

ROTARY District 6490 newsletter



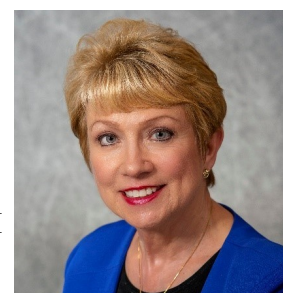
www.rotarydistrict6490.org



District Governor Janet Ellis-Nelson

Dear Friends in Rotary,

This has been a fun and uplifting month for me! I've enjoyed hosting and attending several Rotary holiday parties! You have warmed my heart with your clubs' beautiful acts of service this month. I hope you enjoy reading about the diverse holiday service projects completed and get some ideas for future club projects!



WGLT, Bloomington-Normal's NPR station, aired and published a wonderful story by Lauren Warnecke on the six Rotary clubs in the Bloomington-Normal community. (See the story published in this newsletter.) It would be fabulous if all local radio stations and newspapers promoted Rotary in each area of District 6490. Could someone in your club work on that in the coming year?

If you are like me, you are counting your blessings this time of year. Two people I'd like to give a shout out to are Racheal Fearday, our District 6490 Administrative Assistant, and Christine Walsh, our newsletter editor. I come up with ideas and content, and Racheal creates beautiful graphics, and Christine pulls everything together into an attractive publication. I am sincerely grateful to both women for their support!

Best wishes to you, your family and friends as you gather for celebrations.

Janet Ellis-Nelson
District 6490 Governor

DECEMBER



TAKE ACTION: Join Rotary, Be a People of Action





Recognitions from the Rotary Foundation

TOP: Rotary Foundation Awards were presented at Charleston Rotary's Holiday Party; left to right: President Todd Vilardo – Paul Harris Fellow +1, Kristen Holly – Paul Harris Fellow, Judi and Karl Konrad – Major Donors Level I, Taneya Higginbotham – Paul Harris Fellow, Bill Lair – Paul Harris Fellow +4, Chuck Eberle – Paul Harris Fellow +3, Danny Douglas – Paul Harris Fellow.

CENTER: District Governor Janet Ellis-Nelson presented **Judi and Karl Konrad** from Charleston Rotary Club with a **Major Donor Level I** crystal and pins for their cumulative donations of \$10,000 to The Rotary Foundation.

BOTTOM: Winnie Stortzum, District Paul Harris Society and Major Donor Chair, recognizes Gary Bowen and Doug Nelson from Champaign Rotary as Paul Harris Society members for their commitment to donate at least \$1,000 a year to The Rotary Foundation. Bowen and Nelson are both Major Donors to The Rotary Foundation.



2023 District Grant Projects

Danville Rotary purchased and packed 40 Thanksgiving meal boxes for seniors involved with CRIS Healthy Aging.

Dwight Rotary purchased and installed Four Way Test signs in Dwight's Rotary Park.



Mahomet Rotary bought flip-front clear bins for the Mahomet Public Library so that picture books could be attractively displayed for young children. Friends of the Mahomet Public Library and memorial donations in honor of Carol Williams also contributed to this project.



From left, Gab (Brazil), Prairie (Thailand) and Frederico (Italy).



Left to right Tiffani Henry, Babette (Austria) MJ (Germany), Prairie (Thailand) Gab (Brazil) Doug Schwalm, Frederico (Italy).



From left, MJ (Germany), Babette (Austria), Tiffani Henry, and Prairie (Thailand) at the Christkindlmarket.

RYE Students Embark on Chicago Trip Hosted by Districts 6450, 6270

The RYE students from District 6490, joined by Doug Schwalm (district chair) and Tiffani Henry (district outbound coordinator), along with over 40 other RYE students from nearby areas, had a blast exploring Chicago. Their day kicked off with a scavenger hunt that led them through the streets of downtown Chicago. Armed with clues, the students navigated iconic landmarks, uncovering hidden gems, and absorbing the city's energy.

Once they worked up an appetite, everyone met up at the famous Giordano's for some delicious Chicago-style deep-dish pizza. Sitting around the tables,

enjoying their pizza, they shared plenty of laughs and great conversations.

After filling up on pizza, the group headed over to the Hancock Tower. The view from the observation deck was amazing, giving them a great look at Chicago's impressive buildings, the beautiful lakefront, and the lively streets below. Some students even tried the TILT experience, where they stood on a glass and steel platform that leaned out from the building.

