

THE STAFFORD ROTARY HIGHLIGHTER

March 27, 2024



Rotary Club of Stafford  **People of Action**

March 27 - Tommi Marsans Associate Director, Marketing Technology Verizon Business Group

Tommi has over three decades of marketing technology experience, with a focus on enabling marketing through alignment of technology and strategy. She is currently the Associate Director at Verizon Business Group and is the lead for AI decisioning. She has developed a dynamic customer responsive solution called Compass for Customer Retention and My Solutions for Customer Growth across digital, sales, and retail channels.



She has won several awards for innovative uses of technology including Best in Class and B2B Customer Loyalty awards from The Loyalty 360 group, a SAMMY for User Experience Optimization, a Drum Award, a Pega Impact award, and the Gartner Eye on Innovation Award. In addition, she has spoken many times to the marketing industry on subjects as diverse as leveraging Big Data to ethical use of AI & ML.

Previously Tommi has held executive roles as a VP of Marketing at a regional marketing company and Executive Director of Marketing Operations at Sallie Mae.

Club Calendar March Is Water and Sanitation Month

- ❖ March 27 - Tommi Marsans
- ❖ March 30 – RLI in Warrenton.
- ❖ March 30 – Club Social, Escape Room, 6 pm
- ❖ April 10 – UMW Alumni
- ❖ April 17 – Rotary History
- ❖ April 20 – District Youth Summit
- ❖ April 22, 4:00pm to 7:00 pm- Thurman Brisben Center - Help us cook and serve dinner
- ❖ April 24 – Stafford Rotary History
- ❖ April 27 - District Training Assembly - April 2024
- ❖ April 27 – Relay for Life
- ❖ 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

March 20 Meeting

President Jamie presided.

Holly gave the thought for the day: “Jumping to conclusions is not good mental exercise.”

Announcements:

- ❖ RLI training is scheduled for March 30 in Warrenton. Afterwards there is a club social at an escape room.
- ❖ District Training is scheduled for April 27.
- ❖ The District Installation Banquet is scheduled for June 30.
- ❖ Lena Barrios and Donna Almborg will report on the school library project in El Salvador at the April 3 meeting.
- ❖ Only two people signed up for the March 23 bowling social. President Jamie said this would be canceled. There was little interest in the escape room event on March 30, so this will be rescheduled.
- ❖ Monday, April 29 is the date for the tour of Channel 9. Sign up here: <https://forms.gle/7QdbfqD3opZ9NsNz5>. The event will be held on Monday April 29, 2024. We will meet at 4:00 PM at: 4100 Wisconsin Ave NW, Washington, DC 20016. We'll go out for dinner after the tour. SIGN UP NOW
- ❖ 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.
- ❖ Jack Poland has been hospitalized this past week. Please hold Jack and Leigh Ann in your hearts at this difficult time.
- ❖ Cheri reported that the Tuesday Discover Rotary went very well. Jake told us that Cheri did a great job explaining Rotary to prospective members. Rev. Tolke of St. Peters Lutheran is a potential new member.
- ❖ Jake reported that invoices for the fourth quarter will go out on April 1. Jake and Michael are working on a 24-25 budget model. When you pay dues via the Square charge, please let Michael or Jake know what the payment is for.
- ❖ Relay for Life is April 27.
- ❖ July 13 is the District 7610 Membership and Rotary Foundation training.
- ❖ July 14 is our club installation banquet
- ❖ Donna reported that we had three contestants from Mountain View High for the speech contest. The winner will represent our club at the district speech contest.
- ❖ We are now accepting applications for the scholarships our club we award in May.
- ❖ 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 20 - Program Dr. Thomas Taylor - Stafford County School Superintendent

Our speaker was Stafford Rotarian, Dr. Thomas Taylor. He gave a brief classification talk as well as an update on the state of Stafford County Public Schools. Dr. Taylor shared his presentation with us, and President Jamie sent the file to members.

Here are some highlights from the presentation.

Dr. Taylor listed the different roles that school superintendents fill.



The Superintendent's Role

1. Serve as a strategic partner and executive to the School Board, developing a shared vision that galvanizes the community in support of all students in Stafford County
2. Implement and embody the will of the School Board
3. Preserve that which is working; enhance those areas in need of improvement
4. Rally support for the school division, building relationships that foster excitement and support for Stafford County Public Schools
5. Create a safe and welcoming culture of high expectations, support, continuous improvement, and innovation

He gave us a somewhat stark view of the staffing and physical property problems facing Stafford County. These two items have a dramatic effect on student performance.

Teacher Quality Matters

In addition to parents, research continues to attribute teacher quality as the single most important factor in a student's educational achievement.

