

Rotary



Club of Wauwatosa

Welcome to the Rotary Club of Wauwatosa

Rotary is an organization of business and professional leaders united worldwide who provide humanitarian service, encourage high ethical standards in all vocations, and help build goodwill and peace in the world.

Rotary club membership represents a cross-section of the community's business and professional men and women. The world's Rotary clubs meet weekly and are nonpolitical, nonreligious, and open to all cultures, races, and creeds.

Rotary membership provides the opportunity to: Become connected to your community. Work with others in addressing community needs. Interact with other professionals in your community; assist with RI's international humanitarian service efforts. Establish contacts with an international network of professionals. Develop leadership skills. Involve family in promoting service efforts.

Wauwatosa Rotary Foundation Gourmet Nuts Fundraiser



It is that nutty time of the year! Please consider supporting the Wauwatosa Rotary Foundation by placing an order for delicious gourmet nuts from the A.L. Schutzman Co. These sweet and savory treats are perfect for holiday gifts or any special occasion. Most of all, your participation in this fundraiser supports the service and outreach efforts of our club and Rotary International.

Orders may be placed [online](#) or by [printing and submitting](#) an order form. For questions, please contact [Tom Kirchen](#).

Club Meeting

Wauwatosa
Meets at Radisson Hotel Milwaukee West
2303 N. Mayfair Road
Wauwatosa, WI 53226
Time: Wednesday at 12:00 PM

Events / Speakers

January 25th

Wauwatosa Weekly Club Meeting

Speaker: Jon Gaines

Subject: Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation, Vice President of Business Services & Finance

February 1st

Wauwatosa Weekly Club Meeting

Speaker: Michael Gosman

Subject: President and CEO of Acts Housing

February 8th

Wauwatosa Weekly Club Meeting

February 15th

Wauwatosa Weekly Club Meeting

Speaker: Matthew Wolak

Subject: Crisis Prevention Institute

February 22nd

Wauwatosa Weekly Club Meeting

Club Leaders



[Robert Hugh Nelson](#)
President



[William Carl Makal](#)
President-Elect
Sergeant-at-Arms



[Jonathan Lorenzen](#)
Secretary



[Aaron D. Sebald](#)
Vice President
Membership Chair



[Robert P. Niedermann CPA](#)
Treasurer

[Richard Frenn](#)
Sergeant-at-Arms

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Serving Our Community



Richard Todd Mannisto
Rotary Foundation Chair



Peter M. Skanavis
Sergeant-at-Arms



Paul Alan Vandeveld
Club Programs Chair



Anne Ruttger Neafie
iPast President

Years of Service

No Years Of Service Found



Club History

The History of the Wauwatosa Rotary Club

Our club was chartered in 1952 and is one of the oldest in the area. We meet every Wednesday noon at the Radisson Hotel Milwaukee West. This is a very good time to join our club as we are striving to reinvent ourselves. You would be able to play an exciting and significant role in defining the club's objectives. We recently went through a very intense strategic planning process and are committed to serving the Wauwatosa community.

On a global level Rotary International is very proud to have virtually eradicated Polio through our Polio Plus program. Through its foundation and large international membership base, Rotary offers a great deal of help to the disadvantaged throughout the world.

Our social committee arranges a number of very nice events throughout the year. Each event presents an opportune time to get to know members and spouses, all of which can be invaluable networking opportunities!

Rotary membership does require a member's dedicated participation in club meetings and functions. You need to know that Rotary is a commitment and we are looking for dedicated members who can be away from work for approximately two hours each Wednesday. In other words, your boss needs to understand your devotion to community service.

Take a look at Rotary International's website at www.rotary.org for much more information.

Newsletter - January 18, 2023

By Jonathan Lorenzen

Blessing by Building
A Blueprint for a Meeting of the
Rotary Club of Wauwatosa

Wednesday, January 18, 2023

Chief Architect Bob Nelson began our weekly meeting by asking the assembly of apprentices to arise for the Pledge of Allegiance. Invocator Dale Yerkes followed with a few seconds of spirituality during his succinct supplication for the success of our session. We struck out on birthdays, wedding anniversaries, and Rotary anniversaries – no candles and balloons today.

