



# Rotaract NEWS



RI Director **Dr Mahesh Kotbagi**

RI Director **A S Venkatesh**

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Zone 4, 5, 6 & 7**

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3011	Niranjan Dev Singh
3012	Vipul Agarwal
3020	Venkata Gowtham Kalla
3030	Lokesh Mukesh Kansal
3040	Yatharth Golchha
3053	Sonal Jaiswal
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3070	Rohit Jindal
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3090	Shubham Lila
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# Rotaract News

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# Europe's Rotaractors do exemplary service for Ukraine

As we come out with another quarterly issue of *Rotaract News* during these challenging times when the world is tentatively saying goodbye to the most deadly viral pandemic we have seen in our lifetime, and hoping against hope that we are nearing the end of that dark tunnel, yet another darkness has descended on our world — the brutal attack on Ukraine. But it took little time for Ukraine's Rotarians to get their act together and several clubs and senior Rotarians in the beleaguered country rose above the threat to them and their families to organise help, through Rotary in Europe as well as Rotary International, for Ukrainians rendered homeless and hopeless by the persistent bombarding of their cities.

We at *Rotary News* were monitoring the situation in Ukraine, the work done by Rotarians and carried RI's appeal to Rotarians to contribute to the special fund set up for the devastated Ukrainians. We also came across a remarkable blog on the RI website written by a Rotaractor from Ukraine — DRR Iryna Bushmina, RI District 2232. In her blog she described how she fled from her city of

Kyiv in the “first hours of the war”, with her sister, her husband, her baby and a cat. At the border only the women and child were allowed to leave the country, and as her sister was driving, young Iryna thought that just like her so many others would be requiring help. So why not mobilise the Rotaractors of Europe to help those affected by the attacks? Her sister was driving, her hands were free, so she started texting groups that included Rotaractors. Many of the youngsters responded immediately and help was organised for the affected through numerous little projects. In no time she built up a team of 100.

In another equally inspiring story told through a blog on [www.rotary.org](http://www.rotary.org), Sebastian Adami, another Rotaractor from Austria, described how on the evening of March 2, he set out, along with a team of Rotaractors and colleagues from six nations, “to deliver relief supplies to contacts waiting for us near the border of Poland and Ukraine.” The youngster quickly organised a fundraising campaign with help from other members of his club, they collected relief supplies for both civilians and hospitals and their five-vehicle convoy travelled through the night for 14 hours, traversing a distance of over 1,100km and reached close to the border of Ukraine and Poland. The relief material was handed over to other volunteers and from there “the relief goods were transported to Kyiv, Kharkiv and Zhytomyr. We unloaded the goods and agreed to bring back with us some people who had fled the conflict, mainly women and children, exhausted but relieved they had made it to safety after many hours on the road. Before we got back, we were already receiving photos and videos showing that our donations had arrived at hospitals and locations in need.”

Enthused by this success, the Rotaractor organised yet another convoy; now he looks back at both the missions with great satisfaction, and says, “We were one of the first aid convoys from Austria to bring goods to Ukraine. We helped as much as we could, without hesitating, with the help of our Rotaract and Rotary contacts.”

Read both those inspiring stories in this issue.

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

Rasheeda Bhagat

## Message from Rotaract Co-chair



“

*Youth is the season of  
hope, enterprise and  
energy to a nation as  
well as an individual.*

”

## RI Prez Mehta to launch Rotaract Service Day

Dear friends,

We are in the last lap of our race. So much has transpired during the last quarter. We had the multidistrict meet — RotAsia — in Chennai conducted under the inspiring leadership of RSAMDIO president Aarti Goswami.

The seventh edition of the annual mega blood donation programme called *Mahadan* was conducted by Rotaractors in India and South Asia. Over 225 camps organised by Rotary and Rotaract clubs were held and 16,483 units of blood was collected. Six countries and 32 districts participated. It is a proud moment for Rotaract India and I complement Rotaractors and Rotarians for their extraordinary commitment towards the programme. I compliment the entire team led by Abhishek Goyal.

The zonal leadership training institute under the leadership of Sahil Bhateja was well organised, both online and physically, to train incoming Rotaract leaders including district secretaries. Several Rotary and Rotaract leaders addressed the sessions.

Districts and clubs participated with enthusiasm in RI President Shekhar Mehta's challenge to increase Rotaract membership and clubs. The winners will be recognised at the meeting in Hyderabad on April 28 where President Mehta will address the Rotaractors. Shiv Kumar Eswaran, past president of Rotary Club of Chennai, is the convener of the meeting.

For the first time, Rotaract Service Day will be held on April 30 in conjunction with the Presidential Conference. Rotaractors are encouraged to participate in this programme where we will distribute sewing machines, bicycles, school desks and group handwash stations under the Girl Child Empowerment programme. President Mehta will be the chief guest.

The next Rotaract year brings a new challenge for the leaders as Rotaractors have to pay RI dues. But I do believe that the value the Rotaractors get as members of Rotaract is much more immense for the dues they pay. I am sure after the initial hiccup, Rotaract will become much stronger and will transform itself into a giant youth organisation.

Tomorrow's Rotaractors will drive Rotary into a new orbit and, with their youthful enthusiasm coupled with determination and leadership skills, will be a force to reckon with as they *Serve to Change Lives*.

**Ravi Vadlamani**  
World Rotaract Co-chair



# Austrian aid convoy drives all night to deliver supplies to Ukraine

Sebastian Adami

**O**n the evening of March 2, I set out with a team of Rotaract members and colleagues from six nations to deliver relief supplies to contacts waiting for us near the border of Poland and Ukraine. Our five-vehicle convoy travelled through the night to get there. But we were heartened by the response we saw all around us, people flashing their lights or giving us other signs of encouragement as they saw our relief supply convoy marked by flags that identified what we were doing.

This effort came about through the wonderful network we enjoy in Rotary. Like many, I watched with horror the images coming from Ukraine following the Russian invasion of the country on Feb 24. These images included people who had lost everything, their belongings, their homes, and some even the lives of loved ones. The more I witnessed people having to seek refuge in subways or shelters and the flood of displaced people seeking safety in other countries, I knew I had to do

something. I contacted friends of mine in the Rotaract Club of Klagenfurt-Wörthersee, and we were all united in our desire to help.

## **The convoy heads across Poland toward the Ukraine border**

Within a short time, I set up a fundraising

campaign with a long-time club member Ivana Tadic and our club president Anna Bäuchler with the active support of our members. In one weekend, we collected many donations from family, friends, and work colleagues including canned food, water bottles, sleeping bags, generators and

medical supplies. The question became how to deliver these items.

As part of our campaign, I had reached out to a former co-worker, Alessia Sasina, who was born in Kyiv. She had also been raising donations. But it was not until we both talked to Max Aichlseder that we hit



upon the idea of bringing the donations to the Poland-Ukraine border ourselves. He provided us with some vehicles for the transport, with which we could load our own collected donations and those from Alessia. We had reached friends in Ukraine and knew what was needed through the assistance of the Honorary Counsel for Ukraine, Nils Grollitsch, and through our Rotaract network.

### Headed for the border

Setting out on March 2, we drove all night to reach the border the following morning. The

closer we got to the border, the calmer we became. We were aware of the situation we were getting ourselves into but we were buoyed by the support we saw around us. For security reasons, we decided to meet our contacts a kilometre before the border crossing.

After more than 1,100 kilometres and 14 hours of driving, we arrived. It was an indescribable feeling I will never forget. The gratitude was amazingly great, and our hearts filled up. From there, the relief goods were transported on to Kyiv, Kharkiv and



Zhytomyr. We unloaded the goods on the spot and agreed to bring back with us some people who had fled the conflict, mainly women and children, exhausted but relieved they had made it to safety after many hours on the road. Before we got back, we were already receiving photos and videos showing that our donations had arrived at hospitals and locations in need.

### Second convoy

Since our first campaign was so successful, we put together a second convoy on March 15. We again coordinated with our contacts from the Rotaract clubs on what was most needed. The atmosphere on the second trip was a bit different than the first. There was much more

activity on the roads, and on the way to the border we saw several vehicles heading for Ukraine as aid convoys.

Looking back on the past weeks, I am incredibly proud of what we accomplished together in such a short time. It has been one of the most formative events of my life. We were one of the firsts, if not the first, aid convoy from Austria to bring goods to Ukraine. We helped as much as we could without hesitating, and with the help of our Rotaract and Rotary contacts, the supplies arrived where they were needed.

*The writer is a member  
of Rotaract Club  
Klagenfurt-Wörthersee,  
Austria  
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## Incoming district leaders get groomed at the Rotaract Institute

Yatin Sehgal

**T**his year the Rotaract Zone Institute was hosted by RID 3090 (Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan) at Chandigarh and Barog, Himachal Pradesh, in April for the DRREs, DRRNs and District Rotaract Secretaries Elect under the leadership of DG Parveen Jindal, Event chairmen PDRR

Sahil Bhateja and DRR Shubham Lila. Inspired by the annual Rotary Institute, it is a four-day multi-district training event for the incoming Rotaract leaders of South Asia (zone 1(b), 4, 5, 6 and 7). The programme was initiated as the official DRRs Elect training programme in the Rotary year 2013–14.



PRIP Rajendra Saboo with DG Parveen Jindal (RID 3090), Institute chairman PDRR Sahil Bhateja, PDG Vijay Gupta and DRR Shubham Lila (RID 3090).





DG Jindal and DRR Lila  
inaugurating the Institute.



Host MoCs Rtr Dhara Dhanesha and PDRR Ishita Kaith.

## Rotaract Zone Institute Host Team

- Host District Governor: Parveen Jindal
- Host District Rotaract Representative: Shubham Lila
- Host District Rotaract chair: Yatin Sehgal
- Host treasurer: Ankit Gupta
- Host DG Elect: Gulbahar Singh Retole
- Host DG Nominee: Ghanshyam Kansal
- Host DRR Nominee: Vipul Mittal
- Host District Rotaract secretary: Mihir Agarwal
- Event chairperson: Sahil Bhatija
- Event co-chairperson: Arpit Mehra
- Event advisors: PDG Ravi Vadlamani, PDRR Ashish Aggarwal
- Event convener: Rajesh Goyal
- Event co convener: Samir Madan
- Event secretary: Bhupesh Bansal
- Event joint secretary: Jatin Aneja
- Event social media: Soham Pahi
- Event MOC: Dhara Dhanesha

DRREs ready to take over as leaders for the next year.



