

APRIL 2026

Rotary

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MALARIA

Africa's fighting back... and winning

From page 16





ROTARY INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION

TAIPEI, TAIWAN | 13-17 JUNE 2026



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WELCOME

Sarah van Heerden - Editor in Chief

The news cycle lately has felt relentless.

War dominates headlines. Conflicts stretch across regions. Political tension grows louder.

It is frightening. Missiles and drones are being fired across borders and cities. When you receive this, I will either be aboard an airplane or, hopefully, disembarking from one in Chicago. Yes, the nagging thought of drones and missiles hums quietly in the back of my mind, much like a hungry mosquito on the prowl. The work, however, is important and I refuse to live in fear. I choose to believe in the positive and the good in people, but it does feel as if the world is drifting further apart.

Perhaps the problem is that we no longer believe we can coexist unless we agree on everything. That those who are not the same as us or who don't agree with us are wrong, stupid or evil. Their disagreement becomes a reflection of their value as a human being.

Yet research suggests something quite different.

Work by Jonathan Haidt and colleagues shows that people across cultures share several core moral foundations, such as fairness, care and loyalty. We may prioritise these values differently, but the underlying architecture is widely shared. Much of our moral framework overlaps, even when our conclusions differ.

Social psychology studies have also shown that people systematically underestimate how much others agree with them. When people discuss issues openly, they often find they have far more in common than expected.

Unfortunately, this shared ground is often overshadowed. Communication studies have confirmed what many of us suspect. Conflict

receives disproportionately more attention because it is more newsworthy and emotionally engaging. The result is that the smaller areas of disagreement dominate public discourse, while the much larger areas of shared belief receive far less attention.

Could part of the problem be that we are no longer talking to each other, but at each other?

History has never been short of conflict. What it has also never been short of is cooperation.

Across Africa and the Rotary world, people continue to work together in ways that rarely make international news. These actions may seem small, but they form the foundations of something far more enduring than any headline.

As individuals we cannot stop the missiles or drones, but we can cast the stones that start the ripples which eventually grow into waves of change.

Since its earliest days, Rotary has been built on a simple premise: that people from different backgrounds, professions and cultures can work together to improve their communities.

In a world where differences are often emphasised more than common ground, that idea is almost radical.

The scale of global challenges can sometimes make our individual efforts seem insignificant, but Rotary's history tells us otherwise. Progress seldom arrives through a single breakthrough. It grows through steady, collective effort over time.

At a moment when global tensions dominate public attention, it is worth remembering the good in the world. Whenever people decide to work together rather than stand apart, one of the most powerful forces for change is ignited.



President's message

Preparation, Not Luck

Not long ago, in a small health centre in the village of Aaye in southwest Nigeria, a woman arrived in labour carrying twins. The facility was short-staffed. The nurse midwife in charge was not present.

A community health worker stepped forward. She had participated in Together for Healthy Families in Nigeria, a Rotary Foundation Programmes of Scale initiative and although she was not formally trained as a midwife, she was equipped with essential emergency obstetric skills.

Hours later, both babies had been delivered, one at the health centre and the other at a general hospital, where the mother had been referred after complications were quickly identified. The newborns and their mother were alive and safe.

Women around the world face similar circumstances every day, moments when the

difference between life and loss depends on well-trained medical staff and reliable systems and procedures.

Together for Healthy Families in Nigeria exists to increase the chances that those moments end in hope. By strengthening health systems and training frontline workers, this programme helps communities protect mothers and children even when circumstances are difficult.

This work reflects the very heart of Rotary service. Service is not only what we do when conditions are ideal. It is what we do when systems are strained, resources are limited and the need is urgent. It is the commitment to prepare people before a crisis arrives and to stand with communities when it does.

Maternal and child health is not an abstract goal. It is deeply personal. It is a mother who survives childbirth. It is a newborn who takes a first breath. It is a family that remains whole because someone was trained, ready and cared enough to act. Rotary understands that service means investing in people and systems long before they are tested.

Programmes like Together for Healthy Families in Nigeria show what is possible when Rotary brings together local knowledge, global partnerships and sustainable solutions. By working alongside health professionals and local leaders, Rotary helps ensure that lifesaving care does not depend on luck or location.

The story of the mother and her twins is at its core a story of service. It is a reminder that Rotary's impact is measured in human moments when people step forward to help others in their most vulnerable hours.

When we Unite for Good, service becomes more than an ideal. It becomes a lifeline for families, a source of strength for communities and a promise that Rotary will continue to go wherever help is needed most.

FRANCESCO AREZZO
President, Rotary International



Foundation Trustee Chair's Message

Impact partners

Rotary's environment area of focus offers clubs and districts the chance to make a truly lasting impact in their communities.

One possibility is through the Community Action for Fresh Water partnership between Rotary and the United Nations Environment Programme, which launched the initiative in 2024 to protect, restore and better manage freshwater resources worldwide.

Through the programme, Rotary and Rotaract clubs identify a local body of water, a river, a lake, wetlands, or groundwater and commit to its long-term protection and restoration. Members can draw on UNEP's technical expertise.

Salvador Rico, a member of the Rotary Club of South Ukiah, California and a technical adviser to the partnership, tells us more:

The partnership is deeply personal to me. My passion for clean rivers comes from a painful family experience during my childhood in Mexico: We believe my older sister died of polio she contracted from swimming in a polluted river there. Unsafe water is not an abstract

environmental issue; it is a matter of life, health and dignity for families and communities.

This experience drives my work as a member of The Rotary Foundation Cadre of Technical Advisers, where I ensure Rotary members have access to proven technical knowledge so their global grant-supported projects deliver lasting impact through permanent, scalable solutions.

Today, Community Action for Fresh Water supports Rotary clubs globally by providing a shared platform to upload projects, learn from other clubs and access technical and financial support through global grants and club-to-club collaboration.

The impact became tangible in 2024, when the environmental chair of District 4170 in Mexico shared a critical challenge: Small, family-owned textile factories were polluting the upper Lerma River watershed. Rotarians lacked clear solutions.

Through the freshwater partnership, I connected them with experts from UNEP who provided bioremediation strategy guidance. That led to a global grant application and, we hope, cleaner water for this community.

The partnership between Rotary clubs, family-owned textile companies and government authorities ensures a shared responsibility and long-term stewardship. Every Rotary club can amplify this impact by registering their freshwater projects at communityactionforfreshwater.org.

Look around your community, I bet you'll find a body of water in need of protection. The Rotary Foundation can support your project through Community Action for Fresh Water and a global grant.

HOLGER KNAACK
Foundation Trustee Chair

Telling Rotary's Story

STORIES THAT MATTER

By Sharmila Bhatt, Rotary Public Image Coordinator, Zone 22, Region 28

Rotary's work is visible in communities across the region every day. Yet when clubs report on their activities, the focus often stays on the action rather than the story behind it. A report may say desks were donated, a medical camp was held, or trees were planted. These are real achievements. Still, they rarely capture the full meaning of what happened.

