

# Rotary

NOVEMBER 2024 MAGAZINE

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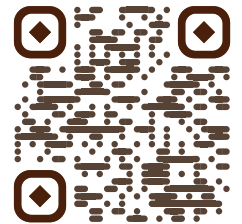
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## A solid Foundation

One of Rotary's greatest strengths is the ability of our members to come together to create lasting change, and The Rotary Foundation helps us transform dreams of change into reality.

From eradicating polio to building peace, much of the work we do around the world would not be possible without our continued support of our Foundation.

The cause of peace is especially important to me, and one of the most effective ways we build peace is our Rotary Peace Fellowship — a product of The Rotary Foundation. The program helps current and aspiring peace and development professionals around the world learn how to prevent and how to end conflict.

Thanks to a \$15.5 million gift from the Otto and Fran Walter Foundation, we can continue supporting peacebuilders in more regions with the next Rotary Peace Center, at Bahçeşehir University in Istanbul.

Opening yet another peace center is a monumental achievement that we will celebrate at the 2025 Rotary Presidential Peace Conference in Istanbul.

The three-day conference 20-22 February will highlight the many ways our family of Rotary advocates for peace. Keynote speakers, panel discussions, and breakout sessions will allow us to share ideas about building peace and foster meaningful conversations about promoting peace everywhere.

Registration for the Presidential Peace Conference is open. I hope to see you there, but if you can't make it, our Foundation offers so many ways to change the world for the better. November is Rotary Foundation

Month, a great time to get to know your Foundation better and pursue causes that appeal to you.

Global grants support large international activities with sustainable, measurable outcomes in Rotary's areas of focus. By working together to respond to pressing community needs, clubs and districts strengthen their global partnerships.

District grants fund small-scale, short-term activities that address needs in your community and in communities abroad. Each district chooses which activities it will fund with these grants.

Our Foundation can even help you support our wonderful youth programs, including Rotary Youth Exchange, Rotary Youth Leadership Awards, and Interact.

Your gifts to our Foundation also make Programs of Scale possible. These are long-term projects that seek to solve otherwise intractable problems.

To ensure these good works continue beyond our lifetimes, it is up to us to reach our ambitious Rotary Endowment goal of \$2.025 billion by 30 June 2025.

*The Magic of Rotary* does not appear out of nowhere. We create the magic with every new member inducted, every project completed, and every dollar donated to our Foundation.

Please join me in supporting The Rotary Foundation, and together, we will change the world for the better.

**STEPHANIE A. URCHICK**  
*President, Rotary International*

Donate to The Rotary Foundation at [rotary.org/donate](https://rotary.org/donate).

Register for the 2025 Rotary Presidential Peace Conference at [rotary.org/istanbul25](https://rotary.org/istanbul25).





**YOU ARE HERE:** Zanzibar, Tanzania

**GREETING:** Habari yako

**BLUE ECONOMY:** Fishing is a way of life in Zanzibar, an archipelago off the coast of East Africa. In the village of Nungwi (pictured here), fishers haul in their catch after a night at sea. The village is a center of shipbuilding known for the dhow, a traditional sailing boat found throughout the Indian Ocean rim. Many people depend on fishing for food, says Augustine Mwombeki, a Rotary member from the main island.

**SPICE ISLANDS:** Zanzibar's tropical climate and fertile soil produce valuable spices, including cloves, nutmeg, and cinnamon, that have drawn traders here for centuries.

**NO WORRIES:** Zanzibar's people, a blend of African, Arab, Persian, and Indian cultures, are known for their hospitality and easygoing nature, Mwombeki says. That's perhaps best captured in the Kiswahili phrases *hakuna matata* (no worries) and *pole pole* (take it slow), he adds.

**THE CLUB:** Chartered in 2005, the Rotary Club of Zanzibar Stonetown has 15 members.

# Rotary

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November 2024

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Rotary 

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## ROTARY FOUNDATION MONTH

November is Rotary Foundation Month, a time to celebrate and support the life-changing work of our Foundation. Since The Rotary Foundation began, it has awarded more than US\$6.5 billion to help members transform communities locally and globally. We are deeply grateful to Rotary members like you who make Doing Good in the World possible.

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**LEARN MORE:** [rotary.org/foundation](https://rotary.org/foundation)



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Vol. 203, No. 5

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Michael Sheldrick co-founded Global Citizen to pair pop culture with ending poverty

**On the cover:** Ferit Binzet, pictured with his wife at the remains of their home in Turkey, chronicled his city's damage and coordinated Rotary aid after the 2023 earthquakes.  
Photograph by Faid Elgziry



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## STAFF CORNER

# Inder Mokha

*Platform operations manager,  
Technology Operations*

**I had a curiosity as a child for examining items and fixing them.** At a young age growing up in New Delhi, I took apart a very expensive radio, trying to understand how it worked. So it was natural that I picked mechanical engineering as my college major. I worked for a company that produced industrial cooling towers. As the industry was undertaking computerization, I switched to the field of information technology.

**My beginnings were humble.** My father was a government clerk and rode his bike 16 miles to work daily to save bus fares. My older brother attended a local college, but after I was admitted to an engineering school, he dropped out and started a job to help support my college education.

**I grew up as a practicing Sikh.** My parents came from Punjab, a region in northwestern India, where Sikhism, a religion and philosophy, started. In 1947, when India and Pakistan were partitioned, my parents migrated from the Pakistan side of Punjab to India. Men wear turbans, an important part of Sikh identity and a mandatory article of faith. Sikhs practice kesh, allowing our hair, including mustache and beard, to grow without cutting it to honor how God made us. Sikh men wrap their hair with the turban.

**I moved to the Chicago area from India in 1999,** four years after I married my wife, a nurse, who was born in Mumbai. She was already a naturalized U.S. citizen. My parents knew her cousin, and they arranged for us to meet. We were wed in India and have two children.

**In the U.S., I started out unloading boxes at a warehouse** while doing college coursework to update my IT education and certification, which paid off. For six years, I worked as a senior Oracle database administrator for Aon Hewitt, a former human resources consulting company. I found Rotary in 2018. The



organization appealed to me because selfless service is also an important tenet of Sikhism.

**My job at Rotary is to “keep the lights on”** — my team runs and manages the computer systems, including the servers, network, and storage at One Rotary Center and the international Rotary offices, as well as in the cloud. Having worked behind a computer all year round, it was an enlightening experience to be assigned to support the 2024 Rotary Convention in Singapore. I enjoyed meeting Rotarians from around the world, especially those from South Asia who conversed with me in Hindi, Punjabi, and Urdu about their Rotary lives.

**Photography is one of my passions.** That started when I was 15. After taking a photo of someone, I disassembled the camera, trying to understand how it worked. It was the pre-YouTube era, and I couldn’t put it back together. Even though I got in trouble for it, I became hooked on photography. I photographed people at celebrations and community events and learned about lighting and composition through self-exploration. Gradually, I started focusing on flowers — each has a story to tell. My works are now on display at a gallery near Rotary’s headquarters.

**I’m on the board of Oneness Run,** a community organization that organizes races to raise money for scholarships and help young people through outdoor activities. My wife runs a community clinic for people who lack medical access. That’s how we were brought up — community always comes first. ■

## Letters to the editor

### DONATIONS WELCOME

I read with great interest “It’s time to consider organ donation” in the August issue. Anil Srivatsa, who is featured in the article for his work on organ donations in India, shows how Rotarians can directly improve the lives of our fellow humans.

The article notes the United States has a severe organ shortage, with about 100,000 people on the national transplant waiting list. Every day, around 17 people in our country die while waiting for an organ. Someone is added to the list every eight minutes.

The U.S. has several laws that govern organ donation under an opt-in model, meaning that individuals must explicitly choose to donate organs. Rotary has the opportunity to save thousands of lives in America each year by advocating with political leaders in all 50 states to sponsor and pass legislation that switches our organ donation model from opt-in to opt-out, in hopes of greatly reducing the waiting time for transplants.

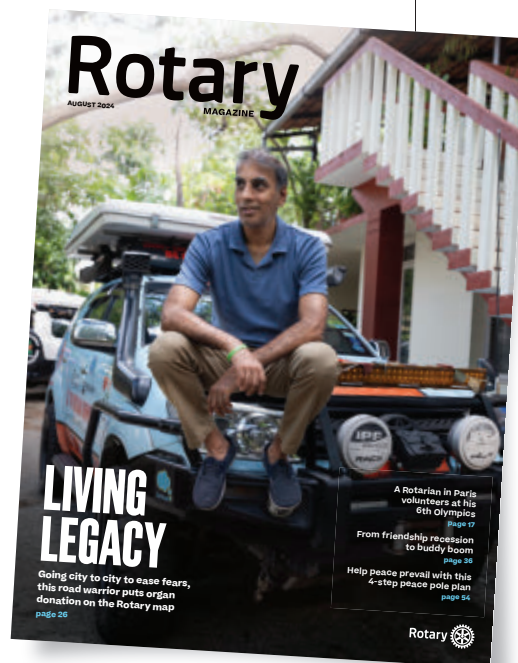
At its peak in the 1940s and 1950s, polio killed or paralyzed more than half a million people worldwide each year. Since Rotary began its eradication program over 35 years ago, polio cases have decreased by over 99 percent. Let us again work together and eradicate our country’s severe organ shortage by pressing for changes in our laws.

**Douglas W. Phillips**, Rochester, New York

Thank you to Neil Steinberg for his well-written essay “Another day at the blood laundromat” in the August issue. I never really understood dialysis until my husband had kidney failure in 2021; he has since done both in-center and home dialysis. After reading Steinberg’s story, I feel “seen” and am actually crying right now. I think I will share this article to help my friends understand.

**Elena Meadows**, Three Rivers, Michigan

I have recently become familiar with chronic kidney disease by talking with nurses who care for dialysis patients and by reading scientific literature reviews from clinicians who seem to feel their patients’ pain. This is a worldwide disease,



and it is lethal due to its frequent occurrence with cardiac disease and diabetes.

I am interested to learn that Rotarians actively participate in helping to treat it. Their enterprise is a double enterprise: helping the patients and educating the rest of us. Thank you immensely for presenting these two articles to the Rotary world.

**Paul W. Morris**, Robinson, Illinois

### PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

I was appalled to see a letter to the editor in the August issue [“For healthy families”] saying that the writer was “disappointed ... to learn that The Rotary Foundation is now involved in projects promoting contraception.”

A critical factor in maternal and child health is the ability of people to plan when they will have children. With education and access to family planning methods, couples have fewer children, because that is what they want, and mothers and children are healthier. Does the writer not wish for healthier families?

In 1960, when I was 13, there were 3 billion people in this world. On 4 July, I turned 77, and there are now more than

### OVERHEARD ON SOCIAL MEDIA

In August, we wrote about how Rotary members are responding to a “friendship recession” by making cherished connections through their clubs.

The friendships I have made because of Rotary are people who will be in my life forever. The love and laughter is genuine! I feel so blessed to have this opportunity to be around amazing, impactful people.

**Nicole Bourget Brien**  
► via Facebook

This foundation of friendship & fun is ... integral to the success & longevity of our club.

**Rotary Club of Buderim, Australia**  
► via Facebook

8 billion. Does the writer not see anything wrong with this picture?

I studied population issues with leaders in the field at the School of Public Health at the University of North Carolina and had a career in human services administration. I firmly believe that all the significant problems in the world are made worse by increasing population.

The writer says he will be redirecting his donations over his concern. As a Rotarian for 47 years and a Major Donor, I will direct more to the Foundation to support maternal and child health.

**Rankin Whittington**, Lenoir, North Carolina

**A TIP ABOUT TIPS**

The article “6 tips to elevate your elevator pitch” [August] has prompted me to give a tip to the author.

As I stifled a yawn by the time I got to tip number 6, I thought back some 60 years to an English composition class at my UK high school in which the teacher, Mr. Connelly, gave us tips on how to write stories that would capture the reader’s attention. In effect, he performed the same exercise as your elevator pitch author but in a more effective way.

From time to time, he read us star pieces that contemporaries of ours at the school had written for him. I recall one of these was a short story by a 15-year-old boy called Peter Ackroyd, who went on to become a world-renowned author. Mr. Connelly succinctly analyzed why it was so good.

Would that your elevator pitch author had done the same and first given an example of a prize pitch, then told us why it was so good and how it should be tailored for the occasion it’s presented.

**John Jascoll**, Lancaster, Pennsylvania

**SHOW AND TELL**

We do a great job of communicating among our Rotary family members. We have the award-winning *Rotary* maga-



In this 2006 photo, Rotary awards line a wall in the home office of Bill Boyd, then RI president-elect.

zine, our district and club newsletters, conferences, and meetings. But if we truly want to get the word out about Rotary to friends, family, and the public at large and increase our membership, I am adamant it will come down to the recognition awards that we prominently display in our homes, businesses, offices, and communities.

Recognition awards, many of which are eye-catching and invoke a sense of wonder, can open the door to a conversation as to what Rotary is and what we do as Rotarians. Simply put, these “micro-advertisements” may hold an intrinsic value that far exceeds their monetary cost. We as Rotarians are the torchbearers of our organization, but without a torch we cannot hope to kindle a Rotary spark in others.

**Bob Withers**, Fallon, Nevada

**PROMOTE PEACE TO PREVENT POLIO**

The recent news that polio is present in Gaza demonstrates the obvious relationship between war zones and polio. Let’s focus on preventing war to accomplish our effort to eradicate polio.

**Al Jubitz**, Portland, Oregon

**PILGRIM**

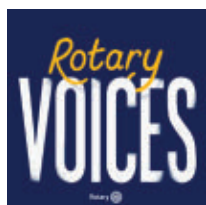
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Clark Cumings-Johnson, Author

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### THE SPECIALIST

## Late-night eats

*A restaurateur brings refined cooking to the wee hours*

**B**efore food, I started out in the music industry. And not the glamorous side. I was born in Taiwan, grew up in Vancouver, and graduated in 2005 from New York University, where I studied English and economics. After college I went to work for a music publishing company, where I handled contracts and licensing. Eventually, though, driven by my enthusiasm for music, my friends and I got involved in a hip-hop record label.

I decided to enroll in the International Culinary Center in New York in 2011, after we sold the music label. It might not seem like a logical career progression, but I come from a family that took cuisine very seriously. Both my mom and my grandmother were exceptional home cooks. A year later, I traveled to Parma in northern Italy and received my master's at ALMA, a leading education and training center in Italian cuisine. It was the best time of my life — living there, speaking about food every day from the

moment you wake up until the moment you sleep, and even dreaming about it. After graduation, I worked first as an intern and then as a commis (junior cook) at the iconic Ristorante Sadler in Milan.

**Upon returning to Taiwan in 2013, I opened Chez Nous**, a boutique hotel, with some Rotarian friends, trying to offer authentic Taiwanese food in a modern setting. Meanwhile, I felt that late-night dining choices in Taipei were limited. So my friends and I launched Longtail, a late-night diner with good service and a casual setting, where everyone knows your name. You can enjoy refined local cooking and drinks from a cozy bar. At Longtail, we offer an innovative mix — everything from duck breast with scallion puree and green Sichuan peppercorn to kaya jam French toast with espresso ice cream.

**We were awarded a Michelin star** in November 2017, four months after we opened. It was a great honor to receive that recognition, which makes us want to do better and do more of what we love. Following Longtail's success, we opened Wildwood, a wood-fired steakhouse that uses a fragrant wood from southern Taiwan to grill steak, lobster, and fresh fish.

**I consider myself an online food influencer** (in Chinese and English) with a fast-growing Instagram presence of more than 240,000 followers. I interview chefs and foodies who share their favorite foods and offer insights on Taiwan's dining scene. ■

**Henry Hsieh**  
Rotary Club of  
Taipei Éclat,  
Taiwan

Restaurateur  
and food  
influencer

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A mother's  
vow to save  
infants' lives

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Grow your  
legacy with  
Rotary's  
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The beauty  
of a long and  
winding road

## MEDIA LITERACY

# The other literacy crisis

*Amid a rise in misinformation and AI-generated content, Rotary members promote media savvy*

It's typically not fun for a teenager to start attending a new school, but your first day at Virginia Hall High School is even stranger than usual. Your grandfather reveals that he used to be a government spy, your stepsister gets locked in a closet by the other students, and some kind of monster seems to be stalking the hallways.

Don't go grabbing a weapon and storming into battle. This is just a video game, and you have to use your brain. You interview a fellow student who seems suspicious and dig through the school newspaper for articles about the monster, all the while asking questions like: Do these sources provide multiple pieces of evidence for their claims? Do they stand to make money because of what they're saying? Do they cast a negative light on people who disagree with them?

Why all the questions? Because this isn't just any video game; it's one designed to increase your media literacy. *Agents of Influence* was co-created by Anahita Dalmia, a member of the Rotary Club of Newport Beach, California, to help middle schoolers think more critically about what they see on social media and in the news.

"We're teaching kids to understand media bias, logical fallacies, and confirmation bias. We teach things like reading closely — tools you can use to determine what to trust online," says Dalmia, the co-founder and CEO of game developer Alterea Inc.

A third-generation Rotarian, Dalmia says the game's approach

was inspired partly by The Four-Way Test. "The first question is, 'Is it the truth?' And there's a reason that's the first question," Dalmia says. "If it's not the truth, you cannot make a strong judgment call based on any of the other questions, because you're starting on an unstable foundation."

