

HEALTH AND BEAUTY

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Leading with Purpose, Living with Wellness

This week, we celebrate the people, programs, and passions that uplift the wellbeing of our island community. At the heart of this issue is Adelenia Chandler, the newly appointed President of the Rotary Club of St. Maarten, whose journey into leadership embodies service, strength, and a deeply rooted commitment to health equity.

In an exclusive Health Seat Interview, Ms. Chandler shares powerful insights into her vision for the year ahead, from expanding community outreach to championing maternal health, youth empowerment, and disease prevention. Chandler is setting the tone for intentional, inclusive impact all anchored by a personal story of resilience, mentorship, and purpose.

This article by Dr. Colin Michie beautifully ties together the science of nutrition with the energy and vitality young people bring to a new school year. By focusing on the importance of phosphorus, a crucial element in ATP (adenosine triphosphate) production, the article emphasizes how this compound fuels the body and mind. As students return to school with their natural energy, growth, and learning capacity, it's fascinating to see how something as foundational as phosphorus works in the background to power everything they do, from growing taller to aging a test!

In honour of Aviation Day, we spotlight a local pilot who shares his experience navigating not just airspace, but the discipline, focus, and fitness required to maintain peak performance in a demanding field. His story serves as a timely reminder that wellness is holistic and does span body, mind, and career.

Here's to health, here's to beauty and, most importantly, here's to wellness and service above self!

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POWER, REAL POWER, TO THIS NEW SCHOOL YEAR!

By Dr. Colin Michie FRCPCH

"Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today." --Malcolm X

Crackling with activity, bursting with growth, a new year starts! Young people return to school taller, stronger, smarter and faster. And what is the source of their energy, their growth? A single chemical element, phosphorous, is crucial. We do not have much phosphate: It accounts for about one percent of our weight and most of it is in bones and teeth. Together with calcium, it forms hydroxyapatite, a really strong mineral crystal that shapes the skeleton and toughens tooth enamel. Phosphate holds together the spiral backbone of the DNA in every chromosome in every cell. And phosphate underpins our powerhouses too. Real

power, as in other living organisms on our planet, depends on the three phosphate links in ATP, the adenosine triphosphate molecule.

Whether it is your mangoes growing, your gut rumbling or your eyes following this script, ATP is working to deliver. Shrimps, seaweeds, iguanas, all use ATP for all that they get up to. And adult humans have perhaps only 250 mg of this substance – a quarter of a gram! Energy is released when ATP breaks one of its phosphate links; it becomes ADP, or adenine diphosphate, with only two phosphates. The energy released may be used to move a muscle, power a molecular pump or help a hair grow.

ADP molecules rebuild to ATP again by binding to phosphate, using energy supplied by what we eat. This can take place in the mitochondria inside cells (that also use oxygen) or anaerobically (oxygen free). And this cycle keeps going. Each ATP molecule can be repurposed within seconds, over a thousand times a day. We turn over ATP even when sitting asleep: It is used for cell functions that keep us alive. And this is before school starts! Athletic adolescents can recycle their weight in ATP each day in muscle activities. So, the return to school also opens

gates to increasing ATP turnovers in youngsters.

Physical and mental activities need extra energy – as will those emotional turmoils and tantrums. For young people starting to gain height rapidly in a growth spurt, more phosphorous will be required. Appetite increases first; growth follows. Adolescent girls begin to grow rapidly after nine years of age, boys usually at about 11, continuing for two-five years, at 5-6 centimetres a year. When the cartilage growth plates at the end of long bones close, further height gain stops, but bones continue to remodel. Average heights have increased by several centimetres over the last century, because of the improved health of young people. Cartilage and skeletons respond to their nutritional and mechanical environments as youngsters grow. Bone strength is an invaluable lifetime investment, protecting against musculoskeletal injuries and bone disorders in adulthood.

To supply growing musculoskeletal systems, blood volume increases from about a litre of plasma and red cells in a 10kg child, to 4 litres in a 50kg older teenager. This is supported by increases in the size and capacities of their hearts and lungs. From the age of 12, heart size and heart muscle thickness

tend to be greater in boys. Lung volumes and functions in both sexes increase with their height. Exercise and athletic training influence and can remodel both heart muscle and lung functions.

