

Rotaract NEWS





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Zone 4, 5, 6 & 7**

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3030	Abhishek Goyal
3040	Bharat Vijaywargiya
3053	Surendra Joshi
3054	Jay Balasara
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3080	Samir Madan
3090	Bhupesh Bansal
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The power, honesty, energy of youth

The advantage of the young is that they are not afraid to speak out, and compared to those much older to them, don't follow double standards — saying one thing from public platforms and doing just the opposite in their private space. The vice of hypocrisy is found much less in this generation.

It is not for nothing that Rotary is wooing the young, and the RI leadership has decided to make Rotaract a part of Rotary. With the dawn of the new Rotary year, Rotaractors, who are already doing such wonderful service in their local communities, will also be able to apply for global grants. This will enable them to be perfectly in sync with our new RI President Shekhar Mehta's constant mantra... to make their service dreams

bigger, and do much bigger, bolder and more meaningful and impactful community service projects.

Energy you all already have... the energy of youth. Combine this with the passion for service, absence of hypocrisy and double standards, and the determination to help your communities, there is little doubt that Rotaractors are placed in an ideal position to really change lives of those who are less fortunate.

In the post-Covid world, where our GDP has been impacted, and millions of livelihoods have been lost, the helping hand that Rotaract clubs are constantly extending to the less fortunate around them is needed even more.

At the recently concluded RI virtual convention, one of the speakers who left me speechless was the young African climate activist Vanessa Nakate. What an impassioned plea she made when she said that while bushfires and hurricanes in the developed world make international headlines, the global media has absolutely no time or space for the devastation brought about to different African countries through natural disasters induced by climate change. The wasteful lifestyles of the developed world and the carbon footprints left by the affluent sections of our world are having disastrous consequences for African and less developed countries.

Without batting an eyelid, the young activist once again pointed out the hypocrisy of the older generation.



Rasheeda Bhagat

Rotaract – Towards a new era



Dear friends,

As the new Rotaract year begins, I'm very excited to work with all of you to take the Rotaract movement into a new orbit.

Our world leader Shekar Mehta's call for action is "Serve to change lives", as we embark on our journey to "Do more and grow more". His vision for Rotaract is to integrate Rotary and Rotaract to achieve synergy to do good in the world.

Several changes in Rotaract like offering dual membership to Rotaractors, enabling them to sponsor their own clubs, and the new leadership development opportunities including invitation to the International Assembly have certainly opened doors to integrate Rotary and Rotaract.

I would strongly urge every Rotaract club to report its membership to Rotary International.

I also request every Rotaractor to participate in the "Each one bring one" programme and identify Rotarians and refer them to Rotary clubs.

One of the major thrust areas of our president is empowering girls and I'm sure Rotaract can play a critical role here. I would encourage Rotaractors to take up programmes of menstrual hygiene and environmental protection.

To become a huge force in the areas of community service, leadership development and networking, we need to improve our presence. We must start more community-based and institution-supported Rotaract clubs. As India is the leader in membership development, I'll guide and walk hand-in-hand with you to double our membership this year as we plan to reach the target of one million Rotaractors by 2029.

Keenly looking forward to work with all of you to strengthen and elevate Rotaract in our march towards a new era.

Ravi Vadlamani
World Rotaract Co-chair

“

I urge every Rotaract club to report its membership to Rotary International and every Rotaractor to participate in the 'Each one bring one' programme.

”

Creating a Rotary-Rotaract synergy

Jaishree

At the Rotary virtual convention Yichun Elyse Lin, charter president, RC Taipei Daylight, Taiwan, highlighted how Rotarians and Rotaractors can work in harmony to achieve Rotary's common goal — transforming communities.

After the 2019 CoL voted to officially recognise Rotaract clubs as a membership type, the Elevate Rotaract Task Force appointed

by the then RI President Mark Maloney recommended an update in Rotaract policies to reflect this new status and create an inclusive, innovative and flexible membership experience.

Elyse, a dual member herself, extolled how this elevated status can benefit both Rotarians and Rotaractors. "At club level, while developing a service project or event, when Rotaractors come up with good ideas, invite them to take

the lead and manage the project as well. Rotaractors are great leaders," she said, addressing the Rotarians and, to the Rotaractors, she suggested, "if you have a service project, you can turn to Rotarians for help. They have the professional experience and resources through their well-developed network."

Rotaractors are good with social media platforms such as Instagram and Facebook. Having a Rotaractor in the team can help Rotarians expand their reach. Elyse recommended inviting Rotaractors to be part of Rotary's district committees. "Their knowledge of technology will help in developing effective district training events," she said, adding that her district committees benefited immensely with contributions from both, Rotarians and Rotaractors. "We triggered an amazing chain reaction when we invited Rotaractors to participate in our training seminars. Chairs of several youth district committees started inviting Rotaractors to join and serve on their committees. The DRRs, in turn, sought help from Rotary clubs to develop district service projects." There are still so many ways to develop a synergy for Rotary and Rotaract to work together. "It benefits not only the people we serve, but ourselves too. The more connected we are, the more opportunities we will have. In the long run, we are also opening opportunities for Rotary," said Elyse. ■

Rtr/Rtn Yichun Elyse Lin



World leaders must take Africa's climate crisis seriously

Vanessa Nakate

Rasheeda Bhagat



This is not just about the weather; this is about people. Many Africans have lost their lives while so many more have lost their homes, farms and businesses. And as we continue to heat the planet, the situation in Africa continues to get worse.”

With this impassioned plea, young African climate activist Vanessa Nakate, who spoke with both passion and conviction, grabbed the attention of the participants at the Rotary virtual convention in June.

Daughter of a Rotarian, who served as president of RC Bugolobi, Kampala, in 2017, and founder of the Rise Up Movement, the young climate activist said that right from that time, watching him work “as the leader of the Rotary Mission Green, a project that saw his and various communities in Uganda planting trees, sowed a seed that made me decide to be a voice of change. His courage and action inspired me to find my voice. To stand up for what I believe is important. And to become an activist.”

Vanessa said that during her childhood she had heard her father and others talk about the rain and how

the region's farmers would always count on the rain to sustain their fields. But things were changing, and over the years, her father's generation had seen the rains falling less and less frequently and the crops suffering. “But when the rain finally did come, it would fall in great downpour often flooding the fields and destroying the already weakened crops.” The farmers known to her father were losing their farms and livelihoods, and food was becoming more and more scarce.

Rising food prices caused tension between the people and the situation worsened quickly. “I was only 21 years old but I could sense the urgency in his voice. And I knew I needed to find a way to make things better.”

She started to research the change in weather patterns. Hailing from Kampala, Uganda, a country with one of the fastest changing climate patterns, in the world, as Vanessa grew up she read about how the climate crisis was already ravaging vast parts of the African continent. “Which is tragic and ironic when you think about how Africa is the lowest emitter of CO2 emissions among all

the continents except Antarctica. Each year the entire continent of Africa emits less than one-third of the CO₂ emitted by the US. Historically Africa is responsible for only 3 per cent of global emissions. And yet Africans are suffering some of the most brutal impacts fuelled by the climate crisis.”

These include rapidly intensifying hurricanes, devastating floods and withering droughts.

Cyclone Idai was one of the worst cyclones to affect the African continent, ripping apart and flooding large parts of Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Malawi. “The strong winds and heavy rainfall left over 1,300 people dead, and many more were recorded missing. It also left an economic crisis.”

Africa's climate crisis may be on the frontline of the world's climate catastrophe, but it is not on the front pages of the world's newspapers.



