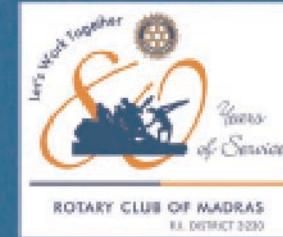


A Timeless Legacy paints an evocative picture of the 80 years of the Rotary Club of Madras. The pages detail the passion and tireless dedication of the founders and the ever-growing network of caring people. This book is more than a historical account. It is the story of people with an intimate awareness of their city's struggles and the desire to make a difference. With an unwavering commitment to service, these Rotarians achieve because they see promise even progress is sometimes merely a dot on the horizon. For the Club, this eightieth year is special; but this year is simply another one in which to bring hope to those with needs, and a chance to leave *A Timeless Legacy* to this country.

Revised Edition

A Timeless Legacy

Eighty Years of Service



ROTARY CLUB OF MADRAS



Published by
ROTARY CLUB OF MADRAS



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A Timeless Legacy
Eighty Years of Service



*A Timeless
Legacy* Eighty Years of Service

DEEPIKA DAVIDAR

Updated up to the 80th year by

RTN. ARUN K. RAMCHANDAR

&

RTN. N.K. GOPINATH



ROTARY CLUB OF MADRAS



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Preface

Early this year, I was asked to write a history of the Rotary Club of Madras. The Club would be celebrating its Platinum Jubilee in July and the book was expected to cover 80 years of history.

I agreed to the project, little knowing that it would turn out to be one of the most enjoyable assignments to come my way. I covered a range of amazing projects and met many inspirational people, not just in person but on the pages of yellowing and brittle archived material. There are hundreds of people who may find no mention in this book but without their contribution to the Club over the years, this would not be the story that it is.

I would like to gratefully acknowledge the help I received from various people while writing this book.

Rtn. N.K. Gopinath tirelessly coordinated meetings, interviews, project visits and ensured that I had all the material necessary to write this book. Rtns. S.L. Chitale, Benjamin Cherian, M. Balaji, Dr. M. Natarajan, C.N. Ramdas, M.V. Chandran, Ganapathi Subramanian, Kamal Chadda, D. Sudhakara Reddy, V.K. Chandrakumar and Indhra Subramanyam shared not just facts and figures about the Club's projects but conveyed the passion that Rotarians feel for their causes.

Rtns. Benjamin Cherian, D. Sudhakara Reddy and V.K. Chandrakumar read through every draft with a critical eye that left no fact to chance. Their constructive suggestions and encouragement were invaluable.

Rtn. K.S. Padmanabhan suggested I write this book, arranged the first meeting with some of the Board Members, and offered every help at the stage of printing.

Rtn. Dr. Kenneth Hobbs and I never met, but his incomparable book *Diary of a Miracle* was the source for much of the chapters on the Red Measles and Polio Immunisation programmes.

Rtn. Arun Sarathi generously supplied me with old photographs and books that belonged to his father, the late Rtn. R.P. Sarathi. Dr. M. Natarajan devoted an evening to identifying faces and events long past and attaching an entertaining tale or two to each black and white print.

Rtn. S. Gunashekhar made available hundreds of photographs of Rotary events captured on his digital camera.

Special mention must be made of Rotarians who have served as editors of the Club bulletin, *The Light House*. This bulletin has been published every week for little under half a century and is a priceless record of club activities.

This book was written with the patient support of my husband, Jonathan. He was a sounding board for many ideas and his advice and keen editing skills helped shape the book.

I would also like to acknowledge the memory of Rotarians long gone, but not forgotten. This book is a tribute to those who laid the foundations of the Rotary Club of Madras.

Deepika Davidar

Foreword-2009

A Timeless Legacy was brought out to commemorate our 75th year of service. This formed a reliable archive of our Club's activities over the years. The importance of this lies in updating the information from time to time- at least once in five years. This is exactly what we have endeavored to do in the eightieth year of our club.

We have enjoyed doing this and hope this will continue to happen in future also. Happy Reading.

Arun K. Ramchandar
Past President

N.K. Gopinath
Past President

Prologue

“The further back you look, the further forward you can see.”

Sir Winston Churchill

The hoots of steamers as they streamed in and out of Madras harbour could be clearly heard in Egmore, a good 10 kilometres away. Horse-drawn tongas trotted along the broad tree-lined roads. A lazy breeze wafted through office buildings, rustling paper, and creating the illusion of heat being dispelled. In reality, it was dreadfully hot, as only May in Madras could be. The year was 1929.

There is a two-week period in May that residents of Madras refer to as *Agninakshatram*. It means ‘wrath of the sun’. During this period, all of Madras tries to stay indoors and out of the sun’s way as much as possible.

James Wheeler Davidson, a Canadian, had served for long periods in the Far East. But as he visited offices in the harbour area of Madras in May 1929, he too found the heat stifling. His white shirt was soaked with sweat. He looked, he recalled later, as if he had “jumped into the sea”. The temperatures soared between 100-110 degrees Farenheit. Davidson said, “Going about in the hot sun from office to office, climbing stairs, for the principals are always found on the top floor, often standing with my heavy briefcase in hand, in badly ventilated hallways for twenty to thirty minutes until I could be seen, made my work a hot job. I used a taxi when possible, a taxi so hot that literally one could not touch the handles or sides of the car with bare hands.”

But it took more than the Madras sun to deter a man with a mission. And Davidson was in Madras to champion a cause he passionately believed in: the Rotary.

CHAPTER 1

The Road to Rotary

“A lamp has the unique quality of being able to light another lamp without losing any of its own brilliance.”

The Buddha

Education and experience make a man. Paul P. Harris, founder of Rotary, had both.

He was born on April 19, 1868 in Racine, Wisconsin, USA. When he was three years old, his parents fell on hard times and Harris was taken to Vermont to be raised by his grandfather.

After school, he completed his PhB and LL.D at the University of Vermont. He joined Princeton University but his quest for higher education was cut short by his grandfather's death. Left to fend for himself, Harris worked for a year before admitting himself to the University of Iowa. He graduated in 1891, a full-fledged lawyer. But Harris was not ready to settle down to office life. Having had years of book-learning, he decided to experience life.

It was the norm in those days for young upper class Americans to travel after graduation. They toured in style and the itinerary rarely varied. One admired the classical beauty of the relics in ancient Greece, imbibed the vibrant art scene of Paris, went boating on Italian lakes, scaled Swiss mountain peaks, and took in the solemn splendour of England's cathedrals.

Harris had no such luxurious course charted out, but he did have an aim: to see the world and get to know his fellowmen. His travels plunged him into a world of exciting experiences. He

worked as a news reporter in San Francisco and Denver, taught at the Los Angeles Business College, worked on a fruit farm and in a raisin-picking factory, saddled up as a cowboy on a Colorado ranch, donned pancake in a Denver theatrical stock company, and sold marble and granite during his stint as a travelling salesman.

Earning his passage on cattle boats, he sailed to England. Once there, he travelled to Scotland to see its famous granite quarries and then moved on to the marble-rich regions of Ireland, Belgium and Italy.

In 1900, Harris called a halt to his five years of wandering. He returned home with a soul full of valuable experience and contacts. He went to Chicago and began to practise law.

Chicago in the early 1900s was a rough and ready industrial town. Its iron and steel mills worked at a punishing pace and immigrants flocked to the city looking for work. By 1890, USA had overtaken Britain in the production of iron and, by 1900, in the production of steel and coal. Industry was flourishing but at the cost of human interests. The old agrarian economy was being savaged by capitalism. Rural societies found themselves depleted as men left for the cities to find lucrative employment.

Different cultures mingled and old values clashed with new ideologies — Chicago in transition was not an easy place to be. Corruption was rampant even among those assigned to keep law and order. Businessmen, in particular were worried that their companies would fold if they didn't subscribe to the trend of paying bribes. For all its hectic activity, Chicago was a lonely place for many people living in it.

Paul Harris felt this loneliness keenly. Raised in rural Vermont, he was used to the friendliness and close bonds of a small community. On an evening walk with a lawyer friend through a residential neighbourhood, Harris was struck by his friend's rapport with many storekeepers. As they walked, his friend would call out a cheery greeting, stop and chat a while and introduce Harris. The thought struck Harris that business friends could be social friends too.

As he built up his practice over the next five years, Harris mulled over the idea of starting a club where businessmen from different fields could get together, enjoy fellowship and forge friendships. On February 23, 1905, Harris discussed his concept with three clients: Sylvester Schiele, a coal merchant, Gustavus Loehr, a mining engineer, and Hiram Shorey, a tailor. The evening began at an Italian restaurant and ended in Loehr's office where Harris laid before them "a very simple plan of mutual cooperation and informal friendship such as all of us had once known in our villages".

Harry Ruggles, a printer, Charley Newton and others who joined the group zealously embraced the plan. Thereafter, membership climbed steadily. A number of men working in Chicago had come from small towns and found the club an avenue to meet up with old friends and make new ones.

It was at the third meeting of the group that Harris presented several options of names for the club. The name 'Rotary' was selected because at that time, meetings were being held in rotation at members' offices and places of business.

In his book, *My Road to Rotary*, Harris writes: "We grew in numbers, in fellowship, in the spirit of helpfulness to each other and to the city. The banker and the baker, the parson and the plumber, the lawyer and the laundryman discovered the similarity of each other's ambitions, problems, successes, and failures. We learned how much we had in common. We found joy in being of service to one another. Again, I seemed to be back in my New England valley."

By 1908, a Rotary Club had been started in San Francisco. By 1910, sixteen clubs had come into existence and collectively they were known as the National Association of Rotary Clubs. Then the concept travelled across the border to Canada and soon crossed the ocean to Great Britain. In 1912-13, the name was changed to the International Association of Rotary Clubs. In 1922, the name was shortened to Rotary International.

Paul P. Harris died in 1947. He was mourned not just by Rotary International but by a host of organisations to whom he had

rendered invaluable service. Harris lived by the Rotary motto: Service above Self. He served in the following positions:

Honorary Vice President, International Society for Crippled Children

Chairman, Committee on Professional Ethics

Member, Board of Managers of the Chicago Bar Association

Member, International Congress of Law, Hague

Member, International Committee of the American Bar Association

The Boy Scout Movement of America awarded him the Silver Buffalo award. He was also decorated by a number of countries: Order of Southern Cross, Brazil; Order of Merit, Chile; Order of Cristobal Colony, Dominican Republic; Order of Merit, Ecuador; Office of Legion of Honour, France; and, Order of the Sun, Peru.

Eleven years after his death, in 1958, the 10,000th Rotary Club was chartered in Mandvi, District 305, India. As long as there are men and women who passionately believe in the Rotary motto 'Service Above Self', Rotary will go from strength to strength. Sharing his thoughts about the older motto, Paul Harris said: The words, 'He Profits Most Who Serves Best' are not empty words; they are full of understanding. To half appreciate this fact is to half realize its benefit; he who can abandon himself in the interest of a cause in which he unreservedly believes is indeed fortunate.

Paul Harris was fortunate not just to believe in the Rotary but to be surrounded by men who shared his conviction. The good that Paul Harris did lives after him. His memory is today honoured by 1.2 million Rotarians around the world.

CHAPTER 2

Mission Incredible

“...its (Rotary’s) message of giving went straightway to his heart and the new chapter of his life became one of a journeying forth to carry the ideals of Rotary from Calgary to the far places of the earth.”

Allen D. Albert,
President of Rotary International (1915-1916)
in his tribute to James Wheeler Davidson.

The 1920s saw an explosion of Rotary International the worldover. Clubs opened in Africa, Europe, Australia, Hawaii, Philippines, Japan, China, New Zealand, South America, Central America and India.

In 1921, James Wheeler Davidson and Colonel James Layton Ralston, avid Rotarians from Calgary, Canada, took a year off from their businesses and sailed to Australia and New Zealand. Thanks to their zeal, clubs were established in Melbourne, Sydney, Wellington and Auckland.

On August 3, 1928, the ‘Duchess of Athol’ sailed from Montreal Harbour. On board were Davidson, his wife Lillian and their daughter Marjory. Davidson had been appointed Honorary General Commissioner of Rotary International. With an allotted budget of \$8,000, Davidson had been commissioned to establish clubs in the Far East and Europe.

Davidson had scheduled eight months for his trip to Europe and the Far East. Little did he know as he stood on the deck of the Duchess of Athol and watched the Canadian coastline fade, that

it would be three years before he saw his home again. He could not have foreseen the marvellous success of his sojourn, for in those three years, clubs would be established in Athens, Cairo, Jerusalem, Bombay, Delhi, Madras, Colombo, Thayetmyo, Rangoon, Penang, Seremban, Kuala Lumpur, Ipoh, Singapore, Batavia, Bandoeng, Malang, Semarang, Medran, Klang, Malacca, Bangkok and Hong Kong. He did not know that he would finally return home having travelled through perilous terrain, suffered several illnesses, met with over 2,200 Asian businessmen and spent \$250,000 of his own money. He little knew that he would die two years after his return, his travels having taken a huge toll on his health.

And even had he known all this, James Wheeler Davidson would have still set sail, for this great man was born to adventure.

Born on June 14, 1862, Davidson's childhood passions were geography and tales of exploration and adventure. He was particularly fascinated by the travelling circus and haunted the circus campsite whenever it came to town, talking to the performers and learning more about the animals.

As a young man, he managed a string of theatres. Around this time, he organised lecture tours for H.M. Stanley, the intrepid explorer of Africa, and Robert E. Peary who had just returned from his trip to the Arctic. And when Robert Peary made his first attempt to reach the North Pole in 1893, Davidson was a part of his team.

When he returned to the USA, he joined the *New York Herald* and was posted as war correspondent in China and Japan. He came to the attention of U.S. President Grover Cleveland who appointed him Consular Agent in Formosa. With his customary enthusiasm, Davidson gave his all to the job. He mastered Japanese, a rare feat for a Westerner, and wrote a classic treatise on Formosa. He continued to serve the government under Presidents McKinley and Theodore Roosevelt. The latter sent him to Manchuria on an inspection of the Trans Siberian Railway.

In 1906, Davidson shifted his family to Calgary, Alberta, and became a Canadian citizen. He invested in land and lumber and

built up a prosperous business. In 1914, he became a member of the Rotary Club.

Allen D. Albert, President of Rotary International (1915-1916), said this about Davidson: "...the fairly familiar phrase 'his dynamic personality' does not wholly describe Jim Davidson. Everything about him was big: body, head, brain, voice, laugh, straight look of the eyes, heart, purpose, ideal, love of Rotary."

Davidson joyfully embraced Rotary. Every morning, he and Marjory kept open home for 20 or more Rotarians. Lively talk was exchanged over endless cups of coffee. The fellowship of Rotary and the ethics it stood for appealed to the gregarious and outgoing Davidson. And with typical generosity, Davidson agreed to spread the Rotary movement around the world.

Arriving in early 1929, Davidson chose Bombay to launch his campaign. Undeterred by the raging communal riots, Davidson contacted key Westerners in the city and formed a Rotary club. From Bombay, he moved on to Delhi but found few suited to the style of Rotary. Not one to give up, Davidson persuaded 28 Westerners to become members. But as soon as the summer heat set in, half the members fled the city for cooler climes. The attendance rule of Rotary was summarily broken. For lack of fellowship, the club was forced to close down in 1931.

Davidson was thrilled to find the Rotary Club of Calcutta, established in 1919 by R.C. Coombes, flourishing. It is likely that he refreshed his spirit in the company of these Rotarians before setting out to his final destination in India: Madras.

CHAPTER 3

Under the Madras Sky

*Madras with 530,000 population is India's third largest city.
Backwaters provide a shelter for important steamship liners which
carry away cotton, peanuts, hides, tea, etc.*

Lillian Davidson
from 'Making New Friends'

In 1929, big business in Madras was dominated by the closely-knit British community. Davidson decided to tackle each prospective Rotary member individually. He later explained his reasons for doing this: "Some Rotarians may have wondered why I did not get my prospects together in groups in the evening, for instance. My answer is that it is difficult in this part of the world to come into these large communities a complete stranger and induce the heads of leading firms and their representatives to attend a meeting to discuss something they know nothing about and in which they may not have the slightest interest. It would, I feel, be regarded by many as an impertinence to even ask them. By calling on each one individually, I can eliminate the man not interested, without his view influencing others, or I have a chance to quietly overcome his doubts. Mob psychology is as likely to work against one as for one, and I believe many failures in organising clubs have been due to bringing together a group of such men as can be collected to talk it over. My task was too important to take any chances, so I selected the slow and tedious but more certain route to success."



Paul P. Harris, Founder of Rotary



James Wheeler Davidson
Founder of the
Rotary Club of Madras



Sir Frederick E. James
First District Governor from
the Rotary Club of Madras



Dr. Rajah Sir M.A. Muthiah
One of the first Indian Members
of the Club



Rtn. J.L.P. Roche Victoria,
Member of the State
Council of Legislature

Times of fun and fellowship



(L to R) : Rtns. Lt. Col. V. Rangachari, Dr. S. Sundara Raman, R.P. Sarathi, Dr. C.R.R. Pillay, Dr. V.S. Subramaniam, S. Subramaniam, I.M. Kapur and G.A. Phadke

Winners of the fancy dress competition held at the residence of
Rtn. P. Maruthai Pillai, 1968 - 1969



Ist Prize
Rtn. K.S. Narayanan
dressed as a Hindu Widow



2nd Prize
Rtn. V. Narayanaswami
dressed as Nooruddin

Greeting Rotarians on their birthdays is a long-standing
Light House tradition

Happy Birthday



K.S. Narayanan
Feb. 26, 1964



F.C. Mathias
Feb. 27, 1964



D.C. Kothari
Feb. 28, 1964



A.M.M. Arunachalam
March 1, 1964

Received With Thanks for the Sunshine Fund

Birthday gifts from

Rtn. K.S. Narayanan	Rs. 15
Rtn. F.C. Mathias	Rs. 20
Rtn. Past Governor D.C. Kothari	Rs. 51

(The Light House, February 24, 1964)

There is no doubt that Davidson could have single-handedly established the Rotary in Madras. But in this city of 530,000 people, Davidson found one valuable ally: Rtn. F.E. James.

Sir Frederick E. James (he was knighted in 1941) was no stranger to the Rotary. He had been president of the Rotary Club of Calcutta in 1924-25 and 1925-26. It was his job as Vice President of the United Planters Association of South India, that brought him to Madras — a fortunate move from the Rotary's point of view.

It must have been a great encouragement to Davidson to find another so devoted to the extension of Rotary in India. Sir F. E. James is described as having been 'a man of high character and pleasing personality, a good speaker and, most important of all, he possessed a comprehensive knowledge of Rotary.'

Davidson recommended that Rotary International appoint Sir James Honorary Commissioner for Rotary International of the Middle Asia Region. In 1932, Sir James organised the first Convention of Rotary Clubs in India, Burma and Ceylon. The convention was held at Calcutta. It is a matter of pride that the first Director of Rotary International from India, was none other than Sir F. E. James of the Rotary Club of Madras. He served in this post from 1933-34. Sir James added another first to his credit when he became the first Governor of District 89 in 1936-37 and served a second term in 1938-39. The first district conference was also held during his tenure as Governor in 1937.

Like Davidson, Sir James lived out the then Rotary motto 'He profits most who serves best'. He was a member of the State and Central Legislatures in India for over 20 years. He served as General Secretary of the YMCA, Calcutta, from 1920 to 1928. His tenure in India was Rotary's gain. He shifted back to England as Managing Director, Tatas Ltd., London, and died in 1971.

The first meeting of the Rotary Club of Madras was held on May 10, 1929, at the Connemara Hotel. The 30 charter members included Sir James and represented the leaders of society and industry. All but three were present at that first meeting. The first

President of the Club was Rtn. C.G. Armstrong, Chairman of the Madras Port Trust; the first Secretary was Morton Chance of the Hotel Chain. The Club was chartered on July 19, 1929.

His job done in India, Davidson moved on. Sadly, he did not live to see the clubs he'd planted bloom. Two years after his return to Canada, he died on July 18, 1933. His untiring efforts for the sake of Rotary had earned him the sobriquet 'the Marco Polo of the Rotary'.

At his memorial service, a year later, Allen D. Albert said to a packed hall, "Rotary is a movement of the love of men for their fellows. Now love is not a thing to be reasoned about. It is not to be expressed in formulas or equations. It cannot be put into the terms of a contract. It is giving. Rotary is a movement in which men give of themselves for the help of mankind. That is what is meant by service. When we say "He profits most who serves best" we mean that if we men of the earth will but give of our best to each other, we shall find ourselves in a world made better by our giving...

...We who are the brothers in Rotary to Jim Davidson think of him in this memorial hour not as one who has gone from us so much as one who remains with us through that which he gave along with his work."

CHAPTER 4

A Code for all Seasons

'...Rotary is not merely a state of mind, nor Rotary philosophy merely subjective but it must translate itself into objective activity...'

The Light House, 1968

What convinced 30 of the city's leading businessmen to join an organisation recommended by a man they barely knew? It is likely that many of them had already heard of the Rotary. As early as 1912, Rotary clubs had been established in Ireland and Great Britain. In 1921, the 1000th Rotary club was chartered in York, England.

In the early years of the 20th century, the only constant was change. With industrialisation, a certain hardness had set in to society. Businessmen were expected to be ruthless, as much as the poor expected to be exploited. World War I (1914-18) saw the fall of certain world powers and the rise of others.

Rotary, with its noble ideals and examples of men who lived by these ideals, must have come like fresh air to men tired of breathing the fumes of corrupted values.

Davidson himself must have intrigued the men he approached. Perhaps they listened to him simply to find out what could inspire a man to leave a flourishing real estate business and travel halfway across the world with a wife and daughter to a country ten times hotter than his own. It must have soon become evident to them that he did not stand to gain anything monetarily. What was it about the Rotary that inspired men such as Davidson to give their lives in its service?

The answer lies in the definition and objectives of Rotary, the benefits of being a Rotarian and the Four-Way Test.

By definition, Rotary is a non-political, non-sectarian association of business and professional men embracing representatives of nearly every trade and profession. Membership is formed on the unique plan of having one active member from each line of business and profession in the community.

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 by each Rotarian of his occupation as an opportunity to serve society;

Third

The application of the ideal of service by every Rotarian to his personal, business and community life;

Fourth

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

The benefits of being a Rotarian include:

Making the acquaintance of men one ought to know.

Participating in genuine, wholesome good fellowship.

Developing true and helpful friendships.

Enlightenment as to other men's work, problems and successes.

Education in methods that increase efficiency.

Stimulation of the desire to be of service to one's fellowmen and to society in general.

Developing a new outlook on one's own business or profession, seeing it more as service to the community than as only an instrument of private gain.

All that is asked of a Rotarian is that he attend meetings regularly, pay dues promptly, do his part when called upon, be a big-hearted, broad-minded man, a man of energy and action, a real man—a Rotarian.

The Rotary offers its members five avenues of service: Club Service, Community Service, Youth Service, Vocational Service and International Service. Each member is expected to apply their talents to serving in at least one avenue.

In the offices of many Rotarians, it is common to see a desktop plaque and a poster pinned up in a prominent place displaying 24 words. These 24 words make up the Four-Way Test. Adopted by Rotary International in 1946, the Four-Way Test is a yardstick by which every Rotarian is expected to measure their relationships and actions whether on the personal, business or social front.

The Four-Way Test asks:

Is it true?

Is it fair to all concerned?

Will it build goodwill and better friendship?

Will it be beneficial to all concerned?

When faced with a situation, Rotarians are encouraged to ask all four questions, and then decide on a course of action. Far from being merely an idealistic set of values, the Four-Way Test arose out of a real-life situation.

In 1932, a certain business venture called the Club Aluminium Company found itself on the verge of bankruptcy. Manufacturers of kitchen utensils and household items, the company owed its creditors \$4,00,000 over its actual worth. The company had a good product however, and the people working for it were dedicated and honest. The creditors of the company approached Mr. Herbert J. Taylor and asked him to save the company from going bankrupt.

On studying the situation, Taylor found little fundamentally wrong with the product or the employees. He borrowed \$6,190 from a bank to keep the production cycle going and began to work on a plan that would help the company rise above the strong competition. He decided that his strategy would aim at improving the character, dependability and service-mindedness of the company personnel.

As with all companies, the Club Aluminium Company had a code of ethics; but no one knew what it was because it was lengthy and complicated. Taylor hewed the code down to four simple questions that could be easily memorised. These four questions became known as the Four-Way Test.

Before the Four-Way Test made a public appearance in the Club Aluminium Company, it first sat on the desk of Herbert Taylor for 60 days. Taylor frankly said that he felt like throwing it into the wastepaper basket by the end of the first day. Each time he considered a business issue or action, he asked himself "Is it the truth?" and was shocked to find out how often he was far from the truth and "how many untruths appeared in our company's literature, letters and advertising."

At the end of 60 days, Taylor, though chastened by the experience of living up to the test, believed in it wholeheartedly. He shared it with his department heads all, interestingly, from different faiths. One was an Orthodox Jew, another a Roman Catholic, the third a Christian Scientist and the fourth a Presbyterian. All four agreed that truth, justice, friendliness and helpfulness were at the heart of their respective religious beliefs and would further the success and progress of any business.

The code was memorised by every employee of the company. Was it successful in turning the company around? Twenty years later, Herbert Taylor had this to say:

"The application of the Four-Way Test to our relations with our own personnel and that of our suppliers and customers helped us win their friendship and goodwill. We have learned that the friendship and confidence of those with whom we associate is essential to permanent success in business."

Through over 20 years of sincere effort on the part of our personnel, we have been making steady progress toward reaching the ideals expressed in the Four-Way Test. We have been rewarded with a steady increase in sales, profits, and earnings of our personnel. From a bankrupt condition in 1932, our company has paid its debts in full, given its stockholders over \$ 1 million in dividends, and has a present value of over \$ 2 million. All these rewards have come from a cash investment of only \$ 6,190, the Four-Way Test and some good hardworking people who have faith in God and high ideals."

"Intangible dividends from the use of the Four-Way Test have been even greater than the financial ones. We have enjoyed a constant increase in goodwill, friendship and the confidence of our competitors and the public, and what is even more valuable, a great improvement in the moral character of our own personnel."

Over the years, Rotarians have carried the values of the Four-Way Test into every avenue of service. If there has been much service, much sacrifice, much achievement and much impact, credit the inspiration of the Four-Way Test.

CHAPTER 5

The Growing Years

“Adventures in friendship.”

Paul Harris
on being asked what Rotary meant to him

At the Silver Jubilee celebrations of the Rotary Club of Madras in 1954, Mr. Sriprakasa, Governor of the province looked around at the 85 members of the club and quipped, “What birth control measures are you using to keep your numbers so low in a city as big as Madras?”

Today, the club approaches its Platinum Jubilee with 240 members. But beginning with 30 members, the Rotary Club of Madras was slow to grow.

Within the first year of its existence, the club invited Indians to join. Rajah Sir M.A. Muthiah Chettiar and Sir Mohamed Usman, KCIE, MLC, were among the first Indian members. A founder member of the Justice Party in the 1930s, Sir Mohamed Usman was the first Indian to be president of the Club in 1935-36. While president of the Club, Sir Md. Usman served as a member of the Madras Legislative Council. He went on to become a member of the Viceregal Council.

Other Rotary stalwarts such as Dr. P.V. Cherian, M. Rathnaswamy, Dr. P. Rama Rau and D.C. Kothari were also among the first Indian members. As early as 1937, the late Rtn. PDG. Dr. P. Rama Rau, became the first member of the Rotary Club of Madras to visit the Headquarters of Rotary International in Chicago. Paul Harris presented him with a gavel which is still in

use. Dr. P. Rama Rau went on to become president of the Club in 1941-42 and was the second District Governor (1943-44) from the Rotary Club of Madras.