Purposeful storytelling changes that. It turns a project report into a human account of change. When people understand the difference a project made in someone's life, the work becomes clearer and more memorable.

A well told story builds trust in the community and helps others see Rotary as a reliable partner. It can encourage prospective members to get involved and gives donors confidence that their support leads to real outcomes. Our stories create connection. People tend to remember people, not statistics.

One useful approach is to begin with a person rather than the project itself. A short report might say a club distributed reusable hygiene kits. A story might introduce a student who can now attend school more

consistently because she has access to those kits. The impact becomes visible through a single experience.

It also helps to show what changed. Explaining the situation before a project began and what improved afterwards gives the story a clear structure. Rotary's role then sits naturally within the narrative, showing how an action led to a practical result.

Outcomes matter more than outputs. Training 50 teachers is an output. A classroom where attendance improves because teachers are using new methods is an outcome. Stories about outcomes help readers understand Rotary as an organisation that creates change.

Using our authentic voices strengthens this process. A short reflection from a beneficiary, a Rotarian, or a community partner adds credibility and texture to the story.

The following story illustrates the difference.

A club reported that it had donated 120 desks to a local primary



school. The statement was accurate, but the story travelled little beyond the club newsletter. When a Rotarian later visited the school again, the head teacher described what had happened since.

Before the desks arrived, many pupils sat on the floor. During the rainy season the classroom floor often became damp and uncomfortable and attendance dropped. Six months after the desks were installed, teachers noticed that more children were present and more attentive during lessons.

The project itself had not changed. The way it was described had.

The Responsibility of Storytelling

Every Rotary project contains stories of dignity, resilience and transformation.

If we fail to tell them well:

- The community does not see our depth.
- Potential members do not understand our relevance.
- Partners do not recognise our value.

Purposeful storytelling is not marketing. It is accountability. It is leadership. It is legacy.

Ask yourself a final question. When someone reads about your project, do they see numbers, or do they see change?

Tell Rotary's story with purpose...
Because your work deserves it!

Coming up...

APRIL 2026

10 April - **ROTARY CLUB OF PLETTENBERG BAY D9350 Golf Day:** At Goose Valley Golf Club. Betterball Stableford. R650 per person. Noon Shotgun start. All bookings and payments through the Pro Shop. Email: bookings@goosevalleygolfclub.com or phone +27-44-533-5082.

JUNE 2026

13-17 June - **ROTARY INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION, Taipei, Taiwan:** Join fellow changemakers from around the world to share innovative projects, exchange best practices and form enduring friendships. The convention is packed with exciting breakout sessions, speakers and more. All RI events take place at Farglory Dome (Taipei Dome) and Taipei Nangang Exhibition Centre (TaiNEX) unless otherwise indicated.

20 June - **ROTARY CLUB OF HOEDSPRUIT D9400, K2C Cycle Tour:** Ride 100km through Timbavati, Thornybush and Kapama. One day, 120 riders. R8000 entry. No under 16s. E-bikes permitted. Includes collectors edition apparel. Hosted by the Hoedspruit club for conservation and social upliftment. Visit www.k2c-cycletour.co.za for details.

20 June - **ROTARY CLUB OF BENONI AURORA D9400, Golf Day** at Benoni Country Club. 10am registration, shotgun start at 11.30am. There will a dinner and Auction after the round and many prizes to be won. Hole Sponsorships available. Golf carts and caddy for own account and must be booked in advance from the Pro Shop (tel: +27-11-849-8821. Fourballs R3,000 (includes dinner voucher). Book your fourball, contact Larry on +27-82-443-2546 or email larryhyde@mweb.co.za

Email info about your club's upcoming events to rotaryafrica@mweb.co.za

Egyptian Rotary member, Mayan Raslan, has been honoured for advancing women's leadership and community development with the receipt of the Sylvia Whitlock Leadership Award.

Breaking Barriers



Rotary International has recognised Mayan Raslan for her longstanding commitment to elevating women leaders, expanding economic opportunity and strengthening communities across Egypt.

A member of the Rotary Club of Cairo Royal (D2451), Raslan received the Sylvia Whitlock Leadership Award, which honours Rotary members who have made a lasting impact advancing gender equity and empowering women.

Raslan brings more than four decades of experience in development, vocational training and fundraising. Through partnerships with civil society organisations, financial institutions and government bodies, she has helped provide microloans to women headed households, supported vocational and leadership training programmes and trained more than 1,000 women in small and micro enterprise development.

“True success is collective, it is never achieved alone,” said Raslan. “When women rise, they lift families and strengthen communities. As leaders, we must create space for others to rise with us, because when women are given opportunity, training and trust to lead, they reshape the future. Empower a woman and you unlock a force for progress that carries forward across generations.”

Her work has also included

Mayan Raslan has been recognised for her work in advancing women and community development. She has led wide-ranging community projects including women's vocational training, microcredit programmes for women, literacy classes and water delivery initiatives for homes in rural villages.



Mayan Raslan, who holds a doctoral degree in public administration from Cairo University, has worked across Egypt on community development projects ranging from polio eradication campaigns and medical caravans to youth leadership training and economic empowerment programmes for women.

several multi-year development initiatives in Fayoum Governorate. These projects restored 20 schools, installed clean water infrastructure for more than 1,000 homes, refurbished health facilities and established vocational training workshops that continue to serve youth and women.

Raslan also oversaw the construction of the four storey, 28 classroom Rotary Egypt School, which opened in 2020. The school now serves more than 800 students and represents a long term investment in education and opportunity, particularly for girls.

“Mayan Raslan’s leadership demonstrates how Rotary creates lasting change by investing in people,” said Rotary International President Francesco Arezzo. “She has strengthened

communities while opening doors for more women to lead, showing that inclusive leadership is essential to meaningful and sustainable progress.”

Within Rotary, Raslan has also worked to strengthen women’s leadership. During the 2016-17 Rotary year she served as the elected leader of Rotary clubs across part of Egypt, becoming the country’s first female district governor. During her term she established the Women Empowerment Committee to mentor and elevate women leaders, an initiative that has since become a permanent committee.

She also introduced measures aimed at increasing female membership and expanding leadership opportunities for women. Today women represent more than half of the

Mayan Raslan, centre, cuts the ribbon at the opening of the Rotary Egypt School alongside local leaders and Rotary representatives during the 2020 inauguration ceremony.



membership in that Rotary region.

Raslan has served Rotary in several additional leadership roles, including district Rotary Foundation chair and chair of the Egypt PolioPlus Committee. She later served as assistant Rotary Public Image Coordinator and Rotary Public Image Coordinator for Zone 22. She is also a member of The Rotary Foundation Cadre of Technical Advisers, a global group that evaluates Rotary funded humanitarian projects.

