

# Rotarians against Child Slavery

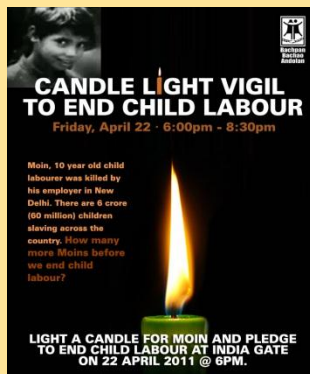
(A Newsletter for the proposed Rotarian Action Group – See website [www.racsrag.org](http://www.racsrag.org))

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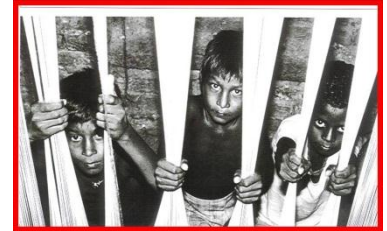
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*"It is not easy to crush a human mind, but with enough brutality, time and indifference to suffering, it can be done. Around the world, it IS being done" (Kevin Bales)*

Editor: Mark Little – Rotary Club of Norwich St Edmund, England

*"To deprive a man of his natural liberty and to deny him the ordinary amenities of life is worse than starving the body; it is starvation of the soul, the dweller in the body" (Gandhi)*



## India on the brink of banning child labour

Following years of sustained pressure by anti-slavery activists Bachpan Bachao Andolan (BBA) and its supporters, the Union Cabinet of India took a gigantic leap for Indian children when it approved the Child & Adolescent Labour (Prohibition) Act on 28<sup>th</sup> August 2012.

The Act, if approved by Parliament, will put a blanket ban on employing anybody below 18 years of age in a hazardous occupation. Such hazardous occupations have also been re-classified in line with the increase in the minimum age of child labour from 14 to 18 years.

However, it will allow employing children only between 14-18 years in non-hazardous industries like forest gathering, child care etc. Children between 14-18 years have been defined as "adolescents" in the new Act. Employing a child below 14 years in any kind of occupation is set to become a cognizable offence, punishable with a maximum three years imprisonment or fine up to a maximum of Rs. 50,000, equivalent to US\$900.

### Editors note:

Banning the employment of children below 14 years will go

a long way to enforcing the Right to Education Act 2009 and making it easier for the authorities to prosecute employers who employ children between the ages of 6-14 years.

Enforcing the new rules **will** be a huge challenge. However, for the time being, celebration must take precedence over reflection and the Indian Authorities must take great credit in listening to child and human rights campaigners.

Not satisfied with the elimination of polio, the Indian Government is now setting out its stall for the gradual elimination of child labour.

## Child servitude highlighted on Indian TV

"Crime Patrol" is a leading Indian crime television series, which highlights crime against Indian citizens while profiling organizations and individuals who raise their voice against it.

The episodes of Crime Patrol: **Dastak**, on 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> of August 2012, explored the exploitation of tribal girls in a city of India, rampant in agencies which specialize in placing and trapping young girls into domestic servitude.

One of the episodes can be

viewed on the link below:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sq6rJz-SQCw>

For the benefit of non-Hindi speakers, the episode highlights a live case study of 16 year old Panchi (name changed to protect identity), who was trafficked to Delhi almost 5 years back from Jharkhand by a local, Ajay Kumar. Ajay was the agent for a placement agency, who often trafficked girls for money.

As a result of the prompt actions

and efforts of BBA activists, Panchi was eventually rescued and compensated for her long period of imprisonment.

### Editor's Note:

Many people are enslaved through deception. Raising awareness of the situation among the public through television is a very powerful instrument in educating communities to protect their children from the traffickers.



## Editorial



*“So many of our dreams at first seem impossible, then they seem improbable, and then, when we summon the will, they soon become inevitable.”*

*(Christopher Reeve)*



I have a confession to make. Sometimes, in my darker moments, I do feel a sense of hopelessness on the child slavery issue and question the value of the continued existence of our Action Group.

