

Enjoy your **Berita** **PUDU**

3rd September 2012
Issue No : 9/2012-13

Programme Today

Speaker : DG Mansoor Saat
Subject : District Governor's Official Address
To The Club

ON DUTY

Duty Table : Rtn. Elaine Tan
Fellowship : Rtn. Robert Tan
Finemaster : IPP Dato Steven Oon
Introduce : PP Ng Sim Bee
Thanking : PDG Dr. Paul Lee

Programme Next Week

Speaker : TBA
Subject : TBA

ON DUTY

Duty Table : Rtn. C T Heng
Fellowship : Rtn. Mok Sin
Finemaster : PP Leong Choy Ying
Introduce : PP Tai Chin Peow
Thanking : Rtn. Sarky Subramaniam

Happy Birthday!

Nil

Spouse's Birthday!

Nil

Happy Anniversary!

Nil

FUTURE ROTARY EVENTS

AGTS – AG's Training Seminar

Friday 28/9/12 – Sunday 30/9/12 @ Kulim, Langkawi

GDLTS – Group Discussion Leaders' Training Seminar

Friday 19/10/12 – Sunday 21/10/12 @ Kamunting, Taiping

Pre-PETS 1

Friday 23/11/12 – Sunday 25/11/12 @ Tampin, A'Famosa Resort

Pre-PETS 2

Friday 15/3/13 – Sunday 17/3/13 @ Ampang, D'Villa Residences

District Assembly

Friday 26/4/13 – Sunday 28/4/13 @ Melawati, Grand Dorsett Hotel

DTTS – District Team Training Seminar

Sunday 19/5/13 @ Klang Central, Klang Executive Centre

District Conference

Friday 6/12/13 – Sunday 8/12/13 @ Kuala Lumpur West, Hotel Istana (tentative)

Rotary Club Diary 3rd – 26th September 2012

Date	Time	Programme	Venue
September Mon 3	12.45 pm	Luncheon Meeting District Governor's Official Visit	Shangri-La Hotel, KL
Mon 10	12.45 pm	Luncheon Meeting	Shangri-La Hotel, KL
Wed 12	6.30 pm	Public Relations Comm	Bukit Kiara Equestrian Club
Thu 13	6.30 pm	Service Committee	Solaris Dutamas
Sun 16		MALAYSIA DAY	
Mon 17		NO MEETING - Public Holiday	
Tue 18	6.30 pm	TRF Comm	Bukit Kiara Equestrian Club
Wed 19	6.30 pm	Club Admn Mtg	Loong Foong Rest Kelana Jaya,
Thu 20	6.30 pm	New Gen Comm	Bukit Kiara Equestrian Club
Sun 23	8 am - 5 pm	3 Pillars Of Rotary Seminar	D'Villa Residence, Ampang, KL
Mon 24	12.45 pm	Luncheon Meeting	Shangri-La Hotel, KL
Wed 26	6.30 pm	BOD Meeting	Bukit Kiara Equestrian Club

WELCOME DISTRICT GOVERNOR!

The highlight of the Rotary Year for any Rotary Club surely must be the visit of District Governor to the club. In this respect the Rotary Club of Pudu is no different. Thus we see the visit on 2-3 Sept 2012 of DG Mansoor Saat as very important and it serves as an inspiration point for the club to move to a higher level. No doubt DG Mansoor has visited the club on many occasions before but these were not the OFFICIAL visit.

DG Mansoor would have begun his visit to the club with a meeting with the Interactors and Rotaractors and no doubt the youngsters would have been thrilled just as we are, to meet the top man in the district. In the meantime, the club would have arranged a programme to entertain his spouse First Lady Emzita.

In the same evening (yesterday) DG would have attended our Club Assembly and heard all our programme and projects of the year from reports by the respective directors. He and First Lady Emzita then would have fellowship with the Rotarians and their families. A special programme for the spouses had been arranged and it would be a talk by an expert on how to avoid mugging and snatch thieves.

