

ROTARY

February 2022

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Emcee Skool

Rotary 



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 CHANGE-MAKERS OF ROTARY,

At the start of the Rotary year, I challenged every club to plan and host at least one practical and action-oriented Rotary Day of Service. The event should address a challenge your community is facing that fits into one or more of Rotary's areas of focus and should bring together volunteers from within and outside of Rotary.

Rotary Days of Service can motivate Rotary, Rotaract, and Interact clubs to plan innovative and impactful projects. They can showcase your work as people of action and introduce prospective members to your club.

I've been inspired by your response so far, and I want to share with you just one project that has captured my imagination.

India is home to an estimated 74 million people with diabetes, a disease that is a leading cause of death. Furthermore, about 50 percent of those people remain undiagnosed.

Rotary, together with the Research Society for the Study of Diabetes in India, saw the urgent need to diagnose, track, and treat people who have diabetes. Working together and with other organizations, we hosted a nationwide blood glucose testing camp on 29 September, which is World Heart Day.

The camp was spread across more than 10,000 sites in India, with more than 2,000 Rotary and Rotaract clubs participating in the effort. More than 1 million blood-sugar tests were conducted in a day, an accomplishment recognized by the Asia Book of Records. But more important than breaking a record is the fact that

tens of thousands of people learned that they may be living with diabetes. They can now be treated for the condition, and they also have been made aware that they should take extra measures to shield themselves from COVID-19 and scores of other diseases that are caused or worsened by diabetes.

This month, on 23 February, the anniversary of Rotary, let us celebrate with more service days, showcasing Rotary's work in our areas of focus. I look forward to hearing about your Rotary Days of Service. Please share your projects on Rotary Showcase, or browse that webpage to find inspiration and project partners. In particular, I encourage you to execute projects that focus on empowering girls, as they have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic. The Empowering Girls initiative is resonating very well with members of Rotary as well as with non-Rotarians. The governments and NGOs in various countries are appreciating this meaningful effort. Let us keep focusing on it.

I am also happy that the Each One, Bring One ethos is bringing fruitful results. Let us ensure that all club members introduce at least one person to Rotary, and that we then all work to engage new members and keep them in our clubs.

In whatever we do, remember that we must push ourselves to *grow more, do more* as we *Serve to Change Lives*.

Shekhar Mehta

President, Rotary International



Witthaya Prasongsin

WELCOME



YOU ARE HERE: Damnoen Saduak Floating Market, Ratchaburi province, Thailand

MARKET FORCES: Located about an hour southwest of Bangkok, Damnoen Saduak is often touted as Thailand's most popular floating market. Traders on *sompans* (slim wooden boats) hawk fruits, flowers, and street food known as "boat noodles" along a network of canals whose banks are lined with more vendors in stalls.

THE DRAW: The main Damnoen Saduak canal, connecting the Mae Klong and Tha Chin rivers, was constructed during the reign of King Rama IV in the 1860s. The principal market on the main canal dwindled as roads supplanted water transportation in the 1960s. But the market was revived as a tourist site in the 1970s before migrating to the ancillary Thon Kem canal, where it remains a top attraction.

THE CLUB: The nearby Rotary Club of Ban Phaeo, Thailand, meets Mondays at 7 p.m.

ROTARY

February 2022

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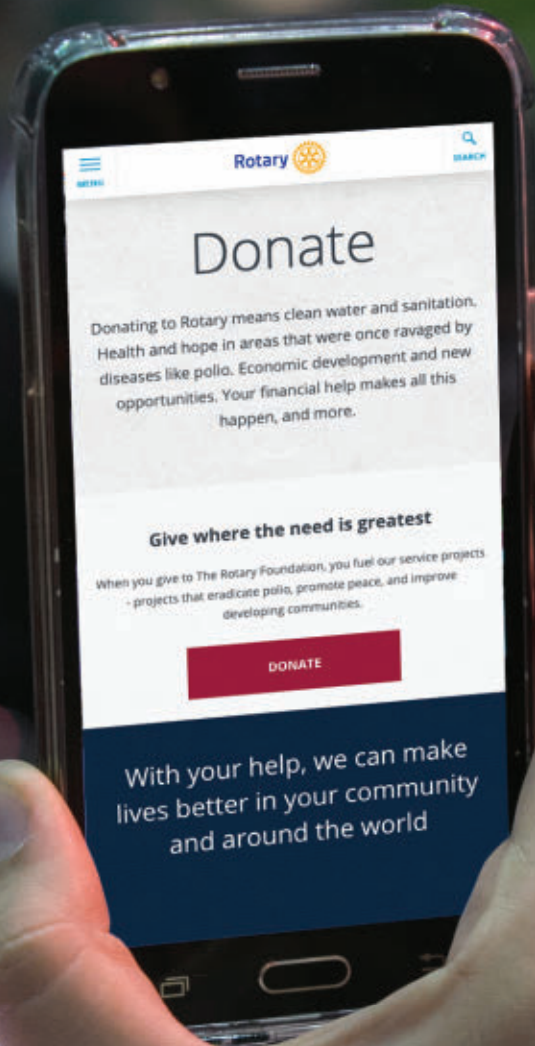
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With an assist from Rotary, a Chicago academy transforms young adults into rapping ambassadors for peace

By Bryan Smith
Photography by Monika Lozinska

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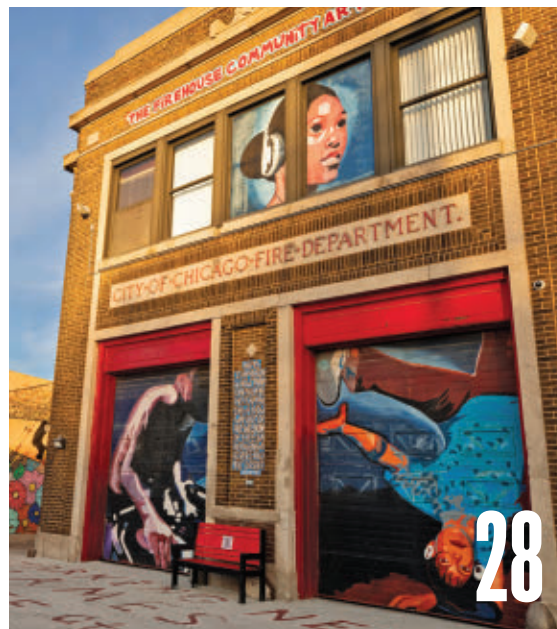
Situated in different parts of the world, the Rotary Peace Centers offer tailor-made curricula to train individuals devoted to peacebuilding and conflict resolution — no matter where they land

By Jeff Ruby
Illustrations by Jason Schneider

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A new report from the Institute for Economics and Peace highlights grave ecological threats around the world — and suggests ways advocates can nurture a more benign environmental future

By Miles Howard
Illustration by Imagezoo



Monika Lozinska

On the cover:
Teh'Ray Hale — better known as Phenom — is the founder of Chicago's peace-focused Emcee Skool.

Photography by
Monika Lozinska

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Inspired by the Olympics? Join your Rotary friends and curl

“Don’t think that because someone has a disability, they can’t be a Rotarian.”

— Ken Masson



Advocacy and action

Ken Masson discovered a passion for helping people with disabilities while he was working as a career specialist for a human services agency in Massachusetts. When he retired in 2020, he knew he wanted to continue to advocate for what’s frequently defined as the world’s largest minority group.

Rotary’s commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion gave Masson the opportunity to combine his passion with Rotary’s Action Plan; he co-founded District 7910’s Rotary Disabilities Advisers group. (See “Make Everyone Welcome” on page 58.)

In June 2021, Masson went on to charter the Rotary Club of World Disability Advocacy, Central MA and Metro West, a cause-based e-club that focuses on human rights issues. The club has 14 subcommittees around the world, all looking for ways to help people with disabilities in their communities. Their work includes vocational training, education, and networking for people with physical or developmental disabilities. (Write to rotarywda@gmail.com to sign up for the club’s newsletter or join its WhatsApp group.)

“Our focus is taking somebody who has a disability and is struggling to be successful, probably because of societal issues, and working on ways to empower them,” Masson says.

— MAUREEN VAUGHT

Read more about how Rotary is focusing on empowering people with disabilities on page 58.

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COMMENTS

The editors welcome comments on items published in the magazine but reserve the right to edit for style and length. Published letters do not necessarily reflect the views of the editors or Rotary International leadership, nor do the editors take responsibility for errors of fact that may be expressed by the writers.

Letters to the editor



NO MORE EXCUSES

I was so impressed by Vanessa Nakate, the young climate activist in Uganda [“The Conversation,” November]. At the end of the interview, she said: “The climate crisis is here ... If you don’t believe that, it only means that you haven’t yet seen it in your community or your country.”

We have seen the climate crisis all over the United States in the past year: in the drought, wildfires, and heat deaths in the West, and in the extreme weather, flash floods, and drownings in the East. Scientists have explained that this litany of damages and deaths would have been unlikely without a warming atmosphere. So the lone excuse that Nakate proposes for Rotary members who don’t see climate change as a problem is insufficient. There are no excuses left.

Maybe it’s time for Rotary members to put climate change solutions into the same category that we have placed polio vaccination: priorities that transcend politics.

— **Chris Wiegard,**

**Virginia co-coordinator,
Citizens’ Climate Lobby,
Chester, Virginia**

LIFE CHANGING

I was especially moved by Jeff Ruby’s article “A Change of Heart” [November]. He is an example of the seismic shift happening globally in response to the pandemic. I see

people examining their purpose in life, in the light of a post-pandemic reality. We need to look closely at the value we’ll give back in return for surviving. Keep showing us that Rotary is aware of the changes happening, and help us see the way forward through service.

— **Linda Peterson,
Rapid City, South Dakota**

STATE OF CONCERN

As a new member of the Rotary Club of San Francisco, I appreciate Rotary members’ dedication to their communities. I know the annual convention [“The Sky’s the Limit,” November] is a highlight for many in this organization. I also know the choice of location is made long in advance for large events like this.

That being said, I am sorry to know that at this moment Rotary is celebrating and investing in Texas, a state that has found its way around providing women their constitutional right to reproductive care.

The women who suffer most from Texas’s new restrictions [on abortion] are low-income women of color. If Rotary cares about the health of women and girls around the world, reproductive choice must be included.

— **Esther Landau,
San Francisco**

MIX MASTERS

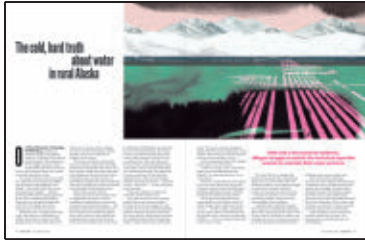
Phillip A. Matous made some vital recommendations to make new members feel welcome [Letters, “Make New Friends,” November] that those of us with established club friendships would be well advised to take to heart.

A couple of years ago, my club tried something to encourage our members to mix it up. As we paid for our meals, we were invited to pick a number out of a hat. The number we received would determine the table at which we would sit during the meeting. The random mixing of members from one meeting to the next was a fun way to help both members and guests benefit from an expanded selection of friends.

— **Robin Maybury,
Sebastopol, California**

SYSTEMS THINKING

We read with interest the recent articles about potable water issues in the United States [“Water Pressure,” October], particularly the one about rural Alaska. After our Rotary District 5010 became aware of the complete loss of the potable water system in the village of Tuluksak, district leaders decided to investigate a practical, long-term way to provide an adequate and flexible emergency response to a major remote-area water system failure.



District Governor-nominee Mike Pollen, who has extensive professional experience with water and wastewater systems in Alaska, led the effort. We teamed with Jon Dufendach of CampWater Industries, LLC, which manufactures rugged, portable water systems for remote areas. A design quickly evolved for a lightweight helicopter-transportable emergency water system constructed on a sturdy aluminum frame reinforced with aircraft cables. The unit can filter and disinfect up to 7,000 gallons per day of clear surface water that is pumped from beneath ice on a lake or river. The power needed to operate the equipment is supplied by a portable generator or the village’s power supply.

We plan to donate four of these units to organizations within the Alaska Native Tribal Health Con-

sortium that bear responsibility for the water infrastructure in their regions. While the units are designed to respond to a water-system emergency in a rural Arctic community under winter conditions, we believe this type of unit may have broader use throughout the world of Rotary, particularly in natural-disaster response. More detailed information about this project is available upon request.

— **Joe Kashi, Cheryl Metiva, Michael Ferris, Michael Pollen, and Brenda Shelden, District 5010 (Alaska)**

I read with interest the article on water contamination from PFAs [per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, such as Teflon]. A different viewpoint is that Teflon saved my life! When I was a young child in the 1960s, a congenital hole in my heart was patched with it. I would not have lived until age 18 without the repair. Over 50 years later, I am still alive and kicking. Obviously, PFAs can serve a valuable purpose.

— **Ollie Phipps, Orlando, Florida**

KEEPING OUR PROMISE

The interview with Aidan O’Leary, the polio chief at the World Health Organization, succinctly covered the plan to eradicate polio [“The Conversation,” October]. Rotary’s promise proves that a polio-free world is within reach. We must keep knocking on doors to vaccinate infants, so we can make this world healthy and beautiful for our children.

— **Munawar Hameed Mangalwala, Karachi, Pakistan**

▼ A health worker at a polio-vaccine transit post in northern Pakistan aims to vaccinate children who were missed during immunization campaigns.



Overheard on social media

In our November issue, we wrote about Rotary’s new partnership with the Global Partnership for Education.

Excellent decision, as all urgent societal goals, including those dear to Rotary’s heart, depend on the transformation of education. Education deserves the support of all Rotarians.

Delia Mamon
► via LinkedIn

Equity in education will ensure a brighter future for everyone. It’s awesome that Rotary is committed to equity!

Pam Brady
► via LinkedIn

FOR MEMBERS

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THE SPECIALIST

String theorist

This expert supplied top artists with the stuff of music

In 1967, my dad and I bought a Chicago company that made strings for musical instruments. You don't have to have musical talent to make strings. I can't play, myself.

I took six cello lessons in my entire life. The instructor, a cellist with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, said to me, "Did you know this is out of tune?"

When we came into the picture, a violin A-string operator could make 24 dozen strings a day. Dad being an engineer, he designed new equipment that could make 110 dozen better-quality strings a day.

My role was product development, as well as getting people to endorse our products and see how we could improve them. We got endorsements from B.B. King and Charlie Daniels. After violinists Fred Spector and

John Cavanaugh
Rotary Club of
Sarasota Bay
(Sarasota),
Florida

Former president
of the Super-
Sensitive musical
string company

Yehudi Menuhin came together to collaborate on a violin mute — a device that bridges strings to dampen the sound — we designed it under Spector's name. It is still being used today.

In the old days, strings would be made of sheep gut or hog gut. Now an E string can be just a stainless-steel or tin-plated wire. An A string is made of nylon. Our D was a layer of nylon with a thin layer of nickel and silver, and our G was made of copper and silver. The lower the note, the thicker the string.

