

Rotary

MAGAZINE

OCTOBER 2023

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WORLD POLIO DAY

FIRST LINE OF DEFENSE

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**Together,
we end polio**



**WORLD
POLIO DAY
24 OCTOBER**



**Register your
World Polio Day event**





Mental health and your club

Dear fellow Rotary members, The World Health Organization designates 10 October as World Mental Health Day, and with Rotary placing a special focus on mental health this year, I would like to help answer the question posed to me most often when I travel to meet members: How can my club get started?

There are some wonderful examples of Rotary members taking action already. In the Philippines, the Rotary Club of Tiaong-Hiyas held a 12-week health challenge for mothers in the community to promote some baseline health screenings and coaching on a healthier lifestyle.

By the end of the challenge, the mothers had a special bond and decided to form a Rotary Community Corps called *Ilaw ng Tahanan* (“one who lights up the home”) with the goal of involving more mothers in health education and wellness support — and later youth services, teen pregnancy prevention, and help with unhealthy substance use. Almost a year later, the RCC is preparing to open its own health center where mothers can come for peer-to-peer support.

Another strong example is in Colorado. In the fall of 2021, a small group of stakeholders from the Rotary Club of Highlands Ranch formed the Rotary Clubs of Colorado Endowed Fellowship for Pediatric Mental Health, which enhances the ability of Children’s Hospital Colorado to recruit and train pediatric psychiatry providers and allows the hospital network to make additional appointments. This increases access to mental health care for children and decreases provider shortages.

Since then, the project has brought on new supporters and is now fully funded with a \$500,000

endowment. Investment income from this endowment will support a fellow — a psychologist or psychiatrist — at Children’s Hospital. A new fellow will be named every one to two years, beginning spring of 2024. Over time this will create a cohort to bolster the mental health workforce, treating kids from all 64 Colorado counties and neighboring states.

There are many more great mental health project stories on Rotary Showcase, and I invite you to share your experiences as you begin your own projects. Also, please reach out to mindhealth@rotary.org with any thoughts or ideas you would like to share about mental health in the Rotary world.

On 10 October, I will host a Facebook Live event when we will recognize World Mental Health Day and further explore how Rotary members can begin this journey. But I would like to leave you with one way every Rotary member can make a difference.

Right now, there is someone you know in the Rotary world — in your club, from a project you’ve worked on, in a Rotary Fellowship or Rotary Action Group — who could use a little more of your time and attention. Rotary is this great gift of global friendship, and that also means being there for each other.

Discovering the human connections that bind us is what we do through our membership every day. It’s what Rotary has always been about, and we can build on it by helping each other find peace at home.

We need to learn how to ask not just “How are you?” but also “How are you really?” By doing so, Rotary can continue to *Create Hope in the World*.

R. GORDON R. MCINALLY
President, Rotary International





YOU ARE HERE: Tasmania, Australia

GREETING: G'day

A CHANCE ENCOUNTER: In June, I flew from Melbourne to Tasmania, a picturesque island off the south-east coast of mainland Australia, for a quick getaway following the Rotary International Convention. On a guided tour to the Bonorong Wildlife Sanctuary, about a half-hour drive north of Hobart, I ran into a group of Rotary members from Alabama. We were all there for the same thing — to see the famed Tasmanian devil. “It’s been on my bucket list,” says Faye McWhorter of the Rotary Club of Decatur Daybreak. Tasmanian devils are usually timid around people, but they do look fierce when they yawn.

BONORONG: The sanctuary’s volunteer rescue service shelters, treats, and cares for a variety of injured and orphaned native animals before returning them to their natural habitat. In addition to the Tasmanian devils, animals that our group saw up close included wombats, possums, lizards, and birds. The highlight was feeding the kangaroos, which live in an open range environment.

ROTARY IN TASMANIA: The island has 43 Rotary clubs and three Rotaract clubs, totaling more than 1,000 members. — WEN HUANG

Rotary

MAGAZINE

October 2023

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EVERY
ROTARIAN
EVERY
YEAR

HELP KEEP COMMUNITIES HEALTHY

Your donation to The Rotary Foundation supports members around the world as they work to prevent disease and strengthen communities by helping people access basic health care. Your gift means people have more resources to fight diseases such as polio, malaria, HIV/AIDS, and diabetes, and that keeps communities healthy.

GIVE TODAY: rotary.org/donate



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Tenacious surveillance ensures that progress in the eradication of polio is not merely sustained but advanced

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Photo essay by Maira Erlich

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A season of heat, fire, and floods

In a time of climate disasters, Rotary members step up to help

By Etelka Lehoczky

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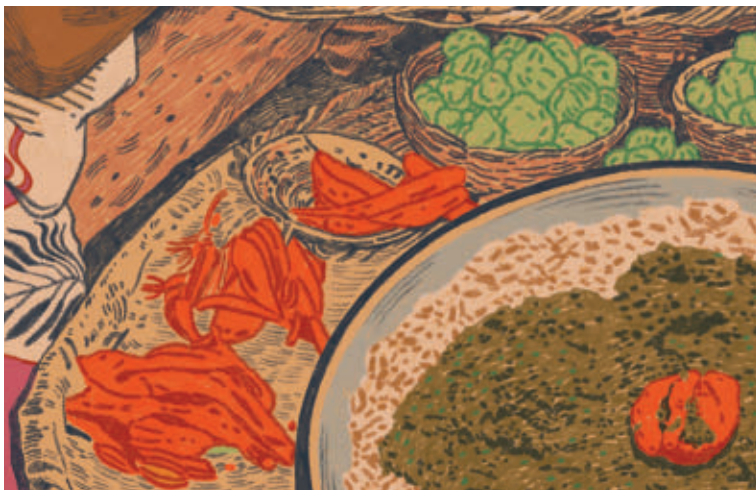
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On the cover: At Bhalswa Lake in Delhi, India, a technician takes water samples to test for poliovirus. Photograph by Alyce Henson



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STAFF CORNER

Carol Pandak

Director of PolioPlus

I have a lifelong love for literature.

Books allow me to expand my experience of the world by exploring other ones, meeting interesting characters, and learning new things. As a literature major in college, I was an avid reader. Stories of women questioning the conventions of the era they're from in the works of authors such as Kate Chopin and Edith Wharton always fascinated me.

The Society of Actuaries pointed me to my calling for nonprofit work

when I was hired as a program manager in continuing professional education. Many nonprofits, like Rotary, are cause-oriented and offer opportunities for people like me to engage in things they're passionate about and make a difference.

I started at Rotary in 1992. A staff manager gave me a book on civil society in Eastern Europe in the post-communist era. I felt called to my Hungarian roots. I had been focusing my doctoral work on adult continuing professional education. Upon reading the book, I abandoned my entire dissertation plan and refocused my research on civil societies in Eastern Europe, Hungary specifically. Fortunately, I knew a Hungarian filmmaker, who was a polio survivor. I had helped him secure funding through Rotary for a film about polio that he was producing. So, when it came time for my thesis research, he connected me with his friends. My research resulted in a book about rebuilding civil society in Hungary.

In 1997, my presentation on polio eradication at a meeting of the American Academy of Pediatrics landed me a job there. As manager of the Community Access to Child Health program, I had some memorable experiences, from visiting a California pediatrician who traveled from clinic to clinic with an abandoned baby goat in her back seat to a trip to Kotzebue, Alaska, where suicide was plaguing the youth population.



- Bachelor's in English literature from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign
- Master's in English literature from Northeastern Illinois University
- Doctorate in adult education from Northern Illinois University

I was back with Rotary in 2000 to direct the PolioPlus program,

which has, over the past 23 years, become my passion and vocation. I manage activities related to Rotary's global polio eradication effort from advocacy, volunteer engagement, and grant administration to financial stewardship, policy implementation, communications, and fundraising. I also serve as the staff liaison with partner organizations such as the World Health Organization, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, UNICEF, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance.

My job has taken me across the world and can be demanding. But it's an opportunity to be a part of history, and I'm privileged to be part of it.

When the Global Polio Eradication Initiative started, there were 350,000 cases of polio every year across 125 countries. People could see what polio did to children, so they wanted their children to get vaccinated. It was a little bit easier then. There were only 30 wild poliovirus cases reported in 2022. Now, people ask why we are still vaccinating against the disease. Polio is only a plane ride away. As long as polio exists anywhere in the world, all children are at risk. We must reach every child to reach our goal of a polio-free world.

— AS TOLD TO JP SWENSON

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Letters to the editor

A CULTURE OF CARE

I am heartened by President Gordon McNally's theme and his commitment to encouraging Rotary to destigmatize mental illness and prioritize mental health ["Ethos into action," July]. I was particularly touched by his account of his brother's suicide.

I joined Rotary less than a year after my 20-year-old son, Danny, ended his own life. For me, service was the antidote to grief, and Rotary was the catalyst that lifted me out of my sadness. No one in the Rotary Club of Suffern knew me or my son or my story. I could be anonymous and just serve.

Two years later, I felt so at home in my club that I finally shared my most personal grief, just as Gordon shared his pain publicly for the first time at the International Assembly. I was met with nothing but love and caring, all I have come to expect from my fellow Rotarians, who walk the walk.

I am proud and grateful to be a Rotarian, and to further Gordon's mission this year.

Judy Klein, Suffern, New York

SCOTTISH SOCIAL

I enjoyed the special issue [July] highlighting our new RI president and Scotland's connection with Rotary ["Rotary's Scottish past"]. For a number of years, during the first week of April, the Rotary Club of Salinas Santa Lucia, California, has celebrated National Tartan Day in the U.S. to appreciate and recognize the contributions of the Scots to America. The ceremony has included pipes, haggis, and Walker's Shortbread, along with a tasting of Scotch malt whisky. One year even included a Power-Point tour of the Bowmore Distillery.

Douglas Kenyon, Grand Junction, Colorado

HISTORY LESSON

Bravo for this thorough and surprising revelation about the part that the Tuskegee Institute played in developing the polio vaccines ["Polio's 'hidden figures,'" June]. For years I lived near the school [now Tuskegee University] and

visited often, but I didn't know about its part in the vaccine story. You boosted my already huge respect for the folks who keep this precious historically Black university running. I'll revisit the museum next time I'm in town.

Michael Conniff, San Jose, California

OUT OF FOCUS

I am disappointed by the selection of the 2023 Photo Awards [June]. Rotary is a wonderful service organization. But most of the photos do not reference Rotary or its service projects at all and could be in any magazine. I suggest the guidelines for submission include that the photo capture a decisive moment of service through Rotary.

Garry Brinton, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

ALL ARE WELCOME

I am a third-generation Rotarian: My father-in-law was a Rotarian, and his father-in-law was one as well. As the mother of a gay man, I have wondered if this would extend to the fourth generation. Would my son or his partner be welcome in Rotary? Your June articles about Quinn Drew ["Staff corner"] and Mary Lou Harrison ["A family affair"] showed what a welcoming and inclusive organization Rotary is. Bravo! Glad you are leading the way.

Rosemary Hollinger, Bainbridge Island, Washington

GOLDEN OLDIES

It is good that we are taking meaningful steps to elevate the voices of our youth ["Forever young," May], but let us not inadvertently shun the voices and presence of our older Rotarians.

Older Rotarians must continue to be a vital part of Rotary. Their wisdom, resources, and "saying it like it is" attitude will keep Rotary healthy forever.

Alan K. Okinaka, Hilo, Hawaii



OVERHEARD ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Heather McNally read the July cover story about her husband, RI President Gordon McNally, for our podcast. Listen at on.rotary.org/podcast.

Lovely to hear the rich accent of a Scot and to learn a bit about the McNallys. Here's to a wonderful year where Rotarians will Create Hope in the World.

Glenda Bryson
▶ via Facebook

Wonderful podcast. Looking forward to the great things we will do together in Rotary this year.

Dale Kerns
▶ via Facebook

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THE SPECIALIST

Going Greenland

An adventure guide shows off his adoptive land

I am from Denmark and first visited Greenland in 1987 in my late teens. I went back to Europe for a time, but now I live here. Even though I'm in the exact center of Nuuk, the capital, I have nature very close to me. If I look out my office windows, I have mountains on three sides and water on the fourth side. I can drive 10 minutes and stand with my back to the city, and I'll feel like nobody has ever been here before.

I totally get that some people need to see a therapist once in a while, but for me nature does the same thing. You might feel pretty stressed at the end of the week, but then you go for a hike in the mountains for four or five hours and have a view of the marvelous fjord system. When you come back, you're totally refreshed. That's what nature can do for you.

Mads Nordlund
Rotary Club of
Nuuk, Greenland

CEO of Guide
to Greenland

Touring by boat is a wonderful way to see nature.

In many places, you'll have the opportunity to see a whale. Some whales, like bowhead whales, are here year-round. Minke whales are also very common. Narwhals are only seen from time to time. The most "touristic" whale is the humpback, because you can see the tail come up when it dives.

We also have dog-sledding, snowmobile rides, and "flightseeing." People go out in a five-person plane or by helicopter. That's a way to see ice caves and glaciers. Seen from above, a glacier can look like elephant skin. The surface is folded again and again. Ice eventually breaks into the sea as an iceberg. In the south and east, you can go into ice caves. It's like being in glass, depending on the light.

In the winter, we have a lot of people coming only to see the northern lights. That's a tour I love to lead.

As with the whales, the lights are a natural phenomenon: You can't say, "There's a 4 o'clock whale" or "The northern lights will be at 11." You can predict when there's a higher possibility to see some of these things if you're lucky, but you never know.

— AS TOLD TO ETELKA LEHOCZKY

FIGHTING DISEASE

A fair chance at a cure

The odds of finding a stem cell donor match depend on a patient's ethnicity

As a graduate student in the 1990s, Narasimhan “Sim” Gopalan began volunteering to spread the word about stem cell donation as a cure for leukemia and other blood cancers. He got involved simply to help with what he believed was an important cause. Years later, though, it became personal.

“Little did I know it would come knocking on my door,” says Gopalan, president of the Rotary Club of Silicon Andhra, California. His wife was diagnosed in 2010 with an aggressive form of leukemia and began treatment. But finding a good donor match for a stem cell transplant as a person of South Asian descent proved difficult, particularly since minority groups in the U.S. are underrepresented on registries of stem cell or bone marrow donors.

With a good — but not perfect — donor match coming so late in her treatment, the transplant was not successful. His wife died just nine months after she was diagnosed, leaving Gopalan to parent their daughters, who were then 12 and 8.