"An unstable foundation" is a good way to describe the state of today's wide-ranging media landscape. We're exposed to far more media than ever before, and figuring out what to believe takes a lot of work. Mysterious algorithms, rather than editors, determine what's in your social media feed, and artificial intelligence technologies are flooding the internet with manipulated photos, videos, and text.

"Before the internet, if I went to get a newspaper, it was run by journalists for whom truth was an important standard. But today, people who want to believe things just post stuff," says Alan Dennis, the John T. Chambers Chair of Internet Systems at Indiana University's Kelley School of Business. "There are active disinformation campaigns by foreign governments designed to influence voters in democratic countries. The actors have become much more sophisticated, and they have learned quite a bit about what messaging works."

There's a widespread awareness of this problem, and people desperately want to learn to be savvy about the media that engulfs them. A survey last year by the Poynter Institute, a nonprofit dedicated to media literacy, found more than 80 percent

Visit [rotary.org/our-causes](https://www.rotary.org/our-causes) to learn about Rotary's work in supporting education and get involved.



“It’s one of the big reasons that people have turned against media, but I think it’s an overcorrection,” says Freeman, who is completing a master’s in media and communications at the London School of Economics with the support of a global grant. “A lot of people have turned to independent journalists who are more willing to incorporate their own personal experience into their reporting. But without a traditional media apparatus — without standard practices for ensuring accuracy — it’s hard to know who’s trustworthy.”

On the other hand, independent voices can be crucial in countries where the news organizations are restricted by repressive governments or simply underfunded. When Zimbabwean Rotary Peace Fellow Thomas Sithole realized his hometown was being ignored by major media outlets, he launched a community radio station. Then he founded the Zimbabwe Centre for Media & Information Literacy to teach people to be more critical and tell their own stories effectively. He believes the two skills are intertwined.

“We tell citizens how to arm themselves against disinformation and misinformation,” he says. (Misinformation is any incorrect information, while disinformation refers to falsehoods that are spread to deceive others.) “We also train citizen journalists and community-based or grassroots content creators. We teach basic skills like fact-checking and ensuring that the story you’re telling is balanced. We’re trying to build a movement across the region, because we see that there is no appetite from our governments to push for policies that support media and information literacy among citizens.”

Even as he works to train an army of storytellers, Sithole worries about the future. Like many people who teach media literacy, he’s afraid the rise of artificial intelligence will make it easier to create and spread disinformation.

“For unsuspecting citizens, like in rural communities, it’s creating



The video game *Agents of Influence* is designed to increase students’ media literacy. It was co-created by Anahita Dalmia, a member of the Rotary Club of Newport Beach, California.

of adults in the U.S. and the UK considered misleading or AI-generated images a problem for society, but nearly three-quarters weren’t very confident they could identify them. And less than 40 percent reported that they frequently did basic fact-checking on potential misinformation. Such steps may include investigating the source, checking the original publication date, or even just reading the caption. The assumption that media literacy is simply a matter of separating truth from fiction is itself inaccurate.

“We need to be able to judge things like: What’s the bias behind it? Who created it? Who’s benefit-

ing from it? So there’s not a simple fix here,” says Jeff Share, who teaches media literacy at the University of California, Los Angeles, and has authored books including *The Critical Media Literacy Guide*. “We need to slow down and investigate. It might mean it’s going to take me a couple more minutes, but I can go to some different sources. I can also recognize that some are more legitimate than others.”

Many people already believe that ideological biases and financial interests guide major news outlets’ coverage. But that thinking may do more harm than good, says Rotary scholar Alex Freeman.



BY THE NUMBERS

68%

Share of Americans interested in learning how to better distinguish between true and false information online

2011

Year UNESCO began commemorating Global Media and Information Literacy Week

59%

Portion of American households with children that report some type of media literacy education in their public schools



Anahita Dalmia is CEO of game developer Alterea Inc. “We’re teaching kids to understand media bias, logical fallacies, and confirmation bias,” she says.

a lot of challenges,” he says. “It becomes very difficult now to tell whether a piece of content is true or false, especially if it’s in the form of videos or images. It’s something that is really a challenge even to the professional journalist.”

Some believe the key to countering the misuse and dangers of AI lies with the next generation. Erin McNeill meets a lot of students through her job as CEO of the U.S.-based nonprofit Media Literacy Now. She says she’s heartened by what she sees.

“AI is definitely making it harder to identify good sources and credible sources. But you can use the same skills” to analyze both AI-generated content and human-made visuals and text, McNeill says. “Young people are so creative and smart. We’re educating them so

they can rise to the challenge of the world. They’re going to find solutions as long as they’re given the skills and the education they need.”

The same belief animates Dalmia as she continues to develop and promote *Agents of Influence*, which she hopes will be finished in two years. She has presented the game to numerous Rotary clubs and hopes members will play a role in getting it in schools.

“This started as a passion project, but there was a huge demand from parents who were concerned about how social media was shaping their kids’ perspectives and interactions with the outside world,” Dalmia says. “The resounding feedback we’ve gotten is, ‘Can I have this for my kid who thinks TikTok is a reliable source of information?’”

— ETELKA LEHOCZKY

Short takes

The Service Project Center at [spc.rotary.org](http://spc.rotary.org) is Rotary’s new digital hub for club service activities. The platform, which replaces Rotary Showcase, offers members improved ways to share and browse projects.

Rotaract UN Days, a conference in Geneva that empowers future leaders and inspires them to build peace, takes place 30 October-2 November. Learn more at [rotaractundays.com](http://rotaractundays.com).



PHOTOGRAPHS: (BOTTOM) JASPER MCEVOY; (TOP) GETTY IMAGES





PROFILE

# Life and breath

*In the wake of tragedy, a Rotarian works to save infants' lives*

**Charlotte Israel**  
Rotary Club of  
Palm Harbor,  
Florida

**C**harlotte Israel has lived through every parent's nightmare: She couldn't save her 45-year-old daughter Dorian Matthews when she died suddenly in 2020, likely of COVID-19 troubles.

"I went in to wake her up to go to work, and she was lying on her bed," Israel recalls. "I called [emergency services] and they told me to try giving her CPR. But I had never done CPR. That has always been on my mind: Maybe if I had the training, I could have helped my daughter."

Israel got CPR training, but she wanted to make a larger impact. She learned about Helping Babies Breathe, a program that trains health workers to resuscitate newborns who aren't breathing. Birth asphyxia kills an estimated 900,000 infants each year, but many can be saved if resuscitation is begun immediately. Israel, who has roots in Sierra Leone, collaborated with Rotary members in the country to train 656 health workers there.

"It was just astounding to me that so many babies were dying because no one was trained in those basic techniques," she says. "I made a vow: If I can help it, no mother is going to have to go through that."

A pastor and 2023-24 club president, Israel brought a different kind of first aid training to several clubs closer to home. She organized an eight-hour course in mental health first aid, which taught people to identify their own emotional problems and support others with struggles.

"It's just like on a plane, when the oxygen mask comes down," she says. "You've got to put it on yourself before you can help others."

— ETELKA LEHOCZKY

*Read about the Helping Babies Breathe program at [rotary.org/fighting-their-first-breath](https://rotary.org/fighting-their-first-breath).*

More than 880 Rotaract clubs earned the 2023-24 Rotaract Giving Certificate for clubs whose members donated a total of at least \$100 to The Rotary Foundation.

Aidan O'Leary, who worked closely with Rotary members as the World Health Organization's director for polio eradication, died 6 August.



World Interact Week is 4-10 November. The annual celebration commemorates the certification of the first Interact club on 5 November 1962.

# People of action around the globe

By Brad Webber

## \$2.4 billion

Share of Canada's 2022 GDP from live performance industry



### Canada

The annual Concert to Feed the Need has raised nearly \$90,000 since 2018 to offer meals in the Durham region in Ontario, through a network of food banks, meal and snack programs, shelters, and other social service providers. Feed Ontario reports an increase of 47 percent in the number of employed people using food banks since 2018. "With the rising cost of food and the impact of the pandemic still being felt, food bank use is soaring," says Joe Solway, a member of the Rotary Club of Bowmanville, which initiated the event. Members of six other Rotary clubs also sell sponsorships and tickets and promote the show, an eclectic mix of pop, folk, country, rock, blues, gospel, "and maybe this year some opera," Solway says. Media attention surrounding the concert and its acclaimed performers helped it yield nearly \$23,000 in 2023. The 2024 event will take place on 8 December.

Rotary Club of Bowmanville

### Guatemala

The Rotary Club of Guatemala La Reforma's Upcycling Art Festival featured whimsical sculptures and paintings created with cast-off materials such as paper and cardboard, wood scraps, glass, plastics, metal, rubber, and electronic waste. Like many countries, Guatemala struggles with solid waste management, notes Esther Brol, a past club president who pioneered the event in 2023. "Pushing artists out of their comfort zone by challenging them to create works of art from waste has generated wonderful results," including raising funds for club projects and The Rotary Foundation, she says. The club partnered with the Rotaract Club of Guatemala La Reforma and the Rotary Club of Los Altos Quetzaltenango to organize the three-week exposition and sale that concluded 5 June.

Rotary Club of Guatemala La Reforma

## \$34.9 million

Record auction price for work by a Latin American artist



### Bulgaria

In 2007, the Rotary Club of Sofia-Balkan teamed up with the Bulgarian Basketball Federation and the National Sports Academy to form a basketball club for wheelchair users, and the project has kept growing. Over the years, the club has lured coaches from the European Wheelchair Basketball Federation to offer a player clinic, cultivated referee skills, and established a Rotary Community Corps to help. On 13 February, in conjunction with a Rotary zone event, the Bulgarian team faced off against a Serbian team for a friendly match. RI's president at the time, Gordon McNally, sounded the starting whistle and tossed the ball into play. The club's signature project is a point of pride for Rotarians, says Past Club President Krasimir Veselinov, and several organizations that advocate for people with disabilities have signed on to support the venture.



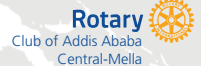
# 47%

Share of urban populations in Europe interested in basketball



### Ethiopia

With the wind at their backs, members of the Rotary Fellowship of Kites and its founder, Henock Alemayehu, gathered for a day of kite making and flying with 250 children, many of them displaced by conflict among the more than 80 ethnic groups in Ethiopia. The children and volunteers converged on the grounds of an elementary school in Quiha, in the northern Tigray region, for the Ashengoda Kite Festival on 9 June. "The simplicity of this activity carried profound significance, offering a rare moment of peace and joy for these children," says Alemayehu, a member of the Rotary Club of Addis Ababa Central-Mella. The kite fellowship, which has more than 100 members from 12 countries, is "creating lasting change through the simple yet powerful act of kite flying," says Alemayehu.



# 200 B.C.

Earliest written account of kite flying

# 9-12 hours

Recommended amount of sleep for children ages 6 to 12



### Kenya

Recognizing the importance of sleep to child development, the Rotary Club of Nairobi delivered bed kits for 8,000 school children in 2024, a milestone in a long-running project. Over the past 16 years, the club has partnered with Toronto-based charity Sleeping Children Around the World to supply bed kits to a total of 80,000 children at a cost of about \$4 million, says club member Mumbi King. Each kit includes a mat or mattress, bedding, and mosquito netting, along with school supplies and clothing. The kits have an outsize influence on children's lives, since better sleep improves health and school performance, King says. Twenty Nairobi Rotarians mobilized for the five-day delivery mission in February, serving the town of Naro Moru at the base of Mount Kenya and other villages, including in the Maasai Mara region. "The heat couldn't keep the team from visiting the villages and interacting with the families," says King.

## GOODWILL

# Grow your legacy

Creative ideas for promoting Rotary's Endowment

By Carol Tichelman

**W**hen I joined Rotary 30 years ago to get more involved in my community, I didn't know much about the organization. I set about learning as much as I could and soon discovered The Rotary Foundation. Impressed with its impact, I became a regular donor to the Annual Fund and to PolioPlus.

Everyone's donation journey is different and changes with life circumstances. As my career advanced and my finances became more stable, I increased my giving and eventually created my own personal endowment to provide a legacy that will live on beyond me.

Creating a legacy and promoting awareness of The Rotary Foundation Endowment can be fun and creative. The Foundation launched a campaign to grow the Endowment to \$2.025 billion by 2025. A celebration will be held in my home Zone 28 when we host the Rotary International Convention in Calgary, 21-25 June.

You can help achieve this goal.

As an endowment/major gifts adviser, I participated in one innovative approach with fellow adviser Mary Shackleton from Zone 32 at a Rotary institute in Toronto. We sat at the registration table and passed out apples with QR code stickers that linked to the District Guide to Growing the Endowment. The guide materials include a video titled "Your Rotary Legacy," which uses an apple tree to represent how our gifts to the Rotary Endowment ensure our legacies carry on. Affixing the QR

code on the apples was a great way to make a connection with the video for attendees.

My colleague Senior Major Gifts Officer Carolyn Ferguson came up with the idea to challenge each district in our zone starting in the 2023-24 Rotary year to secure 25 new gifts to the Endowment by 2025. These gifts of \$10,000 or more can be outright, pledged, or planned gifts/bequests, and designated to what matters most to the donor. If each district in our zone achieves this, that would be \$5 million toward the Foundation's goal. Pretty impressive stuff!

I now challenge every other zone and district to join us in growing Rotary's Endowment to do good in the world — and then come to Calgary in 2025 to celebrate our success! Here's how:

**Raise awareness.** When people think of The Rotary Foundation, they often think of the Annual Fund or PolioPlus. Some may not even be aware that the Foundation has an Endowment. The Endowment Awareness PowerPoint, available with the District Guide to Growing the Endowment, covers the basics. The slideshow is ready to present with speaker notes for each frame. Consider sharing the presentation at your next club meeting.

**Promote Rotary's Promise Club.** Rotary launched a new club designation called Rotary's Promise Club, which is achieved when 100 percent of a club's members con-

tribute \$1,000 to the Endowment outright or through a bequest. Rotary's Promise Club status is a great way to get members thinking about what legacy they might want to leave. The Introducing Rotary's Promise Club newsletter, offered with the District Guide, is an excellent resource to share with your club to spark the conversation.

**Encourage gifts and commitments to the Endowment.** Once your club is informed and excited, you can begin encouraging members to support the Endowment. The Know Your Enduring Impact tool accompanying the District Guide includes the various gift and commitment designations. And when members have included Rotary in their estate plans, please remember to say thank you!

When you endow a gift through Rotary, your donation will "share forever," leaving a legacy for your family, your Rotary friends, and your district. Like any other gifts to the Foundation, endowed gifts are credited to clubs and districts. If an endowed gift is directed to SHARE, it will provide annual spendable earnings that benefit your district forever.

This truly is about legacy and the story you want to share about your values — what is important to you in the work that we do. It is the example you set and the memory you leave for those you love.

*Carol Tichelman is an endowment/major gifts adviser for Zone 28 and a member of the Rotary Club of Chilliwack, British Columbia.*

Find resources to promote Rotary's Endowment, including the District Guide to Growing the Endowment, at [rotary.org/shareforever](https://rotary.org/shareforever).



TOGETHER, WE

# END POLIO

Support Miles to End Polio and the Rotary team as they ride in El Tour de Tucson in November to raise funds to end polio.

Donate at [endpolio.org/donate](https://endpolio.org/donate).

