

The Lighthouse

Rotary
Club of Madras



ISSUE 02

JULY 08
2025

A LEGACY
ILLUMINATED,
A FUTURE
UNVEILED

WEEKLY BULLETIN OF THE ROTARY CLUB OF MADRAS



SERVICE ABOVE SELF

BIRTHDAYS



Rtn. Mahinder Jain	7th July
Rtn. Anand Vurgese	8th July
Rtn. Rajib Kumar Hota	10th July
Rtn. M M Philip	10th July
Rtn. Suresh. P	11th July
PP Rtn. Dr. Prof. (Capt.) Biswakumar B	11th July
Shankar Menon P	14th July
T S Chandrasekar	14th July
Parul Bhatt, Spouse of PP Rtn. Satyan C. Bhatt	8th July
Anita, Spouse of Rtn. Jagdish A. Bhatia	10th July
Dr. Anila Mathan, Spouse of Rtn. Anand Vurgese	10th July
Shameem, Spouse of Rtn. Fazal Mohamed M	11th July
Ruchita Saraogi & Spouse of Rtn. Rahul Saraogi	11th July
Hema, Spouse of Rtn. Karthik Srinivasan	11th July
Mridula, Spouse of Rtn. Narasimhan V.S.	12th July

ANNIVERSARY



Rtn. Ravi Moorthy & Narayani	7th July
Rtn. Subbiah Viswanathan & Jayamangalam	9th July
Rtn. Prabha Srinivasan & Satish Sridharan	11th July
Rtn. Shri Shakthi Girish & Girish Ramdas	12th July
Rtn. Rachna Muralidharan & Vignesh Mohan	12th July



RCM BOARD 2025-26

PRESIDENT

Rtn Nikhil Raj

HONORARY SECRETARY

Rtn Prasanna Rajagopalan

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

Rtn Chella Krishna G

PRESIDENT - ELECT

Rtn Balakrishna S

PRESIDENT - NOMINEE

Rtn Ganesh Ananthakrishnan

DIRECTOR – COMMUNITY SERVICES - DEVELOPMENT

Rtn Suresh Amirapu

DIRECTOR – CLUB SERVICES

Rtn Rajesh Mani

DIRECTOR – VOCATIONAL SERVICES

Rtn Dr Sharon Krishna Rau

DIRECTOR – YOUTH SERVICE

Rtn Suman Voora

TREASURER – CLUB FUNDS & RCM BTS

Rtn Asha Mathen

ASST SEC/BULLETIN EDITOR

Rtn Manasa T Pillai

DIRECTOR – CSR

Rtn Krishnamurthy Vijayan

DIRECTOR – ROTARY FOUNDATION & INTERNATIONAL SERVICE

Rtn Shivkumar Eashwaran

DIRECTOR – COMMUNITY HEALTH

Rtn Arjun Ananth

TREASURER – RCMCT

Rtn A Gooch Kumar

DIRECTOR – FUND RAISING & PR

Rtn Sandhya Sridhar

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Co-Chairperson: Rtn Rajesh Mani

Mentor: Rtn Sesha Sai

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Mr Madhu Mathen

Rtn Akur Raman Raghunandan

Rtn Dr Rama Narasimhan

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YATRATECHS

BLOCK YOUR CALENDAR

19 July 2025

97th Charter Nite

Rtn. Nikhil Raj
President

Rtn. Prasanna Rajagopalan
Honorary Secretary

Rtn. Rajesh Mani
Director - Club Service

7 pm, Hyatt Regency, Chennai

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

Rotary Club of Madras (RCM)
Minutes of the 2nd Weekly Meeting held on 8 July 2025
@ 7.00 pm @ Hyatt Regency Ball Room, Teynampet, Chennai

I. Grand Overture and Esteemed Welcome

The momentous occasion commenced with the Master of Ceremonies, Rtn Jacob Kurian and PP Rtn Rani Muralidharan, extending a warm and ebullient welcome to all dignitaries and esteemed members, both gracing the dais and adorning the assembly.

