Naalya Food Bulletin

12th May, 2026

Rotary Kampala - Naalya

UNITE FOR GOOD

Issue 42 | RY 2025-26



Rtn Ruth Mugisha, from the Rotary Club of Kampala Naalya in action at the health camp at Acholi Quarters recently.

RC KAMPALA - NAALYA

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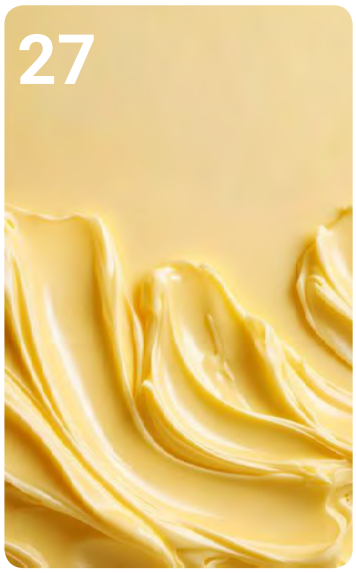



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Chef's Note

Dear Rotarians and Guests,

There is a kind of suffering that does not bleed. It does not fracture a limb or register on any thermometer. It arrives quietly; in the teenager who has stopped dreaming, in the student whose despair is dubbed "laziness."

May is both Mental Health Month and Youth Service Month, and that convergence is no accident of the calendar. It is a mirror held up to us. Because the minds most silently at risk are often the youngest ones among us: the very people we claim to be building a future for.

What is a scholarship worth to a young person who has lost the will to sit for an examination? What is a borehole worth to a community whose children are abusing narcotic drugs?

We have measured health by the strength of the body for far too long, leaving the mind to carry its burden alone, in silence, in shame. But a cracked foundation cannot hold a rising building. A future without mentally strong people is not a future worth celebrating. It is a hollow drum. A road that begins and ends in the same place. In Uganda, we understand pressure. The weight of expectation. The ache of poverty and war. The particular loneliness of struggling while surrounded by people.

We have taught our children that strength means silence, that to speak of pain is to confess weakness. But I tell you plainly: the bravest sentence in any language is I am not well, and I need help!

So here is what we are called to do - not next year, not after the next project cycle, but this week:

Ask. Not "how are you?" and walk away. Ask and stay. Look into the eyes of a young person in your home, your club, your street, and genuinely want to know the answer.

Listen. Without counsel. Without judgment. Without a quick fix. Sometimes the greatest gift one human being can offer another is simply a witnessed silence.

Act. Partner with a school. Seek technical knowhow from experts. Fund a peer support circle. Remove shame from the conversation, because stigma is the lock that keeps people imprisoned in their own pain.

This is not the Butabika professional's work alone. It is ours. All of ours - Rotarian and neighbour, parent and pastor, employer and friend. We do not need a clinic to begin. We need only the courage to begin.

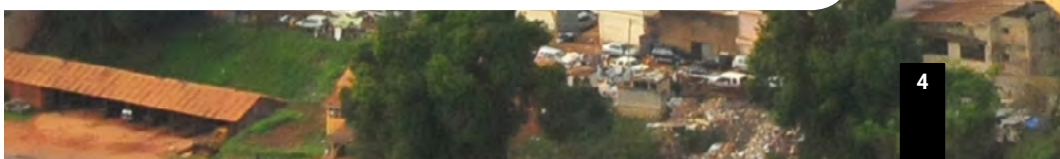
There are young people in our communities right now – bright and beautiful but burning, quietly desperate - waiting to see whether anyone notices. Whether anyone cares enough to ask. Whether the world they have inherited has room for their honesty.

Let the month of May be our answer. Let our clubs and our homes and our conversations become the places where no one suffers alone.

The soil is ready. The season is here. Plant something that lasts.

Service Above Self - in mind, body, and spirit.

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.

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

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.

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,

I warmly greet you all at the start of this new week. May it be filled with renewed energy, inspiration, and opportunities to serve together in the spirit of Rotary.

I extend my sincere appreciation to all who attended our Rotary meeting on Tuesday, 5th May 2026. I particularly thank Past President Herbert Oloka and Rotarian Brian Mayanja for their insightful presentations.

Their reflections on agricultural practices in the face of the climate crisis were timely, as our club prioritises WASH-related projects in the coming years.

I also wish to recognise and thank those who have contributed to our Global Grant initiative. This mental health project, now on the verge of clearance for implementation, represents a significant step forward in addressing one of the most pressing challenges of our time.

Your generosity has brought us closer to making this vision a reality. However, we still face a funding deficit of $3,600. I kindly encourage those who are able to contribute to tag their support directly to the global grant.

This week, we celebrate all mothers within the Naalya Rotary family. Your nurturing spirit and resilience are the foundation upon which strong families and communities are built.

We honour you not only for the love you give, but for the example you set in service and compassion. May you feel deeply appreciated today and always.

Finally, I wish to inform you that there will be no Rotary meeting on Tuesday, 12th May. The day coincides with a public holiday and will also be marked by security restrictions due to the Presidential swearing-in ceremony.

> "This week, we celebrate all mothers within the Naalya Rotary family."

I encourage members to use this time for reflection, family, and personal service activities, or to visit other clubs.

We look forward to resuming our meetings with renewed enthusiasm the following week.