One of the best parts of the job was having backstage passes and meeting artists like Isaac Stern and Johnny Cash. I was on the board of Itzhak Perlman's winter residency program for 10 years. The recitals were fabulous, but the rehearsals were even more entertaining because of the interaction between Maestro Perlman and his students. He would tell jokes, and the students would beg him to stop because they had all heard them so many times.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, school music sales went south. I had retired in 2018 and my son had to sell the business to a competitor. But we had a good run. I have no regrets.

— AS TOLD TO ARNOLD GRAHL

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.



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WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

No laughing matter

EACH WEEK, DURING ONE segment of your club's meeting, a member stands up and shares something funny or interesting. During a recent meeting, the club member assigned to this presentation delivered a sexist joke. What would you do?

I would stand up and say something like, "This joke may not seem funny to some of our members, so let's discuss this in a small group afterward." Then, after the meeting, I would make it clear to the member who delivered the joke that these kinds of jokes have no place in Rotary. I also would make sure that at least one female member

is included in a post-meeting discussion about the joke. I would treat this not as a cardinal sin but as a mistake and a learning opportunity for the club to discuss.

— **Peter Prischl, Rotary Club of Mödling, Austria**

My first thought would be that the club president should respond as necessary and later raise the point at a meeting of the board. Making a direct comment and response at the meeting would only extend the unfavorable situation.

— **Les Lee, Rotary Club of Chesham, England**

Our club does take a few moments

during each meeting to hear happy or sad stories from members. It would be very uncommon for any member to tell a sexist joke. However, if someone did, I would not laugh or exhibit any signs of acceptance. After the meeting, I would discuss the issue with our club leaders and request that they approach the person regarding his distasteful comments.

— **Dan Schiffer, Rotary Club of Mason, Michigan**

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 send it to us at magazine@rotary.org, for possible inclusion in a future issue of the magazine.

Rotary is an international organization, so the answer might be different in different cultures. However, in my mind, Rotary club meetings are business meetings and such a joke does not belong there. I would not single out the person during the meeting, but I would talk to him in private about how the joke was offensive. If the person continued to behave offensively, then the matter should be brought to the board for more serious actions; such behavior does not meet The Four-Way Test.

— **Ken Masson, Rotary Club of World Disability Advocacy, Central MA and Metro West**





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Build your resilience

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Operate your nonprofit like a business

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What it's like to be a mermaid

ROTARY DAYS OF SERVICE

Show and tell

Clubs partner with their communities to demonstrate the good that Rotary can do

PLANTING TREES, conducting blood drives, screening people for diabetes: These are a few of the ways Rotary members have responded to President Shekhar Mehta's challenge to think big this year by organizing a Rotary Day of Service.

"Rotary kindled the spark within me to look beyond myself and embrace humanity," Mehta told incoming district governors during the International Assembly in February 2021. "Service became a way of life for me." Believing that Rotary can do the same for others, members as well as nonmembers, Mehta asked clubs to plan a service day — an event where people in their communities could learn more about Rotary and see the impact of their local club, all while providing service to others.

As clubs were tackling these projects, Mehta asked them to work with at least one local business, community organization, or government or municipality; to include a community discussion about how clubs can continue to empower their community; to promote their events on social media; and to follow up with participants afterward, inviting them to get involved with a future Rotary project or attend a club meeting.

Mehta often says he subscribes to the philosophy that "Service is the rent I pay for the space I occupy on this earth." The members of the Rotary Club of Kigali-Virunga, Rwanda, are striving to do the same. That club and six others worked together on a service-day project in which they planted

For its Rotary Day of Service project, the Rotary Club of Cavite Export Processing Zone, Philippines, erected a handwashing station and sign that provided step-by-step instructions on the proper way to wash one's hands.

Photo courtesy of tStation





“The awareness walk also created an opportunity to encourage community leaders, specifically the monarchs of the communities, to advocate for good mental health.”

2,000 trees that will help feed and sustain two rural communities in Rwanda.

They planted avocado trees and other fruit trees in the village of Kinigi. In another village, Nyakinama, they planted trees, such as eucalyptus, that will generate lumber and raw materials. The club had to find space to plant the trees on community land, get approval from the local government, and find an agribusiness partner to tend the trees.

“Both communities are inhabited by farmers who are in desperate need of extra resources to top up their incomes and help reduce their expenses,” says Rotary member Murtada Ahmed.

The club promoted the project via the Rwanda Broadcasting Agency and other media, as well as on its social media accounts. Members also worked closely with representatives of local and regional organizations, government officials, and beneficiaries of the project.

“Now all of those individuals know what Rotary is and what it does,” Ahmed says.

ANOTHER ROTARY DAY OF SERVICE project, conducted in the Philippines, emphasizes the benefits of maintaining good hand hygiene to prevent illnesses. The club erected a handwashing station and a sign

that provided step-by-step instructions on the proper way to wash one’s hands. The prefabricated handwashing station was constructed by Lauro “Larry” Pascua, president of the Rotary Club of Cavite Export Processing Zone.

“One of our priority projects,” says Marni Sy, a past president of the club, “is to donate handwashing stations for selective barangays [small administrative divisions] and schools to educate people about proper hygiene and the proper way of handwashing in order to prevent the spread of disease, especially during this time of the COVID-19 pandemic.”

The station was placed in a busy area of the city of Cavite. Sy says deciding where to put it was difficult because many schools and businesses were closed or operating on limited schedules due to the pandemic. But the station has been well received, and two schools have since requested their own hand-hygiene stations.

“The project was based on a local needs assessment and was coordinated with local community leaders who helped promote it among residents,” Sy says.

In Nigeria, a service-day event was organized in response to a tragedy that hit close to home, after a local Rotaract member died by suicide. Twenty-nine Rotaract clubs in District 9110 worked

Twenty clubs in Ventura County, California, collaborated on a backpack drive for their Rotary Day of Service project.

Plan to serve

RI President Shekhar Mehta has challenged every club to plan at least one Rotary Day of Service in 2021-22 to “bring together volunteers from inside and outside Rotary” and to “celebrate and showcase the work of your club in your community.”

Guidelines

Clubs are asked to plan events that:

- are organized by two or more Rotary, Rotaract, or Interact clubs
- align with one of Rotary’s seven areas of focus
- are promoted on social media, in a local newspaper, or in other media
- involve people who are not Rotary members

Find out more

Check out the Rotary Days of Service brochure posted at my.rotary.org/en/news-media/office-president/presidential-initiatives.

Short takes

Rotary’s 2020-21 Annual Report is now available at rotary.org/annualreport.



At the UN’s COP26 climate summit in Glasgow, Scotland, in November, RI President Shekhar Mehta pledged that Rotary will support projects to restore mangrove forests.



together to plan a walk designed to raise awareness of the issue of depression and suicide in Nigeria. The country, which has a population of more than 200 million, has an age-standardized suicide rate of 17.3 per 100,000, as compared with the global rate of 10.5 per 100,000, according to a study published last year in the journal *General Psychiatry*.

The walk took place in Ijanikin and Oto Awori, neighborhoods on the outskirts of Lagos. One of the organizers, Ayodeji Ezekiel Sobowale, says the event was designed to help people understand that depression is an illness rather than a character failing. It also aimed to encourage people who are suffering from depression or contemplating suicide to seek help. Participants carried signs with messages such as: “It’s Okay to Ask for Help” and “Fight to Live... Make Mental Health a Priority.”

The district promoted the event in a national newspaper and on social media, including a livestream on Facebook. “Rotaractors also engaged people in direct conversation, talking about the awareness walk and inviting people to join them. That attracted many non-Rotarians, who participated and were introduced to their local Rotary and Rotaract clubs,” says Sobowale, who is the

District 9110 Rotaract representative. He adds: “The awareness walk also created an opportunity to encourage community leaders, specifically the monarchs of the communities, to advocate for good mental health.”

In another Rotary Day of Service project, last fall, 20 clubs in Ventura County, California, collaborated on a back-to-school backpack drive that delivered much-needed school supplies to children from low-income families.

The project got its start after Big Brothers Big Sisters of Ventura County reached out to the Rotary clubs. Big Brothers Big Sisters had about 1,200 empty backpacks that had been donated by the Los Angeles Lakers and the Los Angeles Rams, and they wanted to stuff them full of supplies and give them to children in need. The Rotary members were eager to accept the challenge and filled the backpacks with pens, pencils, notebooks, calculators, and other supplies that students need to start off the school year on the right foot.

“The backpacks went to kids whose family incomes are really low and who have trouble purchasing their own supplies,” says Randy Strong, a member of the Rotary Club of Westlake Village Sunrise.

The items were purchased with a

district grant and individual donations. Each Rotary club reached out to non-profits and other organizations in their own communities to identify children who should receive the backpacks, and to help with distribution. In total, Strong says, there were at least 10 other organizations involved in the project, which was publicized on social media.

Connecting with other community organizations in this way fulfilled Mehta’s goal of using Rotary Days of Service to raise awareness of the ways Rotarians help their communities. “This was a golden opportunity for us to reach out to potential members and say, ‘You really should join us on this project so you can see what kind of projects we do,’” Strong says.

That outreach, he notes, is paying off. “We’re seeing that clubs around here are starting to pick up membership.”

— ANNEMARIE MANNION

Clubs have posted more than 900 projects on **Rotary Showcase** using the tag **ServiceDay2021**.

Get inspired by what other clubs are doing by browsing these projects, and after your event, share its details, along with photos and videos.

Hybrid project fairs will take place this month in Colombia (3-5 February) and Egypt (24-25 February). Learn more at rotary.org/project-fairs.



Foz do Iguaçu, Brazil, will host an RI presidential conference 12-13 February focused on water and sanitation, and disease prevention and treatment.

A new Learning Center course, Public Relations and Your Club, offers tips for club public image chairs and others who want to promote their club. Sign up at rotary.org/learn.

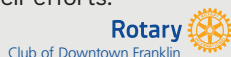
People of action around the globe

By BRAD WEBBER



United States

While jogging on Memorial Day weekend in 2020, Patrick Shairs discovered a holiday-appropriate spot for a break: the old City Cemetery in his hometown of Franklin, Tennessee. Shairs, a member of the Rotary Club of Downtown Franklin, was dismayed by the multitude of badly stained and unreadable headstones. That fall, the club started a project to restore several historic cemeteries in the area. About a year later, 127 volunteers, including members from other area Rotary clubs and students from local schools, had cleaned 560 headstones and footstones and 140 plot pillars, using brushes and spray bottles filled with a biological solution recommended by a preservation organization. They identified 81 people buried in one cemetery who were not listed in the town's official burial register, something that would have gone undiscovered if not for their efforts.



Canada

Island Park in Portage La Prairie, Manitoba, has been a meeting place for more than 100 years. In 2019, the Rotary Club of Portage La Prairie outlined a strategy for a phased, \$150,000 effort to revitalize an area within the popular lakefront park, where the club also sponsored a disc golf course. "The club felt that we could rejuvenate the duck pond to its old glory as well as add new features," says club member Preston Meier. Since 2020, the club has redesigned and rebuilt a waterfall, added fencing and lighting, and constructed a deck with a pergola for special events. "We wanted a project that we could get our hands dirty in and have our fingerprints on — a little blood, sweat, and tears in addition to the fundraising," Meier says.



UNITED STATES

The Rotary Club of The Ridge, Florida, was founded to attract busy professionals who had young children and felt that the breakfast and lunch clubs in the area weren't the right fit. The club views everything it does, including service projects, through the lens of family. Read more in "Family Affair" on [page 54](#).

25% OF THE PLANET'S WETLANDS ARE IN CANADA

300,000 DRAGON BOAT RACERS IN EUROPE

England

After a pandemic-induced hiatus, an annual dragon boat race sponsored by the Rotary Club of Skipton lured more than 150 enthusiastic paddlers in September. Thirteen teams — with sobriquets such as the Komodo Dragons, Craven Ravens, and Rainbow Rockets — collected pledges and raised about \$17,000 for the competitors' chosen charities. Club member Andrew



Gold noted that the competitions in 2018 and 2019 had raised a combined \$30,000. The event was conceived by 2017-18 Club President Mark Ludlam as a tribute to his late father, Brian, a past club president who had arranged a dragon boat race. About half of the club's 40 members helped steward the 200-meter race.

Rotary
Club of Skipton

80% OF PHILIPPINE PROVINCES FEATURE MANGROVES



Philippines

Mangroves form an integral part of the coastal ecosystem of the Philippines. They serve as a source of medicines, alcohol, and timber; a haven for coral reef fish; and a buffer against typhoons. In a two-pronged effort to shore up the maritime trees and buttress a fishing village's ecotourism drive, in November the Rotary Club of Bacolod-Marapara teamed with the Rotary Club of Victorias, the Rotaract Club of Marapara, the Pasil Fisherfolks Association, and other local organizations. They planted some 1,000 mangrove seedlings and provided the fishers with bamboo to construct two cottages in the native style for rental to tourists. "Around the world, mangroves are threatened, but they are important," says Rolando Corona, president of the Bacolod-Marapara club. "Their protection and restoration should be a high priority."

Rotary Club of Victorias
Rotary Club of Bacolod-Marapara
Rotaract Club of Marapara

RWANDA

Members of the Rotary Club of Kigali-Virunga worked with six other clubs on a Rotary Day of Service project in which they planted 2,000 trees that will help feed and sustain two rural communities. Read more in "Show and Tell" on page 14.

India

More than 250 youths from schools and Interact clubs across several Indian states put paint and crayons to paper in a poster competition sponsored by the all-female Rotary Club of Ahmednagar Priyadarshini. The Freedom from Polio art contest stressed the "importance of taking polio drops to help our world get freedom from polio forever," says Bindu Shirsath, a club member who was among the five judges. The club recruited district PolioPlus committee chairs and tapped Facebook and WhatsApp groups to publicize the inaugural project. "Since it was an online competition, the club did not incur costs except for making the e-certificate for winners and publicizing the results in local newspapers," Shirsath adds, resulting in an affordable way to conjure creativity with a message.

Rotary
Club of Ahmednagar
Priyadarshini

110 million INDIAN CHILDREN IMMUNIZED OVER THREE DAYS IN JANUARY 2021



BIG PICTURE

How to bounce back

Build resilience in yourself and others

WHY DO SOME PEOPLE SPRING BACK from hardship while others struggle? Experts agree that resilience is a function of several elements, including genetics, trauma, and personal development, not necessarily in that order. Each of us is genetically hardwired to recover after a failure — some more quickly than others. And, to an extent, our resilience is informed by our experiences. A young person who is abused, neglected, or abandoned is less likely to develop the resilience of one who was nurtured and supported. But most important, whatever degree of resilience we possess, we can always work to increase it. Resilience gets projects accomplished and polio eradicated. It beats the odds, turning losses into wins. Which leads to the question: What, exactly, *is* resilience?

