

Rotary Club of St Francis



CLUB NEWSLETTER No 30 NOVEMBER – FEBRUARY 2026

<http://rotarystfrancisbay.org/news/>

Greetings everyone! We hope and trust that so far 2026 is proving generous and productive for all of you. Our focus in this newsletter is to thank everyone for their generosity and support that saw us through not only our busy fundraising season culminating in our iconic Wine on Water event, but also through the dramatic fire disaster in January which threatened our neighbouring farms and reserves. Hundreds of acres of grazing and bush were lost, as well as a few homesteads but thankfully no lives were lost or serious injuries.

Our brave firefighters and first responders earned high praise and gratitude from all of us and our sincere thanks go to them, all our Municipal staff and Mayor Hattingh Bornman, our farming community, Disaster Volunteer Group, Gift of the Givers and our Rotary members who rolled up their sleeves to ensure our brave men and women received nutrition and health care around the clock! The recent refurbishments undertaken by our Club to our fire station were certainly put to the test during this period!

Our deep appreciation extends to those in our District 9370 Rotary community who supported gave funding to keep our water bombing aircraft airborne or who sent donations to purchase desperately needed feed for both farm animals and wildlife channelled through our local SPCA. Our Club always has a ring fenced fund for disaster relief and so we were able to assist with an immediate donation to this fund of R20 000.00. Without these amazing airmen, the fire would not have been contained as quickly as it was!

President Lesley de Jager summed this up perfectly in her message to Club members :

“Dear Rotary Family

It’s hard to put into words how proud and grateful I am. Over the past week, as fires raged and our community needed support in heart wrenching moments, you showed up tirelessly with compassion, strength, and heart.

For seven exhausting days, up to 150 firefighters a day were fed breakfast, lunch, and dinner because you cared. You gave money, time, services, stock, energy, and love. You opened your homes to wash towels and laundry, you worked behind the scenes, and you never once asked for recognition — you just did what needed to be done. This is Rotary. This is who we are.

Thank you for standing together, for serving selflessly, and for reminding me what an extraordinary group of people I am honoured to lead. I am incredibly proud to be part of this team.

Service Above Self — today and always. With heartfelt thanks, Lesley”

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IT WAS THE SEASON FOR GIVING!

What a fantastic morning at the Amazing Race on 7 December, hosted by the Rotary Club of St Francis and St Francis Tourism, and proudly sponsored by Dirk Ellis Motors!

Thanks to the enthusiasm and competitive spirit of 25 amazing teams, a fantastic R60 000 was raised for Hospice - and with an additional R20 000 donated by Dirk Ellis Motors, today's total reached an incredible R80 000.



Teams dashed through town solving clues, tackling activities, and scoring points at each secret location. After an action-packed morning, SLAM DUNK claimed the title of 2026 Champions!

Huge congratulations as well to our prize-winners:

Double Trouble • 3+2 • Black Stallions • Sexy Summers • The Flintstones • Side Car, 6 on Wheels and Tuxedo.

A heartfelt thank you to all our sponsors and every team who took part. Your energy, teamwork, and community spirit made the day unforgettable - all while supporting a truly important cause.

See you next year!

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Sister Ingrid Williams of St Francis Hospice, Kouga Region, accepted the proceeds of the 2025 Amazing Race for Hospice– a truly Amazing R80 000.00!!

With Sister Ingrid at the presentation were Werner van Wyk of Dirk Ellis Motors in Jeffreys Bay, the main sponsor for the event, and Rotarians Ivan Beaumont and Jef Forrer.

A huge vote of thanks to all the sponsors, volunteers and contestants who made this wonderful donation of much needed funding for Hospice possible!



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Animal Welfare Christmas surprise!

St Francis Rotarians Manfred Burkert and Lyn Aitken dropped in to the annual Animal Expo on 20 December to present five of our hard working and deserving animal charities with a donation from the Rotary Club of St Francis. St Francis Animal Rescue, Spay It Forward, SPCA, J-Bay Animal Rescue and Oyster Bay Animal Rescue each received a cheque for R20 000 in deep appreciation for the admirable work they are all doing to improve the lives of animals. Thank you for all you do for those who cannot speak for themselves.





Congratulations and thank you Billy's Beach!

Congratulations to the organisers of this year's Billy's Beach "Ballie's" evening, pictured here with Mayor Hattingh Bornman. The event which took place 2 January 2026 raised an astounding R1 million for charity!



A heartfelt thank you to Billy's Beach for entrusting R750 000 of these proceeds to the Rotary Club of St Francis.

We are committed to ensuring that every cent is spent wisely on the beneficiary projects jointly agreed upon by Billy's Beach and ourselves. This generous contribution will have a profound impact on our community.

BRINGING JOY TO DISNEY CRECHE

"A nation that forgets its children does not deserve its future." – Oliver Tambo

We're so excited to share the completed upgrade of the Disneyland Crèche Jungle Gym, wrapped up at the end of November. Just look at those happy faces!

