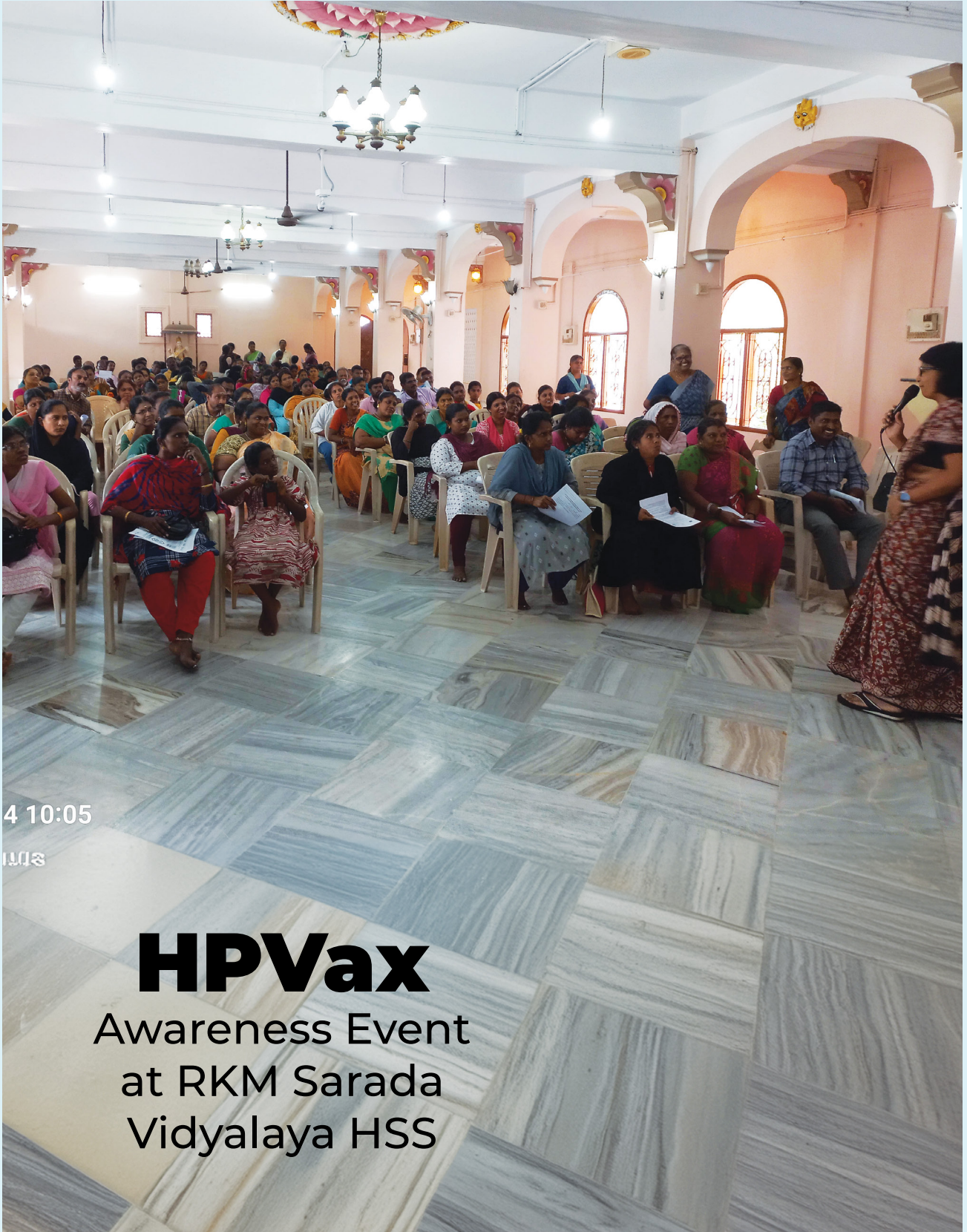


THE LIGHTHOUSE

BOND | BUILD | BRING CHEER

WEEKLY BULLETIN OF THE ROTARY CLUB OF MADRAS | ISSUE 10 | September 08, 2024



4 10:05

11/13

HPVax
Awareness Event
at RKM Sarada
Vidyalaya HSS

Dear RCMers,

With cervical cancer emerging as the second most common cancer in women between the ages of 15 and 44, RCM's initiative to take the HPVax awareness program to schools, is all the more laudable. This issue features an awareness program for parents.



