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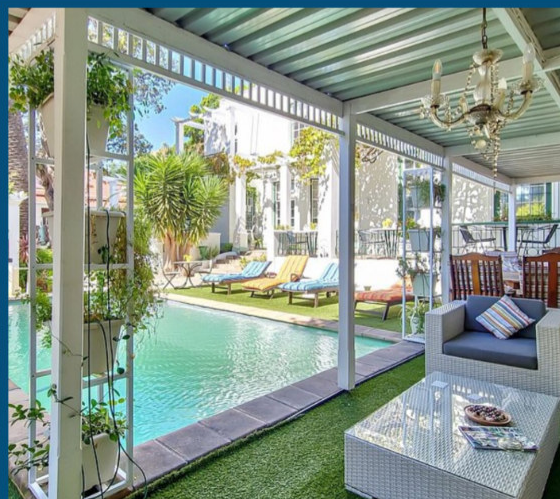
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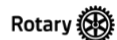
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WELCOME

Sarah van Heerden - Editor in Chief

Every club says they want new members, but very few stop to think about what it feels like to walk into a Rotary meeting for the first time.

Not as a Rotarian, as a stranger. We need to remember what it is like to attend a meeting for the first time.

You arrive a little unsure. Maybe someone invited you, maybe you reached out yourself. Either way, you don't quite know what you're walking into. You're scanning the room, trying to figure out where to go, who to speak to, whether you're early or already behind.

Everyone else looks settled. Comfortable. They know where to sit, who's who, what comes next. There's an ease in the room that only comes with time. Then the meeting starts.

It moves quickly. Names are mentioned, roles are referenced, acronyms (so many, many acronyms) whizz through the air. For the people in the room, it all makes sense. For someone new, it takes effort just to keep up, to stay interested.

There are introductions, a few handshakes, a welcome and maybe a short conversation before or after. Sometimes it's warm and easy. Sometimes it's brief and polite. The difference is small, but it matters. People can tell when they're being included and when they're simply being acknowledged.

At some point, the focus shifts to projects

and this is usually where things become clearer, where the interest starts to grow. A story is shared or an activity is mentioned. Something real, something that happened outside the meeting room and for a moment, the structure falls away and the purpose comes through. That is the moment a visitor pays attention. Not to the meeting itself, but to what sits behind it and almost without thinking, they ask themselves a simple question: *Do I see myself in this?*

It's not about understanding everything. It's about recognising something, a role they could play or a way they could contribute and the reason they want to come back. However, if that link isn't there, it doesn't quite land and they don't return.

Clubs often talk about attracting new members as if the challenge is getting people through the door. In many cases, that part is already happening. People are curious and are open to the idea of being involved, but there needs to be a spark to ignite the passion and purpose.

That first visit is not about explaining Rotary. It's about making it feel accessible, understandable and real in that moment. Most visitors are not looking for perfection. They are looking for a way in and whether they find it or not is often decided long before the meeting ends.



President's message

Follow the Youth!

Shoki Wafula did not know what to expect when he was forced to leave his birth country of Uganda for South Africa. What he found was a Rotary community that welcomed him with warmth and friendship. That experience inspired him to help create a Rotaract e-club where young leaders from around the world could connect, develop their skills and serve together.

Today, that community includes members across multiple continents who collaborate on leadership development, peacebuilding and service initiatives. For Wafula, the experience reinforced the lesson that meaningful service begins with people who feel connected, valued and empowered to lead.

His story reminds us why Youth Service Month is so important. Through Rotaract and programmes like Rotary Youth Exchange, young people build leadership skills, develop global understanding and discover the impact they can make through service.

Rotary's Action Plan calls on us to enhance participant engagement. At its heart, that goal asks a simple question: How can we ensure that

participation in Rotary is meaningful and fulfilling for everyone? Youth programmes and Rotaract provide a powerful answer.

When clubs mentor Rotaractors, host exchange students, or support youth leadership initiatives, they create opportunities for members to share their experience in ways that feel personal and rewarding. These connections deepen members' sense of purpose and strengthen the bonds within our Rotary family.

They also create lasting pathways into Rotary. Thousands of young people complete Rotary programmes each year and they carry those experiences with them throughout their lives. Many remain eager to stay connected.

Organisations such as Rotex International, an association of former Youth Exchange students, help Rotary programme alumni continue serving as mentors, leaders and advocates for our youth programmes. As Rotex co-founder Hans Lee wrote in a recent reflection on Youth Exchange alumni, "exchange doesn't end when you return home."

When we welcome these young leaders into our clubs and activities, we strengthen the continuity of Rotary across generations.

During Youth Service Month, I hope every Rotary club reflects on how youth programmes can enhance engagement for new and longtime members. Collaborate on service projects and invite youth voices into your planning and decision-making.

Rotary's message to the world is that we can Unite for Good. Youth programmes show us how that happens in practice - when generations come together, share ideas and work side by side in service.

When we invest in young people, we are not only shaping future leaders. We are building a stronger, more connected Rotary today.

FRANCESCO AREZZO
President, Rotary International



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Awarded to Rotaract-led
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Foundation Trustee Chair's Message

A shot at the future

Our largest programme at The Rotary Foundation is PolioPlus, followed by a significant new initiative called the Rotary Healthy Communities Challenge, which emerged from the first Programmes of Scale initiative in Zambia. Through this work, we are combating malaria, pneumonia and diarrhoea diseases, the three leading killers of children under 5 in Africa.

