

From Our District Governor

Here's to Water, Service and Camaraderie!



Governor Steve makes the leap at Alpharetta's Polar Plunge fundraiser!

Happy Belated Birthday, Rotarians! Rotary just celebrated its 121st birthday on Feb 23! I want to thank each of you for making an impact in the world. Your service projects and generosity to polio plus are making differences in so many lives. In fact, our district just exceeded over \$906K total giving and we are well on our way to exceed \$1M this year.

In this month's [March Rotarian Magazine](#), President Francesco Arrezzo discussed how critical water is to connect communities. Rotary Foundation has invested over \$230M in projects on this area of focus!

Speaking of water, **freezing water** that is, I participated in the Alpharetta club's annual Polar Bear Plunge and helped them raise over \$230K in donations to help them make a big community impact.

Overall the event raised over \$800K and was a master class in partnering up and making an impact in the community! I highly recommend other clubs look at this as a fundraiser in your area and “R&D” it *(“Rip it off and duplicate it!”). Great work!!

REGISTER: We are in “registration season” for our district! President Elect Learning (PELS) will be over when you all see this but please register for [District Leadership Assembly](#) and District Conference. Remember RYLA is approaching fast too and we need you all to contact the RYLA team to give them student number estimates. There is also the 3 district Atlanta United game on March 7. Sign up at the [district website calendar](#) ASAP.

Membership: I am pleased to announce that our district chartered a new Rotaract Club, **Rotaract Club of Southern Crescent**, sponsored by RC of Griffin! I signed charter paperwork for the new **Georgia Rotary Professional Alliance Club**, sponsored by RC of Johns Creek North Fulton. Additionally, Membership Chair Audley Knight and his team, Jose Gonzalez, DGND Amy Benton, Anna Finn, Dave Schwickerath and Rick Clark have been engaged helping form up a new evening club with 35-40 members that will likely meet at the GA Tech Hotel and Conference Center in the evenings. Well done, team!

Foundation Giving: Overall giving is strong for the majority of clubs. YTD district giving for Annual Fund and Polio Plus is currently at \$906K! I am amazed about how you all have been so inspired to give. Please send in your contributions as soon as you can if your club is aiming for awards in 25-26. We are looking at awards data by March 15 ahead of district conference and giving is highly encouraged throughout this Rotary year.

District Conference planning: We have 257 sign ups so far and increasing daily. Prices go up in early March. I asked the team to extend the next increase to March 3 to allow PE's to attend PELS first and then sign up if they had not. We need to get our guest/meal count right. We have amazing speakers and fun activities planned. Please sign up and attend and connect! Agenda with speaker photos attached. We also are working on having a famous actress/Rotary ambassador attend and are still working this out with RI.

Service: I had several adventures in service this month and attending several very exciting programs.

- Rotary Club of Marietta invited DGN Buck Buchanan and me to meet Governor and First Lady Kemp in a very nice program. The club made the visit work very smoothly and honored the Governor with style and grace.
- I was invited to attend the STAR awards for teachers and students with RC of Decatur and was so inspired to see how bright our future is with these students. This is a very strong annual tradition there.
- I also saw the results of the RC of South Dekalb's peace pole planting project at their wonderful meeting location, Privi at Stonecrest . That was a wonderful visit and experience.
- I also had the privilege to host former Rotary International Peace Scholar Pushpi Weekaroon who shared so many stories of her work and challenges driving peace in so many locales. She spoke to RC of Peachtree City in a very quick visit to Atlanta.
- Opioid grants: IPDG Gordon Owens has been communicating with each of the clubs that have requested opioid grant funding to move forward with any of the projects. This should lead to many positive outcomes for our communities now and in the future.

District Fun/Camaraderie Events for 2026: Please keep in mind the series of events set up for camaraderie and fellowship. You can see the district calendar for details **contact Shawn Bendig** of Rotary Club of Vinings Cumberland with questions.

- March 7 -- Atlanta United Soccer at Mercedes Benz stadium with all three Georgia Rotary Districts!
- Saturday, April 4 at 7pm - Atlanta Vibe Volleyball vs Orlando Valkyries Georgia State University Convocation Center 455 Capitol Avenue SE in Atlanta GA
- April 16-19 - District Conference - Lake Lanier Islands, GA
- May 16 - Saturday, 7:15pm, Truist Park - Atlanta Braves vs Boston Red Sox

I am available to do second club visits and help out with recognitions and club awards too if you want. Please contact [District Secretary Mandy Timmons](#) if you are interested in this.

PHOTOS:



DG Steve joins Decatur in its annual STAR student awards presentation



DG Steve and DGE Cynthia join South DeKalb as it installs its peace pole



DG Steve with our visiting Peace Scholar at Peachtree City Rotary

Posted by Steve Ivory
February 28, 2026

District Conference 2026

Come for Rotary; Stay for Fun!



Looking for inspiration, connection and fun, your 2026 District Conference is designed to balance meaningful Rotary content with relaxation and fellowship. Join us April 16-19, 2026 at Lake Lanier Island for all this and more! You can [register now on the District 6900 website!](#)

Thursday evening begins with the Presidents dinner while other attendees enjoy dining at one of the resort restaurants. The night continues in our three lakefront Mega Hospitality Suites- Metro North, Metro South and Georgia at Large.

Friday morning offers choices to fit every interest: golf, spa, nature walk, pickleball or a scenic lake cruise. We gather for lunch at GameChangers featuring axe throwing, virtual reality sports and arcade games. Friday evening includes our first general session with dinner, speaker, dessert reception and more fun in the Mega Hospitality Suites.

Saturday starts with a breakfast session celebrating Rotary Youth followed by the best practices Breakout forums. The afternoon is free for beach time and boating. Saturday night brings our Club Awards Celebration with a plated dinner, speaker and dancing with a live band.

We close Sunday morning with breakfast and a look at the future of Rotary.

Join us for learning, laughter and unforgettable fellowship. All the best of Rotary!

