue of sharing what I have learnt along the way.

Nice to meet you Sudhan for the time spent. It's been a pleasure getting to know you.

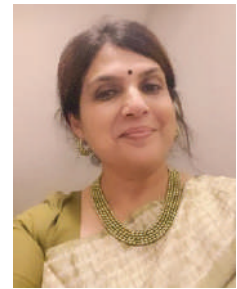
**Kalpana and Sudhan are green rotarians, inducted on May 01st, 2024.**



## WELCOMING OUR NEWEST ROTARIANS

### Dr. Alamelu Arvind

An artist, singer, bridge player and an academician  
One of the many feathers in Dr. Alamelu's possession.  
Ambassadors to noble campaigns  
She sure is an invaluable asset to RCME's bandwagon.



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### Murali Krishnan

Can we call him the newest member on the bloc?  
When he is just coming home after a short walk.  
In RCME and other Rotary roles  
Excellence follows him wherever he goes.  
Tennis, languages, cricket, dance, raise a toast to this master of all  
Welcome back home, aka Sydney Murali.



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### Sri Giriprasath K S

Raising the bar higher  
From Chetpet, joins us this astute lawyer  
Welcoming him and his vibrant family  
To join us at RCME.



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### Praveen Chander

A leader, team player, and one with the details,  
Guiding teams with wisdom and grace.  
So, if wanderlust beckons and you need a guide,  
Look no further—we have perfect planner by our side.



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### Divya Jayashankar

Balancing sports and education, she also mastered classical music.  
A champion of entrepreneurship and innovation,  
From boardrooms to brew rooms, she has transcended,  
A coffee isn't enough to fully appreciate this powerhouse of talent.  
We are thrilled to welcome Divya to the RCME bandwagon!





## PROJECT VIGNETTES

### GREEN HORIZONS — BPCL Swachhata Pakhwada

The Environment avenue of community service, spearheaded the Swachhata Pakhwada Campaign in partnership with BPCL by undertaking a three pronged project in July 2024 consisting of recharging wells in a school at Kottur, tree plantation exercise and installation of a sanitary pad incinerator at Kesari Higher Secondary School. The project aims at improving green cover, conserving groundwater levels by recharging while simultaneously reducing garbage dumps and landfills.



### RCME'S DRISHTI - SMART VISION PROJECT FOR THE BLIND

The distribution of 150 devices took place in Pune on Saturday, August 3rd, at 11.30 am, supported by a CSR contribution from Indian Oil Corporation, of Rs 48 Lakhs.

This is the project of the previous Rotary year under the leadership of IPP Rtn. Babu Krishnamurthy and Director - Health Rtn. Ramaswamy.



### RCME @ US NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATIONS

President Muthu P & IPP Babu Attended the Reception on the eve of 248th US National Day Celebrations and met with US Ambassador Eric Garcetti, TN Education Minister Anbil Mahesh and many friends of RCME.





## PROJECT ANNAPATHIRAM

Every month, with generous donations from Rotarians and Anns, we have been able to feed nutritious meals at homes for the aged and children. This year RCME also began with distribution of new clothes to the residents of these homes, through Project Vasthiram. Thank you once again for your unwavering support.

Rtn. Sudhir S @ 98400 50466. Chairman - Annapathiram



## INTERACT/ROTARACT INSTALLATIONS

The new start of the new academic year saw all Rotaract and Interact clubs associated with RCME busy with installation ceremonies. The Rotaract at Stella Maris College for women, Interact clubs at PS Matriculation, Shraddha Children's academy, National Public school, Dr. Nalli Kuppaswami Vivekananda Kendra Junior College (School) was conducted in the presence of the President and respective chairpersons and GCC Community College.



## ICU MONITORS @ St. THOMAS HOSPITAL, CHENNAI.

RCME in collaboration with Indium Software India Private Limited, inaugurated 4 patient monitors for the ICU at St Thomas hospital Chennai. The project value is INR 6 Lakhs. The project was inaugurated by Mrs Priya Venkataraman, Vice President HR of Indium, who was emotionally moved with the incredible work done by the hospital.



