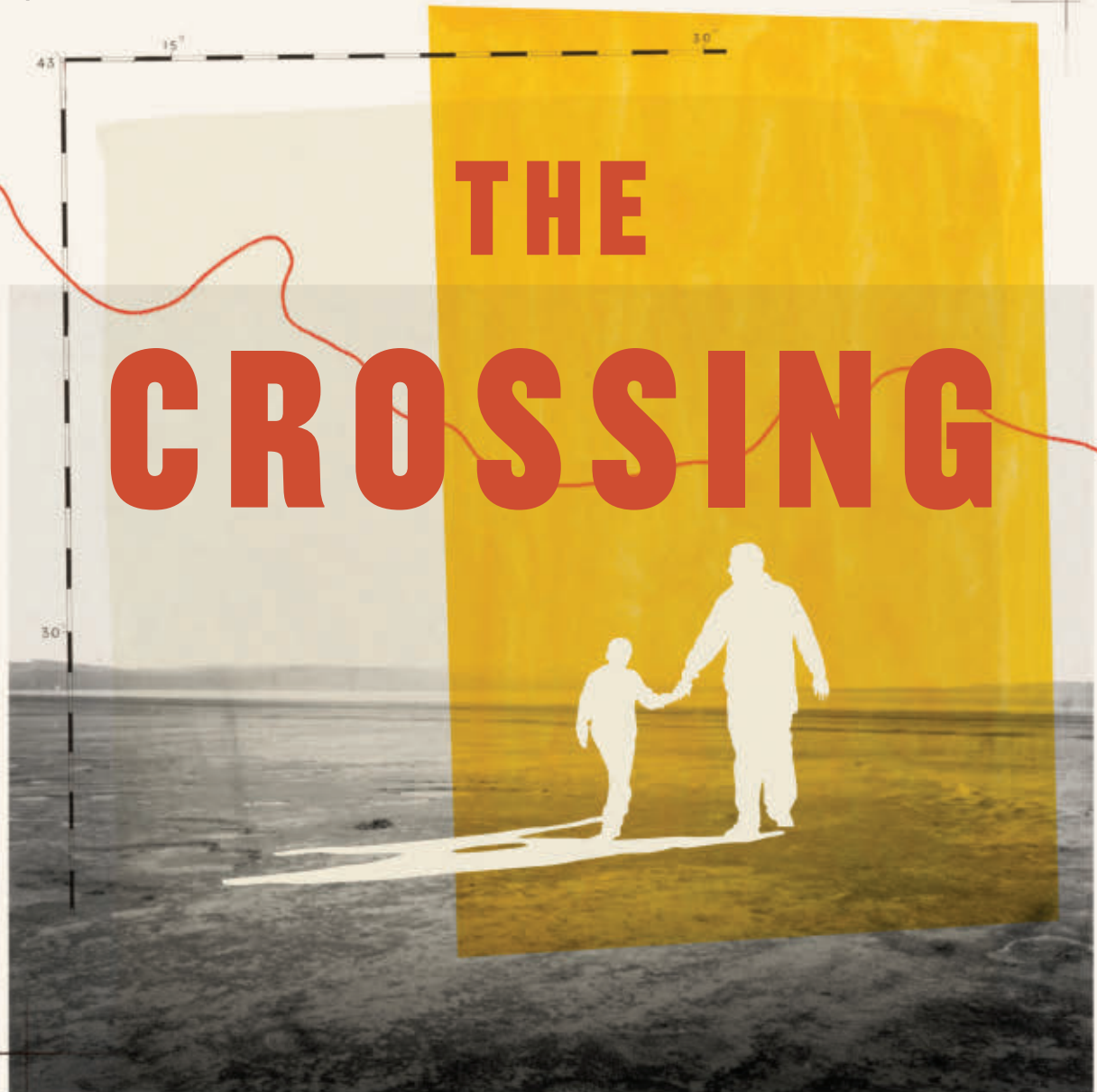


# ROTARY

January 2022

**4 ways to  
teach kids  
to give**  
page 20

**The return  
of What  
It's Like**  
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**With help from Rotary, two refugees  
make new lives in new lands**

page 42



# DIVERSITY STRENGTHENS OUR CLUBS



New members from different groups in our communities bring fresh perspectives and ideas to our clubs and expand Rotary's presence. Invite prospective members from all backgrounds to experience Rotary.



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GREETINGS, DEAR CHANGEMAKERS OF ROTARY,

One of Rotary's founding principles was to use your vocation — whether as a doctor, lawyer, engineer, or another profession — to do good in the world. As we attempt to overcome and recover from the pandemic, this principle is vital in retraining people who have lost their jobs. In response, the Rotary E-Club of Tamar Hong Kong organized seminars for young people, with the aim of preparing them for the changing world of work.

This type of training must happen on a large scale. According to the United Nations, global unemployment is expected to exceed 200 million people in 2022. Women and youths are likely to be disproportionately affected.

This is why I've placed such a strong emphasis this year on projects that empower girls, and I've been delighted to see some of these projects in action. Of course, access to education and the path to employment can be blocked by a lack of water and sanitation infrastructure.

A project in Pune, India, focuses on providing girls and women with an affordable, reusable sanitary pad. The project provides employment for production and distribution of the pads, and it will reduce the pollution caused by the disposal of 12.3 billion sanitary napkins in the country annually, many of which end up in India's landfills.

Others have used vocational service to advance the empowerment of women. The Rotary Club of Poona, India, conducted workshops to teach martial arts to young women, for self-defense against the threat of abuse or human trafficking.

I've also been fortunate to use my vocation to do good through Rotary. The Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004 dev-

astated the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, which are part of my district. Thousands of homes were destroyed, and many areas lost electricity and running water. On my visit to Little Andaman Island, the builder in me immediately wanted to build homes for the homeless islanders there. We decided to construct 500 homes on Little Andaman.

On the last of my seven trips to the island, I could see something glimmering below as my helicopter was about to land. I realized that what I was seeing were the roofs of new homes. I was overjoyed by the sight, and soon a realization dawned upon me. As a builder I had built many beautiful buildings. In comparison, these 500 homes were the most ordinary buildings I had ever built, and they were in a place I likely will never visit again, for people I will never meet again. And yet the satisfaction I had in handing over these houses was greater than from anything I had previously built. Probably because for once I was using my vocation to *Serve to Change Lives*.

You, too, may have had opportunities to use your vocation to *Serve to Change Lives*. I welcome your stories of performing vocational service through Rotary. Also, I want to close by congratulating every club that has engaged with the Each One, Bring One initiative, which asks every member to introduce one person to Rotary. Increasing our membership gives people from all walks of life the opportunity to share their knowledge and skills in transformational service.

*Shekhar Mehta*

President, Rotary International



# WELCOME



---

**YOU ARE HERE:** Reykjanesfólkvangur, Iceland

---

**A UNIQUE LANDSCAPE:** Eruptions of the numerous small volcanoes along the Reykjanes Ridge, part of the ridge that separates the North American and Eurasian continental plates, have created unique lava formations. A portion of these is protected by the Reykjanesfólkvangur reserve, situated on the Reykjanes Peninsula in the southwestern part of Iceland.

---

**GEOTHERMAL ACTIVITY:** “At Seltún, sulphur, bubbling mud, and hissing steam emerge from the Mid-Atlantic Ridge,” says Randver Fleckenstein, a member of the Rotary Club of Reykjavik International, who hails from the American Midwest but has called Iceland home for four decades. If you fly into Keflavik Airport, you can visit Seltún, the geothermal area that includes the hot springs seen here, on your way to Reykjavík, 20 miles to the northeast.

---

**THE CLUB:** The English-speaking Reykjavik International club welcomes visitors; it meets Wednesdays at 4 p.m.

# ROTARY

January 2022

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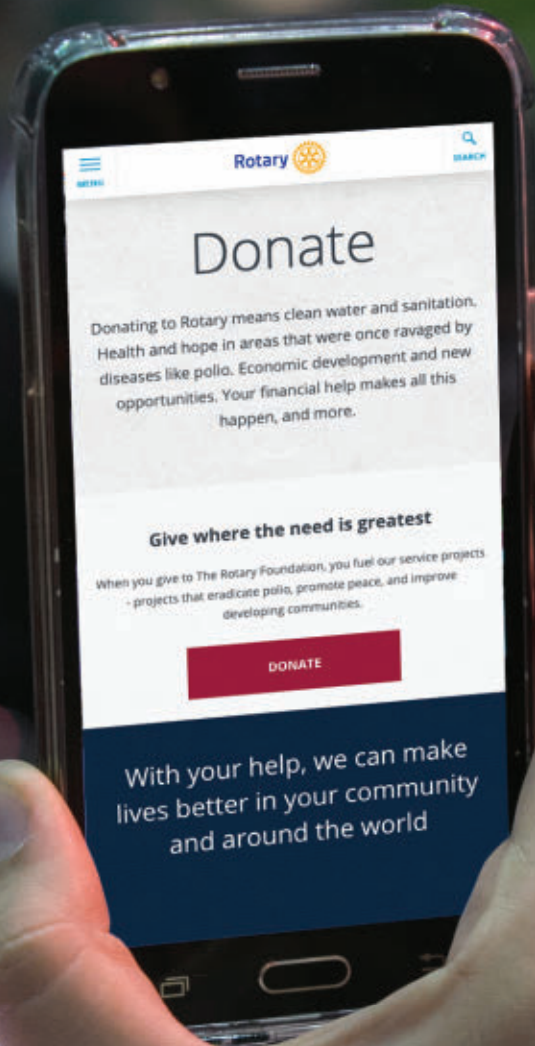
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By Seoha Lee and Kim Widlicki

Illustrations by Valerie Chiang



Courtesy of Mahdi

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In dramatic fashion, a young North Korean woman and a Somali teenager flee their home countries to forge new beginnings elsewhere.

Illustration by Valerie Chiang

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Pins can tell the story of your Rotary experiences

“Through this water filtration plant, we’ve gained credibility and the confidence of the people. The people know us. It gives me a lot of happiness. The polio teams, whether from WHO or the government, all are welcomed.”

— Asher Ali, project manager, Pakistan PolioPlus Committee



14



## Heart of gold

“THE MAIN REASON I help young refugees is probably because I was once a refugee myself,” says Marianne Hopsch, who grew up in the former East Germany and fled to West Germany shortly before the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989.

Hopsch now lives in Switzerland, where she’s a member of the Rotary Club of Zürich City and runs her own jewelry business. “I’m more of a hands-on type; I always want to learn something new and I like to be involved,” she says. As her club’s program officer, she saw an opportunity to do just that by delving into a sphere that she was interested in but didn’t know much about. She decided to focus on aid to refugees.

Her efforts developed into an ongoing vocational service project that involves several clubs in and around Zurich and is known by the German acronym ROBIJ. Hopsch spends about 70 percent of her workdays volunteering with the project. “As an entrepreneur, and thanks to my employees who fully support me, I have the privilege of volunteering more and more,” she says. — GUNDULA MIETHKE

Turn to page 50 to read about a refugee who received training through ROBIJ.

“HOME IS THE PLACE WHERE, when you have to go there, they have to take you in.” Robert Frost wrote that in one of his poems, adding: “I should have called it something you somehow haven’t to deserve.”

Now, what if home were the place you have to leave, maybe never to return? In a perfect world, someone would always take you in. But Rotary exists for our imperfect global society. Clubs and members engage in scores of projects that help transform the unfamiliar lands where refugees arrive into something that becomes a home — a place they shouldn’t have to deserve.

But we make a mistake when we think of the tens of millions of refugees — those currently displaced by war, poverty, or changing climates — as victims. They’re our partners. We have much to learn from them about courage, resilience, and ingenuity.

That’s why we have devoted a good part of this issue to bringing out their voices. On page 44, you will read about Ju Eun Seok, who escaped North Korea at the age of 22 and went on to help found a Rotary club in South Korea that today assists refugees. On page 50, 19-year-old Mahdi tells his story of leaving Somalia — and then learning much-needed job skills, thanks to a Rotary club in Switzerland. Their stories

We make a mistake when we think of the tens of millions of refugees — those currently displaced by war, poverty, or changing climates — as victims. They’re our partners.

provide wonderful lessons; maybe the biggest one of all is what they teach us about home, and what it takes to make one. Things like relentless work, collaboration, and love.

Refugees go through the fire and, sometimes with our help, come out intact on the other side. They know things. While it breaks our hearts to see so many people suffer after being displaced — “dis-placed,” that is, compelled to leave their place — Rotary members’ engagement with refugees carries remarkable gifts on both sides. These gifts make the entire world feel, for all of us, a little more like home.

**THE EDITORS**

## Letters to the editor



### THE STATE OF WATER

Congratulations on another fine issue of *Rotary*! I found the articles on water quality fascinating [“Water Pressure,” October]. I’m glad you focused on issues within the United States, as there is so much overall concern among our population.

Regarding the Biscayne Bay article, the writer does not mention septic ordinances as part of a solution. In Michigan, public health codes regarding water wells and septic systems are the responsibility of local health departments. Here in beautiful northern Michigan, several counties and townships have adopted time of sale/transfer septic ordinances, which require local inspection of wells and septic tanks prior to the sale of a property. Wells and septic systems that are no longer functioning or were installed without regard to code can be identified for corrective action, including replacement if needed. This helps to ensure our waters remain clean.

— Tom Vranich,  
Elk Rapids, Michigan

As your articles show, the state of water in the United States is scary and unacceptable. For many years, H2O for Life, a nonprofit that I co-founded, has inspired young people to raise funds for water for schools in Africa, Central America, and other faraway places. Recently, we have partnered with the nonprofit DigDeep to support water proj-

ects on the Navajo Nation and in Appalachia. What if Rotary clubs nationwide enlisted the help of elementary, middle school, and high school students and supported joint projects through H2O for Life and DigDeep? Funds raised can truly make a difference for people in the United States who are desperate for a safe drink of water.

H2O for Life has collaborated on Rotary Foundation global grant projects in Malawi, Tanzania, and Nigeria to complete 60 WASH in Schools projects in the past seven years. We can do this!

— **Patty Hall,**  
White Bear Lake, Minnesota



Charles Fishman did an outstanding reporting job with the stories about water issues in America in the October issue. The articles are well-written with good details. Glad to see you publishing these kinds of articles now that Rotary has added climate disruption and change to its priorities. Keep them coming.

— **Mark Mann,**  
Butler, Pennsylvania

## MORNING SOLUTION

I just finished the crossword puzzle in the September issue while drinking my morning coffee. Thank you to folks like Victor Fleming who have the talent to create these brainteasers for all of us to enjoy.

— **Lisa Bellamy,**  
Arlington, Virginia

## CULTURE OF INNOVATION

I enjoyed “Free Your Mind,” the essay by Frank Bures in the October issue. To free my mind, I had to learn to make it a habit to anticipate — and indeed, welcome — serendipity, with the intention to create a more equitable world. Louis Pasteur is credited with the phrase “Chance

favors the prepared mind.” Based on my experiences working with innovators across dozens of professions, I believe it is equally important to “pre-pair minds to create chance.”

Active moral support of the aspirational (yet-to-be-discovered) inventor allows for the crafting of diverse nurturing spaces where such inventors may begin to thrive. Much like “it takes a village to raise a child,” in the context of innovation, we each need to become a suitable “midwife” to support the creation and packaging of new ideas in new ways. My brother Sridhar Ramamoorti coined a slogan — “A culture of innovation demands innovations in culture” — that captures the need for cultural changes that will spur and nurture innovators.

Bures cited Craig Wright’s “lengthy period of cerebral gestation.” This involves, in terms of managerial creativity, large doses of caring, thoughtful and timely risk-taking, and interventions on the part of many — a sort of relay race involving creativity from different economic sectors and social backgrounds. Despite COVID-driven anxieties and tragedies, we can remain in constant and wondrous awe at the vastness of all that we do not know, so that we may discover our own kind of free mind that meaningfully shares, cares, and acts upon what it may know, for the greater good.

— **Usha R. Balakrishnan,**  
Iowa City, Iowa

## PARTNER POWER

I have to thank *Rotary* magazine for putting together a wonderfully detailed article on how the Rotary-Peace Corps partnership can make a great difference in lives and projects around the world [“Esprit de Corps,” September]. As the vice president and outreach chair for Partnering for Peace: Friends of Peace Corps and Rotary, I encourage every club and district to stay abreast of what we are doing to help you leverage this powerful partnership. If you’d like to begin a conversation on how you can get started, send an email to us at [info@partneringforpeace.org](mailto:info@partneringforpeace.org).

