

## “Moving the Action Plan Forward”

The 2023-24 Rotary year brought us a number of firsts. India celebrated its first decade of being polio-free. We opened our first Rotary Peace Center in the Middle East. And the first ever Rotaract-sponsored global grants were awarded. These accomplishments are just examples of our collective efforts to increase our impact, expand our reach, provide a memorable membership experience, and adapt to a changing world.

— John Hewko, Rotary International General Secretary and CEO

Service is the core of what we do. We’re committed to making a positive difference in communities all around the world.

### **End Polio Now**

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the World Health Organization’s South-East Asia Region being certified as polio-free. But even as we recognize the tremendous progress we’ve made in the fight against polio, our work continues. For example, [we’re investing in wastewater surveillance](#), which is playing a pivotal role in polio eradication. This testing helps public health workers quickly detect an emergence of the virus and

respond accordingly, and it holds vast potential for use against other diseases.

Polio by the numbers:

- There were 46% fewer reported cases of illness caused by the wild poliovirus in 2023 than there were in 2022.
- For World Polio Day 2023, more than 4,200 clubs registered activities to raise awareness about polio eradication. And we raised US\$836,000 in online contributions — 10% more than the year before.
- Nearly 1 billion doses of the novel oral polio vaccine type 2 (nOPV2) have been administered since March 2021. In Nigeria, nOPV2 helped reduce variant poliovirus cases by 85% in the last three years.

## Fighting cervical cancer in Egypt

In July, we announced that [United to End Cervical Cancer in Egypt would receive the 2023 Programs of Scale award](#). The program is using the US\$2 million award to reduce the number of cervical cancer cases in the Cairo region. The data collected through this program will inform an evidence-based strategy that the Egyptian government can use throughout the country.

**Learn about previous Programs of Scale award recipients and the impact their programs are having on our [Programs of Scale page](#).**

## Your donations make it possible

Our Foundation funds life-changing projects around the world. This Rotary year, as of April, we've provided US\$29 million in district grants, as well as US\$50 million in global grants. The global grants were distributed as follows among our areas of focus:

- Peacebuilding and conflict prevention: US\$1 million
- Disease prevention and treatment: US\$26 million
- Water, sanitation, and hygiene: US\$7 million
- Maternal and child health: US\$4 million
- Basic education and literacy: US\$4 million
- Community economic development: US\$6 million
- Environment: US\$2 million

Thanks to our generous donors, the Disaster Response Fund received more than US\$1.6 million in donations as of April 2024. The [Give the Gift of Rotary](#) campaign raised more than US\$11.3 million in 2023, a 7.5% increase from 2022, to support life-changing projects in our areas of focus. And on Giving Tuesday — 28 November in 2023 — donors gave more than US\$1.3 million to The Rotary Foundation, 9% more than they gave in 2022. With over US\$287 million raised as of April 2024, we continue to work toward our fundraising goal of US\$500 million.

To grow our organization and inspire others to join us, we continually focus on reaching new audiences and raising awareness of Rotary and our people of action.

## Growing Rotary

We understand the importance of creating clubs that meet current and potential members' needs. [From Canada to Singapore](#), clubs are using innovative approaches to create environments that people want to be a part of. Through these efforts, 510 Rotary clubs and 493 Rotaract clubs have been chartered this Rotary year, and we've welcomed more than 115,000 new Rotary members. We have made great progress toward our goal of chartering 1,000 new clubs and welcoming 150,000 new members this year.

As part of our ongoing efforts to integrate Rotaract more fully into Rotary, Rotaractors will soon be able to use Rotary Club Central to track their goals and plan for their clubs' future. And we're pleased to report that the first Rotaract-sponsored global grants have been awarded to projects in Nepal and Mongolia.

## **Global partnerships**

Through our partnership with Bahçeşehir University, we [opened a new Rotary Peace Center](#) in Istanbul, Turkey, for Rotary Peace Fellows who are focusing on peacebuilding in the Middle East and North Africa. With its first cohort starting in 2025, this new center will further our long-term goal of extending the Rotary Peace Centers program into additional key geographic regions.

We also announced a [new strategic partnership with the United Nations Environment Programme \(UNEP\)](#) that will help Rotary members clean, protect, and monitor waterways. These local efforts are crucial to protecting the environment on a global scale. The partnership complements our existing initiatives to improve access to clean water, sanitation, and hygiene with [the Rotary-USAID Partnership](#) and our [WASH in Schools Target Challenge with UNICEF](#).

## Raising public awareness

In Brazil, the Rotary community — from Rotaractors and Interactors to Rotary Brasil magazine staff members — joined together to create a polio awareness campaign called [Together Against Polio](#), which designed a wide array of Rotary-branded materials for clubs' use. Nearly 2,000 people attended the September launch of the campaign in person, and more than 800 joined online. Since then, clubs across the country have been using the campaign's materials on everything from billboards and posters to T-shirts and balloons, spreading a unified message: Together, we end polio.

