

JUNE 2026

Rotary

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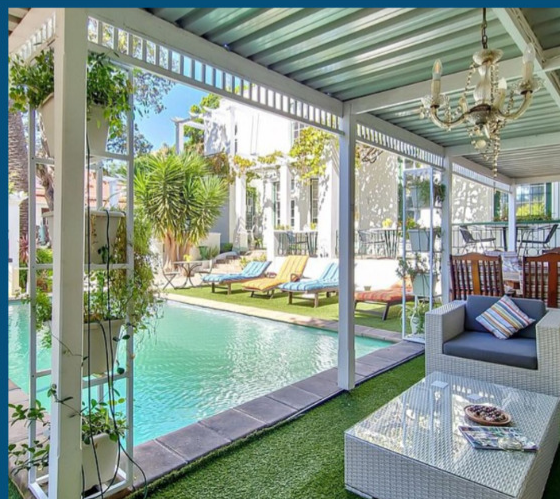
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CLIENT REVIEW



LORETTA FERREIRA RECOMMENDS

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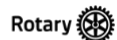
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WELCOME

Sarah van Heerden - Editor in Chief

One of the most remarkable things about Rotary is that no club operates in isolation.

A meeting taking place on a Wednesday evening in East London may seem worlds apart from a breakfast club in Nairobi, a satellite club in Argentina, or a Rotaract project in India. Yet every one of those forms part of something much bigger. Rotary's strength has never rested in individual clubs alone. It is in the extraordinary network created when people across countries, cultures and professions begin learning from one another.

Too often, membership conversations focus only on numbers. How many members joined? How many resigned? How many clubs were chartered? Those figures matter, but they only tell part of the story.

The real question is this: how do people experience Rotary when they walk into our spaces?

Across this month's Membership Insights feature, there is a strong message: People stay where they feel connected, feel seen and feel they belong. That is something every Rotary club can learn from.

One of Rotary's greatest untapped strengths is its internationality. Many people see this as international conventions and travel. Sadly, they are wrong. The true value runs much deeper than that.

Rotary gives clubs access to ideas tested in

real communities across the world. It gives leaders insight into what works elsewhere and nurtures partnerships, fundraising, global grants, friendship exchanges and service projects that would never exist without an international connection.

A club struggling with membership retention in Europe may discover an idea from a club in South America that changes its approach to onboarding. A Rotary club may find project partners because shared conversations created trust first. A Rotarian attending a conference may return home equipped with practical solutions adaptable to their own community. This is where Rotary becomes very powerful.

We work best when ideas move freely between clubs, districts and countries. Service is stronger when members realise they are part of a network of people trying to solve similar challenges in different ways.

There is also something deeply reassuring in realising that clubs everywhere are asking the same questions. How do we attract younger members? How do we remain relevant? How do we create meaningful experiences? How do we build stronger club culture?

No district has all the answers. No club has perfected everything. Yet collectively, Rotary holds an enormous pool of experience, creativity and practical knowledge.

That is why sharing stories matters.



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WE BELIEVE IN PEOPLE

President's message



Let's Continue Building the Momentum

President Francesco Arezzo and Anna Maria Arezzo-Criscione in Chennai.

As my year as president of Rotary International comes to a close, I offer my heartfelt thanks to every member of our global Rotary family. Your kindness, warmth and dedication have changed my life.

During this year, I had the privilege of travelling across our world, from San Francisco, birthplace of the United Nations, to the innovative Rotary clubs of Nigeria. In every place, I saw Rotary members and our partners working side by side to create lasting, positive change, reminding me that our strength lies in shared purpose.

That spirit leads naturally to a simple truth: Rotary is not something we attend, but something we do. We are not spectators. We act, and through that action, we transform our communities and ourselves.

As we continue this work, we must keep our focus on building conditions for peace. Rotary is, at its core, a peace machine. But maintaining that machine requires intention, commitment and steady effort.

That same resolve is needed now as we push



Arezzo planting a tree in Nigeria.



Will the real president please stand up? Arezzo meets his lookalikes in Chennai, India.

toward polio eradication. The final mile is often the hardest, but we cannot falter in our promise to the children of the world.

You have shown that when we Unite for Good, there is no challenge we cannot meet if we stand together. Let us carry this momentum forward with courage, compassion and an unwavering commitment to the safety and prosperity of all.

FRANCESCO AREZZO
President, Rotary International



Wrapping up a visit to Ethiopia, Arezzo attends a Kick Out Polio event with young soccer players.

With Rotary Youth Exchange students and Foundation Trustee Chair Holger Knaack in Brazil.





Foundation Trustee Chair's Message

For the Common Good

Nearly a year ago, I wrote my first message to you as Rotary Foundation trustee chair, encouraging you and all our members to take a fresh look at The Foundation and its unique way of making the world better.

In the months that followed, I invited Rotary members from around the world to share their own stories about projects they have led with Foundation support. They described the impact they witnessed firsthand and how thousands of lives have been transformed.

Now that you have heard about so many successful projects, and the dedicated members and staff who make them possible, I ask that you, too, become part of this success story.

Your donation to The Rotary Foundation already makes a difference. However, I would

like to take it a step further and encourage you to think bigger: consider making a targeted investment in the area most important to you.

Each of us has a particular passion. Yet we all share something in common: we want people around the world to be better off. In Rotary, your vision of a better world can become reality through the work of The Rotary Foundation. Because Rotarians do not just dream, they put their dreams into action. These actions make a real and lasting difference in countless lives.