In the early years, the Rotary Club of Madras was very much a club of the elite. Members were the movers and shakers of society, the plutocrats (mostly British) of a few big business houses and professions, the top civil servants and military brass, the titled gentry (Rao Bahadurs and Rao Sahebs) and wealthy merchant-princes, who met every fortnight over lunch or dinner at the city's most fashionable hotels and clubs. The Indians invited to join were the top industrialists, judges and intellectuals and leaders of the ruling class of the day. Perhaps, it was the British hue that caused the Government of India to view the Rotary with suspicion.

Mr. Sriprakasa, a leading member of the Congress Party who served as Governor of both Bombay and Madras provinces once earned a rebuke from Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. "You are keeping strange company," remarked Pandit Nehru. He was referring to Sriprakasa's association with the Rotary!

The true Indianisation of the club began after World War II and Independence in 1947. By the 1950s, members were predominantly Indian. The screening process for new members was rigorous and only men of the highest calibre were taken. The Classification System ensured that membership was strictly restricted to the top men of each profession or business and not more than one person was selected to represent each vocation.

Invitations to join were coveted. The late PDG. D.C. Kothari (known as 'DC') once related how he came to join the Rotary Club of Madras in 1935. An invitation for his father to join the club was expected any day in the mail. However, when it finally arrived, due to some mix-up, it had DC's initials on it. Armed with the invitation, DC arrived as a guest at one of the meetings. The President said that they had been expecting someone older. "Well, you addressed the invitation to me and hence I came," was DC's confident reply. Impressed with what they saw, the Rotarians invited DC to join the club. He was barely 24 years old and by far the youngest of the 63-member Club.

Numbers continued to fluctuate but rarely rose. In 1936, the club strength dropped to 56. In 1941, it went up to 72 but dwindled to 54 in 1943.

Numbers began to climb in the 1970s when Rotary International sent out a statement encouraging clubs not only to increase in size but to take younger members. (Today, the youngest member of the Rotary Club of Madras is 23 years old.) In the 1990s, liberalisation of the economy and the information technology boom ushered in a host of new companies and professions. New classifications allowed more members to join the Club. The Club also permitted five members under each classification.

In 1985, Rtn. D.C. Kothari achieved 50 years of unbroken membership in the Club. In 2002-2003, the Club honoured seven Rotarians who have been members of the Club for over 40 years. They are: Rtn. V.R. Bakthavatsalam, Rtn. M.Ct. Muthiah, Rtn. M.K. Raju, Rtn. C. Srinivasan, Rtn. R.G. Phadke, Rtn. Balwant Rai and Rtn. G.T. Shahani.

A member of the Rotary Club of Madras has the honour of belonging to the oldest club in South India, the third oldest club in India, and the second largest club after the Rotary Club of Bangalore. The Club has distinguished itself in many areas not the least of which is having had the most number of members — 17 in all — rise to the position of district governor. The illustrious roll call reads:

- 1937-38 Rtn. F.E. James
- 1938-39 Rtn. F.E. James
- 1943-44 Rtn. P. Rama Rao
- 1947-48 Rtn. S.R. Sarma
- 1950-51 Rtn. Dr. P.V. Cherian
- 1954-55 Rtn. D.C. Kothari
- 1959-60 Rtn. K. Gopal Rao
- 1965-66 Rtn. K.V. Srinivasan
- 1971-72 Rtn. M.V. Arunachalam

- 1975-76 Rtn. C.R.R. Pillay
- 1982-83 Rtn. R. Ratnam
- 1985-86 Rtn. Dr. S. Sundara Raman
- 1988-89 Rtn. V. Chidambaram
- 1989-90 Rtn. Dr. M. Natarajan
- 1992-93 Rtn. R. Ramakrishnan
- 2002-03 Rtn. M. Balaji
- 2004-05 Rtn. R. Benjamin Cherian
- 2006-07 Rtn. J.B. Kamdar

A Rotary district is defined as 'a geographical territory in which Rotary Clubs are associated for Rotary International administrative purposes.' The district governor administers the district on behalf of Rotary International. The Rotary Club of Madras was in R.I.Dt.89 until it became Dt.91 in 1937-38. This Dist 91 became Dt.94 and later it became R.I.Dt.56 in 1949. From 1957-58 till 1983-84, our District was known as R.I.Dist.320. In 1984, the district was divided into District 320 and District 323, each comprising about 40 clubs. Under the new District 323 were clubs belonging to Madras, Chinglepet, Salem, Vellore, North Arcot, South Arcot, Thanjavur, Dharmapuri and Krishnagiri. In July 1993, District 323 was bifurcated into District 3230 and District 2980. The Rotary Club of Madras comes under District 3230 as do all the clubs in Chennai, Chinglepet, Kanchipuram, Thiruvannamalai and Vellore.

District 3230 has the distinction of having one of the first woman district governors outside of Canada and USA. Rtn. Rekha Shetty was District Governor in 1999-2000. As early as 1937, District 89 (to which the Rotary Club of Madras belonged) called for women in professions to be admitted to the Rotary. At the first District Conference in 1937, while Sir F.E. James was District Governor, it was decided that all the Rotary clubs should pass a resolution to amend the rules and send it to Rotary International. What became of this resolution is not known but no amendment was made to the rules of Rotary International.

Even earlier than District 89, the board of directors of the Rotary Club of Belfast, Ireland, had, in 1912, debated admitting women as members of the club. It was decided against and the matter never went beyond the club.

In 1977, the Rotary Club of Duarte, California, admitted three women to active membership. The club was notified that admitting women members was contrary to the Rotary constitution. After an internal hearing, Rotary International revoked the charter of the Duarte Club and terminated its membership in Rotary International.

The Duarte Club took the case all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court. On May 4, 1987, the Court decreed that it was against the law to debar women from an organization such as Rotary. In 1988-89, women were admitted to the Rotary. The same year, Rtn. Meena Dadha became the first woman to join the the Rotary Club of Madras. Today, out of 240 members, around 15 are women. In 2000-2001, Rtn. Sudha Umashanker became the first woman to serve as Secretary of the Club.

Being the first club in South India, the Rotary Club of Madras sponsored other clubs into being. It sponsored the Rotary Club of Nilgiris which in turn sponsored the Rotary Club of Coimbatore. Each club that came into existence usually went on to sponsor another club. The Rotary Club of Madras is therefore the parent, grandparent and great-grandparent many times over of numerous clubs.

Keen debate marked the start of 1960. The Rotary Club of Madras, which had stayed knit together for 31 years, was asked to cede territory to bring a second club into existence. Madras City had grown considerably and many deserving professionals and businessmen were barred from Rotary because there were no available classifications. To grow the Rotary movement, District Governor K. Gopal Rao suggested the formation of a second club.

At a closed meeting held on February 23, 1960, members argued for and against the notion. Rtns. M.V. Arunachalam and

IPP. K.V. Srinivasan had prepared a report on the issue and gamely clarified every doubt raised by members. But no conclusion could be reached. Most members were in favour of the new club but doubts persisted. Would the new club affect numbers in the existing club? Should the present club aim for more perfection in its functioning before sponsoring another club of its ilk in the city?

In little over a month, the issue was settled. The weekly bulletin published a 'Note Regarding Extension of Rotary in Madras' written by Honorary Secretary P.N. Ethiraj. The note detailed the reasons for and against opening another club and concluded: "It is the view of the Board that it would not be fair to postpone any longer the formation of a new club or clubs ... and [the Board] is of the view that the Club should release territory to facilitate the formation of one or more clubs in Madras City to serve the area, Nungambakkam High Road, Edward Elliot's Road and the area south thereof."

The charter of the Rotary Club of Madras South (as District Governor Gopal Rao insisted it be named) was signed on June 30, 1960. Today, there are 50 clubs in and around the city and the Rotary Club of Madras has directly sponsored 16 of them.

The Club also sponsored the formation of the Inner Wheel Club of Madras and the Probus Club of Madras. The former is the ladies wing of the Rotary and was started in 1966. The Probus Club, whose members are retired professionals and businessmen, was established on June 16, 1992.

Today, the Rotary Club of Madras is growing at a rapid rate. And yet, as the famous Rotary saying goes: 'What matters is not the quantity in Rotary but the quantity of Rotary in each member.'

THE CLASSIFICATION PRINCIPLE IN ROTARY:

- provides an inclusive rather than an exclusive membership, embracing all services to society;
- broadens the member's acquaintance with the accomplishments and problems of other occupations;
- develops fellowship based on diversity instead of similarity of interest;
- obviates business and professional jealousies;
- encourages mutual helpfulness;
- stimulates pride in the dignity of one's occupation.

OUR LANDMARK EVENT IN 1964

Our Land Mark Event under the avenue of Vocational Service was a Business Relationship Conference organized in 1964 to highlight tension that existed between the Government and the Business Community, and to spell out remedial measures. Inaugurated by Shri Morarji Desai, the then Union Finance Minister, it was addressed by personalities like Rajaji, Prof. R. Natarajan, AMM Murugappa Chettiar, R.G. Saraiya, Sir C.P. Ramaswami Iyer, M.C. Setalvad and S. Narayanaswami. The event was reported exhaustively in the press and a copy of the deliberations was distributed.

CHAPTER 6

Club Service

*“We grew in numbers, in fellowship, in the spirit of helpfulness to each other and to the city ...
We learned how much we had in common.
We found joy in being of service to one another.”*

Paul Harris,
My Road to Rotary

The largest committee in the Rotary Club of Madras is the Fellowship Committee. With a club of 240 members, this is hardly surprising. Paul Harris started the Rotary to promote fellowship. And any true blue Rotarian will tell you that fellowship is the bedrock of a successful Rotary.

During the first years of its existence, the Rotary Club of Madras met on Fridays at the Madras Gymkhana Club. It shifted for a short while to the Madras Cricket Club. On January 15, 1937, the club began to meet at the Connemara Hotel—a tradition that continues till today. In 1940, the club meeting was shifted from Friday to Tuesday, another ongoing tradition.

Then, as now, the meeting begins at 1:00 p.m. with lunch. At 1:30 p.m. the Club settles down to business. Long-standing members of the Club recall the late Rtn. PP. R.P. Sarathi who made it a point to stand at the door and greet every member as they entered the Club meeting.

Members rise for a silent invocation or invocation song. In the old days, a toast would be raised to the reigning monarch of the

British Empire. Nowadays, at the first club meeting of the Rotary year, toasts are made to the President of India and the President of Rotary International.

Visitors are welcomed, birthdays and anniversaries announced and little mementos given out. All the while, there is the buzz of chatter and sporadic applause. Reports are read out, announcements made. New members are inducted. The speaker for the meeting is introduced and given about half an hour to speak.

The calibre of speakers has always been high. Members have been privileged to listen to speakers from the fields of industry, art, medicine, literature, music, architecture, environment, government, law and information technology. Talks are always centred around issues of current interest, though, following the Rotary ethic of being non-political, the Club steers clear of politics. This is also out of respect for the diplomats of different embassies who become members for the duration of their stay in Madras.

The Club meeting ends precisely at 2:30 p.m. Within minutes the room empties as Rotarians head back to their workplaces.

Since its inception, the Club has been known for its adherence to punctuality. For many members, the Club meeting is sacrosanct, regardless of their job or hectic schedules. Senior Rotarians recall PP. C.A. Ramakrishnan, ICS, who never once came late for a meeting despite being Chief Secretary to the Government of Tamil Nadu during the tenure of Chief Minister K. Kamaraj.

In 1983-84, Dr. H.V. Hande, the then Health Minister in the MGR cabinet was invited to speak at a club meeting. At noon, the minister called to say that he would be delayed at a function at the Government Stanley Hospital. Dr. M. Natarajan, then president of the Club, politely informed him that Rotary meetings couldn't be delayed. At 1:00 p.m., the minister called again to ask if the meeting could be delayed. "Join us any time," he was told politely. The meeting began punctually at 1:30 p.m. and business as usual was discussed. The minister arrived at 2:15 p.m. and quietly took his place on the dais. "Would you like to speak for



The President of India, Dr. V.V. Giri (centre) with Rtns. PDG K.V. Srinivasan, Club President R.P. Sarathi, PDG. D.C. Kothari and Deepak Bunker, during the President's visit to the Club in 1968



Dr. M.G. Ramachandran in conversation with Dr. C.R.R. Pillay at a regular Tuesday club meeting in 1968



Anand Amritraj receiving the Rotary Club of Madras Rolling Cup
for the Best State Tennis Player, 1967



Smt. M.S. Subbalakshmi receiving the
For the Sake of Honour Award, 1973



G.A. Phadke and P.N. Ethiraj batting for the Club in the annual cricket match against the Madras Cricket Club



The present Phadke Trophy given to the winner of the annual cricket match between the Club and the Madras Cricket Club



Members turn actors in a Club Play enacted in the 1960's



Colonial Cousins thrill the crowd at a Club fundraiser

10 minutes?" Dr. Natarajan asked him. Dr. Hande agreed, spoke exactly for 10 minutes, and the meeting ended at 2:30 p.m.

Another time, Dr. M.G. Ramachandran, during his tenure as chief minister, was invited as chief guest at a Rotary function to give out wheelchairs and calipers to handicapped persons. The function was supposed to start at 6:00 p.m. and there was a certain amount of apprehension among the organising Rotarians about whether MGR would be punctual. At 5:45 p.m. the chief minister walked in with a broad smile. Someone jovially asked how he had made it on time. "Well, I know you Rotarians are very punctual so I left my house well before time to avoid being caught in any rush hour traffic jam." MGR had a lot of respect for the Rotary and was later made an Honorary member of the Club.

Besides punctuality, the Club is a stickler for the attendance rule. Prominent member or otherwise, an attendance defaulter will find an announcement in *The Light House* stating that the Board "regretfully terminates membership of the following..." Every year, Rotarians must have 60 per cent attendance. If they are unable to attend their home club they are allowed to make up in other clubs but must inform their home club. The number of Clubs dotting the city and district has made it easier for more Rotarians to achieve 100 per cent attendance. This was not such an easy achievement in the 1960s when the nearest club was in Cuddalore! Some have achieved 100 per cent attendance not only through the year but through the years. Rtn. M. Saravanan is one of them. He joined the Club in 1972 and has maintained 100 per cent attendance ever since.

Fireside meetings, so popular today, got off to a slow start. In his installation speech on July 5, 1966, Rtn. Dr. V.S. Subramaniam said, "I appeal that every member of our club should organise at least one meeting in their home, which may be a tea or dinner meeting and invite five or six Rotarians and their wives for a friendly informal chat. If 120 or 130 Rotarians do this during the year, I am sure we can improve our fellowship to a considerable extent."

The first Fireside meeting of the Club was held on August 9, 1966, at the residence of Rtn. M. Ct. Muthiah. It was a success but the concept still needed boosting.

The September 20, 1966 issue of *The Light House* carried an explanation of what Fireside meetings were: "A Fireside meeting is an informal gathering of a group of Rotarians in the home of a club member to develop acquaintance and to learn more about Rotary. Many clubs have found such meetings to be particularly effective for keeping the membership up-to-date on Rotary and in providing Rotary information to new members as a means of assimilating them into the club."

In the same issue, the 'In A Lighter Vein' column had this to say on the topic: "At first, the thought [of Fireside meetings] might seem repulsive to many, what with so much heat generated in every walk of life in the country and especially in the sweltering, humid city of Madras. Nonetheless, the idea is quite commendable provided the rendezvous takes place in the surroundings of a buttery bar or some such similar haunt, where thirst is quenched, tongues loosened, minds cleared and appetite satisfied. Many useful suggestions will come forth, work accomplished and life-long friends made. If the above fails, God help the President or have fire-ing meetings."

Whether the humorous approach helped the idea along is not known but by 1971, Fireside meetings were a well organised affair with 21 groups, each under the chairmanship of a member of the Fireside Committee.

The practice of using first names among members has also helped to break down restraint. This practice was recommended early on by Rotary International but wasn't the easiest thing to implement in Indian society with its habit of referring to elders as 'Sir', 'Madam', 'Uncle' or 'Aunty'. Till the early 1990s, the average age in the Club was 65 (it now hovers in the early 50s) and younger members felt awkward about being on first name terms with men who were their senior not only in age but in achievement. Rtn. D. Sudhakara Reddy recalls his interaction with the late Rtn. PDG. M.V. Arunachalam. "He was so much elder to me but refused to

let me call him 'sir' or 'uncle'. 'Call me MV', he insisted. And so I did. That is the greatness of Rotary. There are no differences on the basis of age, community, religion. All members are equal."

A similar story is told by the only third generation Rotarian in the Club, Rtn. M. Pratap Kumar. His grandfather, the late M.C. Cunnan, and father Rtn. Prabhat Kumar joined the Rotary in 1952 and 1975 respectively. "My grandfather and father seemed to enjoy such fellowship and friendship in the Club that it motivated me to join," he says. "I was very young when I joined the Club in 1992 and my friends wondered why I wanted to join a club with so many senior members. But I found no barriers at all between old and young Rotarians. I was, and am, proud to belong to this Club."

One of the earliest successful Full Club Fellowships was in 1973. It was held at Hotel Savera, Mylapore, which was owned by Rtn. Venkatakrishna Reddy. A committee of 29 hosts came forward to bear the expenses. Messrs. Mohan Meakin Breweries donated the beer. As many as 250 Rotarians and Rotaryanns attended the Full Club Fellowship. Rtn. Reddy provided the hotel band to liven up the evening but Rtn. R.P. Sarathi recorded that, "Although the occasion was quite tempting for Rotarians and Rotaryanns to take a spin on the dance floor, it was rather disappointing that the Rotaryanns continued to enjoy their fellowship seated." However, all was not lost as "a few gallant Rotarians led by Rtn. V. Narayanaswamy and Rtn. Markand Desai demonstrated that it was not absolutely necessary to have a female partner to dance to the tunes of the mellow music."

An aside on how wives of Rotarians came to be known as 'Rotary Anns': Strangely, Rotary International has never officially sanctioned the name. It does not appear in the glossary of the Manual of Procedure of Rotary International. Yet, few terms are more widely known.

In 1914, Rtn. H.J. Brunnier, a structural engineer from San Francisco, boarded a train with other Rotarians to attend a Rotary conference. Travelling along with him was his wife, Ann, the only woman in the group. "You shall be called Rotary Ann," quipped

one Rotarian. A few stations later, another wife boarded the train with her Rotarian husband. "Another Rotary Ann," commented the Rotarians. And the name stuck to Rotary wives. Though many spell it as 'Anne' the original spelling was 'Ann'.

Now, as then, fun is the key ingredient of any Full Club Fellowship whether it's a theme party such as Diwali night, Rajasthani night, Punjabi night, Tamil New Year night or a plain old-fashioned party with good food, friends and laughter. The committee of hosts varies. Sometimes it is a random selection, at other times various people of the same profession get together to act as hosts. For instance, groups of doctors, chartered accountants and lawyers have been hosts in the past. Recently all the past presidents teamed up to host a fellowship. And equal to the task, were 12 lady Rotarians who hosted a recent fellowship.

In August 2001, Rotary International Director Rtn. P.C. Thomas attended a Full Club Fellowship of the Rotary Club of Madras. At the close, he mooted the idea of an outstation fellowship in Ootacamund in January 2002. Though unable to make it in January, the Club accepted the invitation for April. On April 19 (also the birthday of Paul Harris and Rtn. Elsamma Thomas), 15 Rotarians, 12 Anns and 13 Annettes arrived in Ooty.

Besides sight-seeing, trekking, fishing and fellowshipping, the group attended a joint meeting hosted by the Rotary Club of Nilgiris West. Rtn. President M.S. Guhan suggested that the two clubs work together on projects such as groundwater recharging as crying a need in the Nilgiris as it is in Chennai. R.I. Director P.C. Thomas, his wife Rtn. Elsamma and their daughter Julie treated the guests to a marvellous tea at their residence. The success of the trip signals more outstation fellowships in the future.

The Club is seeking closer ties with Rotary clubs within the city and District 3230. For years, interaction between Rotary clubs in the city was limited. In 2002-2003, the Rotary Club of Madras decided to hold joint meetings with the Rotary Club of T. Nagar and the Rotary Club of Kilpauk. Members of the clubs were able to fellowship and discuss opportunities to work together. This is a trend that the Club hopes will continue in the future.

A good rapport has always existed between the Club and social clubs in the city. In 2002, a bridge tournament pitted the Club against the Gymkhana Club. The Club team won. In the 1960s, a cricket match between the Madras Cricket Club and the Rotary Club of Madras was an annual affair. Rtn. PP. G.A. Phadke donated a Rolling Cup in 1966, and that year, the Rotary team won the match. Team members were G.A. Phadke, P.N. Ethiraj, V.B. Gokarn, Sulaiman Md. Ebrahim, Baldev Ji, H.G.V. Reddy, Deepak Bunker, S.L. Chitale, R.G. Phadke, K.G. Dhurandhar and the sons of Reddy and Ebrahim. Past Presidents Phadke and Ethiraj scored the winning run in the match.

The matches, played purely in the spirit of fellowship, had many a hilarious moment. Rotarians who hadn't seen a pitch in years found themselves swinging the willow with a will. A few months before the date of the match, The Light House would carry a reminder exhorting Rotarians to 'Whiten your shoes. Trim your waistlines. Check up your glasses. Get in shape. Date for the Annual Cricket Match is nearing.'

Years later, the Club decided to revive the lapsed tradition. Rtn. PP. R.G. Phadke donated the Phadke Trophy in memory of his late father Rtn. G.A. Phadke popularly known in the Club as 'Uncle Phadke'. On March 3, 2002, an enthusiastic team from the Rotary Club of Madras marched on to the hallowed M.C.C. pitch once again. Cheered by numerous Rotarians, Anns and Annettes, the team played its heart out. That the rules were rewritten in their favour (they were allowed 14 batsmen and could retire any M.C.C. batsmen who 'refused' to be out) didn't much help the team. However, by some 'miracle' (read match-fixing) 13 runs were reversed from the M.C.C. score and the Rotarians won by 10 runs!

The Fellowship Committee is constantly casting around for new ways to keep the fellowship flowing. The Autolec Treasure Hunt hosted by Rtn. Balraj Vasudevan on February 6, 2000 was one such novel idea. That year, 13 entries for the treasure hunt were flagged off from Connemara at 11:00 a.m. A variety of vehicles piled high with Rotarians, Anns and Annettes whizzed all over the city, discovering and deciphering the nine

photographic clues. The hunt wound up at Rajarathnam Stadium, Egmore, where prizes of Rs. 5,000, Rs.3,000 and Rs. 2,000 were given to the winners. The twist in the tale was the prize of Rs.1,000 given to the participant who'd solved the least number of clues. The treasure hunt proved a hit and on June 9, 2002, 14 teams from the Club raced down the Autolec Treasure Hunt trail once again.

The Club play is an eagerly awaited event. Rotarians don the pancake and take on roles with the panache of an Olivier or Barrymore. The Club's most recent production was two short plays, 'The Arrangement' adapted from Neil Simon and 'The Wedding'. Rigorous rehearsals, a professional director, sets designed by Thota Tharani and great acting proved a recipe to bring the house down, which the plays did. Still talked about is a play on attendance staged by Rtn. M.K. Raju and team.

Even in Club Service, the Rotary motto 'Service Above Self' shines through — from the committees that toil to ensure that every fellowship activity is fun and memorable, to the hosts who graciously ensure that nothing but the best is served at the fellowships; from every Rotarian who turns up to cheer at a match, to every Rotarian who sacrifices time to make an event like a play or a treasure hunt a success.

Rotarians agree that without fellowship, there can be no service. Achievements are accomplished by strong teams. In his book *Adventure in Service*, Paul Harris wrote that Club Service could be the beginning of a member's adventure in service. For Club Service leads the member to "the development of acquaintance as an opportunity for service."

CHAPTER 7

Vocational Service

*I know what ideal you have - the ideal of service.
And that is the greatest thing of all."*

Smt. Rukmini Devi Arundale
Recipient of the For the Sake of Honour Award, 1969

A lawyer, a coal merchant, a tailor, a mining engineer, a printer...

Men of different vocations, trades and professions formed the first Rotary club. Only one member of each profession was allowed to join. Even the most accomplished, distinguished and reputed man was barred from joining the club if someone of his profession had preceded him.

A Rotary classic, *Service is my Business*, says: "The privilege of holding this classification entails the obligation to put Rotary to work where you work, to make service rather than self the basis of every principle, policy and procedure in your job. It expresses the prime function of your Club as proclaimed in the Object of Rotary: 'To encourage and foster the ideal of service as the basis of all worthy enterprise'."

The latest United Nations figures say that one out of 10 persons of working age is unable to find a decent-paying job. Young people are increasingly confused by the plethora of choices, peer and parental pressure. Vocational Service offers Rotarians the opportunity not just to run an ethical business but to make a qualitative difference to the lives of many.

Initially, Rotary International indicated that Vocational Service was the responsibility of each individual Rotarian. It was only in 1987 that the Rotary International Vocational Service Committee met (for the first time in 40 years) to redefine Vocational Service and give the present structure of well-defined tasks and projects to be undertaken in specific months by clubs.

Way back in 1915, the Rotary had evolved the Rotary Code of Business Ethics. Through the years, however, the Four-Way Test, which was made an official component of Vocational Service in 1943, has served as the touchstone of truth. That, coupled with the early motto 'He profits most who serves best' and the present 'Service Above Self', were yardsticks enough by which to measure one's efforts in Vocational Service.

In 1989, however, Rotary International adopted the '**Declaration of Rotarians in Businesses and Professions**' which states:

AS A ROTARIAN ENGAGED IN BUSINESS OR PROFESSION I AM EXPECTED TO:

Consider my vocation to be an opportunity to serve. Be faithful to the letter and spirit of the ethical codes of my vocation, to the laws of my country and to the moral standards of my community.

Do all in my power to dignify my vocation and to promote the highest ethical standards in my chosen vocation.

Be fair to my employer, employees, associates, competitors, customers, the public and all those with whom I have a business or professional relationship.

Recognise the honour and respect due to all occupations which are useful to society.

Offer my vocational talents to provide opportunities for young people, to work for the relief of the special needs of others and to improve the quality of life in my community. Adhere to honesty in my advertising and in all my representations to the public concerning my business or profession.

Neither seek from nor grant to a fellow Rotarian a privilege or advantage not normally accorded to others in a business or professional relationship.

History shows that the Rotary Club of Madras has always treated Vocational Service as both the individual and collective responsibility of club members. As early as the 1960s, the club conducted career guidance seminars in schools, had members deliver 'My Job' talks, held club meetings at members' factories, and instituted awards to honour the best professionals.

In 1976 and 1985, the Club brought out a career guidance manual that proved popular with schools and colleges. As Club membership increased, information on more professions became available. This year (2003), the Club released its latest career guidance manual with information on careers in just about any field. Rotarians have contributed exhaustive information on their careers whether in the field of IT, Film Distribution or Switchgear Manufacturing, to name a few.

As part of its career guidance endeavours, the Club also holds seminars for school and college students. The recent seminars on IT-enabled services such as medical billing, medical transcription, digital photography and digital publishing were an eye-opener for students. The Club also partnered with ACT Training Foundation to conduct a Self Development Workshop for children. Through the workshop, children gained valuable insights into character and life skills.

Girls studying in corporation schools received a boost in self confidence with 'Nambikkai', a self development programme organised by the Club in July 2002 in association with the Rotaract Club of Vepery and Vatsalyam. The programme covered 1,600 girls and was conducted in Tamil. Through the programme, the girls learnt about time management, leadership, health and hygiene, and communication skills. It was an unusual day for these girls. Traditionally confined by poverty and stereotyped roles, these girls realised that they had the potential to improve their lives and rise above their circumstances.