Phosphorus is a universal energy currency, used in all living cells. So, when it comes to mealtimes, it can be found in high levels in dairy products, seafood, meat, nuts and legumes. These provide the 1250 mg recommended daily for an adolescent (adult requirements are lower, at 700mg). St. Maarten has the added advantage of local seafood, once referred to as "brain food". Feeding school-age youngsters is rarely easy, though, as they tend to indulge in confectionery, energy drinks and processed foods. These usually provide too much sugar, fat and salt. They usually lack phosphate. They are also short of calcium, iron and potassium, along with vitamins A, D and fibre.

Those experimenting with vegetarian diets are often low on vitamin B12 too. These are all important nutrients to backup those ATP dynamos and ensure bone density. Having regular breakfast – the rise and dine option – may not always be popular. However, it is a strategy that increases micronutrient and fibre intakes in young people, while reducing unnecessary sodium and



sugar, together with unhealthy increases in weight. Provision of school breakfasts delivers benefits in concentration, examination results and athletic success – it works!

Schools unlock new skills, new knowledge. They break cycles of poverty and inequality. Building a strong skeleton and smile is part of a young person's passport to a healthy future too. Perhaps this account of phosphate will tempt them to breakfast before classes, fuelling their ATP, their skeleton and their education.

Dr. Colin Michie specializes in paediatrics, nutrition, and immunology. Michie has worked in the UK, southern Africa and Gaza as a paediatrician and educator and was the associate Academic Dean for the American University of the Caribbean Medical School in Sint Maarten a few years ago.

SOARING HIGH IN HEALTH & STYLE

Pilot Spotlight on Aaron Leerdam

In the heart of the Caribbean, where turquoise waters meet endless skies, Winair stands as a beacon of connectivity and excellence. But what does it take to be one of the pilots at the helm of the region's largest airlines? We sat down with Aaron, a seasoned Winair pilot, to explore the discipline, preparation and personal philosophy that define his career.

1. Aaron, flying a plane requires precision and focus. How do you prepare mentally and physically before taking to the skies?

For me, preparations start the night before. I make sure my uniform is ready and begin a positive visualization process. It's my routine to "get ready, get in gear, get focused." It's essential for maintaining a clear mind before any flight.

2. When did you decide to pursue this exciting career, and how did you make it happen?

Actually, flying runs in the family. My father and uncle were both pilots (now retired), so I grew up around aviation. They would take me to airports in Schiphol, Holland, and I loved watching all the planes take off. It felt natural to follow in their footsteps.

3. What role does physical fitness play in your life, and how do you manage a workout routine with your travel-heavy schedule?

I try to hit the gym three times a week at Be Fit Gym. With my schedule, I also make time for jogs. Staying active is crucial since we as pilots have to pass certain medical certifications. I also enjoy spearfishing whenever I get the chance.

4. Being in uniform most of the time, how do you express your personal style when you're off duty?

Since I became a pilot at 19, I've always been taught to maintain a streamlined, polished and classy sense of fashion. My uniform is one look, but I carry those same standards into my personal life, too.

Disclaimer: We at Health & Beauty strive to offer you healthy tips, recipes and interesting- and informative-insights into the world of wellness.

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HEALTH SEAT INTERVIEW

Adelena Chandler, President of the Rotary Club of St. Maarten

This week, we are proud to feature the newly appointed President of the Rotary Club of St. Maarten, Ms. Adelena Chandler. A passionate advocate for service, health equity and community development, Ms. Chandler opens up about her journey into leadership, the values that guide her, and how she hopes to create lasting impact in St. Maarten and beyond.

1. Congratulations on your new role! What does this leadership position mean to you?

Thank you so much. To be installed as President of the Rotary Club of St. Maarten is truly an honour and a responsibility I carry with deep humility and immense gratitude. This role allows me to serve at the highest level of our Club and to work alongside a team committed to promoting peace, fighting disease, and strengthening our community by uniting people through service. But beyond the title, this moment is deeply personal. I give all glory and thanks to God for this opportunity.

