

Rotary Club of Oakland



Club Meetings

March 5
Ysabel Duron
California Institute
for Regenerative
Medicine

March 12
UCB Chancellor
Rich Lyons

March 19
Abby Sullivan Engen

Service Projects

**Tree Planting
Service Day**
Feb. 28 – with Oakland
Parks & Recreation Fdn

**St. Vincent de Paul
Community Easter Party**
March 28: 8:30 am – 2 pm

Special Events

**Oakland Fledglings
Bird Walk for
Beginners**
Mar. 8: 9 am – 12:30 pm
More info to come

**Oakland Roots Facility
Tour and Reception**
Mar. 26: 3 pm

**Marchtoberfest
Business Mixer**
Mar. 31: 5 – 7 pm
Minuteman Press

Next Club Meeting – March 5, 2026 – Ysabel Duron

Next week's meeting will feature Ysabel Duron of the California Institute of Regenerative Medicine (CIRM) where she is a Board Member. CIRM is a state agency to accelerate stem cell, regenerative medicine, and gene therapy research.

We will meet at Henry J. Kaiser Center for the Arts for fellowship at 12:00 pm followed by the meeting which starts at 12:30 pm. The meeting will be in person as well as on Zoom.

For those joining on Zoom, use this link [Thursday Club Meeting](#)

Rotary Meeting Highlights for February 26, 2026

Call to Order

After the ceremonial blowing of the whistle, **President Joe Goralka** called the meeting to order at 12:30 pm. This was the sixth club meeting at the new Henry J. Kaiser Center for the Arts.

Visiting Rotarians and Guests

President Joe introduced visiting Rotarians **Club Past President Jon Gresley**, of the Truckee Rotary Club, Martha Goralka of the Delta-Antioch Rotary Club, and Shannon Chan of the Fremont Rotary Club. There were no guests but Joe recognized the families, friends, and coaches present for the speech contest.

Thought for the Day – Mathias Lemos Castillo

Mathias Lemos Castillo celebrated Spring by sharing thoughts about the lotus flower which serves as a metaphor for personal growth. Struggles are not obstacles to success but opportunities for transformation.

Richard D. King Annual Youth Speech Contest

Past President Shannon Hackley reminded the audience that the annual speech contest was named in honor of Past RI President, Past District 5170 Governor, and Past President of the Fremont-Niles Rotary Club – Richard D. King. Rick believed that if you discover your voice, you discover your power, you should

District Conference

May 1 - 3, 2026

Reno, Nevada

Go to Club Calendar for registration link.

Rotary International Convention

June 13 – 17, 2026

Taipei, Taiwan

Committee Meetings

Community Service

Mar. 4: 5 – 6 pm

Speakers

Mar. 4: 7 – 8 pm

Karl Stucki World Community Service

Mar. 10: 5:00 – 6:30 pm

Business Development

Mar. 10: 5 – 6 pm

Fun, Sport & Adventure

Mar. 11: 6 – 7 pm

Birthday Greetings

Happy Birthday!

Celebrating are:

March

02 – Daniel Cheng

03 – Linda Chew

03 – Marlene Sacks

04 – Bob Harris

04 – Fiona Ma

07 – Rosemary Darden

07 – David Douglas

08 – Mandolin Kadera-

Redmond

09 – Greg Annis

11 – Kerry Hamill

13 – Alex Poulsen

14 – Merlin Edwards

choose courage over comfort; and that Rotarians love speeches. Rick's legacy lives in every student in every speech contest.

Bill Swartz, Speech Contest Committee chair, kicked off the contest by explaining the rules:

Length: 4-5 minutes; Theme: Service Above Self; Topic: Any topic that the speaker believes is timely and of interest

For contest purposes, **Bill** introduced Speakers A, B, and C.

- Speaker A discussed homelessness in the City of Oakland
- Speaker B talked about redlining as a cause of gentrification.
- Speaker C addressed the need for financial literacy.



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Announcements, Thanks & Two Medals

In order to provide time for the speech contest judges to score each speaker, **President Joe** interspersed the speeches with announcements:

David Kersten invited everyone to the Marchtoberfest also known as the Business Development Mixer, on Tuesday, March 31st, 5:00-7:00 pm. **Sedrick Tydus** will host the event at Minuteman Press in Oakland.

