

SEPTEMBER 2026

Rotary

AFRICA SOUTH

19 The Lesson is Simple:
Partnership adds meaning

33 Clearer Connections
In Tanzania





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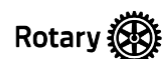
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WELCOME

Sarah van Heerden - Editor in Chief

September brings Heritage Month in South Africa, with Heritage Day on 24 September. For me, it is also an opportunity to think about the continent we share. Africa is home to an extraordinary range of cultures, languages, histories and traditions, shaped by different political and economic systems and current events.

It is here that I see a strong connection with The Four-Way Test, particularly the question: “Will it build goodwill and better friendships?”

Goodwill begins with respect. Through our clubs, partnerships, Peace Fellowships, grants and work at grass-roots level, Rotary brings us together with people whose realities, experiences and perspectives may be very different from our own.

There is an important lesson in this: we cannot enter a space assuming that our understanding of a problem is the correct one. Listening to understand is critically important.

In humanitarian and NGO work, the word “agency” has become important. At its simplest, it means that people should be active participants in what affects their own lives. Community members aren't simply beneficiaries of a solution designed somewhere else. When they have agency, they become partners, bringing their own knowledge, experience and understanding.

Rotary's grant structures teach us to listen and

engage with communities to identify needs and solutions with them instead of for them.

It sounds straightforward, but in practice it can be difficult. It requires the humility to accept that our experience does not necessarily tell us what will work for others. We need self-awareness to resist judging something simply because it doesn't fit comfortably with what we know or how we do things in our own spaces.

I am the first to admit that I don't always get this right and I suspect very few people do. It requires a certain level of confidence to accept that we may be wrong and don't know everything. When we recognise this, we make room for others to participate, we make fewer assumptions and we achieve greater success.

Giving people agency isn't only about achieving better project outcomes. It is about the dignity and respect you create when you acknowledge that what you think and feel may not be correct.

Perhaps this is what Heritage Month brings into focus for me: recognising history and experience and understanding that there are times when I need to say, “OK, I don't understand it, but I trust your judgement.

Sometimes the greatest respect we can offer is to be willing to trust others even when it makes us uncomfortable.



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**1,25m**

is more than a number

Rotary has always been about people. Not projects. Not numbers. People. Our goal to reach 1.25 million Rotarians and 125,000 Rotaractors by our 125th anniversary in 2030 is also about people.

I bring up this goal not because I expect the number itself to move you. Numbers rarely do. I bring it up because I worry that a goal this large may begin to feel abstract, distant from the everyday work of our clubs. I do not want that to happen. So let us talk, once more, about what is truly behind it.

I want to offer your club a simple exercise. Look back over the last five to seven years and find your best year. Maybe it was a year new members arrived and, more meaningfully, stayed. Maybe it was a year your meetings became something members looked forward to, rather than another obligation on a crowded calendar. Find that year. Then I ask you to do better than your best.

This is not a call to outpace the club across town or the district next door. It is never meant to be a competition between Rotary members. It is, instead, an invitation to hold ourselves to our own highest standard and to rise to meet it again.

Why does this 2030 membership goal matter to me enough that I keep returning to it? Because behind every one of those numbers is a person

whose life could be changed by this organisation, just as mine and yours have been changed by it. Rotary has given me friendships that have lasted decades, a sense of purpose I did not know I was searching for and something that, in time, came to feel like an extension of my family. I suspect many of you understand this in your own lives.

That life-changing experience is what we offer when we invite someone to join us. There are people in your communities right now who would find real meaning here, if only someone thought to ask them. So, tell them your story. Tell them honestly how Rotary changed you, not just about the projects you led or the funds you raised but about the person you became. Those stories have a way of reaching people when little else does.

If we hope to Create Lasting Impact, the kind that resounds for generations, we need more people standing beside us to help carry our work forward. Let's come together, not only this month but every month of every year, to make Rotary stronger, more joyful and more like the family it has always been to me.

Find your best year. Then let us be better than our best, together.

YINKA

President, Rotary International

Make polio history

FOUNDATION TRUSTEE CHAIR'S MESSAGE

This month, I want to have some fun and do a little pre-planning exercise for World Polio Day on 24 October. Are you with me?

Each year, World Polio Day gives us a moment to pause, reflect and recommit to the promise Rotary made to the world that no child, anywhere, will ever again suffer the devastating effects of polio. This year, that moment feels especially powerful.

President Yinka has challenged all of us to “better our best,” and I want to echo that call with a challenge of my own. Look honestly at what your club has done to support polio eradication. If your efforts have been strong, stretch further. If your club has not yet engaged in our No. 1 corporate priority, begin now by making a gift of at least US\$1,500 at endpolio.org/donate.

That single act of generosity will do more than you may realise. Thanks to the Gates Foundation’s 2-to-1 match, every dollar becomes three. Together, we can reach our annual goal of \$50 million and finish the job Rotary began.

Each step brings us closer to a world where polio exists only in history books.

But numbers alone do not tell the whole story. Polio eradication is a human endeavour, built on courage, compassion and the belief that service

can reshape the future.

On World Polio Day, I will be spending time in a place that symbolises exactly that. It is a location unlike any I have visited before and I look forward to revealing it in real time on social media. I will be having a creative (and fun) time while using this as an opportunity to shine light on those whose work embodies Rotary’s highest ideals - health workers, volunteers and community leaders who stand on the front lines of disease prevention.

Later this year, President Yinka and I will be travelling to Pakistan to meet with many of these leaders to express our personal gratitude. They are the reason we have come so far and must finish what we started.

As you prepare for World Polio Day, I ask you to join me in spirit and in action. Host an event. Tell the story of Rotary’s leadership. Invite your community to participate. Make your club’s gift. And above all, help us build momentum that carries into the months ahead.

And for all my puzzle-loving friends, here is a clue to my personal location on 24 October: “Polio with the _ E _ _ U _ _ S.”

JENNIFER JONES
Foundation Trustee Chair

Beguiled in BARCELONA



To discover the 2027 Rotary International Convention host city,
start by getting lost

By

Diana Schoberg

Photography by Monika Lozinska

In just a few steps

“Barcelona is a very old town, has a lot of history, but it’s also very modern.”

In just a few steps, we’ve travelled through 2,000 years of Barcelona’s history. The ruins of a Roman temple. A medieval church sheltering the relics of the city’s martyred patron saint. A mosaic-covered modernist concert hall. Every corner we turn reveals more quaint buildings, more quiet courtyards filled with greenery, fountains and artwork.

I know I’m jet lagged, but that’s not why my mind is spinning. Albert Torras, a journalist who moonlights as a tour guide and has joined me for the afternoon, reassures me. “The best thing to do in Barcelona is to get lost here in the centre,” he says.

