



# Rotarian Action Groups Update

January 2010

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*Rotarian Action Groups conduct hands-on, international service projects that advance the Object of Rotary. They're organized by committed Rotarians, Rotarian spouses, and Rotaractors who have expertise and a passion for a particular type of service. Rotarian Action Groups are recognized by Rotary International and operate in accordance with Rotary policy, but they are not controlled by Rotary International. To learn more about Rotarian Action Groups, visit [www.rotary.org/actiongroups](http://www.rotary.org/actiongroups).*

*The Rotarian Action Groups Update is a quarterly communication distributed to active Rotary district chairs. The contents of this publication are provided by the individual Rotarian Action Groups.*

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## **Rotarians for Fighting AIDS Inc.**

[rffa.org](http://rffa.org)

In October, Kenyan Rotarians, members of the Rotary Community Corps (RCC) in Nairobi, and representatives of RFFA's international Board met to review the HIV Free Generation pilot program. Nairobi Rotary clubs are sponsoring RCCs - mentoring the members as they develop leadership and community service skills. There are 7 active RCCs in Nairobi and growing each month. The RCC lead RFFA's "Kidz Clubs"; one RCC group will reach approximately 4000 Kenyan youth with AIDS education and positive role models. Rotarians are developing plans to expand the scope of these activities and spread the model throughout Kenya.

RFFA attended the HIV Free Generation Partners Meeting. Partners from the US and Kenya reported progress as they addressed selection of youth friendly sites and services to be offered, the impact of programs upon girls; economic empowerment and job skills opportunities; opportunities available through IT and ways the services are shared, and messaging, and communications.

In January RFFA is offering an opportunity to meet Marion Bunch and the orphans we serve. We are introducing "Reagan's Pledge", a story and on-line discussion of one young man's pledge to "live, learn, lead". Also hear Marion Bunch's story of her son Jerry and how his death transformed lives through the "Power of Rotary."

## **Global Network for Blood Donation, a Rotarian Action Group**

[ourblooddrive.org](http://ourblooddrive.org)

Inspired by what he saw at the exhibition booth of Global Network for Voluntary Blood Donation and heard at GNBD's breakout session at the RI convention in Birmingham, incoming Club President Dr. Hassan Adalakun of Rotary Club of Oke-Ona Egba, District 9110, returned home with the conviction that his year as president, should mark the beginning of Rotary-organized blood drives in his club's hometown. After having established a local blood donation committee, President Hassan presided in October over the first ever voluntary blood donor drive in Abeokuta, capital of Ogun State, Nigeria. The two-days' drive collected 133 pints of donor blood. A lady Rotaractor gave blood on live television to show that women are not excluded. Nigeria is one of many countries without a tradition for voluntary blood donation, and where various culturally motivated barriers have to be addressed in order to change things. The next drive is planned for early 2010. The ultimate aim is to form a voluntary blood donor association in Ogun State. After the October drive, Club President Hassan received an invitation from the Commissioner of Health for Ogun State to discuss joint efforts to get blood for the state's General Hospitals. "This will imply multiple blood donation drives and involve more Rotarians and Rotaractors", President Hassan Adalakun says.

## **Disaster Relief Rotarian Action Group**

[drrag.org](http://drrag.org)

DRRAG continues to do everything possible within the guidelines of Rotarian Action Groups to communicate with Rotarians on the status of disasters, humanitarian needs, and the involvement of Rotary. We continue to build our capacity to ensure that the issues and contacts can be communicated from the disaster area to those who are in a position and have a desire to help. We are committed to creating a communication mechanism that will provide timely and effective response interventions to emergency situations of concern to Rotarians.

We also continue to develop training for Rotarians representing clubs, districts and zones by continuing to co-sponsor the annual Rotary Emergency Disaster Initiative. The next REDI Conference will be in Houston, Texas from February 5-6, 2010. We will review lessons learned from Galveston, Texas as they continue to recover and rebuild from their last severe hurricane. We know Rotarians want to be effective by timely and appropriate response to a disaster, whether it is a hurricane, tornado, flood, wildfire or earthquake. At the REDI Conference there will be disaster operation programs, training, human skill sets and standard protocols with best practice guidelines provided. Join us.

Our website continues to have the latest in what is happening around the world and we invite you to become a member and stay up to date with the latest issues with which you can make a difference.

## **Rotarians for Hearing Regeneration, a Rotarian Action Group**

[hearingregeneration.org](http://hearingregeneration.org)

For several years, Rotarians for Hearing Regeneration (RfHR) have cooperated with the University of Washington's Virginia Merrill Bloedel Hearing Research Center (VMBHRC), producing a DVD, "Hope for Hearing Loss," explaining how hearing loss happens and the possibility of regeneration.

Rotarians for Hearing Regeneration has distributed the DVD at RI and district conventions and Rotary club presentations. The DVD has been distributed to over 200 US foundations, news and media services.

Currently RfHR is raising funds for a video update to include recent research with Zebrafish. This video will again be distributed widely and at the Montreal convention. We hope Rotarians at Montreal in 2010 will pick up a free DVD at the RfHR exhibit. It is an excellent club program. The present video is available on the RfHR website. Join RfHR and receive a copy by mail.

RfHR encourages Rotarians with hearing loss, as well as those with just an interest in this research, to become involved as members. There are many ways members can help.

