



'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: MINI-GRANTS!

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

Speaker / Program Chair: Edward Jasnow

THE BEST PROGRAM OF THE YEAR!!!



Yes, it's that time of year when we hear from the teachers who are the recipients of our Mini-Grants!

This year we awarded \$400 Mini-Grants to 31 teachers from seven schools. Those grants were even more meaningful this year, as many teachers and their students lost their homes in the Eaton Canyon Wildfire. Additionally, many teachers were laid off as PUSD struggles with the financial impact of the fires.

Please join us to support these wonderful teachers who have had a stressful year and learn about the many creative ways that these funds get used in the classroom.

Ed

MAY 01, 2025

May is: Youth Service 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: PCC VETERANS SCHOLARSHIPS

Review by Craig Cox

The Altadena American Legion Post, when it disbanded, created through Altadena Rotary Charities an endowment to provide scholarships to Pasadena City College students who were veterans to help them on their educational journey. Working with the Veterans Resource Center (VRC) this year we are providing four \$1500 scholarships.

This week we met three of our four scholarship recipients along with three additional Rotary Restore Altadena Recovery Grant Awardees.



Our four PCC Veterans Scholarship recipients are:

Carter Dandridge: *Carter will not be able to attend due to a conflict with his Naval Reserve training.*

Carter served in the United States Navy as a Machinist's Mate from May 2012 to July 2022. He deployed multiple times overseas throughout his service and received awards and recognitions, including the Good Conduct Medal, the Global War on terrorism service medal, the Humanitarian Service Medal, and the Meritorious Unit Commendation. Carter originally started his education career at Pasadena City College pursuing computer science, but quickly realized that applied mathematics was where his true passion was. Carter plans to transfer to a four-year university in Fall 2025 to complete his degree and build a career in data science, quantitative analysis, or engineering applications. He continues to serve as a Navy reservist, and this scholarship will allow him to fully commit to coursework, research opportunities, and the pursuit of his long-term career goals.

Rachel Fraser: Rachel served as an Information Systems Technician in the United States Navy from June 2020 to March 2024. While Rachel was serving, she lost a close friend in an accident on the ship. Rachel developed a strong passion to save the lives of those in critical condition, ultimately leading her to pursue a nursing degree. Rachel was also among many affected by the Eaton Canyon wildfire that displaced her from her home. Despite these challenges, Rachel has remained committed in pursuing the goals she has set out for herself. Rachel plans to use this scholarship to help her with books and other supplies that will help her fulfill her dreams of becoming a nurse.

Jason Morales: Jason served in the United States Marine Corps from July 2014 to September 2022. While serving, Jason had several different billets, including Airborne and air delivery specialist, parachutist, and Marine Security Guard. As a Marine Security Guard, Jason served at U.S. embassies and consulates overseas, which gave



www.ecsforseniors.org/montecedro



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/>

him a deep appreciation for other cultures. Because of his experience, Jason aims to attain a Bachelor of Arts in Russian and pursue a career with the Department of State as a Special Agent for the Bureau of Diplomatic Security Service (DSS). Jason intends to use this scholarship to fund access to the language program known as “Babbel” to increase the efficiency in which he will learn Russian to continue his service to the United States.

Yibo Pang: Yibo moved to the United States from China in 2007 and studied Building Construction at Pasadena City College. In 2008 Yibo proudly enlisted in the U.S. Army as a Bridge Engineer and deployed to Afghanistan from 2009 to 2010. While deployed, Yibo learned skills such as bridge construction, boat operations, and heavy vehicle operations. Since completing his military service, Yibo has held diverse roles, including store manager, crane safety manager, and steel structure supply counselor. Currently, Yibo is working on earning a Building Construction license and an AS degree focusing on modern construction methods and materials. His long-term goal is to apply his skills to California's evolving construction industry. Yibo plans to use this scholarship to advance his educational and career goals and support his family, including his children, who are 8 and 10 years old.



<https://pasadena.edu/academics/support/veterans-services/>

Our three Recovery Grant Awardees this week are: **Save the Tiles (Pasadena Heritage)**, **St. Marks Church**, and **Living Beauty Cancer Foundation**.



