Rotary Club of Pasadena, CA

SPOKES NEWSLETTER

DISTRICT 5300 * Rotary Club 794 * May 1, 2026 * #01-063
www.pasadenarotary.com

THIS WEEK'S PROGRAM

NICOLE CRAIG

Instructor at ASU FIDM and the Los Angeles Campus Merchandising Area Coordinator
The Future of Fashion Retail: Innovation, Technology and the Evolving Consumer

Nicole Craig is a fashion educator and industry professional specializing in merchandising, product development, trend forecasting, licensing, and consumer behavior - understanding what people want, why they want it, and how those insights are translated into commercially viable fashion products. She is currently an instructor at ASU FIDM and serves as the Los Angeles Campus Merchandising Area Coordinator. Nicole has been educating future fashion professionals since 2011, beginning at Legacy FIDM and continuing with ASU FIDM when the LA campus launched in 2023.

Nicole built her career in the fashion industry as a Senior Buyer for multiple brands, led buying and product development for Intimates and Loungewear at Forever 21, and worked as a Senior Merchandiser at MJC International. She has collaborated with major retailers and brands, including Macy's, Target, Hot Topic, Amazon, TJMaxx, Disney, Coca-Cola, Mattel, and Sanrio.

With a background that blends creativity and business, Nicole brings real-world insight into how consumer behavior drives trend forecasting and how those trends are translated into successful fashion products and brands.

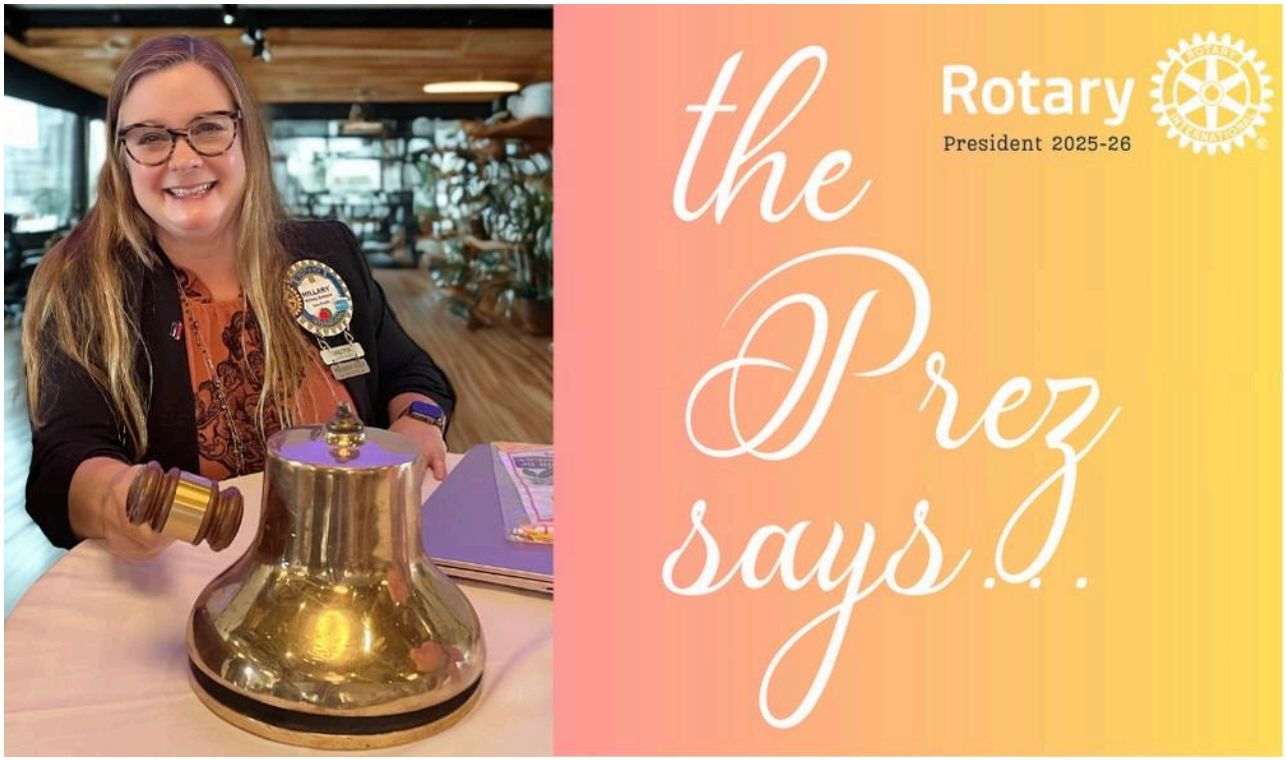
WEDNESDAY – MAY 6, 2026
UNIVERSITY CLUB OF PASADENA

