

JULY 2026

Rotary

AFRICA | SOUTH

10 **Answering the Call:** Meet our 2026-27
Rotary International President





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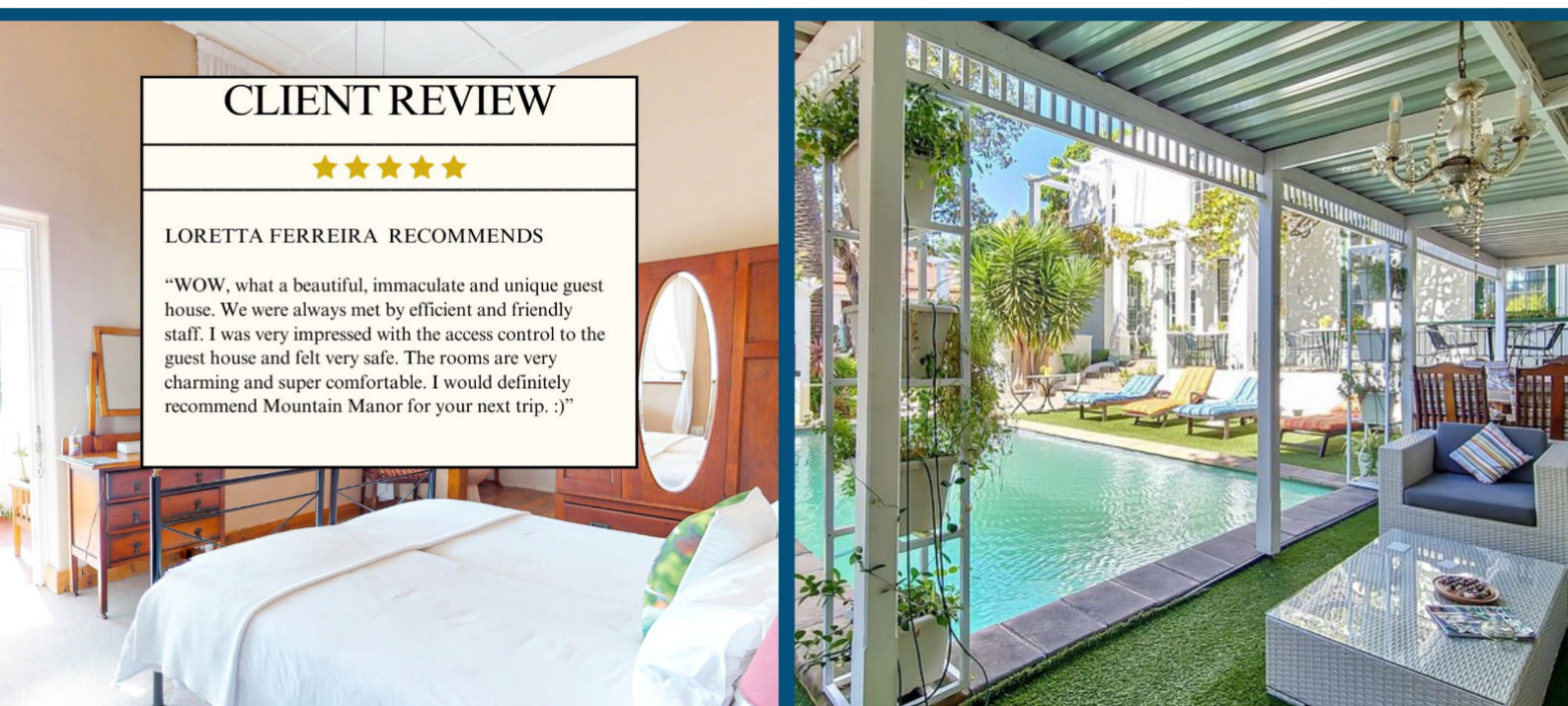
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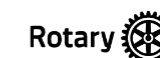
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WELCOME

Sarah van Heerden - Editor in Chief

There is always a sense of anticipation at the start of a new Rotary year.

New presidents take office. Fresh projects begin to take shape and clubs look ahead to the opportunities and challenges that lie before them. It's a time of renewed energy and renewed purpose. It is also a reminder that Rotary is constantly evolving while remaining true to its commitment to service.

This year brings an added sense of excitement for Rotarians across Africa. On 1 July, Yinka Babalola takes office as Rotary International President, becoming only the second African to hold Rotary's highest office. For Rotary members on the continent, it is a moment of considerable pride. His theme for the year, *Create Lasting Impact*, challenges us to think beyond individual projects and focus on sustainable outcomes that continue long after the work is done. Already there is a sense that his leadership will bring a fresh perspective.

That spirit of service is reflected throughout the pages of this magazine. Month after month we see Rotary members stepping forward when communities need them most.

Whether providing blankets during winter, supporting education, improving healthcare, mentoring young people or responding to local challenges, Rotary members continue to find

practical ways to help.

These stories are worth celebrating because they remind us that Rotary's greatest strength has always been its members. Projects may differ from one club to another, but the willingness to serve remains a constant thread running through every district and every country.

The global scale of Rotary was once again on display at the Rotary International Convention in Taipei last month, where approximately 38,000 Rotarians gathered from around the world to share ideas, celebrate achievements and strengthen international friendships.

Attention now turns to Barcelona, which will host the 2027 Rotary International Convention and provide another opportunity for Rotarians to connect across cultures and continents.

As we begin a new Rotary year, there is much to look forward to. There will undoubtedly be challenges along the way. There always are. There will also be opportunities to serve, opportunities to grow and opportunities to create lasting impact in our communities. Let's not forget, too, the many opportunities to connect and make friends.

The year ahead is unwritten and uncharted. What fills its pages will depend on the actions we take, the partnerships we build and the lives we touch through Rotary service. Which is exciting, as it is filled with endless possibility.



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RI PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Let's Get to Work!

It surprises you when a stranger across the table becomes a lifelong friend. It surprises you when a small project in one neighbourhood ripples outward in ways you never imagined. And it may surprise you when you realise that the person Rotary has changed most ... is you.

That is why this year, we are called to harness the change within ourselves, to look to the future and to Create Lasting Impact.

Now, I want to be clear about what those words mean. Change is only the beginning. Impact is what endures. We must think of the long-term impact of every project. How can a new water system contribute to the long-term health of a community? Can residents help other communities build their own? How can a new classroom be part of a wider strategy to improve education in the area? That is the sort of thinking we need.

As we prioritise impact, we must also consider how our actions can contribute to peacebuilding. Peace does not happen by accident. It must be built deliberately and strategically. As you plan your next project, ask yourself: "How does this create the conditions for peace?" Consult the Pillars of Positive Peace to learn how we can bring the world one step closer to peace in everything we do.