— **Charlie Masilae Hunt,**  
Denver



## Overheard on social media

We wrote about the Rotary-Peace Corps partnership in our September issue and wished the Peace Corps a happy 60th anniversary on social media.

Best wishes to a great long-term partner. The Rotary Club of Nuku’alofa and Peace Corps Tonga have been partners since before 2014. We look forward to the return of Peace Corps volunteers when borders are again open.  
**Peter Poulsen**  
▶ [via Facebook](#)

Two great organizations with a common purpose and shared approach to development. Proud to be a returned Peace Corps volunteer and a Rotarian.  
**Martin Booth Tracy**  
▶ [via LinkedIn](#)

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THE SPECIALIST

## For the birds

*Wildlife biologist's conservation plans take flight*

**O**ver the last 50 years, we've lost **3 billion birds** from the North American landscape. It's a staggering loss that's been mirrored in other parts of the globe. The causes include loss of habitat; predation by cats; collisions with buildings, windows, vehicles, power lines, and communications towers; and contaminants like pesticides and rat poisons.

**I'm working to reduce the unintended consequences** of human activities in our urban landscapes. Are we maintaining tree cover for bird migration? Turning off lights at night to avert bird collisions with buildings? Landscaping with native plants that are helpful to butterflies, bees, and migratory birds? Reducing pesticides to ensure birds have insects to eat? There are simple things people can do to make a difference for birds — like buying bird-friendly coffee and local and organic food, and minimizing their use of plastic.

**I was born a nature lover.** For as long as I can remember, I've had a strong connection with nature,

and wildlife, and birds in particular. At age 7, I was trying to identify the birds in my backyard. I loved going to Brookfield Zoo outside Chicago and seeing the wildlife there. My grandfather was a university biologist and would take us on field trips. I decided early on that I wanted to be a biologist and work in wildlife and bird conservation.

**Birds have had cultural value for humans** for thousands of years. We appreciate their songs, beauty, and joy. Bird habitats can support clean water: If we protect waterways and wetlands and the forests that surround our rivers and streams, we help keep our drinking water safer and cleaner. Bird habitats can support our own health, too: Experiencing nature can decrease stress, and just listening to birdsong can improve a person's mood and attention. Birds are also good for the economy. More than 50 million people in the United States watch and enjoy birds.

**A large part of my work is based on building partnerships** around bird conservation goals and activities across different states and countries. My goal is to sustain bird populations, but that can't happen in a vacuum. I have to think about the social and economic landscape and offer solutions that mesh with both human and bird well-being.

— AS TOLD TO ANNE STEIN

**Katie O'Brien**  
Rotary Club  
of Marquette  
(Breakfast),  
Michigan  
Wildlife biologist,  
U.S. Fish and  
Wildlife Service  
Migratory Bird  
Program

*The findings and conclusions in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.*



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WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

## Service that works for everyone

**D**URING THE COVID-19 pandemic, your club has coordinated its service projects virtually. As more people get vaccinated and case numbers drop in your area, you can start to plan in-person community service projects again. However, there are club members who have compromised immunity or cannot get vaccinated due to other health reasons. How will you plan an inclusive project that takes into account those members who may not be able to participate in person?

The solution to providing inclusive service projects for those who

are unable to take part in person is simple: Offer both virtual and in-person projects. Anyone can sign up for virtual projects that they can do from home. And even in-person projects have planning, administrative, and follow-up components that volunteers can work on remotely.

— **Alex Johnson, Rotary Club of Plano West, Texas**

All community service events require a great deal of planning and detail work. Members whose health is at risk don't have to do the physical portion of the project; instead, they can be deployed to work on the planning portion. This way

they can be both safe and included. Sensitivity on the part of the club will inspire members to perform at a higher level and reach new heights for our clubs.

— **Charles Weisbart, Rotary Club of Idyllwild, California**

Virtual events are here to stay. Future meetings and events will surely be held both face-to-face and remotely. The experience of the past two years is demonstrative. Service projects will have to be planned the same way, with some in-person components and some that people can do virtually.

— **Omar Adi Córdoba, Rotary Club of Bulevar, Uruguay**

If some aspects of a service project can be done remotely, ask the members who cannot participate in person to work on those. If supplies can be dropped off at their homes, for example, they could stuff envelopes. Or they could make telephone calls. If there is a shortage of those tasks, clubs should come up with other remote projects that those members can do.

— **Kevin Teigen, Turton, South Dakota**

### Next question

Find the most recent question on our blogs: [Rotary Voices \(blog.rotary.org\)](#) and [Rotary Service in Action \(rotaryserviceblog.org\)](#). Share your response there, or email it to us at [magazine@rotary.org](mailto:magazine@rotary.org), for possible inclusion in a future issue of the magazine.



Let the world know

# We are Rotary

Our new 30-second video shows what Rotary clubs are doing to make a difference in their communities and around the world.



Visit [rotary.org/brandcenter](https://rotary.org/brandcenter) to download and share Rotary's latest video today.

## POLIO ERADICATION

# A matter of trust

*PolioPlus is engaging reluctant communities by addressing basic needs*

**K**HADIM SOLANGI GOTH, a community on the outskirts of Karachi, Pakistan, sits in one of the last remaining polio reservoirs on the planet. More than 40,000 people live in improvised dwellings made of earth or other found materials. For some, a cotton sheet is all that protects them from the hot sun and monsoon rains. “The poorest of the poor are living in this area,” says Asher Ali, the project manager for the Pakistan PolioPlus Committee.

Polio is especially resilient in this community, which has been one of the most resistant to eradication efforts; the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) has designated Khadim Solangi Goth one of its highest-priority areas. And the Pakistan Polio Eradication Initiative classifies Gadap Union Council 4, the administrative district that the community is a part of, as “super high risk.”

What makes polio thrive in this place? The piles of trash and open sewers are one reason; the polio-

virus gets transmitted through contaminated water. But another major factor is the area’s low vaccination rate. In a community whose basic needs aren’t met, residents see the polio vaccine as a low priority. “The refusals are not for the sake of religion but because civic amenities are missing,” says Aziz Memon, chair of the Pakistan PolioPlus Committee. “They ask us, ‘What are you doing here? You come again and again and again to give us polio drops. You never tell us how you’re going to help us with electricity, roads, or clean water.’”

Still, the polio eradication program has seen a boost to its credibility in the past couple of years, thanks to the installation of water filtration plants in Karachi and several other areas of the country, including in Khadim Solangi Goth in December 2020 — part of the GPEI’s effort to install a total of 36 such plants in Pakistan. Since 2012, Rotary members have been working to install plants through a variety of channels, including a partnership with Coca-Cola Paki-



**Want to help?**  
Consider a global grant to support a water filtration plant in Pakistan.

**19**  
Birdwatching in Egypt

**20**  
Philanthropy for kids

**22**  
Vivu Esperanto!



stan, Rotary Foundation global grant projects, PolioPlus Partners grants, and partnerships with Rotary districts or other entities. More construction is in progress or in the planning stages.

“Now that the community has access to clean water, polio workers are giving us feedback that when they are going to homes, the mothers bring their children to be vaccinated. The workers now have easy access to get into the area,” says Ali.

Reaching Khadim Solangi Goth had been a challenge because of security concerns. But the polio workers persevered. Rotary members met with elders, women, and other stakeholders in the community to find out what they needed

most and how Rotary could help. “Once we gained their confidence, then we moved forward,” Ali says.

Safe drinking water was a high priority among Khadim Solangi Goth residents, so Coca-Cola Pakistan and Rotary in Pakistan — whose decade-long partnership has brought clean water to tens of thousands of people in the country — installed a water filtration plant in the community. Rotary members also trained residents to operate and maintain the equipment, and worked with the community to provide education in hygiene and handwashing. “We gradually gained the respect of the people and gained success,” Ali says.

The work ties into the GPEI’s new strategic plan, which launched

in June 2021. One of the objectives is to speed progress toward polio eradication by integrating that work with efforts to address other community needs — “in other words, not just focusing on polio alone,” explains Michael K. McGovern, chair of the International PolioPlus Committee.

In a report issued the same month, the Independent Monitoring Board, a group of experts who assess progress toward a polio-free world, highlighted the slow progress toward improving water and sanitation in parts of Pakistan deemed “super high risk.” The board called directly on Rotary to help bridge the gap between the polio program and other programs

—  
**Left:** In Pakistan, 53,000 children under age 5 die each year from diarrhea caused by contaminated water. **Above:** Since 2012, Rotary members have helped install 36 water filtration plants in Pakistan.

“Now that the community has access to clean water, polio workers are giving us feedback that when they are going to homes, the mothers bring their children to be vaccinated. The workers now have easy access to get into the area.”

and funders. “Rotary International is greatly respected as having a ‘can-do’ capability in advancing practical action of this kind,” the report stated.

While the improvement of water and sanitation in these areas helps stop the spread of polio, the new infrastructure helps build goodwill for the polio program. “It all ties together,” McGovern says.

Hence the “plus” in PolioPlus, Rotary’s program that provides communities with benefits beyond vaccination — such as clean water, medical treatments, bed nets, and soap. In northern Nigeria, for

example, Rotary and its partners sponsored more than 30 solar-powered boreholes, which helped develop trust among the vulnerable residents. The strategy worked: Nigeria reported its last case of polio in 2016, and the World Health Organization certified the Africa region free of wild polio in 2020.

In Pakistan, Memon says, Rotary members complement the water projects with health camps that assist families with other medical needs. “Health camps also send a very positive signal,” he says. “It shows that our main focus is not polio alone, it’s PolioPlus.”



**Local residents,** trained by Rotary members, operate and maintain the equipment. “Sustainability is embedded in community participation,” says Asher Ali, the project manager for the Pakistan PolioPlus Committee.

**By the numbers**

**40 million**

Number of Pakistani children under age 5 immunized each year

**63**

Percentage of polio cases in Pakistan in 2019 that involved zero-dose children, who had never received any essential immunizations

**70**

Percentage of Pakistani households that drink contaminated water

**Short takes**

Celebrate Community, a joint initiative of Rotary International, Kiwanis International, Lions Clubs International, and Optimist International, launched in October with a week of local service projects.



Nominations for The Rotary Foundation Distinguished Service Award will be accepted in January and February. Learn more at [rotary.org/awards](https://rotary.org/awards).



In Hassan Brohi Goth, another community in the Karachi metropolitan area, many people make their living by producing bricks in kilns. A smoky haze envelops the area, exacerbating breathing difficulties among health-challenged residents. The community lacks medical facilities. Its drinking water comes from a pipeline — which is broken, making the water unsafe to drink — or from vendors who charge more than many people can afford.

Rotary members worked with a kiln owner to provide a site for

a water filtration plant. The plant, installed as part of a Rotary Foundation global grant sponsored by the Rotary clubs of Karachi and Maysville, North Carolina, went online in August.

“Through this water filtration plant, we’ve gained credibility and the confidence of the people,” Ali says. “The people know us. It gives me a lot of happiness. The polio teams, whether from WHO or the government, all are welcomed.”

—DIANA SCHOBERG

**Polio is spread** through contaminated drinking water. Providing clean water to communities helps stop polio’s spread, improves people’s health, and builds goodwill for the polio program. “We need to do more than just give polio drops in order to get to the finish line,” says International PolioPlus Committee Chair Michael K. McGovern.

Of the 1,180 Rotary clubs that were chartered in 2020-21, 11 percent self-identified as innovative or flexible clubs (such as cause-based or passport clubs).



Jimin, a member of the superstar Korean boy band BTS, donated 100 million won (\$88,000) to PolioPlus in September.

Gordon McNally of Scotland was announced in October as the official nominee for 2023-24 RI president.

# People of action around the globe

By BRAD WEBBER



## United States

In September, the Rotary Club of Novato, California, celebrated the opening of a community center, the culmination of an effort that began in 2007 with a bequest of \$5 million by longtime member Bill Jonas. The club worked with the College of Marin to construct a 15,600-square-foot complex on the college's Indian Valley campus. The center houses a banquet space with the capacity for hundreds of guests, a kitchen, and a stage equipped with the latest audiovisual equipment. The club, whose contribution covered about one-third of the project's total cost, obtained a 75-year lease as well as naming rights for its benefactors, the late Bill and Adele Jonas, and now holds its meetings at the center. "It was a long-term challenge, but we didn't give up," says Sonia Seeman, a co-chair of the project's planning committee.

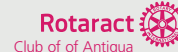


**116**  
**SCHOOLS IN THE CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES SYSTEM**



## Antigua and Barbuda

The pleasant climate in the Leeward Islands might delight sun-seeking vacationers, but for residents, severe drought in recent years has led to rationing and a reliance on desalinated water. To make the most of the water that is available, the Rotaract Club of Antigua embarked on a project to install 12 water harvesting tanks at an association for people with disabilities. "In light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, this will encourage handwashing and proper hygiene," says past club president Ti-Anna Harris of the effort, which cost about \$1,850. The club, which has 34 members, carries out an active schedule of projects. In September, members picked up trash at a local beach as part of the Save Our Shores cleanups that were carried out in conjunction with the Rotaract clubs of Mémorial des Gonaïves, Haiti, and Freetown Sunset, Sierra Leone. Other club projects include free HIV testing, professional and vocational training, a Christmas celebration, and a spelling bee.



**41 inches**  
**AVERAGE ANNUAL RAINFALL IN ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA**



### United Kingdom

In a Rotary-supported initiative, thousands of tents that help provide protection from the elements have been distributed to people in the UK who are homeless. The lightweight one-person tents, which cost about \$40 each, are intended as a short-term solution for vulnerable people in cold and wet weather. “The very first time we showed the Sleep Pod to anyone outside our small circle was when we showed it to Rotarians,” says Justin Devereux, who co-founded the Sleep Pod charity with two friends. The Rotary Club of Erdington and other District 1060 clubs provide

financial support, and hundreds of Rotarians and other volunteers joined a push during the pandemic to assemble pods at home to increase the available stock. “While people still die on our streets and in our fields from hypothermia and exposure, Sleep Pod will do all we can to support people as they sleep underneath the stars,” says Devereux, “for whatever reason they find themselves there.”



# 8.2% OF PEOPLE IN THAILAND ARE UNDERNOURISHED



### Thailand

Since the onset of the global COVID-19 pandemic, the Rotary Club of Eastern Seaboard has played a key role in more than 30 food drives. Rodney Charman, a past president, says the club is a go-to player in Pattaya, a seaside community that has been hit especially hard by lockdowns. “Without tourism,” says Charman, “taxi drivers, hotel workers, and bar staff are all out of work, and some are living on the streets or in shelters.” The club coordinates with a local food bank and social services organizations and works with police to distribute needed items. To prepare for a large distribution event in August, five club members spent three days shopping for, transporting, and packaging grocery items into 400 kits consisting of a cooked meal of chicken and rice, and bags containing items such as rice, eggs, water, tins of fish, cooking oil, and face masks. The team reprised the effort in subsequent months.



### Egypt

In 2019, intrigued by a pair of kestrels that were nesting across from her apartment balcony, Georgina Cole began documenting her sightings on the eBird online database. “I realized I had to learn more about all the birds around me,” says Cole, a member of the Rotary Club of Red Sea-El Gouna, which is located in a resort community on the Gulf of Suez in a region that is a stopover point for more than a million birds migrating between Europe and Africa. When a local school asked her to speak to its students, Cole created bird identification cards in English and Arabic. Encouraged by her work, which is supported by her club, the town constructed a viewing hut overlooking a wetland area. The project has expanded to educate local hoteliers about which birds can be spotted at various times of the year. “The Red Sea region thrives on tourism through marine life, with scuba diving and snorkeling,” Cole says. “Why not also birds?”



# 60-70% OF KESTRELS PERISH IN THEIR FIRST YEAR



GOODWILL

# An early start to a giving heart

Teach children how they can play a part in bettering their world

**W**HEN ELISE ZWICKY'S three children were 10, 13, and 14, they organized a rag-tag carnival in the backyard of their Pekin, Illinois, home and invited their neighbors and friends to join the fun. They charged admission, sold snacks, and raised a couple hundred dollars, which they donated to the Pulmonary Hypertension Association, a nonprofit that advocates for patients who suffer from the chronic heart and lung condition. Zwicky was diagnosed with pulmonary hypertension when Sean, her youngest, was 4 years old. The fundraising carnival was his idea.

