

# ROTARY

May 2021

The science  
of laughter  
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Rotary's  
hidden  
influence  
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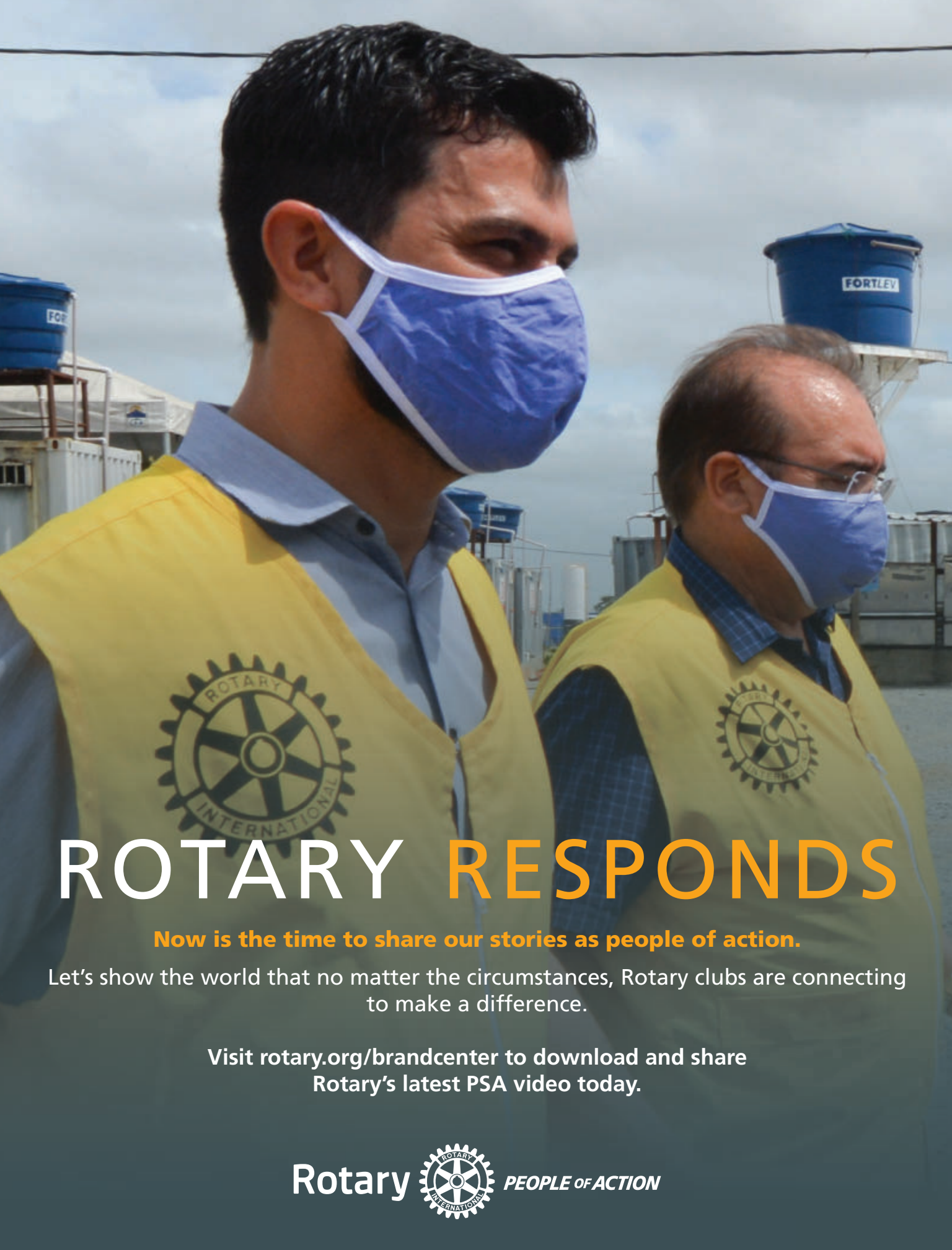


## THINKING BIG

Rotary's new  
multimillion-dollar  
grants are here

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# ROTARY RESPONDS

**Now is the time to share our stories as people of action.**

Let's show the world that no matter the circumstances, Rotary clubs are connecting to make a difference.

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



**F**OR YEARS, SUSANNE AND I hosted many Rotary Youth Exchange students in our home. This program was an entry point to Rotary for me, and my heart is truly in it. When Rotary's exchange programs were suspended because of COVID-19 to keep students and families safe, we felt sorry, especially for the participants, because those years cannot be repeated.

Because of the many uncertainties of the pandemic, the Rotary Board has decided to suspend in-person exchanges through June 2022. As we look ahead with hope, we thank Youth Exchange officers, host families, and volunteers for their contributions in years past, and we encourage districts to offer virtual exchanges as a way of connecting students around the world with each other and with our communities.

For those who are not able to participate in Rotary Youth Exchange, Rotary offers other opportunities. New Generations Service Exchange (NGSE) is a Rotary program that deserves wider recognition: It is an excellent opportunity for young people ages 18 to 30 to participate in community service as individuals or in a group and to gain internship experience. Simukai Matshalaga, a Rotaractor from Zimbabwe, stayed with us in Ratzeburg during her NGSE experience three years ago.

*When I applied for the New Generations Service Exchange program, I did not realize that I was signing up for a life-changing experience. This program gave me that opportunity and much more. It taught me about the importance of failing fast, learning quicker, and being myself.*

*Some of my greatest experiences happened at the dinner table. The warmth and kindness of every home I lived in still resonate with me today. It took me weeks to understand how a stranger could care for me as deeply as these*

*members of the Rotary family did. I am inspired by the lessons of humility I learned from all the amazing people I met. I came to understand a new culture and realized that the only things that separate us as people are our experiences and, at times, our false assumptions.*

*Professionally, it gave me confidence in my own abilities as an engineer. Seeing how other organizations handled problems made me aware that the best person to solve the challenges in my country was me. Returning home from northern Germany, I declined a promotion, quit my job, and began building a family business — a decision that previously I would have never made, out of fear.*

*I am indebted to the Rotary family. I am not sure whether the friends, mentors, and families I left behind knew that they changed my life permanently. I hope they now do.*

New Generations Service Exchange changed Simukai's life. It can change yours, too. All Rotary members can experience something similar at any time: I encourage everyone to take a virtual journey this month and visit meetings of other clubs online. You will see how different Rotary is around the world as you meet great people and make new friends.

Let us build upon these connections forged online — and later, when the time is right, enjoy in-person exchanges through Rotary Friendship Exchange, another excellent program for Rotary members of all ages.

Our ability to meet in person is limited now, but we know that *Rotary Opens Opportunities*, always. Now is the time to get ready, so that when the pandemic is behind us, Rotary's exchange programs will come back stronger than before, serving a world that is yearning to reconnect.

**HOLGER KNAACK**

President, Rotary International



**Simukai Matshalaga**  
Rotaract Club  
of Harare West,  
Zimbabwe



# WELCOME



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**YOU ARE HERE:** Hokuto, Hokkaido, Japan

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**THE ISLAND:** Hokkaido is the northernmost prefecture and the second-largest island in Japan. With its snowy winters and rugged terrain, it attracts skiers and snowboarders in winter, and in the warmer months cyclists and hikers explore the gorgeous landscape.

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**THE EVENT:** Every year, the people of Japan look forward to the arrival of the cherry blossoms. The season varies in different parts of the country; the blossoms emerge as early as March in Tokyo, but on Hokkaido, the *sakura* (cherry) trees usually bloom in May. People celebrate with picnics and flower-viewing parties.

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**THE CLUBS:** In Hokuto, a suburb of Hakodate, you can attend a meeting of the Rotary Club of Hokuto on Thursdays at 12:30 p.m. In Hakodate, there are five Rotary clubs to choose from, with meetings on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.

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**THE PHOTOGRAPHER:** Yeong Hsiou Chen (Asic), Rotary Club of Taipei Hwachung, Taiwan

# ROTARY

May 2021

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Rotary 



EVERY  
ROTARIAN  
EVERY  
YEAR



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Your year-end gift to Rotary's Annual Fund supports projects that help create lasting change in your community and around the world.

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# COVER

May 2021  
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By building on a proven concept — such as efforts to stamp out malaria in Zambia — Rotary’s new multimillion-dollar Programs of Scale grants help make good better

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Illustrations by **Gwen Keraval**

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By **Kris Vire**  
Illustration by **Viktor Miller Gausa**



Courtesy of ShelterBox

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The new Programs of Scale grants will fund large-scale, high-impact projects that can attract partners while tapping into Rotary members’ capacity and enthusiasm.

Illustration by  
Gwen Keraval

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Hydroplane enthusiast builds models — and has raced the real thing

“While global grants and district grants have been very successful, we want to give opportunities for projects with even more impact.”

— Sangkoo Yun

Rotary Foundation trustee and Programs of Scale selection committee member



Gwen Keraval



## Raising voices

**T**HOUGH SHE COMES FROM a long line of Scottish farmers, Kate Mentink has called Mallorca home for nearly 40 years. Mentink, a member of the Rotary Club of Calvià International, has long been an advocate for members of the international community living and working in Spain, including on Mallorca and the other islands of the Balearic chain.

Mentink served two terms on the city council of Calvià from 2003 to 2011, negotiating oversight of tourism and issues affecting expatriates in a town where about a third of the population is from outside Spain.

One inspiration for her work, Mentink says, was her mentor, a man named Eric Lomax. “Such a positive influence in my life led me to have a similar mentor relationship with younger people,” including the international school students who participate in debates run by her Rotary club. One graduate of the program addressed the United Nations after winning an international public speaking competition, and now he hopes to pursue a career in diplomacy or European politics, Mentink says. “We talk nearly every week.”

— VANESSA GLAVINSKAS

Read about the interscholastic debates sponsored by the Rotary Club of Calvià International on page 21.

Illustration by Viktor Miller Gausa

**I** GREW UP IN A BIG HOUSE, where my parents raised five children. I remember in detail every room of that house: what was in it, how things were arranged. Years later, its contents were divided among us children. I have a 1925 Steinway grand piano and furniture of the sort that looks good in a large room. My rooms are smaller, and sometimes things jostle for space. Sometimes they get relegated to the basement, but only temporarily, I tell myself.

I'm not a pack rat, though I have been called one. I have strong attachments. It's not something I can easily explain, especially when asked. My attachment to things I grew up with can't be dismissed as sentimentality. Some things defined my first sense of a pleasing shape, my first appreciation of something graceful or useful.

My sister Mary died in October 2019. Her house was dense with artifacts from our childhood home. I tried to choose selectively from her estate: a Louis Valtat print, a few chairs, a Georgian bachelor's chest, lots of little things. Problem was, not all of it could be assimilated into my living space. And now there is a lot more stuff in the basement.

I asked my son, George, to help me deal with all the stuff down there. He agreed on the condition that he would help me get rid of things; he would not help organize them. A powerful distinction. Just because you've got something neatly packed up doesn't mean you should hold on to it. It might be time to part with the Lenox service for 12 that I haven't unboxed in 30 years.

Which brings me around to "Scale Model," the feature that begins on page 28. It explains Rotary's newly launched Programs of Scale initiative and introduces the recipient of its first \$2 million grant, a long-term anti-malaria project in Zambia. The design for the feature was the brainchild of our art director, Jennifer Moody, who worked with dozens of people in Rotary, coordinating and refining their ideas. The clever illustrations are by Gwen Keraval, whose work has appeared in the magazine many times in recent years.

I would also draw your attention to Ann Patchett's essay "How to Practice," which appeared recently in the *New Yorker*. One of Patchett's insights was that our accumulation of things is based on our expectations of what will go well with the sort of life we're *going* to lead. So we should ask: Does that imagined future self bear any resemblance to our present self? And are our accumulated belongings adornments or burdens to that self? Which are still essential?

I plan to take George up on his offer to help me clear the basement. It will be an interesting exercise. It's a matter of rightsizing what you live with, of recognizing your current aspirations, of concocting a solution that corresponds to the dimensions of a particular problem. The comparison is disproportionate, but as in Zambia, so, too, in my basement: It's all a matter of scale.

**JOHN REZEK**

Editor in chief

My attachment to things I grew up with can't be dismissed as sentimentality.

## Letters to the editor



### CONFLICT RESOLUTION

In your February issue, the article on addressing conflicts within clubs ["Lowering the Temperature," Our World] was well done. The final sentence, though, was out of sync with the main points of the article, saying we don't want to "lose Rotarians over silly disagreements." We should be careful not to trivialize disagreements that seem silly to observers but are important to the parties involved. And of course some disagreements are not silly at all, but occur over strongly held moral convictions.

— **Mark Steinberg,**  
Williamston, Michigan

While I found the article "Lowering the Temperature" interesting, I thought it somewhat incomplete. It really offered no solution or advice as to how a club best can assist if there is a conflict between two or more members.

In my view, bringing a problem of that kind to the club president is not necessarily the best path. That position is often filled by a relatively new and inexperienced member, who may have strengths and skills other than those required for such a task. Rather than set up a special committee, I think that a club's membership committee would likely be the most appropriate body to which a person can turn for help, guidance, and resolution. That task can then be added to the committee

description and suitable members be appointed to it, with that new challenge in mind.

— **Morris J. Haugg,**  
Amherst, Nova Scotia

## LEVELS OF CHARITY

Rotary Foundation Trustee Chair K.R. Ravindran’s message in the February issue [“The Satisfaction of Stepping Up,” Our Clubs] references philosopher Maimonides’ Eight Levels of Charity. He mentions some of them. I was intrigued by what they might all be. Each is relatively short, quite worthwhile, and easily available by doing an online search. We might very well apply them when considering our Rotary projects.

— **Karl Hertz,**  
Thiensville, Wisconsin



## LANDMARK BUILDING

As a Chicago resident with an interest in local history and as a Rotarian, I much enjoyed the article “Building the Dream” [February]. Another Chicago Rotary landmark is the Paul Harris Home, which was purchased and is being restored and remodeled as a historic site and a conference and meeting venue. District 6450 [Illinois] has been involved in that project and has also looked after the Paul Harris gravesite at the nearby Mount Hope Cemetery.

— **Ronald J. Broida,** Chicago

**Editor’s note:** For more on the Paul and Jean Harris Home Foundation, visit [paulharrishome.org](http://paulharrishome.org).

## SPEAK UP

I enjoyed reading Mark Burchill’s words in the February issue [“Special Delivery,” Our World]. As a Rotarian and Toastmaster, I fully agree

with his comments regarding the value of Toastmasters International. Without my experience in Toastmasters, I would never have agreed to be president of the Rotary Club of Burlington, Washington. The leadership and public speaking skills I gained gave me the confidence to say yes when asked to lead in Rotary.

Not only in Rotary but in other organizations as well, I often hear individuals decline leadership roles because of their fear of public speaking. A shout-out to Toastmasters for providing a safe and encouraging environment to develop these skills, and to Rotary for the wisdom in making the alignment.

— **Stephanie Hooper,**  
Burlington, Washington

## TIMELY TOPICS

Wow, you did it again. The January issue was another feature-rich magazine with stories, stats, and content for every type of Rotarian. Bravo for a job well done! I particularly enjoyed “Chrono-Logic” by Joe Queenan. What a wordsmith he is, and what a witty article. It’s this kind of quality, thought-provoking content that has assured *Rotary* magazine’s continued success! Onward into the future, and *benediximus*.

— **Doug Hunt Jr.,**  
Thomasville, North Carolina



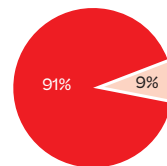
I agree with Jonathan Foley [“The Future: Environmentalism”] that climate change is a major environmental problem, but beginning an article on environmentalism by casting shade on earlier environmentalists is not fair.

The assertion that environmentalists are out-of-touch elites is not only “a wildly out-of-date assumption,” as Foley states; it was always a wrong assumption. The many environmentalists I have known

## Overheard on social media

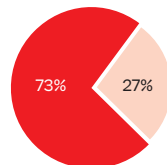
### Which kind of event do you prefer?

- In-person/live
- Online/virtual



### Did you participate in a virtual event in 2020?

- Yes
- No



### What tips do you have for fun and engaging virtual events?

- ▶ Observe and keep time
- ▶ Engage with participants through the chat box
- ▶ Host joint events between Rotarians and Rotaractors
- ▶ Set up breakout sessions so participants can get to know each other
- ▶ Organize art competitions
- ▶ Run trivia games and award prizes
- ▶ Hold happy hours

Watch Rotary International’s Instagram story in May for our next interactive poll.

# FORWARD

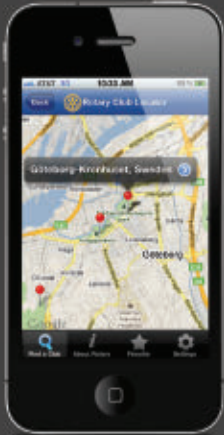
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## Last month's crossword solution

A	C	E	D		O	P	U	S		L	O	A	T	H		
C	H	A	O		H	A	S	H		I	N	T	R	O		
D	I	R	T		A	C	M	E		F	I	R	E	D		
C	A	N	C	E	R	S	C	R	E	E	N	I	N	G		
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P	R	E	N	A	T	A	L	C	L	I	N	I	C	S		
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L	A	R	A	M		S	L	O	E		S	T	L	O		
I	T	I	S	I		A	L	E	C		E	C	K	O		
T	H	E	T	A		M	E	L	T		S	H	O	T		

## This month's crossword solution

D	O	E	S		S	E	M	I		S	A	R	A	H		
O	N	N	O		M	E	A	N		A	C	E	L	A		
G	E	T	C	A	U	G	H	T		B	L	A	I	R		
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O	C	E	A	N		E	M	C	E	E		I	N	I		
O	R	A	L		H	A	I	T	I		K	N	E	E		
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T	R	E	A	D		R	O	O	T		C	A	N	A	L	
A	E	R	I	E		T	O	U	R		R	O	T	O		
B	E	S	T	S		S	O	I	L		S	T	E	W		

## CONNECT



▲ A statue outside Rotary International headquarters in Evanston, Illinois, commemorates Rotary's work to end polio.

