

# THE STAFFORD HIGHLIGHTER

May 13, 2026



Rotary Club of Stafford **People of Action**

## Club Calendar

May is Youth Service Month

May 13 – Noon Meeting, Xiao-Yin Byrom on Polio Eradication

May 20 – Noon Meeting, Program - Stafford County Sheriff's Department

May 27 – Club Social, 6:30 pm at Foode

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.

July 12-14 - District 7610 goes to Evanston!

## May 13 – Xiao-Yin Byrom on Polio Eradication

Xiao-Yin “Tang” Byrom is a first-generation American, small business owner in Manassas, and a passionate, hands-on Rotarian. She currently serves as the PolioPlus Chair for Rotary District 7610. Earlier this year, she had the honor of participating in a National Immunization Day in India. The experience—vaccinating children and meeting families impacted by Rotary’s efforts—was deeply humbling and reminded her how powerful even the smallest act of service can be when done with love and purpose.



In addition to her role in polio eradication, Xiao-Yin has worked closely with fellow Rotarians to organize and deliver wheelchair distributions across Latin America. Through these partnerships, she has helped bring mobility, dignity, and joy to children and adults in countries like Ecuador, Bolivia, Mexico, Guatemala, and Jamaica. None of this would be possible without the dedication and generosity of so many Rotarians working together toward a common goal. Most recently, she and her teammates completed a major fundraiser, and a container of specialty wheelchairs is now on its way to Argentina. Upcoming distributions are being planned in Chile, and Honduras—each one a testament to the strength of Rotary collaboration.

Tang believes that as Rotarians, we are called to lead with humility, gratitude, and an unwavering commitment to Rotary’s motto: Service Above Self.

## May 6 Meeting

President Kristy presided, welcomed our guest speaker from Micah Ministries and Area 4 AG Deneal Kennedy. She made some brief announcements:

- ❖ Kristy announced that the Mother's Day Getaway fundraiser raised over \$600.
- ❖ Donna, Paige, and Nikki all reported on Relay for Life. This year there were enough luminarias to encircle the entire track. There were 112 from our club.
- ❖ Registration for the June 28 District installation and awards banquet is now open on DAC/db.

### Program – Micah Ministries' Jeremiah Community



The Fredericksburg region's current approach to homelessness largely depends on placing people into scattered site apartments with short-to-long term rental subsidies and accompanying case management. The model, called Housing First, is rooted in the philosophy where basic human needs such as food, shelter and safety are met FIRST without precondition (i.e. sobriety, mental health treatment, income, etc.). In our community, it has led to a 56% decrease in chronic homelessness over the past decade. Additionally, 88% do not return to the street or a shelter within two years of housing placement.

While many of our homeless neighbors can be successfully housed through current strategies, there are a significant number whose disabilities require more than scattered sites and time limited options. There are an average of 60 people in our area who have no place to sleep indoors on any given night. One-third of the chronically unhoused in our area have a last known address in Stafford County. As a single-site permanent housing option with special emphasis on community and purpose, Jeremiah Community is an evolution of housing first strategies, including those implemented by Micah. The goal is to become a community where no one has to sleep outside.

This project is named Jeremiah for two reasons: Jeremiah is the name of both a man who spent 27 years living on the streets of Fredericksburg and a biblical prophet who delivered the word of God to the people of Israel during the most terrifying time in their troubled history. The juxtaposition between Jeremiah, the parable of our own city, and the prophet Jeremiah speaks an important truth into how God wants us to show up to our neighbors and the hope and future God desires for all of us, even in exile.

Jeremiah, the homeless man, is one example of many persons with disabilities who have lived chronically on the streets of Fredericksburg. In a perfect world, neighbors like Jeremiah would have had a network of family/friends to keep them from becoming homeless in the first place. Many variations of breakdown in a family unit, however, can leave people without the relationships necessary to maintain a safe place to live and the support to share their burdens. In their own way, the Jeremiahs of our community are living in exile, separated not only from a physical place but a people and purpose, in which to root the essence of who they are.

In the throes of Israel's downfall, the prophet Jeremiah learns that God relates to humanity as the potter works with water and wheel—infinitely shaping and reshaping the unfired clay. It is

with that blessing in his heart that Jeremiah joins the exiled Israelites in Babylon. He brings good news: in spite of the trials and tribulations that led to their homelessness, God desires a hope and a future for them. They may not be able to go back to where they came from; neither could they reclaim the people and purpose of their past. They could, however, live the best possible life and even find joy in the new place God had planted them.

*“Build houses and live in them, plant gardens and eat their product.... But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile and pray to the Lord on its behalf. For in its welfare, you will find your welfare.”* Jeremiah 29: 5-9

Micah Ministries plans to build Jeremiah Community in phases (with phase one including the construction of 50 small homes, and associated infrastructure). In future years the , Jeremiah Community may include up to 109 small homes and other buildings for supportive services.