With your investment in polio vaccinations, you help ensure that no child will ever contract polio again. With your investment in Rotary Peace Centres, you contribute to world peace. By investing in our Annual Fund, you enable effective projects continue to receive sustainable support.

Not every contribution to The Foundation needs to be large. Every gift helps us achieve the lasting impact you have read about this year. The world needs Rotary more than ever. It needs our courage, optimism and commitment to the common good. This is why we need you.

Rotary has a wide range of areas of focus. Whether you choose to support maternal health in Nigeria, literacy programmes in Belize, economic empowerment in communities recovering from hardship or freshwater protection projects, your investment will create a lasting, measurable impact.

Giving to The Foundation is about far more than funding projects. It is also a way to show compassion and empathy for others. As I have said many times before, and believe now more than ever, everything we do opens an opportunity for someone, somewhere.

I am grateful for this opportunity to serve.

HOLGER KNAACK
Foundation Trustee Chair



Malaria
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FELLOWSHIP BROUGHT US TOGETHER – LET'S USE IT TO **END MALARIA**

Rotary Fellowship Month celebrates what happens when people with shared purpose come together across borders. MPI was built on that same idea, connecting Rotarians worldwide who channel goodwill into action.



There's a place for everyone in this fight. Meet us in Taipei, bring us to your club virtually, or visit malariapartnersinternational.org/take-action.

Reimagining Rotary

Through Younger Eyes



Our guest columnist for June, Ruth Mwathi of the Rotaract Club of Langata (D9212, Kenya), is a communications strategist and digital transformation specialist currently serving with Greenpeace Africa. With a career spanning journalism, media, digital marketing, brand strategy and creative partnerships, Ruth is known for translating complex ideas into compelling public narratives and high-impact engagement strategies.

One thing I have noticed recently while engaging with Rotary content online is how quickly our younger members are embracing technology.

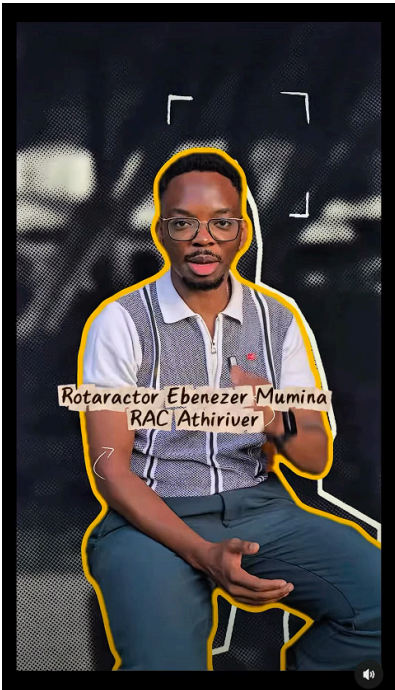
Across our digital platforms, Instagram, LinkedIn, Facebook and even WhatsApp groups, I see Rotaractors creating posters, captions, short videos and voice overs using Artificial Intelligence tools. What once required a graphic designer, a videographer and hours of editing can now be done by a young Rotaractor with a phone and a good idea.

The results are impressive.

A club project can be turned into a short video within minutes. A community story can be summarised into a compelling caption that inspires engagement. Even voice narration for videos can now be generated quickly, helping

clubs share their stories in a more dynamic way.

Recently, I came across a powerful example from our own region. A Rotaractor in District 9212 (Kenya, Ethiopia, Eritrea and South Sudan) produced a short video series about a much-loved annual event, the Sunshine Rally. Using a simple vox pop style, he stops people and asks short questions about the event and what it means to them. The videos are brief, authentic and engaging. Yet they do something very powerful: they make you stop and watch. Through these simple conversations, viewers quickly understand why Rotarians and Rotaractors give their time each year to support and celebrate differently abled



Young members are showing us the way! A Rotaractor in District 9212 with a phone and a good idea, produced a highly engaging series. You can watch it at www.instagram.com/reels/DVXmv8dgua3/

Beyond her professional work, Ruth brings significant expertise to her Rotary club, district and the wider Rotary region, where her skills continue to strengthen storytelling, visibility and strategic engagement initiatives.

children during the Sunshine Rally. It is storytelling in its simplest form. And it works.

For many young people, this kind of digital creativity is simply normal. They are digital natives. Technology is part of how they think, communicate and solve problems, and we, as Rotary members, should pay attention.

Africa is currently the youngest continent in the world, with over 60 percent of the population under the age of 25. These young people are not just the leaders of tomorrow. Many of them are already part of Rotary today, serving through Rotaract and gradually transitioning into Rotary clubs.

If we look closely, we can see that this generation is already helping Rotary evolve. They are showing us new ways to tell our stories, reach wider audiences and engage communities beyond the traditional meeting room. Through digital platforms, a project in Nairobi, Accra or Addis Ababa can inspire someone thousands of kilometres away.

Artificial Intelligence is simply another tool helping them do this faster and more creatively.

This does not replace Rotary's core values of

service, fellowship and integrity. Instead, it strengthens our ability to communicate impact and mobilise people to serve. But there is also an important reality we must acknowledge.

If Rotary does not continue to evolve, even the strongest institutions risk becoming less relevant over time. Organisations remain strong when they understand their audience and adapt how they engage them.

For Rotary in Africa, this means embracing innovation while staying rooted in our mission

of Service Above Self. By encouraging digital storytelling, supporting the use of AI tools and creating spaces where innovation is welcomed, Rotary can position itself as a hub for forward thinking leadership on the continent.

The future of Rotary in Africa will not be built by technology alone. It will be built by people who understand how to use these tools to amplify service, connect communities and inspire the next generation... And in many ways, that future is already here.

