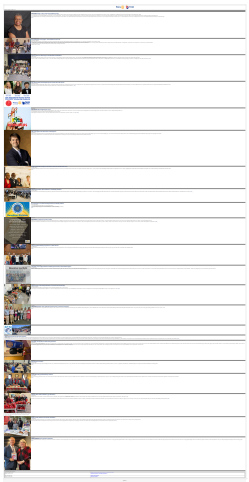
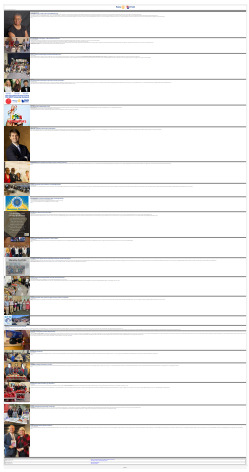
Rotary
District 6900



March 10, 2024



From Our District Governor

Let's Finish Strong: A Call to Action for Foundation Giving!

As we approach the end of the current giving cycle, I wanted to take a moment to express my deepest gratitude for your unwavering commitment to our Rotary Foundation and its vital mission. Your generosity and dedication have enabled us to make a profound impact on communities around the world, transforming lives and fostering positive change.

As we stand on the brink of achieving our fundraising goals, however, we're only half-way there. I urge each one of you to dig deep and contribute whatever you can to help us finish strong. Every dollar count, and together, we have the power to make a difference on a global scale. Whether you're able to give a little or a lot, your support will help us surpass our targets and continue our important work.

The projects and initiatives supported by The Rotary Foundation touch the lives of countless individuals, from providing clean water and sanitation to combating disease and promoting education. By coming together as a united force, we can ensure that these life-changing programs receive the funding they need to thrive.

To raise additional funds, I'd like to challenge you to a 50/50 Recognition. Any club that gets 50% of its members to become Benefactors/Bequest Society members as measured on the club recognition summary, you will receive a special recognition from the district at the end of the year. I will present this special award at your club meeting. Please do all you can to make this happen and I guarantee you we will finish strong!

I understand that times may be challenging for some, but I firmly believe that when we join forces and pool our resources, we can accomplish extraordinary things. Together, we can make a lasting impact.

So, let's rally together, Rotary Club Members, and show the world the true spirit of District 6900 by finishing strong in our Foundation giving. Together, we can exceed our expectations and continue to be a beacon of hope for those in need.

Thank you for your continued support and dedication!!

Posted by André Marria
March 8, 2024

District Conference 2024

We're Waiting for You at Jekyll … with So Much for You to Do!

Rotary 6900 District Conference is right around the corner, and our team looks forward to welcoming over 400 Rotarians and guests to Jekyll Island March 21 – 24, 2024.

The festivities kick off with Music in the Moonlight at Great Dunes Park Pavilion, 101 N. Beachview Drive, with plenty of food, drinks, music, games, and fun from 5:30 pm to 8:30 pm.

On Friday there will be opportunities for service and Rotary learning. We are planning a Service Project with the Boys and Girls Club of Southeast Georgia at 8:30 am. DGE Gordon Owens is also hosting a Vibrant Club workshop and District Training Assembly on Friday, March 22.

DG Andrè and Walter are hosting dinner before our first Impact Session. Dinner will be served at 5 pm and the Impact Session begins at 6:15 on Friday, March 22. Come dressed as your favorite musician!

On Saturday morning we will host our third Annual District Conference Brunch featuring our Rotary Youth. Beginning at 9 am there will be three breakout sessions, followed by brunch with the spotlight on Laws of Life, RYLA, Interact, and Rotary Youth Exchange. The breakout sessions will be repeated at 11:10 am. The Breakout Sessions will cover The Future of Rotary – Presented by TRF Chair and PRIP Barry Rassin, Discover Rotary – Presented by Audley Knight, Rotary Club of North Cobb, and Impactful Service Projects – A Panel Discussion featuring the Rotary Clubs of Peachtree City, Alpharetta, North Atlanta, North Fulton, and Thomasville.

After brunch on Saturday, March 23, there is a break built into the District Conference schedule until 4:15 for attendees to enjoy everything Jekyll Island has to offer its visitors. If you’re looking for something to fill those hours, we have lots of suggestions!

There are so many things to do on Jekyll Island that you may want to extend your stay after District Conference.

- While the 18-hole golf courses will be closed to host both men's and women's intercollegiate tournaments, the 9-hole Great Dunes Course will be open. To reserve a tee time, call (912) 635-2368.
- If miniature golf is more your thing, Jekyll Island Miniature Golf, located at 100 Great Dunes Lane, is a guaranteed blast for the whole family. This is also the home of the Jekyll Island Bike Barn. There are other locations for bicycle rental on the island as well.
- Pickleball courts are coming to Jekyll Island, but sadly not in time for District Conference. Pickleball is available on nearby St. Simons Island. If tennis is your game, reserve a court by calling the Jekyll Island Tennis Center at (912) 635-3154.
- If you're interested in local history, Mosaic Jekyll Island Museum at 100 Stable Road is for you. The museum itself has in-depth and interactive exhibits, and Mosaic also offers private VIP Experiences. To book a tour, or for more information, call (912) 635-4036.
- Who doesn't love sea turtles? The Georgia Sea Turtle Center located at 214 Stable Road is a nature center and rescue and rehabilitation center for sea turtles. This is Georgia's only sea turtle education and rehabilitation facility.
- Steve Stirling, CEO of MAP International in Brunswick, has agreed to offer a unique opportunity for District 6900 Rotarians to tour the headquarters of MAP International at 4700 Glynco Parkway, Brunswick, Georgia, on Saturday, March 23, 2024 as part of the 2024 District Conference. Steve has spoken at Rotary events all over the world, including many clubs in District 6900. If you would like to tour, please contact District Conference Chair Stephanie Windham at swwindham@icloud.com. To learn more about Steve and MAP International, visit the website at map.org.
- While the water might be a little chilly, the weather in March is predicted to be warm and sunny, so a walk on the beach is always a good way to spend an afternoon.
- You can also hang out in The Rotary Disco Lounge (this year's House of Friendship), where there will be music, a non-alcoholic beverage station, and lots of club displays to peruse. For more information on The Rotary Disco Lounge and to sign up for a table, contact PDG George Granade at granadeg@bellsouth.net.

We are looking forward to District Conference and hope to see you there! To register, head to rotary6900.org today!

Posted by Stephanie Windham
March 4, 2024

Interact Update

Interact Conference Shines Light on Mental Health and Wellness

The 2024 District 6900 Interact Conference was a day all about youth service, growth, community, and fostering mental health and wellness. Led by **Atlanta West End Immediate Past President and District 6900 Interact Chair Corteney "C.J." Stewart,** the 2024 District 6900 Interact Conference shined a light on mental health and wellness!