Thanks from **President Joe** to:

- **Past President Mary Geong** for organizing the Lunar New Year banquet (ten courses plus wine).
- **Trisha Connors** and **Marie Sescon** for the Enterprise Institute training session.
- **Bill Palmer** for initiating the global grant to treat clubfoot in Ethiopia and for being selected to serve on the Rotary Action Group for Clubfoot.

Environment Committee Chair Joel Parrott invited members to a tree planting service day on Saturday, February 28th at the West Oakland branch library. This is the last chance to put trees in the ground for this season.

14 – Nema Link
15 – Ken Richardson
20 – Suzie Yokomizo
21 – Andrew Brown
21 – Gio Tanzillo
22 – Garrett Dailey
25 – Debra Barnes
27 – Greg Knight
29 – Dan Altemus
29 – Robert Kidd

Membership Anniversaries

Thank you for your years
of service to the Club
and the community!

March

Tom Love – 54 years
Michael Bruck – 45 years
Randy Reed – 34 years
Barbara Beery – 31 years
Elida Scola – 20 years
Jill Loh Kearns – 19 years
Ana-Marie Jones – 18
years
Jason Wizelman – 11
years
Kym Johnson – 9 years
Julayne Virgil – 8 years
Kathleen Sims – 7 years
Trisha Connors – 5 years
Nik Dehejia – 5 years
Randy Arnold – 3 years
Jessica Arline – 3 years
Bil Dixon – 3 years
Marie Sescon – 3 years
Andrew Shalauta – 2
years
Faye Brandin – 2 ears
Daniel Cardenas – 1 year
Dominique Enriquez – 1
year
Rich Harrison – 1 year
Chris Moore – 1 year
Louis Quindlen – 1 year

President Joe is looking for one more volunteer to help renovate Play Island at Children's Fairyland on March 2nd.

President Joe presented Rotary on the Run medals to: **Club and ORE Treasurer Pam Claassen** who has tirelessly worked to clean up the financial records and who has provided sage financial advice; and **Wendy Howard** for her service on the Speaker's and Lunch Committees, for being a major RI donor, and for serving as an extraordinary Rotary tour guide.

And The Winner Is

Bill Swartz returned to introduce the student speakers and to announce the contest results. The first place speaker will move onto the area contest with the opportunity to participate in the regional and district contests. The winner at the district level will receive \$4,200.

First Place: Lucas Chan, a junior at Head Royce S chool

Second Place: Shaye Weeramantry, a freshman at Head Royce School

Participant: Lei'Lani Bagby, a sophomore at Envision Academy

Bill thanked the judges, tellers, timer, committee members, speech coaches, family members and others who worked to bring back the club's speech contest after a year's long pause.

Bellringers

In honor of **Pam Claassen: Ruth Stroup, Joe Goralka, Ces Butner, Merlin Edwards, Trisha Connors, Kerry Hamill, John Claassen** and **Isaac Kos-Read**

In honor of **Wendy Howard: Joe Goralka**

In honor of the student speakers: **Marissa Betts, Daniel Cheng, and Joe Goralka (3).**

Adjourn

President Joe shared the thought that through Rotary world peace will be established, as he adjourned the meeting at 1:30 pm.

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Name Correction – Kaitlin Levenstrong

Recently several new members were inducted. Unfortunately the name of one was misspelled here.

Kaitlin Levenstrong, Executive Director of Oakland Goes Outdoors, was sponsored by **Danny Wan**. She is leading this new organization and its work in partnership with Oakland Unified School District to help youth obtain meaningful outdoor experiences. **Kaitlin** herself enjoys open spaces and in particular places

near open water.

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Rotary Interact Clubs are Growing

The Club's Youth Facilitator, **Daniel Cheng**, reports that there is a lot of positive activity going in establishing Interact Clubs. Recently, one of the Interact Clubs received their Charter at a Rotary weekly meeting. By the end of **Merlin Edwards'** year as President, Oakland Rotary plans to be sponsoring a total of 12 Interact Clubs.

Recently **Catherine Coleman** attended 4 Interact meetings (Oakland Tech, Oakland High, Lodestar and Lighthouse) to promote our Service Days. There was interest in joining us at St. Vincent de Paul's Easter Event, Alameda County Food Bank and the Barrier Free Park Event.