Philanthropy, experts say, can be a powerful tool for children to gain a sense of agency and hope in the face of challenging circumstances.

"It helps kids feel like, 'I'm a doer,'" says Katie Hurley, a child and adolescent psychotherapist and author of *The Happy Kid Handbook: How to Raise Joyful Children in a Stressful World*. "The world is hard and there are big problems, but I can be a problem-solver."

Practicing philanthropy also plants seeds for skills that children will use well into their adult years.

"It teaches them problem-solving, financial literacy, compassion, a sense of community," says Traci Baxley, a diversity, equity, and inclusion consultant and author of *Social Justice Parenting: How to Raise Compassionate, Anti-Racist, Justice-Minded Kids in an Unjust World*. "To know that their act of kindness can have ripple effects in the world can empower kids to do more."

Parents can start cultivating their child's inner philanthropist by mod-

eling frequent generosity.

"And not just with things," Baxley says, "but with their time, attention, and unconditional love — with extended family and the community. Just like everything else that we teach children — getting dressed, tying their shoes, reading — children need to see it demonstrated and practiced over and over until it becomes automatic." One-time philanthropic acts, like making a donation or volunteering one shift during the holidays, she says, "won't give you the results that you're looking for."

When her own children were younger, Baxley and her husband gave them three jars labeled "save," "spend," and "give" for money they received through allowance or gifts. There are also debit cards designed for young people that offer the option to automatically donate a portion of the child's money to a charity of their choosing.

The choosing, Hurley said, is an important step in helping kids feel like philanthropists, rather than simply rule-followers. "Carve out the time to learn together about organizations and how kids want to help," Hurley says. "When we say, 'You have to do this,' that's not intrinsic motivation. That's a mandate."

Those conversations can be a window into your child's passions, hopes, and fears, and can also be an opportunity to get kids thinking about larger social issues.

"Equity and injustices are topics that even young children are capable of comprehending when discussed in an age-appropriate way," Baxley says. "Teaching our children to have a great work ethic is extremely necessary. Still, we also want our children to know that when they have an

abundance of something, part of their responsibility to the human village is to share it with others."

## A few things to keep in mind:

### Ask, don't assign.

Your kids may have causes on their radar that aren't on yours, and it's important to lean into those. "Part of raising well-rounded kids who will grow up and give back is allowing them to explore ways they can help causes that are near and dear to their hearts," Hurley says.

### Turn to books.

Incorporate reading material that introduces kids to problems in need of solutions. "For our bedtime read-aloud, my three youngest sons and I read *A Long Walk to Water* by Linda Sue Park," Baxley says. "It was the first time that my children understood the privilege of having clean water in their homes. The story of Salva, the main character, moved them to start collecting loose change in a jar that they would eventually send to his foundation, Water for South Sudan."

### Money isn't everything.

Kids don't have to have cash in order to help their community. "If your child is passionate about inclusivity, ask what they can do on a micro level," Hurley says. "What kind of club can you start at school that makes people feel included and welcome and understood?"

### Reap the benefits.

When you establish giving as part of your core values, Baxley says, unsolicited acts of giving may show up in your home. "When one of my sons had a special lunch at school that required him to have the exact change, I watched his siblings rummaging through their personal money stash, trying to come up with dollar bills to support their brother," she says. "When the habit is automatic, you don't have to explain why giving is right. They just do it."

— HEIDI STEVENS



9%

Increase in giving among adult children if their parents are charitable



20%

Increase in giving when parents talk about their donations with their children



83%

Of girls whose parents are charitable make their own donations

Help young people learn the value of service through one of Rotary's youth programs. Find out more at [rotary.org/our-programs/youth-programs](https://rotary.org/our-programs/youth-programs).



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## BIG PICTURE

# Vivu Esperanto!

Members of the Esperanto Fellowship converse in the international language spoken by as many as 2 million people

**I**N THE LATE 19TH CENTURY, Polish ophthalmologist L.L. Zamenhof envisioned a way to help build international understanding and, eventually, world peace. And so he created a language of hope: Esperanto, which, in Esperanto, means “one who hopes.”

To encourage its diffusion, Zamenhof used structures and vocabulary derived primarily from Romance languages, with a smattering of Germanic vocabulary — and without irregular verbs, gendered nouns, and complex grammar. You can become fluent in less than a year by practicing with the popular language learning app Duolingo and regular online conversations. But you don’t even need that, Esperanto speakers say. Learn a few simple rules of grammar with a textbook like *Complete Esperanto*, and with the book’s lexicon beside you, you can talk with Rotary members around the world.

You certainly won’t lack for company. With as many as 2 million speakers (including some native speakers), Esperanto continues to thrive in the digital age: Duolingo says its Esperanto course has been started by more than 1 million people. In addition to investor George Soros, among its speakers you’ll find the 57 members of Rotary’s Esperanto Fellowship—*Rotaria Amikaro de Esperanto* (RADE). The group, which traces its origins back to 1928, claims to be the oldest fellowship in Rotary.

RADE’s *membroj*, who live in 13 different *landoj*, use Esperanto at home and connect with fellow speakers via a smartphone app called *Amikumu*. A regular fixture of RI *konvencioj* (conventions) in years past, RADE now meets via Zoom, as well as through the only Esperanto-speaking club, the Rotary E-Club of Esperanto-Brasil. The *Esperantistoj* are like any other in Rotary, driven by our motto, rendered in Esperanto as *Servo Super Mio*. —JOSEPH DERR

*(Editor’s note: All RADE members quoted in this article are also members of the Rotary E-Club of Esperanto-Brasil, unless otherwise noted.)*

## LERNU ESPERANTON!

*Ni kolektiĝu en la knajpo*  
 (“Let’s gather in the pub.”)

— Emma Mathilde Breuning,  
 Elchingen, Germany

## MEMORANTE LA TEMPON...

► **Growing up in Berlin** at the end of the Second World War, the first thing the Russians gave us was a Russian grammar book. Then our school ended up in the American zone after Berlin was divided, and we got an English grammar book. I learned that language was power. Later on, I heard about a language without armies or coun-

tries, a language of fraternity called Esperanto. Then, I became convinced that it would be a great step forward, a second language for everyone that belonged to no one.

— Sandkühler Grattapaglia

► **At the 1970 World Esperanto Congress** in Vienna, I met the actor

# PEOPLE

## **Mi amas Esperanton**

("I love Esperanto"). Esperanto motivates human beings to love each other and to serve one another.

— **John Emmanuel Magessa**,  
Muleba, Tanzania



## **Agemaj homoj**

("Active people") is the best translation for people of action, in my opinion.

— **Christoph Klawe**, Rotary  
Club of Schweich Römische  
Weinstrasse, Germany

## **Esperanto? Jes, certe Esperanto. Kiel dua lingvo por ĉiuj.**

("Esperanto? Yes, certainly Esperanto.  
As a second language for everyone.")

— **Ursula Sandkühler Grattapaglia**,  
Alto Paraíso de Goiás, Brazil

Nikolay Rytkov, who had spent a few years in a gulag due to his Esperantism. He fled the Soviet Union during a previous congress and never returned home. In his autograph to me, he wrote: *Esperanto opens borders and hearts*. In the years since, I've been able to experience how right he was.

— Breuninger

► **In 1998**, at a World Esperanto Congress in France, we met Rotarians and they invited us to be part of Rotary. We accepted, and soon we were in the RADE booth at Rotary conventions ourselves.

— **Giuseppe Grattapaglia**, Alto Paraíso de Goiás, Brazil

## LA AVANTAJOS DE ESPERANTO

► **When I use Esperanto**, I am celebrating and reinforcing the fact that there is only one humankind on one planet Earth and that humans are destined to live together in peace.

— Klawe

► **Esperanto makes you** a citizen of the world.

— Breuninger

► **I have many contacts** and have traveled extensively due to Esperanto. Like Rotary, Esperanto opens doors to a wonderful community. And best of all, in 2001, during an Esperanto festival in Italy, I met a Polish woman named Anna, with whom I have been married for 17 years!

— **Julio Calegari**, Dubai, United Arab Emirates

► **Via RADE**, it is easy to get in touch with other Rotarians worldwide, as there are no language barriers. This makes cultural exchanges possible, improving the respect for the cultural heritage of other nations.

— Klawe

► **Our club sponsors "Verda Lingvo"**

(Green language), a nursery school in Muleba, Tanzania. I am so touched when I see videos from the school. It makes me happy that we can help these wonderful children through our project.

— Breuninger

► **Esperanto has often helped** me in my profession as a physician. When confronted with an uncommon problem, I can consult authentic specialists in other countries.

Through the international network of Esperanto speakers, we once managed to transfer a patient to a remote foreign hospital in his region of origin, where we had no other common languages to communicate; only Esperanto worked to make the transfer possible.

— Klawe



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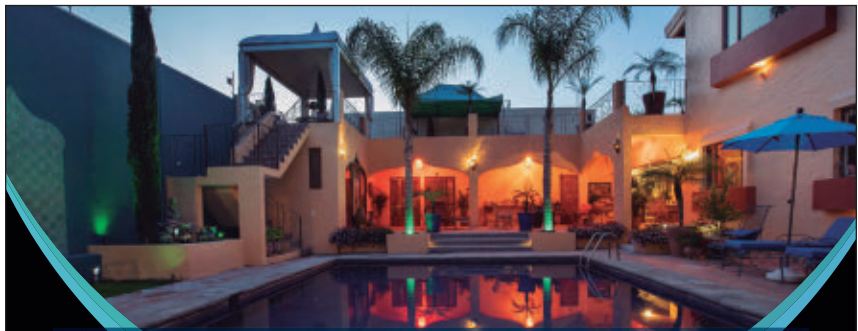


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**WHAT IT'S  
LIKE  
TO...**

---

Illustrations by Richard Mia

# Travel the world for a year of service

**IVAN ALBA AND ELENA LUJAN-ALBA**

Rotary Club of La Mesa Sunrise, California

and their daughters, **ISABEL AND LILY**



**Ivan:** Elena and I were travelers when we met and got married. Then we had our daughter Isabel in 2004.

**Elena:** We're sitting there with this tiny little baby, figuring we won't be doing much traveling. But we were both working with elementary schools back then, and we knew that sixth grade was the year that kids study world cultures. So we thought, instead of studying other cultures in books, we could take Isabel around the world.

**Ivan:** And then within two years, we had Lily. [Laughs] But that only solidified our decision.

**Elena:** We put up a kid's map of the world in our living room. At one point, we asked Lily where she wanted to go, and she said, "I want to go to the Congo!" We said, "Why the Congo?" She said, "Because there's a giraffe there!" Sure enough, there was a big picture of a giraffe right in the middle of Africa.

**Lily:** I was excited for this trip basically my entire life. I would brag to my friends

at school, "I get to go on a world tour soon!"

**Elena:** But we didn't want to just be tourists for a year. We took the girls down to Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, when they were little. We attended a Rotary meeting and found out the club was doing a service project nearby, and we went to help. At a certain point, our kids were kind of bored. So I told them to go get their coloring books and crayons. Our girls started ripping out pages and handing out crayons, and all of a sudden we had 15 or 20 kids and their moms coloring. We saw that our daughters could share their passions with other people.

**Ivan:** We decided that from then on, any vacation we took would have an aspect of service. We wanted our daughters to understand that while it's great to travel, it's even better when you can help people along the way.

**Elena:** Everything just clicked: Our family trip became a Rotary year of service.

**Ivan:** We saved money for many years.

We quit our jobs, sold our cars, rented out our home, and took the girls out of school. We had to educate them on the road. Joining forces with Rotary gave us a connection to the local community everywhere we went — Europe, Africa, Asia, South America. Rotarians took care of us as if we were one of their own. They would pick us up at the airport and drive us around. Through them, we were able to connect with service projects everywhere we went.

**Isabel:** I was 11 when we left San Diego, and I remember I was very nervous about leaving home for a year. I had to learn how to live out of a suitcase, a few days at a time. But by the end of the trip, I noticed how much I'd changed. Before we left, I was very picky about what I would eat and how I'd spend my time, but now I'm more open to new things. The trip also sparked my interest in travel. I'm a senior in high school, and right after I graduate, I'll be taking a gap year to travel. I want to do service-oriented internships.

**Lily:** I like to say that I grew at least three years, physically and mentally, over



that one year. I was really only homesick at the very end. One of the best experiences we had was in the Philippines, where we had the chance to attend school. I got oddly nostalgic, putting on a uniform with knee socks and being back in a classroom.

**Isabel:** I loved visiting this project called Restart Africa, in Kenya. It's a home for kids who have been abandoned or orphaned due to conflict, run by a Rotarian named Mary Coulson. More than a hundred kids, ranging from infants to teenagers, live there.

**Elena:** There was one little girl I spent a lot of time with in the nursery, just talking and cuddling. It put this fantasy in my mind: What if we adopted her? But then I thought: Why would I take her away from this place, where she's so happy and so well cared for?

**Ivan:** That's a big part of what we learned in our year abroad: that no matter where you go in the world, you still see children laughing. Just because you're visiting an area that is impoverished doesn't mean that you're visiting an area that is depressed. Wherever you

have a loving community, you have a joyful life.

**Lily:** One day in my English class, the topic of Africa came up. Some of my classmates were saying things like, "Africa is a poor place, and we should send more things to them." My brain basically exploded. I tried to explain that Africa was not just this place full of poor people who deserve pity.

**Elena:** I did have a moment a few months before we left when I thought to myself: *Wow, are we really going to do this?* But the whole trip was really seamless. It was magical. There was only one time when we panicked, in Cambodia. We were on a chartered bus and we stopped in a little town for a bathroom break. I let the girls go first, and when I came out of the bathroom, I saw Ivan standing there. The bus was gone.

**Ivan:** Because Elena took a little longer in the bathroom, I had to make a decision. If I had stayed on the bus with the girls, Elena would have come out of the bathroom with nobody there to explain that the bus was coming back.

**Elena:** Yes, you said that, and I said: "Next time, never leave my girls alone again." [Laughs] I shouldn't be laughing. That was the longest 12 minutes of my life.

**Lily:** By the way, I had no idea the bus was coming back. And I was freaking out. My sister was just sitting there listening to music, like, "We're gonna be fine." Um, we're not going to be fine! We're in Cambodia, on a bus, without our parents or any way of communicating with anyone!

**Elena:** Like I said, there was a little panic. But we did have a plan if the girls didn't come back. We were going to hire a taxi to chase down the bus. [Everyone laughs]


**Ivan:** We spent a whole year traveling and this was the worst thing that happened. We were never pickpocketed or hassled. The world is not as scary as people make it out to be. It's full of people who are good and kind. Not just Rotarians, but everyone we encountered. The experience really changed our perspective on the humanity of the world.

— AS TOLD TO STEVE ALMOND

# Learn you've won the Nobel Prize

## BENJAMIN LIST

Rotary Club of Mülheim-Ruhr-Schloss Broich, Germany



**L**ast fall, in early October when the Nobel Prizes are traditionally announced, I was on a trip to Amsterdam with my wife — an indication that I really didn't expect to win the award. We had attended a concert the previous night, and that morning we had picked out a nice café for our breakfast. Just before we could place our order, my cellphone rang. My wife immediately said, "That's the call." But that was meant as a joke. We really hadn't expected it, although we knew that the Nobel Prize in chemistry would be announced in less than an hour. You always hear jokes like that when you're being considered as a candidate. Not that I saw myself as a candidate, but in recent years it had been brought up to me from time to time that my work in developing a better way to build molecules might warrant the prize.

In any case, I saw an unknown number on the cellphone display, and underneath, it said Sweden. I looked at my wife in shock, ran out of the café, and took the call. It was actually the call. It was unbelievable. My wife was still sitting in the café, looking at me through a pane of glass, and I had to pantomime to her that I was really being told that I was going to receive the Nobel Prize. She was shocked too, of course. I got down on my knees a bit to show that I was almost fainting from joy. That was a moment I will never forget.

When the call ended, I returned to the restaurant. Unfortunately, the quality of the breakfast was not what we had hoped for. It didn't matter. I couldn't eat anything; it just did not work. It's nice of them to inform you three quarters of an hour before the announcement, so that you can prepare yourself for what's about to hit you. But what are you

supposed to do in that three quarters of an hour? How can you prepare for it? Actually, not at all. We quickly paid our bill and wandered around Amsterdam a bit more before going back to the hotel.