II. The Ascendancy of Leadership: Collaring and Inaugural Toasts

A pivotal moment then unfolded as the distinguished Rtn Jayant Hemdev performed the solemn collaring of President Chella Krishna. Following this significant act, President Chella Krishna masterfully called the august meeting to order, setting the tone for the proceedings. With profound respect, President Chella then proposed a heartfelt toast to the President of India, the Honorable President Droupadi Murmu, an act of patriotic reverence. This was swiftly followed by PDG Rtn JB Kamdar's eloquent proposal of a toast to the RI President and Chief Guest District Governor Vinod Saraogi. The esteemed District Governor Vinod Saraogi then rose to deliver a gracious reply to the toasts, his words resonating with gratitude. With deepest admiration, PP Rtn PN Mohan proposed a toast to incoming President Rtn Nikhil Raj and the new Board 25-26.

III. Acknowledging Pillars of Rotary: Recognitions and Comprehensive Reporting

The Master of Ceremonies, Rtn Jacob Kurian, then took the stage once more to acknowledge and honor the presence of distinguished PDGs, Presidents, and various District Officials. The assembly then turned its attention to the Hon Secretary Rtn Rajesh Mani, who delivered a comprehensive and insightful Secretary's Report detailing the year's achievements. This was followed by presentation of the Annual Report by Rtn Ganesh Ananthakrishnan which was handed over by President Chella Krishna to DG Vinod Saraogi and IPDG Saravanan.

IV. The Torch Passed: Outgoing Board Felicitations and Presidential Address

Following this, PP Rtn NK Gopinath presented a heartfelt felicitation to the outgoing board, commending their dedicated service. The spotlight then shifted to the venerable President Rtn Chella Krishna, who delivered a profound and inspiring address, reflecting on a successful tenure.

V. The Dawn of a New Era: Installation of the President and Charter Handover

The air thrummed with anticipation as Rtn Chella Krishna, in conjunction with Rtn Nikhil Raj, presided over the official installation of President Nikhil Raj, a truly symbolic transition of leadership. The torch was then formally passed as Rtn Rajesh Mani presented the esteemed Club Charter to Rtn Prasanna Rajagopalan, signifying continuity and renewed purpose.

VI. Visionary Leadership: Introduction and Address by the New President

The newly installed President, Rtn Nikhil Raj, was then eloquently introduced by Rtn Vikram Chesetty, setting the stage for his inaugural address. President Nikhil Raj then delivered a stirring address, outlining his vision and aspirations for the club's future.

He began by lauding Immediate Past President Chella Krishna, whose dynamic leadership had taken the club to soaring heights. "A force of nature," he called him, celebrating a year that truly embodied the spirit of Build, Bond, and Bring Cheer.

Reflecting on his personal journey to the presidency, he shared how life often presents forks in the road—choices that shape destinies. For him, that defining moment came through the hands of friends who led him to the Rotary Club of Madras. From there, every mentor, every board role, and every experience stitched him into the very fabric of RCM's ethos.

He emphasized that Rotary means different things to different people, and that was the beauty of it. “Whether you give your money or your presence, your network or your applause—every form of support fuels our mission,” he said. Quoting Deepak Chopra, he compared Rotary Club of Madras to a powerful river—strong, nourishing, and steady. With emotion and elegance, the President closed by reminding everyone that Rotary is built on the simple truth of ordinary people doing extraordinary things. Alone, we can do great things. Together, we can change the world.

VII. The Vanguard Revealed: Board and Trustee Introductions

The distinguished members of the new board were then introduced through a captivating video presentation, showcasing the talent and dedication within the ranks. A moment of unity and camaraderie followed as the Board Photograph was taken, immortalizing the new leadership. The introduction of the esteemed Trustees & Sergeants further solidified the organizational structure.

VIII. Honored Guests and District Luminaries: Introductions, Felicitations, and Gubernatorial Address

PP Rtn George Cherian then stepped forward to once again recognize the esteemed PDGs, Presidents & District Officials. Rtn Visvanathan then had the distinct honor of introducing the revered Guest of Honor. This was followed by a compelling felicitation from IPDG N S Saravanan, whose words resonated with encouragement and wisdom. The grand introduction of the Chief Guest - District Governor 3234, was presented via an engaging video, building anticipation for his address. District Governor Rtn Vinod Saraogi then delivered a powerful and inspiring address as the Chief Guest, imparting synergy between District and RCM.