The more you change your community and the world, the more you will change. Don't just tell

people about the projects you have run or the funds you have raised. Tell them how Rotary has shaped who you are. Those personal stories open doors, inspire new members and remind all of us why we are here.

Storytelling is also an excellent way to recruit new members and raise funds. We need more people standing with us and more resources if we are to end polio, spread peace and have a lasting impact on the world. We have set a goal of increasing membership to 1.25 million Rotarians and more than 125,000 Rotaractors by 2030, just in time for Rotary's 125th anniversary.

Sit down with your club and look back over your accomplishments in the last few years. Find your best year. Maybe it was a record year for new members. Maybe you reached a fundraising milestone. Maybe you completed a project that the whole community is still talking about. Once you find that year, I challenge you to do better than your best.

In these ways and more, we will Create Lasting Impact across the globe, in our communities and in ourselves.

Thank you, my dear friends. Now let's get to work.

YINKA

President, Rotary International

FOUNDATION TRUSTEE

CHAIR'S MESSAGE

Leading with Gratitude

I love the idea of a gratitude journal. The practice is simple: Write down three things each day that you are grateful for and watch how it shifts your mindset, your energy and even the way you move through the world.

To me, gratitude is more than a feeling; it is a force.

In Rotary, gratitude reflects who we are. When we thank our donors, we are acknowledging their contribution and honouring their belief in a better world.

I write in my gratitude journal often, not every day but enough to keep me grounded. I want to share with you an entry from January, written during the International Assembly. The assembly is more than our annual learning event for district governors-elect; it's a gathering filled with inspiration and moments that stay with you long after the lights dim.

My first entry was in gratitude to Debbie and Russell Doby.

In 2022, Debbie, then a district governor-elect, missed out on that inspiring assembly experience because of the pandemic. Then, a year later, just a few days before the district conference she was excited to host, Debbie and her husband were in a head-on collision. The other driver was killed; Debbie and Russell survived, miraculously.

Out of tragedy, they found grace. They created an endowment fund for their district at the Arch Klumph Society level, choosing to transform pain into purpose.

My second entry reflected on Ravishankar and Paola Dakoju from the Rotary Club of Bangalore, India. At the assembly, the couple pledged \$50 million to The Rotary Foundation, an extraordinary gift representing 85 percent of their wealth. Ravishankar said, "When you give more than you think you can, life returns to you more than you can ever imagine." That single sentence captures the heart of Rotary.

My final entry was in gratitude to Moh Eid and Chuck and Carol Stocking. After Moh's brother, Ibrahim, a humanitarian aid worker, was killed while helping victims of war, Chuck was moved to create the Ibrahim Eid Fund to support Rotary Peace Fellows. Their leverage gift was \$100,000 toward a million-dollar goal. That is what it looks like when grief becomes hope.

And today, my gratitude entry is for you. For longtime members and brand-new faces, for those who give year after year and those preparing to make their first gift. Thank you.

Let gratitude be our compass this year.

JENNIFER JONES
Foundation Trustee Chair

Rotarians help protect mothers and children from malaria.

The tools to prevent and treat malaria exist. Getting them to the communities that need them is the challenge. Rotary and Rotaract clubs are bridging this gap through Community Impact Grants.

Know the Symptoms

Mild symptoms: fever, chills and headache. Severe symptoms: fatigue, confusion, seizures, and difficulty breathing. Prompt treatment prevents severe illness.

Lower the risk of getting malaria by avoiding mosquito bites:

- Use mosquito nets when sleeping in places where malaria is present.
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- Use coils and vaporizers.
- Wear protective clothing.
- Use window screens.



See how your club can take action at
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Rotary International Convention - Taipei 2026



We would like to extend our gratitude to each and every person who engaged with us at the Rotary International Convention in Taipei. Whether we met in passing or at our booth at the House of Friendship, you contributed to the convention's vibrant energy, fueled by invigorated Rotarians.



It was inspiring to witness people coming together, having conversations, and ideating potential collaborations, all with people they had just met. This spirit of openness and connection is what makes Rotary truly special, turning chance meetings into meaningful partnerships that have a real impact on communities around the world.