Today is the day many Rotarians have been waiting for. DG Mansoor will officially address the club during our regular luncheon meeting and tell us what he thinks of us. He will have to send his report to RI. Are we in line with EREY & Rotary Foundation.? How are we in terms of projects & attendance? Etc

It is well known that the DG has many issues to ponder upon in the district. Getting new members; maintaining old ones; falling attendance; starting new clubs; gearing up for the district conference and assembly; etc No doubt he will explain to us the outcomes of these issues at some time during the visit.

Helping to arrange some of the logistics is our own AG PP Gary Lim and he would have helped to make the visit manageable.

Welcome District Governor!

My dear Pudu Rotarians,

Warmest greetings to you.

I trust many of you have had a wonderful time with family and loved ones over the long weekend. It is a blessing to be able to spend time with family and loved ones. Sometimes we take these opportunities for granted and forget that these short holidays are time for getting together as a family.



During our club's visit to Jenjarom Old Folks Home on 26th August 2012 (Sunday) by some of our Rotarians, family and Rotaractors, I realized that we are all so blessed to have our family with us. We had good fellowship with the residents there over a "tim sum" breakfast arranged by Rtn CT Heng, This was followed by a cheque presentation to Miss Cheah, who received it on behalf of the home. We also had Rtn Roy's son, Lucas, render a few Chinese song to entertain the residents there.

On our way back, we then had a great lunch fellowship at a restaurant near Carey Island. This was a moment to get to know our Rotarians and their family better and a time to bond with our Pudu Rotaractors. The best part of it all was Rtn Jeffrey Yap (Service Director), who had just returned from Melbourne, took the time to join us there with Ann Catherine.

I find that there are and will continue to be needs all around us. We will not be able to save the world. But the little we can and are willing to do will surely make a difference to the world of those we helped. I am pleased to see the joy on the faces of the residents when we care to spend some time with them and offer them something as simple as T-shirt and shorts.

I hope that our newer Rotarians will be able to join in our next visit to Jenjarom Old Folks Home in January 2013. The fellowship with other Rotarians will be much different but richer when we are out there in the field together. So get ready and come together in full force for our next project.

In Rotary Service,

Aaron Ong
President RY 2012/13

Record of Meeting on 27th August 2012

Guest Speaker : PP KUMAR THARMALINGAM
Subject : IS REAL ESTATE SEXY?

VISITING ROTARIANS

Name	Club
PP Robin Tay	RC Ampang

GUESTS

Name	Host
Benny Chin	Rtn. Sarky
Then Phi Jin	Rtn. Sarky
Brendan Bong	PDG K B Lee
Winnie Lew	PDG K B Lee
Grace Chew	PDG K B Lee
Jannice Soh	Rtn. Sandy Soh
Ms. May	Rtn. Veronique
Ang Yong Chiang	Rtn. Daisy Chiu

STATISTICS

Visiting Rotarians	:	1
Guests	:	8
Club Members	:	35
Total Present	:	44

COLLECTIONS

Birthdays / Anniversaries / Fines	:	RM 59.00
Paying Diners	:	RM 310.00
Raffles & Others	:	
Total	:	RM 369.00

Club Proceedings

SAA Rtn. Jonathan Avinash on behalf of President Aaron Ong called the meeting to order at 1.15 pm. He later introduced all the visiting Rotarians and guests. He later led in the singing of the National Anthem and proposed the loyal toast.

The finemaster for the day was PP Ng Sim Bee. He started his fine session by fining PP Mike Yeow RM1 because of the presence of a good speaker today.

He later fined all the latecomers, Rtn. Alex Chang, PDG Dr. Paul Lee, Rtn. Robert Tan, Rtn. Dr. C C Wong Tan Sri Soong and Rtn. Sarky. All had to pay RM1.

He welcomed back PP Choy Ying and Rtn. Jeffrey Yap from Melbourne, each paid a fine of RM5. PP Y K Chew also had to pay a fine of RM1 for being away so long.

He later fined PP Kumar Tharmalingam RM10 for his spouse's birthday and being away from the Club for a long time.

All the members who did not go to the Jenjarom Old Folks Home were asked to pay a fine of RM2.