IX. Future Unveiled: Roster Release and Inner Wheel Acclamations

A significant moment unfolded with the release of the Roster 2025-26, presented to DG Vinod Saraogi & IPDG NS Saravanan, a testament to meticulous planning and future endeavors. The gracious Mrs Ruchita Saraogi was then introduced by Rtn Aparajitha, leading to a heartfelt felicitation by the Inner Wheel President, highlighting the strong bonds within the Rotary family.

X. Concluding Salutations and Harmonious Adjournment

The evening culminated with Rtn Prasanna Rajagopalan delivering vital Secretary's Announcements & a heartfelt Vote of Thanks, expressing gratitude to all who contributed to the event's success. The resonant notes of the National Anthem, led by the Master of Ceremonies, filled the hall, instilling a sense of national pride.

XI. Adjournment

Finally, President Rtn Nikhil Raj formally adjourned the meeting, bringing the official proceedings to a triumphant conclusion. The evening then transitioned into a time of joyous fellowship and delectable dinner, allowing for deeper connections and shared camaraderie.

THE FUTURE IS IN OUR YOUTH. AND THE FUTURE FOR OUR YOUTH IS IN EDUCATION." - PRESIDENT NIKHIL RAJ

SALUTATIONS

Immediate Past President Chella Krishna, Chief Guest District Governor Vinod Saraogi, Mrs. Usha Saraogi, Guest of Honor IPDG N. S. Saravanan, Inner Wheel Chair Mrs. Ruchita Saraogi, Outgoing Secretary Rajesh Mani and Secretary Prasanna, respected Past District Governors, District officials, Past Presidents of the Rotary Club of Madras, my fellow Presidents for 2025–26, guests, and fellow Rotarians — a very good evening.

Let me start by congratulating Immediate Past President Chella Krishna on the outstanding job done by him and his team in taking the Rotary Club of Madras to a new level. The projects completed and the level of engagement truly lived up to the theme of *Build, Bond, and Bring Cheer*.

LEGACY

It is an absolute honor to stand before you as the 97th President of the Rotary Club of Madras. Not just as one of the oldest Rotary Clubs in the country, but as a club rich in legacy — built by the continued, consistent, united leadership and progressive achievements of our Past Presidents.

It represents 97 years of unwavering service, 97 years of commitment to causes greater than us, and 97 years of bringing light where there was darkness, and hope where there was despair. Since 1929, the Rotary Club of Madras has been a symbol of what is possible when people unite with purpose. We've rebuilt schools, homes, toilets, and communities; supported healthcare; empowered women; mentored youth; and responded with compassion during crises.

This has led to our club now being recognized not just in Chennai, India, or Southeast Asia, but as one of the outstanding clubs in the world. Every past president, every member, every project has been a stitch in the rich tapestry of our legacy. And now, it is our turn to carry that legacy forward, stronger and more determined than ever.



MY PATH HERE

Many times in life, we come to a fork in the road — two paths that could lead to two different futures. A path that eventually defines our destiny. Life starts with our parents, who instill values in us and mold us into the person we become. Along the way, we meet friends, acquaintances, and experiences which further shape our path. They say you don't need a compass to find your direction in life, but it does help to have someone guide you the right way! For me, that "someone" was my friends, who were instrumental in encouraging me to join the Rotary Club of Madras — a decision that has truly shaped my life into something more fulfilling and joyous.

I believe that my journey so far in Rotary — first as Secretary on PP Rtn PN Mohan's Board, then on various boards, and always guided by various Presidents and members — will help me do my bit in building a better and stronger RCM.

THE ROAD AHEAD

The Rotary Club of Madras has been synonymous with large-scale projects, and this year too, we plan to undertake initiatives covering the 7 focus areas of Rotary: homes for the homeless, toilets in schools and villages, upgrading Anganwadis, Balwadis, and school infrastructure; lake restoration; water body rejuvenation; tree planting; supplying medical equipment such as dialysis machines and mammogram units; infant heart surgeries; HPV vaccination programs; women's empowerment; and scholarships.

There will be a renewed focus on awareness campaigns related to HPV, diabetes, autism, and mental health.

The future is in our youth. And the future for our youth is in education. We hope that our efforts in these areas will lead to healthier children — and in turn, more children in school and, more importantly, staying through school.