Coming up...

JUNE 2026

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 STANFORD D9350, Stanford Penguin Plunge at the riverbank between King and Quick Streets. Gathering from 11.30am, plunge at noon. Bring a generous donation in support of soup kitchens for the elderly and vulnerable children. Dress up and join the fun. Soups, fresh bread and gluhwein for participants, hot chocolate for children. Cash and card payments accepted. Pre payments available. For details visit the Rotary Club of Stanford Facebook page.

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

27 June - ROTARY CLUB OF BENONI VAN RYN D9400, Rodeo Rhythm fundraiser dinner and dance at 81 Pomona Road, Kempton Park. Round up starts at 17h30. Line dancing, dinner, raffles and auctions. Ticket price R300 per person. Please bring a non perishable tin of food for The Pantry. No children under 10. Bookings: Christa on +27-73-105-8397

JULY 2026

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

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



Rotary International President Elect Olayinka Babalola and Rotary International Director Elect Emmanuel Katongole visit South Africa

Rotary Across Borders

From Soweto to Pretoria, from conference halls to diplomatic receptions, Rotary International President Elect Olayinka Babalola's visit to South Africa unfolded as a fast moving programme of conversations about leadership, service and Rotary's growing role across Africa.

Joined by Rotary International Director Elect Emmanuel Katongole, the visit brought together Rotarians, business leaders, diplomats, community organisations and incoming club leaders across Districts 9370 and 9400 during four days of engagements in May.

The visit began on 15 May with the arrival of the Rotary leaders at OR Tambo International Airport, where they were welcomed by Rotary District 9400 Governor Dr Angelica Salomão, District Governor Elect Grace van Zyl, Past District Governor Stella Anyangwe, Rotary Club of Pretoria East president Dr Rita Sonko and Acting Nigerian High Commissioner Ambassador Ajayi.

Later that evening, members of the

diplomatic corps gathered in Pretoria for a dinner attended by African heads of diplomatic missions and United Nations representatives. The event highlighted Rotary's growing engagement with diplomatic and international development networks across the continent.

The following day, Babalola addressed a town hall gathering involving Nigerian professionals living and working in Pretoria, before attending a Rotary Foundation fundraising gala at Silver Lakes Country Club.

The event combined fundraising with membership development and public engagement, bringing together Rotarians, prospective members and community leaders. Seven new Rotarians were inducted during the evening, while more than R230,000 was raised for The Rotary Foundation.

Throughout the gala, Rotary leaders focused strongly on partnership building and leadership development. Babalola encouraged attendees to see Rotary not simply as a service organisation, but as a network capable of

creating meaningful long term impact through collaboration and community leadership.

The South African visit also included a stop in Soweto, where Archbishop Desmond Tutu's former home was officially named the global headquarters of an anti-hunger programme supported through a Rotary grant of more than R1.5 million. The initiative focuses on food security and sustainable community support programmes linked to vulnerable households in Soweto.

Babalola also attended the Business Network International Conference in Johannesburg, where he engaged with business leaders and entrepreneurs about opportunities for partnership with Rotary initiatives across Africa and internationally.

On 17 May, the focus shifted toward Rotary leadership development as Babalola and Katongole addressed incoming Rotary and Rotaract leaders attending the Presidents Elect Learning Seminar in Johannesburg.

More than 130 incoming leaders participated in the programme, which centred on

strengthening clubs, leadership skills and long term community impact.

Participants described the atmosphere as energetic and highly collaborative, with discussions focusing on service, innovation and adapting Rotary for changing communities and younger generations.

"The energy, passion and commitment in the room reminded us that leadership is not about titles," organisers noted following the event. "It is about service, courage and the willingness to create positive change where it matters most."

The visit concluded on 18 May with a courtesy call at the Nigerian High Commission in Pretoria and a radio interview with SABC Channel Africa before Babalola departed South Africa for Nairobi later that week.

For many Rotarians who attended the various engagements, the visit stood out not only for its formal programme but also for the accessibility and presence of Rotary's incoming international leadership during a period of growing momentum across African districts.



Awaiting their arrival are PDG Stella Anyangwe, DG Dr Angelica Salomão, DGE Grace van Zyl President of the Rotary Club of Pretoria East, Dr Rita Sonko.



His Majesty King Letsie III of Lesotho, patron of the Rotary Club of Maloti-Maseru (D9370), receives a token of appreciation from Rotary International President Elect Olayinka Babalola during the Rotary leadership visit to Lesotho in May 2026.

Royal Rotary Visit

Conversations about leadership, service and Rotary's future in Africa unfolded across Lesotho in May as Rotary International President Elect Olayinka Babalola and Rotary International Director Elect Emmanuel Katongole visited District 9370 for a series of engagements with Rotarians, professionals and national leaders.

The visit, which took place from 12 to 14 May, combined formal meetings, cultural visits and discussions focused on growing Rotary's reach and relevance within professional and community spaces in Lesotho.

One of the central themes during the visit was membership growth through professional networks. During meetings with members of the medical profession, Babalola encouraged healthcare professionals to consider

establishing an interest based Rotary club, highlighting the value of bringing together people connected through shared professions and service interests.

The visit also included a press conference where Babalola outlined the purpose of the delegation's time in Lesotho and reflected on Rotary's role in leadership, community service and partnership building across Africa.

Rotaractors formed an important part of the programme, with Babalola and Katongole meeting members from eight Rotaract clubs across Lesotho. Discussions focused on leadership development, youth participation and the role younger generations are playing in shaping Rotary's future on the continent.

