



ROTALink

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March is Water Sanitation and Hygiene Month



Water and sanitation are among Rotary International's six areas of focus, reflecting its commitment to addressing pressing global challenges and improving the quality of life for communities worldwide. Rotary's initiatives in water and sanitation aim to provide access to clean water, improve sanitation facilities, and promote hygiene practices, particularly in underserved and vulnerable populations. By focusing on this area, Rotary seeks to:

Improve Access to Clean Water: Rotary supports projects that provide communities with sustainable access to safe drinking water. This includes initiatives such as digging wells, installing water filtration systems and implementing rainwater harvesting techniques.

Enhance Sanitation Facilities: Rotary invests in projects that aim to improve sanitation infrastructure, including the construction of, toilets and wastewater treatment systems. These efforts help reduce the spread of waterborne diseases and improve overall public health.

Promote Hygiene and Health: Rotary promotes hygiene education and behaviour change initiatives to encourage communities to adopt safe hygiene practices. This includes programs that teach proper handwashing techniques, menstrual hygiene management and the importance of maintaining clean surroundings.

Empower Communities: Rotary engages with local communities to develop sustainable solutions tailored to their specific needs and circumstances. By involving community members in project planning and implementation, Rotary ensures long-term success and ownership of water and sanitation initiatives.

Address Global Water Challenges: Rotary collaborates with partners, governments and organizations to address broader water-related challenges, such as water scarcity, pollution and climate change resilience. Through advocacy and awareness campaigns, Rotary works to mobilize resources and support policies that prioritize water and sanitation issues on a global scale.

Rotary's focus on water and sanitation reflects its commitment to sustainable development and improving the well-being of communities around the world. By investing in these essential areas, Rotary contributes to achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 6: "Clean Water and Sanitation" and making a meaningful impact on the lives of millions of people.

Thought for the Day: "People with water-borne diseases occupy more than 50% of the hospital beds across the world. Does the answer lie in building more hospitals? Really, what is needed is to give them clean water."



Enhancing Rotary Governance & Operations: Insights from District Governor's Visit

On March 7th, 2024, our Club welcomed the District Governor, Rtn Manjoo Phadke, as part of her 91st club-validation process for the Rotary year. This visit followed a thorough examination of the club's compliances and documentation by the Assistant Governor Rtn Mahesh Makhija on February 22nd, 2024. Such visits, mandated administrative duties, signify Rotary's commitment to accountability and adherence to established protocols.

Throughout the visit, the District Governor underscored Rotary's unwavering dedication to upholding its constitution and conventions, evidenced by the meticulous scrutiny of the 143 Clubs within District 3131. This scrutiny not only ensures compliance but also fosters transparency and effectiveness within the organization.

One of the focal points of discussion during the visit was the Strategic Plans and trajectory for the Rotaractors within our club. Identified challenges, including low attendance at weekly meetings, an aging membership demographic (with an average age of 67 years) and a scarcity of volunteers for field projects were candidly addressed.

In response to low attendance, the District Governor acknowledged the challenges faced by urban clubs, such as dense traffic and conflicting work schedules. However, she emphasized the importance of making club programs more engaging and inclusive. Suggestions such as in-house Karaoke nights, sharing personal stories of members, and showcasing artistic talents were proposed as means to invigorate club activities and foster a sense of belonging among members.

District Governor Manjoo challenged the notion that age should be a deterrent to involvement, citing examples of members who defy age stereotypes with their enthusiasm and energy. She stressed the need for active promotion of club projects to attract more members to engage in fieldwork, affirming that member interests should remain a priority.

A significant recommendation from the District Governor was the quantification of benefits provided by the club in regular bulletins and their upload onto the District Dashboard. This practice, she argued, not only serves as a motivational tool but also instills a sense of pride among members, reaffirming their contributions to the community. In addition to insights into club operations, the visit also provided guidance for the Rotaractors, urging them to focus on self-development and career orientation, particularly in entrepreneurship. This emphasis on skill acquisition and personality development underscores Rotary's commitment to nurturing future leaders and change-makers.