In addition to the small houses the community will include:

- ❖ Community Center for offices, mail, computer access, recreation, meals
- ❖ Maintenance building for grounds keeping, some storage and/or workshop for making (painting/pottery) or packaging things.
- ❖ Places for worship, study and fellowship
- ❖ Memorial garden, columbarium and prayer labyrinth
- ❖ Mini clinic for health screenings and mental health treatment
- ❖ Green spaces, walking trails, access to the river for fishing, pavilion
- ❖ Community garden
- ❖ Community market for basic needs, selling items made by those living in the community, and place to distribute donated items.
- ❖ Fredbus stop
- ❖ Lodging for visitors, missional residents or retreats

The project will cost an estimated \$17.5 million. Much of this funding has already been raised. Micah Ministries need to raise \$5.6 million more. Groundbreaking is expected in November.

For more information visit the Jeremiah Community website

[https://www.jeremiahcommunity.org/?page\\_id=73](https://www.jeremiahcommunity.org/?page_id=73)

### **Happy Cup:**

Dale shared that this was the 26<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his son’s commission.

Paige talked about the “It All Matters Wednesdays” in May and shared that her daughter put on her prosthetics by herself.

AG Deneal shared a story about her father’s childhood experience of homelessness.

## **PolioPlus Society**

### **Helping Rotary End Polio – Join the PolioPlus Society**

Rotary and The Rotary Foundation (TRF) are dedicated to Doing Good in the World, with a promise to continue the fight against polio until the world is certified polio-free.

### **History of the PolioPlus Society**

# History of the PolioPlus SOCIETY

**1** Basically each District can establish their own criteria for membership, including the minimum recurring gift, and also their own recognition awards and marketing materials.

**2** This is similar to how the Paul Harris Fellow Program was initially set up and we all know how awesome and successful that program has become.

**3** 2012 - The original concept came from Rotarian Harriett Schloer of Bend High Rotary in Oregon, along with then DG Dell Gray of District 5110.

**4** Recently PolioPlus Chair Nelson Maler reported that they have nearly 800 Rotarians who have signed up as members of the PolioPlus Society.

**5** The PolioPlus Society is a powerful way for Clubs to meet their \$1500 in annual giving to polio and is also a most excellent membership engagement tool as well.

October 2022 - RI Trustees endorsed the PolioPlus Society as a Club and District-led program and agreed these societies will develop their own donor recognition program.

The Rotary District-led PolioPlus Society recognizes Rotarians, Rotaractors, and friends of the Rotary Foundation who commit to End Polio by giving a recurring amount determined by the criteria set by each District.

EndPolio.org/Donate

Rotary

Rotary took on this challenge in 1985, and—together with global partners—remains fully committed. Polio is preventable, yet it still threatens children in parts of the world. No child should ever have to suffer from this disease. But ending polio requires enormous resources, support, and your help.

### What is the PolioPlus Society?

The PolioPlus Society was created in 2012 to

encourage sustained, recurring gifts to Rotary’s top humanitarian priority: eradicating polio. Modeled after the Paul Harris Fellow program began, PPS started as a District-led initiative and was formally recognized in October 2022 by the Rotary International Trustees.

Each District sets its own guidelines for PPS membership, including the amount of giving and the type of recognition offered. Many Districts suggest a minimum of \$100 per year, but all PPS programs share one thing in common: recurring support for PolioPlus. Recognition may include a special PPS pin, certificate, or other items, depending on the District.

### Why Join?

- ❖ Your recurring donation directly supports the Global Polio Eradication Initiative.
- ❖ Every dollar is matched 2-to-1 by the Gates Foundation, tripling your impact.
- ❖ Contributions earn Foundation Recognition Points, which count toward Paul Harris Fellow status and can be transferred to other members or your club.
- ❖ PPS is open to Rotarians, Rotaractors, family, friends, and partners-in-service—making it a great way to share Rotary’s mission with your wider network.

### How to Join

Becoming a member is simple:

Contact your District PolioPlus Chair or End Polio Now Coordinator, or Visit [EndPolio.org/Donate](https://endpolio.org/donate) to set up your own recurring, tax-deductible donation to The Rotary Foundation’s PolioPlus Fund.

### Why It Matters

The PolioPlus Society has already proven to be a powerful way to raise funds, engage members, and sustain giving overtime. Your commitment helps Rotary recognize its most generous supporters—and most importantly, brings us closer to making polio only the second human disease ever eradicated.

Together, We Will End Polio. Thank you for being part of Rotary's Countdown to History and for supporting our shared goal to #EndPolioNow.

### May Is Youth Services Month



Every May, Rotary International celebrates Youth Service Month! While Rotary's young leaders are worth celebrating every month, May offers an exciting opportunity to highlight the leadership development and service impacts of the more than 350,000 young leaders who participate in Rotary International's youth programs each year.

Learn more about Rotary International's youth programs:

**Interact clubs** bring together young people ages 12-18 to develop leadership skills while discovering the power of Service Above Self. Interact clubs organize at least two service projects each year: one that supports their local school or community and one that promotes international understanding.

**Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA)** is an intensive leadership experience organized locally by Rotary clubs and districts for young people ages 14-30. During RYLA, participants develop leadership skills while having fun and forming lasting friendships.

**Rotary Youth Exchange** offers students ages 15-19 the opportunity to learn a new language, discover another culture, and build lasting friendships with young people from around the world! Exchanges are sponsored by Rotary clubs in more than 100 countries and range from short-term exchanges lasting several days to three months and long-term exchanges that last a full academic year.