I landed in Barcelona a few hours ago to experience for myself the charms that draw so many people to this city, which will host the 2027 Rotary International Convention from 26 to 30 June. Torras, a member of the Rotary Club of Barcelona Alba and Montse Moral of the Rotary Club of Sant Cugat del Vallès meet me at the Gran Hotel Havana after I regroup from my flight and try my first (but not my only) croquetas of the trip. The historic luxury hotel, built in 1882, is the home base of the Rotary Club of Barcelona and my digs for the next few days.

As we walk from the central Eixample district towards the city’s Gothic Quarter, Torras regales me with the history of Barcelona and its region, Catalonia. Romans founded the city at the end of the 1st century BC, calling it Barcino. In the 8th century, North African Muslims known as Moors conquered most of the Iberian Peninsula, maintaining control of some regions, especially in southern Spain, for nearly 800 years.

In Barcelona, however, the Moors’ reign lasted less than 100 years. Fast forward to the mid-12th century, when the Queen of Aragon married the Count of Barcelona; their joint kingdom, the Crown of Aragon, went on to conquer parts of the Western Mediterranean.

There’s more to say, but that brings us to where we’re standing right now, at the entrance to the Gothic Quarter. The neighbourhood was built up around the time Barcelona was a Mediterranean powerhouse. As we wander around, we pass the ornate Barcelona Cathedral, dedicated to St.

Eulalia, martyred at the age of 13 during the 4th-century persecution of Christians throughout the Roman Empire. But atop its cupola you'll find the figure of St. Helena, for no other reason, Torras explains, than that she was the favourite saint of the family who bankrolled the completion of the neo-Gothic facade in the late 19th century.

And speaking of the Romans, the cathedral is inside the original Roman city. Torras points out the large stone blocks at the base of nearby structures. These are the original Roman walls; the smaller bricks farther up were placed later.

We continue down a narrow street next to the church and the atmosphere becomes more subdued. We see the old royal palace with its crown-shaped tower and pass the Archives of the Crown of Aragon, which holds several UNESCO-recognised documents.

To explain those, it's time for more of that history lesson. In 1469, Ferdinand II of Aragon married Isabella of nearby Castile, setting the stage for the unification of Spain. In 1492, a certain explorer they sponsored by the name of Christopher Columbus claimed land in the Americas for Spain.

The Catalan merchants who found their fortunes in the Americas are known as "indianos" and they and their wealth are responsible for the architecture Barcelona might be best known for: that of the Modernisme movement.

I get my first taste of Catalan Modernist architecture just outside the Gothic Quarter in the Palau de la Música Catalana, perhaps the building that stands out most in my post-flight brain fog.



Above: A relaxing evening at Barceloneta Beach.

The UNESCO World Heritage Site, designed by Barcelona-born Lluís Domènech i Montaner, founder of the Modernisme movement, is adorned with mosaic pillars with floral motifs and busts of famous composers.

My Rotary friends promise me a lot more Modernisme tomorrow, but for now, it's starting to rain, forcing us inside for a coffee break. As the rain slows, the city practically glows. I say goodbye to Torras and head out with Moral to walk down La Rambla, Barcelona's famous pedestrian boulevard. The street is known for its vibrant atmosphere, but it's quiet this evening as the weather keeps the crowds away.

We turn into Plaça Reial and Moral spreads her arms wide. "Enjoy," she says.

I can see why. The square is closed to vehicular traffic and filled with palm trees, giving it the



First row: Gothic Quarter architecture. **Below:** Rotarian Albert Torras; view from the Reial Club Marítim; Mediterranean scene.





Font Màgica de Montjuïc, which comes alive at night with illuminated water displays.

A sweeping view across Barcelona, with the unmistakable Sagrada Família rising above the city skyline.



feeling of an oasis in the city. It's lined with classical-style buildings that are home to restaurants and nightclubs.

"Barcelona is a very old town, has a lot of history, but it's also very modern," she says. "It has a lot of young people. It's innovating all the time."

Antoni Gaudí is practically synonymous with Barcelona. I only had a few hours to see a sampling of the architect's fantastical works, but you could easily dedicate all your spare time in the city to viewing his masterpieces.

Which you might need to do, because I'm afraid to admit no amount of observing could help me summon descriptions of the whimsical, fairy tale buildings and parkland he designed.

"You can stay there one hour looking at things and realise there are things you have not seen before," says Aleix Martorell, a member of the Rotaract Club del Vallès, as we take in Gaudí's

architectural wonder, the Sagrada Família Basilica, the tallest church in the world.

Gaudí began work on the basilica in 1883 and it's been under construction ever since. On 10 June of this year, the 100th anniversary of Gaudí's death, Pope Leo XIV blessed the church's recently completed spire, the tallest of the 14 that adorn the church. Want to step inside and view the basilica's giant tree-like columns and a ceiling that mimics a forest canopy? Best to pre-book tickets, which I intend to do when I return for the convention next June.

As we walk around the building, I chat with Tomàs Masucci of the Rotaract Club of Barcelona-Diagonal, whose parents met as Rotaractors. The 20-year-old has been a Rotaractor for two years and lives about a 15-minute walk from the basilica.

"It's very important to know the city," he advises. "Walk around the streets, know how the people live here. We have buildings you can't find in other

parts of the world, like the Sagrada Família, like other Modernisme buildings. It's a thing we only have here in Catalonia."

During the 19th century, Barcelona saw booming industry and growing wealth, while the rest of Spain fell on harder times. Rich patrons hired Catalan architects to design even more extravagant buildings. Though the Modernisme movement began to fizzle in the early 1900s, today you can find hundreds of properties in the city with modernist elements, nine of which are on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

We head over to the elegant Passeig de Gràcia, the epicentre of Modernisme in the early 20th century. Here you will find two more Gaudí-designed buildings only a few blocks apart: the undulating Casa Milá and the magical Casa Batlló, with its roof scaled like a dragon's back. While you're strolling, check out the street's ornate lamp posts with their mosaic-tiled benches and the decorative sidewalk tiles called panot.