The visit concluded with a dinner where the District Governor mingled warmly with members, partners, and other attendees, embodying Rotary's spirit of camaraderie and fellowship. Her engaging demeanor left an indelible impression, inspiring all present to renew their commitment to Rotary's mission of service above self.

District Governor served as a catalyst for reflection and growth within our club. DG Manjoo's insights and recommendations have provided a roadmap for enhancing club operations and maximizing our impact within the community. As we continue our journey, we remain steadfast in our dedication to Rotary's values and principles, guided by the belief that together, we can create positive change in the world.

Rtn Dr PNN Iyer



Candid Discussions with the Board of Directors

When we give cheerfully and accept gratefully, everyone is blessed.



PHF Pins and Certificates presented to Rtns Gautam Idnani, PP Asis Ray and PP Ranveer Rathore



Official Release of the Rotalink



AG Mahesh Makhija



DG Manjoo Phadke



Vice President Masarrat



Congratulations DG Manjoo on receiving the Silvy Whitlock Leadership Award



DG with President and Secretary



The Audience



Woman Power at RCPD

Rotary is more than just a service organization; it's a way of life that embodies the values of fellowship, diversity, integrity and service above self.



Empowering Vision: Insights from Low Vision and Rehabilitation Program

On 2nd March 2024, the Community Eye Care Foundation's Vision Aid Centre at Bhandarkar Road hosted an exceptional hands-on program focused on "Low Vision and Rehabilitation." 72 enthusiastic young Ophthalmologists and Optometrists participated in this insightful event. Led by Mr. Seethrama Manthenge (Ramu), CEO of SHG Technologies USA, creators of Smart Vision Glasses for the blind, attendees had the opportunity to learn from experts in the field, including Dr Deepak Bagga, Head of the Low Vision and Rehabilitation Clinic at L.V. Prasad Eye Institute Hyderabad



and Ms Devi Udayakumar of Vision Aid India. Dr Supriya Phadke and Apoorva Shitole of CECF also contributed to the program's success.

We extend our gratitude to Rtn Vikram Desai, who generously provided the office space at Desai Electronics for the centre, supported by a Rotary Club of Poona Downtown CSR Grant from Duroshox. This facility is open for use by all ophthalmologists.

Under the auspices of the Maharashtra Ophthalmology Society and Poona Ophthalmology Society, a Continuing Medical Education (CME) session titled "Advances in Low Vision and Rehabilitation" was conducted concurrently. Distinguished Prof. Jeevansingh Titiyal, Chief of the R.P. Centre for Ophthalmic Sciences and Dean of AIIMS, New Delhi, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. Dr Quresh Maskati, our mentor, provided a concise summary of the enlightening lectures delivered.

We express our appreciation to all the faculty and residents of medical colleges, optometry colleges, and Pune ophthalmologists for their contributions to the success of this program. For those who missed the event, recordings are available on Facebook and YouTube.

Rtn Bageshree Gogate



The smallest act of kindness is worth more than the grandest intention.



Our Ambassador to Rotary Club of Mid-Isle St Maarten



On the 13th of March, the Rotary Club of Mid-Isle, St. Maarten, had the privilege of hosting Rtn PP Yezdi Batliwala as a guest speaker. The meeting, characterized by its friendly and informal atmosphere, provided a platform for Rtn PP Yezdi to share insights into Rotary in India, particularly focusing on District 3131 and the noteworthy endeavors of the Rotary Club of Poona Downtown.

During his address, Rtn PP Yezdi shed light on the rich history of Rotary Club of Poona Downtown, elaborating on its significant projects and achievements. Through his talk, attendees gained valuable knowledge about the impactful initiatives undertaken by our club, showcasing its dedication to serving the community and fostering positive change.