Last year, said Vanessa, the water of Lake Victoria rose as a result of heavy rainfall in East Africa. Homes were flooded, farms were washed away and people were displaced, toilets were submerged leaving a water crisis. East Africa was invaded by swarms of locusts brought on by heavy rainfall and abnormally warm temperatures. “The locusts ate everything in their path. Crops were devoured, threatening the availability of food for the people. Last September, massive flooding in Sudan killed 100 people and made thousands homeless,” she said. The Nile regularly busts its borders and farmers rely on the floodwaters to create fertile land. But people living along the Nile “say they have never seen anything like the extent of last year’s flooding.”

Southern parts of Africa have experienced terrible droughts that are leading to food insecurity and water scarcity. The water levels of Zambesi river, Lake Chad and the Victoria falls are lower than they have been for decades. “Lake Chad has shrunk to a tenth of its original size in just 50 years. Over five years of drought in Somalia have left almost half of

its population with little to eat and drink. And half of Nigeria has no access to water.”

According to Oxfam, 12 million people in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia are in dire need of food, she added But with the rising climate-related disasters, this will only get worse. “The droughts and floods have left nothing behind for the people except pain, agony, suffering, starvation and death. For every one per cent increase in drought there is a 2.4 per cent decrease in agri output, she added.

And yet, Vanessa observed sarcastically, “even as Africa endures a lot of climate-related disasters, you wouldn’t know it from watching the news. Africa’s climate crisis may be on the frontline of the world’s climate disaster, but it is not on the front pages of the world’s newspapers. While the media focuses on the wildfires in California or Australia, or flooding in Europe, climate-related catastrophes in Africa receive little attention,” the activist thundered.

She then asked: What is the response from the developed countries about Africa’s social and economic crisis fuelled by the burning

Each year the entire continent of Africa emits less than one-third of the CO₂ emitted by the US. Historically Africa is responsible for only 3 per cent of global emissions.

of fossil fuels. “Greater and greater investment in the extraction of fossil fuels.” Her clear message to the “countries and banks who fund the digging up and burning of fossil fuels in Africa” was: “We cannot eat coal and drink oil. My father told me you must stand up for what you believe in and think is right and never give in. It is time for our so-called leaders to do the same. They must treat the climate crisis like a crisis. Stop making empty promises and take responsibility. They must show the courage and resilience that my father, all those years ago, showed me was possible. Surely this is what RI means by people of action.” ■



Rotary must offer flexible options to Rotaractors

Kiran Zehra

One of the critical goals of Rotary clubs is to listen and recognise what Rotaractors want and give them an opportunity to shape their experience by being more flexible, said RID Valarie Wafer from Canada, anchoring a session for Rotaractors that saw participants from Europe, Africa, Australia,

Brazil, Japan and South Asia. She was addressing a session at the zone institute.

Rotarians must continue their dialogue with Rotaractors and reach out to them for ideas and suggestions, she said. Samantha Fewster, chair, Rotaract Australia Multi-District Information Organisation (MDIO),

said “Rotaract offers an incredible opportunity for young people to learn and grow with other people in a supportive environment at a similar stage in their life. We learn leadership and business skills, and other useful skills through our service to the community.” She asked Rotaractors to apply these skills in their daily lives, workplace and local communities. The new skills will help them if they want to take leadership roles in Rotary in the near future, she said.

The decision to elevate Rotaract on par with Rotary, she said, will make “years of service in Rotaract count when Rotaractors choose to join a Rotary club. This means that young people will be able to take positions that were denied to them previously for want of experience.” Making Rotaract a part of Rotary will “allow a wider demography of people to take on leadership roles to better represent their communities and bring unique perspectives to the

table, so that Rotary can truly change the world,” said Samantha.

Age relaxation

On the upper age limit for Rotaractors being removed, Ojas Joshi, DRR, RID 3141, said this has enabled the Rotaract clubs to decide on their projects, the impact they wish to create, and also the people that they want to engage with. “Many Rotaractors across the world can continue being Rotaractors while embarking on their Rotary journey,” he said.

Nishita Pednekar, past DRR, RID 3170, said the removal of the upper age limit wouldn’t deter young individuals from joining Rotaract. “We join this organisation with the aim of self-development by serving the community,” she said.

Patricia Kuhn, member, RI Rotaract Committee and special adviser to Trustees from Brazil, said TRF Trustees are encouraging Rotary clubs to work with Rotaract clubs on global grants. TRF

RID Valarie Wafer





has made it possible for “Rotaractors to use global grants in their projects. We first have to learn how to use this resource, and who can teach us better than the Rotarians themselves. Besides, this is also a way to get closer to Rotarians.”

On being the first Rotaractor from Brazil to be selected as special adviser to TRF trustees, Patricia said, “I have learned a lot from the trustees. They show us that when different generations work together, our knowledge and ideas come together to build an even more solid future.”

Rotary’s partnership with Toastmasters is an “exciting alliance,” said Karthik Kittu, past DRR, RID 3190, and founder president, Rotaract South Asia Multi-District Information Organisation (RSA MDIO). “This partnership will help Rotarians and Rotaractors grow personally and professionally. It will also help us strengthen the skills of Rotaractors and

help them make a better impact in their communities,” he said.

Ronald Kawaddwa, chair, RI Rotaract and Interact Committee, Uganda, answering a question on whether dual membership for Rotaractors will be beneficial to Rotary, said, “Yes, it does in two ways. One, you are an equal member of both Rotary and Rotaract. Two, young Rotarians can be good mentors to Rotaractors who join Rotary clubs.” Rotary clubs, he said, should embrace younger members because they serve as ambassadors who will encourage

Rotaractors to join their clubs.

Kazuho Sano, Rotaract vice-secretary, RID 2840, Japan, said that he is looking forward to play an active part in Rotary and is hopeful the newly-introduced Rotaract dues will not affect membership. “Students or working members on an average spend \$300 for coffee annually. All we have to do is convert our coffee dollars as dues,” he quipped.

Yatin Sehgal, president, RSA MDIO, said the recent RI amendment that Rotaract clubs can be chartered with or without sponsoring Rotary clubs is

a revolutionary decision. Talking about numbers, he said, “Over the past six months, we have seen an increase of 1.65 per cent in the growth of Rotaract clubs as compared to the last three years. In South-east Asia, the response is amazing because we already have around 261 Rotaract clubs coming up.”

From RI President Holger Knaack’s home district in Germany, Doris Grimm, chair, RI Rotaract Committee, said that it was beneficial to have direct representatives as advisors to both the RI board and TRF. “By having advisors to these two boards, we show that we are not only talking but actually acting upon *Elevate Rotaract*,” she added. Calling the youth of today “a vehicle of social change,” Akansha Sanghvi, charter president, RAC Mumbai Zenith, said to promote fellowship through service “people must join hands and come together for a cause that can create everlasting change.” ■



Making a community happy

Jaishree

From being the first major meet for most of the members, fun conversations and laughter to spending time with all the amazing differently-abled children, this was the most perfect celebration for our club as we wrap up 2020, a year which will

probably be remembered for all the unfortunate things in human history,” says Suparna M, president, RAC Rising Stars, RID 3201, referring to the club members’ visit to the Amma Multispecialty Clinic in Cherpulaserry, a town in Palakkad district, Kerala.



A Rotaractor teaches a teacher to use the virtual platform for teaching.





Rotaractors give gifts to children at the multi-specialty clinic.



Rotaractors with the green house plant shelter.

Children with various physical disabilities visit this clinic regularly for physiotherapy and other treatments. The Rotaractors cheered them up with gifts and snacks as part of their Christmas celebrations titled *Jingle Bells*. One of the members even dressed up as Santa Claus and brought in the festive spirit. “One of the best things in life is seeing a smile on a person’s face and knowing that you put it there. We still cherish the memories of the beautiful smiles and joyous chatter of the children,” she says.