With millions of children languishing in slavery around the world and with little encouragement from the top, what possible impact can a group of Rotarians make to alleviate or eradicate this global exploitation of human beings ?

Then news of a break through or sea change in an age old custom (eg child labour in India), raises my spirits and reminds me of the advice universally acknowledged by the wise, that small actions in support of basic human rights, can often lead to real progress and even greater progress can be achieved when individuals combine to take small actions collectively.

When Rosa Parks, a black seamstress refused to cooperate with a US segregation law in 1955 or when Antionette Sit-hole and a group of teenagers gathered in protest on the streets of Soweto, a sprawling black ghetto near Johannesburg, South Africa, in June 1976, they had no idea they would be the catalysts which changed people’s minds.

Thomas Clarkson was another catalyst for change just over 200 years ago in England. Clarkson helped to organize a 300,000 strong boycott of slave-harvested sugar in the first known example of consumer protest. The protest was so successful that retailers previously selling sugar tainted by slavery, were quickly

sourcing alternative supplies. The Initiative provided an immense filip for the abolition movement which culminated in the abolition of the British Slave Trade in 1807. If one man can generate such a successful action against a slave produced commodity, just think what a committed group of Rotarians could achieve in the fight against child slavery

One of the clues in my criptic crossword a few days ago was “clubman sounds revolutionary” The correct answer I discovered later was “Rotarian”. However, one Rotarian jumping up and down wouldn’t cause a tidal wave. But if thousands of Rotarians jumped together, the effect would be impossible to ignore.

Collective global action changed things in South Africa over 30 years ago. Anti-apartheid groups around the world kept up the pressure that hastened its downfall. They worked to keep the abuses of the apartheid system in the public eye; they mounted campaigns to bring financial pressure on the apartheid regime and they supported the local groups in South Africa with legal aid and with money

Our Action Group of Rotarians is operating in a similar manner. Our twin objectives are a) to create awareness of the plight of millions of children who are physically and mentally held captive for commercial gain and b) to take action by encouraging Rotarians to support, promote and work with anti-slavery bodies worldwide in developing programmes, campaigns and projects that will help to make child slavery history for so

many.

If Rotarians can achieve the impossible by almost obliterating polio from the face of the globe, they can surely make a significant contribution to the eradication of slavery. But the level of this contribution is very much dependent upon a stimulus, any stimulus, from the policy makers of Rotary International. So my plea is lets start jumping together and engulf the world with this message: LET’S STOP CHILD SLAVERY.

One person who is at the forefront in the fight against slavery is Professor Kevin Bales, a welcome contributor to this edition of the Newsletter. Kevin Bales is the Co-Founder and Past President of “Free the Slaves” an anti-slavery organization which is working in many parts of the world. He is also the author of several books on the issue of slavery, a consultant to the United Nations on Human Trafficking and arguably the foremost authority on modern slavery.

His article on page 3 of this Newsletter reminds us how a determined few stopped the trans-atlantic slave trade, why the time is right now to end slavery and what the obstacles are to achieve that aim.

Rtn Carol Metzker, author of “Facing the Monster – How one person can fight child slavery” provides on page 5 an example of how Rotarians in District 7450 are supporting a trafficking shelter in Pennsylvania. Don’t forget to read her book and let me know if you have bought one.



## A job to finish

by Kevin Bales, Co-Founder, Free the Slaves

One warm afternoon in May 1787, twelve people sat together in a London printing shop. None were rich or famous, there were no politicians or aristocrats, just ordinary businessmen, a recent graduate, and a vicar. That afternoon these twelve set out to end the slave trade. It was, by any measure of the time, a fool's mission. The slave trade was legal, and a major part of Britain's economy. Slavery was rationalized from pulpits and the Church of England itself owned slave plantations. Politicians were awash with the profits of slavery. Moreover, everyone knew slavery was a natural part of life. In spite of these barriers, these twelve achieved, in the words of Alexis de Tocqueville, "...something absolutely without precedent in history.... If you pore over the histories of all peoples, I doubt that you will find anything more extraordinary."