A novel way to have new members of the Club introduce themselves is to have them deliver 'My Job' talks. They speak on their profession and explain the ins and outs of their particular

kind of job. Occasionally, the Tuesday meeting is held at a member's factory. The member conducts a tour of the factory, explains the processes, and arranges for lunch. Recently, Rtn. D. Sudhakara Reddy, organised a Club meeting at the Taj Flight Kitchen.

The Trade and Profession Committee organises seminars on topical issues such as Total Quality Management and ISO 9000. It aims to organise seminars that will give consumers, students, women, and other relevant audiences an overview of industry. The Occupational Health Committee arranges seminars on topics such as stress management, yoga, asthma care. It also recently arranged a free medical check-up for 220 construction workers. In a pioneering effort in 2002, over 300 head constables were trained in effective public relation methods by Rtn. Roopa Rani, a human resources consultant. The training was a part of the Club's ongoing road safety campaign. Also contributing to road safety was a recent seminar on safety and public relations held for Madras Transport Corporation bus drivers. MTC drivers have been in the news recently for causing a spate of accidents in the city. The seminar was a timely response to public outcry.

Popularising the Four-Way Test has been the Club's way of imparting its values to the public. Billboards emblazoned with the Four-Way Test are a common sight around Chennai, especially in petrol bunks and railway stations. Recently, a manager of Godrej, decided to put up posters of the Test in all Godrej outlets. Besides this, every person who walks into a Rotarian's workplace is challenged by either a desktop plaque or poster bearing those 24 immortal words.

Taking the Rotary into the public eye are the awards instituted under Vocational Service. The Employer-Employee award instituted in 1961 is given to a company that has a good relationship with its employees. Sankara Netralaya, Hyundai Motors, Nilgiris Dairy Farm Ltd., M/s Autolec Industries Ltd. are just a few of the companies to win the award in recent years. The criteria for awardees is that their companies must have a good work environment, well maintained and adequate facilities, good

employer-employee relationships, minimal industrial unrest and low attrition rate.

Recognising that there are persons who, though non-Rotarians, exemplify the principles of Rotary, the Club instituted the For The Sake of Honour award in 1963. The award is conferred on a local person who has made a remarkable contribution to the ideal of service through his or her vocation.

The first awardee in 1963 was Smt. S. Chellamal, Headmistress, Lady Sivaswamy Ayyar Girls' High School, who bequeathed all her property to the cause of education. Thereafter, awardees have included persons from the field of industry, art, music, medicine, dance, education and social service. Some of the illustrious people to receive the award include Dr. K.S. Sanjivi who set up the Voluntary Health Service; the outstanding industrialist Sri A.M.M. Murugappa Chettiar; doyen of art, music and dance, Smt. Rukmini Devi Arundale of Kalakshetra; Rev. Father Jerome D'Souza for education; Dr. V. Shanta, Director, Cancer Institute (WIA); Dr. Raja J. Chelliah, Chairman, Madras School of Economics; Mr. R. Seshasayee, Managing Director, M/s Ashok Leyland; Professor T.N. Jagadishan for his remarkable contribution to the eradication of leprosy; and Dr. H.V. Hande for his contribution to the red measles and PolioPlus immunisation programmes.

On receiving his award, Rev. Father Jerome D'Souza said, "The Rotary is a body of men who are chosen with care, men who have made a mark in their particular field. The existence of such groups and their influence on those around them are elements of stability and progress in a democracy."

In 2001-2002, the Club felt it should encourage young achievers and instituted the Young Achievers Award. Ms. S. Vijayalakshmi, the first Indian woman to become a chess grandmaster, was the first recipient of the award. This year, Anju George, one of India's greatest long jumpers, won the award.

With protection of the environment becoming a hallmark of responsible industry, the Club instituted the Environment Protection Award in 2002-2003 which went to Amara Raja Batteries.

Empowering women, especially those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, has been a priority with the Club. Women in Rotary Nagar and Sembakkam have benefitted from the tailoring courses run by the Rotary. Free sewing machines have been distributed over the years to enable these women set up home-based businesses. Drawing on the economic viability of traditional skills, the Club has conducted courses in pickle and appalam making and selling. For a while, women were taught how to make jute bags which were then marketed as environment-friendly options to plastic.

The majority of women from poor backgrounds are employed as labourers on construction sites (where they are paid less than male labourers despite doing the same amount of work) or as maids in private homes. Often, entrepreneurship is stymied by lack of capital and the women are forced to fall back on their stereotyped roles. The Rotary Club of Madras steps in with not just ideas for non-traditional means of employment, but also the means to carry out those ideas. The ANEW project, for example, provided 10 women with autorickshaws. In a city where autorickshaw driving is a male bastion, these women are a rare few. They use the autos to transport children to and from school. This sort of employment offers them a steady income, regular timings and safety.

Partnering with leading women's colleges in the city, the Club conducted a series of seminars on women's issues in 2002-2003. A seminar on 'Women and Health' was held on Women's Day at SIET College. A significant first was the National Seminar on Women Entrepreneurship and Economic Development held in association with Ethiraj College.

Stella Maris College teamed up with the Club to conduct a seminar on 'Women in Asia: Issues and Concerns'.

A Rotarian once said: 'When a lawyer becomes a Rotarian he engages that in pleading a case in court, he will give something of himself into the case and that he will not take a case into which he cannot give himself. When the Rotarian merchant sells something over a counter he pledges that he will give something

of himself along with the sale. When the Rotarian physician goes on his calls, the Rotarian engineer builds a viaduct, the Rotarian advertising writer composes an advertisement, we look to them first, do honest work and then, add something of themselves to the honest work. The soul of Rotary is in this element of giving through one's work.'

The Rotary Club of Madras has been fortunate in its members who do not hesitate to give of themselves through their work. Rotary doctors have conducted numerous free medical check-ups and camps, and pioneered medical programmes such as Total Medicare for school students. A sweet manufacturer donates boxes of sweets to Boys Town on every special occasion while a cloth merchant unhesitatingly supplies school uniforms for the children of Boys Town. Owners of a premier movie studio produce publicity films free of cost for Rotary projects. An architect designs large, well-ventilated buildings for Rotary projects. The list, is in fact, endless, not to mention every Rotarian who simply gives generously to support those in need.

President V.K. Chandrakumar (2002-2003) says, "I can't expect every Rotarian to be directly involved with our projects. The reality is that many do not have the time. But I have the assurance, that if I call on them to help in their particular area of expertise, they will be there."

Paul Harris considered Vocational Service to be the very foundation of Rotary. Speaking in St. Louis, Missouri, at Rotary's 1923 Convention, he said: "Let us turn now for a moment to Rotary's distinctive opportunity, the opportunity which its peculiar representative form of structure presents; the opportunity to urge upon the business world the importance of adopting service as the basis of all professions and trades.

The possession of wealth no longer constitutes the only barometer of success; the service ideal is gradually gaining ground. The time when rich men are the big men is passing. Greatness, in the future, will depend not upon what one has been able to get, but rather on what one has been able and willing to give."

AWARD FOR VOCATIONAL EXCELLENCE 2002-2003

On February 11, 2003, Fameeda Khadri stepped on stage to receive the Award for Vocational Excellence. The award was the Club's way of honouring an unusual young lady. For Fameeda Khadri is mentally challenged and has overcome her limitations with relentless courage.

Born prematurely, Fameeda's struggle to live life to its fullest began young. And yet, she grew up to become a teacher, dancer, painter and athlete. Approaching life with a never-say-die attitude, her courage has won her recognition across the world.

At present, Fameeda teaches aerobics and drawing to special children. As a dancer, she has performed before an international audience at a meeting in Kansas City, USA. She travelled to Prague, Czech Republic, to take part in an international painting exhibition where she won the bronze medal. She represented India at the International Special Olympics held at North Carolina, USA, and returned home with a silver medal..

In 2002, she received the National Award for Role Model. She has also won the National Award for Best Employee. The State Government honoured her with the Best Teacher award for developing mental ability in mentally disabled children.

The Rotary Club of Madras was proud to recognise Fameeda's remarkable accomplishments.

CHAPTER 8

Community Service

If you join Rotary to say you are a Rotarian and come for fellowship and a meal, don't join. Become a Rotarian only if you are willing to serve until it hurts.

Mother Teresa,
on becoming a Paul Harris Fellow

Lightning struck Chicago and killed the horse of a doctor. It was the early 1900s and motorised transportation was considered an eccentric and expensive invention. Without his horse, the doctor had no way of visiting his patients. The newly formed Rotary Club of Chicago heard of the doctor's plight. Within days, members raised funds and presented the doctor with a new horse.

This simple deed was the first act of community service performed by the Rotary.

In April 1906, Donald M. Carter, a patent attorney, was invited to join the Rotary Club by one of his clients, Frederick H. Tweed. A prosperous manufacturer of glass signs, Tweed had become a member in December 1905. Tweed showed Carter a copy of the just-off-the-press constitution and bylaws. Carter was interested but remarked, "This club has great possibilities only if it can do something to benefit other people besides its own members."

Unknown to Carter, this sentiment had been expressed by many club members. A month later Carter joined the club. He collaborated with Tweed on presenting another objective of the Rotary Club: 'To advance the best interests of Chicago and spread

the spirit of loyalty among its citizens.' In a speech to the Club, Carter said: "An organisation that is wholly selfish cannot last long. If we, as a Rotary Club expect to survive and grow, we must do something to justify our existence. We must perform civic service of some kind ... This amendment to our Constitution is for the purpose of enlarging the objects of the Rotary Club of Chicago so that we can do civic service."

Carter and Tweed had put into words what other members had been feeling. Soon, members began to act. A washroom was constructed in a community hall in 1907. And as Rotary clubs opened around the world, each club looked outward for opportunities to be of service to their communities.

Rtn. Parsons was the first director of the Community Service Committee of the Rotary Club of Madras. The Club began by providing 900 toys to poor children over Christmas. By 1932, 'Ragdays' were organised in which previously collected old clothes were distributed among the poor. Orphans were taken on outings and cinema shows organised for them. By 1933, the Club had decided to fund scholarships for six needy children.

The state of the city was the next issue to be tackled. In 1933-34, following a discussion on housing schemes for the poor, the Club presented a model hut to the Corporation of Madras. The following year, the Club successfully campaigned to have unsightly hoardings dotting the city pulled down. Members of the Community Service committee, alarmed by the spurt in rash driving, noted down the registration numbers of rashly driven vehicles and reported them to the police.

Taking care of its own, the Club came to the aid of former member, Mr. Munroe, who required funds for his treatment at Madanapalli Sanatorium in 1939.

When World War II broke out, the Club focussed on raising money for the Governor's War Fund. Madras suffered the usual wartime deprivations of blackouts, rationing of essential commodities and curfew. The Marina Beach was cordoned off from the Harbour, all the way down to Elliots Beach. In these bleak times, entertainment events brought people out in droves. The Club took

to the stage in October 1940, and assisted a Mrs. Papworth in putting up a play called 'Intrigue' at the Museum Theatre. This was followed by 'London Calling', the six-day carnival organised by District Governor A. Gardiner and Rtn. Dr. P. Rama Rau. Crowds flocked to the Government House grounds where the carnival was being held. At the end of six days, the Club was able to hand over a princely Rs. 41,000 to Sir Arthur Hope, Governor of Madras Presidency.

The war brought all other community service projects to a halt as civilians concentrated on "doing their bit" for the armed forces. The Club supplied free cigarettes to troops passing through Madras. A mobile canteen named Rotarian was donated to the Salvation Army to supply food, drink and other necessities to the Indian troops. The expenses of running the canteen, Rs. 4,100, were met by the Club.

These early acts of kindness created the culture of caring in the Rotary Club of Madras.

Active members of the Club define a Rotarian as someone who makes helping others a priority. He or she, they advise, must award a minimum of an hour a week to helping a cause either by way of community or vocational service.

Over the years, there have been many Rotarians who have poured time, money, heart and soul into making a difference to the lives around them. In fact, there are few areas of need unreached by the Club. Working tirelessly, the Club has improved the lives of the handicapped, offered opportunities to underprivileged children, adopted a slum, restored water reservoirs, propagated family planning, cared for the health of economically backward people, spearheaded the movement to immunise India's children against red measles and polio ... in short, been there for people when it mattered.

While the Club has performed numerous acts of service to the community, there are some projects that must be highlighted.

One of the posts held by Paul Harris was Director, International Crippled Children's Society. Like its founder, the Rotary Club of Madras has cared deeply about the plight of the handicapped.

In 1966, the Club donated Rs. 10,000 to Bala Vihar, a school for handicapped children, for the construction of classrooms. The Club was also able to hand over aid gadgets from The Shawnee Mission Club, Kansas, USA to the handicapped children. The following year, the Club donated Rs. 10,000 to the Dattatraya Orthopaedic Medic Centre for the construction of an out-patient department.

To mark the birth centenary of Paul Harris, the Club decided to build a hostel for the C.S.I. School for the Deaf and Dumb, Santhome. To raise the money, the Club organised a Music and Dance evening at the University Centenary Auditorium on April 21, 1968. The city's elite were present along with His Excellency The Governor of Madras, Sardar Ujjal Singh and his wife. The highlight of the show was a dance performance by Hemamalini, the era's 'Dream Girl'.

The C.S.I. Hostel was constructed at a cost of Rs. 75,000 and inaugurated on March 4, 1970, by Mr. V.R. Nedunchezhiyan, Minister for Education and Health. The hostel was named the Paul Harris Birth Centenary project.

In 1970-71, the Club gifted the Indian Red Cross Society, Tamil Nadu chapter, Rs. 1,25,000 for the construction of a dormitory that would house 200 amputees.

The International Year of the Disabled, 1982, dawned with the Rotary Club of Madras organising a Sports Meet for the physically handicapped at the YMCA campus, Saidapet, on January 23. The Club was partnered in this effort by the Mylapore Academy and the State Bank of India. An astounding 1,600 children from 16 institutions took part in the event.

In 1996, the Club launched its project to distribute 1500 calipers to polio affected persons through Mukthi, an organisation that manufactures artificial limbs. Mukthi is run by Rtn. Meena Dadha, the first woman member of the Rotary Club of Madras. Mukthi and the Rotary Club of Madras often work hand in hand to help the physically handicapped. The caliper distribution project was financed by a matching grant of \$22,800.

The Midday Meal Scheme began in 1971 when the Principal of Vivekananda College shared a disturbing story with the Rotary Club of Madras. A few months earlier, a boy had been dragged into his office by two other students. His crime? He had been drinking two tumblers of water everyday in lieu of lunch. His sympathetic classmates decided to place the matter before the Principal. The boy couldn't afford to eat lunch and hunger made it difficult for him to concentrate on the afternoon classes.

The Principal's solution was to request the teachers of the college to each donate money towards funding the boy's daily lunch. This worked well but the principal soon realised that the boy was not a case in isolation. Unable to raise further funds he approached the Rotary Club of Madras for help. Rtn. Baldev Ji was president of the Club. A number of Rotarians each donated Rs. 400 towards feeding a student for a year. Thirteen students of Vivekananda College received midday meals. The scheme gradually expanded to cover six more colleges and 100 students.

In time, the State Government started the Midday Meal Scheme for schoolchildren but the Club decided to continue with its own Midday Meal Scheme. In some cases, the funds are used to purchase supplements to the meal supplied by the schools. Over 10,000 children of the Chintadripet Kalyanam Girls Higher Secondary School and seven other schools in the Chintadripet Education Society Ltd., have benefitted. Over 100 college students receive free meals from the Club. The meals are supplied by the college canteen. Donor and student never meet and the scheme is so discreet that the recipient's friends and classmates are often unaware that he or she receives free meals.

In 1973, the Club launched the far-sighted Operation Leprosy Project (OPEL), the brainchild of Rtn. PDG. Dr. M. Natarajan. Today, it is a well known fact that leprosy is curable. Three decades ago this wasn't the case. People feared leprosy and lepers were shunned and denied treatment. OPEL aimed to detect and cure leprosy among schoolchildren.

A team of doctors from Government Stanley Hospital, screened nearly 8,000 students between the ages of 5-15 in the course of a

year. The results were startling. At least 10 per cent of the children tested positive for leprosy. These findings were reported to the State Government but it wasn't until many years later that the Government made skin check-ups routine in schools.

Rotarian doctors joined the fight against leprosy and against the ignorance and myths surrounding the disease. In 1973, in a talk to the Club, Dr. Natarajan said, "If [OPEL is] properly implemented with the cooperation of the health authorities, in 20 to 30 years time, this disease would only be a memory." Also in the battle against leprosy at that time, were the German Leprosy Relief Association, Hind Kust Niwaran Sangh and the Belgian Leprosy Mission, all of whom were also conducting detection and therapy camps.

OPEL pioneered the creation of the Total Medicare Programme in 1975-76. The Chintadripet school complex, where about 10,000 children study in six schools, was chosen to initiate the project. Rotarian doctors visited the schools three times a week between 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. They screened 15 systems in the body such as chest, heart, skin, digestive tract, eyes, respiratory system and teeth. Children from kindergarten right up to Class 12 were screened every year. A card was maintained for each child right from the time he or she joined school to graduation. The doctors detected defects such as congenital heart disease, tumours, epilepsy and referred the parents to specialists. Minor ailments were treated on the spot.

In 1985-86, Dr. M. Natarajan was awarded the Keyman Award by Rotary International. Only three Rotarians were chosen to receive the award and it was a singular honour for the Rotary Club of Madras.

Children have always received a large dose of Rotary generosity. Few people know that the Child Trust Hospital, Chennai, began in 1980 as a small house with only four beds. Rtn. PP. PHF. S.L. Chitale shared his vision of a large world class non-profit children's hospital offering free treatment to patients from lower income groups with Rtn. Dr. Kenneth Hobbs, a Rotarian from Canada. The Rotary Club of Oakville, the Rotary Clubs of

Clarkson-Mississauga and North Scarborough, and the Rotary Club of Whitby, Canada, responded with generous donations.

The hospital's reputation grew faster than its capacity to hold all the patients flocking to its doors. In 1989, the Child Trust Hospital received a 3-H grant from Rotary International of \$608,300 to fund an eight-floor, 200-bed hospital. Simultaneously, the Rotary Club of Whitby pledged to finance vital equipment such as incubators. The hospital is today a haven of hope for sick children who come not only from Chennai but from all over South India.

In 2002-2003, the Club built 22 low cost shelters at Ennathur Rotary Puram. Costing Rs. 18 lakhs, the homes were handed over to the owners in 2003. The Collector of Kanchipuram District gave a grant of Rs. 5 lakhs towards providing roads, water and electricity for the residents of Ennathur Rotary Puram.

A highlight of 2003 has been the joint projects between the Rotary Club of Madras and other clubs in the city and district. The Rotary clubs of Madras and Chennai Kilpauk teamed up to provide Thiru-Vi-Ka School with laboratory equipment, toilets, drinking water and playground facilities. The Rotary Club of Madras gave Rs. 7.5 lakhs towards this project. The Club joined hands with the Rotary Club of Thirupathur and donated Rs. 62,000 towards digging a borewell for the Government Girls Higher Secondary School, Jollarpettai. In association with the Rotary Club of Madras Pallava, the Club donated Rs. 35,000 to build additional classrooms for the Panchayat Union Primary School, Mogappair. The Rotary Club of Thiruvannamalai received Rs. 30,000 from the Club to construct public toilet facilities. To assist the Hepatitis B vaccination programme being carried out by the Rotary Club of Vellore, the Club donated Rs. 25,000. And Rs. 1.75 lakhs was spent by the Club on computers and computer peripherals for the Polio Rehabilitation Centre set up by the Rotary Club of Vellore Fort.

In developed countries, welfare schemes for the underprivileged and disadvantaged are the responsibility of the government. In a developing country such as India, they are the responsibility of citizens with a conscience. Mahatma Gandhi once

said: "Find the purpose, the means will follow." Many of the Club's present mega-projects were started on little more than a vision. Each project is a story in itself of how commitment to a cause can change lives for the better.

CHAPTER 9

Rotary Nagar Sembakkam

"Give yourself, not just your money. Light a torch. Let it be seen. Be for something. Be against something. Stand up. Speak out.

You can be the difference."

William R. Robbins,
President, 1971, Rotary International

How did a slum embark on a 60-year (and still going strong) relationship with the Rotary Club of Madras?

It was the children of the slum with their potbellies and mouth ulcers – those tell-tale signs of malnutrition – who caught the attention of Rotarians way back in 1943-44. Right behind the beautiful Queen Mary's College, was a world of dying children.

Saving these children became the Club's mission. In 1943-44, under President W.P. Blakesley, the Club adopted the slum and named it Rotary Nagar. Soon, the Club found itself committed not just to the children, but to making the slum a healthy living place.

The same year, Rtns. Dr. C.P.V. Menon and K.K. Nambiar arranged for a community hall to be built in the slum. In 1946-47, a night school was started. Gradually, more empowerment programmes began — a tailoring school, a creche for children of working mothers, a library, an Arivoli Iyakkam literacy centre, a medical centre, a computer laboratory ...

Rotary Nagar is a complex of eight slums with a population of 20,000. 'Slum' seems an inappropriate word for Rotary Nagar. Neatly paved streets lined with clean stormwater drains lead to the Community Hall. Most houses are built of brick and concrete and are freshly painted. Cream, white and blue seem to be the popular colours. As Rtns. M.V. Chandran, Ganapathi Subramaniam and C.N. Ramdas walk by, residents greet them warmly.

In a large room at the back of the community hall, a tailoring class is underway. The rhythmic clatter of machines mingles with the chatter of about 25 women in the age group of 18-35. They are taught by Mrs. M. Vijaya who displays some of the work done by the women. Neat embroidery adorns samplers, nighties and wall hangings. At the end of the course, the girls sit for an examination. On passing, they are awarded a certificate that is recognised by garment factories and the garment export units in the bustling Madras Export Promotion Zone (MEPZ).

With tailoring skills, these women earn a minimum of Rs.3,000 a month. Economic independence has changed their lives. From being helpless dependents at the mercy of their fathers and husbands, these women are now respected wage-earners. Two graduates of the course have started their own tailoring shops. One of them, Suganeshwari, recently employed four girls from the course.

In 2000-2001, the graduates of the tailoring course were gifted sewing machines by the State Government Adi Dravidar Welfare Department. Rtn. Abdul Azeez donated five machines to the course while Rtn. M. Balasubramaniam donated 200 metres of cloth. In 2003, sewing machines were awarded to 56 deserving students.

Since 1943, the residents of Rotary Nagar have never lacked for medical attention. Over the years, Rotarian doctors have faithfully conducted regular health check-ups and medical camps in Rotary Nagar. Since 2000, the Club in association with REACH, an organisation working to prevent and treat tuberculosis, has been conducting tuberculosis screening camps. Patients with tuberculosis are treated by REACH.

A little room adjoining the community hall serves as the medical centre. It is run by a doctor and his assistant who is a resident of the slum. She was diagnosed with cancer a couple of years ago. The Club arranged for her to be operated upon and contributed Rs. 12,000 towards the cost of surgery. She made a miraculous recovery and came back to assist the clinic in whatever way she could. Patients are charged a nominal Rs. 5 for medicines, injections and the like. Most of the medicines are donated by Rotarians which is why the Centre can offer them at such subsidised rates.

A small computer room abuts the clinic. Four computers provide an avenue to the future for ambitious youngsters in the slum. Kavitha, computer teacher and resident of Rotary Nagar says excitedly, "Two companies are coming this week to recruit typists and computer trainees." Sri Krishna Sweets, owned by Rtn. Murali, is one of the companies that wishes to employ these youngsters.

The atmosphere is so vibrant, the residents so energetic, it's hard to believe that a couple of times over the years, the Rotary Club of Madras could barely see a future in its relationship with Rotary Nagar. In 1974, President A.K. Sivaramakrishnan rued the negligible progress achieved in Rotary Nagar. Apart from medical activities carried out by tireless Rotarian doctors who visited the slum every Tuesday, little else was being done to improve the welfare of the slum dwellers. The Community Service Committee recommended that Rotary Nagar be the major project for 1974. The need of the hour was funds. The Rotary Nagar fund-raising committee swung into action and by mid-March tickets were being sold for a Variety Entertainment Programme to be held at the University Centenary Auditorium. The target amount was Rs. 60,000, the cost of building a medical centre. In the end, Rs. 1,50,000 was raised.

After a spurt of activity, the situation deteriorated again in the early 1980s. The facilities at Rotary Nagar were moribund. The Club wondered if it should bring the association to an end.

At this time, Rtn. C.N. Ramdas, IAS, returned from his posting in Delhi and made Rotary Nagar his next assignment. During his

posting as Education Secretary, Rtn. Ramdas had arranged for a public library to be built in Rotary Nagar. Now, he turned his attention to getting the roads paved, setting up 200 street tubelights and arranging for a regular supply of drinking water. A night school for adults was also started.

Rotarians took Rotary Nagar to their hearts once again. By the late 1990s, regular fortnightly meetings were held in the community hall. Here, residents of Rotary Nagar shared their needs with club members. The meetings were often attended by Government officials. The Club's new strategy was simple: respond to the expressed needs of the people.

Since then, the community hall has been furnished with a colour television, syntax water tanks have been purchased, requests for jobs are looked into and financial aid for private enterprise is given. In association with TAHDCO, the Club has built low cost houses in the slum. Plans are afoot to build another library on top of the Community Hall. In 2001, the Club arranged for 25 destitute women to receive a monthly pension of Rs. 200 from the State Government.

“Don’t expect gratitude. Just do your duty,” is Rtn. Ramdas’ motto. “You have to be the heart that beats for these people. Do you ever thank your heart for beating faithfully for you? In the same way, don’t expect thanks.”

Every Tuesday afternoon, after the Club meeting, a few Rotarians visit Rotary Nagar. One Tuesday, a special session is held. The audience consists mostly of women seated on the floor in neat rows. A sprinkling of men sit on the sidelines. Taking a break from their sewing and computer classes, the women listen intently as Rtns. Ramdas, M.V. Chandran and Ganapathi Subramaniam offer them an encouraging picture of the future.

The audience cheers as the job opportunities offered by Sri Krishna Sweets and another company are announced. “Rotary is proud of Rotary Nagar,” says Rtn. Ramdas to applause, “but we must work together. Change and progress cannot come from one side alone. You must be willing to make the most of the opportunities given to you.” The audience grows quiet.

The Rotarians detail all that can be achieved with computer skills. They cite Singapore, Kuala Lumpur and Hyderabad as examples of high tech cities that have moved ahead because of computers. Think of all you can achieve!, they exclaim. Some listeners are wide-eyed, others frown trying to imagine the unimaginable.

As soon as the meeting is over, a crowd of men, each waving pieces of paper, gathers around the three Rotarians. One man wants a loan sanctioned to buy an auto. The cost is Rs. 24,000. The Government offers loans up to Rs. 10,000 for auto purchase and the Club has said that it will pay the balance. The man had sent a letter to the officer in charge of dispensing loans but received no reply. Rtn. Ramdas dials a number on his mobile phone and speaks to the IAS officer in charge. He discovers that the government has stayed loans for auto purchase for the present.

The Rotarians patiently listen to the other requests. On the way out, one of them comments, "Why are there so many young boys hanging around unemployed? At once, they launch into a discussion on possible training and job creation schemes. Plans, pregnant with possibility, await a time of birth.

Sembakkam

In the last week of February 2003, large bags of garbage occupied the grounds of the Rotary project at Sembakkam.

It was an odd but heartwarming sight. For the bags had been left there for disposal by school students who'd spent the whole day cleaning the surrounding locality of garbage. The Rotary Club of Madras had organised a plastic collection drive to motivate schoolchildren to keep their surroundings clean and not use plastic.

Started in 1985-86, the Sembakkam project helps semi-urban people from the lower income strata of society. The man behind the project was Rtn. PP. K.R. Gopalan. He was the manager of Air France and a close friend of the late chief minister, Dr. M.G. Ramachandran. During MGR's film career, it was Gopalan who made all the arrangements for MGR's film shoots abroad.