We have project requests worth approximately Rs. 30 crores. We have commitments from our members, CSR donors, and well-wishers to the tune of Rs.8 crores. As you can see, we have a gap to fill, for which we shall continue reaching out to corporates and donors to help us execute these plans.

WORKING TOGETHER

We have a committed set of board members who are raring to implement the plans we've laid out. But this cannot happen with just a few Directors, Chairpersons, and committee members. To be truly effective, we need the collective effort of each and every one of our members. We all have our strengths — what we need is to combine these strengths so we can magnify our reach. Your involvement can make a real difference.

I understand that Rotary means different things to different people. There is a difference between being a member of a Rotary Club and being a Rotarian. You look at Rotary from where you are positioned. Similarly, charity means different things to different people. So, what is it that we ask of you? Time, skill, network, and money. And if all of that can't be done, then at least offer your support!

FLOWING WITH PURPOSE

Deepak Chopra, in his book *The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success*, explains the “Law of Least Effort,” wherein if we channel our energy along the energy lines of the universe, we can maximize results with minimal struggle. Imagine swimming downstream in a fast-flowing river — we reach our destination with least effort. Similarly, the Rotary Club of Madras is a strong, steady river nourishing every shore it touches. We just need you to step in and strengthen the river.

At the end of the day, Rotary is about ordinary people doing extraordinary things. And now, it is our turn to carry that legacy forward — stronger and more determined than ever.

Alone, we can achieve great things. Together, we can change the world!

Looking forward to a great year together.

- President Nikhil Raj



Rtn. HC Ashok Thakkar, Founding Member and Vice-President of the Tamil Nadu Sailing Association and Vice-President of the Yachting Association of India, has finally received the much-awaited clearance from the Central Government to launch a sailing training academy at Marina Beach, Chennai. This visionary initiative, aimed at nurturing young aspirants who dream of becoming world-class sailors, marks a significant milestone for the sailing community. Rtn. Ashok humbly credits the realisation of this project to the tireless efforts of the State Government. This achievement is all the more special as we proudly celebrate the success of our own Annette, Shreya Krishna.

BOARD MEMBERS 2025-26



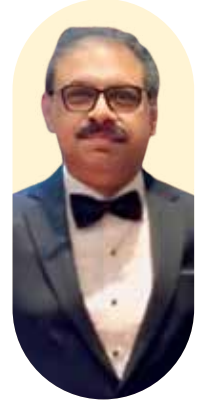
Rtn Ganesh Ananthakrishnan PHF
President Nominee

Rtn G Chella Krishna PHF
Immediate Past President



Rtn Nikhil Raj PHF
President

Rtn Prasanna Rajagopalan PHF
Honorary Secretary



Rtn S Balakrishna PHF
President Elect

Rtn Asha Mathen PHF
Treasurer – Club Funds &
RCM BTS



Rtn Rajesh Mani PHF
Director – Club Service

Rtn A Gooch Kumar PHF
Treasurer – RCMCT



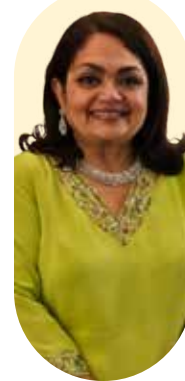
Rtn Shivkumar Eashwaran PHF
Director – Rotary Foundation
& International Service

Rtn Suman Voora PHF
Director – Youth Service



Rtn Sandhya Sridhar PHF
Director – Fund Raising
& PR

Rtn Suresh Amirapu PHF
Director – Community Service
Development



Rtn Dr Sharon Krishna Rau PHF
Director – Vocational
Service

Rtn Manasa T Pillai PHF
Asst. Sec/Bulletin Editor



Rtn Arjun Ananth PHF
Director – Community
Service Health



Rtn Krishnamurthy Vijayan PHF
Director – CSR





Rotary
Club of Madras



Installation of
Rtn. Nikhil Rao
the 97th President
Rotary Club of Madras



Rotary
Club of Madras

INAUGURA

Rotary
District 3294

A DISTRICT'S VISION FOR UNITY:

A tremendous energy permeated the splendid ballroom. The installation ceremony on 8 July 2025 drew a significant presence, including District Governor Vinod Saraogi, whose address offered a compelling perspective on the future of Rotary. Governor Saraogi observed the vibrant atmosphere that filled the grand ballroom, acknowledging the palpable sense of camaraderie among those gathered to witness the transition of leadership. A profound atmosphere of collective enthusiasm and shared purpose filled the space, all directed towards the monumental transition of Rotary leadership.