Rotary



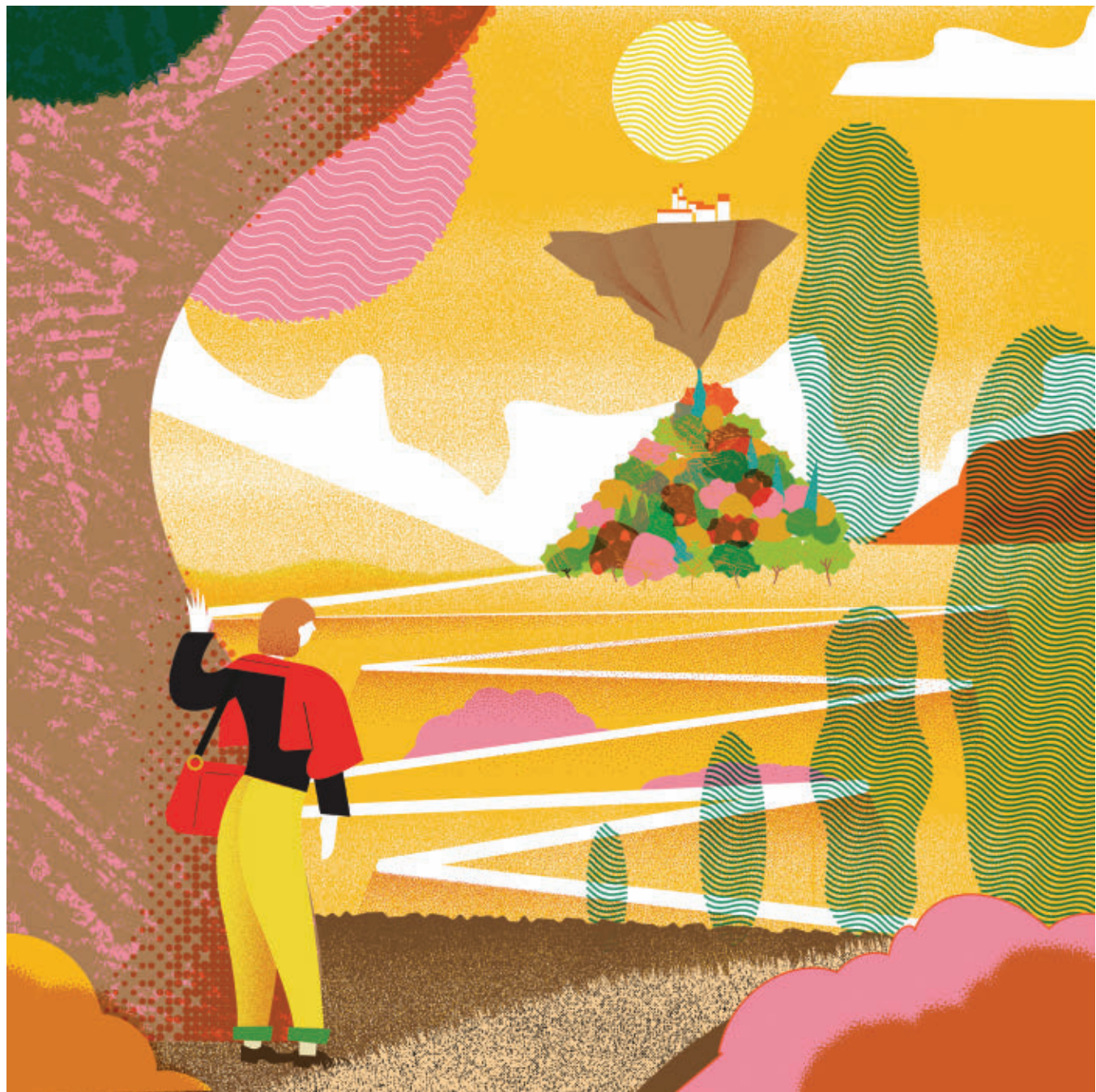
PEOPLE OF ACTION

ESSAY

# The long and winding road

As was the case with Paul Harris, people find their way to Rotary by a variety of different routes

By Calodagh McCumiskey



**T**he autobiography of Paul Harris is entitled *My Road to Rotary*. As the book explains, that road extended from Racine, Wisconsin, to Wallingford, Vermont, and on to Princeton, New Jersey, and Des Moines, Iowa — whence, after earning a law degree, the book's author, as he put it, “made a fool of himself for five years” while roving across the United States and in “foreign lands,” before finally settling (permanently, although still preserving aspects of his vagabond life) in Chicago, where he founded Rotary in 1905.

I began my journey toward Rotary nearly 30 years ago, far from home. I'd been doing aid work overseas after finishing my studies at University College Dublin, which was situated in the city where I was born and grew up. My first posting was in Angola from 1995 to 1999. I was working with an Irish agency called Trócaire that placed me with Catholic Relief Services, a U.S.-based nongovernmental organization with which Trócaire had established a global partnership.

Angola was emerging — temporarily, it turned out — from a protracted civil war, and it was in the middle of a demobilization and a lot of different peace initiatives. My time there was a fascinating and intense experience. Among other things, my work included helping with a program that distributed food and some nonfood items to warring parts of the country. It was well organized and relatively safe if you followed the security protocols. But land mines were a threat, and sadly, I did lose a couple of friends.

I ended up staying with Catholic Relief Services and was given the opportunity to go to East Timor, now named Timor-Leste. I worked there for about a year. It had been very closed off for years, but now the country was separating from Indonesia, and the United Nations was administering a transitional government. Suddenly many people from the international community had arrived, and there was a lot happening in a short period of time. We were rebuilding houses, distributing food, and establishing a big justice and peacebuilding program. It was another challenging time because the people who lived there were emerging from difficult circumstances.

My next stop was Ethiopia, where I worked from 2000 to 2004. USAID had a

long-established food program there, and we were the lead agency in distributing food to different places. The Ethiopians I met were wonderfully warm people. Just as I had seen in Angola and East Timor, I was struck by how large-hearted people could be, even when they found themselves facing tough circumstances.

I first encountered Rotary during my four years working in India. Catholic Relief Services had 12 offices there, and I managed six of them. India is such a big country that you have everything under the sun there. All your senses are awakened, and everything is heightened. It's like living life with the volume turned up.

Catholic Relief Services was part of India's national polio eradication program, which in 2005 was in its 10th year. We were working with the government and with different community mobilizers, and I was amazed at the incredible partnerships that Rotary facilitated. I saw right away that Rotary was a very intelligent organization. Its members seemed to know instinctively how to get to the source of a problem. They saw what needed to be done and brought together all the relevant stakeholders to ensure that it was done properly. They were very strategic and very practical, but they were also very human. All that left an indelible impression on me.

After 14 years, which concluded with four months in AIDS-ravaged Swaziland (now Eswatini), I came home to Ireland, expecting to stay only six months. I wanted to spend some time with my mother, who was sick. Since I had been overseas, my parents had moved from Dublin to Wexford, and after a while, I decided to remain there and reinvent my-

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**Rotary members seemed to know instinctively how to get to the source of a problem. That left an indelible impression on me.**

self. What's more, I had seen the Rotary sign in town and thought to myself, OK, I want to join that.

Today I pursue a variety of vocations. I consult with companies on corporate well-being programs, helping their employees to be less stressed, more focused, and more engaged. I also work with individuals as a life coach and meditation teacher, helping them to build resilience and achieve peace, balance, and success at work and in their personal lives. In addition, I work with organizations that send people overseas to work in stressful environments; I support the well-being of their staff before, during, and after their deployment. And for more than seven years now, I have been a proud member of the Rotary Club of Wexford.

It's remarkable how so many aspects of Rotary align with the different things to which I've devoted my life. The similarities between the projects I was involved in overseas and Rotary's many great accomplishments around the world are self-evident. But even my work in promoting personal well-being and the methods I recommend to achieve it have their parallels in Rotary.

It may seem terribly obvious, but problems get solved when people get along, and they don't when they don't. That's one of the things I appreciate about Rotary, the emphasis placed on friendship and fellowship. That underpins everything. It can transcend differences between people and differences between cultures. What Rotary does is make everybody part of the human family — once again, extremely simple, yet very, very powerful.

And it's not just the friendship and fellowship within Rotary clubs. Because of the way Rotary members design their projects, everybody working on those projects comes together by following the tenets of The Four-Way Test. It's amazing how asking and honestly answering a couple of simple questions — Is it true? Is it fair to all concerned? — can unite people on a very constructive basis. And that's why Rotary is so successful, because everybody does come together.

Those methods are not merely strategic, but large-hearted and smart. It's genius on so many levels, the way The Four-Way Test was conceived and designed and the way that it works. Which brings me to my current focus



on people's well-being. A huge part of our well-being is based on having good relationships, not just with our family and our friends, but with society at large. That means not only the people we know, but the people we don't know: the people whom we bump into on the road, in the restaurant, the airport. It's important that you have good relationships in those situations as well, and adhering to the principles behind Rotary can really bring that alive for us in our daily lives.

That desire for good relationships and the values that sustain them are universal. I see them in action every time I engage with a member of Rotary, be it here in Wexford or in my travels around the world. Rotary sustains my well-being, even as it is good for society's well-being.

Here's another obvious fact: If you do things that make you feel good, do things every day that energize you, those acts help you to feel good about yourself. And every impulse in Rotary is toward doing good, be it in small club projects within our local communities or the large global endeavors in one of Rotary's areas of focus, led by the signature initiative to eradicate polio around the world. Talk about moments that can help people feel good about themselves.

It's important to remember that trying can be as important as succeeding. Without the attempt, there is no success. Granted, not every attempt is going to succeed, or succeed in the way we had hoped or planned. That prompts me to offer a little advice — which, after all, is what I do.

A lot of people, the very conscientious among us, want everything to be perfect. And when things aren't perfect, they focus on what's not perfect. Focusing too much on what is not "perfect" only adds to their stress, which can deal a severe blow to their well-being and their happiness. That's no good for anybody. You end up seeing only the problem. That negative concentration is a stressor, and you can end up being merely a worrier.

They say that anxiety comes from an unhealthy focus on the future, and depression from an unhealthy focus on the past. That is why meditation can be so valuable: It connects you to the here, to the now, to the moment. Obviously when you're in the moment, you have better quality relationships and become more productive. Once you get a little bit of momentum, you feel excited and happy. And that leads to accomplishing your most ambitious goals.

Difficulty comes into everybody's life. None of us is immune to the storms. But learning to weather those tough times leaves us better equipped for what lies ahead. Straight roads don't make good drivers. They leave us poorly prepared for the more challenging highways we'll inevitably encounter.

The same holds true if you are going to successfully navigate life's switchbacks, bends, and curves. The problems Paul Harris experienced and confronted as a child and young adult helped him create Rotary and transform his small Chicago club into a great international force for good. And the things I encountered in my travels and in my work abroad help me be a more fulfilled and engaged person today.

In his autobiography, Paul Harris revealed his road to Rotary. Now you know mine — and you know why, now that I have found my way to Rotary, I intend to stay there and thrive. ■

*A member of the Rotary Club of Wexford, Ireland, and an assistant governor of District 1160, Calodagh McCumiskey is the CEO of Spiritual Earth, which promotes personal and professional growth through well-being.*





# GIVE US YOUR BEST SHOT

The *Rotary* magazine Photo Awards return in the June 2025 issue. It's your chance to share your vision of the world, be it in glorious color or classic black and white. Members of Rotary and their families may submit photos until 31 December. But don't wait: Send us your images today. Submit your photos at [rotary.org/photoawards](https://rotary.org/photoawards).

PHOTOGRAPHS: (FROM TOP) ERIC STRAND; LEIGH ANN WILSON; KEITH MARSH

# From *the* ruins

By JP SWENSON and HANNAH SHAW

Photography by FAID ELGZIRY



More than a year after powerful earthquakes hit Turkey,  
Rotary's relief efforts remain for many a path out of the wreckage



# It was just past 4 a.m.

when Ferit Binzet finally drifted off to sleep. All night, one of his cats meowed and paced through his apartment in the city of Adıyaman, in southeastern Turkey. It was, looking back, as if the unsettled animal knew something was different about this night.

At 4:17 a.m., Binzet knew it too.

Loud booms shook him and his wife awake. Their bathroom walls exploded into the hallway. The kitchen caved in. The building lurched side to side. Binzet cried out to God.

“Please don’t take my soul.”

They ran from their crumbling home into a cold, heavy rainstorm, only to look back and see Binzet’s brother, who was living with them at the time, staring out a window, unmoving. Waves of concrete rubble rolled through the streets. Buildings swayed and fell. Screams pierced the roar of rain smacking against pavement.

After 85 seconds of sheer terror, the earth stilled.

Binzet went back inside the ruined building. He slapped his brother out of his shocked daze. “We can’t leave without the cats,” pleaded his wife, Mehtap Bostancı Binzet. They dug through the dust and debris, found their two cats, and left their home for what would be the last time.

**T**urkey is known for its deadly earthquakes. The country sits at the junction of three major tectonic plates, with a fourth, smaller one squeezed between the others. (Scientists use the analogy of pinching a watermelon seed between your fingers and watching it squirt out.) Still, with a 7.8 magnitude, the quake, which occurred on 6 February 2023, was the strongest to hit the country in more than 80 years.

Its epicenter was near Kahramanmaraş in south central Turkey, near the border with Syria and about 75 miles from Adıyaman. What scientists called a “cascade of ruptures” tore along the East Anatolian Fault’s clamped rocks in both directions for a staggering 190 miles in total, shifting the earth more than 26 feet in some places. Nine hours later, a second quake, similar in size at 7.5 magnitude, struck north of the city in what seismologists call a “doublet,” compounding the damage.

Up to 9.1 million people were directly affected, according to some estimates. Between Turkey and Syria, the quakes left more than 50,000 people dead, over 100,000 injured, and several million homeless.

People felt the trembling far from the epicenter, including in Egypt, Greece, Armenia, and Iraq. The first quake awoke Emre Öztürk, then governor of Rotary District 2430, that morning at his home in Ankara, about 300 miles away. Within hours, he and the two other Turkish governors, Suat Baysan of District 2420 and Serdar Durusüt of District 2440, were on a video call to start mounting a response. “The first thing we did was turn on the TV and try to understand what happened,” Baysan says. “And we immediately realized the power of the earthquake.”

That same morning, they outlined a three-pronged plan that would grow into a multimillion-dollar

Millions of people were left homeless after earthquakes struck Turkey and Syria in February 2023.





Ferit Binzet, a member of the Rotary Club of Adiyaman-Nemrut, Turkey, lost 41 family members in the disaster.



global relief effort: fulfilling immediate emergency relief needs, providing shelter in the form of container cities, and meeting the long-term needs for everything from water treatment to kids' education.

Throughout the day, Öztürk, whose district encompasses the affected area, called the Rotary club presidents and district team members who live there. He learned that some Rotary friends were under the rubble. In the end, six Rotarians and Rotaractors died in the quake.

One of his calls was to Binzet, who was then the president of the Rotary Club of Adiyaman-Nemrut and would become a key contributor to relief efforts despite his own staggering personal losses, which he had only begun to tally.

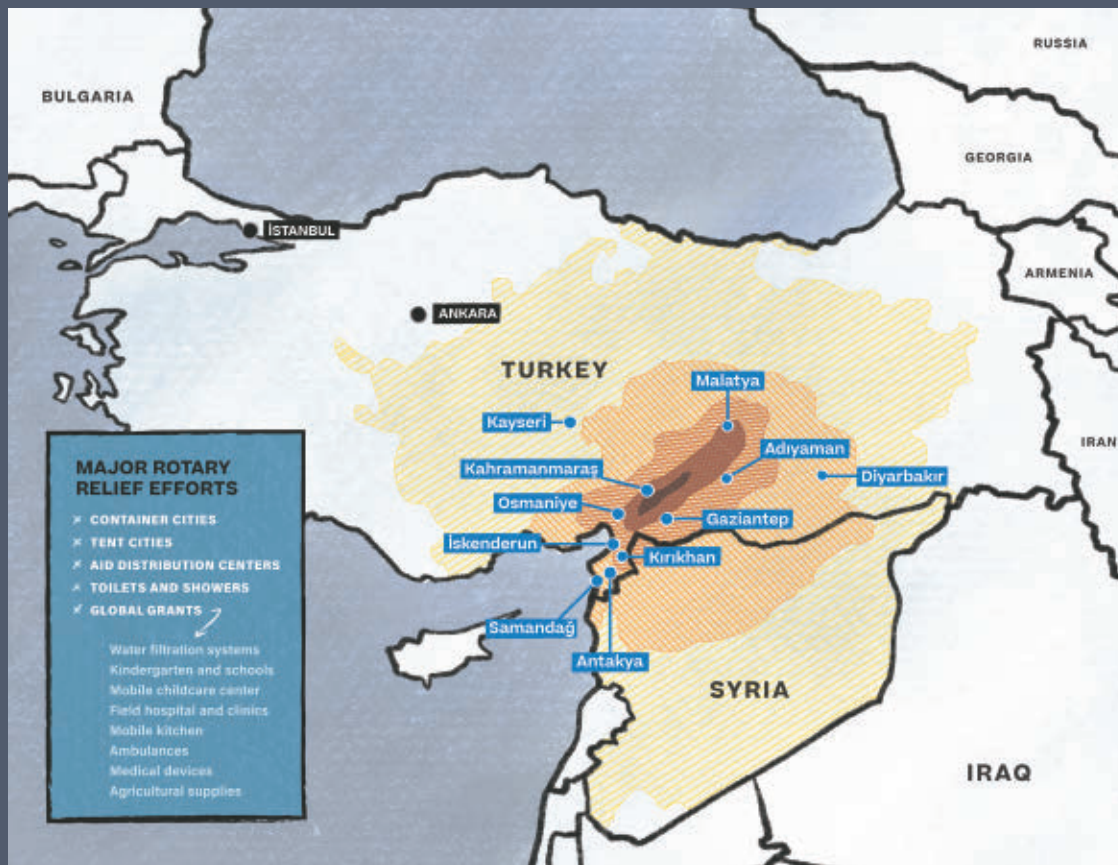
**A** video journalist for Turkey's NTV news, Binzet recorded the aftermath on his cellphone as he and his family emerged from the wreckage. About three of every five buildings in his neighborhood had collapsed. Muffled cries emanated from the rubble: *Save us. Rescue us. We can't breathe.*

In the early afternoon, he and his brother went to check on their mother. They were especially concerned about her because she had Alzheimer's. The door was open. Her nurse had left, and they found her inside, confused. "I'm dizzy," she said. "What's happening?" The two urged her to leave, but in her confusion she did not seem to grasp the situation and refused. At 1:24 p.m. the second earthquake struck. Binzet ran outside as a nearby building crumbled. Binzet's brother jumped from a balcony just before the platform collapsed. (Their mother, still in the building, survived that second quake but has since died.)

Buildings weakened by the first earthquake were quickly consumed by the second. "It was like a horror movie," Binzet says. People were gathering personal items from their homes when the second earthquake hit. Others who had been trapped since morning by debris or, in some cases, by the steel gates on their doors were crushed in the afternoon. One of Binzet's cousins was rescued in the morning but died of a heart attack in the afternoon when a building collapsed near him.