I stand on the shoulders of those who shaped me – my late father Simon Chandler, and my mother Margaret Meade, whose strength continues to inspire me; and my grandmother Margaret Rombly, who introduced me to the essence of “service above self” long before I ever joined Rotary. Her compassion, her generosity and her selflessness formed the foundation of my commitment to community service.

2. The Rotary Club is deeply rooted in service and charity. What are your top priorities during

your tenure as president?

The Rotary Club of St. Maarten was the first Rotary Club on the island, and we take that legacy seriously. Rotary International sets monthly themes for all clubs, which guide much of our work throughout the year. For August, we're focusing on Membership and New Club Development. We want to expand our reach – not just by recruiting new members, but by supporting the development of new clubs that reflect the unique needs and spirit of their communities.

Our club was instrumental in establishing the Rotary Mid Isle, Sunrise, and Sunset clubs, and we've even supported Île de Nord on the French side. Expanding our network is key, because when we grow, our impact multiplies. We also tailor our local projects around these monthly themes. For example, in July – which focuses on Maternal and Child Health – we hosted Dr. Friday at our bi-weekly luncheon to shed light on reproductive health issues on the island. It's a reminder that these themes are not abstract – they are real challenges that require local action.

3. What are the other monthly themes?

I have already mentioned that August focuses on Membership and New Club Development. Just to clarify the rest:

- July is Maternal and Child Health.
- September is Basic Education and Literacy, aligning with Back to School.
- October highlights Community Economic Development.
- November is dedicated to the Rotary Foundation.
- December focuses on Disease Prevention and Treatment.
- January is about Vocational Service.
- February promotes Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention.
- March centres on Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene.
- April emphasizes Environmental concerns.
- May is for Youth Service.
- And June celebrates Rotary Fellowshipships.

lows.

We create projects around these themes, whether it's through partnerships, awareness or just simply rolling our sleeves up and doing the work in our local community and globally.

4. How does the Rotary Club of St. Maarten approach health and wellness through its community initiatives?

One example is that we've partnered with organizations like Nagico, WIMA, and SZV to raise awareness about health issues that affect our community the most. We work closely with them and, together, we organize an annual public health conference to educate health professionals and provide accessible information to the general public. Health is not just about treatment – it's about prevention, education, and empowerment. Through our initiatives, we want to ensure that individuals are informed and supported in making healthier choices, and that vulnerable groups are not left behind.

5. The theme of guidance plays a key role in both leadership and mentorship. Who has guided you in your journey, and how do you plan to guide others in return?

My journey began long before I wore a Rotary pin. My family instilled in me the values of compassion and service, and that foundation led me to Rotary in 2016. I first became curious about the organization in 2014. For over a year, I observed quietly from the sidelines. Then I reached out through Facebook and soon found myself having powerful conversations with then-President Nisha and members like Pierre Decelles, Stephen Thompson, and Robert Judd.

I was drawn in by the real-world impact they were making – and that's when I knew I belonged. I was proudly inducted in March 2016, sponsored by past President Nisha. Since then, I've been mentored by incredible leaders – especially immediate past President Soc, who

took the time to prepare me for this role. His trust in me and his support have been invaluable. Now it's my turn to pass that torch – to be a mentor, to lead with intention, and to empower others the way I was empowered.

6. As a female leader in a prominent community role, what message do you have for young women aspiring to lead in health, charity, or public service?

Coming from Dutch Quarter and a family full of strong women, I was taught early on that failure is not the end – it's a lesson. My grandmother taught me that we fall at some point in life, but more importantly, she taught me how to rise. That resilience is something I carry with me every day as a leader. My message to young women is this: Your freedom lies in your education – not just what's written in a book, but in what you observe, the people you surround yourself with, and the way you choose to think for yourself. Be curious. Be bold. Be willing to create your own story.