Earlier in January this year 17 sessions were conducted by the institute committee in a hybrid programme. The faculty included PRIP Rajendra Saboo, RI directors Mahesh Kotbagi and AS Venkatesh, PRID Bharat Pandya, RI's Rotaract Committee chair Ravi Vadlamani and committee member Sneha Shakya, RI general secretary John Hewko, RI Global Initiatives supervisor John Hannes, Club and District support coordinator from RI South Asia Office Joseph Thomas, past MDIO presidents Amit Singhal, Rajesh Subramanian, Sahil Bhateja and Yatin Sehgal, RSAMDIO president Kaushal Sahu and a host of PDRRs. PDGs Vijay Gupta (3090), Ashish Desai (3054), Vijay Arora (3090), who were former Rotaractors, also addressed the incoming leaders.

Sessions discussed included developing leadership skills, fundraising techniques, developing partnerships outside Rotaract, strategies to strengthen the Rotaract clubs, understanding the RI structure and the MDIO, developing Rotary-Rotaract relationship and Rotaract

protocols. Financial management, time management, enhancing Rotaract's public image through social media and DRRs' official club visits were also discussed to help the incoming district leaders function smoothly through their year.

#### **Membership dues**

From the next Rotary year beginning July 2022, Rotaractors will pay dues — \$8 for community-based clubs and \$5 for institution-based clubs — annually to Rotary International thus recording proper membership. This important aspect was discussed at length with the district leaders so that they will explain its significance to the Rotaractors in their respective districts. A survey done world over earlier pointed to the concurrence to the new RI policy by majority of Rotaractors. The RI Board will soon announce when, how and where the membership dues will have to be made.

The district leaders were urged to explain to the Rotaract clubs the benefits of paying dues to RI, how their membership will enhance

benefits for the club and make the club eligible to avail global grants, RI awards and other leadership development opportunities.

Over 100 delegates from 34 districts (India, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Dubai) participated in person and Rotaractors from Pakistan and Bangladesh were present online for the institute at both the venues. This is the highest registration crossing the participation of 29 districts in the 2019 Rotaract Zone Institute held in Vapi, Gujarat.

The PDRR council of the host district RID 3090 provided great support which immensely helped in the smooth success of the mega event. The guests from across India and overseas had a memorable stay during the four days of the institute in addition to the vast knowledge they acquired participating the enriching workshops and lectures delivered by eminent speakers.

The Rotaract Zone Institute for 2023 will be hosted by RID 3141.

*The writer is a past president of RSAMDIO and the Rotaract chair of RID 3090.*



# Europe's Rotaractors

## mobilise 2,000 families for Ukrainian refugees

Rasheeda Bhagat

**R**eally inspiring is the story of Rtr Iryna Bushmina, the DRR from Ukraine, RI District 2232. In her first-person account, published as an RI blog, she says she left Kyiv “in the first hours of the war. My sister, her husband, her three-month-old baby and a cat, were in the car.” When they reached the border, men were prevented from leaving the country, so she, her sister and nephew continued to drive.

After a harrowing six days, they reached Vienna, staying the nights in three different countries, thankfully, not in hotels but the homes of Rotarians and their families. “I used to just say that Rotary International is a big family, now I really believe it. And I am convinced that this is a family that will stand by you. These are no longer beautiful words to me, this is reality.”

But while driving, the traumatised Rotaractor thought

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**I used to just say that Rotary International is a big family, now I really believe it. And I am convinced that this is a family that will stand by you.**

**Iryna Bushmina**  
DRR, RID 2232, Ukraine

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DRR Iryna Bushmina  
Ukraine, RID 2232

positively; surely she wasn't the only person who needed help and support. Why not mobilise Rotaractors in Europe? As her sister was driving, “I had my hands free. I started writing in groups where there were Rotaractors about the situation in Ukraine. A lot of Rotaractors instantly responded. People immediately created groups with different focus areas and helped me to lead them. These were not perfectly thought-out projects, but they were projects that started working from the first day.”

Amazingly, and with the speed of the young, Rotaractors responded quickly, and “we began with small projects to help Rotarians and Rotaractors of Ukraine find accommodation in other countries. Now, the project has grown, and we are helping many Ukrainians find a new home for the first time. We have lined up more than 2,000 host families to take in refugees.”

Apart from helping the fleeing Rotarians find homes, the

Rotaractors are also providing humanitarian aid; “the biggest need now is to find helmets, thermal images, body armour and the like for the Ukraine defence forces,” writes Iryna.

She says that “what hurts the most” is that they are not able to fulfil simple requests for food and water for the people in Ukraine, as the “the Russian army is blocking us from bringing humanitarian aid to civilians and they are dying from hunger and dehydration.”

Her international team of Rotaractors has over 100 people, and her team in Ukraine has some 50 people. They are all working to disseminate the right information on the present state of affairs in Ukraine; find accommodation and hosts for Ukrainians fleeing the war zone; sending humanitarian aid and securing financial support for those who need it.

The young woman says that not all those they have helped have written back to express their gratitude, but this is understandable as they are under huge “fear and stress, spending three to four days at the border. We do not need them to say, “thank you”. We just need to make sure these people are safe and that they get what they need to survive and help others. Now is the time for understanding. Of course, when some of the people do write their appreciation, it is a pleasure!” ■



# Sports carnival bonds Rotary fraternity in Jalna

Jaishree

**I**t was fun-filled three days when the Rotary fraternity including Rotarians, Rotaractors and the Inner Wheel members came together during the first week of March for the Rotary Sports Carnival organised by RAC Jalna, RID 3132, in the city.

Over 60 Rotarians from five Rotary clubs (RCs Jalna, Jalna Central, Rainbow, Midtown and Elite), 100 Rotaractors (RACs Jalna, Central, Rainbow and Rainbow

O2) and 20 members from Inner Wheel clubs of Jalna, Central and Horizon participated in box cricket, badminton and table tennis tournaments. The tournament fee for cricket was ₹10,000 a team and for the other two tournaments it was ₹300 for singles and ₹500 for doubles, and “that took care of the expenses. The biggest takeaway from this event for all of us was the bonding and camaraderie thinning the line between Rotaractors

and Rotarians,” said club president Mohit Bhakkad.

Rtn Shriniwas Bhakkad, charter member of RC Jalna, inaugurated the carnival which was “a gala event that helped to develop and strengthen the bond among the Rotary members,” said project chairman Badal Gehi. Rtrs Deepen Punjabi and Chirag Talreja were the co-chairmen for the event.

The community-based club, installed in 1968 by RC Jalna, has 63 members.

Other significant projects done during this year include two medical camps and the Beej Bappa. “We distributed eco-friendly Ganesh idols during Ganesh Chaturthi and the project made a good impact in the community. We engaged local craftsmen to make clay idols and marketed them at a reasonable cost, along with a pot and some seeds. Only organic colours were used on the idols,” said club president Bhakkad, adding



Rotaractors and participants with Rtn Shriniwas Bakkad who inaugurated the sports carnival.



that as the Covid pandemic was raging during the festival, the club members encouraged the people to perform the *visarjan* in the pot and plant the seeds in the same clay. “People loved the idea for its sentimental value.”

The club organised two medical camps — one in August and its follow-up in November — in a village near Jalna, in association with its parent club. Regular health checks to screen for blood pressure, diabetes, heart health, bone density and eye and dental issues were done on 170 villagers and medicines were distributed. For those who needed further treatment, the doctors offered to treat them at a subsidised fee at their clinics.

In January the club tied up with a Bengaluru-based fitness company and organised a virtual *TriFit Challenge*. The health-related public activity had 250 participants from across the globe and comprised cycling, walking and running. “Each activity had three levels and certificates were given to those who completed their chosen levels successfully.”

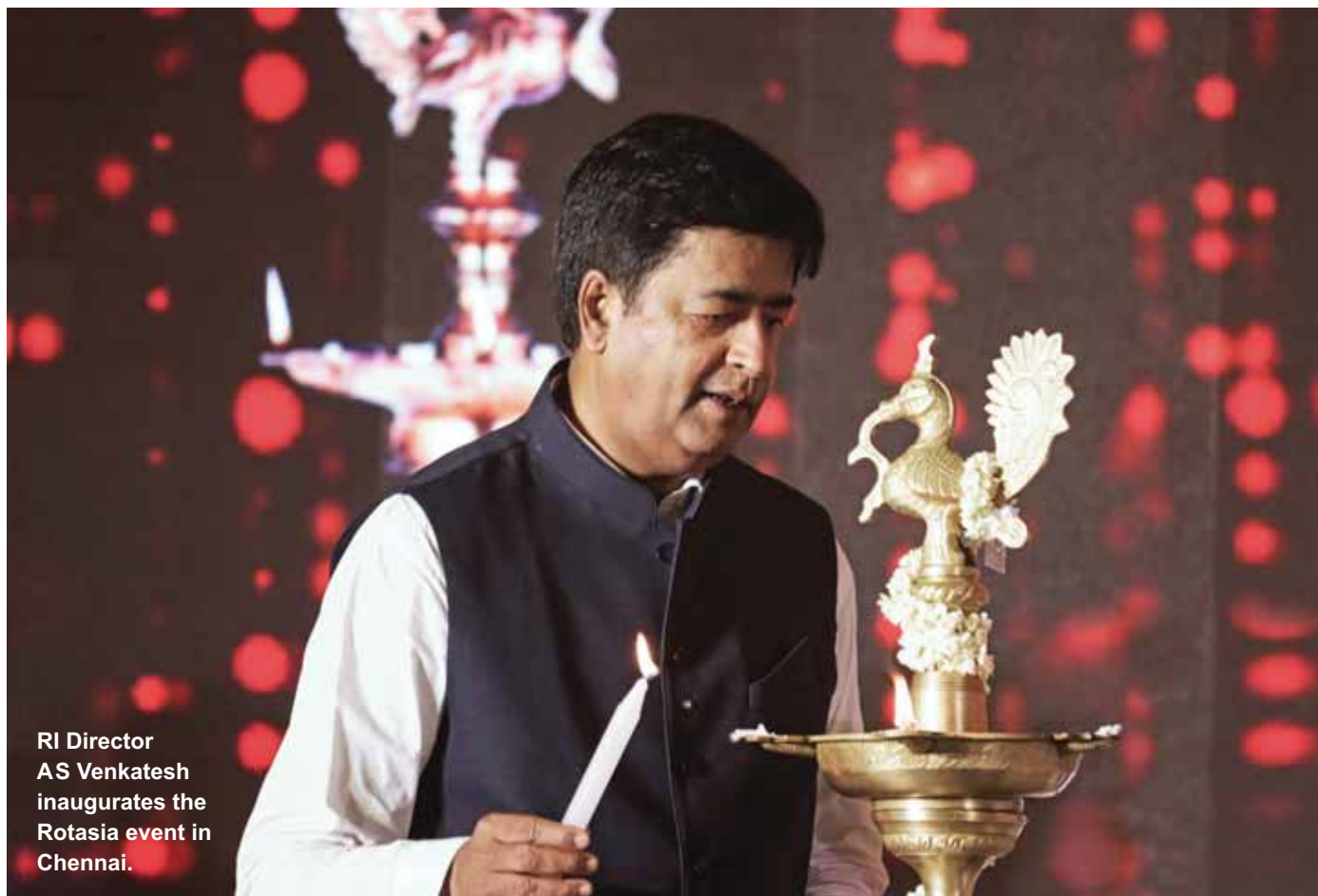
The club raises its own funds for all its service projects. “Until before the pandemic the club was collecting ₹2,100 as annual dues from the members, but now we have brought it down to ₹1,750. I don’t know how they will react to RI’s decision of \$8 from the coming year,” said the club president. ■