Rtn.Shivkumar Eashwaran
Editor

Rtn.A.R.Raghunandan
Chairperson

Mr.Madhu Mathen
Co-Chairperson

Rotary Club of Madras

11th Weekly Meeting

Tuesday,
10th September 2024 | 1.30 pm
at Hyatt Regency, Chennai.

Speaker:
Sujal & Medha

Co-founders of Embarq,
a venture that has been setting
the benchmark for Luxury
Self-drive Road Trips.

in conversation with
Rtn. Krish Vijayan

Topic:
The Road Less Travelled

Please note that spouses are cordially invited for this meeting

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Rtn. Shanno Ravi

Director - Club Service

Rtn. Rajesh Mani

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Rtn. PP. Rani Muralidharan

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Rotary Club of Madras (RCM)
Minutes of the 10th Weekly Meeting held on 03-09-2024, 1.30 PM
 at Hyatt Regency, Teynampet, Chennai

Call to Order and Invocation:

The meeting commenced at 1:30 PM. Sergeant-at-Arms, Rtn. Jayant Hemdev, collared the President. President Rtn. Chella Krishna G., called the 10th weekly meeting of the year to order. A silent invocation was observed.

Welcome and Introductions:

President, Chella Krishna G., welcomed all attendees, particularly the guests of honor, Mr. V. Sriram and Mrs. Deborah Thiagarajan. Honorary Secretary, Rtn. Rajesh Mani, escorted Mrs. Deborah Thiagarajan to the dais. Visiting Rotarians and members of Probus Club were acknowledged: Probian Sukumar and Probian Srinivasan J. A special mention was made of Ms. Shraddha, daughter of Rtn. PP. Rani Muralidharan, who manages video production for the meetings.

Special Acknowledgement of **Rtn. Krishnamurthy Vijayan** : President Chella Krishna acknowledged the efforts of Rtn. Krishnamurthy Vijayan in obtaining funding of Rs.42 lakhs from Aptus Housing for the Balwadi Project .

Member Announcements:

- **Rtn. Prasanna Rajagopal (Director of Fundraising):** Announced the introduction of a "Cause Champion" program for crowdfunding and involvement of Rotarians in smaller fundraising projects. He also introduced this week's cause: supporting an Interactors' trip to Rtn. Rajiv Khanna's factory, with a need for funds to cover bus transportation.
- **Rtn. Aswath Kumar Reddy:** Provided details on the first cause of the week related to the Interactors' trip, highlighting the need for funds to cover the cost of buses.
- **Rtn. Rajesh Somasundaram:** Invited members to a breakfast at his home, followed by the inauguration of the Balwadi project in Kannathur on September 6, 2024.
- **Rtr. J. Sasi Kumar,** District Rotaract Representative (DRR): Shared updates on the Rotaract initiatives, including fundraising achievements and upcoming projects. He also announced his selection to participate in the Rotary International Assembly in Florida.
- **Rtn. Dr. Sangeetha Viswanathan:** Reported on the successful HPV vaccination awareness event at Sri RKM Sarada Vidyalaya and the upcoming sessions at the same school and a sister school.

Secretary's Announcements:

- **Rtn. Rajesh Mani:** Announced birthdays and anniversaries for the week. Highlighted the next

weekly meeting's speaker, Ms. Sharanya Subramaniam, a casting director.

Introduction of Guests:

Rtn. PP. Mohan Raman P.V. introduced Mrs. Deborah Thiagarajan and Mr. V. Sriram, highlighting their contributions to the city of Chennai and their achievements.

Guest Speakers:

Mrs. Deborah Thiagarajan and Mr. V. Sriram addressed the gathering, followed by a Q&A session.

Acknowledgments:

Rtn. PP. Gopinath N.K. presented mementos to the guest speakers.

Vote of Thanks:

A vote of thanks was delivered by the Secretary.

Next Meeting:

The 11th weekly meeting is scheduled for September 10, 2024, with Ms. Sharanya Subramaniam as the guest speaker.

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned by President, Rtn.Chella Krishna G.