According to George Everly Jr., professor of psychology and public health at Johns Hopkins University and co-author of *Stronger: Develop the Resilience You Need to Succeed*, resilience is a matter of both attitude and actions. Tenacity is an action. “People won’t be tenacious if they assume they are going to fail,” he says. “A resilient attitude is optimistic; it’s the belief in a self-fulfilling prophecy.” If you expect to be resilient, you will become resilient. “But the attitude is impotent without subsequent action,” Everly adds. “This ain’t rocket science. We tend to couch it in psychobabble and the ethereal, and it is not.”

Here’s how to learn the art of bouncing back.

—LOUIS GREENSTEIN



ADVICE

► **DON'T LET YOUR GENES RULE YOU**

Kenneth Ginsberg, an adolescent medicine specialist, professor at the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia and the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania, and author of the book *Building Resilience in Children and Teens*, came up with the term “7 C’s” (see sidebar). “I drew on concepts from the leading thinkers,” he says. “It’s about raising youth to be resilient.” The model,

however, applies to adults as well.

While Ginsberg acknowledges a hereditary component to resilience, he is reluctant to bring up that fact in early visits with patients. “If you put genetics first, people feel disempowered. It may be true that certain things are genetically predicted, such as intelligence and anxiety, but really more than anything else it’s that people around you support your growth and recovery.”



CONTROL



CHARACTER



COMPETENCE



CONNECTION



THE 7 C'S OF RESILIENCE

► **Connection:** Human connection is one of the most important elements supporting resilience. Find meaningful opportunities to connect with friends, family, colleagues, and your community.

► **Competence:** Knowing how to handle stressful situations and face challenges will make us more resilient. Stress reduction is a skill that can be learned, practiced, and improved to increase our social skills and build resilience.

► **Confidence:** When we're confident, we know that falling down isn't a failure — but not getting back up is. Adopting a positive attitude will change our perspective on failure.

► **Character:** Always showing integrity, ethical conduct, and personal accountability will increase our self-confidence and our resilience.

► **Contribution:** When we contribute to our communities, our neighborhoods, and our families, the appreciation we receive drives our self-confidence and boosts our resilience.

► **Coping:** Strong social skills and the know-how to reduce stress prepare us to tackle life's challenges. These skills can be taught to children, teens, and adults.

► **Control:** When we take responsibility for our decisions and actions, we begin to make choices that enable us to feel like we're in control of our lives and able to overcome challenges.

Source: Kenneth Ginsberg

► **LET KIDS SOLVE PROBLEMS** Jenny Stotts, a social worker who is a member of the Rotary Club of Athens Sunrise, Ohio, and District 6690 membership chair, says we can build resilience in young people by simply supporting them. "Maybe they are having a conflict with a peer," she says. "Instead of swooping in and fixing it, look for opportunities for them to problem-solve. That is a resilience-building activity."

"A resilient attitude is optimistic; it's the belief in a self-fulfilling prophecy."

— George Everly Jr., professor of psychology and public health at Johns Hopkins University



22%

Share of Generation Z respondents (ages 13 to 27) who say they have no friends. This is a worrisome number, according to professor of psychology and public health George Everly Jr.; a key element of resilience is our relationships with other people.

Source: 2019 YouGov poll

TECHNIQUES

► **THINK YOURSELF POSITIVE** As trite as this may sound, the key to resilience is maintaining a positive attitude. The good news is that if you don't feel positive, you can still build resilience by acting positive. Fake it till you make it, says Everly. Act as though you are tenacious and bound to win. "Even if you don't believe it, just adopt a positive attitude that views the future as bright and failures as steppingstones to success." He points out that the silent movie star Mary Pickford once said, "This thing we call 'failure' is not the falling down, but the staying down."

Everly says that when we accustom ourselves to acting as though we will succeed, our perspective changes. That shift allows us to begin to see life as a journey, not a destination.

► **DISTANCE YOURSELF** According to Stotts, "One cool thing about personal resilience is that what you are born with doesn't necessarily remain static." As a social worker, speaker, and trainer who specializes in resilience, leadership, and organizational change, Stotts says there are many ways to increase resilience. "People prosper from success and learn from others," she says. "If we break down resilience, it is the space between a stimulus and a reaction to the stimulus. In

that space are your coping skills." Trauma, a lack of security, and disruptions can erode those coping skills and diminish our resilience.

Building resilience, she says, is a function of increasing that space between the stimulus and the reaction. With more space — more time to consider, to take a breath, to reframe the world — we learn to get back up.

One way to open up that space is to challenge your perspective. Say you're at an airport and see a flamboyantly dressed woman walking toward you. "I've been socialized to draw conclusions about her," Stotts says. "But I can challenge my own perspective." Instead of asking why she would dress that way at an airport, "I might wonder if she is an artist."

Stotts recommends getting into the habit of developing alternative hypotheses when we encounter a stimulus. "Then, when you are under stress you are more likely to do it," she says.

► **FOCUS ON PROCESS** In her workshops, Stotts helps expand the space between stimulus and response by treating failure from a different perspective. Focus on "process, not results," she says. Say an organization wants to increase its volunteer ranks. Instead of looking only at the number of

volunteers, look at the recruitment process. "Is it easy to volunteer?" Stotts asks. "Are there barriers we don't know about?"

Also, all too often, she says, we look at failure and ask what we did wrong and what we should do differently. "But we should unpack our successes and learn from those processes too. That is building a culture of constructive positivity."

► **PRACTICE KIND LISTENING** If you are talking with a seventh grader who scored a winning goal in a soccer match, here's a good question to ask, says Stotts: "If you were giving advice to a first grader about how to score a goal, what would you tell them?" That builds confidence, and resilience too.

Or say an adult brought in a project on-time and under budget. Stotts recommends saying something like, "You really pulled this off well. Let's unpack it. What lessons apply to other things we do?" Again, this drives connection, competence, and confidence — and helps build resilience.

Everywhere, including in Rotary, "we hear the message to talk and speak and act with kindness," Stotts notes. "But we don't hear as much about listening with kindness."

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GOODWILL

It's all your business

Nonprofits need to embrace strategies for success from the for-profit world, says philanthropy expert Lisa Greer

“WE ARE A NON-PROFIT. We are not a business!” As someone who has served as a board member, adviser, and donor for nonprofits, I've heard a version of this sentiment more times than I can count. At a meeting, it might be someone's response while discussing a financial or organizational governance issue of the nonprofit. The statement often carries a whiff of disdain.

As someone who also has decades of business experience, I think it's time to examine the abhorrence of the for-profit world that is sometimes voiced in the nonprofit one. While the distinction in virtue between nonprofits and many profit-making ventures is clear, the scornful “we are not a business” attitude is used by some as a rationale for sidestepping the practices, standards, and protocols that are part and parcel of any for-profit entity. This is where nonprofits get into trouble.

Nonprofits and traditional businesses are not diametrically opposite entities. The financial website Investopedia.com says businesses can be “for-profit entities or they can be nonprofit organizations that operate to fulfill a charitable mission or further a social cause.”

Why deny it? Nonprofits are businesses. They have overhead and administrative costs. They compensate staff in accordance with labor laws. They don't have to pay some taxes, but they do

have to file paperwork. They have bylaws. They carry appropriate insurance and meet safety standards. They have boards of directors with fiduciary responsibilities to their organizations.

So why does it seem like so many nonprofits rail against anything that sounds businesslike? The view that businesses are bad and nonprofits are good is simplistic. Here are some common misconceptions I have heard that try to justify why nonprofits shouldn't operate like a business — and my thoughts about why they don't make a whole lot of sense.

Only for-profit businesses focus on money. For-profit business is about making a profit, hence the name. However, nonprofit businesses can (and often do) make money — they just invest it back into their mission. That mission, per their nonprofit tax status, is meant to benefit the public. How do you think nonprofits have endowments, for example, if their income isn't greater than their expenditures?

Nonprofit folks are nicer and more caring than businesspeople. As the nonprofit organization Idealist states, “Difficult personalities, big egos, and office politics can — and do — exist in any professional environment. Perhaps a higher percentage of kindhearted people work in the nonprofit sector, but there is no way to measure this, and there are plenty of exceptions.”

Nonprofits are inconsequential in terms of the size of their workforce. Nonprofits employ

more than 10 percent of America's private workforce — providing more jobs than manufacturing, construction, or finance, according to the National Council of Nonprofits.

The 2021 Edelman Trust Barometer, based on an annual online survey conducted by global communications firm Edelman, found that businesses are now the most trusted institutions around the world because they are seen as both ethical and competent. NGOs are viewed as ethical but less competent. When people at nonprofits say they don't have to, and shouldn't, operate like a business, or that they should ignore accepted rules and standards of business practice, it reinforces that image.

So if people trust for-profit businesses more than nonprofits, why do some nonprofits continue to eschew business standards and practices?

An overly energetic expression of the “we are a nonprofit, we are not a business” attitude indicates that a person is thinking more about appearances than about the market forces and fundraising tactics that will make an organization successful, because the roads to success in the for-profit space and in the nonprofit space are very similar. Nonprofits — including staff, board members, and donors — must insist on operating like a business. They just have to be choosy about which businesses to emulate, and smart about which tactics to pursue.

Nonprofits that are poised for long-term success will do what good businesses do: pay their staff a living and competitive wage, train and support their personnel, embrace appropriate technology, welcome innovation, diversify their ranks, honor their volunteers, and do everything they can to be professional, honorable, and focused on results and their mission.

As a nonprofit, your work likely fights the ill effects of bad businesses. To win that fight, emulate the good ones.

— LISA GREER



How does your Rotary club operate like a business — and how does it not? Continue the conversation at yourletters@rotary.org.

Lisa Greer is a philanthropist, nonprofit adviser, meeting convener, and the author of the bestselling book *Philanthropy Revolution: How to Inspire Donors, Build Relationships and Make a Difference*. She is a member of the Rotary Club of Beverly Hills, California. Find her at lisagreer.com.

What it's like to be a mermaid

JENI HALL

Rotary Club of Oswestry Cambrian, England

It was my childhood dream to become a mermaid, like every other girl who watches *The Little Mermaid*. Then, when I was 12 or so, I visited my local aquarium, and my goal shifted a bit.

I really wanted to dive with sharks.

I became kind of desperate to do it.

We didn't live near the sea, but we had a holiday accommodation, and whenever I could get to the beach I would be in the water. That hasn't changed.

I did my first scuba dive at 14, in a local pool, and eventually got my scuba diving certification, then went on to become a divemaster. A few years on, I heard there were going to be some mermaids at a trade show for divers, so I went. I had always felt that being a mermaid was more of a dream than a realistic career goal. But when I saw these mermaids, I was mesmerized. They were proper looking, with fins and tails and long flowing hair, and they moved very gracefully underwater, with no oxygen tank or diving regulator. I was immediately, like, "Yes, that's what I want to do!"

The trick to being a mermaid is learning this breath-holding thing. Luckily, the person who trained those mermaids was at the trade show, and he took me under his wing. He could see that I was willing to do the training. Because it's a lot of work. You have to do free-dive training, for starters. I couldn't hold my breath for 30 seconds when I started. But I came out of a single day's training able to stay underwater for nearly two minutes. I also had to learn the proper techniques for diving to a depth of 20 meters [about 65 feet]. There's even a diet you have to follow. You want to get as much oxygen as possible, so you have to eat iron-rich foods. But you can't eat too much, because you've got to have room in your belly to take in air.

Then there's the whole matter of learning to swim like a mermaid. The costume isn't too bad when you get used to it, but to be natural-looking involves not bending your knees, pointing your toes, and loads of things you wouldn't think of till someone tells you, "No, you don't look like a mermaid." Then there's the whole business of having your eyes open underwater, and smiling and blowing bubble kisses. I trained for 18 months before I felt I was ready to get into a tank at the aquarium.

My first time was absolutely terrifying. You basically can't see through the water, so you're going down blind. You can sense the fish and other sea creatures swimming alongside you, and depending on their shape and color you can vaguely guess what they are. But you can't see the people on the other

side of the glass unless they're right up against the tank. You're just doing flips and waves and trying to get them to interact. You hear them more than you see them. If there's someone squealing with excitement, you can hear that through the glass and it's really nice. But mostly you have to hope that the people out there are enjoying the show. We try to make it look glamorous and pretty and sort of effortless, but honestly, when we get out of the water we've got snot dripping out of our nose and hair everywhere, and it's cold in the water, so we're shivering. That's the side that nobody ever gets to see but us.

When I'm performing, I become someone different: Mermaid Seren. And she's different from Jeni Hall. I'm a shy person, deep down. But when I transform into Mermaid Seren, I'm more forward and confident. I take on the aspects of a mermaid, the grace and fluidity.

My mum completely expected that I'd become a mermaid. She knows that I'll do weird and wonderful things — that's just me. But the reactions from others can be pretty big, so I'm quite careful when I decide to tell people I'm a mermaid. Some people are excited. They say, "That's so cool! I'd love to do that!" Other people think I'm absolutely insane. Which I get. And the truth is, you are really out there, because of the nature of the costume. Everything's on display. When I first started, I was like, "Oh my, everyone can see me." But I don't mind it too much now. Because of the costumes and the long hair and the makeup, you do have some people who take a bit too much of an interest in us. We have our own term for them. We call them "merverts."

Probably the best reaction I've gotten was from my nephew. My sister brought him to the aquarium earlier this year when he was 8 weeks old and he was transfixed, just watching me dive. That was really nice. I feel privileged to be able to do this work, because not many people in the UK do it. When I give talks, I like to focus on ocean species and the ways we can help animals in need by reducing our personal impact on the environment. I try to be an educational mermaid.

I'm actually new to Rotary. I was doing some community work focused on conservation when Mike Lade of the Rotary Club of Oswestry Cambrian reached out to me. He told me that he thought I'd be a really good fit, and when he explained what Rotary did, I immediately agreed to join his club. So now there are loads of plans for me to participate in different events. Mike keeps saying, "Oh, a mermaid would work well there!"

— AS TOLD TO STEVE ALMOND





SHARE YOUR STORY

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. Include "What It's Like" in the subject line of your email. And look for the best stories in future issues of *Rotary* magazine.

Emcee

Skool

With an assist from Rotary, a Chicago academy transforms young adults into rapping ambassadors for peace

S

eventeen young adults — most of them 20-somethings wearing hoodies, jeans, and skullcaps or high-crowned baseball caps — stood loosely against the wall or sat hunched on church-

basement folding chairs, all backdropped by a spray-painted graffiti-style banner bearing the words “Emcee Skool” that was tacked to the wood paneling. The room had the appearance of a typical church meeting space: overhead fluorescents and foldout tables laden with chips, cookies, and small paper plates. »

by Bryan Smith

Photography by MONIKA LOZINSKA



THE FIREHOUSE COMMUNITY ARTS CENTER



CITY OF CHICAGO FIRE DEPARTMENT



AH YO
I AM DOIN
A NEW THIN
CAN YOU FEE
ME I AM MA
ING A NEW
WAY OUT OF
THE WILDERN
OF LIFE I A
BRINGING O
RIVERS FRO
THE DESERT
MAY 2011



CHICAGO

Emcee Skool's principal player

Teh'Ray Hale, better known as Phenom, holds sessions for his school at the Firehouse Community Arts Center (previous page).