Blood stem cells can be used to cure or treat more than 75 diseases, including leukemia, lym-

phoma, sickle cell disease, inherited immune-deficiency disorders, and aplastic anemia, when the body can't make enough new blood cells. A donor's healthy blood-forming cells replace a patient's abnormal stem cells and build a new immune system over time. But for people whose ethnicity is underrepresented in the U.S. on registries, the chances of finding a donor match in time for lifesaving care are far slimmer than for white patients.

Lack of diversity among donors is a problem because to be successful the patient and donor need to share certain genetic markers, and the chances are higher if they're of the same ethnicity. Otherwise, there's a great chance the patient's body will reject the transplant.

Gopalan, a university administrator in the San Francisco Bay Area, has been working for about 30 years to close that diversity gap through donor drives, adding thousands of people over that time to the registry managed by Be the Match, a nonprofit organization in the U.S. operated by the National Marrow Donor Program.

After his wife's death, he redoubled his efforts. “I took that as a message and started running

For people whose ethnicity is underrepresented in the U.S. on donor registries, the chances of finding a match in time for lifesaving care are far slimmer than for white patients.

To learn more, including how to host a donor drive, visit bethematch.org.

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A polio survivor comforts her 6-year-old self

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How to start a PolioPlus Society



Abhishek Padmanabhuni learned about the need for stem cell donors in a 2020 webinar hosted by the Rotary Club of Silicon Andhra. He sent in a cheek swab to join a registry of potential donors and about a month later was notified he was a match.

at least two or three drives every weekend,” he says. In 2019 he joined Rotary and began involving his club in raising awareness in the community, which is home to many Indian immigrants. He also works with and advises leukemia patients and their families all over the world.

Among the people he’s counseled is Vishal Belgodu, a software developer in Santa Clara, California. Gopalan calls him an amazing warrior who “fought the illness with a smile and a lot of resilience.” Belgodu had just become a new father when he was diagnosed with leukemia in 2016. Chemotherapy had put his cancer into remission, but doctors said he desperately needed a bone marrow transplant, another method of receiving blood stem cells.

After a few months, his medical team found a suitable donor, a young woman registered in the

database run by Be the Match. “I’m very grateful to that person and the whole Be the Match process,” Belgodu says. “If not for the donor, I wouldn’t be here for sure.”

Family members can sometimes share enough genetic markers to donate to a loved one, but most patients — around 70 percent — must rely on a registry. Be the Match says its registry is the most diverse in the world. Still, not everyone has an equal chance of finding a match.

The differences in representation are stark. Seventy-nine percent of patients categorized as white in Be the Match statistics are able to find a donor through the registry. But the odds of finding a match in time for treatment are only 60 percent for Native Americans, 48 percent for Hispanic or Latino people, 47 percent for Asians or Pacific Islanders, and 29 percent for Black patients.

One reason for the disparity is

that some ethnic populations have genetic differences inherited from their ancestors that make finding a match more difficult, says Sewa Legha, a medical oncologist in Houston. Another reason is a general lack of trust in science and research in some minority groups in the U.S. because of historical and current injustices toward Black people in health care, he says, causing some people to remain skeptical about the safety of donation.

To register as a potential donor, a person fills out some basic information and turns in a swab of cells from inside the cheek. That swab is then sent off to identify the person’s genetic markers, says Jamie Margolis, senior vice president of donor services for Be the Match. People are contacted if they are found to be a match for a patient, then a series of physical tests are done to ensure the process is safe



To help educate people and allay fears, Padmanabhuni documented his stem cell donation in an online video.

BY THE NUMBERS

29%

A Black patient's odds of finding a donor match

75+

Diseases that can be cured or treated with blood stem cells

3 minutes

Frequency that someone in the U.S. is diagnosed with a blood cancer

for both patient and donor, she says. Donors between the ages of 18 and 35 are most wanted because their stem cells offer the greatest chance of successful transplantation.

Donating used to require anesthesia to extract stem cells directly from bone marrow in the hip. While that technique is still used in some cases, about 85 percent of donations today come from blood cells that circulate in a donor's body, Margolis says. Donors receive five days of injections to stimulate the stem cells. On the day of donation "you've got a needle in one arm, pulling blood from a vein, the cells that are needed are collected, and everything else goes back into a vein in the other arm," Margolis says, a process similar to platelet donation. The procedure typically takes up to eight hours. Donors often watch TV or use their cell phones to pass the time, she says.

One stem cell donor, Abhishek Padmanabhuni, learned about the

issue in a 2020 webinar hosted by the Silicon Andhra club. He sent in his cheek swab and about a month later was notified he was a match.

To help educate people and allay fears, Padmanabhuni documented his stem cell donation in a video he posted online. "I wanted people to know that it was not a painful process at all," he says, "[and] to know that somebody like me, like any other person, can do this."

Padmanabhuni became a Rotarian in 2022, joining the Rotary Club of Austin Cosmopolitan, Texas, and is encouraging his club and district to schedule registry drives. "All the Rotarians across the world need to talk about spreading awareness," Padmanabhuni says. "Every other person you speak to has somebody in their family that has already suffered from cancer."

Today, Be the Match has more than 9 million potential donors registered in the U.S. Through its global network, it has access to

more than 41 million potential donors worldwide. Be the Match organizes its own outreach with colleges to build awareness among young people, Margolis says.

For Rotary members considering a donor registration drive, Gopalan says the process is easy and can pair with any function where people gather: parties, homeowners association meetings, "literally anything." He keeps swab kits in his car just in case he gets a call from someone interested in doing an impromptu drive.

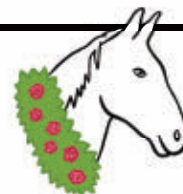
Some of Belgodu's friends did donor drives when he was trying to find a match. Looking back, he credits the constant support of his wife as essential to his recovery. But the person who ended up saving his life is someone he never met. "And that's very powerful, right? If you know you can save somebody's life just by donating your stem cells, that's an amazing thing," he says.

— AMY HOAK

Short takes

In 2022-23, The Rotary Foundation approved 1,098 global grants, 473 district grants, and 321 disaster response grants (preliminary figures), as well as one Program of Scale grant.

Four new Rotary Fellowships were recognized in July, focused on vegans, horse racing, real estate, and past club presidents and officers.



John Ockenfels (left) and Peter Teahen stop in Honolulu during a 26,000-mile flight to raise funds for polio eradication.



PROFILE

To eradicate, circumnavigate

Piloted by two bold Rotarians, the Flight to End Polio took the route less traveled

John Ockenfels
Rotary Club of
Iowa City A.M.,
Iowa

Peter Teahen
Rotary Club of
Cedar Rapids
West, Iowa

The message, sent from somewhere over the Pacific, arrived at One Rotary Center on the last Tuesday of July.

“Greeting via satellite phone from N732WP,” it began. “We are at 11,000 feet. We departed Hawaii at 4:20 a.m. ... and saw a magnificent sunrise an hour after our departure.” Next stop: Oakland, California.

N732WP was a single-engine Cessna 210, and the message had been sent by two Iowa Rotarians, John Ockenfels and Peter Teahen, during the final days of their audacious three-month, round-the-world Flight to End Polio. The two men had begun planning the flight four years earlier, working through multiple delays brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, which necessitated a major overhaul of their flight plan. Ockenfels and Teahen funded the trip themselves, to the tune of about \$100,000 — which meant that every penny they raised went toward eradicating polio.

Before they finally took off from Cedar Rapids on 5 May, Ockenfels and Teahen announced that, with matching funds from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, they had already raised \$1 million for The Rotary Foundation. Over the next 12 weeks, N732WP would make 37 stops in 19 countries; at press time, money raised at 24 fundraisers along the flight’s route had yet to be tallied.

After traveling about 26,000 miles, the intrepid polio pilots landed safely 30 July at the Eastern Iowa Airport in Cedar Rapids, where they were welcomed with a pancake breakfast. They were especially happy to have achieved their top priority. “Our number one goal was to come home alive to our families,” says Teahen. “And that’s what we did.” — GEOFFREY JOHNSON

According to the Institute for Economics and Peace’s 2023 Global Peace Index, the global economic impact of violence last year was \$17.5 trillion.

Global Handwashing Day, which promotes hygiene awareness, is 15 October. The theme is “clean hands are within reach.” Learn more at [globalhandwashing.org](https://www.globalhandwashing.org).



This month, district governors can nominate Rotarians and Rotaractors for the Service Above Self Award. Learn more at [rotary.org/awards](https://www.rotary.org/awards).

People of action around the globe

By Brad Webber

7.2 million

Estimated number of horses in the U.S.

United States

For over 100 years, the grand parade of the Washington State Apple Blossom Festival has been a calendar highlight in Wenatchee. Besides the royalty, the motorcycle drill teams, and the floats with local luminaries, there's another unusual draw: horse manure and, in particular, where it lands. In May, the Rotary Club of Wenatchee Sunrise held a raffle for people to guess where along the parade route the equine excrement would fall first. Those who correctly chose the first "drop zone" were entered into a \$10,000 grand prize drawing; four \$500 consolation prizes were offered for other zones. The concept, adapted from an idea of the Rotary Club of Hailey, Idaho, raised \$14,000 for scholarships, gifts for families in transitional housing, and improvements to a farmers market. "What makes [the event] so fun is the unique and slightly naughty concept for the raffle," says Kathleen McNalty, a club past president. "Selling the raffle tickets gives us the opportunity to talk to our community about the good works of Rotary in a lighthearted way."

Rotary
Club of Wenatchee Sunrise



Guatemala

The Rotary clubs of Solvang, California, and Escuintla, Guatemala, teamed up to bring safe drinking water to the small town of Nueva Concepción. In February, nine Solvang Rotarians, the daughter of a club member, and a member of another District 5240 club visited the rural community, about a three-hour drive southwest of Guatemala City. They joined a professional crew to help drill a \$6,000 well funded by their club. The Linda Vista Foundation, created by a Rotarian, will match that with a second well in the area. "You're soaking wet and you're dirty, dirty. It's not a pretty job," says Linda Johansen, a past president of the Solvang club. "But when clean water comes out, it's pretty impressive." During the visit, Rotarian dentists provided free dental care to 50 children in a clinic coordinated by the Escuintla club. Rotarians helped conduct classes on hygiene and nutrition and led craft projects.

45%

Share of rural households with basic drinking water services in Guatemala

Rotary
Club of Solvang, California

Rotary
Club of Escuintla, Guatemala

28 lbs.

Fish and other seafood consumed by the average German in 2021

Germany

After July 2021 floods that killed hundreds of people, leveled homes, and inundated centuries-old buildings in northern Europe, Rotarians committed millions of euros to help rebuild devastated communities. Nearly two years later, Rotary members along the Ahr River, a Rhine tributary, did not forget the river itself or its fish. Over one week in March, the Rotary clubs of Remagen-Sinzig, Adenau-Nürburgring, and Bad Neuenahr-Ahrweiler (all in District 1810) released thousands of salmon smolt in a roughly \$16,200 restocking. In Schuld, the Adenau-Nürburgring club offered fish-shaped baked treats to children, and a fisheries expert explained the day's task. "It is crucial to involve children directly in these activities," says Alex Schoep, a co-president of the Adenau-Nürburgring club. "They have experienced the horrors of the flood catastrophe firsthand, and it is very important that they re-establish a more positive relationship with the Ahr, a river that characterizes and dominates the region."



Rotary
District 1810

Barbados

The Rotary Club of Barbados has created a series of financial literacy workshops with the help of club members who are financial professionals, including bankers, insurance agents, actuaries, and wealth managers. Dubbed Save, Spend, Thrive, the program includes classroom sessions, mentorship opportunities, and social media messaging. The workshops began in January with sessions for residents and former clients of a center for people with substance use disorders. The effort expanded in April and May through a collaboration with a church in Bridgetown. Topics include debt management, household budgeting, saving, and retirement planning. "To date we have served approximately 100 people, most of them women," says club member Jamella Forde.

8.9%

Unemployment rate of women in Barbados in 2022

Rotary
Club of Barbados



20%

Share of the world's soy production used directly for human consumption

Italy

Each year, the Rotary Club of Morimondo Abbazia dedicates a medal to a charity in honor of the late Ambrogio Locatelli, one of its charter members. In March, the 33-member club designated the Italian office of the nonprofit Rise Against Hunger as the award recipient. In collaboration with the organization, the club gathered 140 Rotarians, family members, friends, and Rotaractors to assemble 17,000 meals for a school in Zimbabwe. The volunteers sorted and weighed rice, soy, and dried vegetables and packed them into bags, which were boxed along with drawings and notes from local children. The effort, which cost about \$9,000, was funded by Rotarians and the Locatelli family, says Davide Carnevali, a member of the Milan-area club.

Rotary
Club of Morimondo Abbazia

Hello, Ina. It's me, Ina.

A polio survivor and celebrated Chicago restaurateur offers words of encouragement to her 6-year-old self

By Ina Pinkney



My earliest memory is the sound of pain. Mine. Strips of wool cut from a St. Marys-brand blanket, which my father had to find on the black market since it was wartime, were lifted from a pot of boiling water, wrung out, and wrapped around my thin, flaccid leg.

Next, dry strips to cover the wet ones and finally a piece of oilcloth wrapped around the entire leg. Then the interminable wait for the swaths to cool before being unwrapped and my tender pink skin massaged with cocoa butter.

My father said I didn't cry. He did.

On Labor Day 1944, I was 18 months old. My father put his outstretched arms over my crib, but I couldn't stand. I tried and fell back down. The instant he touched my forehead and felt the high fever, my father knew that the polio epidemic that was sweeping New York City had come to Brooklyn.

My father gathered me up and took me to see Dr. Suna, who had an office and apartment in our building. Holding me tightly across his midsection, the doctor did a spinal tap, rushed to his office laboratory, and confirmed everyone's worst fear: polio.

We headed for the hospital in Dr. Suna's car. My mother was pregnant with my brother, and my cherished grandpa, who had cancer, was living with us, so she stayed home. When my father and Dr. Suna saw the polio ward with children left alone and parents allowed to visit only for an hour once a week from behind glass partitions, they agreed that I would be taken home and cared for there with whatever precautions were known.

When the flu-like symptoms and fever subsided, they called the March of Dimes. They gave me a long brace on my paralyzed right leg, and everyone resolved to "wait and see." A few months later, I lost the ability to move my foot upward, and the brace was changed to a cast to "help the drop foot." All the while, my parents and Dr. Suna struggled with the status quo. Nothing could be done, and they were all heartbroken.