YOURS IN SERVICE ABOVE SELF,



TEAM TALK

Rotary Begins at Home: Children Who Choose Service Above Self

BY **AG FRANCIS LUBUULWA**

One of the most powerful things a child can ever hear is not, "You must become a Rotarian someday," but rather, "You can make a difference where you are." That is where "service above self" truly begins.

Not in a Rotary meeting. Not at a fellowship dinner. Not even at a community project. It begins quietly at home, in the values our children absorb, the conversations they hear, and the example we consistently live before them.

Last week's piece on Rotary Begins at Home resonated with many Rotarians because it touched a truth we often overlook: our children are already watching Rotary through us.

Whether we realise it or not, they are forming opinions about service, leadership, kindness, and integrity long before they ever step into an Interact club or attend a Rotary event.

> "Children learn values best through repetition, observation, and participation."

The question, therefore, is no longer whether our children are learning from us. They are. The real question is: what exactly are they learning? One of Rotary's greatest gifts to society is that it offers a moral framework that is both practical and timeless.



The Four-Way Test and the Rotary Code of Conduct are not merely tools for club leadership or professional networking. They are principles capable of shaping responsible, compassionate, and grounded young people.

But children do not learn values best through memorisation. They learn through repetition, observation, and participation. A teenager who hears a parent preach honesty but watches them lie casually on the phone learns something very different from the Four-Way Test.

A child who sees a parent treat domestic workers, waiters, drivers, and security guards with dignity begins to understand fairness and respect without a single lecture.

A young person who watches parents serve others joyfully, not for recognition or social media, but because it is the right thing to do, starts to understand what "service above self" really means.

This is where many of us as

parents need to pause. We sometimes present Rotary to our children as something that takes us away from them, rather than something that can include them. They hear us talk about meetings, projects, fundraising targets, and club obligations, but rarely experience the deeper meaning behind any of it.

Yet children are naturally drawn to purpose. Many teenagers today are searching for identity and relevance. They want to feel useful, to know they matter, to belong to something meaningful. Rotary, when lived authentically, answers all those questions.

How do we make this practical in everyday Ugandan homes? It starts with small things. Teach your children to greet people respectfully, regardless of status. Encourage them to help at home without expecting payment for every task. Let them participate when the family is supporting someone in need. Discuss ethical dilemmas openly rather than simply issuing commands. Ask them:

"What do you think is the right thing to do here?"
"Was that fair?"
"How would your actions affect someone else?"

Without realising it, you are teaching the Four-Way Test.

The Rotary Code of Conduct can come alive in equally ordinary situations: teaching accountability when children make mistakes; teaching respect even during disagreement; discouraging bullying; encouraging inclusion of classmates who are often left out; teaching them to use leadership to help others rather than dominate them. These are Rotary values.

We must also allow our children to see us fail and correct ourselves. One of the greatest lessons a child can learn is watching a parent apologise sincerely, admit a mistake, or choose integrity when compromise would be easier. That is how values become believable.

Exposure matters too. Take children along to selected service activities. Introduce them to inspiring Rotarians. Let them see young leaders in Interact and Rotaract doing meaningful work. Some children will show immediate enthusiasm; others may appear indifferent at first. That is normal. Seeds do not all grow at the same speed.

> "If all they hear from us concerns grades, money, cars, jobs, and status, then service will always feel secondary."

The goal is not to force Rotary onto our children. Forced values rarely last. The goal is to create an environment where service feels natural, leadership feels responsible, and kindness feels normal.



And we must redefine success before our children define it for themselves.

If all they hear from us concerns grades, money, cars, jobs, and status, then service will always feel secondary. But if they grow up hearing conversations about impact, compassion, honesty, and helping others rise, they begin to understand that true success extends beyond personal achievement.

That is the spirit behind "service above self." It does not mean neglecting personal ambition. It means recognising that our gifts, opportunities, education, and influence become most meaningful when they improve life for others as well.

Imagine what Uganda would look like if more homes intentionally raised children this way: young people who lead with integrity; who see dignity in every human being; who do not wait to become wealthy before serving; who understand that leadership is responsibility, not entitlement.

That is not just good parenting. That is nation-building. And perhaps that is Rotary's greatest long-term project of all: not the buildings we construct or the donations we give, but the values we quietly pass on to the next generation watching us from across the living room.

The author is Assistant Governor, and Past President of Rotary Club of Kampala - Naalya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2026
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TO THE
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26th June - 15th Dec 2025: 475 (Early Registration)
16th Dec 2025 - 31st Mar 2026: $575
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The Urgent Case for Adolescent Mental Health

BY **THE EDITORIAL DESK**

A ROTARY HEALTH CAMP IN ONE OF KAMPALA'S MOST OVERLOOKED COMMUNITIES HAS PULLED BACK THE CURTAIN ON A CRISIS HIDING IN PLAIN SIGHT — AND IT DEMANDS OUR FULL ATTENTION.

On 2 May 2025, as Uganda joined the rest of the world in marking Mental Health Awareness Month - a global observance that dates back to 1949 - the Rotary Club of Kampala Naalya returned to Acholi Quarters in Nakawa Division with a mission that was anything but routine.

Together with the Rotary Clubs of Bukoto and Kampala Seven Hills, they set up the 2nd Rotary Integrated Mental Health Outreach Camp in one of the city's most underserved settlements: a community still carrying the invisible wounds of war, displacement, and decades of silence.

What they found — and what they offered — should concern every Rotarian in this country, and every person who cares about the future of Uganda's young people.