This less-than-one-year-old club chartered in May 2020 by RC Palghat

has been thoughtfully drafting various projects and programmes throughout the year for the benefit of the community and the personal development of its members. *Vega*, a virtual public speaking workshop, brought out the speaker in every member. “It taught us to shed our inhibitions and speak with confidence and clarity.” An online gathering, *Intercultural*, facilitated sharing of thoughts and ideas between the club and RAC Munich International, Germany.

The *Project Twinkle Twinkle* is meant for students of government schools where the Rotaractors back their online classes with online tuitions. Basic tutorial videos in English and the native language Malayalam, are uploaded on the club’s YouTube channel to benefit schoolchildren. Every Rotaractor from our club mentors a child, says Suparna.

The club, along with RAC Info Institute of Engineering, donated clothes to transgenders quarantined in Coimbatore during the lockdown under its *Project Care for he(r)*. The club, under the district priority project, Environment care, installed a greenhouse plant shelter at the Amenity Centre in Shoranur with guidance from its parent club. It was inaugurated by the municipal chairperson V Vimala. “We want it to inspire people to grow plants and surround their locality

with greenery,” says the club president.

In another initiative, the Rotaractors promote use of paper seed pens replacing plastic pens. These seed pens will germinate into new plants once they are placed in the soil after use. “We are buying these pens from Shirafudeen, a differently-abled youngster who was helped by our parent club in establishing the vocation. He now makes these pens and markets them for a living.” The club is distributing the pens to various organisations such as fire stations, police stations, railway stations, banks, colleges, orphanages and special schools. This is also one way of creating awareness among people to reduce use of plastics, she adds.

Naaranga Mittayi
(sweet lime candy) was

a fun-filled programme where the Rotaractors included and engaged their grandparents in a special zoom meet. “Communication is one important aspect which can help everyone survive the Covid pandemic and its associated gloom. While we the younger generation has the knowledge of technology and ability to make new friends online and offline, our grandparents should not feel left out. This thought motivated us to design a programme exclusively for them,” she smiles. Club members Benjo Cherian, Vishnu K and Rashmi T coordinated the event engaging the elder family members in a lively conversation. “We learnt a lot from them. Their advice was so meaningful and would certainly take



Above: Clothes being donated to a transgender.

Below: DRR M Suparna gifts a box of seed pens to police personnel.



us forward in life,” says Rashmi.

With schools functioning online, many teachers are still learning the ropes to conduct online classes. On Teacher’s Day, the club members, through their *Project Upskill*, provided training to government school teachers to handle virtual classes. They taught them to use the internet, design learning material using Power-Point and introduced them to various other video conferencing apps.

“It has been an exciting journey so far and we as a team are loving every moment of our Rotaract life,” beams Suparna. ■

Providing better sanitation for schoolchildren

Team Rotary News

Rotaract Club of Pune Mid East, RID 3131, along with the district team, installed six prefabricated toilets in three zilla parishad schools in Velhe and Pedgaon villages near Pune. Overhead tanks were also installed to provide sufficient water in each toilet.

“The existing toilets in these schools were in pathetic shape making it difficult for the students and staff. We had surplus funds in our district office last year and I sanctioned ₹1 lakh from

the district funds,” said IPDRR Akshay More who led the initiative with WASH committee member PDRR Arjun Dev and deputy DRR Drishti Singh. The facilities were handed over to the school administration in the presence of PDG Prashant Deshmukh who is also a member of the WASH committee.

Each toilet cost ₹18,000. “We plan to provide more such facilities in the coming years and hope that this will set a precedent for Rotaractors everywhere,” said More. ■

PDG Prashanth Deshmukh, IPDRR Akshay More and deputy DRR Drishti Singh with villagers after installing toilets in a school.



Rotaractors use online platform to do meaningful projects

Kiran Zehra

Rotaractors celebrate the Xmas spirit with children.



Making use of online platforms Rotaractors of RID 3012 put together programmes and activities for children and adults. To begin with, they organised a virtual workshop to create awareness on and address the stigma around mental illness just ahead of World

Suicide Prevention Day (Sept 10). Psychologists from Ascend-PsyCare, a behavioural health science and psych innovation enterprise based in Delhi, addressed the programme. “Talking with the doctors we realised that mental health awareness increases chances for early intervention, which can help patients to receive timely care and help in a fast recovery,” says DRR Varda

Sardana. The pandemic has changed our lives forever. “Stress levels are high in many people and such workshops will act as a platform for people to air their thoughts and anxieties, and get help,” she adds.

Launched in September **Project Saahas** aims at helping underprivileged students with their lessons and providing them educational kits comprising books and stationery. Rotaract Clubs of G L Bajaj, PCTI and Vaishali collaborated with Devanagari: Hindi Ki Pehchan, to conduct online Hindi classes. *Angrezi Medium*, part of Project Saahas, helped in training 14 students from Classes 2–9 in reading, writing and conversing in English with confidence. The classes were conducted over phone and were one-on-one sessions.

Project Aaina “is about taking sex education to street children because they are vulnerable to a variety of physical, psychological and sexual exploitations. For me, this is one of the most important projects our district has undertaken this year,” says Varda. With over 45 Rotaractors onboard, these informative sessions are designed keeping in mind a fixed curriculum imparting sexual awareness and knowledge through infographics and regular learning activities. The district clubs have partnered with institutions like Jagannath International Management School, Sai Academy and Government Girls Senior Secondary School, reaching out to more than 250 students of different age groups. The initiative has completed online training sessions for 23 Rotaract clubs in RID 3012 and 33 Rotaract clubs in other districts “to reach out to as many children as possible and help them understand their biology.” Addressing the global hunger crisis, the district’s International Services team came up with an initiative to provide food to 10,000 people in the district. Under **Project Zero Hunger**, Rotaract clubs from RID 3012 collaborated with Rotaract clubs outside the



districts to carry out joint food donation drives. “Many food vans, restaurants, food delivery services, NGOs and places of worship have assisted clubs in executing the project to date. We encouraged Rotaractors to supply food, preferably home-cooked meals, to underprivileged families on birthdays and anniversaries,” says Varda. The project went on for four months from September to December last year and 30 inter-district collaborations were formed to feed the poor.

Under the **Project Power of Ponytails**, Rotaractors in the district donate their hair to provide wigs for cancer patients who have lost their hair during chemotherapy. Apart from this the campaign creates awareness about cancer and motivates individuals into donating 12-inches of their hair to help make natural wigs for cancer patients. Partnering with the NGO, Protect Your Mom, the district Rotaract and interact teams have been able to collect donations from five donors so far.

The District Rotaract Professional Development Team organised a master



A Rotaractor after donating her hair for making wigs for cancer patients.



A Rotaractor donates clothes to the needy.

class on LinkedIn. Post the workshop, 10 Rotaractors obtained internships from companies like Essay Po, Drum Rolls and Dreams.

Rotaract District 3012 partnered with its Interact district to host the first edition of **Model United Nations, named Diplomacia 3012**. Contemplating current world affairs and engaging in the art of diplomacy, 100+ delegates gathered skills of negotiation, conflict resolution, and cooperation across six UN committees. The two-day affair was conducted online in the presence of DG Alok Gupta, DRCC Sanjay Garg and DIC Naman Jain. Certificates and awards were given to participating Interactors and Rotaractors.

The district conducted its first in-person event in November. Dubbed **Junoon**, the sports meet involved close to 70 Rotaractors in games of cricket, badminton, football, basketball, kho kho and tug of war. Proper safety precautions were undertaken with social distancing rules in play. ■

Spreading warmth

Jaishree

The Rotaractors of RAC Ethiraj College for Women, RID 3232, spread Christmas joy among the street and slum dwellers by giving them blankets and mats to keep them warm. Around 150 people benefitted from the club's humanitarian service. This has been a timely gift for the needy as most of them were using thin tattered blankets while some did not have one at all, said club president Nandini.