The delegation also visited the Morija Museum, one of Lesotho's best known cultural

and historical institutions. The visit provided an opportunity for Rotary leaders to engage with the country's heritage and history during their stay.

A significant moment during the visit was an audience with His Majesty King Letsie III at the Royal Village in Matsieng. The meeting took place in the company of district leadership and formed part of Rotary's longstanding relationship with leadership structures within Lesotho.

Later, Rotary leaders joined Rotarians and

His Majesty at a dinner hosted in honour of the visit. The gathering brought together Rotary members and guests for an evening of fellowship and discussion centred on service, leadership and Rotary's continued growth within the region.

Throughout the visit, district leaders described the engagements as an important opportunity to strengthen relationships across Rotary clubs, Rotaract clubs and professional sectors within Lesotho while highlighting the country's active role within District 9370.



Rotary International President Elect Olayinka Babalola and Rotary International Director Elect Emmanuel Katongole, accompanied by district leaders, visited Rotary club projects in Lesotho during their District 9370 visit in May 2026.



Shereen Michelle Hunter, Rotary International Director Elect Emmanuel Katongole and Azera Cunningham,

The Man Behind the Title

Shereen Michelle Hunter, President Rotary E-Club of Southern Africa D9400

For a few days in May, I had the privilege of spending time with Rotary International Director Elect Emmanuel Katongole during his visit to South Africa.

Many people know Emmanuel as the man behind Cipla Quality Chemical Industries in Uganda, a business leader, but that is not who I want to write about today. I want to write about the man behind the title.

Sometimes life quietly places extraordinary people in front of you, and you realise that true greatness rarely arrives with noise.

On the first day of his visit, Emmanuel sat on a simple plastic chair in Soweto, in the heat of the early afternoon sun, alongside everybody else. He ate chicken mayonnaise and egg mayonnaise sandwiches from a plastic platter

with the rest of us. He spoke to local Rotarians and community members. He really listened. He laughed with us. He engaged with every person as though they were a good friend.

Later that evening, he queued at the buffet station with everyone else, chatting to hotel staff and complete strangers who simply wanted a moment with him. What I saw in every room was not Emmanuel the director-elect, but Emmanuel the human being.

A boy who was once a street vendor, who met a Rotarian who helped him become the man he is today. His story is powerful.

I watched Emmanuel move through rooms with a level of humility that is becoming increasingly rare in leadership today. Believe me, I work with a lot of leaders.

More than being an orator capable of commanding a room with vision, conviction and deep emotional intelligence, Emmanuel knows how to touch people's hearts. For me, his most remarkable quality was something even simpler; Emmanuel has manners.

Across a crowded room, he walked directly over to me with the warmest smile and gave me a hug. "Shereen," he said, remembering my name despite the hundreds of people he had met throughout the trip, "I just want to say thank you so much for the way you served us yesterday and for everything you are doing for Rotary. We really appreciated it. You did good work."

Then we laughed together about moments from the visit and, before walking away, he stood between myself and Azera Cunningham, our executive club secretary, and said, "Come girls, let's take a photo together."

It was not a formal speech, just a sincere thank you.

Afterwards, I found myself thinking: what does it actually cost to say thank you? Absolutely nothing. Yet so few people do it well.

Leadership is often mistaken for status, power, wealth, titles or influence, but the greatest leaders I have encountered all seem to possess the same ability: they know how to work with people.

That is Emmanuel Katongole. Accessible. Present. Grounded.

A man willing to hand out his personal cellphone number to Rotarians across the world because he genuinely wants to help people serve better.

Perhaps that is why, in a single room that evening, ordinary Rotarians collectively raised close to a million rand for The Rotary Foundation in under an hour. That is the power and capacity that good leadership can bring to Rotary.

People do want to serve. People do want to give. People want to belong to something meaningful.

Most importantly, people want to follow leaders who know how to lead from the front and who genuinely care about the people supporting them.

Dearest Emmanuel,

You won my heart on this little South African road trip. It will be an absolute privilege to serve alongside you in the year ahead.

This world needs more leaders like you. Not because of the businesses you have built, but because of the humanity you carry into every room you enter.

You are worthy of the responsibility of helping lead Rotarians globally.

SHARE YOUR STORY *in Rotary Africa*

EMAIL NOW

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Subscription rates from 1st July 2026

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DEADLINE

The cut-off date for membership updates for the July to December 2026 billing period is the 20th June 2026.

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STRONGER TOGETHER:

Membership Insights

Every Rotary club faces its own challenges when it comes to membership, engagement and club culture. Across the Rotary world, clubs are finding practical, creative and often deeply human ways to build stronger connections, create meaningful service opportunities and remind people why Rotary matters. In this section, Rotary Africa shares ideas, experiences and lessons from clubs and leaders around the world, not as a blueprint, but as inspiration. When clubs learn from one another, share openly and adapt good ideas to their own communities, Rotary becomes stronger together.

Let Them Know You Care

Three ways to show new members they matter

Jeff Stefek, president of the Rotary Club of Pflugerville, Texas, has seen his club grow by 50 percent since joining in 2010. He says this is because the club's leaders focus not only on attracting new members but also on making them want to stay.

"It's something that's top of mind. We bring it up on a weekly or biweekly basis," Stefek says. "Our longer standing members are always looking for opportunities to make sure everyone feels included and engaged."

If a club is trying to grow, much of the conversation naturally focuses on attracting new members. But helping those new arrivals feel welcome, involved and genuinely part of the Rotary family is equally important. Rotary research suggests many clubs are still falling short in this area. Only 72 percent of new members surveyed recently said they had a mentor to help them settle in, with even lower rates reported by women and members older than 70. Only 50 percent said their club

experience met their expectations.