The Sembakkam project serves the residents of the surrounding area. Many of them are migrant labour or descendants of migrant labour now settled in the area. A tailoring unit, a medical centre, a community hall and numerous programmes draw residents to the Sembakkam project.

At the tailoring unit, Anusuya comes bustling out from behind a sewing machine. She teaches the 24 students who come in two batches: morning and evening. Students are often girls who have failed in school but want to qualify themselves in order to earn their livelihood.

The girls pay nothing to attend the one-year training course. On completion of the course, each girl receives a certificate which is highly regarded in the job market. "If they weren't here, they'd be sitting at home or working as domestic help," says Anusuya. This skill enables them to run a tailoring business from home or join the garment export units in MEPZ where they can earn up to Rs. 3,000 a month.

The centre has four power machines in addition to regular sewing machines. The Club plans to donate 44 sewing machines to graduates of the course to enable them to be self-employed.

A large community hall dominates the far end of the campus. K. Kosalaraman who manages the Centre says that the hall is rented out to wedding parties for receptions and functions. With running water and electricity, the hall is very popular with the surrounding villagers who are able to celebrate their special occasions in style. At Rs. 700 for 12 hours and Rs. 1,400 for 24 hours, the hall is extremely affordable. The income generated helps fund the project.

With its principle of 'helping others to help themselves', the Club initiated a micro loan scheme for women in 2001. Aided by the Gowriwakkam Pengal Munnetra Nala Sangham, the women were taught to manufacture and market products such as incense sticks, pickles, and detergent powders. The money earned from sales went into an account. A woman could avail of a loan only if it was meant to finance an income-generating enterprise.

The medical centre at the project was originally staffed by doctors from the SOS Village in Tambaram. Now, as then, treatment is almost free. The nominal registration fee of Rs. 5 is the price of a cup of coffee. Patients seated on a long wooden bench await their turn. The medical laboratory, opened on November 17, 1997, saves the patients the cost of tests at expensive laboratories. Annually, the medical centre treats over 10,000 patients.

As with most Rotary projects, the challenge is make the Sembakkam Centre self-supporting.

CHAPTER 10

The Red Measles Immunisation Programme

“Obstacles are those frightful things you see when you take your eyes off your goal.”

Henry Ford

A press conference was held on September 19, 1979, at Rtn. S.L. Chitale's office. Rtn. Srikrishna Laxman Chitale, popularly known as Krish Chitale, announced the arrival of 68,000 doses of red measles vaccination donated by the RI District 707, Canada. Red measles is a dreaded killer in India and the third cause of blindness in children under the age of five. It was the first time that such a huge amount of red measles vaccine had been allowed into India.

The press conference was well attended by leading dailies and prominent doctors from all over South India. The 68,000 doses were to be used in the Madras area. Dr. Kenneth Hobbs, representative of RI District 707 was introduced. After the excitement over the project had died down and the press had finished their share of questions, Dr. Jacob John, virologist and epidemiologist, Christian Medical College, Vellore, stood up and said: “Your project is fine, Dr. Hobbs. You come to Madras, complete a 68,000-dose program, and then go home and feel that you have done your job. Do you not realise how insufficient that is? Do you realise the significance of measles immunization in the developing world? Are you aware that ten children die each

and every minute of every day, day in day out, year in and year out, and five of the ten, half of all these deaths are due to measles? Perhaps you do not realise that ten children become handicapped every minute of the day from communicable diseases that could be prevented by immunization, and that five of these are due to measles. You toss us the bait and then leave, feeling that you have fulfilled your obligation to the children of South India. What are your plans for future measles immunization in South India?"

Dr. Hobbs stood up. "On my return to Canada I will raise the necessary funds, even if I have to dance on a street corner, to ensure that down the road every child born in this State will be protected from red measles," he said. "As you know," he continued, "I cannot and will not commit my Rotary club or Rotary district. The only person I can commit is myself. And I do so now."

With that, Dr. Kenneth Hobbs and the Rotary Club of Madras embarked on the largest immunization project in the history of India.

In his inspirational book, *Diary of a Miracle*, Dr. Hobbs details every trial and success of the project in minute detail. What began as a one-time delivery trip turned into an ongoing journey of hope, faith and fulfillment.

It all began in 1978-79 at the International Assembly in Boca Raton, Florida, where District Governor nominees P. Jagadeesan of District 320 and Bernard Crookes of District 707, discussed partnering on a Canada-India World Community Service project. It was decided to introduce the measles vaccination into India. The finances were supplied by four Toronto Rotary Clubs, the Canadian International Development Agency and the Rotary Foundation.

District 707 decided to send Dr. Hobbs of the Rotary Club of Whitby, Ontario, to ensure that the vaccine arrived safely in Madras and was shifted to a cold storage upon arrival. It sounded like a simple enough task.

Once Dr. Hobbs reached Madras he discovered several hurdles. For one, the Ministry of Health, New Delhi, had to grant

permission for the vaccine to enter India. Then the misgivings of the State Government had to be overcome otherwise the vaccine could rot on the airport tarmac. Also, the medical community, who charged to administer the measles vaccine, were none too happy to see free doses about to do the rounds.

After two days of setbacks, Dr. Hobbs began to wonder if the cause was a wasted one. Rtn. Chitale said to him, "If you believe as much as I do, then we shall overcome all adversity."

The Ministry of Health granted permission for the vaccine to enter India and the vaccine was scheduled to arrive on September 27. Rtn. N. Kumar (now resigned) had worked tirelessly to obtain the vital Import Permit and Duty Exemption Certificates from the Government. The Canadians had warned that the vaccine had to be refrigerated immediately upon arrival.

Twenty-four hours before the vaccine was to arrive, a fire destroyed a large part of the cargo hangar where the vaccine was to have been stored. Six hours before ETA, a bigger snag hit: the Tamil Nadu government withdrew permission to remove the vaccine from the tarmac. Worse, it was the eve of a government holiday and the offices would be closed for the next four days.

Rtns. Chitale, Kumar, Gopal and Hobbs rushed to the government office only to find it already empty. After some hectic parleying, they were able to secure permission to take possession of the vaccine and store it in Spencer's cold storage. However, they were denied permission to open the containers. Dr. Hobbs was aghast. The containers would act as insulators against the cold. The vaccine would perish in the heat.

Though history was made the day the measles vaccine arrived in Madras (September 28, 9:30 p.m.), there were few witnesses to it. Dr. Hobbs, his wife Eva, Club President V. Chidambaram ("C.T."), Chitale, Kumar and Gopal watched as the trolleys of boxes were wheeled in and loaded onto trucks provided by President C.T. The 34 boxes were unloaded in the walk-in freezer of Spencers. Dr. Hobbs couldn't resist opening one box to see how the vaccine was faring. To the team's relief, the freezer packs

surrounding the vaccine were still frozen solid. There was hope that the vaccine would survive the night.

The next morning, Dr. Hobbs, Eva and Kumar's secretary approached the Director of Civil Supplies for permission to unpack the vaccine. After being made to wait for three hours with no result, Dr. Hobbs walked out of the office, went straight to Spencers and with Eva's help, began to open the boxes and unpack the vaccine directly into the freezer. Working in freezing cold conditions, they had unpacked 64,000 vials of vaccine when they heard a frosty voice rebuking them. It was the Director of Civil Supplies. Warning Dr. Hobbs to next time go by the rules and have a little patience, he left.

Dr. Hobbs' mission was complete. He and Eva spent the next few days strengthening their ties with the Rotarians. It was during this time that Dr. Hobbs realised that 68,000 doses, as earlier pointed out by Dr. Jacob John, were a mere drop in the ocean. As Dr. Hobbs put it, "We had won a battle but the disease was winning the war." He left India with the conviction that he would be back.

A short while later, District 707 debated expanding the measles immunization programme under a 3-H grant. This would involve sending an initial half a million doses of vaccine to District 320. Dr. Hobbs was approached for help. He telexed Chitale with the new plan of providing District 320 with half a million doses of vaccine. Chitale sent back an enthused reply.

This was in the days when e-mail was a science fiction concept and talking on a long distance call amounted to tedious torture. To call Chitale, Dr. Hobbs would be connected to a series of operators in Montreal, London, Bombay and finally Madras. If Chitale called Dr. Hobbs, he was permitted to talk only for three minutes. So for speedy communication, Chitale and Dr. Hobbs used telexes. Dr. Hobbs was fortunate to have on his side Rtn. Bill Nurse whose Chevrolet-Oldsmobile dealership had a telex machine.

With the 3-H grant, all of District 320 could be immunised against the dreaded disease. Merck, Sharpe and Dohme, who supplied the vaccine, said that they could supply 500,000 doses by October 1980, another 500,000 doses by March 1981, a million

doses by September 1981, another million doses by March 1982 and 500,000 doses by September 1982.

On June 10, 1980, the Rotary Foundation approved the 3-H grant for the project. However, to proceed, the Committee required 'hold harmless' agreements from the governments of Tamil Nadu and Kerala, and an assurance that Air India would transport the vaccine free of cost. Many telexes down the road, all the necessary papers were in place. On January 20, 1981, half a million doses of red measles vaccine landed in Madras and were stored in cold lockers at King Institute. The dream had become a reality.

By the end of 1981, Rotarians had single-handedly immunised 2.5 million children in District 320. But Rotarian volunteers were tiring. It was agreed that though Rotary had led the way, it was now the responsibility of the State Government to take over. Dr. Hobbs decided to meet with Dr. H.V. Hande, Minister of Health, State Government.

Dr. Hande at once saw the sense of Dr. Hobbs' reasoning that there should be a combined team committee of Rotary and Health Ministry officials overseeing the red measles immunisation project. Calling his senior advisors he said to them, "I do not want to hear of any disagreements with the Rotarians on this committee. If there is, I would ask Mr. Hobbs to approach me personally. If that happens then I will deal with both the problem and the matter of your personal usefulness to me as Minister of Health, do you understand?"

The message was received loud and clear. That meeting with Dr. Hande cemented ties between Rotary International and the State Government. With the State machinery behind it, the project was now set to zoom forward.

Dr. Jacob John, who had unhesitatingly questioned Dr. Hobbs at the press conference, became a vital partner in the success of the project. A Rotarian from Vellore, he regularly tested the vaccine to check for potency, wrote to the press about the project's progress, campaigned among his colleagues for acceptance of the immunisation programme and was instrumental in overcoming

the superstitions of the villagers. Dr. John discovered that the villagers in Tamil Nadu regarded an attack of measles as a visit from a goddess. Interfering with this, would bring ill luck to the family. Dr. John ingeniously replied that if the children were immunized, parents could fearlessly welcome the goddess into their home at any time. This reasoning was responsible for the villagers bringing their children to be immunised.

In 1983, Dr. Hobbs was able to see firsthand what the endless telexes, the run-ins with bureaucrats, the endless tension, but, most of all, the unquenchable hope of service-minded Rotarians had achieved. At a camp in Salem on a hot and humid morning, Dr. Hobbs watched a woman trudge into the immunisation tent with a child on either hip and a third trailing behind. Dr. Hobbs asked District Governor Rtn.P.V.Purushottam (who revolutionised the cold chain methodology) to find out a little about her. She pointed to the children and said that all three were hers and that the eldest was four years old. Hearing of the camp, she had carried her two youngest ones four and a half miles in the burning sun while the four-year-old walked alongside her. Once they were immunised, she would make the long walk back. Dr. Hobbs later wrote: "Women like her were truly the vindication for all the doubts we had encountered and the difficulties we had to overcome."

As 1984 dawned, the Rotary realised that if the measles immunisation programme was to be of any value to the country, the Indian Government would have to make it a part of its Expanded Programme of Immunisation (EPI). New legislation regarding the EPI was to be passed in 1985. It was crucial to the Rotary that measles be included to safeguard the rest of the country against the disease.

In August of that year, the Rotary heard that the Tamil Nadu government had recommended that the Central Government include red measles vaccination in the EPI. The cause was gathering momentum.

Phase Two of the red measles immunisation programme began when the State Government sent Rotary International a letter dated July 4, 1985 stating:

In continuation of the government letter second cited, I am informed that the government of Tamil Nadu is glad to accept the free offer of measles vaccine made by Rotary International for the next five years with the financial commitments that the government will fulfill as detailed below:

20 percent of the cost of the vaccine in the first year: Rs. 2 lakhs

40 percent of the cost of the vaccine in the second year: Rs. 4 lakhs

60 percent of the cost of the vaccine in the third year: Rs. 6 lakhs

80 percent of the cost of the vaccine in the fourth year: Rs. 8 lakhs

100 percent of the cost of the vaccine in the fifth year: Rs. 10 lakhs

Instead of financial commitment on the part of the State Government indicated above, the quantity of measles vaccine supplied by the Government of India under the expanded immunisation programme will be treated as the State's share and, if there is any shortfall, the State Government will meet the cost to the extent of the shortfall.

Sd.

R. Shanmugam, IAS,

Commissioner and Secretary to the Government Health and Family Welfare Department

The 3-H grant for Phase Two was approved. In November 1985, the Government of India included red measles in its EPI. By 1987, the State Government had an organised immunisation programme in place. In less than a decade, change for the better had swept across the State.

In his book, Dr. Hobbs is quick to give credit where it is due. He writes: *When one realises the influence that the Rotary Club of Madras had on the health benefits for the children of the State it is purely miraculous. Let us never forget the power of dedicated Rotarians.*

CHAPTER 11

PolioPlus

“We succeed because we don’t look at what’s not possible.”

Rtn. S.L. Chitale

In 1984, Rotary International President, Carlos Canseco, invited Dr. Kenneth Hobbs to be a part of a special committee. Also invited was Dr. Jacob John who'd played a key role in the red measles immunisation programme in District 320. This time, the doctors were being asked to evaluate whether a particular project would be feasible. It was Rotary International's aim to eradicate poliomyelitis from the world by 2005.

Dr. Jacob John had seen enough polio cases to know the horror the disease inflicted on its victims. Dr. Hobbs was sent to canvass opinion for the project among Rotarians in West Africa. There he saw children with polio, unable to walk, crawling on their bellies. Dr. Hobbs joined the list of Rotarians determined to see a polio-free world by 2005. The project initially called 'Polio 2005' was later renamed 'PolioPlus'.

In a letter to Krish Chitale in November 1984, Dr. Hobbs wrote:

As you know I am on the PolioPlus committee. At our last meeting, I proposed that the State of Tamil Nadu be one of the first Asian areas to participate in this new expanded polio program. President Carlos asked me if I was interested in making early approaches to Dr. Hande. The same conditions would apply if they were approved. Rotary International would supply the oral vaccines free of charge for all children under the age of three, for five years. After five years, the government would carry on the

program. I would appreciate if you would discuss this with Dr. Hande and let me know the result as soon as possible.

Through the Rotary Club of Whitby, Dr. Hobbs applied for a 3-H grant to fund the PolioPlus immunisation programme in Tamil Nadu. Dr. Hobbs had also allocated \$250,000 to upgrade the cold chain facilities.

A short while later, President Carlos received the following letter from Dr. Hande:

Dear Dr. Carlos Canseco,

I have discussed the idea of a 'Project of annual national day of immunisation' (PANDI) approach with Dr. Kenneth Hobbs during his visit to the state of Tamil Nadu. This exciting new approach to polio immunisation appeals very much to us. We are hopeful that our state of Tamil Nadu (India) with a population of 48 millions, will be considered as one of the early geographical areas in the world by Rotary International, for this project of polio immunisation. The assurance of the continuation of the program by our government after five years was stressed by Dr. Hobbs and we are in complete agreement with this philosophy. We eagerly look forward to Rotary International's participation at the earliest.

The 3-H grant of \$2 million came through in May 1985 and not a moment too soon. The statistics concerning polio in India were grim. The disease had existed for 3,500 years in India. Every year, 300,000 cases of polio were reported. In a day, 750 children were crippled by polio and another 75 died of it.

PolioPlus referred to the other deadly childhood diseases besides polio, of measles, whooping cough, triple antigen cholera and small pox. Through PolioPlus, children would be vaccinated against all five.

Recalling the PolioPlus campaign recently, Rtn. Chitale said, "Measles was the litmus test. Having run a successful State-wide measles immunisation campaign, the Club realised that it could run a polio vaccination drive. After measles, polio was a simple race. It was highly successful and lasted from 1986-1992. Then

the Government took over. All along, we had the complete support of the Government. No project will succeed unless you work with the Government. We supplied the vaccine, they provided the infrastructure."

Worldwide, the PolioPlus drive went into top gear. Beginning with South East Asia, the campaign by Rotary International soon ventured into every polio-afflicted country. It was a project with a budget of \$1 billion. Very few projects have ever had such a budget.

The PolioPlus programme was inaugurated on May 1, 1987 by R.I. President M.A.T. Caparas. Also present was the Cabinet Minister for Health, Mrs. Saroj Khoparde.

At the time, India had the dubious distinction of being the country with the most number of polio cases in the world. There were 110 million children who needed to be vaccinated. Little wonder then that Rotary International described India as 'the primary battleground against the disease.'

The programme was divided into three parts: a) Purchase of vaccine and handing it over to the Government (b) Purchase of cold chain equipment to be donated to the Government and maintained for a period of five years (c) Educating and motivating the public by publicity campaigns and conducting immunisation camps.

The third part was the area in which Rotarians were actively involved. Rotarians assigned themselves to primary health centres, administered the vaccine, and publicised the programme through different media. As with red measles, there were many superstitions to overcome. Initially, the Rotary decided to offer a free incentive of one bottle of Horlicks and a tin of Amul milk powder to each person who brought children to be immunised. Even this didn't work. Volunteers were often asked by sceptical villagers if they were standing for election.

Through Rtn. M. Saravanan of AVM Studios, the Club asked Manorama and Rajnikanth, famous movie stars in Tamil Nadu, to star in two short films explaining why PolioPlus was necessary.

The films, produced free by AVM Studios were shown all over State. (Luckily, in Tamil Nadu, even the tiniest village has a cinema hall even if it's just a thatched hut with a noisy projector.) Such is the power of the silver screen in the State that after this film was shown, masses came forward to be immunised. Carrying their children to the immunisation camps, they would eagerly ask for the "Manorama or Rajni *oosi*" (Manorama or Rajni injection).

Both Manorama and Rajnikanth refused payment for doing the films. At a function, the Rotary Club of Madras thanked Manorama and presented her with a sari. The actress burst into tears and promptly returned the sari. "It was a blessing for me to do that film," she said, "I require no payment or thanks of any kind."

Film stars Bhanu Priya, Parthiban, Prabhu and Kushboo and AVM Studios stepped into the breach in 2000 to publicise the National Immunisation Day. The Rotary Club of Madras produced four 90-second propaganda films encouraging parents to immunise their children against polio. The films were frequently aired on popular television channels for two months.

Today, Polio immunisation is organised by the State Government. National Immunisation Days and venues are announced in newspapers across the country. Every single child, rich or poor, is administered polio drops. Yet Rotarians still serve the cause — organising queues, administering the vaccine, filling in enumeration cards for each child, recording the date and other data, supplying food and beverages to immunisation staff. Having launched the attack, the Rotary Club of Madras continues to stand shoulder to shoulder with the State Government in the battle against polio. As Mr. K. Allaudin, IAS, Special Secretary of Health and Family Welfare, Government of Tamil Nadu, said at a District PolioPlus Seminar held in 1999: "The last stage of the battle is always fierce. It is necessary to ensure complete victory."

In 1999, Tamil Nadu had 11 polio cases. Today, it has been declared polio free. In the last two years, not a single new case of polio has been reported. That is a victory for a State that once recorded among the highest polio statistics in the country. But

sadly, the vision of a polio free world by 2005 is not to be. India remains one of six countries in the world yet to completely eradicate polio. In pockets of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, polio cases are still reported. Superstition and religious myths block progress and the Government has asked Rotarians to help in breaking down these prejudices.

"We succeed because we don't look at what's not possible," says Rtn. Chitale. "Once something gets going, it has a ripple effect. More people with dedication join in. It has to be a collective effort." The Rotary Foundation honoured Rtn. Chitale with the Regional Service Award 1999-2000 in recognition of his commitment to the PolioPlus programme and a polio-free world.

However, PolioPlus wasn't to be the beginning and the end of the Club's involvement with polio eradication. There was more to come...

CHAPTER 12

The 3-H Polio Rehabilitation Centre

The highest use of capital is not to make more money, but to make money do more for the betterment of life.

Henry Ford

“Please the window will you open?” A howl of laughter greets this question and a babble of voices shout, “Miss, miss.” A lady’s voice says, “Quiet,” calmly but decisively. “Please open the window,” she says and the voices repeat after her. It is noon and she dismisses the class. The students wander out of the classroom. Some swing crutches, others walk bent over with one hand holding a knee, a few limp along. They are engaged in animated conversation. A few head towards the typewriters while others move down the corridor to the computer lab.

This is a typical scene at the Polio Rehabilitation Centre run by the Rotary Club of Madras and made possible by one of the biggest 3-H grants ever.

While conducting the PolioPlus programme, the Rotary Club of Madras began to feel burdened to do something to help those already crippled and immobilised by polio. Being handicapped and often from the economically backward strata of society, these youngsters were usually ill-treated, abandoned or forced into begging.

Rtns. M.Balaji and Benjamin Cherian visited every rehabilitation centre for handicapped people in the city. Ideas

began to emerge. On March 14, 1997, supported by the Rotary Club of Whitby, Canada, the Rotary Club of Madras filed an application for a 3-H grant to set up a centre where polio-affected persons could be rehabilitated and trained in job skills.

That year, the Rotary Foundation received 120 applications from clubs all over the world. Former Rotary International President Rajendra K. Saboo was one of the trustees of the Foundation. In October 1997, the Club's application was reviewed and accepted. Only six applications were chosen that year. The trustees of the Foundation also commented that they had rarely seen an application so complete and inclusive.

The Rotary Foundation awarded a 3-H grant of \$ 500,000 (Rs. 2 crore), by far the largest grant made to a single club in the history of Rotary.

Rehabilitating polio-afflicted persons requires a two-pronged approach. The Rotary Club of Madras coordinates with non governmental organisations and doctors to conduct polio screening camps in the villages surrounding Chennai. First, patients are examined and the severity of their case assessed. Some require calipers, crutches or braces to be able to walk more easily. Others require corrective surgery. In many cases, corrective surgery has given people who could only crawl, the use of their legs for the first time in their lives. All treatment including physiotherapy is provided free. On an average, the Centre deals with 30 cases per month. Since 1998, the Centre has performed over 630 surgeries free of cost, provided 928 persons with calipers and crutches (apart from the calipers and crutches provided to the corrective surgery cases) and given away 83 tricycles/ wheelchairs. Rainee Hospital and the Andhra Mahila Sabha have consistently cooperated with the Club to perform corrective surgeries.

Once patients are mobile, the second task is to equip them with skills that will ensure their economic independence. The 3-H Centre, as it is commonly called, runs a variety of courses including Spoken English, Typing, Secretarial Practice, Computer Training (Basic and Advanced), TV Repair, Tailoring, Music

(Western and Indian), and Art. Personal counselling and classes in self development are also offered.

The Centre is a large, airy building with lots of natural light. Only people below the age of 30 are admitted to the Centre. The reasoning is that after 30, it is difficult for people to change their attitude and learn a new skill. They should be employable by the time they are 30 if not before.

To ensure that students leave the Centre with the ability to earn a good salary, the Rotary Club of Madras tailors the courses around marketable skills. Spoken English was introduced after students reported that it was impossible to get a well-paid job without a good knowledge of English. The computer classes are packed. Gradually, the Centre plans to phase out the typing course as computers have replaced typewriters in most offices.

Besides helping students overcome their physical handicap, the Centre works on overcoming their mental barriers. Relegated to the shadows for so long, many students actually fear being a part of the mainstream. Many say that a physically handicapped person is often treated as if she or he were mentally handicapped too. Physically challenged people know that while their intelligence is unaffected by their handicap, their confidence is what usually suffers.

Senthil clicks 'Save' on the computer and turns around to chat. He is 21 years old and holds a B.Com degree from Loyola College. He is slight, smartly dressed, well spoken and cheerful. In fluent English, he explains that he contracted polio when he was eight months old. He has never had surgery and briskly moves around on crutches. His father died when he was a little boy and his mother, a flower merchant, ensured that her only child had a good education all the way up to college. "I joined the 3-H centre after college to learn a profession. I did the computer courses. But somewhere along the way, I realised that my dream was to help other physically disabled people come up in life." Senthil teaches the basic computer course at the Centre.

Senthil feels a Centre such as this is vital for disabled people. "If they mingle a lot with others, they gain self-confidence which

is a must if they are to get ahead in life. I've seen the change in people before and after coming here. This place opens the eyes of physically disabled persons to what they can achieve."

In the music class, 28-year-old Srikanth is hoping to master both western and carnatic music on the keyboard. His younger brother plays in an orchestra; his older brother works in a private company. Keeping his options open, Srikanth studies music in the afternoon and computers in the morning. Srikanth contracted polio when he was 11 months old. Since then, he has had two operations which have considerably reduced his limp. His father, a Southern Railway employee, educated his son at the Sir Ramaswamy Mudaliar Higher Secondary School in Ambattur. Srikanth went on to do a B.Com degree from Pattabiram Hindu College.

In the course of conversation, it becomes clear that the computer course is a safety net. Already a member of a Tamil singing troupe, Srikanth's heart is where the music is.

Twenty-year-old Lingesaraja lifts up his leg and displays his foot. It bears a slight scar but looks like any other foot. However, this same foot used to be twisted the wrong way round. The Centre arranged for corrective surgery. Today, dressed in a casual T-shirt and black jeans, Lingesaraja walks with a barely discernible limp. He lives in Andersonpet, which is 30 kilometres away from the Centre. The distance does not deter him from attending the daily typing and computer courses. He hopes to soon be employed by a good company.

Getting students to believe in themselves is an achievement for the Centre. In the tailoring class, Lakshmi who wears a caliper doesn't let it come in the way of her using a sewing machine. The Centre has bought four power machines to make sewing less strenuous for crippled students. Lakshmi and the others in her class look to the export garment factories for jobs with regular hours and decent pay.

The Art students pitched in to fund the Centre. One year, on Children's Rights Day, the British Council organised an exhibition of paintings done by the students of the 3-H Centre. Many of the

paintings found buyers and others were converted into greeting cards which were later sold.

There are over 40 million physically disabled people in India. Whether their disability is congenital or caused by disease or an accident, these 40 million people have one thing in common: they are treated shabbily by Indian society. With rehabilitation, physically handicapped people can be independent. Yet, there are few centres catering to this need. With consideration shown on the part of society, physically handicapped people would be able to move around freely. Yet, you can count on your fingers the number of buildings in the city that have ramps for wheelchairs.

Every person spoken to at the 3-H Centre expresses pain at society's ignorance of their problems. "Society needs to be more sensitive to our convenience," says R. Kavi Priya, a vivacious 18-year-old doing the Secretarial Practice course. "I live in K.K. Nagar. The other day I went to Aynavaram to see my aunt. I had to change two buses. The steps were so high, it was so tiring. I was fed up by the time I got home. And so what if there are only two handicapped children in a school? The school should have facilities for the handicapped to ensure that they miss out on nothing and are able to move around easily."

The Centre asks nothing of its students except a Rs. 25 registration fee and the commitment to complete a course. As an added incentive, students are paid a Rs. 300 stipend. But the Rotary Club of Madras is worried about the Centre's future. The grant runs out this year and finding fresh funds to run the Centre is proving to be difficult. One solution is to add revenue-generating courses such as carpentry, shoe-fabrication and plastic injection moulding. Recently, another opportunity presented itself. The Worth Trust, an eminent social work organization, and the Rotary Club of Madras are exploring the possibility of setting up a commercial venture to generate income.

