Naalya Food Bulletin

19th May, 2026

Rotary Kampala - Naalya

UNITE FOR GOOD

Issue 43 | RY 2025-26



MSAG Project Coordinator, Dr John Mugisa (3L) poses with Rotarians from the RC Bukoto led by President Vincent Kiyingi, along with Acholi Quarters LC1 Chairman and the Police Post OC during the Health Camp recently.

RC KAMPALA - NAALYA

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Chef's Note

Dear Rotarians and Guests,

We're right in the middle of our theme of Youth Service for May. Now, Youth Service is not a programme. It is a promise. Every May, Rotary International reminds us of that promise. But a reminder means little without action.

Here in Uganda, we are counting down to end of the Rotary Year. The time for implementing our annual plans almost behind us. The time for consolidating is now.

This month, our clubs are rallying around young people in remarkable ways. Vocational mentorships, scholarships, community clean-ups, health outreaches. The energy is real. Yet energy alone does not build lasting change. Structure does. Accountability does.

Your columnist Francis Lubuulwa returns this week with a timely reflection on values. He asks a question that deserves honest consideration. Are we living by the Four-Way Test in our daily conduct, beyond the meeting room and away from the podium? His column is not a rebuke. It is a call to self-examination. We encourage every member to read it carefully.

The values AG Francis writes about are not decorations. They are the foundation on which every Rotary project stands or falls. When we act with integrity, partners trust us. When partners trust us, resources follow. When resources follow, communities benefit. The chain is simple. Breaking any link weakens the whole.

That brings us to partnership. Like our own club of RC Kampala Naalya, several other clubs this year have done impressive work alongside NGOs, government agencies, schools, and faith communities. This is precisely how sustainable impact is built. No single club can do everything. But clubs working in deliberate partnership can achieve what none could do alone.

Youth Service, in particular, demands this kind of collaboration. Young people need mentors, yes. But they also need systems. They need organisations that speak with one voice and act with one purpose. Rotary is positioned to convene that kind of effort. We must not waste the position.

As we move into the final weeks of this Rotary Year, every club president, every committee chair, and every project lead must sit with one question. What did we commit to, and can we demonstrate that we delivered? Accountability is not bureaucracy. It is respect. Respect for the communities we serve, for the partners who trusted us, and for the members who gave their time.

It's time to share your lessons, including what did not go as planned. A Rotary Year closes. The communities we serve continue. What we build now must outlast the June handover.

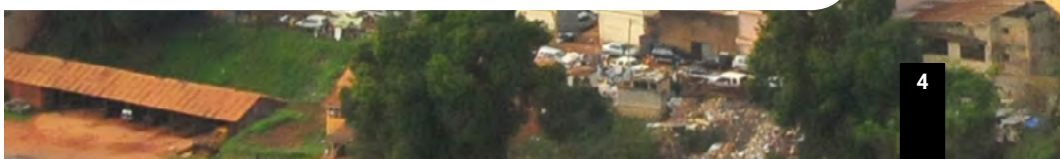
To our youth members and Rotaractors: this edition is as much yours as anyone's. You are not the future of Rotary. You are the present. We need your voices at the table, your ideas in our projects, and your accountability alongside ours.

To our senior members: continue to lead with humility. Mentorship flows in both directions. There is much we can learn from the young people we seek to serve.

May we gear up to close this Rotary Year with our heads held high. Not because everything went perfectly. But because we were honest, we collaborated well, and we kept our promise to the communities that count on us.

Service Above Self. Always.

Rtn. Peter Nyanzi
Bulletin Officer



RI President's Message



By Rtn. Francesco Arezzo

MAY 2026

Shoki Wafula did not know what to expect when he was forced to leave his birth country of Uganda for South Africa. What he found was a Rotary community that welcomed him with warmth and friendship.

That experience inspired him to help create a Rotaract e-club where young leaders from around the world could connect, develop their skills, and serve together.

Today, that community includes members across multiple continents who collaborate on leadership development, peacebuilding, and service initiatives.

For Wafula, the experience reinforced the lesson that meaningful service begins with people who feel connected, valued, and empowered to lead.

His story reminds us why Youth Service Month is so important. Through Rotaract and programs like Rotary Youth Exchange, young people build leadership skills, develop global understanding, and discover the impact they can make through service.

Rotary's Action Plan calls on us to enhance participant engagement. At its heart, that goal asks a simple question: How can we ensure that participation in Rotary is meaningful and fulfilling for everyone? Youth programs and Rotaract provide a powerful answer.

When clubs mentor Rotaractors, host exchange students, or support youth leadership initiatives, they create opportunities for members to share their experience in ways that feel personal and rewarding.

> "Youth programs show us how that happens in practice — when generations come together, share ideas, and work side by side in service.

These connections deepen members' sense of purpose and strengthen the bonds within our Rotary family.

They also create lasting pathways into Rotary. Thousands of young people complete Rotary programs each year, and they carry those experiences with them throughout their lives. Many remain eager to stay connected.

Organizations such as Rotex International, an association of former Youth Exchange students, help Rotary program alumni continue serving as mentors, leaders, and advocates for our youth programs.

As Rotex co-founder Hans Lee wrote in a recent reflection on Youth Exchange alumni, "exchange doesn't end when you return home."

When we welcome these young leaders into our clubs and activities, we strengthen the continuity of Rotary across generations.

During Youth Service Month, I hope every Rotary club reflects on how youth programs can enhance engagement for new and longtime members. Collaborate on service projects and invite youth voices into your planning and decision making.

Rotary's message to the world is that we can ***Unite for Good***. Youth programs show us how that happens in practice — when generations come together, share ideas, and work side by side in service.

When we invest in young people, we are not only shaping future leaders. We are building a stronger, more connected Rotary today.

Our Youth, Our Future

DG'S MESSAGE

By Geoffrey Martin Kitakule



MAY 2026

One of the most remarkable contributions of Rotary is in leadership development. Through Rotaract and Interact clubs, young people are given the opportunity to lead, to organize, and to serve.

