



**Volume 9 Issue 1**  
**July, 2024**

## **Green Education takes root across Rotary**

In response to our request for stories on sustainable living, this month's writers have created a symphony of news on the rapid growth of green education. From elementary schools to a UNESCO conference, Rotarians, Rotaractors, and Interactors are passionately teaching their communities to live sustainably. Several writers report on advocacy within Rotary at every level. Others share practical advice on how to walk the talk of living Net-Zero, from Rotary events to your own household.

With joyful thanks to our ten contributing authors, here are this month's stories:

- ESRAG makes a world of new friends at RICON '24
- Through Green Schools, students are already building a sustainable society (USA)
- ESRAG's Kirsten Weber briefs UNESCO on Rotary's fast-growing role in green education
- Teaching upcycling to turn waste into wealth (India)
- Million Solar Panel Challenge shines at RICON
- Central American Rotaractors forge friendships and environmental collaboration (Guatemala and Costa Rica)
- Be a Hero: Go Net Zero (a toolkit from ESRAG Great Britain and Ireland Chapter)
- July Projects + Webinars (including projects in Kenya and North America)
- Teach your community to embrace zero-waste events (USA)
- Bring hope: share ESRAG's new podcast
- ESRAG booth a-buzz at Rotary Convention in Singapore
- ESRAG thanks departing directors, welcomes those newly-elected



Dear readers: it is such a gift to receive your news! Reading about the environmental solutions you are implementing creates hope and fellowship. Our August theme is circular economy. Please send your story idea to [newsletter@esrag.org](mailto:newsletter@esrag.org) by July 12 if you want to be interviewed. If you are writing a story, please submit it by July 15. ESRAG stories appear throughout the month on our blog and are amplified through our social media, thanks to our new content manager Martina Lastikova, so writing for our newsletter puts your project in sight to many people who can learn from and hopefully replicate it.

We encourage anyone who hasn't yet discovered ESRAG's weekly Projects + webinar to sign up for an upcoming session to join that vibrant real-time conversation with Rotarians, Rotaractors, and environmental experts from

all over the world. The article on July Projects + meetings includes the links.

*Photo collage: Costa Rican Rotaractors and Interactors created fashions from trash and presented their call to action on preventing pollution and protecting biodiversity during the Rotary District Peace Conference in April, 2024. Photos by Joshua Céspedes Campos, President, Cartago Rotaract Club.*

## ESRAG makes a world of new friends at RICON '24

by Dr. Pat Armstrong, Immediate Past Chair, and Dr. Yasar Atacik, Chair, 2023-24



In the last week of May, 2024, the Marina Bay Sands Expo and Convention Centre in the heart of Singapore came alive with the buzz of 14,000 Rotarians, Rotaractors and their guests, who had gathered in the spirit of Sharing Hope with the World.

There were so many memorable moments for the ESRAG members who travelled to Singapore for this annual event. The ESRAG booth in the House of Friendship was a focal point for ESRAG members to meet old friends, make new ones and tell the ESRAG story to the many visitors who dropped by. There were countless photo opportunities and a steady stream of people joining ESRAG and signing up for information. Many thanks to Ambaree Majumder and her team of volunteers for setting up and looking after the booth over the five days. Ambaree also organised a magnificent vegetarian dinner for about 30 ESRAG members in an authentic Singapore restaurant. Even the vegetarian sceptics were won over by the colourful and tasty food.

Celebrating the growth and impact of ESRAG, Chair-Elect Yavuz Atila coordinated an informal gathering for current ESRAG members and those curious about this young Rotary Action Group. ESRAG members spoke about the history of ESRAG, our achievements and aspirations. The passion, pride and teamwork of the speakers told the story of a dynamic and influential group.

ESRAG members spoke at several breakout sessions, including Drs. Liz Henke and Ludwig Kalthoff, and on Tuesday, 28 May, a panel of ESRAG members presented a session: "Learn how Rotary could become carbon-neutral by 2040. The panel included Past Rotary International President Ian Riseley, Dave Alexander, Pat Armstrong, Ludwig Kalthoff, and Yasar Atacik, with the session moderated by Yavuz Atila. Over 80 people attended this session, and many stayed behind to ask questions. This presentation was the culmination of about



two years' work by the ESRAG Climate Roadmap Working Group.

