

PEOPLE OF ACTION

Adam El-Ali

Vice President of Clinical Technology Services, Rogers Behavioral Health

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(Member since September 2020)



Before Adam El-Ali even graduated from college, he had already traveled more than many of us do in a lifetime. Born in Saudi Arabia, Adam and his family spent summers traveling and visiting extended family. At 15, Adam began attending boarding school in the U.S., which meant nine months at Lake Forest Academy in Illinois and then back home for summer vacation and travels.

So, it should come as no surprise that travel is one of Adam's biggest passions.

"Travel is very big for me for a variety of different reasons," Adam said, citing the unique history, culture and beauty that each destination holds, as well as exploring and learning about each country's people, government and societal structure.

"I've traveled to more than 34 countries so far and no matter how much people say we're different from each other, I've found that people are fundamentally the same no matter where you go," Adam said. "Travel allows us to be grateful for what we have but also provides opportunities to see firsthand all that we still have to work on."

Adam's love of exploring the world dovetails nicely with another passion of his: making life better for underserved people in our communities. As vice president of clinical technology services at Rogers Behavioral Health where he's worked since 2015, Adam strives to find innovative ways to bring about equity for patients by creating solutions for the healthcare professionals who serve them.

"I'm not directly involved with patients, but I find ways through technology and improved processes to help those who are. Elevating everyone in society makes the world a better place."

And that's what drew Adam to Rotary, which he joined this past September.

"I was looking for an organization that helps give back to people—something I'm passionate about. I've dedicated my time to various organizations wherever I've lived but was really drawn to the mission and principles of Rotary."

Despite joining in the midst of a global pandemic, Adam, who earned a B.S. in psychology from Loyola University and an MBA from Lewis University, enjoys being a Rotarian, joining in remotely for the speakers and programs.

"Most of all, the people I've met so far share that unified vision of making a difference through all of the various local efforts as well as the global programs. And even during this time—during a pandemic—I still see so many members with

that desire to get out there and do good things. It's nice to see people who have the opportunity to help others pay it forward for the greater good, and I like being a part of that."

Although the pandemic prohibits face-to-face interactions with fellow Rotarians, has disrupted his work life and halted travel and even wedding plans, Adam is determined is to take things in stride.

Inspiration comes from his dad, who was born to a subsistence family in the mountains of Syria and became a doctor, and his mom, the daughter of immigrants living in Chicago, who became a nurse. "I watched my dad overcome such momentous challenges, and my mom, too, faced a great deal of hardship in her life. Their perseverance and selfless dedication to others has served as a very strong driver for me."



Adam, who resides in Milwaukee with his partner Sarah, can still pursue the pandemic-friendly activities that bring him joy: boating, hiking and camping.

"And I love to cook, so when I'm not doing those things, you'll probably find me concocting new culinary creations or mastering some good old standards."

Editor's Note: Rotary People of Action is a bi-monthly series written by a group of Rotarians. This feature was written by Mary Bolich.