In total, Binzet lost 41 relatives — an unimaginable toll. In time it would be felt especially hard during holidays like Ramadan, when he used to visit 15 or 20 homes among his extended family. After the disaster, that once joyful promenade shrank to just two homes. In an interview more than a year later, he weeps at the thought, adding, "We don't have anybody here. All our relatives are gone."

But in those days after the quakes, he was focused on surviving. There was no food and no electricity. In desperation, people had emptied market shelves



**BY THE NUMBERS**

**\$2.7 million**  
Contributions to a dedicated disaster relief fund through The Rotary Foundation

**\$1.4 million**  
Global grants dedicated to the earthquake response

**50,000+**  
People who died in the earthquakes

**Millions**  
Displaced or left homeless

within hours. On that first cold night, everyone remained in the darkened streets, sleeping in any shelter they could find. Binzet and six others took turns sleeping in his brother-in-law's car.

While recording scenes on his camera, he wandered into a gym where it looked like people had taken shelter. He shot video of a dark room full of people under blankets. "Why are people lying on the floor?" he asked the security guard. "Those are dead bodies," the guard replied. Binzet fainted.

**A**s news spread of the devastation across southern Turkey, Rotary clubs in other parts of the country were desperate to do something. "There was a desire to send stuff immediately," Baysan says, "but if you do, is there anybody that will take it, distribute it, make sure it goes to the right people?" The day after the earthquakes, he, Öztürk, and Durusüt met with the clubs in their districts and outlined their developing plan.

They quickly set up help centers in six hard-hit cities. Assigned Rotary club members coordinated the centers, discovering residents' needs and relaying them so that donors could send the right supplies. Rotary, Rotaract, and Interact clubs in the three districts sent more than 200 trucks of emergency





supplies, including food, water, generators, heaters, diapers, sanitary pads, fuel, toys, and body bags.

“The whole Rotary family in Turkey acted as one,” Öztürk says. “We used all of our power, all of our collaboration, to do something to create some relief for the earthquake victims.”

The day of the earthquakes, temperatures were only 37 degrees Fahrenheit at the epicenter, and in the following days they dipped below freezing. The rainstorms changed to snowstorms in some areas, and survivors battled the windchill and hypothermia. District 2440 had an existing supply of tents and immediately established a tent city in İskenderun, on the Mediterranean coast, that Rotary members administered for more than a month before the country’s disaster agency took it over. “We were the first NGO [nongovernmental organization] that was present in that region,” Baysan says. Tent cities in Adiyaman and Kırıkhan quickly followed. Rotary clubs worked with ShelterBox, Rotary’s project partner in disaster relief, to distribute over 2,500 tents and played a pivotal role in that organization’s relief efforts by making introductions to local leaders.

Öztürk spent the next 40 days trekking back and forth between the three tent cities, six coordination centers, and his home in Ankara to report back on what he saw and plan future steps. Baysan and Durusüt similarly traveled into the field to witness the needs and help.

Meanwhile, Rotary’s global membership mobilized to support their work. Within hours of the earthquakes, Jennifer Jones, then the Rotary International president, activated Rotary’s disaster response efforts, and within the week, Rotary established a dedicated disaster response fund that received more than \$2.7 million in contributions. Additional aid efforts used Rotary Foundation global grants totaling about \$1.4 million. Projects were confined to Turkey since Rotary has no clubs in Syria, where the earthquakes compounded a humanitarian crisis triggered by more than a decade of civil war.

Lifesaving relief and direct donations streamed in from all over the Rotary world, and so did volunteers. A Rotary member and doctor from Indonesia texted Öztürk, “I’m coming with medical supplies and will be there in two days.” The doctor lived in one of the tent cities for weeks and treated people.

**T**oday in Adiyaman, children bike and play in the streets, conversation is exchanged over aromatic platters of kebab, and the melodic Muslim call to prayer crackles over loudspeakers five times a day. But even as life goes on in many respects, in other ways time seems to have stopped, like the clock tower that stands tall in the

Above: Donations from Rotary members supplied 350 container homes for displaced people.

Opposite (from left): Ferit Binzet, Suat Baysan, and Emre Öztürk visit a field hospital for earthquake survivors in Adiyaman. A Rotary Foundation global grant helped fund the project.







Above: The modified shipping containers can be outfitted with the comforts of home such as porches and gardens.

Opposite: Sadet Pişirici lives in one of the homes provided by Rotary.



**Tune in to the Rotary Voices podcast and journey with reporters JP Swenson and Hannah Shaw as they encounter stories of loss and hope in Turkey's earthquake zone. Don't miss this two-part series, released 11 November at [on.rotary.org/podcast](https://on.rotary.org/podcast).**

city center, its four faces frozen in time at 4:17, the moment the first earthquake struck.

Before the disaster, Adiyaman was known for its blend of archaeological sites and modern architecture, its stunning natural landscapes, its apricots and pistachios. Now, mountains once blocked from view by towering buildings have reclaimed the city's backdrop. Shells of destroyed buildings and abandoned businesses loom next to sweeping fields of rubble. Distant cranes offer a constant reminder that Adiyaman is in an extended period of transition.

Rotary members from around the region know Adiyaman. Its province is the site of an annual project in which they accompany people with disabilities on a hike up Mount Nemrut. The UNESCO World Heritage Site features colossal stone heads and statues at the tomb of a first century B.C. ruler of a Greco-Persian kingdom. Rotary relief efforts focused here and in Hatay province on the Mediterranean coast, places with a lot of damage and strong Rotary cultures. "A Rotary club can change the fate of a city," Öztürk says. "If we didn't have Rotary clubs in Adiyaman and Hatay, we wouldn't likely have been able to deliver this much aid."

There was also the "Ferit effect," he says of Binzet. "He was always in the field and knew the needs," Öztürk says. "The city of Adiyaman should erect a statue of Ferit."

Binzet was born in Adiyaman and has lived there his entire life. He joined Rotary in 2008. As a journalist, Binzet had the communication skills and the reach

to advocate for the city. In the early days after the earthquakes, for example, he took a video of a toilet overflowing with waste and menstrual hygiene products for the news. Following the broadcast, people all over the region sent menstrual products. "He is a born communicator," Baysan says.

His wife, Mehtap, a photographer and designer, joined the Rotary Club of Adiyaman-Nemrut shortly after the earthquakes and was the club's president in 2023-24.

Adiyaman became the location of one of four container cities that Rotary members supported in the affected region, the second prong of their plans. In total, donations from Rotary members supplied 350 of the prefabricated small homes. The temporary city on the northern edge of Adiyaman includes two streets of Rotary-sponsored homes: Imagine Street and Hope Street.

The modified shipping containers, laid out in tight rows, provide enough space for essentials such as toilets, showers, cooking utensils, beds, and air conditioning, as well as comforts of home such as televisions, porches, and gardens.

Sadet Pişirici, 74, lives alone in a Rotary-provided container. Before the earthquakes, she lived a "proper life," she says. Her hopes echo those of survivors all over Turkey: She wants her grandchildren to go to school and become active citizens. She wants to maintain her health so she can keep walking and enjoying life.

Along with the hundreds of other residents of this container city, Pişirici benefits from Rotary's field hospital, a short distance from her home. The hospital has been operational since April 2023 and serves about 200 patients every day. It has its own generator, an ambulance, monitoring and ultrasound devices, a blood testing lab, and a shower that doctors can use between shifts.

Today, chief physician Mesut Kocadayı sits with a patient surrounded by the hospital's white canvas walls. Working as a doctor in the city, he began treating his fellow survivors in the wreckage immediately after escaping his own home.

Survivors suffered significant wounds and many required amputations. The health system collapsed momentarily when the city was struggling to even bury its dead. But other health care workers streamed into Adiyaman from China to Sweden to help.

"The first three to four days were the most difficult because there was no electricity, water, and heating," Kocadayı says. People lost their appetites, suffered from scabies and gastrointestinal diseases, and endured poor hygienic conditions. Some injuries will last a lifetime.



**“The children  
needed  
materials  
like toys and  
books. With  
the support of  
Rotary, they  
got all of it.”**





**M**ehtap and Ferit Binzet step out of their car into the stillness of their old neighborhood. The familiar call to prayer buzzes from the loudspeaker of a distant mosque, its only competition the occasional passing car. Their old apartment spills into the street around them, where it will stay until the city clears the rubble.

This was the building they moved into 13 years ago after they got married, but one day the remaining pieces of it will be erased. “All my memories are here,” Ferit Binzet says.

Concrete and glass crunch beneath their feet. They call out for one of the stray cats they took care of before the earthquakes. “Gece!” The cat, whose name means “night,” dutifully appears.

After the earthquakes, the two sought help to deal with their emotional trauma. Their therapist recommended replacing painful memories with positive ones. That’s what brings them to their old home every other day, when they come to feed the stray cats. It helps, but it’s hard. “Every time I come here, I live that day again,” Mehtap Bostancı Binzet says. “It’s not easy.”

They remember escaping the house, the sound of the first earthquake. And they feel the pain of others who, like them, are trying to survive surviving. “Everywhere we look, we remember our loved ones. We also suffer from their pains.”

But they find that helping others helps them. Their optimism, their gratitude, breaks through. “Thank God we have friends all around the world,” Ferit Binzet says, as Gece observes from a nearby cement wall. “It’s better to say ‘Thank God’ than ‘I wish.’” ■



**T**he disaster affected nearly every aspect of daily life, which shows in the assortment of projects that Rotary members have supported: building water treatment plants, providing farmers seedlings and cows, opening a veterinary clinic. “Rotary has done great, great work here,” Baysan says. “People are working to rebuild and reshape their lives. I’m very happy to see that.”

But when looking at the results from the third prong of the Rotarians’ response plan — sustainable long-term projects — a kindergarten might be the most appropriate place to start.

After one kindergarten in Adiyaman was destroyed, funds from Rotary members in Japan paid to build a new school from the ground up.

Taking a tour, a group of Rotarians greets the school’s principal, Zeliha Özlem Atlı, with a warm “merhaba” as they approach the entrance. Decorations from a recent holiday still hang amid toys and kid-size chairs. The principal’s goal: make this the best kindergarten in Adiyaman.

She’s made great progress. “The children needed materials like toys and books,” she says. “With the support of Rotary, they got all of it.” The school is on the city’s outskirts. She says that no one can believe there is such a nice school in the area.

“My first project is taking them to theaters and movies,” she says, explaining that many students have never been. “Then, I want to take them to other cities, because they’ve only seen Adiyaman.”

To Atlı, this school is a family. “The teachers also have trauma; some are still living in containers,” she says. “We support each other as a family. We don’t use the word colleague. I’m not the principal here. I’m the big sister.”

Atlı says the kids are in a much better place than a year ago. Every morning, they hug their teachers, who have become their role models. Most of the children, she says, want to become teachers someday.

Opposite (top): Baysan, Öztürk, and Binzet visit with a teacher and his class in Adiyaman; their classroom, provided by a Rotary Foundation disaster relief grant, was made by merging two shipping containers. Bottom: Principal Zeliha Özlem Atlı at a new school built with contributions from Rotary members in Japan.

Top: Students work to return to normalcy. Bottom: Binzet cares for one of his cats. He and his wife continue to feed the stray cats near their old home as a way to deal with the trauma.

# ELIMINATION ROUND

By Sam Worley  
Photography by Charity Rachelle

Cervical cancer can be stopped,  
and **Isabel Scarinci** intends to deliver  
the knockout blow in Alabama



# LILY MAYNER IS ABOUT TO TAKE THE STAGE,

and she's nervous: "I am so stressed out right now," she says, practically humming with energy. A chatty 17-year-old wearing torn jeans and a nose ring, Mayner is slated to speak at the Back to School Bash, an annual event in LaFayette, a small town near Alabama's border with Georgia. It's late July, hot and overcast; kids and their parents wander between a bouncy house and a hot dog stand. Mayner's phone is nearly dead — a problem, since that's where her speech is stored. But she transfers the text to somebody else's device, and the show goes on.

"Good afternoon, everyone," Mayner says to a distracted crowd. "Today we're spreading awareness about a virus that is very prevalent in our community. This virus is called human papillomavirus. We know that this can be a very difficult topic to broach, but today it's very important for us to talk about it to prevent illness."

HPV is a highly common sexually transmitted infection that can cause six kinds of cancer, including cervical cancer. The reason Mayner is talking about it is that Chambers County, where LaFayette is located, has the highest rate of cervical cancer in Alabama, which itself is near the top nationally in both incidence of and mortality from the disease. A high school senior who hopes to become a psychiatrist, Mayner has been part of a health sciences class that's worked to reverse these numbers, one cog in a larger machine devoted to stopping cervical cancer in Alabama.

Caught early, cervical cancer is treatable. But more than that, it's preventable. In 2006, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved the first HPV vaccine, which could be administered starting at age 9. Since HPV causes virtually all cervical cancer cases, this means people can basically immunize themselves against a cancer — and that, in theory, there's no reason cervical cancer should persist as a deadly illness. "We really can eliminate a cancer," says Nancy Wright, director of the Cancer Prevention and Control Division of the Alabama Department of Public Health, which has set up a booth at the Back to School Bash. "It's a miracle."

This hopeful prospect means Alabama can stake its claim to another superlative, far sunnier than high mortality rates: It's the first state in the nation to devise a comprehensive plan for the elimination of cervical

cancer. Launched statewide in 2023, Operation Wipe Out is a collaborative effort between the Alabama Public Health Department, the University of Alabama at Birmingham, and various partners, including the Rotary clubs of Birmingham and LaFayette.

The face of the initiative is Isabel Scarinci, a behavioral psychologist and the vice chair of the Global and Rural Health Program in UAB's Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology. Sixty-two years old and a member of the Rotary Club of Birmingham, Scarinci has deep expertise in cancer prevention; she was recently tapped by the American Cancer Society to lead a task force developing a nationwide cervical cancer strategy. And she has deep personal experience that dramatizes the stakes of vaccination: As an infant in the early 1960s, Scarinci contracted polio when an epidemic struck the small Brazilian town where she grew up. When she was older, her mother took Scarinci — who, due to the infection, walks with a limp — door to door, exhorting her neighbors to immunize their children against the disease.

Now it's Scarinci who's spreading the word, with Operation Wipe Out aimed at multiple audiences. Young people and their parents, she insists, need to learn about vaccination, an effort Mayner's high school class has embraced with aplomb. (Mayner's speech, by the way, goes great. "I honestly did not need the script even a little bit," she says afterward. "I think it messed me up way more to have it.")

Before Operation Wipe Out went statewide, Scarinci coordinated an early version in Chambers County that boosted the full HPV vaccination rate among county school district students to 60 percent in 2024,

At age 6, Isabel Scarinci participates in a fashion show in her native Brazil.



PHOTOGRAPH: COURTESY OF ISABEL SCARINCI

# CERVICAL CANCER BY THE NUMBERS

## U.S. projections for 2024

Estimated new cases:

13,820

Estimated deaths:

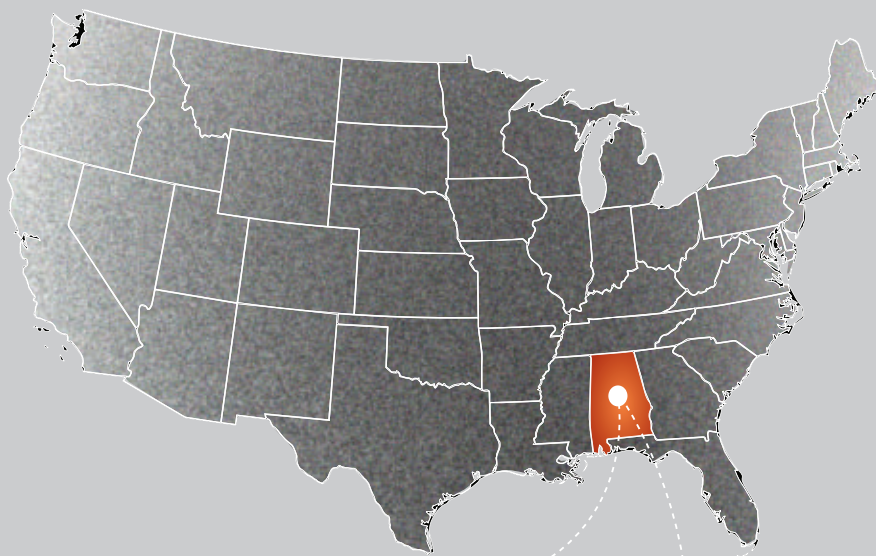
4,360

Source: National Cancer Institute

## Cervical cancer disparity in Alabama

**Incidence rate:** Alabama: 9.2  
per 100,000 females U.S.: 7.4

**Mortality rate:** Alabama: 3.3  
per 100,000 females U.S.: 2.2



In Alabama alone

**Incidence rate by race**  
per 100,000 females

Black 9.8

White 9.1

**Mortality rate by race**  
per 100,000 females

Black 4.8

White 2.9

Source: Alabama Cancer Statistics 2023, Alabama Department of Public Health



including 82 percent at one of two high schools. The broader county vaccination rate in 2023 for all eligible young people was much lower: Only about 30 percent of those ages 9 to 18 completed their HPV shots.