A healthy child still needs an education and education is where futures are built.

Rotary is finding ways to invest in the next generation through partnerships and creative approaches. Johan Denolf, of the Rotary Club Damme, Belgium and Nirmal Rijal, of the Rotary Club of Kathmandu Mid-Town, Nepal, share one remarkable example:

In the mountains of Nepal, the children of Melamchi Ghyang village had no school. In 1985, a teacher named Purna Gautam set out to change that, founding a school on the

promise that no child would ever be turned away. For many girls and boys, it became a lifeline against threats such as child labour, early marriage and human trafficking.

In 1999, Hilde Kuypers, a Belgian humanitarian, was so moved by Gautam's mission that she founded KetaKeti, a nonprofit, to support it. KetaKeti and the Rotary Club of Damme built a partnership while the club helped the community recover from a 2015 earthquake.

In 2024, the Rotary Club of Damme, working with the Rotary Club of Kathmandu Mid-Town and 15 clubs from Belgium and Germany (with support from District 2130) united around a \$175,000 global grant.

The project brought solar energy to the school, eliminated dependence on firewood for cooking, powered a medical post and launched reforestation and environmental education.

By 2025, enrolment had climbed to 440 students. Rotary clubs committed to three years of teacher salary contributions. By 2027, the school aims to be self-sustaining through an alumni fund, matched dollar-for-dollar by KetaKeti Belgium. What began as one teacher's promise has become a story of global friendship and the power of education.

Through a Rotary Foundation global grant, hundreds of Nepalese children now have a genuine shot at the future they deserve. Most remarkable: The school's alumni are now helping to secure that future for the next generation. This is the sustainable, generational impact Rotary endeavours to create.

There are countless such stories waiting to happen. With your commitment and The Rotary Foundation behind you, you can be part of one.

HOLGER KNAACK
Foundation Trustee Chair



Want to Charter New Rotary Clubs? **Time Matters!**

By PDG Nze Anizor, Rotary Membership
Coordinator, Zone 22, Region 27

My Rotary club meets at lunchtime, 12:30pm, for about 90 minutes each week. The club currently has 105 members.

When I joined 26 years ago, two other Rotary clubs met close to my office. I could walk to either meeting. Yet I chose to join a club that met far from my office. To attend the meeting, I had to drive a considerable distance from work and back.

Why did I leave the two clubs near my office to join one farther away? They met in the evening, while the Rotary Club of Trans Amadi is a lunchtime club. I did not want to join a Rotary club that met at night.

Most of our members are in a similar situation. They prefer to meet during the day so they can go straight home after work.

Globally, only about 7% of Rotary clubs

meet for breakfast, while about 26% meet at lunchtime. Imagine how many people cannot join Rotary because no club schedule suits them.

To determine whether your city has enough Rotary clubs, ask how many breakfast or lunch clubs it has. Often, the answer is zero.

As we promote flexible club models, let us not forget that for every club that meets at night, there could be one that meets in the afternoon and another early in the morning. Rotarians can leave the office at lunchtime, attend their meeting, share a meal with friends and return to work. Or they can start the day at a morning meeting, share breakfast with friends and then head off to work or other commitments.

When we open our minds to more

possibilities, we begin to see the many people who cannot join us simply because we have not created the right options. Creating new clubs remains one of the most effective tools for achieving our strategic priorities.

Everyone wins when Rotary grows!

PDG Nze is the latest of our guest columnists. Is there a topic you want to learn more about or a Rotary member you find inspiring? Please email your suggestions to rotaryafrica@mweb.co.za.



Coming up...

MAY 2026

27 May - ROTARY CLUB OF PIETERMARITZBURG AZALEA, 30th Annual Golf Day @ Victoria Country Club: Fourball registration at 9am. Sponsorship opportunities available, including putting green at R5,000 and tee boxes or greens at R1,000 each. Contact Trudy Stegen on 082 901 1326 or stegenpk@telkomsa.net

JUNE 2026

13-17 June - ROTARY INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION, Taipei, Taiwan: Join fellow changemakers from around the world to share innovative projects, exchange best practices and form enduring friendships.

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

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

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

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



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Why Younger Leaders Join Rotary and Why They Stay

By Rex IP Onameh, Rotary and
Rotaract Clubs of Blouberg, D9350

Across many Rotary conversations today, membership growth and generational balance are common themes. A frequent question is: how do we attract younger leaders? Perhaps the more important question is, once they join, why do they stay?

From my experience working closely with members of both Rotary and Rotaract clubs, younger leaders are not looking for titles. They are looking for meaning. They want to be part of something bigger than themselves. They want to see impact and be part of it, not simply hear about it.

Younger professionals are typically drawn to three key things: purpose, connection and growth.

Purpose. Whether it is polio eradication, gender-based violence, basic education or community upliftment, younger leaders want to know that the organisation they invest their time in is making a tangible impact. Rotary's global reach and clearly defined areas of focus position it strongly to meet this expectation, particularly when that impact is communicated consistently and visibly.

Connection. Younger members value spaces where they feel welcomed, respected and heard. Intergenerational collaboration remains one of Rotary's greatest strengths, but it requires intention. When clubs reflect diversity in age, culture and professional background, they mirror the communities they serve. Mutual respect is essential. Younger leaders respond positively when their ideas are considered and when they are trusted as contributors.

