

From the DGs Desk

October 2025



What a Journey!

It's been 4 months since I started my journey as District Governor, and WOW. What an experience. It is a privilege to travel around our District, visiting clubs and experiencing first hand, all the amazing projects Rotary is involved in. I've visit 31 Clubs, including Northern Cape and I am on my way to Northern Namibia.

Thank you for the warm welcome and the energy and enthusiasm you all have for Rotary and the commitment to service above self.

I want to remind each and everyone of you to consider celebrating World Polio Day on 24 October. Whether your club is participating in raising funds or awareness, I encourage you to continue your support toward a Polio Free World.

Projects, Partnerships & Purpose

I wish I could take each and every one of you to my DG Club and project visits. It is so inspirational. It will be, almost impossible to write about each and every project I visited, but I would like to share some with you over the next few months. We are also working towards showcasing our projects in more detail on our website, as this was one of the top requests during the Mini Conference, "The Roadmap to Growth through Storytelling and Partners". However, to tell the stories, clubs need to share their project stories and stats with us. Please write your project stories and share your photos with us. You can email your stories to dalene@grapevinesa.co.za and together we will make sure they are highlighted on, not only our social media platforms, but also on our website.





Celebrating our Projects

I've visited food gardens, dress making projects, and attended fundraising events to help support and grow projects and would like to share just a few highlights with you.

It was the **Rotary Club of Table Bay's** GrowBox project that grabbed my attention.

Cultivating Community with GrowBox 🌱

The Rotary Club of Table Bay is proud to share the remarkable progress at GrowBox, a passion project spearheaded by the inspiring Renshia Manuel. The initiative, based in Hanover Park, blossomed after Renshia addressed the Rotary club following the initial COVID-19 lockdowns.

GrowBox began with a simple yet powerful idea, in Renshia's words: "What if every household could grow their own fresh healthy food, no matter where they live or what they earn?"

This vision has grown into a thriving nursery and workshop space, providing vital food and nutrition education to the community. The project has seen significant milestones, championed by Rotarian and avid gardener, Keith Obery:

- July 2022: An electricity line was installed for the essential watering system.
- April 2023 & October 2024: The club supported health and convenience by installing two composting toilets for the team and workshop attendees.
- November 2024: The pump was replaced to ensure a reliable water supply.
- Hot off the press: An exciting electrical installation in the workshop container is being installed to boost capacity for community education!

GrowBox is more than just a garden; it's a foundation for healthier living and empowerment in Hanover Park. (photos)

But not all projects require funding, some require contacts, connections and commitment.



Tiny Turtles, Big Impact

Rotary Club of Newlands has been involved with the Two Oceans Aquarium's Turtle Conservation Centre for several years.

The Centre rescues, rehabilitates, and releases stranded sea turtles, many of them tiny hatchlings, giving them a second chance at life. Their work goes beyond saving turtles, it reminds us that healthy oceans are vital to all life.

Threats like plastic pollution, warming seas, and habitat loss are very real and protecting turtles has a wide impact on the marine ecosystem.



The unsung heroes of our oceans

From Springbokies to Scarecrows



As Rotarians, we also have a bit of fun. If it is not Springbokies in Springbok then it is a friendly scarecrow in Stanford.



Rotary Club of Stanford's scarecrow was part of the town's theme for welcome the public, celebrating SA's Gold Medal at the Chelsea Flower Show win the UK.



Rotary on the Move: 1,200 Cartons of Children's Clothing

Helderberg Sunrise Rotary Club (HSRC) and **Rotary Club of Stellenbosch** recently played a vital role in distributing a massive consignment of children's clothing across the district.

In the week of August 26th, District 9350 was advised that it was the recipient of a donation of 42,000 pieces of children's clothing. Rotary clubs across the district were asked to cover the cost of transporting the goods from Durban to Somerset West. Rotarians were called to Action - Logistics and Labour were the order of the day!

The success of the operation relied on swift coordination and generous support:

- DGE Anton Lubbe kindly advanced the funds to cover the initial transport costs.
- Anton de Freitas arranged temporary storage, secured through the generous use of a container provided by The Nappy Clinic.
- On Monday, September 1st, members from HSRC and the Stellenbosch Rotary Club met to receive the delivery.
- The clothing was delivered in approximately 1,200 cartons, containing eight different styles and sizes of boys' clothing. The Rotarians tackled the challenging task of craning the container into place, offloading the truck, and packing all the cartons.
- The logistics for the distribution to all interested clubs in District 9350 were expertly handled by the Stellenbosch Rotary Club.

HSRC members convened on September 3rd, to organize their own consignment for local charities in the Helderberg basin. The fortunate local recipients included: Child Welfare, Halli Trust, MamaThemba, Khethani and Heartlands.

The clubs have since received fantastic feedback regarding the impact of this clothing donation on the recipients.



The A-B-C's of Success: Rotary Clubs Open Doors to Learning

As an ex-teacher, I was so impressed with the number of literacy and education projects. From the Library at Westlake United Church, a project in partnership with **Rotary Club of Constantia** where Primary school learners are encouraged, to Little Squirrels Daycare Centre where early childhood education is offered to 60 children between the ages of two and six years. Through generous sponsorship of Rotarian Corinne Itten from the Rotary Club of Ferne Christoffel in Switzerland, RC Constantia was able to secure the entrance of the Daycare Centre with a pedestrian access gate to keep the children and premises safe.



Cozy Corners

In September, the **Rotary Club of Strand** launched a Reason to Read project. This pilot project will create cozy, sustainable reading corners in early childhood development centres, as well as primary school classrooms across Gordon's Bay and Strand.

Strand Rotary has committed R10,000 as a match fund to multiply community donations and Exclusive Books has agreed in principle to support the project with children's books.

The first reading corner will be installed at the ACVV's Tink Tinkie Pre School; with two additional sites to follow as part of the pilot phase.





The Joy of Movement: Rotary Delivers Independence to Keetmanshoop

Each and every club finds a way to make a difference in their community, and every project is different.

In Keetmanshoop I experienced the joy and gratitude in the eyes of community members who received medical equipment, crutches, walkers and wheelchairs. Giving them dignity and freedom to move around.

From Funky Hats to Future Goals: Rotary's Power is in Unity

Thank you to each and every club for welcoming me with open arms and for inviting open and honest conversations about challenges in your clubs, opportunities in your community, while celebrating change and growth. I do apologize for not mentioning every club and every project by name.

I do have to mention one more club, thank you Rotary Club Noon Gun for bringing a bit of fun to the club meeting, A Funky Hat Meeting.

I want to finish with the following;

Unity is strength . . .when there is teamwork and collaboration, wonderful things can be achieved. – Mattie Stepanek

Pam Rawbone
District Governor 2025/2026
Rotary District 9350