Adult women, meanwhile, need regular testing to identify cell changes before they become lethal. At the Back to School Bash, Scarinci, wearing a blue Operation Wipe Out T-shirt, is stationed at the Lafayette Rotary club's tent, trying to sign up women for screening appointments at an upcoming mobile clinic event. "When was your last cervical cancer screening?" she asks one woman who stops by, a funnel cake in one hand, a fan in the other. Scarinci is a loquacious presence with a wide smile. She gives the woman the rundown. "Oh, girl, let me tell you," she says. "It's the only cancer we can truly prevent." Another woman, towing a couple of kids, has what appear to be needle marks on her arms. She has survived cervical cancer, she tells Scarinci, who offers to connect her to a cancer survivors support group.

It's slow going, with only a few sign-ups over the course of the day, and no guarantee they will actually show up for the screening. But even if there's only one.

Scarinci has been doing this kind of work in underserved Alabama communities for decades. Another program she spearheaded has connected thousands of Latina women with cancer screenings. Sitting be-

neath the tent, Scarinci remembers one of the first Spanish-language events she organized. Half the people with screening appointments never came. Her husband said to her: "Why are you killing yourself? They're not interested."

But the next morning she got a call: One of the few who made the appointment had been diagnosed with cancer — early-stage, totally treatable. A wry look spreads across Scarinci's face, "And I said, OK, God, I got the message."

**A** few days later, in her office in Birmingham, Scarinci is still thinking about the woman with needle marks on her arm. Most cervical cancer is a "disease of poverty," she says. It's preventable if people have access to vaccination and to reliable medical care. That's part of the reason Alabama, a poor, rural state with a tattered social safety net, has been hit so hard. For Scarinci, though, Operation Wipe Out began not in Chambers County but across the globe in Sri Lanka, where she became involved in a similar project sponsored by the Rotary Club of Birmingham.

In the past 75 years, the medical understanding of cervical cancer and its prognosis have changed seismically. "Pre-World War II, more women in this country died from cervical [and uterine] cancer than

Friends in the fight against cervical cancer: (from left) Warner Huh, a gynecological oncologist who chairs the OB-GYN department at the University of Alabama at Birmingham; Nancy Wright, director of the Cancer Prevention and Control Division of the Alabama Department of Public Health; Scarinci; and Bruce Rogers, president of the Rotary Club of Birmingham.



from breast cancer,” says Warner Huh, a gynecological oncologist who leads UAB’s OB-GYN department. The 1940s saw the widespread adoption of the Pap smear, a test developed by a Greek immigrant named George Papanicolaou that collects cells from the cervix, the lower end of the uterus, to detect potentially cancerous ones. But it wasn’t until around the turn of the 21st century that physicians came to a deeper understanding of the relationship between HPV and cervical cancer — and then, with the HPV vaccine, the means to sever that link. “People in the 2000s started making the connection,” Huh says. “If we screened well, with a better test, and vaccinated, there’s very little reason why any woman should develop cervical cancer.”

In 2018, the World Health Organization launched a global initiative to eradicate cervical cancer. That same year, before Scarinci had joined Rotary, she and a colleague, oncologist Edward E. Partridge, who belonged to the Rotary Club of Birmingham, began talking with his fellow club members about teaming up with counterparts in Sri Lanka on their own project. Sri Lanka is a small island and its people are relatively well-educated, the two reasoned. “We said, This is an opportunity,” Scarinci recalls. “This is a country that can eliminate cervical cancer.” She and Partridge suggested that the country’s Ministry of Health boost childhood vaccination and revise its screening guidelines, using not just Pap smears but also tests for HPV infection.

But they didn’t communicate this directly. “I think a lot of governments will resent the United States’ influence,” Scarinci says. Instead, she emphasizes a holistic approach to public health. Doctors and gov-

ernments alone can’t heal society; they need buy-in from the people who make up that society, and from the institutions that can foment social bonds, like the local Rotary club. Public health relies on trust and — a word Scarinci favors — credibility. Scarinci could offer “evidence-based strategies”; it would be up to the Sri Lankans to take that information to their government.

Vaccination campaigns are nothing new to Rotary. As Scarinci likes to observe, the WHO introduced a global immunization program in 1974 that targeted six childhood vaccine-preventable diseases, including polio. But a decade after that, polio was still paralyzing a thousand children a day worldwide. The technology was there to combat the disease, but governments needed civil society to strengthen access to, and build trust in, the vaccine. Launched in 1988, the Global Polio Eradication Initiative included governmental and nongovernmental bodies, chief among them Rotary International. According to the GPEI, global polio rates have declined 99.9 percent since the project’s beginnings.

The world today is in a similar position with cervical cancer: The technology is there; the disease can be eliminated. But Scarinci poses the question that must first be answered before all that can happen: “How do we get these tools in the hands of those that need them the most?”

It was because of Sri Lanka that Scarinci — who, as a young person in Brazil, had been a member of Rotaract — ended up joining the Rotary Club of Birmingham. Still, despite her success in the South Asian country, something was bothering her. In 2019 she approached Philippe Lathrop, her club’s president at the time. “I said, I feel like an imposter,” she recalls. “Here we are working in Sri Lanka, patting ourselves on the back, when we have a problem right here.”

OK, he said, what do you want to do? Remembering the exchange, Scarinci laughs. She didn’t actually have a plan. “But give me time,” she told him. “I’ll come up with something.” That something would become the whole state of Alabama, starting in Chambers County.

As a Rotaractor in Brazil, Scarinci, a polio survivor, administers the polio vaccine in 1985.



**R**ural poverty isn’t merely a subject of academic interest for Scarinci. She was born in 1962 in Cambará, a small Brazilian town about 200 miles west of São Paulo. Her parents grew up “dirt poor,” she says. By the time Scarinci and her siblings were born, the family was “low middle class,” her father an accountant and her mother a math teacher. Her family has told Scarinci that she takes after her mother, who was strong-willed and service-oriented. “That woman,” Scarinci says. “She knew how to do things.”

When she was 8 months old, Scarinci contracted polio. She had received the first vaccine dose of a two-part series but was under the weather when the time came to get a second dose. Don’t worry about it, the doctor told her mother; it can wait another

month. But in the interim, a polio epidemic struck, and Scarinci was among its victims. When she was older, her mother took her door to door with a cooler filled with vaccines. Scarinci would deliver a speech about her condition, and then her mother would say, “You don’t want this to happen to your child.”

Scarinci skipped first grade and graduated from high school when she was 16. She knew from a young age that she wanted to be a psychologist. She saw it as a way to help others, and she has an easy gift for conversation. After finishing college and working in a charity hospital in Brazil, Scarinci received a scholarship to study for a year in the United States. She ended up pursuing a PhD at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, where she met her husband. She planned on going back to Brazil but first wanted one more notch in her belt: “I know it’s very shallow,” she said. “I want a Harvard diploma on the wall.”

She landed a one-year clinical residency at the Ivy League school, finding the training beneficial but the social aspect “very dry.” At a party for new residents, she chatted with an older psychiatrist wearing a bow tie. Southerners, he told her, don’t do very well at Harvard. Oh? she asked. How many Southerners have you had? “He said, We had two that didn’t finish,” she recalls, a little gleam in her eye. “I took my beer and I toasted and I said, When you increase your sample size, we’ll talk.”

She was getting a taste of the chauvinism sometimes directed at the South, where Scarinci returned, settling in Birmingham and ultimately staying in the United States for good. Alabama’s status, in particular, as a kind of national punch line came up more than once in interviews with Scarinci and others, who said that even the compliments they received for their plans — again, it’s the first state to set a goal

these institutions and the diffuse constellation of rural health care providers and vulnerable communities that need their help.

Plus one particularly energetic public health advocate. “Like most things, if you don’t ask, then nothing happens,” as Warner Huh puts it. “What Isabel did was, she made the ask.”

Turning her attention from Sri Lanka to Alabama, Scarinci decided to start in Chambers County, where the need was greatest — and where she knew not a soul. Rotary provided the necessary introductions. In 2021, giving a talk to the club in LaFayette, she met Butch Busby, who had recently retired as the town’s only dentist. A past club president, Busby agreed to coordinate the campaign locally. While those efforts got underway, the Alabama Department of Public Health’s Nancy Wright had already been working to increase her own division’s focus on cervical cancer. She approached Huh and Scarinci; together the group decided to convene a summit, with the Birmingham Rotary club and other community partners joining the campaign.

Held in fall 2022 in Birmingham, the summit marked the statewide beginnings of Operation Wipe Out. It wasn’t a situation where a bunch of doctors traveled in to listen to lectures. Scarinci and Huh knew the conversation needed to be led by those on the front lines. “One of the life lessons I learned from that summit is, you cannot assume what people and providers and patients are going through,” Huh says. “You have to understand what those challenges are and then create strategy, not create strategy and then force it on people.” They heard that rural providers felt overlooked, that they lacked access to resources, that their patients had no local hospitals to go to in the event of abnormal screening results.

Poor health care access is a problem that pervades the state. In LaFayette, KFF Health News reported last year that the only two primary care doctors were planning to retire. “There are no OB-GYNs here in LaFayette,” Busby says. “Most OB-GYNs are in Auburn-Opelika,” two towns about 25 miles away from LaFayette. “Now for me, that’s just a ride down the road. But I know two people right now: They go to church with me; they’re elderly. They’re on a very small fixed income. They don’t have vehicles.”

The Wipe Out strategy that emerged from the summit has three prongs: vaccination, screening, and follow-up care. Like much of Scarinci’s career, the strategy involves both increasing access to medical care — through schools, county health departments, mobile clinics, and the like — and engaging trusted institutions in rural communities to help spread the word. “There’s no money on the table — real money,” Scarinci says. “The beauty of this is that it’s a mobilization of people who believe in the mission.” In this sense, Scarinci hopes to prove a model that can be replicated by states, public health advocates, and Rotary clubs elsewhere. Operation Wipe Out doesn’t

## “Isabel lives and breathes her service stuff. You can’t stop her. She’s a moving force.”

to eliminate cervical cancer — were often tinged with condescension: *If Alabama can do it ...*

Still, there’s a legitimate question here: Why Alabama, and not one of the other 49 states? The answer seems to be simply that Alabama happened to have the right combination of experts and enthusiasts, in the right places: UAB’s world-class medical center. A supportive state public health apparatus. The Rotary Club of Birmingham and other community partners that have stepped up to forge connections between



At an Operation Wipe Out event in Alabama's Chambers County, Scarinci is joined by (from top) high school student Lily Mayner, Nancy Wright, and Butch Busby, of the Rotary Club of LaFayette.



need a billion-dollar investment; it just needs to spread the word and make sure systems are in place for patients needing care.

Hence the efforts in places like LaFayette, however challenging they may be. “I mean, you saw all that work,” Scarinci says in Birmingham, glancing at the sign-up sheets on her desk. “One, two, three ... five women. That’s frustrating. Five, in a county with that kind of incidence? That’s what keeps me up at night. I mean, if it takes door to door ...”

But this was a challenge Operation Wipe Out was prepared to face: Everybody’s learning as they go, changing tacks based on successes and failures. In a way, the approach feels like a culmination of the know-how Scarinci has developed over her career and the philosophy that undergirds it, characterized by humility and responsiveness — and, above all, a confidence that things can change. “She makes you believe it’s possible,” Wright says. “And she does believe it’s possible. I have two children and a husband and, when I get off at 4:30, I go home. Isabel doesn’t do that. Isabel lives and breathes her service stuff. You can’t stop her. She’s a moving force.”

“This has been the most rewarding thing I’ve ever done,” Scarinci says. The plan sets 2033 as a target date, but it will take longer to see results: Kids who get vaccinated now won’t be at risk for cervical cancer for another couple of decades. And in the very short term, increased screenings may mean a rise in reported cases. Alabama won’t eliminate cervical cancer inside of a decade, but the timeline, Scarinci says, was meant to galvanize momentum, to demonstrate that something big, and worth paying attention to and participating in, was underway. “If we need to mobilize society,” she says, “we need to give a message of hope.”

Still, victory isn’t pie-in-the-sky. It’s fully achievable. Scarinci has seen one human disease, smallpox, eradicated in her lifetime and others, like polio, achieve near-eradication. She wants to continue that progress, a way of honoring her mother’s legacy. “I asked her before she died: Did you ever think we would eliminate polio?” Scarinci recalls. “She said, ‘Not at the time. But I was doing my part.’ She saw the end of it, almost, before she died. That’s pretty cool. To say, ‘I made a contribution to that.’ Not many people can do it.” But there are those who definitely do. ■

Stage

right



Michael Sheldrick co-founded Global Citizen to pair pop culture with eradicating poverty

In 2012, over 60,000 people gathered on the Great Lawn in New York City's Central Park for a music festival featuring performances from Neil Young and the Foo Fighters. But this festival was a bit different from most. People didn't secure tickets with money, but with their actions aimed at ending extreme poverty worldwide. The festival was organized by Global Citizen.

Known for its Pop Meets Policy campaign strategy, Global Citizen uses big names in popular culture to engage audiences of all ages in defending the planet, defeating poverty, and demanding equity. The organization was co-founded by Michael, or Mick, Sheldrick.

As a university student, Sheldrick pondered how to make a difference.

Raised in the coastal city of Perth, Australia, he started in his home country. He helped organize The End of Polio Concert in Perth featuring John Legend. It was held on the first day of the 2011 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting to urge the attending world leaders to commit to polio eradication. The concert's efforts helped lead the heads of government to pledge \$118 million in new funds toward ending polio.

Now, Sheldrick is the co-founder and chief policy, impact, and government relations officer at Global Citizen. He has helped raise over \$43 billion to end extreme poverty. Since the first Global Citizen Festival in 2012, countless influential artists have graced the stage.

The festival serves as a platform for influential figures, including business executives and political leaders, to pledge significant financial commitments toward eradicating poverty and addressing other critical global issues. In 2022, Rotary's then-President Jennifer Jones took the stage to commit an additional \$150 million to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative on behalf of Rotary International.

In May, Jones sat down with Sheldrick to discuss his story, recount the transformative work of Global Citizen, and give a glimpse into his new book, *From Ideas to Impact: A Playbook for Influencing and Implementing Change in a Divided World*.

**Tell me about growing up in Australia and some of the people who shaped who you are today. I know that one of the people who influenced you was a Rotary member.**

I was born in Perth, Western Australia, which has the luxury of being paradise on earth. At university, I was involved in advocating for Australia to step up and fulfill its international obligations to help end extreme poverty.

One of the first mentors I ever met with was a Rotarian. We met for coffee by the beautiful Swan River, which is this sparkling river that runs through the city of Perth. He pitched to me why polio eradication should be the very first campaign that Global Citizen — although we weren't called Global Citizen at the time — should get involved in.

David Goldstone was this gentleman's name. He was probably one of the best storytellers I have ever met. He had

founded the Rotary Club of Crawley, and part of the reason I had met him is he had given scholarships to university students like me so we could get involved in Rotary. We sit down and he says to me, "I want to tell you a story about my friend John."

John was this healthy guy in Sydney in the 1950s. He was 21 years old and suddenly found he was paralyzed from the waist down. At a hospital, the chief medical officer told him, You will never walk again.

David recounted to me how John responded with those immortal words: Yes, I will. And I know, Jennifer, you've met many polio survivors around the world, and you would have heard all their stories. But one of the things that struck me about this one in particular was the resilience. Because John, over many weeks, turning into months, turning into years, slowly recovered the use of his legs and was able to eventually — still with a limp — regain the ability to walk, ended up being a successful businessman, and dedicated himself to eradicating polio.

And at the end of this conversation, I said to David, "Wow, I'd love to meet with him and hear his story firsthand." And I remember he pulled the chair out next to me, put his leg on it, and he lifted his trouser leg. He was wearing a caliper to help

David Goldstone (left), a longtime Australian Rotary member before he died, encouraged Michael Sheldrick (right) in Global Citizen's formative years to make polio eradication the first cause his organization got involved in.



# The evolution of Global Citizen

## 2011

Inspired by Sheldrick's meeting with Rotarian David Goldstone, the organization that would become Global Citizen puts on The End of Polio Concert in Perth, Australia, on the first day of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, urging attending leaders to pledge funding to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative.

## 2012

The Global Citizen Festival kicks off on the Great Lawn of Central Park in New York City, featuring performances from Neil Young and the Foo Fighters. Sixty thousand people attend this inaugural festival aimed at ending extreme poverty, and \$1.3 billion in new funding for anti-poverty initiatives is announced.

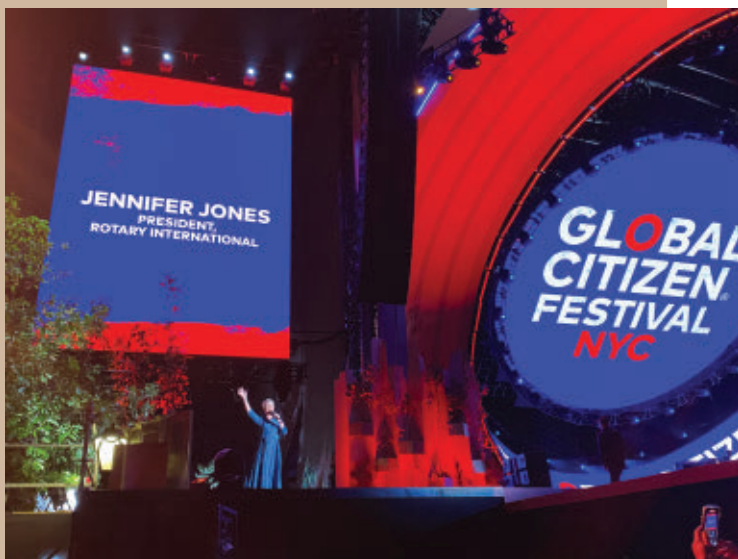
Rotary had a turn on the stage during the 2022 Global Citizen Festival in New York City, when then-President Jennifer Jones committed funding for polio eradication efforts on the organization's behalf.