Celebrating Rotaract Week



On Thursday, 14th March, our Rotary Club celebrated Rotaract Week with great enthusiasm, welcoming members from the Rotaract Club of Symbiosis Skills and Professional University to join us for our weekly meeting. The occasion was marked by a sense of collaboration and camaraderie as we came together to celebrate the spirit of Rotaract.

During the meeting, Past President Pallavi Sable presented the Rotaractors with a specially designed mousepad. This thoughtful gift, crafted by Rotaractor Siddanth under the creative guidance of PP Pallavi Sable, served as a token of appreciation and symbolized the bond of friendship and collaboration between our clubs.

Spread love everywhere you go. Let no one ever come to you without leaving happier.



Rotary Club of Poona Downtown Playing A Key Role in NTEP (National TB Eradication Program) Of GOI

Tuberculosis remains a significant global health challenge, particularly affecting populations in developing countries like India. With over 4,100 daily TB-related deaths worldwide, India accounts for 28 percent of global TB cases. In 2022, India reported its highest-ever count of TB patients, surpassing 24.22 lakh cases, up from 14 lakh cases in 2013.

In response, the World Health Assembly endorsed the End TB Strategy in 2014, aiming for global TB eradication by 2030. India, led by Prime Minister Modi, set an even more ambitious target of TB eradication by 2025 through the National Tuberculosis Eradication Program (NTEP). Given TB's high infectiousness, prompt identification, treatment, nutrition, and patient tracking are crucial for breaking the transmission chain.

The District Tuberculosis Centre (DTC) plays a pivotal role in TB elimination efforts, overseen by the District TB Officer (DTO). Despite the historical challenge of accurately estimating TB burden, the introduction of Nikshay, a case-based web surveillance system, has improved treatment outcomes and patient follow-up.

To combat TB effectively, a collaborative, multi-sectoral approach involving various stakeholders including government bodies, corporations, civil society, and organizations like Rotary is essential. Under NTEP, the government introduced the Nikshay Poshan Yojna, providing free treatment and balanced nutrition to TB patients, ensuring comprehensive care.

Rotary Club of Pune Downtown (RCPD) actively participated in the Nikshay Poshan Yojna, providing nutrition to 175 TB patients from impoverished backgrounds in collaboration with the Health Department. Funding, partially from RCPD members and external donors like Shri Mukund Bhavan Trust, supported this initiative.

Similarly, another RCPD member initiated a similar program benefiting 138 patients at a local hospital. The outcomes showed significant improvements in patients' weight and overall health within six months.

We have now initiated the second leg of this program from 8th March 2024, by inducting 150 patients spread over six hospitals under PMC. For this project, all the funding has come from our RCPD members like Rtn Anil Goel/Rtn Zimra/Rtn Aruna Rathi/Rtn Vinod Dua and a generous donor Mr. Bhutani. We still have a deficit of Rs 1,35,000/-. RCPD members are requested to contribute small amounts of 10-15,000 to make up the gap.

Medicine and nutrition ration packets are distributed at monthly visits to TB clinics. Witnessing the positive impact on patients' health and confidence, RCPD aims to make the Nutrition Distribution Program a flagship project, continuing its support in the coming years.

Rtn Vinod Dua



Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?'



Renovation of Anganwadis

In the expansive and diverse nation of Bharat, serving humanity at the grassroots level in remote areas presents significant challenges due to terrain and limited access. Anutai Wagh and Tarabai Modak initiated a groundbreaking endeavour in 1974 in a tribal district of Maharashtra, providing nutritious meals and educational opportunities to children aged 3 to 6, allowing mothers time for domestic or agricultural duties. This initiative gained momentum and caught the attention of the highest bureaucrat, Padma Bhushan B M Pande, who advocated for its national adoption. The program expanded to include adolescent education on contraceptives and support for pregnant women, with a focus on mitigating child mortality and promoting literacy and arithmetic among children. Overcoming challenges of cadre creation and infrastructure, the project established certificate and diploma courses, enlisted lady volunteers, and utilized community spaces. Under the direct supervision of senior officials, the Anganwadi project, approved swiftly by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's cabinet, evolved into a nationwide effort managed by the Ministry of Women & Child Welfare and the Integrated Child Development Services department, with over 3.77 lakh Anganwadis currently operational, employing teachers and caregivers as central government employees with appropriate benefits.

