

Rotaract NEWS

Rotaract 
Rotary Club Partner



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Rotaract News

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The vibrant world of Rotaract

From belonging to a Rotaract club in Pune that has been formed exclusively for the visually-challenged, to continuing with passion their work on improving menstrual health hygiene across the country, to inculcating the habit of making a donation to The Rotary Foundation, Rotaractors have been active in our zones, despite the challenges presented by the Covid pandemic, as detailed in this edition of *Rotaract News*. And, of course, when it comes to fun and sporting activities such as participating in a 10-km cyclothon in the city of Bharuch, organised by RC Bharuch, to create public awareness about health and fitness and the urgent need to reduce our carbon footprint in the world through the use of non-fuel consuming vehicles, Rotaractors and Interactors of the club participated in full force.

It is interesting to see over the last decade Rotary International giving more prominence to its Rotaract youth force. One RI president

after another has stressed the importance of this 117-year-old organisation not doing enough to unleash the power of its young wing. The result is that in the last few years Rotaractors should have less and less scope for complaining, as they did at an international event I distinctly remember, to John Germ when he was RI President. Without pulling their punches, they clearly told him that if Rotary wanted Rotaract numbers to grow, Rotarians should stop looking at Rotaractors as their slave force! Clearly, it was respect and recognition that they were seeking, and it is abundantly clear that they have got just this over the last few years.

First, during the term of Barry Rassin, one of the most passionate votaries of Rotaractors, Rotaract was made a part of Rotary, and now, as a result, a Rotaractor can have dual membership — that of both Rotary and Rotaract. And the incoming RI President Jennifer Jones has plans to appoint Rotaractors as Rotary Public Image Coordinators and RI President's Representatives.

It is heartening to know that many Rotaractors across the world, specially in community-based Rotaract clubs, are making wonderful use of the opportunity to seek out a mentor in a Rotarian who happens to be an experienced and highly skilled professional in the vocation that this Rotaractor is interested or engaged in. This kind of opportunity and leverage only Rotary can offer.

So go ahead and make full use of this wonderful opportunity and continue to push your limits to create magic in your communities.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading 'Rasheeda Bhagat'.

Rasheeda Bhagat

Message from Rotaract Co-chair



Get ready for Rotaract membership dues challenge

Dear friends,
Rotaract has undergone a tremendous transformation over the last few years. During the next Rotary year beginning July 2022, Rotaractors will pay dues to Rotary International thus recording proper membership.

In future, Rotary International will have two kinds of membership ie, Rotarians and Rotaractors. We must prepare ourselves for the future.

The biggest challenge will be the initial resistance to pay membership dues. RI expects a slight dip in the membership of Rotaract because of this challenge.

I urge Rotary's Rotaract leaders to be prepared for this challenge. We must educate the current and future Rotaractors on the various advantages of being a Rotaractor.

Rotaract to me is an excellent forum for leadership development, improving communication and organisational skills, enlarging the network, understanding internationally and working for the community.

I am positive once we educate the members about the pluses of being a Rotaractor then we will not have any fall in membership. Rotaract membership is growing inspite of the challenges thrown at us by Covid.

Rotaractors have launched a nationwide programme for blood donation called Mahadan during March 7 to 13.

I urge Rotary clubs to participate, conduct, support and organise blood donation camps. I also urge Rotary leaders to charter Rotaract clubs in their districts.

The Rotary International Presidential Conference is to be held in Hyderabad during April 29 to May 1. As chairman of the conference I invite Rotaractors to register as delegates and be a part of the conference. We have a special rate of just ₹5,000 for Rotaractors.

We are also involving Rotaract leaders in the various committees. We will have a separate meeting with the DRRs and Rotaract Advisory Committee chairs before the conference.

Let us prepare for the future by working hard in the present.

“

*The future depends
on what we do in the
present.*

– Mahatma Gandhi

”

Ravi Vadlamani
World Rotaract Co-chair

Rotaractors bond over SEARIC Summit

Jaishree

The annual summit of the South East Asian Rotaract Information Centre (SEARIC) was organised as a three-day event in December at Gwalior and

was hosted by RID 3053, the home district of SEARIC MDIO president PDRR/Rtn Kaushal Sahu. Over 300 Rotaractors from across 22 states and from countries such as Nepal, Bhutan and Timor

Leste attended the gala event which was presided over by RI's Rotaract Committee chair PDG Ravi Vadlamani, accompanied by his wife PDG Rajyalakshmi. He encouraged the delegates to support

A cultural performance by Rotaractors from Nepal.



the underprivileged people in their community and provide sustainable solutions to the community's specific needs. He urged the Rotaractors to focus on Rotary's seventh area of focus — supporting the environment. "Climate change is real and happening. As a proactive organisation we are well-poised to address the situation effectively in our neighbourhoods. Encourage your club members to plant native trees, check plastic use, segregate waste at their homes/offices and boost use of solar power," he said.

PDG Rajiv Sharma (RID 3030) urged the Rotaractors to become



World Rotaract Co-chair Ravi Vadlamani with SEARIC MDIO President Kaushal Sahu.



dual members, and recommend Rotary to their friends. "Enhancing membership is the priority focus of our RI President Shekhar Mehta. Do bigger, bolder projects and do not miss any opportunity to let the community know about the good work of Rotary. The more the visibility of Rotary's participation in the common good, the more it will inspire people to become part of the organisation," he said.

PDG Dr Virendra K Gangwal (RID 3053) highlighted the unique relationship between Rotarians and Rotaractors. "With #Elevate Rotaract becoming effective after the last CoL, the role of Rotaractors is more pronounced and significant. A lot of good can be achieved when Rotarians and Rotaractors work in tandem," he pointed out.

Minister of State for Civil Aviation Jyotiraditya Scindia,

the chief guest for an evening's programme, commended the Rotaractors for their service activities. "Your team spirit and empathy towards the less privileged, especially during these challenging times, is laudable," he said, and urged the delegates to take the 'swachhta pledge' to keep their homes and surroundings clean.

Sahu, in his welcome address, gave an insight into how SEARIC acts as a reservoir of valuable information regarding policies and projects, and how it helps in connecting Rotaractors among the participating districts. PDRR Abhay Dubey was the Summit chairman. Host district DRR Sonal Jaiswal ensured a meticulous arrangement to provide a secure and comfortable experience for the visiting delegates.

Winners of the popular television game show *Kaun*



Clockwise: RID 3030 Rajiv Sharma in discussion with Civil Aviation minister Jyotiraditya Scindia; A section of the audience; Civil Aviation minister Scindia inaugurating a session. Rotaractors participating in a fashion show.





Banega Crorepati Kiran Bajpayee and Geeta Singh Gaur, and motivational speaker Himanshu Buch inspired the audience with their presentations. The Cultural Nite gave a microcosm of the art and culture of the various regions of the participating districts. The DJ Nite and Zumba sessions had the delegates energised and dancing to peppy filmi music.

The visitors were able to appreciate the rich architecture and grandeur of Gwalior's palaces and fortresses as they were taken on a one-day guided tour of the city.

Matthuna Karki was crowned Ms SEARIC Summit 2021 and Arsh Jain won the male title. Summit secretary Deependra Jadon presented the vote of thanks. ■

A borderless network of Rotaractors

V Muthukumaran

It is amazing that a 23-year-old college girl in Lucknow is able to transform her Covid relief work that she has been doing, along with her friends and mates on social media across the world, into the first Rotaract E-Club of the world. At the three-day SEARIC Summit in Gwalior (Dec 17–19), her brainchild, E-Club of Inspiring India, RID 3120, was recognised by World Rotaract Co-chair PDG Ravi Vadlamani, RSAMDIO president Arti Goswami and SEARIC MDIO president Kaushal Sahu for “creating a viable e-platform for Rotaractors to stay connected unlike an institution or community-based club in which members ceased to exist after they leave their college or gets transferred to another city,” says Mahi Bhan, charter president of E-Club of Inspiring India.

Hailing from a Rotary family, Mahi, along with friends, was doing a series of Covid-relief work as “we

Mahi Bhan, charter president, E-Club of Inspiring India and club treasurer Medha Tankha (R) from Dehradun gift toys to a little girl in Lucknow.





Rotaractors cheering with children.

all were at our homes, attending online classes, and then networking with each other on the best way to reach out to patients. We took up food distribution, created awareness on the pandemic and need to follow social distancing, helped Covid patients, and also volunteered at hospitals.” They also provided food to stray animals and birds.

Her mother, Rtn Bharati Gupta, past president, RC Lucknow, took note of her social work and advised her to “combine all your friends across India and create a platform to expand the charitable activity.” From there on, Mahi wasted no time in forming the “the first ever Rotaract e-club with 28 members from Dubai, US, UK, Qatar, Germany and across RI districts in India.”

Projects across time zones

Every week, the Rotaractors meet on a virtual platform to decide on the date and time of the next project which is carried out as per that schedule, but at different time

Rotary E-Club of Inspiring India is the first ever Rotaract e-club with 28 members from Dubai, US, UK, Qatar, Germany and across RI districts in India.

zones of the country they live. For example, Mahi says, “tree plantation was taken up by all our members in Sep 2021 at 4–5pm. But depending on their nationality, Rotaractors will do it on their time zones.” Likewise, the Rotaractors took up a cleanliness drive across time zones, but on the same day, and around 25–30kg of garbage was collected by the e-club with Rotaractors from Mumbai, Delhi, Lucknow, Gandhinagar and Gangtok too chipping in with their contributions.