**Above:** A medical camp in progress in a village near Jalna.

**Below:** Rotaractors giving an eco-friendly Ganesh idol, along with a flower pot on Ganesh Chaturthi.





RI Director  
AS Venkatesh  
inaugurates the  
Rotasia event in  
Chennai.



# Rotaractors strengthen bonds over **ROTASIA 2022**

**Jaishree**

**R**OTASIA 2022, a mega four-day international convention of Rotaractors and Rotaract clubs in South Asia, was celebrated during mid-March at Mahabalipuram, Chennai. RSAM-DIO president Arti Goswami and SEARIC MDIO president Kaushal Sahu were the event conveners. PDRR Suresh Manoharan was the event chairman. Over 650 Rotaractors from 32 Rotary districts across four countries converged to enhance fellowship, build networks and exchange information at the event hosted by RID 3232 led by DRR G Kamuvél. “We were super thrilled and charged up to host this mega Rotaract extravaganza in Chennai after 13 years. All Rotaractors were looking forward to it,” he said. A promotional



video by Rtn David Raynel with Rotaractors grooving to music at popular Chennai spots was circulated among Rotaract clubs across South Asia.

RI Director A S Venkatesh, the chief guest, commended the organising team for the grandeur and substance the conference had on offer. DG J Sridhar, RID 3232, was the guest of honour and District Rotaract Committee chair Sesha M Sai energised the audience with his vibrant humour. Rtn Ram N Ramamurthy, RC Madras Mount, was a special invitee. PDRR Sujith Kumar, founder, Maatram Foundation, and AVP and HR analyst, Infosys, the keynote speaker, inspired the delegates with personal anecdotes where he

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We were super thrilled and charged up to host this mega Rotaract extravaganza in Chennai after 13 years.

**G Kamuvel**  
DRR, RID 3232

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Mr Rotasia — Rtr M Akshaydeep (RID 3131) and Ms Rotasia — Rtr Sajni Aras (RID 3141).



From L: RID 3232 DGE N Nandakumar, DRR G Kamuvel and Rtn Ram N Ramamurthy, RC Madras Mount.



RID 3232 DG J Sridhar, Event chairman PDRR Suresh Manoharan, Event convener PDRR Arti Goswami, DRRE Gowtham Raj and Event secretary Vinodh Nagarajan display the t-shirts specially designed for Rotasia.



DRRE Gowtham Raj being introduced at Rotasia.

did not pass up an opportunity to serve the less privileged.

A grand flag march introduced the participating Rotaract districts from India, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bangladesh. Accomplished musician, 17-year-old Lydian Nadaswaram was recognised with the Young Achiever Award at the conference. TR Sivaram, CEO of Classic Polo was honoured with the Example

to Youth Award. The current year DRRs were felicitated for their district leadership during the year.

A session by Rtn Bobby elaborated the amazing work done by Rotaractors as Covid warriors, helping people during the pandemic. A panel discussion on *#Elevate Rotaract*, following the 2019 CoL that introduced amendments to the constitutional

documents to include Rotaract clubs as a membership type of Rotary International, was the major highlight.

Multi-cultural dance performances, stand-up comedy and DJ nights provided the entertainment quotient for the vivacious audience. The conference ended with felicitations to the incoming DRR Gowtham Raj and his team.

“Rotasia was an exuberant experience for all of us and it gave us an opportunity to develop friendships beyond language, culture and borders, and polish our leadership skills. The event made each one of us proud to be a Rotaractor and be associated with Rotary,” says Sathishkumar, president, RAC Ambattur.

For DRRE Gowtham Raj, the mega event was “an incredible experience. The knowledge and the acquaintances made here will be cherished for life. Rotasia 2022 is very special to me as this is the first time I was part of organising such a rich and grand event.” ■



TR Sivaraman (second from R), CEO, Classic Polo, being presented with the Example to Youth Award at the Rotasia conference.



# A new community-based Rotaract club in Hubli

Team Rotary News



DGN Nasir Borsadwala handing over the club charter to RAC Hubballi Dharwad president Poornima Hegde in the presence of club secretary Poornapradnya Pandurangi, RC Hubli Vidyanagar president Dr Mahima Mohit Dand and Youth Service director of the parent club Rtn P Bhavani Shankar.

**R**otaract Club of Hubballi Dharwad, RID 3170, is probably the first community-based Rotaract club in Hubli, says Dr Mahima Mohit Dand, president of Rotary Club of Hubli Vidyanagar, the parent club. The charter certificate was presented by DGN Nasir Borsadwala on March 8.

The 24 Rotaractors of the club are excited to begin their Rotary

journey with a badminton tournament scheduled on April 24 at Vidyanagar near the town. “We are conducting the sport to spread awareness about diabetes and how physical activities can help in keeping the disease at bay,” says club president Poornima Hegde.

Next on the club’s agenda are an eye camp for school students and a blood donation drive. “We are actively planning to

plant 10,000 saplings before the year-end,” she smiles.

Most of the Rotaractors are employed. Poornima and club secretary Poornapradnya Pandurangi are pursuing BCom and preparing for CAT. The club does not limit its membership to the city alone. Some of the members hail from places such as Belagavi, Goa, Bengaluru and Canada too. They are a mix of students and working professionals. ■



# A Rotaract club takes baby steps in Bolpur

V Muthukumaran

Sponsored by RC Bolpur Rangamati, RID 3240, the less than six-month-old RAC King Surath Land depends on its parent club for guidance, planning and execution of service projects. “Till now, we have not done any projects on our own. We are a team of 12 Rotaractors, all college students, and associate ourselves with Rotary projects throughout the month,” says Amrita Ghosh, charter president of the club.

Formed in December 2021, the club was installed with 20 members, “but some of them

dropped out as we could not work as a team. However, we are learning the ropes and looking forward to do projects on our own with support from our parent Rotary.” The Rotaractors have regular virtual and physical meetings to discuss about their community outreach programmes; and each of them pay club dues of ₹80 per

month. They recently supported a one-day eye camp at the Indranarayan Vidyapeeth in Rajatpur which screened over 360 patients.

Woollen blankets and winter clothes were distributed to homeless people under a Rotary project. A blood donation camp was held at the Rajatpur school with the help of their alumni

RAC King Surath Land charter president Amrita Ghosh (standing, left) and charter secretary Sucharita Das (right) at the eye camp organised by RC Bolpur Rangamati.





group, headmistress and Rotarians. “Over 50 people donated blood and a sapling was given to each donor,” says Amrita.

Doing her MPhil in Rabindra Nritya at the Visva-Bharati University, Shantiniketan, she says, “we are dependent on our Rotary club and private sponsors for doing projects. And we are yet to take up Rotaract projects on our own.” She is using her college contacts and networking ability to add at least 10 more new members by June 30.

For the club secretary Sucharita Das, “mailing all our joint projects and activities to our parent Rotary and DRR on a weekly basis is part of my daily routine.” She is effusive in her praise for Rtn Saptarshi Das who is “mentoring us like a parent and motivating us to excel in our projects.” In the coming months, “we are thinking of conducting a health camp for poor children and also giving them free tuition, books and study material.”

Happy with the new exposure to the Rotary world, the 20-year-old is studying Italian as an UG student at the Visva-Bharati. “I love all the Rotarians for the splendid work they do for the community and will like to involve myself in all their projects. But since I am studying, like all other members, I can involve myself only in few activities with the Rotarians,” she explains. On the new Rotaract club dues to RI coming into effect from July 1, Sucharita says, “while we are aware of this new rule, most of our members will not be able to pay as they are students from underprivileged families. We have to discuss this issue with our parent Rotary.”■



**Club secretary Sucharita Das and Rtr Subhrajyati Saha (left) at the tree plantation drive at the Rajatpur Indranarayan Vidyapeeth.**



# Pune Interact clubs execute a clutch of service projects

Jaishree

**D**uring the Covid pandemic, a group of teenagers in Pune were eager to do their bit for the medical front-line staff, inspired by their Rotarian parents. “When we were busy collecting and distributing masks, PPE kits and sanitisers to front-line and sanitation staff through my club, RC Poona Downtown, my daughter and her friends kept badgering us that they too wanted to pitch in and do something. That’s when we formulated the idea for a community-based Interact club,” says Aashima Agashe, youth director, RC Poona Downtown, RID 3131.