## **Rotarian Action Group for Microcredit**

[rotarianmicrocredit.org](http://rotarianmicrocredit.org)

When the update arrives for the Rotarian Action Groups, each reader looks for articles on their favourites. Our hope, at the RAG for Microcredit is that our activities and plans will stimulate greater involvement in overcoming the misery of poverty. Our mandate is to do just that: motivate, communicate, coordinate and educate folks about the power, through microcredit, to eradicate poverty. You can join us through buying a membership. This is a one time donation of \$100 and is accessible at: [www.ragm.org](http://www.ragm.org).

Most recently, Rotarian Gordon Cran and his very successful team hosted the Toronto Microcredit Conference for about 275 Rotarians and friends. Speakers were from major Non Government Organizations who operate both locally and internationally. Using the theme of "cutting edge" technology the audience heard among other ideas, "rule breaking"

initiatives. This seems appropriate since from the beginning, microcredit was breaking the "rule" that the poor were not credit worthy. After a while the unbreakable "rule" becomes the foundation for what's next. The attendees were encouraged to join Nobel Peace Prize winner Dr. Mohammad Yunus in dreaming of a day when poverty would only be observable in a museum.

### **Rotarian Action Group for Multiple Sclerosis Awareness**

[rotary-rfmsa.org](http://rotary-rfmsa.org)

#### *Raising MS Awareness at your Rotary club*

Below are examples of how your Rotary club can get involved to raise MS Awareness and help find a cure for MS whilst increasing fellowship and fun!

The Philadelphia Chapter of Multiple Sclerosis Society organized the M/S 150 Bike Ride 30 years ago. 10 years ago the Philadelphia Rotary Cycle Team was formed to participate in the Event. Four people rode the first year. Each year thereafter riders were added to the Team and several years have had as many as 50 participants. This year because of injuries and illnesses, there were only 40 participants. Thus far this year, \$50,000 has been raised with funds still coming in. In 10 years, the team has raised over 1/2 million dollars to help find a cure for this debilitating illness.

Additional suggestions:

- Make contact with your nearest MS Society/Chapter.
- Identify and develop a project and fundraising initiative
- Start and complete a club project
- Publicize your success story!!!
- Watch this space for further examples
- Join our email group [rotary-msawareness@yahoogroups.com](mailto:rotary-msawareness@yahoogroups.com); Email: taurins3@vegas.com.au

### **Rotarian Action Group for Polio Survivors & Associates**

[rotarypoliosurvivors.com](http://rotarypoliosurvivors.com)

We of the Polio Survivors & Associates RAG are pleased to announce that we have had two grants approved by TRF this Rotary year for efforts to assist polio survivors in northern Nigeria. This would not be possible except for the caring and generous contributions from multiple Rotary clubs and districts throughout the Rotary world, and also from the generous contributions made to our TRF Donor Advised Fund. With multiple contributions from the US to Hong Kong and Taiwan, efforts will soon be underway for purchasing new and updated equipment necessary to maintain sustainability of a bicycle wheelchair shop in Jos, Nigeria. This also means continued jobs for Nigerian workers. In addition, these grants will purchase supplies sufficient to build 1000 bicycle wheelchairs. It has been reported to us that the combination of these two grants may well be the largest effort ever to assist polio survivors in Nigeria.

It is the continued responsibility of all Rotarians to support Rotary's Polio Plus program through financial contributions and advocacy efforts until our goal of a polio free world is achieved. We believe it is also the responsibility of Rotarians to lead the efforts to assist those we arrived too late for and those we have missed with our vaccination program. We must look back over our shoulders at the long trail of polio survivors following behind us and address their mobility issues.

**Rotarian Action Group for Population Growth & Sustainable Development Inc.**

[rifpd.org](http://rifpd.org)

Since 2004, Rotary clubs in District 3250, have established 28 Saheli training centers in the states of Bihar and Jharkhand in eastern India. In rural India, women lack economic and social security and are subject to exploitation. 87% are employed in agriculture with an income of US \$1 per day. These projects are designed to increase awareness and knowledge of the potential for improving social and economic conditions in their community. The curriculum includes: computer skills, literacy, sewing & handicrafts, primary health & hygiene and reproductive health & child spacing. By the end of 2008, 2,844 women were trained. The multiplying benefits are that women return to their community to share ideas for improving their home and educating their children. "Saheli's" encourage participation of additional ladies at the centers. Saheli means "Lady Friends" - hence the name Saheli Centers. Total grant for one center is \$15,000. Current sponsors include Districts 5110, 5710, 5790, 6560, 6910 and 7690. To sponsor a Saheli Center, contact Jennifer Hendrickson at RFPD Headquarters, [rifpd@aol.com](mailto:rifpd@aol.com).

**Water and Sanitation Rotarian Action Group**

[www.wasrag.org](http://www.wasrag.org)

An exciting opportunity has come our way with something for all clubs and Rotarians! Live Earth is presenting a world-wide water & sanitation event. April 18th is the big day with 6 km walk/runs in major cities around the world. Information is available at [www.liveearth.org](http://www.liveearth.org) Even if you are not close to a race site you can participate by hosting your own event. Check out our website or our Facebook page. We will be posting ideas and information shortly:  
[www.wasrag.org](http://www.wasrag.org).

Also exciting are Wasrag's plans for a full-day water conference in Montreal, immediately prior to the International Convention. Rotarians who are passionate about water and sanitation will have the opportunity to meet on Saturday 19 June, 2010 to learn about the latest developments in sustainable Watsan projects and to share their challenges and experiences with like minded individuals.

And - Wasrag has taken another step into the technological future with a Twitter account: check the activities of WasragRon to keep abreast of Wasrag activities!