A recycling contest titled *Treasure out of Trash* was

conducted for Rotaractors which was appreciated by the UP urban development minister Ashutosh Tandon. “We tied up with RAC Singapore on social media to do this garbage removal drive simultaneously,” says Mahi. Project *Bezubaan* (speechless) is an ongoing work that rescues, shelters and provides care to stray animals abandoned by owners due to the pandemic. Mahi coordinates with her club secretary Sonali Singh, a resident of Bhilwara, Rajasthan, and vice-president Anima Basnett from Pakyong, Sikkim, who is also the president-elect, on issues related to scheduling projects, and convening weekly online meetings. “We brief our DRR Rishu Maheshwari and his district council on our club activities on a monthly basis. His mentorship and doses of motivational tips help us to stay focused on our community initiatives.”

To boost the morale of poor children, “we distributed toys and stationery including books and



Rotaractors at the toys and stationery distribution site.

notebooks to 50 of them at a slum colony near a railway station at Gombi Nagar, a posh neighbourhood in Lucknow. The gifts will help them to do productive work and think imaginatively as they are idle at home now with schools closed,” explains Mahi. The e-club roped in Stotram, the Art of Charity, an

NGO, as a partner in toys and books distribution.

Great work: DRR

Formed in May 2021, the e-club has earned the praise of DRR Rishu Maheshwari: “I am absolutely happy with the way they are working and set about planning everything as

per the Rotaract guidelines.” Mahi is in regular touch and “calls me 2–3 times a week. She is energetic and fully committed to take her club to new heights,” says the DRR. At the SEARIC Summit, Arsh Mishra from the e-club was declared Mr Summit and got PHF membership as reward in his first year as a Rotaractor. Mahi Bhan was chosen as the ‘Most Active Rotaractor’ at the summit. The first-ever Rotaract

We took up food distribution, created awareness on the pandemic and need to follow social distancing, helped Covid patients, and also volunteered at hospitals.

e-club has a tagline that states “it is a platform for the youth to unite, learn, serve, and grow together.” Mahi has coined her annual theme as ‘Shape your dreams’. Doing her Law at Amity University, Noida, she is from a family that has Rotary roots over three generations.

While mother Bharati is her role model, her father late Rtn Satyendra Gupta, both from RC Lucknow, and grandfather Rtn SP Gupta from RC Allahabad East have influenced her eight-month-old, exciting Rotaract journey so far. “We are grateful to our parent Rotary, RC Lucknow, for mentoring and helping us to organise fundraisers such as the Diwali fellowship gala, a ticketed-event,” she adds. ■



Update Rotaract club information with RI

When you need to know the status of each Rotaract club in your district, it's easy to get all of that information in one place.

- Every Rotarian has access to the list of Rotaract clubs through *Rotary Club Central* — On the *Rotary Club Central* homepage, select *Reports* from the menu on the left.
- District Rotaract representatives who have been added to Rotary's database can also get this report. Available on the *Club & District Administration* page of *My Rotary* > *Select Reports*.

Updating data for an active club or reactivating a suspended one

Rotaract club presidents need to update club and member information by June 30 every year. You can report club and member information for active or suspended Rotaract clubs through *My Rotary* or a participating data integration vendor.

The steps below will not change the status of a terminated club or one that is not in Rotary's records at all.

Making updates through My Rotary

Rotaract club presidents and advisers and the sponsor club officers who have been reporting to Rotary International can update Rotaract club membership and general club contact information through their *My Rotary* accounts.

1. Sign in to *My Rotary*.
2. Go to the **Member Center** tab, find **Resources & reference**, and then select **Club & District Administration**.
3. Under **Club Administration**, choose **Manage my club**.
4. Go to the Rotaract section, where you'll see links to **Add, edit, or remove Rotaract club member**,

to add, edit, or remove Rotaract club officers, and to **Update data**.

Here are some tips as you update your club and member information

- ❖ A person must be listed in Rotary's database as a Rotaract club member before you can designate them as a Rotaract club president. To add the person as a Rotaract club member, select **Add, edit, or remove Rotaract club member**.
- ❖ Rotaract club members can report their membership to Rotary by creating a *My Rotary* account. The Rotaract club president, adviser and sponsor club officers can then add the registered Rotaractors to the Rotaract club.
- ❖ When you update a club's meeting address, this allows your club's location to be included in **Club Finder**.

If you have trouble adding members, email data@rotary.org for help. If you can't sign in to *My Rotary*, email rotarysupportcenter@rotary.org or your region's international office.

Making updates through a club management system

Rotary's licensed vendors of club management systems can now manage Rotaract club data. These participating vendors can upgrade their systems to add this ability, allowing Rotaract clubs to use a club management system to manage their membership data and enter their presidents. Contact data@rotary.org for assistance.

Certifying unlisted clubs or clubs listed as 'terminated'

Rotaract clubs that aren't in Rotary's database, or that are listed as terminated, need to be certified by Rotary. To get a club certified:

- Complete the Rotaract Club Certification form (PDF). Note the club's

locally established date so that we can acknowledge its history.

- Pay the \$50 certification fee. Contact your district's Rotary International financial representative for fee payment options and instructions.
- Send the completed form to rotaract@rotary.org or your region's international office.

Terminating inactive clubs listed as 'active' or 'suspended'

To terminate an inactive club, contact rotaract@rotary.org or your region's international office. Mark a copy to the Rotaract club president, Rotaract adviser and sponsor club presidents (if applicable), and district Rotaract leaders.

Changing or removing the sponsorship of a club

Review Rotary's policy related to Rotaract.

In order to change or remove sponsorship of a Rotaract club, complete and submit the **Rotaract Club Change of Sponsorship Form** to rotaract@rotary.org or your region's international office.

Changing a club name or base

To change a community-based club to a university-based club, or to change an university-based club to a community-based club, or to change the name of your Rotaract club, send your request to rotaract@rotary.org or your region's international office. Make a copy to the Rotaract club president, Rotaract adviser and sponsor club presidents (if applicable), and district Rotaract leaders.

Questions? Contact rotaract@rotary.org or your region's international office.

Source: *Rotary International South Asia Office, New Delhi*

A club's image is shaped by the action and projects of the club, and its involvement in the community. We at Rotary Club of Bharuch, RID 3060, would like to be known as people who are sensitive both about the environment and the need to remain fit and healthy through regular exercise," says Rachana Poddar, club secretary.

To implant this image of the club on the local community, and create public awareness about two very important aspects of life, members of RC Bharuch, one of the oldest (78 years) and biggest clubs in RID 3060 with 145 members, organised a 10 km cyclothon in December to focus attention on health and fitness and the need to reduce our carbon imprint on this environment, says club president Dr Vikram Premkumar. Being a medical doctor himself, he felt that during his year health awareness should get priority in the club's projects.

Apart from club members, Rotaractors and Interactors from the Rotaract Club and Interact Club of Bharuch participated enthusiastically in the rally, which saw a massive participation of around 300 cyclists.

The club president says that this interest was, thanks to the Covid pandemic that has been raging for the last two years, increasing awareness in the general public on disease prevention and health. "Health inequities have affected majority of the people. Many people, who have now become more health conscious and feel the need to take care of their fitness level, have already become a part of the cycling world and cycling has emerged as a new hobby, as it is not only fun but can also be easily fitted into one's routine, irrespective of age."

So for this cyclothon, the club forged a partnership with two cycling groups in Bharuch — the GJ 16



Cycling



Pedallers and Bharuch Cyclists Association — for the event titled ‘Ride your way to good health’. Expectedly, the event had an enthusiastic participation from both its Rotaract (45 members) and Interact (35 members) clubs, as well as the Rotary Community Corps, Bharuch.

Iconic, hereditary bridge

The cyclists made their way through the iconic and hereditary bridge called the Golden Bridge that connects the two cities of Bharuch and Ankleshwar (Borbhatha) on the banks of the Narmada river. This bridge was built during the British era in 1881, as they needed a bridge across the Narmada river to create trade and administration access for the empire’s officials visiting Gujarat from Bombay. This bridge is also called the Narmada Bridge, but over the years, a new and parallel bridge was built to handle heavy traffic. Rachana adds that at the moment two wheelers are allowed to ride across the old or Golden Bridge so their cycle rally could make its way through this bridge, providing an excellent photo opportunity.

After crossing the bridge, near Borbhatha, the cyclists paused to clean the place to underline the need to protect our environment and cleared the place of polythene bags, plastic bottles and other garbage that people carelessly fling here. “The event was well covered both in the print and electronic media and the cyclothon achieved its objective of increasing awareness on both the environment and health and fitness and also boosted Rotary’s public image,” she added.

More important, several of the cyclists, particularly Rotaractors and other young participants, also resolved to use the cycle as their mode of communication for at least one trip per day in the week,

with a message

Rasheeda Bhagat



Rotaractors Dhanush and Hemant who are on a 25,000 km cyclothon from Bengaluru and on a stopover at Bharuch being given a send off by the club members.



and this is “Rotary’s contribution to reducing pollution in the city, in whatever little way we can,” added Dr Premkumar.

“We are hoping that our small step of trying to switch just one trip per day from driving a car to cycling will reduce the carbon footprint by about 0.5 tonnes per person every year, and when compounded, this can add up to an impressive number,” says Rachana.