Have you shared a story from the magazine lately? Let us know! What story did you share, with whom, and why? Write us at [magazine@rotary.org](mailto:magazine@rotary.org) with "shared" in the subject line.

were timber cruisers, labor union organizers, basket weavers, and just plain small-town folk who cared about the area they lived in.

And those spotted owls the author mentions dismissively: They are a vital indicator species that serves as a gauge of the diversity and ecological health of a habitat, because when a forest in the U.S. or Canada has northern spotted owls, then it is able to support a full diversity of plants and animals.

Keeping the focus on the whole environment rather than just one species — even if it is our own — is what it takes for a healthy environment.

— Martha Weaver, Malone, New York

issue. Always looking for an interesting book to read, I immediately went to my local library to see if I could check out a few of the 30 books on Mr. Bures' list that caught my eye. None were available, but I suggested to a librarian that they purchase *Carville's Cure* by Pam Fessler and *How to Feed a Dictator* by Witold Szablowski. A few weeks later, I had them both and enjoyed reading them, as well as *The Pull of the Stars* by Emma Donoghue, a fascinating story about a young nurse during the 1918 flu pandemic in Dublin.

Mr. Bures' article is a benefit I wasn't expecting as a member of Rotary. Who needs the *New York Times* bestsellers list when we have articles like this in our very own *Rotary* magazine?

— Dan Ryan, Greenwood, Indiana

## BETTER THAN THE TIMES

I thoroughly enjoyed Frank Bures' "Words to Live By" in the December

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# WWS13

WASH in Healthcare Facilities

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Haik Kocharian on behalf of Village Health Partnership

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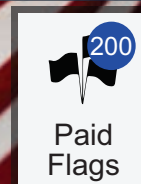
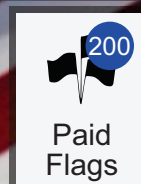
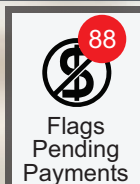


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## THE SPECIALIST

# Wing man

*Pilot provides lifeline for isolated community*

**I began working as a pilot** for the North Slope Borough Search and Rescue in 1995, serving the Utqiagvik community and scattered villages on the Arctic tundra.

I am on duty 14 hours a day for 14 days; then I have 14 days off. Ninety percent of the calls we respond to are for medical transports to hospitals. We are like ambulances with wings.

**Utqiagvik (formerly Barrow), Alaska**, has a population of about 4,500 and temperatures that sometimes fall to 40 degrees below zero. I moved here from Denver in 1980 after a friend told me about a job flying chartered single-engine planes to transport mail and supplies. When I first arrived, it was a real eye-opener, like living *National Geographic* every day. It is not uncommon to see polar bears strolling through villages adjacent to the Arctic Ocean.

**I grew up on U.S. Air Force bases** throughout the world, and I was always around airplanes. My sister

and I were known as “Air Force brats.” I remember, at age five or six, seeing B-47 bombers flying overhead. Being around planes had an impact on me. After I returned to the United States from serving an overseas tour with the 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) during the Vietnam War, I was spending all my time and money to fly as a hobby. I thought, Why not do this for a living? I began my career as a flight instructor, then became a pilot for a commuter airline.

**The COVID-19 pandemic spread through Alaska like wildfire.** Earlier this year, Utqiagvik had a high infection rate, which stretched medical resources. When we do a medical transport, we have to assume for safety reasons that the person has the virus, though most do not. On duty calls, I am accompanied by a second pilot and two paramedics. I am tested weekly, and everyone wears a mask to reduce the spread of infection.

**I fell in love with this community.** After living a nomadic life in the military, I consider this my hometown. They know me, and I know I provide a vital service. All but one of the village runways are gravel, and for many years, they did not have instrument landing approaches to guide the planes to the runways. The challenges are many, but the rewards have more than compensated for them. I know I’m saving lives, and I’m humbled by that.

— AS TOLD TO TRACEY ROBINSON-ENGLISH

**Bob Mercier**  
Rotary Club of  
Barrow (Nuvuk),  
Alaska  
Search and  
rescue pilot

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WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

# Stop, listen, listen some more

**Y**OUR CLUB has members who come from different backgrounds, religions, and ethnicities. In response to current events, some members want to take a stand against social injustices in your community and abroad. Other members consider these issues political or controversial, and don't support the club taking action. This has created tension in your club and alienated and upset some members. As the club chair for community service, you want to ensure that everyone's voice is heard and that the types of projects and initiatives your club supports in the community are endorsed by all members. What would you do?

It would help to have a forum where both sides can be heard so that they can come to a consensus on address-

ing whatever social issues are at hand. Often, it is receiving only part of the message, rather than hearing it as a whole, that causes controversy in the first place. Rotary was a part of the founding of the United Nations and shares a history of working toward peace, so this would be a natural extension.

— **Brian Hayes, Rotary Club of Centerville, Ohio**

The ethical dilemma described could be at our club, except that our diversity quotient is very low. What would we do? First, as Rotarians, we should always consider The Four-Way Test. Who is the "all concerned" mentioned twice? Just people who look like us?

Second, all voices must be heard. But at some point, leadership must say, "We've heard your voices, and we are ready to move forward." Despite

## Next question

Your club has been flexible in finding ways to meet and participate in service virtually. Your club president wishes to continue to innovate and has tasked a committee that you chair with creating a new service opportunity each month for club members to take part in, either virtually or in person if it is safe.

However, there is reluctance among your fellow committee members, who wish to wait until after the pandemic has ended to work on creating new opportunities for engagement and volunteering. **What would you do? Tell us at [magazine@rotary.org](mailto:magazine@rotary.org).**

objections of some members of his Cabinet, U.S. President Abraham Lincoln resolved to sign the Emancipation Proclamation. Rotary must also show the courage of our convictions. We must have the conversations and then move forward.

Last, we should look to Rotary's own history. In 1988, our club inducted three women. Simultaneously, several men resigned. What if, in 1987 or 1988, our club had avoided those difficult conversations because they might have alienated some people?

We must listen to all voices. But avoiding difficult conversations is not an option. Our club is in the midst of these uncomfortable conversations, holding four programs on difficult subjects for Black History Month.

— **Stacy Plemmons, Rotary Club of Fort Collins, Colorado**

I tend to agree that these issues could lean too much toward politics. I think it's important to keep our focus on Rotary's seven areas of focus. If an issue that could be thought of as "social injustice" falls under one of the areas of focus (for example, disproportionate funding in public schools based on demographics of school district), then it's appropriate for Rotary to take a stand.

— **Mike Luque, Rotary Club of Upcountry Maui, Hawaii**



## MENTAL HEALTH

# Out of the shadows

*Rotarians are speaking openly about once-hidden issues — and taking action to address them*

**R**OTARY HAS A remarkable record when it comes to health initiatives. We've helped bring polio to the brink of eradication, and clubs have carried out myriad projects focused on preventing disease and supporting maternal and child health. Now the global pandemic has brought attention to another aspect of health that is often overlooked: mental health. In many places, depression, anxiety, and suicide are seen as things to be ashamed of and kept quiet. But Rotary members are recognizing the gaps in understanding and resources and are stepping up to help.

"A year ago, we had 50 members of the Rotary Action Group on Mental Health Initiatives," says Bonnie Black, a member of the Rotary Club of Plattsburgh, New York, and the chair of the action group. "We've tripled our membership during the pandemic, and I believe it's due to the heightened awareness of mental health and wellness."

More than 264 million people worldwide are affected by depression, according to the World Health Organization, and although many mental health conditions can be effectively treated at relatively low cost, many people who need treatment do not receive it.

Felix-Kingsley Obialo, a member of the Rotary Club of Ibadan Idi-Ishin, Nigeria, manages the local arm of a project called Wellness in a Box, which his club has worked on in partnership with the Rotary Club of Wellesley, Massachusetts. "Mental health is an area that has

been neglected by many people for too long because of the stigma associated with it," says Obialo. "The involvement of Rotary clubs will gradually reduce the stigma, and more and more people will begin to be comfortable around the issue."

WHEN PIA SKARABIS-QUERFELD saw refugees pouring into Germany to escape war and other atrocities in 2014, the Berlin-based doctor felt compelled to help. Skarabis-Querfeld, a member of the Rotary Club of Kleinmachnow, eventually launched a nonprofit called Medizin Hilft (Medicine Helps). With support from a Rotary Foundation global grant and clubs around the globe, the nearly all-volunteer organization donates thousands of hours of medical care to refugees and migrants each year.

But doctors in the group quickly noticed that in addition to needing care for physical ailments, about half of their patients had symptoms of psychological problems or psychiatric disorders, including depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and addiction. In 2020, the Rotary Club of Morehead City-Lookout, North Carolina, worked with Medizin Hilft to secure another global grant that allows the organization to offer free mental health services.

Under the guidance of Ulla Michels-Vermeulen, a psychologist who is also a member of the Kleinmachnow club, psychologists, psychiatrists, translators, and social workers help people like Fatma, a Syrian nurse who once treated

— Learn more about the Rotary Action Group on Mental Health Initiatives at [ragonmentalhealth.org](https://www.ragonmentalhealth.org).

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bomb attack victims. When the situation became too dangerous in Syria, she left home. But fleeing was traumatic, explains Michels-Vermeulen.

While crossing the Mediterranean, Fatma watched several passengers drown before another vessel came to the rescue of their drifting boat. She spent time in a refugee camp, where people slept in tents, there were no doctors, and there was not enough to eat. She was sexually assaulted several times on the journey.

“Fatma has been accepted to stay [in Germany] and is going to school to learn German, but she is still getting counseling. She is suffering from nightmares, sleeplessness, concentration problems, and flashbacks,” Michels-Vermeulen says. “It costs society a lot if we

ignore these mental health problems. And it’s a human right to get support if you are ill.”

AFTER DARREN HANDS INVITED speakers to talk about mental health at a District 1175 (England) conference a few years ago, he and other local Rotarians were inspired to do more. “It was very powerful, and afterwards we thought, ‘What can we as Rotarians do when it comes to mental health? We’re people of action but not mental health professionals. But surely there’s something we can do to help,’” says Hands, president of the Rotary Club of Plympton.

They came up with a social media campaign called “Don’t Bottle It Up,” which encourages people affected by depression, anxiety, or other issues to reach out for help. “The majority

During a Wellness in a Box training session in Ibadan, Nigeria, Felix-Kingsley Obialo works with students on how to be peer leaders.

of people with mental health issues wait over a year to talk to someone,” explains Hands. “Hopefully we can help break down some of the stigma through this campaign.”

Launched in 2017 in District 1175, the campaign features local athletes and celebrities posing with a water bottle and the message “Don’t Bottle It Up.” The ads note that one in four people in the United Kingdom have some form of mental illness, and urge people not to suffer in silence.

Two years later, the initiative launched nationally in the UK and in Ireland. The group has a Facebook page and a website, and today 28 public figures and about 60 Rotarians have shared their image and message on social media.

“We have no direct way of knowing that the campaign has made a difference,” notes Hands. “But if just one person who has suicidal thoughts or is suffering from depression or anxiety sees one of these images and decides to seek help or at least talk to someone, to me, that will be a success.”

THE STATISTICS on teenage suicide and depression are troubling — in the United States, suicide is the second leading cause of death among 15- to 19-year-olds, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention — and the global pandemic has meant that kids are more isolated than ever.

Wellness in a Box, the school-based mental health awareness campaign that Felix-Kingsley Obialo’s club supports in Nigeria, was started in 2013 by Bob Anthony,

In many places, depression, anxiety, and suicide are thought of as things to be ashamed of and kept quiet. But Rotary members are recognizing the gaps in understanding and resources and are stepping up to help.

then a member of the Rotary Club of Wellesley, Massachusetts, at a local high school. The program has expanded to 20 schools in Nigeria, 18 in India, and three in Puerto Rico.

Through videos, workshops, and group discussions, Wellness in a Box presents information to students, parents, and teachers about depression and suicide, about activities to foster coping skills, and about how to seek help. Student leaders are taught to help lead a curriculum focused on preventing depression. The program promotes awareness, decreases stigma, and creates a network of teens and adults who can

identify those who need help and refer them to professionals.

“We measured students’ knowledge of depression and their confidence in seeking help, and the numbers improved at all the sites — even more so when peers delivered the information,” says Anthony, who is now a member of the Rotary Club of Naples, Florida, and the treasurer of the mental health initiatives action group. In Nigeria, where mental health issues are especially stigmatized and rarely talked about publicly, “we’ve made people aware that treatment is possible,” Anthony says. In India, where some schools lacked counselors, the program publicized local hospital contacts whom people could go to for help and is paying for teachers to be trained in school counseling. “It starts with teens, but there’s a parent education workshop that every school is encouraged to provide,” he says. “Ideally, this is for everyone.”

Rotarians working on this project are hopeful that more clubs will focus on improving mental health. “Being a Rotarian confers a kind of legitimacy and authority on Rotarians in whatever they do,” says Obialo. “Rotarians thus become a moral force against the stigmatization of people with mental health conditions.” — ANNE STEIN



Courtesy of Darren Hands

## Mental health global facts

More than 264 million people worldwide are affected by depression.

Although there are effective treatments for mental disorders, between 76% and 85% of people in low- and middle-income countries receive no treatment for their condition.

Suicide is the second leading cause of death among 15- to 29-year-olds globally.

Depression and anxiety disorders cost the global economy \$1 trillion per year.

There are 800,000 deaths per year from suicide.

Mental health conditions are especially common in populations affected by humanitarian crises.

Source: WHO

Darren Hands has made it easy for Rotary members to participate in the “Don’t Bottle It Up” campaign. “You simply take a photo of yourself holding a bottle and send it to me,” says Hands, who posts it on social media and adds local health statistics to make the message more relevant. Learn more at [rotary-site.org/rotarians4mentalhealth](http://rotary-site.org/rotarians4mentalhealth).

### Short takes

Rotary has partnered with the National Youth Leadership Council to develop new service-learning resources for young people. Find interactive courses and downloadable workbooks at [rotary.org/learn](http://rotary.org/learn).



Applications for the 2022-23 Rotary Peace Fellowship program are due to districts 15 May. Learn more at [rotary.org/peace-fellowships](http://rotary.org/peace-fellowships).



**W**HEN THE coronavirus began to spread last year, so did misinformation. Pavithra

Venkatagopalan, a virologist specializing in coronaviruses, kept hearing about false cures and preventive measures that were being shared on the messaging platform WhatsApp.

“Somebody said, if you wear this magnetic tab around your neck, you won’t get COVID. If you drink cow urine, you won’t get COVID. I just got irritated,” Venkatagopalan says. A presentation she gave to her club in Chennai led to other speaking engagements.

“That led to interviews on a radio show, and then on Sun TV, which has a worldwide reach,” Venkatagopalan says. “I’m a very private person. But I thought I might as well put information out there that people will see and believe.”

Venkatagopalan posts videos on YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram, sharing accurate information about COVID-19. People have responded, asking her questions about the virus.

Upon her return to India after completing a PhD program at Arizona State University, Venkatagopalan joined her club as a way to make new friends. In 2015, the Madras Next Gen club was relatively new and made up of young members like herself. “Now, most are getting married, and a couple of them have kids,” she says. “It’s nice growing with the club.”

In January, Venkatagopalan was continuing to post videos about the safety and efficacy of COVID-19 vaccines. Because her husband, biochemist Kaushik Gurunathan, was a trial volunteer for one of the vaccines, she says, they were able to relate their firsthand experience. “It’s confidence-building for people.”

— NIKKI KALLIO

PROFILE

## Just the facts

*A virologist works to combat misinformation about COVID-19*

**Pavithra Venkatagopalan**

Rotary Club of Madras Next Gen, India

Rotary’s final presidential conference of 2020-21 will be presented online by the Ascension Rotaract Network Multidistrict Information Organization (United States) on 14-16 May.

On 25 February, Rotary and the World Health Organization co-hosted a webinar showcasing innovative maternal and child health projects.



In January, the Tanzania RYLA and Interact Boot Camp received the top honor in the inaugural Leaders in RYLA Awards.

# Rotary projects around the globe

By BRAD WEBBER

# 3,000 SPECIES OF FLOWERING PLANTS IN JAMAICA



## Canada

With a flurry of brushstrokes, members of the Rotary Club of Nanaimo, British Columbia, and helpers painted a vista of mountains, ocean, beach, and woodlands onto a 100-foot stretch of wall at a center serving dementia patients. The effort required about US\$800 worth of paint and other supplies paid for with funds raised through the club's twice-annual book sales. "Many of the residents' rooms look out toward the wall.