Above: Rotaractors gift blankets and mats to a woman.

Left: RAC Ethiraj College members pet puppies at a Blue Cross centre.

In another initiative, the members pooled in funds to provide cages and absorbent sheets for animals sheltered at a Blue Cross centre in Chennai. Around ₹26,000 was raised for the project titled *Happy Tails*. Sufficient quantity of cat and dog food were also donated by the Rotaractors.

In an attempt to promote unity in diversity, the Rotaractors partnered with 25 clubs across the country and exchanged letters in their regional language. "It was an opportunity for us to get to know our fellow Rotaractors and exchange information about each other's region," she said. ■



Rotaractors renovate Karur War Memorial

V Muthukumaran



State transport minister MR Vijayabhaskar inaugurates the refurbished memorial in the presence of RAC Karur president R Sabarish (right) and district collector T Anbalagan (3rd from right).

A Rotaract project has enabled the residents of Karur, a historic city in Tamil Nadu, to take pride in their grand heritage. It all began at one of the weekly meetings of RAC Karur, RID 3000, when they were finalising their annual projects. “We wanted to do some additional projects that can really create an impact,” said club president R Sabarish.

Following this, a four-member team visited the Karur War Memorial at Rayanur, 3km from the town, to have a first-hand view of this ruined structure and “in no time, we decided to renovate the entire complex,” he said.

The Rotaractors met district collector T Anbalagan with a 2D layout, 3D visualisation, walkthrough graphics and a project estimate

and got formal approval for the renovation work. Impressed by the plan layouts, the collector said they were about to undertake a similar work and urged Rotaractors to complete the work in time and hand over the renovated memorial to the municipality for proper maintenance.

One of the Rotaractors, NCB Kaviarasu, an architect, came forward to design

the facelift and provide technical inputs for the renovation.

Sabarish and his team approached Asian Fabricx who readily agreed to sponsor the entire project amounting to `3.25 lakh under their CSR arm. The main structure, the obelisk dome, got a fresh coat of paint and the entire premises measuring 846 sqft (approx) got a new makeover with steel rafters, fencing, tiling, civil work,

solar lights, compound work, etc.

The wild bushes, weeds and debris were cleared and flowering plants were grown to enhance the site's aesthetics. However, the main highlight is the erection of six pillars with inscriptions that narrate the history behind raising the War Memorial.

It was raised in memory of warriors killed and as a symbol of victory

when the British captured the Karur Fort from Tipu Sultan during the Second Anglo-Mysore War (1780–1784 AD). “Sadly, the fort was destroyed in the battle. This memorial stands as a testimony of that ancient legacy of Karur,” said Sabarish. TN Transport Minister MR Vijayabhaskar inaugurated the renovated War Memorial on the 35th charter day of the club. ■



An aerial view of the renovated Karur War Memorial.

Kolkata Interactors start a ‘street library’

Team Rotary News

The Interact Club of Silver Point School (formed by the Rotary Club of Calcutta, the longest running club in Asia), in association with iLead (a UGC recognised higher education institution of repute), has set up a ‘Free Street Library’ at their school premises. RID 3291 DG Sudip Mukherjee, along with Pradip Kr Chopra, chairman, iLead, participated in the inaugural event.

The core objective of setting up the ‘Free Street Library’ was to provide a fascinating platform for sharing books and knowledge with the local people of all age groups who cannot afford to buy expensive books but are ardent book lovers, said Debasish Biswas, youth services chair, RC Calcutta. Ratna Chanda Roy, teacher coordinator of the Interact club, talked about the

series of projects undertaken by the Interactors during Covid times and other projects during 2021 that will have at least 500 beneficiaries. People from the local community were highly appreciative of this centre which will make the ‘street library’ accessible to them. DG Mukherjee appreciated the efforts of the Interactors, and the event saw donation of more than 600 books in English, Mathematics, general knowledge, science and story books by the Interact club of the school to Divine Social Welfare Society, an NGO which supports the education of poor and slum children.

Others who participated in this inaugural event included Sula-gna Daw, district interact chair; Bani Roychowdhury, secretary of Silver Point School; Purnendu Roychowdhury, trustee member of the school and RID 3291 zonal secretary Debasish Biswas. ■



Interactors donate books to the Divine Social Welfare Society.

Post-Covid, 'Get set, go' for Mysuru Rotaractors

V Muthukumaran



Bike rallyists on top of Chikka Devammana Betta.

After a phase of inactivity due to tough Covid restrictions during the lockdown, Rotaractors at RAC Mysore, RID 3181, are now looking up and “are keen on doing a slew of projects including a career counselling event for the local youth. We are happy to partner with our parent RC Mysore, a 76-year-old club, in their Covid relief work such as donating stretchers and medicines to the Asha Kiran Hospital, Hebbal,” says S Yashas, club president.

One of their flagship projects is Road Safety Bike Ride, which they have been doing for the last four years to

bring awareness among villagers, especially those riding on two-wheelers. Each year, they join hands with Swami Vivekananda Youth Movement (SVYM) to take out a rally from Mysuru to the Vivekananda Memorial Hospital at Sargur village at Heggadadevanakote taluk wherein the Rotaractors impress on the locals to wear helmets for safe journey. “Around 25 bikers with full riding gears visit this village, 60km from Mysuru, to stage a street play and a flash mob on road safety,” says Yashas. This year the combined team of SVYM and Rotaractors distributed 50

helmets to tribals having two-wheelers at N Begur village.

Flood-relief distribution

In a war-footing, the Rotaractors went door-to-door to collect donations for arranging a flood-relief distribution to affected villages in Kodagu district of south Karnataka and Wayanad region of Kerala. “First, we made a detailed list of household items and emergency kits needed for flood victims, and then raised funds,” he says. Around 30 Rotaractors from 10 clubs (out of 16 in Mysuru) took part in the fund-collection drive and RAC Mysore led from the front being

the oldest club in the region with a 49-year-old legacy of doing service projects.

While they passed on the collected items including grocery bags, garments, baby clothes, mattresses and toiletries to RAC Coorg Institute of Technology for delivering the same to the flood-hit families in Kodagu, the students of JSS Law College, Mysuru, distributed flood relief in Wayanad district. “We had collected ₹60,000-plus for purchasing emergency and household needs as per our prepared list,” he says.

They distributed blankets, protein powder



Rotaractors presenting letters which were sent to Indian jawans.



S Yashas (left), president, RAC Mysore, at the Road Safety Bikeathon.

and stationery kits to tribal students in Bandipur. This was made possible with liberal sponsors from their parent Rotary club. Each year on July 26, Rotaractors from all clubs in Mysuru come together for a peace march to mark Kargil Vijay Diwas. They invite a senior Rotarian or a retired Army officer to give a 15–20-minute talk on the sacrifices of the jawans and their exemplary bravery on treacherous terrains.

On Aug 15, the Rotaractors sent similar letters to Indian soldiers thanking them for their sacrifice while guarding the borders.

School renovation

The club plans to renovate a classroom and construct a new toilet block at the Government Girls High School, Hootagalli. The Rotaractors, along with

Rotarians, planted saplings at the Rotary Vana, a two-acre children’s park maintained by RC Mysore.

The Rotaractors helped their parent club to sponsor a cricket tournament between government and forest officials at Nagarhole, famous for its wildlife tiger reserve and national park. “While we provided the team jerseys for the tournament, Rotaractors from RID 3190 presented the mementos to the winning and participating teams.” It was one of the exciting moments for Yashas to accompany DRR Abhijith MS, Rtrs Shiva Shankar and Mohith during the journey to Nagarhole. “We were also joined by three Rotarians led by RC Mysore president Manjesh Kumar to watch the matches, and that day was really memorable for me,” signs off Yashas. ■

Rotaractors brighten up Bhuj with their programmes

Jaishree

A little boy poses with his Ganesha for the 'Selfie with Ganesha' contest.



