

# THE LIGHTHOUSE

WEEKLY BULLETIN OF THE ROTARY CLUB OF MADRAS  
ISSUE 12 | SEPTEMBER 21, 2023

BUILDING RESPONSIBLE COMMUNITIES






Dear RCMers,

Greetings!

Presenting to you Lighthouse with a round up of marvellous events and a highlight on World Peace Day

Yours in Rotary,

**Rtn. Sunita Suresh**



**ROTARY CLUB OF MADRAS**  
**COMBINED COMMUNITY SERVICES**  
**& AVENUE SERVICES MEETING**  
 Friday, 29th September 2023  
 at 7.00 pm at Manor Hall,  
 Hyatt Regency, Chennai.  
**CLOSED DOOR MEETING FOLLOWED BY**  
**FELLOWSHIP & DINNER**

<b>Rtn. S. Ravi</b> President	<b>Rtn. M. Sessa Sai</b> Honorary Secretary
<b>Rtn. Vikram Chesetty</b> Director Club Service	<b>Rtn. Sandhya Sridhar</b> Chairperson Programs Committee



Dear Rotarians,

We recently held our first meeting in collaboration with the Ability Foundation to organize a job fair on October 9th for individuals with disabilities.

The Rotary Club of Madras is honored to be a part of this initiative, led by Chairman Rtn. Prasanna Rajagopal and Rtn. Regi Joseph.

We would like to express our gratitude to Rtn. Jayshree Ravindran for her valuable contribution and for making this opportunity possible.

## THE LIGHTHOUSE

WEEKLY BULLETIN OF THE ROTARY CLUB OF MADRAS

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[rcmlighthouse2023@gmail.com](mailto:rcmlighthouse2023@gmail.com)  
 Stay updated with our very own RCM magazine!

**EDITED & PUBLISHED BY**  
**Rtn. Sunita Suresh**, Asst. Secretary  
 Rotary Club of Madras,  
 RAYALA TOWERS,  
 2nd Mezzanine Flr., 158, Anna Salai,  
 Chennai 600 002 Phone: +91 44 2859 1020

**CONTACT THE EDITOR AT:**  
[rcmlighthouse2023@gmail.com](mailto:rcmlighthouse2023@gmail.com)

Bulletin Design:  
**CHARIS MEDIA WORKS**

Visit RCM's official website  
[www.rotarymadras.in](http://www.rotarymadras.in)

**CONTACT RCM SECRETARY AT:**  
[office@rotarymadras.in](mailto:office@rotarymadras.in)

## Minutes of the 12th Meeting of Rotary Club of Madras - Sep. 21, 2023

Location: Madras Management Association (MMA) Chennai

### Meeting commenced :

1:30 PM Sergeant at arms Rtn. Dr Parkavi Dr. Collared Rtn.Ravi Sundaresan who formally called the 12th Weekly meeting of RCM to order followed by silent Invocation.



### Call to Order and Invocation :

Rtn. Ravi Sundaresan called the 12th Weekly Meeting to order. Silent invocation was observed.

### Welcome and Confirmation :

President Rtn. S. Ravi welcomed all attendees and requested confirmation of the 11th Weekly Meeting held at MMA.

### Welcoming Guests:

Innerwheel Club President, Secretary, and members were welcomed. Mr. Navneet Agarwal, Mr. Vijay, and Mr. Bajaj were also welcomed.

### Video Presentation:

The Tech Team Played a Video.

### Announcements by Rtn. Vikram :

A trip to Thiruvananthapuram with 35 Rotarians was announced. Bon Voyage wishes were extended. Next week's meeting was cancelled in lieu of a combined community service meeting on the 29th President's visit to Kolkata was announced, and good wishes were extended.

### Announcements by Rtn. Sabina :

Rotary Foundation Month was announced. Rtn. Jagadish was recognized as a major donor with a \$10,000 donation.

### Announcements by Rtn. Yadav Murthy :

Information about the International Peace Fellowship Chair initiative was provided. Eligibility criteria and application details were shared.

### Announcements by Rtn. Vijay Balaji :

Rotary Club of Madras is Partnering with

Ability Foundation : Job Fair for graduates with disabilities was announced for October 9th. Rotarians were encouraged to volunteer for the event.