I told the news to the hotel staff right away. They were very pleased and thankfully made a separate room available to me. I sat there and gave interviews, beginning with the Nobel Foundation itself.

Eventually we returned home to Germany, and they held a reception for me at the Max Planck Institute for Coal Research, where I do my work. It was one of the most beautiful moments in my life. We have a courtyard in the institute, and staff members were standing on the balconies that overlook it. Everybody was clapping, and the press was there and the TV cameras were pointed at me. But I didn't notice the media at all. I only saw all my colleagues applauding me. The feeling that the whole institute was standing there, rejoicing and applauding — that was indescribable. I could really feel the joy. The craftsmen, the colleagues from the administration, the analysts, the chemists from the laboratories, everyone was there and clapped for five minutes. Then there was a short silence because I was answering a few questions for reporters, and then there was another five minutes of applause. Time seemed endless at that moment. It was overwhelmingly beautiful.

And of course I've been in contact with my Rotary club. There will certainly be a small celebration, but I can't say yet when that will be. But we will definitely do that. We'll see if I give a lecture then, too. I've already been allowed to give two talks, one about my life as a researcher and one about catalysis as a whole. Either way, we will celebrate in style.

— AS TOLD TO FLORIAN QUANZ,  
days after Professor List received the news

# Win a rodeo championship belt buckle

JEFF CLINE

Rotary Club of Lake Hickory (Hickory), North Carolina



**A**s far as horses go, I'd never done more than a few nose-to-tail rides at resorts. But in 2012, my wife and I went down to Belize, and this horse wrangler took me out riding. He said, "Would you like to canter?" and I said, "What's that?" That's how little I knew about riding. The moment I felt the sensation of the horse floating along beneath me, I said, "Holy cow! This is fabulous!"

When we got back home to North Carolina, I leased a thoroughbred named Tobacco, a former racehorse, and started training with him. That same year, we went to Cody, Wyoming, and while we were there we went to the rodeo and I saw barrel racing for the first time. You've got these three barrels set up 30 or so yards apart, and you have to race around them in a certain pattern and not knock 'em over. The pros are galloping so fast and making these hard turns. It's thrilling. Just watching them, I realized: I gotta do this.

Then I saw an advertisement that said, "Learn How to Barrel Race." It was a one-hour course out at a ranch. The woman

running the class was wearing this big, shiny belt buckle — a champion's buckle. I asked her about it, and she explained that to get one you have to win some events. "Well, I think I want one of those," I told her, and she said, "You'd have to buy one." She was making a joke. But in my mind, I was saying, "All right, game on!"

My wife, Joy, just laughed and rolled her eyes. But we've been married since 1979, so she knew where this was headed. I started training with Tobacco. I had a number of spills, that's for sure. I wound up in urgent care once, getting eight stitches and a CT scan. Joy was pretty unimpressed with my riding that day. I promised to always wear a helmet after that. And Joy gave me a lucky penny that she blessed, so I do have my safeguards.

I just practiced and practiced and practiced and practiced. I'd been riding for less than a year, but I started entering events anyway. They were sponsored by the National Barrel Horse Association (NBHA). I was 57 then, and I competed in the senior division all through the summer of 2013.

The next year, the NBHA introduced a new category that rewarded consistency instead of just speed. Now, there are some good old cowboys who are as fast as a bullet. But because I was the least

experienced rider, I came up with what you might call a math strategy. Basically, I could go slow as heck, and if I never hit a barrel, I accumulated points. It was kind of like that movie where a guy realizes that there are no ski jumpers in his country, so he learns to ski jump and winds up going to the Olympics. I went to events Saturday after Saturday.

At the end of the year, they held a banquet. I wasn't sure I'd won anything. But then I heard them call my name as the North Carolina District 9 Senior 5D champion. And you can guess what I got. I may have been the tortoise, but my belt buckle is as shiny as any of the hares'.

I'm still riding. Once you feel what it's like to really ride, being a horseman is in your heart. But I'm not competing anymore. My sole quest was to get that belt buckle. My kids have been out to the farm where I ride, and of course Joy has seen me compete plenty. I remember one time I was all mounted and ready to head out of the chute, and I got a call from my future son-in-law. He said, "Tonight's the night I'm going to ask your daughter to marry me!" I said, "All right, son. Good luck." Then I put the phone back in my pocket and had a great ride.

— AS TOLD TO STEVE ALMOND

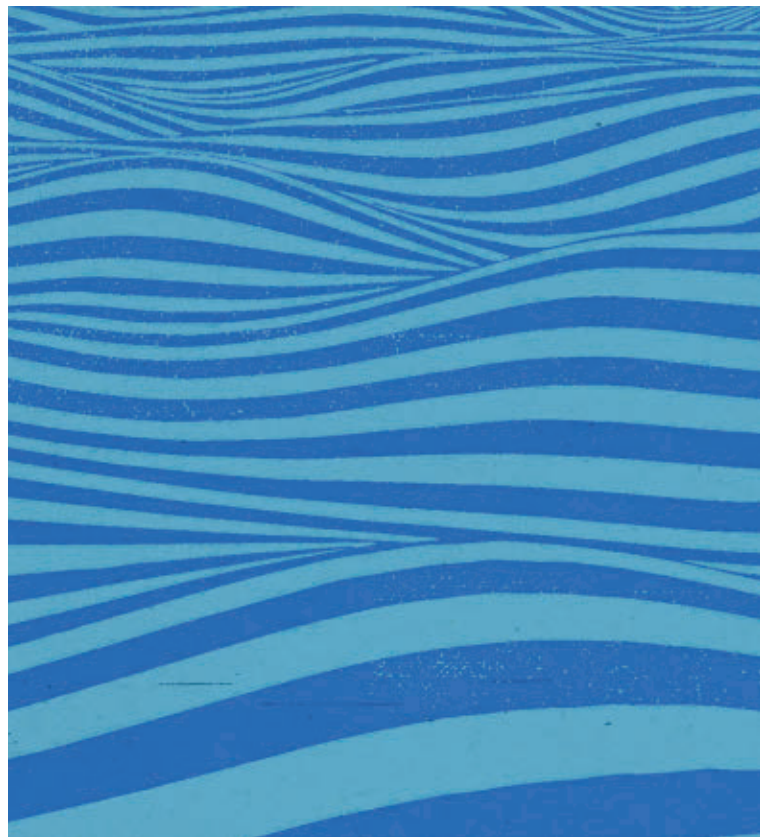
# Be an open-water swimmer

## RITU KEDIA

Rotary Youth Exchange, India to Vermont, 2005-06

## BARKHA KEDIA AGRAWAL

Rotary Youth Exchange, India to Oregon, 1999-2000



**Barkha:** My sister and I started swimming in a pool at a sports complex in our city of Amravati, India. But then my dad read in the newspaper that there was a 5-kilometer race some 600 kilometers away, in Mumbai. He took me there and put me in the sea. I was 9 years old.

**Ritu:** The first two times Barkha swam that race, she had no success. The third time, she stayed with our aunt in Mumbai for a month or two and practiced with a coach. Her coach said, “You know, for marathon swimming you need lots of endurance. You need to be determined. You need patience.” And he thought she had those capabilities. The third time, she swam the 5 kilometers successfully. She was 12 years old.

**Barkha:** My first solo swim was a few months after that race. A solo swim is just that: It’s not a race with other swimmers. You can’t touch the boat or get on the boat, otherwise you get disqualified, but you can take as much time as you want. Finishing the swim is

the achievement. My first solo swim was 36 kilometers. My next one was the Lake Zurich Marathon Swim in Switzerland. It’s a timed race of 26.4 kilometers, and a swimmer has to finish within 12 hours. I got a bronze medal.

**Ritu:** Psychologically and mentally, we were always supported by our family and also our Rotary family: Whenever we came home from a swim, 20 Rotarians would be waiting for us at the railway station with flowers and garlands and music. They would invite us to club meetings to share our experiences.

**Barkha:** We got exposure to Rotary in our childhood. Our dad, Kishor Kedia, was president of his club and later became governor of District 3030. He used to hold his club’s board meetings at the pool where we swam. My dad would be sitting there with the board members while our mom counted our laps.

About a year after the Lake Zurich swim, I went on my Rotary Youth Exchange to Milwaukie, Oregon. I went to Portland Trail Blazers games. I was in the play *The Jungle Book*. I think the only reason they gave me a part was because Mowgli’s girlfriend is Indian.

**Ritu:** The biggest lesson for me from my Youth Exchange experience was that you should do everything that you have in mind so you don’t regret it later. Brandon, Vermont, was a very close-knit community. There were kids in school who had been friends since they were 3 years old, so it was very difficult for me to make friends. There were a lot of things that I now think I should have done, but I didn’t.

The next year, in 2007, I did four international swims in one month. My first open-water swim was the Strait of Gibraltar, from Spain to Morocco. Then it was the Toroneos Gulf in Greece, then Lake Zurich in Switzerland, then the English Channel. When I went into the English Channel, I was already exhausted.

**Barkha:** I think Ritu may be the only person in open-water swimming who’s done four international swims in less than a month. When she finished the channel, the next day we went to collect the certificate at the association office. They said: You know, you are the first pair of sisters from Asia to swim the English Channel. We had no idea there were such records kept. We were the fourth pair in the world to do it.



**Ritu:** When my sister did the Gibraltar Strait, she was the second-fastest woman to cross it. At the place where you enter the water, there is so much turbulence that for a few seconds you don't even know what's hitting you. There's water coming from everywhere. You feel like you're under a waterfall or something. Then you think, "OK, let's create a rhythm and start swimming."

**Barkha:** In 2016, Ritu went to Bangladesh and set a world record in the International Bangla Channel Marathon Swim. She was the fastest person, male or female, to swim that championship. But during the swim she got stung by a jellyfish.

**Ritu:** I saw a ball of white coming at me. There were very long tentacles, and it felt like a thousand needles were scraping my hand. I sort of blacked out for a few seconds. It burned like hell. It's like hot acid being thrown on you. The fishermen on the boat guiding me said, "Take this life buoy and climb on the boat." But once you touch the boat in a marathon swim, you're disqualified. So I said, "As long as I'm conscious, I'll do this." And I kept swimming. It was very, very painful. I think I just wanted to get it over

with; that's why I ended up making the world record. It took nearly two and a half months for the skin on my hand and forearm to come back.

**Barkha:** During my English Channel swim, it was dark, it was raining, and it was windy. The rains in Britain are brutal. They just cut across your body. My dad and my coach told me to swim close to the boat to block the wind. So I was swimming at a safe distance, but close to the boat, when there was a loud noise.

**Ritu:** I can still hear it. I was on the boat. There was a wave and the boat came down. We heard this big CRACK, and we thought the boat had hit her head or something. I can still remember the expression on my father's and coach's faces. They were calling her, "Barkha! Barkha!"

**Barkha:** I thought they were cheering me on, like, "Go Barkha! Go Barkha!" But then I realized that it's not cheerful *Barkha*. It's worried *Barkha*. It's something's wrong *Barkha*. Then they saw that I was alive and said, "Keep going! Keep going." The next day they told me what had happened.

**Ritu:** Hers was the last swim of the sea-

son. It was in September. That day, she was the only solo swimmer who finished. The weather was so bad.

**Barkha:** When I saw the coast of France at 12 hours, the distance I had left should have taken 45 minutes. But it took me five more hours because of the waves.

**Ritu:** You hear a lot of swimmers say, "I've *almost* completed the English Channel." But you don't almost do it. Either you do it or you don't do it. Open-water swimming takes so much out of you as a person because you are swimming alone. You're practicing eight hours a day: four hours in the morning, four hours in the evening, plus one long swim every other week of 8 or 10 hours.

**Barkha:** If you want to live an adventure, challenge yourself, and challenge nature, then open-water swimming is the thing. With open-water swimming, everything that you're doing is *you*.

**Ritu:** It gives you discipline. It gives you mental strength. It gives you confidence because you feel like: If I can handle that, I can handle anything in life.

— AS TOLD TO FRANK BURES

# Walk across the Alps

ALEXANDRE GANDON

Rotaract Club of Cannes Riviera, France



**W**hen I started making long-distance hikes — such as my 1,500-mile walk from Cannes in the south of France to Copenhagen, Denmark, in 2019 — it was never about the athletic challenge. I was simply exploring another channel of tourism during my vacations. I felt that hiking was the best way to meet people.

In the summer of 2020, I decided to travel from Cannes to Geneva by

walking across the Alps. The route was only 370 miles, but the 22 miles of elevation changes made it a demanding undertaking. To add some spice, I planned to sleep under the stars and carry only a small knapsack with room enough for two pairs of socks, two T-shirts, a poncho, two survival blankets, a fleece, and a lightweight solar charger for my phone.

I also carried a special bar of soap to wash my clothes every day. In the summer, there is enough sun and wind in the mountains to dry them quickly, and there were plenty of lakes and rivers where I could wash up — though the cold water was quite invigorating, to say the least. But good hygiene is important while hiking, and I wanted to be clean-shaven when I saw people or bought bread in a bakery. Moreover,

I was planning to meet Rotarians along the way, such as those who greeted me in Bourg-Saint-Maurice and Annemasse, two cities in the east of France.

At that time, I was serving as president of the Rotaract Club of Cannes Riviera, so I added another new element to this hike: raising money for a cause. Other members of my club helped with the fundraising and with media outreach. We also brainstormed to select a local organization that we could help. Suddenly my hike was no longer an individual effort but a collective one. We settled on Association Léo, which funds pediatric cancer research and provides financial assistance and moral support to families of children who have cancer. It was named after a 15-year-old boy who had died of cancer, and it had been launched by his mother, Delphine. During my trip, she, as well as her husband and daughter, sent me encouraging messages, which were an incredible inspiration.

I left the Palais des Festivals in Cannes on 1 August. Hiking through the Alps is not as difficult as you might expect. Of course, I needed physical preparation to a certain extent. I worked



on breathing exercises and muscle strengthening, and six months before my departure, I stopped eating meat so I could lose weight and be more fit for the hike. My previous walks had prepared me for what lay ahead. I am used to hiking and no longer suffer from blisters. And it's a funny distinction, but the rocks on Alpine trails are not as hard on your feet as those, say, in Corsica, where the rock is more likely to crumble and the gravel that covers the trails is sharper.

The most important imperative is to drink water in great quantities, which is not difficult to do in the Alps. Even if I wasn't thirsty, I drank at every opportunity. I had decided to eat only at shops I encountered along the way, but I can easily go without eating for up to 48 hours. I also got an assist when people joined me on certain segments of the trip. My friend Mathieu Maero, who this year is the president of the Rotaract Club of Antibes Cap'Azur, walked with me on the first two days, and other friends met me along the way. That's when I discovered that, just as in cycling, it helps me move forward if I have someone leading the way.

I had no fixed route. I used an app called Visorando where you can find detailed maps of hiking trails. But I did want to visit some landmarks, including the Col de l'Iseran, the highest paved pass in the Alps. (Fans of the Tour de France will be familiar with it.) I slept near the pass's highest point at an altitude of almost 8,000 feet. This was my most challenging night, with the temperature falling to 44 degrees. A

good trick to stay warm is to lie on a bed of pine tree branches.

For the most part, I was lucky. I never imagined that I would encounter so few snags along the way. The only real incident was when a wasp stung my lower lip (I am a real magnet and get stung a lot). My lip swelled monstrously, but I was able to find a pharmacy, and my lip recovered its normal appearance within 24 hours. It taught me not to freak out when dealing with setbacks.

In the Alps, you have to watch out for thunderstorms; if caught in one, stay away from trees and stash your walking poles to avoid lightning strikes. As I walked, I tried to anticipate the weather, and whenever it rained, I looked for a protected area and caught up on sleep. But overall, I benefited from great weather and arrived at my destination

on 20 August, exactly as planned. And we exceeded our fundraising goal, raising €3,000, the equivalent of about \$3,500. The cherry on the cake was the welcome reception extended to me by Rotarians from Geneva, who had planned a barbecue in my honor. I have to admit that it was nice to eat meat again.