Members who are not attending the Club Assembly were each fined RM1 the BOD were each fined RM2.

Rtn. Sandy who spoke fluent 'Hokkien' was fined RM1. Rtn. Sarky who was training to climb Mt. Kinabalu was fined RM1.

President Aaron who was caught causing confusion in his speech was fined RM2.

All other members who were not fined also had to pay a fine of RM1.

President's Announcement

Weekly Meeting for: 27th AUGUST 2012 @ SHANGRI-LA HOTEL

- In conjunction with DG Mansoor Saat's official visit to our club next week, please note the following important dates:-
 - 2nd September, 2012 (Sunday – 6.30pm) @ PDG Dr Paul Lee's residence will be our club's 2nd Club Assembly.
 - 3rd September, 2012 (Monday – lunch) @ Shangri la Hotel will be DG Mansoor Saat's official address to our club.
- I am pleased to inform that our club has endorsed PP Dato Muslim Ayob's application as GSE Team Leader to Kobe in 2013. We wish him all the best in the coming interview with the GSE Committee.

Introduction of Speaker

PP Albert Lim introduced the guest speaker for the day who were none other than our very own member PP Kumar Tharmalingam who spoke on the topic of Is Real Estate Sexy?

Speaker's CV

PP Kumar Tharmalingam needs no formal introduction at all as he is known to all our members. However to those present who did not know who he was, PP Kumar is a graduate of the London School of Economics majoring in Real Estate. A Past President of our Club, currently CEO of MPI – Malaysia Property Inc. and has 37 years of experience in real estate business.

Speaker's Text

ROLLS ROYCE GUN

- Scientists at Rolls Royce built a gun specifically to launch dead chickens at the windshields of airlines and military jets all travelling at maximum speed.
- The idea is to simulate the frequent incidents of collisions with airborne fowl to test the strength of windshields.
- American engineers heard about the gun and were eager to test it on the windshields of their new high speed trains. The gun was loaned to them
- When the gun was fired the engineers were shocked.
- The chicken hurled out the barrel smashed the screen to pieces, blasted through the control panel, snapped the drivers chair and stuck on the back wall
- The horrified Yanks sent Rolls Royce the terrible results of the experiment and the design of the windshield and begged for suggestions.
- Rolls Royce studied the results and sent back a one line suggestion.
- PLEASE DEFROST THE CHICKEN FIRST.

Malaysia Property Incorporated

WHO WE ARE?

A public-private entity set up by the Economic Planning Unit of the Prime Minister's Office

OUR BUSINESS PLAN

MPI wants to be the first port-of-call for foreign investors interested to do Real Estate Investments in Malaysia

WHAT WE DO?

MATCHMAKING REAL ESTATE INVESTMENTS

We aim to match investors and owners for real estate sales and development and to provide exposure for property investments into Malaysia

Is Property Sexy?

- Define sexy as a property tool.
- ATTRACTIVE
- DESIRABLE
- COLOURFUL
- WELL LOCATED
- DANGEROUS
- PROPERTY IS ALL THESE.

ARE WE HAPPY WITH HOUSE PRICES TODAY?

Evidence of house price values

FACT

- The average price of houses > RM0.5m has been trending downwards whereas
- Ave price of houses < RM0.5m rose 25.8% in 2011 vs 2004
- RPGT has had little effect in curbing price increases for those house prices <RM500m

High values depends on where you live

- In 2011, 7 out of 13 states show double-digit house price increases
- Over a 10-year average, highest house price appreciation are in states of Sabah, Terengganu, Perlis and Pahang.
- Prices of Johore has lagged for some time. With the inception of Iskandar in 2006, the price trends are moving upward compared with between 2001-2005.

What is contributing to price increases? Developers building less.

