

MAY 2021

# Rotary

AFRICA | south



## Our Team

### Editor:

Sarah van Heerden

### Administration:

Sharon Robertson

### Chairman:

Gerald Sieberhagen

### Directors:

Greg Cryer  
Andy Gray  
Peter Hugo  
Natty Moodley  
Annemarie Mostert  
Lee-Ann Shearing

### Publisher:

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**Editorial contributions:**  
[rotaryafrica@mweb.co.za](mailto:rotaryafrica@mweb.co.za)

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(Southern and Eastern Africa)

**Postal address:** PO Box 563  
Westville, 3630  
South Africa

**Telephone:** +27 (31) 267 1848

**Email:** [rotaryafrica@mweb.co.za](mailto:rotaryafrica@mweb.co.za)

**[www.rotaryafrica.com](http://www.rotaryafrica.com)**

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Sarah van Heerden

**Editor**

# WELCOME

Preparations for the centennial began a few years ago and I remember at the time saying, "It's fine, there is more than enough time to get this done," and being told that I would be surprised how quickly time will fly.

Well, I am surprised, but after a remarkable event, I am also proud. This was not a conference to celebrate a single club, district or country, but rather a mind-blowingly brilliant celebration of the talents and achievements of people, especially Rotarians, on our continent.

We are now marching in a period where we will see clubs starting to celebrate their centennial charter anniversaries and we will celebrate with them. However, we will never again have opportunity to celebrate 100 years in Africa.

A lot has changed since Rotary arrived here and since we are a community of changemakers, lots more will change. Change is never easy. It's funny, this morning I popped into our local Woolies and as I was dodging puddles in the parking lot, I had a flashback. A vivid recollection of this time last year standing in a queue, at least 1.8 metres from the person in front of me, and waiting up to 20 minutes to enter the store. From 19 March until the last week of April in 2020, I had left my house perhaps, three or four times. I was uneasy, unaccustomed to the changes and worried because we knew virtually nothing about the virus. For me it was particularly scary since I am a solo parent and don't have family in my town. At that point, inter-town travel restrictions were in place and if I became infected and was hospitalised, where would my son go? So, yes, I became THAT person, I doused myself in sanitiser, stood at least two metres from everyone and challenged those who were obnoxious enough to go maskless. After a few months, I adapted. The fears decreased and where I once saw uncertainty, I now saw opportunity.

What once seemed so foreign and awkward, is now second nature. It made me think that perhaps we had all become a little too settled in our comfort zones and perhaps, we should try to do a few scary things every now and again.

So this month, why not try to do a few scary things - take that leap of faith, the outcome may surprise you!

## The Four-Way Test

Of the things we think, say or do:

- 1) Is it the TRUTH?
- 2) Is it FAIR to all concerned?
- 3) Will it build GOODWILL and BETTER FRIENDSHIPS?
- 4) Will it be BENEFICIAL to all concerned?

# Contents

04	President's Message
05	Foundation Trustee Chair Message
06	Convention Update
07	A New Perspective
08	Public Image
09	Opportunity
10	The End is Nigh
11	Wanted: Southern African Hams
13	Doing Good is Good for You
18	Breaking the Silence
19	Mummy President
20	From the Shadows
23	Celebrating Africa
29	Challenge accepted
31	Time Passes, Rotary Remains
32	Together, We Educate
33	Oh Duck
34	Comfortable Treatment
35	Ahoy me Hearties
36	Africa in Brief
40	Celebrating Clubs
42	Wall of Honour

# President's message

Holger Knaack,  
Rotary International President (2020/21)



## Dear Rotarians, Rotaractors and friends,

For years, Susanne and I hosted many Rotary Youth Exchange students in our home. This programme was an entry point to Rotary for me and my heart is truly in it. When Rotary's exchange programmes were suspended because of COVID-19 to keep students and families safe, we felt sorry, especially for the participants, because those years cannot be repeated.

As we look ahead with hope, we thank Youth Exchange officers, host families and other volunteers for their contributions in years past. We are hopeful that in-person exchanges will be back next year. And because of the many uncertainties, we're encouraging districts to offer virtual exchanges as a way of connecting students, families and volunteers.

For those who are not able to participate in Rotary Youth Exchange, Rotary offers other opportunities. New Generations Service Exchange (NGSE) is a Rotary programme that deserves wider recognition: It is an excellent opportunity for young people ages 18 to 30 to participate in community service as individuals or in a group and to gain internship experience. Simukai Matshalaga, a Rotaractor from Zimbabwe, stayed with us in Ratzeburg during her NGSE experience three years ago.

*When I applied for the New Generations Service Exchange programme, I did not realise that I was signing up for a life-changing experience. This programme gave me that opportunity and much more. It taught me about the importance of failing fast, learning quicker and being myself.*

*Some of my greatest experiences happened at the dinner table. The warmth and kindness of every home I lived in still resonate with me today. It took me weeks to understand how a stranger could care for me as deeply as these members of the Rotary family did. I am inspired by the lessons of humility I learned from all the amazing people I met. I came to understand a new culture and realised that the*

*only things that separate us as people are our experiences and, at times, our false assumptions.*

*Professionally, it gave me confidence in my own abilities as an engineer. Seeing how other organisations handled problems made me aware that the best person to solve the challenges in my country was me. Returning home from northern Germany, I declined a promotion, quit my job and began building a family business - a decision that previously I would have never made, out of fear.*

*I am indebted to the Rotary family. I am not sure whether the friends, mentors, and families I left behind knew that they changed my life permanently. I hope they now do.*

New Generations Service Exchange changed Simukai's life. It can change yours, too. All Rotary members can experience something similar at any time: I encourage everyone to take a virtual journey this month and visit meetings of other clubs online. You will see how different Rotary is around the world as you meet great people and make new friends.

Let us build upon these connections forged online - and later, when the time is right, enjoy in-person exchanges with them through Rotary Friendship Exchange, another excellent programme for Rotary members of all ages.

Our ability to meet in person is limited now, but we know that Rotary Opens Opportunities, always. Now is the time to get ready, so that when the pandemic is behind us, Rotary's exchange programmes will come back stronger than before, serving a world that is yearning to reconnect.

*Holger Knaack*



# Foundation Trustee Chair

KR (Ravi) Ravindran

In the classic film *Lawrence of Arabia*, Peter O'Toole plays TE Lawrence, the British scholar, military officer and author who helped Arab tribes in their struggle for independence against the Ottoman Empire.

Lawrence leads a group of Bedouin warriors through the desert for a surprise attack on the Ottoman port of Aqaba. As they reach the end of the desert, they discover that a soldier, Gasim, has fallen off his camel during the night. But it is morning, and the tribesmen, led by Sherif Ali, played in the movie by Omar Sharif, advise Lawrence that going back to find him would be futile, that Gasim would already be dead given the sandstorms and the scorching heat. "Gasim's time has come; it is written," one of the soldiers tells Lawrence.

But Lawrence does go back and finds Gasim near death, staggering in the dunes. When they return to camp, Ali offers Lawrence water. Before taking a drink, Lawrence looks at him and says: "Nothing is written."

This unforgettable scene means more than just a quotable movie line; it represents a way of looking at the world. It is a challenge to fatalism - that we must accept a certain outcome because of the way it has always been. No, Lawrence says, history is not written, yet.

So, it is with The Rotary Foundation. We have not yet emerged from the sandstorm of the COVID-19 pandemic and the economic fallout from it. We are still occupied by work to raise awareness, deliver critical personal protective equipment, and provide support for frontline workers.

We do not know the day when, standing beside our polio eradication partners, we will announce that for the second time in history, a disease has been eradicated. We do know that, because we have worked steadfastly for years, the end of that story will be written soon.

And thanks to a \$15.5 million contribution from the Otto & Fran Walter Foundation, we are also adding a new chapter in the story of our expansion of the Rotary Peace Centres: Plans are underway to launch a new peace certificate centre in the Middle East or North Africa.

Rotary is engaged in so many noble efforts; it is an ongoing story that inspires me even more than *Lawrence of Arabia*. We do not yet know the name of the baby whose life will be saved because of a maternal and child grant from Rotary, or the name of the girl who will learn to read with our support. When will those grants start, and will your district - or you - be directly involved?

Nothing is written. We write it.

## Rotary at a glance

**Rotary clubs: 36 680**

**Members: 1 193 804**

**Rotaract clubs: 9 892**

**Members: 222 711**

**Interact clubs: 15 880**

**Members: 365 240**

**RCCs: 11 610**

As at 17 April 2021

▲ Increase

▼ Decrease







## Find Project Partners

Thousands of Rotary and Rotaract clubs have shared their projects on Rotary Showcase since it launched in 2012. Now Rotary has added new features that make this online tool even more useful.

Your club can now post proposed projects and seek partners for those projects. You can share project details, ask for financial or other support and connect with other clubs. Potential partners can search Rotary Showcase to find proposed projects to join and contact project creators directly.

Learn more at [my.rotary.org](https://my.rotary.org)



# CONVENTION UPDATE

Experienced Rotary International Convention attendees know that it's important to arrive early, because even before the convention gets underway, there's always plenty to do. Preconvention events offer a lot of great information, as well as opportunities to connect with other Rotary members. With the 2021 convention transformed into a virtual event, travel logistics are no longer a factor and these preconvention gatherings are open to all. This is a great year to participate in everything that comes before the main event.

**Rotaract Preconvention:** This event offers the chance to increase your understanding of Rotaract, to learn from and share tips and ideas with other participants and virtually network with Rotaractors and Rotarians from around the world.