My father read that Sister Elizabeth Kenny was in New York City. She was an Australian nurse, called Sister for her military service, who had treated polio outbreaks at home and determined that the "hot pack" treatments she prescribed

were helpful. She said the muscles were in spasm and needed to be stretched, and that the wet heat followed by gentle exercise would help. Many in the American medical community, however, dismissed, ignored, and diminished her and her novel notions of physical therapy.

My father called every hotel in New York City to find her, and when he finally did and spoke to her assistant, he was told that Sister, so as to avoid any more difficulties with the doctors, couldn't treat a patient outside of a hospital. Dejected, my father hung up. He sat in a chair by my crib and watched me all night. The next day he called again and said he would do anything to get Sister to see me. She acquiesced.

My father borrowed a car, drove to Manhattan, and picked up a large woman with a large hat. Sister Kenny sat in the front seat; her assistant sat in the back. During the ride to our home, Sister Kenny asked for details about the onset of my illness and what had been done since. My father said she sat silently with her jaw set, as if steeling for battle.

When my father parked at the curb in front of our apartment building, Sister said, "The child's doctor is here, yes?" When my father said he was not, Sister said, "I won't leave the car until he's here." He raced to find Dr. Suna, who then escorted Sister Kenny into our apartment.

My mother opened the door, greeted them, and led them down the long hallway to the kitchen where she had covered the table with blankets and towels. I was sitting on the table with my back to the wall, my leg with its cast in front of me. Before Sister greeted me, she asked her assistant for scissors. She proceeded to cut off the cast and hurl it

The instant he touched my forehead and felt the fever, my father knew that the polio epidemic that was sweeping New York City had come to Brooklyn.

across the kitchen toward the garbage can. "This is not a broken leg!" she shouted. "This is polio!"

That was the beginning of the hot pack treatments with the strips of wool drawn from boiling water. Once a day, sometimes twice. I know I didn't scream, but I recall the agonized sound of my own muffled voice. After three months, I was mobile. My right leg was shorter and my right foot two shoe sizes smaller than they had been. I walked with a compensated gait, stepping more on the ball of my foot, so you couldn't really tell how much shorter my leg was.

I rarely played with other kids since I couldn't run or skip or jump. Mostly I sat with adults at the gathering spot under the big tree in front of the building. The women would bring kitchen chairs outside, form a circle, and talk. I became a committed listener and learned adult conversation sitting under that tree. If and when I wanted to say something, I knew it had to be cogent so the women would pay attention to me.

What I heard: Movie theaters and pools were closed to stop polio from spreading. Having a disability was a fate worse than death. People went to the hospital to die. By the time I was 6, I knew a lot.

My sense of otherness became clearer at that age. I was confused by being taunted. I was confused by the look on faces of adults. I was confused by my body. I was already mourning the loss of being whole.

I was told that I was going to go to the hospital. Knowing what I did, I thought they were taking me there to die. At 6 you cannot have grief for a life not lived, so I accepted that I'd got six of whatever this was. The man they talked about the other day got 49. I was not afraid.

Ludwig Bemelmans' book *Madeline* saved me. She was a schoolgirl, one of a dozen girls in a French boarding school. She was fearless and completely different than all the other girls. While they were all frightened by the tiger in the zoo and cowered together, Madeline went right up to the gate.

Madeline went to the hospital and came out with a scar on her belly. I went to the hospital and came out with one on my leg. When I woke up from the operation, I thought they had made a mistake. I was still alive and had this strange

second-chance feeling. It was right then that my admiration for Madeline kicked in. She was my hero and role model. Like her, I would have to make my own rules, imagine my own life, and forge my own path. Was I always successful? No. But I tried, and I achieved a lot.

If only I could have written to my 6-year-old self to tell her what her life would be. Here is what I would have said:

MY DEAR INA,

You began your life in the hardest way possible: polio at 18 months, which led to a childhood being marginalized, ignored, ostracized, and bullied. You will learn your first lesson when you understand that you are kinder than those around you. Your father will be the one who instills in you that you only have to get up one more time than you fall. And he will always be there to part another Red Sea of Impossibility.

You will marry Bill Pinkney, who will sail around the world solo. After 36 years,

when you understand his best life will be spent on the sea and yours on land, you will divorce. You will each leave the marriage better people than when you began it — and neither of you will ever forget why you loved each other.

Your life will read like a novel and seem a dream to many. You will hang out with Maya Angelou in Greenwich Village, wipe the brow of Mikhail Baryshnikov in the wings of a Chicago theater, and dance with Fred Astaire at a party given in his honor. You will go skydiving, whitewater rafting, and scuba diving, and you will ski the Alps and the Rockies on your one good leg. You will be fearless, Ina, but never reckless, and you will always see yourself as the causative agent in your story, never the victim.

You will try hard to find your place in corporate America. You will have 21 jobs and get fired from 19 of them, but you will learn something from each one that you will need — and use — later.

You will bake your first cake at age

37 and find a strange and exciting joy in that. You will build a baking kitchen, teach yourself how to bake, and create a dessert catering business in 1980, when such a thing does not exist. You will open your restaurant in 1991 at age 48 and realize there is great power in being underestimated.

Ina's Kitchen will change the landscape of breakfast forever in Chicago. You will feed Julia Child and Wolfgang Puck and experience great kindness from Anthony Bourdain. Celebrities and politicians will flock to Ina's, as will many Chicago chefs, who will grow before your eyes and make Chicago a world-class food destination. Ultimately you will be known as an entrepreneur way ahead of her time, the woman who spearheaded the smoking ban in Chicago, co-founded the Green Chicago Restaurant Coalition, and concocted a recipe for success by combining compassion, exacting standards, and sheer willpower.

After a 33-year career that will bring you much happiness and heartache, you will find your exit strategy and pivot to new and exciting ways to use your knowledge and experience. You will write a memoir/cookbook (*Ina's Kitchen: Memories and Recipes from the Breakfast Queen*), be the subject of an award-winning documentary (*Breakfast at Ina's*), and write a monthly column for the *Chicago Tribune* ("Breakfast with Ina"). Companies will bring you to conferences to speak about breakfast — and you will finally get to *eat* breakfast!

For many years you will try with all your might to fit in and, like most polio survivors, pass for normal. That is until the late effects of polio take their toll and you must find new ways of getting around: first with a brace, then a cane, then a walker, and now a scooter and wheelchair. But your life will still be a source of delight. What you will love the most are the relationships that will sustain you, especially with the members of Rotary you will meet each time you are invited to speak and share your story. You will treat each meeting as an honor, and you will accept that honor because you will feel the grace of all you have tried to accomplish and are no longer 6 years old and afraid that you don't belong. ■

Breakfast virtuoso Ina Pinkney speaks regularly to Rotary clubs about polio.



WE WANT YOUR FEEDBACK



THE ALL-MEMBER SURVEY IS COMING IN NOVEMBER!

This is your chance to tell us what you like, what you don't like, and what you want from your Rotary membership.

To make sure you receive the survey, update your email address at my.rotary.org/profile/me.

GOODWILL

A society of givers

This special perk helps districts increase donors who fight polio

Before Kim Walden's 2019-20 term as the president of the Rotary Club of Thomasville, Georgia, a Rotary member in her district challenged attendees at the presidents-elect training seminar to make a gift toward polio eradication, then pledged to match their gifts. With that match on top of the 2-to-1 match offered by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, "I sat there thinking what that would look like and what a difference my gift would make," Walden recalls. She made a commitment on the spot. "Once I did that, I started turning all of my gifts to polio and telling everyone about it."

Recurring donors like Walden are the key to the PolioPlus Society, a district-led initiative newly supported by The Rotary Foundation. Modeled after the Paul Harris Society, the PolioPlus Society recognizes those who pledge to give a certain amount annually. That amount is determined at the district level; while organizers recommend an annual gift of at least \$100 per year, districts have the flexibility to determine their own threshold.

In District 7780 in the northeastern United States, for example, district leaders created a leveled giving program, with options to join the PolioPlus Society at the \$100, \$250, \$500, and \$1,000 levels. "The first week and a half we had five people who signed up for \$500, four people who signed up for \$1,000, and I can't remember how many did the \$250 level," says Brenda Cressey, the global PolioPlus Society chair and a member of the Rotary Club of Ogunquit, Maine.

The PolioPlus Society began in 2012 in District 5110 in southern

Oregon and northern California and spread to other locations, and similar concepts have existed in other regions. Ten years later, in October 2022, The Rotary Foundation Trustees voted to endorse club- and district-led PolioPlus Societies, agreeing to provide resources such as a toolkit and donor reporting to support interested districts.

As End Polio Now coordinators in 2020-23, Greg Owen and Bob Rogers expanded district participation in the PolioPlus Society throughout Zones 26 and 27 in the western U.S. and Canada. As of early July, 27 of the 30 districts in their zones had more than 4,400 society members who have collectively pledged to donate \$614,000 annually until the world is declared polio-free. "The beauty of the program is you don't have to start from zero with your polio fundraising every year," Owen says.

Wanting to help promote the program, Owen's daughter made an End Polio Now scarf for their puppy. They took a picture and wrote under it that the pooch was forgoing \$10 worth of treats a month to give to the PolioPlus Society. A fellow member saw the photo and circulated it, attracting 100 new society members.

The movement expanded into the Zones 26 and 27 PolioPlus Society Kennel Klub, a subgroup of society members who make their donations in honor of pets. Those who join receive a Kennel Klub doggie bandana and membership pin. (The donation qualifies for Foundation recognition points toward Paul Harris Fellow status for their human.) More information is available at rotaryppskennelklub.org.

"In our eyes, it doesn't matter how Rotarians are supporting polio eradi-



Mollie is the mascot of the Zones 26 and 27 PolioPlus Society Kennel Klub. New members receive an End Polio Now bandana for their pooches.

cation," Owen says. "It just matters that we find ways to inspire Rotarians, friends, and business leaders."

Thinking about starting a PolioPlus Society in your district? Consider these tips:

Name a PolioPlus Society chair for your district. Start by checking out the toolkit in the resource center on endpolio.org. It includes an informational slideshow, banner graphics, sample certificate, vendor options, and brand guidelines.

Encourage giving through Rotary Direct, Rotary's recurring giving program. Set a monthly, quarterly, or annual donation at my.rotary.org/rotary-direct. "You can set up a recurring gift where you wouldn't have to be reminded," Cressey says.

Consider your district's needs. Think about what level of giving makes sense in your area. Consider creating a PolioPlus Society for Rotaractors in the district with an annual giving level that might be more affordable for those early in their careers. "We want to make sure we engage anybody in the effort and help them understand this is our number one priority," Cressey says. "We want to have all hands on deck." — DIANA SCHOBERG

Find tools to promote polio eradication by scanning this code:



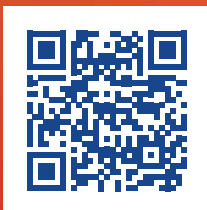


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GIVE US YOUR BEST SHOT






The *Rotary* magazine Photo Awards return in the June 2024 issue. It's your opportunity 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 between 1 October and 31 December. But don't wait: Send us your images today. Submit your photos at rotary.org/photoawards.





THE VALUE

OF VIGILANCE

A close-up photograph of a person wearing a white protective suit, a green surgical mask, and white gloves. They are holding a metal bucket with a rope handle and pouring water into a white plastic bag held by another person's gloved hand. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with green foliage.

Tenacious
surveillance
ensures that
progress in the
eradication
of polio is not
merely sustained
but advanced

BY DIANA SCHOBERG

SEVERAL AFRICAN COUNTRIES

are considered at high risk for a polio outbreak. But for many years, Malawi wasn't one of them.

The nation has a sound public health infrastructure, and its immunization rate is good. The last time a child there had been paralyzed by polio was in 1992, decades before all countries on the continent were deemed polio-free. "Imagine how many children were born and grew up without knowing polio," says Jamal Ahmed, coordinator of the polio eradication program in the African region for the World Health Organization. So, when a child in Malawi tested positive for wild polio in February 2022, "it was a surprise," Ahmed says.

It was a similarly unwelcome surprise a few months later when Janell Routh saw an email from Kirsten St. George at the Wadsworth Center, the polio reference lab in New York State. The lab had identified a case of polio in an unvaccinated man living in Rockland County, about 30 miles north of Manhattan. "That was quite a shock," says Routh, a medical officer in the Division of Viral Diseases at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "We never thought that we would see a case of paralytic polio in the United States."

So how did health workers discover polio in two countries long considered polio-free? And how can they be sure it's

gone now? This process of searching for a disease is known as surveillance, something that Rotary has supported with \$73.6 million in funding over the past five years. As the worldwide eradication of polio approaches, surveillance will play a pivotal role in ensuring that the world is truly polio-free.

If executed as they should be, the fundamentals of conducting surveillance are relatively simple. "In public health, you only see what you look for," explains Stella Anyangwe, an End Polio Now coordinator from South Africa who previously served with WHO for 17 years. "If you don't look for something, you don't see it — though the fact you don't see it doesn't mean it doesn't exist. That's what surveillance does: You collect and analyze information and then interpret it."

One more indelicate detail: The way disease detectives surveil for polio is decidedly unglamorous. It turns out that a key to helping ensure a polio-free world is poop.

IN NOVEMBER 2021, when the 3-year-old girl from a deprived area of Malawi's capital, Lilongwe, showed up at a hospital with paralysis in her right side, clinicians quickly diagnosed acute flaccid paralysis, a sudden onset of muscle weakness, usually in the limbs. AFP has many causes; polio is just one of them, and its occurrence is rare — one more reason why follow-up testing is essential.

Polio is spread through human waste

(or, more rarely, through sneezing and coughing). It enters the body through the mouth, for example in contaminated food or water. The virus replicates in the gastrointestinal tract and is shed in feces. When doctors diagnose a patient with AFP, they send a stool sample to a polio reference lab to check for the virus. This is called AFP surveillance: looking for cases of AFP, polio's primary symptom, and then confirming, through the sample, whether the virus caused those cases.

Farrell Tobolowsky, a medical epidemiologist in the CDC's Global Immunization Division, uses an angling metaphor to describe AFP surveillance. "Never forget that net you cast when fishing," she says. "Polio is a fish you catch in that net."

In Malawi, clinicians obtained a stool sample from the girl, as is protocol. However, because it had been 30 years since the last case of polio in that country, the virus was far from anyone's mind. That January, the sample was sent to the nearest polio reference lab, in South Africa.

