



The first glimmers of a lasting change

I am deeply gratified by Rotary magazine's focus on mental health in this edition — and I'm ecstatic about the enthusiasm shown across the world in the past year to better support the mental health needs of each other and the people we serve.

In January 2023 when I first spoke about the need for Rotary to become more engaged on this crisis, I noted that the global mental health system couldn't be described as broken only because it didn't exist. But I also offered a highly aspirational wish that Rotary could help build that system.

The first glimmers of this vision have been brought to light by you in dozens of mental health projects. But just as important is the invitation many of you have given to fellow Rotary members to share their stories.

I am impressed by the leadership young Rotarians and Rotaractors have shown, and some of their brave, inspiring stories are highlighted in these pages. Former Rotaractor Freddie Almazan has an especially powerful personal narrative that you can learn about here — and hear firsthand at this month's Rotary International Convention in Singapore.

You can read in this issue about a great example of a project with the kind of sustainable impact that creates lasting change: Rotary clubs in Colorado endowing a pediatric mental health fellowship at Children's Hospital Colorado.

At the convention, you can also hear from 2024 People of Action honorees lauded for the impact they and their clubs have made through mental health initiatives. Bindi Rajasegaran will talk about a Rotary-led project in Malaysia helping children develop skills to cope with mental health challenges and building capacity for support throughout the country.

In addition, Rita Aggarwal, an officer of the Rotary Action Group on Mental Health Initiatives, will be recognized for her success in applying the Wellness in a Box framework, a mental health literacy approach for adolescents, in her hometown of Nagpur, India. Read about the project in the "Stand by me" feature. This highly scalable and clinically backed framework can be adapted for use just about anywhere — reach out to the action group if your club would like to support or implement it.

As we look ahead, the Rotary Action Group on Mental Health Initiatives will play a critical leadership role in promoting proven, measurable projects. In doing so, it will empower clubs to focus on initiatives that drive scalable, sustainable impact.

After you've read through the magazine, I invite you to go to the Learning Center on My Rotary and check out the Increase Your Impact series, which includes a wonderful short video explaining impact. When we focus on impact, we bring Rotary's vision statement to life, creating lasting change across the globe, in our communities, and in ourselves.

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