**Rotary Youth Exchange Officers Preconvention:** This virtual event will provide you an opportunity to network with Rotary members and volunteers involved in Rotary Youth Exchange. You'll also gain vital knowledge that will help you improve your local programme or get one started.

**Intercountry Committees Preconvention:** This event, called Opening Opportunities for Peace, will feature inspirational speakers, practical breakout sessions and networking opportunities to help you start or expand an intercountry committee relationship in order to foster goodwill and peace around the world.

The 2021 convention will be held from 12-16 June; all preconvention events will take place from 10-11 June.



# A New Perspective

**PDG ERIC KIMANI, ENDOWMENT/MAJOR GIFTS ADVISER  
ROTARY REGION 28, ZONE 22**

PDG Eric Kimani is a member of the Rotary Club of Nairobi Muthaiga North (D9212), one of Kenya's dynamic, pace-setter clubs, and is the Endowment and Major Gifts Adviser for Region 28 in Zone 22. The region comprises six districts in eastern and southern Africa: Districts 9210, 9211, 9212, 9350, 9370 and 9400.

EMGA is one of five regional leadership positions created to help Rotary club members and District leadership to achieve their Rotary goals and enhance their activities directed at "Doing Good in the World".

It is critically important that Rotary club members and district leadership understand that regional leaders are the servants and in no way their superiors. It is also important to note that those in these positions answer to all Rotarians and to all district leaders. This means that anyone can approach me for assistance on all matters relating to endowments and major gifts.

A special focus for EMGA is to seek outright gifts and bequests of \$25 000 or more to The Rotary Foundation. I would be happy to come to your club or to any other training session to speak and enlighten Rotarians on my work as your EMGA.

I am delighted and looking forward to work with you to make your Rotary life and consequently your whole life exciting!

Contact Eric at:

Email: [eric@palmhousedairies.com](mailto:eric@palmhousedairies.com)

Website [www.erickimani.org](http://www.erickimani.org)

Phone: +25 472 251 6223



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EMAIL ROTARY, ROTARACT AND INTERACT CONTENT TO [ROTARYAFRICA@MWEB.CO.ZA](mailto:ROTARYAFRICA@MWEB.CO.ZA)



# Public Image

**WITH ROTARY REGIONAL PUBLIC IMAGE  
COORDINATOR LEE-ANN SHEARING**

Connection. What does it mean? I found a few definitions which we can consider: a relationship in which a person or thing is linked or associated with something else; the definition of connection is that something is linked with another or associated with another or that there is a relationship between two or more things; a person, especially one of influence or importance, with whom one is associated, as by kinship or common interests, a logical relationship or association of two or more things

However, I am not really sure that these apply to connections in terms of Rotary. I would like to share two stories which, to me, perfectly illustrate the value of the connections in Rotary and how these make things happen.

Nearly a decade ago, one of the members of my club, Elizabeth, became involved with Sleeping Children Around the World (SCAW) after it held an outreach project in Zimbabwe. She joined the volunteer team that went to Uganda and then another, that went to India. Her team leader in Uganda was Rotarian Dave Dryden, a past president and chairman of SCAW.

Elizabeth's daughter, Paida, left school a few years ago and she was accepted at a Canadian university. The mother and daughter travelled to Canada and when they arrived, Dave met them at the airport and arranged for a shuttle to the town of Peterborough where the university was located. The next morning, they got a call from Judge Allan, a Rotarian with the Rotary Club of Peterborough (D7010) who introduced them to another Rotarian, Brenda Booth from the neighbouring Rotary Club of Kawartha. When Paida later moved off campus, members of the two clubs gave her old furniture for her new accommodation. Thanks to her Rotaract experience in Zimbabwe, Paida, helped found the Rotaract Club of Trent University.

After graduating in 2018, Paida worked for the City of Peterborough library until December 2020 when she moved to British Columbia to pursue a career in forensics at a laboratory. Elizabeth contacted the presidents of the Rotary Clubs of Peace Arch Peninsula and South Surrey (D5050). Members of these clubs met Paida at the airport, and helped her to settle in. Dave Dryden has remained a friend and still checks on Paida from time to time.

My own experience was not as life changing but nonetheless still had a huge impact, not only for myself but for the beneficiaries. I got a Facebook message from a dear non-Rotarian friend in Johannesburg who heard of a stroke victim from near Victoria Falls who needed a wheelchair so that his family could move him after he was released from hospital. A few calls and messages to Rotarians in Harare and at the Rotary Club in Victoria Falls later, I sourced a wheelchair from the Rotary Club of Harare Dawn and found transport for it to Victoria Falls. The day before the transport was due to leave, the Victoria Falls club asked if there was another wheelchair for a boy in Hwange. The boy lived with his grandmother and his wheelchair was so badly broken that it was non-functional. Again, Harare Dawn came to the rescue and both wheelchairs were sent to Victoria Falls. I will never forget the photographs of the young man and his beaming grandmother.

These are just two examples of how Rotary connects the world, but do we share these kinds of stories with potential members? Are we underplaying or overlooking the power of these personal stories of connection when we talk about Rotary to others?

What is your story? You owe it to the world to tell your story.





# Opportunity

**THE ROTARY FOUNDATION CADRE MEMBER,  
PDG PATRICK COLEMAN**

May is the month when Rotary focuses on our youth and well, we cannot think about the youth without thinking about mothers!

Just before St Patrick's Day 2012, I was chatting with a few friends about the upcoming 'holiday' after which I was named (all my brothers have biblical names, but I was named after the Irish saint). I explained that my mother would telephone me on or near that date every year and wish me a "Happy St Patrick's Day."

As we were talking my phone rang and, sure enough, it was my father's number. I announced that it was probably my mother calling two days early. Everyone laughed!

Sadly, it was my father calling to let me know that my mother had suffered a massive heart attack.

She was gone.

I travelled back to California for the funeral which became a celebration of her incredible life. It was, according to the young funeral director, the most unusual service that she had ever seen as members of the church and community laughed and cried through the two-hour service. It was, quite truly, a celebration. The funeral director saw hundreds of funerals in a year, yet this funeral touched her in such a way that she said, "This is the kind of funeral I want."

I explained to her that "If this is the kind of funeral you want, then that is the kind of life you must live."

Every year we celebrated our Mother's 21st birthday. Every year. It was a miracle that she never aged and we, her sons, knew better than to ask. We were told (by our very wise father) that "A gentleman never asks a lady about her age."

When I married in 1973 we all began celebrating our Mother's 29th birthday. After all, 21-year-old women did not have married sons.

A year later Christopher was born and we began celebrating our Mother's 39th birthday. After all, 29-year-old women did not have grandchildren.

As the family grew and more grandchildren began to arrive, we all celebrated our Mother's (now known as "G'Ma") 49th birthday – after all, 39-year-old ladies did not have 14 grandchildren!

The NEXT generation of Colemans came on the scene

when Christopher married Jennifer and the first great grandchild was born: Isaac. She took on another title: G'g'ma. We all began celebrating our Mother's 59th birthday. After all, 49-year-old women did not have great grandchildren.

Ultimately, her oldest great-grandson became a teenager and one of the best kept secrets in the family became known: our Mother, born in 1930, began to celebrate her actual birthday every year. After all... She said when you reach 80 you have earned bragging rights!

**"IF THIS IS THE  
KIND OF FUNERAL  
YOU WANT, THEN  
THAT IS THE KIND  
OF LIFE YOU MUST  
LIVE."**



# The End is Nigh

When I was a young boy growing up in London after the war, it was a common sight to see people in the streets holding up placards saying, “The End is Nigh.” Can we say the same about Polio? asks Richard Brooks, Region 28 End Polio Now Regional Coordinator.

Well let’s look at some recent statistics since 2019. In 2019 there were 176 Wild Polio Virus 1 (WPV1) cases recorded globally (147 in Pakistan and 29 in Afghanistan) and last year, there were 140 (84 in Pakistan and 56 in Afghanistan). As at 28 February 2021 there have only been two WPV1 cases (one each in Pakistan and Afghanistan)

Another interesting statistic is that from September 2019 to the end of February 2020 there were only 15 cases in Pakistan and 11 cases in Afghanistan - a total of just 26 cases in six months. In August 2020, Rotary celebrated the certification of Africa as polio free; India was declared polio free in 2014.

Looking back we can see how remarkable the progress has been in 36 years. When Rotary first embarked on a mission to eradicate polio in 1985 there were 350 000 recorded polio cases in the world. This is why our polio awareness activities are essential. We need to remind people that this horrific disease can easily be prevented.

Polio is highly infectious, crippling and potentially fatal. It predominantly affects young children and while there is no cure, there are effective vaccines. To eradicate polio, infection must be prevented. This is done by immunising every child until the wild polio virus is eliminated.

Rotary is committed to continue its efforts until the World Health Organization declares polio eradicated. This means the interruption of the transmission of polio for at least three years, in the presence of appropriate surveillance.

The virus is still endemic in two countries, Pakistan

and Afghanistan. Due to political turmoil and upheaval in these countries, millions of children still have to be immunised. The coronavirus pandemic has presented some obstacles, which put the polio immunisation programme on hold. Nevertheless, Rotary International is committing millions of US dollars to fund polio eradication teams entering the accessible parts of these countries, often under armed guard.

Which brings me to funding. Rotary has once again this year committed \$50 million to the eradication of polio and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation will match each dollar raised 2 to 1. This means it will give a donation of \$100 million for the \$50 million raised by Rotary.