The genius of those meeting that May was to invent a new form of social alliance: the first non-denominational and non-partisan human rights organization and campaign in history. It was a tool for social change that would be astoundingly successful. Today non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and campaigns are everywhere; so common that we forget groups like Amnesty International were products of the 1960's. That first anti-slavery campaign was remarkable in the speed of its achievements. In a country where slavery was legal, morally acceptable, and economically essential, the campaign ended to the legal slave trade in just thirty years.

Today there are some 27 million slaves in the world, and population growth and vulnerability in the developing world have brought a collapse in the cost of slaves. For most of history slaves were

expensive, averaging £30,000 in today's money, but since the 1950s the price has dropped to around £90. Today slaves are in every country, exploited in dangerous and demeaning work. Some of that work feeds the products we buy, from shirts to mobile phones. Yet, for all the horrors of modern slavery there is also a unique opportunity that slavery can be brought to an end.

Those 27 million slaves are, in fact, the smallest fraction of the world population to ever live in slavery. The £40 billion they generate as profits to slaveholders is a tiny part of the world economy. No nation, no industry, would fail if slavery was ended. With slavery illegal in every country and universal agreement on the right of freedom, the stage is set for complete eradication. Slavery has been pushed to the dark edge of our global society, it stands on the edge of its own extinction. But two key things are lacking.

The first of these is a sizable, coherent and conscious movement pressing for abolition. Sadly, political parties don't see the eradication of slavery as a high priority in a time of economic recession, and the long-sighted thinking needed to get this job done is rarely part of the modern short-term attention span. Much of the knowledge and many of the tools are in place; it is the popular awareness and leadership that is lacking.

The second need is the lack of resources necessary to get the job done. Based on work done by local groups in many countries building sustainable freedom for freed slaves, the estimated cost of dismantling systems of slavery around the world and reintegrating survivors would be around £7 billion (equaling the UK pledge to the Irish bank rescue).

That expenditure should come primarily from governments enforcing their anti-slavery laws. With the methods of liberation better understood, existing anti-slavery projects simply lack funds to expand the scope of sustainable freedom.

Where slavery exists we know it is ended most effectively when a community makes a conscious collective decision to bring it to an end. Many Rotarians already find themselves in many of the places where anti-slavery awareness and action can be most effective – in work with migrants, peace building and environmental work, as social workers, youth leaders and teachers, as supporters of development NGOs, as trustees of foundations. It's not a question of laying down other vital work, but of making sure that within that work we consciously bring anti-slavery efforts to the fore. Of course, there are many kinds of exploitation in the world, many kinds of injustice and violence to be concerned about. But slavery is important because it is exploitation, violence, and injustice all rolled together in their most potent combination. Not to take action is simply to give up and let other people jerk the strings that tie us to slavery.

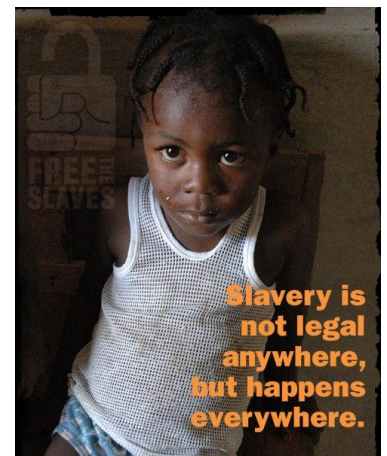
**It would not be the first time that Rotarians have taken on a job others thought to be impossible.**

But imagine the pattern of hope that will come when slavery is ended, the knowledge that ancient wrongs can be healed. Imagine the gift we might give our children and our grandchildren: a world, after thousands of years, free of slavery.

**Rotarians have always taken the long view, and this is a job that needs our perseverance.**



*Child slaves in the fishing industry in Ghana – cheap and disposable*





*From time to time we ask Rotarians who wish to join the Action Group, how they came to hear about the Group and why they want to join. The letters shown on this page were from two of the members who joined the Group in August*

## Letter from Vivien Beal, RC of Croydon South, England

Hi, Mark,

I don't actually remember how I first heard of RACS. It was through the internet, however.