Growth. Many young professionals join Rotary seeking opportunities to develop

leadership skills, manage projects and serve meaningfully. When given responsibility, supported through mentorship and encouraged to innovate, they thrive.

However, whether they remain often depends on culture.

Today's younger generation navigates demanding careers, financial pressure and rapidly changing environments. Rotary should not feel like an additional burden or a full-time obligation. It should reflect the true spirit of volunteering and remain purposeful, flexible and rewarding. They are far more likely to remain committed when expectation are

"When younger leaders feel valued, supported and included, they stay. And when generations work together intentionally, Rotary remains both relevant and resilient."

manageable and the culture is supportive rather than pressured.

If the environment is too rigid or unnecessarily pressured, younger members may quietly disengage. Not because they lack commitment, but because sustainability matters.

Rotary has successfully evolved throughout its history, and that evolution continues. Rotary's long-standing traditions remain valuable and worthy of respect, and openness to new approaches is equally important to ensure continued impact. Gentle guidance, mentorship and shared leadership across generations are fundamental to that progress.

ROTARY'S ACTION PLAN IN MOTION: EMPOWERING WOMEN IN NEW ZEALAND



ADAPTING 'SMALL' PROJECTS FOR GREATER ENGAGEMENT AND REACH

Leanne Jaggs knows about starting small and growing. Her experience with Rotary began as an exchange student to Sweden and grew as she became a Rotaractor, a third-generation Rotarian, a charter member of her club, and, in 2009-10, a second-generation district governor. Jaggs affectionately calls her club, the Rotary Club of Manukau Sunrise in Auckland, New Zealand, "small but mighty." With fewer than 20 members, it has found innovative ways to make a significant impact in the community.

One such initiative, collecting donations for women's shelters, shows how Rotary's Action Plan can guide even small clubs to expand their reach, increase engagement, and adapt to community needs. The project began five years ago when Jaggs read about an Australian club's handbag initiative in *Rotary Down Under* magazine. "We unfortunately have a lot of family violence in our area, so this project jumped out to me, knowing we could help so many in need," Jaggs recalls. "A great small project to start us off and one we could all be a part of."



ADAPTING TO NEW OPPORTUNITIES AND COMMUNITY NEEDS

The initial goal was modest: collect 50 gently used handbags, fill them with essentials, and donate them to a local women's shelter. To avoid putting too much strain on club members, Jaggs asked other clubs in the district to help collect the bags. The response was overwhelming. "We were inundated with support from other clubs," Jaggs says. "In the end, we had 400-500 handbags to use."

What started as a one-time project has evolved into an annual initiative, allowing the club to refine its approach and better serve the community. By partnering with the Friendship House Community Centre, where the club meets, the club ensures that the handbags and their contents reach those most in need.

The items in the bags have changed based on feedback from the community. "We started off with soaps, shampoo, etc.," Jaggs explains. "Some years we've concentrated more on feminine hygiene products after hearing that was the need." One year, to support job-seeking efforts, the club selected bags appropriate for interviews and business settings.

BUILDING ENGAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS FOR GREATER REACH

The project has become a favorite among club members. "The packing of the bags is filled with lots of laughs as we have a small production line happening," Jaggs says. "Everyone looks forward to it."

The initiative has also fostered collaboration between clubs. This past year, the club partnered with another Rotary club, joining the members for their dinner meeting and then turning the packing event into a lively post-dinner activity.

The project's effect also extends beyond providing immediate aid — it has raised awareness about Rotary in the community and even earned the club a new moniker. "We might be called the 'Handbag Club' now," Jaggs jokes, "but even five years on, I still get asked by other clubs and Rotarians if we need any more handbags."

If you ask the community what's needed and ask your members what they care about, that's where the magic starts.



MAKING A DIFFERENCE BY INSPIRING OTHER CLUBS

The project began after Jaggs saw the article about what another club was doing. She now hopes that what members in her area have done can inspire other clubs, big or small, to talk to other clubs, learn what they're doing, decide if it would meet your community's needs, and launch a new project.

How can clubs get started? Jaggs emphasizes the community assessment and member engagement. "Ask your local community what is needed," she advises. "Talk to your club members and find out what they are interested in. If you get the two working together, then that is where the magic starts."

Learn what your club can do at
rotary.org/actionplan



A Lifetime of IMPACT

Prof Stella Anyangwe, MD, PhD, a past district governor of D9400, has been recognised for A Lifetime of Impact by Pan African Women. Her work in Africa spans decades, including service as a World Health Organisation Representative in multiple countries and her continued leadership in the fight to eradicate polio through her Rotary membership. Stella's career reflects sustained commitment to strengthening health systems and advancing public health outcomes.

What inspired you to work in health in Africa?

As a medical doctor with an MPH and PhD in Epidemiology, my early work involved teaching at a medical school in Cameroon, where I focused on equipping doctors in training with the skills needed for effective prevention and control of prevalent communicable and non communicable diseases. A key part of that was grounding students in biostatistics, epidemiology and critical research methodology.

This work led to my recruitment by the World Health Organisation to support polio eradication in the Africa region. During that time, I developed guidelines for district microplanning used in supplemental polio immunisation programmes. I later became WHO Country Representative and served in Seychelles, Mali, Zambia and South Africa, where I coordinated efforts to strengthen national health systems.

