

THE LIGHTHOUSE

WEEKLY BULLETIN OF THE ROTARY CLUB OF MADRAS
ISSUE 10 | SEPTEMBER 5, 2023

BUILDING RESPONSIBLE COMMUNITIES



TEACHER'S DAY CELEBRATION BY ROTARY CLUB OF MADRAS

Dear RCMers,

We step into a September with a grand event on Teachers Day. This edition features a beautiful photograph Tranquil Tranquebar by Rtn. Dr. Sangeetha Vishwanathan in the Capture the Moment series. We entreat you to send us more visual treats for the same.

For the Green Rotarians we have an article on the history of fireside.

Yours in Rotary,

Rtn. Sunita Suresh



ROTARY CLUB OF MADRAS
WEEKLY MEETING

Tuesday, 12th September 2023 | 1.30 pm
at MMA MANAGEMENT CENTER

SPEAKER
Dr. D.P.Sudhakar
Deputy Director, Systems Reliability Entity,
ISRO Propulsion Complex, Mahendragiri.

TOPIC
**INDIA IN SPACE WITH
EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES**

*Please note that spouses are
cordially invited for this meeting.*

Rtn. S. Ravi
President

Rtn. M. Sessa Sai
Honorary Secretary

Rtn. Vikram Chesetty
Director Club Service

Rtn. Sandhya Sridhar
Chairperson – Programs Committee

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Send in your articles, news and stories for consideration in the Lighthouse bulletin to:
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Stay updated with our very own RCM magazine!

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Minutes of the 10th Meeting of Rotary Club of Madras - Sep. 5, 2023

Sergeant-at-arms PP Rtn. Mohan Raman .P.V. collared Rtn. Ravi Sundaresan who formally called the 10th Weekly meeting of RCM to Order followed by Tamizh Thai Vazthu.

Attendees of the meeting as follows:

Rtn. Ravi Sundaresan - President, Rtn. Sesha Sai M – Secretary, Rtn. Vikram Chesetty , Rtn. Chella Krishna, Rtn. Suresh Amirapu and (Guest of Honour Mrs. Omana Thomas)

Agenda:

- Opening and Welcome
- Tribute to Dr. Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan
- Remembrance of Rtn. Ashok Bajaj
- Confirmation of Previous Meeting Minutes
- Introduction of Visiting Rotarians and Guests
- Announcements
- Teachers' Day Celebration and Awards

MEETING MINUTES:

Opening and Welcome:

- The meeting began with the playing of the Tamil Vazhthu.
- Rtn. Ravi Sundaresan, the President, welcomed all attendees and introduced the dignitaries on the dais.
- He highlighted the significance of Teachers' Day and its alignment with the Rotary motto, "Service Above Self."

Tribute to Dr. Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan:

- A tribute was paid to Dr. Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan, whose birth anniversary coincides with Teachers' Day.
- Dr. Radhakrishnan's role as a philosopher, teacher, and the second President of India was acknowledged.

Remembrance of Rtn. Ashok Bajaj:

- A moment of silence was observed in memory of Rtn. Ashok Bajaj, a senior rotarian who passed away today morning.
- Rtn. Mohan Raman P.V. PP shared humorous anecdotes about Rtn. Ashok Bajaj, emphasizing his joyful nature.

Confirmation of Previous Meeting Minutes:

Confirmation of the minutes of the 9th weekly meeting held at Hyatt on August 29th was requested.

Introduction of Visiting Rotarians and Guests:

- Visiting Rotarians and Probus club members were welcomed.

Announcements:

PP Vijaya Bharathi Rangarajan Dr. Rtn. :

- Announced the success of the ABC (All aBout Cancer) Exhibition Inter School Competition, which involved numerous schools and students.
- Expressed gratitude to Mr. Ravi for sponsoring the event and presented an award to the Rotary Club of Madras.

Rtn. Suresh Amirapu:

- Announced the celebration of Teachers' Day and recognition of outstanding educators.
- Mentioned schools participating in the event and winners of the competition.

Rtn. Sesha Sai M :

- Announced birthdays and anniversaries of club members.
- Provided details about the upcoming meeting with Dr. Sudhakar from ISRO and a trip to Trivandrum.
- Encouraged members to participate in the trip.

