



ROTALink

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Volume 38

Issue 16

February 1, 2024

February is Peace and Conflict Prevention/Resolution Month

Building peace is the essence of Rotary. Many of our service projects foster the conditions for Positive Peace. We work tirelessly to overcome barriers and create new connections. This year, we'll promote virtual international exchanges for members to strengthen those vital connections.

Peace isn't a dream, and it's not passive. It's the result of working hard, earning trust, and having open conversations that may be difficult. Peace must be waged persistently — and bravely. Everything we do across our areas of focus has the potential to foster the hope that can make peace possible.

Let us build peace within and spread it freely. Let us create belonging and imagine the future of Rotary afresh. Let us work together joyously and Create Hope in the World.

-RI President Gordon McNally



Making a Difference-

A Peace Fellow and polio survivor focuses on accessibility

Ronald Kasule is co-founder and CEO of Diversity Ability Support Network System (Dasuns), an organization that promotes social and inclusive development by connect people with disabilities in Uganda with support service providers to increase employment opportunities and social integration. <https://www.rotary.org/en/peace-fellow-and-polio-survivor-focuses-accessibility>

A Survivor's legacy

Sam Harris lost his childhood to the Holocaust. He's making sure a new generation of young people can thrive. Visit <https://www.rotary.org/en/survivors-legacy>

Rotary's Four Roles in Promoting Peace

Rotary and its members are:

- **Practitioners:** Our work fighting disease, providing clean water and sanitation, improving the health of mothers and children, supporting education, and growing local economies directly builds the optimal conditions for peaceful societies.
- **Educators:** Our Rotary Peace Centers have trained more than 1,700 peace fellows to become effective catalysts for peace through careers in government, education, and international organizations.
- **Mediators:** Our members have negotiated humanitarian ceasefires in areas of conflict to allow polio vaccinators to reach children who are at risk.
- **Advocates:** Our members have an integral role as respected, impartial participants during peace processes and in post-conflict reconstruction. We focus on creating communities and convening groups that are connected, inclusive, and resilient.



Peacebuilder Clubs are a Rotarian movement creating energy and momentum for peaceful conflict resolution around the world. In 2018, our RAGFP (Rotarian Action Group For Peace) Leadership Team decided to champion this program in Rotary Clubs worldwide as an essential call to action for Rotarian peacebuilders.

The Peacebuilder Club program is designed to enhance Rotary International's mission of, "advancing world understanding, goodwill and peace" through the promotion of programs and projects that align with our organization's Seven Areas of Focus – in particular, the first: Peace, Conflict Prevention and Conflict Resolution.

Rotarian Peacebuilder Clubs commit to engage in dialogues and projects that promote positive peace both in their communities and across the globe.

It is true that the way to war is a well-paved highway and that the way to peace is still a wilderness....

Accolades at the District Conference- Confluence 2024



Confluence 2024, the District 3131 Conference was held on 20th and 21st of January. Rotary Club of Poona Downtown was well represented by Rotarians Aruna Rathi, Asis Ray, Nanu Iyer, Navya Prasanna, Pallavi Sable, Phiroze and Ann Shereen Masters.

Our club's contribution to the Rotary Foundation was well recognised as we received the following awards:

1. Certificate of Recognition to RCPD for generous contribution towards the Annual Fund.
2. Certificate of Recognition to Foseco India Limited and Rotary Club of Poona Downtown for achieving the status of Major Donor Level 4.
3. Certificate of Recognition to Rtn. Anil Goel for being one of the Top Contributors to the Annual Fund.
4. Certificate of Recognition to Rtn. Ranveer Singh Rathore for contribution to the Annual Fund.
5. Certificate of Recognition to Rtns. Aruna and Narayan Rathi for achieving Major Donor Level 2.
6. Our club also received a medal for achieving 7 Star Status for our total contribution to the Rotary Foundation.

Rtn Aruna Rathi
President

Those who are happiest are those who do the most for others.



Touching the Infinity

“Develop a Passion for learning. If you do, you will never Cease to Grow.”

My journey with Interact club of Sunderji Stars is 3 years old but it looks like we have just started. Every time we do a project, our bond deepens and we feel energized while working with each other. It started in 2021 when only 17 children were part of our interact club and now in 2024 the number has reached to 42. And you won't believe, all these stars are neuro-diverse kids. They all are pure souls, so passionate and dedicated towards each project. They are my strength and encourage me to go beyond our limits.