## 2015

Coldplay singer Chris Martin joins Global Citizen as its festival curator. He would go on to help bring Global Citizen festivals everywhere from India to Germany to South Africa. Martin has pledged to curate live concerts for Global Citizen until 2030 and help advance the 17 Sustainable Development Goals put forward by the United Nations.

## 2020

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Global Citizen organizes One World: Together at Home, a televised benefit concert, with support of the World Health Organization. It features various artists performing from their homes and is curated by Lady Gaga.



## 2022

Global Citizen introduces Global Citizen Now, an idea-sharing summit in New York City. The inaugural event brings together more than 200 speakers including Bill Nye, Justin Trudeau, and Gloria Steinem. This same year, Rotary President Jennifer Jones commits an additional \$150 million to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative on behalf of Rotary International.

## 2024

Since its start, Global Citizen has inspired 34 million actions that have had an impact on 1.29 billion lives. Over \$43.6 billion in funds have been distributed.

him walk. And he said to me, “It wasn’t ‘John’ all those years ago; it was me. And I don’t need anyone’s pity or shame. I just want to get on and damn well eradicate this disease once and for all.”

It played a formative role not just in my story but, I would argue, in the founding of Global Citizen.

### **Describe what Global Citizen does.**

The founding of Global Citizen was really built on the recognition that issues like poverty, and even eradicating polio, are systemic challenges. A disease like polio has lots of reasons why it spreads. You have a lack of public investment; you have poor sanitation; you have poverty. It was our recognition that systemic challenges require systemic solutions. Throughout history, we’ve seen the power of social movements to make change.

In this day and age, how do we build a social movement to end extreme poverty? We were university students, and it was just after Facebook had launched. It was really combining the power of social media with popular culture and musicians to mainstream these issues, but also give people a way to take action and create impact. We often say that the idea of Pop Meets Policy is fundamental to our core DNA at Global Citizen. We prioritize impact over ideology, action taken over awareness raising.

### **Getting a musician on board for the first concert that you had in Central Park began as a bit of a dicey proposition. It was the Foo Fighters who started the domino effect. Tell me about that.**

We will always be indebted to Dave Grohl of the Foo Fighters because he was the first one to say yes. That was in 2012. We said after the very first festival, OK, that’s it. We won’t do this again. A few days later, we get a call from Stevie Wonder’s management saying he’s always wanted to perform on the Great Lawn of Central Park, and if you do this again next year, he’s in. So I was like, I guess we’re doing it again next year. And that’s where the movement grew. Chris Martin, the lead singer of Coldplay, agreed to be our

This interview was adapted from an episode of *Rotary Voices*, the podcast of *Rotary* magazine. Listen at [on.rotary.org/podcast](https://on.rotary.org/podcast).



When Dave Grohl and the Foo Fighters agreed to perform at Global Citizen’s first concert in Central Park, it encouraged other artists to join in the fight to eradicate global poverty.

creative director in 2015 and work with us to take it to different cities around the world from Mumbai, India, to Johannesburg, South Africa, to Hamburg, Germany. The rest is history.

### **When someone attends a Global Citizen Festival, they actually have to perform an act of service in order to get a ticket, right? They don’t simply buy a ticket?**

That’s right. We say action is our currency. We’re after your voice. We’re after you to take action, whether that’s calling on your elected official or business leaders to contribute not just to polio eradication — it could be sanitation; it could be access to education.

And as I write about in the book, if you ask for help and you’re very clear in the impact you want to create, the universe has a way of connecting you with inter-

esting people around the globe. It was this Californian filmmaker, Ryan Gall, who said something to the effect of: You know what you should do? You should reward people for taking action. Get them to sign a petition, call on Commonwealth leaders to eradicate polio. And in return, they go in the drawing to earn a ticket to your concert with John Legend.

We had 25,000 signatures for 5,000 tickets. And nine months after that, we had the attention of people around the world. We were standing on the Great Lawn of Central Park for the very first Global Citizen Festival. That was 60,000 people. And more than a decade later, Global Citizen, with the help of our tremendous partners, is now the largest action-taking platform in the world.

We’ve catalyzed and mobilized more than 30 million citizen actions that have helped lead to more than \$40 billion being distributed to a range of causes, including polio eradication. That’s helped in some way touch the lives of over a billion people. ■

# OUR CLUBS

## VIRTUAL VISIT

### A bridge to unite them

Rotary Club of  
Mostar, Bosnia and  
Herzegovina

**Jesenko Krpo was studying architecture in Sarajevo**, the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina, when war broke out in the former Yugoslav republic in 1992. During a break in the fighting, Krpo went to stay with a cousin in Prague. The move was meant to be temporary. But the war, one of a series of ethnic conflicts that accompanied the breakup of Yugoslavia, lasted until 1995. In Bosnia, the war killed around 100,000 people and displaced more than 2 million.

It wasn't until 1998 that Krpo returned home to his native Mostar, a city nestled in the mountains in southern Bosnia and Herzegovina known for an elegant stone bridge at its center that had spanned the Neretva River since Ottoman times. A tall, slim 55-year-old with a youthful face, Krpo saw the end of the war as an opportunity not just to return home but to help rebuild it. "Because everything is destroyed, so they will need me, my help as an engineer," he remembers thinking.

He isn't being boastful, just honest. About 70 percent of Mostar's buildings were heavily damaged or destroyed by the fighting, including the 16th century *Stari Most*, or Old Bridge, which gives the city its name. The stone arch, a masterpiece of Ottoman architecture dating back to when Mostar was a Turkish garrison town, collapsed under relentless shelling.

It wasn't just the structures that needed repair. Once known for having the most ethnically mixed marriages in the region, Mostar was now divided along the Neretva, with Bosnian Croats on one side and Bosniaks, the city's other main ethnic group, on the other. It was the same picture across the country. The Dayton Peace Agreement that ended the war with an imperfect peace kept Bosnia intact but largely divided along ethnic lines and with a weak central government.

Amid that perpetual political stalemate, the Rotary Club of Mostar hoped to achieve what the politicians couldn't. Chartered in 2002, it was, as far as members can tell, the first multiethnic organization to emerge from the city after the war. The six businessmen who initially organized the group included Krpo's father. The club "was the beginning of a very positive thing for connecting people, especially in Mostar, where the city was very, very divided," Krpo says.

One of the few remaining charter members, 70-year-old Marinko "Maka" Marić, was attracted to Rotary's approach to peacebuilding by addressing the underlying causes of conflict. A retired economist now working in real estate, Marić

says Mostar "needed such a club to be a symbol of tolerance."

Before the war started "we were like one family," he says. To re-create that camaraderie, it was obvious what the club's first project should be.

Members set out to bridge the divide — literally — by helping reconstruct *Stari Most*. Linking two fortified towers, the bridge was long a symbol of peace and friendship and the center of the city's life and identity. Generations of daredevils plunged over 75 feet from its ledge to the river in diving competitions. Many works of art depict the structure. It was so beloved, the community insisted on an exact replica, which was painstakingly reconstructed using stone from the same local quarry that supplied the original.

Five of the Mostar club's 21 members at the time — including architects, civil engineers, and a city administrator — aided in the bridge's reconstruction, which was carried out under the auspices of UNESCO.

Completed in 2004, the bridge is a symbol of reconciliation and the centerpiece of a UNESCO World Heritage Site. "This is our legacy that is still present, to unite the people," Marić says.

Although the club's current ranks are small at 13 members, they include representatives of Bosnia's three major ethnic groups and two women. Shared empathy and understanding unites them. They also "all like wine," jokes Club President Sinan Merzić. He joined the club in 2016 because of its "good deeds and nothing else." Among those deeds





The Rotary Club of Mostar, which includes (from left) Sinan Merzić, Zlatan Buljko, Marinko Marić, Nevzet Sefo, Martina Šoljić, and Jesenko Krpo, has members from Bosnia's three major ethnic groups. Pictured here with the landmark Old Bridge behind them, members say they're united by shared empathy.

are scholarships for orphaned children, holidays for children with special needs, and support for a program that educates Romani girls. The club is overseeing funding for a local nonprofit called *Minores* that supports people who are homeless.

Members also help provide equipment to dentists volunteering to treat children. That project developed the way most of the club's projects do, with a member no-

ting a need. General and thoracic surgeon Martina Šoljić discovered the situation while talking with dentists working at the same city hospital as she did. A confident and good-natured 43-year-old with braces, Šoljić spent her childhood in Sarajevo with frequent visits to extended family in Mostar. Green and clean with a river running through it, Mostar is the most beautiful city in the region, she says.

But Šoljić wasn't able to call the city

home until she finished her medical training in 2008. During the war, Šoljić and her family fled Sarajevo, passing barricades and soldiers on the way to resettle in Croatia.

Although she now works and lives primarily in Croatia, Šoljić won't abandon the club she has been part of since 2021 — or Mostar. "For many years it was kind of devastating," she says of the city of around 100,000. "No one really cared about it."

She and other club members, like Zlatan Buljko, are helping change that. During the war, Buljko worked for humanitarian organizations in the city. A member since 2005, Buljko, who is 70, is considered the club's "godfather." The two-time past president believes the club's multiethnic status is its most important attribute.

Šoljić agrees and says its reach is remarkable for its size: "Let's say we don't do big things but the things we do, they really matter." — KATYA CENGEL

*Katya Cengel reported this story with the support of a fellowship from Project Mostar, a UK-funded initiative to foster civic, cultural, and economic life in the city through revitalized public spaces.*

## CULTURE AND CAMARADERIE

Celebrating the region's culture is central to the Rotary Club of Mostar's approach to building community — and having fun. Several members, including Jesenko Krpo, play music. He is a guitarist with a rock band called 45° C in honor of Mostar's hot summers. He also plays the tamburica, a long-necked lute, in a traditional music group called *Mostarski Tamburaši*.

Music is something Krpo has been doing since childhood. In elementary school his band was called Shakespeare. "I earned my first money playing as a 12-year-old kid," he says.

Krpo has performed in cafes, bars, restaurants, and at parties. He even played during the war as part of a cultural organization of Muslims called *Behar*. Among those in the audience these days are Rotary club members like Martina Šoljić, who studied piano at music school before deciding to become a surgeon.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

## Songs in the key of change

A musician and Rotary Peace Fellow wants us to listen more closely to the stories we're telling



In 2009, David LaMotte stepped away from a successful career as a musician, singer, and songwriter to accept a Rotary Peace Fellowship at Australia's University of Queensland. "I was keenly aware of the privilege that the fellowship was," he says today.

**David LaMotte understands the power of a good story.** Need proof? Look no further than the opening chapter of his book, *You Are Changing the World: Whether You Like It or Not*. There you will find the gripping account of a sudden illness that, in 2001, seemed like a stroke and left the 32-year-old LaMotte incapable of speaking and feeling sensation in his extremities. The things taken from him, as he explains in the book, were his words and his hands, a catastrophic loss for a man who made his living, and found spiritual sustenance, as a guitarist, singer, and songwriter.

Spoiler alert: LaMotte survived the ordeal, though that should be evident given that, 23 years later, he's still around to discuss what happened. "As a professional musician, it's easy to get self-absorbed," the Rotary Peace Fellow says today. "What happened to me in 2001 made me reevaluate where I was putting my energy. I resolved to turn my focus outward."

But if LaMotte understands the power of a good story, he also recognizes the importance of closely examining the stories we tell, what we hope to accomplish with them, and the truths they contain or perhaps, unintentionally, conceal. To ensure that people make good decisions, he says, it's important to be cognizant of the stories we're telling and the stories we're hearing.

But before delving into all that, here's a quick look at LaMotte's own story. The youngest of four children, he grew up in Sarasota, Florida. "We lived in the manse across the street from the church where my father was the Presbyterian minister. I was introduced to lots of different kinds of people at dinner." Those meals, he says, imbued him with a "desire for connection across the lines that divide us."

LaMotte also grew up listening to the music his older siblings liked, especially the singer-songwriters Neil Young, Jackson Browne, and Carole King. He began playing guitar in his teens, confining his playing to his bedroom. Finally, in college at James Madison Univer-

sity in Virginia, he began appearing at open mic nights. “I moved from performing covers to playing songs that I had made up,” he recalls. “It meant a lot to me that people were touched by *my* songs.”

He graduated from college with two deep but divergent passions: music and mediation, an effective method of conflict resolution. Torn between the two, LaMotte gave himself two years to make it as a musician, which, against all odds (to hear him tell it), he succeeded in doing. Today he has 13 albums to his credit and has performed more than 3,500 concerts around the world, some with the trio Abraham Jam, a musical collaboration between a Jew (Billy Jonas), a Muslim (Dawud Wharnsby), and a Christian (LaMotte). Today he identifies as a “Quakertyrian.” “I’m a passionate amateur theologian, and my spirituality is pretty broad,” he says. “I have a foot planted in both religious traditions”: the Presbyterian teachings of his youth and the Quaker precepts that have informed his adulthood.

And then, having succeeded as a musician, LaMotte set his career aside to study at Australia’s University of Queensland as a Rotary Peace Fellow. Accompanied by his wife, Deanna LaMotte, and their infant son, Mason, he spent a year and a half earning a master’s in international studies with a focus on peace and conflict resolution.

“I was keenly aware of the privilege that the fellowship was,” says LaMotte, who praises the Rotary members of District 7670 (North Carolina) for making his fellowship possible and the members of his Queensland cohort for enriching the experience. “They were all extraordinary people, in midcareer and with a track record. They already had a lot to contribute, and I learned much from them.”

Today, LaMotte continues to work with Senderos Guatemala (which translates to Guatemala Pathways), the arts, education, and mentoring program that he and Deanna founded after honeymooning in Guatemala. He also devotes time to public speaking engagements, including a recent TEDx Talk in Asheville, North Carolina (near his home in Black Mountain), that has accumulated more than 50,000 views online.

Called “Why Heroes Don’t Change the World,” the 18-minute speech, in addition to confirming LaMotte’s mesmerizing storytelling skills, allows him to challenge a predominant storyline that he fears undercuts our ability to accomplish effective change. (LaMotte considers the same topic in his book, which has been used in some college courses.) Too often, he says, we rely on the hero narrative, where “somebody really special” comes forward to “do something dramatic in a moment of crisis and

then the problem is fixed.” Not only does that type of narrative absolve the rest of us from having to do anything other than wait, watch, and applaud, it doesn’t accurately reflect the way things really work. “I have yet to find one single example of this actually happening in the whole history of the world, not one where some extraordinary person ... effectively addressed a large-scale problem by themselves,” he says. “It has simply never happened.”

Returning to the story of Rosa Parks and the Montgomery bus boycott, nearly 70 years ago, LaMotte recounts lesser-known details about the network of support behind the boycott, unfolding a more complex tale that relies on what he calls the movement narrative. The upshot is that the boycott succeeded because of ongoing efforts by a group of well-prepared and well-organized people. “They did not wait until the fire broke out to build the fire station,” he says, speaking metaphorically. “They had been doing the work for years. They were ready to go.”

LaMotte finishes by offering some words of wisdom and posing a question. “The truth is it’s not naive to think you can change the world,” he says. “It’s naive to think you can possibly be in the world and not change it. Everything you do changes the world whether you like it or not. We need you. So which changes will you make?”

— GEOFFREY JOHNSON



#### David LaMotte

- **Rotary Peace Fellow, University of Queensland, Australia,** 2009-10
- ***You Are Changing the World: Whether You Like It or Not*,** 2023 (2nd edition)
- **“Why Heroes Don’t Change the World,”** TEDx Talk, 2024

In his recent TEDx Talk, David LaMotte contends that movements, not individual heroes acting on their own, solve large-scale challenges.

DISPATCHES FROM  
OUR SISTER MAGAZINES  
**ROTARY MAGAZIN,  
GERMANY AND  
AUSTRIA**

# The Green Belt

Taken over by nature, the former border zone between East and West Germany is prized habitat



↑ The ribbon of land that was once militarized and divided East and West Germany has been reworked into the Green Belt, a home for hundreds of plant and animal species, that is enjoyed by hikers and cyclists.

**The freshwater pearl mussel**, once one of the most abundant bivalves in the rivers of the Northern Hemisphere, is critically endangered. Habitat loss, agricultural runoff, wastewater, and other threats have reduced populations by around 90 percent in Europe. Rotary clubs in Germany searching for a large tract of land to help restore such habitat have focused on a unique area — the ribbon of land that once divided East and West Germany.

The mussel project, centered on moorland near the former East German and Czech border, is just one of several Rotary-supported environmental initiatives focused in and around this piece of land. The Green Belt, as it's called, is a nearly 1,400-kilometer (870-mile) former death strip that once divided the country with land mines, barbed wire, and watchtowers.

After Germany's reunification more than three decades ago, sec-

tions of the strip have been left remarkably undisturbed through conservation efforts, making the land a hot spot for hundreds of rare plant and animal species. Relics of the militarized border remain, including some observation towers and sniper hideouts concealed by overgrown brush. But where border guards once patrolled, hikers, cyclists, and bird-watchers now trek through a blend of meadows and wooded areas.