Lab workers put the sample on a cell culture to see if the poliovirus grew. When they sequenced the virus, they realized it was wild polio type 1. The sample was sent on to a specialized lab at the CDC in Atlanta, where additional testing confirmed the finding and determined that the sample's genetic sequence was linked to a transmission chain last seen in Pakistan's Sindh province in October 2019.

The genes act as a sort of "molecular clock," explains Ousmane Diop, coordinator of WHO's Global Polio Laboratory





BY THE NUMBERS

145

active labs in the polio network

75

labs with the capacity for environmental surveillance

800

sites worldwide conduct environmental surveillance

\$73.6 million

in Rotary surveillance funding for calendar years 2018-22

85%

of countries in the WHO African region have an environmental surveillance system

Lab technicians take water samples at Bhalswa Lake in Delhi, India, to test for poliovirus. This process, known as environmental surveillance, helps officials search for asymptomatic cases that could signal an outbreak.

Network. As the poliovirus is transmitted, it mutates, at a rate of about nine mutations per year. Counting the number of mutations within the sample, scientists could determine how long the virus had been circulating.

Ahmed says the sample's genetic sequence showed the virus had been imported into the region. "It had diverged enough that it was clear it had been circulating two years or more," he says.

As in Malawi, doctors in the United States weren't looking for polio. The last case of wild polio contracted there was in 1979. But in 2014, they began to see children with similar symptoms. "If this was 50 years ago, we would have considered them polio cases," Routh says. "But since polio had been eliminated, what was causing this?" Scientists have found that other viruses in the same family as the poliovirus can cause a polio-like illness, and one called EV-D68 was likely behind outbreaks in 2014, 2016, and 2018.

In June 2022, when the unvaccinated 20-year-old man in New York State went to the emergency room with back and stomach pain, neck stiffness, mild fever, and weakness in both legs, clinicians were looking for that polio-like illness, which is called acute flaccid myelitis. With the onset of summer, a common time for AFM to surface, New York had sent out an alert to clinicians asking them to keep an eye out for patients with any sudden muscle weakness.

With AFM on their minds, doctors, observing the man's lack of reflexes and leg strength, gathered stool and other samples to test for AFM. To everyone's surprise, the stool sample tested positive for poliovirus. Genetic sequencing found it to be variant poliovirus type 2 related to strains circulating in London and Jerusalem. Multiple outbreaks of this variant poliovirus are circulating in underimmunized communities around the world.

"It was amazing to see all the work we'd done since 2014 to set up [the AFM] surveillance system come to fruition," Routh says, "and be able to capture the first [polio] case in the U.S. in a very long time."

WITH THE ASSUMPTION that polio had been circulating in Africa for two years, WHO, CDC, and other international partners were in full response mode within days of confirming the wild polio case in Malawi. Their first goal was to prepare for the mass vaccination of more than 33 million children in Malawi and the nearby countries of Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

Simultaneously, officials educated workers across the medical system in



ON THE WATCH FOR POLIO

Surveillance for acute flaccid paralysis is the gold standard for detecting poliomyelitis cases. The four steps of surveillance are:

1. Finding children with AFP and reporting cases
2. Transporting stool samples for analysis
3. Isolating and identifying poliovirus in the laboratory
4. Mapping the virus to determine the origin of the strain

Source: Global Polio Eradication Initiative

those five countries, and health workers watched for polio symptoms as they traveled from house to house to vaccinate children. Through this enhanced surveillance, eight additional children and adolescents in Mozambique who had been paralyzed by polio were identified. "You can imagine the pandemonium that set in," says Anyangwe, a member of the Rotary Club of Pretoria, South Africa, who went to Mozambique to participate in a review of the response by the Global Polio Eradication Initiative.

The Mozambique cases were all in the country's northwestern Tete province, which officials now believe was the outbreak's epicenter. "We believe the first importation came in Mozambique," Diop explains, "and the one detected in Malawi may have been detected because surveillance is more sensitive in Malawi."

In the United States, officials leapt into action as well, working under the assumption that one case of type 2 polio could mean thousands of mild or asymptomatic infections. The CDC held a webinar for doctors and increased vigilance around sudden muscle weakness. Health officials worked to boost vaccination rates; in Rockland County, where the man diagnosed with polio lived, only 60 percent of 2-year-olds had received the recommended three polio vaccine doses, including one postal code where only 37 percent of children that age were fully immunized. The national average is 93 percent.

To get a sense of how long the outbreak had been going on and how far it had spread, the CDC turned to another indispensable device in its toolkit: environmental surveillance.

BECAUSE THE WORLD is nearing the eradication of polio, very few children are paralyzed by the disease every year. But those children are representative of thousands

Health workers watched for polio symptoms as they traveled from house to house to vaccinate children.



In Pakistan, one of two remaining polio endemic countries, environmental surveillance plays an important role in detecting the virus. As of June 2023, the country had 114 sewage collection sites; 1 percent of the samples tested positive for the virus in the first six months of the year.



of asymptomatic infections. Acute flaccid paralysis surveillance catches the paralytic cases. But how do we find the others?

Once again, it comes back to fecal samples. Scientists employ the same process used when testing a paralyzed child's stool, but instead, they analyze samples from the local sewage system. This process of environmental surveillance helps them survey an entire population of children rather than just one. Using Tobolowsky's fishing net analogy, environmental surveillance casts a wider net by looking for the virus in sewage.

As far back as the ancient Greeks, people blamed sewage — or rather, the vapors it exuded — for disease transmission. The idea that wastewater itself was the culprit goes back to England in the mid-19th century. Typhoid was isolated from wastewater in 1928, and, by 1939, scientists determined that wastewater could be used as an indicator of poliovirus activity.

In 2000, the GPEI began looking for the poliovirus in sewage samples in Egypt, where polio was still endemic. The effort contributed to the eradication of wild poliovirus there, which led the GPEI to roll out environmental surveillance in other polio-endemic countries starting in 2009; it was later expanded to additional countries. Other countries also perform their own wastewater surveillance outside of the GPEI. Altogether, Diop says, environmental surveillance is conducted at around 800 sites worldwide.

In countries with good sewer systems, health officials collect samples of raw untreated sewage that is on its way to the treatment plant. But in reality, the areas with the highest risk for polio often have poor sanitation. In those instances, as health officials try to determine exactly where to take their samples, they look for other telltale indicators, such as places with an underdeveloped socioeconomic environment, a high level of migrants and population movement, and a history of outbreaks of polio and other diseases.

Having made that determination, health officials zero in by using census statistics and satellite imagery from those specific areas, as well as topographic maps to see where sewage flows from the highest points to the lowest. "Usually an appropriate site is one with good flow, not

This expanded wastewater surveillance network around the globe has a vast potential for the future.

something stagnant," says Ahmed. "We try to target the morning on the assumption that most people use the toilet then."

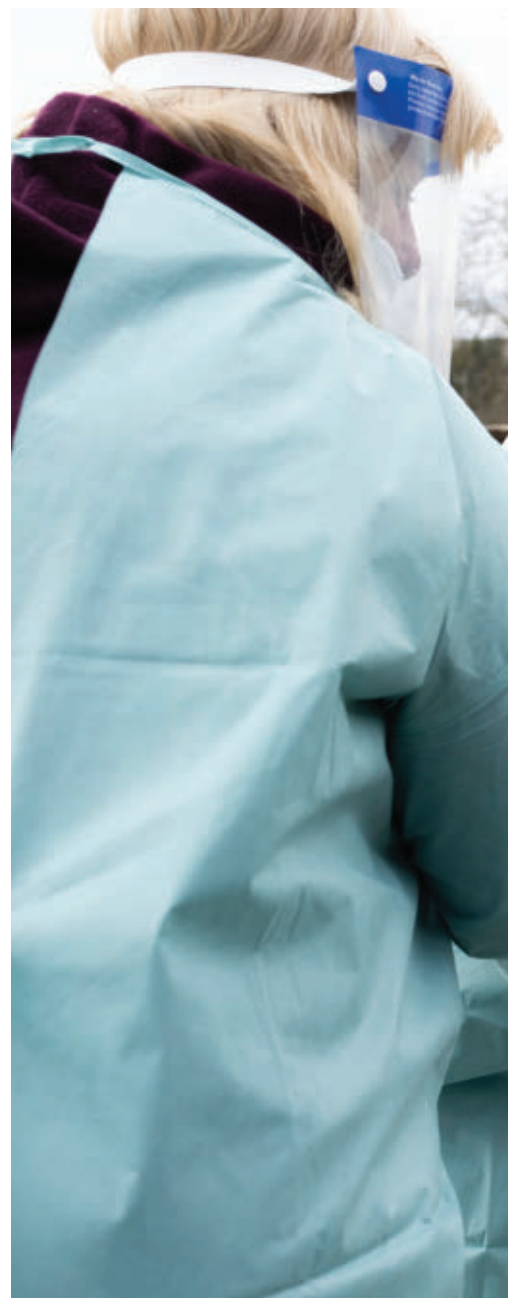
In areas that have typically been inaccessible to polio workers, sanitation workers tend to have a level of trust with communities; as Diop explains, nobody wants sewage draining in front of their home. Because of that, those sanitation workers can usually get the necessary samples.

In February 2022, when Malawi's polio case was confirmed, the country had been on the GPEI's expansion list for environmental surveillance, and a team had already begun preliminary work. "The minute the case was identified, we had two or three surveillance officers going from city to city assessing appropriate collection sites," Ahmed says. "I think within four days of the declaration of the outbreak, we had collected our initial environmental surveillance samples from one of the sites in Lilongwe. Within a month, we had eight or nine sites across the country." No samples in Malawi have come back positive for wild poliovirus.

Environmental surveillance was also ramped up in surrounding countries, including in the outbreak's epicenter,

Tete province in Mozambique. There, however, health officers struggled to find quality environmental surveillance sites and have been unable to detect wild poliovirus in the wastewater. "The AFP surveillance system was the most valuable," Ahmed says.

Once identified, a positive sample can provide useful information. In Botswana, for example, variant poliovirus type 2 was identified last year through environmental sampling, and officials were able to launch two rounds of immunizations, stopping the disease before it paralyzed anybody. But a negative sample is not as





Health workers take a wastewater sample at a sewage site near Uzhhorod, Ukraine. Two children were paralyzed by variant poliovirus type 2 in the country in 2021; environmental surveillance can help officials have confidence that the outbreak is truly over.

definitive as a positive sample. Yes, a negative result could mean the disease is not present, but it could also mean the sample was poor or simply taken on the wrong day. A sample is just a snapshot in time, Diop insists. “It adds value, but it’s not a panacea to detect all poliovirus,” he says. “Environmental surveillance can only be a supplement for AFP surveillance, which is still the gold standard.”

IN THE UNITED STATES, health officials also turned to wastewater sampling to gauge the extent of the spread of the variant po-

liovirus, a task made less onerous since the pandemic.

After studies demonstrated that the COVID-19 virus could be traced in wastewater, the CDC established the National Wastewater Surveillance System in 2020 to detect surging infections. As of June 2023, more than 1,400 sites around the country performed wastewater surveillance for the coronavirus, representing 40 percent of the American public. The sites regularly collect data and submit it to the CDC.

Researchers used these samples gathered for COVID-19 surveillance to look

back in time after health officials identified the New York polio case. “New York State had been testing for COVID and storing specimens,” Routh says. “We were able to pull specimens off the shelf and test retrospectively.” The man paralyzed by polio developed weakness in June; officials looked at samples collected in Rockland County and a neighboring county in May and April and found some positive for poliovirus. This signaled the virus had been circulating for weeks before the patient arrived at the hospital, which set off, as the detection had in Malawi, a drive to increase polio vaccinations among unvac-

cinated children and greater vigilance for polio symptoms.

Health officials then expanded their search, looking in New York City, where people from the patient’s community often traveled; other nearby counties; and places with similar populations in Connecticut and New Jersey, states bordering New York. While there were no positive samples in the other two states, researchers consistently detected polio in sewage samples in New York until October 2022, when detections abruptly fell off (polio is statistically more of a summer disease in temperate climates). There have been no positive wastewater samples since late February. The CDC has since made plans to expand testing to several other communities in other states with lower vaccination rates.

“We’re really grateful,” Routh says. “We were nervous moving into summer that there might be a flare of poliovirus in the wastewater, or we would see a reimportation of poliovirus from another county experiencing an ongoing outbreak. We’re keeping our fingers crossed.”

Ahmed too is watching and waiting to see whether the wild polio outbreak in Africa has been contained. “Polio is a very tricky virus,” he says. “It can circulate for quite a while without detection. We always say that it takes a combination of good surveillance and time.”

Researchers are working to increase the sensitivity of the testing to detect polio in sewage samples even if the transmission rate is very low — in effect, making the grid of the fishing net so fine that no cases can slip through. “This will be important even for post-certification,” Diop says, “to be sure we’re not missing any poliovirus.”

Continued consistent testing in high-risk areas will be important too, because one negative sample could just mean an off day. Consistently negative tests will increase officials’ confidence that polio is truly gone.

With a three-decade track record, the GPEI’s lab network — both the people and the physical lab infrastructure — proved pivotal for COVID-19 surveillance. Experts in the polio lab network helped set up national processes for testing for the coronavirus, and lab workers pitched in on efforts to detect it. “[We] have the skills,”

TWO PATHS TO SEARCH FOR POLIO

Acute flaccid paralysis surveillance

When a child experiences sudden, unexplained weakness in the limbs, health workers investigate.



Workers collect a stool sample within 48 hours.

Environmental surveillance

Most children infected with the poliovirus don’t show symptoms, but they still excrete the virus in their feces for several weeks.



Workers collect sewage samples.



Samples are kept cold during transportation to a lab that is part of the Global Polio Laboratory Network.



Scientists test the samples for the presence of poliovirus. If confirmed, they carry out further tests to determine the exact genetic makeup of the virus and whether it is wild or vaccine-derived.



The scientists compare the sequence against reference samples of known polioviruses. Because viruses from different regions have slightly different genetic sequences, the scientists can determine the origin of the virus.



Health workers use this information to figure out the best immunization strategy to prevent further spread.

Ahmed says. “We’re also benefiting from the infrastructure that was expanded because of COVID with a higher number of people who have the know-how to do sequencing. It’s a win-win scenario for public health in Africa when it comes to the lab network.”

This expanded wastewater surveillance network around the globe has a vast potential for the future. “The uses are endless,” Routh says. “I’m interested in using it for influenza. Could we predict the strains the United States could be seeing in their influenza season and be able to adapt vaccines more quickly?” In 2022, U.S. researchers tested sewage to track

the spread of mpox, the virus previously known as monkeypox. And wastewater can be used for everything from monitoring opioid use to predicting obesity rates in a community to watching for drug-resistant tuberculosis strains, enabling a more rapid response.