INSIGHTS FROM GOVERNOR VINOD SARAOGI

He planned to articulate how this powerful concept would guide the district's collective efforts.

The Governor expressed that the principle of uniting for good encouraged all clubs and members to intensify their collaboration, foster deeper connections, and ensure that their individual actions contributed to a more substantial, combined impact across the district. He believed that by working in unison, Rotarians could achieve outcomes that far exceeded isolated efforts, tackling challenges with amplified strength and shared purpose.

Governor Saraogi began by reflecting on the impactful year that had just concluded under the guidance of Immediate Past President Rtn G Chella Krishna. He commended the club's remarkable accomplishments, noting that Chella's tenure provided profound inspiration through its numerous successful projects. As the leadership baton passed to Rtn Nikhil Raj, Governor Saraogi conveyed his strong support and enthusiasm for the incoming presidency.

A central point of Governor Saraogi's anticipated remarks revolved around the Rotary International President's overarching theme, "Unite for Good." He assured an unprecedented synergy between the District and RCM, predicting it would lead to their most impactful and groundbreaking achievements to date.

Governor Saraogi's message also underscored the vital role of each club within the broader Rotary framework. He highlighted the district's commitment to supporting clubs in their endeavors, providing resources and guidance to facilitate their service projects and membership growth. The collaboration between the district leadership and individual clubs, he believed, was paramount to realizing the full potential of Rotary's mission. In closing, Governor Saraogi anticipated a year characterized by robust cooperation and shared achievements, all under the banner of uniting for good. He conveyed a strong sense of optimism for the collective journey ahead, confident that the dedication and combined efforts of Rotarians across the district would continue to create profound, positive changes in communities.

A LEGACY ILLUMINATED, A FUTURE UNVEILED

Celebrating Chella's Year and Welcoming Nikhil Raj

The air in the grand ballroom was absolutely buzzing. A palpable sense of anticipation and camaraderie filled the space as Rotarians gathered to celebrate a remarkable year gone by and warmly embraced the dawn of a new Rotary era. That night, as the new President, Rtn Nikhil Raj, was ushered in, The Lighthouse magazine dedicated its special installation issue to the incredible journey just completed under the stellar leadership of Immediate Past President, Rtn G Chella Krishna, and looked forward with boundless optimism towards the path ahead.

Chella's 2024 was nothing short of brilliant. It was a testament to visionary leadership, unwavering dedication, and a heart for service above self. From the moment he took the helm, he inspired everyone to "Bond, Build, and Bring Cheer," and he indeed delivered on every front. The launch of the pioneering HPVAX program, aimed at eradicating HPV-related cervical cancer, was a notable achievement. That initiative, spearheaded by Chella and his dedicated team, marked a crucial step in community health, impacting countless lives and setting a benchmark for proactive healthcare. The truly transformative project of building 100 new, durable homes to the marginalized Irular community in Boomanjikulam Village was also unforgettable. This was not just about providing shelter; it was about restoring dignity, offering security, and opening doors to a brighter future. As Chella always meant, "We are here not for our own glory, but to lead and serve everyone else", he kept up to this philosophy every single day. His emphasis on youth services not only built strong foundations but also inspired a wave of enthusiasm that would resonate for years to come. The financial achievements too were astounding, with significant contributions to the Rotary Foundation, making RCM a leading light globally. It was a year where records were not just met, but shattered, a true reflection of the collective spirit that he ignited. And then, as the baton was gracefully passed, the focus shifted to 2025-26 with Rtn Nikhil Raj as the new President. Nikhil's reputation preceded him.