Soon children from across various schools came together and thus was born the Interact Club of Poona Downtown, “probably the first community-based Interact club of the district.” Presently it has 24 members, including two boys, from three schools — St Mary’s, Symbiosis and Gurukul. “We made it clear to them that the club has to stay and cannot be abandoned after the Covid pandemic,” says Aashima.

## Project Green Period

The Interact club began its service journey with *Project Green Period*, the district’s signature project.

The Interactors wanted to reach out to less privileged children of their age. They voted on various ideas and zeroed in on menstrual hygiene with an underlying focus on the environment. “We were excited with the idea as we have been studying in school about how synthetic sanitary napkins and diapers are non-biodegradable and harmful for the environment,” says Ananya Agashe, the Interact club president.

The young members made a one-minute video clip talking about this project and circulated it among friends and neighbours on the social media. By the end

Interactors of Sundarji’s Stars, along with members of RC Poona Downtown, planting saplings at the Anandavan forest.







Members of the Interact Club of Poona Downtown, along with Rotarians, after distributing biodegradable sanitary pads to girls in a school.

of the campaign, they had collected ₹1 lakh. “It was heartening to see these children constantly planning and following it up,” says Aashima.

The next phase was to source the napkins. When Aashima suggested distributing cloth pads to adolescent girls as was done by the district Rotarians, many concerns were voiced. “The Interactors asked me, ‘if you are suggesting cloth napkins, they must be washed clean. Then what happens to water conservation? We from well-to-do families can dry the napkins in some private place. But what about the girls living in slums? Where will they find a private place to dry them?’ So I had to come up with some other solutions.”

After detailed research she identified 5–6 manufacturers who make biodegradable cloth

napkins, and the Interactors chose a manufacturer in Navi Mumbai who makes 100 per cent biodegradable pads. Within 100 days the process of degradation starts when it is put into a compost pit and the used napkin can even be mixed with wet garbage if it is wrapped in newspaper.

The Interactors, accompanied by Aashima and a couple of Rotarians, visited a municipal school and promoted these sanitary napkins to the girls, interacting with them on the problems they face during their menstrual cycle.

Aashima says that compared to adults, with whom “the girls are tongue-tied and shy on such topics, it was fascinating to see a free discussion between the two groups without any inhibitions. For us it was a huge eye-opener.”

The Interactors gave the schoolchildren pads to last for six

months and left with a promise to return. They want to scale up the project to include more such schools, says Ananya.

Another project was providing toys, sports equipment and indoor games to a daycare centre that takes care of 50–60 children of migratory workers. Three huge cartons of clothes and sports goods were collected and given to the centre.

“Our next project will be for an old age home,” she says, adding that the members have paused all activities for the next two months as they are busy with their exams, but will resume soon, as they meet regularly online.

#### **Interact club for special children**

Interact Club of Sundarji’s Stars is another special club sponsored by RC Poona Downtown last December. All the members are



A road safety awareness campaign by Interactors.

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**Compared to adults, with whom the girls are tongue-tied and shy on menstrual hygiene topics, it was fascinating to see a free discussion between the two groups without any inhibitions.**

**Aashima Agashe**  
Youth Director  
RC Poona Downtown  
RID 3131

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either mentally-challenged or have some developmental disorder such as ADHD, but they are not physically-challenged. “You see these children excelling in one skill or another. But they are not as comfortable as ordinary children in interacting with people in society. Some of them just clam up when they are taken away from their comfort settings,” says Aashima. The staff accompany them on their outings for projects.

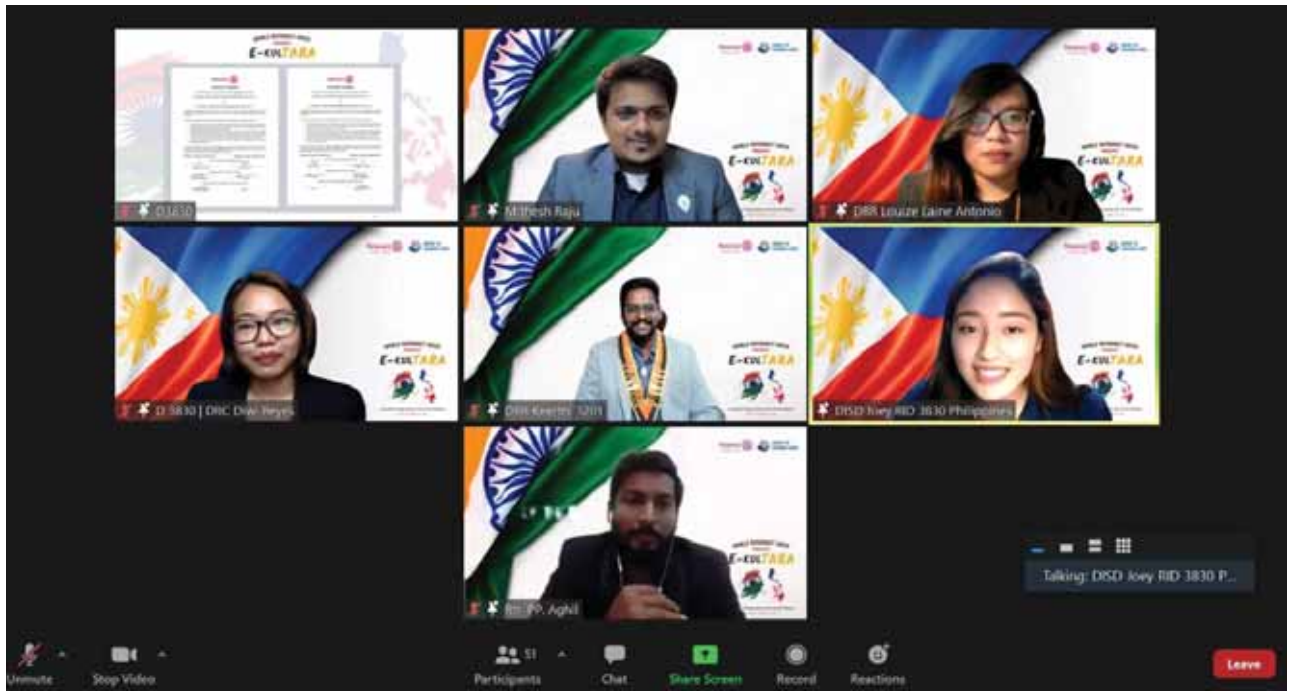
Along with her team of Rotarians, she guided the Interactors in a traffic awareness campaign. “The staff in-charge Vinamrata explained the project to the children in the way they can understand.” The children made placards with slogans on road safety and the Rotarians and Vinamrata accompanied them to a busy traffic junction. “At every red signal they would go to

the centre of the road and hold up the placards. When they saw somebody with a helmet, mask or seatbelt on, they went up to them and gave a thumbs up, and a thumbs down for people who violated traffic rules. It was very endearing to watch them do that and it was a learning experience for the children too.”

The Interactors also carried out a cleaning activity in a municipal park. “We got them brooms, masks and large-sized garbage bags and they collected 7–8 bags of plastic waste.”

The Interactors planted saplings at the Anandavan Reserve Forest and visited Santulan Bhavan, a centre for children of migratory workers, to distribute clothes. With the help of their school’s physical trainer, they engaged the children in some fun fitness activity. ■






# RIDs 3201 and 3830 sign Twin District Agreement

## Team Rotary News

Rotaract Districts 3830, the Philippines, and 3201, India, signed a Twin District Agreement on March 10 during the World Rotaract Week. The event titled “E-KulTARA” was held online. RID 3830 was represented by DRR Louis Lane Antonio, International Service director Joey Marie F Javellana and DRC Diwata Reyes, while RID 3201 was represented by DRR Keerthi Vivek, International Service director Aghil NJ and DRC CG Kumar.

The two districts plan to do joint projects, inter-district visits



### TWIN DISTRICT AGREEMENT

This agreement, made and executed this 10<sup>th</sup> day of March 2022, by and between:

The ROTARACT CLUBS OF ROTARY INTERNATIONAL (RI) DISTRICT 3201, India;

-and-


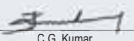




The ROTARACT CLUBS OF ROTARY INTERNATIONAL (RI) DISTRICT 3830, Philippines;

This agreement establishes that the above are now twin districts who commit to a long-term relationship of promoting international understanding and goodwill as well as mutually carrying out service projects benefiting their respective communities.

To achieve the objectives of the Twin District Relationship, the parties hereby mutually agree as follows:

1. Develop and implement at least one joint project every year in relation to any of the Rotary avenues of service;
2. Conduct at least one joint face to face or virtual meeting every year to provide opportunity for friendship and understanding between the Rotaractors in their districts;
3. Host each other's district Rotaract officers when visiting the districts' area of jurisdiction whenever feasible, provided that advanced notice has been given by the district of the visiting member/s and the arrangements to be accorded to the visiting member/s have been mutually agreed by the parties prior to the visit; and
4. Connect and promote friendly communications between the Rotaractors and Rotaract clubs of the districts using any applicable medium.

This agreement shall be effective for a period of two (2) years beginning its execution date and may be terminated at any time by any party for a cause provided at least fifteen (15) days prior notice was given to the other party. This agreement shall be renewable upon mutual consent of the districts.

<p>ROTARACT CLUBS OF RI DISTRICT 3201.</p> <div style="text-align: center;">               DISTRICT ROTARACT REPRESENTATIVES              Keerthi Vivek S         </div> <div style="text-align: center;">               WITNESS DISTRICT ROTARACT CHAIRS              C G. Kumar         </div> <div style="text-align: center;">               WITNESS DISTRICT INTERNATIONAL SERVICE DIRECTORS              Aghil N J         </div>	<p>ROTARACT CLUBS OF RI DISTRICT 3830.</p> <div style="text-align: center;">               DISTRICT ROTARACT REPRESENTATIVES              Louise Lane P. Antonio         </div> <div style="text-align: center;">               WITNESS DISTRICT ROTARACT CHAIRS              Maria Diwata Reyes         </div> <div style="text-align: center;">               WITNESS DISTRICT INTERNATIONAL SERVICE DIRECTORS              Joey Marie F. Javellana         </div>
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and promote friendship between the Rotaractors of both districts. The agreement will be for two years. The online meet was well-attended and provided an opportunity for both countries to get a glimpse of the culture and Rotaract activities of each other.