The future of polio eradication is surveillance, and wastewater-based epidemiology will be a key tool in those monitoring efforts. In the future, it might also play a pivotal role as society confronts other public health issues — which means that the investments Rotary has made in surveillance will continue to pay dividends for years to come. ■

A worker from the Ministry of Health in North Darfur, Sudan, conducts environmental sampling for polio outside of a health facility in al-Fasher. Officials work to maintain the level of surveillance required to rapidly detect any new emergence of the virus.



A person wearing a light blue short-sleeved shirt and blue jeans is walking from right to left. They are pulling a blue rolling suitcase. The background is a plain, light-colored wall with a tiled floor in the foreground.

Rotary Youth Exchange

offers both teens

and host families

the chance to grow

We are family

Photography by Maira Erlich

George French, a Rotary Youth Exchange student from Minnesota, is greeted by Ivone Pinheiro de Souza Silva and Ednei da Silva, his host parents in Guarulhos, Brazil, near São Paulo.



Regina Alesi loves to travel. So when a classmate told her about her experience with Rotary Youth Exchange, the teenager knew she wanted to take a journey of her own. Alesi left her Argentine hometown of San Nicolás de los Arroyos in January through the program to explore Brazil, dive into its culture, and grow as a leader. “This experience has made me more independent and flexible to adapt to new things and different scenarios,” she says.

Rotary Youth Exchange has been promoting international understanding for nearly 50 years, and today Rotary clubs host exchanges in more than 100 countries. The program offers teenagers ages 15-19 an opportunity to make new friends and learn new ways of living, to open themselves to different ideas and experiences, and to adapt and gain fresh perspectives.

The exchanges offer the same to the host families. “Living with our exchange student gave my family the opportunity to get to know a new culture, traditions, and practices,” says Ivone Pinheiro de Souza Silva, a host mom. “The doors of my house will always be open for exchange students.”

Alesi (pictured right) is one of thousands of students who participated in Rotary Youth Exchange last year. On the following pages, you’ll also meet Ava Minocherhomji and George French, two other exchange students, and learn more about their exciting year in Brazil. — JP SWENSON



This page: George French and Regina Alesi participate in a Rotary meeting during their exchanges in Brazil. **Opposite page:** Alesi’s tip for other exchange students: Don’t be afraid to talk to people. Sometimes, they’re wondering how to talk to you. “You can ask anything about them or the country you are in,” she says.

**“This experience
has made me
more independent
and flexible
to adapt to
new things
and different
scenarios.”**

— Regina Alesi





“The thing that surprised me most was how different my host families were from each other, yet how welcoming and loving they all were.”

— Ava Minocherhomji



Opposite page: Ava Minocherhomji, a student from Pune, India, made deep connections with all three of her host families, including Luciana and Victor Pfuetzenreiter.

Above: Minocherhomji, who fell in love with Brazil and its culture and people, rehearses a dance.

Left: She appreciated the little moments like cooking, cycling, and working on projects for her art class.

**“I realized I
love to travel
and that
being on my
own can be
a freeing
way to
experience
new things.”**

— George French





Opposite page: George French came to the São Paulo area from Crookston, Minnesota. “What surprised me the most,” he says, “was how even though I wasn’t their family, we did things as a ‘family.’” **Clockwise from top:** French participates in an acting class; enjoys soccer with his host brother, Rafael da Silva; and shares a meal with his host family. His host mom, Ivone Pinheiro de Souza Silva, says, “I will miss his smile and the long lunches we would share together.” ■




A season of heat, fire, and floods

In a time of climate disasters,
Rotary members step up to help

By Etelka Lehoczky

During a sweltering heat wave in Greece in late July, wildfires immolated a hillside in the village of Vati on the island of Rhodes.



Ioannis Chalikias recalls the July wildfires that ripped through the island of Rhodes, Greece, where he makes his home.

“The effects of climate change are now evident here as well,” says Chalikias, a member of the Rotary Club of Rhodos, Greece. “The increase in temperature, combined with the strong winds, did not allow the fire department to put out the fire immediately. The hot ground rekindled the fires. As a result, they spread to a very large part of the island.”

This summer saw people around the globe enduring similar experiences, and researchers say that heat waves like the one in Greece and increased wildfires globally are more likely with climate change. Record temperatures triggered or worsened wildfires from North America to North Africa, while unusually heavy rains caused extreme flooding from Central Europe to the Pacific Rim. Scientists agree on the ultimate cause of many of these disasters. An analysis released in late July by World Weather Attribution, an international group of researchers, linked extreme temperatures in the Southwestern United States, southern Europe, northern Mexico, and China to human-induced climate change.

“The anomalously high temperatures during this year’s summer, which broke records in several places, would have been highly unlikely in a world without climate change,” says Mariam Zachariah, a research associate with the Grantham Institute for Climate Change and the Environment at Imperial College London. “For the case of rainfall extremes, we now see unusually high amounts of rainfall during shorter periods triggering landslides and flash floods — again consistent with our knowledge that a warmer atmosphere can hold more moisture and therefore lead to heavier showers.”

Around the world, Rotary members have felt the effects. In Tucson, Arizona, a record-breaking string of 53 days over 100 degrees made it dangerous to go outside.

“The heat is by far different from every other summer I’ve been here,” says Kirk Reed, a member of the Rotary Club of Catalina (Tucson). “I went on a short bike ride one morning, but I got dizzy and kind of lost consciousness. I made it home, but I don’t remember the last mile.”

Rotary President Gordon McNally and Foundation Trustee Chair Barry Rassin addressed the situation in an August letter to members.

“July 2023 was the hottest month in recorded history by a wide margin — and perhaps it’s time that we sent a disaster condolence letter to our ailing planet,” they wrote. “But this is not a message of defeat and despair. The Rotary world has stepped up in this time of crisis to offer immediate relief.”

Rotary members across the globe have taken action to aid victims of extreme heat, wildfires, and floods. Here’s how. →

Greece

Three successive heat waves triggered deadly wildfires in Greece this summer, killing at least seven people. On the island of Rhodes, more than 20,000 were forced to evacuate. Members of the Rotary clubs on Rhodes immediately sought ways to help.

“The fire started in the center of the island, which was rather far from the main town, which is in the north,” says Vassia Moutafi, president of the Rotary Club of Rodos-Kolossos. “Fortunately, we had one member, an agronomist, who traveled to the areas where the fire was. One of the first things he told us was that the firefighters needed more hoses and other equipment.”

Not only were the firefighters running low on hoses, but many of the ones they were using had been damaged by the heat. The Rotary members got specifications for new hoses from the firefighters, ordered the hoses, and delivered them to the places around the island where they were most needed. They also donated a range of other firefighting equipment, including gloves, masks, shovels, and sprayers that can be worn like a backpack to put out smaller parts of the fire, club member Ioannis Achladiotis explains.

Then the members turned their attention to helping the thousands of people displaced by the fires. “It was amazing how all the volunteers acted as one big family and one team,” Moutafi says. “This was from all age groups, including young people from 14-15 years old. It was a combination of social media and word of mouth — just picking up the phone and calling each other.”

Some volunteers helped set up shelters and transported people there on buses

and boats. Others provided such necessities as beds and bedding, toiletries, food, and medicine. Club members who were doctors and social workers donated their services as well. The Rotary clubs of Rhodos and Rodos-Kolossos have also started two fundraisers that have raised more than \$10,000.

The members didn’t forget the island’s animal population, especially its beloved native deer. They set out food and water and tried to guide the animals toward safe areas.

“Physically and mentally, our members have dedicated themselves to doing everything possible,” Moutafi says. “I feel very proud.”

Pakistan

Last summer Pakistan saw massive flooding that killed at least 1,700 people and left millions more without homes. A third of the country was under water at one point, and the economic toll was in the billions. This year, more flash flooding has resulted in the deaths of more than 200 people.

Rotary clubs across the country have taken the opportunity to not just rebuild destroyed villages, but to build them better. Their Smart Villages program has erected shelters, upgraded water and sanitation systems, and improved health and hygiene facilities for hundreds of families. By August, the program had reached six villages in all four of Pakistan’s provinces. The plan is to complete 20 villages, providing support to 2,000 families, by June 2024 and then construct 200 more over the next five years.

“Our members in Pakistan thought this to be an ideal opportunity to influence change in our villages,” says RI Director Muhammad Faiz Kidwai, a member of the Rotary Club of Karachi Karsaz. “We are

targeting people who really had nothing before. This has crushed them.”

The new buildings are designed to have zero carbon impact. Instead of carbon-heavy materials like concrete, they are constructed of bamboo, mud, and lime, and they are elevated above ground level to help withstand future flooding.

“The shelters are not just resilient to disasters, but environment-friendly too,” Kidwai says. “The best part is that the labor was provided by the villagers themselves. They built these shelters to improve themselves.”

Korea

In Korea, more than 40 people died and more than 10,000 were displaced by heavy rains and landslides in July. The devastation was spread across the country — but fortunately, so is Rotary.

In Geumsan County, about 50 members from four Rotary clubs in District 3680 cleaned up a restaurant that had been buried in silt from a mountain landslide, while in Bonghwa County, about 50 members from five Rotary clubs in District 3630 visited homes that had been affected. Some of them spent seven hours at two homes destroyed by landslides, removing furniture and household items, cleaning inside the homes, and clearing away piles of dirt that had accumulated outside.

“The actual scene of the damage was much worse than the pictures show,” says Jong-il Kim, secretary of the Rotary Club of Bonghwa. “It was dangerous and scary because the houses were about to collapse, but we carried out the work carefully to ease the worries of the residents a little.”

In the city of Cheongju in the North Chungcheong province, there were nu-

The Rotary Foundation supports disaster relief and recovery efforts through grants from the Disaster Response Fund. Contribute at rotary.org/donate.



From left: The Rotary Club of Rodos-Kolossos, Greece, donated these fire hoses; in Pakistan, a villager uses bamboo, mud, and lime to build a home; an onlooker inspects a house destroyed by a landslide in Korea; a 2021 fire left a devastated landscape near the village of Achelouf, Algeria.

PHOTOGRAPHS: (PREVIOUS SPREAD) STR/NURPHOTO VIA AP; (GREECE) VASILEIA-NEKTARIA MOUTAFI; (PAKISTAN) SYED MUHAMMAD KAMIRAN; (KOREA) JOUNG HO KIM; (ALGERIA) AP PHOTO/TOUFIK DOUDOU

merous casualties due to a flooded underpass and severe damage caused by waist-high water. Members of the Rotary Club of Cheongju-Musim spent about six hours cleaning out flooded homes and a store. Later, at the request of local officials, members of five Cheongju-based clubs gathered at an egg farm and helped dispose of 2,000 eggs that had fermented due to heavy rain.

“The residents told me that they were so grateful that we came, and that it gave them the courage to go on with their lives,” says Joung Ho Kim, president of the Rotary Club of Cheongju-Musim. “But their faces were still filled with worry, and I can’t help but think of ways to help them in the future.” He urged more Rotary members to get involved in flood recovery to give people hope and courage.

Algeria

The forested region around the Algeria-Tunisia border is prone to fires. Even so, the wildfires that have erupted in recent years have been unprecedented. During the summer of 2021, they blazed through some 250,000 acres of land in Algeria and killed 90 people, making for one of the worst fire seasons in the country’s history.

“Those fires spread quickly, helped by strong winds. There were many casualties,” says Abderrahman Ali Khodja, a member of the Rotary Club of Alger Espérance. “Thank God, there were no victims among Algerian Rotarians.”

For eight months, Ali Khodja’s club provided essential support to the village of Igreb, in the Djurdjura Mountains. The fires devastated the village.

“We took charge of a landlocked village of 800 inhabitants. It was totally ravaged by the flames,” Ali Khodja says. “The population lives essentially from olive growing, oil processing, and the sale of olive oil. They have lost almost all their olive trees. It’s their only source of income.”

First, the club gave out food and hygiene products. As winter approached, they donated blankets and heaters. Then they organized the distribution of building materials and donated six sewing machines, enabling 30 women to be trained in sewing.

“When we finished the action and saw the happy villagers, it was an intense moment for us,” Ali Khodja says. “The joy of the women sewing outfits for their children brought tears to our eyes. What happiness, what pleasure to give a little joy to those who need it.” ■

Additional reporting by Seoah Lee.

Heat wave relief

What can hot countries teach us about keeping cool?

As global warming — driven by our use of oil, gas, and coal — spawns more deadly heat waves worldwide, here is a look at what countries around the world do to stay cool.

Think light colors

We know that white clothing is cooler on a hot day. Similarly, using light-colored roofing material or painting roofs white can help hold down the heat inside buildings.

In steamy Indonesia’s industrial buildings, “cool roofs” are being used to drop indoor temperatures for workers by up to 18 degrees, heat experts say.

In hot South Asian nations like India and Bangladesh, painting roofs white is becoming far more common too, particularly in those neighborhoods where many residents struggle to afford air-conditioning or to pay the power bills to run fans.

It could also be time to ditch sweltering black tarmac surfaces. During the Summer Olympics in Tokyo in 2021, the marathon route was covered in light-colored reflective paint to try to keep temperatures bearable for runners.

Los Angeles also has experimented with painting streets white.

Seek out shade

As we all know, it’s cooler in the shade, so adding sun canopies to exercise areas and public squares and creating shadier parks, streets, and pathways can help people as they go about their daily activities.

In some of its public areas, Tel Aviv in Israel has installed light-colored fabric sunshades that can also carry lightweight solar panels. These illuminate the squares at night, making them safer and more attractive to use round-the-clock.

Medellín in Colombia has created a “green corridor” system designed to allow many residents to get where they’re going on foot or by bicycle largely in natural shade. The city now has 30 green corridors of trees and other vegetation that provide an interconnected 12-mile network of shady routes.

Try low-cost cooling

In countries not used to heat waves, few people have air conditioners, and for those on limited budgets, even running lots of fans can be expensive.

But low-energy, low-cost options can cut heat.

In sweltering eastern India, some families cool their homes using jute sacks soaked in water and arrayed on their tin roofs or hung in doorways. Many also leave clay jugs of water outside on hot days to assist those passing by.

In the Indian city of Ahmedabad, a pioneering heat action plan triggers a wide range of measures when temperatures hit dangerous levels, including deliveries of water to areas where supplies may be unreliable.

