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District Newsletter



Another Great Month in Rotary District 6920!

Another great month in Rotary District 6920! The work being done by Rotarians is, in my opinion, beyond belief. Thanks to everyone who is committed to providing service through their Rotary Clubs.

As you may know, the Rotary focus for the month of September is literacy and basic education. In this regard, the focus that Past District Governor Felix Smith placed last year on reading at the third-grade level is making a remarkable impact in the Communities in our District. PDG Felix is once again devoting time this year to spending time and reading to two young readers. I am humbled by his dedication to this cause. I am also so impressed by the club visits I have attended. Many of these clubs have great literacy projects in progress. These efforts by so many Rotarians are helping break the cycle of illiteracy and empowering people to reach their full potential and contribute to their communities. I have heard it said that Literacy is not just about reading, but it's about creating a future where everyone has the opportunity to survive.

One other item of note is Past District Governor Hamsa Thota's leadership on our partnership with Serbia. Several members of our District will be attending their zone conference along with Rotary International President Stephanie. I am sure there will be

additional information in next month's newsletter.

These are just a few things happening this month in District 6920. I continue to look forward to hearing about all the great efforts of making a positive impact in our world, communities and hopefully in each of us.

District News

CART Recognizes District 6920 for Outstanding Contributions in July

Congratulations to Rotary District 6920 for achieving first place in total district giving to the CART Fund for the month of July, with an impressive contribution of \$10,456.43! Special recognition goes to the Macon Rotary Club, which led the district with a donation of \$5,115.00, placing them among the top three clubs.

CART (Coins for Alzheimer's Research Trust) was founded by Rotarians and is now supported by over 600 Rotary clubs across 40 districts. For more information about CART, visit www.cartfund.org.

A big thank you to all who contributed to this vital cause. For questions or further details, you can reach District 6920 CART Chair Glenda Kessler of the Rotary Club of Camden County at gkessler@tds.net or by phone at 706-260-5730.

A Spotlight On GRSP Students





Boston Butt
Fundraiser To
Date

Camden County Rotary Club Builds Accessible Ramps

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Enforcement

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Visits with
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Director

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Development
Authority

Tifton Rotary Club Has Memorable Month

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Rotary Club
Hosts Coastal
Community
Health
Organization

Valdosta North Rotarians Have a Par-Tee

2024-2025 IMPORTANT CONTACT INFO AND LINKS



See The World Rotary Youth Exchange

9/18 – Augusta



We are continuing our efforts to recruit high school students to study abroad through the Rotary Youth Exchange program. Rotary Youth Exchange gives qualified and selected students an opportunity to do a home stay and study abroad year in high school at relatively little expense to the family, with the goal of promoting intercultural awareness and other tenets of the Rotary mission.

We have several parent/student information meetings in September. 9/18 ${\hat a} \in {}^{\omega}$ Macon 9/17 ${\hat a} \in {}^{\omega}$ Savannah

9/23 – Valdosta 9/30 – Macon

More information and registration for the program and meetings can be found at www.ryese.org.

Please help get the word out to students and parents as the application period comes to a close October 15th.

We are looking to host students through out District 6920 for the 2025-2026 school year.

Do you think your club can make history and play a part in pioneering the RYE program? Contact Dana Park dpark@ryese.org or visit the ryese.org website for more information.

Georgia Rotary Student Program Welcomes 2024-2025 Class

The Georgia Rotary Student Program (GRSP) Class of 2024-25 was warmly welcomed this weekend during the annual Conclave in Columbus, Georgia, with the singing of the Peace Song, symbolizing unity and harmony. This year's GRSP Class includes 39 scholarsâ€"24 females and 15 malesâ€"hailing from 22 different countries. Sponsored by 89 Rotary Clubs across Georgia, the students are attending 25 colleges, including Morehouse College and Georgia Tech, marking the program's return to these institutions after a 20-year hiatus.