Acholi Quarters is home to thousands of Ugandans who fled the Lord's Resistance Army insurgency in northern Uganda. They arrived in Kampala carrying not just the physical scars of displacement, but the invisible weight of trauma — post-traumatic stress disorder, chronic anxiety, depression, and grief that does not simply go away because the guns have fallen silent.



> "...approx. 58% of young people in Kampala's informal settlements report symptoms of depression."

In the absence of accessible care, many have turned to alcohol and illicit substances, not for recreation, but as desperate self-medication.

Mental illness in this community has rarely been called by its name. It has been labelled stubbornness, laziness, or witchcraft. And so it has gone untreated - sometimes for years, sometimes for entire lifetimes.

The numbers that emerged from this camp and supporting research paint a troubling picture. Approximately 58 per cent of young people in Kampala's informal settlements report symptoms of depression. Nearly 46 per cent have experienced suicidal thoughts. More than 45 per cent suffer from more than one condition simultaneously. These are not statistics from a distant repo; they describe the teenagers navigating Acholi Quarters every single day.



What the Experts Are Telling Us

Mr Nsereko James Roger, Head of Community and Recovery at Butabika National Referral Hospital - Uganda's leading psychiatric institution - did not mince words when he addressed the camp.

He spoke about people who hear voices, who see things that are not there, and who may unknowingly cause harm to those around them simply because no one recognised the signs early enough to help. "If somebody is hearing voices, let us take them to hospital," he said plainly.

He also addressed epilepsy - still widely misunderstood as a spiritual curse in many communities - and the compounding risks of alcohol and drug misuse.

Crucially, his message was directed not at patients, but at neighbours, parents, teachers, and community members. The first line of defence against untreated mental illness is not a hospital. It is an informed community.

International evidence reinforces this urgency. The World Health Organisation reports that 1 in 7 adolescents globally - those aged 10 to 19 - lives with a mental health condition, accounting for 15 per cent of the total disease burden in that age group.

Suicide is the third leading cause of death among young people aged 15 to 29, with the majority of these deaths occurring in low- and middle-income countries like Uganda.

Half of all lifetime mental health conditions begin by age 14; 75 per cent emerge by the mid-20s. The adolescent years, in other words, are not just a phase. They are a window - and if we miss it, the consequences follow a person for the rest of their life.

Closer to home, Uganda allocates less than one per cent of its national health budget to mental health, even as one in four Ugandans lives with a mental health condition. Butabika Hospital is stretched well beyond its capacity. Prevention, community outreach, and early detection have become not just desirable - they are essential.

The Cost of Doing Nothing

Neglecting adolescent mental health is not a neutral act. It is a choice, with consequences that ripple through families, schools, workplaces, and communities for generations.

Poor mental health is the leading predictor of school dropout and reduced lifetime earnings. Unaddressed emotional pain often surfaces as high-risk behaviour: substance misuse, early sexual activity, and involvement with the justice system. And the cycle does not stop with one generation.

> “... approx. USD 20,000 remains to be raised, and that gap is the difference between a promising start and a fully resourced intervention...”

Adolescents who do not receive support are more likely to struggle as parents, and more likely to raise children in households where mental illness is normalised rather than treated.

The economic argument is equally compelling. For every dollar invested in treating adolescent depression and anxiety, research shows a return of four to seven dollars in future earnings, reduced disability costs, and lower pressure on the justice system. Inaction is not just a moral failure. It is an expensive one.

The May 2 camp was not a one-off gesture. It is one pillar of a two-year Global Grant project, formally titled, Mental Health Support for Adolescents in Ghetto Communities (MSAG), Global Grant #2570450, approved by The Rotary Foundation.

The project targets 3,000 adolescents across Kampala’s urban slum communities through integrated outreach clinics, a toll-free helpline, school-based screenings, teacher training, psychosocial support clubs, and a formal referral pathway to Butabika Hospital. The Rotary Club of Carlsbad Hi-Noon in California, USA, serves as the international partner.

The first camp, held in October last year at the same site, reached over 600 individuals and confirmed both the scale of unmet need and the effectiveness of the model. The second camp built on that foundation - more structured, more resourced, and more deeply embedded in the communities it serves.

Partners at the May 2 event included Dfcu Bank, KCCA, Rela Dental, the Ministry of Health, and Butabika’s own team of psychiatrists and occupational therapists.

The project’s total budget is USD 59,000. The Rotary Foundation has committed USD 9,600. The Rotary Club of Carlsbad Hi-Noon has fulfilled its USD 6,000 contribution. But approximately USD 20,000 remains to be raised, and that gap is the difference between a promising start and a fully resourced intervention that could serve as a national blueprint.

You can help close that gap today. Visit MyRotary.org, select ‘Donate,’ choose ‘Global Grants,’ and enter Grant number 2570450. Contributions count toward Paul Harris Fellow and Major Donor recognition.

You can also contact the Rotary Club of Kampala Naalya directly to arrange a bank transfer.





#Impact

Young People - The Answer to Climate Change

BY **RTN BRIAN MAYANJA**

WHY INVESTING IN YOUTH-LED, CLIMATE-SMART FARMING IS NO LONGER OPTIONAL

The rains that once arrived reliably in March now come in May — or sometimes not at all. The dry spell that once lasted two weeks can now stretch into two months.