As a man of quiet strength, a stickler for time, and a firm believer in the power of simplicity – a philosophy that is believed, would be the guiding star of his presidency, streamlining efforts and amplifying impact. In a world often complex, his commitment to clarity and efficiency brings a refreshing promise. The vision is for a year where projects would be executed with precision, resources utilized with maximum effect, and reach extended with purposeful grace. As the famed management guru Peter Drucker once said, "Efficiency is doing things right; effectiveness is doing the right things". There was an air of confidence that under Nikhil's leadership, RCM would embody both. The excitement in that ballroom was not just for the pomp and circumstance of an installation, it was for the promise of continued service, amplified impact, and the forging of new bonds. The incredible heights that could be reached had been seen, thanks to leaders like Chella. Now, with Nikhil's pragmatic and focused approach, RCM is poised for a year of impactful simplicity with every action counted and every effort, a tangible difference. So, a toast was raised to Rtn G Chella Krishna for a year that would forever be etched in RCM's history as truly brilliant. And the warmest welcome and unwavering support was extended to Rtn Nikhil Raj, as he prepared to lead into a year of purposeful action, guided by the wisdom of "Keep It Simple, Smart". The future, under his stewardship, looked bright, clear, and ready for action!



1. Think of a significant lesson you've learned in life that didn't come from a classroom, a mentor, or even a book. It might have come from a surprising person, an unexpected event, or even a moment of quiet reflection. What was that lesson, and how did it fundamentally change your perspective on something important? Answer: It will be difficult for me to point at a particular event or incident; life has had its ups and downs – failures, success, losing near and dear ones, embracing parenthood. The most important thing I feel is to learn from your failures and setbacks and overcome them and try to have a positive outlook on them.

2. Forget the typical "why Rotary." What's the story behind your decision to join the Rotary Club of Madras? Was it a lightbulb moment, a nudge from a friend, or a deep-seated desire to make a specific impact?

Answer : Being from a medical profession, treating patients, alleviating their pains and discomforts and bringing a smile on their face though highly satisfying I felt the need to broaden my reach to make a more positive and meaningful change in society. Rotary provides a platform or a medium where your efforts are channelized to make this difference a better way. And I hope as time goes by, I will be able to make RCM proud with my efforts and contributions.

3. Every Rotarian has that "aha!" moment, that one experience that truly shifted their perspective on what Rotary is capable of. Since becoming a part of RCM, what's been that most surprising, challenging, or deeply moving experience that's redefined Rotary for you?

Answer : There have been not one but many "aha!" moments for me since I've joined RCM. Whether it is the Hope for the Homeless Project, the Cervical Cancer Awareness Project, the Lake Restoration Project or the most recent cataract procedures done in Ghana; the largescale impact these projects have on society are mindboggling.

I saw hope and joy in the eyes of the Irular community when a home was handed over to them. The long queues of patients in Ghana awaiting medical intervention, the list is endless and the efforts and hard work of each RCM Member involved directly or indirectly in all the RCM projects is truly commendable.

On a lighter note, the biggest "aha!" moment came while answering these questions. I should have attended at least one AI training session to answer these questions (wink!)



**ROTARY
RADAR**

Postcards from the past. Clubs now moving toward flexible attendance policies By Susan Hanf and Wen Huang
Ronnie Yeager, 84, joined the Rotary Club of Aransas Pass, Texas, on 1 May 1970. Over the 52 years of club meetings since, he has had perfect attendance. His extraordinary tenure in Rotary earned him a special recognition letter in September 2020 from then-Rotary International President Holger Knaack.

For Yeager, who had a demanding schedule as a district judge, maintaining his attendance has required meticulous planning and tremendous dedication. "I enjoy the fellowship," he says, "and I find it exciting to be with a group that represents an excellent cross section of people in my five-county judicial district." Yeager says his connection to Rotary deepened in the 1980s, when it made polio eradication its flagship program. A polio survivor, Yeager developed post-polio syndrome 30 years after initially contracting the virus at the age of 8. Postcards from Rotary's archives show how members fulfilled and affirmed their meeting attendance while away from their home clubs.

The family of J.G. Clapp, who served as secretary of the Rotary Club of Palm Springs, California, in the 1960s, donated some picturesque cards to Rotary International, including this one from 1968, when a member of the Palm Springs club visited the Rotary Club of Athens.

Attending meetings is an opportunity, not an obligation.

Traditionally, attendance for a Rotary member had meant participating in a regular weekly meeting at the member's club or at another club. Exceptions were granted only for those who attended the Rotary International Convention or were on official RI business, such as a board or committee meeting or a district conference.