As at 28 February 2020, Rotary had raised \$28.556 million for the 2019/20 Rotary year and for the same period this year, \$24.858 million was raised.

These contributions will also fund the deployment of immunisation teams into countries affected by vaccine-derived cases. Although WPV1 cases have dramatically declined, there were 1 067 cases of Vaccine-derived cases in 2020. Many of these cases occurred in Africa, including countries like Burkina Faso (59), Chad (99), Cote d’Ivoire (72) and the DRC (78).

Naturally, Rotary will continue to fund the cost of vaccines and immunisation team deployments to Pakistan and Afghanistan. The objective is to reach a point where no more WPV1 cases are reported in these two countries.

Once that point is reached, there’s a further three-

year period during which those countries must maintain a zero-infection rate before being certified polio free. For this, funding must remain available to continue immunisation and surveillance efforts.

After the turmoil of the coronavirus pandemic during the last year, it should be extremely clear why polio must be eradicated once and for all. If it is not, there is a serious risk of more polio outbreaks resulting in disruptions and suffering.

Rotary needs to raise the required \$50 million. Districts can assist by contributing some of their District Designated Funds to End Polio Now. Clubs may also assist by raising funds for and awareness of the cause.

Rotary achieved the goal of \$50 million in 2019/20 and it can be done again this year. Yes, the world is in the middle of the coronavirus pandemic, but the threat of polio remains.

## PE Polio Hero

**MICHAEL ZOETMULDER**

**ROTARY CLUB OF PORT ELIZABETH SUNRISE**

Through his company, Michael organises sporting events and uses them to support Rotary. The Peoples Triathlon is one such event and generated funds for PolioPlus.

The recent event was held on 14 March 2021 and ZSports donated R5 000 to PolioPlus on behalf of the Rotary Club of St Francis Bay (D9370). The event was a great success with End Polio Now branding prominently displayed and even included on the event website and in emails.

## Donate Now

To donate to our PolioPlus programme see: [www.endpolio.org/donate](http://www.endpolio.org/donate)

## PolioPlus

For more than 30 years, Rotary and its partners have driven the effort to eradicate polio worldwide. Our PolioPlus programme was the first initiative to tackle global polio eradication by vaccinating children on a massive scale and is a core partner in the Global Polio Eradication Initiative. Rotary club members have contributed more than \$2.1 billion and countless volunteer hours and Rotary's advocacy efforts have played a role in decisions by governments to contribute more than \$10 billion to the effort.

## Polio Today

When Rotary and its partners formed the GPEI in 1988, there were 350 000 cases of polio in 125 countries every year. We have reduced polio cases by 99.9 percent.

## Challenges

Rotary and our partners have made tremendous progress against polio, but eliminating all cases is going to take even more progress and perseverance. Afghanistan and Pakistan face unique challenges, including political insecurity, highly mobile populations, difficult terrain and, in some instances, vaccine refusal and misinformation.

With sufficient resources, the commitment of national governments, and innovations that improve access to remote areas, Rotary is optimistic that polio can be eliminated.

## Celebrity Support

Rotary has a growing list of public figures and celebrities who support our fight against polio, including Bill Gates, co-chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation; actors Kristen Bell and Archie Panjabi; actor and wrestling superstar John Cena; supermodel Isabeli Fontana; Nobel Peace Prize laureate Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu; action-movie star Jackie Chan; actor Donald Sutherland; boxing great Manny Pacquiao; pop star Psy; golf legend Jack Nicklaus; conservationist Jane Goodall; premier violinist Itzhak Perlman; Grammy Award winners A.R. Rahman, Angélique Kidjo, and Ziggy Marley; and peace advocate Queen Noor of Jordan. These ambassadors help Rotary educate the public about the disease and the fight to end polio for good.



# Wanted: Southern African HAMS

Rotary Fellowship, Rotarians of Amateur Radio (ROAR), are looking for amateur radio operators (hams) in Southern Africa to participate in a special event Ham Radio station in celebration of 100 years of Rotary in Africa and to link up with the planned Australian Centennial event.

Rotarian Bill Main (VK4ZD), from Queensland, Australia and a member of the Rotary E-Club of South Africa One (D9370), has appealed for help in identifying Rotarians who may be interested in participating. He is planning a similar event for the Rotary Centennial in Australia. Main (VK4ZD) and his wife Diane (VK4DI) are both active Amateur Radio enthusiasts and members of the fellowship. These hams communicate on a worldwide basis with other hams. There are many facets to the hobby including Morse Code (or CW as it is colloquially known) and voice communications. Hams are

identified by a call sign that indicates to others where they are located, for example, South African's are prefixed by ZS or ZR.

In most countries, radio clubs can apply for a Special Event call to commemorate a milestone event. When The Rotary Foundation celebrated its centennial, Australian members of ROAR applied for the call VI100TRF (VI designated Australia, 100 designated 100 Years and TRF designated The Rotary Foundation) for a period of three months. The call sign was approved and Australian Rotarian Hams activated the call sign to publicise the Foundation's 100 Years and its success. As well as the 'On Air' activity, the hams use an international website ([www.qrz.com](http://www.qrz.com)) to find information on call signs. The VI100TRF page was set up to reflect the Rotary Foundation's ethos and focus.

Contact Bill Main at [bill@mainlinkit.com](mailto:bill@mainlinkit.com)





# Doing good is good for you

Participating in charity strengthens the individual, writes PDG Joe Otin (D9212, Kenya), the CEO of The Collective, a digital ad agency. He currently serves as the Rotary International (RI) Representative to United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and he is also the Co-Chairman of the Rotary/UNEP Partnership on the Adopt-a-River Initiative for Sustainable Development.

Twenty years ago, at an advertising agency in Nairobi, the team consisting of creatives, client services, media and administrative staff had a discussion about personal values.

That was rather unusual because agency personnel were known for parking their values at the door when reporting to work. Whether they picked them up again on their way out was only left to the imagination.

However, this unique day found the high-flying CEO in good spirits, which compelled him to dismount his high horse and hang out with everyday people.

He came bearing gifts and pizza, and gathered the staff in an airy, sun-lit conference room to discuss mind-numbing distractions that might have meant something to greying philosophers of old. Most of the people were there for the food, but a few wanted to rub shoulders with their mighty leader so that he

would recognise them when, later on, they'd casually walk into his office to ask for a raise.

It was in this setting, saturated with designer perfume and oversized egos, where a simple question brought to a standstill both movement (surprising) and thought (not so surprising).

***“If you had all the money you’ll ever need, what would you do with your time?”***

This is one of those questions that causes the keen listener to pause for a moment and shift gears. It forces them to look into their hearts to find out how they feel about the world around them, like shaking a bottle of deodorant spray to see if there's anything left. And within the hollows of their soul, they are reminded that they may have thought about this in their youth. The answers they had then may have driven them to desire a great career full of excessive rewards, knowing that their parents would forgive





them for the high dose of overindulgence. However, those answers are no longer appropriate as grown-ups, and in a different set of circumstances.

That is unless they have the psychological and moral makeup of Gordon Gekko in the 1987 movie *Wall Street*, who believed that ‘greed is good’.

Back at the agency, every answer without exception incorporated a mostly unexplored desire to give money and time to poor families and orphaned children. The executives talked about straight forward and transactional activities like making a regular donation to a charity organisation or delivering foodstuff and used clothes to homes for abandoned kids.

Others spoke of more complicated initiatives like raising money from their family and friends to buy a bus for a school in an impoverished rural area or using their artistic skills to raise awareness about infectious diseases ravaging vulnerable communities. They all wanted to do good and give back to their society, though the majority thought of charity in terms of small or minuscule projects that an individual can undertake on his own without getting too involved.

Obviously, the cautious approach wasn’t because of a general lack of compassion, as they had already demonstrated that their hearts had room for charity. It was going to feature as part of their journey whether or not they had already acted on the impulse, and it would eventually manifest itself in extending a hand to members of the community who need help.

The interest in small projects with little impact had more to do with the prospect of exhausting all of their time and resources on big charity drives. There was insufficient imagination about fulfilling the desire to give back, either by making it a way of life or taken in their stride while having lasting impact on bigger problems.

That is where Rotary clubs come in. Rotary brings together volunteers of like mind who go on to address the glaring issues in the world. For example, the Rotary clubs are on the verge of wiping out the debilitating disease polio from the face of the earth. This will be the second disease in history to be entirely eradicated after smallpox back in 1980. The End Polio Now campaign has had a major impact and the incidence of the disease has been reduced by 99.9 percent within 36 years. Together with the Global Polio Eradication Initiative partners they have raised billions of dollars and immunised over a billion children across the world.

Remember, all of this is happening as Rotarians continue to fulfil their other personal obligations at work or in their businesses, at home with their families or discharging their duties at church and in their neighbourhoods. They deliver substantial relief from the world’s problems and comfortably take this responsibility within their stride.

How they do it is not rocket science and they don’t need to be brain surgeons to figure it all out, even though they do have rocket scientists and brain surgeons within their ranks. It is a membership organisation that has created a broad and inclusive international network of people who are active in their careers and yet want to contribute to positive outcomes in an ailing world.

The organisation has deep and long-lasting effects on its members whether young or old and some of the benefits may lie heavier on one age group than the other. Yet these benefits have appealed to this special breed of volunteers throughout the world and have sustained Rotary for 116 years.