The Conclave, hosted by District 6900 and the



Rotary Clubs of Columbus, Muscogee-Columbus, and North Columbus, was chaired by GRSP Chair lan Bond. The weekend was filled with leadership sessions at the Columbus Convention & Trade Center, a reception dinner at the National Infantry Museum, a student showcase "Cabaret†on Saturday evening, and a thrilling rafting trip on Sunday before the scholars returned to their respective campuses.







2024-2025 Leadership Team

Todd A. Freesemann District Governor

Terry AdkinsDistrict Governor
Elect

Beverly Trainor
District Governor
Nominee

Felix M Smith iPast District Governor

Heather Ann Kellen Zone 33/34 District RLI Chair

Paula K.
Goodnow
District
Communications
Officer

Hamsa Thota District Foundation Chair

Steve Williams

District Membership Chair

Erin Andrews District Public Image Chair

Elizabeth Hardin District Treasurer

Amy Heil Maley District Co-Learning Facilitator

Lisa BirchDistrict Learning
Facilitator

Anne M. Cordeiro District Simplified Grants Chair

Heather Klemm District Awards Chair

Brian M. Weese RYLA Chair

Joe Leek
District
Webmaster

Shrad Amrit
District Polio
Plus SubCommittee





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Georgia Laws of Life Meet Our Match Campaign: Inspiring Character, Shaping Futures



The Georgia Laws of Life Essay Contest thrives because of a dedicated community of supporters who believe in the transformative power of character education. This year, the commitment from long-standing donors and new supporters has played a crucial role in advancing our Meet Our Match challenge grant. Thanks to their generosity, we are at 75% of our goal with a month to go.

Among the inspiring contributors are Lata and Manjeet Chinnan, who have been steadfast supporters of the contest for many years. This year, the Chinnans increased their contribution to the Meet Our Match campaign, inspiring others to join them. Manjeet Chinnan, a retired professor from the University of Georgia, reflecting on his career, shared, "All my life, I have been in academia and have loved it. Supporting the Georgia Laws of Life Essay Contest is my way of giving back and showing my gratitude. I am passionate about this

cause because I see the impact it has on the future of many young students, and I am glad to play a small role in this endeavor.â€

Their generosity and belief in the mission of Georgia Laws of Life are matched by Rotary Club Partners. Clubs have expressed that they are committed to giving in recognition of what the program has come to mean to club members who serve as judges and the students in their local high schools. We hope each club takes this opportunity to increase or give this year, especially with the matching opportunityâ€"every donation up to \$60,000 will be doubled. What a win for everyone.â€

Read More

Club News

Rotary Club of Long County Transforms DFCS Visitation Room to Provide Comfort for Children

The Rotary Club of Long County is proud to announce the successful completion of an important service project that directly benefits some of the most vulnerable members of our community: children entering the foster care system. In August, our club completed the renovation of the Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS) Visitation Room—a project aimed at providing comfort and a sense of security to children who are temporarily housed in the room while waiting for foster care placement as well as the supervised visitation of family's working toward reunification

The newly renovated room is designed to offer warmth and care, featuring a variety of child-friendly amenities. New furniture, including a small loveseat, two chairs, a side table, and a toy organizer, was carefully selected to create a cozy atmosphere. Additionally, we installed a mounted TV, wall bookshelves, and a collection of toys and games, ensuring the children have distractions and comforts during an emotionally challenging time.



Our club members came together on multiple workdays to clean and haul off trash, paint, assemble furniture, mount shelves, and install the new equipment. The collective effort of our members and our community made this transformation possible. The room now reflects the care and dedication we poured into the projectâ€"offering children a safe, welcoming space to relax, play, and watch movies while they wait for their next steps.

