



Dear Rotarians, Rotaractors, and friends,

**T**he year 2020 has brought monumental changes that have already included a global pandemic and a renewed call for social justice. We are reminded that we live in a constantly changing world, and Rotary is a reflection of that world.

We must be ready to listen and adapt, always drawing upon our core values of service, fellowship, diversity, integrity, and leadership. If we live these values and apply The Four-Way Test to all aspects of our lives, we will be prepared to lead at all times.

I am proud of how we have proven our ability to adapt. Faced with a pandemic, Rotary has not stopped. We moved meetings online and found new ways to serve. We turned the canceled 2020 Rotary International Convention in Honolulu into our first virtual convention. Each week, we are proving that Rotary is a flexible gathering that happens anywhere — in traditional meetings, on cellphones, and on computers. Rotary offers a way to connect for everyone who wants to, at any time, and will continue to do so.

Some have even told me that they enjoy Rotary's mix of online and in-person meetings more now than before! How can we build on this momentum and seize the opportunity to embrace change so that Rotary keeps thriving?

For me, supporting new types of clubs is key. They are no longer just experiments but a real part of Rotary today. In addition to traditional clubs, we have e-clubs, Rotaract clubs, cause-based clubs, and passport clubs. These help make Rotary more inclusive, more flexible, and more attractive to new members. Visit these clubs, exchange ideas and partner with them, and promote them to one another and to our communities.

We all agree that we need to grow Rotary, but sometimes we can get caught up in the numbers game and lose sight of the bigger picture. After all, an increase in membership is meaningless if next year, those new members leave our clubs. Let's grow Rotary sustainably. Rotary's flexible options for participation will engage members and show the community how we're different from any other club. Let's celebrate that Rotary is now less about rules and more about joining together in a variety of ways besides traditional meetings.

I recommend that each club hold an annual strategy meeting to ask — and honestly answer — if we are doing all we can for our members and if our club reflects the community we serve. We are taking this approach at the international level, too. I am proud that six women are serving with me on the RI Board of Directors this year, the most we have ever had. Let's keep Rotary moving in this direction at every level. We need more perspectives, more diversity, for Rotary to thrive.

It's fascinating to imagine how we will find new ways to adapt and stay nimble this year and beyond. But I am also inspired about what hasn't changed and never will in Rotary: the friendships, the networking, the ethics, and the service. Indeed, these are the values that make Rotary attractive to all.

As Rotary's founder, Paul Harris, said, we have to be revolutionary from time to time. Now is such a time. *Rotary Opens Opportunities* — countless ones — for us to embrace change that will strengthen us even as we remain true to our core values.

**HOLGER KNAACK**

*President, Rotary International*