

# THE STAFFORD HIGHLIGHTER

February 4, 2026



Rotary Club of Stafford **People of Action**

## Club Calendar

February is Peace and Conflict Prevention/Resolution Month

February 4 – Ralph Menzel, The Rotary Foundation

February 7 - Peace Conference energy!

February 11 - Service project! @ SHS - 2:15 PM. We will be packing weekend food bags for Stafford County students. Come in through the front

February 18 - Lunch Meeting @ SHS. Rotary Action Group Against Slavery. PDG Amelia Stansell .

February 25 - Evening Social, 6 PM Location TBD.

February 28 - Interact Summit. Volunteers Needed!

April 25 - District Training Assembly.

June 13-17 - International Rotary Convention, Taipei, Taiwan.

June 24 - SRC Awards and Installation Dinner

June 28 - District 7610 Awards and Installation at The Piedmont Club, Haymarket, VA.

## February 4 – Ralph Menzel, District Rotary Foundation Chair

Ralph Menzel is currently retired after having spent almost 45 years between the USAF, government and defense contracting world. He was born in White Plains, New York, grew up in Peekskill, New York, and then went to the University of Colorado - Boulder and received a BA degree in Education, History, Geography and certification as a Secondary School Social Studies teacher.

Ralph then spent 30 years in the United States Air Force, during which time he earned a Master of Arts degree in Management and Human Relations and Organizational Behavior, met his wife Laurie, worked overseas for 18 years, became a father to a wonderful daughter and retired as a Colonel.

He spent an additional 15+ years as a government civilian employee and defense contractor and moved back with his family to the United States in 2015.

A member and past Club President of the newly chartered e-Club of Global Peacebuilders, Ralph has been in Rotary for 15 years and is the current District Rotary Foundation Chair (DRFC) and the District Legacy Campaign Chair. He was a Charter member of the Stuttgart, Germany International club, the Stuttgart Solitude club, the West Springfield Rotary Club and NXT (satellite club). Ralph has served as Club President in 3 different clubs, Area and Club Foundation Advisor, District Paul Harris Society Chair, District Membership Chair, Assistant Governor and also is an RLI facilitator and producer and has sponsored 9 new Rotarians. Ralph and Laurie are Major Donors (Level 4), Bequest Society Members (Level 2), Benefactors, and are both Paul Harris Society members.

He and his wife, who is not only a Rotarian, but also works for Rotary



International as a Major Gifts Officer for Zone 33, now call Alexandria, Virginia “home” after having moved 13 times and visited over 75 countries during their 38 years of marriage.

## January 21 Meeting

President Kristy presided. Jake gave the Thought of the Day, reading from Maerin Luther King, Jr.’s “I Have a Dream” speech.

### Announcements:

- ❖ President Kristy shared the sad news that PDG George Atwell passed away. The club decided to donate \$500 to a school supply project in honor of George, and Kristy encouraged members to contribute if they wished. A viewing will be held on Wednesday, February 4, from 6:00–8:00 PM at Storke Funeral Home in Bowling Green, Virginia. A graveside service will take place on Friday, February 6, at 11:00 AM at Union Cemetery in Leesburg, Virginia.
- ❖ The club postponed the upcoming fundraiser due to technical issues.
- ❖ President Kristy officially installed our newest member, Chasity Richardson.
- ❖ The club also discussed the need to apply for a new district foundation grant by May 1st or 15th.
- ❖ PE Donna and PN Nikki will both be attending Chesapeake PETS in March since PN Nikki will be serving as DGN Cheri’s Chief of Staff in Rotary Year 2027-28.

## Program – Classification Talk, Chasity Richardson

President Kristy introduced the speaker, Chasity Richardson, a member of the satellite club who is a submariner veteran spouse, mother, and realtor. Chasity shared a personal story about memorizing Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech in 1964, which inspired her to encourage others to read it.

Chasity shared her personal journey and experiences with volunteerism, tracing it back to her childhood when she witnessed community support for her struggling single mother. She described how her grandmother and others provided assistance, inspiring her commitment to service. Chasity also highlighted her husband's leadership and their military background. She discussed their three adult children's achievements, including Alexis's career in geophysics and her academic success. Through these experiences, Chasity emphasized the importance of investing in others and the lasting impact of service.

Chasity shared her personal and professional background, discussing her children's educational paths and her career as a real estate advisor specializing in senior services. She highlighted her extensive training and certifications in real estate, including pricing strategy, senior real estate, and negotiations, and mentioned her upcoming broker's course. Chasity emphasized her approach to problem-solving and mediation, particularly for military personnel and seniors, and discussed how her organizational leadership degree applies to her daily life and work.

Chasity shared her personal values and career journey, emphasizing her commitment to serving others and her background in nursing and real estate. She discussed her experience organizing a Martin Luther King Day event for the members of the satellite club where they created dream boards instead of vision boards to promote positive thinking and inspire future activities for the Rotary Club.

**Relay For Life of Stafford**  
**Saturday, May 2, 2026**  
**12:00 PM**  
**Kate Waller Barrett Elementary**  
**150 Duffey Drive**  
**Stafford, VA**

**Luminaria**

Light up your community and honor every life touched by cancer. Dedicate a Luminaria to a loved one lost, someone currently battling, or anyone who has overcome cancer.



**2026 Interact Summit**

**Saturday February 28, 2026 | 8:30am – 4:30pm**  
**Laurel Ridge Community College – Fauquier Campus**  
**6480 College Street • Warrenton, VA 20187**  
**\$10/student or Interact Advisor | \$50/Rotarian**

SHOP THE AMAZON WISHLIST TO SUPPORT THIS DISTRICT-WIDE INTERACT SERVICE PROJECT!

**INTERACT SUMMIT 2026**  
SATURDAY, JANUARY 24, 2026

**SCHOOL SUPPLY DRIVE**

Help collect school supplies to make 300 kits for local and international students! Donated items will be collected and distributed to students K-12 by e3kids international, a U.S. based non-profit with a mission to equip, empower and educate.  
Ship donations by Monday, January 19 to project sponsor e3kids international or bring items to the event Saturday, January 24 at GMU-Arlington Campus.

TINYURL.COM/2ECY4Y8

**FOR MORE INFO, CONTACT ROTARIAN LENA GONZALEZ BERRIOS CALL OR TEXT 540-760-2123**

**Donations Needed - Interact Summit** - At the summit on February 28th, participants will be creating 300 school supply kits for students here in Virginia and in Kenya (Via E3 Kids). Our club foundation made a donation of \$500 to this project in honor of PDG George Atwell, a lifelong champion for education. Please join us in supporting this project by making a donation to the Stafford Rotary Foundation or directly to the supply drive by purchasing online - [tinyurl.com/2ecy4yn8](http://tinyurl.com/2ecy4yn8) or by bringing supplies from the wishlist to a club meeting before February 28th.

**February is Peace and Conflict Prevention/Resolution Month on the Rotary Calendar.**



To promote peace and conflict resolution, Rotary International's theme for February emphasizes the importance of understanding and collaboration. Here are key points to consider:

- ❖ Engage in community discussions to foster dialogue and understanding.
- ❖ Support local peace initiatives and conflict resolution programs.
- ❖ Encourage youth involvement in peace-building activities.
- ❖ Collaborate with other organizations focused on peace and reconciliation.
- ❖ Share stories of successful conflict resolution to inspire others.
- ❖ Promote cultural exchange programs to enhance mutual respect and understanding.