This year's conference was held on Saturday, January 21, at the historic Booker T. Washington High School. The program was guided by CHRIS 180 mental health professionals and **Roswell Rotarian Becky Nelson**'s wisdom. Booker T. Washington High School Principal, Dr. William Wade, led the way by inviting us to join him in celebrating the school's 100th year anniversary.

Coming together in service were 2023-24 District Governor André Marria and District Governor-Elect Gordon Owens, Atlanta West End Rotary Club members, including our GRSP student scholar Peace Cyebukayire. The conference included educators, including Regan Pierce (RHS Interact Liaison). who volunteer their time as Interactor facilitators from various high schools in our District. It was a day about youth service, growth, community, and fostering mental health and wellness.

Watch the video on Instagram here:
https://www.instagram.com/reel/C2ViiLXPqpL/?igsh=YXEyYmpxbGxsN3p4

PHOTOS:

Posted by Rose Caplan
March 5, 2024

GRSP News

Oslo Summer GRSP Scholarship Recipients Excited about This Summer

Isabel Forster
District 6900

Vivian Cassaniti
District 6910

Joshua Youmans
District 6920

Oslo International Summer School
2024 GRSP Scholarship Recipients

UNIVERSITAS OSLOENSIS MDCCCXI

Rotary Districts 6900, 6910, 6920

GRSP GEORGIA ROTARY STUDENT PROGRAM

Georgia Rotary Student Program Founder William A. Watt, Sr., established a relationship in Norway that is prospering more than 70 years later as evident in the three college students from Georgia who have

been selected to spend six weeks this summer studying at the International Summer School at the University of Oslo. The opportunity is the result of a partnership with the university, Georgia Rotary Student Program and Rotarians in Oslo.

Isabel Forster will represent District 6900 and the **Rotary Club of Buckhead** with the endorsement of Rotarian Catherine Land-Waters. Vivian Elizabeth Cassaniti will represent District 6910 and the Rotary Club of Athens with the endorsement of Rotarian Jane Kidd. Joshua Dean Youmans will represent District 6920 and the Rotary Club of Downtown Statesboro with the endorsement of Rotarian Weikang "Ken" Wang. Learn a bit more about our District 6900 recipient …

Isabel attends Oglethorpe University and is majoring in international studies, writing her honors thesis to examine ways Palestinians and Israelis might learn to see one another as neighbors. Proficient in Spanish, she teaches tennis to international students and partakes in humanitarian service as part of the Oglethorpe University A_LAB, Rotaract. OU History Professor Glenn Sharfman described as mature beyond her years and discerning in her conclusions.

"As a person, Izzy is always smiling, outgoing, and nurturing. She is just a lot of fun to be around," Sharfman said. "More than once, she was able to help fellow students in my class in one way or another. She has a can-do attitude and wants to help bridge educational, economic, and social gaps between and among disparate groups."

In Oslo, Forster aspires to understand how these different educational models exist within intercultural communication, economics, and Norwegian politics.

"I first landed on the Rotary and Rotaract clubs through an unconventional route," she said. "And yet, I can see the intersection of my interdisciplinary interests: humanitarian service, teaching ESL, mentoring GRSP, Rotaract, and international students, researching comparative education, and much more. Spanning three years, I have enhanced these passions by studying near the multicultural cities of Atlanta, Fort Lauderdale, Philadelphia, and London. These experiences and my upbringing in the public, private, research, and independent school systems in three states and two countries have led to my interest in international education and the varying technological, financial, and political challenges facing school systems worldwide."

The scholarship for the six-week summer program from June 24 to August 2 includes air fares from Atlanta to Oslo and the return trip to Atlanta, room, board, 12-credit hours of undergraduate course work, administrative fees at the university plus an outing with a Norwegian Rotary host. The recipients of the scholarship are responsible for personal spending money and transportation to hand from the airport.

In 1956, King Vakkon VII of Norway presented the brass St. Olaf medal for meritorious service to GRSP Founder Will Watt, who was also named Knight First Class of the Finnish Lion by the President of Finland in1960 in recognition for scholarships awarded to Norwegian and Finnish students along with dedication to the ideals of world peace through understanding.

Posted by Katheryne Fields
March 5, 2024

RYLA Update

The Time for RYLA (Registration) Is Now!

RYLA 2024 will be held June 8-12 on the campus of Georgia Southwestern State University. Cost per student is $475, and this covers all necessary expenses related to attending RYLA. For any students riding our charter buses from the Atlanta area, there is an additional $50/per student cost.

Club Commitment Forms Due Now: Email to susanruckman@gmail.com. Fax to 229-924-7617

Student Registration Payments Due March 1: Mail to Rotary Youth Leadership Awards, c/o Susan Ruckman, P.O. Box 1547, Americus, GA 31709

Club Officers & RYLA Chairs should have all Info & Forms in their Email Inboxes dated January 8. That said, please contact Jaclyn Donovan (jaclyn.k.donovan@gmail.com) if you have questions or need info sent to a different club member.

Posted by Jaclyn Donovan
March 5, 2023

Rotary Youth Exchange

Mike Irvin Appointed to District Leadership Role

District Governor Elect Gordon Owens has selected Rotarian **Mike Irvin of the Rotary Club of Dunwoody** to join the district leadership team in the role of District Chair for the Rotary Youth Exchange program, for a three-year term beginning July 1, 2024. In that role Mike will promote, manage, and oversee both the Inbound exchange program and the Outbound scholarship program for Georgia high school students.

Mike is a long-time Rotarian who has served District 6900 and his clubs in many different roles, while being an active member of the Muscogee-Columbus club and the Dunwoody club. At the club level, Mike has served as Membership Chair, Public Image Chair, Youth Exchange Officer, and Club President. At the district level, Mike has been a member of the Global Grants Scholars committee and has served as District Member Attraction Chair and District Outbound Student Coordinator for the Rotary Youth Exchange Scholarship Program. As the new District Chairman for Rotary Youth Exchange, Mike will work with DGE Gordon, DGN Steve, and DGND Cynthia to expand the program in our district and aim to provide many more study abroad scholarships to Georgia high school students.