President Rtn. Ravi Sundaresan :

- Emphasised the alignment of Teachers' Day with the Rotary motto.
- Welcome all teachers and interact coordinators, especially Mrs. Omana Thomas, for the Teachers' Day celebration and awards.

Rtn. Sharon Krishna Rau Dr. :

- Acknowledged teachers as mentors, friends, and role models.
- Expressed gratitude to teachers for their dedication and hard work.

Teachers' Day Celebration and Awards:

- Recognized outstanding teachers and educators from various schools.
- Presented awards and citations to teachers and principals.
- Acknowledged the contributions of teachers from centers run by Rotary Club of Madras.
- Presented special mementos and awards to deserving individuals.
- Honoured Mrs. Omana Thomas as the Guest of Honour for her achievements.
- Mrs. Omana Thomas addressed the gathering and expressed her gratitude.

Performances:

- Several schools and students performed at the event, showcasing their talents.

Rtn. Vikram Chesetty extended a vote of thanks to all attendees and the guest for their contribution.

President Rtn. Ravi Sundaresan adjourned the 10th weekly meeting of Rotary Club of Madras (RCM). ■

From the 10th Meeting of Rotary Club of Madras Sep. 5, 2023





Rotary Club of Madras felicitates **Ms. Antara Ramkumar**, who took the lead and contributed Rs.24,42,751/- towards a crowd funding drive '**KIDS FOR KIDS COMPAIN'** - Rotary Year-2018-19 at Sishya with her own efforts and raised funds to support the education of underprivileged students of our Boys Town Society home. Her parents Ramkumar Varathrajan and Suhasini Ramkumar received the memento on her behalf.

WHAT MAKES MRS. OMANA THOMAS AN EXTRAORDINARY EDUCATOR?

Listening to Mrs. Omana Thomas's speech, I was struck by her humility, her love of children, her sense of humor, her tenacity, and her sense of gratitude. It's these kinds of qualities that have helped her build and expand Sishya into the school it is today, and it's these qualities that ensure that Sishyans enjoy their time in school and look back upon it with fondness.

At the beginning of her speech, Omana ma'am shared her own professional journey, which began as an assistant teacher in the kindergarten at Sishya. She later taught middle school Science, and described how much she prepared for each class. Her ability to work her way up from assistant teacher to principal, and her deep respect for every job in a school, is testimony to her humility.

While teaching may be an intense and exhausting profession, it's also a joyful one filled with lots of laughter. Our kids remind us to smile and see the humor in life. Omana entertained the audience by sharing a range of anecdotes describing the comedic exploits of Sishya students, including one about a student who turned the tables and gave her a "yellow card." Omana's stories demonstrate her ability to find humor and joy in the antics of her students, as well as her obvious love of children.



She said, "This is a job that I love, as working with children keeps me young."

As the world changes and evolves, educators too need to grow. Omana described how she completed her B.Ed, after which her daughters exclaimed "Never again!" Yet, soon after that accomplishment, she went on to do an M.Ed. Furthermore, she discussed the massive changes ahead in education as a result of the National Education Policy (NEP), but also added that it remains to be seen whether practice will meet theory.

Finally, Omana thanked her family members and expressed tremendous gratitude towards them. She described how she was inspired by her father-in-law, Kit Thomas, who founded Sishya with a strong desire to create a school that treasures and values childhood. She also paid tribute to her husband, her daughters, and her siblings, describing how they have all helped her on her journey.

Through her insightful and gracious speech, Omana offered all of us Rotarians a glimpse into the kinds of qualities we all need if we want to live extraordinary lives.

- Rtn. Maya Thiagarajan. ■





ROTARY CLUB OF MADRAS

CONFERS ON

Mrs OMANA THOMAS

PRINCIPAL, SISHYA

EDUCATOR EXTRAORDINAIRE AWARD 2023-24

CITATION

Mrs. Omana Thomas M.Ed., is a well-known educationist, famed for helping Sishya as its Principal for over twenty years. She has built upon the founding principles of Sishya, a school where childhood is treasured and nurtured. Mrs. Thomas' ability to marry these traditional values with the demanding scholastic expectation of students today, is her unique attribute as an educator.