175 N. Oakland Ave, Pasadena 91101
Non-members are welcome - $45.00 includes lunch
CLICK ON: ***RSVP*** **- *Deadline: 5:00 pm MONDAY***

OVERFLOW PARKING: Across street behind Pasadena Heritage
Enter parking off Madison Ave.
OKAY to park in reserved parking spaces
ADDITIONAL PARKING: 221 N. El Molino - Northwest corner of El Molino & Walnut.
2 block walk to UClub. Cost: $1.00/2 hours

Meeting Host: President Elect Tammy Silver
Reception: Alan Schier & Mike Bernard
Song Leader: PP Mary Lou Byrne
Lunchtime Pianist: Ann Louise Christensen
Inspiration: Chris Layne
Scoot Zone Reporter: Nick Duretta
Photographers: Larry Weiss
Technical: Frank Fish
Sergeant At Arms: PE-E Robert Lyons

Meeting is also on ZOOM opens at 12:00 pm
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86515101523?pwd=dHhNZnV5c2ZqbzNQbWthbDNhYTladz09
Meeting ID: 865 1510 1523
Passcode: 667356



Reflections from the Rotary District Conference

This year's Rotary District Conference was a heartfelt reminder of what it means to serve together with purpose, compassion, and joy. Rotarians from across the district gathered not only to learn and connect, but to celebrate the real impact being made in our communities and beyond.

A special highlight of the conference was the powerful theme, “Better Together – Better the World,” created by our very own Sneha Villalva. Her message set the tone for the entire weekend and beautifully captured the spirit of Rotary. It reminded us that when we come together in collaboration and friendship, our impact is multiplied and the world truly becomes better.

Photo: President Hillary with District Govenor Elect Dennis Franklin

One of the most meaningful experiences of the conference was the hands-on service project where attendees worked side by side to pack 18,000 meals in just two hours for families facing food insecurity. The room was filled with energy, laughter, and determination as Rotarians of all ages came together in a shared mission to help others. It was a moving reflection of Rotary at its best, people united in service and generosity.

Another deeply inspiring moment came from keynote speaker Miquette McMahon. She shared her remarkable personal journey, describing how she grew up as a young girl in Haiti in circumstances of deep poverty, and how her life was transformed when a small Rotary club in Minnesota reached out with support and compassion. That early act of kindness changed the course of her life and became the foundation of her message to others. Her story of resilience and hope resonated throughout the room as she spoke about the power of dignity, opportunity, and believing in what is possible. Many attendees were especially moved by her book The Voice of Poverty Cannot Silence, which extends that message and encourages readers to listen more deeply to voices that are too often unheard.

Beyond the formal sessions, there was a strong sense of fellowship throughout the weekend. Conversations flowed easily, new friendships were formed, and long-standing connections were renewed. There was also time to relax together and enjoy lighter moments, including a lively 80’s Night dance with a wonderful live band that brought smiles, music, and shared laughter to close out an already uplifting event.