BIRTHDAYS

Rtn. PP. Indra Subramanyam	12/9
Rtn. PP.Shanker C. Mangadu	13/9
Rtn. Dr. Bhawna Sirohi	13/9
Rtn. Dr. Venkatesh Munikrishnan	14/9
Rtn. Mehul Uday Nanavati	14/9

SPOUSES' BIRTHDAYS

Ann. K. Alamelu, Spouse of Rtn. Nalli Kuppaswami Chetti	9/9
Ann. Sangeetha, Spouse of Rtn. A. Gooch Kumar	9/9
Ann. Sara B. Cherian , Spouse of Rtn. Vivek A. Parachur	11/9
Ann. Anna Madhavan, Spouse of Rtn. Sanjay Madhavan	13/9
Ann. Radhakrishna S. Iyer, Spouse of Rtn. Nalini Radhakrishnan	15/9

WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

Rtn. S. Nagarajan & Chandra	12/9
Rtn. Hemant Srivatsa & Vasudha	12/9
Rtn. Sudha Raghunathan & Raghunathan	13/9
Rtn. Rinku Mecheri & Rajeev Mecheri	15/9



Dakshina Chitra and Madras Bashai

Culture is not stagnant. This was the thought that clearly stood out as Deborah Thiagarajan and V. Sriram took center stage and walked the audience through the by-lanes of the rich cultural heritage of Madras at the 10th Weekly meeting of RCM on September 3, 2024.

Sriram Venkatakrishnan is a renowned author and heritage activist. He has written many books on Madras and its history and has pioneered the concept of heritage walks in Chennai. As a historian, he has passionately followed the evolution of the Madras Bashai (literally "Madras Language" in Tamil). He highlighted Chennai's history with a diverse population settling in different parts of the city, including the original Tamil and Telugu natives, the Portuguese, Muslims, Arabs, and even the North Indian Marwadi community.

Each of these contributed to the unique dialect of Madras. Some popular slang words used in everyday language today were originally coined many years ago. Film historian and Past President Mohan Raman has drawn comparisons between London's Cockney dialect and Madras Bashai. It was fitting that Sriram engaged Deborah Thiagarajan in a lively conversation as she spoke about her journey with Dakshina Chitra. Deborah, born in Philadelphia, first arrived in Chennai in 1970.

Her initial work involved evaluating the quality of mid-day meals, taking her across Tamil Nadu and allowing her to interact closely with the natives. The rich culture, intricate architecture, colorful customs, traditions, and ways of life in South India left a deep impact on her. This exposure inspired her to

create Dakshina Chitra, a one-of-a-kind living history museum.

Deborah established the Madras Craft Foundation (MCF) in 1984 with minimal funds and no land. Recognizing her vision and passion for showcasing South India's cultural heritage, the Government of Tamil Nadu provided her with land in 1990 on a long-term lease. It is at this location in Muttukadu on the East Coast Road where this heritage museum stands today.

Deborah sincerely



acknowledged the funding received from the Ministry overseeing handicrafts in India and various Tamil Nadu corporates committed to preserving South India's cultural diversity from 1991 to 2001. She particularly mentioned five people who were instrumental in shaping Dakshina Chitra: Laurie Baker (the architect), Vishveshwaran (administrative head), Balakrishnan (chartered accountant), and Ramakrishna and Sharma from L&T (construction). Their pro-bono work greatly helped establish Dakshina Chitra.

Dakshina Chitra finally opened its doors to visitors in 1996 as a public museum. Its sources of revenue are diverse, including traditional craft shops, unique guest houses, a restaurant, mini weddings, corporate and family functions, and ticket sales. The

museum became self-sufficient in 2008 and has continued to thrive. It had a footfall of 265,000 visitors in 2023. Today, the museum has a strong social media presence, with around 50% of its followers in the age bracket of 30–45 years.

Sriram explored how Dakshina Chitra differs from other museums. Deborah likes to call it a museum designed for people to experience history and culture, not just view it. This has been effectively achieved through craft areas, exhibitions, artisans, musicians, and various events linked to festivals. Dakshina Chitra features traditional and historical houses of the South. The foundation has carefully identified heritage homes slated for demolition and reconstructed them using original materials.