While the race for marks often dominates, the true purpose of schooling is the skill to imbibe and assimilate knowledge in all its forms. Mrs. Thomas has successfully set a middle ground, introducing an amalgamation of Montessori and traditional teaching methods in junior school. To her students, she is approachable and admired for allowing them space to pursue their passions in sports and extracurricular activities.

She has also been responsible for diversifying her student body by the introduction of a French School, the Ecole Franco-Indienne Sishya within, and has overseen the modernisation of all teaching and learning facilities on campus, keeping a balance of sports and other activities.

Under her watch, students are encouraged to support worthy socially useful causes like education and health initiatives for the underprivileged, instilling in them a sense of empathy. Prioritising the importance of the environment in her students' everyday life, the school is ecologically friendly, with segregation of waste at source, grey water harvesting and the use of solar electricity. Mrs. Thomas has made Sishya's Model United Nations Conference (SISHMUN) an annual event of note, with over 500 students from across schools in Chennai participating every year.

Mrs. Thomas has been invited to attend several international conferences and symposiums, and has been on the Council for the Indian Secondary Certificate Examination (CISCE) Convenorship (2003-2022). She has received the 100 Most Influential Principals of Indian Schools Award from World Education.

Mrs. Omana Thomas has thus achieved what many educators aspire to—make education absorbing, relevant and interesting for every student, eschewing the one-size-fits-all approach. She has set benchmarks in the imparting of quality education, while retaining the ethics and values that make Sishya School different from other institutions of its kind.

On September 5, 2023, on the occasion of Teacher's Day, The Rotary Club of Madras felicitates Mrs. Omana Thomas on all her achievements, and appreciates her innovations and initiatives. She is an inspiration to many, a path-breaker in her work, one who has strived for excellence and keeps abreast of the times.

She is, indeed, Educationist Extraordinaire.

Rotary Club of Madras wishes her many more milestones for the future, and we are sure that there would be further accolades that would mark her career.

Kudos!

Rtn. S. Ravi
President

Rtn. M. Sesha Sai
Honorary Secretary

Rtn. PE. Chella Krishna
Awards Committee Chairperson

Rtn. Vijay Balaji
Vocational Services Director

September 5, 2023



On September 3rd President Rtn.Ravi Sundaresan and Rtn. Viswanathan have visited all project sites - the Water and Sanitation Project, the Water Bodies Restoration Project & the Home for the Homeless Project to determine the progress of all projects.

At Thathadiar Kandigai Village, the Home for the Homeless Project - specially build for Irular community, the first Phase - 40 homes and the Water and Sanitation Project in J J Nagar (IHHT 205 individual homes) will be completed before December 2023.

It has reached the roofing level. So far, contractors have completed 100 individual home toilets.

The second phase of the Home for the Homeless Project will commence from October. ■



BENJAMIN & GEORGE CHERIAN TROPHY

Inter Rotary Club Bridge Tournament Organized by RCM on 27th August 2023



INTERACT CLUB INSTALLATION M.Ct.M.CHIDAMBARAM CHETTYAR INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL YEAR 2023-2024

The INTERACT CLUB INSTALLATION ceremony of M.Ct.M. Chidambaram Chettyar International school for the year 2023-2024 was held on 28th August 2023. The programme began with a prayer rendition.

With the divine blessings of the almighty, the ceremony started with the welcome address delivered by the former President of the Interact Club, Rtn. Adhitya Balachandar. Our esteemed Chief Guest, Rtn.Ravi Sundaresan, President of Rotary Club of Madras, Rtn. Balaji Chinni, Youth Service Director, Rtn. Suresh Amirapu, Chairman - Interact Zone-1, Rtn.Sabina Narayan, Rotary Foundation and International Services Director, Rtn.Indra Subramanyam, Past President, Rotary Club of Madras along with our respected Principal, Ms.Sangeetha Varma and our Deputy Head of School, Ms.Lavanya Venkatesan graced the occasion.

They were all presented with a token of appreciation by our Principal. Our former Secretary, Rtn. Samiksha delivered a speech on the past events that the students of M.Ct.M. Chidambaram Chettyar International School took part in.