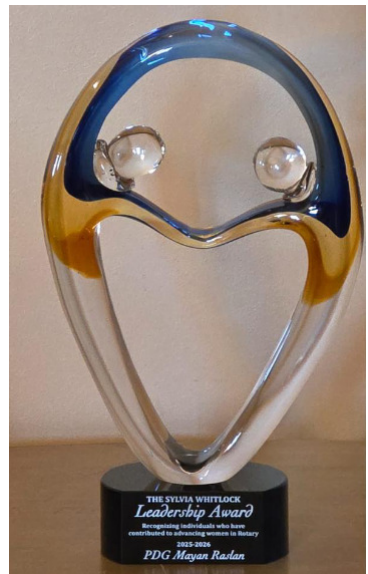
Beyond project work, Raslan has shared her experience widely as a speaker at local and international seminars and conferences focused on women's development, civil society and community responsibility. She has also designed several training programmes centred on women's empowerment and youth leadership development.

Her academic background reflects a long-standing commitment to public service and development. Raslan holds a doctoral degree in public administration from the Faculty of Economics and Political Science at Cairo University, earned in 2015. She previously completed a master's degree in public administration at the American University in 1990 and a bachelor's degree in interpreting from Al Azhar University in 1977. She attended the English School in Heliopolis for her secondary education.

This is not the first time her commitment to service has been recognised. Raslan has also been recognised with the Service Above Self Award and The Rotary Foundation Citation for Meritorious Service. She has

also been named among Egypt's Top 50 Influential Women by the Top 50 Women Forum.

The Sylvia Whitlock Leadership Award, named for the first woman to serve as a Rotary club president, honours one Rotary member each year who has actively worked to advance women and girls.



The Sylvia Whitlock Leadership Award trophy Mayam received.



Protecting Brazil's native stingless bees is good for the environment and for business

Dispatches from our sister magazines:
Revista Rotary Brasil

SWEET HONEY

By Manoel Magalhães

Honey has innumerable health and environmental benefits, from antimicrobial, antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties to unparalleled flavour. As two enterprising Rotary clubs in Brazil have recognised, honey is also a highly marketable product with economic benefits for communities.

With more than 300 species, Brazil is home to the world's greatest diversity of native stingless bees. Also known as meliponine bees, they have reduced stingers and were the primary honey producers throughout the Americas before the introduction of western honey bees from Europe. Brazil is recognised for the quality and purity of its honey and is one of the largest global producers and exporters of organic honey.

With the support of a Rotary Foundation

global grant, the Rotary Club of São Bernardo do Campo in the state of São Paulo created an initiative called Pró-Mel, which trains residents in meliponiculture, the practice of farming stingless bees for honey and wax and to support pollination. The pilot project was initiated with residents of the Santa Cruz neighbourhood and supports Rotary's community economic development area of focus. The other project partners are the Federal University of São Paulo, the Imigrantes Ecological Park and the Rotary Club of Pasadena, California.

After participants complete the course, honey production provides them with a source of income. The honey of the Melipona stingless bee has considerable added value compared to other species such as the *Apis mellifera* bee (western honey bee), due to the honey's higher therapeutic properties, rare composition and limited production volume.



The Rotary Club of Salto helped create a honey garden at a school; the 60 students of the Pró-Mel project participate in training coordinated by the Federal University of São Paulo.

In 2024, the course trained 60 students in how to benefit financially from meliponiculture and how to share their knowledge. Students received a certificate from the Federal University for completing the extension course.

Native bees are essential for environmental balance and the course is also meant to be a tool to raise awareness of the importance of preserving the local biome and bee populations.

The scope of the initiative addresses at least 10 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations, including the eradication of poverty, quality education, decent employment and economic growth, reduction of inequalities, sustainable cities and communities and combating climate change.

Another Rotary-led initiative to protect stingless bees and promote their many benefits is taking place in the community of Salto outside of São Paulo. Last May, residents of Salto inaugurated the city's first honey garden in a joint initiative between the Rotary Club of Salto and the City Hall. The garden, located in the Municipal Centre for Specialised Educational Service, hosted the inaugural event

that celebrated the importance of the stingless bees, especially the Jataí variety, which is vital for the preservation of the environment.

The event included educational workshops, honey tastings, flower planting in the garden beds and an exhibition of bee species. All activities shared the aim of promoting knowledge about bees and respect for the insects and their role in the preservation of biodiversity. The garden has a shelter box that hosts a hive of Jataí bees and includes a sign with information about the variety.

The Salto event also marked the beginning of the Honey Gardens Project in local schools, with many young students from the municipal school system in attendance. The initiative intends to replicate the project with additional gardens.

The effort demonstrates how clubs can combine Rotary's areas of focus, such as protecting the environment and growing local economies, to foster educational and training initiatives that inspire new generations to grow up engaged in environmental preservation.



Hajara Mohammed, a Rotary E-Passport Club member, shares how small details can negatively affect the broader perception of fundraising organisations.

Actions Shape Spirit

Charity events have a way of bringing people together around a shared purpose. Whether it is the quiet generosity of buying a raffle ticket or the lively conversations around dinner tables, there is often a shared sense that everyone present has chosen to support something meaningful.

Recently, I attended a fundraiser for the refurbishment of a school. The atmosphere was warm and welcoming. Guests greeted one another easily, conversations flowed and there was a clear sense of goodwill toward the project.

I purchased a few raffle tickets and when my ticket was drawn, I walked to the front of the room to collect the prize. The MC began sorting through a stack of labelled envelopes at the podium. From where I stood it looked like they were searching for a specific envelope while glancing between the list of ticket holders and the audience. The pause lasted only a short time, yet standing there I found myself

thinking about how easily small details become visible in a public setting.

For many guests, the prize itself is never the real motivation. Supporting the cause is the reason people attend. In my case, the envelope contained a dinner for two at the host hotel on a future date. As my schedule would not allow me to use it, I passed it along to another guest who could enjoy it.

What stayed with me was not the prize, but the experience of the moment. In charity settings, where generosity and trust sit at the centre of the evening, even simple processes benefit from being clearly seen and understood by everyone present.

Events like these remind organisers that the best way to refine fundraising practices is often by learning from shared experiences. Small details in how activities are conducted can shape how guests feel about fairness, transparency and the spirit of the cause they have come to support.



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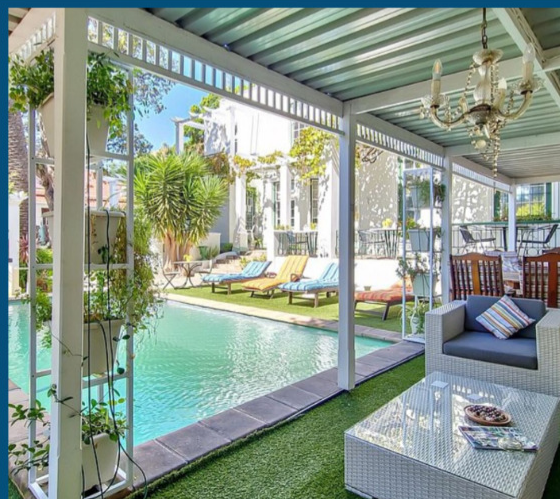
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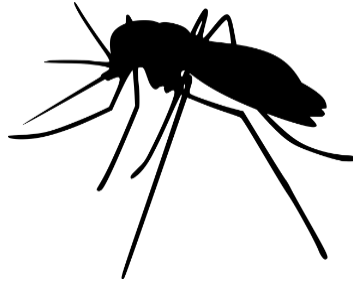
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A Rotarians Against Malaria-Global Rotary Action Group update

Africa Against Malaria

A new grants programme linked to World Malaria Day drew 91 project proposals from across Africa during January.