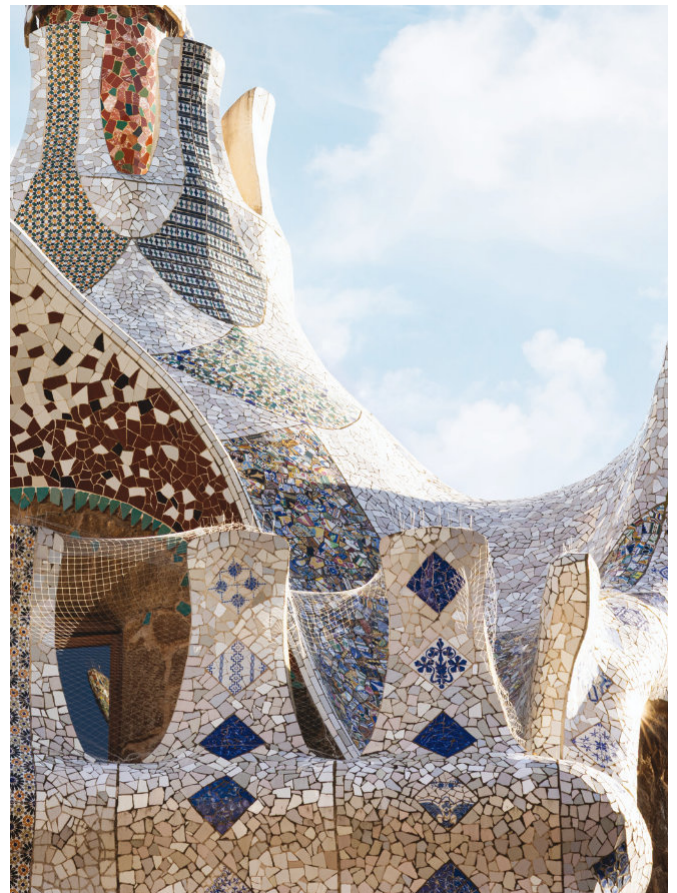
After a full morning of sightseeing, I'm famished. Luckily, two new Rotary friends are about to show me what the Mediterranean way of life is all about.

Sergio Aragón and Julio Sorjús are sitting on the terrace of the Reial Club Marítim de Barcelona, beers in hand and a small dish of multicoloured olives on the table. Flags on the many sailboats in the century-old yacht club's marina waft in the gentle breeze. Cable cars soar above the sea and, in the distance, people amble across the Rambla de Mar, a wavy wooden bridge that extends Barcelona's famous pedestrian street across the water to historic Port Vell.

I take a seat on the terrace and Aragón explains that, although Barcelona is a coastal city, it lived for most of its existence with its back to the sea. The city had developed within the Gothic Quarter I'd seen earlier and later extended as the old walls were knocked down in the 19th century (the name for this newer part of the city, "L'Eixample", means "expansion" in Catalan). But the waterfront was used for heavy industry and locals rarely visited.

All that changed with the 1992 Barcelona Olympics.

"There was a great transformation in the city and



From top: A Gaudí- designed building in Park Güell, now the park's souvenir shop; the Passeig de Gràcia was the epicentre of Modernisme in the early 20th century.



From top: Julio Sorjús (left), a past RI director, and Sergio Aragón, the convention host committee chair, at the Reial Club Marítim de Barcelona; a table full of tapas.

one of the things transformed was the waterfront,” says Aragón, chair of the convention’s Host Organisation Committee. “All this area was restructured in order to make it much more attractive.”

Today, Port Olímpic is home to hotels, shopping, restaurants, nightlife and beaches. “It’s fun to just walk and spend the day there,” he says.

We drift from our conversation about the city to talk about everything from wild boars to chicken farming to coffee culture. “I don’t mean to exaggerate,” Aragón says, “but the two places in the world you can get the best coffee are Italy and Spain.”

Sorjús, a past Rotary International director and the HOC chair the last time the Rotary Convention was in Barcelona in 2002, quizzes me about

Santiago Calatrava, the Spanish architect responsible for the most famous landmark in my hometown of Milwaukee: a stunning pavilion added to the city’s art museum.

It’s all this, the food, the culture, the friendliness, that Barcelona Rotary members will share with convention goers come June, says Aragón. “Barcelona is a very attractive city,” he adds. “It’s a cosmopolitan city. It’s friendly, it’s easygoing. The Mediterranean atmosphere and the surroundings make it a very attractive place.”

Aragón attended his first Rotary Convention in Portland Oregon, in 1990. He was drawn to the opportunity to see the magnitude of Rotary and the ease with which you can make connections.

“You start friendships which then last many, many years,” he says.

The meal has left me stuffed and sleepy. After I’ve had a chance to indulge in another Spanish tradition, the afternoon siesta, I head back to the waterfront for an evening stroll on the promenade along Barceloneta Beach.

In Spain, bullfighting is a legally protected part of the country’s cultural heritage, though one that faces growing opposition. While the last bullfight in Barcelona took place in 2011, you can experience a part of that history with a visit to Las Arenas de Barcelona, only a few stops on the Barcelona Metro from the convention site.

The bullring opened in 1900 and saw its last fight in 1977, standing empty for years before being restored as a shopping centre. Today, walk through the Neo-Mudéjar facade, a Spanish architectural style that draws from the country’s Islamic past and you’ll find dozens of shops, a cinema and places to eat and drink.

“Maybe we don’t like, nowadays, the bullring, the bulls and all of that,” says Laia Marín, a member of the Rotary Club of Barcelona and an architect who worked on the project, “but it was our culture and our history.”

While bullfighting is in Barcelona’s past, Marín says they are working to bring other traditions to the Rotary Convention come June.

“We are planning a very cultural convention, where, if Rotarians come here, it’s easy to get the



From top: A pan of paella in Sitges, a coastal town southwest of Barcelona; Detail on a mosaic-tiled sea serpent bench at Park Güell; the Sagrada Família Basilica.



experience of the Catalan culture,” she says.

Marín, who joined the Rotary Club of Barcelona in 2013 after time as a Rotaractor, went to her first Rotary Convention in 2019 when it was held in Hamburg, Germany. There, she enjoyed learning about everything going on in Rotary beyond her club.

“When you are in an international convention,” she says, “you see what is working.”

Marín takes me up to the arena’s rooftop, where you will find 360-degree panoramas of the city, along with restaurants where you can linger and savour the sights. It is, explains Marín, a favourite place to bring visiting Rotarians for dinner.

“You can see the sunset, you can see Montjuïc, all of that,” she says.

That’s where we’re headed next. Montjuïc, “Jewish Mountain”, is so named for a Jewish cemetery that stood on the hill in the medieval era. There’s also a massive forested urban park that was developed as the site of the 1929 International Exhibition and later renovated for the 1992 Olympics. Today, as you wind through its paths, you’ll find sports venues, museums, gardens and Montjuïc Castle.

From Las Arenas, we walk from the roundabout at Plaça Espanya and along a street lined with fountains until we reach Font Màgica de Montjuïc, an enormous “magic fountain” where you can see choreographed light shows on select evenings (check online for the current schedule). Even during the day, the mist and shade trees make a nice respite from the summer sun.

We hop on an escalator that takes us up past a series of waterfalls to the terrace of the Museu Nacional d’Art



Above and below: Scenes from Park Güell.

