

Bloomington Rotary Club

April 22, 2025

ROUNDAABOUT



Next week's program will be April 29 in the Frangipani Room and on Zoom (https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0ucu-sqD8jGtRD9cv8m5jRCI_vw8ukpApJ).

Our speaker will be award-winning cartoonist **Nate Powell**, who began self-publishing comics as an Arkansas teenager in 1992. The title of his talk: "Graphic Novels as Agents of Empathy and Democracy."

Nate's work includes the new graphic novel [*Fall Through*](#) and a comics adaptation of James Loewen's [*Lies My Teacher Told Me*](#), as well as [*Save It For Later*](#), civil rights icon John Lewis' [*March*](#) trilogy and its follow-up [*Run*](#), viral comics essay [*About Face*](#), and graphic novels [*Come Again*](#), [*Two Dead*](#), [*Any Empire*](#), and [*Swallow Me Whole*](#).

Nate's work has received many awards, and he has appeared on MSNBC's *The Rachel Maddow Show*, CNN, NPR, PBS, and Free Speech TV.

This week's news

After driving three days, **Dick** and **Maribeth McKaig** have returned home from Arizona. Dick, who spent 23 days with blood and bone cancer in an

Arizona hospital this winter, is getting ready to start a new round of chemo. Round one wasn't bad, he says.

The All-Indiana Rotary District Conference is this upcoming weekend at the Indianapolis Keystone at the Crossing Sheraton. The conference provides an excellent time to network with Indiana Rotarians and see how other clubs are operating during these stressful times of change.

Club embraces growth mindset: New budget approach, new meeting room choices are allowing us as community members to see more of the community and the options out there.

Next week we will vote on our **2025-26 Bloomington Rotary slate of officers**.



This week's program

From his home in Chicago, **Raj Haddawi** introduced speaker **Sarah Owen**, Community Engagement Coordinator of the **Exodus** refugee program in Bloomington. Raj has been a supporter of refugees through Exodus and other organizations for more than 30 years.

Sarah said Exodus has been welcoming refugees from many countries, cultures, languages, faiths, and political opinions since 1981.

"We're dedicated to protecting human rights by serving the resettlement needs of refugees and other displaced people fleeing persecution, injustice and war by welcoming them to Indiana," Sarah said.

She showed photos of refugee camps – massive tent cities that are funded by the Red Cross, UN and other NGOs. While they're meant to be temporary shelters, the average stay in a refugee camp is 17 years, Sarah said.

Among other things, Sarah thanked Rotarians for sponsoring the Mohammadi family from Afghanistan: helping the father, mother, daughter and son find a home, employment and English-language classes.

Since Covid, there has been a dramatic decrease in funding by the U.S. federal government. In January the Trump administration suspended all U.S refugee resettlement efforts.

With Catholic Charities' recent announcement that it is suspending its refugee programs in Indiana, Exodus will be the only agency to provide service to refugees in Indianapolis and Bloomington, Sarah said.

In the absence of federal dollars, the organization has cut staff and has increased its efforts to boost private fundraising.

In Bloomington, Exodus is moving its offices from 1401 S. Walnut to First United Methodist Church.

April 22 Celebration of Service

President Traci Jovanovic reflected briefly on the life of Pope Francis and his passion for the oppressed and disadvantaged. The Pontiff, 88, died yesterday after suffering a stroke and cardio-circulatory collapse. He made his last public appearance on Easter Sunday.

Dr. Jerono Rotich gave this week's reflection. As an immigrant, Jerono says her journey took her from a small village in Kenya to the halls of academia as a professor and proud Rotarian in the U.S.

"Through various roles in refugee-serving organizations, I have gained deep insights into the resilience and challenges of refugee life," Jerono says.

Today, more than 100 million people are forcibly displaced worldwide. They face daunting challenges. Their urgent needs include shelter, healthcare, education, employment and legal assistance. Many women and children carry deep trauma while striving to rebuild lives with dignity and hope.

“As Rotarians, we are uniquely positioned to respond,” Jerono says. “When we serve those who have lost everything, we help restore their hope and reaffirm our shared humanity.”

TODAY’S GUESTS: Christy Trendelman, Carol McCracken and Suzanne Melamed, guest of our speaker; **Ethan Fugoso**, past president, IU Rotaract; Bob Bernacki and Brad Meyer, guests of **Tim Jessen**; Jim Johnson, guest of **Judy Schroeder**; Rita Oates, guest of **Bill Oates**.

Birthdays: **Mike Baker** 4/23, **Peggy Frisbee** 4/21 and **Connie Shakalis** 4/23

Anniversaries: **Claire Kest**, 3 years

Acknowledgements

- Executive Asst: Natalie Blais
- Greeter Phil Amerson
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