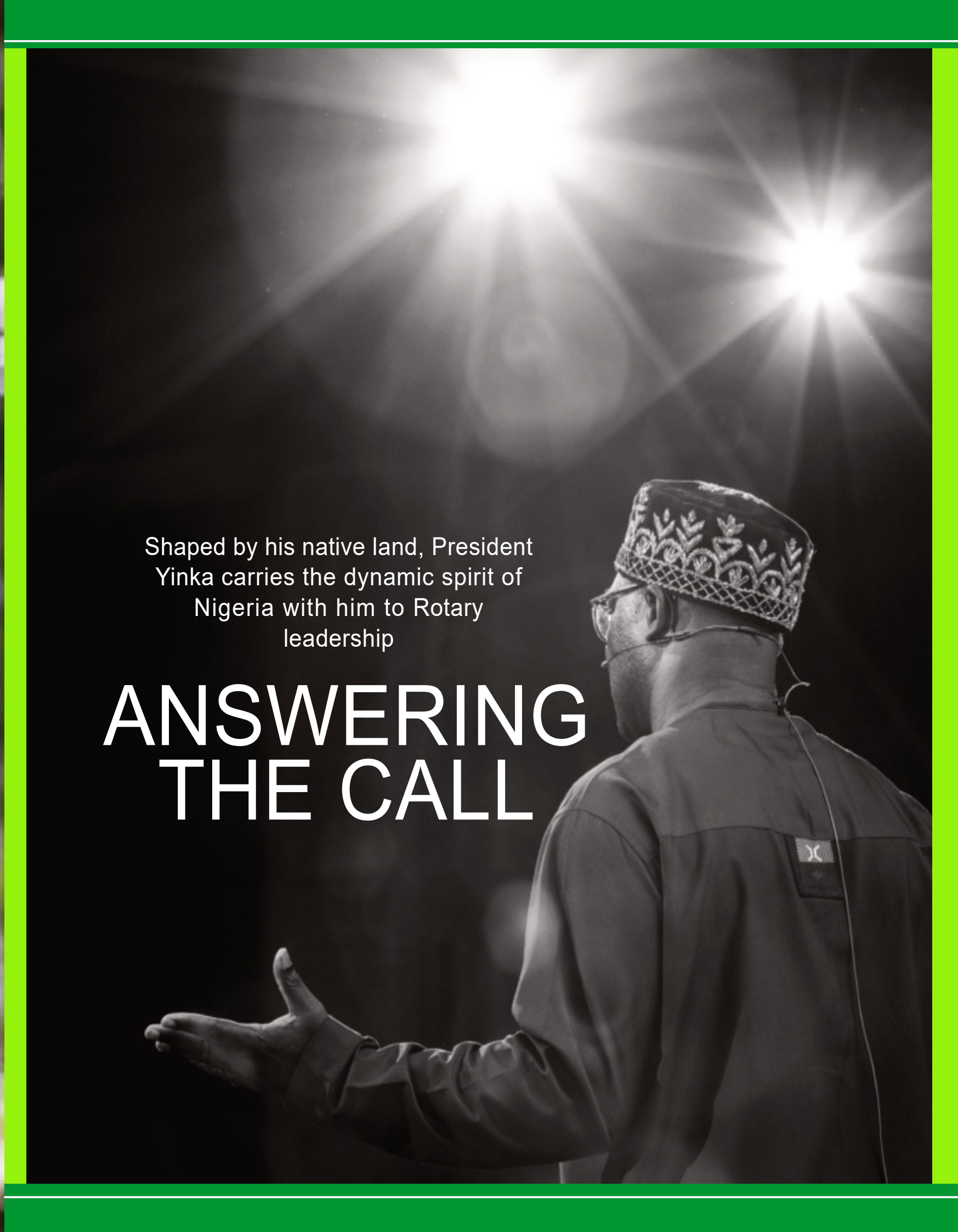


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Shaped by his native land, President
Yinka carries the dynamic spirit of
Nigeria with him to Rotary
leadership

ANSWERING THE CALL

By Diana Schoberg
Photography by Monika Lozinska

THIS IS IT. IT'S SHOWTIME, the moment that Yinka, as he's called, the 2026-27 Rotary International president, the second from Nigeria, the second from all of Africa for that matter, will make his debut to the Rotary world.

It's the first morning of Rotary's International Assembly, a training event for incoming district governors held every winter in Orlando, Florida. Babalola's already miked up for the speech he'll give, the session's main event. But first, he prepares to participate in the opening flag ceremony, a tradition at Rotary events.

He joins 2025-26 RI President Francesco Arezzo of Italy and Larry Lunsford of the United States, who will serve after Babalola. The three walk onstage, hoisting their countries' flags. A singer belts out the US national anthem. Then, the Italian district governors-elect join Arezzo onstage to sing "Il Canto degli Italiani."

Finally, it's Babalola's turn. He steps forward and stands taller, his glittery green-and-white striped hat matching his country's flag. Peace Udoka Anyira, a Nigerian Canadian Rotarian, steps onstage and sings:

Nigeria, we hail thee,
Our own dear native land,
Though tribes and tongues may differ,
In brotherhood we stand
Nigerians all, are proud to serve
Our sovereign Motherland.

Babalola sings along too and as he does, a tear rolls down his cheek.

"You hear a lot of bad stories about Nigeria, but today, the story is not a bad story," he says afterward, choking up with emotion. He takes off his glasses and wipes his eyes. "The flag of this country is being raised amongst people of goodwill, good people from more than 100 countries, for a good cause."

As of 1 July, Babalola will lead them.

Babalola's leadership journey began early. The eldest of six children, he was born in Ibadan, one of the largest cities in Nigeria. His mother was a teacher and his father an accountant. "From my part of the world, when you're the first child, that has some leadership responsibilities," he says.

He went to college at what was then called the



From top: Rotary President Olayinka H. Babalola sings the Nigerian national anthem at Rotary's International Assembly; with his wife, Precy Babalola (centre); and dancing with governors-elect.



With Nigerian Rotaractors (Babalola is the first RI president to start his Rotary journey through Rotaract).

“

The flag of this country is being raised amongst people of goodwill. Good people from more than 100 countries, for a good cause.

Federal University of Technology in Bauchi, an ethnically diverse city in the north where Nigeria's savanna woodlands begin to give way to the semi-arid Sahel on the edge of the Sahara. The school's public image director, a member of the Rotary Club of Bauchi, asked him during his second year if he'd help organise a Rotaract club. Babalola became the club's charter president.

After earning his degree in electronics engineering, Babalola completed a year in the National Youth Service Corps. Aiming to bridge ethnic and religious divides, members of the corps serve in states other than their own. Babalola was posted to Port Harcourt in Rivers state, where the French tyre manufacturer Michelin had requested electronics engineering graduates to help retool its equipment.

Before arriving in Port Harcourt, Babalola joined

other newly mobilised corps members at an orientation camp. He figured since they were all fresh out of university, there must be Rotaractors among them. He posted a notice and gathered everybody together. "We started a mini Rotaract fellowship while in camp," he recalls.

Then in Port Harcourt, Babalola joined the Rotaract Club of Trans Amadi, an industrial area of the city where Michelin was located. With other Rotaract corps members, he volunteered at a facility for children with disabilities that was supported by the Rotary Club of Port Harcourt.

When his mandatory service was over, Babalola landed a job with the Nigerian branch of the Shell Oil Company. Only in his mid-20s, he was beginning to outgrow his Rotaract club; his job gave him the privilege of a better income than others his age. The next logical step, he thought,

PHOTOGRAPH: (RIGHT) ANDREW ESIEBO



Clockwise from top left: Babalola with members of his Rotary club, Trans Amadi; watching as Precy, a lawyer and Rotarian, rehearses a speech; visiting a polio project in Nigeria; and rallying district governors-elect to end polio. “Rotarians will be energised to take on the challenge of polio more than ever,” says Eyone Andy Uwejean, a past governor of District 9141.

“

He would always say, ‘Better your best.’ I don’t want you to compete with other clubs. I want you to compete with yourself.

— Ndukwe Chukwu,
Rotary Club of Owerri Central, Nigeria



PHOTOGRAPHS: (STREET, CLUB MEETING, DRUMS) ANDREW ESIEBO



was to join Rotary, where he could find inspiration from successful older members. “I wanted to be in a place where I could aspire to other things,” he says.

But when he went to a meeting of the Rotary Club of Trans Amadi and said he wanted to join, club members were stunned. One Rotarian erupted: “What’s wrong with this young man? You think this is how you join Rotary?” But another Rotarian volunteered to be his sponsor, later becoming a mentor. “If that man hadn’t spoken up for me, maybe I wouldn’t be here,” Babalola reflects. “I may have left the place and never considered joining Rotary and that would have been the end of it.”

In Rotary, Babalola found career mentors, including the chief operating officer of Shell Nigeria. “There are some people who when you see their signature on a letter addressed to you, it

means only two things: You’ve been promoted or you’ve been sacked,” he says. “That’s the kind of person he was.” Another executive in the Nigerian oil industry also took Babalola under his wing when his father died.

But most of all, he found a place to grow up. “At 27, you have some money in your pocket, you’re single, you’re a boy, you can imagine the kind of things that will be on your mind,” he says. “But because I was in Rotary, that didn’t happen for me. People are talking about taxation; they’re talking about the budget. They’re talking about real estate, about investment opportunities and suddenly somebody is telling you what you need to do with your money.”