At this year's RICON, past and present ESRAG Directors were able to meet with senior Rotary leaders to discuss how ESRAG can best serve Rotary, and to share our hopes in caring for the natural world.

*Collage by Dr. Pat Armstrong.*

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## Through Green Schools, students are already building a sustainable society

**By PDG Jeff Smith, Brian Braginton-Smith, and Tina Nilsen-Hodges**

*Editor's note: How we educate our children - [Styles](#) including preparing them for green careers - is crucial to a sustainable future for our planet. A genius in building partnerships, PDG Jeff Smith of the CNY multi-district in New York State is co-leading ongoing consultations among Rotarians, government, industry, and educational leaders to build a vibrant, environmentally-sustainable regional economy. For this article, he requested front-line reports on two Green Schools from Rotarians Brian Braginton-Smith, Executive Director of the Cape Cod Watershed Institute in Massachusetts, USA, and Tina Nilsen-Hodges, Principal and Superintendent of the New Roots Charter School in New York State. Among his many environmental leadership roles, Jeff serves as secretary of ESRAG's Eastern North America Chapter.*

**Coastal Massachusetts:** Led by the Cape Cod Watershed Institute of the Lewis Bay Research Center, the Connected Communities project on Cape Cod is taking a proactive approach to climate change by starting with K-12 education. "We are equipping a network of schools with a holistic strategy for attaining net-zero carbon emissions and net-zero water discharge," says Brian Braginton-Smith. "The strategy involves micro-grids, clean energy generation, agriculture, bio-char, STEM Education and workforce development. We're providing experiential learning on all aspects of achieving climate and water goals.



"The [Lewis Bay Research Center](#) is a team of educators, ocean scientists, explorers and prophets, working together to help save our oceans and educate our society on marine science, exploration and the importance of our world's oceans to our past, our present and our future. The organization is now also focused on experiential education, lifelong learning and workforce training through the Cape Cod Watershed Institute Center. The goal is to provide solutions that make a long-lasting difference that can be replicated across Cape Cod, our nation and our planet."

**Southern Tier of New York State:** [New Roots Charter School](#) in Ithaca, New York is also a member of Project Green Schools. "We are evaluating all of the green education elements of the Connected Communities project for application in Ithaca," writes Superintendent Tina Nilsen-Hodges. "Established in 2009, New Roots Charter School is a U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon School, a recognized leader in the Green Schools National Network, and member of the Tompkins County Climate Protection Initiative.

"New Roots Charter School lies within the territory of the [Gayogo hó:no'](#) (Cayuga Nation). Our school community gratefully acknowledges the Gayogo hó:no' for their enduring stewardship of this place throughout the centuries, and their generosity in educating people in their territory about how to live in good relation to the earth and with our neighbors."

To discover more about the curriculum, collaborations, and hands-on solutions students are participating in through these schools, click "read more."

*Photo: New Roots students at work, courtesy of New Roots Charter School*

[Read More](#)

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## ESRAG's Kirsten Weber briefs UNESCO on Rotary's fast-growing role in green education

*By Ariel Miller, ESRAG Newsletter Editor*

Climate Scientist Dr. Kirsten Weber alerted an international audience to Rotary's rapidly-expanding environmental action during the Rotary Day at UNESCO Conference in Paris on May 4, 2024. Speaking as part of the panel on "Green Education for Peace and the Planet," she described three initiatives through which Rotarians are teaming up with students and teachers to achieve immediate environmental benefits, raise community awareness of environmental perils and solutions, and develop the skills to become life-long leaders in sustainability. She highlighted that Rotary's environmental Area of Focus addresses eight of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.



"My speech generated a lot of interest, and I was invited to give further talks at Rotary Clubs around the world," says Dr. Weber, who has served as Chair of ESRAG's Great Britain and Ireland Chapter. "People were keen to collaborate with ESRAG. Some interesting encounters I had included:

- Patricia and Mike Werner from Rotary Le Havre in France, who are dedicated to environmental issues at the 2024 Paris Olympic Games. Now, after our meeting, they are working hand-in-hand with ESRAG.
- Jean-Marie Korporaal, who works with students on "[Eloquence on Peace](#)" in the south of France. We discussed the importance of education on effective environmental rhetoric, and possible collaborations.
- Positive Peace Activator MaVi Gargiulo (in the photo) - Both of us are physicists, and we exchanged ideas about how researchers and Rotarians can make the world a more nature-friendly place.
- Won Jung Byon, UNESCO Programme Specialist for [Green Education](#) in the Section of Education for Sustainable Development, and Stéphane Dugast, a French journalist, who were on the same panel "Green Education for Peace and the Planet."