Floods that were once rare now arrive with alarming regularity. For the hundreds of millions of smallholder farmers across Africa, these are not distant statistics. They are the daily reality of a changing climate, and they are threatening livelihoods, food security, and the very future of farming itself.

In Uganda and across the developing world, farming communities - already among the most vulnerable people on earth - are absorbing some of the harshest blows of a crisis they did little to cause.

This is not background noise. It is a five-alarm emergency. And one of the most powerful responses available to us sits largely untapped: our young people.

> "The modern workplace has changed—but support systems have not always kept pace."

To understand what climate change is doing to food systems in poor countries, one must first appreciate the difference between weather and climate.



Weather is what happens today - this morning's drizzle, this afternoon's heat. Climate is the long pattern of weather that farmers have relied on for generations to know when to plant, when to harvest, and when to rest the land.

Climate change is dismantling those patterns. Rains arrive late or not at all. Floods destroy crops and roads in the same season. Droughts stretch longer than anyone remembers. Pests and diseases, once kept in check by seasonal cold, are spreading into new territories.

Livestock suffer from heat stress and shrinking pasture. For a smallholder farmer in Uganda or across the tropics, these disruptions are not just agricultural setbacks. They translate directly into food insecurity, mounting debt, unpaid school fees, and futures placed in jeopardy.

The food systems that poor countries depend on most are fraying at exactly the moment they need to be strongest.

There Is a Way Forward

The global response to climate change has two essential tracks, and both do matter deeply for agriculture. The first is adaptation - adjusting to the changes already underway.

A farmer who harvests rainwater for the dry season is adapting. A community that shifts its planting calendar based on updated forecasts is adapting. These are not signs of defeat; they are practical survival strategies that deserve strong support.

The second is mitigation - reducing the causes of

climate change. Here is a truth worth pausing on: agriculture is both a victim of climate change and, in some ways, a contributor to it.

Yet it is also one of our most powerful tools for fighting back. Trees grown alongside crops store carbon in roots and soils.

Better livestock feeding reduces greenhouse gas emissions. When farming is reimagined thoughtfully, the farm itself becomes part of the climate solution.

Climate Smart Agriculture brings these two tracks together with three connected goals: raising productivity, helping farmers adapt, and cutting emissions where possible. This is not wishful thinking. It is being tested, practised, and scaled across the developing world right now. In Nepal, Benin, and Togo, Climate Smart Villages have been created - not as top-down projects but as community learning spaces where local knowledge meets global science.

In Kenya, farmers are receiving seasonal forecasts and agricultural advice through mobile phones and radio. Drought-tolerant crops, decades in the making, are already saving harvests in sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America.

In Uganda's Masaka region and on the slopes of Mount Elgon, agroforestry - the integration of trees into farmland - is restoring degraded soils, creating shade, and generating income from fruit and timber. The solutions exist. They are working. What is missing is the human force to carry them forward at scale.

Youth - the missing ingredient

Across Uganda and much of Africa, young people have watched their parents battle droughts, floods, poor markets, and unforgiving soil. What they have concluded, quite rationally, is that farming is a losing game.

They leave for the city, and who can blame them? The result is an ageing farming population with no clear succession, and communities that are becoming less equipped to feed themselves with every passing year.

But here is what is being missed: these same young people are precisely who agricultural transformation needs. They are tech-savvy, connected, adaptable, and hungry for innovation. And Climate Smart Agriculture is not the farming of the past.

It involves mobile applications, data-driven decisions, drone technology, value chain entrepreneurship, renewable energy, and green innovation.

It is a thoroughly modern enterprise - the kind that can inspire a new generation, provided they are given proper support and a genuine stake in the outcome.

Involving youth in Climate Smart Agriculture is not a side programme to be added when budgets allow. It is the central strategy. The science exists.

The innovations are proven. What is needed now is a generation of young agripreneurs willing and able to move these solutions from demonstration plots to entire communities and regions.

The Role Rotary Must Play

Rotary's strength lies in its reach: local clubs with global connections, trusted community relationships, and a culture of service that insists on lasting results. The opportunity before us is real and it is enormous.

We can fund Climate Smart training bootcamps for young people aged 18 to 35, teaching drought-tolerant farming, agroforestry, and agribusiness skills — not in classrooms alone, but on working demonstration farms where learning is visible and practical.

> "The modern workplace has changed—but support systems have not always kept pace."

We can establish those demonstration farms in partnership with schools, cooperatives, and local governments. We can launch youth agricultural challenges at the district level, inviting young people to pitch climate-smart enterprises for seed funding and mentorship. We can sponsor the practical infrastructure that unlocks productivity: solar dryers, water tanks, tree nurseries, and small irrigation systems.

We can host policy dialogues that bring youth, researchers, farmers, and local officials to the same table. And we can do what Rotary already does well - mentor.

Our membership includes business leaders, scientists, educators, and finance professionals. These skills, matched deliberately with young agripreneurs, can be transformative.

The rains may no longer be reliable. But the potential of a well-supported, climate-smart young farmer is something we can still count on. The question is whether we will choose to invest in that potential while we still have time.



Taipei: Ten Facts Every Rotarian Should Know



TAIWAN FIRST HOSTED THE CONVENTION IN 1994. FROM 13–17 NEXT MONTH EXACTLY 32 YEARS LATER TENS OF THOUSANDS OF ROTARIANS FROM AROUND THE WORLD WILL DESCEND ON TAIPEI ONCE AGAIN FOR THE ROTARY INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION. HERE ARE TEN FACTS TO SHARPEN YOUR ANTICIPATION.