In places newly experiencing hotter temperatures, it’s crucial to plan ahead to ensure that water and power supplies are available. In cities short of water, spray parks can be a more water-efficient way to cool people than pools.

Subsidize keeping cool

As global temperatures rise, cooling is increasingly recognized as a service that is as essential as winter heating.

In New York, city officials have responded to worsening heat waves by distributing cooling systems to low-income seniors. The city also is petitioning the state government to give poorer families financial aid to pay summer utility bills, just as some now receive help for winter heat. It is also considering setting a maximum permitted indoor summer temperature for rental properties, as it sets a minimum level for winter.

Meanwhile, Berlin is launching a “heat aid” program for its homeless residents that provides free showers, sunscreen, and drinks.

Pick up the phone

Older people, the very young, and people with pre-existing health conditions or disabilities can be particularly vulnerable, as can residents of communities with little access to parks or cool spaces. Heat experts say that simply checking on vulnerable neighbors during hot periods can help keep them safe.

In some Australian cities, Red Cross workers make calls to vulnerable people on hot days and dispatch emergency services if those calls go unanswered. Buenos Aires reaches out to older residents with phone calls and texts.

This article was originally published on [Context.news](#), powered by the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

OUR CLUBS

VIRTUAL VISIT

Leading with heart

Rotaract Club of One Million Lives Saigon, Vietnam

There's a lot of female energy in the Rotaract Club of One Million Lives Saigon: The charter president, president, and vice president are all women. Is that by accident or design? Perhaps a little bit of both.

"It may be a coincidence," says club member Trang Phan Doan Huynh, a student at the Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon) campus of the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology. "But — and this might sound a little biased — in my school, the girls are interested in extracurricular activities a bit more than the boys."

What isn't a coincidence is how the women were drawn to do good works. They credit parents and other older people in their lives with showing them the way. For Ha Vo Nguyet Le, a driving force in chartering the club, inspiration came from an elementary school teacher in the highland province of Dak Lak. Many students there belong to the Ede ethnic minority, and many are in need.

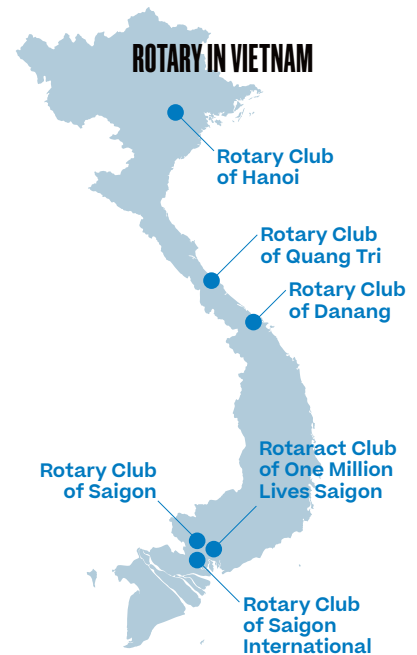
"I met the teacher through my mother, who also enjoys social work," Le says. She and several friends decided to help the teacher purchase items such as bikes for students who would otherwise have to walk 6 or 7 miles to school.

"I visited her once in 2020 to learn more about her work in the remote areas of Dak Lak," Le says. "I was touched by her enthusiasm and her devotion to people who were strangers to her. She always gives out books and clothes for her students and even gives free tutoring sessions in her house. Even though she's not the most wealthy person in the village — she's in the lower-income section of society — she's still able to do those kinds of things."

Le co-founded an organization to help provide school supplies, transportation, and food for students in the region who face hardships. It grew into an association of young people across Vietnam that raised money for various causes. When Le met Jason Lim, past governor of Rotary District 3350, which includes Vietnam, he urged her to charter a Rotaract club.

"Ha Le has the potential to become a strong leader," Lim says. "In doing community service, the important thing isn't how rich you are; it's your heart. She has the heart and the patience to lead her fellow members."

Le was just as impressed with Rotary. "We've gotten a lot of help from our club advisers," who are members of the sponsor Rotary clubs of Bangkok Cyber and Saigon, she says.



The club, chartered in February, is the only Rotaract club in Vietnam and part of a small but growing Rotary presence in the country. Five Rotary clubs have been chartered there in recent years, beginning with the Saigon and Saigon International clubs in June 2021.

The women behind the Rotaract club are masters of social media and word-of-mouth organizing. In 2020, as members of the organization that Le started, they put on a concert to raise funds, then persuaded many of the high school students



Members of the Rotaract Club of One Million Lives Saigon focus on causes such as clean water and food for mothers and children.

who'd attended to join their group. Within a few months after they chartered the Rotaract club, it had more than 40 members.

Some of the club's causes are clean water, food for mothers and children, and sex education. Le is particularly excited about a project to provide 1,000 servings of milk each month to students in a nearby elementary school.

"We're all about providing students with enough food security so that they can stay in school," she says.

My Trang Quynh Nguyen, the vice president, is dedicated to fighting sexual harassment and encouraging sex education, both controversial topics in Vietnam.

"Normally in Asia, parents prevent any conversations about sex. This means that children and teenagers have to explore everything in this area by themselves," she says. "It's crucial to normalize sex education and give our children the right direction."

Nguyen, Le, and Huynh all brought organizational experience to the club. "I used to participate in many extracurricular clubs, but I've never been in any organizations that have such a clear mission as this one," Nguyen says.

Huynh learned about the group through friends, but her interest in helping others started at home. "I've always been interested in social work since I was little,

because my parents did it," she says. "But I wanted to be more proactive and not just follow my parents around. I started by raising funds in my student council to help students with intellectual disabilities in my school."

Huynh ended up founding a club in her high school to help these students. Eventually, the club expanded its efforts to help students with disabilities all over Ho Chi Minh City. After this success, Huynh decided to begin working with the Rotaract club on a broader range of causes.

"What I really love about the club is that we raise funds on our own," she says. "The youth do it themselves."

— ETELKA LEHOCZKY

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

An unmatched gift

Their time abroad opened the world for two Rotary exchange students, while providing deep reservoirs of fortitude and grace

By Sharon Basco



In the years following her student exchange experience, Sharon Basco returned again and again to the lessons she learned from Rotary.

Recently, in an old file folder, I found a timeworn letter dated 1 January 1967 and signed by “Mr. A.” It began this way: “You have been selected for the Rotary SEP. As soon as an opening occurs, we will notify you as to the country to which you will be assigned.”

Mr. A was S. Gayley Atkinson, a member of the Rotary Club of Huntingdon Valley, Pennsylvania, and the chairman for the student exchange program in District 743 (today it’s 7430). And I was a 16-year-old high school student eager and terrified to leave my provincial hometown and go off into the world.

It was summertime when I found out exactly where I was going. I was visiting a new friend, Joseph “Jody” Maier, who was in my student exchange group and already knew that he was headed to Belgium. I phoned home to see whether the day’s mail brought news of my own assignment.

My mother answered: “You have a letter from Rotary.” I heard her ripping at the envelope. She said, “You’re going to Denmark.”

I knew nothing about Denmark except that it was a Scandinavian country. Jody grabbed the encyclopedia. It described Denmark in decidedly unromantic terms as a country obsessed with cows, butter, and pigs. I didn’t care; I had a destination.

In August, after a sleepless night on my first trans-Atlantic flight — from Philadelphia to Munich to Copenhagen — I stumbled out of customs and saw several groups of people waiting. There was a family with a couple of children, a smiling older couple, and a tall, young Viking-type holding a bouquet of roses who was clearly waiting for his gorgeous girlfriend.

I headed toward the parents with the kids, but they shook their heads. Ah, must be the couple. No again. Someone was tapping on my shoulder. It was the Viking, Hans Christian. He was one of the older brothers in my host family, the Sodes, who had lived for generations on the island of Bornholm, where their ancestors were buried

in long ivy-covered rows at a cemetery outside town.

As with my own family, there were lots of brothers and one sister. The whole family made me feel welcome, each in their own way. My Danish “sister,” Elin, tutored me on fashion and gossiped about boys; my Danish “brother” Peter let me hang out for late-afternoon tea with his buddies as they joked and played guitar. The Sodes even helped organize a special autumn Rotary weekend where they welcomed my fellow exchange students from Scandinavia and western Europe. Jody attended, traveling from Liège, Belgium.

In the new year, I moved to my second host family, a pleasant couple whose children were grown up and lived elsewhere. Then I moved to Bornholm’s højskole (a “folk” high school) as a boarder for the spring semester. That was an eye-opening experience, a small-town girl making her way among sophisticated young women from Scandinavia and Germany. On those evenings when their dashing boyfriends drove them to town, I retreated to the ceramic studios and turned lopsided pots for entertainment.

Still, the Sodes were my anchor. I returned to them on weekends, and we have stayed in touch ever since. My Danish sister and brothers and their children have stayed with us in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and

my family visits them in Copenhagen and on Bornholm.

My year as a Rotary exchange student was an unmatched gift, opening the world to me. It changed my life, or maybe I should say, it re-directed my life. It supercharged my natural interest in news and international affairs, and it launched me into my lifelong career as an investigative journalist, arts critic, and public radio broadcaster.

Comparing notes recently with Toni Meixner, who’d been in Sweden when I was in Denmark, we recognized that we both had considerable career success working in overwhelmingly male environments. As it turned out, I knew someone else who, fortified by his year abroad, possessed the inner strength to gracefully confront the dramatic test that came at the conclusion of his relatively short life.

Before the internet, it was hard to stay in touch with my fellow exchange students as we scattered to colleges and moved around for jobs. But when that tool became widely available, I searched out some old friends. I’d lost track of Jody after our college years, and I was mystified at how he had just disappeared. Then I discovered something online that told me why he had suddenly vanished.

I found his name appended to the preface of a book called *The Guide to Living with HIV Infection*. It was the complete text of a

speech he had given at Johns Hopkins Hospital in 1987, a year after he’d been diagnosed with AIDS. In it he shared what he’d learned from the moment when he asked himself whether he was going to see the glass half empty or half full.

“I am in my late 30s,” he said, “reaching the end of my life and knowing, as I say it now, I’m still very much alive.” He advised people not to deny their sadness, but not to wallow in it.

“Take action,” Jody continued. “If I’ve learned anything in the last 12 months, it’s ‘words are one thing, action is another.’ ... Take community action. ... Remember that the loving response to AIDS is not about helping people with the disease to die poetically or enabling them to become martyrs or making them over into saints. The loving response is a way of empowering persons with AIDS so that they can ... maximize their health and cope with their problems at any time during their illness. ... Celebrate the love that we share.”

Jody no doubt had plenty of strength and character before he was an exchange student. But he was deeply influenced during his year abroad by the examples Rotary provided — of generosity and friendship, of service and unwavering leadership. In the decades since we lost Jody, my mind and heart take me back to those same touchstones again and again. ■

PHOTOGRAPHS: COURTESY OF SHARON BASCO



Sharon Basco

- District 743 student exchange program, Pennsylvania to Denmark, 1967-68
- Print and broadcast reporter, critic, and producer, 1975-present

In 1967, Sharon Basco’s year abroad warranted stories in both the district newsletter and in a Danish newspaper. At left, Basco is seated on the far left; Jody Maier is standing fifth from the right, while Mr. A — S. Gayley Atkinson — is standing at far right.

DISPATCHES FROM
OUR SISTER MAGAZINES
ROTARY-NO-TOMO
(JAPAN)

‘I just felt I had to go’



A Japanese high school student brings smiles to Ukrainian refugee children

In February 2022, when Iroha Ukon, a high school student in Osaka, Japan, learned of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, she came up with the idea of traveling to Poland to help children displaced by the conflict. At 17, Ukon knew it was not going to be easy. She searched various media platforms for Japanese volunteers in Poland and contacted them for advice. Given that she would need to stay there for a long period, she realized a significant challenge was going to be finding a family to host her in Poland. Nevertheless, she refused to let the hurdle deter her.

Fortunately, a classmate whose

father is Ukrainian introduced Ukon to Henryk Kalinowski, a former participant in a Rotary Youth Exchange living in Poland. Kalinowski, who speaks fluent Japanese, is a member of the Rotary Club of Wroclaw in southwestern Poland. Having benefited from his days as an exchange student in Japan, Kalinowski agreed to help with Ukon’s accommodation in Poland.

After careful consideration, Ukon’s parents and school gave the green light to her trip. Meanwhile, her determination deeply touched her friends, prompting them to take action. They put up a donation box

on school grounds and raised a significant amount of money to cover some of her travel expenses and to help Ukrainian refugee children.

On 6 May, after 24 hours of traveling, the Japanese teenager landed in Warsaw with two large suitcases filled with gifts for Ukrainian children, including sweets and *mi-sangas*, or good luck charms, that she had made with her friends at school.

Kalinowski, who was actively involved in relief efforts for Ukrainian refugees, met Ukon at the airport and arranged for her to help at a refugee center in Wroclaw. The camp sheltered many Ukrainian children, including those who had become orphaned during the war.

On her first day, Ukon found herself the only volunteer at the center. It was hard to communicate with the children because she spoke neither Polish nor Ukrainian. But Ukon persisted. She spent her time playing with children at a small playground near the shelter. Her warmth and sincerity gained her several friends. As days passed, more volunteers, including some who were the same age as her, showed up at the center. They quickly formed a supportive team.

Ukon taught Ukrainian children Japanese and demonstrated how to use calligraphy tools, such as brush pens that she had brought with her. She also engaged the children in making origami, the Japanese art of folding paper into the shapes of different objects. In return, the children taught her how to speak Ukrainian.

Ukon’s story quickly caught the attention of local media. Several Polish newspapers and TV stations traveled to the refugee center to interview her. Soon, she became a local celebrity.

↑ About three months after Russia invaded Ukraine, Iroha Ukon traveled to Poland to help Ukrainian children displaced by the war.

A month after her arrival in Poland, Ukon had formed strong bonds not only with Ukrainian refugee children and their parents but also with her fellow volunteers. When it was time for her to return to Japan, she found it hard to part with her new friends and yearned to stay longer. Since she was graduating the following year, she realized that she had to go back home and finish her required courses.

Ukon stayed on for another two weeks. On her final day at the refugee center, many Ukrainian children, unwilling to let her leave, clung tightly to her.

Having witnessed Ukon's extraordinary work, Kalinowski reached out to his former host father, Masamichi Kondo, of the Rotary Club of Takatsuki West in Osaka, and told him about Ukon.