I think one of the emails, or possibly the Newsletter, mentioned the Action Group, and I signed up as a result of that, because it was a matter which had been brought to my attention through reading a rather horrid book about a child enslaved in one of the Arabic countries, not specified, and possibly not true. It reminded me of other snippets of news I have read or heard over the years.

It was unusual for me to read such a book - "Not a Man" - and even more unusual for me to continue reading, as it is quite graphic in details of what happened to the child.

So when I saw an opportunity to

align myself with other people who want to bring child slavery to an end, I rather thought it made sense of my having read the book in the first place.

I came across children working in Egypt, where at least they seemed happy and were learning a trade in return for money to help their siblings go to school.

My son came across children working in the silver mines in Bolivia and was very shocked that they seemed so young.

I understand that not all child labour is slavery, and that we should consider the practical situations of families in countries where there is great poverty, rather than condemning the practice of sending children to work. After all, it was

the practice here years ago. However raising public awareness here and in the countries where this includes gross abuse is a first step towards bringing a proper childhood to children the world over, and part of our aim in Rotary to bring Peace through Service.

So, I have already started to talk about this issue in my Club, and am ready to help in any way I can.

Best wishes,

Vivien Beal

(New) President of the Rotary Club of Croydon South  
District 1140, England.

## Letter from PDG Ron Hart, RC of Vancouver, Canada

Dear Rotarian Mark:

I found out about you as I am very interested in the elimination of Sex Trafficking. I firmly believe that men need to rise up and protect their loved one from this awful crime. If men would quit buying, the demand would all but go away. I have been on the Board of Shared Hope International for the past five years and am now serving as their chaplain largely working on church contacts to bring awareness to congregations.

Early last Rotary year I spoke to several clubs at SE Portland and out of that and subsequent meetings these area clubs decided to work together to prevent sex trafficking in

the Portland, Oregon area. I am from Vancouver which is the southern most city in Washington.

I have been a Rotarian since December 1966, was club president in 73-74 and was District Governor in 87-88 and served on the Northwest PETS board committee from 1994 to 2008. I was a local pastor for 35 years. The founder of Shared Hope, Linda Smith is a former US Congresswoman and my children and I supported her run for the House. Several years ago she approached me and asked me to read "**Renting Lacy**", a book that she was writing, and to write an endorsement. I did and began to take a long hard look at her

organization – Shared Hope International. You can get more information about the organization at [www.sharedhope.org](http://www.sharedhope.org)

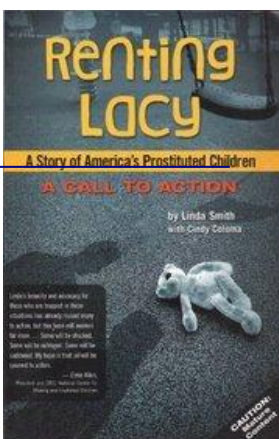
Thanks for doing all you do to stamp out this worldwide blight.

PDG Ronald 'Ron' Hart  
District 5100

Editor's note:

Please click onto the link below to learn about the trafficking problem in Oregon, USA

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NnPyGpM3tW0>



## A More Promising Future Through Covenant House

by Carol Metzker, Founder President of RC of West Chester Downtown

A white van drives by three Rotarians who are standing on a city street. A loud, garbled announcement about help for youth comes from a loudspeaker. A clear visual message on the roof of the van hits home more boldly—an eye-catching small, mummy-wrapped mannequin sticks out of a coffin emblazoned with a phone number for kids to call if they need help escaping gangs or drugs.

The Rotarians have already heard a quieter message in the Philadelphia crisis center where they have just donated items for an anti-human-trafficking outreach program. Last night, an American girl under the age of 21—a victim of sex trafficking—entered the shelter.