PHOTOGRAPHS: DENISE LUNDERSHAUSEN; (OPPOSITE), GETTY IMAGES

Four Rotary districts located on the Green Belt that unite clubs on both sides of the former border have signed cooperation agreements with the BUND conversation group, which manages this unusual nature reserve. Those partnerships began as an initiative of Sabina Gärtner-Nitsche, a past governor of District 1880. This model of conservation is being replicated throughout Europe along a total of 12,500 kilometers (about 7,800 miles) of former East-West border zones, including in areas where Rotary clubs are already involved like the Baltic Sea region.

In Germany, as early as the 1970s, environmentalists from Bavaria began mapping the bird life in the strip of land dividing East and West Germany and identified the first of a total of 1,200 endangered animal and plant species. Preserving this vast area opens a wide range of hands-on activities for Rotary clubs.

“What makes the Green Belt so interesting for Rotary is primarily environmental protection and nature conservation,” emphasizes



A hiking trail winds through a wooded area of the Green Belt. Rotary clubs in four districts participate in conservation activities in the region.

Gärtner-Nitsche, “but not only that: It’s also about the culture of remembrance between East and West Germans. The joint work on the Green Belt should lead to us making another attempt 35 years after reunification to get to know each other better. This could also give a new boost to tourism.”

District 1800 program manager Carolin Ruh’s goal is to bring as many people as possible, especially children and school classes, into nature. “What you don’t know, you can’t appreciate and then you won’t protect it,” says Ruh, a member of the Rotary Club of Duderstadt-Eichsfeld. She is planning hands-on activities such as tree plantings. The starting point for these initiatives is the Gut Herbigshagen estate near Duderstadt, the headquarters of the Heinz Sielmann Foundation, where she serves as a board member. Large parts of the sprawling estate are in the Green Belt.

On the southern edge of the Green Belt, conservation efforts are focused on moorland that was drained in the Rehauer Forest near the city of Hof. By blocking drains and “rewetting” the land, Rotary clubs hope to transform the landscape back into a sink that can

absorb climate-warming carbon dioxide — and restore habitat for the freshwater pearl mussel. Twelve clubs have pledged money toward BUND’s planned purchase of 17 hectares there.

The effort has drawn attention from Rotary and Rotaract clubs interested in supporting such projects to help offset emissions attributed to club activities, such as traveling to meetings and events. A new initiative called End Warming Now, led by Rotary clubs in Germany, is aimed at making individual clubs aware of how to analyze, reduce, and offset emissions.

Rotaractors recently used the initiative’s carbon calculator to put a price on the emissions associated with an event called the Future Forum in Berlin and seek offset donations from attendees. “We were able to collect 765 euros (US\$850),” says Johannes Kraume, of the Rotaract Club of Berlin-Brandenburger Tor. Some of that was directed to buying water filters to be sent to places in Africa. And the rest? It’s helping fund the moor restoration and a once troubled strip of land now full of life and beauty.

— MATTHIAS SCHÜTT



Some observation towers remain along the nearly 870-mile strip of land, which has a blend of meadows and wooded areas.

HANDBOOK

# The path to impact

Long-term change demands a strategy beyond just supplying books, computers, or vaccines

**Your club wants to install** a latrine block at a school or provide computers and books for classrooms. Great, but why?

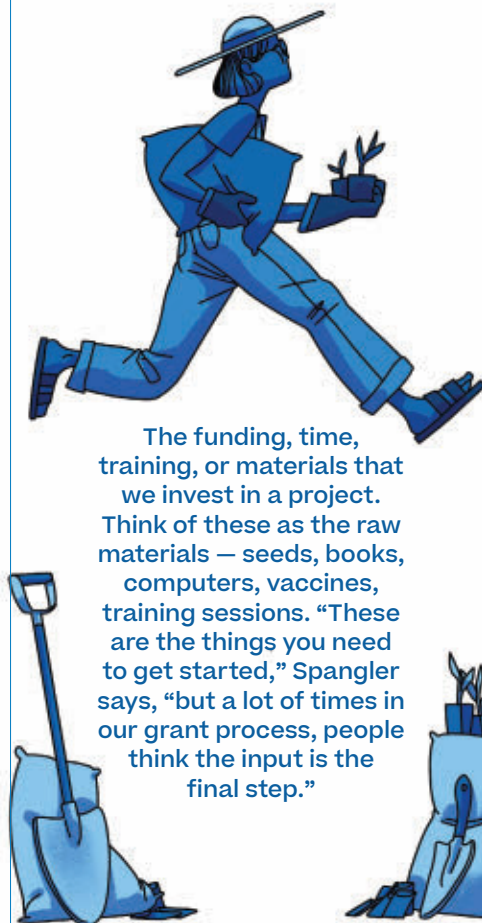
Rotary’s “building blocks to impact” approach to project design could help you formulate the answer. It’s a way to visualize your project strategy — the path to your goal, also known as your theory of change.

“Sometimes we think about what we do — supplying books, for instance — as the terminal activity, when in fact what we’re trying to accomplish is healthier kids who can read so they become happier, healthier adults,” says Barb Spangler, a member of The Rotary Foundation Cadre of Technical Advisers and of the Rotary Club of Lakewood Ranch, Florida. “The idea is to help people take their thinking from nuts and bolts to: What do we really want to get done?”

The building blocks to impact can also be used in reverse. Maybe you already know your “why” for an initiative — your club wants every person in a region to have access to clean water, for example. But how will you achieve it? The building blocks planning tool “is a way to take ambitious long-term goals and back them down into building blocks to see how it happens,” Spangler explains.

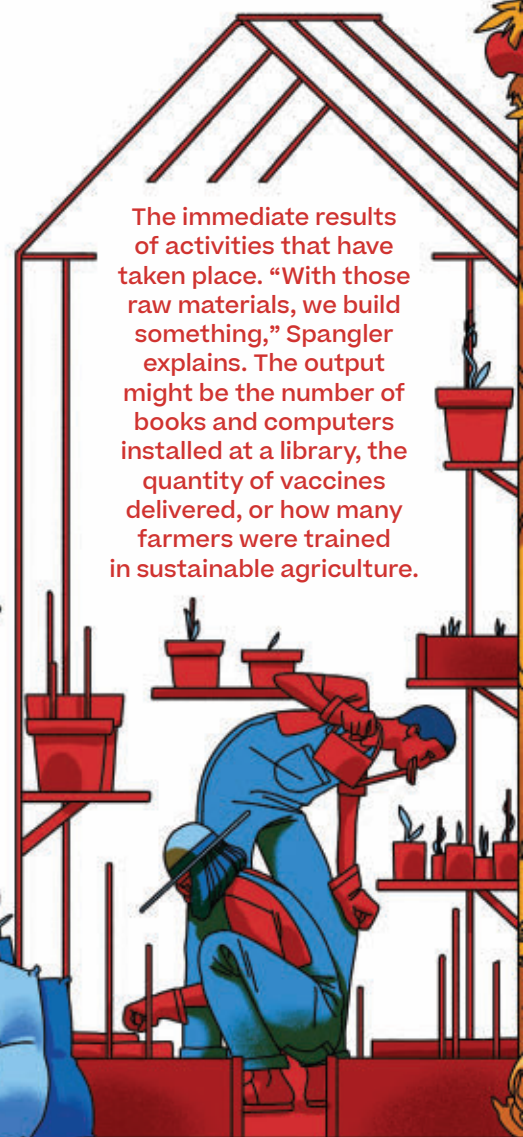
Once you’ve visualized the building blocks, you can use them to determine what kind of data you’ll need to track your project’s progress. “How will we know we did what we thought we did?” Spangler says. If your efforts aren’t going as planned, use what you’ve learned to refine your strategy and improve your future projects. — DIANA SCHOBERG

## INPUT



The funding, time, training, or materials that we invest in a project. Think of these as the raw materials — seeds, books, computers, vaccines, training sessions. “These are the things you need to get started,” Spangler says, “but a lot of times in our grant process, people think the input is the final step.”

## OUTPUT



The immediate results of activities that have taken place. “With those raw materials, we build something,” Spangler explains. The output might be the number of books and computers installed at a library, the quantity of vaccines delivered, or how many farmers were trained in sustainable agriculture.



## OUTCOME

The intermediate results of our actions — things like a change in attitude or behavior. “After we put those things in the ground, do that work, we need to take a little longer view,” Spangler says. That could look like an improvement in students’ reading comprehension, more vaccines given, or farmers incorporating new techniques into their growing practices.

## IMPACT

The long-term changes resulting from our actions. These are measurable improvements that wouldn’t have occurred otherwise, such as an increase in the literacy rate or a reduction in hunger or disease, attributed to the project.

### ASK THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

Spangler suggests two series of questions to help you construct your project’s building blocks:

**The “five whys”**  
“If you say ‘why’ enough times, things start to put themselves in the blocks where they belong,” she advises.

**If/then questions**  
“If I have these resources, then what can I do? If I do these things, then in the short term what will happen?” she says. “Ultimately, I’ll achieve our overall game plan.”

To learn more about the path to impact and applying the building blocks in your service activities, download the Rotary Impact Handbook at [my.rotary.org/document/rotary-impact-handbook](https://my.rotary.org/document/rotary-impact-handbook).



TRUSTEE CHAIR'S MESSAGE

# In our hearts and hands

There are as many reasons to join Rotary as there are members. Most join for experiences — new friendships, expanding professional circles, or putting Service Above Self into action to create impact.

Rotary delivers on all of these, often simultaneously. Through our Rotary Foundation, Rotary also has a knack for offering unexpected experiences and new opportunities that open doors and change lives.

I learned this firsthand at age 30 when I served as president of the Rotary Club of Decatur, Alabama. That year, my wife and I sought out the chance to try something new: attending the 1985 Rotary International Convention in Kansas City, Missouri. There, we witnessed the dawn of PolioPlus and met members from different backgrounds, realizing we were part of a global family.

Later that year, I learned that a Rotary Group Study Exchange team from Nigeria was scheduled to visit Alabama, but Decatur was not on the agenda. After making a few calls, we soon welcomed the Nigerian team into our home. It was an incredible and unexpected experience.

Before the group departed, the team leader recommended me to lead the six-member team from Alabama that would visit Nigeria the following year, which I did. There, I met people whose lives had been impacted by polio, including

several family members of our hosts. I learned that polio reaches its victims across borders, economies, and religions.

That Foundation program — Group Study Exchange — opened my eyes to what Rotary is and what it can do. Taking part in the exchange set me on a path for new friendships and opportunities to serve on multiple continents.

Just as The Rotary Foundation has enriched my Rotary life, it can do the same for you. This month, during Rotary Foundation Month, I invite you to explore new Foundation experiences.

Look for ways you and your club can support Foundation-led efforts like polio eradication, disaster response, or the Rotary Peace Centers. Get involved in global grant or district grant projects. And if you have never had the experience of giving to our Foundation, I invite you to join other Rotary members as a Foundation donor. Your support will mean the world to both Rotary members who want to help and to the individuals and communities who need it.

The Rotary Foundation is not a place or a building. It is an experience, one that lives in our hearts and hands as we do good in the world. The Rotary Foundation is all of us.

**MARK DANIEL MALONEY**  
*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.



# PRESS



# PLAY

## USE ROTARY VIDEOS TO TELL OUR STORY

The Rotary Brand Center has dozens of videos for you to enhance your meetings, engage with your community, and help tell the Rotary story. These high-quality videos promote our campaigns and causes, showing that we're people of action and saving you the time and expense of creating them.



Visit [brandcenter.rotary.org](https://brandcenter.rotary.org) and explore our video selection today.



CALENDAR

# November events

## SOUP'S ON!

**Event:** Chatham Chowder Fest Challenge  
**Host:** Rotary Club of Chatham, Massachusetts

**What it benefits:** Local projects and nonprofits

**Date:** 2 November

Hearty bowls of chowder have warmed New Englanders' bellies for centuries. The club, located on the tip of Cape Cod, celebrates this regionally popular dish with a tasting event that draws hundreds of community members to the Chatham VFW hall. Attendees can sample 10 types of chowder from area restaurants and vote for their favorite. Beer and wine will be sold.

## FELIZ NAVIDAD

**Event:** Gran Bazar de Navidad  
**Host:** Rotary Club of Río Piedras, Puerto Rico

**What it benefits:** Local projects and nonprofits

**Date:** 2 November

The club's annual Christmas bazaar, held at the clubhouse where it meets, provides an early opportunity for holiday gift shopping. Items for sale include jewelry, clothing, shoes, embroidery, handmade soaps, and one-of-a-kind crafts. Shoppers can also buy refreshments, listen to music, and enter raffles.

## A GALIC GALA

**Event:** Midnight in Paris Gala  
**Host:** Rotary Club of Rossmoor (Walnut Creek), California

**What it benefits:** Local nonprofits that support Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, and cancer services

**Date:** 9 November

With a theme in honor of the 2024 Olympics in Paris, the club's 37th annual gala dinner, at the Rossmoor Event Center, will feature French-inspired food, en-



## ALL OF THE FUN, NONE OF THE RUN

**Event:** Gobble Gallop Zero K Race

**Host:** Rotary Club of Murphy, North Carolina

**What it benefits:** Local youth projects

**Date:** 2 November

Participants in this noncompetitive foot race, billed as the shortest in Cherokee County, amble a mere 3 meters to the finish line then socialize and eat together in downtown Murphy. Costumes are encouraged, and a contest recognizes outstanding outfits. The event's beneficiaries include an EarlyAct club at a local elementary school and District 7670's Rotary Youth Leadership Awards program.

tainment, and decor. (Entree choices include filet mignon with bearnaise sauce, cod meunière, and quiche Florentine.) Attendees can enter live and silent auctions and win door prizes. District 5160 leaders plan to attend.

## DRESS TO IMPRESS

**Event:** Peoria North Fashion Show and Luncheon

**Host:** Rotary Club of Peoria North, Arizona

**What it benefits:** Local and international projects

**Date:** 22 November

At this fashion-focused event, club members and friends model items from the collection of Calle Rose, a traveling boutique of women's apparel and accessories. The show takes place at Briarwood Country Club, where attendees enjoy lunch and enter raffle drawings. Part of the proceeds

benefit the Prom Closet, a club project that provides free formal attire to Arizona high school students.

## SEE THE LIGHTS

**Event:** Community Tree Lighting

**Host:** Rotary Club of Vancouver, Washington

**What it benefits:** Local and international projects and nonprofits

**Date:** 29 November

The lighting of the community Christmas tree kicks off the holiday season in Vancouver. The event starts on the city's waterfront as decorated Christmas-themed ships sail down the Columbia River, accompanied by a tugboat carrying Santa and Mrs. Claus. The couple then join a parade of vehicles to a nearby park where the tree is lit. Festivities at the park include music, food carts, hot cocoa, carriage rides, and photos with Santa.

**Tell us about your event.** Write to [magazine@rotary.org](mailto:magazine@rotary.org) and put "calendar" in the subject line. Submissions must be received at least five months before the event to be considered for inclusion.

ROTARY LEADERSHIP

# Sangkoo Yun to be 2026-27 Rotary president

**Sangkoo Yun, of the Rotary Club of Sae Hanyang in Seoul, Korea,** has been selected as president of Rotary International for 2026-27. He will be the organization's second Korean president.

Yun received his bachelor's and master's degrees from the Syracuse University School of Architecture in the U.S. and an honorary doctoral degree from the University of Edinburgh in Scotland. He is the founder and CEO of Dongsuh Corp., which engineers and markets architectural materials, and the president of Youngan Corp., which operates in real estate and financial investment. He is involved in many civic organizations and has a special interest in the preservation of cultural heritage.

A Rotary member since 1987, Yun has served Rotary International as a director (2013-15), trustee (2018-22), committee member and chair, and RI learning facilitator. For eight years, he was co-chair of the Keep Mongolia Green project, initiated by Korean members of Rotary. His RI committee roles include the Board Administration, International Assembly, and End Polio Now Countdown to History Campaign committees. He also chaired The Rotary Foundation's Executive Committee and Programs Committee.

Yun received The Rotary Foundation's Distinguished Service Award in 2021-22. He was appointed an Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire by Queen Elizabeth II, awarded the Friend-



ship Medal by the president of Mongolia, and recognized for distinguished services by the president and prime minister of Korea. He is a veteran of the Republic of Korea Army and an emeritus elder at Andong Presbyterian Church.

Yun and his spouse, Eunsun, are Rotary Foundation Benefactors, Major Donors, and members of the Arch Klumph Society, the Paul Harris Society, and the Bequest Society. They have two adult children. — ETELKA LEHOCZKY

Rotary 

*Healing in a Divided World*  
2025 PRESIDENTIAL  
PEACE CONFERENCE

Connect with others committed to peacebuilding at this special, one-time event led by Rotary International President Stephanie Urchick in Istanbul, Türkiye, 20-22 February.



Register today at [rotary.org/istanbul25](https://rotary.org/istanbul25)

THE ROTARY FOUNDATION

# Arch Klumph Society 2023-24 honorees

Named for the founder of The Rotary Foundation, the Arch Klumph Society was established to recognize the Foundation's highest tier of donors — those who have contributed \$250,000 or more.

This distinguished society includes about 1,600 supporters from more than 50 countries and geographical areas. Their generosity enables the Foundation to continue its mission of advancing world understanding, goodwill, and peace through the alleviation of poverty, the support of education, and the eradication of polio.