This year we chose to introduce voting system to our stars practically. They voted for most eligible and trustworthy candidates as board members of Interact Club. I still remember they were showing that black ink on their fingers to everyone with pride as they had become responsible citizens. After that they didn't look back, whether it was the project of “Unplastic Your Surrounding”, “Celebrating Raksha Bandhan with police personals”, “Mind What you do online”, “Cleanliness Drive” and “Making Upcycled Products”.

I feel amazed when I go back and look at the way we have traveled. During unplastic your surroundings, they all made ~250 newspaper bags and distributed those bags free of cost in shops. They interacted with customers, spread the awareness about hazards of plastic and requested them to use paper / cloth bags. Follow up with the shopkeepers for requirement of more paper bags every month took this project to next level. The idea of celebrating Raksha Bandhan with police came from them only. They wished to celebrate the festival in a different way by expressing their gratitude to police for working tirelessly 24X7 for keeping us safe.

These days we keep on reading about cyber-crime, deepfake and cyber bully. This is our responsibility to provide them a proper training on how to use technology. I expressed this need to Rotary Ann Ms. Mahrukh and she suggested us a Gem of Trainers Rtn. Ms. Charu Mathur, an expert. She conducted a magical session to teach our stars safety rules of digital world in a unique and novel way. Cleanliness drive was the follow up project of last year. The roads leading to school were cleaned by interactors as people residing in adjacent societies were throwing garbage on the roads. After this cleanliness drive, societies have arranged large bins on all the corners, appreciating our stars' efforts.

Now next thing in their minds was what to do with existing waste products we all have in our homes. We don't use those products, neither we want to throw them. Ms. Mahrukh informed us about such a workshop on “Upcycled Products” which was conducted by Rtn. Mr. Rajender Saraf and attended by interactors from various countries such as USA, Canada, Mongolia, Pakistan, Bangladesh including our stars. They got many ideas from the workshop and started working on making upcycled products from the wastes available with them. They made amazing items such as a beautiful decorative piece with an empty jam bottle, a wall hanging organizer with an old trouser, a moveable puppet for story telling from empty tissue roll, an organizer from cardboard carton, a decorative mirror from an old bike mirror and many more. They used old items which are no more in use like CDs, empty bottles, jars, old clothes, coconut shells, broken mugs etc. We have sent the posters of these products for an upcoming competition organized by Rotary club.

Love in action is service to the world.



Recently we participated in District Interact Conference “Nakshatra” on 7th January 2024 where we got to know about the passions of various other Interact clubs. Our stars are enthusiastic to represent their school in any upcoming conference if they get an opportunity.

At the end of the day, we need to implement inclusion for our specially-abled kids. True inclusion requires support, acceptance and understanding. And it can only be achieved by weaving empathy in the society. Our stars for the first time visited a school with neuro-typical kids, celebrated Christmas with them, played games, sang, danced, exchanged gifts and top of all developed friendships. When they feel safe, they make real connections and they break the chains of fear.

“Break the Chains of Fear and Touch Infinity”

Dr. Vinamrata Bhatia
Coordinator
Interactor Club of Sunderji Stars
Charter No. 216862
Charter Date: 13.04.2017



Help the life of one person and you can help the community.

Gift of Laptops for Visually Impaired Students

On 23rd January Rtn. Rashida Bahrainwala, President-elect Nanu Iyer and I visited SP College on a very special mission – to gift laptops to eleven visually impaired students. The visit was an eye-opener for us. The college has enrolled 50 visually impaired students who, despite their handicap, attend lectures and take exams along with the rest of the students.

In their day to day lives, these visually impaired students face immense challenges. All that the other students can do effortlessly, as a matter of course, becomes a challenge for them.

Commuting from home to college, going up and down the corridors and staircases of the college, sitting through lectures without seeing the visuals on the board, taking exams with the help of writers --- all these must be hard. But, they learn to overcome the obstacles and aspire to build careers.

Something that was very heart-warming to see was the loving care and help they receive from their fellow students and teachers.

Thankfully today technology can be harnessed to ease the difficulties of the blind. The college has a special Computer Lab and dedicated trainers who teach these students to become proficient in the use of computers so that they can type their own notes and exams. These skills also help them to get employment.

Donations for this humanitarian project were given by Rtn. Rashida's family. We are grateful to them. We have invited their trainer Ms. Zainab Poonawalla to find out what further help can be given to visually impaired students.

Rtn Aruna Rathi
President



Showing someone they are not alone is a truly precious gift.

Youth Development Activity- A Visit to Duroshox Factory

32 students of 2nd year Mechanical Engineering from the JSPM group of Institutions visited the Duroshox factory in Sanaswadi, Shirur, Pune, on 19th January 2024.