Reduction in supply of homes

Housing supply nationwide slows down while local demand sustains

Housing take up rate in major states has been fairly stable

Other factors contributing to increase in demand

- Cheap financing – Margin of financing is up to 105% for the first time buyer under the Malaysia First House Scheme and BLR at 6.6%
- Offers and promotions by developers – a various offers and promotions such as low downpayment, DIBS, no installment until completion will further enhance the demand
- Low interest rates

Are bloody foreigners contributing to price increases? They are soft targets. Especially for politicians

Foreign Interest has saved KL City Centre

- The average price of houses > RM0.5m has been trending downwards
- Foreigners constitute 2% of total property transactions
- Foreigners are interested mainly in KL and are taking up slack in higher end properties

We can blame material suppliers too – Building material cost data

- Shortage of new land for residential development within city precincts – KL & Penang
- Strong growth in cities; youthful population and immigrants
- Rise in building materials

Loans by Banks rising and Non-Performing Loans falling.

Rising loans and falling NPLs support demand-push and short supply factors

External crisis more important factor compared to domestic monetary tools.

During 2008/09 financial crisis, loans approved declined 11% -14%.

LTV at 70% on 3rd & subsequent property purchase was imposed in Nov 2012 resulting a temporary downward trend for loans applied in 4Q2010 and 1Q2011 before its increased by 16.9% compared with previous high.

Is RPGT a good tool for stopping speculation?

- If it is demand and supply factors driving property transactions, RPGT cannot reduce transactions
- It could tax genuine buyers and further reduce supply as developers cut back property launches, exacerbating gap in supply-demand
- Evidence points that incidences like global crisis is more impactful on property transactions in Malaysia
- Need to bear in mind that world is entering another significant global slowdown with China & India slowing down. Msia will be affected

How will Singapore style stamp duty extra dampen prices?

- Evidence shows that property prices above RM0.5m have already been falling.
- It could lead to a collapse in foreign sentiment, reverse the efforts by Talent Corp and KL Invest to bring in expats and MNCs into country. Flip Flop is a common comment.
- Developers are already giving discounts on high-end properties in KL. With high costs of land in city, developers in city may reduce supply further exacerbating problem.

Is en-bloc sales contributing to price increases?

Does en-bloc sales increase property prices?

- Enbloc sales are few and are usually done for commercial property
- In the case of residential, few known sales, done by Japanese, occur in bigger towns/cities i.e KL, PJ, Penang, JB & Kota Kinabalu.
- Enbloc sales are usually sold at a discount to the market price as developers are willing to let go to ease their cashflow and save on sales costs
- Not easy to sell a whole block because developer has to comply with bumiputra quota

Foreign Investors' Confidence : Singapore is less sensitive than Malaysia

Singapore

Singapore is a strong brand among foreign investors. Singapore property market is well-promoted globally. Foreign investors' confidence remains intact

Spore Govt, is able to undertake drastic measures to curb speculation by introducing the Additional Buyers' Stamp Duty (ABSD) on 8th Dec 2011.

Singapore residential market environment is responsive to such policy changes immediately

- Singapore is more foreign-centric
- A highly volatile market.
- Small market – only 15,000-20,000 homes a year
- Highly exposed to world market
- One of the world's most transparent purchase considerations

Malaysia

Fiscal tools like RPGT, stamp duty work less well in Malaysia because of

- Lower transparency levels
- 98% of homes built are for locals, only 2% to foreigners
- Less open economy than Singapore as seen in Malaysia's resilience during 2008 global financial crisis
- Does not affect the <RM500m housing market that govt is targeting
- Malaysia builds between 60,000-70,000 new housing per year between 2010 and 2011

Population in Malaysia is growing & urbanising

Kuala Lumpur & Selangor

Population (2000) = 5.57 million

Population (2010) = 7.2 million

GKL Population density = 3,014/km²

KL Population density = 6,891/km²

Penang

Population (2000) = 1.31 million

Population (2010) = 1.56 million

Population density = 1,490/km²

Johor

Population (2000) = 2.74 million

Population (2010) = 3.35 million

Population density = 174/km²

Malaysia

Population (2000) : 23.3 million

Population (2010) : 28.3 million

For further information and up-to-date tracking of Malaysian Real Estate data, visit:
www.malaysiapropertyinc.com

For further information on the Market Intelligence & Research, write to afiq@malaysiapropertyinc.com

Thanking of Guest Speaker

PP Mike Yeow on behalf of the club thanked PP Kumar Tharmalingam for his excellent presentation and presented a certificate of appreciation to him.