The members listed below were recognized in the 2023-24 Rotary year through a formal induction or elevation ceremony.

Contribution levels as of 30 June 2024; locations according to club affiliation

**PLATINUM TRUSTEES CIRCLE**

*Contributions of \$2,500,000-\$4,999,999*

**Dahyabhai S. and Angela J. Patel,**  
United States

**FOUNDATION CIRCLE**

*Contributions of \$1,000,000-\$2,499,999*

**Ming-Ho Chen,** Taiwan

**Richard C. Courson and Tina N. Tom,**  
United States

**Michael S. and Gity S. Hebel,**  
United States

**Judy Huang and Ricardo Lynn,** Taiwan

**Santiago Martin and Leema Rose Martin,** India

**Aziz Memon and Samina Aziz,**  
Pakistan

**William W. and Jean D. Wilson,**  
United States

**CHAIR'S CIRCLE**

*Contributions of \$500,000-\$999,999*

**Joyce Michelle L. Ambray and Herminio S. Esguerra,** Philippines

**Helge Andersen,** Denmark

**Vicente JG. Arbesú and Ma. Enriqueta (Kikis) López,** Mexico

**Ronald J. and Marilyn K. Bedell,**  
United States

**Plastic Ray-Ching Chang and Linda Shu-Chen Chang,** Taiwan

**David Gibson-Moore,** Thailand

**Nirupama and Anil Goel,** India

**Roop and Beena Jyoti,** Nepal

**Inseok Kim and Youngryeo Jo,**  
Korea

**Satish Chand Mark Markanda and Uma Sharma Markanda,** United States

**V.R. Muthu and Malarvizhi Muthu,** India

**K.P. Nagesh and Uma Nagesh,** India

**Jong-Yoon Pak and Ji-Min Jeon,**  
Korea

**Ramanathan and Nallammai,**  
India

**Dilip and Bhavini Shah,** India

**Sarah C. Sheehan,** United States

**Daniel Tung-Hsien Tsai and Lillian Li-Ling Hung,** Taiwan



Rotary leaders Gordon McNally (left) and Barry Rassin (right) welcome Olivia A. and Robert E. Ryans to the Arch Klumph Society at a 2023 ceremony.

**S. V. Veeramani and Radha**, India

**Mildred and York Vitangcol**,  
Philippines

**Johnny Gaw Yu and Veronica Yu**,  
Philippines

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### TRUSTEES CIRCLE

*Contributions of \$250,000-\$499,999*

**Farhan Essa Abdullah and Nadia Farhan**, Pakistan

**Ghanshyam and Saroj Agrawal**,  
India

**Ananth H.R. and Girija Ananth**, India

**W. Patrick and Alice J. Anselmi**,  
New Zealand

**Augustine and Victoria Avuru**,  
Nigeria

**J. Randell Barclay and Dianne Richoz Barclay**, United States

**Mary and Ivar Berge**, United States

**Eldon L. Bohrofen and Augusta Crane**,  
United States

**Jaekyung Byeon and Jonghwan Lee**,  
Korea

**John Chan Sung Tong and Chen Wee Ping**, Malaysia

**Joseph Chen and Ilona Liu**, Taiwan

**Paul W. Chen and Salina Chen Lee**,  
Taiwan

**Chen Tung-Chu and Lin Li-O**,  
Taiwan



**Cheng, Chen-Ming and Lin, Shu-Hui**,  
Taiwan

**Mary, Yi-Chen Cheng**, Taiwan

**Chilukuri Sarat Babu and Annapurna**,  
India

**Krishna and Meena Choudhary**,  
India

**Sita Kantha Dash and Kalpana Dash**,  
United States

**Dennis and Heidi Drager**,  
United States

**Bruce and Julie Dunbar**, United States

**Abbie and Mads Engelstoft**,  
United States

**İlter and Suzan Ergürbüz**, Turkey

**Michael L. Escaler and Patricia Maria L. Escaler**, Philippines

**Fang Chin-Ying**, Taiwan

**Suresh and Anjana Gandhi**, India

**James F. Hart and Maureen K. Reed**,  
United States

**Charlotte Hartmann-Hansen and Tore Hartmann-Hansen**, United States

**Joshua Hassan and Mary Hassan**,  
Nigeria

**Martha H. Peak and Frank G. Helman**,  
United States

**Eddie M. Hocson and Aida C. Hocson**,  
Philippines

**Mohmed A. and Mahabuba Hoque**,  
Bangladesh

**Tang-Chih Hsu and Yin-Chen Wei**,  
Taiwan

**Guity Javid and Mark Ameli**,  
United States

**Peter C. and Carolyn F. Johnson**,  
United States

**Naohisa and Junko Kashihata**, Japan

“The Rotary Foundation truly creates the means for each Rotary member to create lasting and positive change across the world, in communities, and in ourselves.”

— Peter C. and Carolyn F. Johnson, United States

## OUR CLUBS

**Taeyun Kim and Jinyoung Seol,**  
Philippines

**Yvonne Kumoji-Darko,** Ghana

**Shirley M. Kwok,** United States

**Yong Joon Kwon and Gi Nam Han,**  
Korea

**Philippe and Dugan Lamoise,**  
United States

**Ki Woon Lee and Yeon Ju Jin,**  
Korea

**Lee Sung-Nan,** Taiwan

**Kim and Jill Lorenz,** United States

**Warren and Marilyn Lovinger,**  
United States

**Nathan G. and Alla O. Lubin,**  
United States

“We support The Rotary Foundation because of its commitment to causes that resonate with us deeply. From disease prevention to clean water and education — every project has a story, a face, a heartbeat.”

— *Joyce Michelle L. Ambray and Herminio S. Esguerra, Philippines*

**Michio and Akiko Matsuoka,** Japan

**Roger May and Patti Sadowski,**  
United States

**Patrick Mennesson,** Gabon

**Yoichiro and Eiko Miyazaki,** Japan

**Don and Cindy Mizelle,** United States

**Takashi and Tatsuko Okura,** Japan

**Everett Uy Oliven and Maryselle Uy Oliven,** Philippines

**Ranjit Pratap and Uma Ranjit,**  
India

**Jhansi Premanand,** India

**James Campbell Quick and Sheri Schember Quick,** United States

**Ajith and Supriya Rai,** India

PHOTOGRAPHS: (LEFT) JOE UNDERBAKKE; (CENTER) MONIKA LOZINSKA; (RIGHT) VIVID MEDIA



Above: Arch Klumph Society members (from left) Augusta Crane, Eldon L. Bohrofen, Jonghwan Lee, and Jaekyung Byeon talk at a 2023 ceremony at One Rotary Center in Evanston, Illinois. Right: Honorees assemble in the building's Arch Klumph Society Gallery the previous day.



**P. V. Rai and Sandhya V. Rai**, India

**Eileen Rau and Robert J. Rau, Jr.**,  
United States

**John E. Robertson and Susan E.  
“Honey” Robertson**, Bahamas

**Pablo Rafael and Alejandra Ruiz**,  
Mexico

**Robert E. and Olivia A. Ryans**,  
United States

**Vinod and Usha Saraogi**, India

**Nelia Cruz Sarcol**, Philippines

**Christopher H. Schneider and  
Ute A. Schneider**, United States

**Nagin and Priya Shah**, United States

**K. Shanmugasundaram and  
Parimaladevi**, India

**Tony Sharma and Harjinder Kaur  
Sharma**, United States and England

**Gowri Srinivas and Srinivas T**, India

**Satoshi and Kazuko Sugikawa**, Japan

**Gina Sy and Jeffery Sy**, Philippines

**Arturo C. Tanyag**, Philippines

**Barbara J. Tracy and James M. Tracy**,  
United States

**Asha Venugopal and Venugopal B.N.**,  
India

**Vommina Sathish Babu and Arra  
Bhanumathi**, India

**Robert A. Wallace and Katherine E.  
Wallace**, Canada

**Mary Ellen and Bob Warner, Jr.**,  
United States

**Charles Warren and Laura Kann**,  
United States

**Pam and Terry Weaver**,  
United States

**Tom and Yvonne Wolf**, Singapore

**Stanley S.Y. Yang and Jennifer Yang**,  
Taiwan

**Stela Yang (Yi Lan) and Spencer Lee**,  
Taiwan

**Yiu Chih Hao and Hsu Li Hua**,  
Taiwan

**Jeff Yong and Betty Wong**,  
Brunei

**Hisashi and Miwako Yoshihara**,  
Japan

**Hamada Zahran and Soha El Gazzar**,  
Egypt



Left: Society members and Rotary leaders gather at a reception in April at the Rotary headquarters building. Below: Taeyun Kim and Jinyoung Seol (center) receive their certificate of Arch Klumph Society membership at The Rotary Foundation Donor Summit in May in Singapore.



2025 CONVENTION

# First convention? It won't be your last



**Whether Calgary will be your first convention or your 20th**, Rotary leaders are confident you'll walk away amazed. And a discount alert! The last day to save significant money with early registration is 15 December. Lock in your preferred hotel and signature events, which can sell out.

First-time attendees 21-25 June in Canada can expect inspiration from distinguished speakers — their insights are a top reason that convention regulars return year after year. The events have featured everyone from World Health Organization and United Nations leaders to Nobel Prize winners, presidents, astronauts, and authors.

Jonathon Wennstrom, of the Rotary Club of Livonia, Michigan, says a powerful experience at his first convention, this year in Singapore, was hearing about the vast needs in the world followed immedi-

ately by Rotary's solutions. "We all need inspiration. We all need to have our batteries recharged. This has been a tremendous way to do that. I feel lifted up."

General sessions are part entertainment spectacular (music stars, dance troupes, and acrobats) and part motivational rally. They're also a learning forum guided by Rotary's leaders. In between, you can explore your passions and your club's priorities at booths and breakout sessions.

Members say that highlights in Singapore included making spontaneous connections in the House of Friendship and feeling Rotary's worldwide influence.

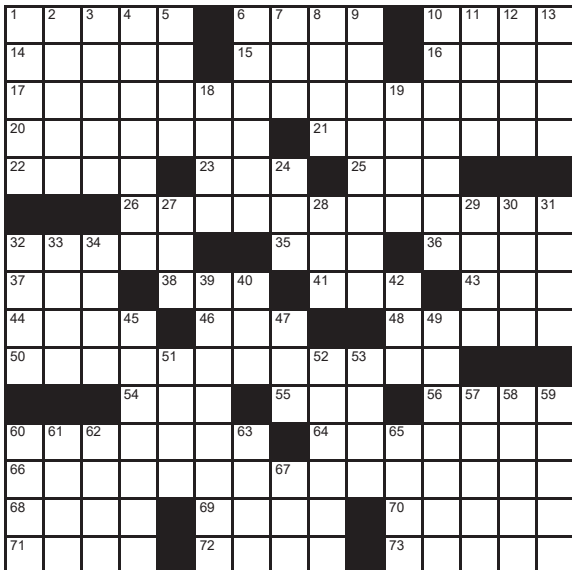
Didier Grandport, of the Rotary Club of Tamarin Les Salines, Mauritius, sums up his first-convention feelings: "It makes me happy to meet people of the world, building action. Being here is like a dream." ■

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

CROSSWORD

# Thanksgiving two-step

By Victor Fleming  
Rotary Club of Little Rock, Arkansas



Solution on **page 10**

**ACROSS**

- 1 Footnote abbr.
- 6 Ayes' opposite
- 10 City in Oklahoma
- 14 Attain
- 15 A.C./D.C. power
- 16 Kind of bag or board
- 17 Start of a simple formula for Turkey Day
- 20 Guide for a walking tour
- 21 "No kidding!"
- 22 Workers' rights org.
- 23 \_\_\_-Magnon
- 25 "Anchors Aweigh" branch (abbr.)
- 26 Part 2 of the formula
- 32 \_\_\_ Warbucks
- 35 Calligrapher's purchase
- 36 "Now see here!"
- 37 Bedrock deposit
- 38 "\_\_\_ be my pleasure!"
- 41 Draft agency, for short
- 43 "\_\_\_ is me"
- 44 Bolivian boy
- 46 "\_\_\_ we on the same page?"
- 48 Hula skirt material
- 50 Part 3 of the formula
- 54 1960s chess champ Mikhail
- 55 Baseball base
- 56 Employee IDs

**60** Collisions

- 64 Baked entree
- 66 End of the formula
- 68 Battle of beefy combatants
- 69 Río \_\_\_ (John Wayne film)
- 70 Composer Harold
- 71 Actor Alda
- 72 "Goodness gracious!"
- 73 Old but still cool

**DOWN**

- 1 Church keyboard
- 2 Bead from an oyster
- 3 Feed a party
- 4 Washington Irving character Crane
- 5 "It's us against \_\_\_"
- 6 NFL rookie, say
- 7 "Float like a butterfly, sting like a bee" boxer
- 8 Abominable snowman
- 9 Foolish, unlikely sorts
- 10 Fermentation by-product
- 11 Darkness at \_\_\_
- 12 Grammatically correct self-introduction
- 13 Mosquito repellent ingredient
- 18 Like blue humor
- 19 Hart's longtime *Entertainment* *Tonight* cohost

**24** French "yes"

- 27 "Just so you know," on a memo
- 28 Hosp. workers
- 29 Ames' locale
- 30 Baby's murmurings
- 31 Barely \_\_\_ out a living
- 32 All finished
- 33 *Die Fledermaus* feature
- 34 Body-shop concern
- 39 Hard-to-believe story
- 40 Beats by \_\_\_ (headphone brand)
- 42 Army NCO
- 45 Figure that stops vehicles?
- 47 Flood's opposite
- 49 Make new
- 51 "Into \_\_\_ life some rain must fall": Longfellow
- 52 Rifle adjunct
- 53 *The Morning Watch* novelist James
- 57 Cry over \_\_\_ milk
- 58 Better quality
- 59 "I \_\_\_ reason not to!"
- 60 *Casablanca* character
- 61 Badly claw
- 62 Rocky Mountains carnivore
- 63 Kiss and cuddle, in British slang
- 65 A bit cracked?
- 67 Corp. alias



# Rotary magazine is now accepting advertising

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We drive engagement and action – when surveyed, our readers reported spending 52 minutes with an issue, and nearly 75% said they've taken “some sort of action” as a result of reading Rotary magazine.

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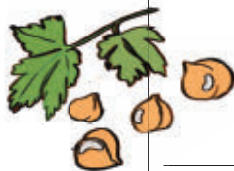


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## Not for amateurs

Eating this Trinidadian sandwich is all in the technique



**Picture a messy sandwich** of curried chickpeas between two tortilla-like flatbreads. Now imagine you're at a street festival in Trinidad with a beer in one hand and that chickpea sandwich in the other. Or it's the morning after and you're looking for something to fill your stomach. That's how you enjoy Trinidad's doubles, Cheryl Dian Sue Wing explains. "It's strictly street food," she says. "It fills you up. On Sunday mornings, sometimes you have it for breakfast. Or after parties on Saturday night, you eat it before coming home to sleep. It's very popular everywhere you go."

Doubles gets its name from the two bars, as the flatbreads are known. The chickpea filling is called channa, and it's typically topped with condiments such as cucumber chutney, tamarind sauce, and hot sauce, Sue Wing says.

**HOW TO EAT IT:** As street food, doubles is served wrapped in wax paper; you eat it leaning over the paper to catch the saucy dribbles. Sue Wing's sons tease her when she puts hers on a plate and eats it with cutlery. "They tell me all the time I'm not Trinidadian," she says.

**INDIAN INFLUENCES:** From 1845 to 1917, nearly 150,000 people migrated from India to Trinidad and Tobago as indentured laborers and greatly influenced the islands' cuisine. Doubles is similar to an Indian street food called chole bhature or chana bhatura, but the dough and the seasonings have a decidedly Caribbean spin. Another common South Asian-inspired dish found in Trinidad and Tobago uses roti flatbread and is playfully dubbed "buss up shut," because the way that it's cooked makes it look like a tattered "busted-up shirt."

— DIANA SCHOBERG

**Cheryl Dian Sue Wing**  
Rotary Club  
of Central  
Port of Spain,  
Trinidad and  
Tobago

What food is your region famous for? Tell us at [magazine@rotary.org](mailto:magazine@rotary.org) and you may see it in an upcoming issue.



# Win this restored 1969 Pontiac 4-Speed GTO Judge!



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



You have a chance to win this beautifully restored **original 1969 Pontiac GTO Judge**. Powered by a period 428ci V8 linked with a four-speed manual transmission and an Eaton limited-slip rear differential. The car is finished in Carousel Red with Judge graphics. Includes Ram Air induction, Edelbrock intake manifold, 15 inch Rally II wheels, front disc brakes, hood-mounted tachometer, and airfoil rear wing and power steering.



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- \$350 for 500 Entries
- \$500 for 813 Entries
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- \$2,000 for 5000 Entries

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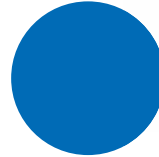
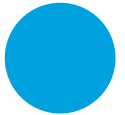
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\*Required to enter. Void where prohibited. No purchase necessary to enter. See instructions online.

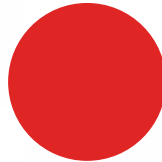


Register and pay by 15 December 2024  
before prices increase

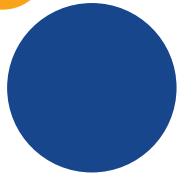
[convention.rotary.org](http://convention.rotary.org)



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