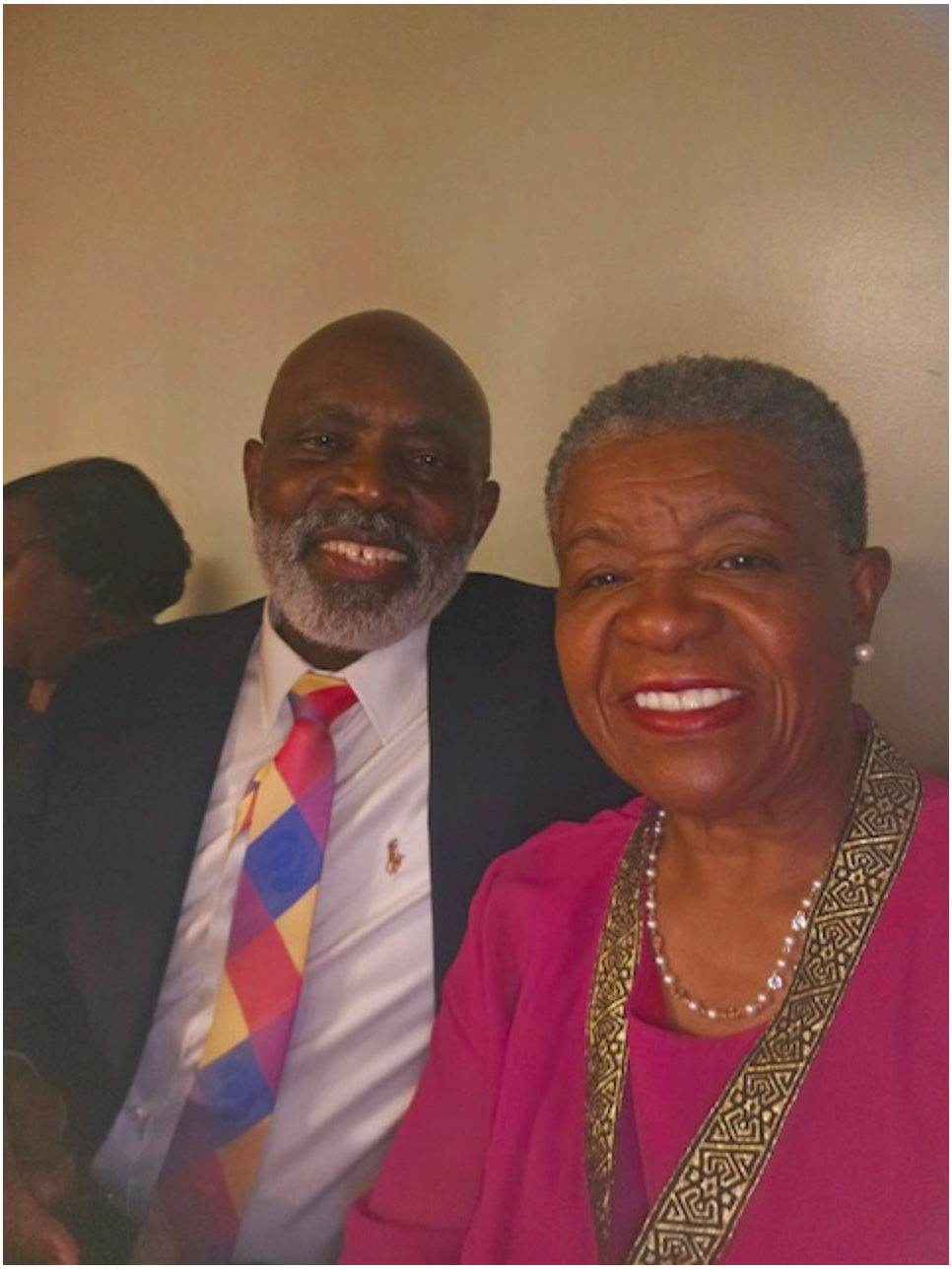
Since getting certified by Rotary International to offer the Rotary Youth Exchange program back in 2016, District 6900 has awarded more than $1 million dollars' worth of study abroad scholarships to Georgia high school students, all at no cost to the awarding Rotary clubs. We have arranged more than 85 study abroad scholarship experiences. More than 165 Rotarians in the district have become Rotary Certified Youth Volunteers through the program, and more than 300 non-Rotarian host family members have joined the family of Rotary after hosting one of our Inbound students to Georgia. The Rotary Youth Exchange scholarship for Georgia high school students is the only Rotary scholarship that is available to children and grandchildren of Rotarians. For more information on the program, visit Rotary6900.org/RYE.

Posted by Mike Parks
March 5, 2024

Imagine Thomasville Recognizes Our District Governor as Woman of the Year

When Imagine Thomasville proudly celebrated its annual Community Impact Awards in early February, our own District Governor Andre' Marria was recognized as Thomasville's Woman of the Year. These prestigious awards acknowledge outstanding individuals and organizations in various categories, highlighting their exceptional impact and commitment to the community. The celebration included a gala and Thomasville's annual Rose Parade.

PHOTOS:



Posted by Jackie Cuthbert
March 8, 2024

GRSP Update

Students Pack Meals, Make a Difference at Leadership Weekend

All 42 GRSP students traveled to Dunwoody early in February to participate in the 20th annual GRSP Leadership Weekend. Led by the **Rotary Club of Dunwoody**, the weekend has several partners - with financial support from GRSP and the **Rotary Clubs of Gainesville and Buckhead**, and people power from the **Rotary Club of Metro Atlanta** and the **Rotaract Club of Atlanta. North Atlanta, Buckhead, Gwinnett, Dunwoody and Atlanta Metro** Rotarians, and **Atlanta Rotaractors** hosted students for the weekend.

From the start, the Leadership Weekend was inspired by the idea that one person, one group could make a difference - combining service projects with communication skills and leadership ideas. Students started and ended the weekend under Rotary's banner of Service Above Self. On Friday afternoon, they packed 10,000 meals for Rise Against Hunger, and on Sunday morning, they divided into teams - each charged with the task of coming up with a service project under the Rotary area of focus their team was assigned. At stake: $1,000 in seed money to bring their project to life. This year's winning team presented an opportunity to build peace in Darjeeling, India.

Saturday, students had a chance to interact with the district's two **Global Grant Scholars** from Japan who are studying at the Rollins School of Health, Emory University - about their journey into medicine and how they hoped their studies and experiences would make a positive difference. They also heard from **North Atlanta Rotarian Christopher Drew** about the club's global grant project they hope will help to end spina bifida in Ethiopia now and longer term, around the world. Roswell Rotarian Michael Sutton led the highly interactive, always positive and meaningful session on Courageous Leadership in the afternoon, focused on facing fears and effectively telling your story.

Students had plenty of opportunities for fun and fellowship with Rotarians - from Friday night's pizza and game night to Saturday night's group dinners.

Now it's on to Pelham!