PHOTOS:

LAKE LANIER
APRIL 16-19, 2026
rotary6900.org/event/8523

Rotary
District 6900

Agenda

Thursday, April 16:

- 4:00 - 5:45 pm - Welcome Lounge Open
- 6:00 - 8:00 pm - Invitation Only Dinner - Landshark Restaurant
- 8:00 - 10:30 pm - Hospitality Suites at the Legacy Villas*
 - North Metro Dance Party
 - South Metro Karaoke
 - "Rest" of District (chill vibes & conversation)

Friday, April 17:

- 8:30 - 9:30 am - Invitation Only Breakfast
- 8:00 - 12:00 - Various Activities (*Registration Required*)
- 9:00 - 11:00 - Welcome Lounge & Collaboration Station Open
- 12:00 - 2:30 - GameChang3 Lunch & Team Competition
- 2:00 - 4:00 - Collaboration Station & House of Friendship Open
- 2:15 - 4:15 - Welcome Lounge Open
- 3:15 - 4:15 - Service Project
- 5:15 - 5:45 - Mix & Mingle
- 5:45 - 7:15 - **DINNER & FIRST SESSION**
 - Keynote Speaker | Jacquelyn Harmon**
 - Phenomenal Life Changes by Rotary LOL Engagement
- 7:15 - 8:00 - Coffee & Dessert Reception for DGE Cynthia Edwards
- 8:00 - 11:30 - Hospitality Suites at the Legacy Villas*

Saturday, April 18:

- 8:30 - 9:45 - Breakfast - Celebrating our Youth
- 9:00 - 10:30 - Welcome Lounge Open
- 9:30 - 11:30 - Collaboration Station Open
- 10:00 - 10:45 - **1st Breakout Session**
- 11:00 - 11:45 - **2nd Breakout Session**
- 12:00 - 4:00 - On Your Own Options: Golf, Pickleball, Pool, Spa
- 2:00 - 4:00 - Collaboration Station & House of Friendship Open
- 5:15 - 6:00 - DG Steve Reception (Semi-Formal)
 - Peachtree Pavilion Amphitheater
- 6:00 - 10:00 - **DINNER & DANCE PARTY**
 - Keynote Speaker | DG Ramesh Ferris**
 - Polio Survivor to Service Leader
- 10:00 - 11:30 - Hospitality Suites at the Legacy Villas*

Sunday, April 19:

- 7:30 - 8:15 - Non-denominational worship service
- 8:15 - 10:00 - **Breakfast & Final Session**

Dress Code

- Friday PM: BUSINESS CASUAL
- Saturday AM: YOUTHFUL CASUAL
- Saturday PM: COCKTAIL CHIC
- Sunday AM: TRAVELER RELAXED

Jacquelyn Harmon

Ramesh Ferris

Posted by Lisa Carlisle
February 27, 2026

Our Rotary Foundation

A Lot to Celebrate: Alpharetta Giving, Rotary's Birthday and PEELS!

by Bob Hagan, District Foundation Chair



Rotary's Founders: Gustavus "Gus" Loehr, Silvester Schiele, Hiram Shorey and Paul Harris

It's always fun to trumpet out extremely good news. Therefore, with great pleasure, I want to congratulate the **Rotary Club of Alpharetta** on becoming a million-dollar club in Foundation giving. It is truly quite a feat! Achieving this in 43 years as a club is a tremendous achievement. They have made an outstanding difference as a club, for our district and Rotary International. A hearty and deserved congratulations!!

As it would happen, I am writing this newsletter on February 23, 2026. A perfect date to do so as it is the anniversary of our founding. Happy 120th Birthday Rotary!! We were officially founded on February 23, 1905, in the Unity Building in Chicago, Il. by attorney Paul Harris. The initial Rotary Club of Chicago included four members who you see in the photo to the left of this article. They are from left to right: Gustavus "Gus" Loehr, Silvester Schiele, Hiram Shorey and Paul Harris.

These three business associates Paul brought together to form Rotary came from a variety of backgrounds. Silvester Schiele was a client of Paul's and was a coal dealer. It was with Silvester that Paul first shared the idea of a new kind of club for professionals. From that conversation Rotary was started and became the world's first service organization with Harris being named the first president of what would evolve into what we now know as Rotary International. Silvester was the first president of the Rotary Club of Chicago. "Gus" Loehr was a mining engineer, and it was in his office on the seventh floor of the Unity Building on Dearborn Street that the four met on February 23rd. Because of deteriorating health, Gus was forced to leave the club but remained a strong supporter until his death at age 53. Hiram Shorey was an invited guest to that first meeting by Gus. Hiram was a merchant tailor and is recognized as a founding member, though he only remained in the club for a very short time before he moved back to his home State of Maine. When he returned to Chicago sometime later, he rejoined the club briefly though he always remained a strong supporter of the Rotary cause.

I hope this short journey down our historical memory lane was as fun for you as it was for me researching and writing it. Join me in wishing our Rotary family a very Happy 120th Birthday!

Let me shift gears now in closing this article to the PELS meeting held in Atlanta. By the time you read this, we will have already had our PELS meeting as it runs from Feb. 28 to March 1. For those of you who might not be familiar with PELS, it stands for **P**resident-**E**lect **L**earning **S**eminars. As the title suggests, it is primarily for incoming club Presidents, however others certainly can and do attend. It is required that the President-Elects do attend this two-day seminar where they all come together to meet the District Leadership Team for Rotary year 2026/2027.

Much is learned at these sessions in terms of strategies along with developing personal relationships with the district leadership. However, many of them will say a key benefit is getting to know their counterparts in other clubs whom they can call on for additional thoughts, ideas and see what is working in other clubs. One of the key focuses of this year's sessions was making sure the clubs don't look at each other as competitors but rather as resources for each other and looking more at rating themselves based on how they have done in the past and working to always raise the bar in their own club. In the sessions they work to plan out their year working side by side with each other and hand in hand with the district leadership there to assist them. They also get to develop a close bond with their Assistant Governors, who are always there ready and willing to assist them. It is an extremely valuable time for these PE's, meaningful to making their PE year successful, but also helping them plan for a successful year as Club President which in turn is vital to the overall Rotary organization.