The 3-H Centre has been a lifeline for those who could once envision no viable future. "Coming to the Centre has been the greatest experience of my life," says Kavi Priya. "I have friends

here. We share our feelings. This course is very useful as most companies need people with these skills. We are lucky to be studying here." She now wants to join college and has decided to have calipers fixed which will increase her mobility. She intends to do her B.A. English and dreams of getting a good job as an English lecturer. "I like communicating with others," she says.

A short film on the Centre says: *They (polio-afflicted people) come in here crawling and leave with their heads held high.* Everything about the Centre radiates positivity, from the bright cream walls, the spacious rooms, the laughing students to the poster on the wall that exhorts people to use terms such as 'wheelchair user' rather than 'wheelchair bound' and 'has polio' rather than 'suffers from/ is a victim of polio'.

On the way out, a sticker on the table of one of the rehabilitation coordinators catches the eye. It is a quote by management guru, Shiv Khera. It says, 'Winners don't do different things. They do things differently.'

Course	No. of students who have completed the course since 1998	Current batch of students	Course completion date of current batch
Secretarial Practice	66	(IX Batch) 9	February 2003
Computer Applications	162	(VII Batch) 30	March 2003
Tailoring	50	(V Batch) 8	February 2003
T.V./Radio Servicing	15	(III Batch) 10 (IV Batch) 2	January 2003 June 2003
Art		13	
Music	-	(I Batch) 15	August 2003

CHAPTER 13

Boys Town

*Many of the things we need can wait. The Child cannot
To him we cannot answer, "Tomorrow".*

His name is "Today".

Gabriela Mistral,
Nobel Prize winning Chilean poet

It began small. On October 13, 1988, the Rotary Club of Madras Boys Town project was inaugurated by PDG V. Chidambaram in a little rented home near Red Hills. The whole club had been invited for the inauguration along with Anns, Anntes and Inner Wheelers. Since the address, No. 10, Shivraj III Street, Puzhal Village, was not familiar to many, a minibus was arranged to transport all those who wished to attend the inauguration.

On the day, there were a large number of invitees who boarded the minibus at Connemara. The previous week, Rtn. PP. S.M. Diaz had given a stirring talk on the vision behind Boys Town. A video was also shown on Boys Town Society of Thirumangalam, Madurai, the project that had inspired Rtn. PP. S.M. Diaz to replicate the same in Madras.

It began small. But the Rotary Club of Madras Boys Town project was backed by a huge vision.

While working in Madurai, Rtn. S.M. Diaz met Joe Hoeman who had started a home for boys from severely economically disadvantaged backgrounds. The home was called Boys Town and was located on a few acres of land. The boys went to school during the day and were given agricultural responsibilities after



Chess grandmaster Koneru Hampy receives the
Young Achiever Award, 2001-2002



Rtn. M. Ct. Muthiah, the first Paul Harris Fellow
from the Rotary Club of Madras



The inauguration of the C.S.I. School for the Deaf hostel, donated by the Club to mark the birth centenary of Paul P. Harris



Rotarians take part in the flag-hoisting ceremony at Rotary Nagar



Boys Town, Selaiyur



Film Star Kamal Hassan boards the Dream Flight
with the residents of Boys Town



The Polio Plus campaign receives a donation of Cold Chain equipment from the Rotary



Rtns. S.L. Chitale of the Rotary Club of Madras and Dr. Kenneth Hobbs of the Rotary Club of Whitby, Canada - the architects of the red measles and polio immunisation programmes

A Rotarian doctor treats a polio-afflicted child



school. Each boy had a sponsor. Sponsorship covered the cost of the boy's education, food, clothing and stay.

On being transferred to Madras, S.M. Diaz joined the Rotary Club of Madras. Very soon, he mooted the idea of the Club starring a Boys Town. There were few takers for the idea.

Diaz persisted, and in time, a Boys Town Committee was formed in Pozhal with Rtn. Benjamin Cherian as chairman who lead the first six formative years of this project. He hired staff and enrolled boys from the neighbouring villages. Every Sunday, he and his family would drive out to Red Hills to spend the day with the boys and encourage the staff. One of the strengths of the project is its staff, like Mr. Pichai, who has been with the project right from its inception. At that time Rtn. Markand Desai a senior member of our club came forward to donate 14 acres of land in Panchalai village at Gummidiipundi taluk which is about 15 km on the Kavaripettai Satyavedu Road. Since this was quite far from the city of Madras, members were not enthusiastic initially about this project coming up in this place because it is difficult to visit and supervise the project. With the help of International children trust six buildings were built on the land donated and in 1989-90, the boys were shifted from Puzhal Village to their permanent base at Panchalai a village four kilometers from the Tamil Nadu-Andhra Pradesh border.

Boys Town committee wanted this to be a rural oriented Boys Town where boys should be given training in farming, dairy and other operations in connection with this. At that time the Chairman and the members of the Committee suggested that we buy surrounding areas of the land which was more suitable for agriculture operations than the one on which this building came up. The Boys Town committee in consultation with Rtn. Richard Gardner and through International Children Trust was able to acquire funding from the European Economic Community from which additional 20 acres of land were purchased in a span of 2 years with no cost to the club.

To enter Panchalai village is to leave all associations with the city behind. The narrow roads leading out of Chennai are laden

with heavy traffic. Lorries thunder past leaving dust storms in their wake. But there is a point at which you take a turn and enter a world silent except for bird cries, goat bleats and quacks from platoons of ducks waddling along the side of the road. The Satyavalli Hills loom in the distance. This is rural Tamil Nadu, with green paddy fields stretching on either side of the road. Women squat in the doorways of their thatched huts, enjoying an afternoon chat.

Deep pink bougainvillea trails over each of the six buildings that make up the different sections of Boys Town. Built in a gently curving line, each block has a motto painted on the entrance such as 'Knowledge is power' and 'Self help is the best help'. The boys have just returned from the Government Secondary School at Madrapakkam, a village about seven kilometres from Boys Town. V. Arumugam, Assistant Director, Boys Town Gummidiyoondi, says the boys used to walk to school and back but have now been given free bus passes by the Government.

Most of the boys are dressed in white cotton shirts and khaki pants or shorts. They each hastily down a glass of ragi malt, grab cricket bats and balls and head for the fields behind their home for a rousing game. Some wander off to the games room and settle down to a round of chess or carrom. Two huge wells known simply as 'Old Well' and "New Well" double up as swimming pools.

The boys return from the games, shower and settle down to schoolwork. They break for dinner, watch the news on television and then head to bed. "Steel beds are our next priority," says Arumugam. For now, each boy unrolls his mat and stretches out on it. Arumugam checks and double checks that each dormitory has a thick gunny sack blocking the gap between the floor and the base of the door. "There are lots of snakes here," he explains. "My biggest fear is that one will get in to the dormitory when the boys are sleeping."

The boys have three main sponsors: International Children's Trust, U.K.; Tripura Foundation, USA; and the Rotary Club of Madras. In 1988, it costed Rs. 1,500 to sponsor a boy. Today, it is Rs. 9,000. Sponsorship covers education, food, clothes, and little

extras like computer classes and physical training like karate and silambu. The boys eat well with meat, chicken and eggs being a regular part of their diet.

Most of the boys at Boys Town Panchalai village are from the surrounding villages. Their families cultivate small plots or work as farm labourers. On graduating from Boys Town, a handful of boys opt for jobs in the city, but many return to the farms. This inspired Rtn. M.K. Raju, Chairman, National Agro Foundation (NAF), to view Gummidipoondi and the surrounding cluster of 20 villages as the ideal place in which to propagate scientific methods of farming. NAF was started by Bharat Ratna C. Subramanian whose vision was to create a green revolution in rural areas and thereby encourage villagers to stay in their villages and not migrate to the city. The patron of NAF is the President of India, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam.

The villagers' initial resistance to change was soon overcome by the persistence of the NAF staff. Finding that the village cows yielded barely a litre of milk each, NAF started the Cattle Development Centre at our Boys Town project at Panchalai village. Their aim was to create a more robust breed capable of yielding six litres each. Semen of a stronger breed of bull was obtained from Poona. The cows in and around Boys Town Project were artificially inseminated. Two boys from Boys Town were sent to Bangalore to learn the process. TVS donated two motorcycles which the boys use to travel from village to village to perform the artificial inseminations. So far, 700 artificial inseminations have been performed.

Throwing their support behind the project, 15 Rotarians each donated Rs. 15,000 towards the purchase of eight cows from Erode. Two cows were donated to families in the surrounding villages. It is hoped that crossbreeding will produce a stronger breed. However, it will take two to three years to see the results.

In the cattle shed at Boys Town, a little black calf with a white triangular patch in the centre of her forehead, is watched with anxious care. Her name is Ashwini. Her mother, a Jersey cow, was inseminated with semen from a Holstein Friesian bull. Will

Ashwini be the success story that NAF hopes for? Only time will tell.

Between 2000-2004 the remaining acreage was put to good use. Ten acres support paddy, three acres groundnut, three acres chillies and another two acres grow dairy grass used to feed the cows. Villagers visit Boys Town to check on the progress of the calves and to see if there is any further information on scientific methods of farming. Their confidence has been won in part because of the literacy programmes started by the Rotary Club of Madras in partnership with TCS, the software giant. Using computers, over 200 villagers have learnt to read and write in three months. The programme has already covered seven villages.

In 1991-92, the Boys town committee in one of the meeting with the international sponsors particularly Rtn. Richard Gardner of Rotary Club of Fareham Meon, U.K., thought of starting an Urban Oriented Boys Town Project where the boys apart from the education can be trained in plumbing, Electrical wiring, carpentry etc which was the need of the hour. For this purpose, 1 – 2 acres of the land was required in and around Madras. On the request of the committee at that time, Rtn. C.N. Ramdas I.A.S. (Retd) who was the Chief Commissioner of Revenue Administration gave a list of Poramboku land to the committee and instructed the Government officials to go along with Rtn. Benjamin Cherian for inspecting the various site and finally we located Selaiyur site. Eventhough the land is owned by Government, some unauthorized persons occupied certain portions of the land. With the help of our members and the Government a plot of 30 grounds at a cost of Rs.31000/- was allotted to our club.

But trouble struck. As soon as the purchase was through, the Air force Officers' Association laid claim to the land and filed a case against the Rotary Club of Madras in the High Court. For seven years, a bitter court battle was fought while the land lay vacant. The club was in an awkward position. Rtn. Benjamin Cherian recalls the embarrassment of having to write year after year to the Rotary Club of Fareham Meon to say that they funds were as yet unused. Due to prolonged litigation, the Board wanted

to write off this amount but the Chairman insisted that we should fight the legal battle. Rtn. Mohan Parasaran who is now the Additional Solicitor General of India took care of our legal work at no cost to our club.

Finally we won the case in 1997. As per the High Court legal verdict, seven grounds were allotted to the Air force Officers' Association. The remaining 23 grounds were allotted to the Boys Town Society. Today, the land, bought for Rs. 31,000 is worth Rs.100 million.

Boys Town Selaiyur was started in a rented house close to the boys' school. In 1997, after the verdict from the High Court, construction of the boys' present home began. The home is built around a quadrangle. There are four spotlessly neat dormitories. The boys' trunks, in which they store their worldly possessions, ring the room. Neatly rolled up mats stand against the wall, waiting for night when they will serve as beds. As with all Rotary Club of Madras buildings, the rooms are airy and huge windows let in ample light.

The kitchen with its huge gas stoves and dining room are also spotless. The vegetables for the evening meal are being chopped. It is no small task to feed 70 growing boys between the ages of 12-21. Ever on the lookout for a good deal, Kannan, Assistant Director, Boys Town Selaiyur, has found a rice merchant who is willing to supply them with good quality rice at a reasonable rate. Pulses and other household commodities are bought from fair price cooperatives. The boys are given chicken and eggs at least three times a week.

Democracy reigns in Boys Town. Every boy has certain responsibilities and leaders are chosen to be the Food, Education, Sports, and Medical ministers. This team is headed by the Chief Minister. A weekly meeting is held during which the boys can voice their concerns or problems. Kannan and his assistant Venkatesan are the final arbitrators.

Coming from unstable backgrounds, these boys thrive on their daily disciplined routine. They rise at 5:00 a.m. and begin the day with meditation followed by an hour of study. From then, the

morning whirls into breakfast, bath and getting ready for school. All the school-going boys from classes 6-10 attend the Madambakkam Government High School. Classes 11-12 attend the Chromepet Government Higher Secondary School.

Education is the first step these boys take on their journey towards self-sufficiency. Free to concentrate on their schoolwork, a majority of the Boys Town boys, both at Selaiyur and Panchalai village, rank within the first 10 of their class. The Boys Town Society has arranged for extra coaching in English, Science and Mathematics at the homes. Both the Boys Towns are equipped with two computers each and computer teachers come every evening to teach the boys the skills they will need to compete in today's job market.

Every boy is expected to pass the Government Class 12 Board Examination. After that, they can choose to study further or attend the courses at the Vocational Training Centre located at Boys Town Selaiyur. While most opt for vocational training in air conditioning and refrigerator maintenance or television repair, some boys have gone on to do engineering degrees. One boy who did a Masters degree has a good job in R.K. Textiles. Hyundai Motors has expressed an interest in hiring boys from Boys Town and training them on the job. "All we want is that our boys should come up in life," says Kannan.

And it's not all work for the boys. The Rotarians ensure that play times are regularly organised. Last year the boys had breakfast at the Connemara Hotel and went for a sail aboard a coastguard ship. The boys were given gifts and bags by Rotarians. On January 19, 2002, the boys were taken aboard a Boeing 737 as passengers on the Jet Airways Dream Flight. Rtn. V. Raja, General Manager, Jet Airways, distributed T-shirts and Indian oil 'Servo' caps to the children. They were accompanied by film star Kamal Hassan who obligingly sang the hit song from his movie 'Aalavanthan' and posed for photographs with the boys. This year, they have already visited the Vandalur Zoo, the Planetarium and the Museum and in January 2003, were taken aboard the naval ship INS Udayagiri.

The Rotary Club of Madras is trying to give these boys all the opportunities and facilities available to children from a well-to-do family. Many of the boys who join Boys Town are from broken homes. Boys from such homes tend to start working young and miss out on an education and childhood. Many turn to petty crime.

M. Saravanan, a bright-eyed 12-year-old who lives at Boys Town Panchalai village, Gummidiipundi Taluk says, "My mother is a maid in a house. She earns Rs. 600 a month." His smile falters when asked about his father. "I've heard he's a mason. He left us long ago." Arumugam says that this is the profile of most of the boys staying there.

When a boy joins Boys Town, his life changes. He is educated, clothed and fed a nutritious diet. Released from the pressures of an unstable home environment and financial worries, he is free to enjoy his childhood, to explore his talents, and discover what he can be.

The Boys Town Society has been led by able chairmen such as Rtns. Benjamin Cherian, Thomas Philip, Christopher Devaprakasam, V. Ganesan and V.K. Chandrakumar to name but a few. The present chairman is Rtn. K. Kamal Chadda. "The challenge," he says, "is to stand these boys on their own feet. How do we ensure that they emerge from Boys Town with confidence and viable skills to make their way in the world? These are kids who see Boys Town as a haven. How do we challenge and motivate them to rise above their home environment?"

The Club is hoping to raise funds to build one more floor at Boys Town Selaiyur and build more blocks at Panchalai village, Gummidiipundi taluk. There is a lot of pressure on the Club to raise more donors and take at least 100 more boys. Other plans include fencing the property and improving the kitchen garden to make the homes self-sufficient as far as vegetables are concerned.

Accreditation from the Government of Tamil Nadu for the vocational training courses is in the pipeline. In fact, the next batch of trainees from the A/c repair and refrigeration maintenance course will receive their certificates from the Tamil Nadu Industrial

Department. By September 2003, automotive repair should join the list of vocational training courses. As of now, boys who are not from Boys Town but want to attend the vocational training courses are charged a nominal fee. But these boys are also from very poor backgrounds and the Club would like to raise sponsors for them.

A databank of the boys who have passed out of both Boys Towns should be ready by July 2003. The Club has realised that it must take the responsibility of placing each boy in a job. Some of the boys have drifted back to their villages and have no career. The Club is in the process of contacting these boys and seeing how they can be helped. Many Rotarians have offered to employ the boys.

Vijay, who is doing a course in air conditioning maintenance at the vocational training centre, Selaiyur, sums up what Boys Town means to those who stay here: "If I weren't here, I'd be simply roaming around without an aim in life. Here we are disciplined and enjoy life."

A STRONG FOUNDATION

When S. Ramkumar was admitted to Boys Town Selaiyur his parents had no idea that his life would change so drastically. They knew that their son wanted to study. But with their combined earnings as daily labourers, they didn't see how they could fulfil his dream. His father even took a second job as an ice cream seller but his long hours under the punishing Madras sun still couldn't bring in the required money. Then someone told them about Boys Town, a place where their son would be educated and cared for, free of cost.

Ramkumar was admitted to Boys Town when he was 13 years old and in Class 9.

Today, this 18-year-old youngster with a ready smile is pursuing a civil diploma at the C.N. Polytechnic in Vepery, Madras. He dreams of getting a good job as a construction site supervisor and his dedicated efforts should see his dream to fruition.

LIFE IS A CANVAS

Pushparajan joined Boys Town Gummidipoondi in Class 11. He tells his own story: "My father is a farm labourer and I had no expectations beyond becoming a labourer too. But I loved studying and my dream was to be an artist. I didn't see how I could stay in school beyond Class 10. For one, my family couldn't afford to educate me further. Also, they expected me to start contributing towards home expenses.

"My uncle heard about Boys Town and brought me here after I'd passed out of Class 10. I was admitted at once. I couldn't believe my good fortune in having a sponsor who would pay for my education and everything. As a way of saying thank you, I painted some pictures and sent them to my sponsor. I've always painted but once I joined Boys Town I found an appreciative audience for my work. Even villagers have asked me to paint pictures for their homes.

"Today, I've completed my Bachelor of Science degree in Botany. I'm hoping I can make a living as an artist. I have options. I'm hoping to get a job at AVM Studios or do a multimedia course and pursue jobs along that line."

CHAPTER 14

Thaneer, Thaneer

*It is better to attempt to light a candle than to curse
the darkness around.*

Oriental proverb

The murky water of the Marudeeswarar temple tank, Thiruvanmiyur, was not a pleasant site. A few Rotarians from the Rotary Club of Madras looked around them in shock. The steps leading down to the tank were chipped and uneven. On one side of the tank were some women washing clothes. The soapy suds drifted atop the slimy water. One of the Rotarians struck up a conversation with an old man who'd come to worship at the temple. He said he was 95 years old. "Isn't the temple tank a place meant for devotees to take a dip?" asked the Rotarian. "True," replied the old man, "but that's not its only purpose. In the old days, the rainwater would collect in the tank. This rainwater would permeate into the ground, raising the water table for the entire area. In those days, Madras had no water shortage." He walked off leaving an idea hanging in the air.

The alarm bells began ringing a long time ago. Environmentalists predicted that from the 20th century onwards wars would be fought over water. At present, the gap between supply and demand of water in Chennai is 200 million litres a day. The monsoon, when it comes, is torrential and water drains off rapidly. The city receives a mere 129 cm of rainfall a year.

The idea to clean as many temple tanks as possible and restore them to their original purpose was the brainchild of Rtns. Chitale

and Verghese Chummar. The project was named 'Thanneer Thaneer' which means 'water' in Tamil.

There are 37 temple tanks in Madras city. The Corporation of Chennai readily gave the Club permission to restore all 37. Doing a survey, the Club found that most temple tanks were in a state of neglect. Once a source of pure and abundant water, they now contained filthy stagnant water and served as breeding grounds for mosquitoes. Others were used as garbage bins, playgrounds and the inevitable cricket pitch.

In foreign cities, water reservoirs collect and store rainwater. In India, temple tanks are meant to perform the same function. The tanks allow water to percolate to permissible soil. Water finds its own level. But if the soil is clayey, the water cannot percolate and penetrate the tank bed, leading to stagnation of water.

If the sandy soil has completely disappeared, it has to be sourced and dumped on the tank bed. In certain cases, the Club had to arrange for lorry-loads of sandy soil to be dumped on the tank bed.

The steps leading down to the tank are not only for the use of the devotees. They also guide the rainwater into the tank. The steps have to be clean and well maintained. In many cases, the steps were chipped and had to be relaid.

Here is how rainwater harvesting works. Collection pits, about 5 x 5 ft and 4.5 ft in depth are dug. The water is guided towards the collection pits by ensuring that the surrounding area and streets slope toward the collection pit. The pits are lined with pebbles which filter the dirt. The filtered water flows into the pipeline that opens into the tank.

To date, the Rotary Club of Madras has restored 11 of the 37 tanks. On an average, Rs. 5 lakhs has been spent per tank. In order of being cleaned, the tanks are:

Marudeeswarar Temple, Thiruvanmiyur
Virubaksheewarar Temple, Mylapore
Gangadeswarar Temple, Purasawalkam
Raveeswarar Temple, Vysarpadi

Prasanna Venkata Narasimhesswarar Temple, Saidapet
Adhikesava Perumal Temple, Mylapore
Kurungaleswarar Temple, Koyambedu
Agastheeswarar & Prasanna Venkatesa Perumal Temple,
Nungambakkam
Kasiviswanathaswamy Temple, West Mambalam
Padavettamman Temple Tank (Chettikulam), Chromepet

Sadly, in many instances, residents' associations and the Corporation of Chennai have not kept their promise to maintain the restored tanks. In a couple of instances, the Corporation failed to build the necessary storm water drains around the tanks. Those tanks are once again in terrible condition.

Unfortunately, the Marudeeswarar temple authorities have not maintained the restored tank and it is once again in a pitiable state. This is tragic in an area prone to salt water seepage into the ground water. The Rs. 3.5 lakh spent on restoring the tank has also literally gone down the drain. Similarly, the Kapaleeshwarar temple tank was cleaned but has not been maintained.

The Gangadeswarar temple authorities have taken care to see that the restored tank remains in pristine condition. The entire surrounding area of Purasawalkam belongs to the temple. The tank cannot be seen from the road as it surrounded by shops and complexes. The day the restored tank was inaugurated, a wealthy lady of that area walked up to the Rotarians and blessed them. "What has not been done in 30 years, you have done," she said.

The Virubhaksheeswara Temple at Mylapore was renovated at a cost of Rs. 3.5 lakhs and was funded through a matching grant from the Rotary Club of Whitby, Canada, and Rotary International. Residents of the area, used to seeing the tank dry for years, were thrilled to see 10 feet of water in the tank after the last monsoon.

For the first time in the history of District 3230, the Rotary Club of Madras led a joint project with the the Rotary Club of Whitby, Ontario, Canada, and four other clubs from District 3230: Rotary Club of Madras Industrial City, Rotary Club of Madras Central Aaditya, Rotary Club of Madras Metro, and Rotary Club of Madras

T. Nagar, to desilt and renovate the age-old Kurungaleeswar temple tank, Koyambedu. The matching grant, Rs.10,02,000 was the largest ever received for a temple tank project.

In this case, the Corporation had built a public urinal right next to the tank. District Governor M. Balaji exclaims in horror, "The tank water was contaminated with urine!"

The Club spoke to the Municipal Commissioner but ultimately had to purchase a piece of land well away from the tank, pay for the construction of a new urinal and demolish the old one before going ahead with the restoration of the tank.

Since the club spends an enormous amount of time and money on each tank, it is heartbreakng to see the tanks revert to being sewer pits. Today, the Club has learnt from its mistakes and will not proceed with a tank restoration unless the Corporation and the area residents make firm commitments to maintain the tank. The club also budgets for a compound wall or chain link fence around the tank. This prevents people from misusing the tank. Walkways with flowerbeds and benches are built around the tank. "We want people to feel like they are coming to a place of worship and treat their surroundings reverently," says DG. M. Balaji.

The next tank to be restored will be the Katchaleeswarar Temple tank at Armenian Street. The estimated cost of restoration is Rs. 10.36 lakhs. This time, however, 50 per cent of the cost will be borne by the Residents' Association of the area. The Club is hoping that personal involvement will encourage residents to ensure that the tank is maintained and allowed to fulfill its primary function of harvesting rainwater.

Sadly, only 10,000 households in a city with a population of seven million harvest rainwater. The Rotary Club of Madras is intent on seeing this change. On April 14, 2003, Rtn. Benjamin Cherian released three films on rainwater harvesting at the Rain Centre in Mandavelipakkam. The Club collaborated with the Corporation of Chennai and the Tamil Nadu Water Supply and Drainage Board in making the films. To be shown in schools and colleges and at the Rain Centre, the films cover rainwater

harvesting success stories and the contact details of people who can set up rainwater harvesting centres.

Every day of the monsoon, schoolchildren wade through slushy puddles. The city's arterial roads turn into rivers. Even trains make their way slowly over inundated tracks. With rainwater harvesting a two-month inconvenience can be transformed into a year-round blessing. Schools, colleges, places of worship with large surrounding lands, big industrial houses, apartment blocks, bungalows – all these are ideally suited for rainwater harvesting. Project Thaneer Thaneer may seem like a drop in the ocean, but what is the ocean if not many such drops?

CHAPTER 15

Youth Service

*Show me, I will remember
Tell me, I will forget
Involve me, I will understand*
Chinese proverb

Thirty five years after Rotary came into being, clubs around the world began to ask how they could better tap the potential of the next generation. People began to speak of the need for a worldwide Rotary Youth programme.

By 1960, most clubs had done an enormous amount of service to young people. The Rotary Club of Madras itself had built a picnic centre at Elliot's Beach (later taken over by the Government), a children's home at Royapuram, a home for mentally challenged children called 'Bala Vihar', besides setting up a book bank and providing financial help to economically backward students.

To recognise the achievements of young people, the Club instituted a Youth Service Award in 1961. The award took the shape of a Rolling Cup for the best State tennis player in the age group of 18 or below. In 1967, Anand Amritraj, the younger of the famous Amritraj brothers, received the award. The Madras State Tennis Association, whose task it was to recommend a player, said he ranked No. 1 in his class. Shortly after receiving the award, he left to represent India in the Junior Wimbledon tournament.

But despite all these activities, the dilemma facing Rotary worldwide was this: How could it find a way to work with youth instead of merely for youth?

For two years, a committee of representatives from districts around the world studied the programmes already in place for young people. They then made their recommendations to the Board of Directors of Rotary International. Their recommendations were approved and in October 1962, R.I. President Nitish C. Laharry announced the launch of the Interact programme. The name was coined from two words — INTERNATIONAL plus ACTION. The movement was (and is) dedicated to service and international understanding.

The first Interact club to be chartered was that of Melbourne, Florida, USA, on November 5, 1962. By December, 20 more clubs had come into existence. Two months later, the Rotary Club of Tanjore, District 320, organised the first Interact club outside the USA. The concept lost little time in catching on worldwide. During 1964, Interact clubs formed at the rate of one a day. By 1965, there were 950 clubs in 46 countries, with 22,000 members.

The Rotary Club of Madras sponsored its first Interact club at Vidya Mandir. The club was inaugurated on September 23, 1965. Soon after, the second Interact club was established at Doveton Corrie. In 1994-95, during the presidentship of V. Ramabhadran, Rtns. Prathap Kumar, Arun Sarathi and Dr. K. Rajan embarked on an enrolment drive and took the number of Interact clubs from 15 to 23. This set a world record though, shortly afterwards, the Club was overtaken by a club in Colombo. Today, the Rotary Club of Madras sponsors 25 Interact clubs.

Not too far behind came the Rotaract movement in 1968, which allowed the Rotary to expand their service to young adults in the age group of 17-30. The purpose of the Rotaract is to stimulate among its members an acceptance of high ethical standards in all occupations, to develop leadership and responsible citizenship through service to the community and to promote international understanding and peace.

