



Issue 254 - February 2025

From the President's Desk

Dear Fellow Members,

This month we celebrate World Rotary Day on February 23, 2025. It would be Rotary's 120th birthday.



It is a privilege to be a member of this global network of individuals dedicated to serving others through community service projects, promoting high ethical standards in one's profession, and working towards creating positive change in the world, all while fostering personal connections and leadership development within a diverse group of professionals. Essentially, our membership signifies a commitment to "Service Above Self" – our core motto.

For an organization with such a legacy, accumulating and preserving the history, values and philosophy of the Rotary movement holds great significance. A big "Thank You" to each member of the Rotary Global History Fellowship for your participation in this endeavour. We look forward to your continued support and request you to continue sending in your inputs on the past and present happenings from your territories.

Do keep visiting our website, www.rghf.org and encourage others to do the same.



Jeetendra Sharma
President
Rotary Global History Fellowship (RGHF)

World Rotary Day

We all know that World Rotary Day is celebrated on February 23rd to commemorate the founding of the first Rotary Club in 1905. But do you know how it happened? Read all about the History of Rotary at www.rghf.org.

The screenshot shows a website interface with a navigation menu on the left containing links for ABOUT, Membership, Rotary History (highlighted), Rotary International, The Rotary Foundation, Rotary Fellowships, Peace, Rotary Magazine and Media, and News. The main content area features a search bar and a navigation bar with links for HOME, JOIN RGHF, OFN NEWSLETTER, WHAT IS PAUL HARRIS FELLOW?, and ROTARY TIMELINE.

How it Happened

On the evening of 23 February 1905, Paul Harris (19 April 1868 – 27 January 1947) invited three friends to a meeting. 1Silvester Schiele, (second from the left) (29 June 1870 – 17 December 1945) a coal dealer, 2Hiram Shorey, (next to Harris) (29 August 1962 – 29 March 1944) a merchant tailor, and 3Gustavus Loehr, (far left) (1864 – 23 May 1918) a mining engineer, gathered with Harris in Loehr’s business office in Room 711 of the Unity Building in downtown Chicago on Dearborn Avenue.

They discussed Harris’ idea that business leaders should meet periodically to enjoy camaraderie and to enlarge their circle of business and professional acquaintances. The club met weekly, membership was limited to one representative from each business and profession. Though the men didn’t use the term Rotary that night, that gathering is commonly regarded as the first Rotary club meeting. [From the May 1938 issue of The Rotarian Silvester Schiele describes the start of Rotary]

As they continued to convene, members began rotating their meetings among their places of business, hence the name Rotary. After enlisting a fifth member, printer 5Harry Ruggles, the group was formally organized as the Rotary Club of Chicago. The original club emblem, a wagon wheel design, was the precursor of the familiar cogwheel emblem now used by Rotarians worldwide.

Click on image to read full story.

9th Rotary Peace Center

Earlier this month, the Rotary Foundation Trustees selected Symbiosis International University at Pune, India to host the next Rotary Peace Center, subject to finalization of the partnership agreement. The Rotary team was very impressed by the University’s proposed program for Rotary Peace Fellows, as well as their faculty, facilities, and commitment to positive peace, all of which met or exceeded Rotary’s established partnership criteria.



Visit of Asia Rotary Peace Center Search Committee delegates to District 3131 - Pune, India

The search committee was also impressed by District 3131's organization and collaboration, as well as their commitment to cross-cultural exchange and extensive local service partnerships. The Trustees are confident that members of District 3131, along with members of neighboring districts, will welcome peace and development leaders from across the region and provide meaningful opportunities for their engagement with Rotary.

As per the initial launch timeline, the first cohort will commence at the new Rotary Peace Center in February 2027.

A day with the RI president at the Rotary Peace Center in Japan

By Tom Gump, Aide to RI President



Tom Gump (left), aide to RI President Stephanie Urchick, and Urchick at the entrance to Rotary's Peace Center at International Christian University in Japan.

Much has been written about RI President Stephanie Urchick's initiative of using the [Rotary Action Plan](#) to grow Rotary. Recently, I witnessed her living another of her major initiatives – "Healing in a Divided World," which focuses on Rotary's peace efforts. Interesting trivia about our president – by the end of her term, she will have visited every [Rotary Peace Center](#) in the world. Stephanie's trip to the Peace Center at International Christian University (ICU) in Japan on 11 December was a trip I will never forget.

Read more [here](#).

Rotary Peace Fellowship

ROTARY PEACE FELLOWS 2025 INCOMING CLASS

131 FINALISTS

- 55% FEMALE
- 43% MALE
- 2% NONBINARY/THIRD GENDER

53 COUNTRIES REPRESENTED

MASTER'S PROGRAM:

- 33 YEARS OLD AVERAGE AGE
- 7 AVERAGE YEARS OF RELEVANT WORK EXPERIENCE

CERTIFICATE PROGRAM:

- 40 YEARS OLD AVERAGE AGE
- 10 AVERAGE YEARS OF RELEVANT WORK EXPERIENCE

As we prepare to kick off a new recruitment season in February for the next cohort of Rotary Peace Fellows, we'd like to congratulate our incoming 2025 peace fellows and THANK the many Rotary and Rotaract members, alumni, and partners who refer and recruit outstanding candidates each year.