Through Rotary, Babalola also met his wife, Precy, the first female president of her university’s Rotaract club in Port Harcourt. She pulled back from Rotary when their children were young,



Joshua Hassan (right), chair of Rotary’s Nigeria PolioPlus Committee, shows Babalola around a polio vaccination clinic.



Babalola visits a clinic where children receive polio vaccines.

rejoining in 2018. Today she is a lawyer and a member of the Rotary Club of Port Harcourt Passport.

“Our stories as members may be different, but Rotary impacts us in many ways, our careers, our businesses, our family lives,” Yinka Babalola says. “I think if you talk to any Rotarian, you will find they have a story, something that made them stay.”

It’s midday and a dozen or so district governors-elect ring a conference table. The Florida sunshine streams in as they exchange business cards and wait for Babalola. These governors-elect are from the last remaining districts battling polio, places like Pakistan, where, along with neighbouring Afghanistan, wild poliovirus is still endemic, along with some districts in Africa, including Babalola’s Nigeria, that are still suppressing outbreaks.

Babalola enters and walks around the table, shaking hands with everybody. This is his hype meeting, where he wants to rally these governors-elect and show them just how serious he is about polio eradication.

As the meeting starts, he speaks in such hushed

tones that one must lean in to hear him. Once he has everyone’s full attention, his voice grows stronger, more animated. He taps his fingers on the table, asking for a demonstration of their commitment.

“Imagine,” Babalola tells them, “being at the Rotary Convention and they’re announcing that we’ve reached zero cases of polio, that this district governor class was the one to get us there.”

The room bubbles with enthusiasm afterward. “We’re excited for him being our president,” says Shahzad Sabir, governor-elect of District 3271 (Pakistan). “He knows what’s a problem on the ground. He knows what commitment means. He knows what we need.”

International PolioPlus Committee Chair Michael K. McGovern, who sat in on the meeting, echoes Sabir’s sentiments. “We have never had a president who has come into the role who has more background on the day-to-day work of eradicating polio in a country, working closely with Rotarians, working with the governments and working with others,” he says. “We couldn’t have a better leader.”



Babalola with his sisters (from left) Muibat, Salimot, and Ganiyat, and daughter Amina; with son Malik; and (below) with his mother, Rianat Babalola.





Babalola on a bird-watching tour with his sisters (from left) Ganiyat and Muibat in his hometown of Ibadan.

In 2012, wild poliovirus was still endemic in Nigeria. Cases were surging, particularly in the northeast of the country, home to the militant group Boko Haram. Babalola, a 2011-12 district governor, was summoned to a meeting to discuss the country's polio eradication efforts. Rotary leaders wanted the past and current district governors gathered to each adopt one of Nigeria's 36 states and work with local governments and partners there to ensure immunisation ran smoothly. "People's hands started going up," Babalola recalls, "and nobody agreed to go to the northeast."

But Babalola had gone to college in the region. It's where he got his start in Rotary. It was a place he knew. He raised his hand. "People turned and looked at me, thinking this guy must be crazy," he remembers.

Salma Ibrahim Anas, the commissioner of health in the northeastern state of Borno in 2011-15, recalls one time when Babalola met her in her office in the state capital, Maiduguri. She told him she'd be travelling to a remote community several hundred kilometres away to launch an

immunisation campaign. There was a security lockdown; civil society partners were not travelling because of the risks. But, says Anas, now the special adviser on health to the Nigerian president, she couldn't believe it when the next day she saw Babalola in that same remote community delivering vaccines. "I was speechless," she recalls. "This was the highest level of dedication, commitment and trust. He sacrificed whatever he had for these children in remote communities despite the security challenges of Boko Haram."

Within the decade, in 2020, the World Health Organisation certified Nigeria, and with it the entire African region, free of wild poliovirus, largely thanks to the efforts of Rotary members.

From his time as a district governor, Babalola quickly rose through the Rotary ranks. "I could see then that he was an up-and-comer, he had that talent," says Bryn Styles, who met Babalola when he was a governor and Styles was an RI director-elect. He is now serving as Babalola's presidential aide. "I was so impressed with him that I wrote a note to the sitting RI president and president-elect

saying this is someone that we have to move along."

In 2017, Babalola was preparing to serve as an RI director himself. His term was to coincide with the year that Sam F. Owori of Uganda was to serve as Rotary president. But the unthinkable happened: Owori died of complications from surgery before he could take office.

Refusing to believe it, Babalola tried to call Owori, whose wife answered and confirmed the news. He called Past RI President Jonathan Majiyagbe and Past Director Sam Okudzeto, among the only living senior leaders from Africa at the time, to ask them what to do. Both deferred to Babalola as the leader now. As he pondered that, he got a call from Ugandan Rotarians asking him what's next. "Suddenly it dawned on me," he says. "I said to myself, 'Yinka, your role has changed. This whole continent is looking in your direction and you need to step up.'"

Babalola and Owori had already discussed plans for their time together on the RI board. Now, it fell to Babalola to execute them. "It was not an easy time," he says, "but it was a serious moment of growth."

One of those plans involved membership growth on the continent, an area that Babalola had excelled at during his time as club president and district governor. When Owori died, Africa was home to 29,000 Rotarians. Today, there are 48,000.

"There's something about Yinka and membership," says Virginia Major, a past district

governor from Port Harcourt and one of many whom Babalola has mentored. "Oh, my goodness. He almost drives you crazy because of membership. He gives you figures. 'This is where we need to be.' 'We need to do this and we can.' I call him the father of membership in Africa."

After the flag ceremony, Babalola hustles backstage to wait while Styles, his aide, introduces him. Babalola swaps his green-and-white hat for one in the same fabric as the presidential ties and scarves the district governors-elect will receive after the morning session. Someone fortuitously tracks down a pocket square in the same fabric and Babalola tucks it in just as Styles is announcing his name. With that, he strides onstage.

The audience applauds as Babalola tells the story of how he was finally able to join Rotary. He talks about the impact of Together for Healthy Families in Nigeria, a massive maternal and child health programme funded by The Rotary Foundation. And he dramatically announces this year's presidential message, Create Lasting Impact, while spreading his arms wide and soaking in the enthusiasm of the crowd, which is standing and taking photos.

Babalola may be only the second president from Nigeria, the second from Africa. But true to Rotary's values, he will build peace as he travels, promoting understanding of the people of a country, beyond the headlines. He himself will be creating lasting impact, on Rotary, on the world.

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(As of 1 May)

**AVERAGE ROTARIAN
AGE IS 48
(YOUNGEST AMONG
ALL COUNTRIES WITH
10,000+ ROTARIANS)**

156 MEMBERS

There are about 70,000 Rotary members across Africa. About half can be found in two countries: NIGERIA and UGANDA.