Leadership isn't about being perfect. It's about being real. It's about showing up, even when it's hard, and using your voice to lift others. As women, we often feel the need to connect every dot, to serve in every role, to nurture everyone around us. But that is our strength. And when we harness that strength with purpose, we create incredible impact. So, yes, I feel honoured – and, yes, I feel a bit anxious stepping into this role; but I do so knowing that I am not alone. I'm supported by a global network of Rotarians who, like me, are committed to uniting for good, recognizing needs, and transforming lives.

About the Rotary Club of St. Maarten

Founded in 1972, the Rotary Club of St. Maarten is part of Rotary International, a global network of 1.4 million neighbours, friends, leaders, and problem-solvers who unite to take action and create lasting change. Our club is committed to serving the local community through impactful projects in education, health, youth development, and disaster relief. With a strong tradition of service above self, we work collaboratively with local partners to uplift those in need and build a stronger, more resilient St. Maarten.

Adelena Chandler's leadership reflects more than just vision – it's deeply rooted in heritage, service, and heart. As she begins this new chapter with the Rotary Club of St. Maarten, her focus remains clear: to serve with compassion, lead with integrity, and create a ripple effect of positive change across the island and beyond.

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5. Mental health is key in high-pressure jobs. What strategies do you use to stay grounded and manage stress during long flights?

Breathing techniques help me stay calm, and I also know the importance of recognizing my limits. However, the key is proper training. At Win Air, we're well-trained, and that training helps keep us alert, yet calm and ready to handle whatever comes our way.

6. What's one travel or wellness essential you never board a plane without?

Water is my must-have. As a pilot and a representative of Winair, I can't stress enough how important it is to stay hydrated. I mainly drink water and always make sure I have it available.

7. Are there any Caribbean health or beauty traditions you follow that influence your life-

style today?

I love making homemade teas whenever possible – things like bush tea, or fresh lemongrass, thyme, and basil. I also swear by peppermint tea before bed; it's such a great way to unwind.

8. Which favourite restaurant in St. Maarten do you like to recommend?

I'm a huge fan of Captain's Rib Shack. Pilots like it because Captain D used to fly for Winair. It's got great food, and the atmosphere is always welcoming.

9. What advice would you give to young men who want to balance a demanding career like aviation with looking good and feeling great?

Everyone has their own path, but keep your eyes open for opportunities. Find something you're passionate about – it makes everything easier. Take time to read, relax, and avoid spending too much time on

screens. Stay disciplined about your fitness, hydration, and enjoy life. St. Maarten is known for its party scene, but balance is key. And if you're interested in aviation, definitely reach out to Winair. It's the largest airline in the Caribbean and a great place to start.

Aaron Leerdam is more than just a pilot; he's a model of discipline, balance and dedication. His approach to health, fitness, and style sets a standard for both aspiring aviators and anyone seeking to maintain a high level of excellence in their career.

Winair is proud to celebrate its 65th anniversary next year—a true testament to our legacy as a stable and reliable connector across the Caribbean. With an unwavering commitment to safety and punctuality, Winair continues to be a company that inspires pride and passion in everyone who's part of the journey

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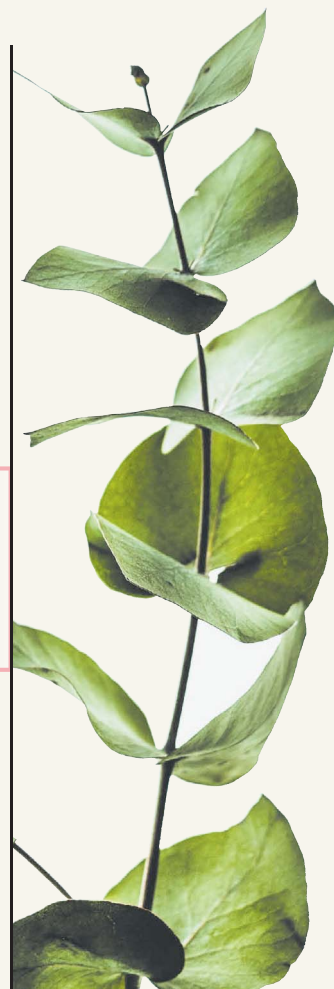


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