

## Bloomington Rotary Club

### Roundabout

**May 6, 2025**

### Next Week's program

We will meet on May 13 in the Frangipani Room. Club scholarship chair **Amy Osajima** will introduce the high school seniors who are our scholarship winners.

Join us for lunch on Zoom

([https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0ucu-sqD8jGtRD9cv8m5jRCI\\_\\_vw8ukpApJ](https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0ucu-sqD8jGtRD9cv8m5jRCI__vw8ukpApJ)).

### This Week's News

#### Vibrant Club Workshops

District Governor Mandy Lohrum has invited Rotarians to the Vibrant Club Workshops on May 31 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Ivy Tech in Bloomington. She says the event is especially important to club officers and emerging leaders who want to enhance their leadership skills. To register, go to

<https://Registrations.DACdb.com/Register/index.cfm?EventID=77814356>

If you have questions, contact Mandy at [mandylohrum6580@gmail.com](mailto:mandylohrum6580@gmail.com) or Bettye Dunham at [bdunham@rauchinc.org](mailto:bdunham@rauchinc.org).



#### Stamp Out Hunger food drive

Rotarians are encouraged to participate in the Stamp Out Hunger Annual Food Drive to support Hoosier Hills Food Bank. Club member **Liz Feitl** has been involved with this drive for many years. To take part, place a bag or box of nonperishable food by your mailbox and your letter carrier or a volunteer will pick it up to be delivered to Hoosier Hills Food Bank. Items needed the most are canned meat, canned fruit, and canned vegetables. Please do not donate expired food, open packages, perishable food, or glass jars. If you want to volunteer or donate funds, please call 812-334-8374.

## Have a conversation about hope

A series of Living Room Conversations will occur Saturday, May 24. These will be 60- to 90-minute conversations focused on the topic of hope. The events are sponsored by Bloomington's Rotary Clubs, Braver Angels, and IU's Political and Civic Engagement Center (PACE). If you would like to participate, host, or moderate, contact **Alain Barker** at [abarker@iu.edu](mailto:abarker@iu.edu).

## This Week's Program



YouTube link: <https://youtu.be/IXi8EiJ2CMA>

**Jim Shea** introduced Steve Bryant, executive director of the Gayle and Bill Cook Center for Entrepreneurship at Ivy Tech Community College and regional director for the South Central Small Business Development Center (SBDC). Steve and his team of advisers help start and grow businesses in a 10-county region along the 1-69 corridor. They also support Ivy Tech Entrepreneurship Program students looking to start or grow their businesses in the area. Steve has held positions within government, not-for-profits, life sciences, and higher education.

Steve's appearance was well-timed, since this is Small Business Week. He talked about the origins of the Cook Center, which was founded in 2010. The center created courses and certificates on entrepreneurship and works with students who want to start a business, as well as established businesses that want to move ahead. In 2012 with support of a grant from the Community Foundation of Bloomington/Monroe County, the center created an entrepreneur ecosystem plan. He and the Cook Center were involved with starting

Dimension Mill and multiple other entrepreneurship programs in 10 counties. The center has worked with more than 5,000 clients – and Steve says that is a conservative number.

The center gets funding from the City of Bloomington, Bloomington Urban Enterprise Zone, Monroe County, Indiana University, the Indiana Economic Development Corp., and the U.S. Small Business Administration.

Steve talked about some of the businesses the center has helped launch, including Amber Racoma's Mamma Dukes Hawaiian Barbecue; one that turns "trash into fashion"; one that recycles aluminum K-Cups into jewelry that is sold in four retail locations in town; and one who operates an ice cream shop in Orleans.

He said the conservative economic impact includes working with 2,000 start-ups and more than 3,000 existing businesses; helping secure \$124 million in investment from \$6.5 million in external funding; and developing partnerships with the IU Kelley School of Business and international outreach on projects in Ethiopia, Croatia, and Japan.

Small business trends today include AI adoption, e-commerce, innovation, workforce issues, and side hustles. He said challenges center on uncertainty, tariffs, costs, the impact of potential policies, and potential damage to consumer demand.

He encourages small businesses to focus on what you do best; realize the customer is king; understand the importance of marketing; ensure operational excellence; and understand that community support remains. He noted that for \$100 spent, a local business circulates \$53 within the community, compared to \$13 from national or chain stores.

## **May Celebration of Service**

**President Traci Jovanovic** welcomed Rotarians and guests by acknowledging the end of the academic year and noted: "It is one thing to take a course, to complete one's work, to earn a diploma or a degree; it's another thing to become a student for the rest of your life. I am hopeful that everyone here is a student for life."

She also presented this week's reflection. She thanked past presidents for their service and wisdom. She said the confirmation of our new board and executive team has reminded her how fast time flies. When she thinks about the most impactful things the club has done in her two-and-a-half years as a member, she thinks about the Mohammadi family. Our club helped the family move several times and helped family members learn English, get jobs, learn to drive, and receive dental care. We have seen a fiancé travel from Mexico and watched a new family begin. Our relationship with the Mohammadis should remind us that

we can and do make a positive impact with our actions. She said a lot of little things our club did helped transform a family's life.

**Andrea Murray** introduced our guests: Troy Phelps, guest of **Joyce Poling**; Joe Habig, guest of our speaker, Steve Bryant; Jun Won, Yehya Kader, and Ahnaf Rah, from Rotaract; Dallas Evans, guest of **Leslie Kutsenkow**; Baby Maisie Cochran, guest (and daughter) of **Sara Cochran**; Sueann Graham, guest of Ivy Tech; and Tylar Nichols, returning as our tech guy. We had one online guest, Brianna Sololá.

Celebrating birthdays are **Joy Harter** on May 6 and **Judy Schroeder** on May 5.

The club received a thank you note from the nurse's office of the Dollens Elementary School in Oolitic for help provided by Teachers Warehouse. We also received a thank you letter from the Refugee Support Network for our support.

We raised money through Happy Dollars.

### **Acknowledgments**

- Executive Assistant: **Natalie Blais**
- Greeter: Past President **Winston Shindell**
- Introductions: **Andrea Murray**
- Zoom Host: **Lori Garraghty**
- Reflection: **Traci Jovanovic**
- Camera/Mic Operator **Michael Shermis**
- Zoom and Audio Producer **Isaac Smith**

Reporter: **Bob Zaltsberg**

Photographer: **Jim Bright**