

THE STAFFORD ROTARY HIGHLIGHTER

March 20, 2024



March 20 Program Dr. Thomas Taylor - Stafford County School Superintendent

Dr. Thomas W. Taylor is Superintendent of Stafford County Public Schools, where he oversees 33 schools in Virginia's eighth largest school district, serving more than 31,000 students and more than 4,300 employees. Stafford County Public Schools is a high-performing, majority-minority school district, where nearly half of the students participate in the federal free lunch program.

Dr. Taylor is a Washington, D.C. native and has served as a social studies teacher, coach, and administrator in several Virginia school districts over the last 20+ years. He holds a Bachelor of Arts from Virginia Wesleyan University, a Master's in Educational Leadership and a Doctorate in PK-12 Education Policy from the University of Virginia, and a Master of Business Administration degree from the College of William and Mary.

Dr. Taylor grew up in a single-parent household, where he recalls how many of his teachers served as co-parents in his upbringing. The support that Dr. Taylor received from influential teachers inspired him to pursue public education as a career. Dr. Taylor has always wanted to become a teacher to give other kids the same support and opportunities that he



Club Calendar March Is Water and Sanitation Month

- ❖ March 20 - Dr. Thomas Taylor - Stafford County School Superintendent
- ❖ March 22 - World Water Day
- ❖ March 27 - Tommi Marsans
- ❖ March 30 - RLI in Warrenton.
- ❖ March 30 - Club Social, Escape Room, 6 pm
- ❖ April 10 - UMW Alumni
- ❖ April 22, 4:00pm to 7:00 pm- Thurman Brisben Center - Help us cook and serve dinner
- ❖ April 27 - District Training Assembly - April 2024
- ❖ May 2 - Virginia Naturalists
- ❖ May 25-29, 2024 -Rotary International Convention in Singapore
- ❖ June 30 - Installation of District Officers.
- ❖ July 13 - District Training for the new Rotary year. Membership and TRF
- ❖ July 14 - Installation of New Club Officers
- ❖ August 11-13 - District trip to RI HQ
- ❖ September 28, 29 -Via Colori
- ❖ October 4-6, 2024 - District Conference

received. Consequently, Dr. Taylor has built his career on the belief that every child deserves access to high quality learning opportunities - not by chance, but by design.

After a distinguished tenure of raising student performance as a social studies teacher in Hampton Roads, Dr. Taylor expanded his impact through school leadership. In 2008, Dr. Taylor became the principal of Charlottesville High School (Charlottesville, Va.) and in 2012 was named the University of Virginia's Outstanding Alumni Principal for his focus on equity and his work dramatically reducing the school's dropout rate. He was subsequently appointed Superintendent of Middlesex County Public Schools in the same year, earning recognition as Virginia's Region III Superintendent of the Year in 2016 for his work in college and career readiness and for leading the first successful 1:1 computing initiative in rural Eastern Virginia. Stafford County is also part of the Virginia Department of Education's Region III.

Dr. Taylor has been an adjunct professor of Educational Leadership at the University of Virginia for the past eleven years and has been a featured speaker at several national and state meetings for various professional organizations. Dr. Taylor is married to Susan Winslow, a civil engineer who specializes in airport design. They have five children, three of which are school-age and attend high school.

March 13 Meeting

President Jamie presided.

PDG Sandy gave the thought for the day: "The only measure of your worth and your deeds is the love you leave behind."

Announcements:

- ❖ RLI training is scheduled for March 30 in Warrenton. Afterwards there is a club social at an escape room.
- ❖ March 23 there is a bowling session at Bowlero in Central Park at 6:30. **Here is the signup link** <https://forms.gle/ueHKaaGwNgacQL7S6>
- ❖ March 27 is an evening meeting. Our speaker will be Tommi Marsans.
- ❖ Lena Barrios and Donna Almborg will report on the school library project in El Salvador at the April 3 meeting.
- ❖ The April 17 program is on the history of Rotary.
- ❖ The new date for cooking and serving dinner at the Brisbane Center is April 22 from 4 to 7 pm.
- ❖ Donna reported that a Discover Rotary evening is scheduled for April 16. There followed a discussion of the difference between a "companion club" and a "satellite" club.
- ❖ Donna reported that we have three contestants for the speech contest on March 19.
- ❖ PDG Sandy reported that we have reached 95% of our giving goal for this Rotary year.
- ❖ President Jamie gave us a pep talk about the importance of getting plenty of sponsors for Via Colori.
- ❖ Donna reported for Youth Services : The Interact Summit on April 20 is an amazing opportunity for Interact students from all over our District to come together to for the first time ever. They will hear a Peace Builder speaker from NY and participate in four pull out sessions on human trafficking, leadership development, selfcare/mental health, and conflict resolution. In addition to all of this they will participate in a service project for e3kids by making beaded bracelets that will be sold to help raise money for water filtration systems. The cost of this spectacular day is about \$5,000 and we need support from all of the Rotary Clubs in our District. Stafford Rotary Club has donated \$100, and we are asking any of our club members to consider donating. Donations can be made to our own Stafford Rotary