Country	Members
NIGERIA	20,156
UGANDA	14,644
KENYA	5,428
GHANA	3,804
EGYPT	3,479
SOUTH AFRICA	3,000
MOROCCO	2,333
CÔTE D'IVOIRE	1,508
TANZANIA	1,327
BENIN	1,251

1970
10 Rotary clubs
342 members

1980
18 clubs
851 members

1990
244 clubs
5,348 members

2000
174 clubs
2,736 members

2010
227 clubs
5,247 members

2020
400 clubs
10,361 members

Timeline of events

- ◆ Political
- ◆ Cultural
- ◆ Rotary



1960
Nigeria gains independence from the United Kingdom.

1961
The first Rotary club in Nigeria, the Rotary Club of Kano, is chartered in April. It is followed later that year by the Rotary clubs of Lagos and Ibadan.



1964
Chinua Achebe, celebrated as the father of modern African literature, publishes *Arrow of God*, completing a trilogy that began with *Things Fall Apart* (1958).

1966
Prime Minister Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa is killed in a coup, and a military government takes over. Apart from a brief period in 1979-83, the military will remain in power until 1999.

1967
A three-year civil war breaks out when three southeastern states secede as the Republic of Biafra.

1971
Amid a surge in petroleum production, Nigeria joins OPEC. The industry had begun with the discovery of oil in the Niger Delta in 1956.

1973
Rotary clubs in Nigeria, along with others in West Africa, become part of District 210. The following year, Anofi S. Guobadia becomes Nigeria's first district governor.



1976
Fela Kuti, the Nigerian musician and activist who pioneered the Afrobeat genre, releases the politically charged album *Zombie*.



1982
As membership grows, Rotary clubs in Nigeria get their own district, District 911. Only four years later, the country will have four districts.



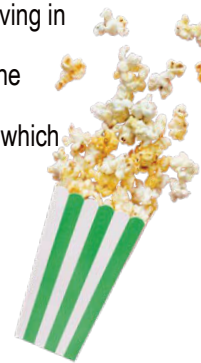
1986
Novelist Wole Soyinka wins the Nobel Prize in Literature.



1990
Rotary members in Nigeria launch the PolioPlus Volunteer Corps to support the government's immunisation programme.

1991
Abuja replaces Lagos as Nigeria's capital.

1992
The VHS release of the thriller *Living in Bondage* galvanises the Nigerian film industry, which acquires the nickname Nollywood.



1996
In an upset, the Nigeria men's soccer team beats Argentina to win an Olympic gold medal.

1996
As part of the Kick Polio Out of Africa campaign, Nigeria conducts its first National Immunisation Days.

1999
The Sukur Cultural Landscape, an ancient settlement in the northeast known for iron production, is named Nigeria's first UNESCO World Heritage site.



2000
Rotary presents its Polio Eradication Champion Award to Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo, in recognition of his commitment to ending polio in his country.

2003
Obasanjo is reelected in the country's first civilian-run elections in two decades.

2003
Jonathan Majiyagbe, of the Rotary Club of Kano, becomes the first Rotary International president from Africa.



2005
The West Africa Project Fair, a multidistrict Rotary initiative, launches in Ghana. Starting in 2007, it will be held in Nigeria several times (including Lagos in November 2026).

2006
Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's novel *Half of a Yellow Sun*, set against the backdrop of the Nigerian Civil War, is published to international acclaim.

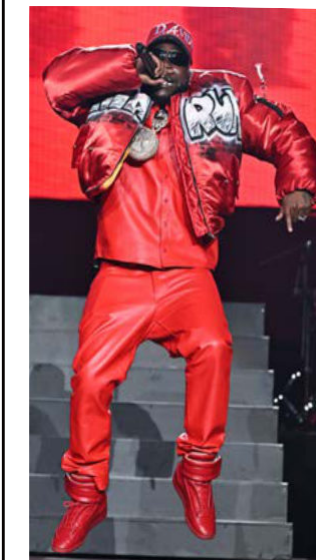


2009
The extremist sectarian group Boko Haram begins a years-long insurgency against the government that results in wide-scale violence, particularly in the northeast.

2011
Nigerian industrialist Aliko Dangote tops Forbes magazine's inaugural list of Africa's richest people, a position he will maintain 15 years later with an estimated \$28.5 billion.

2012
Kenneth Gbagi, of the Rotary Club of Osubi, becomes the first Nigerian member of The Rotary Foundation's Arch Klumph Society.

2016
Nigeria records its last case of wild poliovirus.



2018
As Nigerian pop music takes the world by storm, the video for Davido's song "Fall" becomes the first by a Nigerian artist to hit 100 million views on YouTube.



2020
Nigeria, along with the World Health Organisation's entire African region, is certified wild polio-free.



2022
Rotary's second Programmes of Scale grant is awarded to Together for Healthy Families in Nigeria, an initiative to reduce maternal and neonatal deaths.

2023
Bola Tinubu is elected president of Nigeria. (Over 100 Rotarians serve as election observers.)

2024
Ijeoma Pearl Okoro, of the Rotary Club of Port Harcourt, becomes the second Rotary Foundation trustee from Nigeria, after Jonathan Majiyagbe.



2025
Sir Emeka Ofor, of the Rotary Club of Oraifite, commits \$5 million to the Together for Healthy Families in Nigeria programme.

2026
Olayinka Babalola becomes Rotary's second Nigerian (and African) president.



Join a Rotary International committee.

Apply yourself

As part of the family of Rotary, members are invited to lend their professional expertise on committees that support Rotary and The Rotary Foundation. Each year, those committees focus on putting Rotary’s strategic priorities into action, challenging clubs to increase their impact, expand their reach, enhance participant engagement and increase Rotary’s ability to adapt.

Would you like to contribute to Rotary’s success? RI and The Foundation are searching for qualified Rotarians and Rotaractors to serve on committees in the 2027-28 Rotary year. These positions offer an opportunity for you to apply your leadership skills, share your vocational experience and help ensure diverse perspectives within each committee.

Rotarians and Rotaractors with expertise in the areas detailed in the chart are encouraged to apply. The number of openings is limited. If you’re not

selected this year, you are welcome to apply again next year.

All committees correspond through email and on virtual platforms, typically with one mandatory in-person meeting a year. Rotaractors are encouraged to apply to any area based on their background, skills and experience. Dual members of Rotary and Rotaract are especially welcome to apply.

If you wish to be considered for committee membership or would like to recommend a Rotarian or Rotaractor for an appointment, visit on.rotary.org/application2026.

Applicants must be registered on My Rotary at my.rotary.org and should make sure their My Rotary profile includes current contact information.

Applications close 15 August 2026.