The club also hosted at this event the two Rotaractors, Dhanush and Hemant, from the Rotaract Club of Shishu Mandir, sponsored by Rotary Club of Bangalore Whitefield Central, RID 3190, who are on a 25,000 km, single country cyclothon to set a Guinness World Record for the longest journey by cycle in a single country. They were flagged off on this ride from Bangalore on July 11 by RID 3190 DG Fazal Mahmood, and “have already completed 15,000 km of their 25,000 km journey. We hosted them for one evening and then they left for Surat,” Rachana added. ■



Rotary made me a better person: PDRR Sujith Kumar

Kiran Zehra

Rotaract gave an opportunity for PDRR Sujith Kumar, RID 3232, to evolve as a better person, thanks to its leadership sessions and other programmes. The founder of Maatram Foundation, an NGO that provides education to poor students, recalled his year as a Rotaract club president when he collected food grains for a Rotary project.

Having collected more grain than anticipated, he was asked by the club president to visit a leprosy home where the collected grains had to be given. Jolted by the plight of the inmates of the special home, he said, "I wanted to run away from there." The life-changing moment for him came when at a traffic signal a leprosy patient with "no fingers came running to my father's scooter and raised his hands to bless me. He told my father that he had raised a good child." That was when he realised that through



Institute Chair M Muruganandam (R) and PDG KP Nagesh felicitate PDRR Sujith Kumar.

Rotaract and Rotary he could change lives.

His foundation has helped around 1,500 underprivileged students to get admission in various colleges. Educational institutes are partnering with the foundation to provide not just free admission, but also waive tuition fees, transportation charges, hostel fees and food expenses. They also take care of expenses of books and stationery for students.

Sharing the picture of visually-impaired K Suguna, who has BA and B Ed degrees, once selling candy on

a railway station, Kumar said she along with her husband, also visually challenged, were jobless, but they had to support their children.

A member of Kumar's team spotted them at the station selling candy, while their son and daughter were doing their homework. The foundation helped Suguna meet Nirmala Krishnan, principal of Mahindra World School, Chennai. Unaware that she was attending an interview, she answered all the questions; but the only problem was that she could not speak in English. But she was ready to learn the language.

Today Suguna works as a Tamil teacher at the Mahindra World School and is doing her PhD in Tamil at Satyabhama University, Chennai. She is also a motivational speaker. After the end of his presentation, the PDRR said, "I have met so many people like Suguna and was able to transform their lives because of the values Rotary instilled in me." Rotary trained him to be different in his approach to life. "When you see Rotarians in action, we develop empathy and the art of giving selflessly," he said. ■

The life-changing moment came when at a traffic signal a leprosy patient with no fingers came running to his father's scooter and raised his hands to bless him. He told his father that he had raised a good child.

District Assembly inspires RID 3240 Rotaractors

Jaishree

The Rotaractors of RI District 3240 celebrated the district's 32nd conference and district assembly with a series of events under the title 'Uttoron' (uplifting). Over 130 delegates attended the two-day programme hosted by RAC Silchar with guidance and support from its parent Rotary, RC Silchar. DRRE Sandeep Das, a dual member, along with district co-trainer-elect

Rtn Rajib Ratan Sarkar and Rtr/Rtn Dr Montu Paul, designed various sessions to train the incoming club and district leaders to take on the reins of their clubs efficiently.

IPS Ramandeep Kaur, Superintendent Cachar Police, and Additional SP Subrata Sen were the chief guests. Oncologist Dr Ravi Kannan, Rotarians Dr Moloy Roy and Ramanauj Gupta also provided





A training session in progress.

valuable inputs on matters such as membership growth, retention, fundraising, assessing community needs and implementing service projects.

DRRE Das unveiled the theme for his year: *Encourage, Explore, Establish*. He urged his team to encourage more youngsters to join Rotaract and make it stronger with quality members “who join to stay. Only when you engage members with interesting projects and personal development programmes you can sustain their interest in Rotaract. Members will leave if they don’t find anything useful or interesting for them,” he said. He urged the incoming leaders to explore new possibilities and projects to serve communities better and establish long-lasting relationships both with the members and with communities they serve.

The evenings peppered with various cultural programmes and

entertainment events helped the district Rotaractors to bond in an informal setting.

DRR Rajarshi Sinha said that the conference and the district assembly were well-planned, much in advance. “After 2019, this is the first in-person mega event we have hosted and all the Rotaractors zealously participated in planning it,” he said. The events enjoyed wide coverage in the media, and “this will definitely make Rotaract more visible among the youngsters,” he said. He is confident of adding new members once the Covid wave subsides and educational institutions start functioning. “As such this year, all the Rotaract clubs have been doing meaningful community projects which has piqued public interest.”

RAC Bolpur-Shantiniketan won the bid to host the next year’s district assembly. ■

Women at the forefront in Chennai clubs

V Muthukumaran

In sync with RI President Shekhar Mehta's thrust on empowerment of girls, the District Rotaract Council of RID 3232 has 40 per cent women office-bearers and "we made it a point to have at least one woman-representative

in the committees for the seven focus areas of Rotary to oversee service projects. Over 67 per cent of club presidents and secretaries are women in our district," says Dinesh Kumar G, district Rotaract secretary.

Out of 154 Rotaract clubs in the district, 48 are all-women's clubs; and among the 30,000-plus Rotaractors in the district, over 60 per cent are women, he says. One of the focus areas has

been installing sanitary vending machines and creating MHM awareness in government schools and colleges through regular workshops. "So far, six vending machines were installed in schools.

A team from RAC Dream Homes has designed the machine which is given to institutions at a nominal cost of ₹5,000 as against the market rate of ₹10,000–₹12,000. We urge our women Rotaractors to buy an extra sanitary napkin

pack when they buy for themselves, and refill the vending units regularly," explains Kumar. Till Dec '21, 25–30 MHM workshops have been held in schools and colleges by the Rotaract clubs in Chennai.

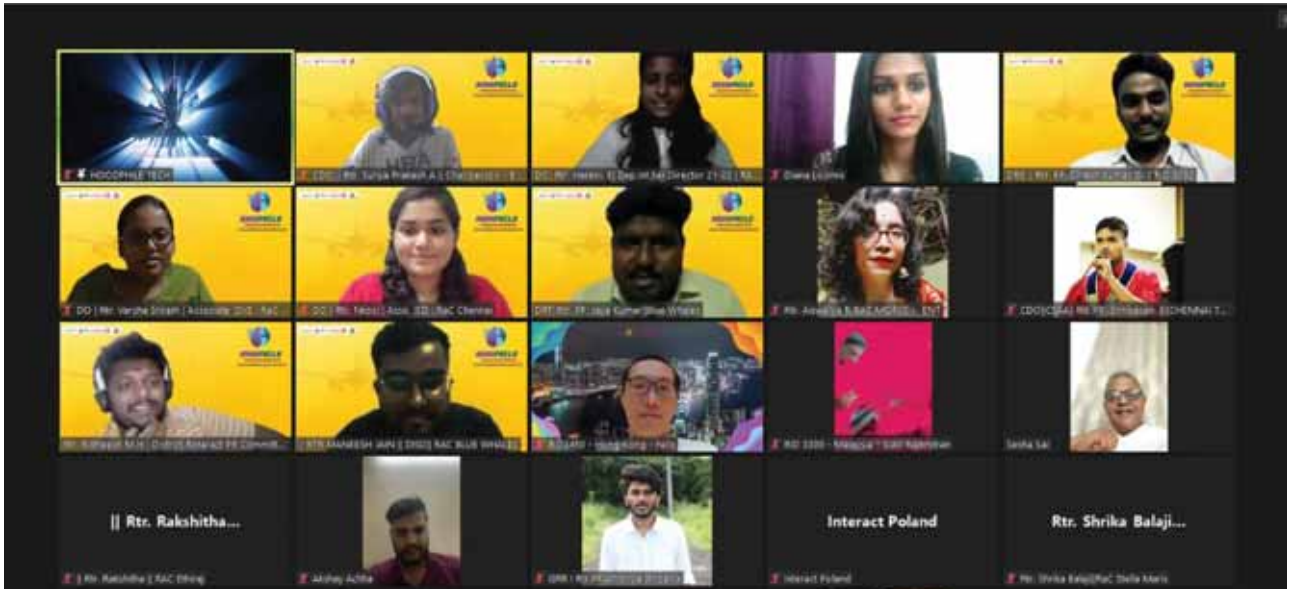
Canshare

To avoid body rashes and allergies on cancer patients due to synthetic hair (as they suffer heavy hair loss during chemotherapy and radiation therapy), "we have launched



A Rotaractor performing Bharatanatyam at the multi-country cultural exchange programme Hodophile.





Participants of Hodophile interacting on a virtual platform.

Canshare in tie-up with Naturals, a chain of beauty salons, and Dr K M Cherian Heart Foundation recently.” A team from Naturals visits a Rotaract club at a women’s college during which each member will give at least 6–8 inches of hair. They collect at least 300 inches of tresses from 50 students at each college. The hair bundles are then given to the Cherian Foundation who process it to make wigs. So far, the salon team has collected hair from Dr MGR Janaki College for Women and B S Abdur Rahman Crescent College.

The district Rotaract and the Cherian Foundation share the cost of wig-making, ₹5,000 a piece, as against the market price of ₹25,000–30,000. “We are in the process of identifying the beneficiaries to donate the wigs, but there is a slight delay in this because of Covid protocols,” says Kumar.