— AS TOLD TO ALAIN DROUOT

# Live with a rare autoimmune disease — and a rarer dog

**MICHELLE MUNRO**

Rotary Club of South Whidbey Island, Washington



**O**n 10 December 2001, I played basketball, then went Christmas shopping. When I came home, my wife and I cracked up because I looked

like Rudolph — my nose and my ears were bright red. But the next day, I couldn't move. I couldn't breathe very well. I can't explain the amount of pain I was in; I felt it in every part of my body.

I was diagnosed with a rare autoimmune disease called relapsing polychondritis. In this disease, your immune system attacks the cartilage and connective tissues in your body — your ears, your nose, your trachea, your heart. Most people don't know all the places you have cartilage throughout your body. When the doctor said, "We'll connect you with a rheumatologist who will help you with this," I thought I would be able to get in to see them that same day. But one of the nurses told me, "There's no hurry. It's not like you'll get better."

That was not what I wanted to hear. I'm a very upbeat person, so I started trying to learn as much about polychondritis as I could, but there was a lot less information available at that time than there is today. Everything I read on

the internet mentioned a three- to five-year life expectancy after diagnosis. Since then, I've learned that was because people often got diagnosed late. I have every reason to believe I'll live quite a while longer with this, with good medical care.

It was either one of my medications or the disease itself that made me go blind in one eye. We weren't sure if I was going to lose sight in the other eye, too, so I started researching guide dogs. I found out that there are other types of service dogs as well, including for conditions like mine. It was really hard to fill out that application and be interviewed. I'd always worked in nonprofits myself, providing services. Now I was the one requesting help.

My first service dog, Hayden, and I were very close. I barely needed to use words to communicate with him. I remember one time when I fell down our steps into the basement. Hayden ran down to check on me, but I couldn't speak, because I had broken some ribs. Hayden took off back upstairs. I thought, "What are you doing?" Then he brought me the phone, which he was trained to do in an emergency. But I couldn't make a call, because I couldn't speak. So he ran off again. Usually in a situation like that, he would lie down and stay with me. But he went out into our backyard and howled

until a neighbor, who had a key, came into the house and called an ambulance. Hearing Hayden howl, the neighbor knew that something was wrong.

I've had Theo for two years now, so we're still getting to know each other. He does everything I need him to. When I have one of my attacks, even if my wife is here to help me, he runs and gets my pain medication anyway and meets me wherever we are.

I tend to be a real optimist, but COVID was different. I got my vaccinations, but because of my disease, I've always acted as though I'm not vaccinated — even though wearing a mask is a challenge because my cartilage isn't firm enough to keep the top part of my ear from flopping over.

I joined the Rotary Club of South Whidbey Island in the summer of 2020, right in the middle of the pandemic, and I've been lucky because my Rotary club has also taken precautions very seriously. At Zoom meetings, someone always asks, "Where's Theo?" Theo wears a Rotary bandana, and he also has a Rotary bow tie for more formal events. He was named our club mascot — even though some of the cats and dogs who also make an appearance on other members' Zoom squares might not fully support that.

— AS TOLD TO FRANK BURES

# Be in Rotary for 70 years

**JIM SIMMERMON**

Rotary Club of Oakmont Verona, Pennsylvania



■ I joined Rotary in 1950 when I was 24 years old. At the time, I was the youngest member of what's now the Rotary Club of Burrell-New Kensington, Pennsylvania. Now at 95, I'm the oldest member of the Rotary Club of Oakmont Verona. After 70 years, I still have perfect attendance. In the old days, attendance was a big deal. Rotary has become more flexible, but I've kept my perfect attendance because I like Rotary meetings. I enjoy seeing my friends and learning what's going on with projects.

At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, my club's Rotary meetings moved online right away. Zoom is quite popular among seniors, so I was comfortable with that platform — and after a few months, it occurred to me that I could start attending more than just my own club's meeting. My son Bill lives in Colorado. He's in the Rotary Club of Highlands Ranch (Littleton), so I started attending his club's meeting each week. I also logged on to a meeting of one of my former clubs, the Rotary Club of Fox Chapel Area, to see some of my old friends. It was great fun to speak with people I hadn't talked to in years. It gave me a lift.

You don't meet many people who've had the experiences that I've had in Rotary. There are just not very many people who have been in Rotary for

seven decades! Over the years, I've seen Rotary grow and change a lot, but I think the most significant turning point for the organization came when women began to join during the 1980s. That was a watershed moment — and now we're going to have Jennifer Jones as the first female Rotary International president. I think that's a great step forward.

When I joined Rotary as a young man, I was working for someone else. Meeting successful people through my club helped me to develop more confidence, and I ended up starting several businesses. One of them was a telephone answering service, which I founded in 1958 and ran for 35 years.

I think my club is actually more important to me now because I'm doing fewer things. My wife, Lois, has passed away, and my five children are adults. My Rotary meetings are what I look forward to each week.

When I talk to younger people about Rotary, I always encourage them to join. It's enriched my life and given me a way to help others. Yes, you have to balance your membership with other things in your life, but there's no such thing as not enough time. You make time for things that are important to you.

When I reflect on my 70 years in Rotary, I think the best part of it has been the friends that I've met — and the difference we've made together.

— AS TOLD TO VANESSA GLAVINSKAS

# Hitchhike around the world

**LUDOVIC HUBLER**

Rotary Club of Beaulieu Côte d'Azur, France



**M**y father thought I was a mama's boy. To help me become more autonomous, he encouraged me to hitchhike, which I began doing when I was 16. If possible, I avoid standing on the side of the road and sticking out my thumb. My rationale is that it is better to choose the drivers than to let them choose me. Gas stations are my preferred locations to pick my rides.

Traveling around the world was a dream I'd had since I was about 8 years old, when I spent much of my time looking at maps. After graduating from business school and before looking for my first job, I thought the time was ripe to make that dream real — and I wanted to fulfill it as a hitchhiker.

This feat took me 1,827 days, from 1 January 2003 to 1 January 2008. I traveled 105,000 miles, visited 59 countries, rode with 1,300 drivers and on 10 ships, waited a total of 10,000 hours, and was flatly turned down 20,000 times — with a few middle fingers for good measure. My rides were sometimes eventful: drunk drivers, people who believed they were NASCAR racers, drivers with drugs stashed in the backseat. In Costa Rica, when I frantically stopped a car because I was out in the pouring rain, the driver pointed a gun at me — but eventually gave me a ride.

I had not planned to be gone for five years. But as I traveled, I realized that if you live to be 100, five years is only 5 percent of your lifetime. The total cost of the trip was €25,000, which is the equivalent of about \$29,000 — not that much, all things considered. I was almost always able to find free accom-

modations or sleep in my tent, and food is really cheap in many countries. I left with €12,000 of my own money; the remaining €13,000 I earned by giving presentations — 350 in total, including at Rotary clubs — writing articles, and doing small jobs, which included working as a waiter and as a housekeeper.

Seas and oceans were my biggest challenge. It often took weeks to find a boat. My most amazing experience was crossing the Pacific Ocean on a 40-foot sailboat, helping the skipper the best I could: washing dishes, peeling potatoes, or hoisting the sails. We had two nerve-racking accidents, first in the Galápagos Islands, where we hit a rock, and then, 4,800 miles later, in the Cook Islands, where the ship was damaged after plowing into some reefs. We had to be rescued the next day, and I was stranded on the island of Aitutaki for a couple of weeks. Altogether, the crossing took four months.



Another scare was being chased by a Komodo dragon in Indonesia. I was too busy trying to take a cool picture to realize that the animal was fairly close — so close that it decided to run after me.

Getting sick is another worry when you travel to so many places. At the beginning, I experienced some digestive issues because of the different foods I was eating. I had a case of dysentery that lasted three weeks. Little by little, however, my digestive system adapted, and by the time I reached India, I could drink juices made with tap water.

Some of the areas I traveled through weren't considered safe. In 2007, I was in Afghanistan. I steered clear of areas controlled by the Taliban. To avoid hitchhiking in the countryside, I wanted to find a ride that would take me from Peshawar, Pakistan, to Kabul. Truck drivers kept telling me that there were two things they would not take: drugs and Western-

ers. I ended up riding with a dentist who was driving between the two cities to buy and sell dental prostheses.

I had quite a few memorable experiences in the United States. In Florida, an employee at a gas station asked me to leave, saying that hitchhiking was illegal. Nonetheless, I was able to catch a lift to the next town, where I had to stand by the side of the road to get my next ride. It didn't take long before I was surrounded by three police cars with their sirens howling and lights flashing. After I explained my endeavor, the officers calmed down and even took a picture with me. Another initially tense encounter with the police, this time in Alabama, ended with me actually getting a ride from them.

A more positive encounter occurred on my way to Miami. In Key West, a driver made a six-hour detour to drop me at my destination. He was a mechanic, and he needed to talk about his personal problems. When I got ready to get out of the car, he told me he'd recently had suicidal thoughts and that hearing about my experience had given him the strength to continue living.

*The World by Hitchhiking*, the book I wrote about my experiences, is subtitled *Five Years at the University of Life*. I like to call hitchhiking a school of life because on my journey I met a wide spectrum of people of various backgrounds, from that local mechanic in Florida to the Dalai Lama in India. Yes, *the Dalai Lama*. At the end of a presentation I made in a school in Dharamshala, where the Dalai Lama lives, the principal told me I should meet him to talk about my adventure. After an extended back-and-forth, I was able to spend several minutes with the great man. I was surprised to see how down to earth and curious he was. We enjoyed a few laughs as he suggested that it would be fun to hitchhike with me. By the way, I had hitchhiked through Tibet, which is rare and even unlawful.

The main conclusion I drew from my travels is that most people are honest and friendly. While you should keep your eyes peeled to avoid any bad surprises, you need to trust your fellow humans.

— AS TOLD TO ALAIN DROUOT



# SHARE YOUR STORY

Since it was first introduced in January 2016, What It's Like has been a favorite with readers. Now, beginning with our February issue, What It's Like will become a monthly feature. If you're a member of Rotary with a great story — or if you know someone connected with Rotary who's got a fantastic tale to tell — we want to hear it.

Share your story with us at [magazine@rotary.org](mailto:magazine@rotary.org). Include "What It's Like" in the subject line of your email.

And look for the best stories in future issues of *Rotary* magazine.

Two refugees.

Two entirely different stories.

And yet their tales share a common theme:

The escape into an unfamiliar land  
takes more than unimaginable courage

# T H E C R O S S I N G

**D**esperate for a better future, two refugees risk everything as they flee their homes for destinations they know little about. One, 22-year-old Ju Eun Seok, attempts to slip through the cordon of guards who protect the North Korean border. Another, a Somali teenager named Mahdi, prepares for a perilous journey by sea. And even should Seok and Mahdi successfully brave those dangerous passages, they are only at the start of their journeys into the unknown.

The two stories that unfold on the following pages are emblematic of the experiences of the tens of millions of refugees around the world who have left their homes and countries behind to start a new life. Each of their stories is different, yet many of the elements are the same: Ruptured family ties. A pervasive sense of displacement. Unrelieved hunger, fear, and economic uncertainty. And a constant longing for a friendly face, a helping hand. If they are fortunate, some refugees may get an assist from members of Rotary — and a few might even find in Rotary a special kind of home.

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Illustrations by VALERIE CHIANG



1997.



J A Y U

M E A N S F

by SEOHA LEE

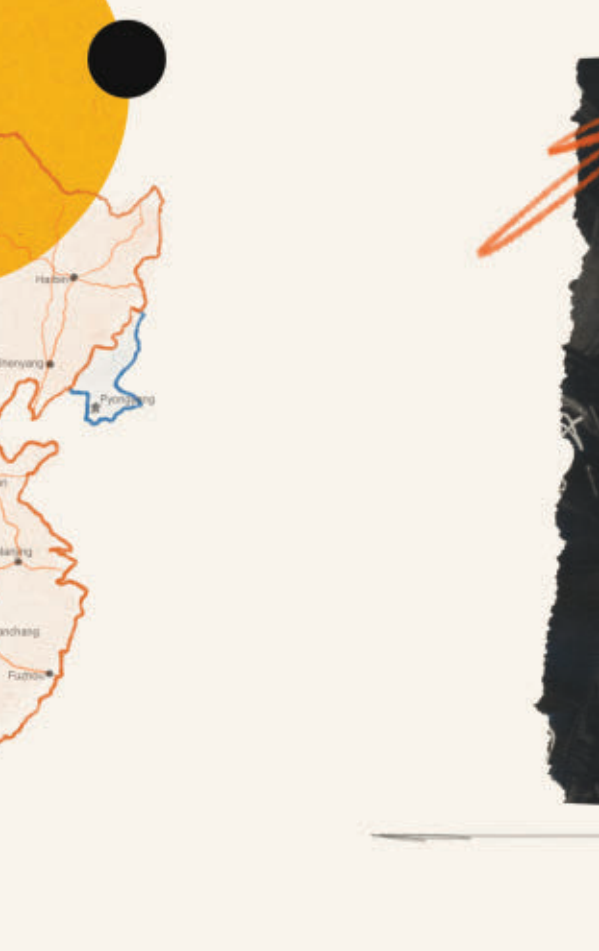
**More than two decades after her harrowing escape from North Korea, Ju Eun Seok leads a South Korean club — the Rotary Club of Ulsan Jayu — whose first priority is helping refugees**

**On a bitterly cold night**, beneath a sickle-shaped moon, three young women huddle in the woods and study the frozen river that lies before them. In some parts of the world, people are preparing to celebrate Christmas. But here on the border between North Korea and China, the shivering women, friends since high school, are intently focused on something else entirely: their impending flight across the ice.

They'd chosen this location with care, a place where the Yalu River narrowed to only a few me-

ters. Concealed in shadows, they can see the two brightly lit outposts, one on either side of the river. As they watch, the guards on the opposite bank begin their shift change. The moment is now.

The women dash from the woods, descend the snow-covered riverbank, and run onto the ice. Fifteen quick, slippery steps carry them to the other side, where they run up the bank and into another stand of trees. Panting, they wait in the dark. Nothing. Their escape from



them young women, attempted to escape during this period. The risk was great. In the late 1990s, the Chinese government had deported thousands of North Korean defectors, deeming them migrants looking for jobs. Under that interpretation, the defectors were exempted from a 1951 United Nations convention that prohibited the return of political refugees to their home countries. Nonetheless, more than 100,000 North Koreans had managed to make their escape. Many of them crossed the Tumen River, which separates North Korea from China and Russia. Others, like Seok, crossed the Yalu.

Some who escaped into China were, for a fee, aided by brokers on both sides of the river. (Today that fee can exceed \$10,000.) Many of the women who fled were sold to farmers as wives, and some were forced into prostitution. According to a study by the Korean Future Initiative, as many as a third of female North Korean defectors suffered that fate between 2015 and 2018.

Seok and her friends were lucky. They had crossed the Yalu entirely on their own. They were indebted to no one.

**On that cold December night** 25 years ago, the three women hiked through the forest until they came to a house. After a moment's hesitation, they knocked. Seok's thin cloth shoes were soaked from the snow and, she recalls, "I was afraid of getting frostbitten if I stayed out any longer." The house was owned by members of a Protestant church based in South Korea. The organization was strange to Seok. "I didn't even know what church or religion was when I left North Korea," she says. (In order to protect its members, Seok has asked to withhold details about the church.)

The entire situation seemed unreal, and Seok panicked. "I realized that I was going to be separated from my family forever," she says. Regretting her decision, she tearfully began to leave the house, intending to cross back into North Korea. The church members stopped her. They explained that the guards were on the lookout for people heading in the other direction — North Koreans who had snuck into China to gather food, clothing, and other supplies they now hoped to bring back home to their families. Seok decided to remain.

The church provided Seok and her friends with birth certificates, food, and temporary sanctuary, and later arranged for each of them to marry a Chinese husband. The three high school friends never saw one another again.