## RCME PROJECT DRISHTI - TIRUNELVELI

Smart vision glasses worth \*INR 21 lakhs were distributed to 57 fully visually challenged individuals at Arvind Eye hospital, Tirunelveli. We are extremely thankful to the donor, JM Fricttech India Private limited, who enabled vision to the 57! PP. Rtn. P.E. Ram represented RCME at the event.





## WINGS TO FLY: A LAUNCH

*Rtn. Raghuraman*

The 10th Edition of our Flagship Project “Wings to Fly” is off to a flying start with a curtain-raiser on the 2nd of August, 2024 at Amma Maligai in the Rippon building complex. The curtain raiser’s aim was to brief the education department as well as all the participating schools about this year’s program construct and schedule and ensure their commitment to the program.

The event commenced with a traditional invocation song, followed by a welcome address from our President, Rtn. Muthu P. Rtn V.A. Ramash then shared the history and vision of the Wings to Fly Project. Rtn Sujitha, chairperson of the 9th edition, spoke passionately about her experiences, the impact of the project, and the valuable lessons learned. Ann Sudha and Ann Haritha, Chair and Co-Chair of the 10th edition had put together a detailed presentation introducing this year’s theme of “Teenpreneurship”, and provided a detailed overview of the program’s timeline and the roles of various stakeholders.



Rtn Magesh introduced this year’s knowledge partner, Miyagi Solutions, highlighting their contributions. Ms. Vijayashree from Miyagi Solutions elaborated on the design of this year’s individual modules. The participating teachers expressed their appreciation for the clarity and thoughtfulness of the program design. The event concluded with a vote of thanks from Rtn Divya, Director - Youth Services. Needless to say, RCMEians and Anns turned up in large numbers to volunteer for the program as well as show our support and commitment for the cause.

Following the event, the participating schools have already completed the first round of screening for 22750+ kids on schedule, with 362 students shortlisted for the next phase. A three-day workshop on entrepreneurship is planned for these participants from September 2nd to 4th, 2024, at Amma Arangam, Shenoy Nagar, Chennai. Preparations are well underway to ensure the workshop’s success.



# EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES - PROJECT SARVODAYA

*Rtn. Kannan Sugantharaman, Director - Community Development*

The Rotary Club of Madras East (RCME) has embarked on a transformative initiative called “Project Sarvodaya,” which translates from Sanskrit to mean “upliftment of all.”

At the heart of this initiative is a collective commitment to the holistic development of a cluster of villages near Madhuranthakam. The ethos of Sarvodaya centers around understanding the nuanced needs of the community, transcending a superficial analysis.



The commitment is not merely rhetorical but extends to active and continuous support for a minimum of three years from the initiation of this collaboration. During this period, RCME will serve as the anchor and principal organization, providing the necessary financial support, leadership, and guidance to ensure the successful implementation resulting in an enduring impact. 3 projects were inaugurated under Sarvodaya in August 2024.

## **Project 1: RO plant in Murukencheri village | Inauguration: 3rd August 2024.**

The RO plant has been placed at Murukencheri village comprising of 180 families (480 persons). It will also support the adjoining villages of Valpirai and Munoothikuppam, where 250 families with 650 people reside. In all, this project aims to service 3 Villages with 1000+ members with its 1000 LHP capacity and can run for 7.5 hrs/day



## **Project 2: Scholarship program | Inauguration: 10th August 2024**

This program aims to empower and support college students in the village cluster. Finance assistance to 30 college students from 5 panchayats. Apart from financial assistance, there will be monthly training session aimed at enhancing life and employment skills. The program will also deliver an annual camp for networking, mentorship and skill building activities.

## **Project 3: Tailoring Training cum Production center at Vilvarayanallur | Inauguration: 10th August 2024**

The initiative aims to train 25 beneficiaries in a 6-month course, equipping them with essential skills in sewing machine operation, jute and cloth bag making, garment production, self-stitching techniques, and cloth pads manufacturing. Upon completion, participants will have the opportunity to either seek employment or establish their own production units fostering their economic independence. We are looking to start the first batch soon and look forward to financial support to enable this.