These platforms equip the youth with essential skills such as communication, teamwork, and decision-making. Many young leaders in Uganda today have been shaped through Rotary programs, gaining confidence and a sense of purpose.

This year through Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA), we trained and empowered the young generation.

Under Interact RYLA 890 young leaders trained from 94 schools, Under RYLA Skill Up Academy - 250 Youth professionally trained in leadership, digital skills, entrepreneurship, and employability readiness.

The RYLA 3-Day Leadership Camp had 320 participants, and the Regional RYLA Wrap-Up trained 150 youth.

Rotary has played a significant role in promoting entrepreneurship and innovation among the youth. Through initiatives like business challenges and mentorship programs, young people are encouraged to think creatively and develop solutions to real-world problems. They are not only trained to seek jobs—but to create them.

The Rotary Club of Upper Kololo program with the Naguru Remand Home is a testimony of how we can transform youth that have had issues with the law into useful citizens.

> "Young people are not only trained to seek jobs—but to create them."





Rotary has also invested in skills development and vocational training. Across Uganda, young people are learning practical skills such as tailoring, carpentry, mechanics, and information technology.

The Boy Child program of Rotary Club of Hoima Kitara has transformed Ghetto Youth by giving them skills that have taken them off the street into productive citizens.

These skills open doors to employment and empower youth to build sustainable livelihoods. For many, this has been a turning point from vulnerability to independence.

Rotary encourages youth to actively participate in community service. Whether it is through health campaigns, environmental conservation, or education support programs, young people are learning the value of giving back.

It is heartwarming to see our youth involved in Rotary Health Family days, and initiatives like the Rotaract Earth Initiative.

These experiences nurture empathy, responsibility, and a strong sense of citizenship. I would like to congratulate Rotaractor Derrick Kabuye of the Rotaract Club of Kampala South for being recognized as one of the Champions of tomorrow. This shows that as a District we are naturing future leaders to drive change in our communities.

> “Rotary is not just changing individual lives—it is shaping the future of our nation.”

Through peacebuilding and social integration, Rotary brings together young people from diverse backgrounds to promote dialogue, understanding, and unity. In a world where divisions can easily arise, these efforts are crucial in building a peaceful and inclusive society.

However, while Rotary has made tremendous progress, there is still more to be done.

Many young people, especially in rural areas, have yet to benefit from these opportunities. Increasing awareness and expanding outreach will ensure that no youth is left behind.

Rotary’s impact on the youth in Uganda is both deep and lasting. It is shaping leaders, creating entrepreneurs, building skills, and inspiring a spirit of service. Rotary is not just changing individual lives—it is shaping the future of our nation.

Therefore, I ask all young people to embrace these opportunities. So that you can lead, serve, and innovate. And together, let us build a better Uganda.

President's Message

RTN CHARLES OWEKMENO
Unite For Good President
2025-2026



Dear Family of Rotary and Guests,

Wishing you a happy new week.

I am deeply grateful for your continued support of the Rotary Club of Kampala Naalya and for the Rotary work you carry out in your communities and workplaces. Your dedication reflects the true spirit of Service Above Self and strengthens the impact of our collective efforts.

> "As we step into this week, let us continue to serve with passion, lead with compassion,."

We are in the final stretch of our fundraising drive for the Mental Health Global Grant Project. Only $1,000 remains to meet the target, and your contribution at this stage is critical.

Please direct donations to The Rotary Foundation in support of the project. Our TRF Director, PP Sylvia Nankya, is available to guide you through the process.

As we count down to our Annual Club Retreat on 30th May 2026 in Jinja, I urge all members to make firm arrangements to attend. The retreat is compulsory for all members and will be a valuable time of reflection, fellowship, and renewed commitment to our mission.

Preparations are also at an advanced stage for the Rotary International Convention in Taipei, Taiwan. Members planning to travel and represent the club should ensure that all requirements — including visa arrangements — are completed in good time.

Our Convention and Discon Officer, Rtn Juliet Nabunya, is available to provide the necessary guidance.
We celebrate all members who marked birthdays, anniversaries, and other milestones over the past week and during this week.

To those who are unwell or caring for loved ones, we extend our prayers for a full and speedy recovery.

As we step into this week, let us continue to serve with passion, lead with compassion, and inspire through action. Together, we are building stronger communities and leaving a lasting impact.

Wishing you a fulfilling week of Rotary service..

YOURS IN SERVICE ABOVE SELF,



TEAM TALK

When the Four-Way Test Meets Real Life

BY **AG FRANCIS LUBUULWA**

There is perhaps no place where Rotary's Four-Way Test is simultaneously more difficult and more necessary than in a society where corruption has become normalised. In Uganda today, many people no longer ask whether something is right or wrong. They ask whether it is achievable without "facilitation" — whether integrity is, in any practical sense, viable.

That is precisely why this conversation matters to Rotarians. If Rotary values only hold during fellowship meetings — recited at the opening of proceedings and then set aside — they are not really values at all. They are performance.

The true test is not how passionately we repeat the words; it is how honestly we live them when no one is watching.

This is uncomfortable territory, but it may be time for Rotarians to ask themselves harder questions.

When a Rotarian in procurement awards contracts to friends or accepts kickbacks behind the cover of polished speeches about service, is



that the Four-Way Test in practice? When a Rotarian in government looks away from inflated contracts or dishonest processes because "that is how the system works" — is that being truthful? Is that being fair? Does it build goodwill and better friendships, or does it merely protect personal interests?

> "A project is launched with banners and speeches, but suppliers are chosen through influence rather than integrity.."