Two guests were joining us today: Rotarian Rob Bassett of the Mitchell Field Club made an announcement about the PolioPlus Society. To become a member, Rotarians pledge \$100 (or more) to the PolioPlus Fund with the goal being to eradicate polio worldwide within five years. Bassett noted that Afghanistan has been polio-free for a year due to the efforts of Rotary International. He also mentioned the upcoming "[Flight to End Polio](#)" in which Rotarian-pilots Peter Teahen and John Ockenfels will fly around the world in a single-engine Cessna T210M, making stops along the way to raise awareness and funds for polio eradication. If you are interested in joining PolioPlus, you can [contact Rob](#).

Rose Murack warmly introduced our other guest, Rotarian Chris Zirbes of the Mayfair Club. Mr. Zirbes is a longtime Wauwatosa resident and is running for the Wauwatosa School Board. Chris briefly outlined the issues on which he is running, and will be working to get the word out in advance of the Spring Election on April 4. He aims to be the board's treasurer if elected.

The following reports of sad and happy news were brought to our attention:

- Anne Neafie reminded us that there will be a collection of food and monetary donations for the Tosa Community Food Pantry at next week's meeting (January 25).
- Anne also let us know that she was able to connect with Kevin Festerling to discuss the rebuilding of the Interact Club at Kingdom Prep Lutheran High School. She said that the resurrected club will consist of mostly new members. Student Jazaiveon S. (who presented at a club meeting last year), is interested in taking the leadership role.
- Bill Bode informed us that for the last 25 years, he has committed to maintaining a Dry January. With today's date being past the midpoint of the month, he and fellow temporary-teetotalers are more than halfway to once again clinking glasses.
- John Sebald shared his gratitude for the continued encouragement of fellow Rotarians as he approaches the two-year anniversary of his near-death experience. John, we are so thankful for your health and recovery, and for your friendship and partnership. You are a blessing to all of us.



With no further club business to conduct, John proceeded to introduce today's program speaker – who happens to be his wife! Kristi Sebald is the Events & Faith Relations Manager for Milwaukee Habitat for Humanity, a position she has held for just over three years.

Kristi began by thanking the Rotary Club of Wauwatosa for its ongoing support for Milwaukee Habitat. Each table had copies of a biography of Colette – the owner of a new Habitat home for which our club provided support.

Coming out of the coronavirus pandemic, Habitat is excited to be moving forward on several growth opportunities to help Milwaukeeans find decent and affordable housing. One in three Milwaukee renters pay half or more of their income on housing. "That is unacceptable." When the lion's share of paychecks are going to rent, it's difficult for families with children to provide adequate food and clothing.

Upon buying a Habitat home, families enjoy dramatically-lower

housing costs with the added benefits of homeownership. The average monthly mortgage payment of \$600-\$900 **includes** the amounts escrowed for property taxes and homeowner's insurance.

Sebald explained that while three out of four White families in Milwaukee County own their home, only a quarter of Black families are homeowners. This disparity can be attributed to deep political and systemic issues long-faced by the city. Habitat facilitates diversity, equity, and inclusion classes to address such inequalities, and is planning workshops on the topic for civic groups and churches.

Habitat's entire "raison d'etre" is to make affordable housing available to members of the community. They do not, however, give houses away for free. Rather, the organization provides individuals and families with opportunities, resources, and guidance to make homeownership a reality. While many are familiar with Habitat's tradition of volunteer home building, some may not realize that they also provide critical home repair services on non-Habitat-built houses. The average home in Milwaukee's housing stock was built before 1930. Skilled volunteers help with big projects like new roofs and accessibility ramps on these aging properties.

Not only does Habitat homeownership provide a stable and affordable place to live, it also generates generational wealth for families. As many Habitat clients are first generation homeowners, the organization provides educational opportunities to help families navigate the process. Habitat often builds homes in contiguous blocks resulting in concentrations of owner-

occupied housing. In turn, these neighborhoods see a decrease in crime and an overall improvement in maintenance, upkeep, and beautification. Habitat blocks frequently inspire adjacent homeowners and renters to likewise take better care of their houses.

The Habitat model is defined by four core principles:

- A focused block by block approach to building homes
- Affordable options for new and existing homeowners
- Preparing families to be successful
- Collaborative partnerships across all sectors of the city

Recently, Habitat Milwaukee has been building in the Harambee neighborhood. A \$1 million grant from the Bader Foundation helped to construct 40 homes in the area. While work was delayed due to the pandemic, the remaining 11 Harambee houses will be finished this year. "All 40 homes are within seven blocks of each other. Whenever I'm in the neighborhood, I love seeing the kids of the families that moved in playing outside and waiting at the bus stop."