Rooted and respected in local communities, Rotary has enormous potential to help close the massive global gap in environmental education. "Only half of national curricula in the world make reference to climate change," said Weber's fellow panelist Won Jung Byon.

[Read More](#)

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## Teaching upcycling to turn waste into income

*By Rajendrakumar V Saraf, Rotary Cadre of Advisors for the Environment*

Upcycling increases the original object's value by transforming by-products, waste materials, worn-out, or unwanted products into new materials or products, often of high quality. Upcycling creates commercial and environmental value. Its biggest benefit is to the planet because it minimizes the consumption of natural resources for making goods and prevents the original products from going to landfill. Upcycling also supports a circular economy by reusing materials multiple times rather than discarding them after one use. Youth and women can do upcycling to earn money, conserve resources, and protect





Organizer – Rotary Club of Patalganga



the environment. Raw material costs for upcycled products range from zero to minimal. Rotarians can provide scientific and marketing support to expand their business.

Upcycling is an integral part of civilization.

Transforming wheat seed into flour and baking it into bread, turning cotton to threads to clothes, and shaping wood into furniture are just a few examples. Upcycling is built into Indian culture as a way to create valuable goods. Leftover rice for dinner becomes fried rice for breakfast the next day. We make cow dung cake from cow dung and blankets (Gothadi) from used saris. We turn an old pair of pants into a pair of shorts plus four bags, or make a worn-out tyre into a swing. These all are well-established trades in India.

RID 3131 hosted three workshops on recycling as part of our environmental projects in 2022, drawing 1,650 trainees. Exhibition cum sale of Upcycle Products was organized by Rotary Club Patalganga, Mahad & Baramati and finally at Pune. We then followed up with the first Rotary Multi-District Global Online Workshop on Upcycling to empower Youth in Rotary Year 2022-23, drawing 456 youth from various parts of the world. The second Rotary International Global Multi District Workshop on Upcycling for Monetary Benefits was successfully organized in 2023-2024. 875 people registered, from India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nigeria, Uganda, Kenya and the USA.

On request from the Rotary Club of Multan Midtown, I conducted a workshop in the Government School of Multan in Pakistan. Participants said that the workshop helped them to understand upcycling and motivated them to make upcycled products to conserve resources and earn money. Since starting this initiative, we've already been able to train 6,350 people in upcycling. The participants sold their products in the exhibition and earned money. We strongly recommend offering such workshops to empower women and youth to increase their income and quality of life. We've had great success in providing this training to Interactors and college students, combining the training with the opportunity for students to exhibit the products they create and to win awards.

To get you started, here is an overview of recycling methods and some of the valuable products you can create from materials that are too often thrown away, with terrible impact on our environment and a waste of precious materials.

[Read More](#)

## Million Solar Panels Challenge shines at RICON

*By Elizabeth Henke, MD, ESRAG Lead for Habitat Solar*

Our exciting conversations with a multitude of people at the Rotary International Convention (RICON) in Singapore revealed that ESRAG's newest initiative, the Million Solar Panels Challenge (MSPC), is gaining remarkable traction, sparking enthusiasm and action among Rotarians worldwide.

During RICON week, the MSPC was featured in multiple presentations, including ESRAG's official RICON breakout session on how Rotary could become Net-Zero by 2040 and the Solar Power for Wash



program. Even before the official launch of the MSPC, Rotarians have already logged an astounding 16,406 solar panels. Solar enthusiasts like Emmanuelle P.S. Barreto from Brazil and her daughter Sabrina eagerly logged their solar panels at RICON, embodying the contagious enthusiasm of the movement. And as for the sudden appearance of ESRAG Director and Chair Nominee Dr. Ludwig Kalthoff in the picture with the Brazilians? Ludwig (aka Luigi to his closest friends,) could not contain his infectious zeal for solar power!

### What is the Million Solar Panels Challenge?

The MSPC is a campaign to mobilize Rotarians globally to take direct action against climate change. By advocating for the purchase and installation of solar panels, this campaign not only helps slash energy costs but also significantly reduces CO2 emissions.