At a club meeting on October 29, 1968, Rtn. A. Agarwal announced the Club's intention of sponsoring a Rotaract club to be known as the Rotaract Club of Madras. He requested Rotarians to sponsor the club by enrolling their children and their friends.

Twenty members were necessary for the club to get started. Today, the Rotaract Club of Madras has closed down but in its time it had the distinction of being the first community-based Rotaract Club ever. The Club also co-sponsored the Rotaract Club of Ethiraj with the Rotary Club of Chennapatna. This joint venture was a first in the district. In the late 1990s, however, the Club relinquished the Rotaract club to the sole ownership of the Rotary Club of Chennapatna. Today, the Rotary Club of Madras sponsors six flourishing Rotaract clubs; five are in colleges — Presidency College, Queen Mary's College, Loyola College, New College and Madras Medical College — and the Vepery Rotaract Club is community based.

Both the Interact and Rotaract movements came into being when the world was witnessing war on several fronts. In Africa, old colonial powers were being overthrown. In 1967, Israel won a six-day war against the rest of the Arab countries. USA and the erstwhile USSR entered the period of the Cold War after teetering on the brink of nuclear war. And as the first club came into being in Madras, Indian troops were pushing back invaders on the frontier.

In this climate, the Rotary felt the urgency of training youngsters to be responsible leaders, with a broad understanding and tolerance of other cultures. As Rtn. Lt. Col. Vasudeva Rao said in 1965, "... I believe that clubs like the Interact have a major part to play in answering the need of our country. Misunderstanding leads to war and if only countries understood each other's aims better, I am sure that wars can be checked. Prevention is better than cure and it is here that the young come into play."

When it started, the Interact movement was meant only for boys. In 1969, the Board of Directors of Rotary International voted to admit girls to the Interact. The Board said: "The Interact was originally established as a programme for boys only and retains a primary emphasis on training in leadership and citizenship for boys. Nevertheless, should local circumstances indicate to the sponsoring Rotary club that good cause would be served by

admission of girls, the sponsoring Rotary Club is at liberty to use its discretion accordingly."

For many years, the Club considered Youth Service a part of Community Service. It was only in 1978, that Youth Service was declared a separate avenue. Under able directors such as Rtns. N.K. Gopinath, Arun Sarathi, M. Pratap Kumar, Dr. K. Rajan, Archana Shri Sanjay and Indhra Subramanyam, Youth Service has developed into a vibrant channel of service.

Interactors and Rotaractors look for opportunities to be of service to both the local and world communities. Leadership camps like RYLA (Rotary Youth Leadership Awards), started in 1971 to develop and build youngsters to be leaders with strong ethics and values. Their social talents and public relations abilities are honed. Youngsters develop both confidence and a conscience. Whether it is helping in old age homes, orphanages, organising blood donation drives and medical camps, or conducting fund-raisers, these youngsters lead the way in their generation.

To sample some recent Interact activities:

Interactors of Sir M.Ct. Muthiah Chettiar School for boys have adopted Santhavellore, a small village 2 km from Sungvur Chathiram. For over a year they have been visiting the village twice a month. They conduct adult education classes, help schoolchildren with their studies, improve civic sense, and clean the school campus. They organised an eye screening and general health check-up camp.

The Interact club of Vidya Mandir, Mylapore, conducted a raffle draw and collected Rs. 47,500. They distributed the money among: RASA, a school to encourage creative movement in special children (Rs. 6,000); Blue Cross, an animal shelter (Rs.4,000); Samarpana, a school for spastic children (Rs.5,000); Karnaprayag, an organisation that cares for and arranges the adoption of abandoned and destitute babies (Rs. 5,000); Udavum Karangal, an orphanage (Rs.5,000); Banyan, a home for destitute and mentally ill women (Rs. 5,000); and a night school at Mandaveli (Rs.5,000).

Since 1998, the The Interact club of Sri Sankara Vidyaashramam, Thiruvanmiyur, has been organising an annual blood donation camp. A chickenpox immunization camp was organised by A.V. Meiyappan Matriculation Higher Secondary School. The club also collected Rs.1,12,000 for the Gujarat Quake Relief Fund. C.S.I. Ewarts School donated a tricycle to a polio-affected youth.

At least once a year, if not more, the Rotary Club of Madras conducts RYLA. This is a leadership development programme for young people between the ages 14-30. A recent trend has been to conduct RYLA camps for handicapped people. The first RYLA of this kind was tailored to the needs of the physically handicapped. In 2001, RYLA for the Visually Challenged made its debut. It was the first of its kind to be held in Asia Zone 6 of Rotary International. Participants from Government Higher Secondary School, Poonamallee; National Institute for the Visually Handicapped, Poonamallee; and Loyola College, Chennai were transported to Children Garden School Camping Ground at Shollinganallur for a three-day, all-expenses paid workshop designed to develop the leadership skills of the visually handicapped. In 2002-2003, the first RYLA for deaf and dumb students was held. Students from CSI School for the Deaf and Dumb and Dr. MGR School for the Speech and Hearing Impaired were enthusiastic participants.

The challenges of arranging RYLA to suit people with special needs are myriad. These camps concentrate on boosting the confidence of the handicapped and showing them that their handicap should not deter them from taking leadership roles. Sessions are held on positive thinking, exploring possibilities, leadership development, team building and yoga. The Club is often aided at these camps by Rotaractors. For instance, at the RYLA for the visually challenged, Rotaractors from the Presidency College and Vepery clubs volunteered to be group coordinators and 'buddies' who helped the visually challenged people navigate their new surroundings.

While the Rotaract clubs in colleges are doing well, the success of the Rotaract Club of Vepery suggests that community-based Rotaract clubs are the way to the future.

The Vepery Rotaract came into being when a group of students from Doveton Corrie High School graduated, but were reluctant to leave their Interact days behind. The Interact club of Doveton Corrie is not only the second oldest Interact club in Chennai but also one of the finest. The motivation to form a community based Rotaract club came from the school Interact counsellor and Maths teacher, Mr. Natarajan.

Rtr. Jaby John, one of the founding members of the Vepery Rotaract club recalls the early days of the club. "Boys that had passed out from Doveton Corrie five years ago, and quite a few from my batch had been avid Interactors. We formed the nucleus of the new club. We modelled it on a Rotary club."

The first two to three years were spent consolidating the club. The club would meet twice a month at Hotel Breeze on Poonamallee High Road. Since fun had been an integral part of the Interact, the group decided to carry on the same spirit of fun as a Rotaract Club. Fellowship was emphasised and every month a different person took the responsibility of organising a fellowship dinner. As John says, "Given the age group of our club, we need a lot of fun activities to keep people motivated and interested in being a part of the club."

Once members had bonded through fellowship, the club launched itself into community service. "We used to move from project to project. On public holidays we would visit orphanages and old age homes. But now we're setting up some projects that are ongoing in nature like a medical centre at Kolathur."

To raise funds, the club held Planet Rotaract, a fun fair on the lawns of Abu Palace, a hotel on Poonamallee High Road. Planet Rotaract has now become a yearly affair and is a crowd-puller.

Forging a bond with the Rotary Club of Madras, the club can be depended upon to help the Rotary's ongoing projects. In 1996, they made contributions to Rotary Nagar. A function was organised at the Community Hall of Rotary Nagar and the following donations were handed over to the residents:

- A Singer Fashionmaker sewing machine to the students of the Rotary Nagar tailoring class;

- Rs. 2,100 towards the cost of medicine administered by the Primary Health Centre;
- Schoolbags, pencil boxes, water bottles and stationery to the Class V children attending the Rotary Nagar night school;
- Rs. 1,000 to assist a handicapped resident in setting up a public call office at Rotary Nagar.

The club won the Best Rotaract Club Award 2000-2001. That year, the club completed a record 35 projects in 350 days. Just days after Gujarat was devastated by an earthquake, a three-member team from the Vepery Rotaract Club rushed to the State to assist aid and rescue operations. They also sent aid in the form of cash (Rs. 2,00,000), 1,000 new blankets, old clothes, milk and other essentials. A team of three doctors also went.

The Vepery Rotaract Club is both the legacy of the Interact movement and the pioneer of the Rotaract movement. Most of all, it is proof of what young people can achieve when their hearts, minds, and souls are opened.

The Rotary Club of Madras also serves young people through its Loans and Scholarship Committee. As early as 1971, the Club felt the need to sponsor the education of students from economically deprived backgrounds. The first idea mooted was a Book Bank. But when looked at practically, the Club realised that it would have to spend a minimum of Rs.3,00,000 to buy all the required books. Further, these books would necessarily be tied up with students during their course of study.

The Club shifted funds and attention to a long-term policy of helping students with their educational fees. The Students Aid Society Trust was formed with a deposit of Rs. 8,700.

The idea prospered and then languished for a while. In 1993-94, however, the Loans and Scholarship Committee was formed with the same ideal as the Students Aid Society Trust.

In its first year (1993-94), the Committee raised Rs. 20,000 which was distributed among 25 students. Rtn. A. Namasivayam, Director of the Loans and Scholarship Committee, knew that much more could be achieved. The Committee worked tirelessly at fund-

raising and by 2000-2001, Rs. 1,50,000 had been collected. The Committee had the pleasure of awarding scholarships to 150 students of 29 schools and four students of Ethiraj College. President M.S. Guhan announced that any student scoring above 85 per cent in the Board exams, would receive Rs.1,200 as tuition fee for the first year of college.

The Committee, following the Club norm of not resting on its laurels, raised Rs. 2.35 lakhs in 2001-2002. And in 2002-2003, it surpassed all expectations and raised Rs. 2.89 lakhs which was distributed to 264 students in 46 schools. Going from strength to strength, the Committee dreams of supporting increasing numbers of students in the years to come.

While the Rotary Club of Madras looks outward, a change is occurring within. The club has always organised special days for the Annettes including a party and entertainment on Children's Day. But now more and more Annettes attend Fireside meetings, treasure hunts and Club fellowships. "There is more emphasis on family," says a Rotarian. "Our social events are times for the children of Rotarians to meet and get to know each other. For who knows, they may be tomorrow's Rotarians."

CHAPTER 16

International Service

'A Rotary meeting is held every 36 minutes somewhere in the world.'

The Light House, June 8, 1971

The above statement was written in 1971 when Rotary existed in 148 countries. Today, Rotary exists in 160 countries. There is probably a Rotary club meeting taking place even as you read this.

Like a network of fine threads, each club in every nook and corner of the world is woven into the tapestry of Rotary International. In recent times, more than ever before, interaction between clubs all over the world has flourished. Wherever a Rotarian goes, he has only to head to the nearest Rotary Club to find fellowship and like-minded people.

International Service as an avenue of Rotary came about after World War I. The war lasted from 1914-1918 and left millions dead. The world had never seen war on this scale before or felt its effects on nearly every sphere of human activity. The old empires crumbled and economies tumbled.

Paul Harris was appalled by the misery wrought by the war. At the 1920-21 Rotary International convention held in Edinburgh, Scotland, (the first to be held outside USA) he added a fourth statement to the Objects of Rotary. It read: The advancement of International understanding, goodwill and peace through a world fellowship of business and professional men united in the ideal of service.

Rtn. PP. L. Rajagopalan put it eloquently when he said: "Rotary is Rotary because it is international; that is where Rotary is different from all other service clubs in the world today. As we identify ourselves with human beings around the globe, as we learn to step into the shoes of other men, we come to understand that we belong to the family of men."

Viewing every person as a part of the global family, Rotary has instituted a number of programmes that: encourage different countries to help each other, open doors into varied cultures and lift Rotarians above the boundaries of their territory and onto the larger stage of the world.

At the heart of Rotary's programmes for fostering world peace and international goodwill is the Rotary Foundation. The Rotary Foundation was the brainchild of Rtn. Arch C. Klumph, the sixth president of Rotary International. At the Rotary International convention in Atlanta, Georgia, 1917, Klumph proposed the creation of an endowment fund which would finance charitable, educational and community projects. The first contribution of \$26.50 was made by the Rotary Club of Kansas City, Missouri.

By 1928, the fund held \$5,739 and was renamed, The Rotary Foundation. Five trustees were appointed to 'hold, invest, manage and administer' the funds and property of the Foundation. In 1930, the first grant of \$500 was made to the International Society of Crippled Children.

The Rotary Foundation paused in its functioning during World War II (1939-1945). In 1947, Paul Harris passed away. Before his death, he made a far-sighted request that any gifts made in his memory should be given to the Rotary Foundation. After his death, donations poured in and by 1948 the Foundation had collected \$1 million. The same year, the Foundation initiated its first educational programme: the International Graduate Scholarships.

By 1954-55, giving to the Foundation was routine for Rotarians. Annual contributions exceeded \$500,000. In 1957, those who gave \$1,000, and above were known as Paul Harris Fellows and could attach the initials PHF before their names. By 1964-65, annual contributions doubled to \$1 million. The matching grants

programme was launched this year. In 1998, aggregate contributions crossed the \$1 billion mark.

By 1971, the Rotary Club of Madras had contributed \$4,800 to the Rotary Foundation. In April 1971, Rtn. M.Ct. Muthiah who'd been a Rotarian for 13 years, called President R.K. Swamy and asked if there was any way in which he could contribute to the Rotary Foundation. He listened carefully to President Swamy's reply and then promptly sent in a cheque for Rs. 7,500 (\$1,000) thus becoming the first Paul Harris Fellow from the Rotary Club of Madras.

Rtn. M.Ct. Muthiah quietly dropped the first pebble into the pool. His action had a rapid ripple effect. In the same year, eight members of the club pledged to donate \$100 (Rs. 750) each and become Paul Harris Sustaining Members. It was their intention to become Paul Harris Fellows in a few years' time.

During the early 1970s, the number of Paul Harris Fellows in India could be counted on one's fingers. Today, the Rotary Club of Madras alone has over 100 PHFs including the youngest PHF twins in the history of Rotary International: Aparna and Aruna Guhan, daughters of Rtn. PHF. PP. M.S. Guhan. Another first, though not for the club, but for District 320, was the first woman PHF in India and Sri Lanka. Rotary Ann Iranganic Wijewardene, wife of Rtn. Governor Nominee (1973-74) Donald J. Wijewardene was made a PHF in February 1974.

By 2001, the total contribution of the Rotary Club of Madras towards the Rotary Foundation amounted to \$370,000. When addressing the club on November 13, 2001, Rtn. PDG. P.T. Prabhakar, Regional Foundation Coordinator in Asia Zone 6, said that the Rotary Club of Madras was the largest contributing club in all of Asia. In 2002-2003, the Club contributed a record \$45,000 to the Rotary Foundation and the Polio Immunisation Programme.

Rtn. PDG. R. Ramakrishnan was awarded the Distinguished Service Award by Rotary International for his outstanding contribution to the cause of Rotary Foundation in a continuous manner. He was one of 50 Rotarians around the world to be honoured. As District Governor in 1992-93, Rtn. R. Ramakrishnan

collected \$1,74,973 in cash, the highest sum ever mobilized by a governor from the southern districts towards the Rotary Foundation.

But the amount that the Rotary Club of Madras has received from the Rotary Foundation greatly exceeds the amount contributed. For instance in 2002-2003 alone, the Club has received matching grants worth Rs. 74 lakhs. And the Club has been the recipient of \$500,000, the largest 3-H grant to be given to a club anywhere in the world.

'3-H' stands for Health, Hunger and Humanity. The 3-H programme was initiated in 1978-79 to improve health, alleviate hunger and enhance human and social development as a means of advancing international understanding, goodwill and peace.

3-H grants are awarded to fund long-term, self-help grassroots development projects which are too large for one club or district to implement on their own. Projects must be self-sustaining after the 3-H grant funds have been expended. All projects must involve Rotary clubs and districts in at least two different countries with a significant number of Rotarians actively participating in the project. The projects must be clearly identified with Rotary.

Rtn. PDG. Alan Barrable of South Africa who came to audit the 3-H programme on behalf of Rotary Foundation shared his interpretation of 3-H with the Rotary Club of Madras:

"The 3-H means the body of a true Rotarian. The first 'H' is the Head which gives wisdom and vision to people. The vision of the four people who started Rotary has led the movement this far. Ideals are only phrases if not lived. Rotary is only a skeleton if it does not find expression in each one of us.

"The next 'H' is the Heart. Any Rotarian without passion is not a full-fledged Rotarian. This passion must be to give to others.

"The last 'H' is hands. Use your hands to make your wisdom and vision, supported with passion from your heart, come true and translate it into action. While the world does not understand what brotherhood and fellowship mean, the hand of the Rotarian can show them."

November is celebrated as Rotary Foundation Month. Besides matching grants and 3-H grants, the Foundation also funds Group Study Exchange teams, community assistance programmes, humanitarian transport grants for transporting people and material to disaster areas, grants for university partnerships and grants for university teachers.

The Group Study Exchange (GSE) programme began in 1965. It involves the exchange of outstanding young professional and businesspersons between paired districts in different countries. The idea behind the concept is that people, meeting together in a spirit of fellowship, will become acquainted with each other's ideas, problems and aspirations thereby opening avenues of lasting friendship.

In the first year of the programme, the Rotary Club of Madras was paired with District 634 comprising the State of Pennsylvania, USA. Teams spend two months visiting places designated by the host district. The Rotary Foundation covers the airfare of the teams but the host district meets all other expenses. Team members cannot be Rotarians, their sons, daughters or dependents.

In the 1960s, a quaint custom arose of toasting clubs of other countries on their national days. A letter would be sent to the club toasted. A number of appreciative replies were received.

Rotary Club of Sydney

*3rd Floor, M.L.C Building,
44-46, Martin Place, Sydney,
N.S.W Australia, 2000*

7th February, 1973

Dear Rotarian Achutha Menon,

Your letter of 24th January informing me of the toast to Australia drunk on our National Day at the Rotary Club of Madras, was a most pleasing message to receive and I'm glad you wrote to me as you did.

One of the self-imposed burdens of Rotary International is to develop international goodwill. Your practice of toasting bridges continents and oceans and reached us here at home in a manner which

is warming to us, as it clearly is to you, and conforms to the highest aims of Rotary.

Thank you for your kind comments about my country following your period here as High Commissioner in the 1950s. In a small way I hope to find a similar pleasure when I attend a meeting in Bangalore in July this year. I hope then to make some Rotary visits.

Would you please convey to the President and members of your Club our thanks and warm greetings and would you please also tell them that I have arranged for your letter to be published in our Club Bulletin so that all of our 360 members will be aware of the toast you drank to Australia and to the Rotary Club of Sydney.

Yours in Rotary,

WHITE,

President

Many old customs have been quietly laid to rest. But since the dawn of the 21st century, the Rotary Club of Madras has been exploring new avenues of International Service. A few 'firsts' deserve a mention.

In 2000, the novel Club-to-Club Group Study Exchange programme was launched. The concept became a reality for the Rotary Club of Madras thanks to the efforts of Rtn. M. Balaji and Rtn. M.Ct. Muthiah, Chairman, World Community & International Youth Project and Hospitality. The Rotary Club of Madras paired up with the Rotary Club of East Fresno, California, USA. On October 6, 2000, the Madras team headed by Rtn. S. Gunasekhar left for California for a period of two weeks. Shortly after their return, Rtn. William ('Bill') Thompson wrote a letter to the club appreciating the team sent. In January, he brought a team to Madras. The club-to-club exchange programme presents another opportunity to build bridges between different cultures.

Another first occurred on October 3, 2000 in the Emerald Isle of Sri Lanka. Thirty clubs from District 3230 signed sister club agreements with 30 clubs in District 3220, Sri Lanka. Rotarians from District 3230 flew to Sri Lanka for the occasion and the historic agreements were signed at the The Lanka Oberoi,

Colombo. The Rotary Club of Madras found a perfect match in the Rotary Club of Colombo for both were founded in 1929.

Keeping the momentum going, in 2001, a 60-member team from District 3230 went to Thailand to nurture ties with Rotary Clubs there. The team consisted of Rotarians and their spouses. The Rotary Club of Madras was represented by Rtn. M. Balaji; Advisor to Governor, Benjamin Cherian; Chairman International Service, Rtn. M. Balasubramaniam; and President Rtn. M.S. Guhan. The club signed sister agreements with the Rotary Club of Bangkapi and the Rotary Club of Silom.

The entire programme was the initiative of Rtn. M. Balasubramanian with District Chairman - International Service Rtn. Kasemchai Nitiwanakun of RI District 3350. It was the biggest ever sister-signing agreement witnessed in Thailand with more than 20 clubs of District 3350 participating. This occasion was made all the more special by the presence of the chief guest, RIPE H.E. Bhichai Rattakul. The Rotary Club of Madras gifted him a stunning shawl and a sampangi flown in specially from Chennai.

The Thai clubs put up a marvellous cultural programme and a human pyramid formed by brightly clad young boys was a breathtaking sight. In the true spirit of Rotary international goodwill, the occasion ended with the saluting of the Indian and Thai flags and the playing of the national anthems.

The same year, members made yet another visit abroad. This time, the trip was not just about fun and fellowship but about nostalgia too. Rtn. V.V. Mohindra, Rtn. Ashok Bajaj and Rtn. N.K. Gopinath visited District 3270 Pakistan.

Pre-1947, the Rotary Club of Lahore, chartered in 1921, was known as the second oldest club in India. The Rotary Club of Madras, chartered in 1929 was the fourth oldest. After 1947, with the partition of India and Pakistan, the Rotary Club of Lahore became the oldest club in Pakistan and the Rotary Club of Madras the third oldest in India.

The trip was made possible through the tireless efforts of Rtn. DG. P.T. Ramkumar and Rtn. DG. Suhail Ahmed. President

Verghese Chummar, Rtn. Benjamin Cherian and Rtn. C.N. Ramdas provided practical support at every stage. Of the 20 Rotarians cleared for visas, only three were able to make the trip. They were received by Rtn. DG Suhail Ahmed and ten Rotarians who played host. For Rtn. V.V. Mohindra and Rtn. Ashok Bajaj, the trip was a backward glance into their personal history. On a tour of Lahore, known as the City of Gardens, the two were able to trace their roots. At a combined meeting of the Rotary clubs of Lahore, all three Indians were asked to speak. Rtn. Gopinath suggested signing a sister agreement between the clubs, an idea that was well received. All present felt that if the clubs of India and Pakistan could serve one another through matching grants, that would be a step towards easing the tensions between the two countries.

The common ideals for sister clubs are: to promote friendship between clubs; to develop joint programs, namely 3H grants and educational ideals; to host visiting Rotary Club members; and to maintain close contact between the clubs relating to the four avenues of service.

Perhaps the strangest case to come before the International Service Committee was the case of A. Arul Prakasam in 1971. Prakasam, a resident of Rameshwaram, a coastal town in Tamil Nadu, India, found a plastic bottle on the beach. It contained a message that read: *May the voyages organised by T.F.C. be always as happy as this one, and good luck to the finder of this message.* A reward was offered to the finder if he or she published the message in a local newspaper. The newspaper was requested to inform T.F.C. Tours, 402 New Plaza Centre, Johannesburg, South Africa, on publication of the message.

The author of the message was a Mrs. Isobel Clarke, a passenger on board the S.S. Boissovain that had sailed from South Africa. The ship was on its last voyage and, as was customary on such an occasion, the oldest lady passenger on board was asked to throw a bottle containing a message into the sea. On June 8, 1968, ten days into the voyage, Isobel Clarke flung the bottle overboard.

The bottle bobbed along until it was found by Prakasam on May 20, 1969.

Prakasam promptly sent the message to The Hindu for publication. The paper, however, declined to go along with the terms of the message. Undaunted, Prakasam wrote directly to T.F.C. Tours introducing himself as the finder of the bottle. Mr. J.C. Foggit, Chairman, T.F.C. Tours, informed Isobel Clarke who was delighted with the turn of events. On June 24, 1969, Foggit replied to Prakasam and enclosed the reward of 300 rand in his letter.

However, the story didn't end there. Prakasam wrote to Isobel Clarke to thank her for the money and concluded his letter with: *"Now I am entirely depending upon God first and you next since my parents' and my family's inability. If it is not possible to help me by you at present, please hand over this poor letter and recommend your philanthropic neighbours to help."*

It turned out that Prakasam, an eighth standard student, belonged to a poor family of fisherfolk and wanted financial help to study further. T.F.C. Tours publicised Prakasam's story in its newsletter and invited readers to each contribute 50 cents towards an education fund for Prakasam. To their amazement, 60 rand poured in. In those days, one rand was equal to Rs. 10.50. The chairman of T.F.C. added 100 rand to this amount and contacted the Rotary Club of Johannesburg to take the matter further. On March 2, 1970, the Rotary Club of Johannesburg wrote to the President of the Rotary Club of Madras requesting help in verifying Prakasam's story.

Rtns. A.K. Sivaramakrishnan, S. Subramaniam, and S.M. Diaz enlisted the help of the Rotary clubs of Nagercoil and Madurai and followed every lead. As DIG of Police, Tamil Nadu, Diaz used his manpower to track down the boy and discovered that Prakasam's story was true.

With the reward money, the sum collected for Prakasam in Johannesburg amounted to Rs. 2,090. Members of the Rotary Club of Madras also made contributions. Prakasam was admitted to a good school in Madras and his education was monitored and funded by the Rotary Charitable Trust. Prakasam proved a good

student who went on to complete his B.A. and B.Ed degrees and joined the Vellaiyan Chettiar High School, Tiruvotriyur, as junior teacher. It was a happy ending to a story of cooperation between clubs in different countries.

Setting aside man-made prejudice and pride, the Rotary Club of Madras prefers to set up signposts along the road of international understanding.

On July 27, 1971, The Light House published an article by a Rotarian called Malcolm Macdonald. The article titled 'A Pattern for the World' is a testimonial to Rotary's pursuit of International Service. An extract is given below.

"Since its beginning in 1905, soon after the dawn of this 20th century, the Rotary movement has done much to promote the century's most vital cause: that of the brotherhood of man.

"If mankind does not learn that Rotary lesson of universal brotherhood, then we are in danger of blowing each other to bits.

"... they (men) have not yet succeeded in solving their most elementary problem: that of establishing decent, peaceful, friendly relations among themselves. Their violent disputes could end in the destruction of the human race itself.

"The answer to the problem is simple. It is the Rotary answer. All men are equals, all men are brothers; all men should be treated alike; all men should cooperate for their common good.

"... All races look a bit different, and yet they are all the same. None is superior, none is inferior to the others. We are all of the same race – the human race."

This Rotary fellowship nurtured between people, regardless of caste, country, creed or colour is beautifully illustrated in an anecdote told by the late industrialist Rtn PDG M.V. Arunachalam.

On a trip to the USA, 'MV' as he was popularly known, had half a day free in Detroit. He remarked to his wife that he would like to visit the Ford Museum. At that point a man came up to him, introduced himself, mentioned that he'd overheard MV's wish, and offered him his own museum admission card. He wrote



The inauguration of the computer courses at the
Rotary Rehabilitation Centre for the Physically Challenged



Rotarians cheer participants in the Special Olympics held for
physically and mentally challenged children

The Padavettamman Temple Tank (Chettikulam),
Chrompet before and after restoration





Rotary-sponsored Low Cost Shelters
at Rotarpuram, Ennathur, near Kanchipuram



RYLA in action



The Board of the 80th Year of the Rotary Club of Madras

out a self-addressed envelope and asked MV to mail the card back to him when he'd finished with it. Using the man's card saved MV and his wife \$40.

What made a total stranger treat a visitor to his country with such kindness? The man was a Rotarian and, noticing the Rotary badge that MV wore at all times, did not hesitate to offer help to a fellow Rotarian from across the seas. Rotary is truly the bond that binds.

CHAPTER 17

The Saga Continues.....