My 30 year association with Rotary International began in 1995 when I became a Rotarian. Over time, I served as club president, assistant governor and district governor of Rotary District 9400. In 2021, I became the first

Black African female district governor in the district's 100 year history. From 2022 to 2025, I served as EndPolioNow Coordinator for 15 countries in eastern and southern Africa. I am also a member of the Paul Harris Society and a Major Donor to The Rotary Foundation.

What is one success you're proud of?

In one of the countries where I served as WHO Representative, I was also chair of the UN Country Coordinating Mechanism for the Global Fund for HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria. At the start of my tenure, I realised that Global Fund resources were at risk of being mismanaged, without proper accountability. Both UN and national health staff were aware of the situation, but there was reluctance to address it.

I raised these concerns with national health authorities and reported them to my regional office. I also refused to sign off on inaccurate HIV and AIDS data being submitted to Geneva. This resulted in strong resistance from national leadership, but I maintained my position. Independent verification confirmed the accuracy of my reports, and I continued in my role until the end of my tenure, after which I



There is also a role for experienced professionals who have retired, particularly in advisory roles, mentoring and supporting the next generation.

was promoted to lead a larger WHO country office.

What's the hardest part of your work as a woman in health leadership? How are you tackling it?

I retired from WHO in 2013 after serving as Country Representative in four African countries over 13 years. At the time, there were relatively few women in senior health leadership roles in sub Saharan Africa. In several countries, leadership structures were largely male dominated and it could be difficult for technical recommendations from women to be taken seriously.

In practice, persistence and reliance on evidence proved effective. By maintaining a consistent focus on data and sound health reasoning, it became possible to demonstrate the validity of those recommendations, even if acceptance was sometimes delayed.

What change do you want to see in the next five years?

More women health professionals should be given the opportunity to lead, both within national governments and international organisations.

What advice do you have for women pursuing careers in health?

Women in health professions should continue to pursue specialisation, including areas that have traditionally been less accessible, such as health economics, One Health, big data and artificial intelligence in health.

Courtesy: Pan African Women in Health. www.pawh.org



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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.

Credits will not be processed on notifications of resignations or changes in subscriptions received after invoices have been sent out.

New subscribers will be invoiced pro-rata as notifications are received.



ROTARY INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION

TAIPEI, TAIWAN | 13-17 JUNE 2026



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2027 International Convention moved to Barcelona

A Global Gathering

Barcelona will host the Rotary International Convention in June 2027, bringing Rotary members from across the world together in one of Europe's major convention cities.

The event will take place from 26 to 30 June 2027 at the Fira de Barcelona. The convention was originally scheduled for Dubai, but has been moved, with Barcelona now preparing to welcome delegates two years earlier than planned.

The Rotary International Board confirmed the update in a joint letter from Rotary International President 2025-26 Francesco Arezzo and President 2026-27 Yinka Babalola. In the letter, they expressed appreciation to partners in Barcelona for adapting to the revised timeline and confirmed that Dubai will host a convention at a later date.

Barcelona has hosted a Rotary convention before, most recently in 2002, and is preparing once again to receive a large international gathering. The 2027 convention is expected to attract up to 20,000 participants from more than

140 countries, with delegates travelling from Rotary clubs across the global network.

Sergio Aragón, chair of the Barcelona Host Committee and a member of the Rotary Club Barcelona Diagonal, said preparations are already underway to deliver the event.

"We look forward to welcoming our international guests and delivering an exceptional experience," Aragón said.

The convention programme typically includes plenary sessions, workshops and opportunities for Rotary members to meet, exchange ideas and engage with projects taking place in different parts of the world.

In their letter, Arezzo and Babalola described Barcelona as a city with the capacity to welcome Rotary members from around the world and noted that it offers a well connected destination for international travel.

Registration for the 2027 convention is scheduled to open in September 2026, with planning continuing as Barcelona prepares to host Rotary members for the five day event.



Connect for Good

Six ways to nurture a sense of togetherness in a Rotary club

By Gurjeet S. Sekhon

In a world which often feels fragmented and fast-paced, the need to belong, to feel seen, heard and valued, remains one of our deepest human desires. For members of a Rotary club, cultivating a true sense of belonging isn't important; it is foundational.

When people feel they belong, they stay. They lead. They serve with heart. They grow. But such a culture doesn't happen by chance. It's built with intention. Here's how Rotary clubs can weave a tapestry of belonging.

1. Create space for every voice

Consider the story of a young violinist in a community orchestra who was quiet, unsure, often overlooked. One day, the conductor pauses and asks for her interpretation of a musical passage. That simple gesture gives her the courage to speak. Her insight transforms the music and her place within the group.

In Rotary, we must intentionally seek out the quiet voices: the new members, the young professionals, people from underrepresented backgrounds, or those who are simply unsure where they fit in. Are we inviting their input in meetings? Are we offering meaningful roles in planning or service?

2. Celebrate contributions, big and small

A well-known story from NASA in the 1960s tells of a janitor who, when asked what his job was, replied, "I'm helping put a man on the moon." He saw his role, however humble, as essential to the mission.

We must do the same in Rotary. Celebrate the member who brings food to meetings. The quiet presence who always has a kind word. Recognise them in meetings, in newsletters and personal notes. Let every member know: You matter. Your work matters.

3. Build through storytelling and shared experience

Human beings connect through stories, not statistics. One small-town book club once asked each member to share the book that most changed their life. The evening turned into a powerful journey of laughter, reflection and connection.