To turn new members into long term members, the club focuses strongly on friendship. “We’re not just here to serve, we’re here to connect,” says club membership chair Barbara Najera. “When members become your friends, when you choose to spend time with those people in or outside of your club, retention kind of takes care of itself.”

Here are a few of the club’s approaches to welcoming new members.

1. Get together more and make it enjoyable

The Pflugerville club creates regular opportunities for members to spend time together outside formal meetings.

“We’re part of a community of people that share the same passion, and you don’t learn that if you’re just sitting in a chair every Wednesday listening to different speakers,” Najera says. “You often learn it outside of meetings, whether you’re getting your hands dirty or doing socials or fundraisers.”

Stefek and the club’s social chair schedule a service activity every month and a social event at least every second month. Activities have included a pool party, a tapas cooking class and an escape room.

“At these events, you’re able to engage one on one, find out what’s going on in members’ lives and really develop those relationships,” Stefek says.

The gatherings also give members opportunities to stay connected even when they miss a meeting.

2. Standardise systems, but keep it personal

The Pflugerville club has developed a set of best practices for introducing and orientating new members, with every member encouraged to take responsibility for making visitors feel welcome.

“If you walk through the door as a new member and we’ve never met you, you will immediately be bombarded with attention to make sure you feel included in that room,” Stefek says. “It’s a job for every member of our club.”

Club leaders also created a series of follow up emails sent to visitors after each meeting they attend. Before induction, Najera spends time explaining the different ways members can become involved in the club.

“I tell them what all our club’s committees do, what the responsibilities are, and the last question I ask is, ‘Which of these do you feel most connected to, do you want to be a part of?’” she says. “I will not go to bed at the end of that day without connecting them to those committees’ chairs.”

3. Make onboarding interactive

Many clubs provide new members with orientation activities such as meeting other members, serving as a greeter or registering for a My Rotary account. The Pflugerville club introduced a more interactive approach through a new member bingo card.

The card includes 40 different activities. Members only need to complete 10, but prizes can be won by completing different bingo combinations.

“That’s how we keep them engaged,” Najera says. “By the end of it, they’ve hopefully connected with past presidents and Paul Harris Society members, visited other clubs in our district and gone to district events.”

Ultimately, Najera believes new members need to feel that they matter. “Never let somebody sit by themselves. Never let somebody walk into a room and not have somebody talking to them,” she says. “Because we all want to belong, right? We all want to be a part of something.”

- ETELKA LEHOCZKY

Membership Insights

Finding Relevance

Leonardo Gonzalo Mangoldt, governor of Rotary District 4851 (Argentina), shares lessons he has learnt to restore club relevance, support small and emerging clubs, and create meaningful service opportunities that strengthen community engagement.

At the beginning of my term as governor, I realised that the main challenge in my district was not simply increasing membership. The real challenge was restoring Rotary's relevance in our communities.

Our district covers ten provinces in Argentina and includes very different social realities: large cities, small towns, rural areas and remote mountain regions. In many places, Rotary had been present for decades, but over time some clubs had become insular, ageing and resistant to change. In other communities, Rotary had disappeared altogether.

I observed something that is likely happening in many parts of the world. Clubs were trying to solve the membership problem by finding people to fill chairs at meetings. But communities are not looking for meetings, they are looking for meaningful ways to serve and belong.

That reflection changed the question for our leadership team. "How do we recruit more members?" became, instead, "How do we create more opportunities for service and belonging?"

This led us to take a different approach. We started visiting cities without Rotary clubs and organising open informational gatherings with young professionals, teachers, entrepreneurs



and community leaders. In many cases, we discovered that the issue was not a lack of interest in Rotary, but a lack of awareness. When people understood Rotary's purpose and its impact, the response was immediate.

At the same time, we discovered small clubs of three or four members operating as satellite clubs that were on the verge of collapse. For years, the tendency had been to keep these tiny groups alive. Instead of looking at these small groups as a failure, we looked at them as an opportunity. We sought to give each a new identity that would create service opportunities and attract people who wanted to join.

Changing the established narrative was essential; the community saw the birth of something new and interesting, rather than the loss of a club.

We also learned that sometimes Rotary already exists outside Rotary. After meeting with health and education professionals, we realised they already had a network and a desire for service. All they needed was to be brought together as a Rotary club. This led to the creation of our first issue-based e-club.

For very small clubs, we worked to set concrete membership goals and provide close

district support.

Once a club has visible projects and its board feels supported, motivation within the club membership returns. Membership does not grow through weekly meeting attendance, it grows around meaningful impact. Even conflict sometimes presents opportunities. In one instance, a long standing clash of viewpoints led us to create a new club, allowing new leaders to emerge and expanding our presence in the community instead of forcing a solution

on the “problem”.

So far, we have formed eight new Rotary clubs and three Interact clubs. Rotary has returned to communities where it no longer existed.

The most important lesson was not numbers. It was this: communities have a deep desire for service. People want to help, participate and belong to something meaningful.

When Rotary offers an open and welcoming place to do that, membership grows naturally.



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Rotary Peace Education Series (ROPES)

26-28 June 2026

Delivered by the Rotary Peace Centre, School of Political Science and International Studies
at The University of Queensland, St Lucia (Australia)

Overview

The Rotary Peace Education Series (ROPES) is a brand-new education programme, exclusively designed for Rotarians (and their families and friends) and Rotary staff who are interested in deepening their knowledge of peacebuilding. Participants gain an advanced understanding of the cutting-edge research on global conflict trends, the new challenges to world peace, the role of gender and youth in conflict resolution, and the visual dimensions of war and peace. This in-person, three full-day education series is led by the Rotary Peace Centre at The University of Queensland in close collaboration with Rotary International. This is a unique opportunity to directly learn from and engage with some of the world's leading peace and conflict resolution experts and award-winning teachers.