"This project reflects the heart of what Rotary is all aboutâ€"service above self,†said Brandi Castanño, President of the Rotary Club of Long County. "We wanted to ensure these children feel cared for during such a difficult time. Our hope is that this space brings them comfort, even if just for a moment.â€

Chair

Elizabeth Hardin District International Service Chair Paul Harris Society

Coordinator

Maria Jennings District Membership Attraction Chair

Stephen D. Acuff District Conference Chair

Pryce May

District Rotaract Chair Jan Hordan

District Interact Chair

Dana Park
District Youth
Exchange Chair

Maj. William
Phelps
District Youth
Protection Chair

William Von Alt District Youth Chair

Glenda Kessler District CART Chair

Rob Kellener District GRSP Chair

2024-2025 AREA GOVERNORS

Kelly Knitter Augusta-West

Jim Seifert Blackshear

Steve Bell Downtown Macon

Ashlee Torpy Dublin

Abby Smith Effingham County

Pam Waters Glennville

Jessica Pedigo Metropolitan Savannah

Shana Brinson Millen We would like to extend our deepest gratitude to every member who donated, volunteered, or contributed in any way to this project. Your involvement has made a tangible difference in the lives of these children, and we are proud to have completed this project as a testament to the spirit of Rotary.

In Service to the Community

This project is just one of the many ways the Rotary Club of Long County is working to uplift and support our local community. Through partnerships, service initiatives, and the dedication of our members, we continue to strive for a lasting positive impact.

Follow us on Facebook at Long County Rotary and keep in touch!

Read More

Kings Bay Rotary Club Supports Local Abuse Shelter



The Rotary Club of Kings Bay donated much needed items to Camden House (an abused shelter)

Pictured is Ms. Taylor from Camden House, members CB Yadav, Nancy Jelley, Kathy Ordway, and Shane Whitemore.

(taking the picture is club President Paula Goodnow).

Blackshear Rotary Club Focuses on Community Support



Blackshear Rotary Club Reviews Poverty Data

Pierce County Family Connection Director Stephanie Bell spoke recently at Blackshear Rotary Club. Bell reported the most recent poverty numbers for Pierce County and the surrounding counties. Pierce's childhood poverty rate is 22 percent - 1,075 children are living in poverty. Surrounding county's rates are: Ware – 27.6 percent, Bacon – 31.6 percent, Brantley – 24 percent. The Kids Count data Bell referenced is from 2022

Bell also reported there are 137 teens, ages 16-19, living in Pierce who are not currently enrolled in school or employed. Pictured (I-r): Rotary Club President Sarah Gove, Stephanie Bell, Rotary ADG Jim Seifert.

Blackshear Rotary supports Hospice Satilla, Senior Center

Blackshear Rotary Club is a proud supporter of Hospice Satilla and Pierce County Senior Site Council. The Club recently sponsored Pierceopoly, a fundraising project for the two groups. The Pierce County version of the beloved board game Monopoly will be available for purchase in December.

Pictured (I-r): Pierce County Senior Center Director Lynn Platt, Hospice Satilla Representative and Rotary President-Elect Stacey Thrift and Pierce County Senior Site Council President Shirley Coleman.

Jekyll Rotary Club Visits South Africa Virtually

The Jekyll Island Rotary Club recently watched a video presentation from Thorny Parker, one of its members of the family trip to South Africa. The trip was a photo safari to some of the wildlife refuges there. The club saw both photos and videos of multiple animals in their natural habitats including lions, hippos, giraffes, crocodiles and leopards just to name a few. Pictured from left are Parker, Rotarian Jerry Ezell and Club President Alan Price.



Savannah West

Beverly Trainor St. Simons Island

Taylor Everett Tennille

Bonnie Sayles Tifton

Danny Broyles Valdosta-North

Kingman Herin Vidalia

Dave Razo Warner Robins



Rotary Club of Camden County Welcomes GRSP Student

The Rotary Club of Camden County is thrilled to host Zuzanna Ignaszek, our 2024-2025 Georgia Rotary Student Program (GRSP) scholar from Poland.