The opportunity to gain advanced leadership skills is at the top of the list of benefits. Rotary club members take turns at the helm as the leadership



mantle changes hands annually, giving each an opportunity to gain from the rich and rewarding experience of managing a diverse set of individuals.

They contain a mix of hard-nosed capitalists, seasoned professionals, senior officers in the development sector, even the clergy, and keeping them motivated demands a light touch and a ton of emotional intelligence. The old HR management maxim works in reverse - 'if they don't get here trained, they'll get trained here'.

Apart from the experiences at the local club, there are extensive opportunities for international leadership, completing service projects across borders and interacting with people from diverse backgrounds. The international exposure is really useful in any setting where globalisation has taken root and working with multicultural teams is the norm.

In the past, many had to contend with language barriers, affecting English and other language speakers. But now there is Google Translate which makes the communication seamless (kind of).

Thus, the international reputation of Rotary is worthy of respect and admiration. Being associated with an organisation that does good in the world, both in local communities and on a massive global scale, adds credence to the individual and beefs up the résumé. In today's realm the personal investment in social responsibility projects improves the image among potential employers, corporate boards, as well as executive recognition award panels.

The reward of gaining the skill to lead robust and high-level teams stands for nothing at all if the deeper meaning of personal transformation is not addressed.

In the earlier part of the last century the literature that centred on management skills offered ideas around strengthening personal attributes, focusing on private values and setting an internal moral compass. In later years, the literature shifted toward skills development.

If both elements are crucial for achieving the biggest goals, does the Rotary club present opportunities to attain the former? The simple answer is yes, and here is how.

As members rise up the leadership ladder in the club, they are inspired to gain the wisdom of Solomon and the patience of Job. And as they tick off the activities required to support their club's goals and have meaningful impact in the

community, they slowly develop a profound sense of compassion. There are numerous examples in history that demonstrate that an intimate sense of compassion is necessary to drive organisations or society at large to greater heights.

As in a chain reaction, the attainment of deep-seated compassion leads to another important attribute: well-being. While interacting with other donors who are also intent on uplifting the underprivileged and advocating for equity in society, and as they spend time with the beneficiaries of their charity, a positive effect is created in their mental, physical and spiritual state.

All of this leads to the most important factor of all. It is at the core of the person who wants to successfully climb the mountain of achievement and success, in their families, careers and any other goal they set for themselves. It is the solidifying of character, which is formed when an individual wages a war against their weaknesses and emerges with some measure of self-respect. Character is the foundation upon which men and women set audacious goals, cement their faith, harden their resolve, and layer life-changing experiences that result in a legacy of purpose and accomplishment.

Character is the single most important attribute in an individual who wants to be influential in society because it is the one that guarantees the others.

And so, we go back to the scene twenty years ago in a conference room full of advertising agency narcissists and prima donnas who expressed their desire to dip in their toes and try out this charity thing.

Perhaps there is a chance for redemption after all.

# SUBSCRIPTION NOTICE

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Clubs will be billed according to the mailing lists in our records, so please ensure that we have all the correct information!

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# Break the silence

To combat the loneliness of isolation during the lockdowns of 2020 Rotarians took to the digital realm to find new ways to connect and take action. Sharmila Nagarajan (president-elect of the Rotary Club of Tower Hamlets, D1130) and a group of women Rotarians were among those. It was during this networking that the conversations turned to menstrual hygiene management (MHM) and how they could leverage the power of Rotary to create change.

MHM is a globally recognised public health challenge and around the world, a growing coalition of academics, donors, NGOs and United Nations agencies are working to address its many issues. Even in developed countries, menstrual-related shame/taboo, period poverty and the all-important universal issue of soil pollution, due to the menstrual product waste, are issues needing to be addressed.

The Rotary International Board of Directors formally approved The Rotary Action Group for Menstrual Health and Hygiene (RAGMHH) and the group's logo and call to action, Break the Silence, was officially launched by general secretary and CEO of Rotary, Rotarian John Hewko, at a meeting in March.

The action group plans to address MHM in ways that will touch directly on each of the seven Areas of Focus: peacebuilding and conflict prevention; disease prevention and treatment; water, sanitation and hygiene; maternal and child health; basic education and literacy; community economic development and protecting the environment.

Menstrual health is not just a women's issue. According to UNICEF more than two billion people across the world, live without basic sanitation services and in developing countries, only 27 percent of people have adequate hand washing facilities at home. Women and young girls in developing countries, those with special needs and disabilities, as well as those living in conflict-affected areas or in

the aftermath of natural disasters are most in need of help.

Break the silence - Speak up aims to achieve menstrual equity through access to sanitary products, proper toilets, sanitation and hygiene education, handwashing facilities and waste management for people around the world.

Young boys benefit from menstrual hygiene education, too. Educating girls and boys from an early age at home and school promotes healthy habits and breaks stigmas around the natural process.

This action group will think global and act local while drawing on the strengths of the participating clubs and resources to work towards the goal of eliminating period poverty and restoring dignity for adolescent girls and women. Members will help create projects that provide education, awareness and counselling. They will also action projects to address access and availability through sampling and/or product distribution and educate people on the safe practices and disposal of the products. Other projects will look at targeted product distribution in closed communities (including schools, organisations supporting marginalised girls and women), and economic empowerment through teaching people to manufacture reusable pads. Where needed the action group will cooperate with WASH Rotary Action Group and help create adequate water and sanitation infrastructure. RAGMHH has been actively conducting train-the-trainer sessions and awareness programmes for its members. Menstrual products have also been distributed to people in need.

From an organisational perspective, the team will have regional directors who are country specific to spearhead locally relevant programmes.

Clubs and individuals interested in learning more can look up [@RAGMenstrualHealthAndHygiene](https://www.facebook.com/RAGMenstrualHealthAndHygiene) on Facebook, Whatsapp +44 755 393 6165 or email [sharmg24@gmail.com](mailto:sharmg24@gmail.com).



# Mummy President

Stepping down as president-elect after I learned that I was pregnant was not an option, writes President Isabelle Athion of the Rotary Club of Grand Baie (D9220, Mauritius).

On 1 July, I was inducted as president of the Rotary Club of Grand Baie and a week later, I gave birth to a beautiful baby boy, Mathys.

Is it challenging to be a new mum and a president at the same time? Yes, it is! Even though I took a sabbatical leave from work, my daily routine was very busy, as I was the only one there to look after baby Mathys. My husband Luciano is a front-line health worker and had been in self-isolation most of the time to keep us safe. When I learned that I was pregnant, my question to Luciano was: “Should I step down as president-elect?” Deep down, I knew that it was not an option and I was thrilled to hear him reply, “Whatever your decision, I will give you my full support.” I would not have expected less from my partner, as Rotary has been a journey of discovery for both of us.

It is true to say that Rotary is a family affair. I am very lucky to have been able to count on my mum and my sister to babysit Mathys whenever I needed them. My club members have been extremely supportive from the beginning. Whenever I needed help, there was always someone to lend a hand.

Mathys is now seven months old and has been interacting with my Rotarian friends since his first weeks - and he has an almost 100 percent attendance on zoom meetings. He has always been warmly welcomed at the meetings and I am so proud to be in a club where my Rotarian friends are so accommodating. As Paul Harris said: “If Rotary is to realise its proper destiny, it must be evolutionary at all times and revolutionary on occasions”

Since I joined Rotary in June 2018, I have been very active. I have led projects, served as secretary, chaired the public image committee and attended my first convention in Hamburg. It has been an enriching experience as I am also honing my leadership skills. It is through service that we bring transformation within ourselves. My main aim as leader is to inspire others by embracing Rotary’s core values every day. I firmly believe that motherhood should not stop us from achieving our objectives or taking leadership roles at club, district or an international level.

Seven months into my mandate, I have no regrets and if I had to start all over again, my decision would be the same. I would still want to be a Mummy President!



# From the Shadows

Rotarians are speaking openly about once-hidden issues - and taking action to address them

*During a Wellness in a Box training session in Ibadan, Nigeria, Felix-Kingsley Obialo works with students on how to be peer leaders.*



Rotary has a remarkable record when it comes to health initiatives. We've helped bring polio to the brink of eradication, and clubs have carried out myriad projects focused on preventing disease and supporting maternal and child health. Now the global pandemic has brought attention to another aspect of health that is often overlooked: mental health. In many places, depression, anxiety and suicide are seen as things to be ashamed of and kept quiet. But Rotary members are recognising the gaps in understanding and resources and are stepping up to help.

"A year ago, we had 50 members of the Rotary Action Group on Mental Health Initiatives," says Bonnie Black, a member of the Rotary Club of Plattsburgh (D7040, USA) and the chair of the action group. "We've tripled our membership during the pandemic and I believe it's due to the heightened awareness of mental health and wellness."

More than 264 million people worldwide are affected by depression, according to the World Health Organization and although many mental health conditions can be effectively treated at relatively low cost, many people who need treatment do not receive it.

Felix-Kingsley Obialo, a member of the Rotary Club of Ibadan Idi-Ishin (D9125, Nigeria) manages the local arm of a project called Wellness in a Box,

which his club has worked on in partnership with the Rotary Club of Wellesley (D7910, USA). "Mental health is an area that has been neglected by many people for too long because of the stigma associated with it," says Obialo. "The involvement of Rotary clubs will gradually reduce the stigma, and more and more people will begin to be comfortable around the issue."