The initiative, coordinated by Rotarians Against Malaria-Global Rotary Action Group, opened applications on 1 January 2026 for short-term malaria prevention activities in communities where the disease remains a persistent health concern. By the end of the month, Rotary clubs and partners from across the continent had submitted proposals outlining local projects focused on awareness, prevention and early detection.

Thirty three projects were selected, each to receive grants of up to \$2,500 and activities will take place in communities across Africa in the lead-up to World Malaria Day.

The funded activities fall under the theme Community-Based Malaria Prevention Strategies and are designed to run for between one and 14 days ahead of World Malaria Day, which is marked on 25 April.

Malaria continues to affect many regions across Africa, particularly in communities with limited healthcare infrastructure. The grants programme focuses on practical responses that can be implemented quickly at community level.

Projects supported through the grants are expected to include awareness campaigns that inform residents about malaria prevention and

control measures. Activities may include identifying and eliminating mosquito breeding sites, strengthening public understanding of malaria symptoms and encouraging early testing and treatment.

Community participation forms an important part of the programme. Local leaders, volunteers and health workers are encouraged to participate in the campaigns as speakers, organisers and facilitators. Schools and youth groups are also included, with malaria prevention messages integrated into existing activities and programmes.

Surveillance and early detection are another focus of the initiative. Project organisers are encouraged to work with experienced health workers and trained community volunteers to identify and report suspected malaria cases. Plans may also include strengthening the ability of local health facilities to carry out accurate diagnosis and ensure timely treatment.

Each funded project concludes with a final report. These reports may help inform future and longer-term malaria prevention initiatives and funding applications.

The programme is sponsored by Rotarians Against Malaria-Global Rotary Action Group, which works with Rotary clubs and partners to support malaria prevention initiatives in affected regions. Action group membership is free and you can join at www.ram-global.org

APRIL 25, 2026

WORLD MALARIA DAY

Rotarians are taking
action to prevent malaria
in their communities.



Your Rotary club can
join the fight. Learn more at:
malariapartnersinternational.org



Malaria
Partners
International

To scale up, go local

Rotary and partners deploy health workers to confront malaria and more

When the Partners for a Malaria-Free Zambia program began five years ago, Rotarian Bill Feldt offered a forecast of what success would look like in 2026:

"I would hope we'd see a dramatic reduction in malaria incidence," he told *Rotary* magazine in 2021. "We'd want to see a self-sustaining health system that is fully utilizing community health workers, where they are diagnosing 60 to 70 percent of whatever small number of cases of malaria there are. ... We'll see that turnover for community health workers is low ... They will represent the last kilometer of a health system that's very successful."

Rotary members launched the initiative in 2021 to reach more than 1.2 million people with malaria prevention information, testing, and treatment. The effort was supported by The Rotary Foundation's first \$2 million Programs of Scale grant, which was matched by the Gates Foundation and World Vision to create a \$6 million project.

Implemented from 2021 to 2024, the program trained community health workers to test and treat malaria closer to people's homes so they wouldn't have to travel to clinics. Easier access means more frequent detection and early treatment, and therefore fewer severe cases and deaths.

The initiative grew out of a smaller partnership between Rotary members in Zambia and Feldt's home state of Washington to distribute bed nets, and it continues to scale across Africa through an expanded initiative, the Rotary Healthy Communities Challenge.

A 2025 annual report details the successes, lessons learned, and what's next — and finds that Feldt's forecast was not off the mark.



Community health workers

Most community health workers learned to provide services beyond malaria, including care for pneumonia and diarrhea. This freed up health facilities to deal with more urgent cases.

2,500

Community health workers trained

1.25 million

People with improved access to malaria testing and treatment

94%

Retention rate for community health workers

Malaria testing

One lesson learned is that the effort to eliminate malaria isn't a straight line; better testing and more reliable data uncovered more cases.

747,000

Malaria tests conducted by the program in 2024

60%

Cases of malaria detected in the 10 target districts by community health workers — cases that would have been missed or else found at a more severe stage

Severe cases

While community health workers can treat most malaria cases in the field, under national protocols they must refer children under 2 months old, pregnant women, and people with severe symptoms to health facilities.

1%

Malaria cases detected by community health workers that they referred to health facilities