Despite the Covid lockdown, the members of RAC Bhuj Midtown, RID 3054, have been busy with a variety of service projects and conducting online contests that have made Rotary popular among the people.

“Many people signed up for our online events such as *Selfie with Ganesha*, Rakhi-making, Rangoli and patriotic singing competition on I-Day,” says Saheli Shah, past president of the club. She was president of the club for two consecutive years from 2016–18, and recalls having implemented over 200 projects during her tenure. “When I was president there were 35 members, but now after Covid, some shifted to their hometowns and we are 26 of us now,” she says.

Talking about virtual events, she says that it has widened the scope for the club and there were contestants from the Middle East countries for the cultural contests. It gives them an opportunity to connect with their roots, smiles Saheli.



RAC Bhuj Midtown president Urvi Soni gives a food packet to a child.



Above: Rotaractors at one of their adopted schools.

Bottom: A Rotaractor cheers up an elderly citizen in an old age home.

The club celebrated Doctors' Day (July 1) by thanking them with cards to acknowledge their valuable service to society especially during the Covid pandemic. "We talked

to them and understood the difficulties and challenges they face in treating Covid patients. No words are enough to thank them. They are messengers of god," she says.

Two years ago, the club had adopted two government schools and the members have been helping the children with books, stationery, schoolbags, footwear and dresses. They donated computers and sponsored some repair work in the schools. "We raised funds through ticketed events and generous contribution from donors including our parent club RC Bhuj."

Since July the club led by its

president Urvi Soni has been distributing food and grocery kits to people residing in the neighbouring slums. The Rotaractors visit orphanages and old age homes to cheer up the inmates with goodie bags, games and competitions. Some of them visited the Palara Jail in Kutch to celebrate *Rakhi* with prisoners and police officials.

The club's annual signature events — photography contest and Holi party — are popular among the youngsters since the last four years. "The photography contest is open to all across the country and we get a good crowd for the exhibition following the contest."

The Rotaractors also celebrated Navratri and Diwali festivals. "All the members were involved with full *josh* for events as well as service projects," signs off Saheli who is a dietician by profession. ■



RID 3240 fights against hunger and illiteracy

V Muthukumaran

On World Food Day (Oct 16) around 35 Rotaract clubs across the zones took up Annapurna project on a massive scale for 15 days. “Over 350 families were given ration kits worth ₹1,000 each, food packets were distributed to around 1,000 needy people and countless animals were fed

with grains and other edibles at various cities and towns,” says DRR Tushar Jalan, RID 3240. Up on the pecking order, 26 clubs in RID 3240 took up “food distribution in a frenetic manner as the year 2020 is witness to never-seen-before developments with coronavirus pushing us to a new normal on all fronts

of our physical activities,” he says.

Heeding the call of PM Narendra Modi for Atmanirbhar Bharat, “we took up a slogan ‘Going vocal for local’ to encourage people to buy local goods and services to boost our economy. Our Rotaract clubs sourced all food grains and essentials from

the neighbourhood *kirana* shops, avoiding supermarkets, hypermarkets and MNC retailers, as part of a mission to support local traders.” In all, Rotaractors would have distributed grocery kits and food packets worth ₹4–4.5 lakh across the RI districts, “the money pooled in through a mix of club funds and

From Left: RC Guwahati Luit IPP Pawan Golcha, Rtn Samta Golcha, DRR Tushar Jalan and club secretary Amit Ajitsariya.



donations, by tying up with local restaurants, cloud kitchens and sponsors from large-hearted Rotarians.”

Promoting literacy

The district launched a mega campaign *Padhega India, Badega India* in September to mark Rotary’s Literacy month. “All our 61 clubs (with 1,200 Rotaractors) were given a clutch of short-term and long-term projects for the month.” In the short-term projects, *Raah* involves gifting of smartphones to meritorious, but poor students; *Guru* enables Rotaractors to teach functional and digital literacy to children in orphanages, childcare centres and special homes for at least four weeks; and finally, under Happy Schools, clubs will donate, renovate or build infrastructure facilities to enhance classroom education. “Rotaractors are free to provide RO units, desks and benches, blackboards and other basic amenities in government schools,” says Janan.

Project Goonj, a long-term initiative, offers a one-year Rotaract scholarship to bright students who don’t have parents, from economically-deprived family or single-parent children. “We provide not just tuition fees, but also school uniforms, stationery kits, and other necessities based on the requirements of each child. The club will adopt a student who has scored



A Rotaractor giving a food packet to an elderly.

80 per cent and above in annual exams under *Goonj*.”

An investor’s awareness meet through zoom was held in partnership with SEBI in which 150 Rotaractors took part along with the public. A financial expert from Hyderabad spoke on ways to multiply one’s wealth through equity market and mutual funds, and how to

keep their shares, other instruments safe from cyber thefts and brokerage scams.

Chartering, reviving clubs

In a major boost to the youth movement of Rotary in Northeast India, DRR Tushar Janan is working actively to charter new clubs and revive those that have shut down for various

reasons. “Till December, I have chartered 10 new Rotaract clubs and revived three clubs which were terminated by RI board, but were active on the ground. For this, we checked the records, coordinated with the presidents of their parent Rotary clubs and took up correspondence with the RI office to revive these clubs — RACs Tinsukia, Jalpaiguri Government Engineering College and Bongaigaon,” explains the DRR.

Over the next two months, RID 3240 will expand its footprints to Jorhat, Golaghat (both in Assam), Manipur, Mizoram and Institute of Hotel Management, Kalimpong. Janan became a Paul Harris Fellow in November by donating \$1,000 to TRF which was matched in part by PDG Prabhat Kumar Kedia. ■

A Rotaractor presenting clothes to a school student.





Children being educated by Rotaractors on Covid prevention.

RID 3190 Rotaractors help the differently-abled find jobs

Jaishree

The Rotaractors of Karnataka, RID 3190, headed by a six-member team, have helped provide job opportunities for 200 physically-challenged people in various

organisations since July. *Project Adhyan*, meaning 'the rising' or 'self-respect', is a district project for Rotaract clubs to help the physically-challenged get suitable jobs in Bengaluru and other parts of the state.

So far 70 people have been recruited by Headway Asia, with 35 getting placement at the Flipkart warehouse. Vindhya Infotech, Amazon Teleperformance and 24-7 are some of the other corporates that participated in the recruitment programme.



A Covid survey being conducted in a village.

“We have included physical disabilities in all forms. Our training partners, Global Talent Track, train them in facing interviews and other skills related to work environment. Almost 70 hours of online training for over 10 days included personal grooming, managing emails and social etiquette,” says project chair and district community services director Rakshith. GTT also helps in connecting the candidates with potential employers.

Rotaractors contact the physically-challenged with data collected from government agencies. “We ask them if they require a job, understand their educational background and work skills, and enroll them for training. Each call lasts for at least 45 minutes. We took special training in sign language to communicate with the speech and hearing-impaired people on video calls,” he says. Some candidates were sceptical, not wanting to risk stepping out of their homes for fear of coronavirus. “So we even identified work from

home options and arranged computers or laptops for them.”

There are special government schemes open for the differently-abled, but these are virtually unknown. “So we educated them about the available government assistance, loans and allowances. Under one such scheme, we procured photocopiers for two disabled people, one each in Chickballapura and Kurnool. They are now earning a decent income from their homes by providing photocopying services in their localities,” says Rakshith.