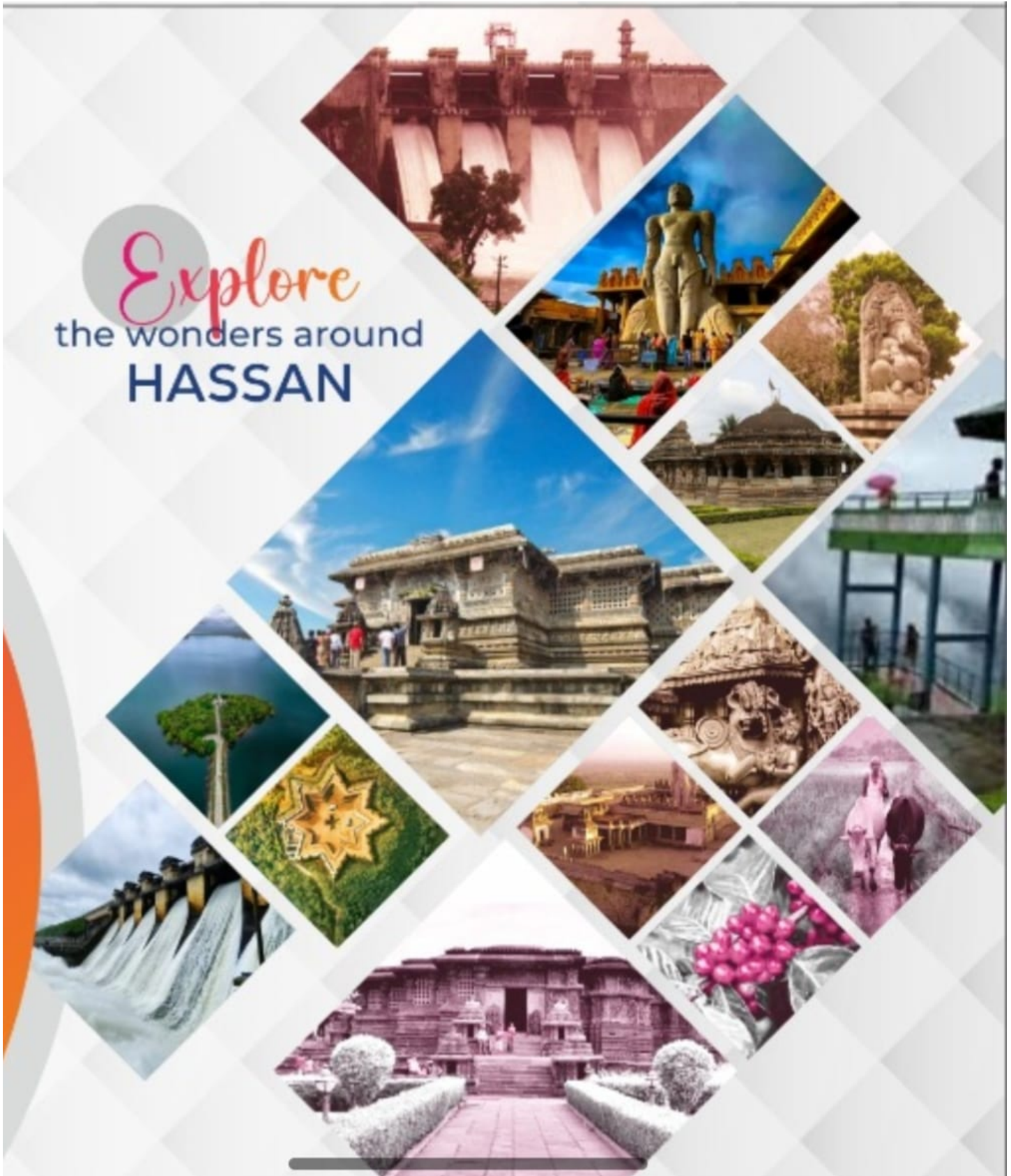
In addition to meeting the Leadership at the district level, they also were treated to a few fun surprise guests. It is a fun and exciting two-day session, one I hope those of you reading this will aspire to in the future. It's truly worth the experience.

If I can personally assist you in any way, please don't hesitate to reach out to me via cell or email. I'm here to help and together we will....Unite for good!

Posted by Bob Hagan
February 28, 2026

Join Our Friendship Exchange Trip to India

by Ada Wikina, District 6900 Rotary Friendship Exchange Chair



Calling on D6900 Rotarians who are ready to engage in RFE visit to D3182 in India during the first week of December 2026.

For an unforgettable and truly inspiring Rotary Friendship Exchange, a ten-day visit (excluding travel days) would be absolutely perfect. This allows the team to soak in every moment at a relaxed yet vibrant

pace—especially important for those experiencing India for the very first time. Rather than rushing from place to place, participants will have time to connect deeply, build lasting friendships, and fully embrace the warmth, color, and energy of India.

We propose exploring the dynamic state of Karnataka in South India—a region where cutting-edge innovation meets ancient heritage, and where Rotary fellowship thrives alongside breathtaking natural beauty.

The adventure begins in Bengaluru, India’s electrifying tech capital and a city that pulses with creativity and opportunity. Here, Rotary fellowship sets the tone for the journey. Imagine evenings filled with mesmerizing classical music and dance performances, vibrant culinary experiences featuring authentic South Indian flavors, and meaningful conversations with local Rotarians. Vocational visits may include world-class IT companies, dynamic startups, renowned educational institutions, and leading hospitals—offering a powerful glimpse into modern India in action. Between engagements, the team can wander through the lush greenery of Lalbagh Botanical Garden and Cubbon Park, explore the grandeur of Bangalore Palace, and experience the buzz of colorful local markets.

Next, the journey unfolds in Hassan, where Rotary service and community engagement take center stage. This is where tradition comes alive. Participants can immerse themselves in rural culture, experience captivating folk arts, and witness impactful service projects in education, agriculture, and healthcare. A visit to the awe-inspiring temple towns of Belur and Halebidu reveals intricately carved stone temples that feel like stepping into a living masterpiece of history. The hauntingly beautiful Shettihalli Rosary Church, rising from the waters, offers a truly unforgettable sight.

From there, the team escapes into the emerald hills of Chikmagalur, a paradise of coffee plantations and cool mountain air. Here, the pace softens into pure enjoyment and connection. Participants can stroll through aromatic coffee estates, learn about the secrets of coffee cultivation, and experience eco-tourism initiatives rooted in sustainability. Adventurous spirits can trek to Mullayanagiri—the highest peak in Karnataka—or explore the misty slopes of Baba Budangiri. Waterfalls, rolling hills, and endless green landscapes provide the perfect backdrop for friendship and reflection.