*"If I can stop one Heart from breaking
I shall not live in vain
If I can ease one Life the Aching
Or cool one Pain
Or help one fainting Robin
Unto his Nest again
I shall not live in vain."*

Emily Dickinson

Year 2003-04

The year 2003-2004 was the Platinum Jubilee Year of our Club. It was efficiently steered by Rotarian Sudhakar Reddy.

We had many high profile speakers namely Mr. Venkiah Naidu the then President of BJP, Honorable Minister Mrs. Renuka Choudhry, Mr. Raghavendra Rao, CMD of Orchid Chemicals, Mr. R. Gopalakrishnan E.D of Tata Sons, Mr. Jeppiar the famous educationist and such others.

The book "Timeless legacy" covering 75 years history of our Club was released by

Shri Venkiah Naidu on 19th July 2003. It is our Charter Day. A separate postal cover announcing our Platinum Jubilee was released on that date.

The VHS – Rotary club of Madras Senior Citizen was also inaugurated that year by Mr. M.V Subbiah, a doyen in Indian Industrial circles .

Our Club had built 21 Low Cost Houses at Ennathur for Barber Community. The land was given by the Government of Tamilnadu.

A special Education initiative for the Slum Children along with a well known NGO called "Pratham" was initiated. With the idea of imparting best education to kinder garden age children in slums and to highlight the importance of reading English from the early age was emphasized. With the ideal of imparting basic education to children of Kinder garden age with special emphasis in English and to inculcate the importance of reading in them books were given free of cost.

To benefit the farm community a veterinary Camp was conducted in Gummidipoondi a head quarters of many surrounding villages by our club in that year . It was a resounding success. Around 2150 cattle heads were benefited by this.

The Club had donated 100 Computers to different Corporation Schools wherein economically backward students are studying . It came as a boon to the low income group of society.

The icing of the cake of this Platinum Jubilee Year was when our club honored a few eminent personalities of Chennai who have crossed the age of 75 like .

M.S. Swaminathan, M.N. Nambiar and others.

The Governor of Tamilnadu His Excellency Ram Mohan Rao was the Chief Guest of the occasion.

At Ennathur, 21 Low Cost Housing built by our club for Barber Community in the land given by Government of Tamilnadu.

Year 2004-05

Rtn.N.K.Gopinath took over the mantle from Rtn.Sudhakar Reddy in the year 2004-2005, coinciding with the Centennial year of Rotary.

Our Rotarian Benjamin Cherian took over as District Governor of Rotary District 3230 in the same year..

In this year the effects of the Tsunami was devastating in the State of Tamilnadu. Many perished, and others became homeless

in a few seconds. The misery and sufferings of the people was terrific and heart rendering.. To cope up the innumerable difficulties experienced by the people of the state of Tamilnadu our club made strenuous efforts and collected 1.5 million US Dollars without approaching Rotary International or Rotary Foundation. The cooperation extended by all the rotarians in achieving this was commendable.

On 76th year charter night Mr. R.Seshasayee, Managing Director of Ashok Leyland Ltd,

A leading commercial Vehicle Manufacturer for decades honored four eminent people from the field of Arts and they were Ms. Alarmel Valli, Ms. Sudha Raghunathan and Mr. Nalli Kuppusamy Chetty..

We had a number of eminent during the year, to name a few:

1. Dr. Verghese Kurien- The “Milkman of India” spoke to us on India’s White Revolution
2. Dr.Jayaprakash Narayanan of Loksakthi
3. Sasikumar of Asian College of Journalism
4. Professor V.S. Ramamurthy, /secretary, Department of Science & Technology, Government of India
5. Dr. M.A.M. Ramaswamy, Philanthropist and Industrialist
6. N. Mahalingam-Industrialist & Gandhian was given “Life Time Achievement Award”

All the above mentioned personalities are in a class of their own in their profession and are eminent citizens of Tamilnadu and India.

Education for the underprivileged and socially backward section is always the primary focus of our club. We have taken a project of providing Rs.5,00,000(Rupees Five Lakhs) each to 16 corporation Schools at a total cost of around Rs. 90,00,000/- (Rupees Ninety Lakhs). This is a boon to the students of lower income group who were studying in these schools where education, uniform and text books are given free of cost by Government of Tamilnadu.

The Egmore Railway Station, one of the gateways of Southern States of Tamilnadu is used by lakhs of people on a daily basis.. To avoid the health hazards it posed to millions of people our club had undertaken and built an ultra modern Toilet outside the Railway station and this has resulted in a congenial atmosphere to Egmore Railway station.

Our Club conducted a First Ghana Eye Project during the year for the benefit of under privileged and poor sections of the society.

The sight of plastic bags strewn everywhere which affects the free flow of waterways and chokes the drainage system of the city. Even the herds of cattles swallow these plastic bags many a times risking their lives. To highlight the woes of over usage of plastic

Bags by the residents, our club in association with M.O.P Vaishanava college students conducted a campaign of the ill effects of usage of plastic bags and persuaded some large merchants to use paper bags and the residents to use cloth bags and refrain and discourage of the use of plastic bags.

RI President Glen Estess Sr, the Centennial President of RI visited the club projects.



C E L E B R A T E
R O T A R Y

100 Years

PROJECT PHOENIX

A Journey from ruins to resurrection

*"Like a Phoenix rising from the ashes
Let us rebuild, restore and resurrect what we lost.
From the ruins and the wreckage
Let us celebrate our rebirth."*

The ocean is a life-giver and a life-destroyer. On December 26th, 2004, the Tsunami reminded us all, once again, of our vulnerability as humans in the face of nature's wrath.

Countless reams have been written on the destruction caused by the mighty fury of the waves; yet, not enough has been said about the restoration efforts that followed that fateful day. Millions have been spent in restorative measures that were undertaken and few people have given so freely and so open heartedly as the members of the Rotary Club. In an unprecedented show of compassion and generosity, they have collected and spent over Rs. 6.5 crores (US dollars 1.5 million) in rebuilding a fishing hamlet on East Coast Road, 30 km from Chennai, called Sulerikattukuppam. This is their story.

Into the Eye of the Storm

The 26th of December 2004 is a day that will be forever imprinted in the minds of the villagers of Sulerikattukuppam. It was the day that their fate was inexorably changed. Once the mighty waves had passed, they were left holding the broken pieces of what had

been their lives...their livelihood... their very existence. Their hamlet was in ruins, wreckage was widespread and diseases abounded.

Into this desolate landscape came the members of the Rotary Club, like a beacon of hope in a sea of disaster. On that very day, they immediately began administering first aid and provided the villagers with immunizations from the large number of diseases that were sure to crop-up due to the amount of sewage, debris and waste that had been washed up by the sea.

But the relief work did not stop with that. Members of the Rotary Club rallied around and decided to adopt this village as their own – to make this hamlet a proverbial phoenix rising from the ashes, to take Sulerikattukuppam from ruins to resurrection.

Rising from the Ashes

The Rotary Club of Madras, District 3230 and the Rotary Club of Bombay District 3140, along with the Government of Tamil Nadu, numerous banks, corporate houses, non-governmental organizations and philanthropists and a consortium of Rotary Clubs in India and abroad together generated funds of Rs. 6.5 crores (approximately US \$ 1.5 million) to convert the ruined village into a model-fishing hamlet. Donations poured in from all corners of the globe as people opened their purse strings and hearts to the plight of these villagers whose very source of livelihood had been snatched from them. Large-scale plans were proposed, not only to rehabilitate the villagers, rebuild their houses and purchase new equipment but also to restore their faith in their only source of livelihood – the turbulent sea that had left them battered and scarred.

Mr. C.V. Shanker, Officer on Special Duty (Relief and Rehabilitation), Mr. Rohit Modi, who heads Tamil Nadu Road Development Corporation (one of the sponsors of the project) and Mr. Benjamin Cherian, Governor of Rotary District (3230) presided at the formal launch of the project on 1st of June 2005. Also present were other major sponsors including the Habitat for Humanity International, Indian Oil Tanking, HSBC Bank and officials from the Government of Tamil Nadu.

The members of the Rotary Club had a vision of the future of the village of Sulerikattukuppam. A vision that saw every villager in a far better position than what they had been in before the day of the Tsunami. Mr. N.K. Gopinath, the then President of the Rotary Club of Madras, outlined some of their grandiose plans which included constructing permanent shelters for the residents, developing shelterbelt plantations, building a public school, a hospital, a refrigeration plant, constructing public toilets and even building a playground.

For the simple villagers, who had lived in mud huts with thatch roofs, this seemed like a rebirth of sorts. Each of the families affected by the Tsunami would receive nothing short of a windfall as their precarious living conditions would be replaced with concrete houses with all the modern amenities like a sewer system, water connection and electricity. We have built 146 permanent shelters of 330 sq. feet each. For the fisherfolk, the contribution of the Club is nothing short of a dream come true as their simple fishing boats will be replaced with state-of-the-art fiberglass motorized boats, each fully equipped with a 10 HP diesel engine, two fishing nets, life jackets, life buoys, a set of fishing tacks and hooks. In addition to this, the villagers of Sulerikattukuppam can now also convene at their new community hall, which had been constructed by the Rotary Club, in an effort to bring the people of the village together. With the restoration process proceeding smoothly, the Rotary Club members' vision will soon become a reality. The remaining houses along with the Refrigeration plant, the electronic fishing trackers, the school, the hospital and the Knowledge Center are scheduled to be complete by the end of April 2006.

The contribution of the members of the Rotary Club in not restricted to just refurbishment and rebuilding they believe in helping the villagers with a complete, holistic healing process. In the days following the disaster, they supplied them with the necessary food and provisions to tide them over until they could provide for themselves and even conducted eye camps, distributed spectacles and undertook pest control measures to improve the quality of their temporary living shelters.



A Banner at Sulerikattukuppam



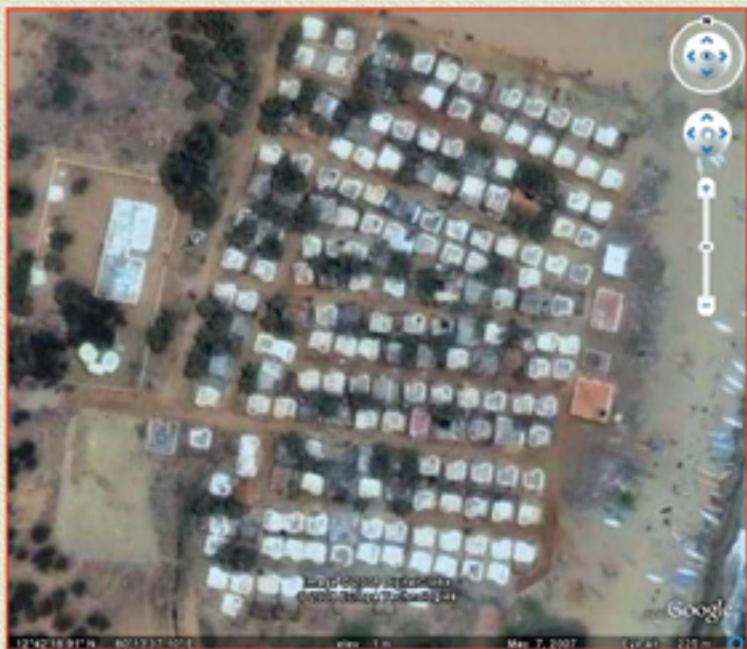
Cold Storage & Refrigeration Plant

146 Houses Built at Sulerikattukuppam





School at Sulerikattukuppam



A Google Earth View of Sulerikattukuppam showing all our work

Mechanized Boats given to Sulerikattukuppam



Times like these prove the true resilience of the human spirit. Although the villagers of Sulerikattukuppam suffered an unrecoverable blow and even lost one life to the terror of the Tsunami, they were buoyed by the restorative efforts of the members of the Rotary Club. In fact, in a show of their appreciation, the villagers even want to go to the extent of changing the name of their village from Sulerikattukuppam, which is derived from the small lake, Suleri, on the west quarter of the village, to that of their kind benefactors, the Rotary Club. The leader of Sulerikattukuppam, Srinivasan, says that efforts are on to issue a gazette notification to officially change the name of their village to "Rotary Nagar". Through this small but significant gesture, the villagers are making an attempt to express their gratitude to the members of the Rotary Club.

Finally we have constructed for this fishing hamlet 146 Permanent Shelters, A School, Community Hall, Refrigeration Plant, A Multipurpose Hall and given them 44 Mechanised Boats replete with two life jackets, a life buoy, a fishing hook and fishing tackles.

DISTRICT GOVERNOR ROTARIAN BENJAMIN CHERIAN

PDG. Benjamin Cherian (Governor 2004-2005) of our Club was recognized by Rotary International by giving him the highest award "Service Above Self". This is the highest award that Rotary India gives to any Rotarian whose contribution to Rotary has been exemplary.

Rtn. PDG Benjamin Cherian can boast of the maximum funds raised ever by our District for Community Service Activities mainly propelled by the unfortunate occurrence of Tsunami and his laudable "Schools into Smiles" project where about 100 primary schools catering to the Students of economically weaker sections were refurbished and made excellent Centers of Education. This project involved building of Compound Walls, renovating and building new class rooms, providing furniture and constructing separate hygienic toilet blocks for boys and girls. PDG Benjamin Cherian, Ann.Valsa, daughter Sara and son George have been individually manning the stalls of the Rotary Club of Madras in the Rotary International conventions for the past six years.

EXCERPTS FROM A LETTER RECEIVED FROM RTN. PDG. C. S. RAMACHANDRAN ADDRESSED TO RTN. N.K. GOPINATH ON THE BOOK TIMELESS LEGACY.

The book is very well written; my first congratulations go to the person who made a write up on the history, facts and figures of the performance of the premier club so interesting. But for her presentation it would have been a drab affair like a Secretary's report. Next I wish to congratulate you and all the others who had provided the material to her for the book. It is wonderful and exciting to read about how the Club started and about the early members and their functioning. I was overawed at the great achievements of the Rotary Club of Madras in community service over the seventy five years of its existence; though I had personally seen and known all the projects mentioned in the book during my visit to the Club as Governor of the District, it was a thrilling experience to read about all of them in print and reminisce about how committed and involved the Rotarians should have been to have done so much for the society and in particular to the "have not" youth of this area. The book will serve as the greatest motivating factor to the numerous clubs in our district which are languishing in an atmosphere of inactivity brought about by an attitude of :what can a few people do to help the multitude". This book will tell them that it is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness. It will also serve to make every present and future Rotarian of your Club develop a sense of ownership to this beautiful edifice called The Rotary Club of Madras built brick by brick to its present glory by the unstinted toil of the scores of past Rotarians. I am proud to belong to the organization in which the Rotary Club of Madras is a member. I am proud that it is this great club that parented my Club the Rotary Club of Madras Midtown. Kudos to all of you who made this book possible.

*With very best wishes,
Always a friend CSR*

Year 2005-06

In 2005-06, .Mangadu Shankar is The First president of our Club of the beginning of Second Centenary of Rotary, the 101st year.

Rotary International President Carl Wilhelm Stenhammar visited our Club Projects Including Tsunami related relief projects in two consecutive Rotary years.

World Famous "Gazhal" Singer from Pakistan Gulam Ali performed for our club during the year 2004-05 and 2005-06 for raising funds for various projects of our Club.

Another Fund raising project was an Art Auction initiated by our Club which proved to be a very successful fund raiser.

Life Time Achievement Award was give during the year to Dr.Ken Hobbs. Other awardees are as under:

1. Vijay Amirthraj - a well known Tennis Player
2. S.Venkatraghavan - An excellent Off Spinner of world repute who was also Captain of Indian Cricket Team
3. Mr. Vijayakumar DGP - A well known Police Officer
4. Dr. Shankar Acharya - Well known Economist
5. Colonel Lalith Rai of Indian Army Kargil/Siachen fame

Dr Kenneth Hobbs of Whitby, Canada was given the Life Time Achievement Award towards his efforts in eradication of Red Measles & Polio.

Dr. KEN HOBBS and his wife Mrs. EVA HOBBS have done service to the Humanity in this part of our country, particularly in TAMILNADU and also few WESTERN AFRICAN countries. It is DR. KEN HOBBS who designed the RED MEASLES IMMUNISATION PROGRAMME in SOUTH INDIA way back in 1979 which resulted in the immunization of 5.5 million children against MEASLES at a cost of US\$ 1.5 million. This programme was successfully completed in a record time of 5 years and was continued until 1993 when it was formally closed.

GHANA – For the second year in succession, we sent a team of Eye Doctors and paramedics to Ghana for a three weeks Eye Camp.

The initiative taken in building a modern toilet at Egmore Station was well received and another modern toilet with all the facilities was built by our club opposite Chennai Central Station.

Our Club opened a rehabilitation centre Ken & EVA during the year.

This Rehabilitation centre was inaugurated on 3rd November 2005 by president, VHS Dr. M.S. Swaminathan, who was the Chief Guest in the august presence of Rtn. PDG Dr. KEN & EVA on their 26th visit to Chennai, District 3230 Governor Rtn. Dr. R. Shyamsundar & Dr. N. S. Murali, secretary of VHS.

A sum of Rs.5 Lakhs by cheque was presented by Rotary Club of Madras to VHS on that occasion to make a beginning. PDG. Dr. KEN and EVA were honored with a Plaque by Dr. M. S. Swaminathan for their continued service to humanity.

Year 2006-07

Mr. Ravi Katari was installed as President along with our own J B Kamdar 17th District Governor from Rotaty Club of Madras on 4th July, 2006.

The Tsunami rehabilitation work consisting of building of 146 houses, a Community Hall and handing over the 44 mechanised boats was completed and handed over to the fishing community of sulerikattukuppam on 29th July, 2006.

Honorable M.K. Stalin, Minister for Local Administration of Government of Tamilnadu officially handed over the houses and other facilities to the community.

RTN. WILLIAM.B.BOYD, PRESIDENT ROTARY INTERNATIONAL, DIST 3230, WRITES ON TSUNAMI REHABILITATION WORK:

"The Tsunami Project of RI Dist.3230 has turned something incredibly bad into something very positive. The Tsunami could have destroyed their life styles but instead through the intervention of Rotary, the village and its young people now have greater opportunities to earn an income, have better health and to allow their children to choose where they want to earn their living. The

second village of the Rotary Club of Madras presents a different picture. Old Homes have been replaced by new and the facilities have been upgraded to the existent that the lifestyles will never be the same again. The ability to earn a living has been enhanced by the new boats, new nets and the cold store. The children will have4 better schooling and the water supply will be a permanent asset. Two different approaches to the tragedy and both are outstanding.”

RTN. K.R. RAVINDRAN, TRUSTEE – TRF, 2006 – 2010.

“I have been traveling your District for many years. But I have never seen in the Real Sense “Rotary at Work”.

What I saw today at Rotary Nager –Sulerikattukuppam the project of the Rotary Club of Madras, leaves me moved for more reasons than one. The calm blue sea that we saw out in the horizon concealed perfectly its treacherous nature. I can never forgive the ocean for what it did on that fateful day on the 26th December 2004. I remember so vividly the broken lives and the dismembered homes and the lost families.

But I guess God send these catastrophes to places like this one because it has people like us to step in and repair in some manner the damage.

How well you have done this!!

Your project of 146 houses that you have built is an apt answer to the indomitable spirit of Rotarians. Your project inspires me and truly makes me feel proud to be a Rotarian. The Tsunami destroyed some of our lives but, we will never allow our spirit to be broken.

Through Rotary we will give expression to that spirit.

You have done precisely that. Well done. May God give you the energy to do more such work. May he bless all of you and keep you going. Thank you for all that you have done.”

**RTN. NORA SETH PATHMANAND, DIRECTOR,
ROTARY INTERNATIONAL**

"I am very impressed by the Tsunami Project organized by District 3230 and the Rotary Club of Madras in helping the people affected by this devastating disaster. This project really addresses the needs of the Community. It is an Integrated Project in helping people to lead and improve their lives which include boats, housing, clean drinking water, vocational training center etc.,

Congratulations for all the work you have done for the community."

Opposite to Madras University building a modern bus shelter was built and inaugurated by Honorable K.N. Nehru, Minister for Transport, Government of Tamilnadu on 9th August, 2006. Rotary International President Bill Boyd inaugurated the Children's Library set up by our Club in association with the BROTHERS FOUNDATION of U.S.A. who donated 12,000 books, value being US \$ 3,00,000.

Construction of Public Convenience of Madras High Court at a cost of Rs.9,80,000/- got started.

On 7th and 8th April 2007, a CAREER and Job Fair was held in Chennai when about 3000 job seekers benefited. They were counseled and 150 candidates were given immediate appointment order and another 100 of them were short listed.

On 12th November, 2006 "DREAM FLIGHT" was organized for Children of Economically Weaker Sections in collaboration with Paramount Airways. The Social Welfare Minister of Tamilnadu along with some of our Rotarians accompanied the Kids. The Honorable Minister was appreciative of our Club's efforts to the Weaker Sections.

Sponsored by us with Rotary India President Wilf Wilkinson as the Chief Guest

This is the First time an Rotary International President being our Chief Guest at a regular meeting of our Club. The get together organized by our Club turned out to be very pleasant and

memorable evening. All past Presidents were honored with mementos marking the occasion.

Rotary International President Wilf Wilkinson inaugurated the newly built school as part of our Tsunami Relief effort at Sulerikattukuppam a fishing hamlet, 45 kms from Chennai.

“Corporate Social Responsibility Award” for the first time given by our Club to HSBC and was received by their C.E.O Ms.Naina Lal Kidwai.

For the third year in succession we sent a team of Eye Surgeons, para medics to ACCRA in Ghana for conducting eye camps, beneficiaries exceeding 1200 people within three weeks. As it was done in the past the entire expenses were borne by Rotary Club of Madras and Rotary Club of ACCRA West Ghana. Rotarian PP.M.C. shankar who imitated the project continues to take a lead role in successfully organizing this noble project.

The First floor of our prestigious Boys Town at Selaiyur was constructed at a cost of Rs.3.6 Million of which major contribution came from the Rotary Club of FAREHAM-MEON U.K. and President Ravi katari’s family. Hence one block was named after Admiral Katari and Captain. Chalam Block, the former being the father of Ravi Katari.

Our Club Achieved great heights with a total contribution of USD 1,32,000.

On May 8, 2007 our Club organized a first meet with 15 out of 16 clubs sponsored by us , attending. For the first time we received the Rotary International’s “Significant Achievement Award” for the year 2006-2007 signed by Rotarian Bill Boyd President, Rotary International.

DISTRICT GOVERNOR ROTARIAN J.B. KAMDAR

We are proud of the efforts and achievements of our Rotarian J.B. Kamdar as District Governor, Rotary India District 3230, in more ways than one. We would like to specifically mention his personal contribution to the Rotary Foundation in excess of USD 75,000 which is probably the highest by any individual Rotarian of our District.

Having crossed the half a million USD mark as contribution to the Rotary Foundation for the first time ever by our district under J.B.Kamdar's stewardship.

In his District conference by the generosity of his Ann Marlene and himself through their firm printed and published a "District History Book" at a cost of Rs.1,20,000/- which was given to every Rotarian of Rotary Club in Rotary India District 3230.

Probably the another first he had three top leaders, Rotary International President, Rotary International President elect and the Rotary Foundation Chair visit to our district during his Governorship.

KUDOS to our J.B.Kamdar

Year 2007-08

In the 79th year of Rotary Club of Madras, history was created in that, Rotarian Indra Subramanyan took over as the **First Lady President** of our prestigious Club with a hoary past.

976 medical camps conducted from July 2007 to June 2008, benefiting 92,866 persons from various areas.

The Ken & Eva Hobbs Rehabilitation centre was provided with medical equipment worth Rs.8,00,000/-

The Senior Citizens Home at Voluntary Health Centre, Chennai built by us has now 35 occupants with all amenities.

Projects of building toilets were continued this year also. The new toilet facility provided by us was inaugurated in this Rotary year. The toilet block at Madras High Court construction was completed and put to use.



Honouring of Platinum People



Rtn. Dr. Arul Mozhi Varman at work in Ghana



Inauguration of Ken & Eva Rehab Centre at VHS, Adyar



Ken & Eva being honoured



Life Time Achievement Award Presented to Mr. A.R.Rahman



First Day Cover Commemorational of our 80th Year Anniversary



Our First Lady President Rtn. Indra Subramanyam

One Eye surgeon and few Para medics from GHANA were trained in a leading Eye Hospital at Erode for a month and a half by us at the cost of Rs.2,75,000/-.

“BORN TO WIN” a Leadership Development Programme was conducted by us in 10 educational institutions.

Rs. 1.5 Million donated by PHF B. Nataraj towards building an educational corpus the interest of which will go to educate a girl child.

Life Time Achievement Award was given to Shri. A.R. Rehman for his contribution to the World of Music.

The Corporate Social Responsibility Award was given to Mr.C.K. Ranganathan MD of Cavinkare Ltd, for their sincere efforts to offer employment to physically handicapped people in a large number in their organization.

Year 2008-09

The Eightieth year of our club started with an exciting charter night. A special postal cover with a special 80th year lapel pin was released. Representatives from our daughter clubs were present to add meaning to the evening. The other dignitaries on the occasion were Dr.V. Shantha, a stalwart in medicine concerning Cancer Cure. Mr. N. Ram, Managing Editor, of “The Hindu” and the District Governor. Our own Rtn PP Krish Chitale was given the Lifetime Achievement Award from the District 3230 in recognition of his pioneering efforts at polio eradication in India and its rehabilitation.

Many medical camps were held with the same verve and vigor under the able guidance of Rtn. Kamala Chadda.

This year too the scholarship amount of Rs.5.30 lakhs was distributed among 350 students from 74 schools. Rtn A. Namasivayam has done it yet again for the Club and the needy students. Awards like the Vocational Excellence or Employer Employee Relationship Award etc have been given to the deserving and these have been high profile events.

Rotary Club of Bangalore which was started by us in the year 1934 celebrated the Platinum Jubilee on the 21st October 2008 and our President and a few members attended the historic event on the invitation of the Rotary Club of Bangalore. Rs.75,000/- was given by us to the Rotary Club of Bangalore for a joint project in their Platinum Jubilee Year.

Many high profile speakers like G.Viswanathan Chancellor of Vellore Institue of Technology, Mr. Mark Tully, formerly the BBC, Miss. Elizabeth Neisloss of the CNN, Mr. Tejpreet Singh Chopra, President and CEO, GE-India, Srilanka & Bangladesh, Mr. K. Radhakrishnan IPS, Commiissioner of Police and such others addressed our weekly meetings.

Epilogue

Is everything all right in Rotary? If so, God pity us. We are coming to the end of our day...

... Is everything all right in Rotary? No, thank God, everything is all wrong. There probably is no part or parcel of Rotary which can't stand improvement...

... I like to think that the pioneering days of Rotary have only just begun. There are just as many new things to be done as ever there were. Kaleidoscopic changes are taking place, many of them without our will. Even to hang to the fringe of this fast-changing world is about all most of us can do. Rotary simply must pioneer or be left in the rear of progress.

Here's a chance for pioneering if ever there was one. Rotary may be only a still small voice, but nevertheless it is a voice and there are none too many. When it becomes loud enough to be heard by those on whose shoulders the greatest responsibility rests, we will have peace. We will keep up the still small voice and others are sure to join the cry ...

... To perpetuate the pioneering spirit, Rotary does not concern itself with mechanical devices, but does definitely concern itself with ideas. Ideas have at times lifted the gates of empires from their hinges.

Let us keep the frontiers ever open to new, vigorous ideas.