Everyone, seated or standing, leaned forward, watchful and alert. All eyes were on a man wearing camouflage, who a few feet away was prowling the tile floor like a big cat. Whatever challenge he might throw at them, the young people were poised and ready to respond.

They knew the man in front of them well. This was the fourth and final night of auditions for Emcee Skool, a six-month course on how to use rap skills to create positive change in their city, Chicago. In preparation for this moment, most of the hopefuls had for weeks been attending open-mic rap events as well as “lyrical workouts,” a series of Emcee Skool workshops that taught rap technique. Most considered the man a mentor, and some even saw him as a father figure. All gave him a respect born of his own accomplishments and street cred.

They knew what was at stake on this night: If they were one of the handful to pass the grueling audition process, they would be privy to a full, structured course on how to become not only a polished rapper and emcee but a peace ambassador and role model working to stem the tide of violence and bloodshed in their communities. They would also get a crash course in living a purposeful life, taught by someone who came to that hard-fought maturity by trudging his own challenging path.

Accordingly, that man, Teh'Ray Hale — better known as

Phenom

(pronounced fi-NOM) — is not merely looking for people who can spit rhymes. Plenty of young men and women can do that, and some even break through to big success. But, as Phenom, Emcee Skool's founder, sees it, his students' success must manifest in greater ways: in a desire to use their gifts as tools to move people, and in an enduring commitment to channel their pain and heartbreak — in some cases their brokenness — to become powerful voices

in their neighborhoods. Attain that kind of success, and by the force of their art and the strength of their presence, they can become agents of change in a city that desperately needs young leaders who are able to speak directly and with credibility to the people most deeply affected by the violence, poverty, and other ills that plague the South and West sides of Chicago, the neighborhoods from which Emcee Skool draws its students.

The need to determine which young people possess the talent, the openness, and the commitment to embrace that vision is why Phenom makes the Emcee Skool audition process so difficult — and is so uncompromising about whom he lets in. And that's why, on this night, the 17 hopefuls give him their full attention when he issues his first challenge.

IN THE RAP WORLD, MORE THAN IN JUST about any other, the respect and credibility that come from having lived the hard knocks and the truths in the rhymes are prerequisites for anyone trying to reach disillusioned young people.

Born and raised in Chicago, Phenom took his first steps toward a career as an accomplished rapper turned rap guru in a house crammed full with family, and with the help of an unlikely tutor. “My mother was my first emcee,” Phenom recalls with a laugh. “She was repeating the Sugarhill Gang” — whose “Rapper's Delight” is regarded as one of the first rap songs — “which was playing on the radio.” But she didn't just sing it. “She went and wrote the words down,” says Phenom. “I'm watching this lady listen to the words and catch them and transcribe them down on a piece of paper for the purpose of memorizing them. That right there made me want to become an emcee.”

A grammar school teacher, however, was the one who set him on his path. As Phenom tells it, he had been in and out of detention, and school administrators wanted to prescribe Ritalin to try to calm the boy's overexuberant nature. That's when the teacher stepped in with an



Class is in session

Top: Phenom conducts a “lyrical workout,” where participants included Brielle Robinson (bottom, left) and Tyenza Kentura.

alternative to medication. “She gave me a poem,” Phenom recalls, “and said, ‘Here, read this in class.’”

“At first, I was class-clowning it,” Phenom admits, but the teacher was having none of that. “No,” she insisted. “Read it.”

As Phenom recalls it, the reading was Clarence Darrow’s famous closing argument against the death penalty in the 1924 murder trial of Nathan Leopold and Richard Loeb, two University of Chicago classmates who had, on a lark, murdered a 14-year-old boy. “When I got to the part that basically says ‘reach for your dreams,’” Phenom says, “I put my hand out. I did it because I was being a clown, but she said, ‘Memorize this and read it for the assembly.’ So I put my little suit on and did it, and they said it was so good they were going to enter it in a regional contest.” They did, and he won.

From that moment, Phenom says, the power of the spoken word informed nearly every aspect of his life. “Hip-hop

Phenom included his essay in the application he submitted to the local chapter of Public Allies, a social justice nonprofit that mentors young people and finds them paid apprenticeships with local community service organizations. Michelle Obama, who lived in Chicago at the time, was its executive director. “She taught us something that stuck with me forever,” Phenom says. “Don’t approach any community or group or anybody with your file cabinet of answers. You are a co-chemist, and y’all are gonna come up with a prescription together.”

The job Public Allies connected him with helped launch Phenom’s early career as a community organizer, running programs connected with various schools. Eventually, he co-founded a program called LYRIC, an acronym for Let Your Rhymes Inspire Creativity, which gave young people the chance to hone their performance skills and speak to their communities about violence in a way that

no other program had.

LYRIC was a success — eventually serving as a peace partner to Rotary’s Chicago-area District 6450 — but

Phenom felt something was missing. “I learned

that these kids need a finish line. LYRIC didn’t have a finish line. It didn’t have a point to rush to, where the kids could say, ‘We’re almost finished, you can do this.’ We didn’t give them certificates or anything.”

The answer was obvious.

Create a school that holds two

classes a week over a six-month period, a school in which Phenom could take the best elements of his community work — his efforts to address violence in Chicago, his own experiences, and the performance aspect of LYRIC — and use them to shape the curriculum. He would need to keep the classes small and make sure that the enrolled students were both serious and

hit me so hard in high school,” he says. When he saw some kids rapping in the cafeteria one day, he told himself, “Oooh, I want to be that.” Eventually, Phenom became serious about school and was able to graduate “by the skin of my teeth.” Not long after, he was persuaded to write an essay answering the question: How would you change your community?

I learned that these kids need a finish line



Seeking inspiration in images

Top: Oluwatosin Addesan (left) and Vinson Muhammad ad-lib an instant rap. Bottom: Kentura sits beside a Firehouse flower.

in a place in their lives where they could commit fully. That meant auditions, as hard and as challenging as those for any Broadway chorus line, as tough as any tryout for Juilliard. It also meant finding funding. But from where?

PHENOM, HIS CURTAIN OF DREADS SPILLING over his hoodie, looked lost in thought as an assistant fiddled with an iPad, trying to connect it to a Bluetooth speaker at his feet. Then, a rap beat dropped. Heads nodded, picking up the rhythm. It was the audition's first challenge.

Phenom began bobbing his head to the beat, looked up, and then strode hard before the group. He pointed at them and unleashed a verbal fusillade:

Back and forth it went, the rhymes spit out in a fierce chant — GO! — until every one of the 17 had the opportunity to single-handedly shout it out.

And then, Phenom pointing: “You, you, you, you, and you. Over here. The rest of y’all, stay there for now.”

FOUNDED IN 2018, EMCEE SKOOL COBBLED its funding from wherever it could: performances, crowdfunding, private donations from places like Chicago’s renowned Old Town School of Folk Music, and Phenom’s own pocket. After initially gathering in Phenom’s apartment — “my dojo”— Emcee Skool met elsewhere, including the Firehouse Community Arts Center on Chicago’s West Side. When their usual venues weren’t available, they turned to church rooms, storefronts, and anywhere else they could find space.

But Phenom had an angel in his corner. In the years before his school opened, his work had already caught the attention of city officials and community organizers, as well as a member of the Rotary Club of Chicago Southeast. Osei David Andrews-Hutchinson had seen Phenom’s LYRIC protégés perform at a peace demonstration in 2012, and he was blown away by their poise, their presence, and the power of their message. In that performance, Andrews-Hutchinson, who served as the 2015-16 governor of District 6450, saw precisely the kind of service and dedication to peace work that Rotary hungers to support. Groups like Phenom’s “are on the front lines, literally,” Andrews-Hutchinson says. “Let’s connect with them and see how maybe we can help them build capacity or get exposure.”

Andrews-Hutchinson, a member of Rotary for 21 years, says his home club was all in. The Chicago Southeast club was started on the South Side in 1997 in hopes of attracting more African Ameri-

“Magical
Dramatical
Sporadical
Acrobatical
Idiosyncratical
Mathematical,
RAP —
Mathe-MAT-ical
GO!”
The group echoed back, immediately:
“Magical
Dramatical
Sporadical
Acrobatical
Idiosyncratical
Mathematical,
RAP!”



Potential peace ambassadors

Clockwise, from left: Lauren Spratt-Osinaike, Courvosier Randolph, Jordan Body, and Shauwnique Wylie-Cross

can members into Rotary. When Andrews-Hutchinson joined, the club's membership was predominantly Black. "It kind of became this unicorn," he says.

After watching that LYRIC performance, Andrews-Hutchinson caught up with some of the performers. "They were expressing how they've lost friends, how their family situations are not conducive to a positive upbringing, but they were using their energy to effectuate other people," Andrews-Hutchinson says. "They were young, teenagers and people in their 20s, but they were polished, they were together, they were organized."

He asked the LYRIC performers if they were working with anybody. "They were

"Some other clubs, especially some of our suburban clubs, were wondering, 'Why do we need to be doing this? This is not an issue for me.'"

Andrews-Hutchinson's answer: "That's the problem. You don't get it because it doesn't affect you personally. But this is an everyday issue. Our kids are scared. Our kids have to look over their shoulders, they have to navigate how they're going to walk to school because they don't know how the turf wars are playing out between the gangs."

Andrews-Hutchinson found a crucial ally in Pat Merryweather-Arges, a member of the Rotary Club of Naperville, Illinois, and the 2012-13 governor of District 6450. At the time, Chicago was reeling from a spike in gun violence that especially affected young people. Merryweather-Arges was particularly shaken by the killing of a 7-year-old girl named Heaven, who was

selling candy with her mother when she was caught in gang-related gunfire. "We've got to do something," Merryweather-Arges recalls telling some fellow Rotarians.

"She basically said: How dare you call yourself a Rotarian," Andrews-Hutchinson says.

"And not at least have compassion and empathy for this. If we're a peace organization, we should be talking about peace in the streets of Chicago. We talk about getting people peace fellowships and sending them to our peace centers around the world, but here we are right in the founding city of Rotary and we aren't addressing peace issues right here.

"A number of us, specifically Black Rotarians, were like, 'Yes, that's what we're talking about.' Rotary needs to be relevant to our community, and this" — the issue of gun violence — "is really

They were polished, they were together

like, 'Yeah, we're working with Phenom,'" he says.

Just then, a memory clicked. Andrews-Hutchinson had encountered Phenom nearly a decade earlier when the latter was doing work with a group called POETREE Chicago. "I put two and two together and said, 'Hey, I need to connect with this guy.'" He approached Phenom and said, "I'm with Rotary, and I love what you're doing."

For Andrews-Hutchinson, supporting LYRIC seemed an easy call, but other Chicago-area Rotarians were less certain.



The pursuit of happiness

The smiling eyes of Brittany White (top) are mirrored by Halina Kennedy (bottom left, in blue hoodie) and Desiree Lopez.

relevant. So what do we do?”

One problem, Merryweather-Arges explains, was that people in the affected communities “had no idea what Rotary is.” So that year the district entered a float in the South Side’s annual Bud Billiken Parade, the largest African American parade in the country. Andrews-Hutchinson invited Phenom and some of the LYRIC performers to ride on the float. Soon, Phenom and LYRIC were performing at Rotary events all over the city.

“Spoken word — poetry and hip-hop combined — is their way of expressing themselves,” Merryweather-Arges says. “They’re not into violence; they’re not into retaliation. They’re into trying to figure out how to make change, how to process the difficult feelings they have. It’s therapeutic for them, but it’s also a way of bridging a gap, bridging knowledge.”

To support Emcee Skool, Andrews-Hutchinson and Merryweather-Arges worked with Phenom to prepare an application for a Rotary Foundation global grant; the co-sponsors were the Chicago Southeast club and the Rotary Club of Trans Amadi, Nigeria. In August 2019,

the application was approved for \$50,000. Then, the COVID-19 pandemic hit just as the money came through and classes for

Phenom’s fourth cohort of students had begun. “I wasn’t about to let COVID stop me,” Phenom says. “It was so many years coming.” Working within the strictures and protocols proscribed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention — wearing masks, practicing social distancing, holding classes in outdoor spaces when possible — that fourth class graduated in June 2021.

NOW, AT THE AUDITIONS IN THE CHURCH meeting room with the Emcee Skool banner on the wall, Phenom turned to some of the school’s graduates for advice. After five hours of rap challenges, it was time to make the final decision on who would make it into the school’s fifth cohort.

With one slot left, two young women, facing each other in the center of the room, battled rhymes, back and forth, back and forth. After the women finished, Phenom wheeled around and looked at his lieutenants. He huddled with them. It was so close.

Too close. He had planned to take only six of the 17, but they were too good. He raised the number to seven.

When it was over, the people accepted into the program consoled their friends who weren’t, then met under the banner for a class photo. Next, Phenom looked at each of them, one by one. This wasn’t the end, he told them, it was the beginning. They listened and nodded as he said his school was going to be one of the hardest things they had ever done. And then, they exhaled.

First class was in three weeks. ■

A longtime contributor to Rotary, Bryan Smith

wrote about the Chicago Rotarian and diversity advocate Xavier Ramey for the November 2020 issue of the magazine.

Rotary needs to be relevant to our community





THE SEVEN CENTERS OF PEACE

Situated in different parts of the world, the Rotary Peace Centers offer tailor-made curricula to train individuals devoted to peace-building and conflict resolution — no matter where they land

Chulalongkorn University

Bangkok

University of Bradford

Bradford, England

University of Queensland

Brisbane, Australia

Uppsala University

Uppsala, Sweden

Duke University/

University of North Carolina

Durham and Chapel Hill,
North Carolina

**International Christian
University**

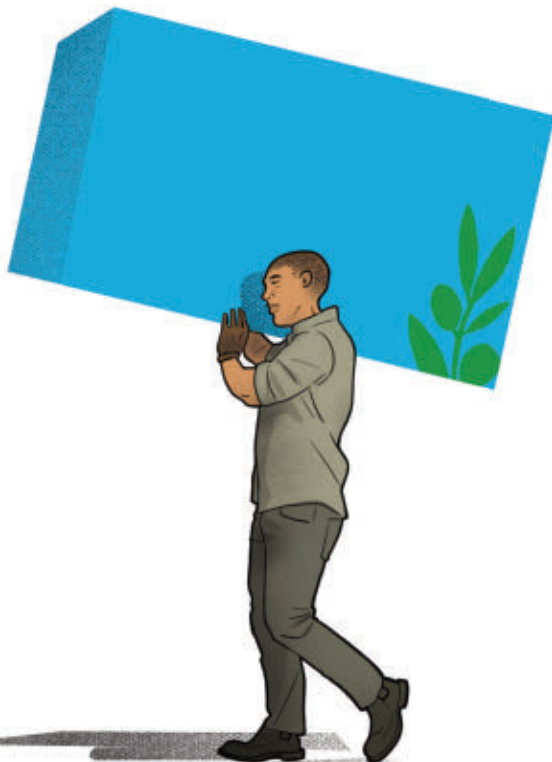
Tokyo

Makerere University

Kampala, Uganda

by Jeff Ruby

Illustrations by Jason Schneider



Rita Lopidia vividly recalls her experiences as a Rotary Peace Fellow at the University of Bradford in England. “The classes in African politics and UN peacekeeping were my favorite,” she says. “The politics course challenged me to dig deeper into research to understand the history of the continent, and the peacekeeping class aided my understanding of global politics. As a practitioner, that was an eye-opener to have a global view of events happening around the world.”