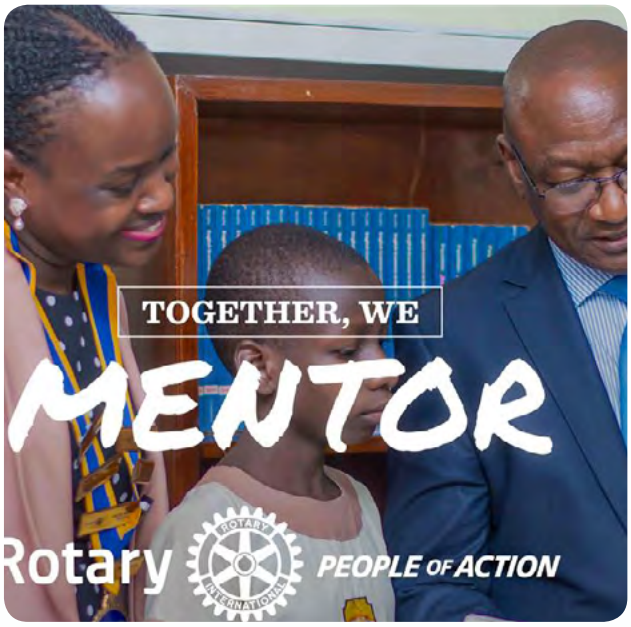
When a Rotarian in business underpays staff, delays suppliers, evades taxes, manipulates tenders, or deceives customers while wearing a Rotary pin, what exactly does that membership represent?

And perhaps harder still: what of compromises within Rotary itself? It is easy to point at government, corporations, or society.

But Rotary must also look inward. Are finances in our clubs and districts always transparent? Are procurement processes genuinely fair? Are decisions made for the good of Rotary or for personal alliances and private interests? Are opportunities shared equitably?

Sometimes comfort with appearances replaces engagement with reality. A project is launched with banners and speeches, but suppliers are chosen through influence rather than integrity.

A Rotary leader speaks eloquently about ethics in public but behaves differently in private. District and club politics



quietly overshadow the spirit of service we claim to defend.

Over time, the risk is that Rotary becomes an organisation that talks about values more readily than it practises them. That should concern every member.

The Four-Way Test was never designed for easy circumstances. Anyone can speak about honesty when honesty costs nothing. Anyone can support fairness when no personal sacrifice is required. The real power of Rotary values only becomes visible when integrity is inconvenient — that is where character is revealed.

This matters well beyond Rotary's internal life. In Uganda, Rotarians are often among the most educated, connected, and influential members of society. Many hold leadership positions in government, NGOs, banks, hospitals, schools, and private enterprise.

Society observes us more than we sometimes appreciate. If Rotarians compromise in ways indistinguishable from those around them, what genuine moral authority do we have to advocate for ethical leadership?

Younger generations are growing sceptical of institutions for this very reason. They are weary of inspiring words unsupported by visible action. They are searching for authenticity — and authenticity requires consistency.

The waiter should experience the same integrity as a fellow Rotarian. The junior employee, the supplier, the driver, the cleaner: Rotary values cannot apply selectively to people within our own networks.

> "...when Rotary values collide with personal benefit, convenience, or pressure — who do we truly become?"

"Is it the truth?" "Is it fair to all concerned?" "Will it build goodwill and better friendships?" "Will it be beneficial to all concerned?"

These questions become far more difficult when money, influence, contracts, politics, and personal interests enter the picture. That is precisely where they matter most.

This is not to suggest that Rotarians are expected to be without fault. Rotary is made up of human beings navigating the same pressures as everyone else. Businesses face strain. Systems create frustration. Corruption can isolate those who try to remain ethical, and integrity sometimes carries a real cost.

The greater danger, however, is not occasional failure. It is growing comfortable with contradiction — reciting values we no longer actively strive to live, separating Rotary from our daily conduct, and substituting the appearance of ethics for the pursuit of it.

Perhaps this is the challenge Rotary in Uganda must wrestle with more honestly in this generation: not simply growing membership, increasing project numbers, or staging successful conferences, but building a community of leaders genuinely committed to ethical living, even when compromise would be easier.

Consider the influence Rotarians could carry if the Four-Way Test truly shaped procurement decisions, hiring practices, contract negotiations, public service conduct, and business culture across Uganda. That influence would extend far beyond any meeting room. It would rebuild trust.

Real service above self does not begin in speeches, branding, or titles. It begins in the quiet, private moments where no one may ever applaud us for choosing what is right.

Because ultimately, the Four-Way Test is not a recitation. It is a mirror. And every Rotarian must answer one question: when Rotary values collide with personal benefit, convenience, or pressure — who do we truly become?

The author is Assistant Governor, and Past President of Rotary Club of Kampala - Naalya


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MSAG: *Why Collaboration Is Rotary's Greatest Asset*

BY **THE EDITORIAL DESK**

There is a version of Rotary service that is admirable but limited — the single club, moved by goodwill, doing what it can with what it has. And then there is the version that actually changes things: clubs working in concert, pooling resources and relationships, drawing in government agencies, private sector players, and civil society to bear down on a problem that no single actor could solve alone. The Rotary Club of Kampala Naalya has provided a masterclass in the second version.

In Acholi Quarters — a settlement in Nakawa Division shaped by decades of displacement and untreated trauma — the club assembled a coalition that should serve as a reference point for every club in District 9213 and beyond.

The Mental Health Integrated Medical Camp was not a routine outreach. It was a deliberate, multi-layered intervention anchored by the formal launch of the Mental Health Support for Adolescents in Ghetto Communities (MSAG) project — Global Grant No. 2570450 — approved by The Rotary Foundation.

Working alongside Kampala Naalya were the Rotary Clubs of Bukoto and Kampala Seven Hills, the Rotary Club of Carlsbad Hi-Noon in California, DFCU Bank, Kampala Capital City Authority, Butabika National Referral Mental Hospital, Reach A Hand Uganda, and several other partners.

Nearly 1,000 residents received services ranging from mental health counselling and dental care to cancer screening, immunisation, HIV testing, legal aid, and blood donation. A large-scale community clean-up preceded it all.