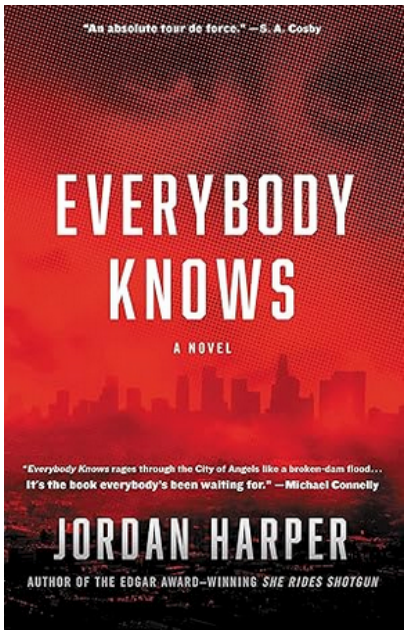
We returned home with full hearts, renewed energy, and a stronger sense of why we serve. This conference reminded us that Rotary is not only about projects and meetings, but about people coming together with kindness and commitment to make lasting change.

Hillary S. Schenk
President 2025-2026
Rotary Club of Pasadena
cell 805.358.8596

ATTENDING THE MEETING MEALS & SEATS ARE PROVIDED BASED ON *RSVP'S*.

CLICK HERE TO RSVP TODAY

ROTARY VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES & EVENTS



ROTARY READERS

MONDAY - May 4th at 6:00 pm

On May 4 at 6 pm Rotary Readers will gather for Bill Opel's review of Everybody Knows by Jordon Harper.

Our host will be Martha Shenkenberg
Please RSVP to Martha Shenkenberg at
mshenkenberg@yahoo.com.
Please RSVP

Rotary Club of Pasadena Community Paul Harris Fellow Award Nomination Form

Each year a recipient for the Community Paul Harris Fellow Award is selected by the Awards Committee. The individual selected shall be from within the Pasadena community and not a current member of Pasadena Rotary. Organizations, groups and clubs are not eligible to receive the award. Nominees should exemplify the qualities and ideals of Rotary and "Service Above Self," be active in community affairs, and be known in the business community as one who follows the "Four-Way Test."
The Rotary Club of Pasadena Foundation will make a contribution of $1,000 in the recipient's name to the Rotary Foundation, enabling them to receive the Paul Harris Fellow recognition. The recipient of this year's award will be honored at an awards luncheon sponsored by the Rotary Club of Pasadena on Wednesday, June 3, 2026.
Submit the completed nomination form and support information by Friday, May 8, 2026

For more information and an applicaton form at our website:
https://www.pasadenarotary.com/home/paul-harris-fellow-award/

Volunteer to help staff the 2026 Pasadena Showcase House for the Arts!

Enjoy this beautifully decorated house, support Showcase's mission to fundraise for the arts, and earn donations for our club in the process. For every shift completed by one of our members, Pasadena Rotary will receive $50.

KEY DETAILS

- Shifts are 3 and 1/2 hours long (inside or outside) and you must stand the whole time (other than during a 15 minute break for water/snacks/bathroom).
- Parking for volunteers is at Santa Anita Park with shuttles to and from the house. There will be no drop off in front of the house, but Santa Anita is only a 10 minute shuttle.
- Your job will be to greet guests, answer basic questions, and direct traffic through the house.
- If you complete TWO separate shifts, you will receive a **free ticket** to tour the Showcase House any day after 1:30 p.m.

If you'd like to volunteer, contact our coordinator, Amanda Pumilia. She will upload your information into the volunteer portal, send you available dates/times, and confirm and schedule your shift(s).

Email: apumilia@yahoo.com or text: (818) 693-0331

Shifts are available on Tuesdays - Sundays from April 19th to May 17th

9:00 - 12:30

12:30 - 4:00

4:00 - 7:00

PHOTO OF THE WEEK

District Conference

L2R: Sneha Villalva, President Hillary, Sarah Slaughter (her father a former Pasadena Rotarian donated $500,000 to RI Foundation), Mark Mariscal, PP Altadena Rotary and PE Tammy Silver enjoy a uniting moment at the District Conference this past weekend.