WEEKLY MEETING PHOTOS HELD ON 27th AUGUST 2012 @ SHANGRI-LA HOTEL, KL



More....





Rotary InFormation

What you must know about:

Polio Plus

The most notable current global project, PolioPlus, is contributing to the global eradication of polio. Since beginning the project in 1985, Rotarians have contributed over US\$850 million and tens of thousands of volunteer-hours, leading to the inoculation of more than two billion of the world's children. Inspired by Rotary's commitment, the World Health Organization (WHO) passed a resolution in 1988 to eradicate polio by 2000. Now a partner in the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) with WHO, UNICEF and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Rotary is recognized by the United Nations as the key private partner in the eradication effort.

In 2008, Rotary received a \$100 million challenge grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Rotary committed to raising \$100 million. In January 2009, Bill Gates announced a second challenge grant of \$255 million. Rotary again committed to raising another \$100 million. In total, Rotary will raise \$200 million by June 30, 2012. Together, the Gates Foundation and Rotary have committed \$555 million toward the eradication of polio. At the time of the second challenge grant, Bill Gates said:

"We know that it's a formidable challenge to eradicate a disease that has killed and crippled children since at least the time of the ancient Egyptians. We don't know exactly when the last child will be affected. But we do have the vaccines to wipe it out. Countries do have the will to deploy all the tools at their disposal. If we all have the fortitude to see this effort through to the end, then we will eradicate polio."

There has been some limited criticism concerning the program for polio eradication. There are some reservations regarding the adaptation capabilities of the virus in some of the oral vaccines, which have been reported to cause infection in populations with low vaccination coverage. As stated by Vaccine Alliance, however, in spite of the limited risk of polio vaccination, it would neither be prudent nor practicable to cease the vaccination program until there is strong evidence that "all wild poliovirus transmission [has been] stopped". In a recent speech at the Rotary International Convention, held at the Bella Center in Copenhagen, Bruce Cohick stated that polio in all its known wild forms will be eliminated by late 2008, provided efforts in Nigeria, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India all proceed with their current momentum.

District News

3 Pillars Of Rotary Seminar

Dear Presidents,

You must be excitedly charging pass your 2nd month into Sept. Your Club must be buzzing with Installation, Project launches and other Club activities. The all round enthusiasm ensures the momentum is kept aglow. On that note, pls mark out the 3 Pillars of Rotary Seminar on Sun 23 Sept 2012 @ D'Villa Residence Ampang, KL.

It's a unique, perhaps for the 1st time, a combination of the TRF, MDR & PR Seminars into one full day programme. It will be an exciting and interactive presentation with some rarely seen/heard fresh ideas and thought process...

- PP Thangaraj - on PR & Marketing, his is a revelation (a not to be missed at all)

- PP Dr Siva Ananthan - If not now, when? (the dynamism always shines thru...)
- PDG Dato Jimmy Lim - always will regale and deliver (loud but his actions speaks louder)

The 3 Comt Chairmen i.e. PDG Jimmy - TRF, Dr Siva - MDR and Dato Ram Nair - PR will be at hand, full-day, to share the 3 Pillars of Rotary: catch them at meals for personal tips. We shall have coffee, lunch & tea breaks, i.e. from 8am (Registration) to 5pm @ D'Villa Residence Ampang, KL.

All Presidents, apart from yourself, pls ensure your PE and TRF, MDR & PR Chairs attend this specially organized Seminar that saves money, time and energy with a 3 in 1 plan! (There will be no other Seminars for the term). All other Rotarians are also welcome to attend. Cost RM40.00 only. Dress code: Formal

You shall receive a folder with relevant notes for reference and website link.

So make the date and kindly confirm early (Host Club: Rc Kajang, Organizing Chair Pres Mah) and join your friends. Be a Rotarian not a Member! We succeed by building our 'infrastructure' - the 3 Pillars of Rotary!