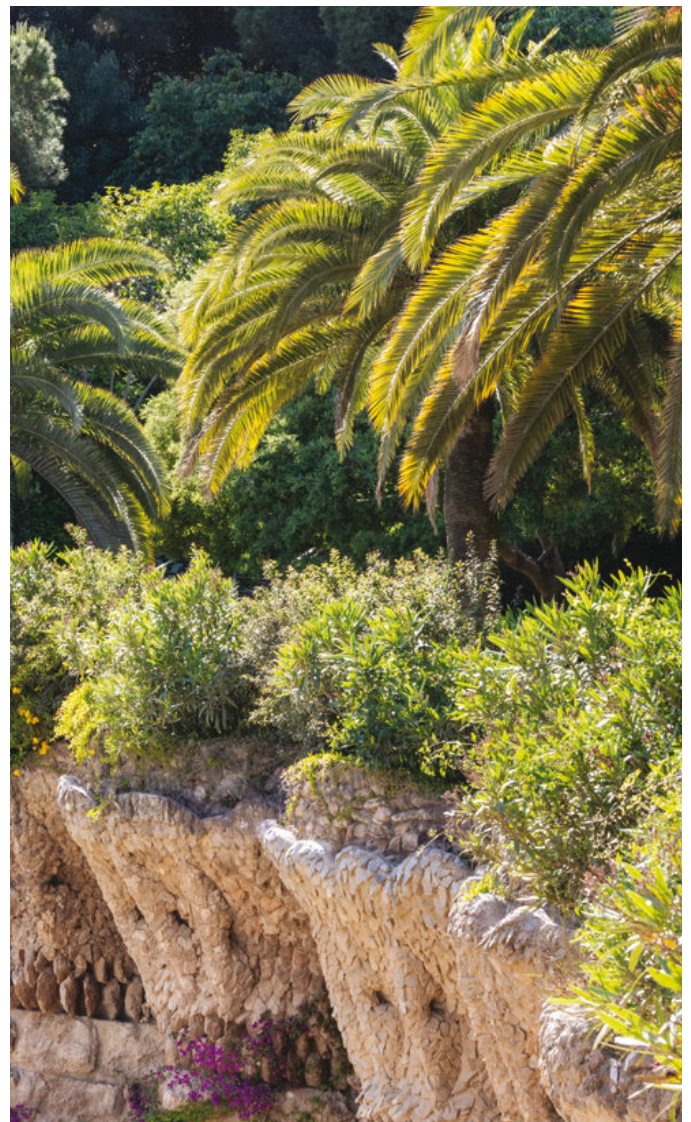
de Catalunya. Join the crowds sitting on the steps in front of the art museum originally the 1929 exhibition's National Palace, for sweeping views of the city.

It's here that I realise just how massive Gaudí's Sagrada Família really is. It's otherworldly as it rises out of the patchwork of buildings below. The church was built to be slightly shorter than Montjuïc and none of Barcelona's other buildings are taller than the church.

We continue meandering through the park until we reach the springboard diving pools from the Barcelona Olympics, immortalised in numerous photos of Olympians diving here with the city skyline in the background. Today, it's been converted into an open-air restaurant, Salts Montjuïc and from our table we enjoy yet more spectacular views of the city.

Albert Torras, my Gothic Quarter tour guide, joins us, looking dapper in preparation for the opening of a photography exhibit he's helped organise later in the day. We're here to partake in another Spanish tradition, la hora del vermut, the pre-meal "vermouth hour".

While my experience drinking vermouth, a fortified wine, is limited to a cocktail mixer, in Spain it's served as its own drink, on the rocks,





From top: colourful bags for sale; monk parakeets by the Arc de Triomf; artistic details.



white or red, as an aperitif along with something to nibble on. “It’s typically before lunch or before dinner or when you wake up,” Torras jokes. “When you want.”

After a bit of day drinking, I’m starting to really like this siesta business.

I pause to catch my breath at my hotel before meeting back up with Aleix Martorell, one of my Rotaract friends from the previous day. This time, we’re heading for Park Güell, a Gaudí-designed public space with more panoramic views of the city.

Eusebi Güell, a longtime

patron of Gaudí’s, commissioned the artist to design a housing development for wealthy families. The venture proved unviable, however and only two of the envisioned 60 houses were built. Gaudí lived in the show house with his father and niece and after Güell died, the city purchased the park.

That’s lucky for us, because what remains looks like it could come straight out of a Disney movie.

The most photographed landmark in the park is a mosaic salamander known as El Drac (“the dragon” in Catalan), halfway up a double staircase at the main entrance. But my favourite part, on the terrace above, is a colourful mosaic-tiled bench in the shape of a sea serpent that snakes along the plaza’s edge. Gaudí popularised this style of mosaic, made of broken ceramics or glass, known as *trencadís* (and the inspiration for the logo of the 2027 Rotary Convention).

As I ooh and ahh after every turn (Fairy tale-like stone viaducts! Houses that look like they belong in Candy Land!), I ask Martorell how people in Barcelona feel about Gaudí: Do they like all of this or are they sick of being known for him? He assures me the art is a welcome part of the city’s identity. “People are very proud,” he says.

Dusk begins to fall and we head to the rooftop bar Tope, ostensibly for sunset photos of the cityscape and the neighbouring pickle-shaped Torre Glòries, a skyscraper that lights up at night. Music thumps and a string of lights illuminates the tables.

It’s time for a toast: to another day in Barcelona, to a city that’s both fantastical and fantastic.

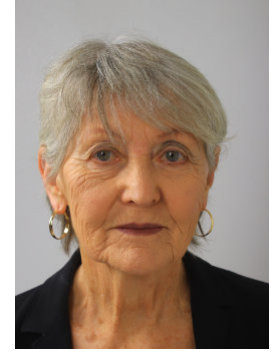
Registration opens in September. For details, please visit convention.rotary.org.

2026-27

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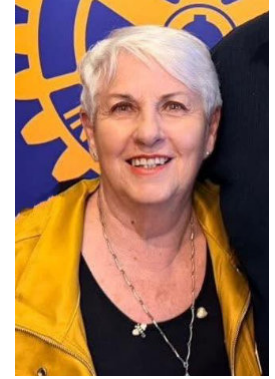
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Coming up...

SEPTEMBER 2026

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NOVEMBER 2026

26-28 NOV - 7TH ALL AFRICA ROTARY ZONE INSTITUTE. Rotary leaders and members from across Africa will gather for five days of strategic dialogue, leadership development, collaboration. Venue: Kampala, Uganda. Registration: www.africazoneinstitute.org.

JUNE 2027

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

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The lesson is simple

By Annette Chiluba, Rotary Peace Fellow
Candidate, Luanshya, Zambia

I have always believed that education can change the direction of a person's life. Growing up in Mansa, Zambia, I saw first-hand how unequal access to opportunities can shape what children believe is possible for their future.

That is why my experience with the Study Buddy Project, organised by the Rotary Club of Luanshya, Zambia (D9210), together with its partners, the Rotary Club of Redding West and Rotary District 5160 in the United States, has stayed with me.

Through the project, I had the opportunity to visit schools, interact with learners and work alongside Rotarians and volunteers. I was warmly welcomed by Rotarian Professor Sherry Coleman and the Rotary Club of Luanshya team, making the experience especially meaningful.

What moved me most was not simply seeing children receive educational materials. It was watching their excitement as they explored them, singing, smiling and proudly displaying what they had received.

