



'SPARKS' OFF THE ROTARY WHEEL

An Award-Winning Newsletter

Edited by Sarah O'Brien

**The Rotary Club of Altadena meets Thursdays at noon
at the Altadena Town and Country Club**

Rotary Club of Altadena - #772

Chartered: February 14, 1949, P.O. Box 414, Altadena, CA 91003

RI Pres: Stephanie Urchick, Dist. 5300 Gov: Michael Driebe

THIS WEEK: RYLA STUDENT VISIT and More Restore Altadena Grants

**Westminster Presbyterian Church 12.00 - 1:30 pm
1757 N Lake Ave, Pasadena, CA 91104**

Speaker / Program Chair: Craig Cox



Rotary Youth Leadership Academy (RYLA) is an intensive, two-and-a-half-day leadership training program for high school Juniors in District 5300. Students are selected for their leadership potential. In addition to the development of leadership skills,

RYLA is meant to develop understanding of Rotary among youth participants and reinforce and provide recognition for their efforts, accomplishments, skills and potential as leaders. Rotarians serve as facilitators to the students' learning and discovery, as well as role models of Rotary ideals of the Four Way Test and Service Above Self. This week we will hear about the RYLA experience from the students we sponsored at John Muir High School.

In addition we'll have a chance to meet several additional Restore Altadena Grant winners including Save the Tiles (Pasadena Heritage), Project Passion, and Havens House Youth Services.



**Who can join Rotary?
You can!**



APRIL 17, 2025

April is: Environment month

Officers

President: Maricela Viramontes
Vice President: Dawn Digrius Smith
President Elect: Brad Roeber

Treasurer: Mike Noll
Bus: 626-657-2287
Secretary: James Gorton
Bus: 626-793-6215

Directors

Craig Cox
Maria Perez-Arton
Mark Mariscal
Sarah O'Brien
Lisa Rickard
Doug Colliflower
Brad Roeber

Chairs

Executive Club Secretary: Mark Mariscal
Membership: Maria Perez-Arton
& Brad Roeber
Foundation: Steve Kerekes
Service Projects: Mike Zoeller

Subcommittees

Community Service: Craig Cox
Vocational Service: Steve Kerekes
Youth Contests, Scholarships, Awards: Mike Zoeller
Youth Activities: Tony Hill
International Service: Sarah O'Brien

LAST WEEK: RESTORE ALTADENA FUND AWARD OF GRANTS TO LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS



www.ecsforseniors.org/montecedro

Review by Dawn Digrius Smith

This week we recognised some of the recipients of our Restore Altadena grants. Groups and individuals who received funds described how the money would be spent to support their work in the community. More details about their work to follow in the weeks to come. Photos on following pages.

Rafaela Moura	RFM Productions
Catherine Cadogan	Melodia Mariposa
Alison Johnson	Historical Tea & Dance Soc
Anais Dervaes	Urban Homestead Garden
Joe Nagy	Altadena Community
Jamani King	Loveland Community Dev
Mellissa Barnwell Scott	Central Altadena Little League
Steve Carrillo	Church of God Prophecy
Kevin Mills	Mills Korner
Brandon Hammerli	Outward Bound Adventures
Anne Lee	Boys & Girls Club of Pasadena
Susan Toler Carr	Justin Carr Wants World Peace Foundation
Kim Olpin	Jericho Road Pasadena
Katie Brandon	Pasadena Village



Frank & Huan's place
(Rand McNally House/FB)

CLUB MEMBERS WHO LOST THEIR HOMES TO THE EATON FIRE:

Maricela
Lisa
Dawn
Mark
Rene
Sue
Carol
(Sue's sister and friend of Rotary)
Linda C.
Wendy
Lauren
Frank
Tony
Sarah
Roger Fennell
Dennis McGinley
Former member
David Smith lost his place of
business (carpenter shop)

Fire Relief Resources:

<https://www.altadenalibrary.org/news/emergency-resources>
<https://sd25.senate.ca.gov/eaton-wildfire-resources>
<https://altadenatowncouncil.org/2025/01/information-resources-eaton-fire/>

RESTORE ALTADENA FUND

Grant Recipients with President Maricela
and Lisa Richard, Committee Chair



CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL!!

*More recipients to be honored in the weeks ahead.
Don't miss these meetings!*





PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By President Maricela

Recognition by Congressmember Judy Chu

When I was notified last week that I was one of the women being recognized by the Congresswoman, I wondered who had nominated me and of course, "why me?". Just like the thousands of us who have said, "why me" when losing our home to the Eaton fire. Or the thousands of others who have said, "why me" when finding out their homes were spared from destruction. Last Thursday, Mark "outed me to the club". It was my plan to write about the upcoming honor. But before I could do that, Mark announced it! I am actually ok with this because in reality, my honor is really the Club's honor. It has been a tremendous honor to be the leader of this club since the Eaton Fire. I know over the next few months and maybe years, our club, and some individual members will receive recognition. This is well deserved. It was wonderful to hand out checks to all of the non-profits that attended our lunch last Thursday. We had a packed room. (Thus, the importance of please sending your RSVP to Brad no later than Tuesday at noon each week).