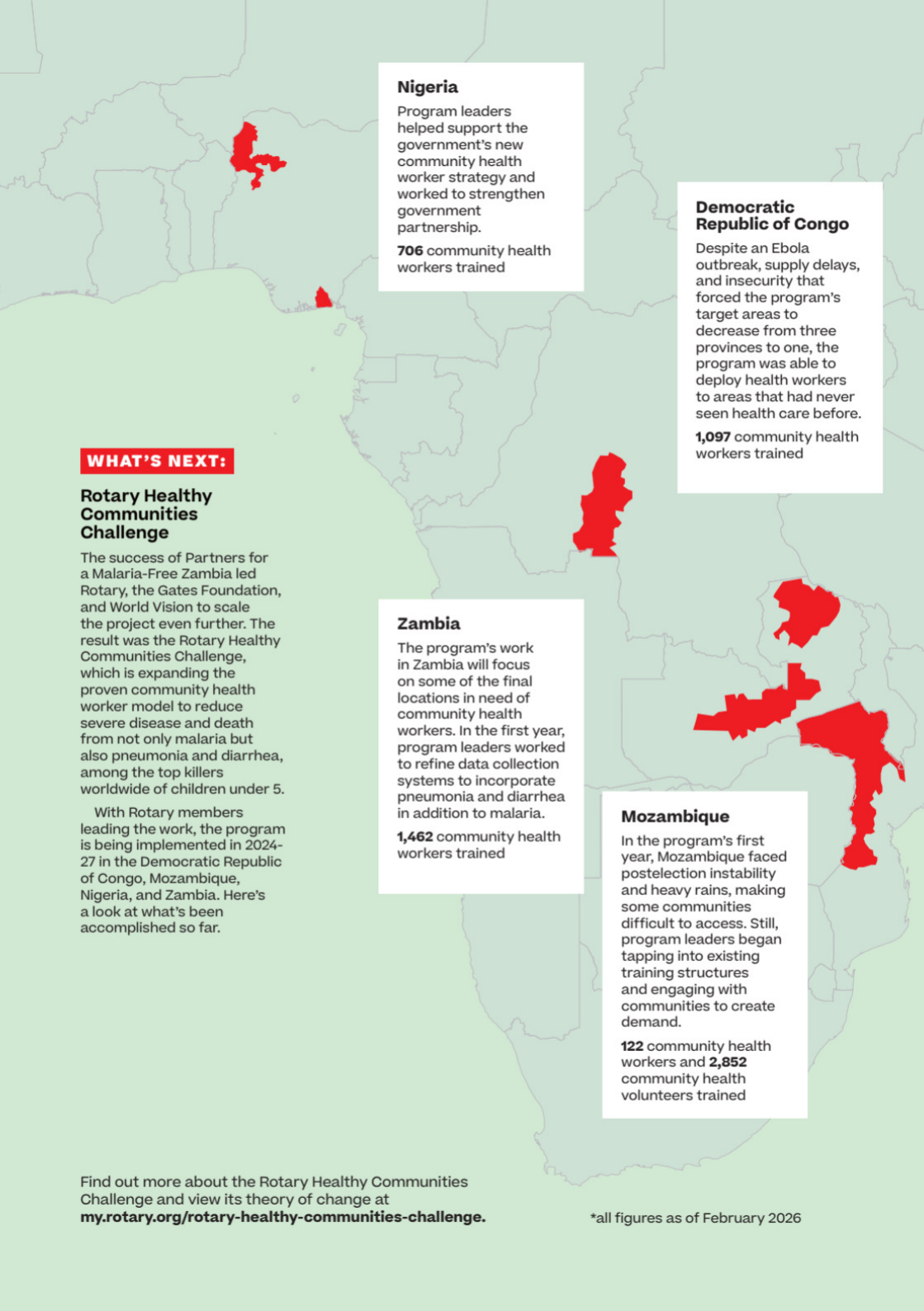
6,498

People admitted to health facilities for severe malaria in the target districts

75

Deaths from malaria in those districts in 2024, marking a drop in most districts

← Ruth, a community health worker with Partners for a Malaria-Free Zambia, demonstrates how she tests patients for the disease.



Nigeria

Program leaders helped support the government's new community health worker strategy and worked to strengthen government partnership.

706 community health workers trained

Democratic Republic of Congo

Despite an Ebola outbreak, supply delays, and insecurity that forced the program's target areas to decrease from three provinces to one, the program was able to deploy health workers to areas that had never seen health care before.

1,097 community health workers trained

WHAT'S NEXT:

Rotary Healthy Communities Challenge

The success of Partners for a Malaria-Free Zambia led Rotary, the Gates Foundation, and World Vision to scale the project even further. The result was the Rotary Healthy Communities Challenge, which is expanding the proven community health worker model to reduce severe disease and death from not only malaria but also pneumonia and diarrhea, among the top killers worldwide of children under 5.

With Rotary members leading the work, the program is being implemented in 2024-27 in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mozambique, Nigeria, and Zambia. Here's a look at what's been accomplished so far.

Zambia

The program's work in Zambia will focus on some of the final locations in need of community health workers. In the first year, program leaders worked to refine data collection systems to incorporate pneumonia and diarrhea in addition to malaria.

1,462 community health workers trained

Mozambique

In the program's first year, Mozambique faced postelection instability and heavy rains, making some communities difficult to access. Still, program leaders began tapping into existing training structures and engaging with communities to create demand.

122 community health workers and **2,852** community health volunteers trained

Find out more about the Rotary Healthy Communities Challenge and view its theory of change at my.rotary.org/rotary-healthy-communities-challenge.

*all figures as of February 2026



Dr. Ogwal Daniel attends to mothers and children during an immunisation day at Ibuje Health Centre, in Maruzi sub-county, Uganda. “Much as the government provides mosquito nets every 3 years, our people don’t use them as planned, and I hope that this vaccine becomes the solution.” With support from WHO, Gavi, UNICEF, and other partners, Uganda has become the 19th African country to introduce the malaria vaccine into its routine immunisation programme and it is expected to prevent at least 800 cases of severe malaria among children every day. Photo: Gavi/2025/Jjumba Martin

Protecting Children

Malaria Vaccine Rollout

The quiet routine of childhood immunisation clinics across Africa is beginning to change the course of one of the continent’s deadliest diseases.

Rotary clubs across the region have long supported vaccination campaigns through Rotary International’s global health programmes, and the growing rollout of malaria vaccines marks another step in the wider fight against preventable disease. As of January 2026, more than 39 million doses of malaria vaccines have been delivered to 25

endemic countries in Africa with support from Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance.

The scale of the rollout has grown quickly. Guinea Bissau became the most recent country to introduce the vaccine in 2026. During 2025, Burundi, Uganda, Mali, Guinea, Togo, Ethiopia and Zambia added the vaccine to their national immunisation programmes. The previous year saw 14 countries begin vaccination, including Cameroon, Burkina Faso, Sierra Leone, Benin, Liberia, Côte d’Ivoire, South Sudan, Mozambique, the Central African Republic,

Niger, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sudan and Nigeria.

Three countries, Ghana, Kenya and Malawi, were the first to introduce the RTS,S malaria vaccine in 2019 through the Malaria Vaccine Implementation Programme.

Since 2024 those countries have continued vaccination under Gavi's malaria vaccine programme, aligning them with other nations now rolling the vaccine out through routine childhood immunisation.

The effort targets a disease that remains one of the largest public health threats in Africa. The continent carries the overwhelming burden of malaria worldwide, accounting for about 94 percent of all cases and 95 percent of deaths.

"Children aged under five years are at the greatest risk of dying from malaria."

Young children face the highest danger because they have not yet developed the partial immunity that adults gain after years of exposure. In 2023 malaria caused 597,000 deaths globally, including about 432,000

children in Africa.

The early signs of malaria can be easy to miss. Headaches, fever and chills often resemble other common illnesses, which means treatment sometimes begins too late. Untreated malaria can lead to severe illness or death within 24 hours.

Scientists have worked for decades to develop a vaccine capable of interrupting the malaria parasite's complex life cycle. The first widely used vaccine, RTS,S, also known as Mosquirix, was developed through a partnership between GlaxoSmithKline and the PATH Malaria Vaccine Initiative.

Both RTS,S and the newer R21 vaccine target *Plasmodium falciparum*, the parasite responsible for the most severe and deadly malaria infections worldwide. The vaccines focus on the parasite's sporozoite stage, which enters the bloodstream when an infected mosquito bites a person.

Vaccination prompts the immune system to produce antibodies that recognise proteins on



Kouakou Dorcas épouse Dosso, a nurse at the Abobo Est Health District, prepares doses of malaria vaccine for the Urban Health Center of Abobo, Cote d'Ivoire. Photo: Gavi/Miléquém Diarassouba

the parasite's surface. When a vaccinated person is later exposed to malaria, these antibodies can neutralise the parasite before infection takes hold.

Clinical trials have shown promising results. Both vaccines reduced malaria cases by more than half during the first year after vaccination, a period when children face the highest risk. A fourth dose given in the second year extends protection. In areas where malaria transmission follows seasonal patterns, the vaccines have reduced malaria cases by about 75 percent.

