

Rotary Club of Kalamazoo



January 13, 2025

Editorian: Charles Ofstein

President Taylor Huie called our meeting to order at approximately 12:15 PM. The Club recited the Pledge of Allegiance. Rotarian Aaron Winters provided our invocation.

Rotarian Dann Systma presented Arts News. He identified several events in the arts this month at the KIA, including member appreciation week. As always, for up-to-date information, such as times, locations, and other information for events in our area, click: <https://www.kalamazooarts.org/>. In addition, Now Kalamazoo at nowkalamazoo.org has an arts section.

Our Foundation impact minute was presented by Past District Governor James Cupper. Jim dedicated this minute to update the club on efforts that Rotary is spearheading to help those devastated by the wildfire disaster in and around Los Angeles, California. The local district in that area is Rotary 5280. They have set up a website: rotary5280.org/page/2025-wildfire-disaster-relief.

No visiting Rotarians today! Our guests included Amira (guest of Rotarian Lucinda), Jamal (guest of Rotarian Steve Duisterhof), and Mary (guest of Rotarian Jennifer Jackson). Welcome, guests!

Announcements

- The Hays Park turtles, dedicated in honor of Mike Williams, are up! A formal ceremony will be scheduled for later this spring.
- Rotarian Brian Kaufman encouraged all club members to submit their nominations for this year's Red Rose Citation.
- The club is beginning anew its Fireside Chat orientation. Stay tuned for further information.
- Kalamazoo now has an Interact club, affiliated with Kalamazoo Central high school! For further information, contact Rotarian Nick Boyd.
- Our club is in the midst of its triennial strategic visioning. Be sure to check your emails for additional information regarding upcoming meetings.
- Martin Luther King day will be a day of service. We have partnered with Lending Hands of Michigan this year for a service project. At the time of this writing, the project has been rescheduled. Stay tuned for further information.

Paul Harris Fellows

President Taylor Huie presented Rotarian Jennifer Jackson with her first Paul Harris Fellow and Rotarian Denise Hartsough with her second. Congratulations Jennifer and Denise! Thank you for all that you do!

Happy Bucks

- Past President Jack Hopkins congratulated Jennifer for her Paul Harris fellow and for Rotarian Lucinda for being a “rockstar” in her work at Lending Hands *and* in the world of Rotary.
- Rotarian Dan Hartlieb was thankful for the good winter weather that allowed him to go cross-country skiing over the weekend.
- Rotarian Denise announced that one of our STRIVE Mentees, Damari Lawler, is having a breakout season for Loy Norrix basketball. Very exciting to see!

Presentation

As many of you know, the Kalamazoo Sunrise Rotary Club completed its merger with our club on July 1st, 2024. Rotarian Bruce provided his new club with a comprehensive overview of the Kalamazoo Sunrise Rotary Club as our presentation today.

The club started in 1986. Bob Cook was its first president. One of the first club fundraisers was selling Christmas stickers. It was also the first club in our area to admit women as members. A significant service project was and continues to be a pancake breakfast on the Kalamazoo Mall.

The Rotary Sunrise Club of Kalamazoo was also involved in international projects. It has sent musical instruments to the Dominican Republic and schoolbooks to Belize. One of their club presidents, Charles Parker, even carried the Olympics relay torch!

The club continues its involvement with several local projects. It has adopted a portion of the Kalamazoo River Valley Trail. Clean up will be sometime this spring. It will remain a significant booster of Rose Park, including the Robert L. Cook Veterans Memorial Plaza at Rose Park. Members of the club still deliver Meals on Wheels together on Mondays. Finally, the Northside Trunk or Treat remains a big event. But instead of candy, the club gives out warm hats, gloves, and mittens to those in need.

Rotarians Bob Hencken and Bill Diamond continue to be involved in selecting the local veteran of the year. The club maintains an interest in literacy. They look forward to partnering with us on our local “Rotary is for Reading” project.

Without a doubt, the legacy of the Kalamazoo Sunrise Rotary Club continues, albeit in different format. Thank you, Sunrise Club for your previous generosity and for your past contributions to our local community. We certainly have a lot of big shoes to fill!