



'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



D.Vance Graphics

THIS WEEK: EDDIE RIVERA: A SURVIVOR'S TALE
Hearts Broken, Hearts Repaired: Practical, Save-Your-Own-Life
Advice For Preventing a Heart Attack

Altadena Town and Country Club, Thursday at noon

Speaker Chair for December: Steve Kerekes



On March 29, 2019, journalist Eddie Rivera was covering the longest home game ever at Dodger Stadium. The Dodgers lost at 1:30am, and at about 2:30am, Rivera was on his way home to a friend's house in Long Beach. That's all he remembers.

Eddie suffered a massive heart attack and seizure, emerging from a coma 36 hours later in the intensive care ward at St. Mary Hospital in Long Beach, California. With all five of his major coronary arteries blocked up to 80%, he underwent a quintuple bypass operation later that week, and recovered fully. Over the next four years, he would lose his younger brother to cancer, and would walk the Camino De Santiago across Spain, in 2023, in his brother's honor. Rivera's presentation is a practical, no-nonsense guide to preventing America's number one killer: heart disease. It's also funny, bittersweet and insightful, with illuminating advice on how to make sure one of America's yearly 616,000 heart attack victims isn't you!

DECEMBER 5, 2024

**December is:
Disease Prevention & Treatment
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: CRAFT TALK BY DIANA YANG THE CALIFORNIA ENDOWMENT

Speaker Chairs: Ashley Watts & Nikki Winslow Review: Steve Kerekes



This past week, new member Diana Yang gave her Craft Talk to the Club. Diana has been living in Altadena for the past four years. She had the unique experience of living in China and being raised by her maternal grandmother from the age of four months until she was about four and a half years old. After that, she was raised in the Pasadena and Arcadia areas by her single mother. She attended USC where she pursued a B.A. in Accounting and a Masters in Business Taxation. After she obtained her degrees, she was not really

sure what she wanted to do and decided to listen to her mother's advice, securing a position at KPMG, one of the Big Four accounting firms, where she worked for three years in the division dealing with the preparation of corporate tax returns. While at KPMG, she studied for the CPA exams. After she obtained her CPA, she decided to transition from accounting to finance and went to work at Union Bank in the regulatory reporting department. After being there a while, she realized that most of the people she worked with cared only about money and that she did not want to work in a profit-driven industry. She then decided to look for work with a non-profit.

In 2013, she was hired by The California Endowment. The California Endowment helps non-profits which provide health and medical care to underserved communities, as well as offering space to these non-profits at their building at 1000 Alameda Street in Los Angeles. As stated on their website, "The California Endowment's mission is to expand access to affordable, quality health care for underserved individuals and communities and to promote fundamental improvements in the health status of all Californians... With smart grant making - which we call 'change making' - good leadership, and people power, we believe we can make the state of health in California better for all. We don't focus on prescriptions."

Diana started at The California Endowment as a financial analyst and then became the Assistant Controller. Six years ago, the Controller departed and she has occupied that position since then. She said that she is proud of the work that the organization does and she enjoys her work there.



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



Above: An attentive audience and new seating arrangement at the last meeting!
Below: Sabrina Verduzco, a guest with President Maricela.



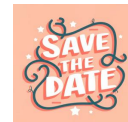
Four years ago, she moved from Pasadena to Altadena. Shortly after her move, she went through a divorce and decided that she wanted to pursue more 'joy' in her life. She made a conscious effort to undertake activities that were outside her comfort zone and explore new experiences. She began going to karaoke and taking singing lessons. She started to pursue her wine certification, although she stopped when she realized it did not bring her that much joy. She spent time at libraries and in gardens and took dance lessons. She also spent time enjoying her two dogs.

While pursuing these other worthwhile endeavors, Diana realized that something was still missing. She determined that she missed volunteering and wanted to spend time doing so. She then made a serious effort to become involved as a volunteer in numerous fields. She joined 'Math Matters', an organization which helps tutor young students, primarily in low income areas, and assists them to overcome the obstacles they face. She started volunteering at the 'Plus Me Project', which provides workshops to help students learn the art of personal storytelling, which increases their confidence, figure out who they are and what they want, and assists them to pursue their life's goals, including college and a career. As part of the Plus Me Project, she has visited various local high schools and talked about her own life's story. She is also on the Board of Directors of 'Classical Notes', a non-profit which brings diverse musical programs to local communities and tries to make classical music performances more accessible and fun. She is also a volunteer at the Altadena Library, which is where she met Mark Mariscal, who enticed her to attend a meeting of the Altadena Rotary Club.