We hoped to give them as lovely a view as other residents have of courtyards and nature," says Denise Wittkofski, a club member and coordinator of the project at the care facility, Eden Gardens. Over the past 20 years, Nanaimo Rotarians have donated about US\$80,000 to Eden Gardens, including money for the center's new building, which opened in 2017.



# 430,000+

## CANADIANS OVER AGE 64 WHO HAVE BEEN DIAGNOSED WITH DEMENTIA



## Jamaica

The Rotaract Club of the University of the West Indies-Mona picked up shovels for a forestry project along Highway 2000 in St. Catherine Parish in early January. The highway is overseen by Jamaica's National Road Operating and Constructing Co. The club planted 400 trees as part of a national initiative begun in 2019 to add 3 million trees in Jamaica, says Joshua Anderson, a club member. "We planted blue mahoe — our national tree — as well as Spanish elm, pink poui, and white poui," Anderson says. Later that month, the club held a beach cleanup; about 25 people, including club members and friends, cleared Port Henderson Beach of enough rubbish to fill 40 trash bags. "We were driven to do projects that were beneficial to our local environment and, by extension, to our communities," Anderson says.





### Slovenia

The Rotary Club of Ljubljana and District 1912 (North Macedonia and Slovenia) staged a St. Nicholas Day virtual concert on 5 December. The event, which was shown during a prime-time broadcast on national public television, consisted of highlights from the 27 previous annual concerts. Rotarians, Rotaractors, and their friends helped staff a phone bank to accept contributions. Most of the proceeds — which totaled

more than \$80,000, including funds raised via text messages starting in November — are being directed this year to helping 46 schools across the country acquire computers and other equipment for distance learning; a portion of the money also went to the pediatric clinic at the University of Ljubljana Medical Center.

Rotary Club of Ljubljana 



### Cook Islands

On coronavirus-free Rarotonga, the largest of the Cook Islands, the Rotaract Club of Rarotonga rolled out its signature Christmas in the Market, a four-hour festival of cultural artistry, food stalls, and fireworks. The playbill for the 16 December event included dancers swaying to the regional style called *ura*; string bands; singers of Maori songs known as *waiata*; and popular contemporary music with choreography by members of the local Filipino community. About 2,000 people attended, and the \$5,700 in proceeds is being channeled toward projects, particularly on the less populated Pa Enua, or outer islands.

Rotaract Club of Rarotonga 

# 20 MILLION+

## CHILDREN IN EUROPE AT RISK OF POVERTY

### Spain

For five years, the Rotary Club of Calvià International has sponsored a series of debates for students ages 14 to 16. Adapting to the COVID-19 crisis, participants in the 2020-21 series — teams of three from six international secondary schools — logged on to Zoom for the contests, conducted in English, which ran from October to January. They squared off on timely themes, taking sides on topics such as “space exploration is a waste of resources” and “the principle of free speech is being compromised in the digital age.”

A team of 20 volunteers, most of them club members, was



required for the debates, which were posted on YouTube. “The standard is extremely high, and it is a real challenge to the jury to pick the winners,” says club member Kate Mentink.

Rotary Club of Calvià International 

# 171,000

## TOURISTS WHO VISITED THE COOK ISLANDS, POP. 18,000, IN 2019

BIG PICTURE

# Hive mind

*A global fellowship is abuzz on a mission to help save the bees*

**B**EES ARE IN TROUBLE. According to a recent study, in North America, you are nearly 50 percent less likely to see a bumblebee in any given area than you were before 1974. Bee species have seen dramatic population declines all around the world — and without bees, global food security may be at risk, because pollinator-dependent crops make up 35 percent of global food production volume.

Rotary members in Slovenia, which is home to many experts in apiculture — one in every 200 Slovenians is a beekeeper — are behind the creation of the International Bee Rotary Fellowship (IBRF). It grew out of a conversation in 2018 between Nina Kolenc, a member of the Rotary Club of Maribor-Park, and Janez Lipec, then governor of District 1912 (North Macedonia and Slovenia). The fellowship hopes to work on projects such as building bee houses and organizing bee-focused camps for young people.

Their passion is infectious. “I admittedly know little about this incredibly productive little animal. But that’s why I am in the fellowship: to learn about the bee population decline from practical advocates and experts,” says John Blount, a member of the Rotary Club of Sebastopol, California.

“Rotary and bees have a lot in common,” says Kolenc. “Bees are hardworking, creative, and productive, and so is Rotary.”

—JOSEPH DERR

## THE BEE'S KNEES

Honeybees live in colonies. For them, one lone bee cannot do anything; it cannot survive. When we Rotarians and Rotaractors act as a family, like bees, we can change the world.

— Matej Vošner, Rotaract Club of Slovenj Gradec, Slovenia

While Slovenians account for 27 of the group's 50 members, 18 other nations and geographical areas are also represented. Fellowship members don't necessarily tend their own hives: “Most new members are interested in increasing awareness of bees for our survival and future,” says fellowship member Matej Vošner.

Learn more at [facebook.com/InternationalBeeRotaryFellowship](https://www.facebook.com/InternationalBeeRotaryFellowship).

## LITTLE WORKERS

► **As far as possible**, do not use chemicals that are harmful to bees. Let us take care of our environment, because without bees, humanity would face many big problems. Without bees, many plant species would face the threat of extinction.

— Mali Levi, Rotary Club of Gadera Habluim, Israel

► **The bee has been** on our earth for more than 100 million years. It helps ensure that we have flowers in our fields, trees full of fruit, and forests that grow and expand. Much of a bee's work is for the existence of the bees and benefits the natural world. Only a small portion of what a honeybee produces is taken by the beekeeper in the form of honey and honey products; the rest goes

What is really inspiring is the bees' sense of community. When a hornet attacks a Japanese honeybee hive, bees unite in defense. Fifty or more bees will surround the hornet, raising its temperature with their bodies, which ultimately kills it. Some bees die as well, but the hive is saved. Great things can be done when we work together.

— Otmar Zorn, Rotary Club of Ljubljana Iliria, Slovenia

My passion is bumblebees and other wild bees. They are extremely important for the ecosystem. This year, we plan to promote do-it-yourself nesting boxes for wild bees:

You take a piece of wood, bore some holes in it, and set it up in your garden in early spring, protected from the rain.

— Anton Gradišek, Rotary Club of Ljubljana Tivoli, Slovenia

## HOW SWEET IT IS

► **Honey contains vitamins,** amino acids, minerals, sugars, and enzymes. Pythagoras is said to have eaten only honeycomb, bread, and water for dinner.  
— Janez Lipec

► **There are seven different honey types in Slovenia:** acacia, linden, chestnut, multiflora, forest, spruce, and fir honey. Forest honey is well known for its great taste and quality.  
— Boštjan Noč, president of the Slovenian Beekeepers Association

► **The most delicious honey is acacia flower honey.** I learned a recipe from my grandmother: Take 1 part butter and 2 parts acacia honey, mix well, and spread it on fresh bread.  
— György Balogh, Rotary Club of Budapest-Budavár, Hungary

► **My favorite kind of honey** is acorn, which has a sweet-and-sour taste. I also really like its derivatives, like soap and wax ointment.  
— Kostas Misialis, Rotary Club of Thessaloniki, Greece

► **My grandparents kept bees.** Honey was natural sugar, for free. When I was 10, I would help with the bees, and I learned about them. Beekeeping is in my blood.  
— Matej Vošner

toward the survival of the bees.  
— Janez Lipec, Rotary Club of Zagorje Kum, Slovenia

► **To help bees,** you can plant or sow pollinator-friendly flowers and plants in the garden, terrace, or balcony, or make simple panels with holes as shelters for solitary bees. Or get involved in organizations like ours that raise awareness.  
—Anton Končnik, IBRF chair, Rotary Club of Bled, Slovenia

“Bees are among the most important animals in the world.”

— Jean-Claude Brocart, Rotary Club of Toulouse Ovalie, France

Members of the Environmental Sustainability Rotary Action Group are also working on bee population concerns in Australia. Learn more at [rotariansforbees.org](http://rotariansforbees.org).

# Advanced in years

Americans have long valued youth over age and experience. Shouldn't seniors have their moment?

By Frank Bures

**N**OT LONG AGO, a letter appeared in our local newspaper. In it, the writer argued that the U.S. death toll from COVID-19 (more than 525,000 at this writing) couldn't be compared to the U.S. death tolls of various wars: Korea, 36,574; Vietnam, 58,220; World War II, 405,399; the Civil War, 498,332.

The reason, he wrote, was that wars killed young people. COVID-19, on the other hand, was killing old people.

"The average [age at] death of a soldier," argued the writer, who was in his mid-70s, "is conservatively [estimated at] 25, and if they lived on average to be — again, conservatively — 75, each death represents 50 lost years of life. The most common age of COVID death is over 70, and even with a life expectancy of 85, that's a 15-year loss of life or less.

"A death is a death," he concluded, but averred that even so, a 25-year-old cannot be compared to a 75-year-old.

Many of us feel this way: that the death of a young person is more tragic than the death of an old one. In this calculus, a life's value is determined by the number of years not yet lived, rather than the amount of life experience acquired. This assessment posits that potential life is more valuable than actual life.

If we follow this logic to its end, here's where we find ourselves: believing that the process of living is one of inexorable decline, and that every day we are worth less than we were the day before until, at the end, we find ourselves without any value at all.

David Lancy, an anthropologist and the author of *Raising Children: Surprising Insights from Other Cultures*, coined a term for this kind of mentality, which he found to be prevalent in the United States: He calls it a "neontocracy," meaning it is centered on its children. They are considered the society's most valued members.

Lancy first took note of this in the 1960s, when he was doing fieldwork in Liberia. "In the village I studied, you'd see far more instances of little kids running errands for those who were older, bringing food, bringing tools," he told me. "Children are at their beck and call: 'Go fetch

this! Go fetch that!' Any adult in the community, in the village, has the right to tell a kid what to do. It seemed so different from contemporary child rearing in the United States. In our society, we impose very little of our needs on children.

"In our society," he concluded, "children rule."

When Lancy came back to the United States, he started reading ethnographic manuscripts focused on other cultures around the world. After studying more than 1,000 societies, he realized that what he had seen in that Liberian village was the rule and that U.S. culture was the exception. In most places, he found, children are not even considered full persons; instead, personhood is something you earn. "One of the common threads that run through those societies is that children start out with very few expectations, and very little importance," he says.

If our culture can be described as a neontocracy, the arrangement that he found to be more common throughout the world is what he calls a "gerontocracy": a society in which the elders are the most valued members. "In a gerontocracy, your venerable age alone gives you status," Lancy says. "On top of that, good work, hard work, taking care of others — all those things — can enhance your social standing. A child doesn't have any of those experiences. What's considered important is what the child contributes to others and how they contribute to the community as a whole — not what they accomplish on their own. Gerontocracy, in many ways, is much more compatible with our evolution as a species."

How did we in the United States get to be this way? How did we arrive at the point where we worship our children and scorn our elders? According to Lancy, by the middle of the last

**Frank Bures** is a longtime contributor to *Rotary* and the author of *The Geography of Madness*.



century, parents began putting their children on a pedestal, and that tendency has increased with every subsequent decade. At the same time, the birthrate was dropping, so in a sense, the value of each child increased. Children also consumed a growing share of family resources.

The American love of youth has deeper roots than that, however. In the late 1800s, historians say, the process of aging came to be seen as a medical problem to be solved. In her book *This Chair Rocks: A Manifesto Against Ageism*, Ashton Applewhite makes the case that this trend accelerated in the 20th century. “Propelled by postwar leisure and prosperity, the explosion of consumer culture, and research into a stage of life newly dubbed ‘adolescence,’ youth culture emerged as a distinct twentieth-century phenomenon,” she writes. “As this ‘cult of youth’ grew, gerontophobia — fear of aging and dislike, even hatred, of old people — gained traction.”

Throughout the 20th century, the status of our elders fell, and today they find themselves at the very bottom of the ladder. We’re all future senior citizens, if we’re lucky, but we often look down the road with fear and denial. In 2019, Americans spent \$53 billion on anti-aging products promising to stave off this natural process,

or at least the appearance of it.

Yet among the costs of neontocracy, perhaps the most telling is our underwhelming response to the deaths caused by the pandemic, which has disproportionately killed our elder citizens.

Imagine, for a moment, that COVID-19, when it arrived, killed 80 percent of infected children. There would have been panic. There would have been outrage. And there would have been action and much more serious attempts at controlling the virus, as there were in less youth-centric cultures such as China, Italy, and Spain. We would have taken extreme measures to protect our most valued citizens.

But we didn’t. And now the generations that fought in World War II, Korea, and Vietnam are on the front lines of this war, too.

Jim Puppe knows that old age is not a long slide into irrelevance and that getting through life, and through hardship, can increase the value of one’s life. Growing up in North Dakota, he heard stories about the Depression, about the “Dirty Thirties” of the Dust Bowl, about World War II, and other challenges that society faced. Yet, he recalls, the people who went through those hard times didn’t seem bitter. They didn’t seem angry. Rather, they seemed content. In fact, the more

adversity they had seen, the more content they were.

Puppe wanted to know why. So in 2004, after he retired, he set out to find one person in each community in his state with wisdom to share. He would show up in a town and ask around for someone with “human spirit, optimism, good morals, values, and integrity” whom he could interview.

More often than not, this was someone older, a person who had made it through tough times. Puppe would sit down with them and listen to what they had to say. At the end of each interview, he would ask what advice the person might have for their grandchildren. “They would say love, respect for others, honesty,” he told me when I called him. “But one fellow just sat there for a minute and said, ‘I have no advice for them.’”

“And I said, ‘You don’t have any advice for your grandkids?’”

“And he said, ‘No. Let how I live be my advice.’”

Over 14 years, Puppe visited 617 towns, and he published the stories he collected in a book he titled *Dakota Attitude*. “What they told me was just priceless,” he says. “There’s a vast resource of knowledge, experience, and wisdom that we can gain from these folks that’s been untapped. In my opinion, most of the problems we have in the world today could be solved by a good grandma.”

If anything good comes of this pandemic, my hope is that more of us will end up like Jim Puppe, and less like my local letter-writer. I hope we can come to see that life becomes more, not less, valuable with age. And if our culture won’t change from its child-centered ways, then let’s each create our own small gerontocracy among the people we know — before all that wisdom, all those memories, and all those lives are gone. ■



“There’s a vast resource of knowledge, experience, and wisdom that’s been untapped. Most of the problems we have in the world today could be solved by a good grandma.”

GOODWILL

# Measure for measure

*Figuring out the impact of their work is a hot topic in the world of nonprofits*

**I**N DECEMBER, for the 13th year in a row, The Rotary Foundation received a four-star rating — the highest possible — from Charity Navigator, an independent evaluator of charities in the United States. Charity Navigator determines its ratings by examining how nonprofits use their funds, how sustainable their programs are, and how well they follow industry standards of transparency and accountability.

In recent years, many nonprofits — including Rotary — have begun to increase their focus on measuring the impact of their work, and Charity Navigator has responded to that shift. In 2020, it acquired ImpactMatters, a ratings organization dedicated to assessing the impact of nonprofits. Based on the existing ratings of ImpactMatters, Charity Navigator will create impact ratings for thousands of charities.

In an effort to measure the impact of Foundation grants and other Rotary projects, Rotary is now also emphasizing the importance of incorporating monitoring and evaluation into the projects that Rotary clubs and districts carry out in their own communities and around the world. But measuring impact can be challenging, because there is no one-size-fits-all methodology. For some projects, large-scale surveys are useful. For others, impact might be assessed using economic indicators.

“What we are asking is this: Is this a good use of resources?”

explains Elijah Goldberg, vice president of impact ratings at Charity Navigator. “Nonprofits are trying to solve a problem. The question is, is this particular type of activity efficient when you solve that problem?”

The intensified focus on measuring impact is an attempt to apply the principles of academic research to the work of charitable organizations. “In the past 15 years, we have seen a huge expansion of the number of careful, rigorous evaluations being done in academia on impact,” says Dean Karlan, co-founder of ImpactMatters and co-director of the Global Poverty Research Lab at Northwestern University. “These days it is much more practical to do fieldwork collecting data; the internet has radically lowered the cost of doing that. And a lot of the exciting evaluations now come from the nonprofit sector.”

Assessing impact through carefully constructed surveys and statistical analysis makes sense for large-scale initiatives, but it is often impractical for smaller projects. The good news for clubs is that there are ways to use existing research to demonstrate that a planned project is in line with proven methods for solving a given problem, and then to use those results to guide your program’s impact measurement.

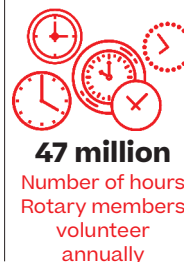
“In the formative stages of project planning, you can get surprisingly good information using an internet search,” says Randall Blair, who, as an associate director at

Mathematica, a data-focused policy research firm, helps foundations and federal agencies figure out the best types of programs to invest in. “You just have to pick keywords. You can search for the big concept, like ‘educational approaches to adolescent sexual and reproductive health.’ To make the search more effective, add words like ‘recommendations for policymakers.’” It’s important to filter the results you find, he notes, but there is a great deal of valuable data at your fingertips. Research in the early phases can pay off when it is time to assess impact, because you will have more information on benchmarks for your type of project.