Posted by Jackie Cuthbert
March 4, 2024

RLI

10 Top Reasons to Consider Attending the Rotary Leadership Institute

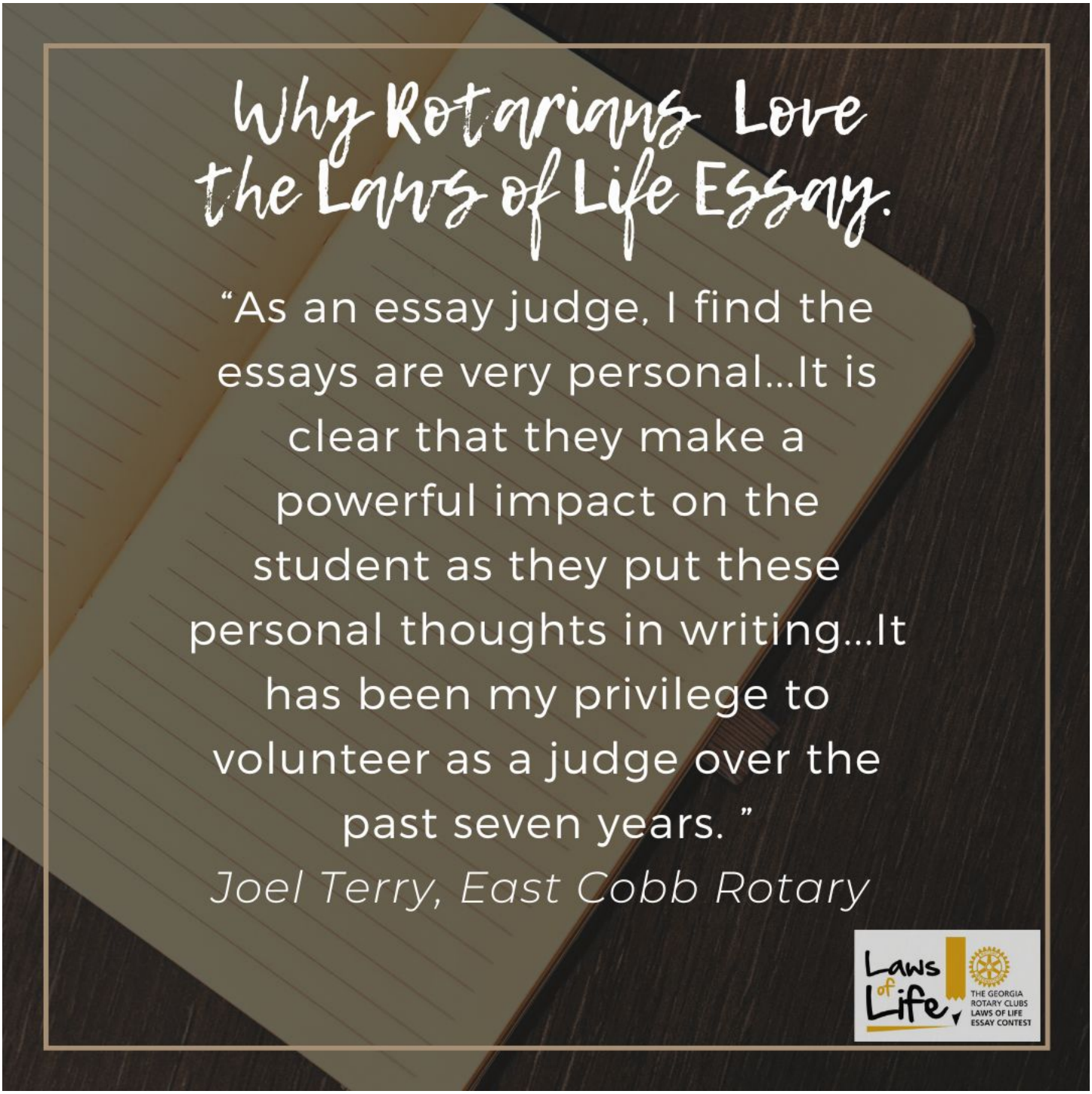
1. You want ROI (Return On Investment) for your Rotary membership.
2. You want to learn how to apply your business leadership skills to volunteer/non-employee leadership.
3. You enjoy learning through discussion…NO LECTURES!
4. You want to learn BASICS of the Rotary Foundation.
5. You want to learn how to execute EFFECTIVE service projects.
6. You want to learn how to retain and engage members for the long run.
7. You want to learn how to use the power of 35,000 clubs to solve local and global challenges.
8. You want to learn how an “ordinary” person can make an extraordinary impact.
9. You want to do all of this while: meeting/networking with like minded, interesting Rotarians who think like you do
10. You want to learn how to create the opportunity for life changing “Rotary Moments”

With all 10 great reasons, check out the RLI Sunshine Division and the great opportunities it offers across Florida and the Caribbean, along with virtual opportunities via Zoom. Get more information and register for an event at https://rlitraining.org/

Posted by Tracy Van Norman
March 5, 2024

Laws of Life

Plan Ahead for 2024-25 Laws of Life Contest



With the Peach State PETS experience under their belts, Rotary Club President-Elects are mapping out their 2024-25 year. Now is the time to confirm high school partners for the 2024-25 Georgia Laws of Life Essay Contest. Together, local Rotary Clubs and the Georgia Laws of Life state office offer this character education program, free of charge, to high schools throughout the state.

High schools from Hartwell to Columbus make the Laws of Life contest an integral part of their English Language Arts curriculum. Students love the contest as it offers them an opportunity to reflect and tell heartfelt stories of joy and of challenges. Teachers love the contest because they get to know their students on a deeper level. The contest also provides healthy competition among students.

The Laws of Life contest offers your club an inspiring, turnkey program with flexible volunteer hours opportunities. The contest allows clubs to support key Rotary causes including Support for Education and Promoting Peace by fostering conversations among students and teachers. Many Rotarians across Georgia share that their favorite meeting is when they celebrate student winners from their partner schools. Students feel a boost of confidence as they read their Laws of Life essays for a friendly audience of club members, teachers and parents.

The GLL state office provides resources for your Rotary club in an online folder: prospect letter templates, contest talking points, and info flyers for clubs and schools. On our GLL YouTube Channel, look for 2022-23 Student Winners and the Teacher Experiences playlists to hear firsthand testimonials.

For complete program info, contact the Georgia Laws of Life team at lawsoflife@georgialawsoflife.org.

Posted by Linda Hatten
March 5, 2024

Club News

Vinings Cumberland Brings Super Bowl to Atlanta Mission

Vinings Cumberland Rotarians Jessica, Jolene, Fiona, Lisa, President Matt and a couple significant

others served a hot wing dinner and nachos with cheese during a Super Bowl party for the men at Atlanta Mission tonight. The club sponsored the party with a gift to the shelter which serves homeless men in downtown Atlanta.