1. 'Taipei' literally means 'North Taiwan.' The name is simple; the city is not. Taipei is Taiwan's political, cultural, and commercial engine.

2. The 1994 Convention was one of Rotary's largest, and 2026 is aiming higher. Taipei drew 31,161 Rotarians from 91 countries in 1994, a logistical feat that stunned even veterans.

This year, 37,000 Taiwanese Rotarians across 12 districts are hosting more than 30,000 delegates from over 120 countries. They are determined to prove that 1994 was a foundation, not a ceiling.

3. Taipei was denied its second convention, and 2026 is the redemption. The city was awarded the 2021 Convention, only for the COVID-19 pandemic to reduce it to a virtual format, wiping out a projected US$80–120 million in economic impact.

Every preparation for 2026 has been built on that frustration. When a host city has a score to settle, the results tend to be extraordinary.

4. Taiwan's presidents have made opening Rotary conventions a tradition. In 1994, Lee Teng-hui, Taiwan's first popularly elected president, delivered the opening address, a moment heavy with symbolism.

For 2026, President Lai Ching-te has publicly endorsed the Convention, emphasising Taiwan's role as a beacon of democracy and global cooperation. Taipei is among the rare cities where heads of state show up for Rotary.

> "Taipei is among the rare cities where heads of state show up for Rotary."

5. The 1994 themes have aged well. RI President Robert R. Barth of Switzerland, only the second Swiss Rotarian to hold the office, gave us the motto: ***"Believe in What You Do; Do What You Believe In."*** Our next president, Olayinka Hakeem Babalola, will be only the second African to hold the position, under the theme: 'Create Lasting Impact.'

6. The National Palace Museum will stop you cold. It hosted social events in 1994 and remains unmissable. Nearly 700,000 artefacts rescued from the Forbidden City are housed here.

The star exhibits are the Jadeite Cabbage, a flawlessly carved jade the size of a fist, and the Meat-Shaped Stone, a



jasper sculpture so convincingly rendered to resemble braised pork belly that visitors have done a double-take for a century.

7. The 2026 venues mark a genuine step change. The convention centres on two world-class facilities: the Taipei Nangang Exhibition Center (TaiNEX) for the main programme, and the Taipei Dome, opened in 2023 and seating 40,000, for the opening and closing ceremonies.

In 1994, Rotarians marvelled at Taipei's infrastructure. The city has since surpassed itself entirely.

8. Taipei 101 was a rice paddy 32 years ago. The tower did not exist in 1994. Completed in 2004, it briefly held the title of the world's tallest building, its design modelled on a bamboo stalk. The 89th-floor observatory is worth the queue.

> "The convention gives you Rotary; the night markets give you Taipei."

So is the 660-metric-tonne golden damper ball, a steel pendulum that keeps the building stable in typhoons.

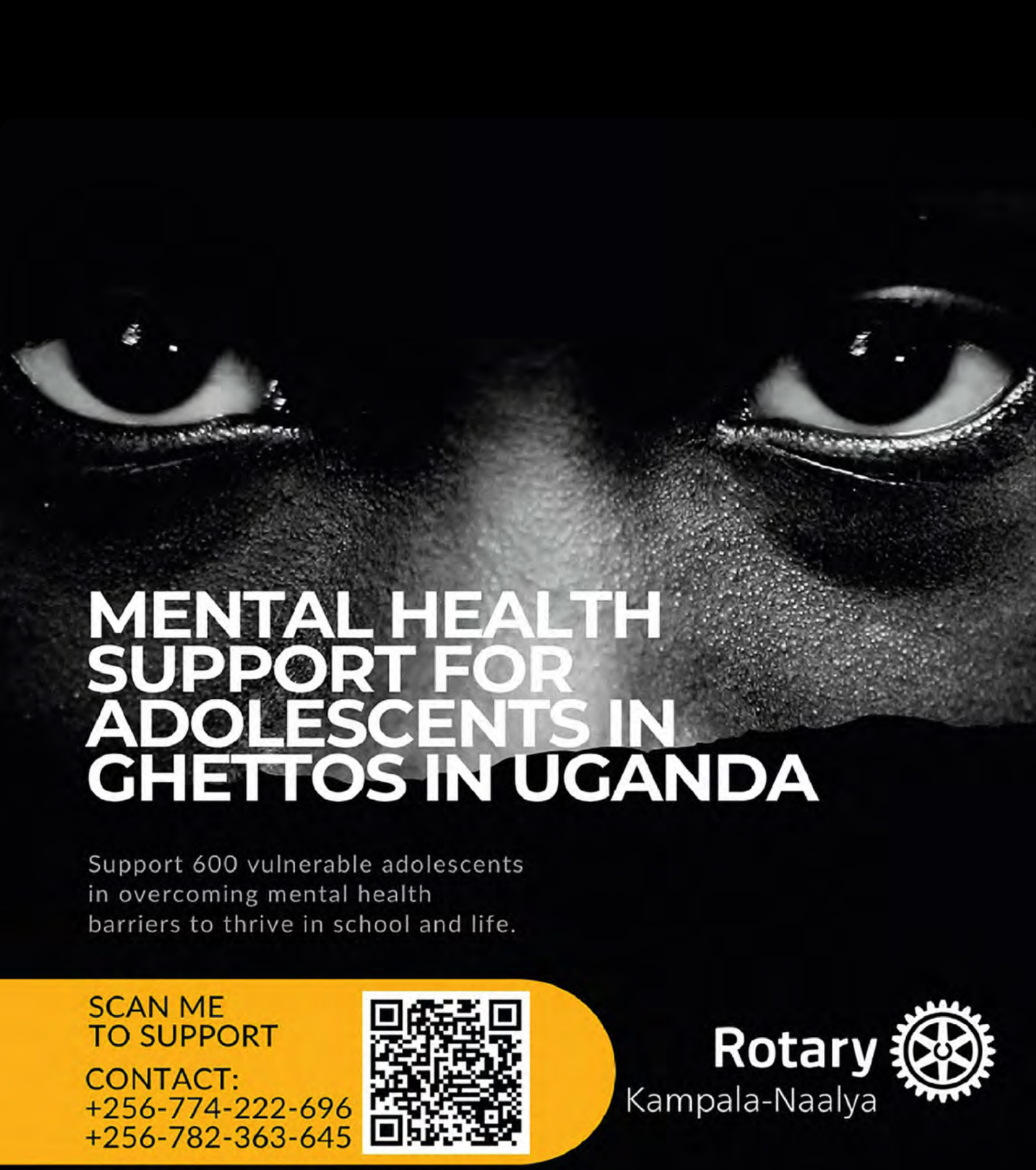
It is among the more extraordinary engineering objects you will ever stand beside.



