

Date: April 30, 2024

To: Bill Phillips, District Awards Committee Chair

[Bill.phillips59@gmail.com](mailto:Bill.phillips59@gmail.com)

**Re: Nomination for Best Continuation Project – Best of Clarksville**

A joint project of Clarksville Rotary Club, the Kiwanis Club of Clarksville, and Bikers Who Care

For: Clarksville Rotary Club

Carol Clark, President, [carolcrotary@gmail.com](mailto:carolcrotary@gmail.com)

**Link to Event Webpage:** [Best of Clarksville](#)

An annual event in Clarksville, Tennessee for 28 years, *Best of Clarksville (BOC)* has evolved several times over the life of the event, but the purpose of BOC has remained constant: to raise funds for one or more nonprofit organizations.

Since 2021, *Best of Clarksville* has been a joint endeavor of the Clarksville Rotary Club, the Kiwanis Club of Clarksville, and Bikers Who Care. This is especially noteworthy in a year when Rotary clubs have been encouraged to partner with other civic organizations on a project.

During the past three years, BOC has raised over \$500,000 for community nonprofits. A portion of the funds are presented directly to local nonprofits by the BOC planning committee and other funds are distributed to the three sponsoring organizations to support their community service activities.

BOC highlights area businesses through online nominations and on-site voting the day of the event. The approximately 4,000 attendees at *Best of Clarksville* determine the winners in over 150 categories, such as best restaurant, best local shop, and best entertainment venue.



The *Best of Clarksville* event started in 1995 as a fundraiser for a national nonprofit. In 2015 the original *Best of Clarksville* committee modified the original event to create a fundraiser for local nonprofits. The Clarksville Rotary Club, the Kiwanis Club of Clarksville, and Bikers Who Care were three of the numerous local nonprofits that received funding from the event.

In 2020, one of the original organizers of the BOC event moved out of state, and several other committee members also stepped down. Two of the existing members of the group, Melanie Thompson (Clarksville Rotary Club) and Sande Cox wanted to keep the event going and began discussions with Kiwanis Club of Clarksville and Bikers Who Care to see if there was interest in partnering together for the event. After some discussions, all agreed to work together and received the blessing of the original BOC committee members to continue with the event.

2021 was the first year for *Best of Clarksville* as a joint venture of Clarksville Rotary Club, Kiwanis Club of Clarksville, and Bikers Who Care, and all three groups are currently planning the 2024 event. Representatives from each organization meet from February through October to plan the event and to explore ways to make it better each year.

Each of the three partner organizations have a longstanding history in Clarksville and are recognized for their work to support the community. The willingness of each group to bring unique resources to the project was a significant factor in the ongoing success of *Best of Clarksville*. For example, the Kiwanis Club of Clarksville and Bikers Who Care had tents which cut down event expenses. Clarksville Rotary Club member Melanie Thompson provided knowledge of the event history and Clarksville Rotary also managed volunteer recruitment for the event. Lasting friendships and connections between members of the three organizations have grown from the opportunity to work together on BOC.



Check presentation to the *Best of Clarksville* charities at a Clarksville Rotary meeting in November 2023 with Bikers Who Care, Kiwanis Club of Clarksville and Clarksville Rotary.



**Clarksville Rotary Club** was established in 1917 and has made notable contributions to Clarksville including projects such as the Rotary Field of Dreams, Splash Pad at Heritage Park, Rotary Park, Avenue of Flags, the playground at Liberty Park, and annual donations to area nonprofits.

**The Kiwanis Club of Clarksville** is a global organization of volunteers dedicated to improving the world, one child and one community at a time. In 1920, Kiwanis Club of Clarksville was organized with the primary focus of improving youth literacy. Each year, the Kiwanis Club of Clarksville impacts the lives of over 9,000 kids in Montgomery County through programs such as the Reading Rodeo, Interview with a Veteran Essay Contest, and Children's Christmas Party.

**Bikers Who Care** is an organization of motorcycle enthusiasts that began in 1982 and is dedicated to supporting the Dream Factory of Clarksville, by fully sponsoring Camp Rainbow – a summer camp for seriously ill children. Each year, BWC works closely with doctors and nurses all over Middle Tennessee, to help bring joy to the lives of these kids by making one dream come true for each of them. BWC also donates money to area nonprofits including FUEL, the Dawn Stanfill Foundation, and many others.