When Pia Skarabis-Querfeld saw refugees pouring into Germany to escape war and other atrocities in 2014, the Berlin-based doctor felt compelled to help. Skarabis-Querfeld, a member of the Rotary Club of Kleinmachnow (D1940), eventually launched an NGO called Medizin Hilft (Medicine Helps). With support from a Rotary Foundation Global Grant and clubs around the globe, the nearly all-volunteer organisation donates thousands of hours of medical care to refugees and migrants each year.

But doctors in the group quickly noticed that in addition to needing care for physical ailments, about half of their patients had symptoms of psychological problems or psychiatric disorders, including depression, post-traumatic stress disorder and addiction. In 2020, the Rotary Club of Morehead City- Lookout (D7730, USA) worked with Medizin Hilft to secure another Global Grant that allows the organisation to offer free mental health services.

## In many places, depression, anxiety, and suicide are thought of as things to be ashamed of and kept quiet. But Rotary members are recognising the gaps in understanding and resources and are stepping up to help.

Under the guidance of Ulla Michels-Vermeulen, a psychologist who is also a member of the Kleinmachnow club, psychologists, psychiatrists, translators and social workers help people like Fatma, a Syrian nurse who once treated bomb attack victims. When the situation became too dangerous in Syria, she left home. But fleeing was traumatic, explains Michels-Vermeulen.

While crossing the Mediterranean, Fatma watched several passengers drown before another vessel came to the rescue of their drifting boat. She spent time in a refugee camp, where people slept in tents, there were no doctors and there was not enough to eat. She was sexually assaulted several times on the journey.

“Fatma has been accepted to stay [in Germany] and is going to school to learn German, but she is still getting counselling. She is suffering from nightmares, sleeplessness, concentration problems and flashbacks,” Michels-Vermeulen says. “It costs society a lot if we ignore these mental health problems. And it’s a human right to get support if you are ill.”

After Darren Hands invited speakers to talk about mental health at a District 1175 (England) conference a few years ago, he and other local Rotarians were inspired to do more. “It was very powerful, and afterwards we thought, ‘What can we as Rotarians do when it comes to mental health? We’re people of action but not mental health professionals. But surely there’s something we can do to help,’” says Hands, president of the Rotary Club of Plympton.

They came up with a social media campaign called “Don’t Bottle It Up,” which encourages people affected by depression, anxiety or other issues to reach out for help. “The majority of people with mental health issues wait over a year to talk to someone,” explains Hands. “Hopefully we can help break down some of the stigma through this campaign.”

Launched in 2017 in District 1175, the campaign features local athletes and celebrities posing with a water bottle and the message “Don’t Bottle It Up.” The ads note that one in four people in the United Kingdom have some form of mental illness and urge people not to suffer in silence. Two years later, the initiative launched nationally in the UK and in Ireland. The group has a Facebook page and a website. Today, 28 public figures and about 60 Rotarians have shared their image and message on social media.

“We have no direct way of knowing that the campaign has made a difference,” notes Hands. “But if just one person who has suicidal thoughts or is suffering from depression or anxiety sees one of these images and decides to seek help or at least talk to someone, to me, that will be a success.”

The statistics on teenage suicide and depression are troubling. In the United States, suicide is the second leading cause of death among 15 to 19-year-olds, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the global pandemic has meant that kids are more isolated than ever.

Wellness in a Box, the school-based mental health awareness campaign that Felix-Kingsley Obialo’s club supports in Nigeria, was started in 2013 by Bob Anthony, then a member of the Rotary Club of Wellesley, Massachusetts, at a local high school. The programme has expanded to 20 schools in Nigeria, 18 in India and three in Puerto Rico. Through videos, workshops and group discussions, Wellness in a Box presents information to students, parents and teachers about depression and suicide, about activities to foster coping skills and about how to seek help. Student leaders are taught to help lead a curriculum focused on preventing depression. The programme promotes awareness, decreases stigma and creates a network of teens and adults who can identify those who need help and refer them to professionals.

“We measured students’ knowledge of depression and their confidence in seeking help. The numbers improved at all the sites, even more so when peers delivered the information,” says Anthony, who is now a member of the Rotary Club of Naples (D6960, USA) and the treasurer of the mental health initiatives action group. In Nigeria, where mental health issues are especially stigmatised and rarely talked about publicly, “we’ve made people aware that treatment is possible,” Anthony says. In India, where some schools lacked counsellors, the programme publicised local hospital contacts which people could go to for help and is paying for teachers to be trained in school counselling. “It starts with teens, but there’s a parent education workshop that every school is encouraged to provide,” he says. “Ideally, this is for everyone.”

Rotarians working on this project are hopeful that more clubs will focus on improving mental health. “Being a Rotarian confers a kind of legitimacy and authority on Rotarians in whatever they do,” says Obialo. “Rotarians thus become a moral force against the stigmatisation of people with mental health conditions.”

Learn more about the Rotary Action Group on Mental Health Initiatives at [ragonmentalhealth.org](http://ragonmentalhealth.org).

*Darren Hands has made it easy for Rotary members to participate in the “Don’t Bottle It Up” campaign. “You simply take a photo of yourself holding a bottle and send it to me,” says Hands, who posts it on social media and adds local health statistics to make the message more relevant.*

Learn more at: [rotary-site.org/rotarians4mentalhealth](http://rotary-site.org/rotarians4mentalhealth).

# Global Stats

More than 264 million people worldwide are affected by depression.

Although there are effective treatments for mental disorders, between 76 and 85 percent of people in low- and middle-income countries receive no treatment for their condition.

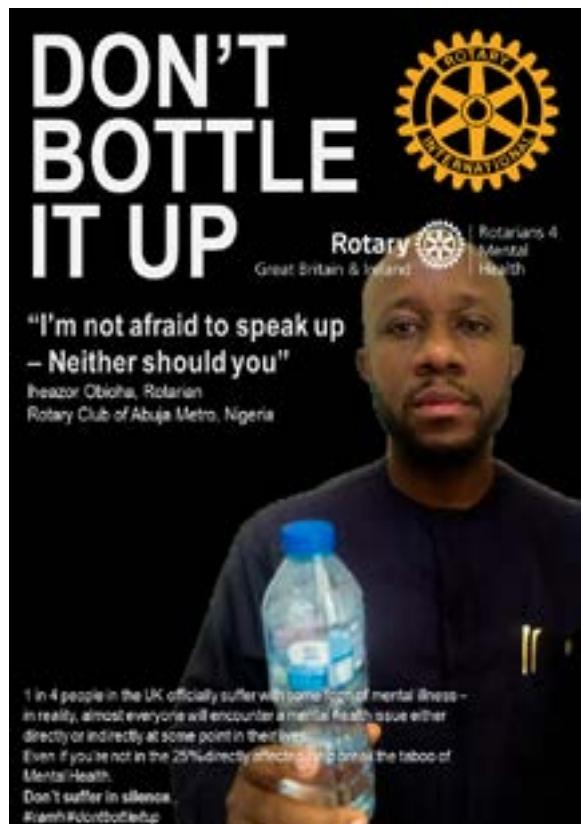
Suicide is the second leading cause of death among 15 to 29-year-olds globally.

Depression and anxiety disorders cost the global economy \$1 trillion per year.

There are 800 000 deaths per year from suicide.

Mental health conditions are especially common in populations affected by humanitarian crises.

Source: WHO







DG Annemarie Mostert and DGE Stella Anyangwe broadcasting live from the studio during the virtual event. All speeches and discussions are on the District 9400 YouTube channel: <http://bit.ly/WatchAfrica100>

# Celebrating Africa

Nearly 2 000 people a day logged in to join the Rotary in Africa Centennial Celebration. The virtual two-day centennial conference took place on 24 and 25 April 2021 and featured an unprecedented line-up of over 90 speakers including heads of state, prestigious Rotary representatives, African business leaders and leading visionaries, pioneers and icons.

What made this event special was that it celebrated the arrival of Rotary on the continent, “This was not a celebration for a club, but for a continent! Other clubs will have their centennials, in Nairobi, in Durban, all across Africa in the coming years, but we will never have another centennial of the first Rotary club being chartered in Africa,” said District Governor Annemarie Mostert, Chairperson of the 2021 African Centennial Celebrations who also opened the proceedings.

## DAY ONE

Rotary International Director Katerina Kotsali Papadimitriou also spoke at the opening and called the African centennial a milestone not only for Africa, but for “the Rotary world as whole. It is a century of Rotary members creating everlasting change, improving communities, and opening opportunities for a better life in Africa.... And that is something worth celebrating.”

She applauded Rotarians for using their passion, commitment and enthusiasm for tackling projects

that built communities, promoting human rights and created jobs. She congratulated the zone on having one of the highest percentages of women members in the world, at almost 36 percent of total membership. “The achievements of the past allow us to dream,” she said.

In his welcome message, Rotary President Holger Knaack praised Rotary members, “For 100 years Rotary has helped build peace and economic activities throughout the continent.”

He added that he was disappointed not to be able to attend in person as was originally planned, “but this past year we have learned the power of virtual conventions... Everything Rotary does helps build friendships, break down barriers and create understanding and peace around the world.”

“We have all coped with the pandemic and we have learned once again the importance of care in everything we do. Taking care of each other and showing care to people around the globe as they struggle against disease, poverty and injustice...





*Various recognitions were presented at the conference from Rotary Heroes to PHFs. Those who were recognised as Paul Harris Fellows included Benson Wereje, Gcina Mhlophe, Joe Otin (PHF +4), Tito Mboweni, Scott Martin, the Nigeria National Polio Plus Committee for Rotary International and Hanan Soliman Gewefel (PHF +2).*

This kind of care leads to peace and it is up to us to help put the world on a path towards a more peaceful and hopeful future.”