During our recent meeting, Zuzanna captivated the club with a beautiful presentation about her home country of Poland. She shared stories about Polish culture, traditions, and her experiences growing up. This cultural exchange is at the heart of the GRSP's mission to foster international understanding and goodwill, a vision established by Georgia Rotarians over 75 years ago. Zuzanna's time here is made possible through the support of three local Rotary clubs: Camden County, St. Simons Island, and Brunswick. As she continues her journey at CCGA, we look forward to seeing the friendships and connections she will build within the community.

The GRSP fosters international goodwill by bringing students from around the world to study at Georgia colleges. For more information on how you can get involved, visit www.grsp.org.

Macon North Rotary Club Kicks off September at Ronald McDonald House



Macon North ended August with a service project Labor Day weekend by cooking a meal for 25-30 residents at the Ronald McDonald House. And Joao, GRSP, was happy to jump in and join us.



This past weekend our Club held one of our annual fundraisers, the Vidalia Rotary Labor Day Boston Butt Sale! This year we sold more than ever - 450 butts! Every year one person in our Club outsells everyone else and he did it again this year! Congratulations to Garrett Wilcox for selling over 150 butts! We awarded him his own Butt trophy this year!! Thanks Garrett for all your hard work in our community!



Camden County Rotary Club Builds Accessible Ramps



Camden County Rotary Club partnered with residents of their community to build a pair of accessibility ramps for community members.



Read More

Metter Rotary Hosts U.S. Congressman

U.S. Congressman Rick Allen visited the Metter Rotary Club on Tuesday, August 13, during their regular weekly meeting at Bevricks.

"l enjoyed being in Candler County and attending the Metter Rotary Club meeting to provide a brief legislative update and answer questions from those in attendance,†Congressman Allen said. "l discussed key issues, including legislation passed by House Republicans to secure our borders, boost domestic energy production, and ensure parents have a say in their children's education. Listening to the concerns and priorities of our communities helps me better serve the residents of Georgia's 12th District in Congress.â€



Pictured, left to right: Metter Rotarians Bill Walden and G.W. Johnson speak with Congressman Allen after the meeting.

Rotary Club of Macon Hosts Mayor



The Rotary Club of Macon hosted Macon-Bibb Mayor Lester Miller last month. Mayor Miller needed no introduction. During Mayor Miller's first term, before he was reelected with over 80% of the vote, his administration was able to hire over 200 deputies, increase patrols on the streets, and increase starting pay for officers. The city has demolished about 725 blighted properties. Lester worked with a team to create and champion the Macon Violence Prevention program that has shown results. Violent crime is down to almost half of what it was when we took office in 2020, and teen homicides are down almost 70%. Lester spearheaded the opening of the Brookdale Resource Center to meet our neighbors who are most in need where they are. Turning to our economy, he secured almost \$700 million in private investment for this community. It is always a honor to have Macon's Mayor speak to our club.

The Jekyll Island Rotary Club recently made a meaningful impact at Burroughs Molette Middle School in Brunswick, GA. We delivered nearly 250 brand-new backpacks to students in need. The donation was warmly received by Principal Mrs. Jadon and her staff. Rotarians Joe Gore (Past President), Alan Price (Current President), and Al Tate (Secretary) were present for the handoff.

In addition to the backpacks, we kicked off our annual STEM program at Burroughs Molette on Wednesday, September 18th. This year, we are teaching five exciting topics to 4th and 5th graders. One of the newest additions uses M&M candies to demonstrate how scientists "sample" populations to solve complex questions. Students had a blast learning about percentages and solving math problems, and they especially enjoyed "eating their data" at the end of the session!

Stay tuned for more updates on our efforts to engage and inspire the next generation.



Rotary Clubs of Jekyll and Milledgeville Meet



The Jekyll Island Rotary Club was recently visited by two members of the Milledgeville Rotary Club. Erin Andrews is the Public Image Chair for Rotary District 6920 and Joy Simpson handles Administration and Photography for the Public Image Team. They provided a comprehensive program on not only how Jekyll's PR Team, but the entire club can promote itself on the island and in the local community and Georgia. Pictured from left are Club President Alan Price, Simpson, Andrews and Rotarian Mike Thompson.