The next day was just as fun, with a visit to the Christkindlmarket. The market, with its wooden stalls and

sparkling lights, really got them into the holiday mood. They had a great time looking at traditional crafts, trying some German snacks, and sharing stories. To top it all off, a few of them went to Millennium Park to go ice skating. For these RYE students, Chicago became more than a city on a map. It transformed into an experience, through adventure, cultural immersion, and camaraderie. Their journey through the heart of the city not only expanded their horizons, but also etched indelible memories that will continue to resonate long after they return to their home countries.

Want to Help Your Club Sponsor an International Project?

Does your club have interest in sponsoring an international service project but isn't sure how to get started? Here are two great opportunities for you to put the International in Rotary by sponsoring, or co-sponsoring, a project with The Rotary Club of Tlalpan Golf Mexico. Both projects, supporting youth, were reviewed by the Heart 2 Heart Project Evaluation team during their visit to Mexico City this past November. Both present opportunities for District 6490 clubs to become involved without a large output of money.

Project Opportunity One: Assist Children with Cancer

in collaboration with the Mexican Association to Assist Children with Cancer - AMANC)

During their visit, the Heart 2 Heart team saw a presentation about a project to expand a learning center for children who are being treated for cancer. The project involves adding more computers, desks, and supplies to the learning center and is a good project to support literacy, mental health, and empowerment of girls and boys. The learning center is located in what is essentially a halfway house for children who come from long distances to Mexico City for cancer treatment in public hospitals but have no place to stay/live during the treatments. The children are provided room and board, transportation, activities, and schooling while they are away from home.

Estimated total cost for this project is around \$10,000, which would make the United States share about \$7,500. It was suggested that U.S. Zones 30 and 31 Rotary Clubs make this a real group effort, where every district represented has club(s) and/or individuals contribute \$1,000 to get to the total needed quickly.

Project Opportunity Two: Girls Empowerment Books

The Tlalpan Golf Mexico club published the first book, *Rompeolas*, and the Heart 2 Heart team saw the author Gina give two awesome special presentations to children in two communities. The Tlalpan club plans to do more books, with three authors already lined up. The club would like to do one book in 2023–24, with sponsorship possibly being shared with Baker-McKenzie, an international law firm. If that joint partnership comes through, the cost to sponsor half of the publishing cost would be around \$3,000. All sponsor partners get recognition in the book. Again, districts, clubs, or individuals are welcome, and encouraged, to get involved.

Two other books are planned in 2024–25, with the Rotary Club of Maryville, Tenn, planning to sponsor one book through a district grant, and The Rotary Club of Bearden, Knoxville, Tenn., planning to co-sponsor one book with Baker-McKenzie.

Let's work together so that District 6490 can help support these projects! If your club has any interest in helping to financially support these projects, I will gladly share details on how to best make that happen. Contact Mike Martin, DGE, for further information. Mike.rotary6490@gmail.com or (217) 259-3120.

From left,
the
Book
Reading
Event
and
Education
and
Activity
Center.





Empowering Women in Leadership

2024 Speaker Series



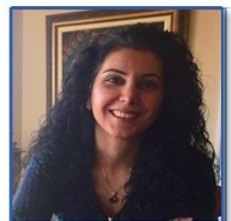
January 12, 2024 - DR. TAMRA CONNOR

Dr. Connor is the Illinois State University Associate Dean for Accreditation & Operations and Professor at the College of Business. Dr. Connor is a recipient of numerous Teaching and Writing Awards. Tamra is an innovative and creative education specialist who is excited to be part of an institution that empowers students to create a legacy and make a difference in the world.



February 9, 2024 - DR. GEORGIA NUGENT

Dr. Nugent became the Interim President of Illinois Wesleyan University for the 2019-2020 academic year and in November 2019 was selected as the 20th and first female President of the university.



March 8, 2024 - DR. MARYAM TAFRESHI

Dr. Tafreshi serves as a faculty member at the Mind-Body Medicine Department at Saybrook University Graduate College of Integrative Medicine and Health Sciences and is recognized as a Global Scholar with The Chicago School of Professional Psychology.



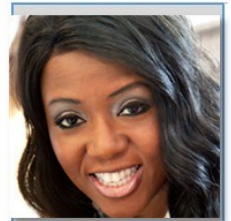
April 19, 2024 - BARB SMITH

Barb Smith is the former Women's Basketball Coach for Illinois State University and associate Head Coach at St. Louis University as the Associate Head Coach. Today Barb is the Founder and CEO at "Find My Team" a motivational speaker, and author of "Beyond the Talent: Profile of a Winning Team"



May 17, 2024 - DEANNA FRAUTSCHI

"Let nature be your guide" - In developing ourselves, we often lose sight of who we really are. Using walks and meditation in natural settings can help us locate our true passions for empowering ourselves. Learn how to chart your own path to self-fulfillment and personal success. Deanna will tell her own story about her transition from insurance executive to wildlife photographer, master naturalist and nature presenter.