The vaccines are not intended to replace existing prevention methods. Health authorities continue to promote mosquito bed nets, indoor insecticide spraying and seasonal malaria

chemoprevention. Studies have shown that combining vaccination with bed nets can reduce clinical malaria by more than 70 percent during the first 18 months after vaccination.

Momentum for the rollout grew after the Gavi Board approved funding in December 2021 to support the introduction of the world's first malaria vaccine across sub Saharan Africa. The vaccine had been nearly 35 years in development.

Demand for doses continues to grow as more countries prepare to add malaria vaccines to their national immunisation schedules, with tens of millions of doses expected to be needed each year as programmes expand across the continent.



Akullu Hellen, a nursing assistant at Apac Hospital. People like her are key to the safe and effective administration of large numbers of vaccinations to those who need them. Hellen said that the hospital had immunised 80 children in the last eleven days since the vaccine had been introduced. Uganda became the 19th African country to introduce the malaria vaccine into its routine immunisation program. The official launch in Apac District in Northern Uganda, marked the largest roll out to date, targeting over 105 high and moderate transmission districts. Photo: Gavi/2025/Jjumba Martin



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Above left: Jacob Koosmek at the centre of the labyrinth in the Peace Garden at Umkomaas Drift Primary School. Above right: Rotarian Iris Canham with Jacob Koosmek, a visitor from the Netherlands, and Dr Suenitha Bhoora, principal of Umkomaas Drift Primary School, during the tree planting at the Peace Garden.

Planting Peace

Rain fell steadily over Umkomaas on 27 February as members of the Rotary E-Club of South Africa One (D9370) gathered at Umkomaas Drift Primary School to plant a Natal Mahogany tree in the school's Peace Garden.

The garden was originally established two years earlier in partnership with community partners in V Section, Umkomaas. The space includes plants, a labyrinth and seating areas designed for reflection and quiet time for learners and educators at the school.

The visit took place during February, which Rotary recognises as Peace and Conflict Resolution Month. Members of the club returned to the school to plant a tree in the existing garden as part of the ongoing development of the space.

Despite the rain, Rotarians and partners continued with the planting. The Natal Mahogany, an indigenous tree species known

for its strength and longevity, was selected for the garden.

Rotarian Iris Canham addressed those present during the planting and reflected on the symbolism of the tree within the Peace Garden.

"Peace is not cultivated in perfect conditions but often in the midst of challenge," she said. "The Natal Mahogany is an indigenous tree known for its strength and longevity. Its deep roots and expanding canopy reflect our understanding that peace-building is a long-term investment. The most meaningful growth happens beneath the surface through education, partnership, dialogue and sustained community presence."

Learners and visitors observed the planting as the tree was added to the garden area. The Peace Garden remains a space within the school grounds where learners and staff can spend time in a quieter environment during the school day.

Service at School

Learners at Boksburg High School gathered on 6 February 2026 for the induction of the Interact Club of Boksburg High School.

The induction event brought together learners, school leadership and Rotarians as the new Interact members formally began their participation in the Rotary youth programme. The club operates with the support of the Rotary Club of Benoni van Ryn (D9400).

Past President Bob Andrews attended the induction and addressed the learners during the event. The school's leadership was also present, including Principal Mr F E Thango and Interact convenor Mrs Lizelle Burger.

During the ceremony, speakers noted the role of the Interact club in encouraging leadership, service and participation in community activities among learners.

The newly inducted Interact Club of Boksburg High School begins the year with approximately 50 members. Throughout the year, members will participate in Rotary related initiatives and develop their own service projects within the school and surrounding community.

Rotarian Graeme Odendaal also attended the event, joining school representatives and Rotary members in welcoming the new Interact members.



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The Plettenberg Bay Sea Scouts and adult volunteers celebrated the group's 10 year anniversary.

Sea Scouts Thanks

A letter of thanks arrived recently at the Rotary Club of Plettenberg Bay (D9350), recalling a donation made a decade earlier to support the Plettenberg Bay Sea Scouts Group.

The group was established in 2015 and marked its 10 year anniversary on 26 January 2026. As part of the milestone, Scout Group Leader Jared Harding wrote to the club to acknowledge a donation of R10,000 made by the Plettenberg Bay club during the early years of the Sea Scouts' development.

At the time, the contribution helped support the activities of the newly formed group. Ten years later, the Sea Scouts have grown to become one of the largest groups in the Outeniqua District.

Today the group supports around 40 young people between the ages of seven and 18. Activities are guided by a team of 10 adult volunteers who mentor members and introduce

them to practical skills and outdoor activities associated with the Sea Scouts programme.

The volunteers continue to guide the group using principles and practices associated with the movement founded by Lord Baden-Powell.

The Rotary Club of Plettenberg Bay has supported a range of youth and sports initiatives in communities around Bitou Municipality. These include gymnastics and chess in New Horizon, netball in KwaNokuthula, boxing in Bossiesgif and rugby in Wittedrift.

In 2026 the Plettenberg Bay club also marks its own milestone, its 40th charter anniversary.

The letter from the Sea Scouts group leader offered an opportunity for the club to reflect on the earlier support given to the organisation during its formative years and the growth of the group since its establishment in Plettenberg Bay.

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Wine On Water

Canal Wine Festival

Boats slowly meandered through the canals of St Francis Bay as guests aboard the barges sampled wines from across the region during the fifth Wine on Water event hosted by the Rotary Club of St Francis Bay (D9370).





Guests travelling by boat between canal side homes during the Wine on Water event hosted by the Rotary Club of St Francis Bay.

Wine on Water, known as WOW, is the club's flagship fundraising event and brings together wine estates, local residents and visitors for a canal side wine tasting experience. The 2026 event took place on 27 and 28 February in St Francis Bay.

The Rotary Club of St Francis Bay was chartered in November 2019 after operating previously as a satellite club. The club supports communities across the greater St Francis region, including Humansdorp, Hankey, Patensie and Jeffreys Bay.

Planning for Wine on Water began in 2019 when members recognised the need for a major fundraising initiative to support community projects. The concept was developed as an annual canal based event where visitors travel between private homes by boat to taste wines presented by participating estates.

Although originally planned for 2019, the first event took place in 2022 after the COVID-19 pandemic delayed the launch. Subsequent events have grown in popularity. Tickets for the 2023 event sold out in 58 minutes, while Saturday tickets for the 2025 event sold out in 27 minutes.

The 2026 event involved 39 wine farms and made use of homes along the St Francis Bay canals as tasting venues. A total of 46 boats and barges transported guests between participating homes and tasting points across the canal network.

Private home owners play a central role in the event by making their canal properties available for preparation, the event itself and post event clean up. Homes are used as tasting venues where guests disembark from boats to sample wines presented by participating estates.

Residents from Sea Vista assisted during the event as deck and jetty marshals, helping guide boats and assisting guests as they boarded and disembarked. Youth from Sibanye Youth were also involved at the registration tent during the event.