And even though he works in a statistics-driven field, Blair emphasizes that for smaller projects, simple surveys and check-in interviews are a valid tool for measuring impact. “Money can be well spent asking basic questions. How are things going? Are we delivering what we said we would deliver? How do folks feel about it? Would they recommend we make any improvements? Those types of questions can really go a long way.”

For Rotary, the new emphasis on measuring impact must be part of what we do. “For many years, The Rotary Foundation has attained the highest rating from Charity Navigator. But the gold standard of social impact is changing,” notes John Hewko, general secretary of Rotary International. “The benchmarks of our progress are not just financial health, accountability, and transparency. They are also our ability to measure what we do and prove that our efforts translate into concrete impact, based on clear evidence. To increase our impact and get the credit that we deserve for our hard work, we have to be more data-driven. By documenting the metrics of our good works, we get a clear picture of results. We learn how to replicate and scale up our successes. And we can tell more compelling stories about the good we do.”

— HANK SARTIN





**By building on a proven concept —  
such as efforts to stamp out malaria in Zambia —  
Rotary’s new multimillion-dollar  
Programs of Scale grants help make good better**

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# SCALE MODEL

**A**S PART OF THE POLIO ERADICATION campaign, Rotary and its partners have trained millions of health care workers and volunteers and vaccinated nearly 3 billion children. Polio cases have dropped 99.9 percent since Rotary took up the cause in 1985, and the number of countries with endemic wild polio has dropped to two: Afghanistan and Pakistan.

“What you’ve done with polio is remarkable,” says Larry Cooley, a well-known international development consultant. “But it shouldn’t be a study of one.”

Rotary is stepping up to that challenge through Programs of Scale, a new Foundation program awarding grants to Rotary clubs or districts with evidence-based interventions that are ready to scale. The first such grant, announced in February, will provide \$2 million to Partners for a Malaria-Free Zambia, a member-led program focused on fighting malaria. Co-funders World Vision U.S. and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation are also involved in malaria mitigation efforts and will each contribute \$2 million to the program. This \$6 million program will train and equip 2,500 community health workers in Zambia to support the government’s work to eradicate malaria in that country. If all goes well, Rotary members hope to expand the effort to elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa (read more

about this project in our interview with Rotarian Bill Feldt on page 32).

The concept of Programs of Scale dates back to 2013, when global grants, introduced through The Rotary Foundation’s updated grant model, expanded the scope and size of Rotary projects with the aim of increasing their impact. After a 2016 evaluation of the grant model, the Foundation Trustees requested that a new grant type be developed that would fund “scalable” grant projects in the areas of focus — meaning projects that were planned in a way that allowed them to be expanded, built upon, and further developed. “Something between large global grants and PolioPlus was needed,” says Francis “Tusu” Tusubira, a member of The Rotary Foundation Cadre of Technical Advisers and a past member of Rotary’s Strategic Planning Committee.

The Programs of Scale grants are the result: a way to fund large-scale, high-impact projects that can attract partners while tapping into Rotary members’ capacity and enthusiasm. “While global grants and district grants have been very successful, we want to give opportunities for projects with even more impact,” says Foundation Trustee Sangkoo Yun, who was on the Programs of Scale selection committee. “We want to better quantify that impact and share what we learn with all Rotarians engaged in international service.”

by DIANA SCHOBURG and VANESSA GLAVINSKAS | illustrations by GWEN KERAVAL

**S**o what, in this context, does “scale” mean?

“It’s a simple question with a complicated answer,” says Cooley, who is an expert on the topic. One way to think about it, he says, is that you are looking for a solution that matches the scale of the problem. If you define the problem in local terms, then the scale of the solution is local. If you define it as international, as with polio, then the scale of the solution is international.

“Problems have denominators,” he says. “If somebody said, we helped distribute blankets to 10,000 villagers, I’d say, congratulations, but how many villagers needed blankets? If the answer is that it was 10,000 out of 15,000, I’d say, holy mackerel, that’s great. If it’s 10,000 out of 10 million, I’d say that’s still great, but that’s not the right strategy.”

Clubs can think about scale whenever they’re developing a project, not only when they are aiming to apply for a Programs of Scale grant. Cooley suggests that rather than focusing on projects, Rotarians focus on problems. “Take on a problem and [don’t] let go until it’s solved, or materially improved, whether at the community or national level,” he says.

When thinking about scaling up, Tusubira notes, you can take a successful project and add new aspects to it to deepen the impact. Or you can expand the project to reach more people, as is the case in Zambia, where Rotarians are building on successful global grants and other programs that funded training for community health workers in other parts of the country. The challenge, he says, is figuring out which are the unique environmental factors that are responsible for the success of a project in order to be sure you are scaling up the right things.

**B**y 1 March 2020 — the application deadline for the first Programs of Scale grant — the Foundation had received more than 70 proposals representing programs across Rotary’s areas of focus to be implemented around the world. After a rigorous review process, those were narrowed down to a select group, and the clubs involved were invited to submit full applications. A team of Cadre members and staff experts conducted virtual site visits and evaluated the proposals based on readiness to scale up the project, readiness to learn and share results, and how well

## KEY TERMS

- ▶ **Scale:**  
The concept of expanding a proven innovation to benefit more people
- ▶ **Sustainability:**  
Impact that continues beyond the time frame of the grant funding
- ▶ **Target population:**  
The group that an innovation is designed to reach
- ▶ **Program participants:**  
The group of people the program directly engages
- ▶ **Beneficiaries:**  
The group of people or organizations who will experience the intended changes supported by the program, either through direct participation or through interactions with program participants
- ▶ **Implementing partner:**  
An organization that supplements another by carrying out an objective
- ▶ **Impact:**  
Measurable, positive change

the clubs involved would work with local communities and partner organizations. Three finalists were recommended.

“I was bowled over by the quality and strength of the applications, and by the expertise and experience of Rotarians on the ground and the connections they have,” says selection committee member Judith Diment. “What I really liked about [the malaria project in Zambia] was the partnerships and the collaboration they had established,” adds Diment, who is also the dean of the Rotary Representative Network and a longtime polio advocacy adviser. “It had many parallels with the polio program.”

Rotary’s success in the polio eradication program provides valuable lessons for clubs — not only those interested in

applying for a Programs of Scale grant, but those planning any project.

One lesson, as Diment notes, is about the power of partnerships. The Global Polio Eradication Initiative is one of the most ambitious public-private health partnerships in history. “Collaborating with partners gives you a much bigger opportunity for large-scale change,” she says.

A second lesson is the need for large-scale programs to grow out of Rotarians’ interests. Before polio was adopted by Rotary on a global scale, individual clubs were already tackling the disease through Rotary-funded projects, including a 1979 project to administer oral polio vaccine in the Philippines. Programs of Scale, Tusubira notes, will give Rotary members





## Frequently asked questions

### What is a program of scale?

The Rotary Foundation has introduced a competitive \$2 million grant to provide Rotary members with resources to implement large-scale, high-impact programs in Rotary's areas of focus while fostering policy development and sustainable programs. The grant will invest in promising, locally led interventions that have already demonstrated success. Throughout the life of the grant (three to five years), Rotary members must work with an implementing partner and be prepared to document the program's success.

### Why is the Foundation now awarding a \$2 million grant?

To increase our impact. Through this grant, the Foundation will support high-quality, member-led programs that have proven outcomes. Lessons learned will be shared with clubs and districts everywhere to further strengthen our service projects.

### What are the attributes of a strong implementing partner?

Implementing partners must have expertise, experience, and program management systems, and must be an active participant in carrying out program activities. Implementing partners may be international or local NGOs, government entities, private sector organizations, or other Rotary entities, such as Rotary Community Corps or Rotary Action Groups. A program may have more than one implementing partner.

### Why is an implementing partner required?

Ideally, implementing partners will add value to the program by complementing the strengths of the Rotary members involved. Having a strong relationship with an adept and experienced

implementing partner is critical. Also, in the first round of the Programs of Scale process, the Foundation encouraged co-funding from philanthropic, private, and other sources. Co-funding can help increase the number of beneficiaries as well as demonstrate the partner's strong commitment to the program's success. Though co-funding is now required, it does not have to come from the implementing partner.

### What is Rotary's role in a program of scale?

Rotary members have a unique role as trusted community members and neighbors, as well as leaders who are globally connected and who are committed to positive change. Whether Rotarians assume technical, programmatic, or advocacy leadership roles, applicants should demonstrate why Rotary members' active engagement is essential to the program's success.

### What type of project has the best chance of being awarded a Programs of Scale grant?

The successful proposal will outline a longer-term project that:

- Is evidence-based and can already demonstrate success.
- Is locally relevant to the intended beneficiaries.
- Is ready to grow because it has the right stakeholders and systems in place.
- Monitors, evaluates, and shares data.
- Employs the unique strengths of Rotary.

### Who reviews the applications?

All completed concepts and applications go through a rigorous review by members of The Rotary Foundation Cadre of Technical Advisers, Rotary staff, and other experts. More than 25 Rotary members and staff contributed to the review and selection process for the first Programs of Scale award.

the chance to come up with ideas they can demonstrate will have a sustainable impact and bring partners to the table.

Another lesson is about deploying Rotary's power of networks. Rotarians around the world have used their connections — local, national, and international — to draw attention to and garner support for polio eradication.

Cooley, the development consultant, says he's fascinated by Rotary's potential to scale up projects. "These are the most prominently placed people in a community, all of whom are trying to do something good," he says. "Look at Rotary as an asset. There are lots of problems Rotary could make a big difference on."

The new Programs of Scale grants will give Rotarians a way to do it.

### HAVE A QUESTION?

Send it to [programsofscale@rotary.org](mailto:programsofscale@rotary.org). Learn more about Programs of Scale grants at [rotary.org/programsofscale](http://rotary.org/programsofscale).



## Why was Partners for a Malaria-Free Zambia awarded the first \$2 million grant?

A number of factors contributed to the success of this proposal. Among them are that the program:

- ▶ Is expanding on an innovation that is backed by clear evidence and has worked in the past.
- ▶ Has a high likelihood of working on a larger scale.
- ▶ Is logically organized and grounded in experience.
- ▶ Has partners that have the experience, trust, and strong respect needed to successfully scale up the program with Rotary.
- ▶ Has co-funders — the Gates Foundation and World Vision U.S. — with the ability and desire to support the program with Rotary.
- ▶ Is set up for sustainability and aligned with government efforts.
- ▶ Has clear indicators of program success and systems set up to measure them.
- ▶ Has strong demand; malaria is a leading cause of death in Zambia.
- ▶ Allows Rotary members to interact with the program by volunteering, raising money, mobilizing communities, and conducting national-level advocacy work.
- ▶ Has the potential to expand further to combat malaria across Africa.

## Rotary members expand on a proven concept in Zambia

**B**ill Feldt recalls the first conversation he had about solving Zambia’s malaria problem at scale. It was in 2012, after he worked on his first matching grant for malaria with Mwangala Muyendekwa, a physician and a member of the Rotary Club of Kalulushi, Zambia. It was a \$57,000 project distributing 6,500 bed nets in Zambia’s Copperbelt province. “By the time they were distributing those nets, Mwangala emailed me and said, ‘This is good, but not sufficient. We’ve got to go to scale,’” recalls Feldt, a member of the Rotary Club of Federal Way in Washington state.

Now Muyendekwa’s vision is coming to fruition in a big way as the work, which has continued since then, expands. With this first \$2 million Programs of Scale grant, Partners for a Malaria-Free Zambia (as the initiative is now known) is seeking to help reduce the incidence of malaria over time by 90 percent in 10 heavily affected districts in the Central and Muchinga provinces.

They’ll do this by training 2,500 community health workers, as well as other health facility staff and officials who will work with them. The community health workers, equipped with the necessary medicine and supplies, will respond to malaria cases, work to prevent transmission, and provide other needed health care interventions — which will in turn reduce the burden on clinics.

Malaria, a preventable disease caused by parasites spread through the bites of infected mosquitoes, continues to be one of Zambia’s leading causes of illness and death, contributing significantly to infant and maternal mortality.

The grant proposal included pledges from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and World Vision U.S. to match Rotary’s \$2 million grant, for a total of \$6 million for the initiative. “Rotary’s credibility is so amazing,” Feldt says. “We’ve got a lot to offer. Let’s demonstrate that.”

We asked Feldt for his insights about the application process and about the project.



## What makes this project a program of scale?

It's expanding on a proven concept, which I think is really important and was compelling to Rotary in awarding this grant. We'll be impacting about 1.3 million Zambians who will have health care in their communities for the first time. That means testing for, treating, and preventing malaria, and that also means treating diarrhea and pneumonia as well as providing information about COVID-19. We think that's a program of scale. We're very excited about that.

## How does this grow out of previous work Rotarians have done?

We've written three global grants in the past two years. When the third grant project is complete, we will have trained more than 1,500 community health workers in the Copperbelt province. That gave us credibility with The Rotary Foundation. We think we're pretty good at it. What we're really doing is supporting the government in Zambia, which has a superb six-day training curriculum. There are about 12,000 community health workers trained under the auspices of the Ministry of Health. With the global grants and Programs of Scale grant, we are adding about 33 percent more.

## How did you adapt what you learned in previous projects?

We're going into areas where there are no community health workers. Once the new workers are trained, doctors and nurses need to learn how to interact with them. We're paying for some of those strengthening activities in the global grants and now even more with the Programs of Scale grant because we've learned that's such a vital component of sustainability. Another thing we've learned is that the best community health workers are people who are established in their communities. They aren't getting paid. It's really about prestige. A study concluded that people do this because it's a good thing to do, and it makes them a leader.

## Why is this the right program to tackle malaria in Zambia?

Not just Zambia. Sub-Saharan Africa too. One key success factor is that there is a supportive, committed government in

Zambia. If the government isn't committed, it's going to go nowhere. One of our project partners, an organization called PATH — which is based in Seattle and receives funding from the Gates Foundation — supported the Zambian Ministry of Health and the National Malaria Elimination Centre in the launch of the government's community health worker initiative. This is a concept that UNICEF and the World Health Organization have been defining and encouraging. Between 2012 and 2015, the Ministry of Health and the National Malaria Elimination Centre, with support from PATH, did its first real project in the Southern province of Zambia, and they drove malaria rates down to near zero using community health workers. That's really the proof of concept. The model seems to work, the government is committed, and obviously the Gates Foundation thinks it's a good model because it's been supporting the PATH program in Zambia for nearly a decade.

## What advice do you have for Rotarians looking for partners?

Make organizations aware of what you're doing. Connecting is the whole game. I think that's what Rotary wants to do through Programs of Scale. In Africa, and all over the world, local Rotarians can open doors through their connections. My view is that we have a leg up on a lot of people looking for money because of what Rotary has done with polio. It is central to our credibility.

## If we visit the project in 2026, what should we see?

I would hope we would see a dramatic reduction in malaria incidence. We'd want to see a self-sustaining health system that is fully utilizing community health workers, where they are diagnosing 60 to 70 percent of whatever small number of cases of malaria there are. They will probably be working on pneumonia and diarrheal diseases more than they had been. Hopefully, they'll be doing telemedicine. We'll see that turnover for community health workers is low and that there's retraining. They'll have been retrained twice by that time, and they'll be a core part of the health system. They will represent the last kilometer of a health system that's very successful.



## READY TO SCALE UP?

If your club is interested in applying for the next Programs of Scale grant, start by asking the following questions:

1. Is your club or district project successful — and is that assessment based on strong evidence?
2. Does it solve a problem for the target population?
3. Is there a clear and logical implementation plan that can be scaled up?
4. Does the implementing partner have the ability and leadership to deliver a larger program over several years?
5. Are all stakeholders committed?

The next round of applications will be accepted starting in June. To apply, visit [rotary.org/programsofscale](https://rotary.org/programsofscale).

### KEY DATES

- June:**  
Grant competition launch
- August:**  
Concept notes due
- October:**  
Invitation to submit a full proposal
- February 2022:**  
Site visits (virtual and/or in-person)
- April 2022:**  
Award decision

# THE TOP PROJECTS

What stood out about the top five applicants?  
We annotated their proposals with  
feedback from the selection committee

## PROGRAMS OF SCALE GRANT AWARDEE

### Partners for a Malaria-Free Zambia

This program impressed the committee because of its experienced partners and incredible funding. It won the grant because of the strong involvement of local Rotarians and the participation of the local government.

**Area of focus:** Disease prevention and treatment

**Proposal:** To reduce the incidence of malaria by training 2,500 community health workers along with health facility staff and officials. The community health workers will respond to malaria cases, help prevent transmission, and provide other health care, thereby reducing the burden on local health clinics.

**Location:** Zambia

**Rotary role:** Malaria Partners Zambia will co-implement the program with World Vision Zambia. The **Rotary Club of Federal Way, Washington**, will serve as the sponsor club, while the **Rotary clubs of Kabwe, Lusaka, Mansa, Ndola, Ndola Kafubu, and Nkwazi, Zambia**, will provide support.

**Primary partners:** The \$2 million Programs of Scale grant award will be matched by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and World Vision U.S., in line with their commitment to fighting malaria, for a total of \$6 million in funding. Other partners include the **Zambian National Malaria Elimination Centre**, the **PATH Malaria Control and Elimination Partnership in Africa**, and **Malaria Partners International**.

**Expected outcome:** To help reduce the incidence of malaria over five years by 90 percent in 10 target districts in Zambia and bring health care closer to home for 1.3 million Zambians.