June 14, 2024 - RENESIA MARTIN

Resenia Martin is an executive with State Farm Insurance. Her memoir, "Don't Hit My Mama!" is a triumphant account of her childhood riddled with family violence, abuse and neglect. Renesia openly describes the process she went through to find wholeness. In addition, she shares self-help exercises for those who want to embark on their own journey of breaking the cycle of abuse and overcoming the effects of family violence.

**NEW
IN-PERSON FORMAT
AVAILABLE**

Join us for lunch
(**\$25 per person**)
with our local speakers
at
11:30 a.m.
Rob Dob's Restaurant
801 N. Hershey Rd.
Bloomington
or by ZOOM at
12:00 Noon



Amber Gruenloh
Emcee



Shandra
Summerville
Facilitator

**SPONSORED BY
ROTARY
DISTRICT 6490**

To Make a Lunch Reservation or Sign-up for ZOOM, contact Pat Grosso at grossopat27@gmail.com



Decatur



Urbana



CU Sunrise

Champaign



Mahomet



Champaign West



Bloomington Pub Club Rotary took a red kettle on a bar crawl and raised \$785!



Savoy



Paris



Rotary Clubs Support the Salvation Army

SAVE THE DATE

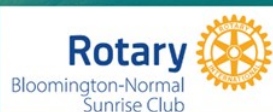
You are invited to an All-District 6490
Lunch & Learn on Human Trafficking

Friday, April 5, 2024

Location: Special Olympics Illinois
605 E. Willow Street, Normal

11:30 doors open, lunch will be available. Program begins at 12pm.

Further details as the date gets closer.



Metamora and Germantown Hills Rotary Club members help with a Food Distribution Day at the Spring Bay Food Pantry. They provide meals to over 100 families in the area. They also helped at the Thanksgiving Distribution day. Pictured are (l-r) Ed Rainville (Secretary), Jason Roton, AJ Friedrich (President) and Gavin Mitchell (President-elect).



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Manuel Enrique Hernandez, Savoy, sponsored by Phil Van Ness

Patrick Zajac, B-N Sunrise, sponsored by Sue Seibring

Shanna Hargitt, B-N Sunrise , sponsored by Aimee Beth Beam

Felicia Auth, B-N Sunrise , sponsored by Glenn Harbin

Dan Moffett, B-N Sunrise , sponsored by Julie Howell

Ann Gilmore, Bloomington, sponsored by David Haynes

Steve DeLacy, Charleston , sponsored by Chuck Eberly

Olivia Frambes, Fairbury, sponsored by Sue Popejoy

Chip Holmes, Champaign West, sponsored by Dave Webb

Ashley Immke, Danville, sponsored by Emily Duncan

Interested in Rotary?

In the Twin Cities, You've Got Options

How do grown-ups make friends?

Work friends are one way. Dog parks are another. And for many, volunteering gets them out into the community, connecting with others.

It may surprise some to hear there are six rotary clubs in Bloomington-Normal. There's the Bloomington Rotary and the Normal Rotary, plus Sunrise, Sunset and Daybreak — not to mention the Elks, Kiwanis, Jaycees, Lions, the Shriners — the list goes on and on.

This might be the answer to the friend-making challenge, and for many Twin City residents, it is. But certain aspects of social clubs remain shrouded in formality and social and political capital.

Social scientists have documented a sharp decline in civic engagement over the last four decades, as social media and "slacktivism" reign supreme. Social clubs have struggled to modernize and attract new, young, diverse membership.

Rotary international, for example, did not accept women until 1989. In Bloomington-Normal, membership remains disproportionately white. And many young adults' work patterns and social lives look completely different from those of their elders, a trend that was exacerbated by the pandemic.

Enter the Pub Club

"We ran the numbers in October," said Kate Burcham, treasurer, incoming president, web designer and social media manager for the Bloomington Pub Club Rotary. "We are 55% female and our average age is 45."

Founding president Tara Conklin reached out to four friends in 2021 with an idea for a new Rotary club.

"So, we all sat at a bar," Burcham said. "In March 2021, we had our inaugural

meeting. We had almost 30 people show up. By our official start date in May, we had 21 members. From there, we just grew."

Now tipping above 80 members, Pub Club is the fastest-growing Rotary in Illinois. From the original five, the board will expand to 13 members next year.