Lopidia’s time at the Rotary Peace Center profoundly affected her. “After graduation, I traveled back to Africa and settled in Uganda due to the ongoing conflict in South Sudan,” she explains.

“There I established the EVE Organization for Women Development and started engaging the South Sudanese refugees in Uganda and their host communities. Through my organization, we were able to mobilize South Sudanese women to participate in the South Sudan peace process promoted by eastern



The curriculum at each of the seven peace centers has been carefully crafted to address specific aspects of the peacebuilding process.

Africa’s Intergovernmental Authority for Development — and that led to the signing of the Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan in 2018.” (You can read more about Lopidia and three other peace fellows in the following pages.)

Lopidia is just one of the 1,500-plus peace fellows from more than 115 countries who have graduated from a Rotary Peace Center since the program

was created in 1999; the first peace centers began classes three years later. Currently, Rotary has seven peace centers in various locations around the world; the newest, at Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda — the first in Africa — welcomed its inaugural cohort of peace fellows in 2021. Next, Rotary plans to establish a peace center in the Middle East or North Africa, perhaps as soon as 2024, and has

set its sights on opening one in Latin America by 2030.

As you will discover, the curriculum at each peace center has been carefully crafted to address specific aspects of the peacebuilding process — and train the next generation of global change-makers. To learn more about the Rotary Peace Centers and how to nominate a peace fellow or apply for a fellowship, go to rotary.org/peace-fellowships.

ROTARY PEACE CENTERS IMPACT

<h3 style="margin: 0;">ROTARY PEACE FELLOWS ARE GIVING BACK BY SUPPORTING PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES IN COMMUNITIES AFFECTED BY CONFLICT</h3>	<h3 style="margin: 0;">CAREER PATH</h3> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div> <h1 style="margin: 0;">93%</h1> <p style="margin: 0; font-size: small;">Working alumni who have a job connected to peace and development</p> </div> </div>	<h3 style="margin: 0;">TOP 5 SKILLS ACQUIRED</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li style="margin-bottom: 10px;"> Research and conflict analysis <li style="margin-bottom: 10px;"> Conflict resolution <li style="margin-bottom: 10px;"> Communication and presentation skills <li style="margin-bottom: 10px;"> Project planning <li style="margin-bottom: 10px;"> Leadership
<h3 style="margin: 0;">KEY BENEFICIARIES</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refugees and displaced persons • Young people • Conflict-affected areas • Women and children • Impoverished communities 	<h3 style="margin: 0;">PROGRAM ALUMNI</h3> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="margin-right: 10px;"> <h1 style="margin: 0;">572</h1> <p style="margin: 0; font-size: small;">Certificate program</p> </div> <div style="margin-right: 10px;"> <h1 style="margin: 0;">904</h1> <p style="margin: 0; font-size: small;">Master's program</p> </div> </div>	
<h3 style="margin: 0;">ENGAGEMENT WITH ROTARY</h3> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="margin-right: 10px;"> <h1 style="margin: 0;">90%</h1> <p style="margin: 0; font-size: small;">Alumni who say they have opportunities to connect and collaborate with Rotary networks and partners</p> </div> </div>	<h3 style="margin: 0;">PROGRAM DONATIONS</h3> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="margin-right: 10px;"> <h1 style="margin: 0;">\$188M</h1> <p style="margin: 0; font-size: small;">Contributed by 9,484 donors (since 2002)</p> </div> </div>	

Sources: August 2019 Rotary Peace Fellow surveys and alumni database

Chulalongkorn University

Bangkok

When a coup took place in Myanmar in February 2021, the peace and development studies program at Chulalongkorn University worked to recruit and support peacemakers there. Six months later, during the evacuations in Afghanistan that followed the resumption of Taliban control, the program created an entire network to get people, including more than one Chula alumnus, out of the country. “We are looking for fellows who are sitting on the front lines of conflict,” says Martine Miller, deputy director of the Rotary Peace Center at the university. Those can include a peace fellow who works with young people in prison systems in California or one focusing on at-risk youth in Kenya.

The nontraditional lecturers of the interdisciplinary one-year program have been embedded in conflict areas themselves. They include Gary Mason, a Methodist minister who has been involved in Northern Ireland’s peace process, and Jerry White, co-founder of Landmine Survivors Network, who lost part of a leg to a land mine in Israel. “It’s not the typical classroom,” says Miller. “The instructors are not professors. They’re writing articles and books. They’re out there in the field doing it. And they’re certainly not bashful.”

Since the peace center was established 17 years ago, the curriculum has evolved to include discussions of gender identity and a session on psychological well-being and trauma meant to tackle head-on the inherent stress of the conflict resolution field. Chula’s long history of innovation has paid off: Seventy-five percent of the more than 500 alumni work for United Nations and government agencies, for nongovernmental organizations, or in academia and research.

“

My colleagues and the lecturers at the university have expanded my knowledge with their shared experiences.”



Salam M. Khanjar, Syria

CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY, 2021-22
· Professional development certificate in peace and development studies, with a focus on conflict analysis, negotiation strategies, and peacebuilding

“As a Syrian refugee now living in the Kurdistan region of Iraq, everything covered during my time at the Rotary Peace Center is interesting and life touching for me. I have acquired skills that I am using in my current work to reduce gender-based violence among my Syrian refugee community and internally displaced people in Iraq. My colleagues and the lecturers at the university have expanded my knowledge with their shared experiences from different cultures and contexts. You can feel the enthusiasm they have to work on peace and save lives around the world. And it’s helpful to know that we will continue to communicate and that I can always seek support from them if I need it.”

“

I look at things differently, analyze nuanced issues, and back my analysis with evidence from research.”



Rita Martin Lopidia,
South Sudan

- UNIVERSITY OF BRADFORD, 2015-16
- Master of Arts, with a focus on international politics and security studies
- Co-founder and executive director of EVE Organization for Women Development, which focuses on women’s issues in South Sudan and Uganda, as well as peace and security issues
- Winner of the inaugural Women Building Peace Award from the U.S. Institute of Peace (2020)

“As an activist for peace and women’s rights, my experience at the Rotary Peace Center at the University of Bradford immensely improved my advocacy skills and my confidence in raising and arguing key concerns around those issues. I look at things differently, analyze nuanced issues, and back my analysis with evidence from research. Overall, my experience at the peace center contributed to my growth professionally and has motivated me to push boundaries.”

University of Bradford

Bradford, England

Home to the largest program in the world devoted to peace studies, conflict resolution, and development, this diverse public research university in northern England offers seven different master’s degrees in peace and conflict studies and has educated students from more than 50 countries. The sheer breadth of the program means Rotary Peace Fellows can focus on anything from sustainable development to contemporary security issues. “We don’t simply look at conceptual issues,” says Behrooz Morvaridi, the peace center director. “The program prepares the students to go and implement what they learn at the practical level.”

During their 15 months at Bradford, peace fellows can participate in field studies in Africa, Northern Ireland, and other locations, where they talk to political leaders and immerse themselves in the regions’ institutions and issues. The trips become real-life opportunities to see how contemporary trends involving the environment, social division, climate change, and resource scarcity can affect peace — and the ways in which communities show resilience in the face of conflict. Then there’s the trip to Oslo, Norway, to visit the Nobel Peace Center and some of the world’s preeminent peacebuilding institutions or to The Hague to learn about the International Criminal Court system in action.

The fellowship’s most popular activity, though, is the “Crisis Game,” an off-site simulated conflict management scenario of an international situation in which each student plays a role, such as ambassador, journalist, or world leader. “Students come up with great ideas to solve the problems, but [students representing] other countries come with ideas that disrupt them,” says Morvaridi. “They learn specifically what the challenges are, how politics play a role, and how difficult problems are to solve.”

University of Queensland

Brisbane, Australia

As one of Australia's largest universities, UQ has long been known as a research innovator in the social sciences, a strength reflected in the 18-month Master of Peace and Conflict Studies curriculum, which, for peace fellows, includes seminars on topics such as “embracing emotions.”

Members of the school's renowned political science department focus on the role of images and emotions in shaping global politics, examining, for example, the worldwide concern for Syria's refugee crisis prompted by the heart-rending 2015 photo of a Syrian toddler washed up on the Mediterranean shore. “We all know those iconic images, and we are emotional beings,” says Morgan Brigg, director of the peace center. “We can't just try to suppress that. So we embrace it.”

A course in gender, peace, and security also challenges students to deconstruct “masculine” and “feminine” roles in peacemaking that traditionally equate violence with men and victimhood with women. And the program's administrators have put various systems in place to smooth each fellow's transition from their home country to life in Australia, such as a buddy system, where first-year fellows are matched with other fellows in their final semester.

The thoughtful approach to Queensland's curriculum draws a wide range of fellows — everyone from a documentary filmmaker to a former U.S. Marine — who explore and contribute to the world from a range of innovative angles, including through dance, cultural tourism, sexual education, and the prevention of online crimes. “The range of ways that fellows engage with peace and conflict is really quite diverse,” says Brigg. “We want them to have the potential to be excellent professionals and innovators.”

“

I needed to not only unpack my personal perceptions and biases gently, but also let myself adapt.”



Emily Nabakooza, Uganda

UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND, 2018-19

· Master of Peace and Conflict Studies, with a focus on peacebuilding through education

· Founder and executive director of the Assisi Centre for Social Justice and Peace, a youth-centered nonprofit focusing on issues related to gender inequality, social inclusion, illiteracy, and the nonviolent resolution of conflicts in Ugandan schools and communities

“My introductory course units in peace and conflict resolution confirmed to me that my professional experience could not be processed in isolation of my academic training. I understood that to make the most of my fellowship, I needed to not only unpack my personal perceptions and biases gently, but also let myself adapt, learn, and unlearn through the process. Beyond learning, my fellowship has been a steppingstone upon which I developed social and professional networks. These networks have been an excellent source of support in ways I never imagined.”

“

It's a truism that to be an effective humanitarian you must possess a strong degree of cultural awareness.”



Jamie LeSueur, Alberta

UPPSALA UNIVERSITY, 2013-15

- Master of Social Science, with a focus on peace and conflict studies
- Head of emergency operations at the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), leading humanitarian relief and disaster management efforts in disaster and conflict situations in Africa and elsewhere
- Alumnus of the Year, Uppsala University, 2020

“My Rotary Peace Fellowship provided the opportunity to learn and study in a foreign context — and the applied field experience offered me a first entry point as a delegate in the international humanitarian space. Less tangibly than the courses offered, the fellowship offered a unique exposure to a diverse cultural context that helped prepare me for international work. It's a truism that to be an effective humanitarian you must possess a strong degree of cultural awareness.”

Uppsala University

Uppsala, Sweden

The peace center at Uppsala University is known for its conflict data program, a comprehensive database of organized violence and mortality. Around the world, policymakers and practitioners from the European Union to the United Nations look to the Uppsala program as the global standard for evidence-based records

— and the peace center's fellows draw upon the same scientific approach toward social issues. “There's a deep expertise here,” says Kristine Eck, the director. “Our fellows want to understand cause and effect, and that's a skill set we train them in.”

Highlights of the 20-month program include a joint trip with Bradford fellows to Oslo to visit the Nobel Peace Center; there are also extended opportunities for fellows to continue self-designed field work and research. For example, in Zambia they might focus on water and sanitation, or in Korea they could learn about nuclear nonproliferation (designed to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology while promoting nuclear disarmament and the peaceful use of nuclear energy). One student assisted in a quantitative research project that explored the relationship between a society's level of gender equality and its military effectiveness.

Sweden is proud of its history of pacifism, which enables fellows to take advantage of local events such as “Philosophy Teas,” a series of discussions about peace practitioners and philosophers led by Uppsala professor Peter Wallensteen at a century-old theater — a tradition that began as a celebration of Sweden's 200 consecutive years of peace. “There's an increased interest among our fellows in the skill set of peacebuilding,” says Eck. “A lot more people used to come to us wanting to learn about conflict.”

Duke University and University of North Carolina

Durham and Chapel Hill, North Carolina

The Duke/UNC fellowship program is an anomaly among Rotary Peace Centers. For starters, the 21-month curriculum offers core courses in peacebuilding and brings together fellows from two college campuses 10 miles apart, which doubles students' resources and flexibility. It's also the only master's program that doesn't offer a degree in peace studies, instead focusing on international development policy at Duke and, depending on a student's interest, various academic specialties at UNC.

The holistic approach gives peace fellows the tools to enter pertinent development sectors such as public health and education, where they can prevent conflicts and promote peacebuilding through, say, improving sustainable

development and human security. The program's willingness to think outside the box leads to unusual instruction, with courses in water and sanitation and a peace- and development-related film series.

The classes offered are chosen for their direct utility in the field: Because monitoring and evaluation have become key job skills in the peacebuilding and humanitarian sectors, Duke/UNC offers a class in the evaluation of peacebuilding programs. "At the end of the day, employers don't care if you understand all the theories about diplomacy," says Susan Carroll, the center's managing director. "They want to know that you can incorporate it into projects you work on and manage projects and budgets."

International Christian University

Tokyo

Founded in the wake of World War II, ICU embraces the mission of the United Nations and has a strong focus on the promise of international diplomacy. Osamu Arakaki, the program's director, was a legal officer of a UN humanitarian agency in Canberra, Australia, and associate director Herman Salton worked at the UN Headquarters in New York. The school's emphasis on intergovernmental peacekeeping organizations is underscored in classes such as "The United Nations and Sustainable Development" and "Multilateral Diplomacy."

"ICU holds a mission to foster international citizens contributing to the establishment of lasting peace," says Arakaki. "And it has formed countless UN and international organization staff members and diplomats."

The ICU Graduate School of Arts and Sciences is known for its interdisciplinary program and liberal arts approach.

Fellows pursue a master's degree in peace studies within the public policy and social research program.

The 22-month peace studies program prides itself on the open dialogue between students and instructors. Classes at the graduate level are offered in English, and the student-to-faculty ratio of 18-to-1 enables ICU to realize its mission of small-group education. A field trip to Hiroshima enables students, including some who have come from war-torn countries, to hear the voices of survivors of the nuclear bomb and witness firsthand how Japan attempts to overcome genocide through reconciliation. "The horror of Hiroshima is not simply in the past," Arakaki says. "It is a real fear that the tragedy may be repeated in parts or even the whole of the globe in the future unless we make a concerted effort to avoid that situation."