Another six homes are just about to be finished near Solomon Community Temple United Methodist Church. Kristi added that the church has a vibrant youth program which families could get involved in.

Habitat connects their future homeowners with local lending partners to provide mortgage loans. While the organization does everything it can to position clients for success, certain requirements must still be met to qualify for a Habitat home. Ensuring homeowner readiness means that foreclosures are incredibly rare – only 4% of purchasers end up defaulting. "We work with people on either side of the median income level."

Building Habitat for Humanity houses has the added benefit of bringing together churches, civic groups, corporations, and individuals across the city. "It doesn't matter what your beliefs are, we can all come together to build houses."

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Milwaukee Habitat continues to receive significant financial investments from philanthropists and grant makers to further their work. In March 2022, the chapter received a transformational gift of \$5.75 million from MacKenzie Scott, former spouse of Amazon founder Jeff Bezos. They also received a government equitable recovery grant. These substantial contributions are primarily earmarked for down payments on new home projects.

Sebald explained that Habitat is averaging 15-20 new home builds in Milwaukee per year. Their goal is to reach 40 new homes per annum – in addition to providing critical home repair. They also are exploring the feasibility of constructing single story homes. Milwaukee Habitat is currently eyeing the King Park neighborhood as the location for 80 new homes. "Identifying and purchasing properties for home sites involves a lot of permits and working with aldermen."

Habitat believes in sharing resources outside of the community; as such, the Milwaukee chapter tithes 10% of unrestricted donations to global projects. The practice resulted in \$500,000 from the MacKenzie Scott grant going to projects in Zambia and El Salvador.

Three Milwaukee-area ReStore thrift shops provide additional revenue for Habitat projects. The organization relies on the generosity of corporate, civic, religious, and individual donors for the rest of its operating income. Kristi mentioned that Sargento and Komatsu Mining are two of Habitat's biggest corporate donors. In the future, they would like to have a sponsor for each house constructed. She concluded by inviting individuals to consider volunteering for or financially supporting Habitat.

Sebald then welcomed questions from the assembly:

- Aaron Sebald wanted to know the cost to build a Habitat home compared to the purchase price
 - Homes cost more to construct than what they are sold for.
 - Costs for a typical Habitat new build are around \$200,000
 - Habitat is the only home builder in Milwaukee constructing new dwellings that sell for under \$200,000.
 - Sale prices are set in relation to commensurate home values in the neighborhood.
 - Habitat homebuyers do not have to make a down payment, rather they put in "sweat equity" by helping to build their new home.
- Robert Niedermann asked if new Habitat homes are built on empty lots
 - Yes. Habitat buys lots from the city for nominal prices. As such, land costs are practically nonexistent.
- Paul Vandeveld asked if Habitat has a program to lend tools to families
 - Not exactly, however they do offer workshops on topics like common home repairs.
- Bill Bode questioned if there are restrictions on selling Habitat homes after purchasing
 - Yes. For a certain period after purchase, owners must sell the home back to Habitat and may have to share gained equity. Eventually, however, the restrictions end, and owners can freely sell on the open market.
- Rob Bassett asked if applicants are ever turned down for mortgages

- o Yes. Sometimes, clients are not quite ready to purchase a home. Habitat helps them work towards qualifying. Clients can re-apply after an unsuccessful application.
- Ann Neafie asked if Habitat's Bader grant is renewable
 - o Conversations are currently underway

Having run out of questions, President Nelson adjourned the meeting. Many thanks to Kristi Sebald for an excellent briefing on Milwaukee Habitat. Our club is honored to support this very impactful initiative.

Respectfully Submitted,
General Contractor of Going On and On ... and On
Jonathan Lorenzen

Upcoming Commitments

Program

January 25: Alex Solanki will present Jon Gaines, Vice President of Business Services & Finance for Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation

February 1: Peter Skanavis will present Michael Gosman, President and CEO of Acts Housing

February 8: Rick Steinberg

February 15: Jonathan Lorenzen will present Matthew Wolak of the Crisis Prevention Institute

Invoker/Greeter

January 25: TBD

February 1: Paul Roller

February 8: Demond Means

February 15: Rich Mannisto