### Honorary Secretary's Announcements (Rtn. Sesha Sai) :

Birthdays and celebrations of club members and their spouses were acknowledged.

Reminder of the combined community service meeting on the 29th at the Hyatt was given.

Rtn.Ashok Thakkar has contributed Rs.58,000 for his birthday on 18th September 2023

President's Address on International Day of Peace:

President Rtn. S. Ravi emphasised Rotary's role in promoting peace and outlined his vision for a kinder, healthier, and inclusive world.

Mentioned Rotary's commitment to peace-building and conflict resolution.

Welcomed Dr. Bharathi, a global youth human rights champion, for a discussion on peace-building.

Handover to Rtn. Sandya Sridhar:

Rtn. Sandya Sridhar took over the proceedings and discussed the International Day of Peace and RCM's efforts to promote peace through youth initiatives.

### Perform for Peace Awards:

The results of the Perform for Peace initiative were announced, recognizing schools and students for their contributions to peace.

Acknowledgment to Krea Play:

Dushyanth from Krea Play received a token of appreciation for their support in organising the Perform for Peace initiative.

Conversation with Chief Guest Dr. Kriti Bharathi: Rtn. Afsar and Rtn. Farzana engaged in a conversation with Dr. Kriti Bharathi on peace-building and conflict resolution.

### Vote of Thanks :

Rtn. Sabina Narayan delivered the vote of thanks. ■



## From the 12th Meeting of Rotary Club of Madras Sep. 21, 2023









# A DAUGHTER OF INDIA!

A wonderful peace chant wafted through the air as we entered our regular meeting hall. And then a simple and effective video on “We Shall Overcome” played. What a lovely way to set the ambience! The presence of Inner Wheel Members and teachers from our Seliayur campus added energy in the room. We were all set!

President Ravi linked how today’s event was a manifestation of what he had highlighted at his inauguration about peace being one of Rotary’s pillars. Then, Rtns. Sandhya, Bhaswar and Fharzana took over. And how wonderful did they curate an excellent conversation with remarkable lady – Dr. Kriti Bharti, a true ‘Angel of Courage’/ ‘Real Sherani of India.’

Sandhya highlighted some key facts that had the audience enthralled and inspired:

- Dr. Kriti has successfully annulled over 50 child marriages and prevented 1,500 of them.
- Over 20,000 victims have been rehabilitated
- The CBSE has included her work in the syllabus
- The BBC has included her in its list of 100 influencers

Dr. Kriti began with the traditional Rajasthani greeting – ‘Khamma Ghani’ (Many Greetings). Communicating in a very down to earth manner, combining English and Hindi and by balancing the serious topic with humor, Dr. Kriti won our hearts.

She spoke about being abandoned by her father before she was born and her mother being under severe pressure to have an abortion. She faced physical and mental abuse growing up and even being poisoned at age 10 which led to be bedridden for 2 years.

At 12 she made a decision to change her surname to avoid being identified by her caste and became the ‘daughter of India’ – Kriti Bharati was born! She spoke movingly about the choices she faced– to be killed or kill abuse and exploitation – bravely she choose the latter!

Bhaswar and Fharzana had prepared really well and asked well thought through questions. Here is a snapshot of the discussion:

**Q: What causes child marriage?**

- A: • Following age old customs  
• Saving the child from sexual exploitation  
• Fear of elopement/love marriage  
• One less mouth to feed (become more acute post covid – due to economic hardships)

**Q: What are some notable examples you have dealt with?**

A: Three instances:

The groom (under age) was the informer but did not want his identity revealed. The family replaced him with an older man when questioned!

A young girl was asked to pay Rs. Six Lakhs by community leaders for annulling her marriage. Her father too did not support her.

When questioned, the groom of a 16 year old girl said that there was no marriage even as there was no invitation card or official photos. Fortunately, social media told a different story.

**Q: What are the different type of interventions you undertake?**

A: 5 types:

1. Child marriage annulment
2. Prevention of child marriage
3. Information campaigns and oath taking at community level
4. Rehabilitation of young brides who are isolated and unsupported
5. Using social media campaigns

**Q: What is involved in rehabilitation?**

A: Psycho-social support, livelihood, education, shelter and community education. Plus motivating them to continue their studies is the only fees her organization expects!