While this is an ongoing programme, the district has tied up with an NGO, Crafting Woods, to provide awareness about Covid in 12 villages. “We distributed health kits comprising masks, sanitisers and soaps to the villagers.” The Rotaractors put up banners and conducted door-to-door Covid-related surveys with questions such as what safety measures the villagers follow; what do they do as soon as they return home; and the toll-free number to call if they developed Covid symptoms. ■

Rotaractors play Secret Santa

Kiran Zehra

Soon after the relaxation of the lockdown in Chandigarh, RAC Chandigarh Midtown, RID 3080, planned 10 activities for 10 days in December. “This is the time of year when we donate toys, food and do a lot of charities under our annual event called *Secret Santa*. We raised the money for this event in November and planned our activities in

areas close by to avoid too much travel and risk of exposure,” says Himani Sharma, club president.

Following social distancing and all other safety precautions, the Rotaractors stepped out and carried out the first set of projects. “We started with donating stationery kits to underprivileged students from the slums. Because of the lockdown, their parents could hardly



Sanitary napkins being distributed to girls.



Clothes being distributed to the needy.

Left: Rotaractors with children after distributing stationery kits to them.

Below: Children sporting masks given to them by Rotaractors.



afford to feed them three times a day. Buying stationery for school was out of the question for them," she says.

To spread the Christmas cheer club members

also distributed balloons and toys among poor children across Chandigarh.

"While we enjoy the winters sitting cozily in our homes and sipping hot coffee, there are people

out there on the streets for whom it is a matter of survival in the bitter cold," says Himani. Keeping this in mind the club donated blankets to 100 people sleeping on the streets.

Sanitary napkins for women and adolescent girls, clothes, masks and food for the needy were also part of the giving drive for the club members. ■

When pictures speak

Rasheeda Bhagat

It was colours galore and celebration of nature at its best at the Global Greens photo contest organised by the Interactors of RID 3040, led by its DIR Avhaan Narang. The contest was organised in partnership with *Saevus* magazine, that is devoted to environmental conservation.

Many of the pictures taken by these youngsters were of great quality, and as Narang put it, there is immense joy in pursuing “photography which is the ultimate art where you capture a moment of beauty through your camera and then save it for generations.”

Addressing the meet, RID 3040 DG Gajendra Narang said the contest got an impressive number of 160 entries from Interactors all over the world. “A dedicated team of jury from *Saevus*, led by its managing partner Sandeep Mal, a Rotarian from the district, selected the best three pictures for awards, and five honourable mentions.

He also thanked Sree Nandy, CEO of *Saevus* magazine, who is a Rotarian for becoming the



The prize-winning photo of a monkey and its little one.

knowledge partner for this event of the Interact clubs of his district.

In response Sree Nandy said this had been a rewarding experience for them too and promised that “in the future too we will be happy to work with Rotary to reach the message of the urgent need to protect the environment to the youth of this country.”

Wonderful quality

Mal said the quality of the photographs submitted for the contest

Many of the pictures taken by these youngsters were of great quality, and as Narang put it, there is immense joy in pursuing “photography which is the ultimate art where you capture a moment of beauty through your camera.”

was “really wonderful” and the pictures had to be shortlisted through several stages. The first prize went to Aditya Krishna Menon, for his brilliant black and white photograph of a dragonfly trapped in the web of a spider.

Describing the moment he captured that prize winning entry, Menon said, “I was sitting at home, bored by the lockdown, and saw both the spider in its web and the dragonfly on the ceiling. As the web was brightened by the light, I saw the dragonfly getting attracted by the light and it started moving towards the spider’s web. I knew that sooner or later it will get caught in the web, so I quickly grabbed my camera and waited.”

The picture, shot with a DSLR camera, and published here, has brilliantly caught the delicate

web, the hunter (spider) and the victim (dragonfly).

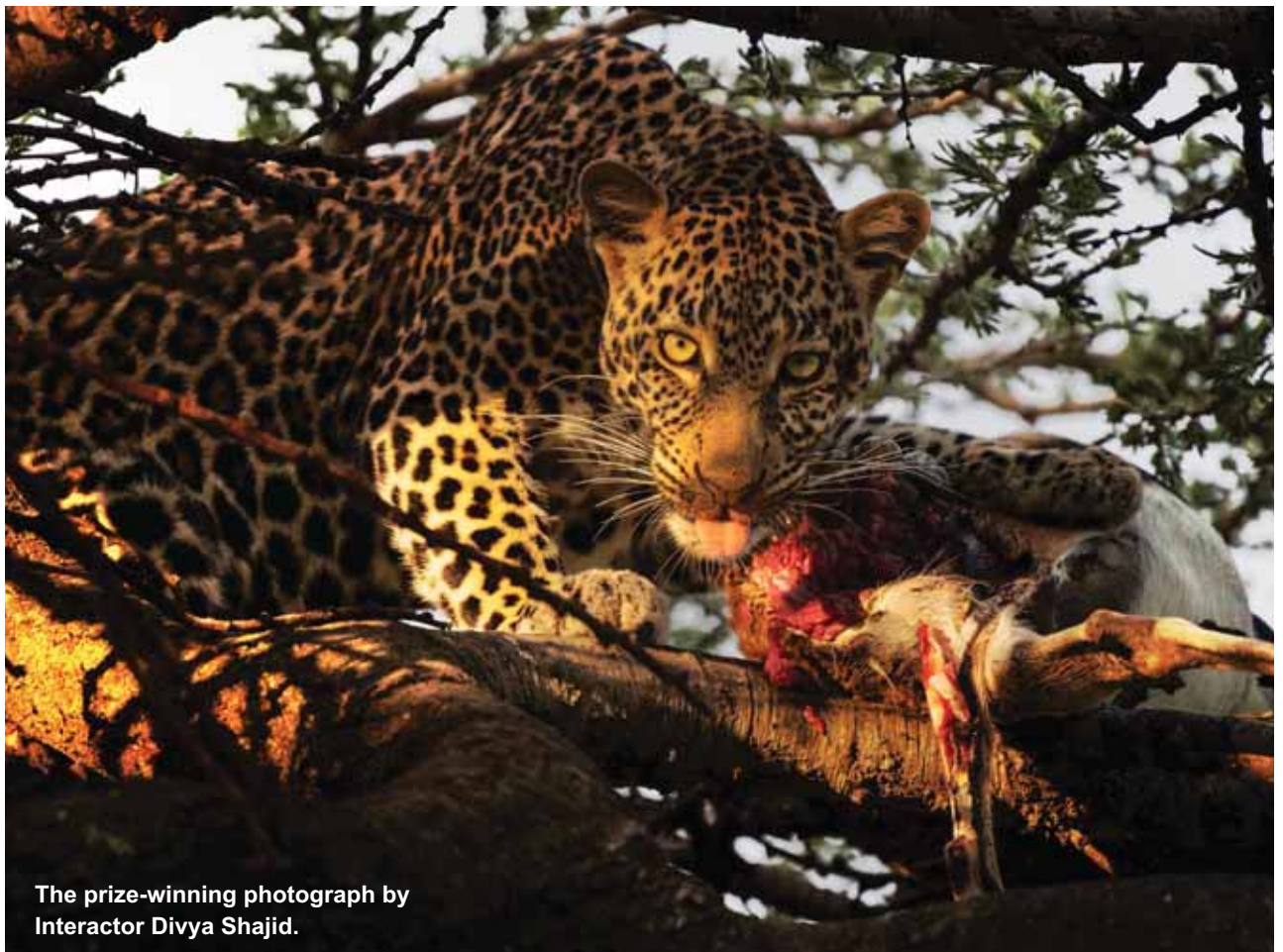
It was heartening to know that the prize-winning youngsters have all used cameras, and not their mobile phones, to compose great pictures. It shows their serious interest in photography as a hobby, and maybe later, as a profession.

But my favourite from the prizewinning lot at the event, over which I presided, was the second prize winner Vishal Naveen’s picture of a monkey with its little one, which has made it to the cover of our January issue. To me that picture speaks so much... of course its composition, its sharpness, the back lighting, and other technical features are great. But it also proves the adage that one picture is worth 1,000 words.