RCPD & Anganwadi: Sometime in 2016, a dynamic R'Ann Preeti Gupta attended a six month's course in Montessori Schools Training. It ignited her passion for going down to rural schools for the underprivileged and doing some work for them. In the interim her husband, Rtn Rajesh Gupta became the President of the Club. He was very inspired by his wife's findings and decided to get down to ground realities & make it a mission for the Club. He first went to Borgarh, a tribal area, near Junnar, about 5 hrs drive from Pune. He came to terms with stark realities hands-on. As a technocrat he became determined to augment the facilities for the children & women in Anganwadis.

He then, approached Foseco, one of our CSR partners, and made a down to earth presentation & they released Rs 39 Lakhs. This was converted into a Global Grant with a foreign partner and raised to Rs 60 Lakhs. The husband-wife duo has provided a range of infrastructure facilities from Toilets to leak proofing the roofs, to masonry repair work, painting/repainting the walls & ceilings, lights and fans, to providing swings & slides for the kids, to providing polymer shelters in the compounds for the kids to play in a shaded area, to revamping the hygiene of the kitchens, proving steel almaris, plastic shelves for books, toys as teaching aids, Teacher training et al. And for all this they are so very humbly grateful to our Club & the team mates. Kudos to them.

Their score is 47 not out. Yes, they have done FORTY SEVEN Anganwadi centers so far and still counting. Their latest was yesterday at village Krishnanand, Wagholi, off Nagar Road. They have gone to schools in such remote areas to which motor car access is yet to come. I am so certain that all of us in our Club and elsewhere stand up to give them a roaring ovation. Be blessed Ann Pritee & Rtn Rajesh & wish you Godspeed.

Rtn PNN Iyer



Education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world.



Tricycle Distribution and Gift of Mobility Presentation

On 14th March, Rotary Club of Poona Downtown organized a Tricycle Distribution event at Poona Club, where 11 tricycles were provided to economically disadvantaged individuals with mobility challenges in and around Pune. Additionally, 9 tricycles were sent directly to beneficiaries residing outside Pune.

The event was graced by Shri Purshottam Lohiya, Chairman of Mukund Bhavan Trust, and Executive Director of Mukund Group, along with his wife, who were the Chief Guests. The Mukund Bhavan Trust generously donated Rs 5 lakhs towards the cause.

The event was presided over by President Aruna Rathi, Chief Coordinator of the project, Rtn PP Shabbir Jamnagarwala and Rtn Pradeep Munot, and. Together with Shri Lohiya and Mrs. Lohiya, they handed over the tricycles to the beneficiaries.

These tricycles were specially designed with lightweight materials to ensure ease of use, thanks to the expertise of Shri Farook Syed of Solapur, a mechanic skilled in modifying cycles for the differently-abled. Mr. Farook and his team were felicitated for their contribution during the meeting.

In addition to the tricycles, each beneficiary received goods worth Rs 2500/- to help kickstart their livelihood by selling the material. The event was attended by numerous Rotarians from our Rotary Club as well as other Rotary Clubs including the AG of our club Rtn Mahesh Makhija and President of RC of Pune Camp, Rtn Pradeep Khedekar.

Following the distribution ceremony, Rtn Pradeep Munot delivered a comprehensive presentation on the club's 'Gift of Mobility' projects from a historical perspective. The Rotary Club of Poona Downtown has provided functional Prosthetic Hands (LN-4 & INALI) to 11,760 underprivileged beneficiaries across 18 states in the country through 69 camps. With approximately 15 permanent centres set up across the country, the club ensures that at least one beneficiary receives a prosthetic hand every day somewhere in India.