He said that Rotary has taken a strong stand against discrimination, which he said exists around the world and takes on different forms everywhere. “While Rotary is not political, neither can we be silent and when we see discrimination, we have a duty to speak out and stand up for our core value of diversity.

“We are going to live up to our core values just as we have throughout our history – in good times and in bad times. And we are going to continue to thrive because we are not afraid of change!”

South African Minister of Finance Tito Mboweni, who is an honorary Rotarian, shared a message of welcome and congratulations with the delegates saying that Rotary had made a “vital contribution in the lives of ordinary people” and had also built friendships “across races and across gender, a very important contribution for creating a human society... I congratulate you on this magnificent achievement” during his opening address at the African Centennial Event.

#### **DAY ONE DISCUSSIONS**

Topics discussed on day one included strategic community economic development for poverty alleviation, solving Africa’s twin deficit in education, partnerships in controlling epidemics

in Africa and the future of peacekeeping on the continent.

South African Minister of Finance, Tito Mboweni, delivered the keynote address on the economic outlook of South Africa and Africa. In particular, he discussed the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the economic climate of the continent and what steps have been put forward to rectify damage done by the shutdowns.

“The global economy has been gravely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic; however, 2021 looks promising and the April 2021 World Economic Outlooks published by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) indicates that growth is expected to be around six percent in 2021- reflecting a surprisingly rapid recovery, particularly in the advanced economies of the world,” said Mboweni.

He also said that South Africa, Zimbabwe, Lesotho and Algeria fell into a group of severely affected countries and have experienced contractions of more than four percent of their GDP in 2020. Ghana, Kenya, Angola, Egypt and Eswatini were less severely affected, with a less than four percent contraction and are expected to bounce back successfully. Interestingly, while Nigeria saw a decline of 1.4 percent in 2020, it is expected to grow at a modest 2.5 percent in 2021. South Africa is expected to grow at 3.1 percent and

*Continued on page 26*

## SOME OF THE OUTSTANDING CONFERENCE SPEAKERS INCLUDED:

- **TITO MBOWENI.** The South African Minister of Finance, who delivered the keynote address on the economic outlook of South Africa and Africa. He discussed the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the economic climate of the continent and what steps have been put forward to rectify damage done by the shutdowns.
- **H.E. KING LETSIE III.** The King of Lesotho praised Rotary for its impactful work in Lesotho, by initiating projects to assist the community in educational, health and sanitation sectors.
- **DR KENNETH DAVID KAUNDA.** The First Republican President of Zambia. In a rare and exclusive appearance, he thanked the organisation for its spreading of uBuntu and for assisting the country in areas where they required help.
- **DR NKOSANA MOYO.** The Executive Director of the Mandela Institute for Development Studies shared his thoughts on how Africa can emerge victorious after the pandemic, by identifying the opportunities that have become available, instead of focusing on the doors that have been closed.
- **SAMATA PATTINSON.** The CEO of Red Carpet Green Dress. The global entrepreneur discussed sustainability in the textile industry and the impact it has on the global economy.
- **ATSUKO TODA.** The acting Vice-President of Agriculture, Human and Social Development of the African National Bank discussed one of the conference's key topics, water, sanitation and hygiene, and focused on Africa's solutions to the crises.



During the conference DG Annemarie Mostert shared a special story. “In the dead of the night on 23 January 1900, two great future world leaders passed each other on a battle-torn hill. The hill, south of the town of Ladysmith, in South Africa’s province of KwaZulu-Natal, is known as Spion Kop and gave its name to the most iconic battle of the Anglo Boer War. One of those future world leaders was at that time a journalist covering the war. The other was a volunteer stretcher-bearer carrying the wounded away from the battlefield. Both would, almost a half century later, work closely with Rotary and Rotarians. Winston Churchill and Mahatma Gandhi both wrote pieces for *The Rotarian* reflecting on war, and both became advocates for peace – one of Rotary’s pillars. We would like to think their experiences in South Africa helped shape that philosophy. As Nelson Mandela remarked, ‘India gave us a Gandhi; we gave India a Mahatma’.”



*A Paul Harris Fellowship recognition was presented to Ellyanne Wanjiku, one of the special guest speakers, who is the founder of Children With Nature and has served as a Climate Crisis Ambassador. She is just nine years old. Ellyanne was recognised for her contributions to the environment in Africa. DG Patrick Obath was watching the conference with the surprised young climate warrior when the recognition was announced and presented her with the pin and certificate. Ellyanne challenged the Rotary members worldwide to go beyond ceremonial tree planting and clean-up projects and to implement sustainable environmental projects that will have visible impact in their communities*



*One of the best kept secrets was the surprise presentation of the Rotary International Service Above Self Award to PDG Grant Daly, the convener of the centennial conference committee. The award was ‘smuggled’ into the studio by DG Annemarie and hidden until it was time for the presentation.*

Kenya is expected to bounce back at eight percent.

Mboweni said that IMF indications show an expected growth in Africa of around 3.4 percent in 2021 and four percent in 2022. However, the outlook for growth in Zambia is only 0.6 percent because of high inflation, low demand for copper, wide fiscal deficits, poor policy management and unsustainable debt levels.

Kenya was highlighted as one of the countries

expected to have significant growth in 2021, thanks to the Kenyan government’s implementation of its economy recovery strategy.

Minister Mboweni said that other African countries can learn from Kenya, “When there is poor policy formulation and poor policy implementation, the consequences thereafter are dire indeed.”

He further addressed the prevalent issue of vaccine nationalism and asked that Rotarians



strongly discourage it.

“The Rotary family should be vocal in expressing its unhappiness in what we refer to as ‘vaccine nationalism’ - the attempt by some countries to monopolise vaccines at the expense of poorer countries, which will result in the poorer countries suffering more. We should try to discourage vaccine nationalism wherever we find it.”

Minister Mboweni concluded by acknowledging the lessons learnt in 2020, which included understanding that there is a growing role of the digital economy that will increase in importance during the coming years.

## DAY TWO DISCUSSIONS

An in-depth discussion on innovation for maternal and child health in Africa was led by UN Women representative Ms Anne Githu-Shongwe.

Another interesting panel discussion looked at sustainable and environmentally friendly textile development. This was discussed by a prestigious panel including Kenyan designer Anyango Mpinga, a forward-thinking eco-innovator who explores the use of emerging technologies to create biodegradable textiles.

Mpinga is passionate about aligning to the United National Sustainable Development Goal of sustainable employment, economic growth, and fair employment opportunities for all, particularly within the textile industry.

Also, on the panel was Samata Pattinson, CEO of Red-Carpet Green Dress, a global change-making organisation bringing sustainable design to the forefront of conversation and action within the fashion industry.

According to Pattinson, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of African designers over the last few years, aided by the increasing recognition and acceptance of African aesthetics within pop culture which has inspired and contributed to more designers showing their range of designs to the world.

Another perspective was added to the discussion by Skander Negasi, CEO of Trade and Fairs Group who is also the Messe Frankfurt Representative for East Africa

co-organiser of African Sourcing and Fashion Week, Africa’s biggest trade event for the textile, apparel and fashion industry. “Due to lack of resources, African designers have always been sustainable with resources in comparison to the European countries. There is a bright future when it comes to designing,” he says.

The panel was moderated by Kutay Saritosun, the Director of Fashion Brands at Bluesign Technologies in Switzerland, a man passionate about educating brands on producing more sustainable products.

Ahead of his involvement at the conference, Saritosun, who is himself a Rotarian and former Rotary exchange student, had said that the growth and movement of manufacturing factories throughout Africa have the potential to change the industry by being more mindful and aware of the environmental and social impact they have.

The fashion industry can no longer turn a blind eye to irresponsible consumption and production of materials and needs to play its part in making a positive impact on climate change. This panel discussion was part of a session on Protecting the Environment, one of the 11 sessions that took place at the conference.

Sustainability and responsible business practices are no longer buzzwords used by brands to persuade their customers that they’re good corporate citizens, says headline sponsor African Brand Architects Managing Director Natalia Rosa. “New empowered generations demand and no longer ask nicely for action over promises. They want to see, not hear how businesses’ strategies incorporate sustainability as a way of doing business and how these strategies contribute meaningfully to the communities and environments connected to them.

*Headline sponsor of the centenary celebration was African Brand Architects, marketing, communications, and PR specialists. Pillar sponsors included Hlanganisa Institute for Development Southern Africa, Sešego Foundation and Tshikululu Social Investments.*

# How We Can Emerge Stronger

While all around us, the clouds may appear dark and stormy, there is always a silver lining to be found. That is even true of the pandemic, says Dr Nkosana Moyo, founder and Executive Director of the Mandela Institute for Development Studies (MINDS), who believes the COVID-19 crisis has shone a spotlight on the risk of over-concentration of value chains and subsequently opened opportunities that Africa is particularly well-placed to take advantage of. That is, if it seizes the day.

In his Changemaker talk at the Rotary Africa Centennial in April 2021, Dr Moyo, shed light on these opportunities and what Africa needs to be doing right now in order to benefit.

The root of the opportunity lies in correcting the vulnerabilities that have arisen as a result of globalisation, he explains.

“What we now realise is that an over-concentration of value chains has led to a vulnerability in supply and this should be seen as an overshoot that needs to be and can be corrected to relieve tensions in global society and also to mitigate some risks that have resulted directly from that process.”