The grand finale awaits in Sakaleshpur, nestled in the spectacular Western Ghats. This region is a nature lover’s dream—lush forests, dramatic viewpoints, and fresh mountain breezes. The team can engage with sustainable farming initiatives, visit eco-resorts, and experience village life firsthand. Exploring the star-shaped Manjarabad Fort and taking in the panoramic vistas from Bisle Ghat will leave everyone inspired by the region’s natural grandeur.

This extraordinary combination of vibrant city life, profound Rotary fellowship, meaningful service projects, cultural immersion, vocational exchange, and stunning landscapes creates a journey that is not just a visit—but a transformative experience. Participants will leave Karnataka not only with incredible memories and photographs, but with lifelong friendships, renewed inspiration, and a deep connection to the spirit of Rotary in India.

If you want to be part of this team on this amazing trip, send me an email at awikina@hotmail.com or call me on 4044215825. This will be a trip of a life time. Remember, that our hosts will offer accommodation in their homes to make for an interactive visit.

Posted by Ada Wikina

February 20, 2026

RYLA Update

LUCKY to have RYLA!



It's getting closer to RYLA time! With all the talk this month about "lucky" things and "being lucky" we thought we'd share why we think anyone who goes to RYLA is the luckiest of all for the many positives they gain from the experience:

- Personal Development
- Meeting Other Like-Minded People
- Learning from Others
- Confidence Boost
- Teamwork and Collaboration
- Looks good on Applications and Resumes
- Inspiration to Reach Future Goals
- Opportunities to Challenge Yourself
- Grow Your Impact and Positive Influence on Others

This is just a small sample of the many benefits of attending RYLA - and this goes for both students and staff. We all gain something from the time we spend together each summer. And it's not just us - You and Your Clubs benefit as well. Do you want to grow leaders for your schools and communities? Send a student

to RYLA. Do you want to develop future Rotary members to join your clubs and engage in service? Send a student to RYLA. Do you want to experience the energy and passion that goes into growing your students into strong leaders? Come visit RYLA for yourself!

If you and your club want to get in on all the great things that come along with sponsoring a student to RYLA, use one of the following routes to send in your RSVP:

1. Use this link to complete our RSVP online: <https://forms.gle/SsLFt1wFuW38UgPk8>
2. Visit our page to download the forms: www.rotary6900.org/page/656
3. Email us at RYLA6900@gmail.com for information and answers to your questions ?

If your club is already signed up, Student Registration Payments are Due NOW. Please mail your check to:

Rotary Youth Leadership Awards

c/o Susan Ruckman

P.O. Box 1547

Americus, GA 31709

For Online Payments: Send your name, email address, club name, and amount to be paid (# of students + # of bus rides if any) to us at RYLA6900@gmail.com and we will send you an invoice through Square.

If you have already selected your students, please complete and return the Student Application Brochure (available on our district website page www.rotary6900.org/page/656) at your earliest convenience.

As always, if you have any questions at all please reach out to Susan Ruckman or Jaclyn Donovan and they will help you out. We can't wait to see your students at RYLA!!

Posted by Jaclyn Donovan

February 20, 2026

Our Rotary Foundation

Why We Give: Enduring Impact, Fellowship at Work



As we consider giving money to The Rotary Foundation, it's important to consider how that money enables us to do good in the world and the lasting relationships and friendships it builds. Here's an example of just that ... In 2022, the **Roswell Rotary Club** partnered with the Rotary Club of Panama Nordeste on a Global Grant bringing clean water to remote, underserved communities in Panama. The project delivered lasting

impact—and lasting friendships. Recently, we were able to help those friends again.

Landy Cheucarama, a local village leader, worked tirelessly to help implement the grant. Recently, we learned his region had suffered devastating crop losses, and that the boat motor his family relies on for daily life had failed.

With few roads, river travel is essential, Roswell Rotarians acted quickly. An ad-hoc effort raised funds for a new motor in just days. Rotarian Langdon Hollingsworth traveled to Panama and personally delivered it—five hours away by rented truck.

In a video you can watch by clicking [here](#), Landy shares his gratitude. This is Rotary fellowship at work: relationships that endure, and service that continues long after a grant is complete.

Your contributions to The Rotary Foundation can make a difference here at home anywhere around the world to make lives better. Think about how you can help. Contact me if you'd like to know more.

Posted by Lee Hollingsworth
February 4, 2026

Laws of Life

Partnering with Kennesaw Capstone and Judging 2026 Essays

Together, we're building character — one essay, one student, and one life lesson at a time.

School-Level
Essay Judge
Kick-off Training
2025-2026

Laws of Life
THE GEORGIA ROTARY CLUBS
LAWS OF LIFE
ESSAY CONTEST

Carol Gray Walker, Elizabeth, Steve Curry, Mary K. Widener, Jim Bailey, Cynthia, Amber Clark, Jo Phillips, Ray Huebschmann, Merrean McDonald, Debby Ciccone, Susan Waltman, Beth Andersen, LouAnn Medlock, Ebb Albin UCB, Warren

Georgia Laws of Life is proud to partner with Kennesaw State University's College of Computing and Software Engineering through its Capstone Program.

This semester, a team of KSU students is working directly with Georgia Laws of Life to analyze workflows and implement a new CRM system that will strengthen our management of school partnerships, Rotary engagement, and statewide growth. Unlike traditional classroom assignments, the Capstone Program places students in real-world client engagements—allowing them to develop technical expertise while building the professional, client-facing skills that prepare them for today's workforce.

Since 2023, the Capstone Program has expanded to more than 35 industry-sponsored projects each semester, emphasizing high-quality, relevant experiences where students can deliver meaningful impact. According to Alla Kemelmakher, Director of Partnerships and Events, our project exemplifies that mission: Students “gain tangible CRM implementation experience for their résumés while contributing to an organization whose mission—supporting school children—genuinely resonates with them. I was truly impressed by how much the cause matters to the teams.”

We are grateful to KSU for investing its talent and expertise into strengthening Georgia Laws of Life's future—while helping prepare the next generation of professionals.

To learn more about the Capstone Program or partnership opportunities, contact Alla Kemelmakher at alla.kemelmakher@kennesaw.edu or 404-452-9373.