After her Craft Talk, there was a short question and answer period. Diana was asked when she found time to sleep. She had a difficult time answering this question!

Rotary Monthly Themes

- July - Maternal & Child Health Month
- August - Membership & New Club Development Month
- September - Basic Education & Literacy Month
- October - Economic & Community Development Month
- November - Rotary Foundation Month
- December - Disease Prevention & Treatment Month
- January - Vocational Service Month
- February - Peace and Conflict Prevention Month
- March - Water, Sanitation & Hygiene Month
- April - Environmental Month
- May - Youth Service Month
- June - Fellowship month



**Save The Date:
December 17th**

On Tuesday, December 17th from 5-7pm., Altadena Rotary Club will join the Altadena Town Council and Altadena Library Foundation for a special Holiday Invitational Reception hosted by the Rose Bowl Operating Company. Club members and one guest will be able to attend. The reception includes appetizers, drinks and tours of the Rose Bowl grounds and locker rooms. More information will be available via email in late November.

Altadena Rotary in Action!



Santa Pantry Prep Day – November 16

Santa's Distribution – November 23



Thank you to all who supported the effort! 40 wonderful families benefitted from our work.



PE Brad Roeber, a volunteer with the food packing service project for Families Forward Learning Center.
<http://www.familiesforwardlc.org/>

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

President Maricela



GIVING THANKS!

One of the best moments of my Thanksgiving last week, in reviewing all the photos, was the realization that I was surrounded by my family. These past 18 Thursdays, most of the photos I have been in have revolved around our Rotary meetings. In one sense, the Rotary meetings do resemble being around family and sharing a meal. Basically, we give thanks during the club meetings in many ways. First, by just showing up to be with others, Second, by sharing in the pledge, song and inspirational minute. Third, by sharing our experiences (and cash contributions!) during the Happy Bucks collection; Fourth, by learning together via the speaker; and last, by reciting the 4-Way Test and saying goodbye.

On the Saturday before Thanksgiving, some of our members spent a few hours giving away boxes of food that included items needed to prepare a full thanksgiving dinner to around 40 families. This was coordinated with club members Elva Sandoval and Liz Kwong who work at Families Forward Learning Center. The food was purchased from Grocery Outlet Altadena via club members Sandra and Jose Valenzuela. And of course, thanks go to Brad Roeber and his team of club members who had packed the food the week before and then also helped distribute on that cool (brisk) morning.

I am sure that some of you participated in the 'Black Friday' Thanksgiving shopping. I am sure there were terrific deals to be had! If any of you purchased toys for donating to different groups, let me remind you that our club will be collecting toys over the next two Thursdays for our Toy Giveaway scheduled for Friday, December 13th at Farnsworth Park. An email went out this past weekend. Please bring them to the meetings of December 5th or 12th. Another option is to purchase toys and then drop off at Grocery Outlet. We are partnering with the Altadena Sheriff Station and the Altadena Golf course too, for the collection.

SEE YOU THURSDAY!

ROTARY FOUNDATION MONTH CELEBRATION

Steve Kerekes

Last month was known as "Foundation Month" in the world of Rotary. Our club recently mailed in funds totaling over \$6,700 to The Rotary Foundation. Just over half of it came from the individual club members who contribute monthly, quarterly or annually to our own club's foundation (Altadena Rotary Charities) with the direction ARC sends it on to The Rotary Foundation each quarter. The remainder was a group contribution that was directed specifically for the End Polio Now Campaign. The bulk of those funds were received during the summer concerts via the pass the pitcher program. The rest came from the October 24th collection taken in lieu of the Happy Bucks during that meeting.

Be on a lookout for an email from **The Rotary Foundation** thanking you for a contribution (\$80 for most of you). Again, this credit was shared with each of the Active Club members on the roster as of November 15th.

Many of you, like me, probably received at least 5 different solicitations from local non-profit groups for what is now known as Giving Tuesdays (the Tuesday immediately following Thanksgiving). For those who want to contribute to a charity, our own local Altadena Rotary Charities is always an option. We provide many quality programs. If you have any questions, please speak with Mark Mariscal or me.