In the presence of the dignitaries, the incoming President, Sevugan Alagappan was collared and badged. Sevugan gave his acceptance speech for the role which was bestowed upon him. The newly



elected Vice President, Samara Parakh and the Secretary Varun Pulliagada were badged, followed by the Directors of the Interact Club. After the badge pinning ceremony, the secretary delivered his acceptance speech for his role.

The members of the Rotary Club of Madras gave away valuable feedback on past events and put forth their new ideas for the upcoming team. This sparked the audience to join with the club members and work united. Later, the Head of School addressed the audience and congratulated the outgoing Interact Club officer bearers for the annual awards (Rotary Interact Relationship, Best Faculty Coordinator, Best President, Best Projects award to M.Ct.M. and also the head of school wished to encourage the incoming Office Bearers to give their best.

To conclude the programme, the Vice President gave the Vote of Thanks. The event ended with the National Anthem.

- Rtn. Balaji Chinni
Youth Service Director ■





BALLROOM DANCE WORKSHOP

Within two weeks of a super successful “Happy Feet” Bollywood dance event, RCM’s Wellness and Holistic Living Committee - Sole to Soul had yet another Big Hit - this time a Ballroom Dance workshop. 34 Rotarians on the floor enthusiastically followed in the footsteps of Sqr Ldr Unni Nair, the event Trainer. Nair, who was in the Air Force for 14 years, said he learnt ballroom dancing during that time. His relaxed demeanor made him the perfect choice for RCM’s diverse group, all with different styles and levels of experience. He patiently demonstrated and repeated several different dance steps to a very receptive audience. From waltz to jive to cha cha cha, everyone learnt a few steps while having a great time.

Anita enjoyed the workshop and she said, “Whether I do it the right way or not, I love dancing.” In fact, she beautifully demonstrated the salsa steps with Nair later as a recap for the rest. Smita and Rakesh said they had a great time. So did Nikhil and Laura. That echoed the sentiments of many in the group - the idea is to have a good time doing what you love to do. It wasn’t about precision but about getting some exercise while having fun. George said he enjoyed the dancing, to be part of the workshop and to learn the finer steps. Niloufer said she found it very interesting and learned a lot of steps- the waltz was new for her. Anisha said the event was fantastic with lots of laughs and lots of fun. Sushma, Rajashree and Smitha all loved the workshop and Sushma said for the first time she jived to someone else’s tunes!



Dr Rajan said he had a wonderful time and this was something he hadn’t done before.

Usha said, “It was a fabulous evening, it was not difficult and we learnt to be both leader and follower.” Rajshri said this event was very good and a much required a change from our sometimes-mundane lives and that this kind of event helps bring “life into our lives.”

One of the highlights was to see a very graceful dancer - senior Rotarian Past President Shanker Mangadu on the dance floor. What an inspiration!

Archana did a recap of the entire jive routine with Sqn Ldr Nair and it was brilliant how she could keep pace and pick up the steps so easily,

A huge thank you to Rtn. Anand Rengaswamy for providing the Anandam Hall at Hotel Maris, which was again perfect for the event. The delicious refreshments were sponsored by Director Rtn.Bharat Pujara. A special shout out to Rtn.Linesh and Rtn.Fharzana for coordinating the event.

Watch out for the Committee’s next event - a calming pranayama workshop! Hope to see you all there.

- Rtn. Priya Bhatkal ■

RCM NEW LEARNING & INDUSTRIAL VISITS SAINT - GOBAIN INDUSTRIAL VISIT - SRIPERUMBUDUR PLANT AUGUST 26th 2023

Under the New Learning & Industrial visit committee under Chairman Rtn. Rajesh Somasundaram, we had our first Industrial visit on August 26th 2023 to the Saint Gobain plant at Sriperumbudur. This was organized thanks to our Rtn. Bobby Balakrishna.

We had an enthusiastic group of 21 Rotarians who participated.

It was a fantastic trip and we were all mesmerised by the warmth & hospitality of the Saint Gobain team led by Mr Pughazendhi, Mr. Prabhu, Mr. Manikandan, Mr. Hari and a team of 20 members from Saint Gobain.