The Road to State Winners is Underway

Judging for this year's Georgia Laws of Life Essay Contest is officially underway! A total of 1,350 top student essays from high schools across Georgia are now being evaluated by 155 Rotarians and Community Leaders statewide.

Volunteers serve as School Judges, State Judges, or both, completing all evaluations online through our Award Force platform. School-level judges participate in a kick-off training, independently read and score 30-48 essays, and then join a virtual team discussion to determine school-level winners. This round of judging takes place from mid-February through early March.

State-level judges begin their work on March 26, using a blind review process to carefully rank 16-18 of the highest-scoring essays from across the state. Final rankings are submitted by March 29.

Judges contribute several hours of thoughtful reading and discussion to ensure every essay receives careful consideration. We are incredibly grateful for their time, integrity, and commitment to honoring each student's voice.

School-level winners will be announced on March 26, followed by the State Winners on April 2. Stay tuned as we prepare to celebrate these remarkable students and share their inspiring Laws of Life essays with you.

Posted by Carol Gray Walker
February 25, 2026

RLI Movement Continues to Grow



2026 has continued to get off to a strong start for RLI, as 23 more members joined the District 6900 RLI movement in Marietta on February 21. There was a spirit of enthusiasm throughout the day despite the bad weather, as members learned, shared, and had fun. Members increased their Rotary knowledge while also increasing their leadership skills.

Many thanks to Ron Lunk and the kind folks at Life University for providing a first-class experience and venue, helping to set up the event, and ordering the food and drinks. Special thanks to the RLI team, who led the discussions to the members: Anthony Slaughter, Raymond Ray and yours truly. Special thanks go to Allen Bowns, Debby Ciccone and Ed Davis from District 6910. Ed stepped in with a day's notice after one of our DLs was rushed to the hospital.

Join us to enhance your facilitation skills, connect with peers, and enjoy a full day of learning and networking at the next onsite event, which will be announced soon. Don't want to wait? You can access RLI online at RLIsunshine.org/course-information/course-schedule/ to secure your spot!

PHOTOS:



Posted by Tracy Van Norman
February 27, 2026

Our Rotary Foundation

Paul Harris Society Welcomes New Member



Governor Steve welcomed **David Lighten of the Rotary Club of Lake Spivey/Clayton County** to the Paul Harris Society (PHS). Members of the PHS commit to making a \$1,000 annual contribution to The Rotary Foundation to further its work of changing lives every day.

David was motivated to become a PHS member because he deeply believes in the values of service and community that Rotary embodies. "As a retired combat veteran and veteran service officer, I have witnessed the profound impact that dedicated support can have on individuals and families," David said. He continued, "I am honored to be a part of a group that fosters positive change and embodies the spirit of giving back."

As Rotarians, we all know the vast impact our Foundation has on communities in our backyard and around the world. Joining the PHS gives you the opportunity to be a force in changing lives. Becoming a member is easy. Simply contact Governor Steve, PDG Bob Hagan or Lauri Young (District PHS Chair) for further information.

Thank you, David, for your dedication and commitment to the Rotary International Foundation.

Posted by Lauri Young
February 25, 2026

Fellowship Opportunity

Rotary Means Business



Rotary Means Business (RMB) is a global fellowship that encourages Rotarians to support one another's professional success through business referrals and mentoring. Watch the newsletter for upcoming events. If you want to get involved, please contact Carter Stout at 770.349.8201 or cstout@stoutkaiser.com

Posted by Carter Stout
February 25, 2026

Membership

Welcome to the New Rotaract Club of Southern Crescent!



We are pleased to announce that our district chartered a new Rotaract Club, **Rotaract Club of Southern Crescent**, sponsored by the **Rotary Club of Griffin!**

A heartfelt thank you to faculty sponsor Dr. Shannor Huff for his leadership and dedication to empowering these outstanding students. We were honored by the presence of Dr. Irving Clark, President of Southern Crescent Technical College, along with many proud parents and supporters who joined the celebration.

Special appreciation to Area Governor Kathleen Smith and Past President William Wilson for their encouragement and continued support of Rotaract and youth engagement across the district.

We were also delighted to have the event visited by District Rotaract Chair Caroline Lazaro, whose passion for Rotaract continues to inspire students across the district.

Posted by Steve Ivory

March 1, 2026

Club News

Alpharetta Polar Plunge Raises Big Money



The **Alpharetta Rotary Plunge**, held on February 7, raised \$230,000 for club community projects and almost \$800,000 for the 235 causes that participated in the plunge. The temperature was only in the mid 40's when scores of fundraisers, many in costumes, braved the cold by jumping into the Wills Park Pool. Organizations that benefited that day included the Lionheart Life Center, Meals by Grace, Jafuta Foundation, Champions Community Foundation and many more. The costumes included superhero outfits, penguins, and a Bavarian theme. More than 1,635 donors contributed that day.

PHOTOS:







Posted by Gail LaFleche
February 25, 2026

Brookhaven Accepting Grant Applications



Brookhaven Rotarians joined other community groups for February's Arbor Day tree planting event cohosted by the Murphey Candler Park Conservancy and Brookhaven's Tree Canopy Preservation team

The **Brookhaven Rotary Club** is excited to announce a new program designed to provide grants, through the Brookhaven Rotary Foundation, to local organizations that support the city of Brookhaven community. Club President Jennifer Yanulavich adds, "If you know of a Brookhaven non-profit organization that may have a need for financial support, you can be their Rotarian champion! Even if you're a Rotarian outside of Brookhaven."

Applicant organizations need not be physically located in the city of Brookhaven but must show a direct link to service to citizens who reside in Brookhaven, Georgia. For its inaugural year, the club expects to select six organizations from among those that apply, to receive one of the following grant awards:

- One organization to receive a \$5,000 grant
- Five organizations to receive a \$1,000 grant

Supporting Our Community

The Brookhaven Rotary Club is very pleased to be able to support our community in the service of our members, but also with significant donations of funds raised through our members and supporters. Requests are received and evaluated by a Charity Committee that makes recommendations to the Board of Directors on awards and amounts to fund, from the requests the Club receives in the application period of February 18 to March 18, 2026.

Giving Through Grants

This committee is open to receive applications from any charitable entity for needs that support the club's service priorities, can demonstrate responsible fiscal management and provide a significant impact on our Brookhaven community and our service environment.