AREA OF EXPERTISE	FUNCTION	PREREQUISITES	OPENINGS
AUDIT	Advises leadership on audited financial reports, internal and external audits, and internal control systems	Independence, appropriate business experience and demonstrated financial literacy in accounting, auditing, banking, insurance, investment, risk management, executive management or audit governance	One position with a four-year term
COMMUNICATIONS	Advises leadership on Rotary’s overall public image, branding, communications, content strategy	Professional background and experience in internal and external communications, marketing, public image, brand, public relations, media and content strategy	Two positions with three-year terms
ENHANCING PARTICIPANT ENGAGEMENT	Advises leadership on enhancing participant engagement and fostering a welcoming and accessible club culture rooted in respect that values different perspectives and voices	Professional or educational experience related to shaping a culture of respect and positive engagement, facilitating difficult conversations and uniting individuals to solve problems	Two positions with three-year terms
FINANCE	Advises the RI Board on Rotary’s finances, including budgets and sustainability measures	Professional background in a finance-related field; nonprofit experience preferred. Candidates should have experience in financial matters at the club and district levels.	Two positions with three-year terms
FUND DEVELOPMENT	Advises The Rotary Foundation Trustees on all aspects of fundraising	Significant experience in nonprofit fundraising. Committee members actively fundraise and support The Foundation.	Two positions with three-year terms
INVESTMENT	Oversees the management of Rotary’s investments and the implementation of investment policies by the office of investment. Makes investment policy recommendations to the respective boards of governance.	Institutional investment experience or equivalent	One position with a four-year term
LEARNING	Advises leadership on creating effective learning opportunities for Rotary leaders and members	Adult learning expertise within or outside Rotary. Experience in the professional learning field (including e-learning) or with planning and implementing learning events at the member, club, district, zone and international levels.	Two positions with three-year terms
OPERATIONS REVIEW	Advises leadership on the effectiveness of operations, administrative procedures, and standards of conduct. Serves as the advisory compensation committee to the Executive Committee of the RI Board.	Experience in management, leadership development or financial management and thorough knowledge of Rotary’s operations. Appointments are limited to past RI directors and past Foundation trustees.	One position with a six-year term
STRATEGIC PLANNING	Advises leadership on matters regarding the strategic plan	Significant experience in long-term planning, financial management and RI and Foundation programme activities	Two positions with four-year terms
TECHNOLOGY	Advises leadership on enhancing technology practices, products, and strategy to improve the member and participant experience	Expertise in technology development, security and data privacy, product management and user/participant experience. Non-Rotarian technology experts may be appointed.	Two positions with three-year terms

Go to on.rotary.org/application2026. Applications close 15 August 2026.

iHola Barcelona!

Rotary International Convention
26-30 June 2027

The Rotary International Convention is coming to Barcelona in June and members who've visited the coastal city or who live there can hardly contain their excitement.

Experience the energy, culture and renowned landmarks of the city! The timing of the 2027 convention is perfect for visiting Barcelona's signature attraction, the Sagrada Família Basilica. Under construction for more than 140 years, the Antoni Gaudí masterpiece reached a milestone after workers finished its final, tallest tower earlier this year.

This is the second time the city has hosted the convention, the first was in 2002, and this is the first European convention since 2019.

As a city, Barcelona is known for its warm spirit, breathtaking architecture and stunning Mediterranean beaches. Stroll the Plaça d'Espanya where prominent corridors converge at a sprawling plaza of museums, public art, restaurants, a bullfighting ring and the Magic Fountain light show. Get tickets in advance for Park Güell with its gardens, play spaces and for more of Gaudí's ornamental architecture.

What speakers, performers, excursions, learning topics, and inspiration are convention organisers lining up? They're hard at work on a programme that is sure to impress (Nobel laureate Malala Yousafzai spoke at the convention in Taipei last month). One thing we know for certain, is that they will combine Rotary traditions, world-class experiences and the chance for stress-free travel.

Registration opens in September 2026.

Learn more at www.convention.rotary.org.



Heidi Brown-Koelble with Mbali Valashiya. Heidi was involved in the bursary programme that Mbali won and after Mbali finished her schooling, she employed her.

A LIFE CHANGED BY ROTARY

From Khayelitsha to the world: a journey of belief, sacrifice, and opportunity.

"I grew up in Khayelitsha, Cape Town, where my mother firmly believed that education was the key to a better future. Determined to give me every opportunity possible, she enrolled me at Sea Point Primary School despite the long daily journey from our home."

While at Sea Point Primary School in Cape Town, Mbali was among 80 promising learners from across the city who were invited to write a bursary entrance exam. There were only three bursaries available and Mbali won one of them.

The bursary, provided through a partnership between the Rotary Clubs of Neuss (D1870) and Am Kap (D9350), allowed Mbali to attend the German International School, Cape Town, from primary school through to matric.

When she was 16 years old, Mbali participated in an exchange programme to Germany. For a young girl from Khayelitsha, flying overseas and experiencing another culture was something she

had never imagined possible.

The journey demanded sacrifice. School days began three hours before classes and ended with a two-hour journey home. Yet she remained committed, knowing the value of the opportunity she had been given. "Some opportunities are worth every sacrifice," she reflects.

Today, she works for one of the Rotary members, Heidi Brown-Koelble and is training to become a tour consultant.

Mbali says that she will always be grateful to Rotary Am Kap and the Rotary Club of Neuss in Germany for investing in 'a young girl from Khayelitsha' and shaping who she is today.

During the last 15 years, President-Elect Michael Schröder has been deeply involved in the club's scholarship programme, "Our students have become part of our Rotary family with many of them returning to help with our projects. It's a most rewarding programme."



Community members, Rotarians and project partners gather at Idawekwako Old People's Home during the refurbishment project that was completed over three phases between 2024 and 2025.

A Home Renewed

The walls are freshly painted, the ceilings repaired and the bathrooms refurbished. After more than a year of work, the interior of Idawekwako Old People's Home in Marondera has been extensively upgraded through a project undertaken by Rotary club members, churches, schools, businesses and community volunteers.

The Rotary Club of Marondera (D9210) identified the home as a project requiring long-term support and embarked on a refurbishment programme that would eventually span three years. Located in the Dombotombo suburb of Marondera, the home provides accommodation for elderly residents whose needs often extend beyond food and clothing to include safe, comfortable and well-maintained living spaces.

The project was valued at just over US\$15,000 and was completed in three phases between May 2024 and November 2025. Funding came from a variety of sources, including Christmas Carols held in December 2023, a fun day at Watershed School in March 2024 and donations from individual Rotarians. The Community Church played a significant role throughout the project, while the Interact Club of Peterhouse helped fund the second phase. Halsteds added further support through the donation of 28 door handles for

residents' rooms.

Work began in May 2024 with a focus on the roof and ceilings. Damaged ceilings were replaced and volunteers helped clean-up and paint in June. Once preparation work had been completed, attention turned to the dining room, kitchen and women's wing, all of which received a fresh coat of paint.

The second phase ran from September to December 2024. During this period, the men's wing and an external kitchen were painted. Plumbing was repaired and cupboards in the main kitchen were refurbished.