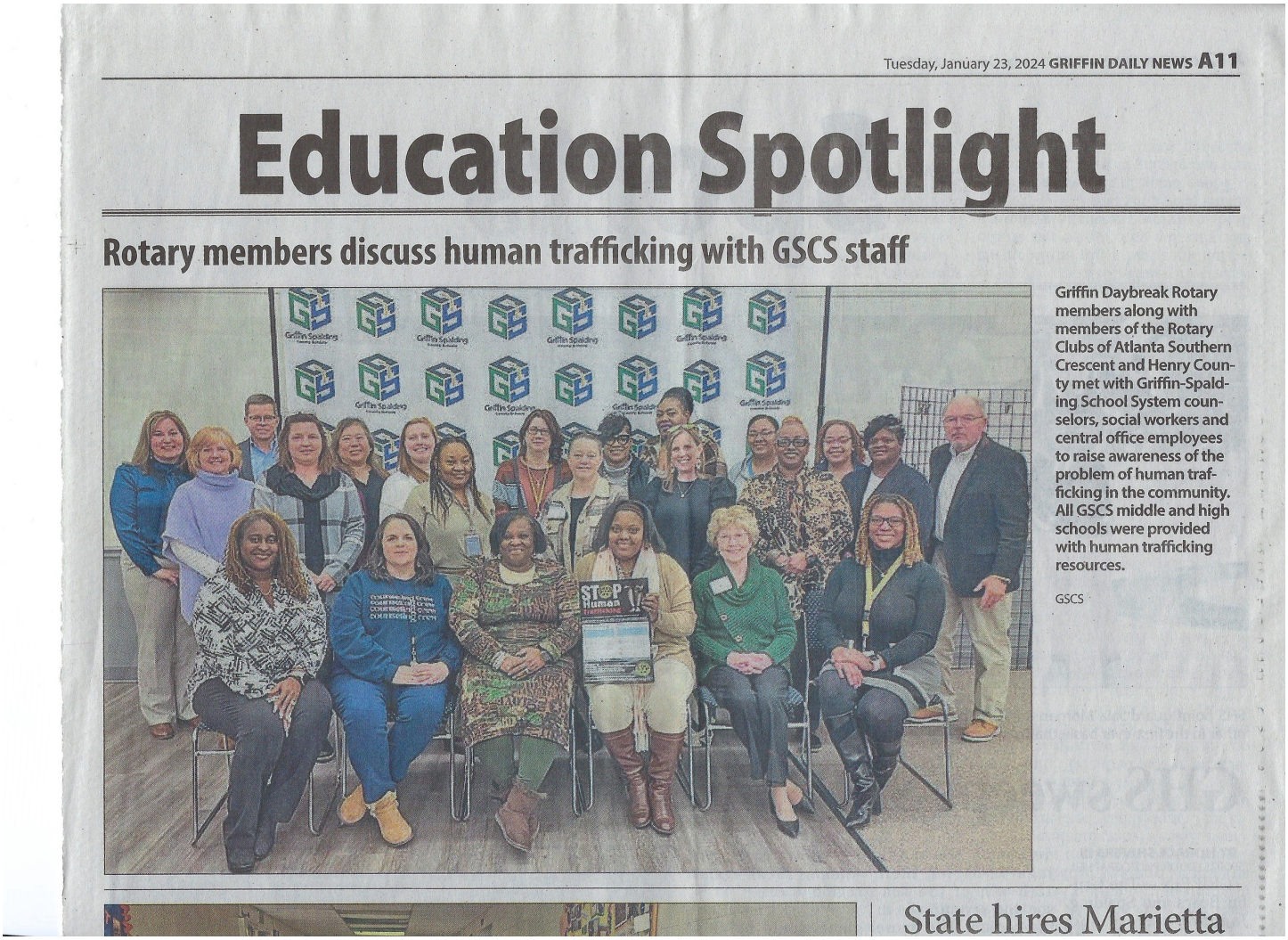
PHOTOS:

Posted by Brenda Borden
March 5, 2024

Our Rotary Foundation at Work

Community Grants Support Human Trafficking Presentations,

Mental Health Support



Tuesday, January 23, 2024 GRIFFIN DAILY NEWS A11

Education Spotlight

Rotary members discuss human trafficking with GSCS staff

Griffin Daybreak Rotary members along with members of the Rotary Clubs of Atlanta Southern Crescent and Henry County met with Griffin-Spalding School System counselors, social workers and central office employees to raise awareness of the problem of human trafficking in the community. All GSCS middle and high schools were provided with human trafficking resources.