I had the opportunity to sit with learners and help them explore the



materials. In those moments, I was reminded that community service is not simply about giving something to someone. It is also about showing up, listening, engaging and helping people feel seen and valued.

The experience connected strongly with the work I have been doing through the Howard Legacy Project, where I have supported young people through school visits, mentorship and education-focused community activities.

It also reminded me of something deeply personal.

My mother did not have the opportunity to receive a formal education. Growing up, my siblings and I would sometimes share with her what we had learned at school. Because of this, I came to understand that learning was never something that belonged only inside a classroom. Knowledge could pass from one person to another and, in doing so, benefit an entire family.

The Study Buddy Project brought that feeling back.

A learning resource placed in the hands of a child can become a source of curiosity and confidence. A Rotarian or volunteer who takes the time to sit with a learner can help that child feel valued and encouraged. When communities invest in education together, they help children imagine futures beyond their present circumstances.

I also learned from the Rotary team that meaningful service is strengthened through partnership. Communities, volunteers, schools, Rotary clubs and other organisations may each bring something different, but the impact becomes far greater when they work together towards a common purpose.

One small moment from the experience will always remain with me. I was given a Rotary pin and heard the words: “You are already doing that, making a difference.”

Those words have stayed with me because they remind me that service does not always begin with a title or position. Sometimes it begins simply by seeing a need and deciding to do something about it.

My experience with the Study Buddy Project strengthened my commitment to education, youth empowerment and community development. It also reminded me that when we serve alongside others, we do not only give. We learn, grow and discover new ways of making a difference.

I am grateful to the Rotary Club of Luanshya for allowing me to be part of this experience.

For me, the greatest lesson is simple: when we invest in a child, we invest in a family, a community and the future.

When we join our efforts in service, even seemingly small acts can create lasting impact.



Rotary Peace Fellow candidate Annette Chiluba helps a young learner write her name on a Study Buddy Lapdesk in Luanshya, Zambia. The Study Buddy Project helps give children practical resources to support their learning.

Creating a **WASH** legacy

Nearly two decades after helping establish a Rotary network dedicated to water, sanitation and hygiene, Ron Denham and Anna Shepherd are being recognised through two funds carrying their names.

The Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Rotary Action Group, WASH-RAG, has established permanent Legacy Funds honouring the contributions Denham and Shepherd have made since the organisation was founded in 2007.

“The two Legacy Funds recognise decades of volunteer service,” said Legacy Lead Carolyn Meub. “These Funds will provide lasting support for high-impact WASH programmes and projects that improve the lives of communities in need around the world.”

Denham served as founding Chair of the WASH-RAG Board of Directors. His involvement helped shape the organisation during its early years as Rotarians interested in safe water, sanitation and hygiene developed an international network around these areas of service.

The Ron Denham Legacy Fund will be administered through the WASH-RAG Foundation and used to support WASH programmes.

Shepherd's involvement also dates back to the organisation's establishment. Appointed Executive Secretary in 2007, she became responsible for much of the operational work behind the growing network.

Over the years, Shepherd supported thousands of members and coordinated international communications while helping to keep the organisation's activities running.



WASH-RAG has established permanent Legacy Funds honouring founding Chair Ron Denham and founding Executive Secretary Anna Shepherd for their contributions to the Rotary Action Group since its establishment in 2007.

The WASH Rotary Action Group Anna Shepherd Legacy Donor Advised Fund will be administered through The Rotary Foundation. Donations to the fund will support WASH projects which have been reviewed by WASH-RAG.

The two funds reflect the different roles Denham and Shepherd played as WASH-RAG developed from a new Rotary Action Group into an international network.

Today, WASH-RAG is one of Rotary's largest Action Groups. Its members work to improve access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene through community-led programmes and projects.

Since its establishment, the group has supported dozens of projects reaching hundreds of thousands of people. It also hosts an annual educational summit and has developed a network of more than 130 WASH Ambassadors.

The Legacy Funds will now connect that ongoing work with two people who were there at the beginning, one helping to lead the organisation and the other helping to keep its international network working from day to day.



Rotary E-Club of D9400 Portuguese International members with Assistant Governor Shereen Hunter during a leadership session focused on building strong foundations for the newly established club.

Building Foundations

A leadership session gave members of the newly established Rotary E-Club of D9400 Portuguese International the chance to talk frankly about what it takes to build a sustainable club from the ground up. Assistant Governor Shereen Hunter joined members for discussions on relationships, integrity, accountability, teamwork and good governance.

Attention was also paid to the club's role within the Portuguese-speaking community and District 9400. The club is being developed as a space where Portuguese-speaking Rotarians can connect while participating in Rotary's wider network of service and international partnerships. "Before we can create meaningful impact in our communities, we need strong foundations," said Public Image Chair, Bianca Vaz.

Additional discussions explored opportunities including youth exchange, The Rotary Foundation, international partnerships, public image and a South Africa-Portugal twinning relationship..

For a club still establishing its identity, the meeting provided an opportunity to examine how leadership, administration and communication work together behind Rotary's service activities. Hunter's visit also gave members access to district-level guidance while working through the practical aspects of establishing a new club.

President Tony de Gouveia is leading the club as it develops its membership, structures and plans for the future. Accountability, leadership and teamwork remain part of building the internal structures needed to support those plans.



Rotarians, Interactors and representatives of local organisations joined forces to distribute meals, Bags of Hope and essential supplies in Worcester.



Worcester's Mandela Day

Music filled the frail care facility at Awendrus Nursing Home as residents joined Rotarians, volunteers and local organisations for a morning of entertainment and fellowship ahead of Mandela Day.

The Rotary Club of Worcester (D9350) organised the 16 July outreach, working with Innovation for the Blind, Mediclinic Worcester, Herotel Worcester and Women of Worcester (WOW), with Rotary members and Interactors also taking part.

At Awendrus, the Innovation for the Blind Band provided live entertainment before residents were served soup and bread. The

outreach extended beyond the nursing home, with further food distributions taking place in OVD.

Mediclinic Worcester donated 190 Bags of Hope, which were distributed among Awendrus, House of Hope, WOW and St Christopher's. Herotel Worcester (through Jacques Debbes) contributed essentials, including coffee, tea and sugar.

The partnership allowed the day's activities to reach several organisations across Worcester. While one partner provided entertainment, others contributed food and essential items and volunteers helped with serving and distributing the donations.

The involvement of Interactors brought younger volunteers into the programme alongside Rotarians and representatives of the participating organisations.

By the end of the outreach, 190 Bags of Hope had been allocated among four local organisations, essential grocery items had been distributed and meals had reached residents at Awendrus and people at OVD.



Her Royal Highness Princess Maseeiso Mohato Seeiso (seated, centre) with the Rotarians, Rotaractors and Friends of Rotary visited St Cecilia Children's Home at Ha Buasono, where 55 blankets, warm clothing, hot soup and fresh bread were provided for the children.