What you'll learn

- Understand current global conflict trends and the new challenges to world peace.
- Fathom the importance of gender and youth in post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding.
- Understand the role that images play in both, sustaining war and promoting peace.

Who should attend

Rotarians (and their families and friends) and Rotary staff who are keen to gain an in-depth understanding of global trends in violent conflicts, current challenges to peacebuilding, the role of gender and youth in conflict resolution processes, and the visual dimensions of war and peace. Rotarians from around the world and others with a keen interest in this area are invited to participate.



**Click or scan to register
and learn more about the
programme**

Certificate and Accreditation

Participants who successfully complete the course will receive a Certificate of Completion, signed by both Rotary International and the UQ Rotary Peace Centre.

For further details contact:

School of Political Science and International
Studies, Rotary Peace Centre

Email: rotarypeacecentre@uq.edu.au



Delegates from across southern Africa during the Rotary District 9370 Conference 2026 hosted by the Rotary Club of East London (D9370).

District 9370 Together

Conversations filled the halls long before the formal programme began as Rotarians from across southern Africa arrived in East London for the Rotary District 9370 Conference 2026.

Hosted by the Rotary Club of East London (D9370) during the club's centenary year, the conference brought together delegates for several days of presentations, fellowship and discussion centred on leadership, service and community impact.

From registration onward, the atmosphere reflected both reunion and renewal. Long standing friendships were rekindled while first time attendees and younger members moved easily into the flow of the gathering. Meals, informal conversations and evening events formed as much a part of the experience as the formal sessions themselves.

The conference programme opened with the

flag ceremony, invocation and In Memoriam tribute. This was followed by the official welcome to delegates and the RI President's Personal Representative, Director Elect Emmanuel Katongole.

Across the following days, speakers covered topics ranging from business leadership and public image to youth development and international exchange. Jonathan Goldberg shared reflections from a fireside conversation with Richard Branson, while AD Birrell delivered a presentation that prompted discussion among delegates throughout the conference.

Community projects featured strongly in the programme. Members heard about the Rotary Club of St Francis Bay's Wine on Water fundraiser and the ongoing work of ROMEX, the Rotary Medical Exchange programme,

presented by Gordon Thompson. Belinda Tudge addressed delegates on the Water and Sanitation Global Grant, while Assistant Governor Ash Maharaj spoke about the International Friendship Exchange programme.

Youth programmes remained a consistent thread through the conference. Sr Patricia Sbusisiwe presented on EarlyAct, Craig Thompson spoke on Interact and Rotaractor Yashvir Soorjee highlighted the role and growth of Rotaract within the district.

Rotary Youth Exchange student Troy Champion reflected on his exchange in Germany, while motivational speaker Kim van Kets delivered one of the conference's most popular presentations.

Public image and visibility also formed part of the discussion, with Ashley Venter encouraging clubs to strengthen their social media presence and community engagement. Colin Hegter introduced delegates to the "Global Domino Challenge", while Rolf Werner shared the Rotary Club of East London's chess sponsorship initiatives.

At the Celebration of Africa evening, delegates embraced music, dress and traditions from across the continent. The Governor's Banquet later brought the formal proceedings to a close, with awards, recognitions and the chartering of the Rotaract Club of Buffalo City. District Governor Elect Dr Melonie Gobel was also inducted during the evening.

A significant moment during the conference was the celebration of 100 years of the Rotary Club of East London, marking a century of Rotary service in the city.

District Governor Elect Dr Melonie Gobel after her induction at the Governor's Banquet.



Motivational speaker and author Kim van Kets with RI Director Elect Emmanuel Katongole during the Rotary District 9370 Conference.





With two of the guests are Jackie van Waveren and President Zander Lintvelt.



Above and left: Volunteers and community members during the record breaking pancake event organised in partnership with local organisations and sponsors.

Flippin' Record Breaker

Music, volunteers and thousands of pancakes filled the Vaal triangle as local organisations and businesses gathered to set a new Guinness World Record.

The Rotary Club of Vanderbijlpark (D9400) joined the large scale community initiative organised by the Golden Chamber of Commerce, Tsogo Sun Emerald Resort and Casino and a network of sponsors and volunteers. Together, participants baked 29,600 pancakes within eight hours, establishing a new Guinness World Record during what organisers described as the largest event yet held in the Vaal.

Members of the Vanderbijlpark club were responsible for distributing filled pancakes to community organisations and residents

attending the event. Assistant Governor Jackie van Waveren and President Zander Lintvelt were among those involved in the distribution effort, supported by volunteers throughout the day.

More than 25,000 pancakes were distributed during the event. Transport was arranged for residents from old age homes and various organisations so they could attend and enjoy meals on site.

The event also included live performances by South African musicians, drawing approximately 7,000 attendees over the course of the day. Guinness World Records judge and international representative Mbali Nkosi officially handed over the award following the successful completion of the challenge.



Iris Canham, Logie Naidoo and Vanessa Rana delivering food hampers during the Rotary E-Club of South Africa One (D9370) child wellbeing initiative.

Small Acts Matter

Food hampers packed with noodles, biscuits and mahewu made their way into Early Childhood Development Centres and vulnerable households as members of the Rotary E-Club of South Africa One (D9370) spent May focusing on child wellbeing and nutrition.