GSCS

State hires Marietta

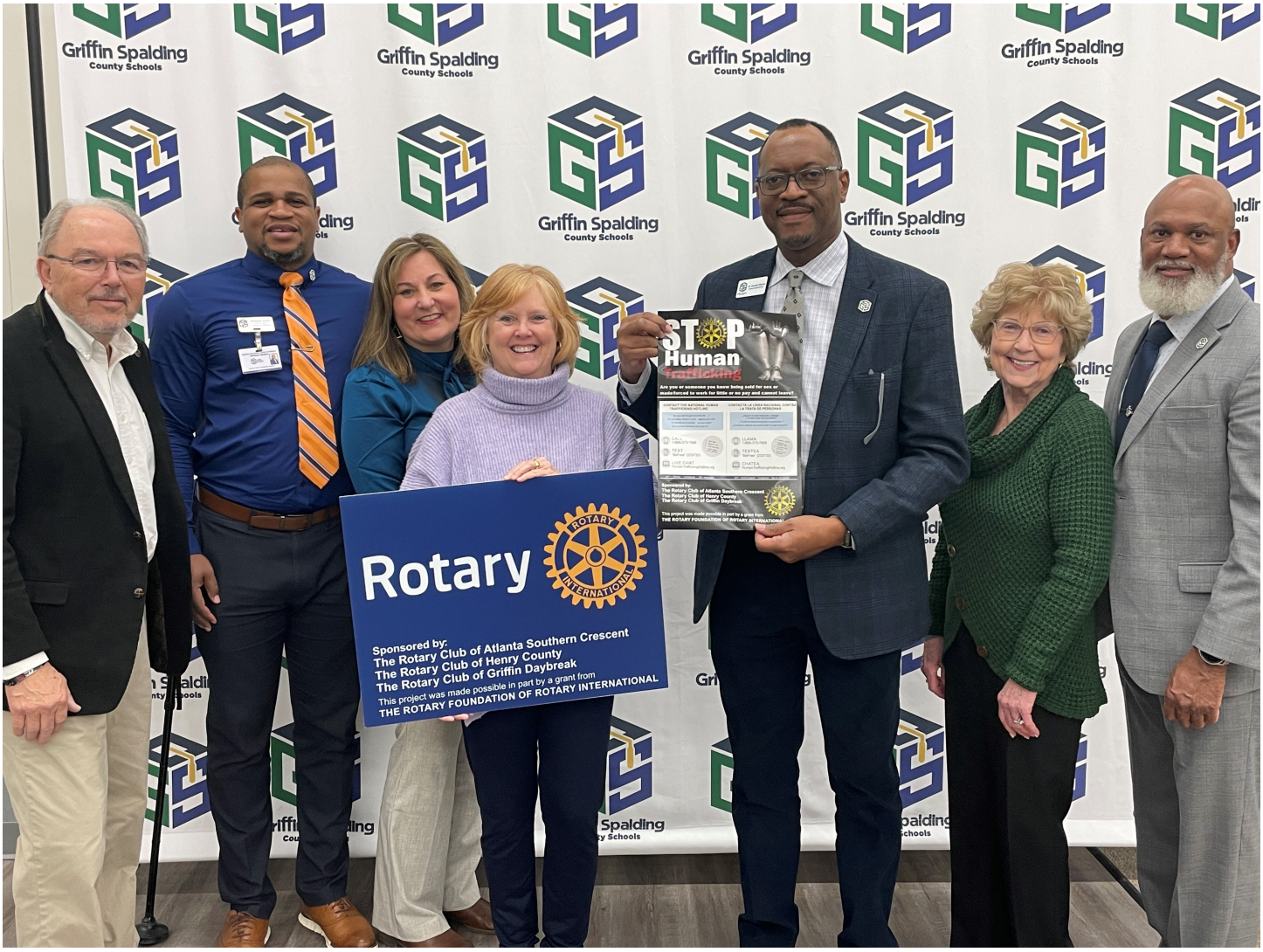
Thanks to a community grant, the **Rotary Clubs of Atlanta Southern Crescent, Griffin Daybreak and Henry County** were able to support presentations and materials to fight human trafficking in Clayton County, Spalding County and Henry County high schools and middle schools. Human trafficking posters and the human trafficking video, "Chosen" were provided. The Atlanta area is a hub for human trafficking. Education has proven to be a deterrent. The posters, in English and Spanish, with an 800 number, and the video showing the signs to watch for should be a great educational tool.

All of the students in each of the middle and high schools in each of the Counties will have access to the posters. Unfortunately, middle school is now considered a prime spot for trafficking exploitation. Children as young as 12 have been trafficked in our area. That is not acceptable, and we wish to do all we can to stop human trafficking. We are hoping that these resources will assist many of these students. But if it saves one child, it will be worth it.

Our second grant focuses on the mental health needs of first responders and other county employees at the Henry County Police Department because they face many challenging situations. The Henry County Police Department Behavioral Health Program allows first-line responders and county employees to avail themselves of immediate and ongoing counseling if needed, to address the challenges and possible

traumas associated with being in law enforcement. This would allow them to be able to talk about these experiences with a trained professional in a safe environment.

PHOTOS:



Rotary

TARY
LUB
NRY
UNTY
ORGIA
STOP Human Trafficking
Are you or someone you know being sold for sex or made/forced to work for little or no pay and cannot leave?
Rotary
Sponsored by:
The Rotary Club of Atlanta Southern Crescent
The Rotary Club of Henry County
The Rotary Club of Griffin Daybreak
This project was made possible in part by a grant from
THE ROTARY FOUNDATION OF ROTARY INTERNATIONAL

Posted by Claudia Mertl
February 5, 2023

Club News

Smyrna Partners with Backpack Buddies to Provide Weekend Meal Bags

The **Smyrna Rotary Club** has done an astonishing array of local, national and international projects for over 60 years.

Of recent projects, Club President Nominee Angi Sklar says, "We've been loving packing over 200 weekend meal bags every second Wednesday for the students at Green Acres Elementary school in partnership with Backpack Buddies of Atlanta. It is the highlight of our week!" Sklar also added, "Putting others ahead of self has and will always be a pillar for the club. Recently, one student grandmother responded, 'It has been extremely helpful. I'm raising three grandchildren on my own. This assistance has been a wonderful blessing.' This is why we do what we do! We're stronger together."

This project took almost a year to put together, with presentations to the club from Backpack Buddies of Atlanta as well as member visits by several Smyrna Rotarians to Backpack Buddies' impressive facilities. Smyrna Rotarians truck over 2,500 food items and bring plastic bags, etc., to Green Acres Elementary, and then gather to assemble the 200 bags of food. This ongoing project is fun, engaging, and helps us do something truly useful directly in our community. A typical event has eight Rotarians and guests and takes two to three hours.

PHOTOS:

Posted by Narayan Sengupta
March 5, 2024

Club News

Thomasville Students of the Quarter Recognize Teachers, Parents for Inspiration

Author's Note: This story includes excerpts from a story in the Thomasville Times-Enterprise E-Paper

The **Rotary Club of Thomasville** recognized students of the quarter last month. Certificates were presented to Brookwood, Thomasville High School, and Thomas County Central students who were nominated by their teachers. Youth Services Director Chandler Giddes explained the students exemplified what Rotarians stand for. “They are character pillars of honesty, good students, good athletes, and service in school,” he said.

Each had an opportunity to tell a little about themselves. THS Senior Emma Poole will study at Kennesaw next year and said, "Time at Thomasville High School and the Scholar’s Academy has taught me a lot about how to succeed both academically and in my own personal life. I will always remember the unwavering support I’ve received from my teachers and administrators.”

Brookwood's Emily Grace Tuten has immersed herself in clubs, organizations, and sports, dedicating her time and commitment to serving her classmates. “A huge part of who I am involves commitment,” she said. “I’ve found that true commitment inspires people. Brookwood has taught me this, and I truly value it.” She plans to study law in the future.

For Brookwood senior Katherine Jones, art is a large part of her life inside and outside the classroom. As a lover of the arts, Jones plans to attend Auburn University in the fall and major in architecture, so she can continue to enjoy her greatest passion for the rest of her life.

TCC's Braxton White has been a part of the County School System his entire life and is thankful for the countless teachers who pushed him forward to be the best he could be. With the education gained at TCC, White told the club he plans to attend the University of Georgia in the fall and major in Engineering.

Senior Veronica Vanlandingham, also a senior at TCCHS, brought along her dad, who she said inspired her with what she wants to do next, along with her teacher, Maria Pittman. With Pittman and her father’s encouragement, Vanlandingham announced she will be attending Valdosta State University in the fall where she will major in Computer Science.