The final phase began in May 2025 and continued through to November. Windows and doors throughout the building were repaired. Bathrooms were refurbished, kitchens were painted and electrical faults were fixed.

Community participation featured in the project from start to finish. Volunteers helped with cleaning and preparation work, while fundraising activities and donations helped sustain progress across the different phases.

The project was undertaken during the terms of three club presidents, Mazwi Shamu, Presten Nyamangara and current president, Veronica Chirombe.



Members of the newly launched Interact Club of Charleston Hill High School contribute to the Rotary Club of Paarl's winter blanket campaign with a sizeable blanket donation. With them (left) is principal Dr Henry Fillies.

Warming Winter

As winter approaches in the Western Cape, community partnerships are helping to bring warmth to those who need it most.

The Rotary Club of Paarl (D9350) and Paarl Toyota launched a blanket collection, which was supported by businesses, people and Interact clubs in the town. Nearly 1,000 blankets were collected and shared among organisations working directly with people in need in the Paarl area.

The newly launched Interact Club of Charleston Hill High School joined the campaign and collected a large amount of blankets.

With some of the donated blankets are Rotarians Marita van der Sluys and Brenda Wynne.





FINDING CONFIDENCE

Standing in front of a room and speaking to a group of adults wasn't something Boitumelo Sithole had planned to do.

The 19-year-old student from the Gauteng Community Education and Training College volunteered to present a session on self-esteem and life skills during a training programme hosted by the Rotary Club of Pretoria Hatfield (D9400) in May. For a young woman who had struggled with a fear of public speaking, it was a significant step.

Boitumelo was one of 18 people who attended two Life Skills Training sessions held on 16 and 23 May. The group included people from the Tshwane Leadership Foundation, Gauteng Community Education and Training College and Asiviklane.

The sessions were designed to provide practical skills that could be applied in everyday life, further education and the workplace. Topics ranged from goal setting and career planning to CV development, interview preparation and communication skills. Discussions also focused on confidence, resilience, self-esteem and personal growth.

While the programme covered a broad range of subjects, Boitumelo's presentation became one of the memorable moments of the two-day training.

She spoke about self-esteem and life skills, sharing her thoughts with the group and demonstrating a confidence that had not always come easily. Her willingness to stand up and contribute was noted by both the facilitators and those



Boitumelo Sithole, a 19-year-old student from the Gauteng Community Education and Training College, presents a session on self-esteem and life skills during a Rotary Club of Pretoria Hatfield (D9400) Life Skills Training programme. Family members attended the session to support her as she overcame a fear of public speaking.

attending the sessions.

The occasion was also a family one. Boitumelo's parents, brothers and aunt attended the training, offering support and encouragement from the audience. Their presence reflected the role families can play in helping young people develop confidence and pursue new opportunities.

The programme also featured entrepreneur guest speakers Piet Mabaso and Stoffel Ralebipi, who shared their personal experiences of building businesses and overcoming challenges. Their presentations focused on perseverance, identifying

opportunities and navigating setbacks.

The training was facilitated by Rotarians Lololo Kopanye, Judith Aguga, Christine Magezi and Goran Despot.

Recognising Boitumelo's commitment and potential, the Pretoria Hatfield club intends to involve her in future Life Skills programmes. For the club, the sessions were another opportunity to bring people together to learn, share experiences and develop skills that can support future educational, personal and employment goals.

Coming up...

JULY 2026

19 JULY - ROTARY CLUB OF STANFORD D9350, Cape Welsh Choir: For details visit the Rotary Club of Stanford Facebook page

25 - 26 JULY - ROTARY CLUB OF FOURWAYS MAIN REEF D9400, Art@TheManor: Art Exhibition | Family Fun Day. An exhibition and sale of artwork by local emerging and professional artists, featuring a special showcase of artwork from local schools. Enjoy a weekend of art, entertainment, and family fun, while supporting a fundraiser dedicated to the preservation and maintenance of the historic Norscot Manor. FREE Entry. Venue: Norscot Manor, 16B Penguin Drive, Fourways, Johannesburg. Contact: Beate +27-82-808-9525

AUGUST 2026

8 AUGUST 2026 - ROTARY CLUB OF PORT SHEPSTONE D9370, Hats & Butterflies Brunch with the Anns. A fundraising brunch in aid of hospice care, featuring guest speaker Charlotte du Plessis. Enjoy live music by SuAmbi and mystery envelope sales, with proceeds supporting hospice services. Cost: R230 per person. Venue: Umthunzi Hotel, Umtentweni. Time: 10h00. Contact: Vanessa +27-82-818-1449.

SEPTEMBER 2026

29 SEPT - 3 OCT 2026 - 7TH ALL AFRICA ROTARY ZONE INSTITUTE. Rotary leaders and members from across Africa will gather for five days of strategic dialogue, leadership development, collaboration. Venue: Kampala, Uganda. Registration: www.africazoneinstitute.org.

JUNE 2027

26-30 JUNE - ROTARY INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION, Barcelona: Registration opens in September 2026. Learn more at www.convention.rotary.org.

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



The blood drive, hosted in partnership with the South African National Blood Service, collected 101 units of blood on 13 June.

Centennial Giving

The queue began forming early and continued throughout the day as East London residents turned out to support a blood drive marking a significant milestone for the Rotary Club of East London (D9370).

Hosted in partnership with the South African National Blood Service and Spargs Superspar Beacon Bay, the campaign challenged the community to donate 100 units of blood in recognition of the club's centenary year.

The event took place at Spargs Superspar Beacon Bay on 13 June and attracted donors from across the city. SANBS medical teams managed the collections while Rotary volunteers assisted at the venue and helped guide donors through the process.

Members of the Interact Club of Hudson Park High School and the Interact Club of St Joseph's were among those supporting the event. The Interactors assisted with donor registration, welcomed visitors and helped ensure the day ran smoothly.

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Craig Thompson at the East London club's blood drive. The target of 100 units was set as part of the club's centennial celebrations.

The blood drive also received support from a number of local businesses and organisations. Following their donation, donors were invited to take part in a Spin the Wheel prize draw.

Prizes were sponsored by Spargs Superspar Beacon Bay, Mr Price Home, Windmill Junction, Pot O' Curry, the Rotary Club of East London Anns, Jade Garden Take-Aways, Jade Garden Fusion Restaurant and VlapaGas GoManzi.

When donations were counted at the end of the day, the campaign had collected 101 units of blood, exceeding the original target set for the event.

www.rotaryafrica.com



Fairways for Good

Sunshine returned to the Garden Route just in time. Only weeks after heavy rainfall swept across the region, golfers arrived in Knysna and surrounding towns for the Rotary Club of Knysna (D9350) 26th annual Charity Golf Tournament.