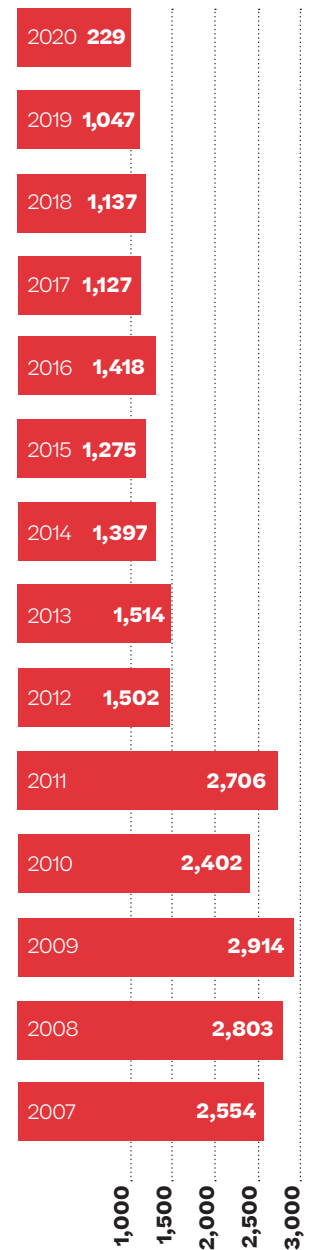
# R E E D O M

North Korea has gone undetected. They are in China now. At 22, Ju Eun Seok has begun her yearslong journey toward freedom.

**On the night Seok fled North Korea** — 24 December 1997 — her native country was in the midst of a desperate time. At the end of the Cold War, the Russians and Chinese cut the subsidies that had been sustaining the nation for years, and in 1994, the North Korean government had effectively suspended food deliveries to its northeast region in favor of its capital, Pyongyang. It had also reduced rations to farmers, who began hoarding food. Estimates vary, but the resulting famine — whose enduring hardships were characterized as the "Arduous March" by the government — may have killed more than a million North Koreans.

A record number of North Koreans, many of

## NUMBER OF DEFECTORS IN SOUTH KOREA



Source: South Korean Ministry of Unification

## HOW SOUTH KOREAN ROTARY CLUBS HELP NORTHERN REFUGEES

► **The Rotary Club of Seoul Shilla** and other clubs from District 3650 regularly hold charity concerts to fund a new building for the Yeomyung School for North Korean immigrant youth.

► **The Rotary Club of Seoul Guro** in District 3640 supports Samjeong School, an alternative school for North Korean immigrant youth.

► **The Rotary Club of Yangsan** in District 3721, along with the Yangsan Police Department, has sponsored nine joint weddings since 2015 for North Korean immigrants with economic difficulties.

► **The Rotary Club of Ilsan-Jeongbal** in District 3690 provides free dental care for North Korean youth.

The church placed Seok in a rural village in Liaoning Province, a coastal area in northeast China, and introduced her to a farmer who wanted a wife. Not beholden to a broker, Seok voluntarily agreed to the marriage, figuring it was the safest way for her to avoid attracting the attention of the Chinese police. “I hadn’t had time to prepare for living as a farmer’s wife,” she says. “But this is the reality for North Korean women.” Less than a year after the crossing, Seok gave birth to a son.

While the household had the appearance of a normal family, Seok remained a stranger in a strange land. The stress of living in an unknown country, in constant danger of exposure, was at times unbearable. Seok had heard that many North Korean defectors carried poison or a razor blade, intending to evade capture by taking their own life. She was terrified every time she saw one of the white cars driven by members of the Ministry of Public Security. Whenever a stranger came to the farm, she fled into the woods with her baby on her back.

Finally, on 1 November 2003, six years after crossing into China, Seok took public transit to an airport, with a reservation for a flight to South Korea. Bearing a false identity card, she had memorized the address of her destination and practiced speaking the necessary phrases in Chinese. “I felt a chill down my spine when the Chinese officials interrogated me,” Seok says. “They checked me three times before they allowed me to pass to the gate.”

This time she had been aided by a broker arranged by the church. Defectors relied on a complex network of brokers in North and South Korea as well as China. Many of the brokers in China were among the 2 million ethnic Koreans in that country. For a cost — Seok paid about \$8,000 — they arranged transportation, provided the necessary passes, issued fake IDs, and bribed border guards and other officials.

Seok’s flight took only 90 minutes, and she was met by church members at the South Korean airport. The South Korean government placed Seok in a resettlement education facility run by the Ministry of Unification, where she spent two months learning life skills such as using an ATM, navigating the South Korean transit system, and finding a job. She also was educated about Korean democracy. Finally, Seok received her ID as a Korean citizen — the country does not consider North Koreans to be foreigners — and was provided an apart-

ment, along with a stipend that went toward paying the broker’s fee. Seok was expected to pay rent and all her other expenses. She worked three part-time jobs a day, sometimes four. Somehow, she endured.

**Now 46 years old** and living in Ulsan, an industrial city in the southeast corner of the country, Seok retains vivid memories of her crossing — not just of the terrifying run across the Yalu River but also of her long ordeal in China that culminated with her anxious moments at the airport. Her passage to freedom comprised far more than her first 15 steps across the Yalu; it covered hundreds of miles and two alien cultures.

One of those unfamiliar cultures was South Korea’s. Seok was shocked by her ignorance of the customs, of the technology — of almost everything. “I was embarrassed at every step,” she says. “Every moment, I felt like a newborn. Everything about the lifestyle was completely unthinkable in North Korea.”

The food especially took some getting used to. “I thought it was greasy at first, because it was cooked in oils that were unavailable in North Korea,” she explains. When dining out, “I had to let myself look stupid and get help just in choosing from the menu.” Steak, for example, was a revelation. “In North Korea, we had a vegetarian-oriented diet due to the economic difficulties,” Seok says. “All these new foods were a challenging experience.”

Then there were the cultural differences. The transition from the ’60s-style music of government-controlled North Korean radio to K-pop was jarring. So were the South’s freewheeling television shows and movies. But the biggest shock came from the relations between men and women. In the North, she says, “cultural rules are very conservative.” In the South, “the frank expressions and physical romance seemed embarrassingly free. As a woman myself,” she admits, “I sometimes envied the other women I saw.”

Even all these years later, she occasionally struggles with the cultural differences. “Sometimes I sit like a mute, smiling meaninglessly, while everyone around me talks,” Seok says. “I have to think about what to say, to express my own opinion.”

Soon after settling in South Korea, Seok found part-time work in a restaurant while majoring in social work at a university — all

while caring for her son (who had later joined her in South Korea) and learning how to comport herself at work and operate the devices in her apartment. Her husband joined them a year after Seok entered South Korea; another son was born a few years later. Seok and her husband later divorced, and she ended up raising the two boys alone.

By all measures, she succeeded. Her older son recently completed his military service and now assembles cars for the Hyundai Motor Company. Her younger son is training for the military, and Seok works as a unification education instructor.

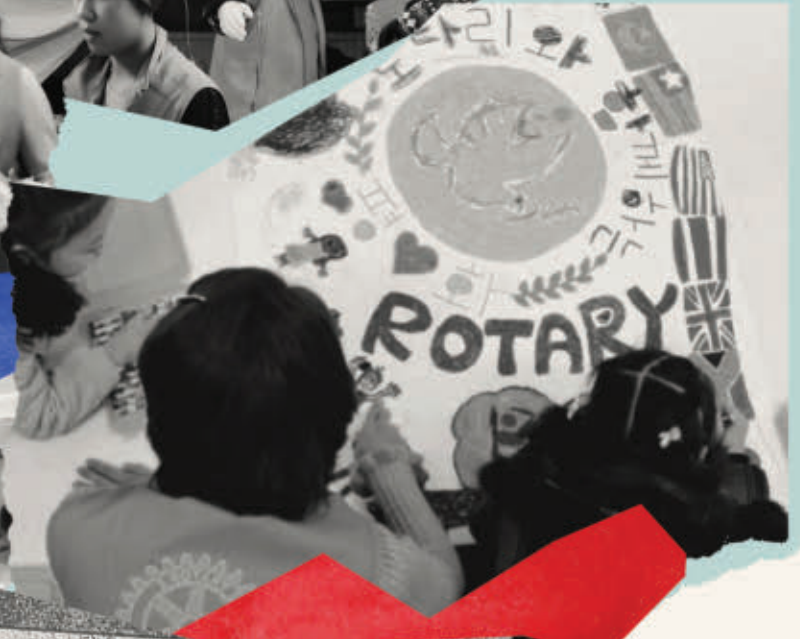
Along the way, though, the family struggled. “It was very, very hard,” she recalls. But she

had help. She received a “warm welcome” from the government, along with financial support and work. Her social welfare professor at the university became a mentor. And the elder and the pastor at her church — the same church that had helped her defect — “became my spiritual fulcrum. They cared for me with the same affection as my parents had. They helped me endure, which is how I can stand here and be who I am today.”

Additional aid came from an unexpected source. The Rotary Club of Ulsan granted Seok several scholarships, and the Ulsan Munhwa club gave her a computer. The Rotary connection would prove crucial over the next decade and a half.



ULSAN



3721.

**It began when Seok started** counseling newcomers from the North. This came to her naturally; she'd been an extrovert as a young girl, and liked to help others. When she was 18 and still living in North Korea, her friends had nominated her to attend a National Communism Good Customs Leaders' Conference, which celebrated citizens who had performed good deeds for their country and comrades. In the South, she now helped newer refugees acclimate to the culture and joined some of them in volunteering at an orphanage.

In 2016, Seok was approached by Hae-Sang Choi, a Rotarian who at the time was governor of District 3721. As a member of the National Unification Advisory Council — a national board, led by the president of South Korea and known today as the Peaceful Unification Advisory Council, that consults on rejoining North and South Korea — Choi had helped support North Korean refugees. He encouraged Seok to work with fellow refugees to charter a new club. "Rotary can be your starting point to build relationships with the community," he said.

Choi arranged for the Rotary Club of Ulsan Daeduck to mentor the fledgling club. In 2016, with 25 members, the Rotary Club of Ulsan Jayu — or Ulsan Freedom, as it's known internationally — received its charter. Its founding president was Ju Eun Seok.

The Ulsan Jayu club assists North Korean refugees, using Rotary connections to link them to employment services, medical care, legal aid, and education. On holidays like Chuseok (similar to Thanksgiving), Seollal (Lunar New Year's Day), and Christmas, the club invites North Korean immigrants and local low-income families to share food and presents, wear holiday costumes, and enjoy time together in order to ease feelings of alienation and create a sense of belonging. On the last Saturday of each month, members gather in the orphanage to clean the facility and bathe the residents. Some stay and help the children draw pictures.

Today, about half of the club's members are nonrefugees. "I think it's a positive sign that we are making great progress," Seok says. "I want our club to be as vibrant as any other club, with diverse members and diverse projects." But she emphasizes that the club's first priority remains helping North Korean refugees resettle in the area.

Seok's club is one of many that are working to give immigrants a positive transition experience. Rotary clubs in South Korea have long supported defectors from North Korea in a variety of ways, such as building schools, offering scholarships, and providing free health checks and dental care. During the COVID-19 pandemic, five clubs (Ulsan-Dongbu, Ulsan Jayu, Ulsan-Jeil, Ulsan-Muryong, and Ulsan-Namsan) have delivered quarantine kits to 580 North Korean families in the Ulsan area.

Lately, though, the number of refugees has shrunk dramatically. According to the Ministry of Unification, only two North Koreans, a man and a woman, entered the South in the second quarter of 2021 — the fewest since South Korea began keeping quarterly data almost 20 years earlier, and a dramatic drop from the 1,000-plus refugees who arrived each year between 2001 and 2019. A major cause of the decline is the pandemic. North Korea tightened security at its Chinese border along the Tumen and Yalu rivers, placing special forces troops on the front line to augment the work performed by the border guards; in some instances, soldiers were stationed every 3 to 5 meters (10 to 15 feet). These changes have made it virtually impossible for brokers to bribe guards. At the same time, the deployment of electronic identification measures, including vaccination certificates and facial-recognition technology on public transportation systems, has made it difficult to move through China undetected.

Still, Seok stays hopeful for a united Korea — or at least one in which people can move freely between North and South. "Practically speaking," she says, "I will be glad if North and South Koreans can just visit their loved ones and friends." In the long run, she would like Korea to gain the advantages of combined capital, technology, resources, and people.

Beyond the political challenges will be the cultural ones. This is where Ulsan Jayu comes in. "We call ourselves 'unification already in existence,'" Seok says. "We believe our activities will make it easier for the people of the South to accept people from the North without prejudice, and the people from the North will feel that they can be accepted, as others see us serving as proud members of the community."

— SEOHA LEE manages Korean-language communications for Rotary International. She lives in Seoul.

73.8

► Percentage of females among North Korean defectors entering South Korea from 2001 to 2020

57.1

► Percentage of North Korean defectors who entered South Korea between the ages of 20 and 39

9.4%

► Unemployment rate in 2020 among defectors in South Korea, more than twice the national average

Source: South Korean Ministry of Unification



# A CHANCE FOR A FUTURE

**Fleeing violence in his homeland, a young man leaves his family behind and faces the unknown. When he arrives in a place he never knew existed, Rotarians are ready to help**

Learn how you can help refugees in your community and globally by visiting the website of the Rotary Action Group for Refugees, Forced Displacement, and Migration at [ragforrefugees.org](http://ragforrefugees.org).

**I left Somalia when I was 14 or 15.** It was only about five years ago, but it feels like such a long time.

My mother is a farmer. My parents separated when I was little, so I never knew my father. Then my mom married my stepfather. At that time, the war was already going on.

I had never thought of leaving Somalia. But a terrorist group called al-Shabaab was taking children from farm families, selling them false ideas, bringing them to the cities, and using them as human bombs. I saw them take a neighbor. I couldn't tell my mom or anyone because they

would have put me in jail or shot me. I had to flee without saying goodbye to anyone.

I left at night. I didn't know where I was going. My goal was never to get to Europe, because I hadn't even heard of it. I wanted to get across the border to Kenya. In Somalia, we don't have buses or trains like in Switzerland, but we have these cars that you can catch a ride with. I took the first one I could. After a journey that lasted an entire day, I found myself in Ethiopia. I had gone the wrong way.

In Ethiopia I was arrested and put in jail. I was held there for a month. When they let

me go, I was walking down the street and heard someone speaking my mother tongue. He told me that a lot of people come to Ethiopia and then go on to Sudan, Libya, or Europe, and he offered to help me.

I spent two days in an apartment with a group of refugees, and then someone picked us up with a car. The car broke down in Sudan, and we had to walk across the desert for three days. After that we found a car to take us to Libya. They don't ask you for any money at the start, but when you get to Libya, you have to pay for the ride and for everything you ate or drank on the way.

If you are able to pay the money you owe, you can get directly on a boat to Italy. But I didn't have any money, and when I tried calling my stepfather, he hung up. When you can't pay, you get beaten up. They beat me and some other young people, and made videos. We were like an example for the new people who were arriving.

Once they realized I was broken, really skinny, and almost dead, they decided to let me go. I found work, but I didn't get paid anything, and all I got to eat was flour with salt, and sometimes some sugar. The first week I couldn't eat it and kept throwing up. By the second week, I was so hungry that I started eating it. I was sleeping outside on the beach.

I stayed in Libya for almost a year and a half. Finally I was able to get on a boat. It wasn't a real boat, just something put together from wood and plastic, and they put as many people as possible on it. It had two decks, and as we were crossing the Mediterranean Sea, the people on the top deck saw a big Italian ship. They all stood up at the same time to look at it, and our boat flipped over.

The sea was cold because it was winter. I was lucky because I know how to swim. Many people went into the water and drowned. One friend of mine from Somalia, Mohammed, went down into the water. Someone I know from Eritrea, who now lives in Lucerne, lost his wife and two children.

I ended up in a hospital in Italy. After two weeks they brought me to a camp, an awful camp. They gave us very little food. I decided I couldn't stay there.

I went to Syracuse, in Sicily. Some people there were putting refugees on buses, if you had money. I have an uncle who lives in Holland, so I created a Facebook account and found him on there and wrote him a message. The next day my uncle called and told me to take a bus to Holland. A guy made me a fake passport and bought me a ticket after my uncle sent him

money, but the ticket only took me as far as a small village in Switzerland on the border with Italy, where there was another refugee camp. I spent two days in this camp, and then I was sent to a camp in Zurich. My uncle still wanted me to come to Holland, but now I had my fingerprints and information in Switzerland, so I wasn't allowed to.

I didn't have a job or anything. I decided I had to do something, it didn't matter what, so that I would have a chance for a future.

In Somalia, I knew I was going to be a farmer. That's how it is. But when I looked at airplanes in the sky, I dreamed of flying airplanes.

I did a job placement for refugees. I took some tests and I chose jobs that I was interested in. But it was already August, which is when all the apprenticeships start in Switzerland. That's when the organization that was helping me put me in contact with ROBIJ and with Ms. Hopsch [see sidebar], who found me an apprenticeship. I had to do a week of job exploration, and then another week where they could see if I'm punctual. At the end of those two weeks, they offered me a two-year apprenticeship to learn to be a painter.