TCC senior Sara Connell credited teacher Amy Ponder with making a huge difference in her time at TCCHS. “I took her class for AP Psychology and came back this year to take AP Art History because my senior year would not have been the same without her,” Connell said. Sara is an AP Scholar of Distinction, and will be attending UGA to study Politcal Science.

Posted by Shanna Derby
March 5, 2023

Club News

Polar Plunge

Posted by Clark Savage
March 5, 2024

Club News

Alpharetta Polar Bear Plunge Earns $165,000

The **Rotary Club of Alpharetta** got cold for a cause on February 3rd with their 6th Annual Polar Bear Plunge. The Club smashed last year's record of $120K, raising $165K with over 150 jumpers. Nonprofits, schools, clubs, and community groups form teams and raise money for their cause. Teams get to keep most of the funds raised, with a small percentage going to the club.

Open to the public, enthusiastic fans were blessed with sunshine and 50° temperatures. The plungers took over an hour to jump, followed by a tasty Chili Cookoff. Lionheart Life Center and the Alpharetta Symphony Orchestra were this year's team leaders. Lionheart provides education and therapy to children with autism and developmental challenges and raised nearly $15K. The ASO set a new personal record of $14.5K. Notable Jumpers included the Mayors of Alpharetta and Roswell, the North Fulton Rotary Club, and the Rotary Club of Roswell.

Alpharetta City Councilman John Hipes, who served as the Alpharetta Symphony Orchestra team captain, said, "The Polar Bear Plunge is an opportunity for people to support their passions in the community. We could all pick, and people in the community who aren't in Rotary could pick their passion and jump in cold water, and the net result is almost $165,000."

"That is the most awesome Rotary project I could ever imagine in my life."

Posted by Clark Savage
March 5, 2024

Linking Membership and Service

Meet Bella, Serving Others and Recruiting Rotarians

by Jay O'Neal, Columbus Rotarian

"Today we parked in the parking garage by the River Center so we didn't get a ticket, as I had a feeling we may be there longer than the allotted time for street parking. We went to Fountain City, but they had a line going out of the door. We walked to Iron Bank, but they had a line out of the door as well. I thought about walking to get coffee away from Broadway, but wasn't really planning on doing a lot of walking today. I had promised Bella a slow day and yes, I talk to my dog.

I remembered that Judy Bugs sold coffee, quite cheaply I might add at only one dollar. I could then use that cup to get a refill at Fountain City and just pay them later when they weren't busy. I also got a book that seemed interesting, so I figured we would just sit and read/people watch. I was still unaware at how eventful the day would soon become.

We went back to fountain city and listened to music being played by a street performer. We met a lady that was lost and from Montgomery. She was trying to find City Hall to get something for her son who was over seas. I offered to walk her there as it was just a block down Broadway, in the old Synovus building. We got there and noticed that a note was on the door saying that a water main had broken and the building was closed. We were then directed to the Citizens Service Center on Macon Road.

I asked what exactly it was that she was looking for. She told me and I suggested that it may actually still be available at the government center a few blocks away. I explained that the building was being demolished and they had moved some things around, but I'm pretty sure records were still there. I offered to get her a shuttle and she said "if you don't mind showing me, I can walk". "Sure", so we continued up 12th. As we passed the post office, I mentioned that there was also a court house inside and they may be able tell us for sure, before we kept walking. We stopped and they assured us that it was in fact at the Government Center. So we turned onto 2nd Avenue and headed towards our destination.

She went to the 2nd floor and Bella and I waited in the main lobby, while watching the elevator for our new friend to return. After 10 minutes or so the elevator opened and Bella started to wag her nub, out she came. She apologized for taking so long, I told her not to worry that Bella was enjoying the adventure. I again offered to get her a shuttle back to her car, which was on 10th near 1st. She again declined and said no, we aren't too far.

So, we began to walk back to Fountain City and she mentioned that her husband was actually in the car waiting on her! Wait, what? I offered to run back with Bella and get him to come and get her. She said, "Oh no, that would probably frighten him and he's old, he just had back surgery so he can't drive anyway". We continued to walk and as we approached Fountain City she said, "Oh there is that coffee shop! You know I'll be 74 next week and I've never had coffee?". I didn't even respond to the coffee statement. All I said was, "Wait, you are almost 74 and you just let me take you on a tour of Uptown Columbus on foot?" (As it was a bit of a tour.)

I told her the history of many of our beautiful buildings and churches that we passed. I also talked with her about CSU and new developments and growth in Uptown. She asked if it was always so crowded and I shared with her about the thespian conference that was happening and 5,500+ high school students. We of course talked about the beautiful little four legged tour guide that was leading the way! All in all, it was a fun 3.7 mile walk through Uptown with a traveler from Montgomery, Alabama.

I did make sure to tell Mrs. Pat how very lucky her son was to have a mother like her willing and able to do this for him. She smiled and said thank you. I wished her and her husband safe travels and Bella and I returned to our seat in front of Fountain City, where she was happy to see that the musician was still there playing music. I went inside to pay my tab for the coffee and water that we had gotten earlier during the rush. I realized it was lunch time and I needed more than coffee!

The new arcade place, Bytes and Brews, sounded good, but that was back on 12th and 2nd and I wasn't fixing to make Bella walk anymore. So, I called for a shuttle and off we went! We ate and socialized and played games, well Bella rested while I played games. I ran into an old friend, Sam Beaman, we had a chance to catch up and Rotary came up in conversation. He said, "Yeah I've been meaning to ask you about Rotary. What exactly is that?". So in a quick elevator style speech, I started with its foundation and discussed current projects and programs. Sam being a very involved person within the community and a heart for God would make a wonderful addition to our Rotary family, so I invited him to join me one day.

We then made our way back to Broadway and to reward Bella, I decided to take her to Fetch Dog Park. This was our first time going, as I'm very apprehensive of dog parks; more so of improperly trained dogs/humans, aggressive dogs or sick dogs. While I spoke with the staff member at the front gate, I observed the play that was going on inside. I noticed several staff members monitoring and interacting with the dogs, while putting fresh water out many times around the park. I also noticed that the human counterparts to said pups were never too far away. I decided to give it a try and just get a day pass.

Not so fast, I was told that I must first register Bella and present certain veterinary records. So, I had Dr.

Caldwell's office to send the proper records via email for approval. This made me feel much better about the health and wellness of the other dogs that Bella may interact with. I was also asked to leave Bella's treat bag outside as they don't allow outside food or drink for people or pups. This is actually a really good way to prevent food aggression with large groups of dogs, so again I'm impressed. I took her leash off, but left her jacket on at first just to observe how she would act. I quickly knew that the jacket wouldn't be needed and she could just play and enjoy herself.