The Ripple Effect of a Million Solar Panel Installations:

- **Environmental Impact:** Equivalent to planting 10 million mature trees - without having to wait!
- **Economic Savings:** Over \$3.5 billion saved on people's electricity bills.
- **Emission Reduction:** More than 7 million tonnes of CO2 emissions prevented.

**How You Can Participate:** If you're a Rotarian, here's how you can make a difference:

- **Log Your Solar Panels:** Document the number of solar panels you have already installed on your own home, business, or for those less fortunate. [Use this link to log](#) your solar panels.
- **Community Education:** Encourage fellow Rotary members to log their solar panels or purchase solar panels for themselves or for underserved communities around the world.
- **Climate-Friendly Clubs:** Motivate your clubs to invest in clean solar energy to offset their carbon footprints and join the net-zero movement.
- **Give the Gift of Solar:** Millions of people worldwide lack access to electricity. Donate a solar panel or installation to someone in need. Donate solar panels [here](#).



The Million Solar Panels Challenge is not just a campaign; it's a movement towards a sustainable future. Every panel counts, and every Rotarian's effort brings us closer to a cleaner, greener planet. Join the challenge today and be a part of the solution!

*Top photo: Brazilian Rotarians got an open-armed welcome from ESRAG Director Ludwig Kalthoff when they registered their solar panels for ESRAG's MSPC (credit: Dr. Liz Henke). Bottom photo: Dr. Henke talking about ESRAG's Habitat Solar initiative as part of ESRAG's May 28 RICON breakout session "Rotary + Habitat: Local Collaboration Models for Impact" with panelists from Habitat for Humanity and Shelter Box. Photo provided by Trinnah Caracho of Habitat for Humanity.*

## Central American Rotaractors forge friendships and environmental collaboration

By Joshua Céspedes Campos, President, Cartago Rotaract Club

In a world where people come together and





take action to protect the environment for a sustainable future, collaboration between Rotaract Clubs demonstrates how teamwork can make a significant impact. Six members of the Rotaract Club Cartago visited the Rotaract Club Guatemala Oeste, staying six days in Guatemala City and Antigua. This experience not only strengthened the bonds of friendship, but also resulted in important collaborations on community and environmental projects.

A highlight of the visit was attending the environmental symposium organized by the Green Team of Districts 4240 and 4250, in collaboration with the Rotary Leadership Institute. This event allowed participants to present their environmental projects and learn from the experiences of other clubs, identifying opportunities for future collaborations on sustainable initiatives.

Experts from the Rotary Leadership Institute presented key tools for the development of environmental projects, which generated a

great impact on the listening members and inspired them to continue their work for the environment.

The clubs discussed a series of innovative and sustainable environmental projects. Among the notable initiatives was the Trashion Fashion Show, an event that promotes sustainable fashion through the reuse of recycled materials. In addition, the participants shared projects such as cleaning and reorganizing gardens in schools and local environmental parks, well as informative talks on reuse projects designed for students in kindergartens and schools. We also discussed training workshops for students, to educate young people about the importance of sustainability. Other projects include the planting of native trees and the preservation of mangroves, essential for biodiversity and coastal protection.

*Photo: Rotaractors at the iconic archway of the historic city of Antigua de Guatemala, courtesy of the Rotaract Club Guatemala Oeste*

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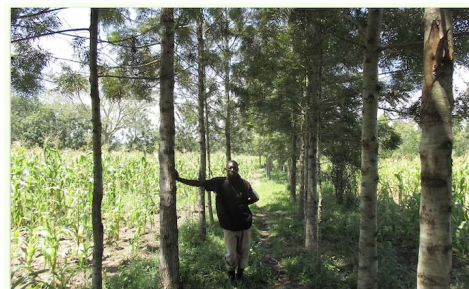
## Be a Hero: Go Net-Zero!

**By Chris Davies, Co-Chair,  
ESRAG Great Britain & Ireland Chapter**

I am writing to invite you to become part of the ESRAG initiative Be a Hero, Go Net Zero, or "BAHGZ" (pronounced Baggins for ease). The Great Britain and Ireland Chapter (ESRAG GBI) have aligned BAHGNZ to contribute to ESRAG's Every Club Climate Friendly. The methodology is simple. We start by doing everything within reason to minimise our footprint. Then we offset the rest by donating to a Rotary-sponsored project that prevents emissions or removes CO<sub>2</sub> from the air.