Dr. Kriti ended with three powerful thoughts

- Child marriages happen all across India and the world (even in the UK!)
- To gain peace, we have to be willing to have conflicts!
- We can each support this cause through time/money/resources without needing to be front line activists!

Rtn. Sabina epitomized elegance, warmth and thoughtfulness as she thanked the many many players involved in putting together this event. A special mention to President Ravi for giving the International team the freedom and support to curate this event and Chair-Person Guna for pulling it all together!

*Rtn. Sanjay Chaganti ■*





# INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE

September 21st is celebrated as International Day of Peace. The United Nations' aim in assigning this date to Actions for peace, is to promote peaceful, just and inclusive societies that protect the human rights of women, children and the marginalized. Strengthening the ideals of peace involves fostering compassion and empathy to resolve all conflicts.

This is both an individual and collective responsibility. We at the Rotary Club of Madras invited Dr Kriti Bharti, who actively champions the rights of women and children, freeing them from the clutches of 'Child Marriage'.

She is a crusader who "annulled" India's first Child Marriage.

In 2012, her Saarthi Trust made history by annulling the first child marriage in India. As of date, she has annulled several hundreds of child marriages and prevented more than 1600 of them.

In 2022, Dr Bharti was honoured with the Global Youth Human Rights Champion Award by the Geneva Center for Human Rights & Global Dialogue, GCHRGD, as a Human Rights Champion.

- Rtn. Sabina Narayan ■



## BIRTHDAYS

Sept 25th - Rtn. N.Prakash  
Sept 27th - Rtn. N. Sukumar  
Sept 30th - Rtn. Vineeth Prakash Munjal  
Oct 1st - Rtn. Kannan . B

Sept 25th - Ann. Meena  
(Spouse of Rtn.Mohankumar Subramanyan)  
Sept 25th - Ann. Priyadarshini (Spouse of Rtn. V.Murali)  
Sept 25th - Ann. Vasudha (Spouse of Rtn. Hemant Srivatsa)  
Sept 1st - Paraiakshith Jhaver  
(Spouse of Rtn. Anuradha Jhaver)

## WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

Sept 27th - Rtn. Rita Chaudhuri & Moley Chaudhuri  
Sept 29th - Rtn. N.K.Bhatia & Amita Bhatia  
Sept 29th - Rtn. PDG Kamdar J.B. & Marlene J Kamdar  
Sept 30th - Rtn. Balakrishna Rao M & Jayashree Potty





Rtn. Raghunandan, we have netted you in the bracket of "green rotarians" .... Lightest green. It's gives us the opportunity to get to know you better, and we are happier for that.

"My work is in international consulting, and I was based in Singapore until 2017. Due to health issues, and the necessary treatment required, I took a decision to return to Chennai. Once I was well and back on my feet, I joined RCM at the end of 2019, looking forward to that journey. Covid struck shortly after, my health a tailspin and a setback in our family."

Despite it all, today he is an advisor to several trade bodies and think tanks. He works with the Ministry of Commerce and also in a committee of Retd. Foreign Service officers & senior Army Generals. Their goal - working towards a World Without War & Peace Economy. It is like a movement - better economies through peace.!! (Aren't we lucky to have an RCMer like this amongst us)

#### Your journey in RCM so far....

"I was offered the post of Director - International Relations in PP Jayashree's year. A babe in the woods, initially a bit lost, and then it got better once I understood the workings.

It was extraordinary to me, the whole journey, we did good (that's treating it lightly), contributing 200,000 USD to the TRF.

From my side the small contributions - I helped get a speaker to our meetings and a friend helped with the "little hearts project".

We worked in getting a partnership going with IIT Madras & RCM relating to the WASH project, more help and focus is required here to keep it going."

#### If you were to choose a year in your life that you would reset or relive differently, which year would it be & why?

"Oh Never!.... I would not change a thing! I believe I am blessed. A cancer survivor, and twice at that.

It's all the blessings of our parents. Even when I was going through the entire treatment, I never questioned - why me, and I always believed I would come out alright. It was not a strategy. It is what pulled me through."

#### Going forward.... What would you like to work on? RCM & otherwise.

"I would like to help in counselling, especially those struggling with their health issues, I know what that was like, and it helps to have friends to speak with. Of my own accord, I find people and offer my time." (A wonderful quiet gesture- something for all of us to do, which I am sure we do - but that reminder is a nudge).