# “ROTARIANS BRING UNPARALLELED ENERGY AND DEDICATION TO GLOBAL HEALTH CHALLENGES.”

— Philip Welkhoff, director of the malaria program at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation



FINALIST

## Every Child Learning Well

This application stood out because the Pratham Education Foundation is an excellent partner with methods that are data-driven and proven to improve literacy and numeracy within a short time.

**Area of focus:** Basic education and literacy

**Proposal:** To improve education quality by bringing Pratham’s internationally recognized Teaching at the Right Level literacy and numeracy program to 1,500 primary schools and improve the fundamental skills of 200,000 students between the ages of six and 12.

**Location:** Jalna district, Maharashtra, India

**Rotary role:** Members of the **Rotary Club of Pune Pride** are the main sponsors of this proposal, with support from

**five Rotary clubs in Jalna.** Members in Jalna would ensure that the programs run smoothly and receive community recognition. In addition to providing funding and oversight, Rotary and Rotaract members would volunteer directly with the program and work to improve the local education system.

**Primary partner:** Pratham is one of the largest nongovernmental organizations in India. Its programs aim to improve the quality of education across the country by working directly with children as well as the government.

**Expected outcome:** To improve the reading and writing levels of at least 80 percent of participating students.

**Sustainability tip:** This program is simple enough that teachers should not have trouble continuing it beyond the life of the grant.

# “PATH IS VERY PLEASED TO AGAIN PARTNER WITH ROTARY AS TOGETHER WE CONTINUE TO PURSUE A MALARIA-FREE FUTURE.”

— Nanthalile Mugala, chief of Africa region at the PATH Malaria Control and Elimination Partnership in Africa and a member of the Rotary Club of Lusaka Metro, Zambia

## Save to Grow 2.0

The Aga Khan Foundation is a strong partner because it is already working in many parts of Tanzania. It has 43 staff members in the country, over half of whom work on either developing agricultural markets or supporting savings groups.

**Area of focus:** Community economic development

**Proposal:** To promote the creation of shared-interest savings groups, in which members learn to use digital platforms to save money, make loans to one another, and receive payments. The participants, primarily women and young people in rural and peri-urban areas, would also learn smart farming practices and receive coaching on how to expand their agriculturally based businesses. Ultimately, the groups will self-govern.

**Location:** Northern Tanzania

**Rotary role:** The **Rotary Club of Bainbridge Island, Washington**, is the sponsor

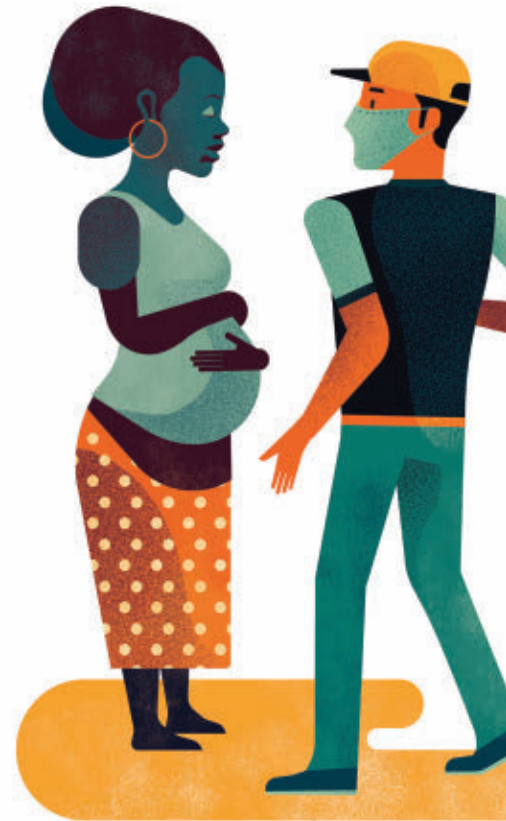
club, with support from the **Rotary Club of Poulsbo-North Kitsap, Washington**, and the **Rotary clubs of Arusha, Arusha West Side, and Usa River, Tanzania**.

Members would spearhead raising financial support, conduct program oversight, and serve as program participant mentors.

**Primary partner:** The Aga Khan Foundation would implement the program and manage the technical aspects, including partnerships with digital banking services and support for the entrepreneurs.

**Expected outcome:** To improve the economic well-being of 24,000 smallholder farmers and 240 entrepreneurs — particularly women and young people — through the creation and strengthening of 1,600 shared-interest savings groups, agricultural training, and entrepreneurship support.

**Innovation tip:** This proposal brings digital financial services to remote areas by making use of the proliferation of cellphones.



**“WHEN WE BRING  
IMPACT-FOCUSED  
ORGANIZATIONS  
TOGETHER, WE CAN  
DO MORE TO HELP  
THE WORLD’S MOST  
VULNERABLE REACH  
THEIR POTENTIAL.”**

— Edgar Sandoval Sr.,  
president and CEO of World Vision U.S.

## Sustainable Improvement of Reproductive, Maternal, and Child Health

Rotarian leadership of this program is very strong. Building on Nigeria's success in the polio eradication campaign, Rotary members are connected to leaders at the highest levels of the country's health infrastructure. Rotary is trusted and is therefore able to deliver important, sometimes difficult, messages about maternal health — such as the health benefits of child spacing.

**Area of focus:** Maternal and child health

**Proposal:** To improve maternal health and family planning services while strengthening systems at the national, state, and local levels; increase demand for maternal care and family planning services by educating community members about their benefits; and train health care workers to track data on maternal and neonatal deaths so interventions can be tailored to specific needs.

**Location:** Nigeria

**Rotary role:** This program is sponsored by **Rotary District 1860 (Germany)** in partnership with **Rotary District 9125 (Nigeria)** and the **Rotary Action Group for Reproductive, Maternal, and Child Health**. Rotarians in Nigeria coordinate project activities, oversee training, lead advocacy efforts, and engage with the government. Members in Germany lend their technical and administrative expertise to support management, monitoring, and evaluation.

**Primary partners:** Nigeria's federal and state ministries of health and the Population Council.

**Expected outcome:** To increase the number of pregnant women, new mothers, and children who have access to improved maternal and child health services, and improve support for men and women who are interested in family planning.

## Infrastructure Improvements to Water Systems, Helping Communities and Schools

This program stood out because it works to strengthen the public sector — a key element of any sustainable program.

**Area of focus:** Water, sanitation, and hygiene

**Proposal:** To provide an improved and sustainable water supply to more than 100,000 people, along with water systems, bathroom facilities, and septic systems that meet UNICEF standards for 30 schools serving 6,000 students and 400 teachers.

**Location:** Bonito Oriental, Sabá, and Tocoa municipalities, Honduras

**Rotary role:** The **Rotary Club of Con-**

**cord, California**, would provide overall program management and guidance. Members of the **Rotary Club of Tocoa, Honduras**, would assist with data collection, maintain communication with local governing entities, review data, and solve problems as needed.

**Primary partner:** Water Mission, an engineering nonprofit that builds water, sanitation, and hygiene solutions, would be the implementing partner.

**Expected outcome:** To provide 100,000 Hondurans with clean water and 30 schools with improved water and sanitation facilities. ■



**AS CHAIR EMERITUS** of the Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Rotary Action Group, Ron Denham has listened to his share of presentations about water projects. “Rotarians love to talk about their success,” Denham says. But it is often more worthwhile, he suggests, to reflect on initiatives that were less than a complete success, particularly in an area of focus in which Rotary has spent more than \$127 million since 2014. “We’ve tried to change the dialogue,” he says. “I prefer to ask: What did we learn?”

Project failures can stem from mechanical malfunctions, of course, since wells, pumps, filters, and pipelines range in sophistication, as does the level of technical expertise required to operate them. But to hear it from Denham and other Rotarians who have decades of experience with water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) projects, human interaction — including a basic communication of expectations and responsibilities — can be the biggest challenge. Insisting on community engagement and inclusion

in the decision-making process, or the failure to do so, can make or break a project.

“A general lesson overall is that when Rotarians introduce some form of technology, even something as simple as a borehole, a biosand filter, or a pump, we don’t put enough emphasis on training the people as we should,” Denham says. “It is relatively easy to raise money to dig a well. You should be spending as much to build capacity. It is essential to have the community in from the beginning of the discussion.”

We talked to Rotarian WASH experts who shared their stumbles and the lessons they’ve learned, many of which were originally discussed at a breakout session at the 2020 Rotary Virtual Convention. “As an engineer, I’d like to tell you that the problems are technical and that as engineers we can solve them,” says Mike Paddock, a member of the Rotary Club of Milwaukee. “But the reality is that the sustainability of these systems depends on people. There’s no user manual for humans, and life gets in the way.”

**Making a mistake isn’t the end of the world if it becomes a learning experience. Here are lessons from four water, sanitation, and hygiene projects — and five tips for your project’s future success**

T R I A L & E R R O R





## Expert input

**WHEN A GOVERNMENT-FUNDED GIRLS SCHOOL** serving 1,400 low-income students asked the Rotary Club of Hyderabad Deccan, India, to upgrade the school's restroom facilities, Rotarians enthusiastically embraced the idea. "Two functioning toilets were simply not enough," says Uday Pilani, who was club president in 2018-19 when the request came. "Girls had to queue up or go to some nearby place." Because of the lack of facilities, many girls missed classes while they were menstruating.

Rotarians spent nearly \$30,000 to install 23 toilets, 10 hand-washing stations, and a sanitary pad disposal bin and dispensing station; upgrade electrical wiring and lighting; and renovate the computer lab. Once the club placed an overhead tank to supply borehole water to the toilets, everything seemed to be in place.

"The moment we realized that we had goofed up was crazy," recalls Pilani, who recently became a charter member of the Rotary Club of Lake District Moinabad. "After having spent a considerable amount of money digging the trenches and laying the evacuation pipeline, we realized that the main sewer was at a higher height, and hence the refuse could not flow toward it." A club member who had volunteered to

make periodic campus visits to review progress was apoplectic. "He realized quite late that it was impossible for the sewage to go to the municipal lines," says Pilani, who distinctly recalls an angry phone call, followed in short order by a board meeting with equally piquant language. "The board members just kind of looked at each other, realizing that we — so-called businessmen running large enterprises — should have hired professional engineers."

Over three more months, the club spent an additional \$5,000 "to build the biggest sump that anyone has ever built," Pilani says. "We reviewed the whole thing properly, got some experts to make sure there were no more goof-ups, and got it completed in a very thorough manner."

### MISTAKE

The club did not hire a professional engineer.

### LESSON

Smart club leaders don't always know everything. "Rotarians should ask questions, inquire, ascertain, cross-check things," says Pilani. "These may sound like simple tasks, but a lot of us do not do them."

The Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Rotary Action Group is hosting a Virtual World Water Summit on 3-4 June. Find out more at [wash-rag.org](http://wash-rag.org).

# Long-term commitment

**OVER THE COURSE OF 15 YEARS** beginning in 1989, Neil Van Dine helped construct 1,000 wells in Haiti, founding the organization Haiti Outreach along the way. Then Van Dine commissioned a survey to determine how many of those wells were still working. “I was shocked to learn that half of them were broken,” he says. “Here I am, 15 years in, thinking, what a loss.”

Van Dine, a member of the Rotary E-Club of WASH, D9980, and his organization learned from the failures, eventually recognizing that the problems were managerial, rather than technical. “We worked with the communities to create a business plan. They have a budget, they have so many subscribers,” he says. “We went from half of the wells not working to 90 percent of them functional.”

Failure, says Van Dine, can provide a valuable blueprint. He has a favorite example. In 1997 he designed a water supply system for the residents of Bohoc, a long, bumpy ride north of Port-au-Prince. “We were going to do this whole community participation thing,” he recalls. Basically, anything that the community could provide — such as rocks, sand, and labor — would be its responsibility. Everything else would come from Haiti Outreach.

The scene that unfolded in the initial months of the two-year project might have been worthy of a movie epic, an all-hands assembly-line tableau. On the first day, 200 people showed up to work. “The next day we had 400 people, the next 500, then 600,” Van Dine says. “Hauling rock, hauling sand, digging ditches, carrying pipe, you name it. It was incredible. It was amazing how this community came together to build a water system for themselves.”

The glow was short-lived. “Within a week they were struggling to manage it,” Van Dine says. Those who worked on the system didn’t think they should have to pay for the water. Since more than 90 percent of households had worked on it, the result was a costly misadventure. “The water system failed within three years and now, over 20 years later, very little of the original structure remains,” Van Dine says. “That insight led us to think we had to change the program.”

## **MISTAKE**

The error was in making short-term fixes rather than taking a long-term approach with projects.

## **LESSON**

It’s important to help communities understand that their commitment to clean water is not a one-off responsibility, even if they made a significant initial contribution.



# Clarity on costs

**FEW OBSTACLES SURPRISE** Mike Paddock, a veteran of dozens of water projects across five continents with Rotary and Engineers Without Borders. He recalls a proposal for an eight-community water distribution project in Quiché department, northwest of Guatemala City, where most residents were fetching water from surface waters or streams. Through a \$225,000 joint project of Paddock's Rotary Club of Milwaukee and the local Rotary Club of Guatemala Vista Hermosa, the water would be treated with a slow sand filter and chlorinated for delivery along an 8-mile conduction line.

But when Paddock visited to conduct a needs assessment before the start of the project, he was in for a surprise: The site already had a functioning water system. "As I looked up on the mountain, here was a huge, elevated storage tank," Paddock says. "Then I also found a wonderfully drilled well and a diesel-powered generator to pump the water." They were the remnants of a five-year-old, \$350,000 system that had been developed by the municipal government but abandoned within a year of its completion. The reason? The cost of diesel fuel to power the generator was about 30 percent of the average household income.

"That kicked off what I call the WASH death spiral," says Paddock. Households exited the system, and those defections drove up maintenance costs for the remaining participants; the system collapsed when costs finally became prohibitive.

That all might have been easily avoided. As Paddock points out, an economic study in the preliminary stages of the well project would have identified the cost of fuel as a major obstacle to success.

But Paddock was able to put a stopper in the "WASH death spiral." As he studied the diesel generator, he spotted a recently installed power line some 660 feet from the well. Rather than carrying out the proposed \$225,000 project, Rotarians suggested to the community the more sustainable solution of using the grid to provide the electricity to power the existing water system. With \$7,500 raised from the sale of the generator, the community tapped into the grid at a cost 70 percent lower than fuel. In the end, the clubs did not need to provide any funds, only technical support on the grid connection.

## MISTAKE

Payment collection, or the lack thereof, ranks among the biggest challenges to sustainability, notes Paddock, the author of *Bridging Barriers*, a book about his experiences in the WASH arena. In this case, the ability of families to cover the expense of sustaining the systems had not been considered.

## LESSON

Communicate the cost before the project gets underway. Resist the temptation of thinking you'll figure it out later, says Paddock. "Sometimes it doesn't get figured out and you can't afford the system."



# Community buy-in

**REMBA ISLAND, A SCRUBBY** and shanty-dotted locale in Lake Victoria on Kenya's border with Uganda, is a case study in water and sanitation chaos. Fishermen and the small vendors serving them come from all over Africa, lured by the plentiful catch. But with only two simple pit toilets for public use on the island, open defecation was rife. Rainfall sent that sludge and refuse into the lake, which was also used for cleaning fish and washing clothes and utensils.

Rotarians began working with another nongovernmental organization in 2012 to install filters to turn lake water contaminated with *E. coli* into potable water. The water was then metered and sold to the inhabitants. While those filters were widely hailed, community reaction to the second step of the initiative — the installation of 29 toilets to address the sanitation woes — was another story.

After struggling to manage the removal of waste from the toilets, which filled up in one-third the time expected, the local WASH committee redesigned the toilets and introduced a fee, equivalent to about 5 cents per use, to help pay the workers tasked with cleaning them. "Families could not afford this for every member," says Deurence Onyango, a Rotarian who went on to spearhead the formation of the Rotary Club of Kisumu Mashariki, Kenya. A significant portion of the transient population also came to see the toilets as

a luxury. "For cultural reasons, somebody would pay for water but not pay for the call of nature," she says. As a result, toilet revenues were low compared with expenditures.

Project designers should have promoted the toilets as the natural companion to the water system, which had widespread appeal, Onyango says. "Institutional support is central to success." Complicating the effort was a change in leadership among the island's authorities midway through the initiative. To strengthen the fishing community's support of the effort, those implementing the project eventually brought the most influential leader on the island on board and educated residents about the benefits of using the toilets.

## MISTAKE

Education and support on the need for toilets were lacking.

## LESSON

"Assumed ownership is not ownership," says Onyango. Communicate with all stakeholders. "Each component must be well explained to the community, so they have that buy-in." ■

*Brad Webber is a frequent contributor to Rotary magazine.*

## TIPS FOR WASH SUCCESS

"We all want to have that wonderful photo of the water flowing and the little girl drinking the water," says Mike Paddock. "The real test is how things are working five and 10 years from now." Here are five tips that will help ensure your project passes that test.

**Suggest flexibility in rates:** Inflation can erode the financial stability of any project. Encourage WASH committees to allow fee increases to account for it and to inform subscribers about the fee structure.