Hodophile
Around 500 Rotaractors from 32 countries representing 17 RI districts took part as virtual delegates at the webinar titled Hodophile conducted to share

A team from Naturals visits a Rotaract club at a women’s college and each member will give at least 6-8 inches of hair; at least 300 inches of tresses is collected from 50 students at each college.

Out of 154 Rotaract clubs in the district, 48 are all-women’s clubs; and among the 30,000-plus Rotaractors in the district, over 60 per cent are women.

Dinesh Kumar G
District Rotaract secretary, RID 3232

cultural values and ethos of diverse people in the world.

DG J Sridhar, SEARIC MDIO president Kaushal Sahu, RSAMDIO president Arti Goswami, RID 3232 Rotaract Committee chairman Sessa Sai, International Service chairman Chella K Srinivasan and DRR G Kamuvél spoke on the importance of Rotaractors to rise up to the occasion as a new world of Rotary is opening up for them to create an impact in service projects.

“Hodophile was aimed to explore different cultures beyond borders

through a virtual journey as Rotaractors through videos presented the uniqueness of their land in terms of culture, tradition, classical dance, music and fine arts. Our team gave an account of Tamil’s history and heritage dating back to centuries,” says Rtr Maneesh Jain, international service director, District Rotaract. There were similar presentations by Rotaractors from Lebanon, Hong Kong, Brazil, the Philippines, Belgium, France, Bulgaria, Iran, Sri Lanka and Poland. Project secretary Nkosi Lenin gave the vote of thanks. ■



Jennifer Jones announces 2022–23 presidential theme

Ryan Hyland

RIPE Jennifer Jones wants members to imagine the possibilities in the change they can make to transform the world.

Jennifer, a member of RC Windsor-Roseland, Ontario, Canada, revealed the 2022-23 presidential theme, *Imagine Rotary*, as she urged people to dream big and harness their connections and the power of Rotary to turn those dreams into reality.

“Imagine a world that deserves our best where we get up each day knowing that we can make a difference,” she told the incoming district governors.

Jennifer, who will make history on July 1 by becoming Rotary’s first female president, gave a live online address to precede Rotary’s annual training event for district governors from around the world, the International Assembly. The assembly was rescheduled because of the Covid-19 pandemic and will now be held virtually February 7–14.

She told the incoming governors about a chance she took when a member asked for assistance in getting a young peace activist out of Afghanistan during the US troop withdrawal last year. At first unsure how she could help, she relied on “that certain Rotary magic” and contacted a former Rotary Peace Fellow she had met a few years earlier. Less than 24 hours later, the activist was on an evacuation list, and soon she was on her way to Europe.

Engaging members through meaningful responsibility

To better engage members, Rotary needs to “adapt and retool,” she said, using her hometown as an example. Windsor was once the automotive hub of Canada. But after plant closings left thousands without work, the city needed to retool, in the same way an auto plant would, preparing for new parts or a new model. Now, Jennifer

said, Windsor is a leader in agribusiness and medical and aerospace technology.

For Rotary, “finding the right ‘part’ to engage each member should be our core function. It comes down to the comfort and care of our members,” said the incoming president.

Engaging members is crucial to retaining members, she said, adding that we need to ask members what they want to get from Rotary and give them meaningful responsibilities.

“It is our offer of hands-on service, personal growth, leadership development and lifelong friendships that creates purpose and passion,” she said.

Embracing change also means embracing new club models, said Jennifer, as she asked the incoming governors to form at least two new innovative or cause-based clubs during their term. “Let’s make sure we engage our members so they love their clubs and their Rotary experience,” she added.

She also announced the appointment of a Rotaract member as a Rotary public image coordinator and said that she has included Rotaractors on several committees and will assign some Rotaractors as president's representatives.

"We have been entrusted with leadership in our great organisation. Now it is up to us to be brave and intentional in our actions, and let others help us lead."

The RIPE noted that Rotary has little time left to achieve the RI Board of Directors' goal of having women make up 30 per cent of Rotary's members by 2023. Rotary has achieved this in more than 110 countries, she said, but it has a long way to go. She pointed out that

**Imagine a world that
deserves our best where we
get up each day knowing that
we can make a difference.**

Jennifer Jones
RI President-elect

Rotaract has already achieved 50 per cent female members.

To raise Rotary's profile, she plans to hold a global impact tour that will include talking with leaders about working together to address the

world's most pressing challenges. "Rotary opens these doors and we need to harness our connections, to deepen these relationships and create new partnerships," she said. "And the best part is, this can happen at every level of leadership."

Jennifer closed her address by saying that although we all have dreams, acting on them is a choice we make. When an organisation like Rotary dreams about big things like ending polio and creating peace, it becomes our responsibility to make them happen. "You don't imagine yesterday, you imagine tomorrow," said Jennifer.

Rotary International

A Covid awareness drive in Siliguri

Team Rotary News



Rotaractors of RAC Siliguri distributing masks and sanitisers.

Rotaractors of RAC Siliguri, RID 3240, distributed over 1,000 masks and sanitisers among the residents of a slum colony in the city. "We organised short lectures to educate them about Covid, the protocols to be followed and even carried out a Covid vaccine campaign," said Kavita Agarwal, Project Coordinator.

The club members ran a cloth collection drive in a residential colony, refurbished the used clothes which were in good condition and distributed them to 200 underprivileged people.

The club sponsored a one-day workshop in interior designing for the students of the Institute of Fashion and Modelling. "It was a fun workshop with basic lessons to help the IFM students try their hands in interior designing," she said. ■



Rotaractors voice their views on policy changes

Jaishree

Come July, Rotaractors will start paying to RI annual membership dues — \$5 for institution-based and \$8 for community-based Rotaract clubs. The 2019 CoL’s landmark decision to ‘Elevate Rotaract’ also included eliminating upper age limit for Rotaractors and involving them in district committees.

At the Mahabs 21 institute, World Rotaract Committee chair Ravi Vadlamani moderated a special session with Rotaract representatives — RI’s Rotaract Interact Committee member PDRR Ramkumar Raju, RSA MDIO president PDRR Arti Goswami, its vice-president PDRR Naveen Sena and SEARIC MDIO president PDRR Kaushal Sahu — to

discuss how Rotaractors view these changes.

The decision to collect membership dues had a mixed response. “For community-based clubs, it is not an issue. But it will be a challenge for college-based clubs,” said Raju. Referring to clubs with large membership such as RAC Ethiraj College in Chennai with 6,000 members and RAC RV College in Bengaluru, he said, “We have clubs with membership in 1,000s and don’t want to lose them.” Vadlamani responded: “It is the price of just one pizza. For the value and transformation that Rotaract gives, this is a small price.”

Echoing his thoughts, Sena said, “it might not burn a hole in

the pocket of Rotaractors who have settled down with a career. If they understand the benefits their membership brings, they will be ready to pay.” He pointed out that 50 Rotaractors have been invited to participate in the next International Assembly where Rotary will be offering them training in leadership. “Anything given free will not be valued,” said Sahu.

The Rotaract delegates were however unified in opposing the elimination of upper age limit. “People would want to stay on and pay lesser dues in Rotaract rather than pay a hefty fee as a Rotarian. In fact I know some Rotarians who have become Rotaractors! The



Sridhar Bharathy

PDRRs Ramkumar Raju, Arti Goswami, Kaushal Sahu and Naveen Sena with PDRR Sujith Kumar (centre).



Rasheeda Bhagat

RI President Shekhar Mehta gives Paul Harris Certificate to PDRR Rtn Naveen Sena in the presence of (from L) World Rotaract Committee Chair Ravi Vadlamani, Institute Convener RID A S Venkatesh, Institute Chair PDG M Muruganandam, PDRR Rtn Ramkumar Raju, DGN (RID 3232) Ravi Raman and PDRR Arti Goswami.

decision throws open much confusion,” commented Sena.

Talking about the Rotary-Rotaract synergy, he said that Rotaractors are a huge pool of youngsters who are good in creativity, energy, vision, technology and “they have their finger on the current trends. We will support Rotary in achieving its mission. In TEACH, or polio awareness, you will

We must install Rotaract in women’s colleges, give them leadership responsibilities and implement projects directed at women’s welfare such as menstrual hygiene and cancer screening.

PDRR Arti Goswami

need volunteers in huge numbers. Rotaractors will be ready to do the job. Include us in your planning and district committees and together we can accomplish great things. If Rotary is filled with experienced people, Rotaract is fuelled with energy.”

The benefits are mutual, said Raju. “Rotarians such as my DG C R Raju have nurtured me to become what I am today. If Rotaractors can use the support offered by Rotarians they can go places,” he said, and recalled his convention experience when he was DRR. “Speaking to 40,000 elite Rotarians in the plenary session at the Sydney convention was a dream come true.” He also recalled the *My Flag My India* event that had 50,000 Rotaractors and Rotarians coming together to form the world’s largest human flag and create a record in Chennai. “Rotarians have always been there and taken us forward. It all depends on how Rotarians see Rotaractors — as people with potential or as ‘just Rotaractors’.”

Referring to Vadlamani, institute chair M Muruganandam and counsellor Y Kumanan, all past DRRs, he said, “This shows how Rotaract has developed leadership qualities in these Rotary leaders.”