Our team put lots of love and care into bringing this play area back to life:

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Rotary Club of St Francis



- ✦ Gave all the timber on the Jungle Gym and swings a full maintenance treatment
- ✦ Transformed the old boat into a brand-new Swinging Boat for the kids 🚣
- ✦ Installed a new slide with a sturdy wooden platform
- ✦ Repaired the Floating Bridge so it's safe and fun again
- ✦ Re-hung the swings with new rust-proof fasteners for extra stability
- ✦ Softened the back wall with beautiful Willow Screening, kindly donated by *First Dutch Brands*

And the best part?

The children are absolutely loving every moment in their refreshed play space! Their laughter and energy remind us how important outdoor play is - building strong bodies, strong muscles, and strong minds.

Thank you to everyone who made this upgrade possible. Here's to many more days of joyful play and learning at Disneyland Crèche!



Rotary Club of St Francis – Spreading Christmas Cheer

Our hearts were filled to the brim after handing out Christmas bags to crèches in our community! We found ourselves with a few extra... so President Lesley and Rtn Patsy Roux did what Christmas spirit inspires - they stopped right there in the street and shared them with the children around us.

The smiles, the excitement, the little hands reaching out with joy... it was truly humbling. Moments like these remind us that kindness doesn't need a stage - sometimes it happens on a dusty road under the warm African sun, surrounded by laughter and gratitude.

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Club of St Francis



A huge thank-you to everyone who helped make this day possible. Together, we're making Christmas a little brighter for our children.



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Showing Some Love and Dignity at Ons Tuiste!

President Lesley and Rtn Patsy Roux also handed out Christmas goody bags to residents of Ons Tuiste Retirement Hom and Assisted Living Facility to bring a little bit of Christmas joy to the frail and lonely.

Together, we are making a difference. Thank you for helping us bring comfort and care to the elderly in our community.



SHOWCARE - SHOWING WE CARE!

We had an incredibly memorable time at our inaugural Rotary Club of St Francis Showcare event on 18 December! From 100 golfers teeing off at St Francis Links Golf Course to a fun packed evening alongside Gino Fabbri and the amazing Rotary team. Guests enjoyed everything from Spin & Win and exciting auctions to top-class entertainment and exceptional food prepared by Chef Pieter and his talented team at St Francis Links.

Our talented Rtn Gail Petrie created a truly moving video that held the entire room spellbound from beginning to end. It beautifully captured the heart of what the Rotary Club of St Francis stands for — the meaningful difference being made in our community and beyond. From supporting local initiatives and protecting our environment to

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driving change where it matters most, Rotary continues to inspire hope and create lasting impact and we thank every person who walks this journey with us and demonstrates *Service Above Self*. A huge thank you to all our generous sponsors of almost R200 000 worth of fantastic prizes. Thanks to your support, almost everyone walked away with an amazing prize, all whilst helping us raise funds for the causes close to our hearts. The event raised a fabulous R90 000. But more importantly, this event showcased our Club and all that we do in our community



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SHOOCARE

Lighting the Road Ahead: A Day of Golf, Giving and Gratitude **2025**



Thank you for your support!



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Rotary Club of St Francis



FLASH FLOAT RAISES OVER R 400 000!

What a Float-tastic Day in St Francis Bay on 30 December!

What an incredible sight on the canals of St Francis Bay as well over 4,000 floaters came together to float and have fun!

With the incoming tide, the journey started at Pump House, flowed down the Main Canal, and finished at The Cove – smiles, laughter, and colourful inflatables as far as the eye could see.

A massive thank you to our amazing volunteers who helped ensure a safe and successful event:

- 👉 NSRI
- 👉 Paddle Club
- 👉 Kromme River Police
- 👉 St Francis Bay Riparians
- 👉 Woodridge Life Saving Club
- 👉 Traffic Dept
- 👉 Guardmed Ambulance Service.
- 👉 And of course, the Rotary Club of St Francis and the staff of Talhado Childrens' Haven.

This event is held once a year in late December, perfectly timed with the incoming tide, and it just keeps growing! What started 5 years ago with a few hundred floaters has now become a signature St Francis tradition with thousands attending from far and wide.

Most importantly, all proceeds go towards Talhado Childrens' Haven Montessori Pre-Primary School and the many other beneficiaries supported by Rotary.

Thank you to everyone who floated, volunteered, supported, and helped make this day unforgettable. See you next year – bigger, brighter, and floating stronger!

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Wine on Water 2026 No 5 - 27 & 28th February 2026 WoW what an experience!

2026 Photo Gallery: <https://wineonwater.co.za/2026-photo-gallery/>
Yes we did it again!!

As we look back on another incredible two days on the water, filled with laughter, camaraderie, and unforgettable moments, we want to extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who made our 5th Wine on Water event a spectacular success!

To Investec, for their unwavering support as our major sponsor for the fifth consecutive year — your commitment makes this event possible and continues to drive positive change in our community.