In this article, I'll give you answers to some of the many rationalizations people offer for declining to reduce their footprint, explain the road map to become a Net Zero Hero, and link you to a range of carbon footprint calculators and several inspiring nonprofits through which fellow Rotarians are contributing to solutions that prevent or sequester CO<sub>2</sub>.

[Read More](#)



Tropical tree planting has both environmental benefits (e.g. soil moisture retention, protection against soil erosion, climate change mitigation) and huge humanitarian benefits (e.g. additional farm income, fruit for better nutrition, own supply of fuel wood from pruning). Crucial aspects to the success of tree planting are:

1. allowing farmers to plant species of their own choice
2. paying farmers to care for trees during first year after planting.

## July '24 Projects + Webinars



### **July 3: Evolving a Net-Zero Community: striving to prevent a global catastrophe**

**Speaker: Brian Braginton-Smith.** Time: 1400 UTC

The Connected Communities initiative on Cape Cod is implementing a wholistic strategy for attaining net-zero carbon emissions and net-zero water discharge. The strategy involves micro-grids, clean energy generation, agriculture, bio-char, STEM Education, and workforce development. In partnership with local K-12 schools, this includes experiential learning on all aspects of achieving the climate and water goals. [Register here.](#)

**Speaker bio:** Rotarian Brian Braginton-Smith is Executive Director of the Cape Cod Watershed Institute in Massachusetts and an internationally-recognized expert in integrational systems dynamics.

### **July 10: The Million Solar Panel Challenge**

**Speaker: Elizabeth Henke, MD.** Time: 1400 UTC

This ambitious campaign empowers Rotarians worldwide to take direct action against climate change one solar panel at a time. By encouraging the installation of solar panels, this initiative helps reduce energy costs and cuts CO2 emissions. [Register here.](#)

**Speaker bio:** Elizabeth Henke is a retired cardiologist, co-chair of East Chapel Hill Rotary Environmental Initiative, and lead of the Habitat Solar project for ESRAG.

### **July 17: Electronic waste management in Kenya**

**Speaker: Nancy Ng'ethe** Time: 1400 UTC

Electronic waste is the world's fastest growing and most complex waste stream and much of it is handled unsafely, causing pollution, human health hazards and the loss of valuable finite resources. The WEEE Centre properly disposes of and manages all e-waste in an environmentally friendly manner. [Register here.](#)

**Speaker bio:** Nancy Ng'ethe is a strategically-minded and results-oriented strategy and business development specialist with over 10 years' experience in Edtech. She is currently the Manager of the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Centre, one of Africa's largest ISO certified e-waste management players focused



on contributing to the SDGs and Circular Economy. [Register here.](#)

### **July 24: ESRAG North America Environmental Project Fair**

**Speaker: Caroline DeWitt.** Time: 1400 UTC

Environmental stewardship can begin in our clubs and community as shown in this presentation about a Climate Friendly Initiative and the Sarasota Environmental Fair. [Register here.](#)

**Speaker bio:** Caroline DeWitt attended the Rotary International Conference in Canada in 2018, fueling her dedication to Rotary and the Environmental Sustainability Rotary Action Group (ESRAG). She is currently serving as the Chapter Chair for ESRAG's Eastern North America, including the Caribbean.

### **July 31: World Impact Investing: the intersection of intentions, innovation, and finance**

**Speaker: Can Atacik.** Time: 1400 UTC

Learn the nuts and bolts of the fast-growing world of impact investing with real examples and explore how innovative financial structures can and are creating new opportunities for investors and entrepreneurs to make our planet a better place for all. [Register here.](#)

**Speaker bio:** Can Atacik is a firm believer in impact investing; he began work at the World Bank, transitioned to investment banking, founded an angel fund, and served as CFO of a mining firm. In 2020, he founded Alethina Impact and is also a venture partner at ImpACTNOW Capital and Venture Science.

*Photo of July speakers: (top row) Brian Braginton-Smith and Dr. Liz Henke, (bottom row) Nancy No'ethe, Caroline DeWitt, and Can Atacik*

## **Teach your community to embrace zero-waste events**

**By Kris Cameron, Plant-Rich Diet Task Force, Amélie Catheline, Food Waste Solutions Task Force, and Tami Mulcahy, Plastics Solutions Task Force**



No matter what you call it - near zero waste, towards zero waste, or something else - any club can help reduce GHG emissions and conserve natural resources by focusing on waste at their own or other events.