Keeping kids warm

Lesotho winters can be bitterly cold, particularly for 55 children who have had to share the blankets available to them.

The Rotary Club of Mantsopa-Maseru (D9370) visited St Cecilia Children's Home at Ha Buasono on 25 July with a simple answer to that problem: a new blanket for every child.

The Keep the Child Warm project involved the Mantsopa-Maseru club and the Rotary Club of Rosebank (D9400), with additional support from the Rotaract Clubs of Qiloane and the Centre of Accounting Studies and Friends of Rotary in Lesotho.

The children at St Cecilia's are cared for by Fr Mahlaku of the Roman Catholic Church and five house mothers. Although the home receives some

government support, its resources remain limited and all too often essential items, such as blankets, have to be shared by the children.

Along with the 55 blankets, the visitors brought warm clothing for the children and served hot soup and fresh bread before spending the afternoon with them.

Her Royal Highness Princess Maseeiso Mohato Seeiso joined the visit and stayed into the late afternoon, spending time playing with the children alongside Rotarians, Rotaractors and other visitors.

For the children and their house mothers, the project addressed a very practical need. Each child now has a blanket of their own for the cold Lesotho winter.



Joseph Maina during the fitting of an LN-4 prosthetic hand in Nairobi as part of the project coordinated by the Rotary Club of Nairobi Utumishi (D9215).

Restoring Function

A prosthetic hand fitting in Nairobi has provided a Kenyan farmer with renewed use of his arm through the LN-4 prosthetic hand project supported by Rotary.

Joseph Maina, a 52 year old farmer from Baharnic Ocean View Village in Lamu County, Kenya, lost his left hand in a road traffic accident in November 2011. The amputation was below the elbow, allowing him to qualify for a prosthetic fitting through the LN-4 prosthetic hand programme.

Maina was fitted with an LN-4 prosthetic hand in Nairobi through the project coordinated by the Rotary Club of Nairobi Utumishi (D9215) in collaboration with Rotary clubs in District 5110 and District 5160 in Oregon in the United States.

The LN-4 hand is designed to assist individuals who have lost a hand through accidents, birth defects, violence or landmine injuries. The prosthetic device was developed by industrial designer Ernie Meadows after the death of his daughter Ellen. The design was later entrusted to

Rotarians with the request that no one profits from its production or distribution and that recipients receive the prosthetic without charge.

The prosthetic hands are produced by the Ellen Meadows Prosthetic Hand Foundation, which works with Rotary clubs to identify recipients and coordinate fittings.

For the device to function effectively, certain conditions must be met. The amputation must be below the elbow and there must be sufficient remaining forearm length to allow the prosthetic device to be fitted securely and used properly.

Following the fitting, Maina planned to use the prosthetic hand to assist with daily household tasks and farm work.

Rotarians involved in the project encourage fellow Rotary members who encounter individuals who may benefit from the prosthetic hand to refer them to the Rotary Club of Nairobi Utumishi so their details can be assessed for possible participation in the programme.



Toddlers enjoy playtime during the Maternal and Child Health Experience at Solas Khanya Children's Centre.

Rotary E-Club of South Africa One Projects Director Logie Naidoo explains ingredients and meals which mothers and children can enjoy.



LEARNING STARTS EARLY

By 9am, mothers were already arriving at Solas Khanya Children's Centre in Amandawe, an hour before the day's programme was due to start. Some carried babies and others arrived with toddlers.

Pregnant women were also among those attending a Maternal and Child Health Experience organised by the Rotary E-Club of South Africa One (D9370) and the Dillon Trust.

Inside, the setting was deliberately different from a conventional workshop. Child-sized tables held puzzles, play dough, simple instruments and kitchen utensils.

The programme focused on the first 1 000 days of a child's life, an important period for health, learning and development. Rather than simply presenting information, organisers used activities which mothers and children could explore together.

"Health is holistic. The idea was not just to focus on giving advice on physical health but to create an experience," said Iris Canham of the E-Club.

Scents including lemongrass and lavender, colourful fabrics, shapes, classical music, homemade instruments and food showed parents how everyday experiences can become opportunities for learning.

"Children don't need expensive toys or expensive food, but they need loving adults who will talk to them, sing with them, cook with them, let them explore and discover. Learning begins long before school," Canham said.

Healthcare professionals from the Department of Health shared information about maternal and child wellness and screening services. Education specialists discussed early learning and the value of talking and interacting with babies and young children.

Food and nutrition were equally practical. Rotary members Logie Naidoo and Vanessa Rana demonstrated affordable, nutritious meals using familiar ingredients, with mothers joining the discussion about nutrition.



BLAST off!

A countdown echoed across the sports field before a homemade rocket shot into the air, drawing cheers from learners who had spent weeks preparing for the moment.

The Rotary Club of Klerksdorp (D9370) once again brought science and friendly competition together through its annual Rocket Day, hosted this year by Hoërskool Wesvalia. Schools from across the area gathered to test rockets they had designed and built from recycled two-litre plastic bottles.

The challenge was simple in concept but demanding in practice. Teams competed for distance, accuracy and time in the air, with every launch offering a lesson in planning, problem-solving and teamwork.

Throughout the day, learners adjusted fins,

Learners put their designs to the test as homemade rockets made from recycled plastic bottles took to the skies during the Rotary Club of Klerksdorp's annual Rocket Day.

checked launch mechanisms and compared notes with fellow competitors. Some rockets climbed high above the field. Others veered off course, prompting quick discussions about what could be improved before the next attempt.

The event helps make science practical and visible. Instead of learning from a textbook, competitors literally watched their ideas take flight.

School spirit was as important as the results, with teammates celebrating successful launches and proudly represented their schools.

The atmosphere remained lively from start to finish, helped by RS Sound, which kept the energy high throughout the event.

When the final scores were announced, Laerskool Goudkop claimed top honours in the Junior Division. Hoërskool Schoonspruit secured victory in the Senior Division, while Ashton John's High School won the Through the Poles Challenge.



Water Restored

When the first borehole failed to produce enough water, the project team found another way to bring water to St Ludger's Primary School.

The Rotary Club of Marondera (D9210), working with the Rotary Club of Lincoln 14, Nebraska, USA, completed a water project serving the school and surrounding community. Located in Masomera, about 34 kilometres from Marondera, the school has 540 children aged four to 13.

A water survey on 22 November 2025 identified a drilling site near the staff accommodation. Drilling reached 70 metres, but the borehole failed to produce enough water. Club members then discovered a government-drilled borehole nearby that had never been completed. Working with local authorities, the Marondera club was able to finish the installation.

Completed on 13 December 2025, the system includes a solar pump, four 580-watt solar panels, a 200-litre pressure tank and two 5,000-litre storage tanks with community taps. It also connects to the school's existing 2,500-litre tank supplying classrooms and staff accommodation. The project cost US\$7,484.