Both the districts plan to execute at least one service project every year and organise at least one physical meeting, in addition to multiple virtual meetings to promote fellowship between Rotaractors. The DRRs agreed to host each other's Rotaract officers and connect the Rotaract clubs in each other's districts for better understanding. ■

# Promoting dental health in slums and rural areas

Kiran Zehra

**W**hat comes to mind when you think about your dental care? asks Dr Hemank Mehta, a dentist from the Indian Dental Association (IDA), Mohali, Punjab, who was part of Project *Smile*, a Rotaract District 3080 initiative to help create awareness on oral health and hygiene. “If you want to keep your teeth healthy be

vigilant in your dental care. This message is easy to understand for one who follows oral hygiene. But when you reach out to people living in the slums or a rural area you need to do more than just an awareness talk,” he adds.

In partnership with the IDA, 140 Rotaract clubs from RID 3080 conducted 42 dental camps at slums and rural locations to test and treat close to 5,000

people most of them being children. The project included talks in each village on oral hygiene and infections, and helping the community identify a qualified dentist they could go to for dental care. DRR Shubham Goyal who conceptualised Project *Smile* says, “We have IDA data showing that there is a lack of awareness about oral diseases and the impact of good oral hygiene on

**Students at a government school in Mohali, Punjab, receive new toothbrush and paste under Project Smile.**





overall health and well-being among the underprivileged community. This initiative was meant to address this need and I am glad that it's brought all the Rotaract clubs of the district together and we could reach out to so many needy people."

Losing teeth, says Dr Mehta, "limits what can be eaten, compromising nutrition and affects general health. Pain from toothache affects normal day-to-day activities and bacteria from gum disease can infect the bloodstream and cause other illnesses, ranging from inflammation to heart disease. But since the awareness is poor not many people seem to care."

He points out that "many patients at the camp had cavities, gum disease, infections in their mouths. In many of these cases the dental issues can be avoided with a simple toothbrush and toothpaste." He and his team conducted procedures, including, fillings, gum treatment, scaling and polishing, and surgical extractions. Few were referred to the IDA, Mohali, for root canal and emergency procedures.

In addition to this, dental kits were given out at all the camps and Rotaractors sensitised the patients on oral health and hygiene and the best practices.

Under the theme *Service to Mankind: By the community, For the community*, clubs in the district carried out various activities.

RAC Chandigarh Himalayan organised a sanitation kit donation drive. Over 100 kits were distributed to children from Harryson Model School, Mattaur. Rotaractors also spoke to the children on the importance of personal hygiene, use of mask and social distancing.







Rotaractors of RAC Sardar Bhagwan Singh University with the clothes collected for the distribution drive

Under its initiative *Pause for Paws*, RAC DAV Dental College fed stray animals and organised a food donation drive at a slum area. Ration packets included 30kg of rice, dal, wheat flour, sugar and tea packets. Samosas and noodles were also given to the kids in the area.

RAC Soaring Monks, in collaboration with RAC Thane North End, Mumbai, through its *Spread a Bite* initiative distributed food to the needy.

RAC Chandigarh Shivalik encouraged every club member to do a random act of kindness. While some Rotaractors chose to donate food or money to

the underprivileged, some gave their domestic help a day off or lent them a helping hand. Club members shared their experiences on social media.

RAC Sardar Bhagwan Singh University, through its *Mission Good Will*, donated clothes in the slums of Dehradun. RAC Shivalik Spectrum spread happiness through the medium of art. Members donated crayons, pencils, erasers and drawing sheets to over 150 children from poor economic background. This was followed by a drawing party where the kids used their creativity and imagination to come up with beautiful art work. The event concluded with the distribution of refreshments (banana, fruit juice and chocolates) to the kids.

Members of RAC GNKITM organised a fundraiser for an economically weak family to provide them with ration for two months. A small amount of cash was given to the family for medical expenses and to meet their emergency needs. ■



A dental check-up camp for students.





# DISCOVER NEW HORIZONS

**AT THE 2022 ROTARY INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION  
IN HOUSTON, TEXAS, USA, 4-8 JUNE 2022**

Take advantage of the limited-time registration rate of US\$425\* from 12 to 16 June.  
Register today at [convention.rotary.org](https://convention.rotary.org).

**New this year:** Nonmembers are welcome to attend, so invite a friend to join you!  
Information about nonmember registration rates and virtual-only attendance  
can be found at [convention.rotary.org](https://convention.rotary.org).

*\*Registration must be paid in full between 12 and 16 June 2021 to receive the US\$425 rate.*



# Burdwan Rotaractors take up diverse projects

V Muthukumaran

Chartered in July 2021, RAC Burdwan, RID 3240, is the brain-child of Dr Chandrajit Kundu, president of Rotary Club of Burdwan, who “took all efforts to set up a Rotaract club for students, business community and those employed in private firms. We had one such club in 1980s but it wound up within few years and now it has been revived with 21 members,” says club president Aslam Parbez.

Burdwan is the headquarters of Purba Bardhaman district, the rice bowl of West Bengal, and is dotted with tourist spots. “We have five Rotary clubs having around 250 members in the city and our monthly Rotaract bulletin *Pragati* is being circulated among Rotarians, Anns and Annets to draw more new members into our fold,” he says. Through the bulletin, the Rotaractors share their projects and community initiatives with the larger Rotary family in the

city. “We partner with our parent Rotary in most of their projects and learn from this experience. Recently, a two-phase cataract surgery camp was organised and 57 people were treated for cataract at the Camri Hospital.”

On March 31, the Rotaractors distributed free spectacles to 200 out of 250 patients who were examined at an eye camp held in partnership with the Rotary club and Vision RX Labs. “We meet twice a month, on second

Children at the Meghnad Saha Planetarium, Burdwan, with Rtr Prithwijoy Shome at the centre.







**From Left, standing:** RC Burdwan president Dr Chandrajit Kundu, Rtns Amit Bhagat, Mahbub Hussain, Dr Mahmood Hossain, RAC Burdwan president Aslam Parbez and its joint secretary Aman Sonkar at the cataract surgery camp.



and fourth Saturdays to discuss and chalk out our programmes. Rotaractors pay a monthly fee of ₹250, and we get donations and sponsors from businessmen to fund our outreach activities,” explains Parbez. The club has organised four blood donation camps in which 120 people have donated around 500 units of blood.

### Engaging poor children

On Children’s Day, 38 inmates at the Tejganj Children Welfare Organisation were taken to Burdwan Science Centre and Meghnad Saha Planetarium. “It was a rewarding experience for us as the less privileged kids were thrilled and got enriched with an unusual experience of a lifetime.” In the coming months, the club is planning to hold a couple of health camps for the 250 children at this NGO which offers after-school coaching to children from Classes 5–12.

Another activity that enhances its public image is Project *Upahar*

(Gift) in which the members collect sparingly-used clothes from the public at a drop point in Rotary Bhaban and package them neatly for distribution to underprivileged families. “We did the clothes distribution in January, and will do it again in April.” The club hosted a webinar on financial literacy for the benefit of students at the University of Burdwan and all Rotaractors from RID 3240. “Around 80 students and youth took part in the virtual session. We are holding such online meetings on a quarterly basis. Also, we leverage the social media to publicise our activities and gain visibility among the public,” says Parbez.

An Interact Club of Global Magnus School was chartered on April 1 and Rotaractors are ready to join hands with Interactors for impactful projects. With a new job posting at Powai, Mumbai, as chartered wealth manager, “I will be handling the Rotaract activities from this place,” says the 24-year-old financial analyst. ■

# A Rotaract club plans activities across 11 avenues

Jaishree

**R**otaract Club of Deonar, RID 3141, spreads its activities across 11 avenues of service — community development, professional development, club service, international service, sports, PR and marketing (PR&M), social

media and digital marketing to name a few.

Club secretary Kajal Medh explains each of these avenues. The club helps youngsters brush up their skills, train them in public speaking and interview etiquettes under the professional development avenue. “Recently we participated

in *Project Prayas* of our parent club, RC Deonar when the Rotarians had donated tabs to Class 7 schoolchildren in a village. We helped to install software in the tab and to make the children familiar with the device, we conducted a workshop on Canva app to train them to design greeting cards, pamphlets and brochures.”

*Xpressions* is the club’s long-running flagship project with a 32-year legacy. It is a mega inter-school competition conducted

**Clockwise from right:** Students exhibit their creations after the Canva workshop organised by the club. Rotaractors setting up the Tabs sponsored by RC Deonar to be distributed to schoolchildren under *Project Prayas*. A winner of *Xpressions* contest being felicitated. RAC Deonar President Vasanthraj Govindan with a child at the *Talent Fiesta* contest.





annually for schoolchildren around Mumbai. “Nearly 4,500 children participate in it. It is the most happening event among schoolchildren in the city and schools consider it prestigious to have their students participate in it,” she beams. Competitions are conducted in fine arts and performing arts and a rolling trophy, besides certificates and awards, are presented to achievers. This year the event was held in three phases. The first phase was an offline contest organised in January at various NGOs in Chembur. The second phase was a virtual event in which 15 schools participated. The third

phase will be conducted in March for students in Palghar.

The club also organises *Talent Fiesta* — a contest for the differently-abled children — with the help of 20–25 other NGOs. At least 500 children from across Mumbai participate in various competitions every year. “It’s a competition where everyone who participates wins, because we believe that each and every participant is a winner in their own right. We believe that *Talent Fiesta* will enable participants to display their creative potential, be it through performing arts or fine arts,” says club president Vasantharaj Govindan.

Under its community service avenue, the club recently provided groceries and other non-perishable essentials to the Maranatha Harvest Mission, a local orphanage. The club collaborated with the district to provide food for the poor. “It was a tie-up with the food delivery agent Swiggy. The cost of one meal is ₹20 and for every meal we donated, Swiggy matched it with a meal. We set a target of 250 meals, but provided 308!” smiles the president.

