



'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: FELLOWSHIP MEETING

Westminster Presbyterian Church 12.00 - 1:30 pm

An opportunity to stay connected and support those in need, in the aftermath of the Eaton Fire. Share information and learn about developments in the community, including the vital role Altadena Rotary Club is playing in the recovery and relief efforts.

Our local community took a direct hit from the firestorm that started on January 7th. Structures **destroyed** - just over **10,000** and 1,044 others damaged. This does not include structures believed to be destroyed but pending confirmation. More than 6,000 households will have to find other places to live over the next two to three years during the rebuilding process. Our club is committed to having as many of these displaced individuals back in our community. Starting immediately, we will be accepting monetary contributions via checks, PayPal and Venmo. More options will be added shortly.

In order to make financial contributions to the Altadena Rotary Charities, a 501c3 organization, please make checks payable to ALTADENA ROTARY CHARITIES and mail to

**Altadena Rotary Charities, PO Box 414 Altadena CA 91003
Fed Tax ID 95-4600758**

For PayPal and Venmo links, please visit: www.altadenarotary.org



JANUARY 30, 2025

**January is:
Vocational 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

Local Altadena leaders asked our club if we would accept donations on behalf of the immediate, short-term and long-term needs to help ensure the community of Altadena comes back stronger than ever. Our club has 75 years of service and grant making and has proven to be a trusted non-profit organization.

Funds will be used in different ways:

Grants to other small local non-profits,

Mini-grants to businesses with Business in Altadena

Gift Cards to employees of local businesses who lost employment due to place of work burning down

Gift Cards to those in Altadena who lost housing (with a focus on renters)

Many more ideas are still coming in.

www.altadenarotary.org / Mark Mariscal



<https://www.ecsforseniors.org/montecedro/>



EATON FIRE AFTERMATH

CLUB MEMBERS WHO LOST THEIR HOMES:

Maricela

Lisa

Dawn

Mark

Rene

Sue

Carol

**(Sue's sister and friend of
Rotary)**

Linda C.

Wendy

Lauren

Frank - prospective new
member

Tony

Sarah

Former member

David Smith lost his place of
business
(carpenter shop)

LAST WEEK: INSURANCE INSIGHT

Brad Roeber, Executive Director

California Insurance Guarantee Association

I have been in the insurance business for over 40 years and have been through many catastrophic events like our Eaton Fire. I offered my assistance as well as the support of folks on my staff if anyone needs help through the Claim process. I offer a few high-level points:

1. Be firm – this is a negotiation. Do not believe that your adjuster first offer is their best offer. You know best what your belongings are worth.
2. Be patient – this will be a long process. Don't let your immediate needs cloud your decision making.
3. Own your claim. Your adjuster likely has 150-200 claims to manage – you only have one! This is your most valuable asset so do not be afraid to take control! Your adjuster wants to close your claim quickly so use that leverage to your advantage.
4. Ask for help. Organizations like United Policyholders exist to support you in times like this – engage them! (unitedpolicyholders.com).
5. Be thoughtful if you decide to hire a lawyer. There are experts in the area you need. Many more are not qualified. Make sure you carefully check the qualifications of a lawyer before engaging them.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By President Maricela

Disaster Struck. What is Next?

Last Thursday, we held a meeting at the Westminster Presbyterian Church (arranged by IPP Dawn Smith). There were many tears and hugs. I have not really been in the mood to write these articles but will find the strength going forward. It is important that the

Rotary Club of Altadena stays strong.

Altadena Rotary Charities Board approved the acceptance of monetary donations to help fire survivors, including renters, homeowners, businesses and others. To date, we have received more than \$200,000, mainly because of the work of Altadena Town Council members Victoria Knapp and Nic Arzen appearing on Jimmy Kimmel live and Good Morning America.



Our goal might be to consider spending \$100,000 this year, next year and 2027 towards the rebuilding of our beloved Altadena community.

Rotary Clubs from around the country and internationally have reached out to ask what is needed. The most important need is monetary (cash or gift cards). One of many heartwarming examples is that Chris O'Brien (Sarah's father) was able to arrange a fast transfer of funds from Wollaton Park Rotary Club in Nottingham, UK, for the purchase of toys for children who lost everything.

Our club, along with the St. Vincent de Paul at St. Elizabeth Church and additional Clubs in Rotary District 5300 will be holding a 'Give Away' event on Saturday, February 8th in the parking lot of Altadena Grocery Outlet (club members Jose and Sandra) from 10am -2 pm. If you are available to volunteer, please let me or Mark Mariscal know. We hope to give away gift cards, NEW clothes, food and toys.

See you on Thursday - stay strong!



Message from 2024-25 Rotary International President Stephanie Urchick (via FaceBook)

#RotaryResponds

I am deeply moved by #PeopleOfAction like Altadena Rotary who are raising funds, organizing donations, and supporting those impacted by the Los Angeles wildfires—even as some of their members have lost their own homes.

This unwavering commitment to service, even in the face of personal loss, demonstrates the heart and resilience of Rotary.

Find ways to help:
on.rotary.org/3D0p307

Donation links for Altadena Rotary Charities



Pay Pal QR Code



Altadena Rotary Rotary
[@altadenarotaryclub](https://www.instagram.com/altadenarotaryclub)

