

Create Lasting Impact

RI President Olayinka “Yinka” H. Babalola • Rotary Club of Trans Amadi, Nigeria

“Change is only the beginning. Impact is what endures.”

— President Babalola, International Assembly, January 12, 2026

The Message

Introduced at the 2026 International Assembly in Orlando, Florida, **Create Lasting Impact** builds on the connections forged under 2025–26’s Unite for Good. President Babalola’s call to action is rooted in a simple but profound distinction: outcomes show what we did—impact reveals whether it endured. “We must focus not only on outcomes, but on impact,” he said. “Change is only the beginning. Impact is what endures.”

Babalola traces this conviction to his own story: as a Rotaractor in Nigeria, a literacy project changed how he saw his responsibilities. “Rotary has changed us,” he told district governors elect. “It has shaped who we are and made us better people.” Transformation is not just something Rotary creates in communities—it begins in each of us.

Three Pillars of Lasting Impact

- **Transform Ourselves:** Rotary must ask not just “What did we do?” but “What changed—and will it endure?” Babalola calls on every member to reflect on how Rotary has shaped their career, business, and family, and to share that story publicly.
- **Welcome More People:** Clubs must open their doors wider. Drawing on his own experience of being questioned when he walked into a club uninvited, Babalola urges members to make every new face feel they belong. Reaching 1.25 million Rotarians and 125,000 Rotaractors by Rotary’s 125th anniversary in 2030 starts with hospitality.
- **Pursue Sustainable Service:** Go beyond the event or donation. Measure what changed and whether the change will last. Real-world examples: Rotary clubs in Knysna, South Africa, empowered local women to open and run early childhood education centers that will serve families for generations; in Nigeria, the Together for Healthy Families program dramatically reduced infant and maternal mortality by changing community systems—not just providing services.

What This Means for the Rotary Club of Nevada City

President Babalola’s challenge—“Do better than your best”—invites our club to look back at the last five to seven years, identify our best year in membership, fundraising, and service impact, and then aim to exceed it. For Nevada City, this message maps directly onto our current priorities:

- **Pumpkins Palooza 2026 (October 15, Miners Foundry):** Evaluate success not just by funds raised but by community visibility, new member introductions, and long-term partnerships created—each a form of lasting impact.
- **City of Nevada City Partnership:** A formal partnership with the City is exactly the kind of sustainable structural relationship Babalola describes because it outlasts any single project and amplifies Rotary’s reach across future service years.
- **Welcoming Culture:** Audit how first-time visitors and prospective members experience our meetings. Babalola’s story of nearly being turned away is a reminder that every interaction is either an invitation or a door closed.
- **Story Sharing:** Collect and share member transformation stories—how has Rotary changed you personally? Babalola specifically calls on clubs to make these stories visible, so the public understands Rotary is more than a service organization.
- **Membership Goal:** Set a specific target that beats our best prior year for new members, then track it monthly through the 2026–27 year.

*“When we change ourselves, we change our clubs and districts.
When we change our districts, we change the communities we serve.
And when we change our communities, we create lasting impact across the globe, in our communities, and in ourselves.”*

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