Arti lamented the smaller membership of women Rotaractors. “It is only 30 per cent. We must focus on installing Rotaract in women’s colleges, give them leadership responsibilities and implement projects directed at women’s welfare such as menstrual hygiene and cancer screening.”

Vadlamani suggested that Rotary, like Rotaract, should recognise 10 large projects at the Houston convention. He urged the delegates to motivate Rotaractors to become dual members and increase membership of both Rotary and Rotaract. RI has set goals to increase the number of registered Rotaractors to one million by 2029 and RI President Shekhar Mehta wants the Rotaract membership to grow from 200,000 to 300,000 by 2022. ■

Austin Rotaractors donate to TRF

Kiran Zehra

Diwali is a time for celebration and also a great time to raise funds for good causes,” says Deepika Sharma, president, RAC Austin Institute, RID 3070, who spearheaded a fundraising programme that raised ₹23,000 “for a club project and to donate to TRF”.

The inspiration to give to TRF came from DG Upinder Singh Ghai. “He informed us that 90.8 per cent of the donations go straight to supporting service projects. Our donations no matter how big or small, he pointed out, are used to train future peacemakers, support clean water, and strengthen local economies.”



RAC Austin Institute president Deepika Sharma, along with club members, giving a set of lamps to a couple.



Club mentor Rtn Ajit Paul Singh Naphrey and president Deepika Sharma donate lamps to a differently-abled.



Club president Deepika Sharma and Rotaractors with a display of the lamps they decorated.



Club president Deepika Sharma hands over the club's contribution to TRF to DG Upinder Singh Ghai.

The Rotaractors, armed with with paintbrushes, acrylic and glitter, painted close to 500 diyas which were put out for sale by Rotary clubs in Jalandhar, Punjab. “We sourced the lamps from local vendors at a reasonable price, painted them artistically and gift wrapped them,” says Deepika. Some of the diyas were home delivered by the Rotaractors while a few were picked up by people who visited the stall at the Austin Airhostess Training Institute, Jalandhar. Before the Diwali holidays began the diyas were all sold out and “we raised ₹23,000 and were thrilled!”

A cheque of \$101 (₹7,500) was handed over to DG Ghai as a donation to TRF and the remaining money was used to buy warm clothes for under-privileged families. “We are proud to have given to the Foundation. It may not be much if you look at it from a Rotarian’s perspective. But for us Rotaractors, this is remarkable and is the first step towards the journey of giving to the Foundation,” she smiles. ■



Rotaractors decorating the terracota lamps.

Rotaract projects create a buzz in Hailakandi

V Muthukumaran

Grabbing the rare opportunity to meet Rotaractors and Rotarians in person after a Covid-induced gap of two years, the members of RAC Hailakandi, RID 3240, made it a grand occasion by hosting a two-day zonal conference-cum-assembly titled *Appayan*. It was an eclectic mix of interactive sessions, guest lectures, fun and fellowship that included Bollywood musicals and Bengali folk arts that regaled around 60 Rotaractors from the district, seven Rotarians from the parent

RC Hailakandi and members from the Inner Wheel club.

Two sessions were chaired by Rtn Dr Sandipan Dhar and DRR-elect Sandip Das on various issues related to Rotary-Rotaract synergy and “how Rotaractors can contribute to the work of Rotarians to mark a difference in the world,” says Rtr Nilanjan Das, ZRR and the contact person at RAC Hailakandi.

Addressing the conclave, DRR Rajarshi Sinha focused on his Rotaract theme “rejuvenate and retain” and called upon the clubs to attract new members by taking up impactful

projects that enhance their public image in the society. “Rotaractors are doing a fantastic job, but we need to further expand our work to increase our membership which will ultimately benefit the society,” he said. AG Rtn Harikishore Chanda was the chief guest at the zonal meet, while local MLA Jakir Hussain Laskar, the guest of honour, was briefed on the various initiatives of Rotaract clubs across the district.

Diabetes camp

A monthly diabetes check-up camp at the SK Roy Memorial Old Age Home

Blood sugar test being done at an old age home.



in Katlicherra on the outskirts of Hailakandi benefits around 30–40 people including the inmates of the home. “We also distribute nutritious food packets to the residents of this village and cater to the needs of around 25 elders at the SK Roy Home,” says Das. “We reach out to villages around Hailakandi after identifying the needs of the rural, impoverished families. Recently, we distributed new and old clothes to over 500 plantation workers at a tea estate in Narsingpur, 10km from the city.”

Cricket tournament

If everything goes as planned, “we will be organising *Run-bhoomi*, a cricket tournament for schools in and around Hailakandi, in mid-February. Last time, we had 24 school teams competing with enthusiasm and this year, we expect around 30 teams to take part in this 10 overs-each-side contest,” says club president Kaushik Chakraborty.



So far, the club has given around 1,000 sanitary pads to rural women and “in future we plan to hold a medical camp at the site of our pad distribution. Rural families will be screened for general ailments at these health camps.”

With a large number of Bengalis, 85 per cent of the population in Hailakandi, 315km southeast of Guwahati, the Rotaractors celebrate Durga puja, Eid and Diwali by hosting culturals, prize distribution and amusement events. “We used to give prizes to winners of the best stage (*pandal*), lighting and Durga stall competitions. But due to Covid lockdown, we could not do it last year,” says Chakraborty. His club got the Best Club Introduction Award at the two-day district conference titled ‘Uttoron’.

Annual dues

While the new mandatory rule of annual dues for Rotaractors (\$5 per individual for institution-based clubs, \$8 for community clubs) from July 1 is a challenge, “we are confident that our members will pay the fee. We are yet to discuss the issue in our club meeting and 4–5 student members have to be convinced about this new RI rule,” opines club president. With 43 members, the club has inducted eight new Rotaractors this year and “we will add another 3–4 members in the next five months.” ■



Club president Kaushik Chakraborty donates a water filter to SK Roy old age home.

A cleanliness drive in Darjeeling

Kiran Zehra



Rotaractors participating in a marathon.



Despite the hurdles posed by the Covid lockdown and its daily hassles, members of RAC St Joseph's College, RID 3240, in Darjeeling spend at least three hours a week to chalk out the schedules of their service projects that range from distributing masks, sanitisers, creating awareness on the pandemic to conducting health camps, marathons and holding cleanliness drives with the help of their parent Rotary, RC Darjeeling. "Rotaract for us is the college-level version of Rotary. We are happy to be part of an initiative that is fostering service leaders," says Vinayak, club president.

Recently, the club hosted a marathon in association with RAC Southfield College. The marathon was part of RC Darjeeling's cleanliness drive and the Rotaract clubs "cleared tonnes of garbage that was littered from Sukhia Bazaar to Jorpokhri. It was a

great experience to join the conservancy workers and help them with the clean-up," he says. The marathon saw a participation of 200 Rotarians, Rotaractors and other volunteers, and "we set up a water station for the runners near the Rotary Tower in the heart of town and at the mid-way point of the marathon. We distributed water bottles to the runners."

The club is looking forward to make its cleanliness drives more sustainable and efficient in the long run by involving the vendors and locals. "We want to shed more light on the 3Rs of waste management — Reduce, Recycle and Reuse. It is going to be a lot of effort but with the support of our parent club we are sure this is attainable."

MHM workshops

Going beyond just creating awareness on MHM or installing a sanitary pad vending machine, "we aim to spread the knowledge

for a sustainable change in hygiene management among women," says Vinayak. The MHM programme, he says, is reaching out to college students in Darjeeling, "addressing the stigmas, taboos, and challenges associated with menstruation. But more importantly, helping them understand the biology behind it."

Pemala Sherpa, who attended an MHM awareness session at the Southfield College, says "now we know how to use a sanitary napkin and what a menstrual cup is. We are also told about the psychological changes too. This camp connects the dots on menstrual health and mental wellness." The MHM workshops also address the lack of access to sanitary products by rural women due to financial constraints. "Rotaractors talk to us about the broader issues such as the stigma and lack of education on female reproductive health in these hygiene sessions," adds Pemala. ■

Dimapur

Rotaractors reach out to underprivileged families

V Muthukumaran

RAC Dimapur president Ashok Jain fitting a hand sanitiser in an autorickshaw.



Dimapur, the gateway to Nagaland and rest of the Northeastern states — Tripura, Mizoram and Manipur, has one of the oldest Rotaract clubs of RID 3240 — RAC Dimapur — chartered in 1972. “But we became active from 1975. Over the decades, we have taken up a number of service projects reaching out to the homeless, destitute and marginalised families which have lifted our public image here,” says club president Ashok Jain. His team is preparing a digital register of blood donors in the city and “we will have a soft launch of the roster in March. With the names of blood donors and details of their blood group, the roster will be a useful reference guide for patients and hospitals.”

Rotaractors will also take up an awareness drive on blood donation. Last year, during the second wave of Covid, the club had arranged 105 units of blood by taking the donors to hospitals for the transfusion and then dropping them back at their homes. “Rotaractors donated 20 units of blood. We lent oxygen cylinders to 34 patients with an inventory of 20 units, five owned by us and the rest coming from NGOs like Shree Agarwal Mahasabha,” recalls Jain.

Around 1,000 meals were distributed to patients and their attendants



at the hospitals and homes; and 20 beds were set up by the club at the five Covid hospitals in Dimapur at the peak of the second wave, “We will resume these Covid-relief activities if the pandemic worsens in the coming months. We have adequate stocks of masks, sanitisers and PPE equipment which will be distributed to the frontline workers,” he assures.