Rotary Club of Effingham County Prepares for Annual Football Showdown

ECHS head football coach, John Ford and SEHS head football coach Loren Purvis brought their best game, pre-game banter that is, to the weekly meeting of the Rotary Club of Effingham County. Moderated by "The Big Guyâ€, Frank Sulkowski, of WJCL fame, the coaches provided their prognostication on how they see the outcome of the game. Rotarians will be there first hand as they will be tailgating and witnessing the annual match up at Rebel Stadium tomorrow night.







Golden Isles Hosts Local Law Enforcement



Glynn County Chief of Police Scott Ebner recently spoke at a Golden Isles Rotary Club meeting, where he highlighted positive developments within the police department. Chief Ebner discussed successful strategies for recruitment and retention, shared crime statistics for the county, and gave an overview of upcoming advancements in methods and equipment.

Pictured are Rotarian Mike Cherne, Chief Ebner, and Club President Marjorie Mathieu.

Jesup Rotary Club Kicks Off Exciting Year

Recently, the Jesup Rotary Club organized a successful supplies drive, "Circle of Care," to support the Safe Harbor Child Advocacy Center, which works directly with survivors of human trafficking. Our efforts to assist these vulnerable individuals continue this Friday as we host an awareness and fundraising event at a local venue. All proceeds will benefit human trafficking survivors, and we look forward to sharing photos of the event soon.

In other exciting news, we proudly donated \$500 to support Sailor Morgan's mission trip to Peru, where she will assist survivors of trafficking in partnership with the nonprofit organization "Lilly & The Sparrow."

We are also delighted to welcome two new members to our Rotary family. Mrs. Cindy Hughes was recently inducted, and we introduced Mrs. Kelly Shanklin as our new Club President.







Golden Isles Visits with GRSP Executive Director



At our August 28 meeting, we had the pleasure of learning more about the Georgia Rotary Student Program (GRSP). We were honored to welcome Kathryn Fields, Executive Director of GRSP; Meredith Deal, local trustee and member of the Brunswick Rotary Club; and Zuzanna Ignaszak, a GRSP student from Poland currently studying at the College of Coastal Georgia.

Kathryn provided an update on the GRSP program, while Zuzanna shared her personal experiences, speaking about her life in Poland and her impressions of the United States, particularly Georgia and the Golden Isles. She also engaged with the Club, answering questions about her background. A highlight of the meeting was when Rotarian Bill Austin greeted her in Polish, much to her delight. It was a pleasure to meet



Zuzanna, and we look forward to reconnecting with her at the District Conference in the spring.

Pictured: Kathryn Fields, Club President Marjorie Mathieu, Zuzanna Ignaszak, and Meredith Deal.

Jekyll Island Rotary Club Hosts Coastal Georgia Honor Flight

The Jekyll Island Rotary Club recently welcomed representatives from Coastal Georgia Honor Flight, including Stewart Stratton, James Vivenzio, and Milton Hall. Coastal Georgia Honor Flight provides veterans from World War II, the Korean War, Vietnam, and the Cold War with an opportunity to travel to Washington, D.C., at no cost to them. The veterans, along with their guardians and volunteers, fly via private, chartered airliner from Brunswick to the nation's capital, where they visit the memorials dedicated to their service.

Pictured from left to right are Stewart Stratton, James Vivenzio, Club President Alan Price, and Milton Hall.



Golden Isles Meets with Development Authority

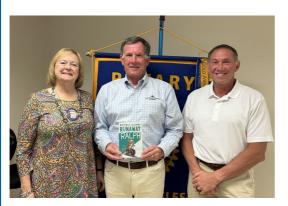


On August 14, the Golden Isles Rotary Club welcomed Mark Williams, the new Executive Director of the Jekyll Island Authority. Mr. Williams commended his predecessor, Jones Hooks, for the tremendous improvements made to Jekyll Island and shared exciting updates on current and upcoming projects. These include an ambitious Golf Expansion Plan aimed at restoring Jekyll Island as a premier golf destination, as well as plans for expanding both the Sea Turtle Center and the Jekyll Campground. The presentation concluded with the traditional gift of a book, which will commemorate the speaker's visit and be added to the library at Goodyear Elementary School.