At the beginning I didn't know what a painter was, but now I really enjoy it.

A lot of things were difficult at the beginning. For example, in Somalia, we didn't have showers. We wash by using a plate to pour water over ourselves. In the place where I first stayed in Switzerland, there was no one from Somalia who I could ask where I could wash myself. For a month I used a plate to wash myself. The whole bathroom was full of water.

In Somalia, my family didn't have a TV, so how can you know all this stuff? The first time I saw a white person was in Libya, and it was so weird. I thought, this is not a real human. People had to explain to me that it was a human. Other refugees had come from cities where they have TVs, so they knew about it.

At the beginning, I had no idea of the value of money in Switzerland. I went to a shop to buy some clothes. I gave my money to the cashier and she took everything I had for the entire month. I didn't think it would be so expensive.

I didn't know how to cook either. I ate just bread and potatoes and drank tea. Then I learned how to cook eggs and found some friends to cook with. It wasn't easy to meet people in Switzerland. But now with vocational school, I have friends. Now I really like Zurich.

— As told to KIM WIDLICKI. Widlicki is a marketing and social media specialist in RI's Zurich office.

## UNTAPPED POTENTIAL

In 2018, Rotary members in Zurich started a nonprofit aimed at helping young refugees integrate into society — and helping local businesses find skilled workers. With the motto “We give young people a chance,” eight clubs work with dozens of local employers, including tailoring, catering, construction, and cargo-handling businesses, to provide career exploration days, vocational training, and internships to young people like Mahdi, whose story you can read on these pages.

Three years earlier, Marianne Hopsch had been serving as program officer for the Rotary Club of Zürich City when she decided to focus on aid to refugees. She and her fellow club members got to know the various organizations working in that sphere; their program, which goes by the German acronym ROBIJ, grew from those connections.

As of mid-2021, six refugees have found apprenticeships and more than 20 others have been placed in trial internships. During three career exploration days, almost 200 young people have been able to meet with representatives from trade organizations and learn about job opportunities. For more information (in German), visit [robij.ch](http://robij.ch).

# OUR CLUBS

## VIRTUAL VISIT

### The show must go on

Rotary Club of Americus, Georgia

With a red velvet curtain providing a dramatic backdrop, and ornate plasterwork, painted murals, and other decor from a bygone era setting the scene, members of the Rotary Club of Americus, Georgia, assembled in June for their annual bash at the town's historic Rylander Theatre. In addition to celebrating the chance to get together in person, the evening commemorated a century of connections between the club and the theater, which opened in January 1921.

Two charter members of the club — Arthur Rylander and his son Walter — were among the founders of the theater. In 1919, Walter surprised everyone involved by privately coming up with \$60,000 for the construction, alleviating the need for the city, chamber of commerce, and club to rustle up the funds. In return, his family name went up on the marquee.

In its heyday, the theater was billed as the finest playhouse south of Atlanta: John Philip Sousa once performed there, World War I hero Sgt. Alvin C. York spoke there, and people came from miles around to hear the “Mini Mo,” a pipe organ made by the M.P. Möller Organ Co. (The “Mighty Mo,” the second-largest theater pipe organ in the

world, adorns the Fox Theatre in Atlanta).

After a more modern theater opened in town in 1950, the Rylander closed its doors — and they stayed closed for more than four decades. In the 1990s, the city's then mayor, Tom Gailey, who was also a Rotary member, launched a major restoration effort, and the club made its mark on the theater again with a significant contribution. A grand reopening was held in 1999 on the 75th birthday of former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, whose hometown of Plains is 10 miles west of Americus. He and first lady Rosalynn attended, and the auditorium was named in his honor.

Today, the connection between the club and the theater continues: Last year, members secured a grant from the district to update the projection equipment.

The club calls its annual party the Trip Raffle: The name is derived from a long-standing tradition of offering three big prizes at the end of the evening in the form of special getaways. Since the 1990s, the club has been putting together the prize trips — which have included a four-day cruise in the Bahamas and a “culture-packed weekend in Atlanta” that featured tickets to *Hamilton* at the Fox Theatre, a tour of the city's Pratt-Pullman historic district, and a visit to the Atlanta Botanical Garden — with an eye toward boosting sales of the raffle tickets.

Angela Smith, the 2020-21 club president, describes the event as part fundraiser, part just plain fun. “A big part of Rotary is service,” she notes, “but we also really like to hang out with each other.”

At the event, members celebrate the year's successes. They had a lot to cheer this year: Despite the COVID-19 pandemic

## How to make the most of an online meeting

The Americus club shifted to hybrid meetings in July 2020 and began looking for ways to best engage online members in the new format. President Kenny Phillips says the club wanted to make sure that those attending online would feel they were participating and not just watching remotely. A few tips from the club:

- ▶ **Add a second camera and computer** in the back of the room to allow people online to see those attending in person and to help pick up remarks made away from the podium.
- ▶ **Assign a member to run the second unit**, muting and unmuting virtual attendees. The second unit should also be connected to the room's speaker system so those who are taking part online can be heard by everyone.
- ▶ **Experiment with the setup beforehand.** Angela Smith admits it took a few meetings to get things working well. “We had to figure out a way to share what was onscreen,” she says. “It was definitely an evolving process.”
- ▶ **Keep the limitations of the setup in mind.** “Some speakers like to roam about when they talk,” Phillips notes, “but the microphones only pick up so much.”

and the need to shift to virtual meetings, the club built new partnerships in the community and also brought in 10 new members. A big reason for the club's recent success is the way it has embraced the need to reinvent itself during the pandemic. “While



routine is good,” Angela Smith notes, “it can also be crippling.”

She continued: “We knew that not meeting wasn’t an option for us. The pandemic created an environment that forced us to pivot from the way we have always lived, met, served, and given.”

Angela Smith’s husband, Rene, who was serving as club president at the start of the pandemic, had experience with online meeting platforms; the club immediately scrapped its previous format, dedicating its first remote meeting to sharing news and helping members acclimate to getting together online. The club then began inviting representatives from local organizations, including the CEO of the hospital — who is

also a member of the club — to join online and share their group’s needs, as well as ways Rotary could help. Meetings became brainstorming sessions for service projects — and, later, working sessions to carry out those projects remotely.

Members used the money they were no longer spending on lunches to purchase snack baskets and meals for staff at the hospital. Events that couldn’t be held in person went virtual, and their budgets were rerouted to help local businesses. Collaboration with other organizations became a priority.

“People wanted a way to help,” says Angela Smith. “This gave them that way.”

The club has created plenty of opportunities for members to get involved in more traditional types of projects, too, such as cleanups of the downtown area. Members also volunteer at a wreath-laying event at another of the area’s major tourist attractions, the Andersonville National Historic Site, which is situated on the grounds of the infamous Civil War prison camp where more than 12,000 Union soldiers died.

“We’ve had more people take part in our service projects than we did before,” notes Kenny Phillips, the current club president. “It’s easy for me to flip on whatever plat-

form and accomplish some things and still be in my work environment.”

The club’s connection with President Carter, who is an honorary member, continues to influence its work: A recent project included buying computers for the Boys and Girls club that the Carters support.

In 2020, the Trip Raffle was held virtually, so organizers got creative, designing an online scavenger hunt that had members and guests scrambling through their homes to find toilet paper, thermometers, hand sanitizer, and other items representative of the pandemic. The participants had to photograph the items and text them back in order to collect points.

Phillips says that kind of resiliency is what defines the club.

“Seeing the level of commitment and effort individuals are making to serve keeps me humble,” says Phillips. “It’s a small town. But these people have a heart, a passion, a desire, and a drive to make a difference in our community, the state, and the world.”

— ARNOLD R. GRAHL

From left: Americus club members Angela Smith, Sybil Smith, Kenny Phillips, Cindy Pryor, and Kathryn Moore at the historic Rylander Theatre, with which the club has a century-long connection.

**“The pandemic created an environment that forced us to pivot from the way we have always lived, met, served, and given.”**

FOUR QUESTIONS

# Barrier free

Increasing access for people with disabilities requires a shift in attitude



**Jeremy Opperman**  
 Rotary Club of  
 Newlands,  
 South Africa  
 Diversity, Equity,  
 and Inclusion Task  
 Force member

**1 You have a condition called retinitis pigmentosa, which can result in total blindness. You also run your own consulting firm that focuses on diversity and disability issues. How has being blind shaped your work?**

I didn't become a diversity practitioner and a disability equity specialist because I was blind; I had a perfectly good career for more than 10 years before I started working in this field. But what my blindness did was give me credibility in the subject. It gave me a personal understanding of an impairment, and empathy. As a result, I have been able to pursue these issues with greater understanding and empathy.

**2 As a member of Rotary's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force, what experiences can you share with Rotary leaders that will help to create a more inclusive experience for all?**

One of the most glaringly obvious reasons why corporations struggle with disability equity and diversity is because leadership is not truly invested. It's vital that our leadership be invested and knowledgeable about diversity, and especially disability, because it is very nuanced, involved, and complex.

There is often activity in diversity areas, but organizations might be doing it in an ad hoc or reactive way. The diversity activities of an organization might be confined to certain segments that don't intersect with other aspects of the business. It's very important that we ensure there's integration in all parts of an organization such as Rotary. It's strategic; it's not just something you do here and there.

**3 You have written about the differences between a surface understanding of accessibility, such as wheelchair access, and a fuller understanding of what it means to have disability equity. What are some barriers that people often overlook?**

A major attitudinal barrier prevents us from bringing disability equity into mainstream inclusion. For generations and generations, we've had a paradigm that embraced exclusion. It's not unlike the paradigm that has kept women down for millennia. We are at the tail end of that, but it's hard to undo those things.

But as I like to say, physical barriers don't make themselves. Your inaccessible building didn't make itself; it was made by people. And if people were to think more about disability inclusion, you would have less inaccessibility. That's what I mean by an attitudinal barrier. To overcome the physical barriers, we need to overcome the attitudinal ones. And that's our greatest challenge.

**4 Why is it beneficial to all to make disability equity a priority?**

Because inclusion makes more sense than exclusion. If we categorically exclude people, even if we do so without realizing it, we exclude more than just one individual. Say you are a party of four going out to eat at a restaurant, and one of you is in a wheelchair. Can you go anywhere you'd like? Chances are you can't, because of accessibility issues. Now, that restaurant you could not go to — did it lose one meal, or four? We can't afford to lose people through thoughtlessness, carelessness, or even tacit exclusion. — ARNOLD R. GRAHL

Learn more about Rotary's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement at [rotary.org/dei](http://rotary.org/dei).



# ROTARY RESPONDS TO COVID-19

Visit Rotary's COVID-19 resource center to help your club take action in support of COVID-19 vaccination and prevention

[rotary.org/covid19](https://rotary.org/covid19)





# GROWING MEMBERSHIP INCREASES THE GOOD WE CAN DO!

## **Introducing the Membership Society for New Member Sponsors**

To recognize those who have demonstrated extraordinary commitment and success in growing our membership, we have launched a new recognition program. The Membership Society for New Member Sponsors is a virtual gallery for those members who have sponsored 25 or more new members.

**Visit [rotary.org/membershipsociety](https://rotary.org/membershipsociety)**



## CALENDAR

## January events

## Take the plunge

**Event:**

Lyme Lunge

**Host:**Rotary Club of  
Lyme Regis, England**What it benefits:**

Local charities

**Date:** 1 January

Winkingly described as a “fancy dress dip in the balmy waters of Lyme Bay,” this event is actually a bracing plunge into chilly water — about 12 degrees Celsius (54 degrees Fahrenheit). Some participants wear bathing suits, while others opt for formalwear or festive costumes. Local businesses provide refreshments to help swimmers warm up.

## Shop till you drop

**Event:**

Summer Market

**Host:**

Rotary Club of Ocean Grove, Australia

**What it benefits:**

Local and international charities

**Date:** 2 January

This monthly summer market has been held for two decades and features a wide variety of items for sale — from fresh produce and snacks to clothes, crafts, and toys. Locally made goods are a crowd favorite. Donations are collected to benefit causes such as bushfire relief.

## Utensils ready!

**Event:**

Fork It Over

**Host:**Rotary Club of Edmonton-Mayfield,  
Alberta**What it benefits:**

Local and international charities

**Date:** 8 January

To mark the 20th edition of this fundraiser, this year’s event will be a formal gala, in the style of the Academy Awards. A professional auctioneer and an emcee will keep attendees entertained and motivated to bid on various live and silent auction items. Many of the prizes are food- and travel-related (hence the “Fork It Over” name).

## Fifty years of art

**Event:**

Mornington Art Show

**Host:**

Rotary Club of Mornington, Australia

**What it benefits:**

Local and international projects

**Dates:** 20-30 January

Celebrating its 50th year, this art show features some 800 paintings for sale from artists around Australia. Following an opening-night gala, the pieces will be exhibited at a community center for a week; and starting 23 January, digital versions can be viewed on the event’s website: [morningtonartshow.com.au](http://morningtonartshow.com.au).



## So hot it’s chili

**Event:**

Crazy Pepper Chili Cook Off

**Host:**

Rotary Club of Highlands County, Florida

**What it benefits:**

Local charities

**Date:** 22 January

Think your chili recipe is the best in the world? Why not put it to the test at this 10th annual chili cook-off event? Cooking teams can win cash prizes, including \$500 for first place. If your expertise lies more in tasting, this is also a delicious way to spend an afternoon. Besides the main course, the event features a chili-dog eating contest, live music, and a car show.

## A festival weekend

**Event:**

Federation Festival Market

**Host:**

Rotary Club of Corowa, Australia

**What it benefits:**

Local projects

**Date:** 23 January

The Rotary Club of Corowa hosts a monthly market, but this additional one held annually on the weekend closest to Australia Day is bigger and better than most. Expect the usual array of food, including a farmers’ market, along with live entertainment, a miniature railway, an inflatable castle, and free face-painting for kids.

Tell us about your event. Write to [magazine@rotary.org](mailto:magazine@rotary.org) with “calendar” in the subject line.

HANDBOOK

# Innovate to recruit

## Each One, Bring One initiative offers fresh opportunities

**Increasing Rotary's** membership isn't a new concept. It's an ongoing process, says RI Director Elizabeth Usovicz, "but we're bringing fresh ways of thinking about it." The emphasis now is on encouraging innovative new clubs, and "each person can bring someone to that effort," she says.

From starting new clubs that are focused on a cause or interest to promoting a sense of belonging in existing clubs, an effort to embrace flexibility and prioritize the needs of members — both current and potential — can help Rotary grow.

With a goal of reaching — and sustaining — a global membership of 1.3 million Rotary club members and 300,000 Rotaract members, the Each One, Bring One initiative is a call to action for every member. Read on for ideas on how to introduce someone you know to Rotary.

— MAUREEN VAUGHT

"There's a difference between being a member and belonging. You don't belong until people take care of you, and you, in turn, start taking care of other people."

— Elizabeth Usovicz



## Each One, Bring One (back)


Former members — as well as current members who may have lost their passion for Rotary — can be a valuable resource. To learn how to best engage all members, talk with people who haven't been attending club meetings to find out why, and ask former members what was missing from their Rotary experience. Then look for ways to meet those needs.

## Be flexible

Rotary offers a variety of ways to create a club experience that appeals to new and potential members. From corporate and alumni-based memberships to e-clubs and satellite clubs, you can choose when, where, how, and why you meet. "Flexibility is key," says Usovicz. "Shake up the time you meet and where you meet. Look beyond your inner circle to your secondary circle. You're more likely to find a greater representation of your community."

## Start a cause- or interest-based club

Clubs everywhere are looking to engage members by focusing on their passions. In District 5030 (Washington), Governor Howard Cohen has helped charter two cause-based clubs — one focused on environmental sustainability and another on ending sex trafficking — and is planning others that will pull in members who are veterans, part of the LGBTQ+ community, or involved with the Muslim Association of Puget Sound. (See the "Resources" box on how to start a new club.)



“Personal testimony — not only what you were able to give back to the community but also how Rotary has impacted your life and what you gained from it — can make a real difference.”

