

Acceptance Speech

President Patrick Kain

Recognition of Rotary in order of Protocol PDG Stela, AGs Presidents of other Clubs Guest Rotarians Rotarians Annes and Partners Guests



Despite COVID we have had two successful years under the able stewardship of President Doulien who managed to carry out her duties under the most trying of circumstances. I wish to thank Doulien and pay tribute to her able leadership and the additional duties which she undertook with the wool project and spearheading the Clarion, our monthly newsletter and the support and encouragement that she gave to our other ongoing projects. I also pay tribute to her husband Bert who supported Doulien in all of her endeavors.



Unfortunately, they not here with us this evening as they are both taking a well-earned rest with her family travelling throughout Europe and beyond. I also pay tribute to the members of the Rotary Club of Pretoria East firstly for their service to the community during the past year and secondly for placing their trust in me by nominating me as President for this year. It is obvious that the past two years were very difficult indeed but thanks to new technology we were able to keep the Club going. Now that we are coming out of Covid, and with the lifting of restrictions, I can announce that the intention is that we will now have our business meeting live from this month- subject to approval of the Board.



The venue will be announced immediately after the board meeting – providing that this proposal is approved. we will increase the number of live meetings as time goes by depending on circumstances. Of course, our fellowships will continue on a monthly basis, and these will be live. COVID has had a Devastating effect on the population and an even greater negative effect on the less privileged in society.

As a group of dedicated members much was achieved. Even the Covid-19 pandemic could not hold us back. Prevented from attending regular weekly meetings together, our champion for internet meetings, Patrick Kain, ensured that we got closer together during Zoom meetings. Sharing ideas and listening to the wide variety of excellent speakers in our pajamas might be the way to go. The virtual meetings gave us the opportunity to be honored by the attendance of our AG, former members, honorary-members and visitors. Attendance seems to be better when the option of joining in your pajamas with your family nearby exists. We even attended an online president's breakfast meeting. RCPE is an example of a global club. We had members and friends attending from Kenya, KZN, the Eastern-Cape, Eswatini and Lesotho attending. We've shared some fun and quick thinking with an online Quiz, in which our Past President Anastasia Demertzis outwitted the men.

Our projects are still alive and well organized. The wheelchair project is alive and rolling. Wheelchairs were collected from storage and repaired. Additional wheelchairs were donated by members from the Retirement Village to assist where needed. RCPE has taken hands with members of Bronberg Retirement Village who willingly donated clothes and food to the needy. This project of weekly donations was then combined with the Retirement Village's project for Mandela day. The ladies who were not allowed to visit or be visited by their families started a knitting project. They knitted or crocheted baby clothes, jerseys for toddlers and blocks for blankets.

These were distributed by members of our club to Home for the Needy Crèche, Louis Botha Children's Home, Winterveld HIV Scheme, Bronberg Frail Care Centre, New Hope School's Crèche and Abba House for abandoned babies and a family in Hermanstad.

Clothing as well as soup and sandwiches, was donated to the Tshwane Leadership Foundation for Potter house and Lerato house for destitute woman and children, and to projects in the Burgerspark area. Donations, knitted articles and hotdogs were also shared with the Mother and Child Centre in Hermanstad and Tuinrand Primary School.

SOUNDS is a GG recognized literacy project of RCPE to assist to teach toddlers to read and write. The SOUNDS project is still thriving with PP Robin Jones and Edie arranging training sessions on Saturdays. A presentation of the SOUNDS project was shared with the other Rotary Clubs in Pretoria. Presentations of this project to assist Toddlers in reading and writing skills were also presented to various clubs in Sweden to assist with literacy skills to refugees.

Cycle Lab A with assistance of Past President Jan Visagie made a difference in the lives of people by donating 30 blankets to the Home for the Needy to commemorate Mandela Day. A Rotary Club of Pretoria East Service Award was given to Marba Visagie for her selfless contributions to the community and for her support to PP Robin Jones and Edie Jones on Saturdays with the SOUNDS training sessions.

Our project to assist households run by children who lost their parents due to HIV/Aids is championed by Rotarians Clive Pearson, Nosisi Dlambewu and Patrick Kain. We are ever so thankful for the generous donation by Emily towards the Winterveld project.