**Recruit respected leaders:** The most influential people in the community should be rallied to the cause.

**Make maps of your projects and store them securely:** It might seem like a small matter, but documents are easily misplaced, considering the turnover of personnel overseeing systems of buried pipes that can last for decades, says Braimah Apambire of the Rotary Club of Reno, Nevada, and the director of the Center for International Water and Sustainability at the Desert Research Institute. "If 10 years down the road people don't know where the pipes are, you have a problem," he says.

**Meter up:** Many water meters accommodate pay-as-you-go accounts, linked through cell-phones. They're also increasingly affordable, with some home

units costing \$30. The concept is particularly popular in the developing countries where WASH improvements are most needed.

**Keep in touch:** Your project may be over, but your work hasn't ended. Nancy Gilbert of the Rotary E-Club of WASH, D9980, recalls visiting a project in Nigeria and discovering the toilets and water system had stopped working a few months after installation. "The school never reached out to the club, and the club never checked back," she says. "Four years later, the system was in disrepair and the students had not benefited from the time and money invested. Lesson learned? Keep in touch and implement a plan for monitoring."



by VANESSA GLAVINSKAS

# Rotary's

**7 ORGANIZATIONS**

# hidden influence

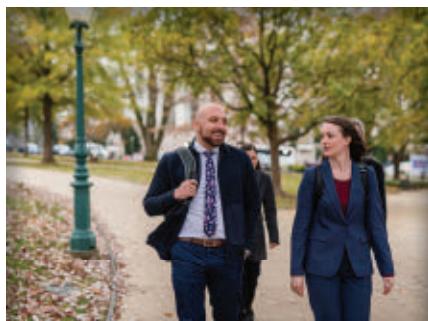


**THAT GOT  
THEIR START  
BECAUSE  
OF ROTARY**

Rotary's positive influence on the world extends far beyond its members and its clubs. From medical missions to disaster relief to combating climate change, Rotary plays a role in a vast array of initiatives that help humanity. The reach and impact of Rotary's work are a testament to Rotary members' leadership, passion, and drive to help others.



On the following pages, we look at some organizations that have grown out of a Rotary project or an individual member's incredible commitment to a cause. These entities are well known — but their roots in Rotary might not be.



# Easterseals

In 1907, a teenager named Homer Allen was critically injured in a streetcar accident in Elyria, Ohio. There was no real hospital in Elyria, and Homer — who was reported to have lost both his legs — died after being unable to get the medical care he needed. “He might have lived if there had been a hospital,” says Mark King, a current member of the Rotary Club of Elyria. The young man’s grief-stricken father, Edgar Allen, sold his business, the Cleveland Cedar Co., and devoted himself to raising the money to build a hospital in his town.

Elyria Memorial Hospital opened in 1908. Through his continued involvement with the hospital, Allen learned that children with disabilities, including polio, often didn’t receive adequate services and were kept hidden away at home. He dedicated the rest of his life to creating community-based services for those children. Allen also raised funds to provide a setting where they could attend school while in treatment. In 1919, he joined the Rotary Club of Elyria, which had been chartered a year earlier, and with the sup-

port of his fellow Rotarians, he founded what became known as the International Society for Crippled Children. Rotary founder Paul Harris served as the organization’s first chair, and it received The Rotary Foundation’s first grant.

Today, that organization is called Easterseals, and it helps 1.5 million people each year through its community-based network and its global partners. “Easterseals serves as an indispensable resource for individuals living with disabilities, veterans, seniors, their families, and their communities,” says Angela F. Williams, Easterseals president and CEO. The organization’s services include early intervention, inclusive child care, medical rehabilitation, behavioral health services, workforce development programs, transportation, adult day services, caregiver support, and camping and recreation.

Easterseals led support for the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act, which became law in 1990, and it continues to advocate for the rights of people with disabilities. Many Rotary members support Easterseals as volun-



teers, donors, and community partners, and the organization is still driven by the purpose that inspired Edgar Allen: to change the way the world views disability.

## DID YOU KNOW?

- In 1930, Paul Harris and Edgar Allen drew up “The Crippled Children’s Bill of Rights,” which led to the first federal funding for children’s services in the United States, written into the Social Security Act in 1935.
- Easter Seals Ontario, which was modeled on Allen’s organization, was also founded by a group of Rotarians, from the Chatham, Hamilton, Kitchener, London, Stratford, Toronto, and Windsor clubs.

Learn more at [easterseals.com](http://easterseals.com).

# ShelterBox

Last year, ShelterBox celebrated its 20th anniversary. What started as a project of the Rotary Club of Helston-Lizard, England, marked this milestone as an internationally recognized disaster relief organization.

“The initial aim was to provide disaster victims with quality equipment to enable them to survive and rebuild their lives,” explains James Kingston, one of the members of the Rotary Club of Helston-Lizard who were active in getting ShelterBox off the ground; he later served as a trustee for the organization. “Some members thought that if we helped eight to 10 families a year, we would be doing well.” ShelterBox has now assisted 1.7 million people worldwide.

The original box contained a 10-person tent, 10 sleeping bags, a folding trenching tool, water purification tablets, cooking utensils, a bucket, rope, and a flashlight. Today, the contents vary depending on needs. “We learned very quickly that each disaster is different,” says Kingston. “It is really important to spend time talking to affected families to provide

the right support at the right time.”

Sometimes family-size tents provide a solution until people can start rebuilding their homes. After other disasters, heavy-duty tarpaulins, ropes, and nails are needed to repair damaged buildings. “But it is not just about the physical aid,” says Kingston. “ShelterBox provides the emergency shelter, essential items, and training needed to support families in the long process of rebuilding their lives.”

Since 2012, ShelterBox has been Rotary’s official disaster relief partner. The organization’s link to Rotary enhances its ability to provide help in hard-to-reach places — during a crisis, nearby club members often provide local contacts and logistical support. “Rotary is truly in the DNA of everything we do,” says ShelterBox CEO Sanj Srikanthan.

## DID YOU KNOW?

ShelterBox’s longest-running response is in Syria, where the organization has been providing aid since 2012.

Learn more at [shelterbox.org](http://shelterbox.org).





## THE ROTARY FOUNDATION IS YOUR FOUNDATION

Not everyone can start their own nonprofit. But anyone can make a gift to The Rotary Foundation, which funds projects in Rotary's seven areas of focus. Visit [rotary.org/donate](https://rotary.org/donate) to learn more and to make a contribution.

# Little Free Library

**As Todd Bol was doing a renovation project** at his home in Wisconsin in 2009, an idea came to him. His late mother, June Bol, had been a schoolteacher who loved to read, so he took some scrap wood and, after a few days of hammering and painting, mounted what resembled a tiny schoolhouse filled with books on a post in his front yard, along with a sign that said “Free books.”

Bol, who joined the Rotary Club of Hudson in 2012, soon started getting requests to build more of his little libraries. When demand outpaced his ability to fill the orders, he hired a carpenter and shared his design online. In 2012, he launched Little Free Library as a nonprofit.

Today, you can find little libraries around the globe. There's a Little Free Library inside Hampton Roads Regional Jail in Virginia. In the Kyangwali Refugee Settlement in Uganda, a Little Free Library is one of the few sources of books for the people who live there. North of the Arctic Circle in Finland, a Little Free Library boasts books in Finnish, English, and Chinese.

Rotary clubs have embraced the idea because of its focus on literacy — and also because the tiny libraries help bring people together.

“I live on a street out in the country

just west of Minneapolis,” says Catherine Smith, a member of the Rotary Club of Cultural Exchange Enthusiasts (D5960). “I've loved having the library, as it has helped me continue to get to know my neighbors. During the pandemic, I added jigsaw puzzles for people to exchange.”

Members and clubs alike began building libraries in communities large and small, making Little Free Library a testament to the power of Rotary's network when armed with a simple, effective idea that's easy to replicate. “The cost is minimal to get started, the opportunity for branding and having fun decorating is fantastic, and the libraries are an ongoing community project,” says Smith.

Bol died in 2018, but his movement to spread his love of books and of community is still going strong.

### DID YOU KNOW?

- Studies link exposure to books with better literacy rates, but more than 60 percent of poor children in the United States have no age-appropriate books at home.
- Through the Impact Library Program, Little Free Library provides free books in communities where books are scarce.

Learn more at [littlefreelibrary.org](https://littlefreelibrary.org).

# Aquabox

**One day about three decades ago**, two members of the Rotary Club of Wirksworth, England, were chatting about their club's international service work at a backyard get-together. "One said that providing aid like blankets and clothes to disaster areas around the world was great, but it would be really good if our club could supply clean water, because without water, after about a day or two, you're in quite a bad way," explains Roger Cassidy, a member of the Wirksworth club. In some cases, more people die in the aftermath of a disaster because of waterborne pathogens than from the disaster itself.

The two men — Peter Hare and Mike Hoole — took the idea to their club in 1991, and the other members embraced it. Soon after, Aquabox was born.

Despite the initial enthusiasm, the club ran into problems right away. The water filter that members had chosen and shipped to disaster zones relied on chlorine tablets to purify the water and left a strong chemical taste. As a result, families often didn't use the filters, but continued to take their chances drinking water from rivers or other contaminated sources.

Club members turned to John Griffith, a member of the Rotary Club of Cleadon & District. "He's a brilliant engineer and scientist," says Cassidy, who is chair of trustees for Aquabox. Griffith developed a filter that relies on

pressure and doesn't need chlorine, but it was quite large. Knowing the filters would need to be shipped to remote areas, the club asked Griffith if he could make it smaller.

Griffith was able to scale down the filter, which relies on a membrane composed of small tubes with microscopic holes. When water flows up the tubes, the holes allow water to pass through but block dirt and pathogens. The filters are operated via a hand pump and don't require electricity. They last for years, are sustainable, and are an environmentally friendly alternative to shipping bottled water. They are also small enough to fit inside Aquabox's emergency aid boxes.

"The advantage of our filter is that it provides instant access to clean water," says Roz Adamson, a member of the Rotary Club of Bakewell, England, and an Aquabox trustee.

Aquabox has distributed more than 110,000 boxes to date, helping hundreds of thousands of people in more than 50 countries. Griffith also distributes the filter he invented to other aid organizations through his own nonprofit, Grifaid.

## DID YOU KNOW?

In 2016, Aquabox received the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service at Buckingham Palace.

Learn more at [aquabox.org](http://aquabox.org).

## WATER PROJECTS EVERYWHERE

A number of Rotarian-founded entities focus on water. They include:

► **Pure Water for the World**, which grew out of a project by the Rotary Club of Brattleboro, Vermont, and is now a nongovernmental organization working in Haiti and Central America.

► **Global WaSH**, which was founded by Isis Mejias, a member of the Rotary E-Club of Houston, and helps provide safe access to water and sanitation.

► **Wasser ohne Grenzen (Water Without Borders)**, a German nonprofit that was co-founded by Peter Fritz, a member of the Rotary Club of Leipzig, and focuses on supplying drinking water and treating waste in rural areas of developing countries.

► **Water Survival Box**, an initiative of the Rotary Club of Chelwood Bridge, England, that also provides disaster survivors with the filter developed by Rotarian John Griffith, along with other essential items.





## EVEN THE UNITED NATIONS HAS ROTARY ROOTS

Rotary played a leadership role in the San Francisco Conference that formed the United Nations in 1945 and continues to hold consultative status with the organization. Read more at [rotary.org/history-rotary-and-united-nations](https://www.rotary.org/history-rotary-and-united-nations).

# Citizens' Climate Lobby

In 2006, Marshall Saunders, a longtime member of the Rotary Club of Coronado, California, went to see former U.S. Vice President Al Gore's film *An Inconvenient Truth*. A week later, he watched it a second time. Then a third. Saunders, who had been dedicating his time and money to humanitarian efforts, realized that all his work would be for nothing if no one tackled the existential threat of climate change.

Saunders began giving talks on the climate crisis at Rotary clubs, schools, churches, retirement homes — anywhere he could get an invitation. After one presentation, a woman asked him what should be done. He responded: "What's needed is thousands of ordinary people organized, lobbying their members of Congress with one voice, one message — and lobbying in a relentless, unstoppable, yet friendly and respectful way."

"Why don't you do that?" the woman asked.

Inspired, Saunders started the Citizens' Climate Lobby. As CCL became more organized, members began lobbying for an idea called "carbon fee and dividend," which proposes a fee imposed on suppliers that starts at \$15 per metric ton of emitted greenhouse gas and increases every year. The collected fees are then paid directly to consumers to offset higher fuel costs. The goal is to encourage the adoption of clean energy technologies through market forces.

Saunders died in late 2019. Earlier that year, in a conversation with this

magazine, he said he was optimistic about carbon fee and dividend, calling it "a solution that was a match for the problem."

The Citizens' Climate Lobby now has almost 200,000 supporters — including many Rotary members — and their congenial, bipartisan approach consistently wins over lawmakers. John Delaney, a former U.S. representative from Maryland, called the Citizens' Climate Lobby "the most effective and enjoyable group of people that I've ever dealt with since I've been on the Hill." As the new U.S. Congress convened in January, CCL's executive director, Mark Reynolds, said, "We are looking forward to a quick reintroduction of the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act."

Scott Leckman is a past governor of District 5420 and a member of The Rotary Foundation Cadre of Technical Advisers, as well as a member of the governing board of Citizens' Climate Education, CCL's sister organization. "What I love about Rotarians is that they are willing to tackle the biggest problems facing humankind. Our changing climate is certainly one of them," he says. "With CCL, they will learn how to advocate for a bipartisan solution for climate change."

### DID YOU KNOW?

The years 2014 to 2020 are the seven warmest on record.

Learn more at [citizensclimatelobby.org](https://citizensclimatelobby.org).

# Rotaplast International and Alliance for Smiles

**When a child's palate, lip, or both do not fuse together** properly in utero, the resulting condition makes it hard for that child to eat and, later, to speak. While surgery can repair the problem, in developing countries, many children lack access to the medical care needed and face lifelong health problems and ostracism.

In 1992, members of the Rotary Club of San Francisco created a project called Rotaplast to support an annual medical mission to Chile on which volunteer doctors would surgically repair cleft lips and palates. A few years later, they began sending medical personnel to other countries, and Rotaplast International became an independent nonprofit. Rotaplast has conducted 220 missions in 26 countries, carrying out surgery on nearly

21,000 patients and providing dental and orthodontic care and speech therapy. The organization also supports education for medical personnel in host countries and the development of centers to care for patients with cleft lip and palate.

In 2004, six San Francisco club members established a second nonprofit called Alliance for Smiles, which also provides surgery as well as ongoing treatments including dentistry, orthodontia, speech therapy, and sometimes psychological counseling. To do this, Alliance for Smiles trains local health care providers and establishes treatment centers where patients can receive such care.

"Medical missions are really important, but so is education, training, and extended care of cleft lip and palate children," says Anita Stangl, a member of the

Rotary Club of San Francisco, who was the president and CEO of Alliance for Smiles from 2004 to 2016. Since 2004, Alliance for Smiles has treated more than 7,000 children.

The COVID-19 pandemic has put missions on hold. Alliance for Smiles is training medical professionals virtually, and both organizations are using the time to explore new ways to serve. Stangl says that there is a backlog of needed surgeries and that medical missions should resume as soon as travel restrictions are eased. ■

## DID YOU KNOW?

Globally, about one in 700 babies are born with a cleft lip or palate.

Learn more at [rotaplast.org](http://rotaplast.org) and [allianceforsmiles.org](http://allianceforsmiles.org).



Do you know of other organizations founded by Rotary members? Send us a note at [magazine@rotary.org](mailto:magazine@rotary.org) with "Rotary's influence" in the subject line.

*A funny thing happened during  
this neuroscientist's research:  
She stumbled on the study of laughter*



**THE CONVERSATION**  
**Sophie Scott**

# W

**hat makes you laugh?** You might have any number of idiosyncratic responses to that question: Mel Brooks movies, your dad's dad jokes, stand-up routines by Tiffany Haddish or John Mulaney, your favorite Tik Tok creator, funny animal GIFs, your child's laughter.

When researcher Sophie Scott asks the same question — *what makes you laugh?* — she's not looking for a recommendation for a funny book or movie. She's looking to understand what's behind the universal human impulse to laugh.

Scott, a professor of cognitive neuroscience at University College London, studies the neurobiology of speech perception — the brain science behind the way we hear and process spoken language. Her research touches on subjects including dyslexia, aphasia,

and auditory processing in people with cochlear implants.

Scott was recently consulted for a news story on the underlying factors of Zoom fatigue, but there's another area of her research that has captured attention beyond academia: the science of laughter. That work has led to a TED Talk, interviews with the BBC, and writing for the *Guardian*. It has even led her to take the stage herself as a stand-up comedian. "I would say it's comfortably the most interesting part of my work," she says. "I never set out to study laughter; it was entirely serendipity that I sort of stumbled across it." Scott spoke with contributor Kris Vire from her home in London.

### **Is laughter the main focus of your research? Or is it just the facet that garners the most interest?**

Most of my work is much more boring stuff about how the brain processes sound and gets different kinds of information out of the human voice — including things like laughter — and about how the brain controls production of the voice, lets you interact with other people. Laughter has become a bigger part of what I do. I've always done work on emotion in the voice, and laughter is now the main part of that.