Makerere University

Kampala, Uganda

The newest peace center, and the first in Africa, Makerere is located in the continent's Great Lakes region, an area with a long history of conflict. This gives fellows, a large percentage of whom are from or live in Africa, a chance to interact in the direct aftermath of conflicts — or as clashes unfold in real time. But rather than pinpointing the causes of war, Makerere's curriculum teaches fellows to expand their notion of "peace" beyond a simple absence of violence and into measures of personal safety and growth.

One of the highlights of the yearlong program is an intense weeklong trip to Rwanda, where fellows see how media and ethnicity directly fed into the country's mass atrocities in 1994. To learn how spirituality influences behavior in war situations, students also visit Kibeho, a small Rwandan village where Catholic schoolgirls said they experienced apparitions

of the Virgin Mary that foretold the bloodshed. "Our fellows either interface with the people who have experienced the strife, or they are able to interact with the actual situations through our field excursions," says Helen Nambalirwa Nkabala, the peace center's director.

Makerere's curriculum, which emphasizes human rights and refugee and migration issues, encourages students to use what Nambalirwa Nkabala calls the "no-method" approach to peacebuilding — a fluid approach that, with its emphasis on indigenous participation, allows communities to engage with the peace fellows' social change initiatives rather than merely accepting predetermined solutions.

Learn more about the Rotary Peace Center in Kampala and meet six peace fellows who are members of the center's first cohort, at rotary.org/africas-agents-change. ■



NATURAL HAZARDS

A new report from the Institute for Economics and Peace highlights grave ecological threats around the world — and suggests ways advocates can nurture a more benign environmental future

by Miles Howard

At first glance, the Jaguar cacao fruit resembles a glowing green orb wrapped in earthen brown roots. But the fruit's value lies within: a multitude of edible seeds that, when roasted and ground into powder, give chocolate a nuttier flavor profile.

The fruit grows in a few ecosystems in Central and South America, such as the foothills of southeastern Colombia. There, in the Amazon River basin, Rotary Peace Fellow Lorena Rodriguez has played a pivotal role in seeding this rare crop and quite a few others. During her fellowship, Rodriguez spent time in rural Colombia conducting field research on food sovereignty, which prioritizes the needs of the people who grow and otherwise produce food over the demands of the markets and corporations that distribute it. In 2019, she joined forces with friends and launched La Realidad, an NGO that helps communities in the Putumayo region of Colombia grow their own fruit and vegetable crops using regenerative agriculture practices — such as crop rotation, composting, and cover cropping — that help create a more nutrient-rich soil and reduce excess carbon in the atmosphere.

“Putumayo has been highly affected by the armed conflict in Colombia, by narco traffic, and by the structural violence that arises from the gap between urban and rural societies,” Rodriguez says. “A lot of the elders there were leaving, and their kids cannot sustain their lives doing agriculture the way their parents did, using pesticides and heavy chemicals to produce bigger yields of corn or

sugarcane for the global market. It's not sustainable economically or environmentally."

In recent years, Putumayo has also felt the scourge of deforestation inflicted by loggers and cattle ranchers. That's the fractious backdrop against which La Realidad partners with Putumayo residents to grow sustaining crops that are endemic to the Amazon belt — cultivating a food source that can ultimately bolster the security of rural communities. Ecological degradation, including the burning or uprooting of forests, can undermine a community's resiliency,

the IEP uses data from global and national indices to explain why some regions of the world are enjoying peace and prosperity while others are mired in or on the brink of conflict. This data often pertains to issues such as resource availability and economic power. But the IEP's second *Ecological Threat Report*, released in October, zooms in on the symbiotic relationship between conflicts and ecological calamities such as droughts, record-breaking storms, and temperature changes.

According to Michael Collins, the IEP's executive director in the

pen independently. They're the next step of what any country could be 'attacked' with."

SO HOW DOES THE REPORT SCORE the severity of the ecological threat facing 178 independent countries and territories? It focuses on five things that can endanger the ecological stability of a society: food risk, water risk, rapid population growth, temperature anomalies, and natural disasters. The report also uses the IEP's Positive Peace Index, which identifies the attitudes, institutions, and structures that ultimately create

peaceful societies. Conversely, the absence of societal bedrock — such as an equitable distribution of goods, a well-functioning government, or a healthy business sector — can leave nations primed for conflict, to the point where all it takes is one final shock to ignite relentless violence. The report shows that ecological shocks can be that incendiary spark.

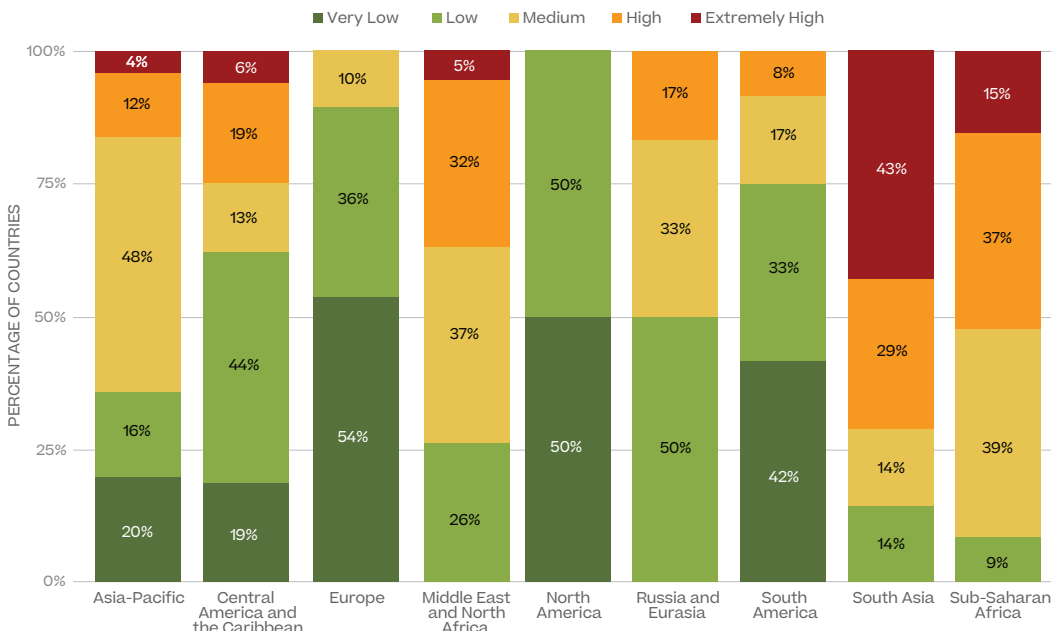
"Indicated throughout this report is the deep, deep cyclical relationship that exists between ecological degradation and levels of conflict around the world," says Collins. He also notes that once violence has begun, it can actually worsen the ecological problems, like food or water shortages, that predated the conflict. "Eleven of the countries with the report's worst scores are now in conflict," says Collins.

Most of these countries are located in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, and the report highlights one particularly profound driver of their conflicts — food insecurity.

Since 2014, global food insecurity, which had been lessening for decades, has risen an alarming 44 percent, a situation further aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Its steady resurgence didn't occur in isolation; it was sometimes fueled by

Regional composition of ecological threat scores, 2021

The highest percentage of countries facing high and extremely high threats are in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.



Source: Institute for Economics and Peace
Note: Totals may not add to 100 due to rounding.

IEP's *Ecological Threat Report 2021*

especially when it comes to food security. In the worst cases, it can sow the seeds of conflict and fuel a relentless cycle of collapse and violence.

The relationship between ecological shocks and conflict isn't speculation. It's the latest finding from the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), a partner of Rotary International. Founded in 2007 by Australian software entrepreneur and philanthropist Steve Killelea,

Americas, the *Ecological Threat Report* can function as something of a blueprint not only for recognizing ecological vulnerability at both local and regional levels but also for improving societal resilience in vulnerable countries and, hopefully, averting conflict. "Climate change can certainly act as an aggravator of issues such as food insecurity and water stress," says Collins. "But some ecological threats are going to hap-

natural events, such as insufficient rainfall, or in many cases by sectarian conflicts. In South Sudan, these forces merged and have exacted a terrible toll. By 2018 — half a decade after civil war erupted between the South Sudanese government and insurgents — an estimated 190,000 people had been killed through direct warfare, and an additional 193,000 are believed to have died as a result of disruptions to the country's fragile food production and health systems. Their food systems were already vulnerable to droughts and flooding, and they still haven't recovered. As recently as 2020, about 85 percent of South Sudan's population was struggling to find sufficient food on a daily basis.

Without intervention, global food insecurity is expected to get much worse over the next three decades. The *Ecological Threat Report* projects that by 2050, the number of people who are experiencing undernourishment — not getting enough food to sustain day-to-day physiological health — could rise by a staggering 45 percent. The broad global demand for food could also grow by more than 50 percent within this time frame. As ecological events like rising temperatures, earthquakes, or hurricanes exacerbate

resource scarcity in vulnerable countries, the risk of conflict and societal collapse becomes more severe, and more liable to spill beyond borders.

This can already be seen today in the rate of forced displacements and migration occurring around the world. The report's researchers found that in 2020, 82.4 million people were displaced — the highest number of global displacements on record, 1 in 94 people. It's a tremendous shift from 2000, when 1 in 161 people worldwide had been displaced. But like the recent rebound of food insecurity, this surge also didn't happen overnight. Forced displacements have been rising over the past nine years, as hot spot

regions, identified by the report, reckon with worsening ecological deterioration, resource deficits, warfare, and, in several cases, significant population growth.

IN THE FACE OF SUCH MASSIVELY worrying trends, how can one begin to promote peace and sustainability at a local level, let alone a regional one? Collins is quick to spotlight two of the *Ecological Threat Report's* most salient policy recommendations for humanitarian agencies and organizations: thinking about ecological risk as a systemic problem, and empowering communities in ecologically vulnerable nations to become more resilient. This can be done through collaborative grassroots projects that focus on intersectional issues such as agriculture, economic prosperity, and

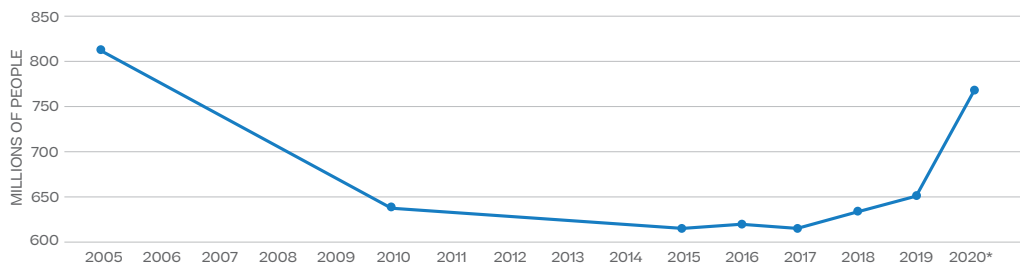
with community members to create a brickmaking cooperative, owned and managed by its members.

Rodriguez would adopt a similar approach in 2020 when building La Realidad. As she and her friends converted the setup of their Putumayo cacao orchard into an organic production, neighbors would drop by and ask why the group was doing all the "hard work" of regenerative growing techniques. Why not just spray the cacao trees with pesticides that would work faster than organic alternatives? "These questions created a conversation about why it was important for Putumayo residents to prioritize their homeland and not the global market," Rodriguez recalls.

The farmland on which La Realidad hosts several regenerative agriculture projects — including a

Global undernourishment, 2005-20

The number of undernourished people rose by an estimated 118 million in 2020, marking the sharpest increase since at least 2005.



Source: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
 Note: *Figures for 2020 are projections. 768 million represents a middle projection between a possible high of 811 million and a possible low of 720.4 million.

IEP's *Ecological Threat Report 2021*

human security.

Collins comes from a family of construction professionals, and before joining the IEP, he applied his family trade to humanitarian projects in developing nations, including Indonesia and Haiti, often in the wake of natural disasters. "Initially, a lot of this revolved around training programs for people who are seeking to enter or already in the construction sector," he says. "Due to a number of social and institutional issues, construction quality is extremely low in a number of developing countries." In Padang Alai, a town on the outskirts of West Sumatra's capital city of Padang, Collins addressed this problem by working

food forest (a diverse, multi-layered blend of edible plants and trees) — was acquired through this community outreach. "The owner was selling her land," Rodriguez recalls. "She met us and said, 'I really want to leave the land to someone who appreciates this ecosystem. I don't want to just give it to another person who will put cows here.'"

Whether the product at the heart of a community resiliency project is organic fruits and vegetables or stronger building materials, the best results come when the project is conceived and launched in close partnership with residents who will manage the work long term. The way Collins sees it, members of Rotary

are uniquely well-positioned to step up and invest their knowledge and labor into these collaborations. “One of the amazing things about Rotary is the ability of every club and every district to contribute,” he says. “Because Rotary is made up of community members, you have this grassroots network of individuals throughout the world who can develop a variety of different projects that are very well-tailored to the community in question — because a lot of Rotarians are actually from

The program already has trained 90 peace activators, who are also Rotary Peace Fellows (such as Rodriguez) or members of Rotary, and those activators have since taught more than 50,000 people in North America, South America, and Europe about the tenets of the Positive Peace Index — the same framework that underlies the *Ecological Threat Report*. “Rotary’s key strengths lie in our ability to convene and mobilize communities both locally and globally,” says Rebecca Crall, Rotary’s area of

duce within half a mile of 85 percent of Atlanta’s population by the end of this year by offering residents the education and resources they need to get involved with urban farming.

As the number of urban farmers swelled, it became clear that AgLanta needed a framework for settling disputes between growers. The city turned to Kate Keator, a Rotary Positive Peace Activator specializing in conflict resolution. Through her conversations with urban farmers and AgLanta leaders, Keator identified

two things that could help keep the peace: virtual gatherings in which growers could connect and foster a foundational culture of dispute resolution, and access to an informal mediator when necessary.

Atlanta might seem a world apart from the regions spotlighted in the *Ecological Threat Report*, where ecological degradation and conflict are more severe. But peacemaking and community empowerment can be applied, at scale, anywhere that conflict arises.