Rotary clubs can work to deepen connection and humanise our mission. Invite members to share their “Rotary moment,” a story of service, a lesson learned, or why they joined. Host “Rotary story nights.” Feature personal spotlights in meetings or newsletters. These stories remind us that we’re not simply part of a club; we’re part of each other’s journeys.

4. Design with inclusion, not just intention

A global tech company once changed the timing of its leadership training after discovering that evening sessions excluded working parents. With a simple schedule shift, participation doubled.

Clubs can ask: Are our meeting times and venues accessible to working professionals, caregivers and older people with mobility needs? Are communications inclusive of languages and levels of digital fluency? Are we making it clear not just in words but in structure

that everyone belongs?

5. Foster moments of connection beyond service

A Rotary club in Nairobi, Kenya, once visited a rural school to plant trees. Afterwards, instead of leaving, members stayed to play soccer with the students. That spontaneous moment sparked an ongoing relationship that led to mentorship, support and a lasting bond.

Service may be our foundation, but friendship and fun are our glue. Organise informal coffee mornings. Plan cultural nights, hikes, or movie evenings. Encourage members to bring family, friends and stories. When we build friendships, not just committees, we stay connected for the long haul.

6. Lead with empathy and purpose

During the height of the pandemic, a hospital administrator made nightly phone calls to every staff member. She didn’t call to give orders. She called to listen. That act of empathy, more than any directive, restored morale and unity.

Rotary leaders can check in with members not only about projects but about life. Celebrate birthdays and milestones. Be present in times of joy and hardship. When leaders lead with compassion, members follow. Rotary becomes more than a service organisation; it becomes a family.

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Members of the Rotary Club of Vanderbijlpark (D9400) during the club's 70th anniversary celebration held at Heron Banks Golf Club.

70 Years Strong

A milestone gathering brought members together as the Rotary Club of Vanderbijlpark marked its 70th anniversary with an evening event at Heron Banks Golf Club.

The Rotary Club of Vanderbijlpark (D9400) hosted Rotarians, guests and family members for the celebration, with a structured programme reflecting the club's history and membership. President Zander Lintveld opened proceedings, and Past President Dr Dave Gilliland served as master of ceremonies. Assistant Governor Fiona Brokenshaw addressed those present, congratulating the club and acknowledging its years of service.

The formal programme began with the popping of champagne corks, followed by a series of Rotary toasts. Attention then turned to long-serving members, with awards presented to Dr Dave Gilliland for 45 years of service, Sonja Gilliland for 26 years, Petro Bester for

20 years and Celeste Lance for 19 years. Recognition extended across generations, with Rita Benecke and Megan van Schalkwyk acknowledged as the oldest and youngest Rotarians present. The programme also included a wine raffle, won by Lidia Corte. Her brother Nicolas, visiting from Mexico, attended the event and his birthday was marked during the evening with songs in Afrikaans, English and Spanish.

Preparation for the event was handled by members, with decor arranged by Rotarians Zander Lintveld, Celeste Lance, Jackie van Waveren and Adri Roos. The venue and catering were provided by Robert and Annie Lance and their staff, who were acknowledged during the proceedings.

Following the formal programme, music continued into the evening as members and guests moved to the dance floor.



Members of the Rotary Club of Aliwal Shoal (D9370) during the name change event held at the Italian Club Umkomaas.



Prishen Sukraj, Vash Naidoo and Maureen Biyela.



Jerry and Janet Boyd of the Umkomaas Golf Club with Tony and Mickey Harding.

Making the Change

The Rotary Club of Widenham (D9370) formally became the Rotary Club of Aliwal Shoal (D9370). The name change was celebrated at an event held at the Italian Club Umkomaas on 27 March 2026.

Members and guests gathered for the announcement, marking the club's transition to a name that reflects the coastal area surrounding its base. The change was introduced by President Greg Cryer, who proposed aligning the club's identity with Aliwal Shoal, a well known feature of the region.

Assistant Governor Ash Maharaj attended the event and addressed those present, outlining

considerations linked to the name change. The evening was attended by Rotary members and guests from the surrounding areas of Umkomaas, Scottburgh, Park Rynie and Umzinto.

During the event, three members were inducted into the club. Prishen Sukraj took on the role of public image lead. Vash Naidoo resumed her role as club secretary following a period away from the position.

The gathering took place at the Italian Club Umkomaas, which will now serve as the club's meeting venue.

Meetings are scheduled for the first and third Wednesday of each month from 5 pm to 6 pm.



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Lerotholi Mohato Seeiso of Lesotho joined volunteers in the invasive shrub removal project at Ha Seeiso.

ENVIRO-Fun!

More than 200 young volunteers gathered at Ha Seeiso in Thaba-Bosiu to remove invasive shrubs, growing in the grazing land and vegetation in the rangeland areas.

The project was led by the Rotary Club of Mantsopa-Maseru (D9370) and included Rotaract clubs from across the Mountain Kingdom, as well as the Ministry of Environment and people from the area.

This initiative focused on practical environmental work and formed part of broader efforts to manage vegetation and support land use in the region.

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Lerotholi Mohato Seeiso attended the project, observing the work carried out by volunteers and engaging with participants during the day.



The Rotaract Clubs of Qiloane-Maseru, CAS-Maseru, Botho-Maseru, NUL-Maseru, Montech Institute-Maseru, LP-Maseru, Maseru and the Rotaract E-Club of Maloti-Maseru eagerly supported the project.



