

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



**D**URING A RECENT Zoom meeting with Rotarians and Rotaractors, I looked at the smiling faces on my screen and realized how much our organization has changed in a short period. It is clear that there is no going back to the “old normal” in Rotary — and I see that as an exciting opportunity!

Innovation and change are happening at so many levels as we rethink and remake Rotary. Rotary’s new flexibility is blending with digital culture to drive change in ways that many of us have never seen before. We can learn a lot from Rotarians like Rebecca Fry — who, at age 31, already has 15 years of Rotary experience.

*I see Rotary as a phenomenal platform to change the world. I believe I can have the greatest influence by empowering others to create the change they wish to see in the world. I’ve gained leadership insights through my experiences in RYLA and Rotaract, and now as charter president of the Rotary Social Impact Network, a new e-club.*

*Engaging Rotary program alumni is key in forming new clubs. Our club is proof that Rotaractors and other alumni want to join Rotary — but sometimes they can’t find the Rotary club that’s right for them. Our club has 31 members, all between the ages of 23 and 41, and almost all of them are alumni of Rotary programs.*

*We need to be able to integrate and align Rotary with the other personal and professional goals we’re pursuing. In chartering this club, we set out to design a personalized model of Rotary that is focused on added value for our members. We have also sought to leverage connections — through Rotary Fellowships, Rotary Action Groups, and other international partnerships — in order to elevate our members’ experiences beyond the club.*

*Our club meets and manages most of its projects online, using Microsoft Teams to engage 24/7 in topics that interest our members. This also means our club is not geographically bound to any one location: Although many of us are in Australia, we also have members in Germany, Italy, Mexico, Tanzania, and the United States.*

*Also key for our club is measuring the impact of our projects. For Plastic Free July this year, we created an awareness campaign promoting ways that individuals could reduce their use of plastics, and we reached more than 6,000 people. It’s a project with a tangible impact that anyone can take part in wherever they are. I’m proud that, through our club, we are bringing people together for a new type of Rotary experience. I am excited for our future.*

All Rotary clubs have the opportunity to be innovative clubs, just like Bec’s club. Let’s trust those clubs, learn from them, and lend them our support. Change in Rotary happens at the grassroots level, as clubs lead the charge, defining what this new Rotary can be.

Change is constant, and we have more work to do in many areas. It is important that we celebrate the contributions of people of all backgrounds and promote people from underrepresented groups so that they have greater opportunities to participate as members and leaders in Rotary.

The tools to make Rotary more inclusive, more relevant, and more fun for everyone are at our fingertips. Let’s use them now, and we will see how *Rotary Opens Opportunities* for ourselves and for those yet to discover us.

**HOLGER KNAACK**

*President, Rotary International*



**Rebecca “Bec” Fry**  
Rotary Club of Social  
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