9. The night markets are as good as the legend. In 1994, the Host Committee's night-market-style food festivals became the social heart of the week. Shilin and Raohe night markets, the real thing, have only improved since. Beef noodle soup, fried chicken cutlets, bubble tea (invented here), and stinky tofu, which is far less alarming than it sounds. The convention gives you Rotary; the night markets give you Taipei.

10. Rotary will cover your MRT fares. All full registrants receive access to Taipei's Mass Rapid Transit system: clean, punctual, and air-conditioned, connecting hotels to venues and beyond.

If you have a spare half-day, take the Maokong Gondola, a glass-bottomed cable car into the mountains above the city, where tea houses serve local Oolong with a panoramic view of the urban sprawl below.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ELDER'S EYE

Seeking Life Skills Solutions to Youth Development

BY PP GODFREY OKELLO-OMODING

As we continue to reflect on the theme of the month, Youth Service, let us examine the role of life skills in youth development. Much attention has been given to formal education and skilling.

The arguments are familiar: we need knowledgeable, employable people who can read and write.

In a society with a well-schooled youth population, there is much to gain. The narrative is compelling.

But what of life skills? The World Health Organization defines them as "abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life." These skills fall into four categories: practical, thinking, social, and personal.

Practical skills help with daily tasks such as managing money, performing basic chores, and navigating job interviews.

Thinking skills support decision-making, critical analysis, problem-solving, and coping with change. Social skills are essential for listening, communicating, expressing empathy, working in teams, and resolving conflict.

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

Personal skills govern how one manages oneself in areas such as stress, self-discipline, hygiene, and time.

Many young people are deficient in these areas. This may explain the troubling behavioural patterns increasingly observed among youth: mental health challenges, irresponsibility, disregard for work, impatience, intolerance, lack of self-drive, substance abuse, and low resilience.

Solutions for holistic youth development are more



urgent today than in the past, when families were more closely knit and extended communities filled the gaps. Those webs are cracking. The question is: who steps in?

Rotary has recognised these gaps through its commitment to youth service.

However, youth needs are evolving rapidly, and their forms are as diverse as the communities they emerge from. Fluidity must be the guiding approach. We must change with the situation.

> “Without life skills, even capital and technical training may fail to transform a young person into a responsible adult..”

Employment creation through skills empowerment remains necessary but insufficient. Skilling alone does not produce a complete person.

Without life skills, even capital and technical training may fail to transform a young person into a responsible adult.

Youth are constantly urged to become job creators. Yet the high mortality rate of youth-led enterprises draws little scrutiny beyond blaming statutory requirements.

Scant attention is paid to the underlying cause: a deficit in life skills. It is easier to address visible challenges than to excavate the ones buried beneath.

Rotarians, this month invites us to go deeper. Counting youths reached or enterprises launched may provide temporary comfort. But watching an honest endeavour collapse for lack of foundational skills is a lasting pain. Life skills deserve our attention.

It is worth noting that female youth appear to be gaining ground in this area.

Young women increasingly demonstrate confidence and focus in their undertakings, a testament to the sustained effort of gender-affirmative interventions and women’s groups.

This progress also calls to mind the District Governor’s Boy Child Uplifting Programme (BCUP), an initiative that seems to be quietly fading from the conversation.

Rotarians, when a call is made to sponsor a youth for RYLA, respond. You will be investing in life skills.

Consider those most deserving. And if you have not already done so, begin giving the youth around you, starting with those in your own family, the life skills they need. Your legacy is best secured not by what you give them, but by what you build in them.





OUT TO LUNCH

Why Roadside Kiosk Owners Need Municipal Bonds

BY **RTN DENIS JJUUKO**



A few weeks ago, an image went viral on the internet in Uganda: a woman raising her hand in distress as her kiosk was being loaded onto a truck with Kenyan motor registration plates, while another woman held a breastfeeding toddler.

People hailed it as the photo of the year. It is, indeed, a powerful image - a single frame that says a thousand words.