Last week our club held a Fellowship event at the Alexander's Steakhouse. We enjoyed appetizers, socialized and most importantly, picked up a check from the staff at the steakhouse in the amount of \$17,954.80! All funds go to our club's Restore Altadena project through which we award small grants to selected local non-profits that perform programs or projects for Eaton Fire Survivors.



Some of you have heard by now that I will be heading to Cambodia and will miss the April 24th, May 1st and May 8th club meetings. I will be traveling with Sarah O'Brien, our International Service Projects co-chair. Sarah has arranged for me to visit the sites of the club projects we support in Cambodia, and to meet with the Rotarians over there. I am excited to see how the monies we send overseas make a difference in people's lives. Of course I will miss you all dearly...not really? Maybe!

Attention 501(c) Nonprofit Organizations:

The Rotary Club of Altadena is now accepting applications for the Restore Altadena Grant Program, offering \$500 to \$5,000 in funding to support community projects that aid in Eaton Fire recovery efforts.

Who can apply?

- 501(c) nonprofit organizations
- Projects benefiting Altadena residents, businesses, services, and charities affected by the Eaton Fire
- Organizations may sponsor projects by individuals, businesses, or local government

First application deadline: March 31, 2025

Apply now:

<https://altadenarotary.org/?p=stories&storyid=287709>

President's Message (cont'd)

At our Board of Director's meeting, we anticipate the receipt of 4 additional proposed members to our esteemed club. It is important that as our club grows, we still take time to say hello to the newer members and make them feel welcome. This past weekend, Mark Mariscal and I represented the club at the District 5300 Club Assembly Training on Friday, April 11th. We then attended the District Conference. Others from the Club attended too. There were hugs, tears recognitions and check presentations. Yes, my husband and Daniela also went along for the ride and the three of us got to enjoy Disneyland after the conclusion of the Conference!

**See you on Thursday.
Stay Strong!**

First Time at a Rotary Conference!

By Jose and Sandra Valenzuela (*photos opposite*)

When we told Maricela and Mark that we had signed up to attend the District Conference in Anaheim, they gave us high fives! Over the next 2 weeks, we stayed in touch to get a better understanding of the conference and how to participate. We did not want to let on that our main goals were to 1) stay at the Disneyland Hotel, 2) go into Disneyland on Sunday and California Adventure on Monday and 3) get away from the Grocery Outlet store and relax!

We arrived on Saturday morning just as the 4 Way Speech Contest was finishing up. The four students competing were all excellent competitors but only one could walk away with the \$5,000 scholarship. We heard from a Past Rotary International Director about the beginning years of Rotary up to the Supreme Court ruling that allowed women to join the organization. After that, all of the conference attendees participated in an abbreviated version of the "Disney Institution Training Module". The focus was on good customer service starting with your own employees... we thought we would just learn about Rotary while attending. We did! Right after the institute, the next speaker talked about the impact that the END POLIO NOW campaign makes around the world. Our speaker crawled from the entrance to the stage, used his arms to lift himself on stage and then proceeded to talk about how he contracted polio at a young age when in India. He was fortunate to be adopted at a young age by a loving couple in the United States who were able to get him health care and support in dealing with this devastating condition.

At lunch, Maricela and Mark were part of 75 Rotary members who carried in a flag from one of the countries where Rotary is active in the world. We heard from the RI President's representative about the current state of Rotary International, the many programs around the world and an update about the Rotary Foundation. After lunch, we headed to a different room to hear about the District 5300 Vocational Team of volunteers who went to Australia last month to talk about the techniques for Human Trafficking Prevention. In one of the SPARKS photos, you will see Maricela, Sarah, Allison and Ruth (from the non-profit Our Rescue - Boldly fighting to eradicate sex trafficking and child exploitation) and Mark. Footnote: if you did not yet read your March edition of the Rotary Magazine, you will learn more about what is being done at the local level.

District Conference Photos



Dinner and program were delightful. We sat with Paul Vercammen from Shelter Box USA. Sarah played some piano to accompany a video about the Eaton fire that featured Maricela's home and the Jimmy Kimmel fundraising clip. At the end of the clip we were asked to stand, with Mark also, to be recognised as the 'heart' of Altadena that keeps beating throughout this period of recovery. We received a standing ovation and it was a moving moment for all. The main speaker was a past Rotary International Director who focused on the future of Rotary. He gave examples of how one Rotarian at a time can make a difference in the community. After dinner, we capped it off with a walk (we even let Mark tag along with us) to Downtown Disney towards the entrances to the theme parks. There we watched the fireworks show before heading back to the hotel.

I would write more about our Sunday in Disneyland and Monday in California Adventure. But we want to hold you in suspense and give you a discussion topic to bring up the next time we see each other!



New Donation Link:

givebutter.com/EatonFireARC

A screenshot of a laptop screen displaying the 'Eaton Fire Recovery Fund' donation page. The page features a header with the Altadena Rotary Charities logo and a main section with a photo of a city skyline. Below the photo, there is a 'Choose amount' section with radio buttons for 'One-time' and 'Monthly' donations. The 'One-time' section has three options: '\$1,000', '\$500', and '\$250'. The 'Monthly' section has three options: '\$50', '\$25', and '\$10'. There is also a 'Read more' link and a 'Continue' button. The bottom of the screen shows the Altadena Rotary logo.