Highlighting certain conditions that need to be met and require the continent’s full focus, Dr Moyo says: “There is a unique window of opportunity for Africa to participate in the de-risking of the over-concentrated global supply chains.”

First of these is an integrated African economy of scale that attracts investment capital. “If most of the continent becomes one economy without the hassles of duties and innumerable border controls, investors will take a serious look at the continent. As the world reconfigures manufacturing centres, Africa can present itself as a serious option for the location of these newly configured value chains.”

Further, Dr Moyo advocates a change in mindset away from the fixation on ownership to a comfort in hosting and regulating. In his view, ownership raises the burden of finance, while hosting and regulating removes that burden allowing things to happen faster.

Somewhat related to fixation on ownership, is the issue of price controls, adds Dr Moyo. It is for this

reason that Dr Moyo advocates a market economy in Africa that is regulated through supply and demand. “Regulations against monopolies and oligopolies will largely be more effective in protecting the consumer than legislated price controls.”

An additional condition is the need to develop fit-for-purpose infrastructure – transport, ICT, energy, water and sanitation, health and education. This, is to facilitate the movement of people and goods and enable modern manufacturing.

He believes if the mindset shifts to hosting and regulation, required capital for infrastructure would be raised with ease.

Lastly, Dr Moyo advocates a focus on financial products that de-risk investments by private sector in case of need and a guaranteed minimum return on investment.

“COVID-19 has led to huge borrowings by governments which have taken advantage of historically low interest rates. It’s unlikely that policy makers in these heavily borrowed countries will institute policies that lead to significantly higher interest rate any time soon, which means these markets will continue to be quite uncompetitive in terms of return on investments. This is exactly what Africa needs to stand out as an attractive destination for private sector capital,” says Dr Moyo.

One of the only places investors are likely to find opportunity is in Africa, according to Dr Moyo, however, the continent needs to use this time wisely and be proactive in how it presents itself. “We are not being imaginative about how we bundle these opportunities and present them to these people with money,” he warns.





*Volunteers at the litter collection done by the Rotary Club of Rosebank on World Water Day filled 21 bags with rubbish.*

# Challenge accepted!

Clubs in District 9400 were challenged by PDG David Grant, the D9400 Ambassador of WASH Rotary Action Group, to support river clean-up initiatives on World Water Day.

The Rotary Club of Rosebank accepted the challenge. With help from Alex Barbosa of Friends of the Sandspruit, a small group of club members met at the Ernest Ullmann Park in Morningside Manor. Armed with rubber gloves and rubbish bags, they cleaned up a section of the Sandspruit River that flows through the park. It was heart-breaking to see the overwhelming pollution of this otherwise beautiful river frontage and the group filled a total of 21 rubbish bags.

Another club to accept the challenge was the Rotary Club of Boksburg. The historical Boksburg Lake was in a disgusting state and President Derek Fox decided that was where the club would celebrate World Water Day.

The Boksburg advertiser promoted the event and, on the day, residents arrived in their numbers to help the club. The clean-up was held in association with WASH





*The event was well publicised and approximately 100 people helped the Rotary Club of Boksburg.*

Rotary Action Group, Armour and Cleaner River.

Approximately 100 volunteers, including people from Woodlands International College, Hoërskool Dr EG Jansen, Sunward Park Christian Academy, Hoërskool Voortrekker, Girl Guides and Urban Ruins, joined the initiative. Event sponsors included SPAR Boksburg, Auction Boys, AECl water division, Emperors Palace and a resident, Tannie Sarie.

“We’re also grateful that Talfryn Harris cleared two truckloads of rubble debris and palm leaves from the park with a vehicle sponsored by Woodstock Plants. He also put all recyclable items in the recycle containers,” Fox said. “Unfortunately, we could not clean the edge of the lake because we don’t have equipment to do it.”



*PDG David Grant, Rodney Genricks and President Derek Fox at the clean-up that was supported by residents as well as local businesses.*





*Unveiling the Sundial are Sean de Bruin, Yvette Zihhilarwa, Melanie Jackson, Nell Harrison, Victor Crouser, Bill Wilson, Val Brady, Shane Ballantyne, Blake Ballantyne and President Deidre Crouser (front).*

## Time Passes, Rotary Remains

The Rotary Club of Century City Cape Town (D9350) unveiled its branded sundial, titled *Time Passes, Rotary Remains*, at Intaka Island in Century City, Cape Town. The project was done in partnership with Century City Property Owners Association and cemented a common vision of supporting and promoting education.

This project was inspired by sundials that Hermanus Astronomy Centre installed along the beach promenade. During the research phase, club members learned that the Rotary Club of Whyalla, Australia had embarked on a similar project at Whyalla Foreshore.

Intaka Island, in the heart of Century City, symbolises unity between conservation and property development and is home to more than 120 species of birds and 177 species of fynbos.

It was the perfect location to provide a visible long-lasting image of Rotary's contribution to the community. Intaka Island is frequently visited by pensioners and school groups and is also a popular venue for birthday parties and corporate events.

The unveiling provided the opportunity for the members to enjoy some much-needed socialising at a nearby outdoor restaurant.



# Together, we educate

Together, the Rotary Clubs of Umhlanga (D9370) and Broadstairs (D1120, UK) provided Natest Primary School with early childhood education equipment worth more than R20 000.

Sandy Smith (Umhlanga) has a daughter who is a member of the Broadstairs club. This has led to a relationship forming between the clubs. Recently, Broadstairs allocated its District Grant to the Umhlanga club to support early childhood education initiatives.

It was after four of the Umhlanga members visited Natest in February 2020 that the club decided to support the school and direct the grant money to benefit it.

The building of Natest Primary School was financed by contributions from descendants of indentured labourers working on sugar cane plantations and the mill in Campbell's Town, Old Mount Edgecombe, outside Durban. Referred to as Madiba's school, after a visit by Nelson Mandela in 1997, it celebrates 65 years in existence this year.

Natest is in the forefront of producing outstanding leaders, citizens and sports people over the decades. It provides quality holistic value-based education to approximately 600 learners from Pre-school to Grade 7 from very disadvantaged communities in the area.

Poverty within the community the school serves is debilitating; only 21 percent of learners at the school can afford the fees. The school only receives R92 000 from the Department of Education each year and it costs the school approximately R32 000 a month to keep its doors open.

The club aims to play a meaningful role in facilitating the early childhood development of the young learners.

It will help the school provide reading and writing skills, making a homework centre available to the learners and providing disadvantaged and at-risk children with a safe, stable and nurturing environment.



*The Rotary Club of Umhlanga gave 256 pairs of school shoes to children at Natest Primary School. To collect the shoes, the club relied on a school shoe marketing promotion that was run last year. Collection points were held at Mount Edgecombe KwikSpar, Ridge KwikSpar and Glenore KwikSpar. The Interact Club of Tongaat Secondary School raised another R800 to buy 20 pairs of shoes. It was noticed that mostly boys' shoes were collected and the Rotary Club of Broadstairs donated R5 000 to buy girls' shoes.*



# Oh Duck!

One hundred and ten little ducks went out one day, down the canal and far away...

Competition was fierce as the first Duck Race of the year took place at Rosebank Canal in March. Hosted by the Rotary E-Club of Greater Cape Town and the Rotary Club of Constantia (D9350), the colourful rubber duckies battled it out in 11 heats, with the two winning ducks from each heat being entered into the final race.

Tensions ran high as the competitors went beak-to-beak for the first prize of a night for two at Atlantic Beach Hotel, sponsored by Rawson Estate Agents, Muizenburg.

“The money raised through this fun, COVID-friendly outdoor event supports two great projects” said Biffy Danckwerts, vice-president of the Rotary E-Club of Greater Cape Town.

The first project is being done in conjunction with the Rotary E-Club of Greater Cape Town, a Rotary club in Kansas and the newly established Rotary Club for Action Against Trafficking (District 5710, USA) and aims to rehabilitate victims of human trafficking. They will be provided with trauma-healing assistance and the skills they need to enter the work force.

The second project supported by this fundraiser is the Rotary Club of Constantia’s sports development project at Westlake Primary School, Cape Town. It works to develop sporting activities at the school and to date has provided a netball court and bibs. An athletic sports field is in the process of being developed.

The next Duck Race fundraiser is set to bob off in November 2021. So, get ready to dust off your duckies and contact Biffy Danckwerts at [aecon.e@mweb.co.za](mailto:aecon.e@mweb.co.za) for more information.

*Ducks ready and waiting for their chance to race.*



*Ania King (Rotary Club of Constantia) and Biffy Danckwerts (Rotary E-Club of Greater Cape Town) prepare for the first race of the day (Image: Peter Rogers)*





*Hospice Manager Sister Ingrid Williams, Rotarians Ivan Beaumont and George Stegmann, Sister Sharon von Mollendorff with hospice administrator Jennifer MaGrath demonstrating the use of the Lazy Boy chair and one of the syringe drivers.*

# Comfortable treatment

A Lazy Boy electric chair and two syringe drivers were given to the St Francis Hospice in Humansdorp by members of the Rotary Club of St Francis Bay (D9370).

Rotarian George Stegmann explained that “The Rotary Club of St Francis Bay was able to facilitate these donations valued at R33 000 through the generosity of an anonymous family foundation and the Lions Club of Bremen in Germany.”