As difficult as it is to face the fact that human trafficking exists in the United States, it's good to

know that local organizations are reaching out to help victims and to prevent additional ones. One of those non-profit groups is Covenant House, a shelter for homeless youth. Covenant House has given safe harbor to eight youths trafficked internationally. Last year alone, it sheltered approximately 20 American teens trafficked into the sex industry and reached out to dozens more in the same predicament. This special residence provides vocational training, GEDs if needed, friendship, food and a home when their options have run out.

Rotary District 7450 is helping these kids through support to Covenant House. The Rotary Clubs of Frankford NE Philadelphia, West Chester Downtown, and Great Valley collected personal-sized toiletries to donate to the shelter. In turn,

shelter staff members will reach out to youth on the street with a small bar of soap, shampoo or a toothbrush. Providing a gift of personal hygiene products can serve as a start to a relationship by letting teens know that someone cares about their well-being. It can result in youth trusting that they will find safety and help by entering the doors of Covenant House.

In addition to providing the shelter with toiletries, members of the district literacy committee and the Rotary Clubs of West Chester Downtown and Central Chester County sorted gently used books and chose 150 age- and subject-appropriate paperbacks and hardback for the shelter's residents, who lacked resources for recreational reading



*Rotarians and family members sort books for needy organizations including Covenant House, a shelter for homeless youth..*

## Trafficking in human beings

Most people think that the slave trade was abolished in the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and in the UK we celebrated the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its demise in 2007.

Sadly it still exists, but for some reason it is now called “Human Trafficking” This is now a global problem. Kevin Bales estimates that around 800,000 people are trafficked each year across international

borders into slavery, and human trafficking is now the third largest source of income for organized crime, after drugs and arms smuggling.

Of the 800,000 victims, around 80% are female and 50% are children. They enter a range of economic sectors, but predominantly the sex industry.

In the last Newsletter we read about the anti-trafficking initiatives which are being

taken by rotary clubs in District 5100. This month there is an article about the work which is being done by clubs in District 7450. We would really like to hear about initiatives being taken by other clubs to address the problem. So please do consider sending in a short article about your work. If you do that you are more than likely to attract volunteer helpers from other local clubs.



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*“There is no trust more sacred than the one the world holds with children. There is no duty more important than ensuring that their rights are respected, that their welfare is protected, that their lives are free from fear and want, and that they grow up in peace” (Kofi Annan)*

## Protecting children’s rights

We are indebted to Rtn Susan O’Neal from the RC of Washington DC for reminding us of this wonderful quote of Kofi Annan’s which is included alongside this article.

This Newsletter is constantly referring to the duty of Rotarians to protect the rights of children as well as other human beings. So what are these responsibilities. ?

The answers are set out below but may not be exhaustive. Awareness of these written responsibilities is essential because very often they

are hidden within the depths of RI’s Codes of Policies or Rules of Conduct and are never seen by the majority of Rotarians.

For example, included in the list of Rotarian responsibilities (see over page) is a copy of Rotary’s Code of Conduct which the writer and most of his colleagues have seen for the first time.

Rtn Binod Khaitan of the Rotary Club of Central Calcutta was responsible for highlighting the contents of this Code via the RI Facebook.

We understand that the new Code was introduced last year and replaced a previous code entitled “Declaration of Rotarians in Business and Professions” which itself was introduced in 1989.

It is not easy to keep track of the constant changes in our ethical responsibilities, hence the clause in District 1080’s latest Motion on “Child Slavery” which calls on the RI Board to remind members, from time to time, of their ethical responsibilities.

## Rotarians’ Ethical Responsibilities

### RI’s Code of Policies....Article 8.050.3

Rotarians should

- defend the rule of law and order to preserve liberty of the individual so that all may enjoy freedom of thought, speech and assembly, freedom from persecution and aggression, and freedom from want and fear,
- uphold the principles of justice for humankind, realizing that these are fundamental and must be worldwide.