They were shown around in detail from Raw Material Stores, to manufacturing, to in-process quality assurance to final product testing & despatch.

They were then briefed about best practices, followed by Question & Answer sessions in the training rooms. All the students benefited from the industrial visit, understanding the practical aspects & interaction with Mr Shekhar Damodare, a QA professional. One of the faculties had come with the students.

Our Director Youth Services, Rtn Shailendra Abhyankar took the initiative and he was supported by our Rtn Anil Goel, the Chairman of Duroshox.

I accompanied the students in the Duroshox factory. As a part of the concluding session, I educated them about the critical aspects of learning on the job, innovating & pursuit of excellence in a corporate career.

Rtn Dr PNN Iyer



Small acts, when multiplied by millions of people, can transform the world.



Report of the 4th Club Assembly held on 18.1.2024

The Fourth Club Assembly was held on the 18th of January 2024 at Poona Club at 7.30pm. Number of members present were 28 Rotarians and some of the R'anns.

President Aruna called the meeting to order and invited PP Rtn Anil Goel to put forward his point. Anil Goel expressed his concern about the decreasing attendance of the club. He stressed on the fact that every member must have an attendance of 50% and the RI stipulates that if a member does not attend 4 meetings in a row, then the membership could be terminated and that the Board should take this issue seriously.

This was followed by a presentation by all Directors, of the work completed in the last 6 months and the plans for the coming six months i.e. January to June 2024.

The following data were presented:

1. The Program Committee has organized and presented:

- Informative, and interesting talks on varied topics
- Interactive quiz and games
- Music and poetry session

More interesting programs in the offing!

2. Some of the memorable fellowships conducted by the Fellowship Committee were:

- Installation
- Lunch at Golf Course
- Diwali Celebration
- Xmas Celebration
- Lohri Sankranti Celebration

3. Club Magazine:

- Our editorial team is doing a fabulous job!
- ROTALINK is informative and interesting
- Covers Club, District and Rotary International news

4. Community Service – Medical-Director Rtn. Vinod Dua:

- Blood Donation Camp – collected 634 units of blood
- 4 LN4 Camps –228 beneficiaries
- 3 Eye camps – 1011 beneficiaries
- Nutrition Kits for TB Patients – 175+ beneficiaries
- Hepatitis Vaccination at Mental Hospital
- Well-equipped Dialysis Centre commissioned at Khedekar Hospital

Nothing is more important for the public welfare than to form and train our youth in wisdom and virtue.



Plans

- 300 INALI Hands fitments in February and March
- 25 Tricycle Shops to be distributed by June
- Dental Check up camps to cover 800 school children
- 2 more eye check up camps to cover 500 children
- Nutrition packets for 200 beneficiaries – funds required 8.40 lakhs- funds confirmed 2 lakhs-Please come forward to fill the deficit.

5. Community Service Non-Medical-Director Rtn. Bageshri Gogate

- Scholarships for girls
- Donation of school kits
- Laptops for the visually impaired
- Smart Phones
- Christmas gifts for HOPE Creche

Plan for Happy Anganwadis

- 4 Anganwadis are identified
- Need assessment is done
- Renovation work will start soon

6. Youth Services: Director Shailendra Abhyankar

- Sundarji Stars participated in Interact Assembly
- Also participated in Interact District Conference
- All four interact clubs are active and doing good work
- RYLA on the plan

7. Foundation and Grants - Rtn PP Yezdi Batliwala June to December 2023

- APF Collection up to December 2023 - RS. 3,97,450 - \$4919.
- Total Giving for TRF for the year was– Rs. 35,39,450 - \$42775
- Application for Global Grant “RCPD-Janseva Foundation Vocational Skilling Centre” is being completed.
- Work for CSR Grant, “Shri Bahri Malhotra Residential & Vocational Training Home for Girls” is nearing completion.

Donation from a Well-wisher

Rtn. Suresh Balani from USA donated Rs. 30 lakhs specifically for the welfare of under privileged children in 3 areas:

- Improvement of Balwadis in rural areas- 10 lakhs
- Pediatric Cardiac Surgeries- 10 lakhs
- Nutrition for Cancer afflicted children- 10 lakhs

Plans for January – June 2024

- Expect APF Collection to reach Rs. 25,00,000 - \$30,00
- Expect Total Giving for TRF to be Rs. 62,50,000 - \$75,000 +
- Application for Global Grant “RCPD- Janaseva Foundation Vocational Skilling Centre” will be completed and the centre will be functioning.

From what we get, we can make a living; what we give, however, makes a life.