Sister Ingrid Williams, the hospice manager, explained that the chair was necessary because many terminally ill patients become bedridden. “The electric Lazy Boy is a great help because with the easy-to-use control buttons, patients are able to position themselves in the most comfortable way.

During waking hours, they are able to sit upright and when they need to sleep, they can lower themselves in the most comfortable way to sleep.” It is also possible to adjust the chair to give the most

support for patients with various forms of painful cancer such as bone and internal organ cancers.

Many patients become short of breath when they lie flat and the Lazy Boy makes it easy for them to position themselves to relieve this. In addition, if a patient is too weak to stand up from a chair, the lazy boy has a feature which actually lifts the patient up to the point where it is easy for them to stand up.

The hospice was in need of syringe drivers as the ones it was using were about 30 years old. Syringe drivers are used in palliative care to administer medication to patients who are no longer able to take these orally.

“Our wonderful new syringe drivers, with the latest digital technology, enables us to administer more medication, more accurately. They do not run out of power and are easier for our staff and even the patient’s family or caregivers to monitor what medication is being given,” she explained.

# Ahoy, me hearties!

A motley yet jolly crew of ‘cyber buccaneers’ from District 9370 recently surfed the web and raided the Rotary Club of Shepperton Aurora (D1145).

The group of 60 Rotary members, from the Rotary Clubs of Port Elizabeth West and Uitenhage South, as well as attendees of the D9370 Presidents and Officers-Elect Training Seminar, raided the Shepperton Aurora weekly meeting to thank it for a donation it made to a community project of the Port Elizabeth West club.

Assistant Governor Clive (Uitenhage South) and Kathy Hassell (Port Elizabeth West) are old friends of the Shepperton Aurora club (of which Kathy was a charter member) and regularly attend its meetings. The three clubs often partner to host quiz evenings.

Thanks to the coronavirus pandemic, the clubs are now closer than ever before and following a presentation in January by Port Elizabeth West’s President Angela Newton, Shepperton Aurora

agreed to make a £500 donation.

The connections go deeper. The speaker at the meeting was Terry Pattinson, a former Fleet Street reporter of the year, town crier and friend of Clive and Kathy when they lived in the UK. He is a member of the Rotary Club of Slough (D1090) which is closely connected with the Rotary Club of Dothan (D6880), a club with which Clive is already working closely. Terry shared stories from his years of reporting and spoke of his new book Scoop which is being sold in aid of Slough Food Bank.

Among the many faces from SA were not only incoming officers, but many from the district team including DG Maud Boikanyo who thanked Shepperton Aurora for its support in helping educate under-privileged children.

Whatever happens with COVID-19, the future looks bright as the three clubs will continue to work together in service.

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## AFRICA IN BRIEF



Two schools for the disabled each received a donation of 10 wheelchairs, three walking aids and five pairs of crutches from the Rotary Club of Polokwane (D9400). Funds for the donation were raised at the “Wonderful Wildlife Virtual Charity Concert” that was produced in partnership by the Rotary Clubs of Polokwane and Monterey Pacific (D5230, USA) in partnership with Energy FM and Choice FM radio stations. Attendees secured their tickets by making donations to the project. At the handover are BK Matewe (Energy FM), Shandukani Madima (Choice FM), T Maluleke (KG Maluleke Memorial Disability Organisation, representing SJ van der Merwe School), LMF Maluma (principal of Tshilidzini Special School) and PP Charles Hardy.



The Rotary Anns Club of Algoa Bay (D9370) provides sandwiches for cancer patients at a provincial hospital. The effects of the cancer medication are severe and patients often need a small snack during treatment. Receiving the donation is Nurse Alice.





Three standing frames were given to the Occupational Therapists at Klerksdorp Hospital by the Rotary Club of Klerksdorp (D9370). A standing frame is multi-functional and lets patients stand in static mode, move in dynamic mode and allows them to perform the leg exercises in rehabilitation mode. They will be used to help patients with cerebral palsy, spinal cord injuries and paralysis.



The Rotary Club of Welkom-Flamingo (D9370) gave a vacuum cleaner to Little Stars Pre-School. Principal Rynette Coetzer received the donation from Jill Lombard and Audra Visser.

# TAKE NOTE

The annual Which Club Meets Today directory is being prepared.

Please send your club's meeting and leadership details to  
[rotaryafrica@mweb.co.za](mailto:rotaryafrica@mweb.co.za)  
 before 15 May 2021



Clockwise from top: These colourful Zebras delighted festival goers. A buyer with artist Sakiwe Mthembu. Sue Bernon's Waterlillies.



For the last four years, the small town of Mtunzini has been transformed into an art paradise for the Rotary Club of Mtunzini (D9370) Art in the Shade Festival. The coronavirus pandemic prevented the 2020 event from being held, but in February 2021, the town could not wait and a safe and socially distanced event was arranged. Public art went up, trees got wrapped, posters went up and a general buzz started vibrating throughout the town. It was a feast of talent, with 11 crafters and 23 artists exhibiting their work. Every possible art genre could be found at Art in the Shade, from the abstract to super realism, from frivolous and fun to heartbreakingly poignant.





The Rotary Club of Pretoria Hatfield (D9400) joined a very special party at Ga-Rankuwa Sunshine Hospice and HIV/AIDS Awareness Centre to wish Jereminah Ngobela (centre) a happy 104th birthday! In addition to a birthday cake, the club also gave a donation of linen, adult diapers, gloves and masks to the hospice that takes care of 16 patients.



The Rotary Club of Gaborone (D9400) gave four wheelchairs, donated by the Charity Association of Chinese in Botswana, to children from Mochudi Village.



President Neil McDonald won the raffle that was recently held by the Rotary Club of Amanzimtoti (D9370) .

## CELEBRATING CLUBS

# Welcome to our Rotary Family!

The Rotaract Club of Hermanus (D9350) was chartered on 6 March 2021 at Mollergren Park Hall. This joyful occasion included a Potjie Competition, which later provided dinner for the gathering of forty plus people.

Rex Oameh, the District Rotaract Representative, Biffy Danckwerts, the District Rotaract Chair and Assistant Governor Tony Butcher attended the charter event.

The charter ceremony opened with an address by PP Richard Beardsall and a welcome from President Lourina Wilson.

Inspirational messages from Rex, Biffy and Tony followed before AG Jenny Howard, who was involved in the charter, introduced each Rotaractor

*President Lourina Wilson presented Charter President Victoria Young-Pugh with the chain of office.*



and presented them with their Rotaract badges. The formalities were closed by Rex who led the Rotaractors in reciting the Rotaract Statement of Intent.

Afterwards, everyone feasted on the five delicious potjies prepared earlier by the club members and the dessert muffins that were beautifully decorated by the Rotaractors.



*The Rotary Club of Port Alfred (D9370) celebrated its 36th charter anniversary. Port Alfred was sponsored by the Rotary Club of Grahamstown in March 1985.*





*Current members of the Rotary Club of Swakopmund are Secretary Kathryn McLean, Joel Nambuli, Matt Napier, Jens van der Fecht, Secretary-Elect Rachel Harris, President-Elect Raimar von Hase, President Phillip Oosthuysen, Neels Strijdom, Treasurer Vera Leech, Hellmut Wormsbacher, Anja Rohwer, Yusuf Amed and Britt Klews. Not present are Hartmut Rotter, Stephanie van Jaarsveld, Burkhard Dobiey and Petrus Econia.*

# The Gem of Swakopmund

*Rotary Club of Swakopmund celebrates 60 years of creating lasting change in its community*

The Rotary Club of Swakopmund (D9350) has served its community for 60 years. It has persevered through the years and although it has generally been a small club, there has always been a solid core of members who have kept the Rotary flag flying high. They have given their time and efforts to many good causes, at home and abroad, and made a difference in many lives.

Today, its 15 members are project leaders in various fields, including education, conservation, the development of women and children, recycling and sustainable agriculture, food relief and security, entrepreneurship, a capella music and support for the disabled.

The 60th anniversary was celebrated with a prestigious dinner event that highlighted the club's work within its

town and country.

Sixtieth anniversaries are traditionally associated with diamonds and with Namibia being famous for its diamonds, it's fitting to say that the Rotary Club of Swakopmund is a diamond in its own right.



# WALL OF HONOUR



Mimi van Deventer and Annette Volschenk are new members of the Rotary Club of Johannesburg New Dawn (D9400).



Charles van Rooyen is a new member of the Rotary Club of Benoni Aurora (D9400).



Blikkies Blignaut is a new member of the Rotary Club of Pinelands (D9350).



Karen Harkema and Inga Molzen are new members of the Rotary Club of Johannesburg New Dawn (D9400).



Jeni Lobel and Matt Pitjeng are new members of the Rotary Club of Johannesburg New Dawn (D9400).



Cuthbert Gumbochuma and Brenda Sakellarides are new members of the Rotary Club of Johannesburg New Dawn (D9400).



Ryan Kleynhans is a new member of the Rotary Club of Swellendam (D9350).



Russel Untiedt is an Honorary member of the Rotary Club of Westville (D9370).



PP Chymie Naidoo and Randal Jooste of Sizabantu Piping Systems received Vocational Awards from the Rotary Club of Pietersburg 100 (D9400).



Bettina Rabiega of Plumtree Lodge received a Vocation Award from the Rotary Club of Pietersburg 100 (D9400).



Graham Steele is an Honorary member of the Rotary Club of Westville (D9370).



Marlene Wilson received a Community Service Award on behalf of the Rotary Anns Club of Pietersburg 100 (D9400).

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