The visit started off with an introductory video & presentation about the company and the Chennai plant, which is the largest glass plant of Saint Gobain in the world.

We were then given a safety briefing and provided safety shoes, goggles, helmets, and reflective jackets and were taken on buggies to various parts of the plant - mirror line, float glass line and the Security toughened glass line (for automotive) where we got to see how the glass is made, coated, heated, cooled, cut - it was fascinating. Our Rotarians also had great questions. We also planted saplings at the Miyawaki forest that the company maintains on a 7-acre area and has visitors plant saplings.

Mirroring RCM's focus, the company has a specific focus on ensuring they support women, and many women run the assembly lines. Through a program "Gift of Education", they also support 200 students through the NTTF program on their campus by providing scholarships, on the job training and placements. And they are environment friendly having two large rainwater harvesting water bodies which helps them not use groundwater for almost 7 months in a year, a 3.5 MW rooftop solar plant and a Waster heat recovery system to support their energy needs. They also increasingly recycle a lot of glass.

The visit was capped off by Director Rtn. Vijay Balaji proposing a Vote of thanks and President Rtn. Ravi Sundaresan also thanked the Saint Gobain team for hosting us. This was followed by



a delicious lunch hosted by them at the Fairfield by Marriott hotel nearby.

Overall, a superb start to the year and we look forward to more such Industrial visits that the committee is planning.

A big shout out to Rtn. Bobby for helping us with the permissions and to Chairman Rtn. Rajesh Somasundaram and team for organising the visit. A big thank you to Honorary Secretary Rtn. Seshasai for organising the Volvo bus and the snacks that made the travel so comfortable and finally, a big thank you to the energetic group of 21 Rotarians for their enthusiasm that made this visit a Grand Success.

Post to our visit, we received an E-mail from Saint-Gobain profusely thanking us for picking them as the learning destination for our industrial visit. Below is the message they have for us.

Rtn. Vijay Balaji

Director of Vocational Services - RCM ■

RCM Library Building Site Visit. Site visit to Rotary Nagar Proposed New building.

August 25th 2023

On 25th August President Rtn Ravi Sundaresan, Rtn Rajit Mhetras and Director Rtn Vijay Balaji Visited the proposed site for the construction of new library building at Rotary Nagar

They met with the local Rotary Nagar committee and reviewed the requirements. The recommended layouts from which Rtn Rajit Mhetras would develop the drawings and plan that will be presented to the Corporation for approval. ■



RCM SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM SCHOLARSHIP HANDOVER TO STUDENTS IN ROTARY NAGAR August 29th 2023

Greetings from the Vocational Service team!

On 29th August, 2023, Under the RCM Scholarship committee, we distributed scholarships to three students from Rotary Nagar.

The Scholarship were distributed by President Rtn. Ravi Sundaresan, our first lady Rtn Aruna Sri Ravi and by the Deputy Consul General of Japan Mr. Miyata Kenji in the presence of PP Rtn. N K Gopinath, Cultural Head of Japan Ms. Teraoka Mami, Rtn Shivkumar Vellu Co-chair Scholarship committee, Honorary Secretary Rtn. Sesha Sai and Rtn. Vijay Balaji Director Vocational service.

- Rtn Vijay Balaji

Director of Vocational Services - RCM ■





HOLISTIC HARMONY HELD AT JEPPIAAR ENGINEERING COLLEGE

The Rotaract Club of Jeppiaar Engineering College, sponsored by Rotary Club of Madras| RID 3232 is elated to inform all of you on the successful completion of Holistic Harmony, a session on Holistic Wellness and Living by Rtn PP PHF Dr G Preethi, Rotary Club of Adambakkam. She is a renowned speaker and a delightful company on stage providing us with information on how we, the student and Rotaract community can take care of ourselves with matters as simple as breathing the "right" way.

We were just as perplexed when we were told we breathe the wrong way! The session was so insightful on more than one front, justifying the holistic nature of it all. The Session was held on 29th August from 12pm onwards. The President of Rotary Club of Adambakkam, Rtn Dr Suresh also graced the occasion, along with the college heads of Jeppiaar Engineering College Dr J Francis Xavier, Principal and Dr Shaleesha A Stanley,

Dean-Academics and Pro-Chancellor, Jeppiaar University.

