

Meet the President and join the club

Meet Gabriela Aguado, the President of the Rotary Club of Portobello, who is keen for anyone who lives or works in the area to consider joining their club.

Gabriela is a very engaging and charismatic Mexican woman. She describes herself as creative, and always interested in knowing more about different cultures, traditions and religions.

She enjoys art, writing, walking nature and meditation and she says she is interested in emotional well-being, self-knowledge and emotional healing. Gabriela works as an art therapist and is also an Interior Designer.

She said: "I am an entrepreneur, with diverse business experiences, nowadays, in charge of Yekta a unique shop in the Old Town on South Bridge.

"I first started in interior design in 1991 when I set up a business there. But I have done a lot of different things – I am the author of the novel "La historia equivocada de Wanda Petunias", (Awareness of sexual abuse) published in Spanish, in 2012 and I am now working on its translation."

Gabriela is the former CEO of IFIP Instituto de Finanzas Personales (Personal Finances Institute) in Mexico City, from 2009 and is well used to media interviews about using Personal Finance advice to empower people.

In a past life she worked with people, especially single mothers – and many of them girls or teenagers – living in poverty, homeless and/or struggling with drug and sexual abuse. She has used art therapy workshops as part of their healing process and recovery.

Her Rotary career has been a long one. She said: "Rotary is in my veins, my grandfather was a Rotarian. I became a Rotarian in 2000.

"I have been the representative for Community, dealt with the Club's administration and PR, been the Rotary Foundation Officer, and also the Secretary. I was president four times at my former Club Rotario Contreras in Mexico City. I have served as Diplomatic Relations and Peace and Mediation District Officer in D4170 in Mexico City, at "Revista Rotary Mexico" (Mexico's Rotary Magazine) in charge of Rotary Diplomatic Section, interviewing diplomats in Mexico City, and am now happily President 2023-2024 of Rotary Club of Portobello D1320."

Gabriela came to live in Edinburgh when she found love, and became involved in Rotary in Portobello.

She said: "Rotary is a way of living that brings me a lot of nurturing moments when I am able to change forever the lives of others. Rotary gives me satisfaction while being able to draw smiles, touching people's hearts and making a better world. Rotary is part of my 'Ikigai'. We base our ethics on the Four Way Test, from what we think, feel and do, either with personal or social matters, family or business:

Is it the truth?

Is it fair to all concerned?

Will it build goodwill and better friendships?

Will it be beneficial to all concerned?

Gabriela explained more about the Rotary Club and what members get involved in. She said: "The Portobello club has participated in several very important projects. Locally, with the CBS at Newcraighall Station Park & Ride every last Sunday of the month (from March to October), we contribute to allowing people to make an income and to recycle unused things. The income that we earn, we donate to charities like VOCAL, which cares for un-paid carers in Edinburgh and Midlothian.

"Lend with care is an international micro-loan project that supports entrepreneur families, Polio Plus, which is a Rotary International world-wide programme, to eradicate polio, we vaccinate every child in remote places, and Children's Visual Health in Mexico City involves eye tests for students from very low-income schools and delivering spectacles to the ones who need them. This year, along with other clubs in Scotland and Mexico, we have delivered more than 500 lenses. Our vision is to improve their vision and to change their lives forever.

"Service above all" is our motto and we would welcome new members at our club – for example someone who would like to contribute to create a better world while having fun with new friends all over the globe."

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Gabriela welcomed three international scholars, two of whom are studying at the University of Edinburgh Business School, (l-r below Miranda, Yoko and Riane) to the club's International Night at Ravelston House in Musselburgh where funds were raised for the club's visual health programme in Mexico.











Gabriela Aguado