Food distribution

Freshly-prepared meals are being distributed on the last Sunday of every month over the last six months. “We have reached out to over 250 beneficiaries, mostly homeless and roadside dwellers. On Makar Sankranti (Jan 14), mattresses, woollen blankets, food packets with refreshments were given to over 50 poor families,” says Jain. Following a blaze at Rio colony, Sewak, a settlement of migrant workers and their families, that gutted 23 houses, “the Rotaractors donated essentials such as new clothing, dry ration, snacks and household articles to the fire victims.

Great scope for growth

Jain is confident of adding at least 4–5 members, taking the club membership to 30 by June-end. Recalling his seven-year Rotaract journey, he



Above: Packed food being distributed.

Below: Rotaractors distribute clothes and other essentials to victims of fire mishap.

says, “it is like doing a lifelong MBA course as I learnt many valuable lessons that offered new perspectives of the world. Apart from boosting our self-confidence, we get to network with interesting people.”

At present, all the club members are self-employed professionals, “hence we are looking forward to attract students and youth to diversify our membership profile.” As the commercial hub of Nagaland with one of the busiest railway stations in the Northeast and a domestic airport, “Dimapur is a cosmopolitan and multicultural city right on the Assam border with around 100 languages being spoken here (recent study by the Brookings Institution, US, and Indian Statistical Institute) — like in Bengaluru — by people from many parts of the mainland. Hence, there is a vast potential for Rotaract to grow rapidly in this region,” he smiles. ■



A Rotaract club for blind students in Pune

Kiran Zehra



The members of RAC Divya Zhep
on a trek up a fort near Pune.

Giving shape to the aspirations of the visually-challenged, a new Rotaract club was chartered exclusively for them in Pune. All its 26 members are students of Sir Parashurambhau College, Pune. “The new Rotaractors at RAC Divya Zhep, of which two are physically-challenged, are talented and have big dreams. The Rotaract platform will not just enhance the leadership skills in these students but, also make them part of an international community,” said Vinay Patil, president, RC Pune East which has sponsored this one-of-its-kind Rotaract club.

The Rotaractors will be given job-specific training based on their physical limitations and once they complete their graduation, “they will get employed and be able to support themselves economically,” said Patil. He added that sightless people face many social hurdles and the work-place is not friendly to them.

Samruddhi Bhalwankar, president of RAC Divya Zhep, is a poet, storyteller, writer and debater with a score of 88 per cent in language and arts in her second year of college. She has cerebral palsy by birth and is paralysed on the left side of the body. “But that doesn’t define



DG Pankaj Shah (L) presenting the charter to RAC Divya Zhep president Samruddhi Bhalwankar.

me or will stand in the way of my dream to go to Germany and become a Sanskrit teacher,” she says confidently. She is excited about her Rotaract journey and is “looking forward to meeting new people, participating in meaningful activities and learning new skills that will help me build a secure future.”

During the induction ceremony in November 2021, the Rotaractors were gifted a white cane by the parent Rotary club. “It’s a meaningful gift,” says Rtr Yowraj Dalve, the club secretary. He recalls a time “when I thought that a white cane was a symbol of shame and failure. But now it has become the best tool for me to walk beside those with sight and become more comfortable being alone. Using the cane makes

me feel powerful and in control,” he said.

The new Rotaract club is named after a group that arranges writers for the visually and physically-challenged students during examinations at this college. The group has also started a library on the campus where volunteers read books to blind students who can also use the reading and listening software installed in the library computers, or read Braille books. “We wanted to give the disabled students an equal chance to participate in all the activities in the college. The reason is neither pity nor sympathy, but to treat them equally, understand their needs at a personal level and in certain cases learn from them,” says Prof Yogita Kale from the Arts department, and founder of the group. She

is also the mentor for the new Rotaract club.

The Divya Zhep group organises trips and treks to various forts around Pune for its members. So, is it tough for them to climb? “Yes, but they want to experience their history lessons, especially stories about Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. They touch the giant doors, feel the surface, lie down on the floor of the fort and want to know how large the room is,” she says. Sometimes the group mentor narrates the stories again at the fort and they love it.

These special Rotaractors are trained in dance and also perform street plays on various social issues like road safety and hygiene. “With the help of RC Pune East, we are sure our student Rotaractors will be able to do and achieve more,” Yogita adds. ■

Enriching lives

Jaishree

Rotaract Club of Chennai Celebrities — a community-based club chartered by RC Chennai Celebrities in September 2021 in RID 3232 — is an enthusiastic team of 90 members led by its president A Vinodh Chiranjeevi and secretary Yaser Ahmed.

The club has a ‘branch club’ with 26 members in Pondicherry and another one is being worked out in Madurai. “This is a

new club model and the setup is like a corporate having branches in various places,” says Chiranjeevi, adding that there is no separate president/ secretary in the branches. “We assist them with the functioning but they manage the fundraising and identify service projects on their own.”

The club has its own office in the heart of Chennai, “a rare feature for any Rotaract club.

Rotaractors from other clubs too drop in to just relax and chat with us over a cup of tea or organise their meetings here,” he says.

‘No food wastage’ is the club’s signature project. The members, having developed a rapport with managers of marriage/ party halls, collect excess food from social, religious events, arrange a vehicle and distribute it to street dwellers, ragpickers and beggars. “We celebrate our birthdays, anniversaries and other special occasions by distributing food to the underprivileged.” The club distributes groceries and had recently provided ₹2,000 worth groceries to 30 families whose income was affected following the long Covid-induced



lockdown and the monsoons later. During the floods in November the Rotaractors braved the rains and rescued people stranded in their homes to safer places, and also distributed packed food. Pet lovers of the club got together to provide about 25kg food to stray animals.





For most projects the club has managed to raise its own funds. “But our parent club has been helping us in times of need. They supported us with ₹50,000 and RC Madras Mount gave us ₹10,000 for organising our installation event for which we spent about ₹3.5 lakh,” says Chiranjeevi, adding that he encourages his team to seek support for projects from corporates and business houses. “Since all members are either entrepreneurs or employed, they are quite good in raising funds.”

The club has recently chartered a Rotaract club — RAC Fighter Wings Aviation College — with 62 members. They have executed two projects — rice

distribution and Christmas celebrations in a slum colony. “But we have made it clear that they must raise their own funds and that we are not their ATMs. We warned them to account each rupee diligently.” The new club’s treasury has a balance of ₹39,000. “A ‘sponsor head’ has been appointed who drives the members to convince people and get sponsors. Now many other Rotaract clubs are replicating the

idea,” he says, adding that the club has installed a fund box in their college which also draws a sizeable contribution.

RAC Chennai Celebrities is meticulous in drafting agreements with other clubs partnering for service projects or events. “We have a legal wing with two High Court advocates. For any project with partner clubs we sign an MoU and the documentation is done by our legal wing. This is

probably a new concept,” says the club president.

He is a huge supporter of inclusiveness. An event manager by profession, Chiranjeevi organises his signature fashion show annually for the differently-abled. The funds collected from the show is given to the Headway Foundation that works for their welfare. “We have a separate Inclusive wing in our club headed by wheelchair tennis player Satyamurthy Radhakrishnan. He is



RAC Chennai Celebrities president Vinodh Chiranjeevi (R) at a fashion show for the differently-abled.

employed with the State Narcotics department and mentors for other Rotaract clubs. It was his idea to conduct fashion show for the differently-abled people,” he says.

A ‘Transcent Show’ was organised by the club, jointly with RAC Madras Mount. It had a participation of 20 transgenders walking the ramp alongside other men and women. “After us RC Madras Mount also organised one such event and donated the funds collected to Headway.”

The Rotaract club, in association with its parent club, supported the doctors and nurses at a Covid vaccine camp in Alandur, a city suburb. The members campaigned for the vaccination in the locality and even helped in transporting people to and from the vaccine centre.

A ‘Know Your Numbers’ medical camp was organised with the support of a medical team from the Fortis Malar Hospitals to check blood sugar, BP and other vital parameters. Over 100 people visited the camp.



Club members at a park where they organised breast cancer awareness campaign.

A general physician was present to provide consultations.

Mammogram test

A breast cancer awareness campaign was organised in association with the Fortis Malar Hospitals. The Rotaractors met women walkers in public places such as parks and beaches and talked to them about the mammogram test to rule out breast cancer. Early diagnosis increases the chances of cure they were told. A 23-women group did a rally on their bikes to spread the message

under the Pink Bikethon programme. “We must have reached out to at least 1,000 women through this campaign,” he smiles.

On World Polio Day (Oct 24), the Rotaractors took out an End Polio Rally to spread the role of Rotary in polio eradication. “A flash mob was performed at the busy Gemini signal. This drew the attention of several motorists at the traffic junction.”

Digital job fair

About 68 of 133 youngsters got

placement in various jobs through a digital job fair organised by the tech-savvy Rotaractors on the Clubhouse platform. A recently concluded Rotaract Club Premier League (RCPL) — a T-10 cricket league hosted by the club, along with RAC Vishwahita (sponsored by RC Madras Industrial Club) and 11 other co-hosts — brought all cricket enthusiasts to participate with their teams. “The event was a huge public image building exercise,” says the president.

Debate competition, yoga sessions, talent show, modelling/saree/styling workshop and an illustration workshop with Antway School of Design are some of the programmes that help in the personal growth and enhancing the self-confidence of the club members. ■



Participants at the Transcent Show organised along with RAC Madras Mount.