For more details on the **Brookhaven Rotary Club Charity Grant Program** and to complete an application, please click [here](#). All applications must be received by March 18, 2026. Further inquiries may be sent to rotarybrookhaven@gmail.com .

Posted by Linda Hatten

February 20, 2026

Club News

North Fulton Brightens Seniors' Valentines Day



North Fulton Rotarians were thrilled to share our hearts and our hands at the Crabapple Senior Center in February. The morning kicked off with helping participants create beautiful individual floral arrangements to take home, followed by crafting Valentine-themed garland to decorate the center. These creative activities were not only fun, but also great for stimulating the brain.

Next came some lively (and competitive!) rounds of bingo. Everyone walked away a winner! We wrapped up the morning with a delicious Italian lunch and plenty of time to chat and connect with our new friends. We can't wait to plan another visit with this wonderful, engaging group.

PHOTOS:



Posted by Lisa Gelber
February 25, 2026

Club News

Alpharetta Celebrates Annual Golden Gala



The **Rotary Club of Alpharetta** held its second Annual Golden Gala on February 13 at the American Legion; it was a huge success. Over 120 seniors attended and enjoyed music, dancing, line dance lessons, refreshments, raffles and more! The guests wore their favorite party attire and joined their friends for this free event that included fun and community. They were honored at this event because Aging is not something to hide - it is something to celebrate!

Posted by Gail LaFleche
February 25, 2026

Club News

Rotary Club of Columbus Completes Meaningful Project in Meeting



The **Rotary Club of Columbus** recently transformed its regular gathering into a hands-on act of service, demonstrating what it truly means to live out Rotary’s motto, Service Above Self. During a recent Done-In-A-Meeting project, Rotarians paused their usual agenda to work side-by-side filling hygiene bags for neighbors in need. The completed bags will benefit three local organizations making a direct impact in the community: Valley Rescue Mission, Stewart Community Home, and Home for Good.

The Rotary Club of Columbus recently transformed its regular gathering into a hands-on act of service, demonstrating what it truly means to live out Rotary’s motto, Service Above Self.

During a recent Done-In-A-Meeting project, Rotarians paused their usual agenda to work side-by-side filling hygiene bags for neighbors in need. The completed bags will benefit three local organizations making a direct impact in the community: Valley Rescue Mission, Stewart Community Home, and Home for Good.

The project served as a reminder that meaningful service does not always require a large event — sometimes it simply takes people willing to show up, work together, and care intentionally for others. Members were encouraged to participate in assembling the bags, turning an ordinary meeting into an opportunity to make a tangible difference.

“Rotary is at its best when service moves from conversation to action,” said Alan Harkness, Club

President. "When we come together with purpose, even a simple project like this becomes something powerful for our community. These hygiene bags represent dignity, compassion, and hope for those who receive them."

The meeting concluded with the recitation of The Four-Way Test, reinforcing Rotary's shared commitment to ethical leadership, integrity, and service that puts others first.

Through projects like this, the Rotary Club of Columbus continues to demonstrate how local professionals can unite to create lasting impact — one act of service at a time.

PHOTOS:





Posted by LeighAnn DiCesaris
February 20, 2026

Club News

Atlanta West End Strengthens Youth Through School Snack Initiative



The **Rotary Club of Atlanta West End (AWER)** has launched and delivered multiple rounds of food support to students at Booker T. Washington High School, ensuring that students have access to nourishment during school breaks when resources might be stretched thin at home. This initiative puts Rotary's Youth Service Avenue into action in a very tangible way. Through the Booker T. Washington Snack Initiative, AWER members have already completed two major deliveries of food and gift cards this Rotary year, with a third delivery scheduled for Spring Break in April 2026 and another planned for the last day of school in May.

Working directly with the school's counseling and social work departments, AWER member Bridgette Long identified a pressing concern: many students rely on school-based food access during the academic week, and extended breaks can create gaps in support.

In response, Rotarians and community partners collected shelf-stable snacks and foodstuffs such as macaroni cups and noodles, applesauce and fruit cups, granola bars, and gallon-sized bags for packing weekend food kits. Items were collected at our weekly Friday lunchtime meetings at the GA Tech Hotel & Conference Center and also purchased through an Amazon wishlist to simplify participation and broaden community involvement.

During the February winter break delivery, AWER members ensured the school pantry remained stocked, helping prevent depletion of essential supplies. The school counselor, Ms. Robinson, expressed deep gratitude, noting how meaningful this partnership is for students and families.

In the leadup to Thanksgiving, the project expanded even further when AWER member Carolina Ramos rallied friends and family to donate Kroger gift cards, ensuring households could purchase fresh food items to complement pantry staples. These additional resources extended the club's impact beyond

students to entire families.

Here in the Atlanta West End Club, we believe that service and fellowship go hand in hand. Projects like this remind us why we joined in the first place, and they tend to bring new members in too. They embody AWER's mission to build fellowship while creating sustainable community impact.

What makes this initiative especially powerful is its continuity. Rather than limiting support to a single holiday drive, AWER committed to ongoing deliveries throughout the school year:

- Thanksgiving Break 2025
- Winter Break 2026
- Spring Break 2026 (Upcoming)
- End of School Year 2026 (Planned)

By structuring the initiative around school breaks, the club created a predictable rhythm of support, strengthening trust and partnership with school leadership. District 6900 clubs looking for replicable, relationship-driven youth initiatives may find inspiration in this model.

Special shoutout to AWER member Bridgette Long for leading our club in this initiative, and to Carolina Ramos for going above and beyond to extend our reach into the community. Both embody the spirit of Rotary and Service Above Self.

Posted by Jared Evans
February 25, 2026

Club News

Roswell Hosts Conference for Emerging High School Leaders



Roswell Rotary Club hosted the annual Leadership 20/20 1-day conference this February with approximately 70 emerging student leaders from Roswell High School attending. Without a doubt, this over 30-year tradition was a quiet yet steady testament of collaboration between Roswell HS, Roswell HS

PTSA and the Roswell Rotary Club.