- Working on a Global Grant for Paediatric Heart Surgery in partnership with KEM Hospital and a Rotary Club from USA. The total value of the grant will be approximately Rs. 36,50,000 - \$44,000.

8. Public Image-Director -Rtn. Sujata Malkani

- Posted write-ups and photos of projects on District Chats, Rotary News and Governor's Monthly Letter.
- Promoted Tricycle Shops for the differently abled.
- Placed standees at Metro Stations to promote our Projects.

9. Membership & Strategic Planning- Rtn PNN Iyer

He stressed on the following:

Downtown needs

- Better attendance, involvement
- Participation
- Plan
- Improve interaction with our truant members
- Aim to enhance membership by 7%
- Induct members in the age group of 40-50 years
- Interacting with some MNC's in the vicinity

After the presentation, an interactive session of 15 minutes followed, when President Aruna Rathi also expressed her concern for the decreasing attendance. She threw open the idea of the possibility of having 2 weekly meetings followed by a Sunday Brunch meeting, keeping in view of the average age of the club, Pune traffic situation and parking and also non-availability of younger members as Thursday being a working day.

The meeting ended with the President thanking all members for attending the meeting.

Rtn Shikha Mitra Secretary



Rotary doesn't just give you opportunities, it gives you purpose.

Let's Make the World a Better Place to Live in

Rtn. Keshav Tamhankar, District Director Green Society Project RY 2023-24 was the guest speaker at the weekly meeting of RC Poona Downtown on Thursday 25 th Jan.

The meeting started with a short celebration commemorating the upcoming 75th Republic Day of our great nation. Members came dressed in national colours and sang the ever-popular patriotic song 'Sare Jahaan Se Accha Hindustan Hamara.....' setting the mood.

The speaker was then introduced by Rtn. Navya. Rtn. Keshav is a member of RC of Pune Gandhi Bhavan and has been an active and passionate promoter of the Green Society Initiatives started by his club and further taken up at the district level.

He began by reminding the audience that July 2023 was the hottest recorded and reiterated that a rise in temperature even to the tune of 1.5 degrees C could trigger a change in monsoon patterns which would spell disaster! He emphasized the need to go back to our roots and have a minimalistic lifestyle which is needed for environmental sustainability.

Rtn. Keshav listed the efforts made by Rotary in the area of environment (which is also the 7 th area of focus of RI). The thrust is on Awareness, Facilitation, Assessment and Appreciation to encourage housing societies and MSMEs to work towards creating sustainable green areas with a reduced carbon footprint. He also emphasized that this is not a one time, one year project but is a continuous programme which will continue for the next two years, at least, under the forthcoming District Governors. Processes for the same are already in place.

R'ann Shereen Masters



All we have to do is wake up and change.

Connecting Through Rotary

Rotary Club of Madras Elite

Madras Elite club is made up entirely of transgender members and dedicated to addressing the needs of the transgender community.

Each of the club's 25 charter members has overcome adversity and pain. "People rarely see transgender individuals as being in positions of strength, and that's a problem," says Deepthi, the club's president.

<https://www.rotary.org/en/platform-raise-their-voices>



The Rotary Fellowship of Kites

Meet Sandesh Kaddi from the Rotary Club of Belgaum, India, a kite builder and member of The Rotary Fellowship of Kites. We are a global community of kite enthusiasts dedicated to spreading our love of kites and promoting fellowship and goodwill through kite flying.

<https://rotarykites.org/who-we-are/>



PEOPLE OF ACTION

(Music Video for
Rotary
International)



Be happy in the moment, that's enough. Each moment is all we need, not more.

Greetings On Your Special Day

May your days be filled with Sunshine, Happiness and Love



R'ann Sumita Guha	2 nd February
Rtn Shailendra Abhyankar	10 th February
Rtn Dipti Bhosle	10 th February
R'ann Asavari Ghate	11 th February

Wishing you a lifetime of Cherished Moments and Beautiful Memories

Rtn Sanjay & R'ann Seema Mathur	5 th February
Rtn Farrokh & R'ann Veera Bhathena	12 th February



Programs for the Fortnight

What to do when a Loved One is hurting... Connecting Trust	Ms Sandy Dias Andrade and Ms Sukhada Khisty	Thursday, 1 st February
'Dialogue with the Self' --- a Program of Music and Dance	Sahana Ray and Sarbani Ghosh	Thursday, 8 th February
Peace and Conflict Resolution	Aarti Patil	Thursday, 18 th February

We do not need guns and bombs to bring peace, we need love and compassion.