Vapi Rotaractors focus on village development

Jaishree

Rotaract Club of Vapi, RID 3060, has adopted Sangadipada, a hamlet located in the interior part of Valvada, 10km from Vapi, Gujarat. The village is populated with around 1,000 people and the men are daily wage earners employed in a factory nearby.

There are two government schools here — one primary with around 60 students and the other, a higher secondary school with an enrolment of 250 children. “We launched ‘Project Samarth’ this year to support the education of the students in these two schools,” says club president

Pooja Shah who had decided on developing this hamlet last year even before she took over as club president. She got to know about Sangadipada during a visit to her family-owned chemical factory. “The workers told me about how underdeveloped it was and immediately I decided to provide whatever possible support I can through my club.”

The primary school had just two teachers. So the Rotaractors began frequenting the village to teach the students. “We were so drawn by their enthusiasm that we started visiting them during all festivals and commemorative days such as Teachers’ Day, Children’s Day, Independence Day etc and educate the children about the significance of such days,” she says.

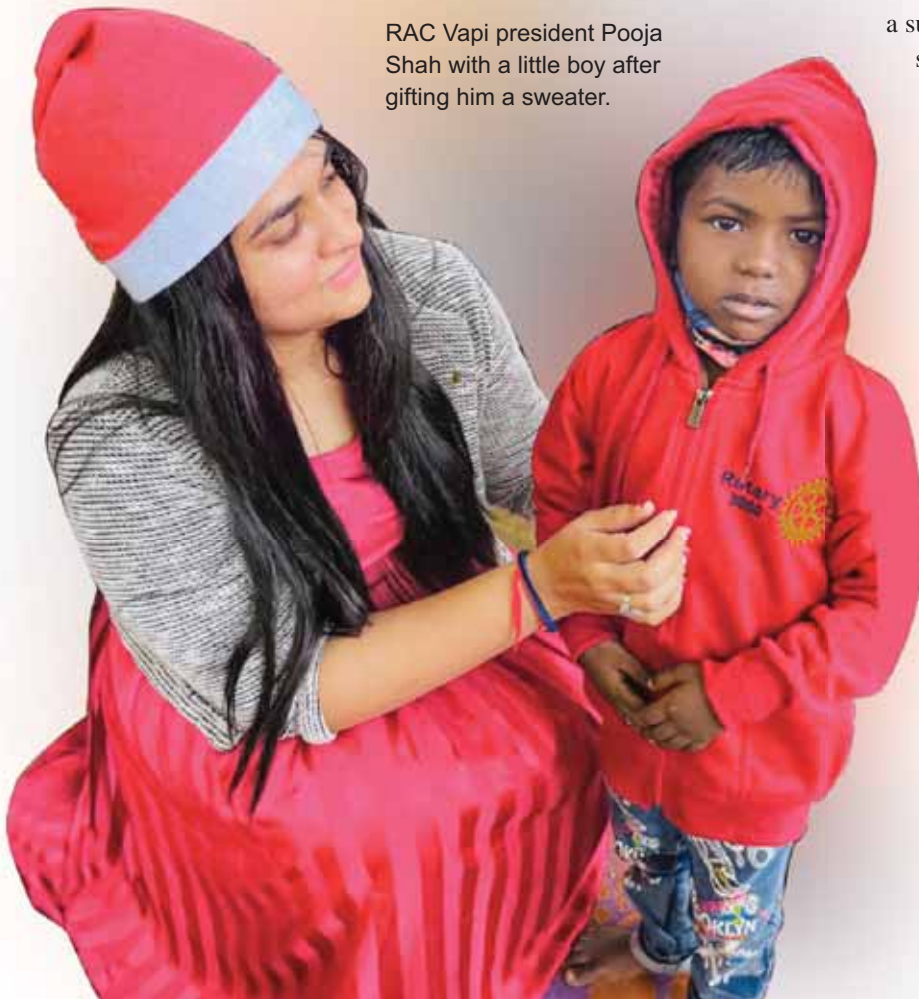
The club members conducted a survey to ascertain the students’ needs. “We met the village sarpanch Satish and the teaching faculty in both the schools to understand the schools’ needs and the students’ challenges,” adds Pooja.

To begin with, the Rotaractors distributed literacy kits comprising colouring books, guides and stationery to the

Our dream is to make the schools so beautiful that every child in the village is inspired to come and learn.

Pooja Shah
president, RAC Vapi

RAC Vapi president Pooja Shah with a little boy after gifting him a sweater.





Above: A young participant in a colouring competition organised by the club.
Below: Rotaractors celebrate a religious festival with the villagers.

children. Various competitions such as elocution, debate and essay writing are conducted by the club to improve the self-confidence in the children. “The parents and elders are also happy with the knowledge their children gain through our visits,” she says.

More recently the club, with the support of their parent club RC Vapi, distributed sweaters to the villagers.

The Rotaractors planted saplings on the school campuses and distributed some to the villagers, encouraging them to plant and nurture them around their homes. “We visit the village frequently and educate the residents about various aspects such as keeping their surroundings clean and caring for





Club president Pooja interacting with children in the village.



the environment. We teach them lessons in personal hygiene and the importance of supporting their children’s education,” she says.

The club had spent about ₹30,000 on this phase of the project since July and it was all pooled in by the members. Next the club plans to set up a library and drinking water facility, renovate toilets and develop the playground in the schools in the coming months. Two Rotarians of RC Vapi have each committed to sponsor construction of a block and fencing the perimeter around the school. “Our dream is to make the schools so beautiful that every child in the village is inspired to come and learn.”

A medical camp and adult literacy programme are also planned for the villagers. “We did a fundraiser through which we have collected ₹85,000 and we intend spending it for the betterment of the villagers,” says the president of this 52-member community-based club. ■

RID 3170 Rotaractors on a complete service drive

Jaishree

We were happy to interact with RI President Shekhar Mehta. He was interested to know about our community service projects and how we plan to expand Rotaract in our region,” says RID 3170 DRR Vishakha Pednekar, on an exciting note, talking about President Mehta’s visit to Kolhapur in October. Mehta urged the Rotaractors to do meaningful projects based on the needs of the community they serve. “His major focus was on membership

growth, and he wanted the district to add 20 more Rotaract clubs to take the total to 100,” she says. He also suggested the Rotaractors to become dual members so that they enjoy the benefits of being a Rotarian too.

The district is geared up to celebrate its 50th Rotaract district conference, ‘Aura’, on March 12 and 13, coinciding with the World Rotaract Day (March 13). The event will be hosted by RAC Mapusa in Goa. “We have a huge line-up of events to commemorate the golden jubilee year. But my focus is on

promoting Rotaract among the public. People are aware about Rotary but not Rotaract,” says Vishakha.

The district’s significant projects include ‘Sabla’ which focuses on menstrual hygiene and health of women. “We visit villages and rural areas and talk to women about MHM and distribute sanitary napkins to those who couldn’t afford them.”

Under Project *Garaj*, the Rotaractors donate used bicycles to schoolchildren in remote areas. The project was initiated by RAC Sahyadri Pashan.

RI President Shekhar Mehta with DG Gaurish Dhond (on his left), DRR Vishakha Pednekar (on his right) and Rotaractors at an event in Kolhapur.





Schoolchildren with bicycles given to them by Rotaractors.

The club members came to know that children in Mirgaon village had to walk at least 8km daily to attend school situated in the midst of Koyna forest and there was no other mode of transport. So, many of them were irregular to school. The club came up with the idea to provide cycles to

the children and the Rotaractors went about collecting used cycles from their friends and acquaintances, refurbished them and gave them to the children. So far 250 children have benefited from the project. "Now it has become a district project and we want the project to benefit at least 1,000 children,"

says Vishakha. Every Rotaract club in the district is identifying remote areas where there is no proper transportation facility and providing bicycles to children to make it easy for them to ride to school and back.

The Rotaractors of RID 3170 promote literacy in villages and rural areas





A medical camp organised by RAC Homeopathy College in progress.

through the 'Each one, teach one' concept. They visit villages twice a week and spend time with their 'students' for atleast two hours daily, teaching them lessons in English, Math and Marathi. In some places the elders are included under adult literacy, says the DRR.

The Rotaractors are also keen on greening the surroundings. "At the start of the year we planted 1,000 saplings across the district. Now the task set for the Rotaractors is to nurture

these plants until they grow into big trees, and also plant more saplings over the months."

A Rotaract Entrepreneurs Network (REN) has been formed in the district on the lines of Rotary Means Business which helps to connect Rotarian-entrepreneurs on a global level. At present 80 Rotaractors of the district are members of REN, "but we are working to build a global network of Rotaractor-entrepreneurs," she says.

On the fun side, the annual sports event hosted by RAC Krishna Valley for three days in November brought together over 200 Rotaractors and several more to cheer them. Rtn Kishor Lulla inaugurated the sports meet and DGN Nasir Borsadwala was the chief guest for the valedictory.

Earlier during June-July when several places in the district were hit by heavy floods, Rotaractors of RAC Lote rose up to the occasion and assisted in emergency rescue activities. They dealt with the aftermath of the disaster by pitching in to redevelop destroyed homes, and distributed essential items such as groceries, household articles and clothes to 4,000 flood victims. Other Rotaract and Rotary clubs helped with financial support and material.