"It's more attractive to a younger demographic," said Realtor and current board member Shannon Smith. "They want to help in the community. They might not be able to do it financially, but they can give their time."

Pub Club meets monthly in a rotation of local watering holes. But Burcham said the club is not just about drinking. The Pub Club's main goal is completing service projects. Smith said she tried out almost every Rotary in Bloomington-Normal — and this was the one that worked for her.

"We're doing more service hours than any other Rotary in town," she said, though it took some convincing to get Rotary International on board.

"We're bringing in members and doing all these things," Smith said. "They recognized, maybe we need to make some changes — not to get rid of what traditional Rotary is, but open it up on another spectrum so the people that aren't looking for that model can join this model."

Recently, the Pub Club won a regional trailblazer award for its efforts, showing there's not just one way to Rotary.

A more conventional option

Chartered in 1949, a more traditional club is the Normal Rotary that meets at noon Wednesdays at Illinois State University's Alumni Center.

Despite its traditional trappings — they ring the bell, recite the Pledge of Alle-

giance and sing "My Country 'Tis of Thee" at the top of each meeting — president Dayna Brown said the club has evolved to meet the moment.

"We really try to be open," Brown said, "where we embrace the history but welcome change."

As one example, Normal Rotary no longer has an attendance requirement. They've made moves to meet members where they're at, and it appears to be working, with a growing membership and age range spanning from 30 to 92.

"I think a lot of groups that haven't been willing to change, that's where they start to see some difficulties," she said.

But a lunchtime meeting can be challenging for some — and is one reason why Pub Club started.

"I own my own company," said Burcham, adding many Pub Clubbers are business owners and "solopreneurs."

"Our time is money," she said. "I'm sorry, but if it's between going to a lunch at noon or meeting with a client — the client is always going to win," she said.

Members across multiple clubs said scheduling was their primary motivating factor in choosing which Rotary to join.

Sunset Rotary meets after work, for a quick weekly meeting with no meal. Pub Club meets monthly. They don't provide food, but buy members a beer. Sunrise and Daybreak are for the early birds, combining weekly meetings with breakfast.

Finding your 'fit'

Rotary Club members also talked about figuring out "where you fit in." That can be coded language for newcomers,

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HOLIDAY SERVICE



VANDALIA ROTARY

Vandalia Rotary hosted a Christmas party for K-8 students from all over Fayette County.



CLINTON INTERACT

Clinton Interact packed school and hygiene supplies to ship to girls in a Third World country.



NORMAL ROTARY

Normal Rotary packed holiday food baskets for 250 Unit 5 families.

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especially given the longstanding rule that membership relies on paying dues [that run anywhere from \$200-\$600 a year] and sponsorship by an existing member. Being welcoming and being inclusive are not always mutually exclusive, and these factors, in part, are why Bloomington-Normal has six Rotary Clubs when one or two might do.

Until the Pub Club came around, Daybreak Rotary was the newest, chartered in 2013. With just 15 members, Daybreak Rotary is, quite honestly, a vibe. They meet at the Original Pancake House. Most members order “the usual,” eating their pancakes and eggs as they run through the agenda.

“I was attracted to this primarily because I had a friend here, and because of the focus on service,” said Chris Hoy, who joined Daybreak Rotary six months ago. Hoy has been involved

with scouting and Habitat for Humanity and had never been exposed to Rotary.

“The group of people here, who have a social connection, but also the drive to give back with sweat, in town, was something I wanted to be a part of,” he said.

At a November meeting, the group debriefed on their second annual

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HOLIDAY SERVICE



LINCOLN ROTARY

Lincoln Rotary participated in the Lincoln Christmas Parade.



DANVILLE SUNRISE ROTARY

Danville Sunrise Rotary helped distribute Toys for Tots.



MAHOMET ROTARY

Mahomet Rotary purchased and delivered 256 books to third graders at Lincoln Trail Elementary School.

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Grocery Grab, a Supermarket Sweep-styled fundraiser at HyVee in Bloomington — and the club's biggest event of the year.

"We try to do the best we can in our little corner," said club president Jason Sleet Shirley. The Daybreakers raised \$1,250 in the Grocery Grab, divided among three charities.

"It's huge for us," Shirley said. "I originally came to this club because the business that I worked for paid for it. It was supposed to be a networking opportunity. There's 15 people in here, and of course we come from all walks of life, but this isn't that kind of club. If you want to network and hand your card out, Sunrise is where you go."

