



Rotary International president Barry Rassin is known for looking for ways to do things differently to maximise the positive impact Rotary has on the world. One of his focuses is working to build strategic partnerships, which, like The Rotary Foundation's collaboration with UNICEF and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, have the potential to help us make a far greater impact than we ever could alone.

On New Year's Day, around one million spectators gather to watch the historic Tournament of the Roses Parade in Pasadena, US, with a further 70 million people worldwide tuning in to the televised program at home.

Local Rotarians, Rotaractors and Interactors combine each year to create Rotary's very own float. The parade uniquely requires every visible component to be covered in organic material. Everything from living flowers to sawdust is used to create colourful moving displays of every variety.

In 2019, Barry and Esther Rassin journeyed to sunny California to ride the Rotary float alongside fellow Rotarians and Rotaractors, together showcasing a vibrant Rotary to millions around the globe.

Alongside his participation in float festivities, Barry visited the historic Huntington Library, hosted by the Rotary Rose Parade Float Committee. There, he met with the presidents of fellow international service organisations Lions International, Kiwanis International, and Optimist International. Lions and Kiwanis likewise participate in the Rose Parade each year with floats of their own.

The presidents met privately, as well as gave individual speeches to guests discussing their visions for the future. Each touched on the similarities between the aspirations, as well as the hurdles, facing their organisations.

"All of us want to make a difference around the world," said Lions International president Gudrun Yngvadottir. "During this wonderful meeting we had this morning, we could share our successes, our issues, our worries. We have a lot in common – we all have the same goal to make a difference in many people's lives."

Kiwanis International president Florencio C 'Poly' Lat is a Stage 4 cancer patient and shared his moving story of deciding to take on presidency and its hurdles to live the rest of his time helping the world's children. He touched on the shared importance placed by all those present upon serving others, what he called "the purpose of life".

Collaboration on future humanitarian initiatives was the forefront of discussion. Together, Rotary and the three fellow service organisations represented at the event have a combined membership of more than four million worldwide, representing the opportunity to make significant impact should they collaborate on future projects.

Serving together: Rotary International president Barry Rassin, left, Optimist International president Rebecca Butler, Lions International president Gudrun Yngvadottir and Kiwanis International president Florencio C "Poly" Lat.

CLOCKWISE: RI president Barry Rassin and wife Esther don the hat and glasses that were part of the costume for Rotary float riders and walkers at the 2019 Tournament of the Roses Parade in Pasadena, US; Lions International president Gudrun Yngvadottir and husband Dr Jon Bjarni Thorsteinsson onboard the Lions float; Optimist president Rebecca Butler Mona, husband Mike, and their children Amanda and Alex, lend Barry a hand decorating the Rotary float; The theme for the RI float was "Service Rocks" – it was a giant crocodile playing the piano accompanied by the music of Elton John.



Do you need help with projects?

If so, have you considered approaching service organisations that share Rotary's values with a view to collaborate? With 1250+ Lions clubs in Australia, New Zealand and Pacific region alone, there are likely to be many members in service in your local area happy to work with you towards the benefit of the community. Collaboration brings the benefit of expanded networks and resources, multiplies the number of volunteers available, and can help increase the overall effectiveness of projects undertaken.



Rotary Connects the World

The 2020 Rotary Rose Parade float will be created with inspiration from Rotary International president-elect Mark Maloney's newly announced theme *Rotary Connects the World*. Fittingly, participation in the 2020 festivities will be opened up to include members of the Rotary family from around the world, to showcase the impact we have globally. More details on how Australians and New Zealanders can take part in this unforgettable experience will be published as details emerge.



"About a year ago, Rotary came up with a new vision statement, that 'together we see a world where people unite and take action to create lasting change across the globe, in our own communities, and in ourselves'," Barry said. "All of us have that same vision. We want to work together, we want to bring others together as partners in service. We want to make lasting change, and we want to take action to do that. We want to do it around the world, we want to do it at home, and we want to help each other to do

it. We're all on the same path, we're all going in the same direction.

"We want to take this to a new level as we move forward into the future, where the four of our organisations, and perhaps some others, could continue to meet and grow our relationships to a point where we can really show the whole world that all of us are on the same path of making the world a better place."