The system now provides water for the school and neighbouring families, while new water points reduce the distance people need to travel to collect it. An official opening and the installation of a security fence and gate will happen this year.

Learners, teachers and community members gather around the new solar-powered water system at St Ludger's Primary School after the completion of a borehole project delivered by the Rotary Club of Marondera in partnership with the Rotary Club of Lincoln 14, bringing reliable access to clean water for the school and surrounding community.





The Rotary Club of Benoni Aurora supported the annual Art Alive Exhibition, where work by teaching artists and students was displayed and sold.

Art with Purpose

Paintings covered the walls, soup was on the stove and four bonfires offered somewhere warm to gather as artists and visitors came together for Benoni's annual Art Alive Exhibition.

The Rotary Club of Benoni Aurora (D9400) once again supported the four-day exhibition from 29 July to 1 August, hosted by the Art Alive Art School.

Teaching artists and their students displayed their work throughout the school, with pieces available for visitors to purchase. The exhibition attracted people of different ages to browse the artwork before heading to the soup tent or gathering around the fires outside.

The Benoni Aurora club has supported the annual exhibition for several years, helping with ticket sales, providing soup and bread rolls and assisting where

needed during the event.

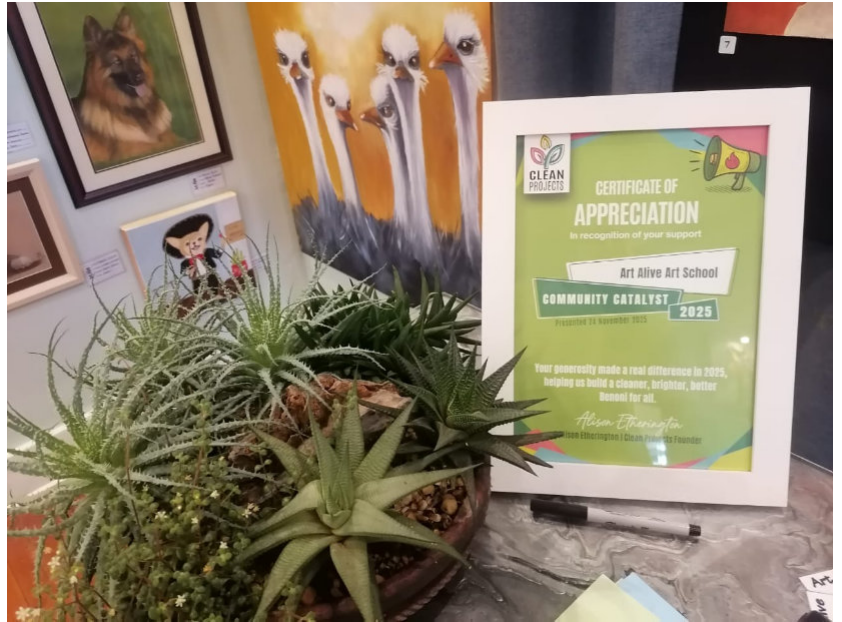
There was also a fundraising element to the exhibition. Artists and teachers donated 108 Charity Squares, small artworks which were offered for sale to visitors. By the end of the exhibition, 91 had been sold.

Money raised through the Charity Squares and ticket sales is donated to Clean Projects, which works on verges and gardens in Benoni.

The funds are used to purchase equipment and consumables needed by the organisation for its work around the city.

The arrangement brings together the Art Alive Art School, local artists and the Benoni Aurora club, with the exhibition providing a marketplace for artists while also raising funds for work taking place beyond the gallery.

Visitors could spend time looking through the students' and teachers' work, buy pieces which caught their attention and contribute to Clean Projects through their entrance tickets



Funds raised from ticket sales and donated Charity Squares went to Clean Projects for equipment and consumables used in its work on Benoni's sidewalks and gardens.



and purchases from the Charity Squares collection.

For the Benoni Aurora club, its role remained practical throughout the four days. Members helped visitors at the ticket table, kept the soup and bread rolls moving and supported the Art Alive team with the running of the event.

By the time the exhibition closed on Saturday, most of the donated Charity Squares had found new owners and another year's ticket sales had added to the funds available for maintaining Benoni's verges and gardens.





Founding members of the new Glenwood House Interact Club celebrate their official chartering alongside members of the Rotary Club of George and visiting Interactors from neighbouring schools after receiving their Interact pins during the ceremony.

Ready to Serve!

A commitment to service took centre stage at Glenwood House as learners gathered to celebrate the official chartering of the school's new Interact club, creating fresh opportunities for young people to serve their community through Rotary.

Members of the Rotary Club of George and Interact Clubs of York, Bramble Hill and George High Schools (D9350) celebrated the charter of the Interact Club of Glenwood House and welcomed its 22 founding Interactors to the Rotary family.

Guest speaker Jonathan de Graaff encouraged the new members to see leadership as an opportunity to support others and highlighted the importance of inclusion, diversity and community involvement. He welcomed the learners into the international Rotary family, reminding them that local acts of service can have an impact beyond their immediate community.

The evening also saw the induction of the club's first executive committee. Iya Kuze was inducted as charter president, with Ian Vermaak taking on the role of vice president.

Younger learners were also included in the celebration, with a group of Grade 7 pupils attending as guests ahead of plans to establish an EarlyAct club later in the year, creating a pathway

for service leadership across the school.

The official Certificate of Recognition was presented by Rotary Club of George President Wilhelm van der Vyver to Glenwood House representatives Trevor Harbottle and Genevieve Claassen.

During the ceremony, Claassen outlined the club's first service projects, which will support Life Academy, the National Sea Rescue Institute, Options Care Centre and ODIN, an organisation that cares for animals across the Karoo and Eden districts.



Receiving their Interact pins during the club's charter ceremony.



For the American visitors, discussions broadened a journey which had begun with travel through Tanzania. Time spent with local Rotarians created opportunities to consider exchanges between districts and clubs, as well as larger projects which could draw on The Rotary Foundation.

Clearer Connections

A pair of reading glasses can be easy to take for granted, but for an ageing bead worker whose livelihood depends on seeing fine detail, it can make work possible again.

That became clear when a group of Rotarians from California, North Carolina, South Carolina and New York travelled through Tanzania on a 15-day visit combining sightseeing, fellowship and service.

Their journey took them through some of the country's best-known landscapes, including Serengeti National Park, Ngorongoro Crater and Tarangire National Park. Away from the wildlife reserves, they spent time with Tanzanian Rotarians and local communities, turning the journey into an opportunity to build new Rotary connections.

The group met Rotarians in Arusha, Kilimanjaro and Dar es Salaam, where conversations ranged from current club activities to possibilities for working together in future. Youth

Exchanges, Friendship Exchanges and humanitarian projects supported through Rotary Foundation Global Grants were among the opportunities discussed.