The Scoot Zone

By Dr. Sonya Sharififard, Staff Reporter

Photographers: PE Tammy Silver & Hans Rosenberger

President Hillary Schenk rang the bell, as Pasadena Rotary honored Teacher Appreciation Week with a marvelous Four-Way Test Choir led by **PP Mary Lou Byrne** and **Gary Kearney** singing *Teach your Children* with **Don Andrues** on guitar, and **Ann Louise Christensen** on piano.

Marilyn Buchanan delivered the Inspiration about friendships built over Rotary, sharing a story about friends on a trip who exchanged pens from teachers in the Rotary Club of Bulgaria. Rotarians are all over the world, serving as educators, professionals, and community leaders whose love for service above self and the greater good transcends all else.

Guests

Larry Weiss introduced Carlos Escarcega, Pasadena Realtor. **Lynne Sullivan** introduced her husband Dennis McNamara, **PE Tammy Silver** introduced Christen Gair, Managing

Director at Piper Sandler, and Casey Jagusch, Faculty at Pasadena City College. **PP Howard Raff** introduced Alejandro Umanzor, Insurance Agent.

Announcements
Please send nominations for the Paul Harris Award to committee chair, **Catherine Hany.**

Amanda Pumilia encouraged volunteering at the Showcase House. Pasadena Rotary receives $50 for each shift worked, and if you complete two shifts, you'll receive a complimentary ticket to visit the Showcase House!

Teachers of Excellence
Committee Co-Chairs **PP Mary Lou Byrne** and **Gary Kearney** introduced the program and welcomed all guests and dignitaries to the annual Teachers of Excellence Luncheon. It is often said that a good teacher can change a student's life; but a great teacher can change everything in their students' lives.

Since 1991, Pasadena Rotary has been honoring our local teachers. The goal of the program is to foster and encourage excellence in teaching and dedication to education in the Pasadena Unified School District. Rotary wishes to demonstrate in a concrete way that the community cares about the quality of public schools by conducting a competition to select those exceptional teachers who deserve special recognition. With funding, primarily from the Pasadena Rotary Foundation, as well as the club's budget, and contributions from individual members, monetary awards are given to five teachers from the Pasadena Unified School District, with $500.00 presented to each recipient's school. For the past 35 years each teacher has received $1,500, but this year that amount was increased to $2,300 for each teacher, to spend as they wish for any purpose — personal or professional.

The teachers were nominated by their school principals. The principals and the nominees each submitted three essays, which were scored by the Teachers of Excellence committee members. Committee members visited the classrooms of the finalists, whose essays received the highest scores, and the classroom visits counted as 60% of the final scores. The five teachers with the highest combined scores were our winners.

PP Mary Lou thanked the efforts and commitments of the committee members who made this year's event possible through reviewing applications, conducting school visits, and hosting dignitaries. They are: Rotarians **Shelley De Leon, Patrick Dinan, Tammy Duke, Nick Duretta, Jonathan Edewards, Michael Ferrera, Michele Ferroni, Sandy Goodenough, J.P. Harris, Amanda Pumilia, Liliane Ribiero, Tammy Silver,** and **Lynne Sullivan**, and non-Rotarian community members members Casey Jagusch, Rick Kidd, Del Lile, and Dennis McNamara. **Jim Osterling** was recognized for hosting state, national, and local dignitaries and going above and beyond in making this year's committee responsibilities as memorable and moving as possible.

Several dignitaries, guests and government officials and local council members were recognized. **Superintendent Dr. Elizabeth Blanco** announced how despite all that's happened in the district over the last few years, the teachers always show up and take pride in their work; and the principals who recognize their teachers and the value of the work they do every day.

As a special part of the event, videos of classroom activity for each teacher were shown, featuring words of inspiration from their students, their colleagues, and their schools, honoring how profound differences they made across their community. **Ben Sellick** provided essential technical support by configuring Zoom via his Wi-Fi hotspot, ensuring that the videos were successfully displayed on the screen.

Through every touching video, the theme of what creates excellence in a teacher is to keep praying for love. When students feel the love and care of a teacher, something changes; they love back and their path to growth and excellence is transformed. You can be a teacher who is empowering and kind; but remains firm in values and discipline; a teacher who presents warmth and empathy; but structure and preparedness; someone who creates a meaningful environment that is vital to every student. They come into the classroom every day, show up for every student, and make a difference. The secret sauce is love.