L: Stanley Miles (pictured with Lisa and Zoot) received a grant for the Batcherler Tile Program - saving tiles of the 1920's from chimneys that face demolition within the fire zone.

PAUL HARRIS FELLOW



Steve Kerekes presents to Dawn D. Smith with her Paul Harris Fellow 'plus 4' pin. Dawn has been a steady donor to The Rotary Foundation using Rotary Direct for monthly contributions. Congratulations!



Another Level of Paul Harris Fellow Award

By Steve Kerekes

Every year, as members contribute to the Rotary Foundation – either through direct giving, club fundraising or our contribution to the Polio Plus Campaign due to our Summer Concert Series ‘Pass the Pitcher’ campaign – club members reach a different level in their giving totals. Each \$1,000 in giving brings a club member to what is called a Paul Harris Fellow Award, plus 1, plus 2, plus 3, etc. until finally reaching the first level of being a Major Donor. This week at the club meeting, I presented the PHF + 4 pin to Dawn Digrius Smith.

To learn more about the Paul Harris Fellow Award, please contact me or Mark Mariscal.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By President Maricela

We Are The World, We Are The Children!

Last week, I mentioned the song "Leaving On A Jet Plane". This week, it's "We are the World" - the charity single recorded by the supergroup 'USA for Africa' in 1985. It was written by Michael Jackson and Lionel Richie and produced by Quincy Jones. I share this because Rotary is the world to millions, and I am proud to be a part of it!

I missed last Thursday's meeting as I was finishing the last-minute preparations in order to head to the airport that evening and fly with Sarah O'Brien (Sparks Editor / International Committee Co-Chair) to Cambodia. I hear the meeting was well attended and I appreciate Doug's assistance in presiding over the meeting. I know that our club members really enjoyed the Veteran's Scholarships for students from Pasadena City College. In addition, we also presented checks to a few local non-profits through our Restore Altadena Committee. Another thank you to Lisa and her Committee.

From behind the scenes, our Club Executive Secretary, Mark Mariscal, continues to amaze me, and I sure some of you too. While running around town, he represents our Rotary Club well. On Sunday evening, he was one of the five speakers chosen to speak at the retirement celebration of Jennifer DeVoll, the CEO of the Pasadena Community Foundation. The PCF has been a supporter of our club over the years. And of course, they also have stepped up over the last 20 years with funding support to local non-profits that are physically in the Altadena Community. Since the Eaton Fire in early January, PCF has raised more than \$70 million dollars. PCF created a new entity; the Altadena Builds Back Foundation (ABBF). This foundation is focused on Housing solutions in Altadena. And who better than Mark to be on this new entity's Board of Directors! In addition to joining this board, Mark also submitted an application to the Employees Community Fund of Boeing for our club to be considered for one of their "Crystal Vision Award" grants. You know where this is going: our club was chosen to receive \$50,000! The club will use the funds for our next Community Day of Service. PLEASE save the June 7th event on your calendar for participating. It is one week after the Pancake Breakfast. We will be busy!

Back to my arrival in Cambodia! The first leg of the flight to Hong Kong was about 15 hours. After a 6 hour layover, we then flew to Bangkok (3 hours) and to our final destination, Siem Reap (1 hour). A long but smooth journey. We received a warm welcome and immediately started to enjoy the Cambodian hospitality at our boutique hotel in Wat Bo, on the same road as Sarah's apartment.



Above: Maria and David Cole out and about recently!

Cont'd: Despite the initial jet-lag we have been out and about, exploring and experiencing the unique Khmer culture including the magnificent temples of Angkor (by bicycle!) and of course the wonderful food! I have enjoyed meeting our Rotary contacts in the field of landmine clearance (including the rodent variety!) and shall be touring the rural villages in a couple of days, to see where our financial support is making an impact in the area of clean water and sanitation. More about those activities and our continuing adventures when I get the chance to put my feet up for a minute...
poolside!



**Needless to say, I miss you all.
Stay strong!**