The meetings allowed members from both countries to learn more about the work being done in their communities and establish relationships which could lead to future partnerships.

There was also a practical service component to the trip. During visits to Maasai communities, the group worked with local partners to set up vision-testing stations and distribute more than 1,000 pairs of reading glasses.

The effect could be seen almost immediately as people tried different strengths and found the pair that worked for them.

“I can read again,” one recipient said after putting on a pair.

For some older Maasai artisans, clearer vision has a direct connection to their ability to earn an income. Traditional beadwork and handmade ornaments require close, detailed work, and deteriorating eyesight can make those tasks increasingly difficult.

A suitable pair of reading glasses allowed some recipients to once again see the fine detail needed for their work. For those who rely on beadwork and other crafts for an income, the practical benefit would continue long after the visitors had left.

The glasses project was straightforward in its approach. The travelling group worked alongside local partners who knew the communities, setting up stations where people could have their vision tested and be matched with an appropriate pair of glasses.

The trip also offered the visitors a closer look at Rotary in Tanzania. Meeting club members

provided opportunities to exchange project ideas, discuss local needs and explore where international cooperation could be useful.

Those conversations continued as the group travelled, allowing fellowship and service to develop alongside one another rather than as separate parts of the visit. By the time the visitors returned home, they had new Rotary contacts in Arusha, Kilimanjaro and Dar es Salaam and opportunities for future exchanges and projects to explore.

For the recipients of the reading glasses, the result was more immediate. Some could read more clearly again. Others could return to the detailed work involved in producing beadwork and handmade crafts.

A journey through Tanzania had ultimately brought together several parts of Rotary: fellowship, service, international understanding and relationships with the potential to continue well beyond the 15 days.



For more than 1 000 people, it was a beautiful day when they found the right pair of glasses and saw details in front of them more clearly.



Vanessa Rana leads a teaching session during the launch of the pilot Academic Support Programme.

M?SSING PIECES

Heavy rain drummed outside Isipingo Beach Intermediate School but inside, a group of learners were more interested in why they had been chosen to spend part of the morning with Rotary.

The Rotary E-Club of South Africa One (D9370) launched its pilot Academic Support Programme at the school on 29 July, bringing learners, parents, educators and community partners together to provide children with additional academic support.

The programme was developed by retired educator and Rotarian Vanessa Rana, drawing on lessons from the Study Buddy Campaign. It combines academic resources with mentorship and encourages parents, volunteers and learners to take an active role.

“Every child learns differently. Sometimes all a learner needs is a little extra time, the right resources, encouragement and someone who believes they can succeed,” Rana said.

During the launch, Iris Canham used a puzzle with missing and incorrect pieces to illustrate what can happen when gaps in understanding aren't identified.

“This is what we are doing each day when we don't meet children where they are. Expecting them to complete a puzzle with missing and

incorrect pieces. We frustrate them and rob them of the joy of learning,” she said.

Rather than expecting learners to simply keep pace, the programme aims to identify where help is needed and provide the time and resources to address those areas. Parents of learners selected for the pilot programme attended the launch to learn how they can support their children outside the classroom.

The initiative also brings together the E-Club, Isipingo Beach Intermediate School and Isipingo Beach Library. Speaking on behalf of the library, Sivi Govender welcomed its involvement, while E-Club Projects Director Logie Naidoo thanked the school's principal and staff for their support.

Rana then led a teaching session with learners and parents, demonstrating how the programme could work in practice.

Outside, the winter rain continued. As the Rotary team prepared to leave, one parent walked his child back to class after attending the launch. It was a small moment that reflected the programme taking shape inside: parents, educators and community partners working together to help learners find some of the missing pieces.



A severe storm damaged the ablutions at a local rugby club. Thanks to a disaster relief grant, the Worcester club has been able to help. Below: The ceiling before and after.



Play can resume

When players returned to Goudini United Rugby Club after a severe storm, damaged ablution facilities were among the problems facing the community club.

The Rotary Club of Worcester (D9350) stepped in, with Past President Juanita Wilkinson successfully applying for a District Flood Relief Grant to restore and upgrade the facilities.

The work included a complete renovation of the toilets, improving hygiene and comfort at grounds used by players, supporters, visiting clubs and community members.

Established in 2010, Goudini United is based in the Goudini-Weg area. In a letter to the Worcester club, chair Kobus Jones said the ablution facilities

had been a long-standing concern and the renovation had made a noticeable difference.

“This upgrade means much more to us than just new plumbing and neat walls,” Jones wrote. “It restores the dignity of our members.”

The project formed part of recovery efforts following storm damage in Worcester. Rather than adding something new to the grounds, the grant allowed the club to restore infrastructure needed for training, matches and other activities.

With the ablutions restored, Goudini United once again has facilities able to cope with the regular demands of a community sports ground. Jones ended his letter with an invitation for Worcester club members to visit and see the completed work.

AFRICA IN BRIEF



District Governor Dr Melonie Gobel used the strings of her guitar to illustrate the value of working together during her recent visit to the Rotary Club of Phoenix (D9370). Rather than each string producing a note on its own, she encouraged members to consider what could be achieved when the strings worked together to make music. The visit included discussions about leadership, community service and future club projects and ended with Gobel and club members singing “Heal the World” together.



The Anns of the Rotary Club of Helderberg (D9350) donated goods worth R4 800 to Reach for Recovery in Somerset West on 4 August. The NGO provides free emotional and practical support to breast cancer patients and their families, with much of its work carried out by trained volunteers who are themselves breast cancer survivors. Reach for Recovery supports people after diagnosis, during treatment and through recovery. Handing over the donation are Rotary Anns Rejane van der Grijp, Mieke MacDonald and Gayl Boon.

The Rotary Club of Flamingo-Welkom (D9370) held its annual Hospice Golf Day on 8 August, continuing a fundraising tradition which has now run for 37 events. The club organises and hosts the golf day in support of Goldfields Hospice, with all profits from the event going to the organisation. At the golf day are, from left, Jill Lombard, Vicki Harrison, President Audra Visser, Evert Demmer and lanthe Muller.





Twenty four teams gathered at Northmead Bowling Club for the annual Charity Bowls Challenge hosted by the Rotary Club of Benoni Aurora (D9400) and its Anns Club on 31 May. Players of all ages and experience levels enjoyed a day of friendly competition, refreshments and fellowship, with coffee and biscuits welcoming participants before play and a curry and rice lunch served during the event. Raffle prizes added to the occasion, with winners including the DGE Grace van Zyl and the Froneman family of the Rotary Club of Springs Gold. Proceeds from the event will support community projects undertaken by the Benoni Aurora club and the Rotary Anns Club in the Benoni area.



The Rotary Club of Worcester (D9350) supported 11 learners at Merwida Primary School with new school uniforms, while also donating books from the club's collection to the school. The initiative combined two practical areas of support, providing learners with appropriate school clothing while adding books to the resources available for reading and literacy development.



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