Every year the Rotaractors visit Jamshed village which has been adopted by District 3141 under *Project Zariya* to provide the







**Above:** ERotaractors with schoolchildren after distributing gifts to them.



villagers with essentials as per their needs.

The club service avenue takes care of the internal bonding among the members through informal meetings. The club has signed sister club agreements with RAC University Alumni, Sri Lanka, and with Rotaract clubs in Bengaluru. The PR&M helps raise funds and identifies sponsors for the club's community service and professional development projects. The social media and digital marketing avenues ensure an active club presence in social media platforms such as Instagram, Snapchat and Facebook. "This has helped in getting more youngsters interested in Rotaract," says Kajal, who is into her fourth year with the club. Three of her cousin sisters are also in the same club.

The club, chartered in 1989, has 85 members presently. ■





# Citation for Rotaract Clubs

**R**otaract clubs that achieve the Rotaract goals by the end of the Rotary year will earn a citation. All activities need to be completed by August 15. To be eligible for the Rotary Citation, Rotaract

clubs need to be certified by RI and endorsed by the district governor before July 1.

Use this worksheet to set your goals and track your progress.

Citation Category	Goal Detail	Set Your Goal	Goal Achieved
Club membership	How many total members does your club want by the end of the Rotary year?		
Service participation	How many members will participate in club service activities during the Rotary year?		
Rotary Action Group participation	How many club members will be members of at least one Rotary Action Group during the Rotary year?		
Leadership development participation	How many leadership or professional development programmes will your club organise to enhance members' skills?		
District conference attendance	How many members will attend your district conference?		
Rotary Fellowship participation	How many club members will be members of a Rotary Fellowship during the Rotary year?		
District training participation	How many of your club members attend a district training?		
Learning Center engagement	How many club members will access the Learning Center and how many courses will they complete?		
Annual Fund contributions	Will your club contribute to Rotary's Annual Fund, and will these contributions meet the requirements for the Rotaract Giving Certificate?		
PolioPlus Fund events	During the Rotary year, how many events will your club hold to raise funds for or increase awareness of Rotary's work to eradicate polio?		
Service projects	Will your club partner with your sponsor club on a significant local or international service project in one of Rotary's six areas of focus?		
Rotaract clubs	How many Rotaract clubs will your club sponsor during the Rotary year?		
Interact clubs	How many Interact clubs will your club co-sponsor during the Rotary year?		
RYLA participation	How many of your club members will be involved in planning or participating in the Rotary Youth Leadership Awards?		
Programmes for young leaders	Will your club host a meeting that introduces members to Rotary programmes, including RYLA and New Generations Service Exchange?		
Strategic plan	Does your club have an updated strategic plan?		
Online presence	Does your club's online presence accurately reflect its current activities?		
Update website and social media	During the Rotary year, how many times per month will your club's website or social media accounts be updated?		
Social activities	How many social activities will your club hold outside of regular meetings during the Rotary year?		
Media stories about club projects	Did your club promote an event or activity that it held during World Rotaract Week on social media?		
Use of official Rotary promotional materials	Did your club use Rotary International's messaging and public service materials, such as broadcast videos, print ads, and other material in the Brand Center, to promote Rotaract in your community during the Rotary year?		
Promote your club	Will your club submit your best project for the Rotaract Outstanding Project Awards?		

# RAC Khamgaon conducts medical camp at rural village

Kiran Zehra



Rotaractors helping the villagers to register at the medical camp.

**M**edical camps conducted in villages are a timely help for the patients who have

no access to hospitals and medicines,” says Sachin Purwar, IPP, RAC Khamgaon, RID 3030. The club has been

conducting medical camps in villages around Khamgaon for the past nine years. Recently the club conducted a medical

camp at Hivarkhed village, 25km from Khamgaon.

Mahadev Hatkar, a resident of Hivarkhed, helped the Rotaractors organise the camp. “He promoted the camp by going door-to-door asking the villagers to register for the camp,” says Purwar.

“Neighbouring villages frequently had medical camps. This is the first time our village hosted a camp and had visitors from other villages,” says Hatkar. Apart from addressing chronic ailments such as diabetes,



A villager getting his eyes tested.





Rotaractors distribute biscuits at a slum area.



hypertension, orthopaedic problems and eye disorders, the camp also had a gynaecologist who helped women understand menstrual hygiene.

“Physically-challenged, pregnant women and elderly persons are the biggest beneficiaries of our annual camps,” says Dr Bhagat Singh Rajput. Along with

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Many of the villagers are daily wage workers and they hardly have the time or money for a visit to the hospital. Most of the time they go to a doctor only when their condition turns worse.

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his team Rajput screened, tested and treated over 250 villagers.

Purwar points out that “many of the villagers are daily wage workers and they hardly have the time or money for a visit to the hospital. Most of the time they go to a doctor only when their condition turns worse. Camps like these help screen and identify the problems at an early stage.”

Close to 10 Rotarians from RC Khamgoan and 22 Rotaractors from the club were present at the camp to take care of the arrangements.

The club donated sarees to women from poor economic background. The club also conducted a biscuit distribution drive in slum colonies. ■

# Udgir Rotaractors on a service mission

V Muthukumaran





**W**ith the success of two events on March 8 — Mahadan 7.0, a blood donation camp; and a seminar to mark Women's Day — RAC Udgir, RID 3132, has got its batteries recharged and the Rotaractors are keen to expand their membership by holding awareness meets and workshops in colleges

in the near future. "We are just a 15-member community-based club. Much needs to be done to create awareness about Rotary, what it stands for and its global reach," says Sachin Pensalwar, club president.

He is looking forward to add at least five new members by December 2022. Udgir is a very small town in Latur taluk of Maharashtra and is 80km from Bidar district of Karnataka. "The town is close to the inter-state border and has a sizeable population of small businessmen who are engaged in granite, tiles and garment industries. Our five-year-old club has mostly these entrepreneurs and students and it is sponsored by the parent RC Udgir Central," explains Pensalwar. At the recent Mahadan camp, they collected 40 units of blood which was given to the Amberkhane Blood Bank, Udgir.

A special lecture was given by Dr Yernale Jyoti, a gynaecologist, on gender-specific issues such as menstrual hygiene, ensuring dignity of girls and underprivileged women, and healthcare tips. "The seminar was attended by 20 rural women and we received good feedback on this lecture event. We distributed around 1,000 Rotaract calendars to the public in January. The Rotaract calendar was funded by entrepreneurs who placed advertisements on it for wider reach among the public in and

around Udgir. Also, we got donations from reputed schools, colleges and other establishments."

### **Cyclothon on road safety**

Along with Rotarians and youth volunteers, the club hosted a cyclothon rally in August 2021 to create awareness on road safety. "Over 100–120 people including members from the Rotary fraternity took part in the cycle rally. T-shirts and handbills were distributed to drive home the message of road safety among pedestrians, commuters and motorists," says Pensalwar.

However, due to the Covid lockdown, the club was not able to chart out project activities in an effective manner, he says. "We resumed our activities only from January 2022 and are meeting twice a month to chart our programmes." They don't depend on their parent Rotary club to mentor or guide them in their community projects. "We don't have a Rotarian mentor to help us in our projects which are decided only through discussions among our members."

Apart from the annual membership fee of ₹1,000 per head, the club develops a rapport with local businessmen and traders who sponsor Rotaract activities on a regular basis.

Pensalwar, his secretary Prasad Rudrawar and rest of the team are toying with the idea of holding Rotary workshops in colleges and schools to increase membership and widen the impact of their service projects. Having completed masters in computer science, 26-year-old Pensalwar is on a job hunt. "At present, I am fully enjoying my stint as Rotaract club president. Rotary has widened my perspectives of life and instilled in me a spirit of service to mankind," he adds. ■



**Left:** RAC Udgir president Sachin Pensalwar honouring Supriya Mahadev Bhandare, a participant at the Women's Day celebrations. Also seen are (from L) district zonal representative Amol Polawar, Rtr Pratik Mangulkar, her husband Bhandare and past president Suyog Kotalwal.

# Rotaract fundraisers help communities

Jaishree

**C**ome June, the Rotaractors of RAC Chennai Towers, RID 3232, will be all set to provide better huts to the Irula tribe living on the outskirts of Chennai, thanks to an ongoing fundraiser. The club's dedication to community service over the past nine years has also earned them a valuable donor who is ready to extend financial support to renovate the huts of the tribal people.

Club president Sivaranjani Babu came across the community living in dire straits on the city's outskirts at a village named Pazhaiyanoor near Chengalpattu. They have been ostracised by the villagers and are living in isolation, she says. When

she conveyed this to her club the members readily decided to help.

For years, the club, under their project *Conquerors*, has been into designing monthly sheet calendars featuring women achievers from various fields and these calendars, priced at ₹250 each, are readily bought by NGOs and other Rotary/Rotaract clubs. The proceeds from its sale is used to fund a service project every year.

Children of the Irula tribe pose for a photograph.







This year's sale of calendars will help to renovate the huts of 25 Irula tribals. "The huts are in a pathetic shape and would just collapse any moment. So we discussed with the tribals and decided to strengthen the huts and provide a stronger roof using cement sheets," she says. Each hut would need at least 15–20 sheets. The total cost of the project is ₹2.5 lakh.

Since last year the club has been conducting *Ranchana*, a mega painting competition for young children from all walks of the society across the city. Mentors are engaged to teach the fine aspects of art to the participants. Drawing kits are provided to all participants by the club. This year the Rotaractors invited 35 children of the Irula families to participate in the painting competition. Transport was arranged to bring the children to the venue in Chennai and drop them back at their homes. "The children had such a memorable experience that day. They were happy to exhibit their drawing skills and return home with a bag of goodies that we gifted to every participant," she says.

*Fundemic*, born out of the Covid pandemic last year, is another

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The huts are in a pathetic shape and would just collapse any moment. So we discussed with the tribals and decided to strengthen the huts.