To the more than 40 Barge and Boat Owners – your beautiful vessels carried the spirit of celebration through the waterways, and your generosity in joining the fun truly made the event magical.

To the Skippers– thank you for your expert navigation and dedication to safety. Your professionalism ensured a smooth and secure experience for all.

To the 39 Wine Farms supporting us this year – your incredible wines transformed each stop along the route into a celebration of local flavour and craftsmanship. Every sip told a story, and we are so grateful.

To The Foodies – thank you for delighting our guests with your delicious creations, perfectly complementing the wine and creating moments of pure culinary joy.

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Rotary Club of St Francis



To TCS – your reliable WiFi kept us connected and made communication seamless, enhancing the experience for everyone.

To Kelston Motor Group – thank you for providing the Park and Ride Shuttles! Your support ensured that our guests could travel safely and conveniently, adding another layer of comfort and care to the event.

To the 21 Homeowners who participated this year – your warm hospitality in welcoming the Wine on Water convoy into your beautiful homes created an atmosphere of unity and generosity that was truly inspiring.

To Everyone Who Bought Tickets – your participation and support made Wine on Water 2026 possible. Because of you, we continue to raise funds that make a meaningful difference in our community.

A special thank you to the 112 Sea Vista residents who served as our deck and jetty marshals and assisted us in so many ways this year! These residents are given the opportunity to earn and learn through their involvement in the event. They play a crucial role in ensuring the smooth and safe arrival of boats and barges carrying our guests, assisting with docking and helping guests on and off the vessels. They also make sure that everyone is wearing the proper event bands upon arrival either by barge or by road.

In addition, the Sibanye Youth were trained to assist at the WOW registration tent, contributing to the event's seamless operation. Their bright smiles and hard work made all the difference.

And finally, to our Amazing Rotary Team – your tireless dedication, passion, and flawless planning made every aspect of the event run seamlessly. Your service above self shines through in everything you do.

Here's to the continued unity of our community and the ongoing success of Wine on Water! Stay tuned for the inspiring stories of change that your support will make possible throughout the year.

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Club of St Francis



DID YOU KNOW DONATING TO ROTARY IS TAX DEDUCTIBLE?



Be part of a community dedicated
to making a lasting impact.
Let's make a difference together!

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www.rotarystfrancisbay.org

At The Rotary Club of St Francis Bay, we believe in the transformative power of generosity. The Club has recently had its application for income tax exemption, approved. Now, you have the opportunity to make a difference and receive tax benefits under Section 18A of the South African Income Tax Act.

WHY DONATE TO US?

TAX DEDUCTIBILITY: Your donation qualifies for a Section 18A tax deduction, allowing you to reduce your taxable income and support a cause that you care about.

TRANSPARENT GIVING: We are a registered Section 18A public benefit organization. You can be assured that every cent donated is carefully monitored according to our Clubs strict governance rules .

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Rotary District D9370081-301NPC, Club No: 90539 Rotary District 9370, NPO 282-391

COMMUNITY IMPACT: Join us in creating positive change within our community. Not only do we select well deserving community projects to support, but we also make meaningful contributions to organisations such as the NSRI, Foster, Animal Welfare, Hospice, Kromme Enviro Trust, and many others.

HOW TO DONATE TO US:

Visit our website www.rotarystfrancisbay.org should you require any additional details about our club and the activities that we involve ourselves in.

Contact our Club Treasurer Mike Rishworth:
082 339 9294 or treasurersfbr@gmail.com for more details about your donation.

You are welcome to specify what worthy cause you would like to support, and Rotary will make sure that your special request is carried out.

Once your donation has been received you will be issued with an official receipt which includes all the details needed for a hassle-free process when submitting your tax return and claiming your tax deduction.

Your Donation Matters! Whether big or small, every donation counts.

Be part of a community dedicated to making a lasting impact.

Let's make a difference together!

Rotary's seven areas of focus:

- 1) Peace and conflict prevention/resolution.**
- 2) Disease prevention and treatment.**
- 3) Water and sanitation.**
- 4) Maternal and child health.**
- 5) Basic education and literacy.**
- 6) Economic and community development.**
- 7) Supporting the environment.**

Rotary

Club of St Francis



**ALL PAST ISSUES OF OUR NEWSLETTER ARE AVAILABLE ON OUR WEBSITE AT
WWW.ROTARYSTFRANCISBAY.ORG/NEWS**

As you may be aware, the Protection of Personal Information (POPIA) Act is now in effect (1 July 2021). The Rotary Club of St Francis is in full support of having your full consent to continue to receive communication from us and we are therefore required to remind you that as a club bulletin recipient your information will be used for the sole purpose of receiving club news from us.

Should you wish to OPT-OUT of receiving any further newsletters from us, you may do so by sending us an email with the word "Unsubscribe" in the subject line. If you would like to continue to receive our newsletters then no further action is required – please note that by not unsubscribing you agree to remain an OPT-IN recipient and a voluntary recipient of the Rotary Club of St Francis' News mailing list.