Inspired by Ukon's unwavering commitment to helping Ukrainian refugee children, Kondo contacted Yuiko Miyasato, 2022-23 governor of District 2660 (northern Osaka), who recommended Ukon as one of his district's exchange students to Poland. Ukon's trip would be sponsored by the Rotary Club of Osaka and hosted by the Rotary Club of Wroclaw.

In March 2023, Ukon graduated from Osaka YMCA Gakuin High School. She returned to Poland where she is attending a local school and continuing her volunteer work at the refugee center in Wroclaw, bringing smiles to Ukrainian children and other volunteers.

Ukon formed strong bonds not only with Ukrainian children and their parents but also with fellow volunteers.



Kochi Diaper Bank

In 2016, while cleaning out my closet, I came across some packages of unopened diapers that I had forgotten about. My son, already in kindergarten, no longer needed diapers. At the suggestion of a friend who is actively involved in children's charity projects, I decided to donate them to Kochi Misono Baby Home, a local orphanage.

As I was delivering the diapers, I ran into a friend on the street. She also had leftover diapers she was looking to donate. Our encounter led to the creation of a diaper bank.

In Japan, many organizations and businesses are partnering with the government to provide various types of support for low-income families with small children. However, I quickly realized that no agency was dedicated to supplying these families with diapers.

While some parents struggle to afford disposable diapers, people like me and my friend had unopened packs tucked away in our closets, forgotten. So I decided to start a project that would collect unopened packages of disposable diapers from families who no longer needed them and deliver them to those who did.

Around that time, I had just been elected Rotary Foundation chair of my club, the Rotary Club of Kochi East, and I proposed the plan dur-

ing a brainstorm session for club projects. Everyone liked the idea, and we decided to make Kochi Diaper Bank a district grant project.

In December 2017, we organized a special kickoff event and donated the first batch of disposable diapers. At the same time, we distributed flyers at Rotary club meetings and to the general public, encouraging people to participate. Each donor received a towel as a token of appreciation.

Since its inception, the Kochi Diaper Bank project has continued to expand. Every year, Misono Baby Home sets up a Kochi Diaper Bank booth at local events to raise awareness and ask for donations. The orphanage also collaborates with the social welfare council in the Kochi prefecture on the project.

Kochi Diaper Bank received the 2020 Kochi prefecture Best Childcare System Award from the child care support site Ikuhaku. In 2022, this Rotary project inspired Unicharm Co., a manufacturer of diapers and hygiene products, to set up a diaper donation program in partnership with Kannoji city in Kagawa prefecture.

The Kochi Diaper Bank, born from Rotary's effort, has flourished thanks to the wonderful caregivers and the support of the public.

— YAYOI NISHIMORI

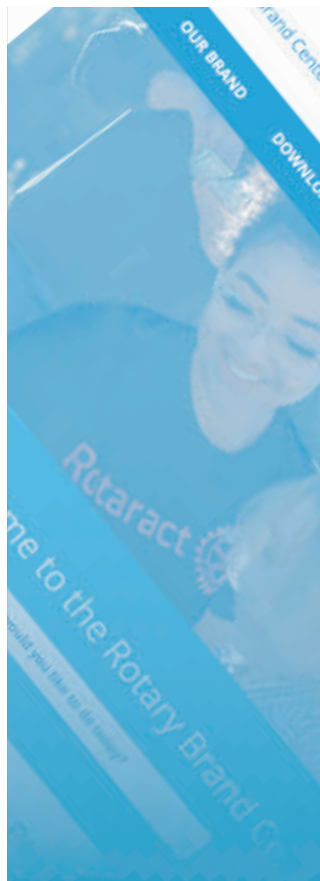
HANDBOOK

At your service

Rotary International is here to support your membership journey. Here's how.

When you think about your experience in Rotary, the first thing that likely comes to mind is your club: your weekly meetings, longtime friendships, and service opportunities in your community. But when you joined your club, you also joined Rotary International — a vast global organization with about 775 employees headquartered in Evanston, Illinois, and six additional offices around the world. Rotary International is here to support you in your membership journey every step of the way, providing tools, resources, and expertise to enhance your membership experience.

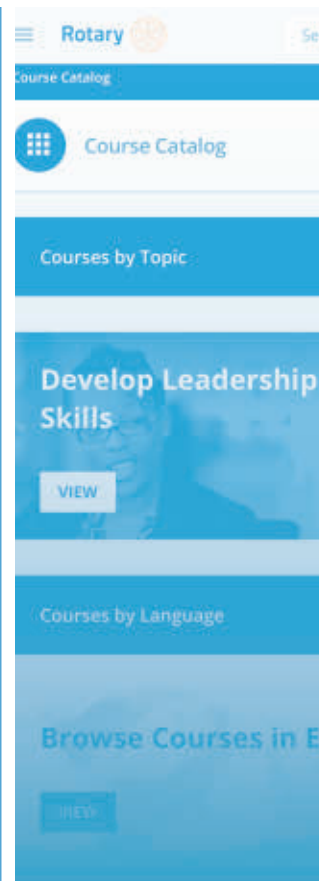
To help you take advantage of everything your membership offers, we asked Drew Kessler, RI treasurer and a member of the Rotary Club of North Rockland (Haverstraw), New York, to walk us through a few of the available resources.



The **Brand Center** will help you tell Rotary's and your club's story, providing resources for developing your own promotional materials and templates for creating your club's logo. "It's a great tool," Kessler says. "Rotary makes it easy for clubs to show their community how we're people of action and how they can join our efforts."

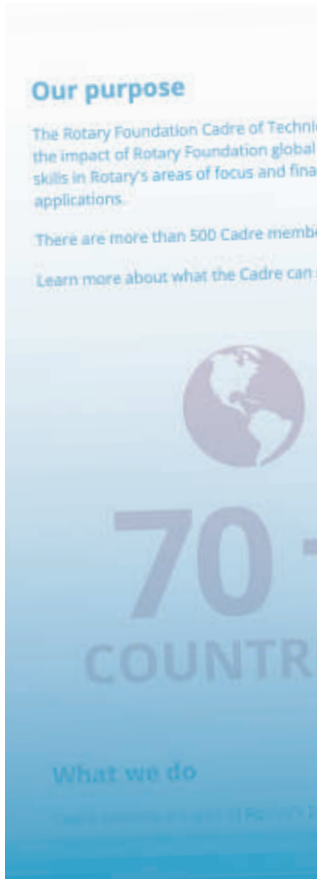


Rotary provides clubs and districts with **global, district, and disaster response grant funding** that makes their service projects possible. Kessler points out that our immense response efforts are supported through members' donations to The Rotary Foundation. "There are organizations throughout the world you can donate to," he says, "but with The Rotary Foundation, there's the trust factor." Members know their contributions are helping others.

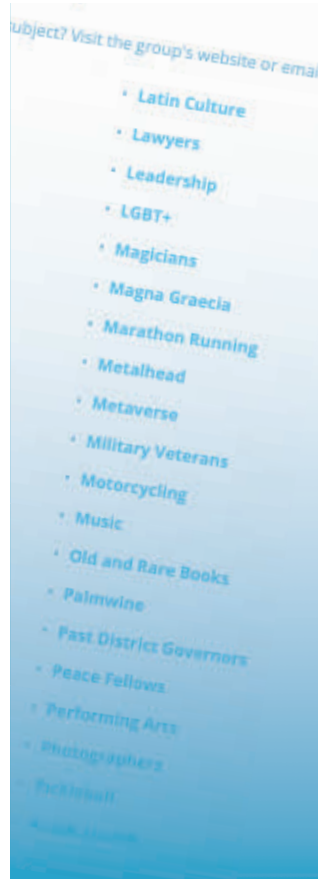


With the **Learning Center**, you can take advantage of a wealth of training materials and online courses designed to help you learn new skills and become more successful in everything you do. "There is amazing content for anybody who is looking to understand more about the organization or is looking to go deeper on so many different subjects for personal and professional development," Kessler says.

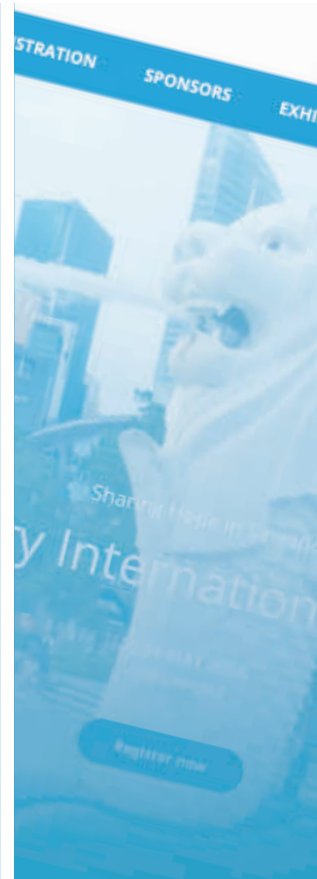
Get started by creating an account at the recently updated my.rotary.org. It's how you can get the latest Rotary news, easily access online



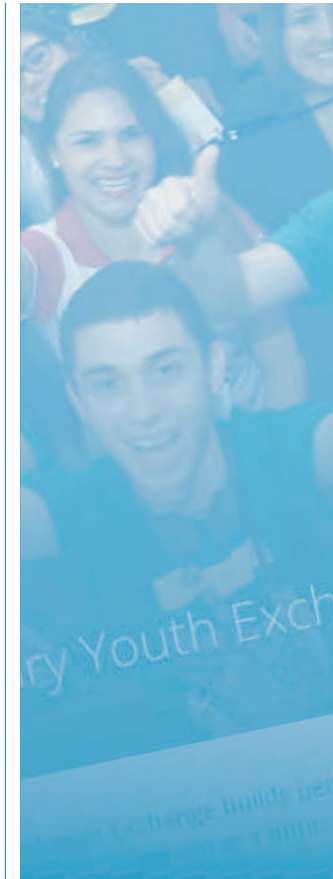
Rotary International connects you with experts who can advise on topics such as service projects (**The Rotary Foundation Cadre of Technical Advisers**), club and district operations (**Club and District Support**), the club experience (**regional membership officers**), and fundraising (**annual giving officers**), to name a few. And since you can drop into a club anywhere in the world, you'll find support wherever you go. "When you're a part of Rotary, you have that network," Kessler notes.



Rotary Community Corps, Rotary Action Groups, and Rotary Fellowships connect you with others who share an interest in your favorite hobby or cause. "Rotary extends outside of your club," he says. "The opportunity to connect with fellow Rotarians, Rotaractors, and community members who have similar interests or support causes you're passionate about adds a lot of value to the membership experience."



The annual **Rotary International Convention** features distinguished speakers, energizing breakout sessions, opportunities for lifelong connections, and so much more. "It's a chance to meet members from all over the world and be in a city with over 20,000 like-minded people," Kessler says.



Rotary headquarters helps clubs and districts manage their **Rotary Youth Exchange** programs and provides comprehensive youth protection resources to ensure program participants are safe from harm. "Our youth offerings are second to none and invest in the next generation," Kessler says.

tools like the Grant Center and the Learning Center, connect with other members, and get help from Rotary experts.



TRUSTEE CHAIR'S MESSAGE

Our goal is in sight

On 24 October, we renew our commitment to our top humanitarian goal for World Polio Day.

This year, let's remember a young health worker in Pakistan known as Bibi Marjana (Miss Marjana). She braves the snow and cold in the mountains to vaccinate 84 children in rural areas, visiting each home, often miles apart.

Marjana is one of the thousands of frontline workers in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and outbreak areas I consider heroes in the final push to end polio. The work they do, coupled with the vision of our partners and the support you give, is moving mountains.

With Rotary's partnership, the Global Polio Eradication Initiative is aggressively pursuing two key goals from its 2022-26 strategy. First, we aim to halt wild poliovirus type 1 transmission. This year, only six cases have been documented as of this writing. Could this be the year we see the last of these poliovirus cases? We're cautiously optimistic that it might.

Second, we aim to report the final case of circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus type 2, or cVDPV2, in outbreak countries. About 80 percent of cVDPV2 cases last year occurred in subnational areas of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria, and Yemen. We must implement tailored strategies to stop the virus in these areas.

Other challenges persist, including

political tensions, security risks and access issues, and the lasting effect of the pandemic in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Despite these challenges, we are making progress. Poliovirus strains are diminishing, as is the number of affected regions where polio once prevailed. A new vaccine we have introduced reduces the incidence of the circulating vaccine-derived virus type 2.

Rotary is the organization that had the audacity to take on a global effort to protect children everywhere from disability or even death due to polio. We must have the tenacity to see it to the finish line.

What can you do to help us get there, you ask? Join or initiate a PolioPlus Society in your club or district and engage all members in this historic moment. And don't forget that the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation continues to amplify Rotary's donations to polio eradication with a 2-to-1 match for every dollar.

You can also advocate the cause of polio eradication with governments to secure political and financial support and promote Rotary's leadership role in all media.

Like Marjana marching up the mountain, we have our goal in sight, and we will keep going until we get there.

BARRY RASSIN

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.

The new and easier-to-use Brand Center is now available!

Promote your club. Inspire your community.

Visit the Brand Center to access promotional materials and resources to share your club's stories of impact and show your community we're people of action. You'll find:



Templates to create club logos and custom promotions



Ads, photos, and videos that show Rotary in action



Guidance to apply Rotary colors and design elements

Use these tools to update your website, social media accounts, and community outreach materials. Get started at rotary.org/brandcenter.

CALENDAR

October events

GOOD UNCLEAN FUN

Event: Family Fun Mud Run
Host: Rotary Club of Fair Lawn, New Jersey
What it benefits: Local projects and scholarships
Date: 1 October

For this annual outing, the club partners with a company that puts on family-friendly mud runs. The course, which includes obstacles and plenty of mud over 1.5 to 2 miles, is designed so that parents and kids can run together. Anyone age 5 and older is welcome to participate. Members of the Interact Club of Fair Lawn High School help out as well.

RUN TO END HUNGER

Event: Harvest Classic
Host: Rotary Club of Longview-Early Edition, Washington
What it benefits: A local food collection and distribution center
Date: 7 October

This footrace invites runners and walkers to compete in either a 5K or a 10K. Both routes are flat with scenic views of downtown Longview; the 10K also loops around part of Lake Sacajawea. This year's event is part of Longview's centennial celebration, and participants can use an app along the route to learn about the city's history. Proceeds go toward the Lower Columbia Community Action Program's Help Warehouse, which supplies area food banks.