Some people offered to help the woman. Others had much to say about the ongoing nationwide campaign to remove informal structures from road reserves. There was also a frantic search for the photographer.

It later emerged that the image had been generated using artificial intelligence. Quite remarkable.

Regardless, Uganda is a country where nearly everyone is either a business owner, an aspiring one, or a former one.

Several international organisations have labelled us the most entrepreneurial nation in the world.

Yet most of our businesses are micro or small — a kiosk here, a stall there, a bench for shining shoes, or simply a spot to sit and sell whatever one can source from a nearby supplier.

In Kampala, this practice is called *kuyiriba*. With the rise of the internet, *kuyiriba* - the hustle - has also migrated online.

Kiosks and stalls along streets, road reserves, and public spaces provide significant informal employment. They are, however, also an eyesore. They create a cluttered and unsafe environment for both traders and customers.

> “Uganda is a country where nearly everyone is either a business owner, an aspiring one, or a former one.”

The government, having deemed the situation untenable, ordered their removal - though that directive has since been suspended.

Consider driving along the highway connecting Uganda to Kenya - one of the busiest in the country given our dependence on the port of Mombasa - and encountering hundreds of stalls selling waragi between



Kakira and Magamaga, where taxis and trucks stop to refuel before continuing their journeys.

What impression would a visitor form? Alcohol along a major transit route does little to reassure anyone about road safety.

Visitors using the old Kampala–Entebbe Road encounter a similar picture - one that suggests a struggling economy. First impressions, in urban development as in business, carry considerable weight.

In the interim, property owners along such corridors could, at a minimum, be encouraged to pave their front yards, apply fresh coats of weather-resistant paint, and replace ageing roofing.

Those unable or unwilling to improve their properties could be encouraged to sell to those who can. Alternatively, the government could acquire such land through fair compensation - similar to how it handles right-of-way acquisitions during road construction.

The government could then commission a masterplan for the area, complete with architectural guidelines, and invite investors to purchase plots and develop them accordingly. Crucially, those investors would not be permitted to deviate from the approved plan.

> “Not every junction can accommodate a boda-boda stage, a taxi park, or a pop-up food stall.”

To finance such acquisitions, the government could issue municipal or infrastructure bonds. SACCOs, investment clubs, and individual investors would likely oversubscribe.

The resulting capital could fund land acquisition and development within a reasonable timeframe. Tax incentives could further stimulate participation.

The masterplan would incorporate large, designated market areas to which kiosk and stall owners could be relocated. Flea markets and mobile vendors would operate in these zones rather than on road reserves. Dedicated areas for taxi and bus stages would be identified, with provision for future transit infrastructure such as train stations and cycling lanes.

Kampala and many of our growing urban centres lack adequate open and public spaces. A deliberate masterplan would set aside such spaces alongside the amenities that make cities livable.

Ugandans would have to accept that convenience cannot exist on every corner. Not every junction can accommodate a boda-boda stage, a taxi park, or a pop-up food stall.

People may need to walk a little further - or even drive - to board a taxi or buy groceries. Not every front yard can be a kiosk or a boutique for second-hand clothing.

The global cities we admire are planned that way. We have both the tools and the opportunity to move in that direction.

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How Time Is Not Treated the Same Everywhere

1. Germany: Being late is disrespectful. Meetings start to the second. Punctuality is not a habit; it is a moral standard.

2. Brazil: An invitation for seven means nine. Relationships matter more than schedules. Rigidity kills the atmosphere.

3. Japan: Trains run to the minute. A sixty-second delay warrants a formal public apology. Time is a system, and the system is everything.

4. India: Events begin when people arrive. The gathering defines the time. Presence matters more than precision.

5. Polynesian cultures: Time was tied to stars, seasons, and the ocean: circular, not linear. The clock came later, and from somewhere else.

6. United States: Time is money. Every hour is billable. Every minute is scheduled. Rest must earn its place.

7. Spain: Lunch at three. Dinner at ten. The day bends around the person, not the other way around.

8. Ethiopia: A different calendar entirely: thirteen months, New Year in September. Time here is a cultural choice, not a global agreement.

9. France: August belongs to rest. Emails go unanswered. Shops close. Nobody apologises. Leisure is a right, not a reward.

10. Kenya: The clock starts at sunrise. Six in the morning is hour zero; noon is hour six. Time is built around light, not an arbitrary number on a wall.

11. China: One time zone for the entire country, a landmass that should span five. In the far west, the sun rises at ten in the morning. Unity was chosen over accuracy.

12. Australia: Aboriginal communities have always read time through seasons, animal movements, and the stars. For over sixty thousand years, the land itself served as the calendar. No clock was needed; nature told them everything.

> “Ethiopia: New Year in September. Time here is a cultural choice, not a global agreement.”



13. Mexico: Mañana means not right now. Urgency is often self-imposed. The present moment has its own demands, and they are considered legitimate.

14. Greece: A guest may arrive at any hour. You welcome them fully. The clock adjusts to the person; the person never adjusts to the clock.

15. Scandinavia: Months of darkness, then months of endless light. The body follows seasons,

not schedules. This is ancient. Science is only now catching up.

16. Nigeria: Start times are a suggestion. What matters is that everyone arrives, connects, and the evening becomes what it was meant to be. Experience always outranks the schedule.

