



'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: SCHOLARSHIPS TO PUSD STUDENTS!

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

Our program this week revolves around scholarships to the excellent students from Pasadena Unified School District. For more than 30 years, our club has worked closely with the school principals as their staff nominate and select deserving students to receive scholarship funds from our club.

This year, we shall recognize five students from Muir Magnet High School, six students from Marshall Fundamental 6-12 grade school and two students from Eliot Arts Magnet School. Enjoying our luncheon will be the students, their family members and the school principals.

Join us!



MAY 15, 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: KRISTEN ZOLNER, NEW MEMBER CRAFT TALK



The Rotary Club of Altadena was fortunate to hear a craft talk from a new member this week. Kristen Zolner has been a resident of Altadena for 5.5 years and came to us through Justin Rickard, son of President Designee Lisa Rickard. She and her husband Dave Cole (also a new member), are in the entertainment business. They moved to Altadena from the Hollywood Hills area to find a quieter life

to raise their children. Kristen's first exposure to Altadena came over 20 years ago when she was working with actor John C Rielly, who is a resident of our fair town. Kristen recounted her first trip here to see him and asking herself, *"Who would ever live all the way over here?!"*

Kristen is a TV producer and Dave is a writer. They have 2 children, 6.5-year-old Billy Sedona and Charlie Eagle, who is 5.5. She began her career in entertainment with various roles and was able to move up the ranks quickly – which is not surprising as she is clearly very intelligent and is a wonderful communicator. She connected with Amazon Studios in 2013 to work on their initial foray into original programming. She was a part of the show "Transparent", which won many awards during its run. Tiring of the culture at Amazon, she then moved to Netflix and was there for 8 years. She described her work on over 30 comedy specials during her time there, and she also worked on scripted shows with comedians such as Big Mouth, Emily in Paris and Dead to Me. She produced Ali Wong's first comedy special and mentioned that her work on the show, "The Characters" was particularly rewarding.



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/>

As new leadership joined Netflix and the culture changed, she moved to Ron Howard's Imagine Entertainment as the head of its TV division. She was there for three years until her recent departure and is currently seeking a new opportunity!

Kristen told the club that she is glad to be a member of our Rotary club because of the people she has met and that it gives her a great opportunity to be "out of the bubble" of the entertainment industry and to work with folks who are genuine and want to serve our community. She said that she loves raising her kids here!

Members were very engaged by Kristen's story and asked a multitude of questions – mostly about how things happen in Hollywood, and why! She gave excellent answers and ended by saying the new series on Apple called "The Studio" is eerily accurate. We enjoyed learning about Kristen and her family and we are a better club with her as a member!

R: Kristen's kids, Billy Sedona and Charlie Eagle!



Altadena Rotary Club Recognized

By The Boeing Company



Last Thursday, club member Mark Mariscal represented President Maricela at the 34th Annual Crystal Vision Awards hosted by the Employee Community Fund - California, of The Boeing Company. This award recognizes the work our club has done since the Eaton Fire Recovery efforts began. A check in the amount of \$50,000 was part of the award and will be used to fund our next Rotary Community Give Away. This event is going to be held at Loma Alta Park. Volunteers from The Boeing Company will join us that day. Luncheon photo in President's Message.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The Magic of Flight

By Maricela Viramontes

Many of us, especially those without an Engineering or Aeronautical background still wonder, "*How does an airplane really stay up in the air?*" That was the question that my daughter asked me last Friday as we traveled home from Cambodia. After a late departure for our 15 hour flight from Singapore to San Francisco we arrived in SFO just after our final flight from SFO to LAX took off. We ended up receiving food vouchers and a hotel room food the night, and finally made it 'home' with our hearts, minds still full of the experiences and adventures we'd enjoyed, with club member Sarah O'Brien and Rotarian friends in Siem Reap. With hundreds of photos to sort through, my account of our time there may take a while but is coming!

Heading home this time felt strange. We all look forward to sleeping in our own beds after travel, but who were we fooling? Our beds burned



Sarah Azcarate receives her Restore Altadena Grant Award from Lisa Rickard on behalf of Altadena Music Theatre (@altadenamusictheatre)

up four months ago and we are living in strange times as we consider and prepare for a possible new journey of life. There was plenty to contemplate during our flight of 15 straight hours with 400 plus strangers, in a coned shape instrument that we trust will remain airborne, even if we don't quite understand how.

As a Rotary Club, we were not ready to to blast off with our newly assigned responsibilities such as receiving hundreds of thousands of dollars last January, but like a plane, we rolled down the runway with newly minted dollars to distribute amongst the many organizations doing good work. Using this metaphor, we are currently at our cruising altitude and still have many more nautical miles to fly!



My thanks to Doug and Dawn for filling in for me these last two weeks. Also to Mark Mariscal for representing our club at the Boeing Crystal

Vision Awards luncheon (pictured above). And of course our friend and club member Sarah for sharing her insight into family life in Cambodia, the projects we support there - and the occasional passionfruit mojito - much-needed in the extreme heat and humidity!

In the heart of Cambodia's countryside including the specific areas impacted by landmines, I got to see where our Rotary dollars are making a major difference and will elaborate on that in the future. Thankfully the work continues long after we shake hands and leave.



By the time you read this article, I will have acquired a new smart-screen television that was gifted to our club by the Burbank Sunrise Rotary Club. This was just a small part of their gift that will



total almost \$5,000 to help us recover from the loss of items we had at the Altadena Town and Country Club.



With my daughter Daniela in rural Cambodia and below, with Rtn Bill and Jill Morse, founders of Cambodia Self-Help De-Mining organisation



(Cont'd) Despite the challenges, heartache (and jet lag!), I am happy to be back, and as many of us still struggle to feel 'settled' in our temporary housing, I know that ALL our experiences - at home or on the other side of the world - will serve us well, as we move forward together:

"A mind that is stretched by a new experience can never go back to its old dimensions." – Oliver Wendell Holmes.

SEE YOU THURSDAY, STAY STRONG!