Participants received training in vegetable production, poultry management and conservation agriculture, with practical sessions on planting, soil preparation and water management.

Where Food Grows

Vegetable gardens at rural schools in Limpopo now form part of daily activities following the completion of a global grant project led by the Rotary Club of Pietersburg 100 (D9400) in partnership with the Rotary Club of Waukeg in the United States.

The project focused on establishing and maintaining school gardens at 10 selected rural schools. A needs assessment identified schools within reach of the Blessman International Training and Research Farm, with those selected showing readiness to participate and sustain the programme.

Training formed a central part of the project. Each school selected five participants, including teachers, community members and learners, to attend structured agricultural training. Sessions were held over three six day periods and included both classroom learning

and practical fieldwork.

Following the training phase, agricultural teams visited each participating school to establish functioning gardens. Each site received a prepared planting area, a JoJo water tank, a drip irrigation system, fencing to protect crops and initial seedlings.

Follow up visits take place twice a year during the five year duration of the project and schools that maintained their gardens received additional support to improve crop production.

The gardens provide vegetables for school meals and serve as agricultural learning spaces. Schools, learners and community members are involved in maintaining the gardens and using the produce.

The project was implemented by Blessman International in collaboration with its Rotary partners.



Food Plant Solutions Rotary Action Group was highlighted during a seminar in Cairo involving the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations and Rotary, where discussions focused on nutrition and food security. The work of the action group was included as part of the programme, reflecting its use of locally based food solutions.

Global Nutrition

A Rotary Action Group that began in Tasmania is now working in more than 60 countries, focusing on practical approaches to food security using locally available plants.

The Food Plant Solutions Rotary Action Group supports communities by providing information on which foods can be grown locally, how they contribute to nutrition and how they can be used in daily diets. The approach is based on sharing knowledge that can be adapted and used within different regions and cultures.

The model used by the group centres on three practical questions for communities: what can be grown locally, what should be eaten to improve nutrition and why those foods are important for health. These questions guide the development of educational materials that can be shared across communities.

Resources developed by the group are

written in accessible language and designed for use in a variety of settings. Materials can be translated and adapted, allowing them to be used in different countries and regions without requiring specialised training.

The programme responds to ongoing challenges in global nutrition, where many communities rely on a limited range of crops despite the availability of other nutrient rich plants suited to local conditions. The focus on crop diversity and local knowledge forms part of broader efforts to address food security and nutrition at community level.

The Food Plant Solutions Rotary Action Group works with Rotary clubs, NGOs and community partners in projects related to nutrition, agriculture and food security. To learn more or contact the action group please email info@foodplantsolutions.org or visit www.foodplantsolutions.org.



Handover of the ambulance at Mutendere Mission Hospital in Chirundu, Zambia.

Cross Border Care

An ambulance now serves patients at Mutendere Mission Hospital in Chirundu, Zambia, following a Rotary Global Grant project led by the Rotary Club of Maluba (D9210) in partnership with the Rotary Club of Gallipoli in Italy.

Mutendere Mission Hospital provides care to communities in Chirundu as well as patients from across the border in Zimbabwe. Before the project, the hospital operated without a dedicated ambulance, limiting its ability to transfer patients requiring urgent medical attention.

The project began after Giovanna Mucci, an exchange student from Italy, observed the challenges faced by staff and patients. She shared her experience with the Rotary Club of Gallipoli, which led to a partnership with the Maluba club.

During the same period, Roland Cherry, a visitor from the UK, was treated at the hospital after sustaining serious injuries. Following his recovery, he contributed to fundraising efforts.

The Rotary Club of Maluba coordinated activities on the ground, working with hospital staff and community stakeholders throughout the project. Funding was secured through The Rotary Foundation Global Grant programme, together with additional contributions raised through supporting partners.

The ambulance is now used to transport patients requiring specialised care to larger facilities, including the University Teaching Hospital in Lusaka. The service is used particularly for emergency cases, including maternal and neonatal care.



Bishop Raphael Mweempwa, Bishop of the Diocese of Monze, Mutendere Mission Hospital Director Brother Hippolyte and President George Kanja of the Rotary Club of Maluba (D9210) during the ambulance handover.



Giovanna Mucci with her parents Giovannino and Soave Mucci with Roland and Shirley Cherry.



John Makaties during his bicycle mechanic training at Breakaway Bicycles in Kimberley supported by the Rotary E-Club of the Karoo Region (D9370) and partners.

Mechanic On Wheels

A six month training programme in Kimberley has equipped a local volunteer with practical bicycle repair skills through a Rotary supported initiative.

John Makaties, a volunteer at the Galeshewe Youth Network, was trained as a bicycle mechanic at Breakaway Bicycles in Kimberley. This was arranged with the support of the Rotary Satellite E-Club of Kimberley-The Karoo Region (D9370), the Rotary Club of Empangeni (D9370) and their international partners.

Guided by Dreyer van Niekerk, owner of Breakaway Bicycles, Makaties learnt brake and gear systems, wheel building and the technical aspects of bicycle repair. The training

combined practical workshop experience and ongoing mentorship.

This is part of a larger partnership involving the Rotary Club of Carroll Creek in the United States, Hope in South Africa and Bicycles for Humanity. The programme focuses on developing practical skills and supporting access to sustainable transport solutions through bicycle repair and maintenance.

Following the completion of the programme, Makaties continues his involvement with the Galeshewe Youth Network, applying the skills developed during the training.