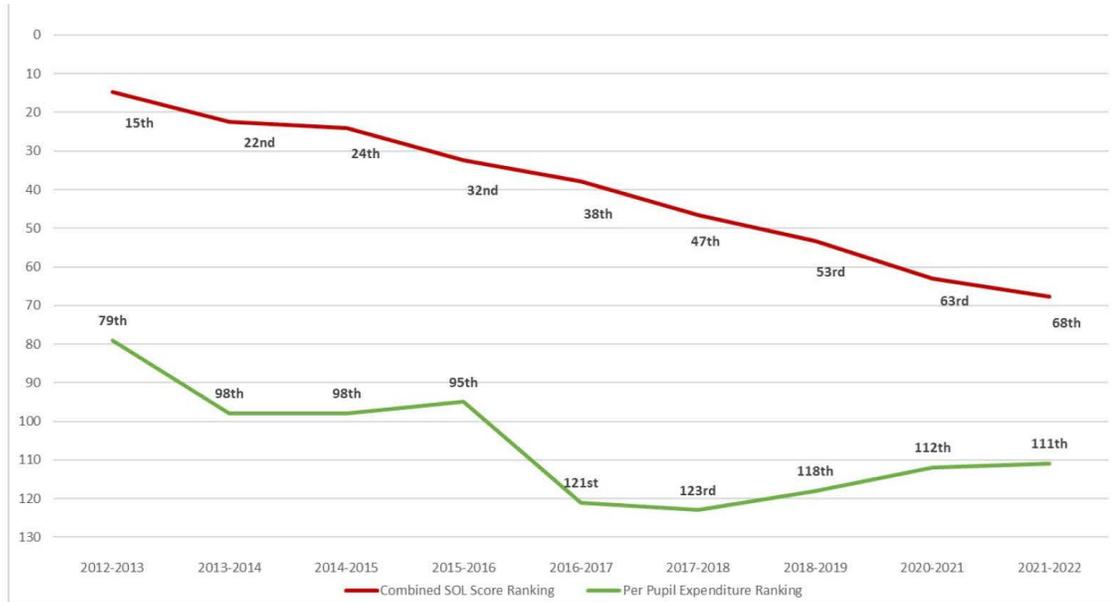
Although Stafford is the nineteenth wealthiest county in the United States, we have one of the lowest funded school systems in Virginia. Although 72% of the school staff live in Stafford, keeping them working in Stafford is difficult when the salaries in nearby counties are so much higher.

The goal is a teacher attrition rate of 10% or less, but Stafford hasn't been able to meet that goal for many years.

2018 - 15.5%
2019 - 14.4%
2020 - 12.4%
2021 - 18.2%

2022 - 15.9%
2023 - 13.2%

43% of Stafford County teachers have less than 10 years of experience. The beginning teacher's annual salary is only \$50,000. Working for the Stafford County School System means becoming part of the "working poor".



To have the state "average" Per Pupil Funding would mean an additional \$73M

Stafford is **111 out of 132** school divisions in Virginia for funding.

In the middle would be **66th** out of 132.

Another major problem is the capital budget. The school population, now 32,000, grows by approximately 1,000 students per year. New school buildings are full by the time they are built. Temporary classrooms will be needed to accommodate the increased student population, even though that is an inadequate solution to the problem..

Of equal concern is the inadequate budget for major repairs. Dr. Taylor gave several examples of school buildings in need of major repairs. Standard good practice would be to budget 2.2% of the total value of school property for major maintenance. That would equal \$19 million annually. The actual budget for major maintenance is only \$1 million.

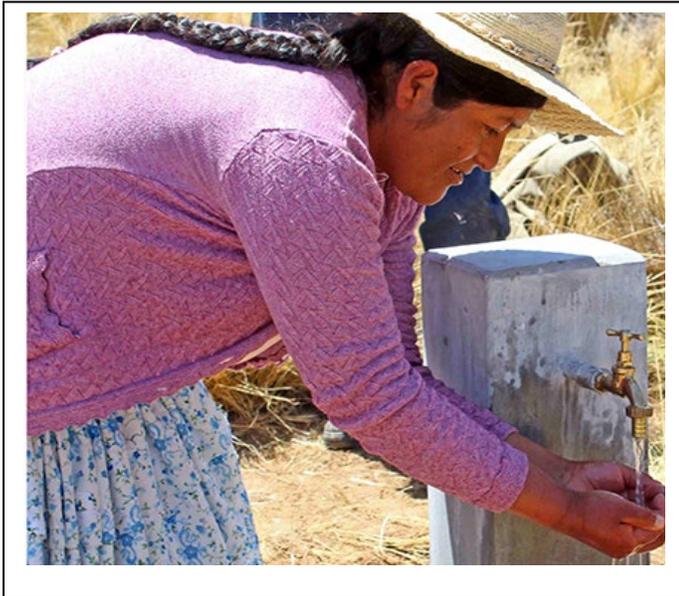
Dr. Taylor's presentation elicited many questions. Two issues stood out:

- ❖ How long will this growth last? At least 15 more years.
- ❖ Why are our public schools so underfunded? Our county has had a long habit of kicking the problem down the road, but our wealthy county has inadequate tax sources beyond residential property taxes. This is obvious to anyone driving from Stafford into Prince William County. The commercial developments planned by the county should help solve this problem.