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fundraiser programme of the club aimed at helping with education of schoolchildren. "We named it *Fundemic* to raise funds for the Covid pandemic victims. Last year when we started it was an online event. We had a stand-up comedy show and we raised ₹50,000 in a week through ticket sale." Part of the funds was used to provide groceries and basic essentials to Street Vision, an orphanage, and the remaining amount was spent on a transgender community who were uprooted by the government from their dwelling place within the city and relocated to Semmandur on the city's outskirts. "We helped them with the basic essentials, medicines and some cash."

This year the club had organised a variety of performing arts events by budding artists at the auditorium of Saveetha College of Business Management, and it had a good footfall earning the club ₹80,000. The fundraiser helped to support 380 children from a Sri Lankan refugee camp in Gummidipoondi near Chennai. "We gave them school essentials and set up a basic library for them at a local tuition centre. Our parent club sponsored the school fees for 10 children from below-poverty-line families. We had other donors too to support us," says Sivaranjani, who works for an NGO that takes care of children of terminally ill parents or HIV victims.

DRCC Sessa M Sai and Col Lakshmanakumar, Youth Services director of RC Chennai Towers, presided over the *Fundemic* event this year.

The parent club is a huge support to the Rotaractors and pitches in with ideas and monetary help. The Rotaract club was chartered nine years ago and presently it has 80 members, a mix of students and working professionals. ■



A beautician training programme for transgenders in progress.

# A vocational training programme for transgenders

Kiran Zehra

**I**t is time we stop checking the box on diversity, equity and inclusion and begin to make an impact,” says Deepanshu, ZRR, RID 3070. With that in mind three Rotaract clubs from his zone — RACs GGNIMT, North Ludhiana and Ludhiana Supporters — organised a vocational training programme for members of the transgender community, in association with

two local NGOs — Jeet Foundation and City Needs.

The training programme is being undertaken by Jeet Foundation and during the International Week of Happiness (March 17–22) Rotaractors promoted the initiative under the event *Happy Camp*. “Each year we visit an orphanage or old age home and distribute clothes, sweets and food during the Week of

Happiness. This year we wanted to help members of the transgender community,” says Deepanshu who chaired the event. Such programmes, he says, are a “driver for positive change not just in Ludhiana but across the country.” In most big cities in India, he points out that there are “strong transgender associations and communities. It’s the smaller cities and towns that need more

sensitisation and to see change we have to move from awareness to action,” he adds.

“I am a talented make-up artist but people look down upon me because I am a transgender. This certified training programme will help me find a job or start something small on my own,” says Sandy, a participant of the vocational training programme and adds that



“this programme has not only polished my skills but the interaction with the Rotaractors made me realise that we can be treated normally without being patronised.”

Positive experiences like these “are a genuine way to appreciate the unique talents this community has to offer. Besides this is also a great way for them to connect, learn and engage,” says the ZRR.

At the closing ceremony of the *Happy Camp* members of the transgender community participated in games, sang songs and danced to the tune of latest Punjabi songs. “I enjoyed myself and made new genuine friends. Rotaractors are

people I can trust and I know I can call them when in need,” smiles Sandy. In addition to festivities Rotaractors honoured them by giving them red roses and cut a cake.

Ashish Arora, the District Rotaract secretary and Nishul Sood, ZRR-Himachal zone, along with a few RI officers, attended the closing ceremony. “Organisations with diverse perspectives and representation are more successful than the rest. We request other Rotaract zones and districts to organise a *Happy Camp* because everyone deserves happiness and as Rotaractors we should begin to make an impact.” ■



Members of the transgender community participating in an activity at the Happy Camp.



Rotaractors with members of the transgender community.



# RID 3040

## Rotaract notches record growth

**V Muthukumaran**

**W**ith the introduction of annual RI dues for Rotaractors from July 1, “it will be a challenge to sustain membership in the short term. But the new policy change will ensure that we induct quality Rotaractors and the focus is on doing impactful, large projects for the communities,” says DRR Yatharth Golchha, RID 3040.

As per the new RI directive, community-based Rotaract clubs have to pay \$8 per year for a Rotaractor, while clubs at institutions (like colleges) need to

pay \$5 per head annually. “Till last year, most of our clubs are dependent on their parent Rotary clubs for funds, sponsorship and mentorship. But now, after the introduction of district Rotaract funds from July 2021 during my installation our approach is oriented towards financial independence through mobilising funds internally and seeking sponsorship without the support of

Rotary,” explains Golchha. To begin with, Rotaractors have to pay ₹150 each per year for district funds, apart from the membership fee the clubs may collect from them. “This fee is a modest step we have taken, but this will initiate the habit of mobilising funds within Rotaract for organising events and programmes.”

### **New rules, structure**

During his installation, his district Rotaract team has introduced bylaws to streamline the functioning of Rotaract clubs in RID 3040. “Now with these laws, a sort of ready reckoner, a Rotaractor can refer to it as a handy guide for the conduct of projects, meetings and other aspects of Rotaract,” says Golchha.

**At the RID 3040's Garba Mahotsav during Navaratri. DRR Yatharth Golchha is standing sixth from left.**







(Middle row, from L) Rtn Anoop Golchha, PDG Nitin Dafaria, SEARIC MDIO president-nominee Abhishek Goyal, DRR Yatharth Golchha, PDRR Tejasva Gandhi and IPDRR Rtn Bharat Vijayvargiya at the Rotaract District Assembly and installation titled Genesis.

He has also launched Rotaract Business Connect (RBC), a virtual forum to promote the businesses of Rotaractors through B2B and B2C networking. “So far the RBC forum would have benefitted over 60 Rotaractors in our district.

A slew of high-profile events has enabled the Rotaractors to bond with each other like never before. The one-day *Garba Mahotsav* during Navaratri in Indore saw Rotarians too joining the gala fellowship. “DG Col Mahendra Mishra was the chief guest at the social get-together in which dance and music, followed by a sumptuous dinner, gave us something to look back in future,” he recalls. Around 60–70 Rotaractors took part in the festival event.

However, the main highlight of his term so far has been the two-day virtual DTS (district training seminar) titled *Rehnumai* (guidance in Urdu), in which 15 speakers including DG Mishra, DGE Jinendra Jain, DGN Ritu Grover, DRRs and PDRRs shared their views at the interactive

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When I took over as DRR, we had 719 Rotaractors in July last year; now the strength is 2,550 across 57 Rotaract clubs in RID 3040, a meteoric growth of 350 per cent.

**DRR Yatharth Golchha, RID 3040**

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sessions. Rotaract Pro League saw a combination of games — badminton, volleyball, chess and table tennis — and field athletics like sack race and others brought out the sporting skills of Rotaractors.

#### **District record**

RID 3040 has installed two Rotaract clubs with largest charter membership in this district. RAC Indore Oriental Navlakha was chartered with 646 membership in September 2021 and its strength has risen to

over 900 by March-end. Another club, RAC GH Rasoni University at Sausar in Chhindwara district of Madhya Pradesh was chartered with over 350 members in July.

“We launched a district Rotaract portal [www.3040rotaract.org](http://www.3040rotaract.org) to upload projects and share best practices,” says Golchha.

A freelance fashion photographer and Rotaractor since 2017, Golchha is the third generation Rotarian in his family. His father Anoop Golchha is a second-level PHF, while mother Vandana is also a Rotarian. “My grandfather Gian Chand Golchha is a former Rotarian who had sown the seeds of ‘service above self’ in our family.”

The DRR says a lot of promotional activities will be taken to draw new Rotaractors from colleges and other institutions. “When I took over as DRR, we had 719 Rotaractors in July last year; now the strength is 2,550 across 57 Rotaract clubs in RID 3040, a meteoric growth of 350 per cent,” smiles Golchha. ■

# Cheering the disabled

Jaishree

For 15 consecutive years RAC Ambattur, RID 3232, has been hosting the annual day celebrations for the physically/mentally-challenged students studying in eight special schools in Chennai. “The cultural programmes will be designed by the respective schools and the staff will train their students to perform. We organise the venue

and ensure that it is disabled-friendly and comfortable for the children,” says Sathishkumar, president of this 30-year-old club sponsored by RC Ambattur. The event helps to unearth the latent talent of these children and “it is a pleasure to see their performances, overcoming their challenges.” The paintings done by some of the children and exhibited at the venue also won appreciations from the audience.

The participants are recognised with gifts and a sumptuous dinner is served for the children, their parents and school staff.

The programme is popular and many people including Rotarians and Rotaractors look forward to attending it every year. Several philanthropists come forward to sponsor the fees for the students. “We do the background verification and authentication. The donors

A donor hands over a cheque to a parent to sponsor the education of a student at the *Vidiyal* programme.







**Above and below:** Cultural performances by participants.

directly hand over the sponsor funds to the students in the presence of the parents.” At the end of the programme the club distributes gift kits such as tiffin box, stationery, school bags, etc each year to all the students. “Every year we discuss the children’s needs with the school coordinators beforehand. We also recognise the coordinators and support staff at the event.” he says.

#### **Cremating unclaimed bodies**

The club received the best project award two years ago at the RSAMDIO conference for its service project — cremation of

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Every year we discuss the children’s needs with the school coordinators beforehand. We also recognise the coordinators and support staff at the event.

**Sathish Kumar**

president, RAC Ambattur.

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Artwork done by the children exhibited at the cultural programme venue.

unclaimed bodies. Whenever they get information from the Royapettah General Hospital and the Chintadripet Police Station about anonymous deaths in their jurisdiction, the officials notify the Rotaractors and after

the requisite formalities, hand over the body for cremation to them. Not many people are ready to participate in this project as it involves visiting the mortuary and the crematorium, says Sathishkumar, adding that

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The club received the best project award two years ago at the RSAMDIO conference for its service project — cremation of unclaimed dead bodies.

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Members of RAC Ambattur at the *Vidiyal* programme.

he is part of a specific team in his club that has been executing this project for the past three years.

Club member Sudankumar leads the team. “Earlier his father was involved in this project and it was through him we got drawn to it.” The Rotaractors take care of the basic rituals and visit the crematorium to provide a decent cremation. Each service costs about ₹2,500, says the club president.