Funds raised through Wine on Water support a range of Rotary supported projects and organisations in the St Francis area, including Hospice, the Sea Vista Primary School, Talhado Children's Haven and the local fire station project.



A water storage tank was installed in Benoni Western Extension by the Rotary Club of Benoni van Ryn (D9400) thanks to the support of an anonymous donor. Above: The installation team preparing the water tank and water supply.

Problem Solved!

A month without running water placed severe strain on residents of Benoni Western Extension, where households were unable to carry out basic daily tasks such as cooking, cleaning and maintaining hygiene.

The Rotary Club of Benoni van Ryn (D9400) responded after The Salvation Army alerted the club to the situation in the community. With the support of an anonymous donor, the club arranged for the installation of a 2,500 litre JoJo water tank and supplied it with 1,000 litres of drinking water.

A team installed the tank and water supply to

provide immediate access to water for residents who had been without municipal supply for several weeks.

The installation was organised to provide a practical water source for community members during the interruption in services. The project also involved cooperation with The Salvation Army, which had raised the need within the area.

The JoJo tank now provides a local supply of water for residents who rely on the installation for their daily needs while the broader water supply challenges in the area continue.



Members and guests during the 25th anniversary celebration of the Rotary Club of Haenertsburg (D9400) held at Cheerio Gardens.

25 Years Young

Members and guests gathered to mark the 25th anniversary of the Rotary Club of Haenertsburg (D9400), celebrating a milestone that reflects a quarter century of service in the community.

The club was chartered on 16 February 2001 under Rotary International and was sponsored by the Rotary Club of Pietersburg 100 (D9400). From its establishment, the club brought together members committed to service activities in Haenertsburg and surrounding communities.

Over the years the Haenertsburg club has supported a range of community initiatives, including assistance to local schools, youth development programmes, community upliftment activities and fundraising projects

aimed at supporting local needs.

The anniversary celebration brought together club members and invited guests to recognise the club's 25 years of activity since its charter. The event was held at Cheerio Gardens, where the gathering celebrated the milestone with an evening programme and a shared meal.

Catering for the event was provided by Red Plate.

During the celebration, members reflected on the club's history since its founding in 2001 and the activities undertaken during its years of service in the Haenertsburg area.

The Rotary Club of Haenertsburg continues its community activities as it enters its next year of service following the 25 year milestone.

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Big Rock Training Centre riders with bicycles donated to the Rotary Club of Parys by the Rotary Club of Empangeni to support the cycling development programme in Parys.

Riding Towards Opportunity

The sound of bicycle wheels on gravel has become a familiar part of activity at the Big Rock Training Centre in Parys, where young riders gather regularly for structured cycling training.

The centre began as a small initiative with only a few bicycles available. Children from Parys, Tumahole and surrounding communities took turns riding, waiting patiently each week for an opportunity to train. Despite the limited equipment, regular sessions continued and participation steadily grew.

The aim of the programme was to provide young people with access to organised cycling training in a safe and supportive environment. Over time, the training centre developed into a structured youth cycling programme offering coaching and mentorship to young riders.

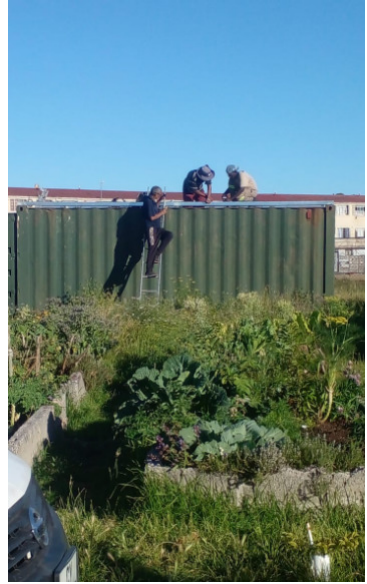
The Rotary Club of Parys (D9370) became involved in supporting the initiative as participation increased. Through Rotary's

involvement, the programme gained additional support and structure, allowing more young riders to take part in training sessions and skills development activities.

Further support arrived when the Rotary Club of Empangeni (D9370) responded after learning about the programme. In February, the club donated 96 bicycles to the Big Rock Training Centre during the first official delivery.

The donation significantly increased the number of bicycles available for training. Where children had previously shared a small number of bicycles, the additional equipment made it possible for more riders to train at the same time.

With the expanded fleet of bicycles, the training programme can now accommodate more participants and offer more consistent training sessions for young cyclists from the surrounding communities.



A Rotary club project in Cape Town is teaching people how to grow their own food.

Gardens of Hope

Fresh vegetables grow in raised garden boxes at the GrowBox site in Hanover Park, where community members gather to learn practical food growing skills.

The Rotary Club of Table Bay (D9350) supports the GrowBox initiative, a community based programme founded by Renshia Manuel that focuses on vegetable gardening and skills development on the Cape Flats near Cape Town.

GrowBox was established after Manuel experienced food insecurity and began developing practical garden boxes designed for small or urban spaces. The boxes allow families to grow vegetables close to their homes and make use of limited space.

The project operates in Hanover Park, an area on the Cape Flats that faces ongoing social and economic challenges. At the GrowBox site, participants learn how to plant, maintain and harvest vegetables using the garden boxes

while gaining experience in basic food production methods.

As participation increased, improvements were made to the facility with the support of the Table Bay club. Rotary assistance included the installation of solar panels, construction of a new roof and the addition of a toilet at the site. These additions expanded the functionality of the space and improved the facilities available to participants and organisers.

District Governor Pam Rawbone of District 9350 visited the GrowBox site and met with Manuel to view the project and its activities. During the visit, she observed the gardening spaces and the training environment where community members take part in the programme.

GrowBox continues to operate as a training and gardening space where participants learn vegetable growing techniques using the garden boxes developed through the initiative.



During the project, community discussions also highlighted the often overlooked role that access to basic personal items can play in school attendance and in helping women rebuild their lives after leaving abusive situations.

Dignity Restored

A simple clothing item became the focus of a community drive when members of the Rotary Club of Chatsworth (D9370) discovered that girls were missing school because they did not have basic underwear.

The discovery emerged during conversations with local schools. Some learners owned only one bra and stayed home on days it needed washing. Others had none at all and felt too embarrassed to attend school. The issue also affected women arriving at shelters after fleeing abusive homes, many of whom left without basic personal items during moments of crisis.

The Rotary Club of Chatsworth responded by launching the aBRA Project, a campaign to collect bras for distribution to those in need. The project set an initial goal of collecting 2,025 new or gently worn bras within three months.