The Rotary Peace Fellowship is dedicated to promoting peace and conflict prevention by seeking committed and motivated peacebuilders from communities around the world to become effective catalysts for peace. Our programs

have trained more than 1,800 peace fellows who have gone forth to advance peace and humanitarian efforts on behalf of The Rotary Foundation.

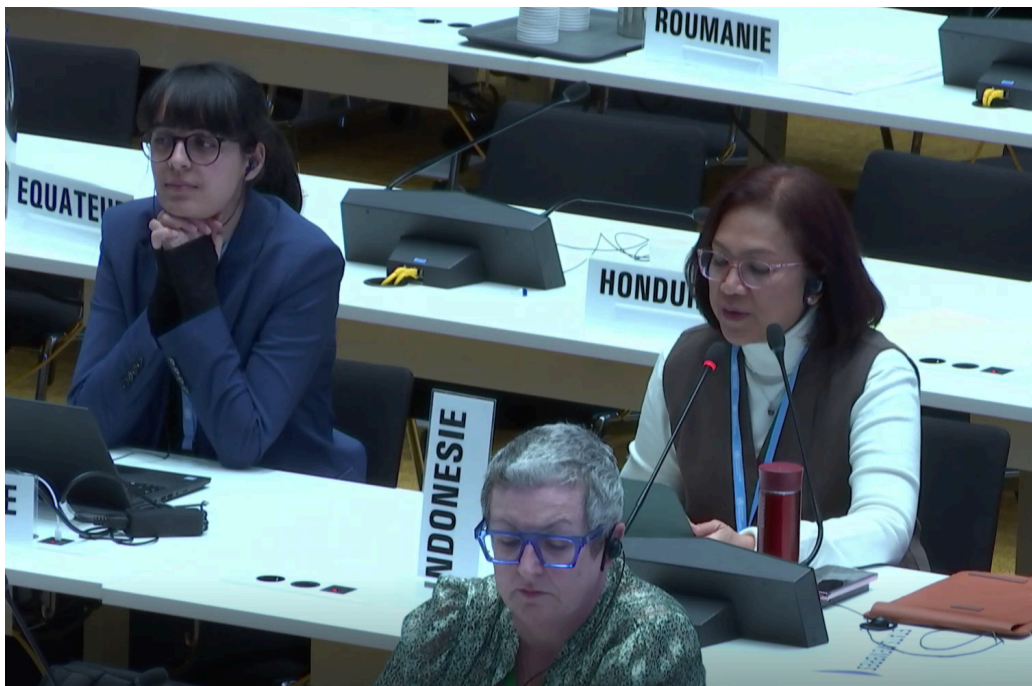
The Rotary Peace Fellowship application is now open! The 2026-27 Rotary Peace Fellowship application is available [online](#) through 15 May 2025.

If you know a potential candidate, use our [referral form](#) so they can receive more information.

Source: Rotary Peace Centers on Facebook

WHO Executive Board says emergency measures needed to stop polio

Global polio and health experts urge right geopolitical decisions to stop 'perfect storm' for poliovirus transmission and protect eradication



WHO Executive Board, Geneva, Switzerland, 7 February 2025 – Health ministries from around the world meeting at this week's WHO Executive Board in Geneva expressed serious concern about increasing wild poliovirus transmission in the last two remaining endemic countries, Pakistan and Afghanistan, noting that extraordinary measures were going on in response.

The year 2024 saw an increase in virus transmission in both countries, which share the last remaining endemic wild poliovirus reservoir in the world. WHO Member States commended the new emergency operational approaches being now implemented in both countries to turn the tide on this trend. These approaches include identifying the different operational reasons why children are not being reached, area by area; increasing co-administration of inactivated polio vaccine (IPV) alongside oral polio vaccine (OPV); boosting overall immunity levels in children; and, improving access to more adequate sanitation infrastructures.

These measures reflect the unique environmental, geopolitical, programmatic and security challenges affecting both countries, which together essentially create an epidemiological 'perfect storm' for poliovirus transmission. These approaches must be underpinned by strengthened surveillance activities not just in highest-risk areas, but comprehensively across all areas of both countries, and doing more to protect polio-free areas, particularly in critical border areas, and among highly mobile population groups, in particular in three clearly identified 'virus transmission corridors' affecting both countries.

Read more [here](#).

Rotary International Convention



Would you be at the Rotary International Convention to be held between 21-25 June 2025 in Calgary, Canada? If yes, please get in touch with our RGHF Board Members:
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Our Foundation Newsletter



This newsletter is published by the Rotary Global History Fellowship. The comments and stories in this newsletter do not reflect the opinions of Rotary International, The Rotary Foundation of Rotary International or any other Rotary related organization.

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