Over 50 people were treated for various ailments at a homeopathy medical camp organised at Vengurla by RAC Homeopathy College. The club members visited the Jivhala Sevashram, an old age home, and conducted tests for diabetes, haemoglobin count, ECG and blood pressure, and gave them medicines. They also did physiotherapy for the elderly residents of the home. ■



Rotaractors providing flood relief in a village.

On the racks



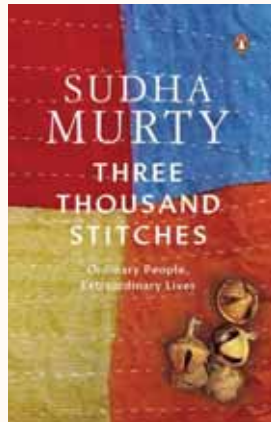
Savi and The Memory Keeper

Author : **Bijal Vachharajani**

Publisher : **Hachette India**

Pages : **248; ₹350**

Moving into a new city after losing her father wasn't the best thing for Savi. At her new school, she finds it difficult to adjust, but makes new friends who she initially believed were "the most stuck-up of classmates." To add to her challenges, she is put into an Eco Club at the school. Savi is the butt of ridicule for her poor knowledge of plants and trees. Things take a positive turn as she and her new friends begin to explore nature and discover its magical healing powers. They hug trees, converse with the flora and provide the club with diverse information on the environment. The book deals with grief and climate change, the other pressing issue of our times.



Three Thousand Stitches

Author : **Sudha Murthy**

Publisher : **Penguin Random House**

Pages : **192; ₹206**

From being thrown a slipper by a group of Devadasis to making a difference in their lives through the Infosys Foundation and acceptance by the oppressed and subjugated women, the book deals with several gender issues and much more in a sensitive manner. Equally appealing is her narrative of her father's love. Sudha Murthy takes us down memory lane, fondly recalling her testing, yet enriching days, at an engineering college where she was the only female student of her batch. Later, the book fast forwards to recent times where she was once judged by her attire and called "cattle class" by a fellow traveller at the Heathrow Airport. In other chapters, she dwells at length on social issues including alcoholism, conservatism, exploitation and discrimination.



Rumours of Spring

Author : **Farah Bashir**

Publisher : **Fourth Estate India**

Pages : **240; ₹317**

The author poignantly narrates what it means to live under the constant watch of militants and the strict vigil by the Army in Kashmir during 1990s. This hard-hitting, trauma-ridden account of Farah's early life in Srinagar recalls the death of her dear *Bobeh* (grandmother) in the backdrop of Indian troops and militants battling across the cityscape marred by the violence with sporadic clashes and killings, which has become the new normal since then. Even ordinary chores like studying for exams, walking to the bus stop, combing her hair, and falling asleep, are all riddled with anxiety and fear in these troubling times. The book is a lucid presentation of a teenager's experience of the "violence, oppression and subjugation of the Kashmiri people" by the armed forces.

Compiled by Kiran Zehra

Designed by Krishnapratheesh S

RID 3060 aims big with digital projects

V Muthukumaran

Why not an e-platform for Rotaractors to develop their contact and expand their business networking, just like the way Rotarians exchange notes with members from other clubs across India? This novel idea will get a physical shape in the form of *Rotabiz*, a portal for Rotaractors and Rotarians, which will be launched on World Rotaract Day (March 13) by DRR Vatsal Khimasiya, RID 3060.

Most of the 2,700 Rotaractors in the district comprising parts of Gujarat and Maharashtra are from community-based clubs and are “involved in some form of small enterprises and business activities. Hence, the new portal will help them to expand their networking with fellow members and Rotarians, and it will be a win-win situation for the Rotaract clubs and Rotaractors in our district,” says Khimasiya. While the web design is almost ready, the DRR has got ‘amazing feedback’ from the assessment study they have done for the requirement of such a digital exchange platform among the Rotaractors and Rotary clubs. The project delivery team has already taken up a Rotabiz campaign on social media

(Instagram, Twitter, WhatsApp, etc) and the district Rotaractors are looking forward to the gala launch of the business portal.

He has roped in PDGs and senior Rotary leaders to be part of a WhatsApp group for regular exchange of ideas and feedback on the best way to design a portal that will fulfil the aspirations of Rotaractors in the years to come.

Placement website

As part of Republic Day events, a job placement website was

launched exclusively for Rotaractors of RID 3060. “Rotarians and others can list their job vacancies in this portal, but the e-forum will offer job opportunities only to our members; this will be showcased as one among the additional benefits of being a Rotaractor for the aspiring youth,” he explains.

Most of the 60-odd clubs are into Covid-related projects, mostly taking care of Covid patients and holding vaccination camps for the elderly and vulnerable groups. In fact, RAC Surat East, “one of the

Rotaractors of RAC Bhavnagar Royal with RI President Shekhar Mehta, Rashi, DG Santosh Pradhan, Sunetra Pradhan and DRR Vatsal Khimasiya at Project Niramaya.



PRIP Kalyan Banerjee interacting with DRR Khimasiya and Rotaractors at his Rotary Gallery in Vapi.



largest community clubs in the world with over 500 members”, was running a Covid vaccination centre for around six months during the second wave and “they had inoculated over 10,000 people during that peak time.” All the Rotaractors in

Surat had helped the Covid patients in one way or another, “either by taking them to hospital, as caretaker to the elderly patients, assisting them in their ablutions, or doing errands for them to meet their needs during their hospital stay.”

With the third wave of Covid gripping the nation, “we are going to introduce a book rental service, similar to *BookMyShow*, which will facilitate the Rotaractors to lend books across genres to those in need through the e-rental platform. “First, this will be launched in 15 cities of Gujarat, one by one, and then based on results, it will be expanded to others parts of the district. A nominal fee will be collected from the borrowers and it will go to the lending clubs. This will fetch revenue to our district and also develop fellowship among Rotaractors,” opines Khimasiya.

E-waste collection

Around 30 Rotaract clubs took part in a mega collection

We initiated this one-of-its-kind project in memory of our late PDRR Bhumik Shah and collected around 1.3 tonnes of e-waste that were segregated and recycled.

Vatsal Khimasiya
District Rotaract Representative





Rtr Swapnil Khadpekar from RAC Sarigam with the electronic waste collection.

of electronic waste such as computers, smartphones, TVs, air conditioners, fridges and other electrical and digital appliances. “We initiated this one-of-its-kind project in memory of our late PDRR Bhumik Shah and collected around 1.3 tonnes of e-waste that were segregated and

recycled,” says the DRR. Another 15 clubs sensitised the public on the need to avoid e-waste through month-long awareness drives that included rallies, roadshows and distribution of flyers and handbills.

Once the new system of annual dues for Rotaractors kicks

in from July 2022, “we have to face the reality of 20 per cent attrition in our membership as some of them are not willing to pay money to RI. But the digital projects that we are going to start will provide extra benefits for Rotaractors to continue in their clubs, enjoy fellowship and also expand their business.” A member of RAC Jamnagar, the DRR says, “being a Rotaractor for eight years had helped me to fine tune my skills in using designing software such as Corel Draw and made me confident in handling my family business at Aditya Udyog, the makers of bicycle tube valves.” Khimasiya is also the charter secretary of Jamnagar Toastmasters Club.

DG Santosh Pradhan released a combined Rotary-Rotaract district directory which is a unique initiative. A common monthly bulletin is also being published for both Rotary and Rotaract clubs. “To cap it all, we will finish the year, with a joint Rotary-Rotaract district conference,” adds the DRR. ■



DRR Khimasiya interacting with a differently-abled child.

In Brief



Aircar gets green signal to fly

A car that can transform into a small aircraft was awarded an official Certificate of Airworthiness by the Slovak Transport Authority after it completed 70 hours of flight testing. Called the 'Aircar' the prototype is powered

by a 1.6L BMW engine, and runs on fuel that can be refilled at any gas station. A team of eight specialists worked for more than 100,000 hours to design the Aircar.



Dinosaur egg in museum

A fossil of a baby dinosaur curled up perfectly inside its egg was unearthed in the Shahe Industrial Park in Ganzhou City, China. It is now kept at the Yingliang Museum. Palaeontologists from the University of Birmingham confirmed that the 70-million-year-old embryo belongs to a species of toothless, beaked theropod dinosaurs, also called oviraptorosaurs.



China builds an 'artificial moon'

China has built a research facility that imitates the low-gravity environment on the moon. The facility uses powerful magnetic fields inside a 60-cm vacuum chamber to control

gravity. The scientists were inspired by an earlier experiment that used magnets to levitate a frog. Tests completed in the chamber will be used to make, add or remove changes in China's lunar exploration programme.

Building blocks from plastic



ByFusion, a Los Angeles-based startup, is converting non-recyclable plastic into building blocks for construction purposes. Shreds of non-recycleable plastic are pressured to fuse with the help of a machine called blocker patented by the startup to make the brick-like blocks.



Youngest pilot in the world

Nineteen-year-old Zara Rutherford is the youngest woman pilot to fly solo around the world, and the first to complete a circumnavigation in a microlight aircraft after a five-month journey which began on August 18, 2021, from Kortrijk, Belgium. Zara began training to become a pilot at 14 and got her pilot's licence in 2020. She has broken the record previously set by American pilot Shaesta Waiz who flew solo around the world in a single-engine aircraft at 30.

Compiled by Kiran Zehra; Designed by Krishnapratheesh S



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