The "movers and shakers"

"Once you come here, you hear the energy, you feel the excitement. The

comradery that's in this group — I felt this is home for me," said Sue Seibring, president of Sunrise Rotary, chartered in 1990.

"It's a long-standing group," Seibring said. "It's a great variety, very diverse, all different types of occupations, all different age groups, which makes it fun, too."

As the largest club in the Twin Cities, Sunrise Rotary is flush with network-

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HOLIDAY SERVICE



BLOOMINGTON ROTARY

Bloomington Rotary purchased and distributed Dictionaries to all third graders in District 87 and assembled blessing bags for friends at Life Long Access.



DWIGHT ROTARY

Dwight Rotary asked businesses to decorate a tree in Rotary Park. The club provided free smores.



CU SUNRISE ROTARY

CU Sunrise Rotary sorted and priced clothing and helped with cleaning at Salt and Light.

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ing opportunities and chock full of business owners. Daybreak, Normal Rotary and Pub Club members almost universally called Sunrise the "movers and shakers" in the community.

"Your fingers are out in the community even more when you have so much diversity," said Seibring.

Realtor and past president Laura Pritts joined Sunrise Rotary looking for organized service opportunities.

"The future of Rotary is in groups like Sunrise and Pub Club," Pritts said. "There's energy and there are people who can't wait to get up and go."

Sunrise gathers on Tuesday mornings at Eastland Suites in Bloomington. Breakfast begins at 6:30 a.m.

"We have so many people who say, 'I'm not a morning person,' and yet

they're here every single Tuesday," Pritts said. "There's something about that."

Long-lasting connection

Pritts said Sunrise Rotary also is about friendship. At a November meeting just before Thanksgiving, guest speaker Phil Bachman of Luther Oaks discussed the "Blue Zones," areas of the world where seniors are thriving.

Article written by Lauren Warnecke. Reprinted with permission of WGLT.

HOLIDAY SERVICE



DANVILLE NOON ROTARY

Danville Noon Rotary placed wreaths on the graves of veterans.



CHAMPAIGN WEST ROTARY

Champaign West Rotary helped children shop for loved ones and wrap gifts at the Crisis Nursery Holiday Shop.



CASEY ROTARY

Casey Rotary volunteered at Christmas in Fairview Park each Monday in December collecting goodwill donations and handing out candy canes to people visiting the light show.



Pub Clubbers Do Good

The Bloomington Pub Club Rotary used the proceeds from their golf outing to provide 120 Thanksgiving meal kits to families whose children attend The Boys and Girls Club. Pictured left to right: Tara Conklin, Jen Bras, Sara Larsen, Annie Swanson, Christen Busick, Sherry Quinlan, Shannon Smith, Christine Street, Russell Edelman, Tamara Harvell, Ethan Nelson, Tori Howard, and Darlene Piper.



HOLIDAY SERVICE



MATTOON ROTARY

Mattoon Rotary went door-to-door collecting food donations and also stuffed 150 stockings with goodies for children through the Mattoon Food Pantry and The Haven homeless shelter.



PONTIAC ROTARY

Pontiac Rotary held a Christmas party for special needs students providing lunch and a gift for each child.



BLOOMINGTON-NORMAL SUNRISE ROTARY

Bloomington-Normal Sunrise Rotary signed 170 holiday cards for residents at five long term care communities, volunteered at the Festival of Trees, and donated \$4,670 in cash and gifts for 71 children gifts at The Baby Fold.



B-N Sunrise Has Holiday Party

The Bloomington-Normal Sunrise Rotary Club recently held its annual holiday celebration.



RYLA



**19-21
APRIL**

**ROTARY YOUTH
LEADERSHIP AWARDS**



JOIN SOPHOMORES AND JUNIORS FROM AROUND ROTARY DISTRICT 6490 FOR AN INTERACTIVE WEEKEND AT THE 4-H CAMP IN MONTICELLO FRIDAY EVENING THROUGH SUNDAY LUNCH, APRIL 19-21! RYLA PARTICIPANTS WILL SLEEP IN CABINS, COMPLETE A CHALLENGE COURSE WITH THEIR TEAM AND GROW IN SELF-CONFIDENCE, LEADERSHIP SKILLS, MAKE A LOT OF NEW FRIENDS, AND HAVE FUN!

4-H Memorial Camp
Monticello, Illinois

OPEN TO HIGH SCHOOL SOPHOMORES & JUNIORS

RYLA Is Back!

The cost will be \$165 per student, and registration will be open in January 2024. Please email Tanya Walker, RYLA Chair, at ibtanya-walker@gmail.com, if you have questions.