These houses include the timber and rock from hundreds of years ago, maintaining their authenticity. The Mapilai House is one such reconstruction, and the Koduva House, reflecting the Coorg style of living, is also being developed. Deborah acknowledges the challenges the museum may face in the future. She believes that the museum must embrace augmented reality, which requires expensive equipment and skilled manpower. However, Deborah remains positive and confident about overcoming these challenges. She firmly believes that Dakshina Chitra was made possible due to passionate cultural activists and their generous efforts to preserve the rich traditions of South India.

It would be appropriate to say that V. Sriram and Deborah Thiagarajan have earned the love of Chennai in the same measure that they have loved the city.

- Rtn. Himanshu Budhia



Embracing the Essence of International Peace Day

This is the first in a series of five articles on Peace by Rtn.Fharzana Siraj, to commemorate International Day of Peace (September 21st).

International Peace Day is more than a date on the calendar; it is a solemn reminder and a call to action for every global citizen. In a world increasingly fragmented by conflicts, inequality, and environmental degradation, this day serves as a beacon of hope, a moment to pause, reflect, and recommit to the principles of peace that transcend borders, cultures, and ideologies.

For citizens of the world, International Peace Day is an opportunity to envision a future where understanding and compassion replace discord and division. It

invites each of us to contribute, in our unique ways, to the creation of a world where every individual's dignity is respected, where conflicts are resolved through dialogue rather than violence, and where our shared humanity is celebrated above all else.

For Rotarians, International Peace Day resonates deeply with the core values of fellowship, service, and integrity. As members of a global organization dedicated to fostering goodwill and building sustainable peace, Rotarians understand that peace is not merely the absence of war, but the presence of justice, equality, and opportunity. It is a state of harmony

that must be cultivated through our everyday actions—whether by advocating for conflict resolution, supporting education and healthcare initiatives, or engaging in community service that uplifts the most vulnerable among us.

This day also serves as a reminder of the power of collective

transcends language and culture. Its origins can be traced back to the 1940s, during World War II, when it was used as a symbol of victory. However, in the 1960s, it was adopted by the counterculture and anti-war movements as a sign of peace, love, and harmony.

The peace sign's simplicity is its strength. By raising two fingers, one conveys a message of non-violence and a desire for harmony. It represents the hope for a world where conflicts are resolved through dialogue rather than warfare. This small gesture serves as a reminder that peace is not just

the absence of war, but the presence of understanding, respect, and unity among all people.

On International Peace Day, let us raise our fingers in the universal sign of peace and commit to fostering a world where kindness and compassion reign. Together, we can create a future where peace is not just a symbol, but a reality for all.

Yogic Tip:

Corresponding Yoga Mudra: Prana Mudra

Embracing Peace with Prana Mudra

In the quest for inner and outer peace, the Prana Mudra, an essential hand gesture in yoga holds



Poster Design by Rtn. Sakthivel Raja

action. When individuals, communities, and organizations like Rotary come together with a shared purpose, the impact is profound. The ripple effects of our efforts can touch lives across continents, fostering an environment where peace can flourish.

In the weeks to follow, let us reflect on every hand gesture that depicts peace, understand what it represents, and explore how we can adopt its significance in our lives.

The Universal Peace Sign: A Symbol of Unity and Hope

The hand with two fingers raised, often referred to as the "peace sign," is a universal gesture that



profound significance. This mudra, created by touching the tips of the thumb, ring finger, and little finger together while keeping the other fingers extended, is a powerful symbol of vitality and harmony. The Prana Mudra is believed to enhance the body's energy levels and balance the five elements: earth, water, fire, air, and ether.

In a world that often feels chaotic, the Prana Mudra reminds us that peace begins within. By embracing this gesture, we honor our own need for balance and tranquility, thereby contributing to a broader atmosphere of peace. Let the Prana Mudra be a daily practice, guiding us toward a more peaceful existence and inspiring those around us to seek the same harmony.

On International Peace Day, using the Prana Mudra can serve as a personal affirmation of our commitment to peace. By adopting this gesture, we invite the harmonious flow of prana into our lives, cultivating a serene inner environment that radiates outward. This simple yet profound practice helps to ground us in the present moment, dissolve stress, and foster a deeper connection with ourselves and others.

- Rtn. Fharzana Siraj

HPVax Awareness Event

at RKM Sarada Vidyalaya HSS, Burkitt Road



The first event in a series of planned awareness activities at the Sarada Vidyalaya group of schools was conducted on the morning of August 31st.