The breadth of that coalition is worth pausing on — because it did not happen by chance.

Collaboration is a discipline, not a convenience. It requires clubs to look beyond their own membership and ask honestly: who else needs to be in the room? For Kampala Naalya, that question led to a Californian club willing to commit USD 6,000 across the ocean, to a national referral hospital whose clinical expertise gave the outreach its backbone, and to a commercial bank whose partnership extended the project's reach in ways a club budget alone could not.

> "TRF's Global Grant Mechanism rewards cross-border partnerships, demands accountability ..."

Each partner brought something irreplaceable. Remove any one of them and the project shrinks — in scope, in credibility, and in impact.



This is precisely the architecture The Rotary Foundation's Global Grant mechanism is designed to encourage. It rewards cross-border partnerships, demands accountability, and pushes projects towards sustainability rather than one-off gestures.

The MSAG project — with a total budget of USD 59,000 targeting

3,000 adolescents through outreach clinics, a toll-free helpline, school-based screenings, teacher training, and a formal referral pathway to Butabika — is that architecture in practice.

The context matters. Acholi Quarters absorbs people who fled the LRA insurgency in the north, carrying trauma that was never treated. One in four Ugandans lives with a mental health condition.

Less than one per cent of the national health budget addresses it. Approximately 58 per cent of young people in Kampala's informal settlements show symptoms of depression; nearly 46 per cent have experienced suicidal ideation.

Against that backdrop, the MSAG project is not ambitious — it is necessary.

As PDG Mike Ssebalu, a veteran voice in District 9213, noted at the inaugural camp, the depth of deprivation visible in Acholi Quarters suggests that District 9213 might consider adopting the community for projects across all seven of Rotary's Areas of Focus.

> "... our most valuable asset is our ability to convene, connect, and bring the right people around a shared problem."

It is a bold proposal — but it follows logically from what Kampala Naalya has already demonstrated: that when clubs commit seriously to a place, and bring others with them, the cumulative impact is transformative.

For newer Rotarians, the lesson is straightforward: the goal of any project is not the project itself, but the change it leaves behind. That change is almost always proportional to the quality and depth of the partnerships behind it.

For more experienced Rotarians, the reminder is equally plain — our most valuable asset is not our dues or our meeting rooms, but our ability to convene, connect, and bring the right people around a shared problem.

The MSAG project still has a funding gap. Any Rotarian wishing to contribute can do so through the MyRotary portal: select Donate, choose Global Grants, and enter Grant number 2570450.

Three thousand adolescents in Kampala's informal settlements are not waiting for a more convenient moment. Neither should we.





Did You Know These Seven Facts About the All-Africa Zone Institute?

AS KAMPALA PREPARES TO HOST THE 7TH EDITION IN SEPTEMBER, HERE IS WHAT THIS GATHERING TRULY MEANS — AND WHY IT MATTERS TO YOU.

BY EDITORIAL DESK



PDG Nsibirwa was the RI President's Representative at Discon for District 9126 in Nigeria recently

1. It Was Born Out of a Corporate Expansion Problem then Africans Made It Their Own

Rotary International formally created Zones in the 1980s to manage its growing global membership, and Zone Institutes followed as the mechanism for disseminating presidential policy to regional leaders.

For decades, African districts were bundled under European Zones, meaning our new leaders travelled to Paris or Rome for their training. In 2018, visionary African leaders successfully lobbied the RI Board for a dedicated, unified continental framework - and in 2019, the 1st All-Africa Zone Institute was born in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt. The blueprint was RI's; the transformation of it into a continental tool belongs entirely to Africa.

2. It Is Not a Conference; It Is a Leadership Pipeline

Unlike a District Conference, which celebrates local club achievements, the Zone Institute is a high-level training and governance forum. Before the main sessions begin, incoming District Governors-Elect (DGEs) undergo the Governor-Elect Learning Seminar (GELS), where they are prepared for district administration, budget management, and leadership strategy. Governor-Nominees undergo similar structured preparation.

> "In 2018, visionary African leaders successfully lobbied the RI Board for a dedicated, unified continental framework."

This pre-Institute phase is the most critical leadership development exercise on the continent, and it happens quietly, behind closed doors, before the wider delegation even arrives.

3. Its Core Delegation Represents the Entire Rotary Architecture of Africa

The Zone Institute gathers past, current, and incoming District Governors alongside RI Directors, Rotary Foundation Trustees, Regional Coordinators for Public Image, Membership, and the Rotary Foundation - and increasingly, senior Rotaractors. When this room speaks, it speaks with the full institutional weight of continental Rotary.

4. It Is Where Africa's Biggest Service Projects Are Conceived

This is the one space where a Governor from East Africa can sit across from counterparts in West or Southern Africa and co-design cross-border global grants targeting maternal health, water and sanitation,



RIDE Emmanuel Katongole was the RI District Representative at Discon 2026 for District 9370 in Southern Africa

and basic education. The $6 million "Partners for a Malaria-Free Zambia" initiative — celebrated at the 5th Institute in Lusaka — is the clearest example of what happens when African Rotarians are given a strategic table of their own.

5. Its Six Previous Editions Tell a Single, Coherent Story

From Egypt's structural launch in 2019, through Uganda's pandemic-era digital resilience in 2020, Cameroon's bridging of linguistic divides in 2021, Ethiopia's membership growth mandate in 2022, Zambia's programmes of scale in 2023, to Mauritius's professionalisation of grant access in 2024 - each Zone Institute has built deliberately on the last.

The question has evolved from "How do we organise ourselves?" to "How do we execute multimillion-dollar continental impact?" Kampala 2026 is the next chapter of that roadmap, not a standalone event.

6. Hosting the Institute Carries the Weight of a State Summit

When an African nation hosts, the Head of State is typically invited as Guest of Honour to officially open proceedings - a recognition of the diplomatic and economic significance of 3,000 international delegates arriving in your country.