Foundation and given to Michael, just make sure the check is annotated to go to the Interact Summit and Michael will get it there. Or, you will find on DACdb a flyer with links for contributing. Just see Donna if you have any questions. Kristy will be representing our club as she takes advantage of the Rotarian sessions which will focus on all of the youth opportunities within our district such as: Interact, Earlyact, Youth Contests, Youth Exchange Programs, Youth Protection, etc.

March 13 Program – Samantha Mitzel UMW Rotaract President



We celebrated World Rotaract Week by hearing from the UMW Rotaract Club president. Sam is well-known to Stafford Rotarians because she is so active in Rotaract projects and so willing to help with our Rotary club projects. She was active in an Interact club when she was in high school and had hoped to continue her connection to Rotary when she went to college. When she began at the University of Mary Washington the Rotaract club there was inactive, but Samantha worked closely with Donna and other members of our club to get the club reactivated. In the past two years the UMW Rotaract club has grown from 5 members to 17 members. The club has several club projects each year and partners with Stafford Rotary with Via Colori and the fall chili cook off.

We assist with the UMW Rotaract Club on Relay for Life every spring, but this is the Rotaract Club's project. The date this year is April 27. The emphasis this year will be on preventing colo-rectal cancer which has seen a dramatic rise in cases among younger people

in recent years.

Samantha shared the story of the beginning of this fundraiser for the American Cancer Society which you can read here:

<https://cancerhistoryproject.com/article/the-history-of-relay-for-life/#The%20First%20Relay>

Another upcoming event is the Youth Summit on April 20.



The Theme of World Water Day 2024 Is 'Water For Peace'



Water can create peace or spark conflict. When water is scarce or polluted, or when people have unequal, or have no access, tensions can rise between communities and countries. More than 3 billion people worldwide depend on water that crosses national borders. Yet only 24 countries have cooperation agreements for all their shared water.

As climate change impacts increase, and populations grow, there is an urgent need, within and between countries, to unite around protecting and conserving our most precious resource. Public

health and prosperity, food and energy systems, economic productivity and environmental integrity all rely on a well-functioning and equitably managed water cycle.

When we cooperate on water, we create a positive ripple effect – fostering harmony, generating prosperity and building resilience to shared challenges. We must act upon the realization that water is not only a resource to be used and competed over – it is a human right, intrinsic to every aspect of life.

This World Water Day, we all need to unite around water and use water for peace, laying the foundations of a more stable and prosperous tomorrow.

How Rotaract Transformed Me

Posted on March 12, 2024

By Shahroz Ahmed, Rotaract Club of Faisalabad
City, Pakistan

*Shahroz Ahmed speaks at a membership seminar.
Ahmed credits Rotaract with boosting his confidence
and public speaking skills.*

My journey in Rotaract has been transformative, marked by personal growth and the acquisition of valuable skills. Prior to joining Rotaract, I struggled with speaking in public. Rotaract gave me a supportive environment where I could gradually overcome my fear of public speaking. Through opportunities to address meetings and participate in community events, I improved my communication skills and gained confidence in expressing my ideas effectively.



Rotaract has also equipped me with a diverse set of practical skills that have proven beneficial in both my personal and professional lives. From project management and event coordination to technical engagements, my involvement in Rotaract exposed me to hands-on experiences that enhanced my problem-solving abilities and taught me to be adaptable.

By embracing the challenges and opportunities in Rotaract, I have grown as a leader and as an individual. I am grateful for both the experiences and the platform it has provided me.

I would encourage anyone seeking personal growth, leadership development, and the opportunity to make a positive impact in their community to consider joining Rotaract. It's a welcoming community where you can learn new skills, meet inspiring individuals, and contribute meaningfully to causes you care about.

World Rotaract Week, 11-17 March, commemorates the founding of the first Rotaract club in 1968 and celebrates Rotaract's success around the world. Explore ways to partner and collaborate with Rotaractors.