We arrived half an hour early to set up, and the school prayer-hall-cum-auditorium wore a deserted look. Mr. Varadarajan set up our standees as we waited for the audio visual technician, Mr. Arjun, to help us set up our presentation.



Gradually, a few parents trickled in, and we started to casually engage with them. They had received information about the awareness event through their children and also through letters sent from the school administrators, inviting them to participate.

We started the event about 10 minutes late, following a small invocation prayer and an introduction by Mrs. Rama K., the headmistress of the school. Much to our delight, as the presentation slides rolled with explanations in Tamil, the hall started to fill and overflow with parents. Extra chairs needed to be brought in to accommodate everyone. During the event, we distributed information sheets and consent forms in Tamil to all the attendees for them to take away and read prior to giving consent for vaccination.

The event was attended by President Chella, his wife Swetha, and our Secretary, Rtn. Rajesh Mani. President Chella addressed the gathering, encouraging the parents to make use of this opportunity to avail free vaccination for their daughters. At the end of the session, we were surrounded by parents who had questions that they wanted us to answer. We all waited until the questions were answered to the satisfaction of the parents and then accepted the offer of a hot beverages and refreshments from the school authorities.

A total of around 250 parents were present at the session, and we were all happy with the interest and engagement they showed in protecting their daughters from cervical cancer. A list of willing children will be drawn up by the school, and free vaccination will be carried out at the Cancer Institute, Adyar.

We look forward to active participation from RCM members and their families as we widen our reach across society to increase awareness about cervical cancer prevention through HPV vaccination.

Rtn. Dr. Sangeetha Viswanathan

Teachers Day Special

Interview with **Rtn. Anil Srinivasan** Musician, Educationalist, Philanthropist

On the occasion of Teachers Day, The Lighthouse features a Rotarian from our club who is not just an educationalist, but also a musician par excellence, and a wonderful philanthropist.

He is a musician, an educator; he spends the major portion of his time with children and he is a humble human being.

A man cannot make better use of his time!

He reminds me of a gentleman, Mr. Kasturirangan, a rose farmer from the age of 15 until 85, who spent his time tending to roses. The creator of Ooty Rose Garden and BCCI curator for pitches, I find the similarity so appropriate!

Anil Srinivasan has music, children and education as his occupation! Can he ask for anything more!

I asked him ordinary questions, but nothing can match the extraordinary service he does to society in his endeavour to create a generation of quality and beauty to make this world a better place.

God bless him!

Rtn. A. R. Raghunandan
Chairperson, The Lighthouse Committee.



You recently received a significant award. What was it for, and can you elaborate?

My firm, KRUU, was declared the "Best Life Skills Provider for the Year" by Element-Ed, one of the most coveted awards in education. KRUU went live only in January 2023, so this is significant progress made by us (especially my team) in less than 18 months!

KRUU provides access to students from all over South Asia to higher education institutions and professors via project-based learning. This bridge allows for valuable skills training from the world's best experts without worrying about affordability or class barriers – and this initiative has now

reached nearly half a million students in a very short period of time.

For our friends in Rotary, this might be a new facet of what I do, as most associate me with music, and quite logically so. However, KRUU is not about music, but about access to opportunities across various domains – from AI to zoology!

You train children by combining education with music. What were your thoughts behind that, and how successful has it been, in your personal opinion?

Rhapsody is my earlier venture. Rhapsody uses music (and, to some extent, visual art) to teach concepts in science, math, and languages.

This interdisciplinary mode of learning (and teaching) followed some work I had done during my studies at Columbia University. Relying on the neuroscientific aspect of enhanced brain activity when exposed to music, Rhapsody lessons take math or science concepts and convert them into songs and musical activities.

In addition, Rhapsody also brings music to challenging environments – classrooms in remote districts and children from far-flung and underprivileged communities through our CSR arm, the Rhapsody Foundation.

Rhapsody has reached more than 300,000 children and received one of the highest accolades



internationally – the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) Reimagine Education Awards in 2021 as the best Innovation in Education provider in the K12 (schooling) space worldwide, ahead of more than 3,000 initiatives. I know Rhapsody has impacted many children in meaningful ways, given wings to many dreams, and helped many communities.

And it continues to do so.