PDG Pramod Jhejhurikar, who addressed the event, congratulated DRR Avhaan Narang for “this wonderful initiative that has connected Interact clubs all over the world.” He recalled that a few weeks ago, Rotary India had organised a wildlife event for school children addressed by RIPE Shekhar Mehta.

The perfect picture

But first Naveen’s take on how he took the picture: “It was outside the Guindy Park in Chennai and I saw many monkeys and among them this mother and



The prize-winning photograph by Interactor Divya Shajid.

What makes a good picture

Rotary News Editor Rasheeda Bhagat explained that taking a good picture is more about the eye behind the camera, than the camera itself. While today anybody can take a good picture with a mobile phone, those who were interested in serious photography should make it a point to use cameras.

Apart from composition and understanding the importance of light and its source, patience is of great importance, particularly while photographing nature and wildlife. Recalling the importance that *Life* magazine of yesteryears gave to photographs which it carried over full pages,

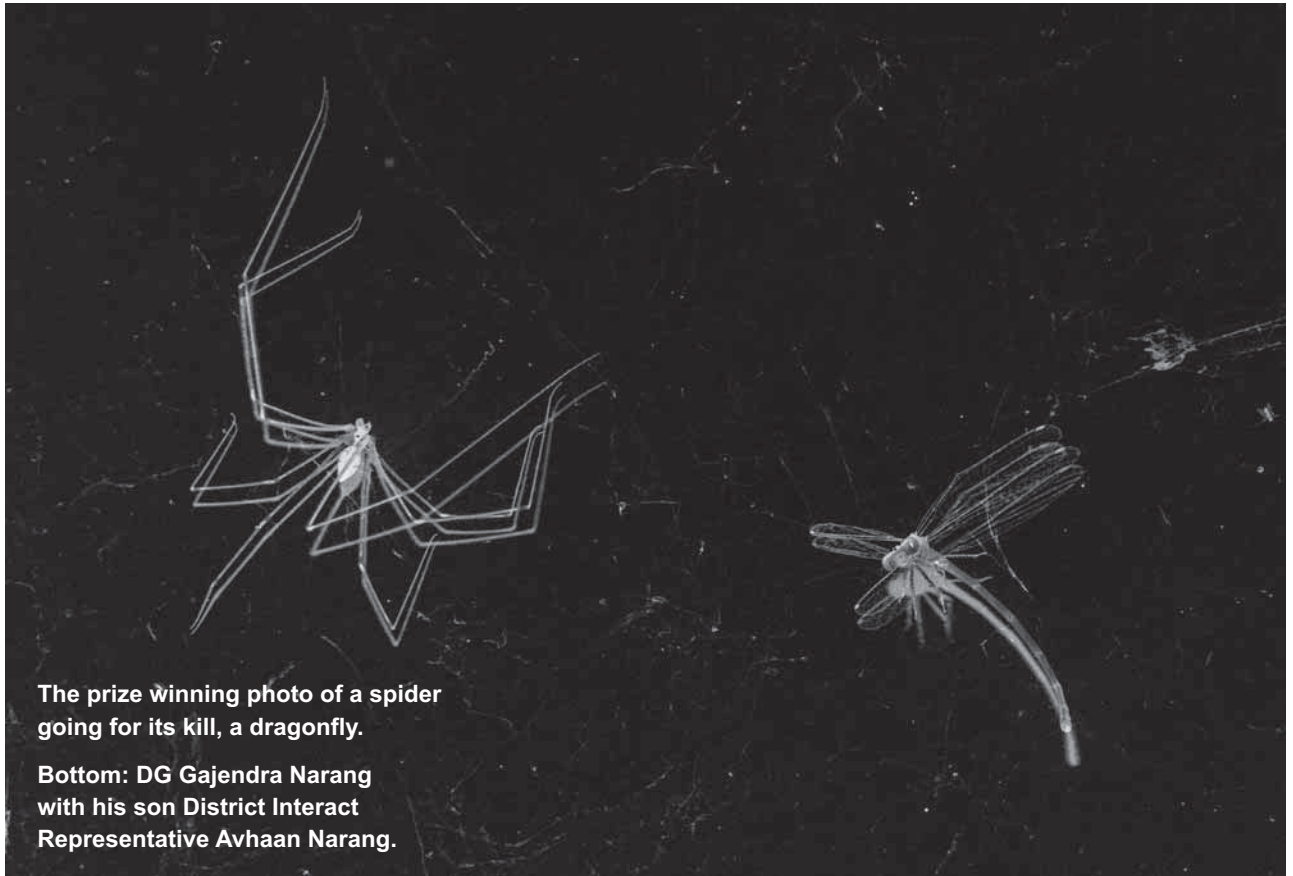
she urged the Interactors to look up the pictures published by the magazine, which captured the mystery, magic, essence and beauty of the subject in the pictures it carried.

Talking about the great photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson, who was present at the Birla House a day before Gandhiji's assassination, she explained his concept of the "decisive moment" of a photograph. A professional photographer has to be always alert and sharp, and sports photographers know this best. If they blink even for a second, they could miss the picture of the match!

Reiterating the importance of patience, she said that while photographing a stunning sunset, most people pack up their camera kits once the sun has set.

"But the real magic in the evening sky begins after the sun has set. The sky rapidly changes colours and pictures shot of the glowing sky after the sun has set can be very dramatic and rewarding," she added, and urged the young photographers to never give up their passion for this hobby, which could well turn into a meaningful profession, if they pursued it.





The prize winning photo of a spider going for its kill, a dragonfly.

Bottom: DG Gajendra Narang with his son District Interact Representative Avhaan Narang.

child, and took a few pictures. But I wasn't satisfied with the shots, so I waited for the sun to set, and when I felt the light was perfect, I took this picture."

The picture has wonderful backlight and the frame is perfect too. But the emotions it

is bound to create in the viewer, and that too when such a disastrous year like 2020 is over, and a new year is beginning, are bound to be overwhelming. This picture is about both love and tenderness as well as hope and protection.

PDG Pramod Jhejhurikar, who addressed the event, congratulated DRR Avhaan Narang for "this wonderful initiative that has connected Interact clubs all over the world." He recalled that a few weeks ago, Rotary India had organised a wildlife event for school children addressed by RIPE Shekhar Mehta which had seen a record participation of 95,000, including thousands watching it through a Facebook link.

Lokesh Jhavar, District chair for Interact, announced that 10 Interact clubs were being opened within a week, to add to the 14 active Interact clubs it has now.

DGE Mahendra Mishra, project chair of this event, DGN Dharendra Jain and District trainer Atul Gargav participated. ■



Delhi Rotaractors organise online programmes

Team Rotaract News

A week-long initiative called *Learn to Rise* was organised online by Rotaract District 3011. Eminent speakers and personalities spoke on various topics such as mental health, laughter therapy and emotional well-being; art and Zumba sessions rejuvenated the participants. RAC Ramanujan hosted a talk show by laughter guru Dr Madan Kataria who gave an inspiring speech on staying healthy through lifestyle modifications.

Suhasini Subramanian, psychologist from Karma

Centre for Counselling and Wellbeing, spoke on developing the art of writing as a form of self-love, introspection and therapy. Dr Sajeela Maini from Sir Ganga Ram Hospital urged the Rotaractors to express their feelings in a healthy way “so that we can channelise our energy in a positive, coherent manner.”

Virtual organ donation rally

DG Sanjiv Rai Mehra was the chief guest at the virtual organ donation rally. “A transplant is the ultimate legacy a person can leave behind as it gives a new lease of life to another,” he said.