— Erica Murphy, Rotary Club of Shades Valley, Alabama

## Contact your Innovative Club advocate

In North America, each zone has two Innovative Club advocates who can help you create new clubs, explore new meeting formats, and discover different membership options. To find your advocates, contact your district governor, zone coordinator, or director, or look on your zone’s website.

## Hold an Each One, Bring One event

Club events that focus on service, or simply on fun and fellowship, are a great way to introduce new people to Rotary and show them how your club is making a difference in the community. When you organize such events, encourage each member to bring at least one new person along. And make sure you follow up with attendees to let them know about the different ways they can become involved in Rotary.

## Get into the action

When members are involved in Rotary Action Groups and Fellowships, they’re more likely to remain in Rotary, says Jacque Howard, a past governor of District 6080 (Missouri). Find out what your members’ interests are so you can connect them with like-minded people. Or get the whole club involved: The Rotary Action Group for Peace, for example, can help set you up as a peacebuilder club.

## RESOURCES

### Refer a Member online tool

Know someone who would make a great member but need help determining which club is right for them? Rotary members can use the Refer a Member tool to help match a potential member with the right club. Find it at [my.rotary.org/member-center](https://my.rotary.org/member-center).

Visit [myrotary.org/membership](https://myrotary.org/membership) to find a variety of tools to help your club engage members. Learn how to:

- ▶ Connect with potential members
- ▶ Conduct a club health check
- ▶ Create a membership plan for your club
- ▶ Engage your current members
- ▶ Increase your club’s flexibility
- ▶ Start a new club



### TRUSTEE CHAIR'S MESSAGE

## The value of partnerships

**We all came into Rotary** because we wanted to join with others in service and make a difference. Similarly, when Rotary teams up with like-minded organizations to work toward our shared goals, there is nothing that we can't accomplish. Partnerships amplify our impact.

Leading through partnerships is nothing new for Rotary: We helped spearhead the formation of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative. Later, when the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation joined the cause, we gained a long-term fundraising and technical partner in the fight against polio. Through our partnership and the 2-to-1 fundraising match agreement with the Gates Foundation, Rotary generates \$150 million annually to end polio. We are proud that they are a part of the effort to end this disease.

Many people may not know that our work with the Gates Foundation and our other partners doesn't end with polio but includes other disease-prevention efforts. The Rotary Foundation has joined with the Gates Foundation and World Vision U.S. to co-fund a Rotary member-led program to help eliminate malaria in Zambia. Based on past partnership and future collaboration around this effort, each co-funder is contributing \$2 million for the Partners for a Malaria-Free Zambia program, the first recipient of The Rotary Foundation's Programs of Scale grant.

This level of impact can also be seen in collaborations across our other areas of focus. Rotary partners with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) on major initiatives at a national scale. The Rotary-USAID WASH partnership has helped communities and governments in countries such as Uganda and Ghana provide safe water, sanitation, and hygiene, impacting hundreds of thousands of lives. We are also teaming up with USAID to help fight COVID-19 and its long-term financial and social impact in Italy. Meanwhile, the Hearts of Europe program, which is funded jointly by USAID and Rotary, assists communities in Eastern Europe through global grants.

Proving our value as a trusted partner often spurs multiple mutual projects. Through the Power of Nutrition initiative, we are partnering with our polio eradication partner UNICEF and the Eleanor Crook Foundation to tackle undernutrition during early childhood.

The Rotary Foundation is far too great to keep to ourselves. Let's make sure to let the Foundation's light shine bright. In doing so, we will find new partners, gain new supporters, and increase the good we're all doing in the world.

**JOHN F. GERM**

*Foundation trustee chair*

## SERVICE ABOVE SELF

### THE OBJECT OF ROTARY

The Object of Rotary is to encourage and foster the ideal of service as a basis of worthy enterprise and, in particular, to encourage and foster:

**First** The development of acquaintance as an opportunity for service;

**Second** High ethical standards in business and professions, the recognition of the worthiness of all useful occupations, and the dignifying of each Rotarian's occupation as an opportunity to serve society;

**Third** The application of the ideal of service in each Rotarian's personal, business, and community life;

**Fourth** The advancement of international understanding, goodwill, and peace through a world fellowship of business and professional persons united in the ideal of service.

### THE FOUR-WAY TEST

Of the things we think, say, or do:

1. Is it the **truth**?
2. Is it **fair** to all concerned?
3. Will it build **goodwill** and **better friendships**?
4. Will it be **beneficial** to all concerned?

### ROTARIAN CODE OF CONDUCT

The following code of conduct has been adopted for the use of Rotarians:

As a Rotarian, I will

1. Act with integrity and high ethical standards in my personal and professional life
2. Deal fairly with others and treat them and their occupations with respect
3. Use my professional skills through Rotary to: mentor young people, help those with special needs, and improve people's quality of life in my community and in the world
4. Avoid behavior that reflects adversely on Rotary or other Rotarians
5. Help maintain a harassment-free environment in Rotary meetings, events, and activities, report any suspected harassment, and help ensure non-retaliation to those individuals that report harassment.

# ROTARY ACTION GROUPS

Rotary Action Groups help clubs and districts plan and carry out community development and humanitarian service projects in their areas of expertise. The groups are organized by Rotarians, Rotaractors, and Rotary Peace Fellows with skills and interest in a particular field. Membership is open to anyone who wants to share their expertise to make a positive impact. Action group members have the opportunity to engage in meaningful service activities outside their clubs, districts, or countries. Clubs can draw on these groups to enhance projects, engage members, and attract new ones. Find out more by emailing or visiting the website of the group you're interested in, or by writing to [actiongroups@rotary.org](mailto:actiongroups@rotary.org).

## Addiction prevention

[rag-ap.org](http://rag-ap.org)

## Alzheimer's and dementia

[adrag.org](http://adrag.org)

## Basic education and literacy

[belrag.org](http://belrag.org)

## Blindness prevention

[rag4bp.org](http://rag4bp.org)

## Blood donation

[ourblooddrive.org](http://ourblooddrive.org)

## Clubfoot

[rag4clubfoot.org](http://rag4clubfoot.org)

## Community economic development

[ragced.org](http://ragced.org)

## Diabetes

[rag-diabetes.org](http://rag-diabetes.org)

## Disaster assistance

[dna-rag.com](http://dna-rag.com)

## Domestic violence prevention

[ragfamsafe.org](http://ragfamsafe.org)

## Endangered species

[rag4es.org](http://rag4es.org)

## Environmental sustainability

[esrag.org](http://esrag.org)

## Family health and AIDS prevention

[rfha.org](http://rfha.org)

## Food plant solutions

[foodplantsolutions.org](http://foodplantsolutions.org)

## Health education and wellness

[hewrag.org](http://hewrag.org)

## Hearing

[ifrahl.org](http://ifrahl.org)

## Hepatitis

[ragforhepatitiseradication.com](http://ragforhepatitiseradication.com)

## Malaria

[ram-global.org](http://ram-global.org)

## Menstrual health and hygiene

[www.ragmhh.org](http://www.ragmhh.org)

## Mental health

[ragonmentalhealth.org](http://ragonmentalhealth.org)

## Multiple sclerosis

[rotary-ragmsa.org](http://rotary-ragmsa.org)

## Peace

[rotaryactiongroupforpeace.org](http://rotaryactiongroupforpeace.org)

## Polio survivors

[rotarypoliosurvivors.org](http://rotarypoliosurvivors.org)

## Refugees, forced displacement, and migration

[ragforrefugees.org](http://ragforrefugees.org)

## Reproductive, maternal, and child health

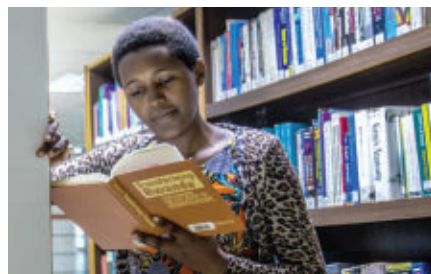
[rotaryrmch.org](http://rotaryrmch.org)

## Slavery prevention

[ragas.online](http://ragas.online)

## Water, sanitation, and hygiene

[wash-rag.org](http://wash-rag.org)



## IN BRIEF

# Rotary pledges grants at Global Citizen event

**Rotary International** President-elect Jennifer Jones took the stage at the Global Citizen Live concert on 25 September in Paris and pledged that Rotary would provide \$97 million in grants to sustainable, club-led projects in 2022.

Global Citizen Live, a 24-hour broadcast with events and performances across six continents, was put on by the international advocacy organization Global Citizen to unite people to take action to defend the planet, end the COVID-19 pandemic, defeat poverty, stop the hunger crisis, provide education for all children, and promote equity and justice for everyone. Some of the world's best-known performing artists, activists, and government leaders participated in the event.

"Every day, millions of girls walk miles to fetch clean water, and millions of boys are on the streets instead of going to school. Every day, moms and dads struggle to find ways to feed their children," Jones said. "And every day, members of Rotary and Global Citizen start our days knowing that we can make a difference."

"This year we're putting a special focus on empowering girls worldwide, opening doors for young women to build brighter futures," Jones said. "Today Rotary is committed to helping end poverty globally and to protecting the planet by pledging \$97 million in grant funding during 2022 for sustainable, member-led projects."

She added: "We stand together with Global Citizen as people of purpose, people of action."

Rotary has worked with Global Citizen for more than a decade, primarily in the effort to eradicate polio worldwide.

In conjunction with the September event, governments, corporations, and other organizations announced financial commitments totaling more than \$1.1 billion, along with pledges to plant 157 million trees and donate 60 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines to developing countries.

— RYAN HYLAND



# PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT

## AN OFFICIAL CAUSE OF ROTARY

Rotary's new cause focuses on comprehensively solving specific issues that have a detrimental effect on the environment. As people of action, let's take on projects that can make a positive, measurable, and sustainable impact on the one place we all call home.

Learn more about Rotary's new cause at  
[rotary.org/environment](https://rotary.org/environment)

2022 CONVENTION

# Houston in the bag



michelmorand

When you come to Houston for the 2022 Rotary International Convention 4-8 June, you might want to bring an extra suitcase. The city is famed for its shopping — and it has something for everyone, from luxury fashion stores to charming local gems.

At the Galleria in Uptown Houston, you'll find hundreds of stores spread over an astounding 2.4 million square feet. It is the largest shopping center in Houston and among the largest in the country. Tourists and locals alike come for stores such as

Neiman Marcus, Nordstrom, Chanel, Gap, H&M, and Saks Fifth Avenue.

The River Oaks Shopping Center is one of Houston's oldest and most stylish centers. Dating to 1937, it's known best for its Art Deco buildings, its open-air concept, its award-winning movie theater, and its blend of vintage and contemporary aesthetics — not to mention its 70-plus stores and restaurants, all adding up to an impressively elevated experience.

Houston's fashionable Uptown Park is home to a

few dozen charming, hip, and homegrown shops. With unique offerings that include a cigar shop, a café whose décor evokes space exploration, and a jewelry store featuring local and international artisans, this shopping center is a favorite destination for many

Houstonians. And when the shopping is over and all you want to do is eat, there is also a good assortment of restaurants, ranging from authentic French-Mediterranean cuisine to sushi to Mexican street food.

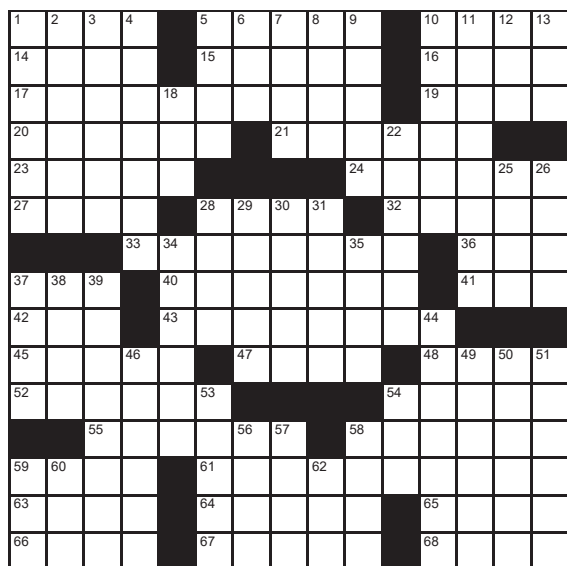
— MIYOKI WALKER

Learn more and register at [convention.rotary.org](http://convention.rotary.org).

CROSSWORD

## Frosty's Winter Punderland

By Victor Fleming  
Rotary Club of Little Rock, Arkansas



ACROSS

- 1 Whitish gem
- 5 Not together
- 10 Certain TVs
- 14 Canceled
- 15 Art piece, familiarly
- 16 Golfer Isao \_\_\_
- 17 Frosty's reply when told there are difficulties ahead?
- 19 Argument
- 20 "Mature" viewers
- 21 "I'm impressed!"
- 23 Admit, as to a meeting
- 24 Device that comes with a saline wash
- 27 Pennsylvania port or lake
- 28 Inventory system, for short
- 32 Preferred strategy
- 33 It's out back
- 36 Pet project of RWR
- 37 *Lou Grant* production co.
- 40 Frosty's array of headwear?
- 41 Brick hauler
- 42 Sheep that might be pregnant
- 43 Closest to being lamblike
- 45 \_\_\_ Waldo Emerson
- 47 *In \_\_\_* (actually existing)
- 48 About
- 52 Willing matter?
- 54 Bought into a hand

55 Tsar, e.g.

- 58 Got to spend more, as a customer
- 59 American \_\_\_
- 61 Frosty's stash for dealing with headaches?
- 63 Kitten's cry
- 64 Baseball phrase after a leadoff single
- 65 Famously ticklish Muppet
- 66 Federico of Clinton's cabinet
- 67 Puccini opera
- 68 Caught a glance at

DOWN

- 1 At reduced prices
- 2 Consider at length
- 3 Cousin of a guinea pig
- 4 Less lofty
- 5 "A pity!"
- 6 Avocado's middle
- 7 Abbr. on a business letter
- 8 Prefix with -stat
- 9 Egg-laden cake
- 10 Nadal of the court
- 11 Frosty's preferred method of payment?
- 12 Alias, for short
- 13 Bit of a beverage
- 18 Rainier or Shasta, briefly
- 22 Avoid
- 25 Fix an onscreen error, say

- 26 Word written on an invoice, perhaps
- 28 Clock part
- 29 Castle of dance
- 30 True stuff
- 31 Advanced degree tests
- 34 Crazy \_\_\_ (card game)
- 35 Fencing blade
- 37 Adjective for formalities and technicalities
- 38 Quaint past-tense contraction
- 39 Frosty's occasional tantrum?

- 44 Aromatic plants of Eurasia
- 46 Spanish rice dish
- 49 1966 U.S. Open winner Fred
- 50 "Out with it!"
- 51 \_\_\_ favorite (bettors' choice)
- 53 Attraction near Orlando
- 54 Smartphone download, casually
- 56 Panicking one's cry
- 57 7-up and 4-all
- 58 Wrist-to-elbow bone
- 59 Mischievous sort
- 60 Ruby or Sandra
- 62 \_\_\_ cit.

Solution on page 26



## Stick with it

*Pins can tell the story of your Rotary experiences*

**PIN, THE TALE:** The array of Rotary pins is vast — representing service projects, annual themes, club offices, district conferences, and other events. The pins typically have some identifying information on them, such as a club name, district, or event date. You can use that information to search the internet to find out more about them. There are also people ready to help you out on Rotary on Pins' Facebook page.

**TRADE VALUE:** If fellowship members are interested in trading Rotary pins, they can join our trading group on Facebook. Trading is also really popular at in-person events — especially among Youth Exchange students, Rotaractors, and other younger members. I'll put some pins out on the table at conventions, and people will immediately start taking pins off their own jackets to trade — it's like nothing I've ever seen.

**ALL TOGETHER:** A good pin collection is in the eye of the beholder. If you're happy with it, you're good. If you like to look at your pin collection, talk about it, and engage with Rotary members and others by wearing your pins, then it's valuable. It's not about the number of pins you have or the monetary value; it's about representing what Rotary does for the community.

— MIYOKI WALKER

### Ed Book

Rotary Club of Downtown Gainesville, Florida

Chair, Rotary on Pins Fellowship

# LEARN ON THE GO



## ROTARY LEARNING CENTER

**Access the Learning Center via mobile.  
Sign in to My Rotary, tap Learning & Reference,  
tap Learning Center, and you'll be on your way!**



# Wherever you go, take *Rotary* with you.

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