Uganda has a strong track record of high-level government engagement with Rotary, and the Kampala organizing team, co-chaired by PDG Mike Kennedy Ssebalu and PDG Peace Taremwa, is mobilising over UGX1 billion in corporate and state partnerships.

This is MICE tourism and national diplomacy operating at its finest.

7. Kampala 2026 Marks a Historic Milestone for African Rotary

The 7th All-Africa Zone Institute, which will run from September 29 to October 3 at Speke Resort Munyonyo, coincides with the historic ascension of Rtn Emmanuel Katongole as RI Director and Olayinka Hakeem Babalola of Nigeria as RI President-Elect.

> "The 7th All-Africa Zone Institute, which will run from September 29 to October 3 at Speke Resort Munyonyo,."

For the first time, Africa is not just hosting the conversation - Africa is leading the global one.

For every Rotarian on this continent, old guard or newly inducted, being present in Kampala this September is not optional. It is a once-in-a-generation witness to what African Rotary has built.



RIDE Emmanuel Katongole (2L) poses with regional Rotarians at the Regional Team Learning Seminar in Kenya recently



#Impact

Building Tomorrow's Leaders Today: Rotary's Five Most Iconic Youth Service Projects

BY **EDITORIAL DESK**

Every May, Rotary International turns its collective gaze toward the generation that will inherit both its challenges and its promise. Youth Service Month is not merely a calendar observance - it is a deliberate affirmation that the future of "Service Above Self" lives in young hands.

Across the globe, Rotary's youth programmes have moved well beyond token gestures, evolving into structured, scalable frameworks that develop character, cultivate empathy, and deliver measurable humanitarian impact.

Five of these initiatives stand above the rest - tested by time, proven by results, and ripe for replication anywhere from Kampala to Kathmandu.

RYLA: Where Hidden Leaders Are Found

The Rotary Youth Leadership Awards programme remains the gold standard of youth leadership development within the Rotary family. Adopted across virtually all 500-plus Rotary districts worldwide, RYLA typically takes the form of an intensive three-to-seven-day seminar, camp, or workshop for young people aged 14 to 30. What distinguishes it from conventional training is its deliberate targeting of hidden leaders - young people of immense potential who lack the resources or confidence to step forward.



> "With nearly half a million members across 150-plus countries, the Interact Club is Rotary's most expansive youth initiative..."

Through experiential learning, outdoor challenge courses, and real-world problem-solving simulations, RYLA strips away the lecture theatre and replaces it with life.

Participants leave equipped in conflict resolution, ethics, and community organisation. For Ugandan districts, RYLA represents a readily deployable model that demands no elaborate infrastructure - only committed Rotarians willing to invest a week in a young person's future.

Interact: A Boardroom for Teenagers

With nearly half a million members across 150-plus countries, the Interact Club is Rotary's most expansive youth initiative. Every club is mandated to execute at least two service projects annually - one serving the local community, another promoting international understanding.

What makes Interact genuinely iconic is its governance model: teenagers run their own board of directors, manage budgets, and execute full project cycles.

From organising blood drives to fundraising for clean water wells, Interact translates youthful energy into structured, accountable humanitarian action. In Uganda, where secondary schools are already fertile ground for student leadership,



Since 2010, a partnership between Rotaract clubs in Kenya and Germany has quietly rewritten the playbook on youth-led international development.

Rather than one-off well-drilling, German Rotaractors fundraise and manufacture sustainable BioSand water filters while Kenyan counterparts train schoolchildren as "water ambassadors" - conducting monthly water quality tests and performing community hygiene outreach.

Cited by Rotary's WASH Rotary Action Group as the longest continuous youth-managed international WASH project, it even survived COVID-19 through remote training. It is proof that sustainable development, when trusted to young people, endures.

These five programmes share a common thread: youth ownership, not adult management; sustainability, not one-off charity; and replicability, not isolated inspiration.

As Rotarians in Uganda and across the continent look to deepen their impact this Youth Service Month, the blueprint is already written.

The only question is whether we have the will to hand the pen to those who come after us. ***The next generation is not waiting in the wings. They are ready for the stage.***

Interact clubs offer a natural bridge between classroom civics and real-world service.

Rotary Youth Exchange: Diplomacy at Eighteen

Few programmes in the Rotary ecosystem carry the transformative weight of the Rotary Youth Exchange. Over 8,000 students annually spend up to a year living abroad with host families across more than 80 countries.

As a mandatory component, each exchange student participates in local service initiatives within their host country - embedding peacebuilding into the very structure of cultural immersion.

Alumni have gone on to found NGOs, lead post-conflict reconciliation efforts, and advance Rotary's core areas of focus. The multiplier effect is extraordinary: a single exchange year has been known to ignite decades of service. It is, in the truest sense, Rotary's grassroots peace project.

"You Are Not Alone" (YANA): Mental Health Meets the Digital Age

Born from the ingenuity of Southeast Asian Rotaractors, the YANA initiative reached over 50,000 young people with evidence-based mental health education covering suicide prevention, cyberbullying, trauma, and depression.