Representing every corner of the school, the students were nominated by a teacher or staff for showing leadership qualities in the hallway, classroom, club meeting or playing field. They learned about their own leadership style as well as complimentary ones during the morning session. Having taken the DISC test before arriving, Executive Coach Maggie Ishack (Focal Point Coaching) not only introduced them to the “jargon” of leadership styles but also had them participate in several activities to see how it felt to work together.

Before lunch, Roswell Rotary President Trummie Lee Patrick III congratulated students on their nomination and took a group picture. At lunch, they met Rotarians as well as listened to a “fireside chat” between long-time friends Roswell Rotarian Dave Schmit and retired Naval Colonel Aviator Dwight Schmidt who talked about the joys and challenges of becoming professionals while maintaining important personal relationships. After lunch, they participated in break-out groups where local professionals talked about relevant Hot Topics selected by RHS Social Worker, Mrs. Val Rogers:

- DDS. Vatsala Jajoo-The ills of Vaping from a Medical Perspective
- Mr. Nnamdi Anene-Communication 101/Prepping for Post HS Communication Skills
- Mrs. Christiana Johnson/Redefining Failure as Research
- Mr. Joshua Willam/7 Descreening Habits for Successful 16-21-year-old students

The RRC 20/20 committee starts meeting in late October for the day to come together seamlessly. Thank you to Roswell Rotarians Kathy Igou, Frederick Levy and Becky Nelson, Roswell HS CTAE Dept Chair Katherine Knowles and Roswell HS PTSA members Stacy Pearlman and Marianne Scherck. Roswell's commitment to our youth is Service Above Self in action.

Posted by Becky Nelson
February 26, 2026

Club News

Buckhead Pairs School Kids and Shelter Dog Projects



The **Buckhead Rotary Club** brought two of its signature projects together in a Valentine's Day effort to benefit shelter dogs and children who have experienced homelessness themselves.

Buckhead Rotary members visited The Boyce L. Ansley School to make dog and cat toys with the students, grades K - 6 and write Valentine's Day messages for the animals at LifeLine Animal Project. The club also purchased more than 20 crates for the animals in the shelter, and the children wrote messages to adorn the crates saying things like "I hope you get adopted soon," and "I love you." A foster dog was brought in to participate in the event, giving the children a hands-on lesson in how to pet a dog safely, while enjoying a few treats from the kids as well.

The project was made possible in part by a grant from The Rotary Foundation of Rotary International to support education, one of the organization's seven areas of focus. The grant funded the purchase of the crates, the art supplies and Valentine's Day cookies for the children.

The Boyce Ansley School and LifeLine Animal project are two of the club's signature community service projects, meaning they each receive donations every year, over three years. The signature projects provide focus for the club, and allow it, through funding and by providing volunteers over the three years, to make a more significant impact on key charities in the community.

The Boyce L. Ansley School is a tuition-free, private school for children who have or are currently experiencing homelessness. LifeLine Animal Project is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit and the largest animal welfare

organization in Georgia. LifeLine manages DeKalb and Fulton County Animal Services, the only open-intake shelters in Atlanta.

Posted by Shelley Hammell
February 25, 2026

Club News

Dunwoody Rotarians Help Anchor Place Respite Celebrate Valentine's Day



Anchor Place Respite Care in Dunwoody held a very special "Harmony and Hearts" community Valentine's Day celebration for caregivers and their family members living with memory issues - all with some help and support from **Dunwoody Rotarians**. Past President Louise Barden helped with event planning and Charlie and Anita Augello provided a tasty Italian lunch from the East 48th Street Market. Flower

arrangements created by Anchor Place participants adorned the tables. Members of The Loose Shoes Band provided music that had the whole room dancing - some said this was the first time they'd danced with their partner in many years.

The Rotary Club of Dunwoody helped start Anchor Place almost three years ago - and has logged well over 1,000 volunteer hours since then. Anchor Place warmly welcomes older adults living with mild-to-moderate memory issues and other cognitive challenges to our community space. Participants enjoy a range of stimulating activities, including music, art, cognitive stimulation, games, service projects, gentle movement, a shared meal, prayer, conversation, and lots of laughter.

If you're interested in starting a respite care program in your community, contact us to learn more about our journey. And if you like golf, know that part of our May 18, 2026 FORE! the Memories golf tournament proceeds will help support Anchor Place.

Posted by Jackie Cuthbert
February 26, 2026

Club News

Atlanta Southern Crescent Delivers Valentines

SPREADING VALENTINE'S DAY JOY!

The Rotary Club of Atlanta Southern Crescent delivered 50 valentines for the residents and staff of the Jonesboro Senior Assisted Living on Saturday, February 7th.

President, Mahli Lowder, and Rotarian, Dawn Hartman, enjoyed delivering the valentines and loved seeing the joy they brought. ♥



Rotary Club of
**Atlanta Southern
Crescent**

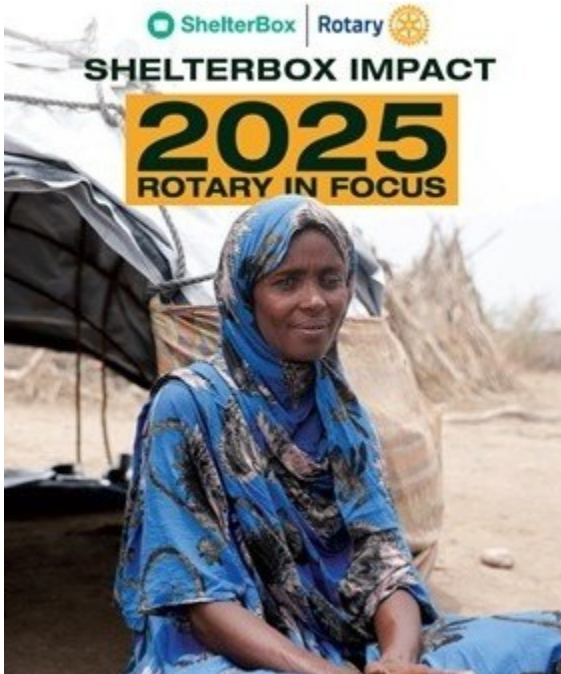


50 valentines
delivered to
residents & staff! ♥

The **Rotary Club of Atlanta Southern Crescent** delivered 50 Valentines for the residents and staff of the Jonesboro Senior Assisted Living. President Mahli Lowder and Rotarian Dawn Hartman enjoyed delivering the valentines and loved seeing the joy they brought.