In an era of climatological changes that will reshape the way billions live, there can be an enduring glint of hope in this potential for collaboration. “One of the things that I learned through community development is that people are people,” Collins says. “The same solutions don’t work for everybody,

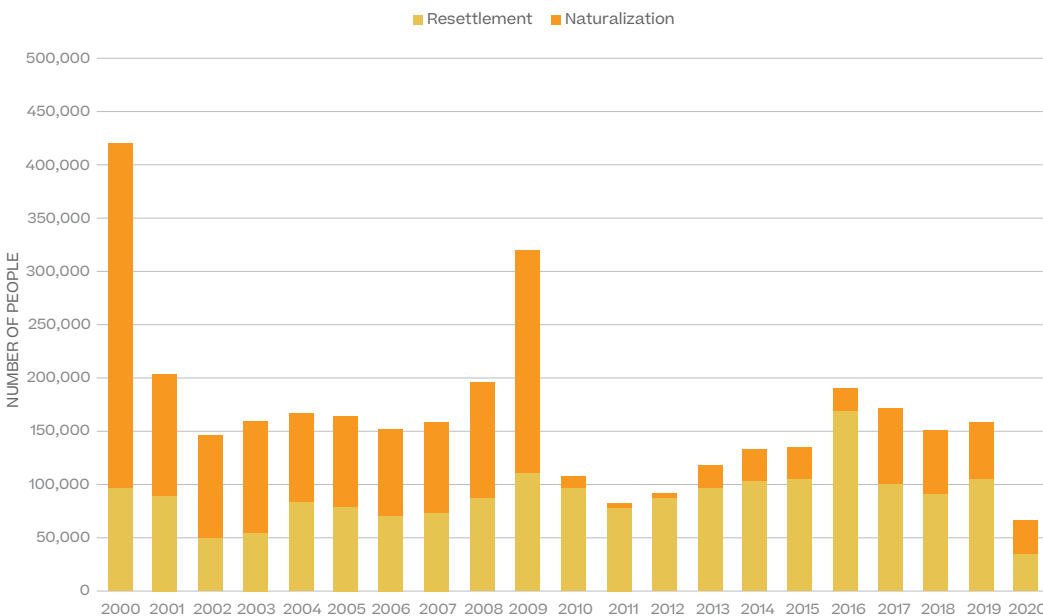
but there are synergies. There are many, many ways.” ■

A Boston-based author, Miles Howard wrote about Houston, the site of the 2022 Rotary International Convention, in our November issue.

Learn more about Rotary International’s partnership with the Institute for Economics and Peace and other organizations at rotary.org/partnerships.

Resettlement and naturalization of refugees, 2000-20

In 2020, the number of refugees who were resettled or naturalized was at the lowest levels on record.



Source: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

IEP’s *Ecological Threat Report 2021*

those communities.”

Recently, Rotary has taken two big steps to catalyze more projects that address the intersection of ecological degradation and conflict. In 2020, it added a new area of focus — protecting the environment. (More than \$18 million in global grant funding from The Rotary Foundation had already been allocated to ecological projects in the five preceding years.) Also in 2020, working with the IEP, Rotary launched the Positive Peace Activator Program.

focus manager for peacebuilding and conflict prevention. “Merging with the empirical research and analysis of the IEP is a potent force for creating good in the world.”

For a literal taste of that good in the United States, look to the vacant lots of Atlanta, where urban farmers are growing fruits and vegetables that find their way into refrigerators and pantries across the city. Atlanta’s recent urban farming boom is partially the result of the city’s AgLanta initiative. Its goal is to put fresh pro-



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.

REFER A NEW MEMBER

my.rotary.org/member-center

Rotary 

OUR CLUBS

VIRTUAL VISIT

Family affair

Rotary Club of The Ridge,
Lake Wales, Florida

For their first date, Megan and Herb Gillis went to a Rotary club ball. He was a Rotary member; she wasn't. "The rest is history," she says. The couple will celebrate their 17th wedding anniversary this year. The Gillises have three children, and as working parents, life has been a bustle of school sports, archery competitions, camping trips, and other outdoor adventures. Somewhere along the way, Herb left Rotary when he got a new job.

In 2016 Megan was invited to join a new Rotary club that planned to hold its meetings after work. "I was like, mmm, no. I'm a mom, I'm running a business. I don't want to work all day and have to find a sitter for three kids — that's so expensive. I'm already away from them so much," she recalls thinking. "Anything I want to be actively involved in involves my children." Then, she says, "They told me to bring my children."

The Rotary Club of The Ridge in Lake Wales, Florida, was founded as a way to draw in busy young professionals who weren't able to attend the breakfast and lunch clubs in the area. This family-

friendly aspect has proved to be a key to its success. "A lot of people are running to pick up their kids after work. We said to just bring them," says Chevon Baccus, one of the club founders. "I was talking to a fellow today who I think is going to come to our next member activity. He and his wife have three kids, so I said you can both come — and bring your kids. It's worked."

At a recent meeting, this child-forward focus is evident. One of the Gillises' daughters, Haiden, hands out programs as people arrive at the meeting, which is held on Mondays at 5 p.m. in the community room of a law firm that's owned by the husband of a member of another club in town. The Ridge members take turns bringing snacks; today's spread includes a crockpot with meatballs, trays of cheese and crackers, and a basket of snack-size bags of Doritos and Cheetos for the kids. ("Or the adults," Megan says. "We don't judge.") Coolers with wine, beer, and water line a wall.

"This club has a lot more informality, flexibility, and adaptability," says Fred Halde, a retiree who previously has belonged to clubs in Iowa and Michigan. "It's not the kind of staid, official movers and shakers that you see in some clubs. I've been part of those, too. You never know what to expect in this club, and that's a good thing."

The room buzzes with chatter before Haiden goes to the front to ring the bell so her mom, who is the 2021-22 club president, can start the meeting. The club has forgone some traditions, like fines, but they've kept others, like happy bucks — and people are brimming with good news to share: a new car, a zip lining adventure with their family, a Green Bay Packers win.

6 tips to make your club more family-friendly

from The Ridge Club President
Megan Gillis

- 1. Serve snacks!** That's the way to kids' hearts.
- 2. Find projects** that families want to participate in. View your club through a family-friendly scope — don't make it an afterthought.
- 3. Make the kids** feel like they are part of your club by letting them ring the bell and lead the Pledge of Allegiance.
- 4. Mark children's birthdays,** report cards, and other achievements. We always love to celebrate their accomplishments and cheer them on.
- 5. Show kids** what you can achieve in your community when you work together. Our club organizes "done in a day" projects that kids can be involved in.
- 6. Encourage families** to join your club by offering an incentive or discount on dues. For example, our monthly dues are \$25 for an individual but just \$40 for two people in the same household.

Before the pandemic, members would do "high tens" around the room or play musical chairs. "I miss that so much," Megan says. "It was just so fun to get out of your seat to say hi."

Club leaders have tried to keep membership as flexible and inexpensive as



possible, with dues at \$25 per month for individuals or \$40 for two members of the same family — they’ve attracted several couples that way, Baccus says — and no additional cost for meals. The club has 41 members who range in age from 18 to 72; most are women.

The club views everything it does through the lens of family, including its service projects. One of its flagship projects is the Josh the Otter basic water-safety program for preschool and kindergarten students. As part of the project, the club partnered with the city of Lake Wales and a local YMCA to offer free swimming lessons. (The Josh the Otter program has

worked with Rotary clubs for more than a decade and devotes a section of its website to resources tailored to clubs, including a template for district-level grants and a sample press release. Learn more at joshtheotter.org.)

This spring, the club is planning a weekend event for sixth- and seventh-grade girls called Camp Fearless and is also hosting a soccer tournament. These events help familiarize members’ children with the idea of service while introducing the club to other families who may someday become members as well. “We want it to be very family-oriented,” Megan says. “When we serve, our kids will grow up serving.”

With childcare no longer an issue, both Megan and Herb Gillis are now members of Rotary on the Ridge, as the club is known. (“The Ridge” refers to the Lake Wales Ridge, a 115-mile long topological feature of ancient sand dunes that runs north-south through central Florida.) Megan’s parents, Sheri and Marshall Hartley, joined too, and the Gillises’ daughters also attend, doing their own projects such as making friendship bracelets, building

cardboard boats for a Josh the Otter fundraiser (a favorite event of daughter Madison), and helping the members’ younger children keep busy with sticker books and other activities.

“All of our events, our projects, our fundraisers — they all revolve around children,” Megan says. “To come and volunteer is a family affair. It allows me, as a working mom, to do things in the community that my kids can see and understand because they’ve heard us talk about them at our meetings.”

In July, the Gillises’ eldest daughter, Jillian, turned 18. One of her first acts as a full-fledged adult was joining her parents and grandparents as an official member of the club — and serving as its 2021-22 public image chair. “I’m a people person. Here, you get to meet people and hear their stories,” Jillian says. “I love doing that, and it’s a big reason I decided to join.”

— DIANA SCHOBURG

[Rotary Club of The Ridge President Megan Gillis \(second from right\) with, from left, daughters Madison and Haiden, mother Sheri Hartley, and daughter Jillian.](#)

“All of our events, our projects, our fundraisers — they all revolve around children. To come and volunteer is a family affair.”

FOUR QUESTIONS

Nice and easy

Rotary's online fundraising tool eliminates the paperwork hassle



Jayne Hulbert
Rotary Club of
Ignacio, California

1 Like many Rotary members, you have a personal reason for wanting to rid the world of polio. What's your family's story?

My husband's father contracted polio in 1909 at the age of 5. My sister also contracted polio when she was 5. That was in 1949, the height of the polio epidemic in America. Doctors told my parents that my sister would never walk, would never get out of bed. There were times she was able to come home from the hospital and then had to go back. She lived with the effects of the disease her entire life, until she passed away last year.

In 1997, a Rotary member who knew my sister's story said to me, "You need to come to a Rotary meeting. We are going to eradicate polio." That is absolutely what got me in the door, and I've been raising money for polio eradication ever since.

2 What prompted you to host your district's polio fundraisers on Raise for Rotary?

I was talking with a staff member at The Rotary Foundation about wanting an easier way to raise money, and he told me about Raise for Rotary. I had been fundraising for Rotary for more than two decades, and we'd always had to handle all of the cash and checks and worry about filling out the paperwork properly. Raise for Rotary lets us share our fundraisers more widely with fellow members and new audiences, who can easily donate online, directly to The Rotary Foundation, with no paperwork. This is huge. And even when we do receive a donation by check, we can add that amount to our Raise for Rotary fundraising tally and count it toward our goal.

Raise for Rotary accepts online donations in U.S., Canadian, and Australian currencies. Learn more at rotary.org/raise.

3 How, specifically, have you used Raise for Rotary?

We first used it in 2020 for our fundraiser supporting a \$2 million polio challenge in Zones 26 and 27. We asked people to donate online, and we also used our Raise for Rotary page to highlight significant offline donations.

The following year, we set up a Raise for Rotary page for our district polio fundraiser. We worked with Truffle Shuffle, a company started by three veterans of the famed Napa Valley restaurant The French Laundry, which offers online cooking classes. We made \$3,800 from the sale of tickets. Even more amazing, during the 90-minute cooking class we raised another \$17,000, including funds from many new donors.

For World Polio Day, we organized a Race to End Polio, an urban treasure hunt in which people dressed in costumes and searched for clues to win prizes. To encourage donations through our Raise for Rotary page, we created a QR code for quick access from smartphones. We made sure the QR code and website link were included in all of our promotions. One of the great things about the Raise for Rotary platform is how easily you can upload promotional flyers, photos, and videos, and add thank-you notes to donors, to keep the page fresh.

4 What's your advice for clubs and districts that want to get the most out of Raise for Rotary?

Be creative, and just keep blasting out your website link through social media and email. Raise for Rotary eliminates credit card and processing fees. It's so simple, and staff from The Rotary Foundation are there to support you. — ARNOLD R. GRAHL

CALENDAR

February events

And all that jazz

Event:
An Evening of Jazz
Host:

Rotary Club of
Hammond, Louisiana

What it benefits:
The Southeastern Louisiana
University music department and
the club's SLU scholarship fund

Date: 13 February



Looking for some romantic entertainment on Valentine's Day weekend? Reserve a pair of tickets, or book a table with friends, for an evening of music provided by Southeastern Louisiana University's jazz band. Attendees may bring their own food and drinks, and can purchase additional refreshments from a cash bar. A silent auction offers the chance to bid on a gift for your valentine.

Just wing it

Event:
Florida Craft Brew & Wingfest

Host:
Rotary Club of Vero Beach Sunrise,
Florida

What it benefits:
Local and international charities

Date: 19 February

After a year off, this family-friendly event returns in 2022 with scrumptious chicken wings from some 20 vendors — who are all vying for the title of best wings in Vero Beach — and more than 250 craft beers. Four bands will perform across two stages, and there will even be a root beer tasting competition for the kids.

5K on the runway

Event:
Run the Runway
Hosts:

Rotary clubs of Fairfield, Frankton-
Te Rapa, Hamilton Central, Hamilton
East, Rototuna, and Waikato Sunrise,
New Zealand

What it benefits:
Local and international charities

Date: 20 February

In this event's second year, participants can choose to run, roll, or ride down the Hamilton Airport runway. Mobility scooters and wheelchairs are welcome, making this 5K fun run accessible for all. The race kicks off at 6:45 a.m., offering the opportunity to see a spectacular sunrise. With the number of participants capped at 600, organizers suggest booking early to avoid missing out. At the inaugural event, a marriage proposal took place mid-race.

How well can you spell?

Event:
Spelling Bee(r)
Host:
Rotary Club
of Oklahoma City
Midtown, Oklahoma

What it benefits:
Local arts initiatives

Date: 25 February



This is not the spelling bee you remember from elementary school. While contestants engage in a war of words, local breweries are on hand to showcase their lineup of beers. The first-place speller wins a \$500 cash prize, while all spelling participants (who must be at least 21 years old) get to take home a bag of goodies from the breweries. A silent auction and a photo booth add to the festivities.

Spin the wheel

Event:
Casino Night
Host:

Rotary Club of San Antonio Airport,
Texas

What it benefits:

Literacy projects

Date: 26 February



Blackjack, craps, roulette, and poker are just a few of the games offered at the San Antonio Airport club's first-ever Casino Night. Heavy appetizers and soft drinks will be provided, along with access to a cash bar. If gambling isn't your thing, check out the silent auction and raffle. Tables with information about club projects will be set up for those looking to learn more about the club's activities throughout the year.

Colorful and bright

Event:
South Miami Art Festival

Host:
Rotary Club of South Miami, Florida

What it benefits:
College scholarships and local and
international projects

Dates: 26-27 February

Originating in 1984 as a small show with only 25 booths, this art festival has grown to host more than 120 artists, an expansive food court and beer garden, and live jazz. Artists from all over the United States and beyond come to South Miami to sell their jewelry, paintings, ceramics, photography, mixed media, sculptures, and more. Admission is free, but bring your wallet, as there will be plenty of arts and crafts for purchase.

Tell us about your event. Write to magazine@rotary.org with "calendar" in the subject line.

HANDBOOK

Make everyone welcome

How to create a club that values diversity

“One friend of our club in Kenya has severe cerebral palsy. He can’t control his body or talk very well,” says Ken Masson. “But he can use his toes. He’s a DJ, and he creates all his music using his toes.”

When looking for potential members, Rotarians should focus on qualities that make a good Rotary member rather than what makes a person seem different, says Masson, president of the Rotary Club of World Disability Advocacy, Central MA and Metro West, an e-club that works with other clubs worldwide to improve the quality of life for people with disabilities. He says a club that values the contributions of people of different abilities, experiences, and cultures will be more interesting, stronger, and better equipped to create lasting change.

“Don’t think that because someone has a disability, they can’t be a Rotarian,” Masson says. “That’s focusing on the person’s disability. But, man, this person has 20 beautiful abilities that would make a really good Rotarian.”