The dedicated volunteers of RCPD have demonstrated exemplary service in conducting these camps and centres, with every Rotarian of RCPD contributing in various ways to make the Gift of Mobility campaign a resounding success over the past decade.

The meeting was also attended by many Rotaractors of the Symbiosis Skills and Professional University.

Rtn Gautam Idnani



To serve is beautiful, but only if it is done with joy and a whole heart.



“Kindness is the light that dissolves all walls between souls, families, and nations.”

The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.



Rotary Action Groups

Rotary Action Groups (RAGs) represent a dynamic force within Rotary International, comprising independent, Rotary-affiliated groups consisting of individuals globally recognized as experts in various fields, including economic development, peace, addiction prevention, environmental conservation, and water management.

These specialized groups, composed of dedicated Rotarians and Rotaractors who possess proficiency and a fervent commitment to service in their respective areas of expertise, serve as catalysts for community development and humanitarian service projects. By collaborating with Rotary clubs and districts, RAGs provide invaluable guidance and support in planning and executing projects tailored to their field of specialization.

The inception of Rotary Action Groups emerged as a strategic response to the need for harnessing the expertise and dedication of Rotarians to tackle complex global challenges effectively. The pioneering RAG, the PolioPlus Committee, established in 1985, epitomized Rotary's concerted effort to combat polio. Building on the success of this initiative, Rotary expanded the RAG framework to encompass a wider spectrum of causes, reflecting the organization's commitment to addressing multifaceted issues.

Throughout their evolution, RAGs have emerged as potent platforms for Rotarians to unite their skills, resources, and knowledge, driving impactful change across diverse sectors. From healthcare and education to economic empowerment and peacebuilding, RAGs have significantly contributed to shaping Rotary's footprint in humanitarian endeavours.

Presently, RAGs continue to inspire Rotarians to take proactive measures and effect enduring change. Each RAG operates with a distinct mission, fostering connections among like-minded Rotarians and facilitating collaboration on projects that yield tangible benefits for communities worldwide. As Rotary progresses in its mission, RAGs stand as a testament to Rotary's ethos of service, fellowship, and transformative action, reaffirming its enduring commitment to creating a better world for all.



The secret of happiness is not in doing what one likes, but in liking what one does.



Establishment of Rotary Action Group for Peace (RAGFP) India Chapter

In recent years, the pursuit of peace has emerged as a central focus for Rotary International, catalyzed by the initiatives of Past Rotary International President Ian Riseley. During his tenure, several peace summits were convened globally, culminating in the Toronto Peace Summit just prior to the 2018 Toronto Convention. It was during this period that Rotary International forged a partnership with the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) to advance the cause of peace.

The collaboration with IEP revealed the foundational elements of peace, encapsulated in the eight Pillars of Positive Peace. These pillars synergize with Rotary's seven Areas of Focus, underscoring Rotary's multifaceted approach to peacebuilding. From promoting peace to supporting education and environmental conservation, Rotary's diverse projects contribute to fostering peaceful communities worldwide. Implicit in this endeavor is the recognition that every Rotarian plays a role in peacebuilding, whether through direct engagement in conflict resolution or by participating in Rotary's humanitarian efforts.

At the forefront of Rotary's peacebuilding endeavors stands the Rotary Action Group for Peace (RAGFP), dedicated to engaging, educating, and empowering Rotarians and stakeholders in the pursuit of peace. Recognizing the need to amplify RAGFP's mission in India, the India Chapter was inaugurated on March 5th, 2024, marking a significant milestone in Rotary's peacebuilding journey.

The establishment of the India Chapter was commemorated through an online meeting attended by distinguished Rotary leaders, including PRID Shekhar Mehta and RIPE Stephanie Urchick, alongside RAGFP Chair Michael Hayes. Their presence underscored Rotary International's unwavering commitment to fostering peace and solidarity across borders. The launch event served as an international platform, drawing participation from esteemed Rotarians worldwide, united by a shared dedication to advancing peace.