### **What was the serendipitous moment that led you to this area of study?**

I was working in Cambridge, and I had colleagues who were studying patients who have problems processing information from faces. Particularly information about identity, but also specific kinds of information about emotion. If someone has, for example, a deficit in recognizing what frightened faces look like, you don't know if that's something to do with faces or if it's something to do with emotion. You can only find out when you test for other ways the person might process emotion. So my colleagues wanted to test emotion in the voice, and they asked me, because I worked in speech. That's when I started working on emotion in the voice. So that was pure serendipity.

And then the next step occurred at a talk by Paul Ekman, who's the father of modern studies of how we process emotion, particularly from the face. And he was talking about these emotions that we had all been working with — they are called the basic emotions, the emotions that are recognized all around the world: fear, anger, disgust, sadness, surprise, and happiness. And I asked him, "Why is there only one positive emotion in there? It seems strange." And he

said he thought that a smiling face, which is what he was using to test happiness, might actually be split up into more types of positive emotions, some of which might have this characteristic of being universal. But he said you wouldn't get there if you only studied faces, particularly photos of faces; you'd need to look at things like body movements and voices. And I said, "Oh, I study the voice."

He directed me to one of the papers he had written on possible universal positive emotions. One of the positive emotions he talks about was what he calls amusement, which is laughter. And of course, as soon as you start studying laughter, it kind of runs away from you, because it is another basic emotion. It is recognized universally, and the brain processes laughter very robustly. You can mess up most sounds in such a way that people can't recognize the emotional content anymore, but it's really hard to do that with laughter. As long as you've got those kinds of bursts of sound, people will hear laughter.

And you also realize that it's everywhere. We're immersed in it in a way that we're not immersed in other very basic emotional things, like screams or *yuck* sounds. So that was the starting point for me. I stumbled across it, and then it took me on a very interesting journey. It's a nice example of serendipity in science. If I hadn't gone to that talk, and if I hadn't asked that question, I might not have gone down this path. No one studied laughter. There's more laughter research now than there has ever been, but when I started, there was nothing.

### **You've suggested that there might be two pathways of laughter: one that's social, and the other more uncontrollable.**

If you think about the last time you were laughing and you may not have wanted to be — you may have

**Kris Vire** has written about arts and culture for publications including the *New York Times*, *Chicago* magazine, and *American Theatre*. He is based in Chicago.

been trying to stop yourself from laughing, but you could not stop — that’s an example of really spontaneous, involuntary laughter. It’s still kind of social, because it doesn’t happen randomly; for me, I have to be with someone I know, most likely with my partner and our son, for me to really go. It’s probably better to think of it as a spectrum: At one end there’s this absolutely helpless laughter, where you can’t stop it even if you want to.

At the other end, you have this laughter which primarily is a communicative act. It’s something that happens in conversation. If you look at people in conversation, they laugh a lot. And they tend to start laughing together and stop laughing together very quickly, and then move on. And people laugh in a very coordinated way when they laugh in conversations. That looks a lot more like a voluntary motor act, like the speech that they’re producing. It’s a much more communicative, controlled act, like the way that I’m speaking now is controlled. That doesn’t make it bad. It’s actually very positive. There are very nice studies from Greg Bryant at UCLA showing that in conversational laughter, you can get a sense of how close the two people are who are talking to each other, because they will laugh differently when they’re with someone they know better and like better.

**Reading some of your work about the social aspect of laughter made me realize how much more likely I am to laugh out loud watching a movie, for instance,**

**“AT ONE END THERE’S THIS ABSOLUTELY HELPLESS LAUGHTER, WHERE YOU CAN’T STOP IT EVEN IF YOU WANT TO. AT THE OTHER END, YOU HAVE THIS LAUGHTER WHICH PRIMARILY IS A COMMUNICATIVE ACT.”**

**when someone is watching with me than if I’m watching by myself.**

Yes. There’s a very well-established finding that you’re much more likely to laugh if there’s somebody else with you than if you’re on your own. Robert Provine [a professor of neurobiology and psychology at the University of Maryland known for his research on laughter] argues that you’re 30 times more likely to laugh with someone else present. We’ve comfortably replicated that. And there’s some evidence that the closer you are with those people, the more you’ll laugh.

**But it can spread even among strangers, too, can’t it? I think of the way that people in a theater audience can sort of give each other permission to laugh. Sometimes you just need one big laugh to get the whole house going.**

Yes! It even helps just giving people an indication that this is meant to be funny, this is a funny thing that’s happening. It’s a very nuanced cue. It’s fascinating.

**That’s why TV sitcoms had laugh tracks for so many years, right?**

Absolutely. And if you look at the roots of that — TV, when it started, was hot on the heels of radio, and radio is where you find the first comedy broadcast. Many of the initial comedy broadcasts were just comedians in the studio, and the reason they started using [live] audiences is that the comedians didn’t like doing comedy without an audience’s responses. And audiences at home frequently didn’t understand that it was supposed to be funny, because they were used to hearing comedy in a theater. So it then became the norm to record comedy in front of an audience.

And it makes things funnier! We have found that if you add laughter to the ends of jokes, people think the jokes are funnier. When I told a comedian that finding, his first reaction was, “Well, of course. If I can hear the audience laughing, I become funnier.”

**What’s something you’ve discovered in your work that’s surprised you?**

When I first started working with these positive emotions, among them amusement, if you’d asked me, “What’s this sound? *Ha-ha-ha*,” I’d have said: That’s amusement. That’s the sound you make when you find something funny. Robert Provine has always argued that, actually, although we do laugh at jokes, laughter has this bigger world within social behavior. And I thought, obviously, he’s wrong. But for our study comparing spontaneous laughter with more communicative laughter, when we tried to get people to laugh in the lab, we found that we couldn’t just get people into the lab and get them laughing spontaneously. It just didn’t happen. All sorts of things had to be right to do that. And the more I did it, the more I realized he’s right.

It’s not enough for stuff to be funny. People have to be with people, and they have to be with certain

sorts of people, and you have to do a lot of work to make people feel comfortable before this behavior starts to appear. So when people laugh together, laughter's more like an index of how those people feel about each other and where they're at and what's going on, than it is, "Oh, we saw something funny." It's telling you about the people and how they feel about each other, and what the bigger mood is, and where they are, more than it's telling you there was a funny thing. And I was really surprised by that, because I thought it was such a no-brainer: Laughter's what you do when something's funny, obviously. I mean, that's common sense. And it's what most people will tell you if you ask them, "When do you laugh?" They'll tell you they laugh at jokes and comedy. If you ask people, "What *makes* you laugh?" they will start to talk about people. It's quite interesting.

**Your research has led you to trying your hand at stand-up comedy yourself. How did you find yourself onstage?**

The university where I'm based started a new public engagement unit in 2008. University College London is a very famous university that is known on the world stage for research, but interestingly, it's not as well known within London. I live just around the corner from University College, but if I say to my neighbors that I work at the university, they think I mean King's College or Imperial College. So as part of an effort to raise our visibility, they started running comedy nights where the performers were UCL academics and research students. There would be a

headline act and an emcee who were proper comedians, so you were in professional hands.

In academia, you have to get used to being in front of an audience, because you have to give lectures and do seminars and conferences. As an academic, I had always made jokes in my talks, mainly to know whether the audience were still listening. Do I still have them, and if I lost them, are they furious? You know that if they're laughing, they're at least listening.

But when it came to doing stand-up, I thought, no way am I doing that! I had worked really hard and I had just been made a professor, and I didn't want to go into a pub full of strangers and die onstage. Then one of my colleagues did it, and I decided I had to do it. The first night I was booked in for a gig doing stand-up, I was locked in the toilet at the pub thinking, what have I done? I've made a terrible mistake! And then I did it and I loved it, and I came offstage and thought, I want to do that again, and I want to do it better. It was a revelation in a couple of ways. I was 44 when I did it for the first time. You sort of think, that's it, this is how things are, this is the person you are. It never occurred to me that I could learn a new skill. So now I've done a lot of gigs. No one is fooled into thinking that I'm a professional comedian, but it's a very fascinating skill to learn, and it helps me in a number of other ways in terms of communication skills and things like confidence. And it's fed back into my science. I would definitely recommend it to anybody. You can teach an old dog new tricks, I guess. ■

To hear Sophie Scott's TED Talk on her research into laughter, go to [ted.com/talks/sophie\\_scott\\_why\\_we\\_laugh](https://ted.com/talks/sophie_scott_why_we_laugh).



Paul Wilkinson

# OUR CLUBS

## VIRTUAL VISIT

### Cream of the crop

Rotary Club of Muthaiga, Kenya

In 2007, Agnes Kiraithe was invited to speak at the Rotary Club of Muthaiga, in Nairobi. At the time, Kiraithe was the chief administrator of what is now the Kenya Children’s Home, and she had come to talk about the organization, which takes in orphaned children from around the city. After her presentation, she looked around the club.

“Initially, I thought Rotary is a place you go and pitch for support,” she says. “But after the first meeting, I started to talk to people, and I said, ‘Hmm, this looks interesting.’ So I started coming to the meetings and made friends, and I stayed on for the fellowship.” She joined in 2008.

It wasn’t long before Kiraithe saw the power of Rotary at work. Around that time, a series of violent clashes had broken out in Kenya’s Rift Valley after a deeply divisive national election. A member of the Muthaiga club had connections to communities in that region, where houses had been burned to the ground and people were living in tents. The club raised funds to buy hoes, seedlings, and containers of beans and potatoes for residents to plant.

Just four months later, Kiraithe says, “we found that people had already planted. The farms were green. The World Bank had come in and given them materials to build small houses. Afterward, they told us: ‘We now don’t need any more donations. We are back to our land.’”

Later, the club bought 12 foot pumps to help irrigate the new crops. With their own plantings thriving, the farmers told the Muthaiga Rotarians to give the pumps to a neighboring community. “We made enough money to buy electric pumps,” they told the club members.

“From that time, I was sold,” Kiraithe recalls. “I think that’s when I really became a Rotarian.”

Kenya is home to the first Rotary club in East Africa — the Rotary Club of Nairobi, founded in 1930 — but by 1991, when Salim Manji helped charter the Rotary Club of Westlands-Nairobi, there were still only 17 clubs in the country. A few years after Manji served as president of the Westlands club, the district governor put him in charge of the district membership committee. Manji looked around and decided there was room for another club in the capital. Others had their doubts.

When the Muthaiga club was founded in 1997, there were 20 clubs in all of Kenya, including eight in Nairobi, Manji says, “and there was a fair amount of resistance to a new club, because people felt that it would just dilute the existing membership. Rotary was considered to be very exclusive, and people who were already in the Rotary world didn’t necessarily want that world to change.”

But Manji started recruiting, and the Rotary Club of Muthaiga was chartered

### Find your tongue

Kenya has a rich and ever-evolving linguistic landscape.

- ▶ The country, with 48 million people, has two official languages, Swahili and English; a street language spoken in Nairobi, known as Sheng, mixes the two.
- ▶ Throughout the country, more than 60 other languages are spoken, most of which fall into one of three families: Bantu, Nilotic, and Cushitic.
- ▶ Kenya is also home to tens of thousands of speakers of Punjabi, Gujarati, and Arabic, evidence of the country’s history as a center of trade.
- ▶ In addition to their mother tongue, many Kenyans speak at least a few words of English or Swahili.

on 22 May 1997 — which happened to be Manji’s 50th birthday — with 38 members. A month later, on the club’s charter night event, it had 13 more members. The club took its name from the verdant Nairobi neighborhood that is in turn named for the medicinal muthaiga tree. Muthaiga is one of the city’s most exclusive neighborhoods, home to ambassadors, politicians, and other elites, but from the start, Manji wanted the new club to be different. It was the only one in town that met on Monday night, and members decided not to have a full meal. The club encouraged couples to join and made a point to promote women in membership as well as leadership. Members say this



has resulted in one of the club's greatest strengths: its diversity, in background and age as well as gender. The club has had a number of women presidents, one of whom happens to be Rotary Foundation Trustee Geeta K. Manek.

Over the years, the club has compiled an impressive résumé of projects, including in the areas of vocational training, maternal and child health, literacy, and youth education. Another strong focus of the club, says its president, Sandra Bomett, is water and sanitation. In 2010, when a devastating drought struck the country's Turkana region, the club mobilized

**One of the club's greatest strengths is its diversity, in background and age as well as gender.**

Sanjiv Somi

to send truckloads of food and supplies north from Nairobi.

Since then, the club has stayed involved in that region, donating boats to fishermen on Lake Turkana and helping with crop development through a project called Furrows in the Desert, which uses irrigation methods developed in Israel to grow crops in arid regions.

Closer to home, Muthaiga has worked with the Rotary Club of Dayton, Ohio, to support Maji Mazuri, a nonprofit that serves children from Mathare Valley, one of the largest slums in Nairobi. With the help of Rotary Foundation grants, the Rotarians have built a school and a health clinic and installed electricity. Last year, during the pandemic, they also helped several schools in and around Nairobi rebuild or improve their bathroom facilities with an eye toward improving hygiene.

The club has 59 members, and since its founding, a wave of new clubs have been chartered in Nairobi, bringing the total to more than 30.

"Every president comes in with their

own agenda," Bomett notes. "When I came in, I wanted the environment to be a big focus. The environment is key." A few years ago, the club worked with several other Rotary and Rotaract clubs, as well as the Kenya Urban Roads Authority and the local government, to plant some 3,000 trees in the city; members are now collaborating with the Kenya Forest Service on another, bigger project. "This time, we want to triple what we planted before," Bomett says.

"We're a very strong club," says Bomett. "We have a good track record with projects and a good capital base in terms of our finances. We have a good number of people in leadership, and we've brought in the right people. The Rotary Club of Muthaiga has a lot of momentum."

—FRANK BURES

*At a daylong event in a Nairobi suburb in March 2020, members of the Rotary Club of Muthaiga and the Rotaract Club of Muthaiga worked with volunteer dentists to provide dental care to about 300 people.*



FOUR QUESTIONS

## By the young, for the young

How Rotaractors pulled off Greece's first virtual RYLA event

**When Rotaractors in Greece** found they had extra time on their hands during the COVID-19 pandemic, they put those hours to good use by hosting the country's first virtual Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA) event, an intensive leadership training program for young people. "There was decreased Rotaract activity due to the pandemic and the lockdown. Rotaractors had to stay at home and had plenty of free time," says Konstantinos Pantikiou, a 31-year-old advanced emergency medical technician and nursing student at the University of Athens. "We decided to make the best of a bad situation by using online media to keep them interested and engaged in our Rotaract goals."

Pantikiou and fellow members of the Rotaract Club of Athinai-North teamed up with members of the Rotaract Club of Thessaloniki to conduct a successful virtual RYLA event in May 2020 that, he says, attracted a larger and more diverse audience than a traditional program would have.

**1 How did you set up the virtual RYLA, and how did that differ from what has been done in the past?**

The e-RYLA was organized by two Rotaract clubs, with a committee of five people.

We had no experience organizing a RYLA, but I believe that in comparison with an in-person RYLA, a virtual RYLA can be put together by fewer people. We made use of Rotary materials and the RYLA Handbook, and we had the guidance of the Rotarians from our sponsor clubs and of the RYLA committee members in our districts. We invited participants through local youth organizations and student e-newspapers.

**2 What level of participation were you able to achieve?**

There were far more participants than at most previous RYLA events in Greece. A total of 80 people took part, with an average age of 24. Most were from Greece, but we had 13 from four other countries: Cy-

**“More than 85 percent of the participants had no prior relationship or contact with Rotaract or Rotary.”**

prus, Great Britain, Italy, and the Netherlands. More than 85 percent of the participants had no prior relationship or contact with Rotaract or Rotary. Through the virtual RYLA, young people became friends, and some became members of Rotaract clubs. Instead of a participation fee, we asked attendees to make a small donation to The Rotary Foundation. This gave them the opportunity to learn about the work of the Foundation and how it benefits society.

**3 What did your RYLA event focus on?**

It was a two-day event conducted in Greek on the Zoom platform. Our opening speaker, RI Director Aikaterini Kotsali-Papadimitriou, provided a helpful overview of Rotary. Throughout our event, we promoted The Rotary Foundation's work and its impact on the world. We presented lively speeches and interactive workshops on topics such as personal branding, leadership, web development, and résumé building. We purposely limited the number of participants in each workshop to 20 so that everyone could get to know each other and actively participate.

It became a project for young people by young people, which perhaps explains part of the success. We set up activities based on things that concern us in our everyday lives and that are related to the development of skills that we find are lacking in our generation.

**4 What are some of the benefits of setting up a virtual RYLA?**

Accessibility was one of the main benefits. We believe that the virtual RYLA managed to take away distance as an obstacle, resulting in an increase in participation. People with mobility or hearing problems were also able to participate equally, which in the past was not always possible. An additional benefit was to the Rotaractors who were involved in organizing the event: Planning and managing the virtual RYLA gave them an incentive and an opportunity to actively engage in a project and to learn about the processes of Rotary life. We provided our districts with a report of what we accomplished, and we hope it will be used in the future.

— PAUL ENGLEMAN

Visit the virtual RYLA safety considerations topic at the Learning Center at [rotary.org/learn](https://rotary.org/learn).

# May events



## TAKE IT TO THE HOLE

**Event:**

Golf Classic

**Host:**

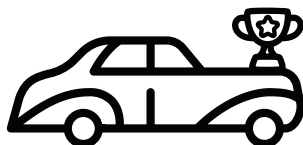
Rotary Club of Kyrene, Arizona

**What it benefits:**

Local charities Save the Family and Feeding Students USA

**What it is:**

Hosted at the par 71 Arizona Grand course, this event includes lunch as well as opportunities to win raffle prizes. There are fun competitions, including a hole-in-one contest that can net a \$25,000 prize.