Rtn. Raghunandan, thank you for sharing your personal space with us. Respect.

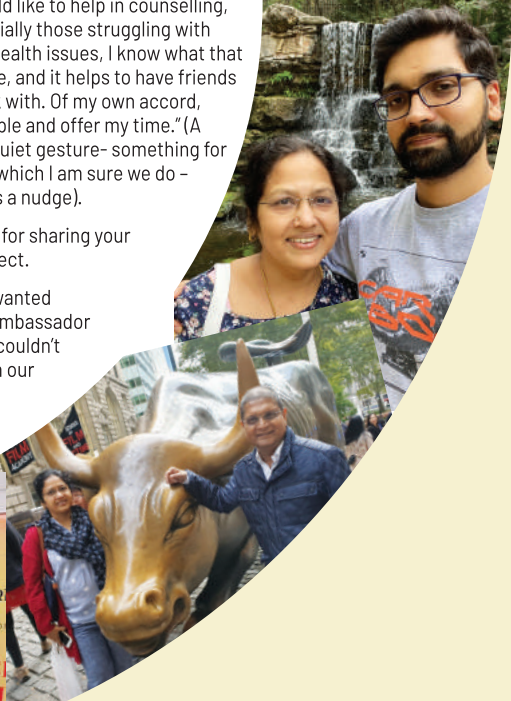
PS: when Lighthouse editor wanted someone apt to write about ambassador Deepa Wadhwa's speech, we couldn't think of anyone better, and on our request, he agreed readily.

We got him to share some beautiful photos of work, family & fun. Enjoy!!

## THE PULSE ON THE GROUND

.....the engaged GREEN RCMer

In conversation with  
Rtn. Akur Raman Raghunandan  
joined RCM 13th November 2019  
in the field of International  
Business Consulting.





## DENTAL CAMP DONATION

On 7th September 2023, the Rotary Club of Madras met with Suryodaya Bank Chairman and CSR head. The meeting was so cordial and they agreed to support them for the next six months by transferring a sum of 7 lakhs payment towards running costs for mobile dental camps in government schools.

A recent visit was made to our dental camp at Villivakkam Primary School near Valasaravakkam and the team was quite satisfied. ■



## EYE CAMP at Veeraragavapuram Village. Thiruvallur District

Organised By **Rotary club of Madras.**

Total no of patients screened 66

Total no of free glasses distributed 12

Total no of cataract patients Picked up for free surgery 16



## VANGUARD INSTALLATION CEREMONY 2023-24 ROTARACT CLUB OF JEPPIAAR UNIVERSITY



On the morning of September 14, 2023, the Rotaract Club of Jeppiaar University witnessed a remarkable installation ceremony for the year 2023-24. The event was a celebration of service, leadership, and the spirit of Rotaract. With the resonant notes of the Tamil Thai vazhthu echoing through the hall, it began with a profound sense of purpose and gratitude. The ceremony commenced with a warm welcome address by Rtr. Dharmesh, the Charter President of the Rotaract Club of Jeppiaar University. He extended his heartfelt greetings to the esteemed Chief Guest, Rtn. Ravi Sundaresan, President of the Rotary Club of Madras, and the Guest of Honor, Youth Service Director Rtn. Balaji Chinni, Rtn. Deepak Chander, Rotaract Zone Chairman-1, Rtn. Reji Joseph from the Rotary Club of Madras, and Rtn. Summan Voora from the Rotary Club of Madras.

Also present were key figures from the Rotaract community, including Rtr. PP. Essaki Sekar, DRR RID|3232, Rtr. PP Sanjan David Varma, DRR Elect 24-25 RID|3234, Rtr. PP. Niranjana, DRS 23-24 RID|3232, and Rtr. PP Dinesh Kumar, ADRR 23-24 RID|3232.

A pivotal moment during the ceremony was when Rtn. Ravi Sundaresan, President of the Rotary Club of Madras, bestowed the collar upon Rtr. Dharmesh, officially marking him as the President-Elect for the year 2023-24. The charter was then handed over to the capable hands of the Secretary, Rtr. Naveen Kumar, by Youth Service Director Rtn. Balaji Chinni.