In another recent meeting, Ryan Moore, President and CEO of the Golden Isles Development Authority, spoke to the Club about various projects underway and planned for Glynn County. He provided an overview of current and upcoming projects aimed at fostering growth and development in Glynn County.

Pictured to the left are Rotarian Annabelle Beasley, Ryan Moore, and Club President Marjorie Mathieu.

Picture below are Club President Marjorie Mathieu, Mark Williams, and Rotarian Hugh Adams.



Tifton Rotary Club Has Memorable Month

August was a memorable month for the Tifton Rotary Club, highlighted by engaging presentations from distinguished speakers. Among them were Natalie Gore, Superintendent of Tift County Schools, Head Football Coaches Noel Dean of Tift County High and Rusty Smith of Tiftarea Academy, as well as former State Representative Penny Houston.

In addition to these insightful talks, our members made a meaningful difference in the community by volunteering with Peanut Butter and Jesus. Our Board Members also demonstrated their dedication to service by attending the Rotary Leadership Institute, further strengthening their leadership and commitment to Rotary's mission.



Camden County Honors Rotarians



During the Rotary Club of Camden County's recent Gavel to Gavel celebration, we had the honor of recognizing several outstanding Rotarians for their exceptional service and contributions!

Service Above Self Award:

We are delighted to present Erik Nesteruk with the prestigious "Service Above Self" Award. Presented by John McNeil, this award acknowledges Erik's tireless dedication to the club.

"Erik is always one of the first members to arrive in the morning to help set up and one of the last to leave to take things down. He is the best civic treasurer I've ever seen," said John McNeil.

Rotarian of the Year:

Mitch Blyler, who served as Public Image Director and President Nominee, was named Rotarian of the Year for 2023-24. Despite only being a member for a few years, Mitch has shown incredible enthusiasm and generosity by stepping up to lead the club next year. He received the award and was also recognized as a Paul Harris Fellow for his contributions to The Rotary Foundation, presented by outgoing President John McNeil.

Paul Harris Fellows:

A special congratulations to Mitch Blyler and Debra Parsons, our newest Paul Harris Fellows! Their certificates were awarded by District Governor-Elect Terry Adkins, District Governor Nominee Bev Trainor, and Club President Hunt Thornhill.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to all of these remarkable Rotarians for their service and dedication to Rotary's mission!





Jekyll Island Rotary Club Hosts Coastal Community Health Organization

The Jekyll Island Rotary Club was recently visited by the Coastal Community Health Organization. They provide health services for the underserved population in multiple coastal Georgia counties. Their mission is to ensure patient-centered quality care that is accesible to all our counties. Some of



their focuses are Family Medicine, Pediatrics, Dental, Women's Health, Behavioral Health, Occupational Health and Pharmacy Services. Pictured from left are Dr. Candler Kavanaugh, Cheryl Woods, Katie Phillips, Sally Cedars, Rotarian Joe Gore and Club President Alan Price.



Valdosta North Rotarians Have a Par-Tee



Valdosta North Rotarians know how to PAR-TEE! VNR members had a blast mixing, mingling, and swinging a golf club around at their first social of the year! We discovered who the real masters of the green are. Rotarians and their families enjoyed dinner, drinks and rounds of digital golf at Fairway Tavern in Valdosta, Georgia.

2024-2025 IMPORTANT CONTACT INFO AND LINKS

Todd Freesemann, District Governor 912-433-4555 | <u>tfree16@comcast.net</u>

Paula Goodnow, District Chief of Staff paulagoodnow@hotmail.com

Erin Andrews, District Public Image Chair 478-363-3372 | Erin@marketinggeorgia.com

Cece Koon, Newsletter Editor 386-590-3457 | cece@shonnawilsonagency.net

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