DGN Ashok Kantoor appreciated the Rotaractors for creating awareness about organ donation through a virtual rally during the pandemic times. “One person can save the lives of so many, with just one commitment. What you leave behind is not what is engraved in stone but what is woven into the lives of others,” said Kantoor.

DRR Sarthak Bansal
RID 3011

Dr Vasanthi Ramesh said organ donation is growing in importance as the world is grappling with new kinds of diseases which are spreading fast in recent years.

Under the *Project Rakht Sahayak*, the Rotaractors are compiling a database of blood donors in the extended localities. “This data of prospective donors has been made available for those who require blood donation especially during this pandemic,” said DRR Sarthak Bansal, RID 3011.

Pehchaan – Sabka Haq

To mark International Transgender Day of Remembrance (Nov 20), a talk show titled *Pehchaan: Sabka haq* was hosted by RAC Young Visionaries. This was followed by a Q&A session with panellists who were from LGBTQ community answering queries on their personal experiences since childhood. “The conversation was candid and the issues touched included perspectives on how to be a good ally, how to ensure that you use proper pronouns, the importance of consent, respect, empathy, bullying, teasing and general transphobia etc,” said Bansal.

Voice Your Opinion

The district Rotaractors joined hands with RC Delhi Midwest to host an online *Voice Your Opinion* debate for Interactors.



Many teams of enthusiastic Interactors from Delhi schools competed against each other in an Oxford-style debate. “The aim of the event was to encourage young Interactors deliberate on contemporary issues and to promote professional development and foster public-speaking skills,” said the DRR.

Project Prashikshan

The New Education Policy was the focus of discussion at *Project Prashikshan* jointly hosted by RACs Delhi Vedanta, Delhi Janak and Ingenious Mind. Both students and teachers were involved in a two-day digital initiative with the aim to train them on the new policy and its impact on school education.

Experts like Dr Kuldeep Aggarwal and Dr Rajiv Lochan

delivered speeches during the keynote sessions. This was followed by a skill training session on personal development and public speaking. “It was a wholesome learning experience for all the students, teachers and Rotaractors as the deliberations simplified the various nuances of the new education policy,” said DRR Bansal. The district Rotaractors kicked off a long-term project titled *Vridhi* directed on skill development and employment through hybrid learning.

Elevation: Rotaract Assembly

The two-day district assembly titled *Elevation* saw PDRRs Mukesh Pratap Singh, Rajesh Subramanian, Naveen Senna, Vivek Baskar, IPDRRs Sneha Shakya



DG Sanjiv Rai Mehra

and Chintan Shah delivering inspiring speeches. PDG Hemant Ahuja spoke on the importance of team building. PDG Deepak Kapur, DRCC Anil Sachdev and Kashish Chandan, chair, district new generations (youth services), were the other speakers.

A virtual district training seminar was

conducted for the Rotaractors with an aim to allow members to acquaint themselves with each other.

A fun-filled online Halloween party was hosted by RACs Young Souvenirs and Gurugram Midwest with Rotaractors donning colourful costumes and make-up for a lively interaction through zoom. “From spooky games, sharing ghost stories to dressing up creatively, the night saw it all. For a lot of Rotaractors, it was their first informal Rotaract event,” said Bansal.

RID 3011 has 55-plus Rotaract clubs spread across Delhi and NCR with over 2,500 Rotaractors having taken up diverse projects like plantation drives, youth exchange programmes, career development sessions, animal welfare initiatives and many community-connect projects. ■



Chasing away lockdown blues

Jaishree

The Rotaractors of RAC Mumbai Malabar Hills, RID 3141, put together *Project Yogdaan* to implement a range of welfare projects in the community during the lockdown.

The first service project was distribution of 1,000 masks, 75 litres of handsanitiser, 300 soaps,

1,500 biscuit packets and two tarpaulins to police stations at Malabar Hill, Gamdevi and Marine Drive. “We collected funds for the donation through a fundraiser and all our members were enthusiastic that they all pitched in one way or the other,” said Punit Vakil, youth director, RC Mumbai Malabar Hill.

The next initiative was *Project Khana*

under which the Rotaractors provided packed food to the hungry in various localities in the neighbourhood. *Poha, upma, idli* and fruits were distributed to 1,000 people. “We included chocolates and cream buns for children,” he said, adding that it was a collective activity performed throughout the lockdown period.

To combat the winter chill the club distributed 350 blankets to people in five rural regions near Chakan in Pune.

A book collection drive was organised which helped to collect a fair amount of academic as well as fiction books, and these were distributed to children and school students.



A Rotaractor presents a blanket to a beneficiary.



Above: Beneficiaries with blankets distributed to them by Rotaractors.

Below: Food packets being distributed by Rotaractors.



With schools shut due to the pandemic, the Rotaractors taught school lessons to children of domestic help, watchmen, gardener and milk delivery men. “We also raised awareness about good touch, bad touch; importance of healthy diet and menstrual hygiene.”

Feeding stray animals comprised the last initiative under *Project Yogdaan*. The Rotaractors fed stray cats and dogs, and birds in Churchgate, Malabar Hill, Hanging Gardens and Priyadarshini Park areas. “We provided fodder to 10 cows and have installed terracotta bowls at our homes and on the street pavements in our locality to provide water for animals and birds” said Vakil. ■

RC Dibrugarh starts afresh with a slew of projects

V Muthukumaran



Covid warriors at the Assam Medical College and Hospital with Rotaract citations.

After a gap of eight years, Rotaract Club of Dibrugarh, RID 3240, the oldest club in the district, was re-chartered in October 2020 with persistent efforts from DRR Tushar Jalan and PDG Kalpana Khound. “We had long discussions in conference calls, zoom sessions to revive the 49-year-old club despite the limitations imposed by the Covid lockdown,” says Abhisek Kaushik, president, RAC Dibrugarh. RC Dibrugarh, its parent Rotary club, extended support in restarting the Rotaract club.

Soon the Rotaractors took up *Project Mundita* by tying up with RAC Guwahati East to create awareness on hand hygiene among students of Lezai Miri Pathar High School. Rotaractors led by Rtr Akankshya Bhattacharya conducted a panel discussion at the school’s community hall with village elders, headmaster and select parents. “We talked about the impact of Covid, its repercussions and preventive steps

to be taken by keeping our hands clean and following personal hygiene,” he says.

The Rotaract team demonstrated handwashing with proper soap and water. “We donated sanitisers and the people were happy to receive them as till then they have not heard of such a product and its use,” says Akankshya. At the end of the event, the school was evacuated and sanitised with instructions from the village elders.

Impactful projects

Club secretary Riwitick Baruah and Rtr Garima Todi did all the spadework for *Project Annapurna* at the International Buddhist Mission. Ration kits for 35 days were given to orphaned children at this event and Rotaractors fed dozens of stray dogs, birds and cows at many places in Dibrugarh.

Rotaractors joined hands with RC Dibrugarh for *Project Upodhoukon* in which over 150 books of different

genres were donated to the Bandhoi Puthibhoral Library at Bokul Japihojia village near Dibrugarh. “This place did not have a school, but children were all excited to learn about the world,” says Kaushik. The project was taken up as a tribute to PDG Madhura Chatrapathy who was the chief guest at the club installation. Co-ZRR Abhinav Gautam led a Rotaract team in making the library donation a success.

Frontline workers were presented with a Covid Warrior citation issued by the district administration at the Assam Medical College and Hospital under *Project Sanman*. “We went to every department and ward to honour nurses, cleaners, admin staff, doctors, nurses with the citations and a silk scarf having Covid Warrior embroidered in it,” he says. President-elect Hrishekesh Goswami and vice-president Nafisa Zinnat Hakim took care of arrangements to make the felicitation event at the college memorable. ■

Serve to Change Lives

Shekhar Mehta's Presidential theme