Cheers

Christie
Seminar Coordinator

Contact OC Pres Mah Soon Chai @ +6017 8866611

RI News

World's first peace park celebrates its 80th anniversary

In a year when the RI theme is all about peace, the annual gathering of Rotarians from both sides of the U.S.-Canadian border at the world's first peace park takes on even greater significance.

In 1932, Rotarians played a large role in convincing the governments of Canada and the United States to join Glacier National Park in Montana and Waterton Lakes National Park in Alberta, forming Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park.

Each year since, Rotarians from both countries have gathered for a weekend of fellowship and goodwill, an event that this year could include members from more than 200 clubs in four districts in southwestern Canada and the northwestern United States.

"When I heard this year's theme was about peace I was thrilled. It fits so well with what our districts have been doing here for the past 80 years," says Frances Leggett, governor of Canadian District 5360 and president of the Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park Association. "Peace means all sorts of things. Any sort of collaboration is really a means of promoting peace."

"When all is said and done, ours is an organization of service that can lift others, and build peace one person

at a time," adds Canadian Monty Audenart, a past RI vice president, who has participated in the event.

The assembly alternates between the U.S. and Canadian sides of the border. This year it takes place in Kalispell, Montana, 14-16 September. Three days of speakers and events will be capped off by the most moving part of the assembly, when Rotarians join hands across a white ribbon symbolizing the border between their countries.

During the ceremony, Rotarians recite this pledge: "In the name of God we will not take up arms against each other. We will work for peace, maintain liberty, strive for freedom, and demand equal opportunities for all mankind. May the long existing peace between our two nations stimulate other people to follow this example."

Youth exchange students from both countries take part whenever possible. "A few years back, we had a separate event for the youth exchange students, and at the Saturday banquet they all marched in carrying the flags of their nations. It was a very moving experience," Leggett recalls.

Beginnings

The idea for the peace park originated eight decades ago, when the president of the Rotary Club of Cardston, Alberta, Joseph S. Low, attended a meeting at which Past District Governor Frank R. Freeze spoke eloquently on the subject of international fellowship. Low decided to pitch to his club the idea of arranging an annual goodwill meeting between Canadian and U.S. Rotary clubs on alternating sides of the border. The club heartily endorsed the idea and authorized him to make it happen.

The park was dedicated on 18 June 1932. At the ceremony, Canadian Prime Minister R.B. Bennett and U.S. President Herbert Hoover expressed sentiments that mirrored Low's.

"It is my earnest hope that this great International Peace Park, stretching across our common frontier and in which citizens of both our countries may seek recreation, may forever remain a permanent memorial of all that neighbourly relations should be between adjoining nations," Bennett wrote.

"Dedication of the Waterton-Glacier International Park is a further gesture of the good will that has so long blessed our relations with our Canadian neighbors, and I am gratified by the hope and the faith that it will forever be an appropriate symbol of permanent peace and friendship," wrote Hoover.

Today, Rotarians govern the Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park Association. Canadians and Americans are equally represented on the 18-member board, and the presidency alternates between the two countries.

Adapted from a Rotary Canada story by Paul Engleman

Source : Arnold R. Grahl, Rotary News

Rotary news in brief from around the globe

Rotary clubs around the globe have many things in common, including a commitment to service. All year long, clubs are taking action to make a difference in their communities. Here's a roundup of recent club activities worldwide:

Canada

The 87th annual International Goodwill Meeting was held in Winnipeg, Man., in February, commemorating the founding of the Rotary Club of Winnipeg, the first club outside the United States. The event drew 125 Canadian and U.S. Rotarians, who celebrated the international connections within Rotary. Seven Winnipeg-area clubs hosted the gathering.

Czech Republic

To raise funds for playground renovations at a speech-therapy kindergarten, the Rotaract Club of Ostrava hosted a rock music marathon in November. Club members worked with one of the city's most popular music venues, Fabric Club, and four local bands to organize the event for 200 people, who paid US\$14-18 for tickets. The Rotaractors also volunteered to work on the playground, which is designed to help the children develop their motor and cognitive skills.