Heading the India Chapter is Rtn Smita Vikhankar, supported by Rtn Pallavi Sable as Vice Chair and Rtn Kirti Vadalkar as Honorary Secretary. The committee comprises passionate Rotarians from across India, committed to championing peace and peacebuilding initiatives within their communities. Rotarians keen on contributing to peacebuilding efforts are encouraged to join the RAGFP India Chapter through the link <https://tinyurl.com/join-RAGFP-India-Chapter>.



The establishment of the RAGFP India Chapter heralds a new chapter in Rotary's peacebuilding legacy, reaffirming Rotary's role as a catalyst for positive change and harmony in society. As Rotarians, let us embrace this opportunity to further Rotary's mission of advancing peace and goodwill, one community at a time.

Rtn PP Pallavi Sable

The greatest moments in life are not concerned with selfish achievements but rather with the things we do for the people we love and esteem and whose respect we need.



Greetings On Your Special Day

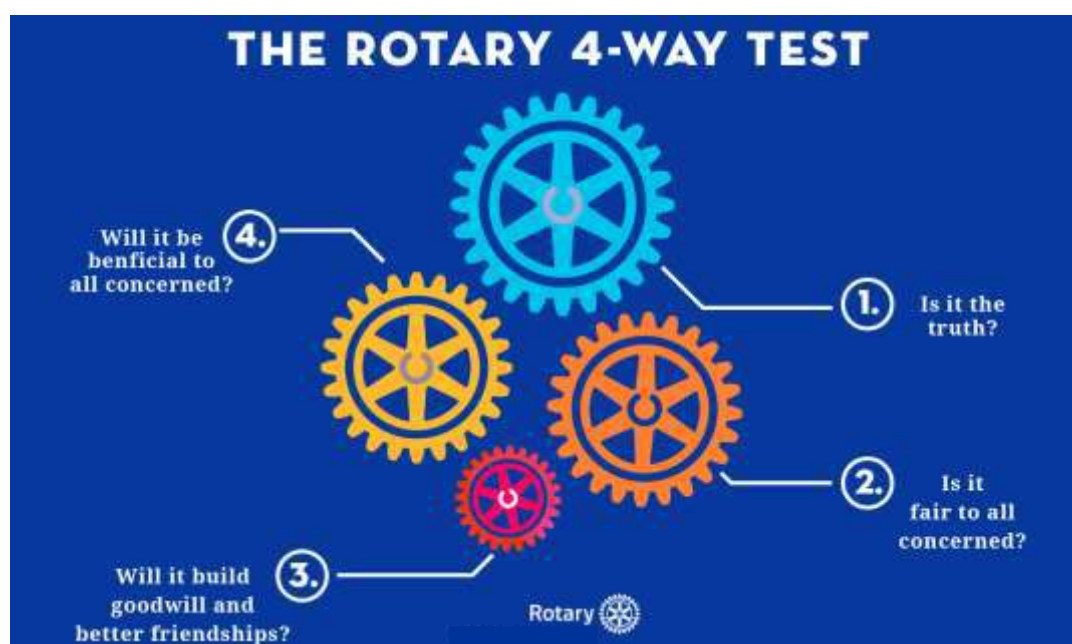
May your days be filled with Sunshine, Happiness and Love



R'Ann Rashisa Jamnagarwala	23rd March
Rtn Dr Bageshree Gogate	27 th March
Rtn Subir Guha	27 th March
Rtn Nita Idnani	27 th March
R'Ann Priti Malhotra	27 th March
Mr Shabbir Tavawalla	1 st April

Programs for the Fortnight

Vocational Awards Nite		Thursday, 28 th March
Vijay Kiyawat	Art – My Second Career	Thursday, 4 th April
Lt Gen Ramesh Kulkarni	Siachen 1987	Thursday, 11 th April



A little bit of mercy makes the world less cold and more just.