Inspired by the Poulsbo, Washington Rotary Club's successful efforts to reduce waste at their Viking Tour bike event from a 4-cubic yard dumpster to one garbage bag of trash, and the [ESRAG Green Events Handbook](#), the [Wenatchee Confluence Rotary Club](#) and a few members from other clubs decided to attempt the same at the local 11-day Washington State [Apple Blossom Festival](#).

Towards Zero Waste compost and recycling stations were located throughout the park, local businesses sponsored compostable cups in the beer garden and empty wine bottles were recycled with Chelan Rotary's [911 Glass Rescue](#). All cardboard was recycled and vendors were provided with buckets to collect their kitchen waste for composting. Local commercial composter [Winton Mfg.](#) donated compostable service items to interested vendors, as well as their hauling and processing services. Partner organization Sustainable NCW inaugurated a Green Vendor Award to recognize and reward sustainable practices among the 26 food vendors. An annual luncheon, affiliated with the Festival, offered a plant-based/low carbon entree option as well. Rotary and Interact members made up half of the 108 community volunteers who helped reduce landfill waste by almost 40% (six tons) by weight. You can watch a [local feature story](#) here.

The [Solana Beach Eco Rotary Club](#) near San Diego also supports events in their effort to reduce waste. The Club started in 2009 to make the annual [Encinitas Wine & Food Festival](#) as close to zero waste as possible, providing planning support and volunteers to sort out organics, recyclables, and collect reusable utensils. The Club has since then created a [Zero Waste Committee](#) to strengthen their efforts and now

## Community Reusable Dinnerware Kit



**Need a large quantity of dinnerware for your next event? Borrow our Community Reusable Dinnerware Kit – it's free!**

The Kit is a ready-to-use solution ideal for family events, community gatherings, potlucks, picnics, and more, where large quantities of dinnerware are needed. It offers a better dining experience and enhances the overall enjoyment of meals. Additionally, it lessens the environmental footprint associated with the production and disposal of single-use dinnerware, helps save money, and encourages communal activities.

The Kit aims to make it easier for the community and event organizers to choose the reusable option. It is available for pick-up in Solana Beach and is free of charge. Serving up to 100 guests, it comes in boxes for ease of transport and storage.

Over time, the consistent use of the reusable Kit will shift cultural and community norms back to eco-friendly practices, making reusable items the standard rather than the exception.

[Community Reusable Dinnerware Kit - Terms and Conditions](#)

If you are interested in using our Community Reusable Dinnerware Kit, contact us by filling out the form below. Please indicate date and quantity needed:

provides a Community Reusable Dinnerware Kit for anyone who organizes an event in the community. One of the major achievements was replacing the disposable dishware with reusables at the 2022 [EcoFest Encinitas](#) and providing a washing station onsite.

The event welcomed 1000+ visitors, two food vendors and generated only 5 lbs of trash, while 19 lbs went to the recycling path, and 27 lbs of organics were collected. As part of the zero waste effort, the club provided around 150 plates and silverware sets to the two food trucks. There was a washing station to clean and reuse them all day long. No single-use items were used, so no addition to the trash.

For more information and examples about ways your club can provide waste reduction and diversion services at events, contact Kris at [kris.cameron@esrag.org](mailto:kris.cameron@esrag.org), Amelie at [amelie.catheline@gmail.com](mailto:amelie.catheline@gmail.com), or Tami at [info@esragplastics.org](mailto:info@esragplastics.org).

Before you get started, click "read more" for resources and questions to guide your planning.

*Photo: Alert at the Apple Blossom Festival Beer Garden, volunteers Brian Brennan and Selina Danko fished out items that needed to go to a different receptacle.*

[Read More](#)

## Bring hope: share ESRAG's new podcast!

*By Ilya "The Admiral" Shcharbitski, ESRAG Social Media Team*



At the end of 2022, after doing a lot of social media work for COP26 in Glasgow, I thought we needed more media channels to reach Rotarians to inspire them with what ESRAG is doing. I thought it would be good to start a podcast and hear inspiring stories. Through contact with Laurie, I learned that ESRAG Director Felix Kimani Kariuki also had the idea to start a podcast. Sometimes, the same great idea can appear in two different minds, and that's exactly what happened here.