The event was exceptionally useful to us as we were all immersed in the content provided to us. We are deeply grateful for our Youth Service Director, Rtn Balaji Chini sir who was very instrumental and agile in finding us this GEM of a speaker. We are truly grateful for his support so far and for this specific occasion as well. The Faculties who joined gave the Club President a very positive review as well.

We ended on the note of "He who serves the most, gains the most", the secondary Rotary Motto and Holistic Harmony was adjourned.

Written by

Rtr Yasmeen Begum
Lighthouse Coordinator
RaC JEC ■

A History on how the fireside MEETINGS CAME ABOUT

The first fireside meeting of the Club was held on August 9, 1966, at the residence of Rtn. M. Ct. Muthiah.

It was a success but the concept still needed boosting.

The September 20, 1966 issue of The Light House carried an explanation of what fireside meetings were:

"A Fireside meeting is an informal gathering of a group of Rotarians in the home of a Club member to develop acquaintance and to learn more about Rotary. Many clubs have found such meetings to be particularly effective for keeping the membership up-to-date on Rotary and in providing Rotary information to new members as a means of assimilating them into the club."

In the same issue, the 'In A Lighter Vein' column had this to say on the topic: "At first, the thought of Fireside meetings might seem repulsive to many, what with so much heat generated in every walk of life in the country and especially in the sweltering, humid city of Madras. Noneless, the idea is quite commendable provided the rendezvous takes place in the surroundings of a buttery bar or some such similar haunt, where thirst is quenched, tongues loosened, minds cleared and appetite satisfied.

Many useful suggestions will come forth, work accomplished and lifelong friends made.

If the above fails, God help the President or have fire-ing meetings."

Whether the humorous approach helped the idea along is not known but by 1971, fireside meetings were a well-organised affairs with a group of about 21, each under the chairmanship of a member of the Fireside Committee.

Excerpt from Timeless Legacy

Courtesy Rtn PP N K Gopinath





FRIDAY firesides

AUGUST 2023

Fireside No 4 : Hosted by
Rtn Dr Krishna Hande and Dr Indira on Fri, Aug 4
Rotarians: 24, Spouses: 20, Total: 44

Fireside No 5: Hosted by
Rtn Anand Vurgese and Dr Anila on Fri, Aug 18
Rotarians: 16, Spouses: 7, Total: 23

Fireside No 6: Hosted by
Rtn Hemu Ramaiah and Jai Subramaniam on Sun, Aug 20
Rotarians: 20, Spouses: 8, Total: 28

Total firesides in August: 3
Total Rotarians: 60, Spouses: 35
Total: 95(excluding hosts)

BIRTHDAYS

Sept 12th - Rtn. PP Indra Subramanyam
Sept 13th - Rtn. PP.Shanker C Mangadu
Sept 13th - Rtn. Dr. Bhawana Sirohi
Sept 14th - Rtn. Venkatesh Munnikrishnan
Sept 14th - Rtn. Mehul Uday Nanavathi
Sept 16th - Rtn. Maya Thiagarajan
Sept 17th - Rtn. Vicek A.Parachur

Sept 11th - Ann. Sara B. Cherian
(Spouse of Rtn. Vivek A. Parachur)
Sept 13th - Ann. Anna Madhavann
(Spouse of Sanjay Madhavan)
Sept 15th - Ann.Radhakrishnan S.Iyer
(Spouse of Rtn. Nalani Radhakrishnan)
Sept 12th - Ann. Divya Chetti
(Spouse of Rtn. Deepak Chander)

WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

Sept 12th - Rtn. S. Nagarajan & Chandra
Sept 12th - Rtn. Hemanth Srivata & Vasudha
Sept 13th - Rtn. Sudha Raghunathan & Raghunathan
Sept 15th - Rtn. Rinku Mecheri & Ravi Mecheri

TRANQUIL TRANQUEBAR

"As the swirling sky meets the open sea on this blissful morn this is the place to be"

Dr. Sangeetha Vishwanathan

