

Telling our stories

Every month since I joined Rotary, I've looked forward to reading this magazine, especially the opening essay from our Rotary president.

I'll admit that as much as I appreciate a digital copy, I still revel in the tactile sensation of sitting down and leafing through the magazine's glossy pages. They are a treasure trove of photos and memorable stories about our great organization — the one we all know and love. I have learned so much over the years about service projects and lives that each of you have transformed.

As a communications professional, I have longed for the day our stories would be a regular part of mainstream media and our flagship magazine might populate doctor's offices, coffee shops, or anywhere else people sit, wait, and browse. It's great that Rotary members are better informed about all we do—and wouldn't it be that much better if more people knew our stories?

All this was top of mind as I thought about our plans for promoting Rotary worldwide during the upcoming year. Over the next 12 months, we are going to shine a light on projects that put Rotary service on display to the world, and we are going to do it strategically. Nick and I will focus on some of the most impactful, sustainable, and scalable Rotary projects from our areas of focus, in what we call the Imagine Impact Tour.

We are inviting top-tier journalists, thought leaders, and influencers to use their channels to help us raise awareness by reaching people who want to serve but have not yet realized they can do it through Rotary.

But there was another important issue to consider — our carbon footprint. I take seriously Rotary's emerging leadership position on environmental issues. The example set by our members during the COVID-19 pandemic is fundamental to how we carve out our future.

That means we will harness digital technology to tell these stories — we will be tweeting, posting, and “going live” to anyone who will listen. We must consider the environment, and part of that means not always traveling but continuing to connect in meaningful ways as we have for the past two years.

Of course, we are social people, and we still need to be together. We simply need to be more mindful of our decisions and think about how we gether just a little bit differently. For example, if we travel to visit a project, we will plan successive visits in neighboring areas.

So, what are your stories and who can help tell them? I hope you might consider your own Imagine Impact efforts — your story might be something you can promote just as easily on social media or during a Zoom call. Think about ways to showcase notable projects in your clubs and districts.

We all feel the impact that Rotary service and values have on us. Now it's our opportunity to share that feeling with others.

JENNIFER JONES

President, Rotary International



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