The initiative formed part of the club's activities linked to Child Protection Month, highlighting the role that nutrition, dignity and care play in the healthy development of children. Members visited communities where food insecurity remains a daily challenge, delivering hampers and spending time with children and caregivers.

The project followed an earlier environmental initiative organised by the club during April. Through a Virtual Plant Based Dinner Challenge, Rotarians and supporters prepared and shared plant based meals, encouraging discussion around sustainability and climate awareness. The event showed how small changes in everyday habits can

contribute toward reducing environmental impact while creating shared conversations across communities.

Together, the two initiatives reflected a broader focus on practical action at community level, linking environmental responsibility with social wellbeing.

"As Rotarians, we aren't always be able to change the world overnight, but through small, intentional acts of kindness and responsibility, we can help shape a healthier, safer and more sustainable future," said Rotarian Iris Canham.

Club members involved in the outreach project included Iris Canham, Logie Naidoo, Vanessa Rana and Selvie Gounder, who participated in food distributions and follow up activities connected to the virtual meal initiative.

The Rotary E-Club of South Africa One used both projects to encourage participation beyond traditional club activities, combining online engagement with direct community support during April and May.



Sidwon and Sarita Sheldon waiting with Kimsay and Joshlin Engelbrecht for further eye examinations during the Rotary Club of Riebeeck Valley's Sight for the Future initiative.

Hope Through Vision

A classroom chalkboard became clearer for dozens of young learners in the Riebeeck Valley after a Rotary eyesight campaign identified children struggling with undiagnosed vision problems.

The Rotary Club of Riebeeck Valley (D9350) launched its Sight for the Future campaign last year, offering free eyesight screenings to Grade 1 and Grade 5 learners at three schools. Of the 406 children tested, 41 needed spectacles.

During the screenings, educators reported that three children required urgent medical attention. Two of them, aged six and 12, were diagnosed with severe cataracts.

"This really struck a chord with us," said Rotary member Gary Lindhorst.

The club approached Frederik Jansen of the Rotary Club of Melkbosstrand (D9350), who helped arrange free cataract procedures for the children. On 17 April, the families travelled for further examinations, accompanied by Rotary members who also assisted with transport and meals during the long hospital visits.

One learner, Sidwon, returned for additional

testing later in April, with surgery planned for a later stage. Another learner, Kimsay, was scheduled for surgery on both eyes in June following specialist consultations.

The campaign has already started changing daily classroom experiences for learners whose vision difficulties previously went unnoticed.

Educators have reported positive progress among the learners who had previously appeared distracted or restless in class and were struggling simply because they could not follow lessons properly.

The initiative also extended into the wider community. On 23 April, optometrist Frederik Jansen from Jansen and Vorster addressed residents in Riebeeck Kasteel during a community eye care awareness evening organised alongside the project.

The Rotary Club of Riebeeck Valley will continue annual screenings for Grade 1 and Grade 5 learners to ensure children receive early intervention where vision problems are detected. The project is supported through local fundraising and community partnerships.

The southern blue headed agama featured in the artwork created by Warren Cary for the 2026 Rotary K2C Cycle Tour.

Warren Cary
COLLECTORS EDITION



Cycling For Conservation

What began as a local cycling fundraiser has grown into one of Hoedspruit's most recognisable annual events, combining conservation, community support and a distinctly Lowveld identity.

The Rotary Club of Hoedspruit (D9400) recently marked a milestone with the 10th edition of the Rotary K2C Cycle Tour, an event that continues to draw cyclists and supporters from across the region. Held through the Timbavati, Thornybush and Kapama areas, the tour has become closely associated with local wildlife, conservation awareness and community initiatives.

Funds raised through the event support conservation and social development projects in the area, including anti-poaching and environmental programmes. Over the years, the event has developed a strong identity built around local wildlife artwork created by Hoedspruit artist Warren Cary. Each year features a different species linked to the region, with previous designs including the dung beetle and pangolin.

The 2025 edition featured the southern

yellow billed hornbill, while attention has already shifted to the 2026 event and its latest featured species, the southern blue headed agama, known locally as the bloukopp koggelmander. The reptile appears across the newly unveiled cycling apparel and promotional material for the upcoming tour.

Designer and curator Stephanie Hawkins-Mollett worked alongside Cary on the 2026 visual identity, with the agama artwork forming part of the event's collector edition cycling kit. The launch of the design accompanied growing anticipation for the next edition of the tour, scheduled for 20 June 2026.

The event continues to attract both local and visiting riders, with organisers noting growing participation over recent years. The 2026 edition will accommodate 120 riders across the 100 kilometre route, with e-bikes permitted for the event.

Rotary members and organisers say the tour remains rooted in its original purpose of supporting conservation and community based initiatives while bringing people together through a shared experience in the Lowveld.



Riders arrived in Cape Town ahead of the Cape Town Cycle Tour following the Trans Karoo Spirit Ride.

Karoo Spirit Ride

The road stretched ahead in long empty ribbons as cyclists rolled out of Clarens under wide Free State skies, beginning a journey that would take them across four provinces, through mountain passes and Karoo towns, and eventually all the way to Cape Town.

For the group of 16 Rotarians, endurance cyclists and supporters taking part in the Trans Karoo Spirit Ride, the journey became about far more than distance. Over nearly 1,000 kilometres, the ride unfolded as a moving portrait of South Africa seen at bicycle pace, where wildlife, weather, landscapes and roadside encounters shaped the experience day by day.

