Meeting Notes – Jan. 16, 2024

The LaFayette Rotary Club met today, January 16, 2024, for its weekly meeting. We were thrilled to recognize and honor two of our members, T. R. Clark and Dr. John Caldwell, as they became Paul Harris Fellows. This status is achieved when an individual has contributed $1,000.00 over his/her lifetime to the Rotary Foundation. Both received Paul Harris Fellows certificates and pins.

Rotarian Chester Carter was responsible for the program today. He invited as his guest speaker Kea Martin, Mobil Team Supervisor for the LifeSouth Community Blood Centers, East Alabama Region. Kea shared with us how she became interested in blood donation. Her father had become very ill and needed a blood transfusion. He refused to receive a transfusion for fear of catching a disease. His daughter, Kea, asked the nurse if it would be possible for her to donate her own blood to give to her father. The nurse said it was. Kea asked her father of he would be willing to accept her blood and he was. The nurse directed her to the LifeSouth Center near the hospital and within just a few hours, her father had the life-saving blood that he needed.

LifeSouth is a non-profit community blood bank serving more than 150 hospitals in Florida, Alabama, Georgia, and Tennessee. Blood collected by the East Alabama Region is used by hospitals in our area, from Lineville/Wedowee, to Auburn/Opelika to Columbus/Phenix City. Blood cannot be manufactured, so it is vital to have blood donors. Once drawn, the blood is sent to Montgomery for testing. Blood is screened for various diseases and conditions, such as bacterial infections, HIV, sexually transmitted diseases, and COVID antibodies. Once the blood is deemed safe, it is separated into three components: red blood cells, platelets, and plasma. Red blood cells are sent to local hospitals. Platelets are often given to patients undergoing cancer treatments. Plasma in generally used in medical research.

Whole blood has a shelf-life of about six weeks. Often, centers have to borrow from each other when their own supplies run low. A donor can donate as often as every 56 days. In order to donate, the donor must be off any antibiotics for at least three days, and cannot be taking certain medications such as blood thinners, Accutane (for acne),and certain drugs for rheumatoid arthritis. You can donate your blood for use by a specific member of your family or for yourself in preparation for a future surgery.

Each Rotary member received a gift bag with additional information about blood types and blood donation, how to host a blood drive, as well as a water bottle, snacks and other gifts.

Diane Sherriff