The project links local training with support from Rotary partners in South Africa and internationally.



Francesco Arezzo, President of Rotary International, with Rotary Peace Fellow Zaliha Abdulhamid Lawal who recently undertook her field experience with the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes in Durban.

Building Peace Across Africa

A Rotary Peace Fellow from Nigeria spent six months in Durban (D9370, South Africa) working alongside one of Africa's established conflict resolution organisations as part of her studies in peace and conflict.

Zaliha Abdulhamid Lawal, a Master's student in Peace and Conflict Studies at Uppsala University in Sweden, completed her field experience with the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes in Durban. Her placement formed part of the Rotary Peace Fellowship, which combines academic study with practical experience.

Zaliha has worked in development across Nigeria and other parts of Africa, focusing on education, gender, climate action, conflict and governance. Her work has involved engaging with communities and contributing to policy processes linked to development and social change.

During her time in Durban, she worked on a

Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency programme to strengthen conflict prevention across Africa. Her role included supporting training sessions for African Union and regional stakeholders, workshops with religious leaders and young people, and contributing to discussions on conflict prevention, management and resolution. She also assisted in developing peacebuilding strategies and worked on the CSO–UN Peacebuilding Dialogue.

While in South Africa, Zaliha was hosted by Rotary International District 9370 and shared her experiences with Rotary clubs in Durban and surrounding areas.

The Rotary Peace Fellowship provides fully funded opportunities for selected participants to study at designated peace centres at universities around the world, combined with applied field experience in relevant organisations.



Some of the Melkbosstrand High School Interactors during their visit to Lilac Residence, where they spent time with the residents and hosted a fun quiz.

Youth Serving Communities

A school term filled with activity saw learners from Melkbosstrand High School step into community spaces across the West Coast, taking part in projects that ranged from relief support to time spent with older residents.

The Interact Club of Melkbosstrand High School, affiliated to the Rotary Club of Melkbos (D9350), draws its members from Atlantis, Melkbosstrand, Table View and Blouberg. During the first term, the group took part in a series of outreach activities within these communities.

One visit took the Interactors to Seapark Retirement Home, also known as Lilac Residence. Learners spent time with residents during the afternoon, engaging in conversation and taking part in a quiz. The visit formed part of the club's interaction with older members of the community.

Following fires in Dunoon over the December period, the club organised a donation drive. Household items were collected and delivered to learners at

Inkwenkwezi High School, providing support to families affected by the fires.

The Interactors also visited the United Reformed Church Sonnekus, where they spent time with children attending a free aftercare programme linked to Woodbridge Primary School. Activities included games and group interaction during the visit.

Weekly meetings at the school included discussions on recycling, environmental responsibility and approaches to addressing bullying. These sessions formed part of the club's regular programme during the term.

Six members of the club attended the Rotary Youth Leadership Awards camp held in Franschhoek. Letso Mokoena and Miané de Klerk returned to the camp alongside Amber Huisman, Neale Smit, Arielle Pienaar and Lihan Dippenaar.

The activities took place over the course of the first school term, with learners participating in a range of service and development opportunities.



Healthcare professionals and volunteers during the community outreach clinic hosted by the Rotary Club of Port Shepstone (D9370) in Marburg.

Bringing Care to Marburg

Patients began arriving early at a community clinic in Marburg, where volunteer healthcare professionals and Rotarians worked through the day to provide consultations and support.

The Rotary Club of Port Shepstone (D9370), in collaboration with the Port Shepstone Sai Centre, hosted the outreach on 15 March. The clinic ran from 8:30 am to 2:00 pm and served residents from Marburg and surrounding areas in KwaZulu-Natal.

A total of 163 patients registered during the day. Each was able to consult with one or more of the healthcare professionals present, depending on their needs. The clinic drew a wide range of patients, including individuals seeking medical advice and support who would otherwise have limited access to such services.

The outreach brought together a team of healthcare providers across several disciplines. Services included consultations with general practitioners, a physician, a dentist, an

audiologist, a gynaecologist, physiotherapists, a mammographer and dietitians. Patients moved through the different stations in a structured flow, from registration through to consultation and follow up.

Planning and coordination for the event were led by Health Director Dr Kanaya Maharaj, who worked with club members and volunteers to organise the clinic. Members of the Port Shepstone Sai Centre prepared the venue and provided refreshments and meals for both patients and volunteers throughout the day.

Volunteers assisted across all areas of the clinic, from registration to patient support. The event was structured to allow patients to access multiple services during a single visit, depending on individual requirements.

The Rotary Club of Port Shepstone plans to continue hosting similar outreach clinics every three months in different communities across the region.



Members of the Rotary Club of Pretoria Hatfield (D9400) and the Rotary Club of Maloti-Maseru (D9370) during a fellowship gathering at Ramabanta Trading Post in Lesotho as part of the outreach visit.

Hatfield in Lesotho

Rotarians travelled to Lesotho in March for the latest outreach programme organised by the Rotary Club of Pretoria Hatfield (D9400) in partnership with the Rotary Club of Maloti-Maseru (D9370).

The outreach, which began in 2012, focuses on community development, education and practical support in the Rapoleboea area. Over the years, activities have included planting fruit trees and distributing winter items such as blankets and jackets to local residents.

A central feature of the 2026 visit was a Sports Day that brought together learners from five local primary schools. Medals were awarded to winners, while snacks were provided to learners, teachers, parents and spectators attending the event. Parents, teachers and Rotarians also took part in the activities.