Guatemala

Members of the Rotary clubs of Stratford, Woodstock, and Woodstock-Oxford, Ont., Canada, set up eight temporary clinics in mountain communities around the city of Quetzaltenango, providing care to 1,200 people over two weeks in November. In addition to medical and dental treatment, 23 health care professionals – including two doctors, a dentist, a pharmacist, a physiotherapist, and several nurses – provided lessons on personal health and hygiene and distributed reading glasses, toothbrushes, and toothpaste. Some of the nurses were volunteers from CarePartners, an Ontario-based nursing services provider. The Stratford club purchased medications, and Medical Equipment and Supplies Abroad, a project of District 6600 (Ohio, USA), donated dental and medical equipment.

Lebanon

The Rotary Club of Beirut-Cedars created its own online daily paper last year through Paper.li, a publishing service. The publication pulls news from the Web and the club's Twitter and Facebook feeds, focusing on subjects related to Rotary, peace, polio, and other humanitarian topics. Links to the paper and top stories are posted on Twitter to increase publicity for the club; go to <http://twitter.com/rcbeirutcedars>.

Mongolia

A 100-acre orchard planted in 2006 has grown to more than 1,200 acres and is now Mongolia's largest. Korean and Mongolian Rotarians planted five windbreak forests, one of which included the orchard, to help avert damage from Gobi sandstorms, which can affect Korea and other distant areas. The initiative, called Keep Mongolia Green, has received funding from Rotarians, Rotary Foundation Matching Grants, and the Mongolian government. The government also subsidizes a nearby juice factory to

process the fruit from the orchard, and an agricultural cooperative provides jobs for local people.

New Zealand

The Rotary Club of Ashburton Plains harvested a record amount of gourmet potatoes last year for its annual Christmas fundraiser. The 2,884 bags, each weighing nearly 9 pounds, sold for NZ\$10 each, and the effort netted over \$27,000. The money supports club projects and scholarships, Rotary Youth Leadership Awards events, and the Ashburton Rowing Club, which works with the Rotarians to dig up the spuds. For the 2011 holiday season, the club also donated 164 bags to local food banks.

Rwanda

Women and children in the village of Binunga once had to hike down a mountain for water, then haul it back up by hand. Because of a Rotary Foundation Matching Grant project sponsored by the Rotary clubs of Forest Hills, Pa., USA, and Kigali-Virunga, solar-powered pumps now send 8,800 gallons of water to the village from a spring-fed reservoir every day. The project also benefits the Urukundo Home for Children, a school and orphanage in the village that houses 46 young people.

USA

To celebrate 100 years of Rotary in Florida, the state's first club, the Rotary Club of Jacksonville, and District 6970 raised funds for a mobile health bus that will visit schools, churches, community centers, and shopping areas to provide screenings, inoculations, and basic care to local children and families. Kalyan Banerjee, 2011-12 RI president, and his wife, Binota, were on hand to dedicate the bus in February.

Source : Rotarian, August 2012

Regional membership plans offer a new tool for attracting and retaining members

When it comes to increasing membership, one size does not fit all, says Manoj Desai of the Membership Development and Retention Committee.

Understanding a region's unique needs, customs, and historic trends can greatly enhance the ability of district leaders to bring in new members and retain existing ones.

The RI Board of Directors recently approved the development of regional membership plans that take these differences into account. Most of these plans were approved by the Board in May. Some regions are still developing their plans and will submit them to the Board in November.

District Governors for 2011-12, 2012-13, and 2013-14 will receive their region's plan or be told the status of their region's plan by the beginning of their term.

By using these plans as a starting point in drafting membership and retention goals, along with an action plan to meet those goals, leaders will be better able to help RI meet the membership goal recently set by the Board: 1.3 million Rotarians by 30 June 2015.

"Members are the lifeline of Rotary International," says Desai. "The chief benefit of these regional membership plans is to make Rotary vibrant, have positive membership growth, and be the number one volunteer organization in future years."

The plans were created by a committee of Rotary leaders in each region, headed by the Rotary Director. Each region's strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and challenges, were taken into account in setting targets. Many of the plans included recommendations.