17. Indonesia: Jam karet: rubber time. Time stretches around mood, traffic, and social obligation. Rigidity is considered uncomfortable, not professional.

18. Russia: Eleven time zones. Vast winters. Long silences. Time here is treated with a patience that outsiders often mistake for slowness.

19. Egypt: One of the first civilisations to invent a calendar. Yet modern Egyptian social time is deeply flexible. Hospitality always comes before the clock.

20. Congo: Community shapes the day more than any schedule. Time belongs to the people in the room, not the hands on the clock.

21. Philippines: Filipino time is a known and accepted reality. Six in the evening means seven or eight. Arriving before the host is ready is the real social mistake.

22. Vietnam: Built on endurance and long horizons. Planning here thinks in years and generations. Short deadlines feel foreign to a culture that measured time in struggles spanning decades.

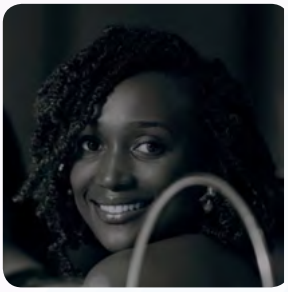
23. Tanzania: Pole pole: slowly, slowly. A phrase that governs daily life. Rushing is not a virtue. Moving with intention is.

24. Argentina: Dinner at ten. Parties at midnight. The night is its own world. Compressing it into earlier hours would make it something lesser.

25. Turkey: A meeting can become a meal, and a meal a long evening. Nobody considers this a deviation. It is simply what time is for.

26. Iran: Its own solar calendar. New Year falls on the spring equinox. Time is tied to nature, poetry, and a civilisation so ancient that modern urgency feels like a passing trend.





PK's CORNER

Leaning Inwards

BY **RTN PAMELA KAWADDWA**

When the world grows loud
with opinions dressed as truth,
when approval becomes a currency
I keep failing to earn,
I begin the long walk home
not across cities,
but into myself.

I used to stretch my hands outward,
begging mirrors to name
me beautiful,
crowds to call me worthy,
love to arrive carrying
permission to finally rest.

But exhaustion teaches
what pride refuses to learn:
no outside voice
can speak louder
than the silence waiting within.

So I lean inward.
Past the noise.
Past the expectations
stitched onto my skin.
Past the versions of me
built to survive rooms
that never truly saw me.

Inside, I find a quiet chair
reserved only for my becoming.

Here,
my breath answers questions
before fear can interrupt.
My heart speaks softly
not demanding perfection,
only presence.

I discover comfort
was never missing;
it was waiting patiently
behind every distraction
I mistook for love.

I learn to hold myself
the way I wished others would: gently,
without negotiation,
without applause.

And slowly,
approval loses its power
when I realize
I am both the seeker
and the home.

Now when the world shakes,
I do not run outward.
I close my eyes,
place my hand over my chest,
and return
to the only place
that has never abandoned me.

I lean inward
for comfort,
for answers,
for love.

And finally,
I arrive. Home! Inside of me.

#Pkwyhome

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

Butter

Today, we explore one of humanity's most underappreciated words. Butter. Yes, that golden, glorious emollient that has, quite literally, greased the wheels of civilisation.

Let us begin at the beginning, as any good club president opens a meeting: with proper credentials.

The word butter traces its lineage through Old English butere, borrowed from the Latin butyrum, which itself descended from the Ancient Greek bouturon - a compound of bous (cow) and tyros (cheese).

Cow-cheese, that's right. There you have it, dear members. For millennia, humanity has been spreading cow-cheese on its bread and calling it 'sophistication.'

Delightfully, the Greeks - inventors of democracy, philosophy, and the meeting agenda - had little use for butter at the table.

They considered it a peculiarity of "barbarian" northern tribes, using it instead as a medicinal ointment.

One imagines a Scythian nomad applying butter to sunburned skin while a Greek philosopher watched, deeply unimpressed. It wasn't until the Celtic and Germanic peoples embraced it that butter became the culinary cornerstone that we Rotarians have made a main-stay in our refrigerators today.

Now, here is where it gets truly interesting; for butter did not merely conquer kitchens. It conquered language.

To butter someone up - to flatter excessively before requesting a favour - is an art form perfected at every Rotary committee meeting since time immemorial. "Mr. President, your leadership this year has been truly visionary. Might I propose a slight adjustment to the budget?" We know the drift, don't we. We've all made the move.

Then there is the indispensable wisdom of knowing which side your bread is buttered on - understanding where your interests lie. Every Rotarian who has ever cheerfully volunteered for the fundraising gala committee when the District Governor was watching understands this perfectly.

And of course, butter wouldn't melt in their mouth - that delicious phrase for the member who arrives late, blames traffic, and somehow ends up chairing the vote. Innocence itself.

Fellow Rotarians: whether you are smooth as butter in negotiations, a butterfingers with the raffle tickets, or simply someone who knows their bread-and-butter technique, this humble word - born of cow's milk and ancient pastures - reminds us that the richest things in life are often the simplest.

Service Above Self means always pass the last piece of butter!



Jokes of the week

A new president is sworn in. The predecessor leader gives his successor three numbered envelopes and says, "Open these only when your government runs into trouble."
One year later, the country is in crisis. He opens Envelope 1: "Blame the previous administration." It works.
Two years later, another crisis. He opens Envelope 2: "Blame foreign interference." It works again.
Three years later, things are falling apart. He opens Envelope 3: "Prepare three envelopes."



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