I follow you closely on LinkedIn. You have a phenomenal array of thought leaders, industrialists, and professionals in support. How important is it to you to have this group backing you?

It's extremely essential. In India today, we are only a fraction as effective if important stakeholders from various cross-sections do not support us. And this extends beyond education as a domain. We need industry to lend guidance and support on skilling and employment (for KRUU), we need our investor ecosystem to help us discover more networks and collaborators (for Rhapsody and KRUU), and sometimes we all benefit from a pat on the back and a cheer when something good happens.

As a society, we are skewed towards our champions and performers – entertainers or sportspeople who have large canvases to express their life's stories. People building educational missions are mostly backstage operators, so having others amplify one's message always helps.

What do Rhapsody and KRUU do with students to train them? Can you elaborate on the model?

Rhapsody uses music to teach STEM and languages using a multi-modal lesson plan that I developed a decade ago. Over 450 lessons are then used by trainers in

schools to make learning more creative and innovative. We also have an online teacher training platform called Cocoon.

KRUU links some of the best professors worldwide – whether from Harvard or an IIT – directly to middle and high schoolers in schools of all types across the South Asian region. Students log in to access live lectures from top professors and embark on guided project-based modules on a wide variety of subjects and disciplines.

Schools subscribe to both these services – Rhapsody (K-5) and KRUU (Std VII upwards) – to offer education in a more creative, holistic manner.

If I understand correctly, your efforts have benefitted over 400k children. Would that be correct?

Between the two efforts, we have now reached above 500,000!

I remember you have dedicated all your earnings henceforth from your concerts to charity. That's a huge commitment. What are your thoughts behind that?

In 2021, I had a health crisis. As you know, I was already doing a lot for charity even before that. Following the crisis, I made a prayer that I would donate all of my music-based earnings to charity. I think sometimes it takes a jolt like that. A lot of folks were surprised and, frankly, unsupportive of this decision. I have stuck to it, and I am happy to be doing what I can to support charity, including some of our projects at RCM.

Coming to RCM and Rotary, you have worked in the Boystown with the children there. Which areas of development did you address, and do you propose to continue that endeavor?

At RCM, my biggest contribution has been to the school we built in

Perumbakkam following the floods. I did a series of concerts in the US to raise money, most significantly from Anuja San Antonio, a group of doctors and government officials of Indian origin with special ties to Chennai, who knew me through music. That, along with personal fundraising efforts, were the first contributions that came for that mega project.

Boystown is a special interest of mine. I am a professor at KREA University, which is nearby, and we have managed to have students from KREA volunteer at BTS, as well as make small contributions to the library and music program from time to time. I will continue to do my best to support BTS.

As you know, all the performances I do for Rotary – whether at our club events or fundraisers – I do entirely free of cost, and all proceeds go towards our projects.

Are your activities restricted to India, or do you work with other countries?

KRUU is already active in six countries – India, Sri Lanka, the Maldives, GCC countries, and hopefully soon Nigeria. We hope to continue to grow. Our professors, of course, are from all over the world.

Would you like to mention people who have role-modeled for you, those you have followed or mentored, and how they inspired you?

Too many to count. My father, for his remarkable acumen and relentless enthusiasm; my music teachers, for their adherence to discipline; and many friends from both the music and education fraternities for the remarkable things they do. My mother is a great role model for her relentless optimism despite all the trials and tribulations of life.



Personally, I am a big fan of Mr. M.V. Subbiah for his personal vision and contributions to the community, Mr. Arun Jain who continues to lead by example, my dear friend and visionary Ashwin Damera for his contributions to educational access, and the chairman of my board, Mr. S.V. Krishnamurthy, for being a man of steadfast principles and unimpeachable ethical standards.

This would not have been possible without the support of your family and friends. What was their role and support behind your achievement?

My wife, Archana, is the rock on which the entire edifice of KRUU, Rhapsody, and all my decisions have been built. Without her, none of this exists.

What are your expectations from people in your universe to make this more effective and rounded, to create a better society? What do we need to do?

I think we need to create circles of gratitude. We need happier people, and it starts with acknowledging the gifts we have been given and the people who bestow these gifts. We tend to focus on those who create conflict. The tantrum throwers attract the maximum attention, and often we end up serving petulance and pettiness.

Do you have any suggestions for Rotary?