We organized [nearly 30 sessions at the 28th United Nations climate conference](#) in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. They highlighted community-led solutions and partnerships, as well as our members' involvement in environmental preservation and protection, to COP28 delegates.

Last August was the one-year anniversary of a major update to the Brand Center, our online hub for the public image resources that members use to raise awareness of Rotary. After the update, visits to the Brand Center increased by 35% and downloads by 33%. Among the most popular items are [People of Action materials](#), which members use to show their communities what makes Rotary unique.

The reason members join Rotary — and stay in it — is the club experience. That's why it's so important that clubs offer members opportunities to get involved, to learn, and to develop as people of action.

Mental health awareness President R. Gordon R. McNally has asked Rotary members to prioritize mental health. This call to action inspired many projects around the world that aimed to raise awareness of mental health needs, decrease the stigma associated with them, and expand access to mental health care.

Clubs such as the Rotary E-Club of Suicide Prevention and Brain Health, Texas, USA, [work to reduce stigma and promote measures that sustain mental wellness as a necessary part of daily life](#). The Rotaract Clubs of Sahel Metn, Lebanon, and Amsterdam Nachtwacht International, The Netherlands, raised money to support the only suicide hotline in Lebanon. Rotarians in Nepal led a session for teachers on suicide prevention and mental health management in schools, including ways to reduce stigma and discrimination.

**[A variety of resources are available on My Rotary to help clubs incorporate mental health support into club projects and activities](#). You can also learn how to foster mental wellness by connecting with the [Rotary Action Group on Mental Health Initiatives](#).**

## **All are welcome**

Rotary is committed to the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion, and it's vital that we provide welcoming, inclusive environments for all. Rotary has a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Advisory Council to move us forward, and more districts are appointing DEI chairs to guide initiatives in their areas. In fact, more than 70% of districts reported having a DEI chair.

We're proud to share the stories of trailblazers such as the six Rotary members that were named [People of Action: Champions of Inclusion](#) in 2023, for illustrating how inclusivity can make a transformational impact on communities. And in 2024, we continue to highlight the contributions of members like Manjoo Phadke, this year's recipient of the [Sylvia Whitlock Leadership Award](#) and a tireless advocate for gender equality and DEI.

**New and expanded resources to help clubs build diversity, equity, and inclusion are available at [rotary.org/DEI](https://rotary.org/DEI).**

## Make new friends

Friendships are often cited as a primary reason members stay in Rotary. Rotary Fellowships are great ways to engage with people who share your passions and interests beyond your club.

This year, members gained even more ways to connect with one another when we expanded our list of more than 100 global fellowships. Here are the new ones:

- Cybersecurity Rotary Fellowship
- Rotary Fellowship of Educators
- Rotary Fellowship of Horse Racing
- Rotary Fellowship of Mental Wellness Counsellors
- Rotary Fellowship of Metaverse

- Rotary Fellowship of Past Presidents, Officers, and Friends
- Rotary Fellowship of Real Estate
- Rotary Fellowship of Startup Investors
- Rotary Fellowship of Tea Lovers
- Rotary Fellowship of Vegans
- Weather Enthusiasts Rotary Fellowship

An organization's ability to adapt is key to its long-term success, which is why Rotary is always looking for ways to improve and evolve.

## **Virtual connectivity**

President McNally, inspired by the lessons of the COVID-19 pandemic, encourages districts to incorporate more virtual components into their programs, events, and activities to give more people a chance to experience Rotary. Adding virtual components or fully virtual options to Rotary Youth Exchange, Rotary Friendship Exchange, and other programs and events has offered participants new ways to experience other cultures, make new friends, and broaden their global awareness. It has also made participation more accessible to people who have time, health, or financial limitations and has bolstered intercultural communication and understanding.

By offering ways to connect virtually, we allow people to tailor their Rotary experience to suit their needs and preferences.

## **Serving our members**

At the Secretariat, we're committed to improving and streamlining our processes and our offerings to give you, our members, the



time as well as tools and resources you need to serve your clubs and communities. Take our research as an example. We've learned a great deal about our members and their interests over the years, and we use these findings to guide our organization and advance our strategic initiatives. And now, we're [making this information available to you.](#)

We also listen to what you need. In preparation for World Polio Day 2023, we used member feedback to improve how we offer materials for promoting polio eradication. These changes resulted in a 150% increase in downloads of those resources compared to the previous year.

We continue to enhance our learning and development offerings for members and provide courses in more than 20 languages. As of April, more than 30,000 first-time users had gone to Rotary's Learning Center this Rotary year, and users have completed 240,000 courses. Approximately 45% of clubs now use the Learning Center regularly, and that number is expected to keep growing.

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As Rotary's general secretary, I'm proud of all that we've accomplished this year. We'll continue to build and grow the world's premier membership organization, dedicated to connections, communities, and positive change.