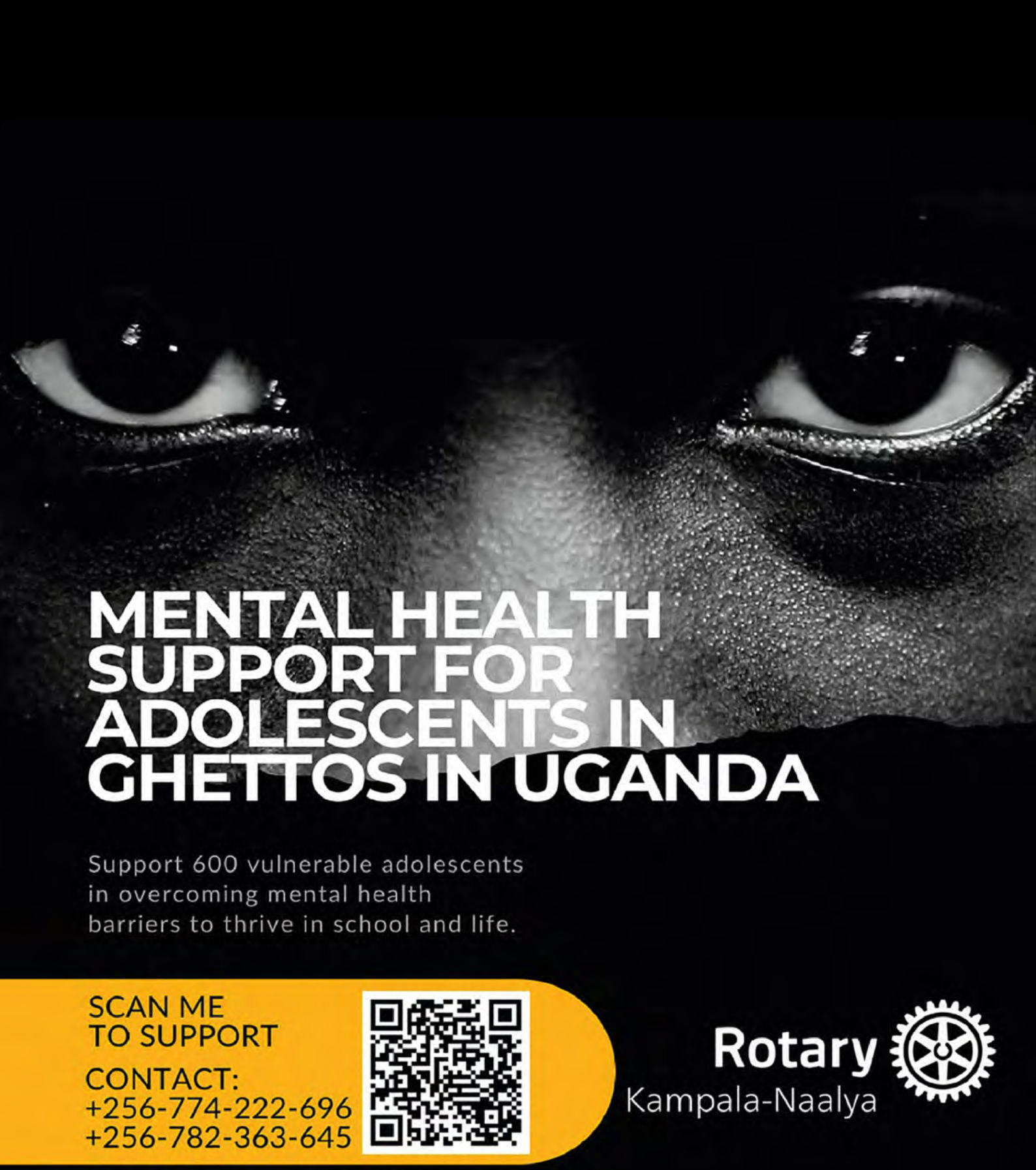
> "The model is scalable, replicable, and urgently needed in communities across East Africa.."

Winner of the 2020–21 Rotaract Outstanding Project Award in the international multiclub category, YANA pioneered a digitally native model that crossed cultural boundaries without losing clinical credibility.

In a continent - and indeed a world - where youth mental health remains deeply stigmatised, YANA demonstrated that Rotaractors can leverage technology to address invisible wounds with both compassion and rigour.

The model is scalable, replicable, and urgently needed in communities across East Africa.

Hand in Hand: Youth for Water and Sanitation


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Mental Health: Not a Luxury — It Is Survival

BY **RTN JACKLINE MUTIIMBA**



For many years, communities have learned how to survive hardship — but not always how to heal from it.

In low-income and underserved communities, people wake up each day carrying invisible weight: financial pressure, family responsibilities, violence, unemployment, grief, rejection, trauma, and fear about tomorrow.

Yet despite all of this, society still expects people to suffer in silence. Emotional exhaustion is normalised.

People are praised for enduring quietly. Burnout is mistaken for resilience. Depression is hidden behind forced smiles. Pain is laughed off because vulnerability is seen as weakness.

The truth is this: a struggling mind affects an entire community. Mental health is not merely a personal issue. It is a community issue, a development issue, a leadership issue, and a human issue. No community can genuinely grow when its people are emotionally drained, unsupported, and constantly surviving rather than living.

> “Depression is hidden behind forced smiles. Pain is laughed off because vulnerability is seen as weakness.”

Healthy communities are not built through roads, businesses, or policies alone. They are built when people feel safe — safe to speak, safe to rest, safe to ask for help, safe to exist without shame.

People need more than opportunity. They need emotional support, compassion, and environments where they are treated with dignity, not merely expected to endure.

When communities begin to take mental well-being seriously, something powerful happens. People reconnect with hope. Young people start believing in their futures again. Parents become more emotionally present.

Friendships deepen. Families communicate more honestly. Violence reduces. Trust returns. Slowly, healing begins where silence once lived.

Supportive community leadership matters more than many people realise. The strongest leaders are not only those who organise projects or speak loudly in meetings — they are those who listen, who create spaces where people feel seen, and who understand that dignity,

empathy, and kindness are also forms of leadership.

Communities flourish when compassion becomes culture rather than exception.

Emotionally healthy people contribute differently to society. They collaborate better, think more clearly, solve problems creatively, and support one another with greater sincerity. They build rather than destroy, and they dream again.

Mental health support does not always begin with therapy rooms or expensive programmes.

Sometimes it starts with simple things: checking on someone, listening without judgement, creating safe conversations, reducing stigma, showing patience, and offering understanding in place of criticism.

> “When people feel mentally supported, they do not merely survive within their communities. They thrive. .”

Sometimes the most healing words a person can hear are: “I see you.” “You matter.” “You are not alone.”