The tournament is the club's largest fundraiser and a fixture on many golfers' calendars. This year, 170 players travelled from around South Africa to take part. Play took place at five venues. Golfers teed off at Pinnacle Point Golf Club near Mossel Bay, Pezula Golf Club and Championship Course, Simola Golf and Country Estate, Knysna Golf Club and Goose Valley Country Club in Plettenberg Bay.

Many of those taking part were familiar faces. The tournament continues to attract golfers who return year after year, maintaining friendships and traditions that have developed over more than two decades.

Among them were Pierre Rodrigues and Dave Howard, who reached a



Rotary Club of Knysna Golf Event Coordinator George Coon joins 10-year cap recipients Dave Howard and Pierre Rodrigues at Simola Golf and Country Estate.

notable milestone this year. Both golfers qualified for 10-year caps, recognising a decade of participation in the event.

Club President Murro-Wayne Spies described the event as the club's biggest and most impactful fundraiser, explaining that proceeds help determine the scope of projects the club is able to undertake during the coming Rotary year. Community initiatives supported by the club are closely linked to the success of the annual golf weekend.

The event also relies on a wide network of supporters. Advertisers, prize donors, host venues, golf course personnel and players all contribute to its success, alongside club members who spend months planning and coordinating the tournament.

With another successful event completed, planning is already under way for the 2027 tournament.

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When severe storms swept through Worcester on 11 and 12 May, roads were damaged, bridges washed away and communities were left without electricity and water for up to a week.

Worcester Relief

The lights went out first. Then came the rising water. Once the waters subsided, families across the town faced an uncertain few days as they assessed the damage and waited for essential services to be restored.

The Rotary Club of Worcester (D9350) wasted little time in responding. An emergency soup kitchen, coordinated by Rotarian Heloise Beukes, was established to support residents in some of the worst-affected areas. Rotarians and volunteers spent long hours preparing and delivering hot meals to communities in Roodewal, Riverview, OVD and Avian Park. The initiative also supported the Ward 15 food drive.

For many households, a warm meal was more than just food. With power outages stretching over several days, cooking at home simply wasn't possible.

What made the effort particularly significant was that several Rotarians were dealing with storm damage of their own. Some returned to homes without electricity. Others faced repairs and clean-up work. Yet the club's relief operation continued.

As conditions improved, new challenges emerged. Families returning home discovered

waterlogged furniture, damaged belongings and rooms filled with mud and debris. The immediate need for food relief gradually gave way to a demand for practical household support.

The Worcester club expanded its response. Working alongside Worcester Ladies Circle 38, Worcester Round Table 68 and fellow Rotary clubs including Stellenbosch, Claremont and Paarl, members coordinated the collection and distribution of essential supplies.

Food parcels were delivered. Clothing was sorted and distributed. Bedding, furniture and household items found their way to families trying to restore a sense of normality. Relief efforts also included cattle feed, dog and cat food and blankets for pets.

The recovery process is still under way and although the floodwaters have receded and many services have been restored, rebuilding takes time. Homes must be repaired. Possessions need replacing. Families continue to adjust to the impact of the storm.

Throughout that process, the Worcester club has remained involved. The focus has shifted from emergency relief to longer-term recovery, ensuring that support continues where it is needed most.

AFRICA IN BRIEF



The Rotary Club of Worcester (D9350) acquired a collection of books for distribution to primary schools, crèches and old age care facilities across the community. With help from its Interact clubs, the books will be delivered to organisations where access to reading material is often limited. This initiative forms part of the club's ongoing focus on literacy and education, while also providing its Interactors with an opportunity to participate in a community service project.



For 36 years, a single evening has brought together some of Klerksdorp's brightest young minds. The Rotary Club of Klerksdorp (D9370) welcomed Head Boys and Head Girls from local schools to its annual Head Boy and Head Girl Dinner, where learners tackled topics ranging from organised crime and corruption to artificial intelligence, job security and substance abuse in schools. Through short presentations, the young leaders impressed guests with their insight, confidence, humour and honesty



Boxes of milk, packs of toilet rolls

and tins of food filled the entrance hall as members of the EarlyAct Club of Outeniqua Primary prepared for a visit that would take them beyond the classroom and into the heart of their community. Supported by the Rotary Club of George (D9350), the EarlyActors collected 578 toilet rolls, 80 kilograms of oats, 151 boxes of milk and 250 tins of food for the George Night Shelter. The shelter has been operating for more than 30 years and provides



accommodation, meals and ablution facilities for around 135 people each night, while also offering support aimed at rehabilitation and reintegration. In May, 20 EarlyAct members visited the shelter to deliver the supplies and see first-hand how it operates.



As temperatures dropped across Gauteng, the Rotary Club of Benoni Aurora (D9400) distributed 200 blankets to children, adults and elderly residents in communities across the area. The project was coordinated by outgoing Community Services Chairperson Gail Wilson, with support from the Friends of Martin de Porres Community Centre, which assisted with distribution in the Barcelona community, and the Rotary Anns of Benoni Aurora, who distributed blankets in the Protea Park informal settlement. Working through local churches and community organisations, the club helped ensure that blankets reached people most in need during the winter cold.



Representatives of the Rotary Club of Dundee (D9370), Battlefields Primary School and Dundee Pick n Pay gather during the distribution of school shoes to learners. The project grew from the club's Walk for Shoes fundraiser held in January, which attracted additional donations from the community. Dundee Pick n Pay supported the initiative by supplying quality school shoes at a reduced cost. Distribution began in June and, working with local teachers, the club has already provided approximately 330 pairs of shoes to children at local schools. Additional shoes are currently being ordered as some learners have outgrown the sizes originally identified for the project.

The Anns of the Rotary Club of Helderberg (D9350) donated 900 adult pull-on nappies and 500 toothbrushes, valued at R10,000, to Zandvliet Care Facility in Macassar. This facility cares for senior citizens, mental healthcare patients and other residents in its 25-bed transitional care unit. At the delivery of the donation are Rotary Anns Gayl Boon, Carol Vader, Ingrid Edelson and Pauline Brinkworth.



NEW MEMBERS



Tim Makin is a new member of the Rotary Club of Knysna (D9350).



Kim Brink is a new member of the Rotary Club of Rosebank (D9400).



Andre Olivier is a new member of the Rotary Club of Rosebank (D9400).



Hester Davis is a new member of the Rotary Club of Vanderbijlpark (D9400).



Bafia de Wit is a new member of the Rotary Club of Worcester (D9350).

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MISCELLANEOUS

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A large graphic with a blue background. On the left, the text 'Rotary' is followed by the Rotary gear logo, a large white plus sign, and the WhatsApp logo and text 'WhatsApp'. Below this is a QR code. On the right, a woman with glasses and a blue shirt is holding a smartphone. At the bottom, the text reads: 'Follow Rotary International's new WhatsApp channel! Find us in Channels or Updates in the app.'



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ROTARIAN
EVERY
YEAR

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