Posted by Claudia Mertl
February 17, 2026

Alpharetta Named as Shelter Box Hero



The **Rotary Club of Alpharetta** has been recognized as a *ShelterBox Hero Club* for its outstanding commitment to providing emergency shelter and essential supplies to families displaced by disaster and conflict worldwide.

ShelterBox, Rotary International's official project partner in disaster relief, delivers tents, tools, and life-saving aid to communities devastated by hurricanes, earthquakes, floods, and conflict. Hero Clubs are Rotary Clubs that make an annual financial commitment to ShelterBox, ensuring this critical work continues.

"Becoming a ShelterBox Hero Club demonstrates our members' dedication to *Service Above Self* and to making a global impact," said Club President Paul Slavik. "We are proud to stand alongside other Rotary clubs across the U.S. in supporting families during their greatest time of need."

Hero Club recognition includes Bronze (\$1,000), Silver (\$3,000), and Gold (\$5,000) levels of annual support. The Rotary Club of Alpharetta achieved Bronze status this year.

For more information about ShelterBox, its Rotary origins and how Rotary Clubs can become Hero Clubs, visit <https://shelterboxusa.org/>

Posted by Clark Savage
February 25, 2026

North Cobb ... From McKenna Farms to Kennesaw to Women's Extension



McKenna Farms | Therapeutic Play Area Closet Refresh: North Cobb Rotarians helped renovate a small closet within the therapeutic play area at McKenna Farms. McKenna Farms provides innovative therapeutic programs and resources for children with special needs and their families. This service project is in support of our larger district competitive grant previously awarded to McKenna Farms. The refresh work included:

- Removing all wire shelving
- Removing all wood baseboard trim and top crown trim
- Removing all existing wood wall paneling so as to expose (previous-installed) wood paneling behind
- Removing all screw/nail holes to received wood putty
- Paint all wall surface areas
- Re-install all baseboard trim + top crown trim
- Continue installation of new gym floor mat

Women's Extension Dinner | Sharing a Meal with our Friends at the Extension: North Cobb club members provide food for 30 people, serve dinner, and cleanup. The Extension is a faith based, 12 step, recovery program for both men and women. The residential program has Marietta facilities on Church St.

Extension for the men and Holiday St. for women. North Cobb Rotary has provided dinner on a monthly basis for going on 15 years. It is a chance to get to know your fellow members in service as well as provide some encouragement for the men and women in recovery. Residents are required to gain employment during their residence, and they receive counseling, job preparation, and life skills in addition to the recovery process. This is an opportunity to get to know your members and be an encourager to these residents as they transform their lives.

February Club Social | International Potluck: North Cobb club members and guests brought a dish that represents their home country or hometown—family favorites, cultural classics, or local specialties were welcomed. Members enjoyed the food, had a drink and engaged in sharing their individual cultures with one another. Additionally, the Pad A Girl Raffle concluded at this event, and one lucky individual was awarded a \$1,000 gift card towards a cruise.

Forever Fed | Feeding Families in our Community: North Cobb club members partnered this month with the Kennesaw State University Rotaract Club to package and deliver food into community members vehicles at the local Desktop in Kennesaw. Families arrived between 3:30pm and 5pm to receive free food to offset their weekly costs and help them reduce the burden of groceries.

Rotary Leadership Institute | Learning for Future Leaders: North Cobb Club members attended the RLI event in Marietta, GA this past Saturday, 21 February to learn all about Rotary and help grow their own leadership skills. Members including Brian Moore, Sandra Glenn, Peter (podcast Pete), and Alabi (Alex) Adetokunboh completed RLI session 1 and kicked off their leadership journey with Rotary.

PHOTOS:







Posted by Jose Gonzalez
February 25, 2026

Griffin Daybreak Joins Read Across America



Griffin Daybreak Rotarians Katheryne Fields, Cresta Barber and Nicki Gore jumped at a chance to share some of their favorite stories with new mini BFFs at Moreland Road Elementary, part of the club's partnership with Griffin Spalding Schools to participate in Read Across America.

PHOTOS:



Posted by Katheryne Fields
February 28, 2026

Club News

Columbus Installs Peace Pole



The **Rotary Club of Columbus** hosted a Peace Pole Dedication Ceremony this February at the Columbus Public Library in Columbus, Georgia — a permanent symbol of our commitment to peace, goodwill, and understanding here at home and around the world. Inscribed with messages of peace in multiple languages, the Peace Pole reflects the shared values that define our community: inclusion, service, and unity. It stands as a reminder that while peace is a global mission, it begins right here in Columbus. This

dedication reflects our continued commitment to building a stronger, more united Columbus for generations to come.

PHOTOS:



Posted by LeighAnn DiCesaris
February 26, 2026

Club News

Roswell's Family of Rotary Committee

FAMILY OF ROTARY

Our membership cares deeply about the needs and concerns of our members. We don't want to miss an opportunity to reach out in friendship when such concerns arise. The chairperson of this committee is Lynne Lindsey and all news should be directed to her at lynnehlindsay@outlook.com

With a heart for service, **Roswell Rotary Club** has a heart for each other too. We are a strong club that gets inside and behind a message or a need with full vibrato. Walking in partnership with this sense of service to our community, our district and our world, is a sense of intense caring for each other. Past President Lynne Lindsay, with the full support of current President Trummie Lee Patrick III, has been the point person for our Family of Rotary Committee for years.

When a current or past member needs help, support or some messaging, they get a phone call directly. Not only are offers of support made but also a specific and tailored strategy of care developed together. The best next step may mean messaging out to the club for a MealTrain, prayers or other specific needs. Sometimes it may mean messaging to a small group for privacy and strategically unique caring support. With 200+ members, there is always a family experiencing crisis through a job loss, a death, or a life-pivoting diagnosis, etc.

Lynne has the institutional knowledge of wrapping Rotary love around each family and an empathetic heart for having gone through her own life-threatening medical crisis in the last few years. In the last three weeks, three current or past members have passed. Each family has expressed how much Roswell Rotary meant to the deceased and to please attend the funeral. They also typically receive at least one meal and flowers. Service Above Self must include caring for our own members and families overtly as stated on our weekly RotaScope newsletter.

Posted by Becky Nelson
February 27, 2026