SHELLFISH SHINDIG

Event: Oyster Crush
Host: Rotary Club of Cape Henry, Virginia
What it benefits: Local charities, scholarships, and youth leadership programs
Date: 8 October



DRESSED UP DOGS

Event: Halloween Dog Parade and Costume Contest
Host: Rotary Club of Florham Park, New Jersey
What it benefits: Local scholarships and charities
Date: 14 October

Pet lovers will delight in this event, held outside the Florham Park borough hall, in which dogs and their owners parade in Halloween costumes and compete for prizes in various categories. Last year's best-in-show award went to a *Jurassic Park*-themed trio: a greyhound dressed as a dinosaur, accompanied by humans in park ranger uniforms. A DJ will provide music, and refreshments will be sold.

Over nearly four decades, this massive oyster roast and all-around party has raised more than \$300,000 for organizations and programs in the Hampton Roads region. No one will go hungry with an all-you-can-eat menu of raw and wood-fired oysters, steamed clams, barbecue, fried chicken, and more. The event takes place outside a restaurant in Virginia Beach and includes music and dancing.

RIDE FOR READING

Event: Road Rally at the Lakes and Festival
Host: Rotary Club of Norman, Oklahoma
What it benefits: The club's Success Cycle program
Date: 14 October
 For this bike race, participants can choose to ride 28, 40, or 50 miles, with all routes traveling from Lake Thunderbird to Lake Stanley Draper and back again. A

festival replete with food trucks, beer, and live music awaits cyclists past the finish line. The event helps fund a literacy program in which the club awards bicycles and e-readers to local elementary school students who have reached reading goals.

WINNER, WINNER, CHICKEN DINNER

Event: Chicken BBQ
Host: Rotary Club of Upper St. Clair-Bethel Park-Breakfast, Pennsylvania
What it benefits: Local and international charities
Date: 28 October
 Club members work with volunteers to barbecue more than 800 chickens and serve upward of 1,600 drive-thru meals for this annual fundraiser. Each meal includes a half chicken, baked beans, coleslaw, and cookies. Over the past 34 years, the event has raised more than \$800,000 in support of charities.

Tell us about your event. Write to 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.



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on.rotary.org/podcast

IN BRIEF

Why mental health matters

Prioritizing mental health is one of Gordon McNally’s initiatives as Rotary president this year. Throughout his term, McNally is focusing on erasing the stigma associated with emotional well-being, raising awareness of mental health needs, and improving access to preventive and interventional mental health services.

This focus on mental health is timely worldwide. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic emergency, a silent crisis has unfolded around the issue. The isolation stemming from lockdowns and other changes that kept people apart, the loss of loved ones, and the uprooting of social networks have all taken a toll on many people’s mental well-being.

Experts agree that mental and emotional health are essential to overall wellness. These factors can affect people’s physical health as well as how they relate to their friends, family, and community.

The World Health Organization, which designates 10 October as World Mental Health Day, puts it this way: “Mental health is a state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realize their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to their community. It is an integral component of health and well-being that underpins our individual and collective abilities to make decisions, build relations, and shape the world as we live in it. Mental health is a basic human right. And it is crucial to personal, community, and socioeconomic development.”

One in 8 people worldwide, or 970 million people, live with significant mental health conditions, according to WHO. Adequate resources to prevent and treat these conditions aren’t reliably available in all parts of the world, and in low- and middle-income countries, up to 85 percent

of people with some mental health conditions receive no treatment.

WHO has also compiled research that shows people with mental health issues can be more likely to have other health conditions. For example, having depression can predispose someone to having diabetes or a heart attack. Similarly, living with a chronic disease or experiencing a significant health challenge can put someone at a higher risk of developing depression.

A person’s circumstances also can be a factor. Poverty, violence, disability, and inequality can put people at a higher risk for mental health issues. A lack of adequate support or resources to address these issues can destabilize families and disengage people from their communities. These interconnected factors illustrate the need to discuss mental health on a global level and to remedy the gaps in support.

Everyone in Rotary has a role in this effort. Members don’t need to be mental health professionals to make a positive difference. They can treat others with care, respect, and dignity. They can ensure that people feel valued through a smile, a phone call, a visit, or another caring gesture. They can talk openly about mental health, let people know they’re not alone, and encourage them to get treatment if necessary. By putting a greater focus on emotional well-being throughout the world, Rotarians and Rotaractors can make an incredible impact. ■

IN MEMORIAM

With deep regret, we report the deaths of **Luis Felipe Valenzuela**, Guatemala Sur, Guatemala, who served RI as director in 1994-96 and district governor in 1983-84; **Alceu Antimo Vezozzo**, Curitiba, Brazil, who served RI as director in 2001-03 and district governor in 1970-71; and **Ron Beaubien**, Coronado, California, who served RI as director in 2003-05 and district governor in 1994-95.

In addition, we report the deaths of the following Rotarians who served RI as district governors:

Yukihiko Shimizu
Kushiro, Japan, 1981-82

Murray Elder
Windsor (1918), Ontario, 1987-88

John A. Fiesta
Somerset, Pennsylvania, 1990-91

Kumeyoshi Ichinose
Sasebo East, Japan, 1994-95

Hideo Sato
Chitose, Japan, 2003-04

Dennis Skinner
Nevada, Iowa, 2003-04

Seiichi Komiya
Tokyo-East, Japan, 2005-06

Del Bluhm
Ames, Iowa, 2006-07

Kazuo Mashita
Higashi Matsuyama, Japan, 2008-09

Arlie Daniel
Ada, Oklahoma, 2017-18

Graeme R. Hooper
Warner’s Bay, Australia, 2019-20

Gavin Eric Jepson
Hibiscus Coast-(Margate and Uvongo), South Africa, 2022-23

Visit [rotary.org/initiatives23-24](https://www.rotary.org/initiatives23-24) to learn more about this effort and find ideas for how your club or district can support activities that encourage mental well-being.

WWS15

IT ALL STARTS WITH WASH

THANK YOU!



Thank you to all of our attendees, sponsors, volunteers, and NGO exhibitors who helped make **World Water Summit 15** in Melbourne, Australia, a success!



Join us! May 24, 2024 in Singapore

Register today for World Water Summit 16 at www.wasrag.org



2024 CONVENTION

A stress-free getaway



It's easy to turn your Rotary International Convention trip to Singapore into a no-hassle vacation. The two convention sites give you ready access to much of the island's most loved gardens, recreation, food, and sightseeing spots. And traveling between venues and nearby sites is simple on the MRT rail system.

Between breakout sessions in the Marina Bay Sands complex, a vast vacationland in itself, enjoy being a tourist next door. A short walk brings you to Gardens by the Bay with its towering steel "super-tree" art garden and mega-greenhouse of the world's flowers.

Cross the twisted-steel Helix Bridge for a 20-minute walk to the Singapore Flyer Ferris wheel for skyline views or to one of the city's hawker centers. The usually inexpensive and open-air food courts are cultural touchstones. Stalls at Makansutra

Gluttons Bay sell local culinary delights including meat satay skewers, char kway teow noodles stir-fried in lard, and fried carrot cake that's no dessert — savory cubes are made with daikon radish (white "carrot") and rice flour.

General sessions at National Stadium put you in the middle of the Singapore Sports Hub. You or your guests could surf a simulated wave, rent a kayak, or visit Shimano Cycling World for bicycle history exhibits, to name a few activities.

Malls are a big deal in Singapore. The convention grounds have two: Marina Bay Sands' luxe shops and the Sports Hub's Kallang Wave Mall, including sporty stores, golfing simulators, a virtual reality arcade, and a rock climbing wall that cuts through the mall's levels.

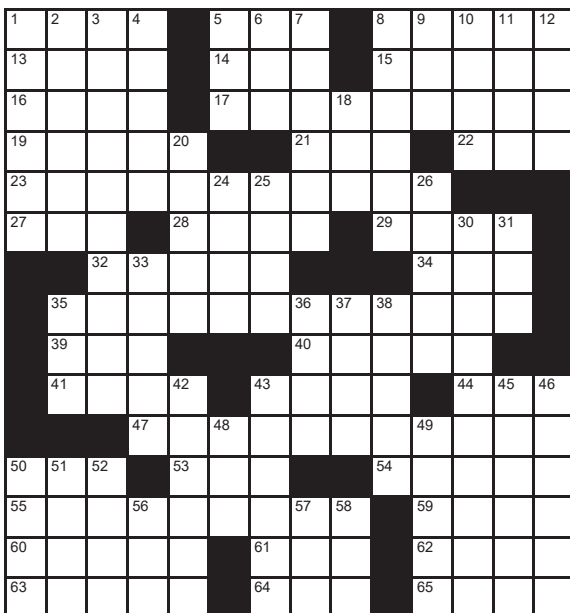
Join us 25-29 May in *Sharing Hope With the World*. — EVA REMIJAN-TOBA

Learn more and register at convention.rotary.org.

CROSSWORD

Meet there in May

By Victor Fleming
Rotary Club of Little Rock, Arkansas



Solution on page 10

ACROSS

- 1 Gnat or nag
- 5 Calculate column totals
- 8 "Me too!"
- 13 Pro ____
- 14 Golf ball's platform
- 15 Dance move
- 16 Factory seconds (abbr.)
- 17 Theatres on the Bay area of 55-Across
- 19 Gallant galloper
- 21 Pro ____
- 22 Mauna ____
- 23 With 35-Across, theme of the 2024 Rotary Convention
- 27 Candied tuber
- 28 Modernists
- 29 Become unhinged
- 32 Most opposite
- 34 End to form or spat
- 35 See 23-Across
- 39 Business name end, briefly
- 40 Parking pro
- 41 Beverage brand
- 43 Correspondence
- 44 ____ polloi
- 47 Figurative term for the economies of Hong Kong, South Korea, Taiwan, and 55-Across

50 For the Boys grp.

- 53 Apartment ad abbr.
- 54 Works for
- 55 Where many will gather for the 2024 Rotary Convention
- 59 Boyfriend
- 60 Ken Jennings, e.g.
- 61 Just out
- 62 90 degrees from norte
- 63 Brief stretch
- 64 "What did I tell you?"
- 65 Grps. of offices

DOWN

- 1 Affectedly prim
- 2 Actress Kitt
- 3 Make more efficient, perhaps
- 4 Electric dart shooter
- 5 Had breakfast
- 6 ____ Moines
- 7 Downward extents
- 8 Collecting field
- 9 Have title to
- 10 "Agreed!"
- 11 "____ I have to draw you a map?!"
- 12 Big furniture retailer
- 18 Astrological fire sign
- 20 "Someone's in the kitchen with ____"
- 24 Arbor abode
- 25 Ancient invader
- 26 Accustom
- 30 100% of what's left
- 31 Word after sketch
- 33 Words before Sketch
- 35 Acquire via competition
- 36 Hunter of fiction
- 37 "Cool your heels!"
- 38 Skate park trick
- 42 Tel Aviv's nation
- 43 Brick workers
- 45 Elaborately decorated
- 46 Debate subjects
- 48 Mischievous sort
- 49 Kaplan and Kapler
- 50 Operates, as a computer
- 51 Airhead
- 52 Formerly
- 56 Salon selection
- 57 Riddle-me-____
- 58 She sheep

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The bitter and the sweet

Like a good life, this Malagasy stew requires balance

Cassava leaves are a staple ingredient in Malagasy cuisine. Rich in fiber and vitamin C, the leaves are sold fresh at markets across Africa. Locals grind the leaves and simmer them with pork to create a popular stew: ravitoto sy henakisoa. For Rita Ravelojaona, the dish is a perfect reflection of the Malagasy approach to life.

“In our culture, we say there is bitter and sweet in life,” Ravelojaona says. “Either taste alone is not good, but you have to find your right combination and balance to live well.” The Malagasy stew embraces that sentiment, as the bitterness of the cassava leaves can be smoothed by the added sweetness of sugar. For Ravelojaona, who worked in her family’s traditional Malagasy restaurant for over two decades, the dish is a favorite comfort food. “It has a special taste,” she says.

FAMILY TIES: The dish is typically cooked for family celebrations. “It’s a family dish, so each family has its own recipe,” Ravelojaona explains. Some stews incorporate fish or peanuts rather than pork, while others use sweetened condensed milk to balance the cassava leaves’ bitterness. Ravelojaona’s grandmother taught her their family recipe when she was a child.

SAVOR IT: To make the dish, brown the pork with onions, garlic, tomato, salt, and pepper. Simmer the ground cassava leaves with oil and water. Departing from the traditional recipe, Ravelojaona incorporates both coconut milk and coconut cream, which lend a velvety texture to the stew. She also adds vinegar and sugar. Serve the ravitoto sy henakisoa with rice and rougail, a tomato-based side dish. — EVA REMIJAN-TOBA

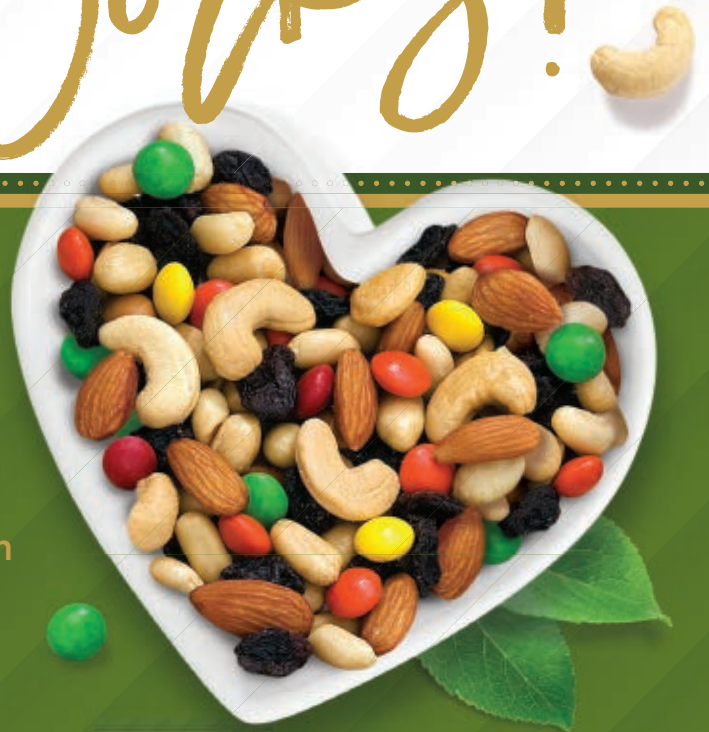
Rita Ravelojaona
Rotary Club of
Antananarivo-
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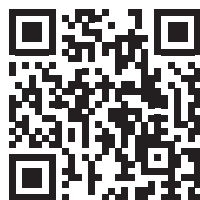


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