It was such a treat and so very much needed for her! She made lots of new puppy friends; one named Kenny who's human is a neurologist who recently moved to town. After lots of conversation of TBI, Shepherd Center and Roosevelt the conversation led to Rotary. He then became interested in learning more as he had only been in town for six months and was eager to get involved within the community. This was another perfect moment for the elevator Rotary speech and I then invited him to join us at Rotary one day. He then asked if I knew a Spence Sealy. He mentioned that his wife knew Spence well and he remembered hearing him talk about Rotary. Of course, this led to more even more conversation about Rotary and the fellowship within.

As the sun began to set, more and more folks started to show up, so I figured it was a good time to look for some dinner. We walked next door to get some barbecue at Moe's. My food was absolutely delicious and Bella rested on the cool floor. After dinner it was time to go home and get some rest after a long day. While reflecting on just how many steps Bella puts in with me on a daily basis and just how many times she leads me to have conversations about Rotary, I think I'm going to find a way to get her a Rotary patch made for her vest.

Now that I think about it, the only reason that I took her to Fetch in the first place was because a conversation started about Bella one night over dinner at a local restaurant that allowed me to meet Martin, one of the owners of Fetch. We then started talking about Rotary and then another gentleman joined the conversation asking about Rotary. This was Matthew, the owner of The Goetchius House, who is now being proposed as a member.

As we were leaving the park tonight, Martin saw us and thanked me for giving them a try and said that they would love to see Bella again. I said absolutely, as long as you join us one day for lunch at the Trade Center. He asked what and where was that? I laughed and told him that The Columbus Rotary Club meets every Wednesday at noon at the Trade Center on Front Avenue and if he would join me as a guest one day, I would get Bella a membership to the park. He happily agreed, but what he didn't know is that I was already planning on getting her a membership anyway. So yet another win for Rotary!

I'm definitely getting Bella a Rotary patch for her jacket. She's already a walking Rotary billboard, we might as well make it official. Actually, if you really think about it, the very words that you have read started as a story about the daily adventures of Bella and ended as a conversation about Rotary. No, she's not a Rotary billboard; she's a just a Rotarian with 4 legs. She spends her days walking around with fellow Rotarians showing kindness and being helpful to strangers, for no other reason than because it's what she does.

Some people may just say, "she's a service dog, she's just doing what she's been taught to do". We have this saying in Rotary and it goes like this, "service above self". That sounds like the perfect kind of job for a service dog to me.

Thank you for reading about the daily adventures of Bella Grace, a service dog that truly puts service above self! If you haven't had the opportunity to meet her, stop by the Columbus Convention and Trade Center any Wednesday around noon. I invite you to join me for lunch and let us tell you a little bit about what Rotary means to us. Bella has many adventures that I could share with you and yes, most of them involve

Rotary. There was this one time that involved flying in a tornado, while going to a Rotary convention, but that's a story for another day. Until then always remember, service above self!

Posted by Julie Bond
March 8, 2024

Club News

Roswell Hosts Career Day

Investing into our youth yet again, the Roswell High School Career Day, sponsored by the **Roswell Rotary Club** for over 20 years, found over 50 area professionals talking about their profession to students in 15-minute segments. Broken up by industry like finance, real estate, law, engineering, and skilled trades, students had signed up for 5 categories they wanted to attend during the 6 morning sessions. During lunch, the students attended sessions focused on soft professional skills like interviewing, dress for success, and credit worthiness. The day ended with a panel discussion on entrepreneurship featuring Roswell business owners sharing their tips, failures, and celebrations.

Posted by Becky Nelson
March 4, 2024

Club News

North Fulton Brings Valentines Day to Seniors

In an effort to bring joy and fun into the lives of local senior citizens, Rotary Club of North Fulton hosted a Valentine's Day party at the Milton Senior Center. Rotarians led the seniors in an hour of bingo playing, complete with prizes they were eager to select. Following the bingo games, Rotarians served a delicious Italian lunch of baked ziti, meatballs, salad and cannoli. A fun time was had by all and the seniors seemed so appreciative of receiving this special attention!

PHOTOS:

EXIT
Reese's
Carmello
OREO
Vaseline

Posted by Lisa Gelber
March 5, 2024

Club News

Marietta Metro Shares Valentine's Joy with Seniors

Club members Rene Lanier, Lynn Lanier, Jim Bunda, Bob Thomas, and Charles Lassiter delivered the gift bags to the Cobb Senior Services office, where they were enthusiastically received by Cobb Senior Services employees Stacy Morton (2nd from left) and Angelica Swafford (3rd from left).

Valentine’s Day was a little sweeter this year for 350 senior citizens in Cobb County. Gift bags assembled by **Marietta Metro Rotarians** were delivered to Meals on Wheels clients and visitors to Cobb Senior Services. The bags contain puzzle books, mechanical pencils, assorted toiletries, and sugar-free candy.

In addition, roses in bud vases were delivered to the women of The Extension, an alcohol and substance use rehab center in Marietta. The Extension’s mission is to facilitate a transformation that empowers individuals and communities experiencing homelessness and substance use challenges to engage in a process of change in recovery. The process happens through counseling, life skills classes, and maintaining stable employment.
Posted by Sally Platt
March 5, 2024

Club News

Douglas County Rotarians Serve Meals to Homeless

The **Rotary Club of Douglas County** served over 100 hot meals to the residents of Sanctary Village. Sanctuary Village is a temporary residence for people in the Accountability Court in Douglas County. Judge Beau McClain helped establish the program after observing that homelessness was a barrier to success for many of the drug court participants.

Rotarian Joe Williams spent hours smoking ribs and chicken in preparation for the lunch. "This is a big population in the county, and they are trying to get back on their feet," Williams said. "We wanted to give them a hot meal and show that we are supporting them."

After serving at Sanctuary Village, the Rotary members traveled to the camp for the homeless near the courthouse and served about 25 residents there.

PHOTOS:

HEAVY DUTY ALUMINUM FOIL
500

Posted by Nell Boggs
March 5, 2024

Club News

Griffin Daybreak Honors Speakers with Books

Each of **Griffin Daybreak's** guest speakers sign a new children’s book that the club donates to the local library children’s section. Pictured here is Dr. Donald Green, President of Gordon State College who spoke to the club about his vision for the school. He is a strong proponent of higher education as a means to help people become more successful and productive in societyDr. Donald Green, President of Gordon State College who spoke to the club about his vision for the school. He is a strong proponent of higher education as a means to help people become more successful and productive in society. It seemed quite fitting to have him sign a book for our library program.

Posted by Debby Daniel-Bryant
March 4, 2024