During the outreach, a Vision Board workshop was held with students from

Raboletsi School. Supported by Rotaractors, the session allowed learners to set out personal goals through creative exercises. Teachers were encouraged to continue the activity after the visit.

Two sessions on sexual health and hygiene were also conducted. During these sessions, 40 reusable sanitary towel kits were distributed to young women. The discussions provided an opportunity for participants to engage on health related topics.

At the Good Shepherd Centre, a home for unmarried mothers, an embroidery initiative was introduced. The programme is designed to provide vocational skills training, with participants already completing work for a private commission.

The visit also included time for club fellowship, with Rotarians meeting at the Ramabanta Trading Post during the trip.



Members of the Rotary Club of Haenertsburg (D9400) during one of the themed “Come Dine With Me” evenings, where teams hosted a series of dinners as part of the club’s fellowship programme.

Come Dine with Us

After months of project work, planning and fundraising, members of the Rotary Club of Haenertsburg (D9400) set aside their usual routines for a series of themed evenings built around food, conversation and shared hosting.

The event, titled “Come Dine With Me, Haenertsburg Rotary Edition”, brought together four teams, each responsible for hosting an evening with a distinct theme. The format created a sequence of gatherings, with members moving between venues and experiences over the course of the series.

The first evening opened with a Greek theme. Tables were set in white and blue, and the menu reflected Mediterranean flavours, with a focus on shared dishes and informal dining. The setting encouraged conversation as members moved through the evening together.

The second team hosted an Island themed evening. Bright décor and a menu built around tropical flavours shaped the atmosphere. The format remained consistent, with members gathering around shared tables and moving

through the evening as a group.

An Italian themed evening followed, with a focus on traditional dishes served in a more formal setting. The arrangement included candlelit tables and a menu centred on courses designed for sharing, with members seated together for the duration of the evening.

The final evening was hosted as a Polish Heritage night. The menu featured a range of traditional dishes, with the evening structured in the same way as the previous events. The setting reflected the theme through both the food and the presentation.

Each team prepared and hosted its evening independently, with members attending all four events. The format allowed for variation in presentation while maintaining a consistent structure across the series.

The event included a competitive element, with a prize awarded at the conclusion of the four evenings. Members participated in the process throughout, moving between roles as hosts and guests.



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AFRICA IN BRIEF



The Rotary Club of Dundee (D9370) distributed approximately 2,300 cabbages (donated by farmer Mynardt Sadie) to community organisations in Dundee, Glencoe and Rorke's Drift, where centres including ABH, SAVF homes, the Melusi Christian Centre, the Dundee Adult Centre, Siphuthando Care Centre and Emseni Old Age Home provide daily meals to around 300 people.



Easter eggs were shared with the Klerksdorp Care Centre during a Rotary Club of Klerksdorp (D9370) lunch meeting, supporting the centre's soup kitchen which serves around 450 elderly and disabled community members each week. The partnership includes ongoing support through food contributions and assistance with storage facilities for fresh produce.



Members of the Rotary Club of Paarl's (D9350) local youth clubs, Interact and Rotaract, enjoyed an outing to Paarl Mountain where they were addressed by game ranger Steven Whitfield on his experiences in game conservation in the Kruger Park.



The Anns of the Rotary Club of Rosebank (D9400) celebrated the life of Margaret Anna Jackson, a long serving member and Paul Harris Fellow, with the donation of a table and benches to the SA Guide Dogs Association during a ceremony held on 15 March. Margaret, who died in December 2025 at the age of 101, served the club as treasurer, secretary and president, and remained connected to the Anns for many years. Anns, Rotarians, representatives of the SA Guide Dogs Association and members of Margaret's family attended the memorial.





Neatly packed clothing parcels lined the hall at Die Bron Primary School as learners arrived to collect uniform packs prepared for the start of the school term. The Rotary Club of Stanford (D9350), working with local donors and school staff, organised the distribution in response to increased enrolment and the growing need for basic school clothing. A total of 95 learners received individually prepared packs, each containing trousers, shirts, shoes and socks, with items labelled in advance to ensure a smooth handover. Teachers and Rotarians worked side by side as learners from Grade R to Grade 7 collected their parcels, forming part of a broader back to school support effort that also included the earlier delivery of bulk stationery to local schools.



The Anns of the Rotary Club of Helderberg (D9350) in Somerset West donated R10,156.35 to support learners at Strand High School, with the funds used to settle outstanding school book accounts. Pictured from left are Renda van Wyk and Miemie Calitz of Strand High School with Mieke MacDonald, past president of the Helderberg Rotary Anns.

Awards & Recognitions

A group of community members in Stanford were recognised for their contributions to the community at an awards evening hosted by the Rotary Club of Stanford (D9350) in March. The awards were presented by Past District Governor Ann Wright during the event.



Klein River Cheese was recognised for community service.



Graig Niemand was recognised for his community service..



Jenny October-Mars was recognised for her work with youth.



Anchelle Damon was recognised for her work with youth.



Amanda Phillips and Geraldine Damon were recognised for their community service.



Regina Broenner was recognised for vocational service.



Kevin Husk was recognised as a Paul Harris Fellow.

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Ray Tee received a Paul Harris Fellowship recognition.

New Member



Magen Busschers is a new member of the Rotary Club of Estcourt (D9370).

MISCELLANEOUS

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