I do not have the stature to suggest anything beyond saying that we need better archiving of our contributors and better ways in which our stories of Rotary can be preserved, especially for those who join the club. With social media, technologies, and disruptive AI already here, we don't have to rely on a physical publication that comes out every five years to better create connections around interest areas (beyond our committee WhatsApp groups) and start more channels to engage with each other and with the community outside.

What are your future plans for KRUU and Rhapsody?

I see myself as a custodian of these ideas, even though I founded them. The idea is to grow them towards sustainable growth (more than at present) and then find the right flag-bearers to take things forward. To me, good leadership is knowing when to move on and allow those with better abilities and talents to take over and steer good ideas towards actualizing their true potential!

TEACHERS DAY AWARDS PRESENTED BY RCM

YEAR	NAME OF THE WINNER
2011	Senior Rotarian C. R. Vaitheeswaran
2012	Smt. Seetha Rajan
2014	Krishna Shastri Devulapalli
2015	Shri. V. Arun
2016	Dr. Mrs. Y.G. Rajalakshmi Parthasarathy & Ms. Arulselvi Chandrasekaran
2022	Yoga Guru Shri. Nandakumar
2023	Mrs. Omana Thomas



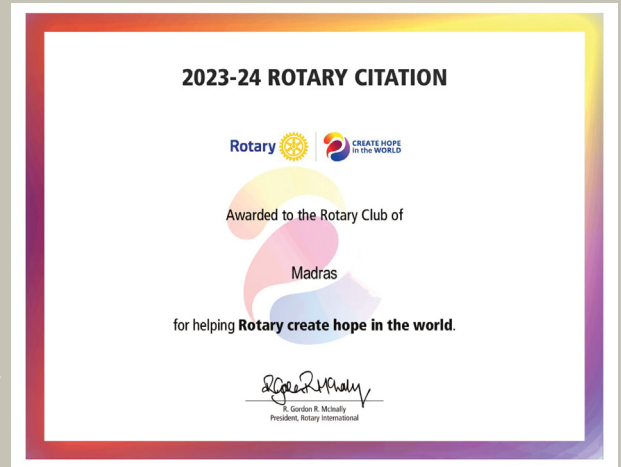
Dear 2023-24 Club President,

Congratulations! Your club has earned the Rotary Citation, the most significant award a Rotary club can achieve, for 2023-24. This past year, your club demonstrated a commitment to achieve its goals, which ultimately helps strengthen Rotary and shape our future.

Please find your Rotary Citation certificate in this folder. They are named by district number, then club name. I encourage you to display it proudly to celebrate your club's achievement.

Once again, congratulations on a successful year as club president!

Sincerely,
Gordon R. McNally
 2023-24 RI President



Issue 9 : Best Captions

1. Rajesh: "I think we've just arrived in Hawaii."
 Linesh: "No, Rajesh! We've just hit the bottom of the pineapple!"
 - Rtn. **Hemant P. Chordia.**
2. The straws are tired , but the boys are not finished yet ...
 -Rtn. **Vijay Duagr**
3. Rajesh: I hope my wife is not watching or else I have to share a drink with her every time! - Rtn. **Fharzana Siraj**
4. Linesh (confused mind voice): Never ending flow of juice... wonder where it is coming from. - Rtn. **E. M. C. Palaniappan**
5. Sipping sunshine and friendship - Rtn. **Bobby Balakrishna**
6. Linesh : " Macha Rajesh.. This is what we tablers do, we share everything even the last drink " - **Ann. Tanuja Paul**
7. Cheers to the perfect blend of pineapple and coconut.
 - Rtn. **Dr. Anisha Ashok**
8. "Double the fun, double the straws! When life gives you a Pineapple, share it with a friend... Hawaiian style"
 - Rtn. **Naveen Kumar Bhatia.**
9. This is really and truly friend'sip' RCM shtyle...O la la
 - Rtn. **PP. Vivek Harinarain.**
10. "What can I say about this popular duo sipping the pineapplicious triotail, HipaHipa Rajesh and Linesh!"
 - **Ann.Midhuna**



Issue 10

Suggest the most quirky, whacky or creative caption/ blurb for this photo (Maximum 15 words). The best entries will be reproduced in the next week's edition of Lighthouse.

Mail your captions to editor@rcmlighthouse.com on or before 10th September .





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