Communities that ignore mental health eventually struggle with broken relationships, hopelessness, violence, addiction, and cycles of pain that pass quietly from one generation to the next.

But communities that choose healing create something different — belonging, resilience, and people who are emotionally strong enough not only to survive hardship, but to transform it.

When people feel mentally supported, they do not merely survive within their communities. They thrive. And thriving people build thriving communities.





ELDER'S EYE

The Role of Rotarians in Shaping Youth

BY PP GODFREY OKELLO-OMODING

"A FATHER'S WEALTH IS NOT IN HIS POCKET, BUT IN THE CHARACTER OF HIS CHILDREN."

This African proverb speaks to the responsibility of elders in forming the young. Today, it places that responsibility squarely on Rotarians — to nurture the youth around them, particularly Rotaractors and Interactors.

This month's theme, Youth Service, is a timely reminder of two interconnected obligations: what Rotarians must do to advance young people, and what the youth themselves must do to meet the expectations of their communities.

Youth must be guided and motivated to engage in activities that strengthen the places they live and will one day lead.

Young people should always be in a mode of learning and doing. Rotarians, in turn, should maintain a keen, active interest in the youth around them — guiding them, ensuring they develop varied skills and sound character, and creating conditions for them to benefit from what they discover about themselves and the world.

> "Thinking skills support decision-making, critical analysis, problem-solving, and coping with change.."

Youth benefit enormously from knowledge passed on through both formal and informal channels. As the saying acknowledges, no amount of property conveys wisdom. Wisdom comes from tested experience, from difficulty navigated and lessons absorbed. Every Rotarian who is present in a young person's life has the opportunity to serve as mentor, teacher, counsellor, or disciplinarian — often all at once.

The Rotarian's voluntary commitment to mentoring and guiding youth should have no natural end point, because the young are always learning, always growing, always in need of orientation. There must always be a place for youth in Rotary's life. That kind of sustained engagement offers both quantitative and qualitative growth.



The message of this month's theme is direct: take your role seriously, because you are in the business of building character. You have seen further than the young people around you. They need your shoulders to stand on — not to lean on — in order to see their own futures clearly. By standing on those shoulders, they gain vision, skills, access to influence, and a share in your wealth of experience and knowledge.

Every Rotarian has, at some point, taken significant risks — from youth through to the present. The clarity that comes from navigating those risks is precisely what can save a young person from avoidable mistakes.

Shared experience more than doubles



its value: the one who shares it plants a seed that benefits not only the recipient but, in many cases, the giver.

For parents especially, the return is often direct. Hence the proverb: the father's wealth is in the character of his children.

Through your networks, Rotarians hold uncommon power to create opportunity. Society is increasingly shaped by who knows whom, and how well. Being part of a network — or being close to someone who is — opens doors. You carry networks that a young person can genuinely benefit from. Connect them.

It has long been observed that building on tested ideas reduces the risk of failure. Such ideas are best obtained from people with experience — those who have been shaped and refined by time, exposure, and knowledge. Today's youth have a distinct advantage in the presence of technology, which accelerates the spread and development of ideas.

But information is not wisdom. The vast flow of content available — good and bad — needs to be filtered, contextualised, and sharpened.

As the proverb goes, iron sharpens iron, and one person sharpens another. An idea from a young person, refined by an older and wiser hand, becomes something stronger.

> "An idea from a young person, refined by an older and wiser hand, becomes something stronger."

Rotarians must have a genuine stake in the youth. Young people are the continuation of everything Rotary has built. No one builds in order to leave nothing behind.

Rotarians must invest in continuity — through active participation in the lives of Rotaractors and Interactors, through mentoring, through opening doors.

The theme of this month calls Rotarians to step forward as teachers. The youth are searching for practical wisdom to help them navigate life. Genuine teachers who build and share constructive knowledge are rare.

Rotarians must go out and build the young people to whom they will eventually hand over the future. Let youth use you as a stepping stone.

In unity and for the greater good, take your place in creating lasting impact among the youth — shaping, reshaping, and sharpening them, and opening opportunities wherever you can.



OUT TO LUNCH

UEDCL Review Should Include Self-Funded Connections



BY **RTN DENIS JJUUKO**

Land prices in greater Kampala and other urban areas of Uganda continue to rise, making homeownership increasingly unattainable for most people. This dynamic widens the country's housing deficit, which currently stands at approximately 2.4 million units.

One of the main drivers of high land prices is the availability of utilities.

Once an area is connected to the national electricity grid or water mains, land values climb sharply.

When a road is added, they can triple or quadruple.

Landowners understand that utilities attract buyers and developers — and that where infrastructure is absent, the cost of obtaining it can be prohibitive.

> "For businesses requiring three-phase electricity and a transformer, the costs become steep.."

A basic new electricity connection may cost less than Shs 100,000 where no additional pole is needed and the customer is willing to wait for a government-subsidised installation.

A self-funded connection, however, can exceed Shs 500,000. Where no pole exists nearby, costs rise further: a single-pole connection runs in excess of Shs 2.8 million. If more than one pole is required, customers often have no option but to hire a private company, and there are no standardised rates — each contractor charges at will.

For businesses requiring three-phase electricity and a transformer, the costs become steep. The alternative — relocating to an industrial park where power is already available — is out of reach for small enterprises, leaving them with no option but to absorb high start-up costs.

Water infrastructure presents the same problem: where no major pipes run nearby, the resident or business must fund the connection independently.

It is this burden that apparently drove outgoing Mawokota South Member of Parliament Yusuf Nsibambi to cut down electricity poles he had personally installed, after voters in those areas returned him the fewest votes in the January 2026 polls.

He stated on live television that there had been no return on investment. He has

since crossed from the opposition FDC to the ruling NRM.

Nsibambi may have been fortunate not to face arrest for vandalising the power lines.



Under current practice, once infrastructure is privately installed, UEDCL — and previously Umeme — maps and registers it as its own asset. It is catalogued in the utility's inventory.