NB Until it was rescinded in January 2010, Article 42 of the RI Code of Policies stated the following specifically for children .... “*Rotary International recognizing that children because of their vulnerability, need special care and attention.....& should be able to grow into adulthood in an environment of peace, dignity, tolerance, freedom and equality, endorses and supports the rights of children to food, shelter, health care, education and freedom from abuse, violence and slavery. Rotary clubs around the world are committed to protecting these rights for all children, regardless of race, creed or nationality*”.

### The Object of Rotary

To encourage and foster the ideal of service above self as a basis of worthy enterprise and, in particular, to encourage and foster:

- High ethical standards in business and professions; the recognition of the worthiness of all useful occupations; and the dignifying by each Rotarian of his occupation as an opportunity to serve society.

### The 4-Way Test

Of the things we think, say or do

1. Is it the TRUTH
2. Is it FAIR to all concerned
3. Will it build GOODWILL & BETTER FRIENDSHIPS
4. Will it be BENEFICIAL to all concerned.



## Rotarians' Responsibilities (Continued)

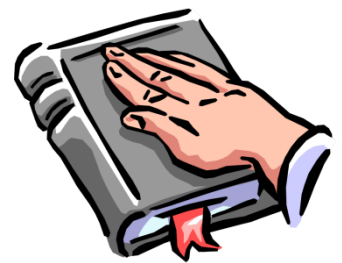
### Rotary Code of Conduct

As a Rotarian, I will

1. Exemplify the core value of integrity in all behaviours and activities
2. Use my vocational experience and talents to serve in Rotary.
3. Conduct all of my personal, business, and professional affairs ethically, encouraging and fostering high ethical standards as an example to others.
4. Be fair in all dealings with others and treat them with the respect due to them as fellow human beings.
5. Promote recognition and respect for all occupations which are useful to society.
6. Offer my vocational talents: to provide opportunities for young people, to work for the relief of the special needs of others, and to improve the quality of life in my community.
7. Honour the trust that Rotary and fellow Rotarians provide and not do anything that will bring disfavor or reflect adversely on Rotary or fellow Rotarians.
8. Not seek from a fellow Rotarian a privilege or advantage not normally accorded others in a business or professional relationship.

### The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)

The pledge above includes, inter alia, the promise to be fair in all dealings with others and to treat them with the respect due to them as fellow human beings. This request is very much based upon many of the tenets enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This Declaration was initially adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948 and subsequently embraced by every nation on earth. The Declaration arose directly from the experience of the Second World War and represents the first global expression of rights to which all human beings are inherently entitled. It consists of 30 articles. Three of these articles are reproduced here because they are directly related to the struggle which Rotarians are being urged to join in order to help those hard pressed anti-slavery activists who urgently need our support.



**Article 1:** All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.

**Article 4:** No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

**Article 13 (1):** Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.

### Message of a former RI President

*“Whether or not the ethical climate in business is higher or lower today, each of us has an opportunity to speak up for higher standards. And for each person willing to voice his conviction, there are others who are willing to follow and be influenced by that kind of leadership”* (RI President Robert A Manchester – November 1976)

I make no apology for regurgitating this quotation by RI President Robert Manchester. It is still relevant today. Rotarians today have an excellent opportunity to speak up for higher standards. We can achieve this by openly condemning known practices of slavery and by supporting and encouraging others to support the work of anti-slavery organizations and activists. We can ensure that we as individuals or our fellow Rotarians are not involved directly or indirectly with any person or organization which makes use of forced labour. If we can act in this way, we will influence others with the same leadership skills that Rotarians have used for more than 100 years to uplift the human condition. If we don't or won't speak up for higher standards, or condemn practices which are clearly wrong, how can we say that we are true Rotarians?

**PLEASE PASS ON THIS NEWSLETTER AND ALSO ENCOURAGE FELLOW ROTARIANS TO VISIT OUR WEBSITE AND SIGN ON AS A MEMBER. THE WEBSITE IS [www.racsrag.org](http://www.racsrag.org) . The webmaster is Stephen Sypula, RC of Stevenage Grange, England.**

Mark Little, RC of Norwich St Edmund  
District 1080, England  
11<sup>th</sup> September 2012