The club has 92 Rotaractors and most of them are college students although it is a community-based club. The members pay annual dues of ₹750 each. ■



# Making children smile

## Team Rotary News



Rotaractors distribute toys and games kits at an orphanage.

Club members of RAC AK Chanda Law College, RID 3240, travelled around

Silchar, Assam, to distribute chocolates and toys to underprivileged children across the city.

“We wanted to do something for children from poor economic background and see then all excited and happy,” says Gourab, the project chair. “The children ate the chocolates and we gave them extra,” he smiles. The toys included cricket bats, teddy bears and dolls.

It was a “delightful moment” for Gourab when one child at an orphanage “walked up to me and asked me if I will bowl for him. We played with the children and it felt good,” he says.

The club also distributed new clothes for these children. The project chair says “a big thanks to my club members for their contribution to the drive. We gave about 3–4 sets of clothes to each child including socks and underwear. We plan to do more this year.” ■



# High visibility Rotaract projects at Dharmanagar

**V Muthukumaran**

**R**ight guidance and motivation by Rotary will go a long way in nurturing Rotaractors and RAC Dharmanagar, RID 3240, sponsored by RC Dharmanagar is a good example of how “Rotarians have taken upon themselves the responsibility of creating a right framework for us to thrive in this scenic city which has a huge population of Bengalis,” says DRRE Sandip Das, who is also a Rotarian.

Dharmanagar, located 170km north of capital Agartala, is the second biggest city in Tripura and has a vibrant business community. “We are

a team of 40 Rotaractors consisting of students, private firm employees and professionals like doctors, engineers and lawyers. Community projects are discussed at our meetings held four times a month. Our Rotary club offers its rented premises for our general body and board meetings,” explains Das, also charter president and mentor of RAC Dharmanagar. Formed in January 2019 and chartered the next month, this young club is distributing freshly-prepared food packets twice a month to roadside families, destitute and homeless people under a rechristened *Project Plate of Happiness*.

“We have been doing the food project earlier as part of Annapurna Day celebrations in the first week of July, but without much publicity. Now under the rebranded initiative, Rotaractors distribute around 50 food packets a month with liberal donations from our Rotarians and sponsors,” he says.

Sometimes well-to-do families deliver to the club the leftover, untouched dishes from their private parties and social occasions. “We sort them out and neatly package the food items before distribution. But on most occasions, Rotaractors prepare food at their homes, package and supply them to a team of 15 project volunteers who are into distribution. Over the months, the club has received a lot of appreciation from the local communities, and “some well-to-do families also donate food to us.”

Over the last three years, they have installed four sanitary vending machines at the Government Degree College, Dharmanagar, and three government schools, which has benefitted around 1,000 girls. “Our club is probably the first NGO in the city

A trainer demonstrates at the Defend the Dark, a self-defence workshop for girls.







Past AG Shibabrata Dutta (3rd from L), RAC Dharmanagar IPP Ananya Bhattacharya (centre), RC Dharmanagar IPP Monish Kanti Bhattacharya (3rd from R) and to his left is DRRE Sandip Das at the zonal meet titled Maloncho.

to install a pad vending machine and we have a plan to set up another 3–4 machines by the end of this Rotary year,” says Das.

### Defend the Dark

As charter president, he initiated a two-day workshop titled *Defend the Dark* to provide self-defence training to girls and rural women. “Around 65 participants were taught basic skills in martial arts through four sessions held with the support of All Tripura Thang-Ta Association in December 2019. Senior police officers and martial arts experts took part in this

event which was widely covered in the local media.”

Last year (2020–21), the club hosted a zonal conference that saw the participation of 65 Rotaractors from seven clubs and “they had stimulating sessions that honed their organisational skills.” Rtns Pranoy Chanda and Monish Kanti Bhattacharya, past presidents, RC Dharmanagar, are pillars of support to Rotaractors as “they have guided and counselled us on many occasions in the past. Even for want of funds, we approach them and they are ready to help us in whatever way they can,” says Das.

### New Rotaract policy

Quiz him on the goals he will pursue as DRR (2022–23), he says, “first, I have to make Rotaractors aware of policy changes Rotary International has brought for Rotaract from July 1. While a Rotaractor has to pay RI dues of \$8 a year (\$5 for institution-based clubs), he or she needs to register at *My Rotary* to get a personal ID.” At present, Rotaractors at Dharmanagar pay monthly club dues of ₹100 per head, apart from district fees. “Most of them are ready to pay the new RI dues for Rotaract clubs. I’d like to unite all the 1,200-plus Rotaractors across 62 active clubs in RID 3240 so that the next DRR will have it easy to go ahead with big programmes.” During his term, Das wants to focus on sustaining the number of clubs and Rotaractors and “try to add at least 300 new members to push up their strength to 1,500 by the end of June 2023.”

But to achieve “these modest goals I have to create awareness about the changed Rotaract policy which is a challenge,” says the 29-year-old lab technologist at the Damcherra Primary Health Centre, North Tripura. ■



From L: DRRE Sandip Das, Rtns Dipujjal Das, Ankan Deb, Debarshi Paul and Sambhu Sankar Chakraborty at the installation of a sanitary pad vending machine at the Tilthai RC Higher Secondary School, Dharmanagar.

# Project Period Power creates impact **in Solapur**

**V Muthukumaran**

**T**wo-year-old RAC Sangameshwar College in Solapur, RID 3132, is busy raising funds from the public and Rotarians to execute a slew of high-visibility projects in and around the city. “We have 40 Rotaractors and all of them participate in our

monthly activities with enthusiasm. Our teams had conducted three MHM workshops in colleges that saw participation of at least 45–50 girls in each menstrual hygiene camp under Project *Period Power*. At the three virtual sessions for the same project, we had altogether

100 online visitors,” says Shreya Mashal, club president.

Expressing gratitude to her parent RC Solapur North which sponsored the Rotaract club, she says Rtn Poonam Deodas, the IPP, guides them “at every step. She helps the Rotaractors in both planning and executing



RAC Sangameshwar College president Shreya Mashal (4<sup>th</sup> from L), along with Rotaractors, at the Mahadan camp.





Rotaractors at the Prathana Balagram during Holi celebrations.



the service projects. She has been a great mentor to us.” The club has contributed ₹1.5 lakh out of ₹30–35 lakh for the renovation of the Prathana Old Age Home which was a joint initiative of local NGOs. “We collected money from the public and large-hearted donors, also some Rotarians helped us, and we were happy that we had played a role in making the life of elderly and destitute a little more comfortable at this old age home,” she says.

For the 15 children at the Prathana Balagram, Rotaractors shower them with goodies including new clothes, toys, study material and other essentials during festivals and special occasions like Diwali, Holi, Independence and Republic Days. “Our visit to the children’s home is a regular feature as we are happy to see the smile on the little ones’ faces during our lively interactions there.”

### Hybrid projects

During the Covid lockdown, the club hosted 2–3 webinars for the



RC Solapur North IPP Poonam Deodas (right) along with Rotaractors at the Project Period Power in a government girls school.

college students and Rotaractors. “We had a motivational lecture on how to be inspired to do social work; followed by a career guidance for those preparing for competitive exams; and of course, we had multiple virtual sessions on MHM for college girls,” explains president-elect Sanjana Nagtilak. They collected 35 bottles of blood at the Mahadan camp to mark World

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With the aim to create awareness about Rotaract and its global activities, the club has shot a five-minute documentary film with zero cost.

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Rotaract Week in the first week of March.

At one of the physical MHM sessions at the Sonamata High School in the city, “a team of Rotaractors visited Classes 7–8 and addressed 35–40 girls in the age group of 12–14 during their class hours. Later on, Rtn Poonam gave a lecture-demo on hygienic use of sanitary pads and their safe disposal for the target girls group,” she says.

With the aim to create awareness about Rotaract and its global activities, the club has shot a five-minute documentary film with zero cost as “it was shot in our smartphones and Rotaractors acted in it. But we need support from our Rotary club to release the short film for the wider audience for good impact,” says Shreya.

In the near future, there is a plan to hold study and art lectures for children in slum colonies in and around Solapur. “We want to give shape to their imaginations through creative

pursuits. The project is still in the drawing board, but once finalised it will help the under-privileged students to sharpen and display their creative talent for the public,” she says. Another outreach programme they are planning to do is motivational workshops for trans-genders “as part of our ongoing monthly events to motivate them to succeed in life.”

Rotarians from their parent Rotary have been generous in their donations “which is one of the factors for the success of our community outreach so far,” chorus Shreya and Sanjana. There are three Rotaract clubs in Solapur having around 120 Rotaractors. “But as one of the two institution-based clubs, we want to be different in our approach to social work and very soon we will reach out to various sections of people through impactful and motivational projects,” adds Shreya, doing MA (English) at the Sangameshwar College. ■



# Eye camp in Aurangabad

## Team Rotary News

RAC Achievers, RID 3132, in association with AGS Eye Hospital, Aurangabad, organised a free eye check-up camp at the hospital. The Rotaract club wanted to help people from different walks of life and create awareness on eyecare in the city. “The overall objective of the project was to reduce the burden of avoidable blindness among local villagers and seamlessly carry out a partnership project,” says Pratik Deshmukh, the club secretary.

Dr Mahesh Patak led his team of optometrists from the hospital to examine over 250 patients. Around 100 patients were referred for eye surgery.

The Rotaractors helped the beneficiaries with



Rotaractors at AGS Eye Hospital, Aurangabad.



registration, screening and collecting medicines. They also accompanied patients who were referred for surgery to a waiting room where “we spoke to them and helped them understand the surgical process and further accompanied them to a second screening,” says Deshmukh.

Post-screening, the prescriptions for eyeglasses were collected by the Rotaractors who helped all the patients to collect their medicines.

Dev, a 39-year-old IT employee from Aurangabad, says, “The doctors at the camp examined my eyes with care and recommended eyeglasses for better vision. I am very grateful to the Rotaractors for organising this camp. ■





Rotaract Zone Institute

# All set to lead



District Rotaract Representatives for Rotary Year 2022–23 at the closing ceremony of the Rotaract Zone Institute held in Chandigarh and Barog (Himachal Pradesh).



DRREs after the graduation ceremony.