Participation in special club meetings, roundtables, informal gatherings, and service activities could not be counted as attendance.

Recent Rotary research shows that rigid attendance rules and policies are a barrier to attracting new members and engaging current ones. Further, they exclude young professionals who have developing careers or are starting families. In response, Rotary International has stipulated that any Rotary club wishing to try a new approach can do so by amending its bylaws. Clubs are encouraged to relax attendance expectations or not have them at all. His attendance streak faced a challenge about 20 years ago when his family took a three-week vacation along the coast of Australia. Yeager managed to make up for his absences while on the trip — a practice that in years past typically would be affirmed by sending a postcard to one's club. Yeager also recalls traveling to Vancouver, British Columbia, in 2006 and attending a local Rotary club event.

"The club secretary said he would mail a postcard to my club," he says, "but I had him give it to me because I wanted to make sure that my club received it." In Yeager's early years in Rotary, the Aransas Pass club met on Mondays, at times in conflict with his busy law practice.

"There were several other Rotary clubs within 25 miles of where I live," he says, "and I always made sure that I got to the adjoining town for a makeup meeting." One nearby club was known for treating visiting members with delicious fried chicken. "That club had about 20 members," he recalls, "but they would normally have 70 to 100 visitors who were there like me for the food and attendance makeup." Yeager commends his club's flexibility. Since retiring in 2013, he has been hospitalized twice. His club, which now has 13 members, accommodated his situation by holding the meeting at the hospital.

In recent years, many Rotary clubs have innovated by adopting flexible formats. Some clubs rotate their meeting locations among a member's home, a restaurant, or a business. Some meet virtually, while others use a hybrid format, allowing members to call in to in-person meetings.

"I think having some flexibility in meeting attendance requirements is a good idea," says Yeager. "It'll accommodate people with a disability or young people with a busy work schedule. Holding meetings every other week or in the evenings are good ideas to explore.

Changing the meeting format can keep members engaged and active, and enables guests to have fun, productive meetings that connect with Rotary's values and mission.

"There are certain things in life that we don't have that much control over," Yeager adds. "The new rules now give you a whole lot better control over that." Susan Hanf is a Heritage Communications specialist at Rotary International. This story originally appeared in the October 2022 issue of Rotary magazine.

1. Think about one seemingly small, unconventional, or even rebellious act you undertook in your younger days – something that might not have seemed important at the time, but unexpectedly created a lasting, positive ripple effect in your life or in the lives of others. What was that act, and what did it teach you about the unpredictable nature of impact?

Answer : When we inaugurated Gummidipundi Boys home and Selaiyur Boys home in a small rented house in two different places in 1986, paying a rent of Rs.300 – Rs.400 then, we never realized that after 38 years these projects would be one of the most prestigious projects of our club, empowering 1000's of boys and also empowering girls, women in vocational training to lead their lives. Some of them have achieved great heights in whatever they have pursued. In this process we have also created a land bank asset to the tune of 100 crores owned by the club today. It helps us to dream of magnificent plans not only for the centenary year but also for the next decade for the good of the community.

In the whole process I always feel proud that I have played a significant part, a meaningful role in the progress of the whole project and have special attachment to this project.

1. If you were writing a candid, no-holds-barred letter to the RCM of 2050, what's the one indispensable piece of wisdom, the most critical warning, or the most audacious vision you'd impart to ensure our club's enduring relevance and impact?

Answer : My dream and vision is that, for being a member of RCM, people in the society should look at you with awe and respect for what you have done to the society and not for who you are in society. People should think that members of Rotary club of Madras are people of different caliber who stand tall in society by their mere service to the poor and downtrodden. I hope that by 2050 the public image of Rotary and our club would be at a different level. People wear the Rotary pin with pride. State and Central Governments should look for rotary to partner for all its community service needs.

Every member has to be actively involved in some project of our club. Only then can they feel proud of being a member of the club.

3. Rotary prides itself on service, but sustained impact often requires navigating difficult currents. Reflect on a time when RCM faced a significant internal or external hurdle – a crisis of confidence, a dissenting opinion, or a major setback. What was the real story behind that challenge, what uncomfortable truths did you have to confront, and what leadership lesson did you personally carry forward from that experience?