When electricity and water utilities publish their achievements, they report kilometres of installed lines, numbers of transformers, and lengths of water mains — without disclosing that some of that infrastructure was funded by private citizens.

Claiming assets that were built at another party's expense, and treating a GPS reading as sufficient basis for ownership, is not a sound policy position.

> "A basic new electricity connection may cost less than Shs 100,000 where no additional pole is needed."

Last weekend, the Minister of Energy and Mineral Development terminated the services of the UEDCL board chair and placed the managing director on forced leave. A newly appointed acting board chair promptly named an acting managing director.

The expectation is that service delivery will improve. One issue the new leadership should address is the policy on self-funded connections.

The minister and the sector regulator should instruct UEDCL to stop charging customers who have independently purchased poles, built lines, or installed transformers until the value of their investment has been recovered.



Surveyors who are sent to assess whether a pole, three-phase connection, or transformer is required could include a cost estimate in their report.

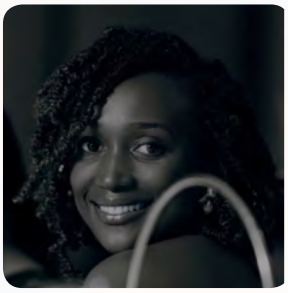
Where a customer proceeds to fund the connection, UEDCL should credit that customer's account with the amount spent.

Each month, consumption charges should be offset against the credit until the balance is exhausted — after which normal billing resumes.

This approach would prevent the utility from effectively appropriating private infrastructure.

Homeowners and businesses would recover their investment. Land and operating costs would fall. And the credibility of public utilities would be better served by honesty about who built what..

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PK's CORNER

The Moment of Bloom

BY **RTN PAMELA KAWADDWA**

There came a quiet ache
no one could see,
not loud enough to be
called suffering,
but heavy enough
to live in my chest like
unfinished rain.

I stayed folded for so long,
wrapped in safety,
tucked inside familiar
fears, telling myself
waiting is wisdom,
stillness is peace.
But inside me,
something restless
kept whispering.
you were not made to remain small.

The walls that once protected
me began to press inward.
The comfort became confinement.
The silence became loneliness.

And I realized
even safety can suffocate
a growing soul.

So I trembled.
Oh, how I trembled.
Because blooming meant exposure
sunlight touching places that
had never known warmth.

It meant risking storms,
risking judgment,
risking becoming visible.
Yet the pain of staying closed
had grown sharper
than the fear of unfolding.

And so…
petal by hesitant petal,
I opened.
Not perfectly.
Not all at once.
But enough to breathe again.

I learned that blossoming
is not a moment of beauty
alone it is an act of bravery.

A surrender to becoming.
A quiet decision to trust
life more than fear.
Now I stand in my becoming,
soft yet unafraid,
knowing this truth:
the bud never betrays itself by
blooming it finally honors what
it was always meant to be.

I will fear, fear itself!

Till again,

~pkwy

Object of Rotary

The Object of Rotary is to encourage and foster the ideal of service as a basis of worthy enterprise and, in particular, to encourage and foster:

FIRST

The development of acquaintance as an opportunity for service;

SECOND

High ethical standards in business and professions; the recognition of the worthiness of all useful occupations; and the dignifying of each Rotarian's occupation as an opportunity to serve society;

THIRD

The application of the ideal of service in each Rotarian's personal, business and community life;

FOURTH

The advancement of international understanding, goodwill, and peace through a world fellowship of business and professional persons united in the ideal of service

Fun Facts

Salad

Here is a truth that would silence any dinner table: the word salad has nothing to do with lettuce. Not a leaf. Not a crouton. The entire magnificent edifice of the modern salad - from Caesar to Niçoise - is built upon a single, crystalline foundation: salt.

Travel back to ancient Rome, and you would find soldiers and senators alike doing something remarkably familiar. They were dressing wild greens and bitter herbs - in a bracing mixture of brine, vinegar, and fish sauce called garum.

This dish was called herba salata: literally, "salted greens." The herba eventually fell away, as superfluous things do. The salt, however, endured. It always does, doesn't it.

From Vulgar Latin, salata passed into Old French as salade, arriving in English around 1400 as sallet or salat. Chaucer nodded to it. Tudor cookbooks celebrated it. And all the while, the defining element was never the vegetable — it was the dressing. The sharp, salty, corrective hand that transformed raw bitterness into something worth eating. The Latin root sal, salt, turns



out to be one of history's great overachievers. It gave us salary (Roman soldiers received a salarium to purchase salt, making them perhaps the first people ever paid in condiments), salami, sauce, sausage, and salsa. Salt didn't merely season food; it built economies, preserved empires, and apparently colonised half the dictionary.

By the 17th century, creative cooks realised the "dressed mixture" principle could extend beyond leaves - to cold meats, potatoes, and eventually tuna from a tin. Today we have fruit salad, which would horrify any self-respecting Roman.

As for Shakespeare - he gave us "salad days" in Antony and Cleopatra, meaning not fresh and green, but raw, unripe, and unready.

Youth as an undressed vegetable. Poignant, really.

Which brings us, naturally, to Rotary. We who gather weekly, with Service Above Self as our compass, have long understood what the Romans knew instinctively: the right ingredient, applied consistently, transforms everything around it. Salt preserves. Service elevates. Neither announces itself loudly. Both are quietly, stubbornly essential.

Next time you pass the salt at an inauguration dinner, remember: you are participating in 2,500 years of civilisation.

Now that surely deserves at least a second helping.

Jokes of the week

1.A bowl of soup walked into a therapist's office. The therapist said, "What seems to be the problem?" The soup said, "I feel like nobody ever takes me seriously. They just stir me up, blow on me a little, and abandon me when I get cold." The therapist nodded slowly. "That," she said, "is called a situationship."

2. Why did the egg get thrown out of the comedy club? Every single joke was too over easy. The crowd was eggs-asperated. He was taken off the menu. Scrambled career.



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