Pasadena Rotary 2026 Teachers of Excellence
Maria Barajas, 2nd Grade teacher at Hamilton Elementary School, nominated by Dr. Erika Cooper

Michael Birnbryer-Lao, Music teacher at Blair High School, nominated by Dr. Amy McGinnis

Sonia Covarrubias, Kindergarten teacher at Willard Elementary School, nominated by Maricela Brambila

Ani Karapetyan; 6th Grade Math and Science teacher at Eliot Arts Magnet, nominated by Lanisha McKenzie

Jocelyn Strickland, 3rd Grade teacher at Jackson Elementary School, nominated by Veronica Villagrana

They all received their awards with a pair of Rotary socks to step boldly into their classrooms.

After President Hillary brought the meeting to a close, everyone posed for a lovely group photo of the teachers, principals and Teachers of Excellence Committee.

L2R: PP Justene Adamec, Amanda Pumilia, Jose Gomez, Elizabeth Blanco, Liliane Ribeiro, JP Harris, Lisa Cavelier

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

CAROLINE LEE - May 4th

LYNNE SULLIVAN - May 4th

PAT WRIGHT - May 4th

HAPPY ROTAVERSARY

Amanda Pumilia	5/4/24	2 Years
Robert Lyons	5/5/10	16 Years
Akila Gibbs	5/6/09	17 Years

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

May 13th - Akila Gibbs, Executive Director Pasadena Senior Center - Stories from the Fire

May 20th - David Klug, City of Pasadena Economic Development Director

May 27th - Robert Hartstein & Mike Bollenbacher - University Club - Back from the Ashes

June 3rd - Paul Harris Fellow Community Award

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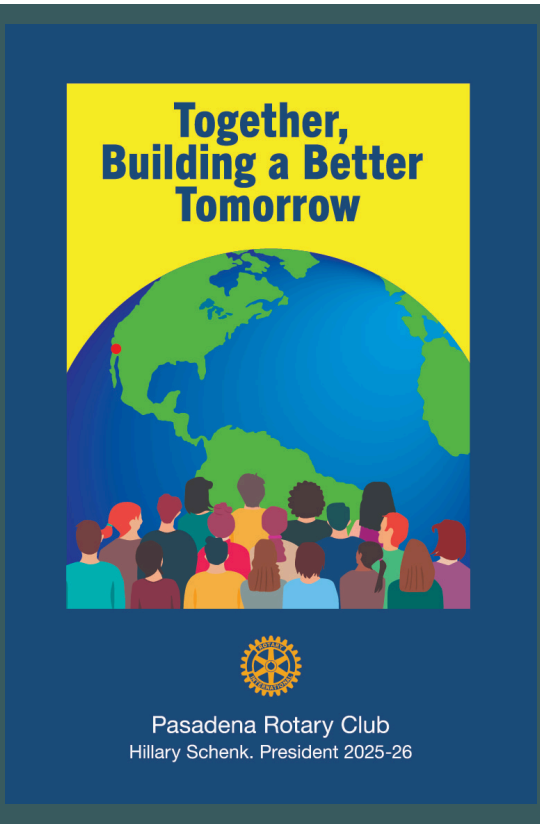

ROTARY CLUB OF PASADENA 2025-2026 BOARD OF DIRECTORS
MEETS the 3rd Thursday of every month at 5pm - University Club of Pasadena

PRESIDENT: Hillary Schenk
PRESIDENT ELECT: Tammy Silver
SECRETARY: Wende Lee
TREASURER: Allison Burgos
CLUB DIRECTORS: Don Andrues, Mike Bernard, George Falardeau, Frank Fish, J.P. Harris, Debi Kroman, Robert Lyons, David McAlexander, Nevino Rocco, Alan Schier, Dede Venkat
Non-Voting Member: Amanda Pumilia, Chair, The Impact Club

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