Organised as a fundraising initiative by the Rotary clubs of Mtunzini and Empangeni (D9370), the ride supported various community projects.

The route to Cape Town began in Clarens and passed through Ladybrand, Aliwal North, Burgersdorp, Cradock, Graaff-Reinet, Willowmore and Oudtshoorn.

Along the way, the changing landscapes became part of the story itself. Riders described green Free State hills giving way to the open stillness of the Karoo, with springbok, kudu, black wildebeest and blue cranes regularly visible beside the road. Meiringspoort Pass, with its towering cliffs and shaded bends,

became one of the defining stretches of the journey.

Yet it was often the people encountered along the route who left the deepest impression. In Aliwal North, businesses provided repairs and mechanical support and a tyre company in Graaff-Reinet opened on a Sunday afternoon after one of the support vehicles suffered a major blowout. Somewhere between Graaff-Reinet and Willowmore, a farmer quietly filled a support vehicle with fuel and refused payment when he learnt the group was raising funds for Rotary club community projects.

For Gordon Reid, the ride was a personal journey shaped by endurance sport, recovery and service. “This journey was never just about cycling,” he wrote. “It was Service Above Self, lived out on dusty roads and in quiet towns.”

Participants in the Trans Karoo Spirit Ride during the journey from Clarens to Cape Town. Cyclists crossed the Karoo during the nearly 1,000 kilometre endurance ride arranged by the Rotary Clubs of Mtunzini and Empangeni (D9370). The ride raised funds for a number of Rotary club projects, spanning from education to caring for the elderly.





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Members of the Outeniqua Primary EarlyAct club during their visit to Môreson Child and Youth Care Centre in George, where learners delivered donated fruit collected with support from parents and the school community.

Fruit for Môreson

Boxes of fruit filled the hands of learners from Outeniqua Primary School as members of the school's EarlyAct club arrived at Môreson Child and Youth Care Centre in George for their latest outreach visit.

The EarlyAct programme, supported by the Rotary Club of George (D9350), encourages primary school learners to take part in service activities within their communities. At Outeniqua Primary, the club forms part of the school's broader focus on citizenship and community involvement.

"We've walked a long way with the children at Môreson Child and Youth Care Centre," said Danielle Barnard, teacher and EarlyAct coordinator at Outeniqua Primary. "We wanted to again do something special with these children."

Learners and parents collected fruit donations ahead of the visit, with around 14 EarlyActors taking part in the handover on 24 April 2026. After delivering the donations, the learners spent time playing with preschool children at the centre.

Môreson Child and Youth Care Centre traces its history back to 1917 and currently provides care for approximately 100 children between the ages of three and 18. Based in Denneoord, George, the centre accommodates children placed there by court order, many of whom come from backgrounds involving neglect or abuse.

Children are placed in one of eight residential houses and a multidisciplinary team supports their physical, emotional, social and educational needs.

AFRICA IN BRIEF



Tiny jerseys, knitted beanies and baby blankets filled donation bags as members of the Anns of the Rotary Club of Helderberg (D9350) continued their long running support of Mama Themba, an organisation that prepares starter packs for new mothers and their babies. The donation included handmade items produced by Rotary Anns and volunteer knitters from the local community, many of whom have supported the initiative over several years. With Rotary Ann Ingrid Edelson is volunteer knitter Dot van den Berg at the handover of knitted items prepared for newborn care packs.



Three BiliCare screening machines donated by the Rotary Club of Worcester (D9350) in partnership with the FNB Foundation are helping healthcare workers identify neonatal jaundice earlier and more efficiently in newborn babies across the Worcester region. The equipment uses non invasive transcutaneous bilirubin technology, allowing infants to be screened quickly and painlessly without blood samples. The machines will support healthcare services in Rawsonville, Touws River, De Doorns and Overhex, where access to specialist hospital services can be limited. Rotary members said the project reflects the value of partnerships focused on improving healthcare access and early intervention within local communities.



Three decades after meeting as teenagers during a Rotary Youth Exchange in Brazil, friendships formed through the programme continue to connect two families across continents. Anne Soldat, née Brook, travelled to Brazil nearly 30 years ago as a long term exchange student sponsored by the Rotary Club of Empangeni (D9370). While attending Objetivo High School in Avare, she became close friends with Aninha Americo Gomes and Eduardo Grassi, friendships that continued long after the exchange year ended. In 2025, Anne and her family travelled to Brazil to reconnect with their friends and families. This year, Eduardo and Aninha visited Empangeni, where they stayed with Anne and her family during their South African holiday. During the visit, Aninha presented her club banner to Rotary Club of Empangeni president Andrew Killick and thanked Rotary for creating opportunities that led to lifelong friendships through the Youth Exchange programme. Photographs taken nearly 30 years apart show Anne, Eduardo and Aninha reunited decades after first meeting as exchange students.



Welcome new members and share achievements here. Email
photos and details to rotaryafrica@mweb.co.za

Members of the Rotary Club of Haenertsburg (D9400) remember past president Keith Patrick, who passed away on 19 April 2026. Inducted into the club in 2013, Keith was recognised with a Paul Harris Recognition in 2023 for his dedication and service. He is remembered for his steady leadership, humility and the warmth he brought to the club and community.



Hand-knitted and crocheted blankets made by volunteers from Somerset West were delivered to the Zandvliet Care Facility in Macassar through the Anns of the Rotary Club of Helderberg (D9350). The blankets formed part of an ongoing community support initiative assisting local care facilities and vulnerable residents. With Zandvliet caregiver Sunet Adams are Ingrid Edelson and caregiver Karen Faro during the handover of the donated blankets.

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