There is a lot that is now needed to be done for these unfortunate members of the community who suffered the effect of this dreadful disease. To the RCPE, this opens new project opportunities. With this in mind, it is well to note that every organisation be it business, professional or philanthropic, requires resources for its operation. And Rotary is no different. While essential the resources may differ from organisation to organisation, there are two resources that are essential to every organisation. These of course are money and people. so even though there are new opportunities we cannot undertake these without the two primary resources money and people.

People we have but not enough. Money, we don't have, we struggle and have been doing so for the past few years. There was a time when we had a surplus of funds but now that is not the case. We have a number of projects on our order book identified and ready to go but we are lacking the funds. No people, no projects, no money, no projects. While we have managed to increase our membership, we have lost a few members for various reasons so we must keep on replenishing and increasing our membership. This seems to be happening but that is no reason to rest on our laurels.

The sad fact is that, there has been a dearth of funding over the past few years. This has caused us to put a number of worthwhile projects on hold. The order book is huge, but we are unable to fulfil the orders at the moment. Despite this we have successfully undertaken a number of worthy projects but with difficulty – the SOUNDS project, Home for the needy, the wool project which is both occupational therapy for the retirees who provide the beanies and scarves to keep the needy warm over winter, the annual blanket drive and the long standing Winterveldt feeding scheme to name a few. I pay tribute to those who very ably undertook and continue to undertake these projects. as I said no money no projects therefore while we continue to service our projects. I therefore propose that this year will be one of seeking the resources to fulfil the order book. With this in mind, I have asked one of our members to spearhead a fundraising committee with one objective – to obtain the funds needed to complete our current order book and to seek even more projects. this fund-raising initiative will need a well-planned out strategy but before we commence, we will need a major public awareness campaign.

We know what we do but does the public know? NO! How then can we raise funds if the public are not aware of the work that we so ably do do? It will be an impossible task to get the public to buy-in on something that they know very little about. It is no point planning a major public fundraiser until our target audience knows what we do. and have the opportunity to evaluate what we do and what we will do with funds that the public will be contributing to Rotary

projects. The objective is therefore to embark initially on a public awareness campaign targeting at all levels, media, social media, directly contacting business and commerce where the money is making them aware of the work that we have done and continue to do. This should be closely followed by a number of serious fund-raising projects to raise substantial amounts which we will then plough back into our list of potential projects on that ever-growing wish list – our order book. This is a very daunting task which, if it is to be realised, requires RCPE to establish new relationships and nurture old ones with the general public, corporate South Africa, the press and social media in an effective way so that when we do embark on the fundraising drive, the community and corporate South Africa will know what Rotary is about, what we as an organisation do for the community and so feel comfortable to contribute. Fundraising is critical to the existence of the club. By this I mean serious largescale fundraising. Without funds a Rotary Club is dead in the water. We have experienced a significant shortage of funds for some time now and this needs to be rectified my goal will be to raise a slush fund of somewhere between 100,000 and 200,000 Rand during the Rotary year this is no mean target, but it is doable providing we focus on the task at hand. three or four major fundraising projects during the year each raising 50,000 to 75,000 Rand. Like I said at a recent projects meeting – I am greedy for funds for our projects. But in fact, it is not me that is greedy - it is the Projects on our list of potential projects that are greedy for funding. Of course, as mentioned earlier we will also need to continue the growth while retaining Membership. we must retain our members and look after their needs when situations present themselves. Retention is vital. Resignations must be taken seriously, and an exit report is something that the membership chair must complete after a member decides to leave the club. the questions to be asked are why did the member leave or how can we retain the members interest in the club did something go wrong is the member in need of counselling or other assistance? Just like our social contract with the public, this means fostering good relationships among our members. We are members of the worldwide fellowship of Rotary Clubs. We come in contact with Rotarians from other Clubs in the District and around the World all with one goal to grow and foster the objective of Rotary International. Like our relationships with the community at large, relationships with fellow Rotarians of other Clubs are as important as our relationship with the general public. So essentially my message tonight is to come to the party, do your bit to foster good relations within the community make our voice heard at the corporate level and at the community level. Do what you can to make our message of what we have done and continue to do for the community. Ably assist with out fund-raising endeavours and take satisfaction from using these funds in a meaningful manner on our worthwhile community projects. The more finds we have the more projects that we can do that leads to more funding for even more projects. Remembering all the time that this is only possible if we foster relationships with the corporate and our community.