PDG Benjamin Cherian
Founding Force



Answer : In any club or organization with 200 – 300 members, there will be difference of opinion. For instance, 15 years back the club wanted to sell a portion of Gummidipundi land to raise financial resources. It was strongly opposed by few members including me. Ultimately the General Body agreed to this decision not to sell the land. The decision that was taken proved good that we could plan phenomenal projects in this land of 35 acres and also enjoy the ownership of land which has a great value today.

During Tsunami, when RCM wanted to construct a hospital in ECR to the tune of Rs.2 -3 crores the government sanctioned 2 acres of land for the hospital with a condition that it should be handed over to Panchayat after 10 years. During that time, we spent a phenomenal amount of time discussing a tie up with MIOT or other big corporate hospitals with different opinions expressed by members but ultimately, we dropped the idea because we were not agreeable to this proposal of handing over the hospital to Panchayat after spending Rs. 2 – 3 crores.

Whatever the case and whenever there is a difference of opinion among members, it is always resolved either by mutual discussion if not, by a democratic way with the majority decision of the members .

THE RISE OF REPRESENTATION: TRACING THE JOURNEY OF WOMEN PRESIDENTS IN ROTARY

SHE ROSE: A ROTARY REFLECTION

*She rose, not with thunder, but with grace,
A quiet step in a crowded space.
Once a whisper in halls of might,
Now a presence, bold and bright.*

*In twenty sixteen, barely a quarter,
Of presidents crossed the gendered
border. Twenty-three percent stood tall,
Yet echoed loudly through the hall.*

*Each year a number, slow to climb,
But steady, sure—a march through time.
From twenty-four to twenty-eight,
She pushed the hinges of that gate.*

*District 3234, behind the pace,
But still, she carved her rightful place.
From twelve percent, a gentle spark,
To nineteen now—a growing mark.*

*She did not ask the world to bend,
But chose to lead, to build, to mend.
Each seat she claimed, not out of plea,
But proof of strength and dignity.*

*A sash, a gavel, a vision wide—
No longer waiting by the side.
She rose, and others found their way,
Inspired by her light each day.*

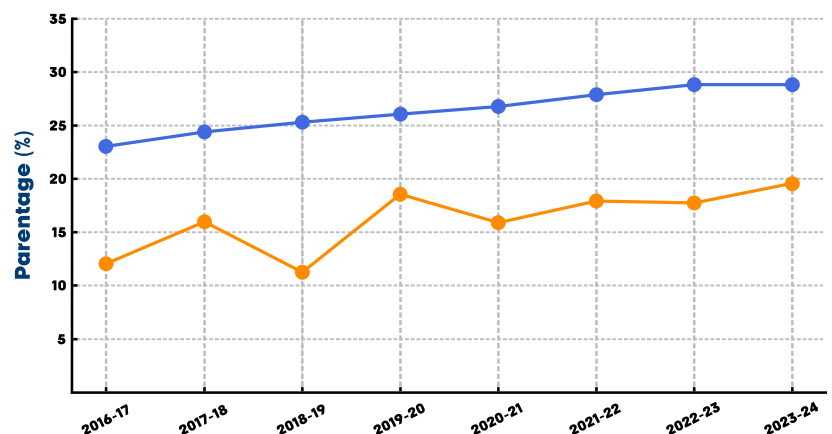
*So count the numbers, if you must,
But know they're built on years of trust.
Of voices rising through the fray—
Of her, who led the Rotary way.*

In the quiet hum of Rotary halls, in boardrooms and banquets, a transformation has been unfolding. It has not shouted, but it has steadily grown louder. Over the last nine years, the Rotary world has seen a powerful shift—a growing chorus of women stepping into the highest seat of service.

% of Rotary Club Female Past President

YEARS	ROTARY GLOBAL	ROTARY DIST 3234
2016-2017	23.06%	12.03%
2017-2018	24.33%	15.96%
2018-2019	25.26%	11.21%
2019-2020	26.06%	18.55%
2020-2021	26.75%	15.87%
2021-2022	27.88%	17.93%
2022-2023	28.79%	17.75%
2023-2024	28.82%	19.54%

Percentage of Female Past Presidents (2016-2024)





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