Paul Harris (1868-1947)

Our Interact and Rotaract Clubs

Sl.No.	Interact Clubs
1	Bala Vidya Mandir Sr. Sec. School
2	Vidya Mandir Senior Secodary School
3	Sri Sankara Senior Secondary School
4	Sri Sankara Vidyashramam Matriculation Higher Secondary School.
5	Dadha Schools
6	Corporation Girls Hr. Sec. Schools
7	Shrine Velankanni Sr. Sec. School
8	Adarsh Vidyalaya Sr.Sec. Schools
9	Sri Ramdayal Khemka Vivekananda Vidyalaya
10	CSI Ewart Boys Hr. Sec. School
11	CSI Ewart Girls Hr. Sec. School
12	Anita Methodist Mat. Hr. Sec. School
13	Doveton Corrie Boys Hr. Sec. School
14	Christ Church Anglo Indian Hr. Sec. School
15	Chintadripet Kalyanam Girls Hr. Sec. School
16	Kerala Vidyalayam Hr. Sec. School
17	Children Garden Hr. Sec. School
18	Mct. M. Girls Hr. Sec. School
19	Kalyanam Girls Hr. Sec. School
20	Adarsh Vidyalaya Mat. Hr. Sec. School
21	M.Ct.M. Centenary Mat. Hr Sec. School
22	Alagappa Mat. Hr. Sec. School
23	Sir. Mct. M. Boys Hr. Sec. School
24	Lady M.Ct.M. Girls Hr. Sec. School
25	Gummidipundi Boys Town
26	Selaiyur Boys Town
27	Govt. High School; Madambakkam

Sl.No. Rotaract Clubs

- 1 Rotaract Club of Vepery
 - 2 Rotaract Club Of Loyola
 - 3 Rotaract Club of New College
 - 4 Rotaract Club of Queen Mary's College
 - 5 Rotaract Club Of Chennai
 - 6 Rotaract Club of MOP Vaishnava
 - 7 Rotaract Club of Presidency College
-

We had also jointly started the Rotaract Club of Ethiraj College along with The Rotary Club of Chennapatna

The worlds Largest Rotaract Club under our fold, The Rotaract - Club of Loyola (Based at Loyola College, Madras) with a membership of around 2500.

ROTARY COMMUNITY CORPS

- Seliyur
- Ennathur
- Sulerikattukuppam
 - Gummidipoondi
 - St.Thomas Mount

PROBUS CLUB of Chennai...

for retired Professional and business persons

Life Time Achievement Award

Year	Name / Profession
2004-05	Dr. N. Mahalingam , Industrialist and Philanthropist, the first Recipient of Life Time Achievement Award
2005-06	PDG Dr. Kenneth Hobbs of Whitby, for his efforts in eradication Red Measles and Polio
2007-08	Sri A.R. Rahman for his contribution to the World of Music

“For the Sake of Honour” Award

Year	Name of the Recipient / Profession
1963	Smt. Chennammal , Headmistress Education
1964	A. Anantharamakrishnan (Posthumous), Industrialist
1965	Dr. K.S. Sanjivi , Health Service
1967	Sri A.N. Sivaraman , Editor Journalism
1969	Smt. Rukmani Arundale , Indian Art Music & Dance of Kalashetra
1970	Prof Jagadesan , Leprosy Relief Work
1971	Mrs. Mary Clubwala , Social Service
1972	Rev. Fr. Jerome D’Souza, S.J. Social Service
1973	Dr. M.S. Subbulakshmi , Carnatic Music
1974	Sri M.A. Chidambaram , Industrialist Industry, Sports & Fine Arts
1976	Dr. R. Rajam , Medicine
1977	Sri. N. Subramanian , Teacher Education of the Young
1978	Sri. M.V.G. Appa Rao , (Posthumous) Sports
1979	Sri. K.V. Jaganathan , Journalism
1980	Sri. S. Balakrishna Joshi , Education of the young

“For the Sake of Honour” Award

Year	Name of the Recipient / Profession
1981	Dr. Justice S. Maharajan , Promotion of Tamil Language & Literature
1982	Smt. Savithri Vaithi , Social Work
1983	Dr. S.S. Badrinath , Opthamology
1984	Dr. Y. Naidamma , Leather Technology
1985	Dr. Rajah Sir, M.A. Muthiah Chettiar , Public Service
1986	Kumari C.R. Sathyabhama , Education
1987	Padma Bhushan Dr. B. Ramamurthy , Advancement of Neuro Surgery & Medical Education
1988	Dr. Padma Subramanian , Exponent of Classical Dance, Music Composer, Author and Indologist
1989	Dr. V. Santha , Selfless Service & Relentless research against cancer
1991	Sri. A. Sivasailam , An Industrialist worthy of emulation
1992	Dr. Pappu Venugopal Rao , Scholar, Linguist & an Ashtavadani
1993	Sri. T. V. Antony , IAS (Retd) Family Planning
1994	Sri. N. Shankar , Business & Industry
1995	Sri. M. Ananda Krishnan , Scientist, Educationalist
1996	Dr. VL. Dutt , Business & Industry
1997	Dr. Raja J. Chelliah , Economist-Fiscal Policy
1998	Sri. N. Kumar , Contribution as President of CII
1999	Sri. K. Santhanam , Nuclear Physicist
2000	Sri. Venu Srinivasan , Business & Industry
2001	Sri. R. Seshasayee , Business & Industry
2002	Ms. Shakunthala Sharma , Educationalist
2003	Dr. H.V. Hande , Help rendered to Red Measles & PolioPlus eradication as Health Minister
2004	Dr. Jeppiar , Educationalist

Year	Name of the Recipient / Profession
2005	Dr. M.A.M. Ramaswami , M.P. Industrialist & Philanthropist
2006	Mr. Chinnappa Antonymsami , Social Service
2007	Mr. Heung Soo Lheem , MD, Hyundai Motors Industrialist

Corporate Social Responsibility Award

2006-07	Miss. Naina Lal Kidwai , CEO of HSBC
2007-08	Mr. C.K. Ranganathan , M.D. Cavincare Ltd

Know Your Past Presidents

Year	Name of the Presidents / Profession
1929-30	C.G. Armstrong , <i>Chairman, Madras Port Trust</i>
1930-31	J.W. Mac Farlane , <i>Director, South India Exports</i>
1931-32	Major WSE, Money OBE
1932-33	Major WSE, Money OBE
1935-36	Sir. Md. Usman , <i>Sheriff of Madras, VC Madras University, Usman Road in T Nagar named after him</i>
1936-37	Sir. Frank Birley , <i>Chairman, Madras Chamber of Commerce & Industry</i>
1937-38	Dr. P.V. Cherian , <i>Renowned E.N.T Surgeon, Governor of Maharashtra</i>
1939-40	M. Ratnaswamy , <i>Educationalist, VC Annamalai University</i>
1941-42	Dr. P. Rama Rao , <i>First Rotarian to visit R.I. Head Quarters in U.S.A, met Rtn Paul Harris , the Gavel given by Rtn. Paul Harris was given to Rotary Club of Bangalore</i>
1942-43	H.C. Papworth , <i>Principal, Presidency College, Madras</i>
1944-45	D.C. Kothari , <i>the Youngest member of our Club, Industrialist, Sheriff of Madras</i>
1946-47	A.V. Patro , <i>Commissioner of Police, Madras</i>
1947-48	Lt.Col G.S. Gill , <i>I.G. of Prison, Madras Presidency</i>
1950-51	Lt. Col. P. Viswanatha Menon , <i>I.M.S. Officer, Professor of Surgery MMC</i>
1953-54	R. Ramanathan Chettiar , <i>Sheriff of Madras (1949), Mayor of Madras, Member of Parliament</i>
1955-56	Dr. E. Somasekar , <i>F.R.C.S. Surgeon, Railway Hospital</i>
1956-57	H.C. Kothari , <i>Industrialist & Sheriff of Madras 1963</i>
1957-58	K. Gopal Rao , <i>Padma Shree Awardee, District Governor in 1959-60</i>

Year	Name of the Presidents / Profession
1958-59	K.V. Srinivasan , <i>CMD Standard Motors, District Governor (1961-62)</i>
1959-60	A.R. Narayana Rao , <i>Very famous Architect</i>
1960-61	Lt. Col. Dr. N. Vasudeva Rao , <i>A Medical Doctor with Industrial Health as speciality, Closely associated with Madras School of Social Work and Guild of Service</i>
1961-62	K.S.G. Haja Sheriff , <i>Shipping Agency. Sheriff of Madras (1965)</i>
1962-63	P.N. Ethiraj , <i>Senior Partner of Harrison Group of Hotels</i>
1963-64	G.A. Phadke , <i>Printing Machine Supplier</i>
1964-65	M.V. Arunachalam , <i>Renowned Industrialist, District Governor 1970-71</i>
1965-66	V. Pandurangiah , <i>President, Madras Jewellers & Diamond Merchant Association</i>
1966-67	Dr. V.S. Subramaniam , <i>Renowned E.N.T. Surgeon</i>
1967-68	Dr. C.R.R. Pillay , <i>Hony. Professor of Medicine, Stanley and MMC, District.Governor 1975-76</i>
1968-69	R.P. Sarathy , <i>Leading Metal Forging Unit Holder - Well known for his Rotary knowledge and a much sought after speaker</i>
1969-70	C.A. Ramakrishnan , <i>I.C.S (Retd), Chief Secretary, Govt. of Madras when Sri. K. Kamaraj was Chief Minister</i>
1970-71	R. Krishnaswamy , <i>South India Chamber of Commerce</i>
1971-72	Baldevji , <i>Printing Machine Supplier</i>
1972-73	R. Ratnam , <i>Scion of TVS Family, District.Governor in 1982-83, Sheriff of Madras (1970)</i>
1973-74	A.K. Sivaramakrishnan , <i>Fraser & Ross, First Indian President of The Madras Club</i>
1974-75	V.R. Bhaktavatchalam , <i>Business-Well known furniture Manufacturer</i>
1975-76	V. Emberumanar Chetty , <i>Business, Hoe & Co, Madras Pencil Factory, Sheriff of Madras (1958)</i>

Year	Name of the Presidents / Profession
1976-77	Dr. S. Sundararaman , Hony. Professor of Surgery of Kilpauk, Stanley and Madras Medical College, Author "Handbook on Rotary," District Governor 1985-86.
1977-78	M.ct. Muthiah , Scion of M.ct. Chidambaram family, First Paul Harris Fellow from R.C. of Madras & the District, Director of IOB
1978-79	Deepak Banker , Industrialist & Past President FICCI
1979-80	V. Chidambaram , Industrialist, District Governor in 1988-89, Hony Consul General for Netherlands
1980-81	C.S. Vidyasankar , Held senior position in the Income-tax Department Govt. of India
1981-82	R.G. Phadke , Printing Machine supplier
1982-83	Sri Krishna Laxman Chitale , Well Known Architect, Father of Red Measles vaccine & Polioplus programmes in the country, GSE Team Leader
1983-84	Dr. M. Natarajan , Well Known Dermatologist, District Governor 1989-90, Prof of Dermatology, Stanley Medical College
1984-85	K.R. Gopalan , Head, Air France, Madras
1985-86	K.V. Shetty , MD, India Pistons Rings, GSE Team Leader
1986-87	H.R. Pandurang , Senior Executive, Larsen and Toubro, GSE Team Leader
1987-88	R. Ramakrishnan , At the age of 26 he was the General Manager of "Indian Express" - Sheriff of Madras in 1975 Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha) - District Governor R.I. Dt 323 in the year 1992-93
1988-89	V.S. Dhandapani , Businessman & Educationalist
1989-90	N. C. Sundararajan , Leading Chartered Accountant
1990-91	P.C.M. Somasundaram , Hospitality Business
1991-92	D. Parthasarathy Reddy , Hospitality Business-Taj Coramandel

Year	Name of the Presidents / Profession
1992-93	S. Krishnan , <i>Leading Chartered Accountant</i>
1993-94	L. Rajagopalan , <i>Leader in Paint Industry</i>
1994-95	V. Ramabadran , <i>Leader in Electricity Generation Business</i>
1995-96	Capt. Dr. B. Biswakumar , <i>Leading Neuro Physician</i>
1996-97	M. Balaji , <i>Leading Business man and a leading Exporter, District Governor 2000-01, President, Hindustan Chamber of Commerce</i>
1997-98	R. Benjamin Cherian , <i>Exporter of Human Hair, District. Governor 2004-05</i>
1998-99	U.R. Rao , <i>Businessman Real Estate & Finance</i>
1999-2000	J. B. Kamdar , <i>Leading Industrialist in Air Control Equipment, Philanthropist, District Governor 2006-07</i>
2000-01	Dr. A. Verghese Chummar , <i>Leading Foundation Engineer, former Professor of IIT</i>
2001-02	M S Guhan , <i>Leading Movie Producer</i>
2002-03	V K Chandrakumar , <i>Leading Businessman in Chemicals</i>
2003-04	D. Sudhakara Reddy , <i>Leading Businessman & Hotelier</i>
2004-05	N K Gopinath , <i>Leading Businessman-AgriEquipments</i>
2005-06	Mangadu C. Shankar , <i>Leading Businessman-Printing Machines</i>
2006-07	Ravi Katari , <i>Leading Businessman, Garment Exporter</i>
2007-08	Indra Subramaniam , <i>First Lady President of Rotary Club of Madras, Manages a Diagnostic Laboratory</i>
2008-09	P S Govindachary , <i>Leading Businessman in automobile ancillaries</i>

LONGTERM DONORS

M/s. Calimidhi Alavandar Chetty Charities and M/s. Namberumal Chetty Charities have been donating a handsome amount every month to our charitable trust for over 25 Years, thanks to the munificence of Rtn. M . Pratap Kumar Past Rotarian. Prabhat Kumar and Past Rotarian M.C. Cunnan.

Group Study Exchange Team Leaders from Rotary Club of Madras

Sl.No.	Name	Year / Place
1	Rtn PP. K. V. Shetty and Ann Vasanthi	1988 U.S.A.
2	Rtn PP. H.R.Pandurang and Ann Prema as Leaders of all Women Team	1990 U.S.A.
3	Rtn PP.S.L. Chitale	1994 Canada
4	Rtn PP M. Balaji	1999 U.S.A.
5	Rtn Thomas Philip	2003 U.S.A
6	Rtn. Paul Jacob	2009 Brazil
7	Rtn PP Arun K. Ramchandar of Ranipet now a member of our Club led a team in 1990 to U.S.A.	

ROTARY AMBASSADORIAL SCHOLAR

Rtn. Satyan S. Bhatt (*Past President of R.C. of Ambattur now
our member*) went on Ambassadorial Scholar to U.K. in 1988/89
through Rotary Club of Ambattur.

**Clubs sponsored by
Rotary Club of Madras**

Sl.No.	Name of the Club	Chartered on
1	Rotary Club of Bangalore	1934
2	Rotary Club of Cochin	1937
3	Rotary Club of Salem	1939
4	Rotary Club of Nilgiris	1941
5	Rotary Club of Cuddalore	1951
6	Rotary Club of Tirupathi	1959
7	Rotary Club of Madras South	30.6.1960
8	Rotary Club of Madras West	25.10.1965
9	Rotary Club of Madras North	22.12.0969
10	Rotary Club of Madras Mid Town	18.12.0972
11	Rotary Club of South West	16.06.1981
12	Rotary Club of Madras Central	09.04.1982
13	Rotary Club of Madras Meenambakkam	15.06.1983
14	Rotary Club of Madras Metro	27.06.1985
15	Rotary Club of Madras Mylapore	21.06.1988
16	Rotary Club of Madras Marina	05.10.1989

A FEW KEY ROTARIANS OF OUR CLUB

The following Rotarians are an altruistic lot, for they have been in the forefront, in giving it their all, for service through the Rotary Club of Madras.

Rtn. A. Namasivayam has been in charge of Scholarships given by our club to deserving students for over 13 years now and has been instrumental in collecting and distribution of money in excess of Rs. Five Million.

Rtn. C.R. Vaitheeswaran our Mid Day Meals man who also has been handling this committee for over ten years now and has seen to it that proper nutrition is given to many school students, by raising required funds.

Rtn Ranjit Pratap has given our club an address for identity. He has given a spacious place in which we have located our Secretariat in Down Town Chennai.

Rtn. V.K. Chandrakumar is a wizard when comes to doing big projects involving big money. He has taken our club to great heights by organizing mega funds through many donors abroad including the Matching Grants route.

Rtn. Christopher Devapragasam is a real boon to our club for his "hands on" involvement in our on going project "The Boys Town". He really makes a difference for the better to the boys who are under our fold.

Rtn. C.N. Ramdas, (IAS) Retd, This former bureaucrat is an affable one and he is our strong and effective interface with the Governments of the State and the Centre.

Rtn. Kamal Chadda is the Medical Camp Man of our Club. He has single handedly organised hundreds of Medical camps covering all categories of treatment. People in excess of 200,000 have benefited by these camps that are organised by him for many years now. His contribution is invaluable to say the least.

Charter Members of The Rotary Club of Madras

1. ARMSTRONG, C.G.

(President)

Chairman, Madras Port Trust
The Harbour, Madras
Public Service Docks

2. ANGUS, M.A.

(Director)

Partner and Managing Director
Spencer & Co.Ltd.
Mount Road, Madras
Wine Distributing

3. BARKER, H.W.

Partner, Messrs Jackson & Barker
200, Mount Road, Madras
Architecture

4. BLACKWELL J. H.

Acting Manager
Burmah Shell Co.
Royapuram, Madras
Refined Oil Products Distributing

5. BRUNNNSHWEILER, G

Partner

A. Brunnshweiler & Co.
104, Amenian Street, Madras
Indian Piece Goods Exporting

6. BURNHAM, J.R.

District Manager,
Kodak Ltd.
2/155, Mount Road
Photograph Distributing

7. CHANCE, MORTON

(Hon. Secretary)

Hotel Chain Manager
Mount Road,
Madras Hotels

8. CRIGHTON, W.R.

Rev. A D

Acting Archdeacon
(Church of England)
Protestant Churches

9. CUNNINGHAM, C.B.

Commissioner of Police
Egmore, Madras
Public Safety

10. DILGER, G

Manager
Volkart Bros
Armenian Street,
Madras Iron & Steel
Machinery Importing

Charter Members

11. HEARSON, H.F.P.

Managing Director
The Bombay Co. Ltd
169, Broadway, Madras
Raw Cotton Exporting

12. HORTON, W.H.

Manager
Richardson & Cruddas
1st Line Beach, Madras
Steel Structural Shape
Manufacturing

13. HAYLES, A.A.

Editor, Madras Mail
Associated Publishers (Madras) Ltd.
Newspaper Publishing

14. JAMES, F.E.

(Vice-President)
United Planters Assn. Of South India
1st Line Beach, Madras
Planters Associations

15. KAY, K

Director, Binny & Co. Ltd
7, Armenian Street,
Madras Shipping

16. KNOX, J.A.R

Manager, Madras Telephone Co.
Telephone House, Madras
Telephone Service

17. LEECH, A.J.

Managing Director
TA Taylor & Co. Ltd.
Armenian Street, Madras
Piece Goods importing

18. LUKER, W.H.

(Treasurer)
Director
Addison & Co. Ltd
Mount Road, Madras
Automobile Distributing

19. McBAIN, W.B.

Secretary & Treasurer
Imperial Bank of India
1st Line Beach, Madras
Banking

20. MACFARLANE, J. W.

(Director)
Manager
South Indian Export Co.
McLean Street, Georgetown
Leather Exporting

21. MONTGOMERY, HonE.B.

American Consul
Consular Service

22. PHILIPS, A.C.

Manager
Thomas Cook & Son Ltd
Mount Road, Madras
Tourist Agencies

23. PARTRIDGE, P. W.

Partner, King & Partridge
7, Kondy Chetty Street, Madras
Solicitor

24. ROSS GRAHAM, C.A.

Partner, Fraser & Roass
17, Armenian Street, Madras
Accounting Service

25. ROBERTSON, A

Manager
Wrenn, Benett & Co Ltd
Mount Road, Madras
Women's Clothing Retailing

26. ROBERTSON, R.J.C

Managing Director
P Orr & Sons Ltd.
Mount Road, Madras
Jewellery Retailing

27. RUDDLE, W.H.

Director
Best & Co. Ltd.
1st Line Beach, Madras
Coal Distributing

28. STACK, L.C.

District Manager
Dunlop Rubber Co.
Mount Road, Madras
Tyre Distributing

29. STRO UTS, R.C.M.

Managing Director
Gordon Woodroffe & Co.
21/22, North Beach Road,
Madras
Hide & Skin Exporting

30. WOOD, C.E.

Director, Parry & Co. Ltd.
1st Line Beach, Madras
Engineering

Signatures of the Charter members who attended the Club's Inauguration Meeting in May, 1929

ROTARY CLUB OF MADRAS

INAUGURATION MEETING

HOTEL CONNEMARA FRIDAY MAY 10TH 1929

SIGNATURES

Man
Woman
longer
arct. Lach
goose
C. litoralis
M. minor
Olea
Juniperus
C. monspeliensis
and others

Past Presidents and Secretaries of The Rotary Club of Madras

Year	President	Secretary
1929-30	Rtn. C. G. Armstrong	Rtn. Morton Chance
1930-31	Rtn. J W Macfarlane	Rtn. C.D. Priestley
1931-32	Rtn. Major WSE Money, OBE	Rtn. L.G. King
1932-33	"	Rtn. A. G. Vere
1933-34	Rtn. R. Jackson	"
1934-35	Rtn. Sir Daniel Richmond,	Rtn. C. Rajagopalachari Kt, CIE
1935-36	Rtn. Sir Mohamed Usman, KCIE, MLC	Rtn. J Chr Aschengreen "
1936-37	Rtn. Sir Frank Birley, Kt	Rtn. Capt. Abdul Hameed
1937-38	Rtn. Dr. P.V. Cherian, FRCS	"
1938-39	Rtn. A.G. Vere	"
1939-40	Rtn. M. Ratnaswamy	"
1940-41	Rtn. F.G. Luker	Rtn. W. Blakesley
1941-42	Rtn. Dr. P. Rama Rau	"
1942-43	Rtn. H. C. Papworth	"
1943-44	Rtn. W. P. Blakesley	Rtn. A.V. Patro
1944-45	Rtn. D. C. Kothari	Rtn. S.T. Sadasivam
1945-46	Rtn. Sir Robert D. Denniston	Rtn. C.W. Stephenson
1946-47	Rtn. A. V. Patro (From Jan. 47, G.M. Merrison)	"
1947-48	Rtn. Lt. Col. G. S. Gill	"
1948-49	Rtn. P. Appu Nair	Rtn. C.W. Stephenson (up to 9.9.1949)
1949-50	Rtn. A. Sinclair Rose	Rtn. K. Gopal Rao
1950-51	Rtn. Dr. C. P. V. Menon	
1951-52	Rtn. P.S.G. Rao	Rtn. R. Aiyadurai
1952-53	Rtn. D.S. Sastri	Rtn. Lt. Col. Dr. N. Vasudeva Rao
1953-54	Rtn. R. Ramanathan Chettiar	Rtn. K.S.G. Haja Shareef

Past Presidents and Secretaries

Year	President	Secretary
1954-55	Rtn. C.W. Stephenson	“
1955-56	Rtn. Dr. E. Somasekhar	Rtn. A.Y. Sundaram
1956-57	Rtn. H.C. Kothari	Rtn. S. Osman Ali Khan
1957-58	Rtn. K. Gopal Rao	Rtn. K. Natarajan
1958-59	Rtn. K.V. Srinivasan	Rtn. M.V. Arunachalam
1959-60	Rtn. A.R. Narayana Rao	Rtn. P.N. Ethiraj
1960-61	Rtn. Lt. Col. Dr. N. Vasudeva Rao	“
1961-62	Rtn. K.S.G. Haja Shareef	Rtn. R.P. Sarathi
1962-63	Rtn. P.N. Ethiraj	Rtn. R. Krishnaswami
1963-64	Rtn. G.A. Phadke	“
1964-65	Rtn. M.V. Arunachalam	Rtn. P. Balarama Sastri
1965-66	Rtn. V. Pandurangiah	Rtn. M.S. Pattabhi Raman
1966-67	Rtn. Dr. V.S. Subramanian	Rtn. R.G. Phadke
1967-68	Rtn. Dr. C. R.R. Pillay	Rtn. Deepak L. Banker
1968-69	Rtn. R.P. Sarathi	Rtn. V.R. Bakthavatsalam
1969-70	Rtn. C.A. Ramakrishnan ICS (retd)	Rtn. K.S. Narayanan “
1970-71	Rtn. R. Krishnaswamy	Rtn. K.R. Kothandaraman
1971-72	Rtn. Baldev Ji	Rtn. S. Sundara Raman
1972-73	Rtn. R. Ratnam	Rtn. S.L. Chitale
1973-74	Rtn. A.K. Sivaramakrishnan	Rtn. V. Chidambaram
1974-75	Rtn. V.R. Bhaktavatsalam	Rtn. V. P. Raman
1975-76	Rtn. V. Emberumanar Chetty	Rtn. K.R. Gopalan
1976-77	Rtn. Dr. S. Sundararaman	Rtn. Dr. M. Natarajan
1977-78	Rtn. M Ct. Muthiah	Rtn. S. Chellappa
1978-79	Rtn. Deepak Bunker	Rtn. H.R. Pandurang
1979-80	Rtn. V. Chidambaram	Rtn. K.V. Shetty

Year	President	Secretary
1980-81	Rtn. C.S. Vidyasankar	Rtn. R. Ramakrishnan
1981-82	Rtn. R.G. Phadke	Rtn. C.S. Krishnaswami
1982-83	Rtn. S.L. Chitale	Rtn. N. Kumar
1983-84	Rtn. Dr. M. Natarajan	Rtn. V.S. Dhandapani
1984-85	Rtn. K.R. Gopalan	Rtn. S. Krishnan
1985-86	Rtn. K.V. Shetty	Rtn. S.R. Mazda
1986-87	Rtn. H.R. Pandurang	Rtn. K.S.G. Murti
1987-88	Rtn. R. Ramakrishnan	Rtn. P.C.M. Somasundaram
1988-89	Rtn. V.S. Dhandapani	Rtn. Pratap Hansraj
1989-90	Rtn. N.C. Sundararajan	Rtn. V. Ramabhadran
1990-91	Rtn. P.C.M. Somasundaram	Rtn. L. Rajagopalan
1991-92	Rtn. D. Parathasarathy Reddy	Rtn. M.K. Bhargava
1992-93	Rtn. S. Krishnan (RGN Price)	Rtn. R. Ramamurthy
1993-94	Rtn. L. Rajagopalan	Rtn. Dr. B. Biswakumar
1994-95	Rtn. V. Ramabhadran	Rtn. Dr. B. Rangarajan.
1995-96	Rtn. Dr. B. Biswakumar	Rtn. R. Benjamin Cherian
1996-97	Rtn. M. Balaji	Rtn. N.K. Gopinath
1997-98	Rtn. R. Benjamin Cherian	Rtn. M.C. Shanker
1998-99	Rtn. U. R. Rao	Rtn. M. Srinivasan
1999-2000	Rtn. J. B. Kamdar	Rtn. Thomas Philip
2000-01	Rtn. Dr. A. Verghese Chummar	Rtn. Sudha Umashanker
2001-02	Rtn. M.S. Guhan	Rtn. S. Gunashekhar
2002-03	Rtn. V. K. Chandrakumar	Rtn. T. Ramakrishnan
2003-04	Rtn. D. Sudhakara Reddy	Rtn. Viji Joseph
2004-05	Rtn. N.K. Gopinath	Rtn. Indra Subramanyan
2005-06	Rtn. M.C. Shankar	Rtn. S. Nagarajan
2006-07	Rtn. Ravi Katari	Rtn. Dr. Vasanthi Vasudev
2007-08	Rtn. Indra Subramanyan	Rtn. Captain Shibu Isaac
2008-09	Rtn. P.S. Govindachari	Rtn. Prasanna Shenoy

“There is a mysterious circle in human events. To some generations much is given, of other generations much is expected, but this generation of Rotarians has a rendezvous with destiny.”

—Arun K. Ramchandar