Thank you, Dr. Taylor for an enlightening program.

Flowing Toward Peace: The Power of Clean Water

Posted on March 22, 2024



Collaborative efforts between Rotary Peace Fellows, Positive Peace Activators, local Rotarians, and cooperating organizations are providing access to clean water in rural Bolivia.

By María Antonia Pérez, Rotary Positive Peace Activator and Rotary Peace Fellow

I am excited about a project I have been part of in Bolivia that underscores water's critical role in fostering stability and prosperity. As we observe World Water Day on 22 March, which has a theme of "Water for Peace," I feel this project demonstrates Rotary's unwavering dedication to tackling global challenges and the transformative potential of positive peace in driving sustainable

change.

Currently, 2.2 billion people worldwide lack access to safe water, and over 3 billion depend on water crossing national borders, presenting cooperation challenges that endanger water quality and quantity, thus posing threats to social and international stability, according to the United Nations.

Water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) aren't just essential for health, they are also crucial to peacebuilding objectives.

Several Rotary Clubs from New Mexico, including Hobbs, Lovington, Carlsbad, Eunice, Silver City, Albuquerque, West El Paso, Taos and Tucumcari along with the La Paz San Jorge Rotary Club from Bolivia, are collaborating with the United4Change Center (U4C) and Quaker Bolivia Link (QBL) to undertake an innovative water project in 2024. This project aims to provide clean, safe water access to two rural indigenous communities in Bolivia. These clubs have completed similar WASH projects in two other indigenous rural communities in Bolivia, as part of the "Ampara Project."

Accessing clean water in rural Bolivia is a significant challenge due to the absence and contamination of clean water. These longstanding issues are becoming unsustainable, compounded by a growing and profound lack of fresh water. The effects of climate change have exacerbated the situation, threatening the health and well-being of residents, especially children who experience high incidences of diarrhea and other water-borne diseases, particularly those under 5 years of age. Due to strong freezing winds, reduced rainfall, and the absence of natural water sources, families, especially children, frequently engage in unsanitary practices. Water sources are located in remote and dispersed places, and the majority of families in the participating communities lack proper latrines, resorting to rudimentary cesspools for waste disposal.

The project aims to empower marginalized groups and create conditions for sustainable human existence. We work with cooperating organizations, local and international Rotarians, local governments, and villagers. The organizations are hand-selected by experienced Rotarians and provide training, capacity-building, tools, and water systems. In 2021, the project benefitted 72

families, reducing the rate of diarrhea and aiding in COVID-19 prevention through increased handwashing.

In 2024, a new project “Soy Agua” is underway to create access to safe drinkable water for approximately 150 indigenous villagers. This project will result in a faucet being installed in each of the 30 homes, which has never been done before. The project will also involve installing family water sinks for water extraction and handling, water tanks for distribution, and purification filters in the pipe downspouts for water collection to enhance quality and create individual subsystems for each family. Additionally, the project will train 500 villagers including community leaders. Committees of villagers will ensure continuous operation and sustainability by managing administrative and operational functions.

The Rotary Clubs of Hobbs (New Mexico) and San Jorge (Bolivia) have a long-standing tradition of involving Peace Fellows and Peace Activators in their global grants. This project has included participation by Ximena Murillo, a Rotary Peace Fellow and CEOP of U4C, Carla Murillo, a Rotarian and Positive Peace Activator from Bolivia, Magdalena Zurita, a Rotary Peace Fellow from Argentina, and Maria Antonia Perez, a Rotary Peace Fellow and Positive Peace Activator from Colombia.

This project addresses the Pillars of Positive Peace promoted by the partnership between Rotary and the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) by addressing human rights, equality, and good governance. By ensuring access to clean water and sanitation, the project fosters trust between communities and governments, prevents conflicts over water resources, and promotes economic development and social cohesion within marginalized communities.

In regions where water resources are scarce, providing sustainable access to water and sanitation not only prevents the potential for conflict but also fosters good relations between neighboring communities who may share water sources.

Clean water isn't just a basic necessity; it's a cornerstone for peace, prosperity, and sustainable development. Through collaborative efforts and unwavering dedication, Rotary and its partners are striving to ensure that everyone, regardless of their background or circumstances, has access to this fundamental human right.

September Is Coming!