Once we talked, we outlined our idea for the podcast and started to look for speakers. I thought it would be good to start with our main sponsor, ESRAG Communications Director Laurie Zuckermann, and then go to the person with the most history in ESRAG, Karen Hendrick-Hands.

We hope, through the podcast, to reach a new audience and garner more support from Rotary and Rotaract to initiate projects to help our environment. We need everyone to generate workable solutions for communities around the globe. The climate issue might seem big and unapproachable, but after hearing what people are doing on the ground, I think it should bring hope to people. By bringing hope, we can inspire action. Once people are in action, it's quite hard to stop them.

Tune in and listen to our intriguing guests. If you have a climate project you are working on, feel free to reach



out to us or to me directly. We would love to talk about your project and what kind of solution it offers. We look forward to hearing from you, our listener.

Our podcast is available on Spotify, YouTube, Apple podcasts and our website. Look for ESRAG podcast on all these platforms.

*Ilya "the Admiral" Shcharbitski is a key member of ESRAG's Communications Team and the Rotaract Club of Scheveningen, Netherlands.*

*Photo: After years of sharing news and great ideas over WhatsApp, Karen Kendrick-Hands and the Admiral met in person at last at the Rotary International Convention in Singapore. Credit: Dr. Liz Henke.*

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## ESRAG booth a-buzz with fellowship and discovery

**By Barb Sheehan, ESRAG Oceania Chapter**



It was with much anticipation that I arrived in Singapore a couple of days before RICON, carrying posters for the ESRAG booth that had been displayed in Melbourne the year before. When Melbourne RICON 2023 finished, planning began for 2024 with the Singapore team of Ambaree Majumber, George Jacobs and Bianca Polak. Laurie Zuckerman ran the training sessions for the booth volunteers and organised the roster for the booth.

ESRAG Chair-Elect Yavuz Atila brought pull-up banners for ESRAG and the Million Solar Panel project, and when the House of Friendship opened on Saturday the ESRAG booth was looking splendid.

From the start it was a busy booth, with lots of Rotarians interested in what we do, lots of sharing of ideas for environmental projects, and plenty of interest in becoming a member of ESRAG. It was a great support to have many of the ESRAG current and previous Board members spending time at the booth. Their expertise was much appreciated. Special thanks to Jo Randolph who kindly covered the booth for much of the convention, including during her allocated opening session!

New friendships and connections were made, others rekindled, and the passion and enthusiasm for protecting our environment was shared with many from around the globe. Congratulations to Ambaree and her team on a successful event.

*Barb Sheehan, a member of the Rotary Club of Highton, coordinated the volunteers for the 2023 ESRAG House of Friendship booth for the Rotary International Convention in Melbourne.*

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## ESRAG thanks departing Directors, welcomes those newly-elected

**By Yavuz Atila, ESRAG Chair-Elect**

ESRAG thanks the following Directors for their service and leadership as they complete their terms on the Board:

- Joey O'Brien, Canada (Director 2021-2024)
- Dr. Yasar Atacik, Türkiye (Chair 2023-24, Director 2018-2024)
- Dr. Rick Randolph, USA (Chair 2021-22, Director 2018-2024)
- Dr. Mina Venkataraman, India (Director 2021-2024)

ESRAG welcomes and congratulates the newly-elected Directors for the 2024-27 term:

- Caroline DeWitt, Canada
- Dr. Ludwig Kalthoff, Germany (2nd Term)
- Carlos Montoya, Mexico (2nd Term)
- Cinderella Ndlovu, Zimbabwe
- Gunilla Östberg, Sweden (2nd Term)
- Safak Özsoy, Türkiye
- Alberto Palombo, Brazil
- Deniz Vural, Türkiye (2nd Term)
- Doug White, USA



*Photo: ESRAG Director Ludwig Kalthoff (front and center) explaining the Every Club Climate Friendly initiative at the May 28 breakout session on how Rotary could reach Net-Zero by 2040. With him on the panel were Past Chair Dr. Pat Armstrong (not shown), Chair-Elect Yavuz Atila, Rotary International Past President Ian Riseley, ESRAG Chair Dr. Yasar Atacik, and DG David Alexander.*

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## The Environmental Sustainability Rotary Action Group

operates in accordance with Rotary International policy, but is not an agency of, or controlled by, Rotary International.

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## Connect with us on social media