## CELEBRATING REVOLUTIONARY EXCELLENCE: Dr. M.S. SWAMINATHAN AWARD

*Rtn. Aarthi Lakshminarayan*

The Dr. M.S. Swaminathan Award for Environment Protection 2024 was held on Thursday, August 8th, 2024, at the Rain Tree hotel, St. Mary's Road, Chennai. The award is instituted by the Rotary Club of Madras East (RCME) in the name of our Honorary Member and India's most acclaimed Agricultural Scientist, Dr. M.S. Swaminathan. The award is presented to either an individual, company or NGO who have contributed, either directly or indirectly, to heightening environmental protection, sustainable development and awareness, in any part of the world.



The awardee this year was Padmashri Dr. Anant Darshan Shankar. Our awardee is a pioneer in the path of revitalising Indian medicinal heritage. He is the Chairman of the Indian Institute of Ayurveda and Integrative Medicine, Managing Trustee of Foundation for Revitalization of Local Health Traditions (FRLHT) Founder-Vice Chancellor – The University of Trans-Disciplinary Health Sciences and Technology. He is a recipient of several national and international awards notably, the Norman Borlaug Award (1998) for contributions to conservation of wild populations of medicinal plants, first Indian citizen to receive Columbia University's International Award (2003) for Complementary and Alternative Medicine, and in 2011, Padma Shri by the Govt. of India in recognition of his pioneering work in promoting integrative health sciences.

The award was presented by the Chief Guest, Hon'ble Mr. Justice Senthil Kumar Ramamoorthy and the awardee was felicitated by Dr. Soumya Swaminathan. RCME thanks Cavinkare Pvt. Ltd. for their support in sponsoring the award.





# TERRY FOX RUN

M.L. Srinivasan ,Chairperson-Terry Fox Run 2024

**“Even if I don't finish, we need others to continue. It's got to keep going without me” - Terry Fox**

**About the Run:** This run is to support the cause of Cancer Research as well as to create awareness on cancer on early detection and intervention. **Terrance Stanley 'Terry' Fox** (July 28, 1958 – June 28, 1981) was a Canadian athlete & cancer activist. He became famous for the “Marathon of Hope” - a cross country run through Canada's Atlantic Provinces for 143 days and 5,373 kilometers, to raise money for cancer research, which he ran with a prosthetic leg. Since then the Terry Fox run has been organized annually to celebrate human spirit and support cancer research in 600 cities in 53 countries.

Read his inspiring story on [www.terryfox.org](http://www.terryfox.org)

Terry Fox of Canada inspired Akash Dube of India and Akash brought this run to Chennai in 2009. Although Akash isn't with us today, his family has been championing the cause along with Rotary Club of Madras East year on year.

## About this year's event.

This year we had 2 categories - 3 km / 6 km run or walk, to suit all age groups. The Registration for the run was FREE, with an option to make voluntary donations. **'NO MATTER WHAT'** T-shirts at a nominal cost, the proceeds of which will go towards Cancer Research work at the Adyar Cancer Institute, Chennai. We organised a finisher medal for all the participants to take back memories of the event and proudly support the cause.

The event was held on Sunday 18th August 2024, at Olcott Memorial School, Besant Nagar Chennai, Lt. Gen Karanbir Singh Brar, General Officer Commanding (GOC) of Dakshin Bharat Area, Chennai was the chief guest and Rtn. J Sridhar, Past District Governor, Rotary International District 3234, Ms. Gautami, Actor and Founder Life Again Foundation, Dr. E Hemanth Raj, Executive Vice Chairman, Adyar Cancer Institute and Mrs. Sujatha Dube, Mother of Mr. Akash Dube, was Guest of Honor. Mr. Rajasekar Pachai, First Tamil civilian to reach the summit of Mount Everest and Mrs. Neerja Malik, Cancer Counsellor and Motivational Speaker, flagged off the runs, in the august presence of the President of RCME, Rtn. Muthu P and Secretary Rtn. Ravi Venkataramani.

The popularity of the run has encouraged corporates to make it their own HR activity for a social cause. We had at least 12 corporates who have registered their employees from 50 to 1000 in numbers. Many individuals and corporates came forward to donate voluntarily for the Nobel cause. Overall, about 3500 people participated in the event and nearly Rs. 20 lakhs collected through this event. The entire collection will be handed over to the Cancer Institute, Adyar for Cancer Research.



**“It's one thing to run across Canada, but now, people are really going to know what cancer is.”**  
**Terry Fox**