Creating an inclusive environment begins with an honest assessment. Does your club include members from underserved groups in your community, including veterans and LGBTQ+ people? Are your meeting locations and times accessible to people with disabilities and young professionals with families? Do you seek out and value the opinions of people with differing viewpoints and experiences? (Download the Rotary Club Health Check at my.rotary.org/en/document/rotary-club-health-check.)

Here are some tips to help you start practicing inclusivity.

— MAUREEN VAUGHT

DO’S & DON’TS

DO

Educate yourself. Provide learning opportunities for your club members to expand their perspectives and open up meaningful conversations. Invite local diversity, equity, and inclusion experts to speak to your club. By educating yourself, you help identify the biases that may be preventing you from creating an inclusive environment.

Start a committee. A committee can help your club prioritize inclusivity. “Some of our clubs were apprehensive to call it a diversity, equity, and inclusion committee,” says David Hart, who heads up District 7930’s committee, “because they thought they already knew and represented their community’s demographic.” Hart urges clubs to look at what kinds of people might be missing from their membership.

Be accessible. Is your club’s meeting time convenient for all? Is the location accessible to people with mobility challenges? Can some of your events be held virtually or as a hybrid of in-person and online? “People don’t understand what accessibility means,” Masson says. “They think, ‘We don’t need to worry that our meeting place has a stairwell, since we don’t have any members with disabilities.’ But of course, that could be why they don’t have any members with disabilities.”

Create a sense of belonging. Involve all of your members in club committees and activities. Make sure everyone’s voice is not just heard but respected. A buddy or club mentor system can help new members feel they belong.

Speak up. Hold yourselves and each other accountable when a person’s actions don’t reflect Rotary’s ideals or values. Respectful conversations can bring about meaningful change.



“Exclusiveness is more of a concern to me. To exclude someone from participating because they’re different doesn’t make sense. And it doesn’t follow The Four-Way Test.”

— Ken Masson



19 million

veterans in the United States

15%

of people in the world have some form of disability

DON'T

Cling to traditions. Exclusionary or out-of-date club traditions can be off-putting to people from other backgrounds. “We used to [start our meetings with] a prayer, the Pledge of Allegiance, and a song,” says Hart. Now, members take turns sharing a Rotary moment or telling the club why they joined Rotary or when they truly felt they were a Rotarian.

Speak in Rotaryisms. Make sure everyone understands what you’re saying by avoiding Rotary acronyms and phrases that only insiders understand. Remember, no one ever complained that something was too easy to understand.

Ignore your biases. Whether conscious or unconscious, our biases prevent us from seeing the qualities in a person that make them an excellent Rotary club member.

Be cliquish. Look around the room and make sure no one is sitting alone. Invite visitors and new members to join your conversation.

Fill a quota. “Reflecting the diversity in our community is one of our best tools and best strategies for changing perceptions about Rotary,” says RI Director Elizabeth Usovicz. “When [the community] starts seeing themselves in the club leadership, then Rotary’s public image starts to be adjusted and awareness changes.”

RESOURCES

- ▶ Learn more about **how to create an inclusive club culture** at my.rotary.org/en/learning-reference/about-rotary/diversity-equity-and-inclusion
- ▶ Download the **Rotary Club Health Check** at my.rotary.org/en/document/rotary-club-health-check
- ▶ Download the **club diversity assessment** at my.rotary.org/en/document/diversifying-your-club-member-diversity-assessment



TRUSTEE CHAIR'S MESSAGE

Rotary builds peace by creating the next generation of peacebuilders

I always look forward to February, the month of Rotary's anniversary, as a time to remember our history. What began as a small gathering in a Chicago office in 1905 soon transformed into a global movement — one that you and I are a part of today.

February is also Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention Month, when we celebrate a core Rotary concept: the pursuit of global peace and understanding.

Through our global and district grants, The Rotary Foundation is a force for peace — as are all of you who use those funds for projects. A grant that promotes literacy can lead to greater understanding and economic security in that community and beyond. This lays the foundation for peace. When communities aren't fighting over scarce water resources, because they have a working pump system, they can instead pursue education. Promoting peace is interwoven in all that Rotary does.

The work of actively building peace and understanding has been a hallmark of Rotary since its earliest days. But with the creation in 1999 of the Rotary Peace Centers we began a bold new chapter in this story. This year marks the 20th anniversary of the inaugural class of peace fellows; the innovative program continues to merge a strong, academic understanding of the roots of conflict with practical tactics for solving real-world problems.

Despite the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Rotary Peace Centers were able to adapt, ensuring minimal disruptions to the program. Now, students at our seven centers are resuming their normal activities. This includes young peacebuilders at our newest center at Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda, who are preparing to apply their new knowledge and skills in a region that's in need of peaceful solutions.

The peace center program keeps growing. Our search committee is researching potential locations in the Middle East or North Africa to establish our eighth center, with plans for its launch as soon as 2024. This is a significant step for Rotary's efforts in global peace education, as we lay the groundwork for the next generation of fellows to pursue peacebuilding in that region. And we aren't stopping there: Our goal is to open a Rotary Peace Center in Latin America by 2030.

In the last 117 years, Rotary has grown to become a global force for good — promoting peace and understanding in all of our endeavors. The staying power of Rotary, the Foundation, and our decades-long commitment to peace are things that are worth celebrating, supporting, and sustaining for the generations that will follow us.

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.

IN BRIEF

World Polio Day celebrates progress

The eradication of polio is within reach, global health experts said during Rotary's annual Online Global Update for World Polio Day on 24 October. The program provided encouraging information about the progress and remaining challenges in the fight to end polio worldwide.

Hamid Jafari, director of polio eradication for the World Health Organization's Eastern Mediterranean region, spoke with Jeffrey Kluger, editor at large for *Time* magazine, about the hopeful situation. Kluger noted that, at the time, only two cases of wild polio had been reported in 2021: one each in Afghanistan and Pakistan, the two countries where polio remains endemic. (By mid-December, Afghanistan had reported three more.) In 2020, 140 cases were reported worldwide.

Jafari attributed the low case count in 2021 to several factors, including the resumption of mass polio vaccination campaigns after the interruption caused by COVID-19, restrictions on movement during the pandemic, and natural immunity



induced by recent wild polio outbreaks. "This is truly unprecedented, that we are seeing this decline simultaneously in the two countries," he said. "So this is the time to really press hard in making use of the opportunity that presents itself."

Jafari also addressed the challenges of political change and security concerns in Afghanistan and explained that the polio program there is accustomed to adapting to uncertainty. House-to-house polio vaccinations resumed in Afghanistan in November in a nationwide campaign that aims to reach children in areas where vaccination teams had been banned for more than three years. "With the evolving situation in Afghanistan, it is of course very important that we partners maintain our neutrality and the impartiality of the polio eradication program," Jafari added. "As always, we will continue to work with all parties."

Mohammad Ishaq Niazmand, chair of Rotary's Afghanistan PolioPlus Committee, echoed Jafari's sentiments in a joint video address with his counterpart for

Pakistan, Aziz Memon. Niazmand said of Afghanistan: "Rotary and our partners are working with all stakeholders to ensure that polio eradication remains a top priority, even in the midst of change. Work is underway to ensure that children have access to lifesaving polio [vaccines] and other childhood vaccines."

Memon, a Rotary Foundation trustee as well as chair of the Pakistan PolioPlus Committee, said Rotary continues to build trust with government, community, and religious leaders. "By bringing broader health services to children and families alongside polio vaccinations, we're ensuring better health care and greater vaccine acceptance," he said.

The World Polio Day program also discussed the broadening distribution of a new vaccine to address outbreaks of cVDPV2, a circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus. A key component of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative's new strategy for 2022-26, this novel oral polio vaccine type 2 (nOPV2) is more genetically stable and thus less likely to revert to a form that causes vaccine-derived polio.

The novel oral polio vaccine, which has already been introduced in several countries, "is a powerful example of the polio program's innovation to overcome the toughest challenges," said Simona Zupursky, senior adviser to the polio director of WHO. "Partners, scientists, and leaders from around the world made nOPV2 possible. This is the kind of collaboration that will help end polio for good."

— RYAN HYLAND

Rotary partners to fight malnutrition

Rotary has joined a partnership led by the charitable foundation The Power of Nutrition to fund a new multi-sector program to address malnutrition in Ethiopia. The partnership, which was announced in November, also includes the Eleanor Crook Foundation and the END Fund. The Power of Nutrition is matching the investments of Rotary and the other partners to create a five-year, \$30 million program.

Despite recent progress, malnutrition remains a major public health concern in Ethiopia. As a result of severe malnutri-

tion, the country has one of the highest rates of stunting (being too short for one's age) in children under 5 years old: around 40 percent, compared to a global rate of 22 percent. Stunting and wasting (being too thin for one's height) affect millions of Ethiopian children.

The Power of Nutrition program will combine multiple interventions to address the factors of malnutrition. Over its five years, the program will reach at least 1 million pregnant women and 3 million children with vital health and nutrition services. It will make Ethiopia's health and food systems more resilient and encourage healthier, more productive communities.

The program will be implemented by UNICEF and Action Against Hunger, working closely with Ethiopia's Ministry of

Health. Rotary members in Ethiopia, led by Teguest Yilma (Rotary Club of Addis Ababa Entoto) and Samson Tesfaye (Rotary Club of Addis Ababa Central-Mella), will support the implementation, drawing on their years of experience in PolioPlus efforts that include community engagement and government advocacy.

"The effects of malnutrition on a child's physical and mental development can profoundly and permanently limit the trajectory of their lives," says RI General Secretary John Hewko. "As we've learned from our global effort to eradicate polio, we know that by leveraging each of our strengths, we can make a significant impact together to give children in Ethiopia access to nutrition and a chance for a full and healthy future."



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2022 CONVENTION

Tastes of the town



The Houston food scene presents a classic conundrum for visitors: too many restaurants, too little time. While you're in town for the 2022 Rotary International Convention 4-8 June, try a sampling of cuisines at these spots, all a short cab ride from downtown.

The Original Ninfa's on Navigation offers quintessential Tex-Mex, a blend of Southern American and Mexican ingredients. Founded by "Mama" Ninfa Laurenzo in 1973, this Houston staple is credited with helping put fajitas on the national stage.

Make sure to try their famous queso flameado and tacos al carbón, and cool off with an agua fresca.

Brennan's of Houston serves up authentic Creole cuisine and Southern hospitality for a unique fine-dining experience. Enjoy their signature turtle soup and locally sourced Matagorda Bay oysters. This sister restaurant to the famed Commander's Palace in New Orleans also offers a jazz brunch on the weekend, perfect for beignets or shrimp and grits.

Nobie's, which bills its

fare as new American, offers farm-to-table dining in a hip, relaxed atmosphere. The eclectic menu changes often, but you can expect innovative dishes like chicken-fried quail or steak tartare topped with deviled-egg cream. Soak in the party vibe as you sip a craft cocktail or an offering from the extensive wine list.

The classy-yet-casual

Rosie Cannonball serves European comfort food with an Italian spin. Start with focaccia di Recco or blue crab carbonara, then dive into pizza, charred octopus, or other offerings from the wood-fired oven and grill. You'll leave feeling as if you got a warm hug from the chicest Italian you'll ever hope to meet.

— MIYOKI WALKER

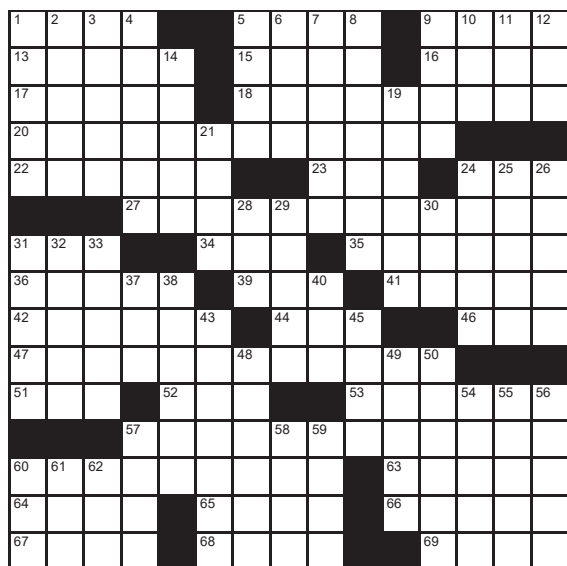
Learn more and register at convention.rotary.org.

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CROSSWORD

Featuring Phil

By Victor Fleming
Rotary Club of Little Rock, Arkansas



ACROSS

- 1 Takers of vids
- 5 Marc of design
- 9 Auto roof type
- 13 British miler Steve of the 1970s and '80s
- 15 Not thick
- 16 Creole vegetable
- 17 Start to grade or active
- 18 Venetian tour vessel
- 20 1993 Bill Murray movie, which Phil was in
- 22 Has figured out the scheming of
- 23 Scratch, say
- 24 Cry after an epiphany
- 27 Small hill about two miles from 47-Across, where Phil stays on 1-2 February
- 31 Cooking spray brand
- 34 What a sniggler snares
- 35 In a creepy way
- 36 Deceitful ones
- 39 Mylanta target
- 41 Attaches a handle to?
- 42 Almond flavoring
- 44 Cohort of Curly and Larry
- 46 "Classified" listings
- 47 Borough about 50 miles northwest of Altoona that is home to Phil
- 51 Place to recuperate
- 52 ___ Lanka

- 53 Ryan and Tatum of filmdom
- 57 Phil's home commonwealth, abutted by Lake Erie
- 60 Sheer ill will
- 63 1977 George Burns film
- 64 Dire sign
- 65 Bridle attachment
- 66 "Did you get the text ___ you?"
- 67 Financial page listings, briefly
- 68 Pilot in *Catch-22* and hockey great Bobby
- 69 Approximate phrase?

DOWN

- 1 Buckingham Palace resident
- 2 States with certainty
- 3 "I absolutely agree!"
- 4 Like beads on a necklace or bracelet
- 5 Apply acid artistically
- 6 Bush Secretary of Labor Elaine
- 7 Checkers player's call
- 8 How many foolish things are done
- 9 Shakespeare's Sir ___ Belch
- 10 Boxing win, for short
- 11 ___ pro nobis
- 12 Butter helping
- 14 "Kemosabe" speaker
- 19 Pitcher of a World Series perfect game
- 21 "___ careful!"
- 24 Jungian principle
- 25 ___ up (hid out)
- 26 Bottomless pit
- 28 Dog command
- 29 Fleeced beast
- 30 Malay isthmus
- 31 Pebbles-hitting-water noises
- 32 Inflate, as a tube, informally
- 33 ___ Carta
- 37 Harrison or Stout
- 38 Disrespects, as with verbiage
- 40 Female hog
- 43 Give up one's amateur status
- 45 Carbon compound
- 48 More diminutive
- 49 Poem's final stanza
- 50 "What of it?"
- 54 Get riled up
- 55 Big cats
- 56 "___ say" ("Alas")
- 57 Items in pocket protectors
- 58 Start to wake
- 59 Longings
- 60 Fermented paste dish
- 61 Plate sweeper at home
- 62 Speed Wagon maker

Solution on page 13

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