## START YOUR ENGINES

**Event:**

Bow Car Show

**Host:**

Rotary Club of Bow, New Hampshire

**What it benefits:**

Local charities

**What it is:**

See all types of automobiles, trucks, and motorcycles from the early 1900s to the present. A People's Choice award will be given, along with Best in Show and 16 additional prizes.



## HAVE A LITTLE ART

**Event:**

Kingman Festival of the Arts

**Host:**

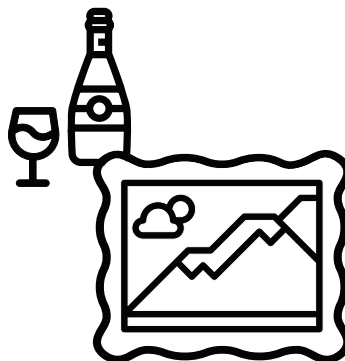
Rotary Club of Kingman Route 66, Arizona

**What it benefits:**

Local and international projects

**What it is:**

A Mother's Day weekend tradition, this festival features arts and crafts, music, dance and theater performances, and food, as well as children's art activities. Celebrate the moms in your life — and buy them a nice gift — at this party.



## MAKE CHANGE

**Event:**

Quarter Mile

**Hosts:**

Rotary Club of Bangor, Rotary Club of Bangor Breakfast, and Rotary Club of Old Town, Maine

**What it benefits:**

End Polio Now

**What it is:**

A "quarter mile" might sound like a short race, but this event involves laying down quarters for a full mile: The result is 66,555 quarters, totaling \$16,638.75, lined up on the ground. With the 2-to-1 match by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the amount raised increases to nearly \$50,000.



## SIP AND SEE

**Event:**

Art, Wine & Wheels

**Host:**

Rotary Club of Mariposa Yosemite, California

**What it benefits:**

Local projects

**What it is:**

There is something for everyone at this annual day of culture and beauty. Appreciate art? Admire and buy works from more than 40 artists. Love wine? Taste delicious wines from a variety of local vineyards. Fancy yourself a car person? Check out the antique autos.

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

HANDBOOK

# Brush up on your leadership skills

Stand out by being a follower – of advice from our experts

**Yvonne Kumoji-Darko**, like many people, was afraid of speaking in public, and she worried that it was holding her back in her club. “If I didn’t overcome my nervousness, I would be stuck at the back of the room, not enjoying Rotary as I would have loved to,” she says.

Kumoji-Darko, who is now governor of District 9102 (Benin, Ghana, Niger, and Togo), read online materials on public speaking and leadership, and found they mostly repeated the same basic ideas. Far more productive, she says, has been the mentorship of a past district governor, Adotei Brown. “Past Rotary leaders have an immense wealth of knowledge,” Kumoji-Darko says.

Rotary’s partnership with Toastmasters International is another way the organization is helping enhance members’ leadership and communication skills.

Kumoji-Darko is a believer in the transformative power of Rotary programs to develop leadership skills. “My voilà moment was delivering a Power-Point talk without looking at the screen,” she says. In late January, a club focused specifically on public speaking, the Rotary Club of Accra-SpeakMasters, was chartered in her district.

— BRAD WEBBER

## KEY MOVES FOR LEADERS

### BE CREDIBLE

“We don’t follow people for very long if we don’t believe they’re credible,” says Barry Z. Posner, co-author of *The Leadership Challenge*. That means being dependable. “When you tell me you’re going to show up at the barbecue fundraiser at 1 o’clock, I can count on that. If I can’t count on that, I can’t depend on you.”

### FIND A MENTOR

“Every new Rotarian should have a mentor,” says Michel Jazzar, a past governor of District 2452. He had the good fortune, he says, of having Past Rotary International President Jonathan Majiyagbe as his mentor.

### BE A MENTOR

Keep that loop of constructive energy thrumming by encouraging the next generation of leaders.



### DELEGATE

“Utilize the talents and backgrounds of members when forming a committee. Usually the unofficial leader is the one with some experience in the program or project,” says Knut Johnsen, a past governor of District 7210 in New York.

### PICK YOUR TEAM

Include both new and more experienced members. Embracing diversity fosters new ideas and approaches to conducting business. Let go of assumptions (and, in some cases, unfair reputations) about fellow club members.

### SHARE POWER

“Autocratic leaders struggle in the Rotary environment because members can choose to exit the club at will or abscond from club duties,” says Lynda Nabayiinda Were, a Toastmaster and the president-elect of the Rotary Club of Kampala Maisha in Uganda.



## CREATE A POSITIVE VIBE

“Generate high team motivation in doing good,” says Jazzar. Leading is easier in an upbeat atmosphere.

## SHOW APPRECIATION

Acknowledge the efforts of others with a meeting shout-out, an emailed thank-you message, or a cup of coffee in gratitude. Even small gestures pay dividends, says Nabayiinda Were.

## BE WILLING TO LEARN

“Leadership requires that the leader is open to going out of their comfort zone,” says Louie Boy de Real, chair of the Pilipinas Rotaract Multidistrict Information Organization in the Philippines.

## BE THAT VOLUNTEER

Chairing a club committee can make all the difference — for your club and for yourself as your confidence builds.

## PRACTICE PUBLIC SPEAKING

“If I could have given advice to my younger self, I would have told myself to join Toastmasters early in my career,” says David Jones, president-elect of the Rotary Club of Upper Arlington/Grandview (TriVillage) in Columbus, Ohio.

## RESOURCES

- ▶ **My Rotary:** Rotarians can find specific guidance for emerging leaders at the club, district, zone, and international levels. Subscribe to the *Training Talk* newsletter.
- ▶ **Rotary Leadership Institute:** Past Rotary Director David Linett created this group in 1992, when he was governor of District 7510 (New Jersey), to help Rotarians hone their skills in course sessions emphasizing participation. The institute is not an official Rotary program but has been adopted by many districts.
- ▶ **Rotary.org/learn:** The Rotary Learning Center offers an array of online courses that guide you through building leadership skills.
- ▶ **Your club:** A study commissioned by Rotary showed that in 2018-19, 29 percent of clubs offered leadership development seminars, up from 17 percent in 2014-15.



**TRUSTEE CHAIR'S MESSAGE**

## Rotary members are writing the future

In the classic film *Lawrence of Arabia*, Peter O'Toole plays T.E. Lawrence, the British scholar, military officer, and author who helped Arab tribes in their struggle for independence against the Ottoman Empire.

Lawrence leads a group of Bedouin warriors through the desert for a surprise attack on the Ottoman port of Aqaba. As they reach the end of the desert, they discover that a soldier, Gasim, has fallen off his camel during the night. But it is morning, and the tribesmen, led by Sherif Ali, played in the movie by Omar Sharif, advise Lawrence that going back to find him would be futile, that Gasim would already be dead given the sandstorms and the scorching heat. "Gasim's time has come; it is written," one of the soldiers tells Lawrence.

But Lawrence does go back and finds Gasim near death, staggering in the dunes. When they return to camp, Ali offers Lawrence water. Before taking a drink, Lawrence looks at him and says: "Nothing is written."

This unforgettable scene means more than just a quotable movie line; it represents a way of looking at the world. It is a challenge to fatalism — that we must accept a certain outcome because of the way it has always been. No, Lawrence says, history is not written, yet.

So it is with The Rotary Foundation. We have not yet emerged from the sand-

storm of the COVID-19 pandemic and the economic fallout from it. We are still occupied by work to raise awareness, deliver critical personal protective equipment, and provide support for frontline workers.

We do not know the day when, standing beside our polio eradication partners, we will announce that for the second time in history, a disease has been eradicated. We do know that, because we have worked steadfastly for years, the end of that story will be written soon.

And thanks to a \$15.5 million contribution from the Otto & Fran Walter Foundation, we are also adding a new chapter in the story of our expansion of the Rotary Peace Centers: Plans are underway to launch a new peace certificate center in the Middle East or North Africa.

Rotary is engaged in so many noble efforts; it is an ongoing story that inspires me even more than *Lawrence of Arabia*. We do not yet know the name of the baby whose life will be saved because of a maternal and child health grant from Rotary, or the name of the girl who will learn to read with our support. When will those grants start, and will your district — or you — be directly involved?

Nothing is written. We write it.

**K.R. RAVINDRAN**

*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.

2021 CONVENTION

# Convene before the convention



**Experienced Rotary** International Convention attendees know that it's important to arrive early, because even before the convention gets underway, there's always plenty to do. Preconvention events offer a lot of great information, as well as opportunities to connect with other Rotary members. With the 2021 convention transformed into a virtual event, travel logistics are no longer a factor, and these preconvention gatherings are open

to all. This is a great year to participate in everything that comes before the main event.

**Rotaract Preconvention:** This event offers the chance to increase your understanding of Rotaract, to learn from and share tips and ideas with other participants, and virtually network with Rotaractors and Rotarians from around the world.

**Rotary Youth Exchange Officers Preconvention:** This

virtual event will provide you an opportunity to network with Rotary members and volunteers involved in Rotary Youth Exchange. You'll also gain vital knowledge that will help you improve your local program or get one started.

**Intercountry Committees Preconvention:** This event, called Opening Opportuni-

ties for Peace, will feature inspirational speakers, practical breakout sessions, and networking opportunities to help you start or expand an intercountry committee relationship in order to foster goodwill and peace around the world.

The 2021 convention will be held 12-16 June; all preconvention events will take place 10-11 June.

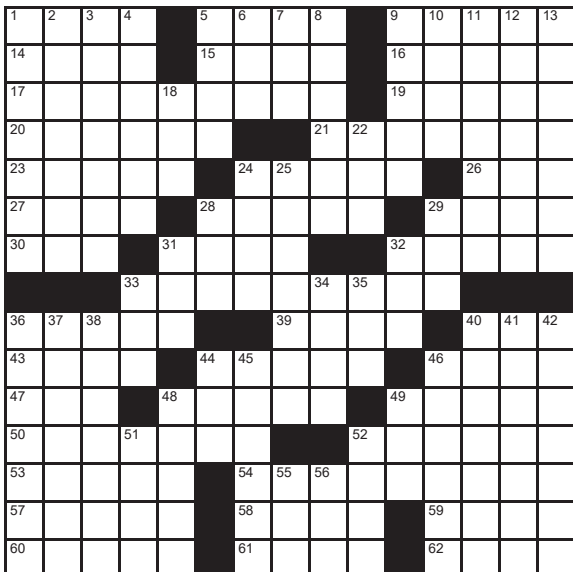
[Holger Knaack \(above\), 2020-21 RI president, addressed the 2020 Rotary Virtual Convention via video. Learn more about the virtual convention and preconvention at \[convention.rotary.org\]\(http://convention.rotary.org\).](#)

CROSSWORD

## May Day and more

By Victor Fleming

Rotary Club of Little Rock, Arkansas



ACROSS

- 1 Deer that bear fawns
- 5 Prefix meaning "half"
- 9 Silverman of comedy
- 14 \_\_\_ account (never)
- 15 The "M" of GMT
- 16 Amtrak train that can go 150 mph
- 17 With 11-Down and "Month," when book lovers strut their stuff (May)
- 19 Former British Prime Minister Tony
- 20 Like brave sorts, often
- 21 Made reference (to)
- 23 Arctic or Indian
- 24 Host at a roast or toast
- 26 Reggae singer Kamoze
- 27 Uttered, not written
- 28 Port-au-Prince's land
- 29 Child support?
- 30 Abbr. for one with emeritus status
- 31 Excessive studier, maybe
- 32 "I read you"
- 33 With "Day," when StarKist's Charlie is feted? (May 2)
- 36 Gossip mill report
- 39 "Bonny" belle
- 40 Bodybuilder's target
- 43 "Once \_\_\_ a time ..."
- 44 Sibling's daughter

46 Art \_\_\_

- 47 Baseball player with a "W" on his cap
- 48 With "de Mayo," Mexican holiday (May 5)
- 49 "Same for me"
- 50 Lion, Tiger, or Bear
- 52 Decennial count
- 53 Auto-tire pattern
- 54 With "Appreciation Day," when patients forgive their endodontists? (May 12)
- 57 Cliffside dwelling
- 58 Multi-location vacation
- 59 \_\_\_-Rooter
- 60 One-ups
- 61 Nursery dirt
- 62 Worry (about)

DOWN

- 1 Pug's passageway
- 2 4,840 square yards
- 3 Beg
- 4 Like party lovers
- 5 Complacent
- 6 Brain-reading letters
- 7 \_\_\_-jongg
- 8 All there
- 9 Dark brown fur
- 10 Grp. advocating for constitutional rights
- 11 See 17-Across
- 12 Property receiver, in law

- 13 More robust
- 18 Raggedy doll's name
- 22 With "Day," when Hawaii celebrates its blooming neckwear (May 1)
- 24 Cromwell's title
- 25 Important piano key
- 28 \_\_\_ Majesty the Queen
- 29 Campers' org.
- 31 Neither go-with
- 32 Hosp. workers
- 33 Got the victory
- 34 \_\_\_ Bell
- 35 Waste not
- 36 Drink on credit
- 37 Like the proverbial cat that's rescued by the firefighter
- 38 With "Day," what a child or co-parent might celebrate with its honoree (May 9)
- 40 "\_\_\_ ... and say we did!"
- 41 Put into motion
- 42 Not fast enough
- 44 Picayune point
- 45 Nonreactive gases
- 46 Kuwaiti currency
- 48 Gives over
- 49 Mo. for carolers
- 51 Cafe au \_\_\_
- 52 Lower-left PC key
- 55 Tic-tac-toe victory
- 56 Yves' "yes"

Solution on page 10

IN BRIEF

## Honolulu to host 2027 convention

A year after canceling the 2020 Rotary International Convention in Honolulu because of the COVID-19 pandemic, Rotary announced that the city will host the organization's 118th convention, scheduled for 5-9 June 2027.

About 20,000 Rotary members from 170 countries and geographical areas had been expected to attend the event in Honolulu in June 2020, which had been projected to bring as much as \$40 million into the local economy. The convention was reimaged as a virtual event.

"We are grateful to the citizens of Honolulu for welcoming us again in 2027," says Rotary President Holger Knaack. "As a global organization that values bringing people together, we look forward to sharing and celebrating our friendships, cul-



tures, and service in the spirit of aloha."

"Beyond the incredible economic impact this convention will have, the people of Hawaii will be inspired by the humanitarian causes of Rotary International," says John de Fries, president and CEO of the Hawaii Tourism Authority. "As a global

community, Rotary members embody the values we cherish here in Hawaii."

The first Rotary club in Hawaii, the Rotary Club of Honolulu, was chartered in 1915. Today, there are about 1,500 Rotary members and more than 50 clubs in the state.

IN BRIEF

## Governors-elect gather virtually for International Assembly

Rotary President-elect Shekhar Mehta (pictured) announced the 2021-22 presidential theme, *Serve to Change Lives*, at the International Assembly in February.

The assembly, a yearly training event for incoming district governors, was held virtually this year because of the COVID-19 pandemic. In both general and breakout sessions, governors-elect and a select group of Rotaractors discussed the impact of service, the power of Rotarians and Rotaractors to do good in the world, and the importance of telling Rotary's story. They also focused



on membership and how Rotary leaders can give members the tools to help the organization grow. In addition, the assembly included programs for governors' partners and opportunities to connect with other participants and with Rotary staff members.

"Rotary kindled the spark within me to look beyond myself and embrace human-

ity," Mehta said in announcing the theme. He urged members to "do more and grow more": to become more involved in projects with measurable and sustainable impacts, and to help increase Rotary's membership to 1.3 million by July 2022. "As we all serve, we change the lives of not only others," he said. "We change our lives, too."



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## Fast as hull

*Hydroplane enthusiast builds models — and has raced the real thing*

**Nelson Holmberg**  
 Rotary Club of  
 Three Creeks  
 Vancouver,  
 Washington

**BUILT FOR SPEED:** Unlimited hydroplanes are the world's fastest race boats, to boil it down to the simplest terms. They're boats that fly; they gain speed by reducing drag and skimming the water as they fly across, going up to 200 miles an hour on a 2.5-mile oval race-course. I fell in love with them — the visual excitement of it all and, of course, the noise — when I was 12 after my dad took me to see an exhibition. The plaque is from when I raced outboard hydroplanes myself.

**STUNT DOUBLES:** I build and race scale model hydroplanes that are one-tenth the scale of real hydroplanes, about 3 feet long versus 28 to 30 feet long. They go about 45 to 50 miles per hour. Each one is a replica of a real boat, all the way down to what the driver in the cockpit looked like. We make our models as realistic as we can, including things like tracking down the color number of the paint used on the real boat so we can use the same color, and contacting the sponsors to get the design files of their logos.

**WINNING MODEL:** Through 12 years of racing unlimited hydroplane models, I started to make connections with owners, drivers, and crew chiefs on the real race boat teams. In 2012, I was talking with the crew chief of the Graham Trucking team, and he asked me if I wanted to volunteer on the crew the following weekend. I did, and that led to a call from the owner to join the crew at the 2013 world hydroplane championship in Doha, Qatar — which we won. The black boat is a replica of the 2013 Graham Trucking hydroplane.

# LEARN ON THE GO



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