Symbolism filled the air as the Sergeant-at-Arms band was wrapped around the wrist of the new Sergeant, Rtr. Venkatswamy, by Rotaract Chairman Zone-1 of the Rotary Club of Madras, Rtn. Deepak Chander.

In the spirit of leadership and commitment, Rtr. Dharmesh appointed his dedicated team of office bearers. The dignitaries present had the honor of issuing appointment letters to these

enthusiastic individuals, ensuring a smooth transition of leadership.

Faculty Coordinator of the Rotaract Club of Jeppiaar University, Mr. Samuel Das, shared his insights and addressed the gathering, emphasizing the importance of service and community engagement.

The Chief Guest, Guest of Honor, and special invitees took the stage to inspire the gathering with their words of wisdom and encouragement, underscoring the significance of Rotaract's mission and vision.

Rtr. Naveen Kumar, the newly appointed Secretary, expressed gratitude and extended a heartfelt vote of thanks to all those who made the ceremony a success.

With a sense of purpose and a commitment to serving the community, Rtr. Dharmesh.S, the newly inducted President, adjourned the Vanguard Installation Ceremony, marking the beginning of a year filled with service, leadership, and Rotary's unwavering spirit.

The Vanguard Installation Ceremony 2023-24 of the Rotaract Club of Jeppiaar University was an event filled with inspiration, dedication, and a strong sense of community. As the club gears up for a year of service and leadership, the spirit of Rotary shines brightly.

**- Rtn. Balaji Chinni**  
Youth Service Director





## WASH PROJECT

On September 16, 2023, a ground breaking ceremony took place at Nemili Government High School. The event was attended by fellow Rotarians of our club, school children, school staff, and the contractors. The purpose of the project is to construct new toilet facilities and hand washing stations for the 195 boys, 230 girls, and 30 faculty members in the school. Additionally, a digital classroom is being installed, with RCM investing about 15 lakhs in the project.

It is worth mentioning the grand reception that the government school organised, which included NCC cadets playing in the band.

After the ceremony, the entire group of Rotarians proceeded to Sulerikattukuppam, where we had previously invested 6.5 crores in building houses, a community hall, a school, a cold storage facility, and 46 merchandise boats as part of our tsunami relief efforts. In order to assist the 210 households affected by the construction



of the desalination plant, we distributed 5 kgs of rice to each household. Rtn. Rajesh Somasundaram then hosted lunch for all the participants.

We thank all fellow Rotarians who joined us at the WASH Project:

1. President Rtn. Ravi Sundaresan
2. Rtn. Arvind Shankar
3. Rtn. Sabina Narayan
4. Rtn. Vivek Harinarain
5. Rtn. Vivek's friend Mr Sukumaran
6. Rtn. Chella Krishna
7. Rtn. Rajesh Somasundaram
8. Rtn. Vivek Parachur
9. Rtn. Sumit Kalra
10. Rtn. Kadiresan Adithyan
11. Rtn. Anuradha Ganesan

**Rtn. Arvind Shankar**  
Chairperson, WASH project.





# FIZZ'23

FIZZ'23 was held on 10th September 2023 at St. Thomas College of Arts and Science. FIZZ'23 was a vibrant cultural gathering meticulously crafted to captivate and delight a diverse audience. This significant occasion revolved around various art forms, cultural expressions, and values.

FIZZ'23 offered a splendid chance for both Rotaractors and non-rotaractors to unwind and unveil their latent skills.

The collective efforts of the Rotaract Club of Madras and 18 other co-host Rotaract clubs drove this event and featured diverse on-stage and off-stage activities.

"There is a 'can' in cancer because we can beat it". Cancer ranks as the world's second most prominent cause of mortality. However, progress in cancer

screening, treatment, and prevention has led to enhanced survival rates across several cancer types. FIZZ'23 aimed to extend assistance to the tribal community of Mettupalayam by utilizing the proceeds from our cultural extravaganza to provide them with a Mammogram and also to raise awareness of cancer amongst the youths.

The extravaganza was a big hit, consisting of a 3800+ energetic audience, who stayed dynamic till the valedictory.

The walk-in of 26 celebrities was a feather added to the hat.

The overall winner prize was bagged by the Rotaract Club of Madras Millennia and the runner-up prize was bagged by the Rotaract Club of Hindustan University.