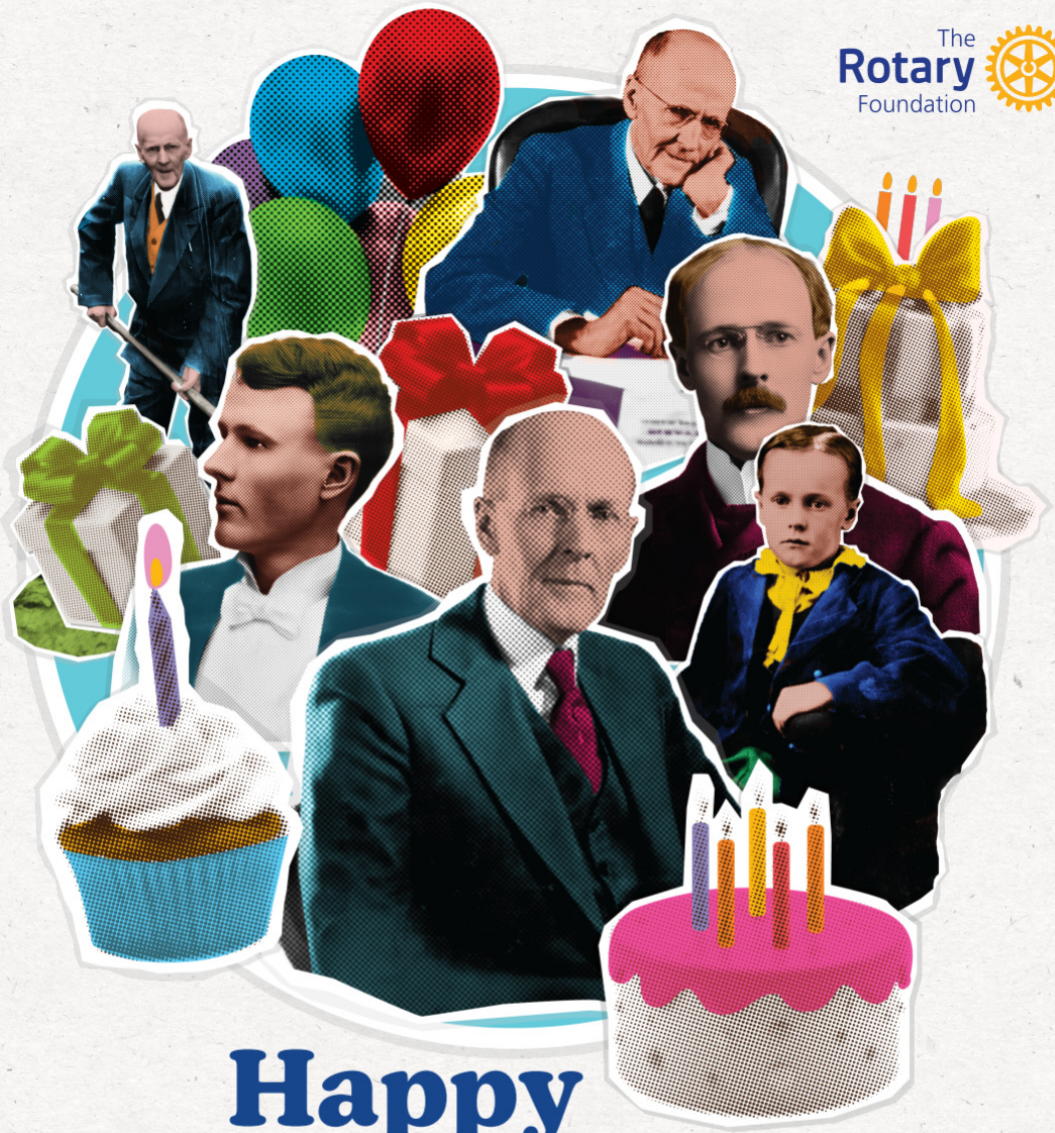
Support for the campaign came from across the community. Donations were received from

individuals, businesses, university students and community groups. The Rotaract Club of Chatsworth Anns assisted with the initiative, helping to gather and organise contributions during the campaign.

By the end of the collection period, the number of items received had exceeded the original target. Members of the Rotary Club of Chatsworth and the Rotaract Club of Chatsworth Anns spent a weekend sorting, sizing and packaging the donated bras for distribution.

The packaged items were delivered to local schools, children's homes and shelters supporting women and children affected by domestic violence. School representatives and shelter coordinators accepted the donations on behalf of the organisations they serve.

The aBRA Project was organised by the Rotary Club of Chatsworth as part of its community service activities in the area.



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Reading activities during World Read Aloud Day organised with the Rotary E-Club of South Africa One (D9370).

World Read Aloud Day

Stories Shared

Stories were read aloud in classrooms, community centres and care facilities as Rotarians and community members marked World Read Aloud Day through activities organised by the Rotary E-Club of South Africa One (D9370).

The initiative formed part of an international day that highlights the role of reading in education and community life. Events took place in several locations in South Africa and were linked with similar activities in other countries.

In Durban, volunteers visited Chatsworth Hospice where stories were read to patients and staff. At the Aryan Benevolent Home for the Aged, an intergenerational reading session brought together older residents and volunteers to share stories aloud.

The Bliss Autism Centre organised a sensory friendly reading environment where

participants could listen to stories in a calm setting. At Depot Road Primary School, learners took part in reading activities and shared stories with classmates. Young readers also participated in reading sessions at Northgate Elementary. This formed part of a broader international programme that is coordinated through Rotarian networks, in which Rotarian Pree Parumaul helped facilitate the international connections.

In Houston, Texas, Brookdale for Senior Living hosted a read aloud session for residents. At Greenfields Inclusive School in Dehradun, India, students presented dramatic readings as part of the day's programme. In East Java, Indonesia, an elementary school organised storytelling sessions and distributed books to learners. Pree described the initiative as a way of linking communities through shared stories and language.

AFRICA IN BRIEF



The Interact Club of Worcester Gymnasium was officially chartered after nine years of preparation with the support of the Rotary Club of Worcester (D9350). From left, Nidhi Patel, Interact Treasurer, Nina Dippenaar and Charlotte Horn, Interact Secretaries, District Governor Pam Rawbone, Lise le Roux, Interact Vice President Jaco du Toit, Interact President Juanita Wilkinson, President of the Rotary Club of Worcester and Assistant Governor Stuart Hunter at the chartering ceremony.



Learners from the EarlyAct Club of Outeniqua Primary School visited the Moreson Child and Youth Care Centre in George to deliver fruit collected for the children living at the facility. The club, supported by the Rotary Club of George (D9350), encourages learners to take part in community service. About 20 EarlyAct members handed over the fruit and spent time playing with younger children. The centre provides residential care for around 100 children between the ages of three and 18.



The Garden of Life, a project of the Rotary Club of Benoni Aurora (D9400), recently produced a harvest of cabbage, spinach, brinjals, chillies and onions. The fresh vegetables were distributed to the Barcelona Community Centre, Sinethemba Place of Safety and the club's Rotary Community Corps to support its soup kitchen programme.



Welcome

Frankie Wendorff is a new member of the Rotary Club of Stellenbosch (D9350). With him are District Governor Pam Rawbone and President Laurence Chambers.



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