For example, India's regional plan encourages all club membership chairs to attend membership development seminars that will be created by Rotary coordinators and district leaders. The plan sets a goal of 10 percent membership growth each year through 2015.

"In India, Rotary leadership has challenged all the district leaders and they have accepted the challenge," says Desai.

Other recommendations from the plans:

*In the United Kingdom, Rotarians are developing a national publicity campaign to counter the public's lack of knowledge of what Rotary does. The plan also encourages increased use of social media to attract and retain members, as well as the selection of publicity photos of Rotarians actively serving, to counter the image of Rotary as elitist and stuffy.

*In North America, the plan recommends focusing on retention rates and addressing the reasons members are leaving. The plan suggests treating members as Rotary's "customers" and identifying, defining, and promoting Rotary's value to members.

*India's plan recommends leaders make use of Rotary's good public image in that country. Other strengths include a pool of young entrepreneurs with leadership aspirations and a growing economy.

*In Europe, strategies include conducting more informal club meetings, allowing more flexibility in attendance by measuring the frequency of involvement in service activities rather than meeting attendance, and staying in contact with alumni and inviting them to meetings.

Download your regional membership plan. August is Membership and Extension Month. Take the Rotary Membership Challenge, or sign up for Membership Minute.

Source : Arnold R. Grahl, Rotary News

Rotary Global Swimarathon sets new Guinness World Record and save lives

11,000 miles between Scotland & NZ clubs, 15 time zones, 23 countries, same hour WE DID IT!

It's official!The Rotary Global Swimarathon has set a new Guinness World Record for the largest number of participants. 4,546 swimmers made a splash in an hour long swimathon charity event, which took place at over 64 locations across the world. All swimmers dived into

action simultaneously between 12-1 pm GMT on 25th February 2012. The previous record set was 2,013.

The event, organised by the Rotary Club of Grantham, Lincolnshire, set participants the challenge of completing 100 metres, raising funds for polio eradication and helping set a new Guinness World Record. Swimmers from all across the world, could not resist.

Event Chair Roger Graves, Rotary Club of Grantham, says: "This is fantastic news! I must admit we have all been getting anxious waiting for the results. To find out we are world record breakers, along with Team GB's achievements in the Olympics, really makes 2012 a great year for sport. We are over the moon!

"The swimarathon was such a fun and easy way for people to raise money and help Rotary's drive to wipe out polio all across the world. The event raised over USD 101,000 (over £64,000) thanks to donations and sponsorship which flooded in from all across the globe. The money is going to Rotary's End Polio Now campaign, a dedicated drive to fund and administer the polio vaccine. Since 1985, billions of children across the world have been protected from this crippling disease.

The Rotary Global Swimarathon captured the attention of swimmers from as far away as Australia, New Zealand and America, as well as securing the support of Australian Open Water Ultra Marathon swimming legend Penny Palfrey, and Team GB Paralympic athletes Fran Williamson and Claire Cashmore.

Social media played a major role in telling the world about the fundraiser. Rotarian Paul Wilson committed himself to the internet, determined to get as many people and Rotary clubs involved as possible: "The idea was first floated on the internet, using social networking. Within just a few days we had interest from swimmers across the globe, all wanting to take part. It was wonderful to see such commitment from Rotary clubs and swimming fans. Take a look at our website and find out where you can join in next year."

Roger added: "When we set out, people laughed, saying it will never work and then gradually it got bigger. The night of the event when we hit local radio news stations we soon realised that everyone involved had achieved something incredible. Apart from raising money for polio, the main thing was the excitement from people who joined in what seem a hair-brained scheme to encourage clubs to hold swimarathons. Now they will be holding them for years to come. We're so delighted about it.

"I must say a huge thanks for all those who took part around the world this year and as for the future, please, please we want as many people to join us again on the 23rd February 2013 and we'll swim around the world once more."

Interested parties who would like to join in next year can find their nearest event and register on the official website, and catch up with the latest news at the official Rotary Global Swimarathon Facebook

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