"We have so much more in common than anything that is different among us. We all strive to make a positive

difference in our own communities, in the world, and in each other, so I've been delighted to have some time talking about that and some ideas regarding some specific things we can do to come together," said Optimist International president Rebecca Butler Mona, who, along with the presidents of Lions and Kiwanis, was similarly energised by the prospect of project partnership.

Barry recognised the members of the four organisations represented at the summit were all already informally working together towards a better future.

"We want our world to be a better place, we want to make a difference and change our world so we can all be proud when we look around and see we've eliminated extreme poverty, we've eliminated hunger. We're all doing that together right now. We just need to bring that a little bit closer," Barry said.

Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions and Optimist clubs are discussing the possibility of working together on service activities out and about in their local communities to create as one an enormous display of the power of service organisations around the world.

Barry has invited all the presidents to attend the Hamburg Rotary Convention, and further meetings are planned for when their schedules permit.

Incoming RI president Mark Maloney has likewise earmarked partnerships as a major emphasis of his term, building on Barry's efforts in the space. He announced his plan to a series of presidential conferences around the world at the International Assembly in San Diego, which will focus on Rotary's lengthy relationship with the United Nations and the UN's sustainable development goals many Rotary service projects support. Mark will similarly be meeting with next year's Kiwanis, Optimist and Lions presidents when he participates in the 2020 Rose Float festivities.

"I'm truly excited, because I see a beginning of a new era in service," Barry said. "I see the beginning of a new feel of what we can all do together to change our world." •

FELLOWS IN SERVICE



ROTARY INTERNATIONAL

Founded: 1905

Motto: Service Above Self

Members: 1.2 million members (and over 700,000 additional Rotary young and emerging leaders)

Clubs: 68,500 (35,500 Rotary clubs, 9500 Rotaract clubs, 23,500 Interact clubs) across 200 countries and geographic regions.

Rotary is a global network of volunteers united in providing humanitarian service to better our world. Rotary members take action to create lasting change in local and international communities, limited in scope and scale only by members' passion and creativity. They encompass, but are not limited to, promoting peace, fighting disease, providing clean water and sanitation, protecting mothers and children, supporting education and growing local economies. One of Rotary's most significant achievements to date is spearheading the campaign to eradicate polio worldwide, which has reduced in incidence by 99.9 per cent.



OPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL

Founded: 1919

Motto: Friend of Youth

Members: 86,000 (70,000 adult and 16,000 youth)

Clubs: 3000 (2500 Optimist clubs and 500 Junior Optimist) across 20 countries

Focused on providing hope and positive vision, Optimists work to "Bring Out the Best" in youth, their communities and their volunteers in a variety of ways. Each year, Optimists perform 65,000 service projects, raising and investing over \$75 million in the communities they serve. Projects range from scholarship contests to youth leadership development, youth sports and safety, disaster relief, and childhood health and wellness initiatives around chronic diseases like childhood cancer, as well as healthy lifestyles, mental health, and physical, intellectual and developmental disabilities.



LIONS INTERNATIONAL

Founded: 1917

Motto: We Serve

Members: 1.42 million Lions (plus 175,000 Lions youth)

Clubs: 48,000 Lions clubs and 7000 Youth Leo clubs in 200 countries and geographical areas

Lions strengthen local communities through hands-on service and humanitarian projects. Lions extend their service impact through the generous support of their Lions Clubs International Foundation, which has awarded more than 13,200 grants totalling more than \$1 billion in support to Lions' humanitarian projects since 1968. Lions are focused on supporting sight, hunger, the environment, childhood cancer and their global focus, diabetes, to help address some of the biggest challenges facing humanity.



KIWANIS INTERNATIONAL

Founded: 1915

Motto: Serving the Children of the World

Members: 551,000 (215,000 adult and 335,000 youth)

Clubs: 16,500 (8200 adult clubs and 8300 youth clubs) across 80 nations

Kiwanis empowers members to pursue creative ways to serve the needs of children around the world, such as fighting hunger, improving literacy, and offering guidance. Kiwanis clubs have built all-access playgrounds, restocked libraries, bought medical equipment, hosted diversity fairs and much more. So far, they have raised nearly US\$110 million towards eliminating maternal and neonatal tetanus, in addition to the US\$105 million already contributed towards global elimination of Iodine Deficiency Disorders, the leading cause of preventable mental and developmental disabilities.