

Rotary



Club of Asheville THE COG

Wednesday, January 29, 2025



Today's Meeting (January 30, 2025) - Asheville Mayor Esther Manheimer

By Sophia Stefanidis Ungert on Saturday, January 25, 2025

"State of the City"

Today we'll experience what has proven to be one of our most popular programs of the year: Mayor Esther Manheimer's "State of the City" address. Come out and hear the mayor's perspective on Hurricane Helene relief and recovery efforts, and the city's plans to "build back better."



Esther Manheimer was first elected to the Asheville City Council in 2009, and elected Vice-Mayor by her peers in 2011. She was elected Mayor in 2013 and re-elected in 2017 and 2022. Her current term runs through December 2026.

A graduate of Asheville High School, Mayor Manheimer earned her Juris Doctor and Masters of Public Administration from the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill. She earned her BA from the University of Colorado at Boulder. She is a partner in the Van Winkle Law Firm in Asheville, where she specializes in land and commercial litigation. As mayor, Esther has focused her attention on achieving greater equity

for all residents of Asheville. Esther received a Martin Luther King, Jr. Award for Community Service from the MLK Association, and she is a past chair of the North Carolina Metro Mayors Coalition, an organization representing North Carolina's largest cities. Most recently, she has led Asheville through the worst natural disaster to impact Western North Carolina in generations. She is married to Mark Harris, a social studies teacher at Enka High School who coaches Enka's award-winning wrestling team. They are the parents of three sons and a rescue dog named Sochi.

Join us in person and enjoy a great lunch, or [virtually via this Zoom link](#).

Click below to electronically contribute Happy Dollars, Fines, and donations to our Rotary Club of Asheville Foundation, Inc.

Donate



Rotary Club of Asheville Honors Eight Outstanding Local Teachers

By Kyle Parks on Friday, January 24, 2025

Club Meeting

Asheville
Meets at TUTION HALL, TRINITY
EPISCOPAL CHURCH
60 Church St
Asheville, NC 28801
Time: Thursday at 12:30 PM

Speakers

January 30, 2025
[City of Asheville Mayor Esther Manheimer](#)
State of the City

February 06, 2025
[Rae Geoffrey, Ed Kolesar, Ed Snyder](#)
New Member Talks

February 13, 2025
[Lisa Raleigh, RiverLink Executive Director](#)
River Resilience in the Wake of Hurricane Helene

February 20, 2025
[Varied](#)
Community Grants Recipients

February 27, 2025
[Varied](#)
Community Grants Recipients

Coming Events

January 22nd
[Honduras Medical-Dental Brigade](#)

February 5th
[Urban Hike](#)

February 19th
[Thirsty Third Wednesday](#)

February 20th
[Red Cross Blood Drive](#)

Club Leaders



[Eva-Michelle G. Spicer](#)
President

[David Mans](#)



President-Elect



Michelle Daniels
President-Nominee
Club Director
International Service
Chair



Betty A. Doll
Secretary



Cathy Early
Treasurer



Anthony D. Lynch
Attendance Secretary
Sergeant-at-Arms



Alvin Ward Peacock Jr.
Club Director
Membership Chair



Janet L. Whitworth
Treasurer



Timothy L. Owings
Club Director
Rotary Foundation
Chair



Michael Thomas
Sergeant-at-Arms



Tracy Eames
Club Public Image
Chair



Alexander P. Pence
Club Director
Community Service
Chair
Club Service Chair



Zachary F. Lamb
Club Director
Vocational Service
Chair



Marcia Whitney
Club Admin Chair
Club Director



Richard T. Devereaux
Bulletin Editor
Diversity Equity &
Inclusion
Webmaster
Chris Werte



The Rotary Club of Asheville hosted its third annual Teachers of Excellence Awards luncheon on Thursday, January 23 at Trinity Episcopal Church. Eight teachers were recognized this year, each receiving a cash award of \$2,000.

The following teachers were commended for their outstanding commitment to their profession and to their students:

- **Maired Smitka, Issac Dickson Elementary**
- **Gabriel Al-Shaer, School of Inquiry and Life Sciences**
- **Rodney Workman, Asheville High School**
- **Jesse Pitt, Asheville Middle School**
- **Thomas Oliver, Weaverville Elementary**
- **Samantha Aycok, Lucy S. Herring Elementary**
- **Hope Willis, Asheville Middle School**
- **Sarah Duffer, Asheville High School**

The goal of this program is to foster and encourage excellence in teaching and reward dedication to education in the Asheville City and Buncombe County School Districts.

The selection process began with 30 teachers nominated for the award. Each nominee and their nominator submitted essays that were reviewed by a selection committee consisting of three Rotarians and the presidents of the Buncombe County and Asheville City Schools Foundations. The Committee selected 10 semi-finalists, each of whom were interviewed. After these interviews, the eight Teachers of Excellence were chosen.

Our children and their futures are shaped and educated by the innovative, hard-working, and caring teachers who have dedicated their lives to bringing enthusiasm and expertise into the classroom each day.

[CLICK HERE FOR PHOTOS AND BIOS OF THE EIGHT WINNERS!](#)

2025 Rotary People of Action Awards Gala

Tuesday, January 28, 2025

[Tickets on sale now!](#)

On Thursday March 6th from 6-9pm, The Rotary Club of Asheville is delighted to host our second recognition gala honoring our local community heroes. Rotary clubs worldwide focus their efforts on seven areas, and we are thrilled to present awards for outstanding achievement to individuals who embody a "service above self" mindset in our local region. The following awardees will be honored for their dedication in specific areas at our People of Action Gala event:

- Peace-building and Conflict Resolution: Dr. Oralene Simmons (MLK Prayer Breakfast)
- Disease Prevention and Treatment: Dr. Shannon Dowler (US Dept. of Health & Human Services; MAHEC; CDC)
- Water Sanitation and Hygiene: City of Asheville, Water Resource Dept (Assistant City Manager,



Diversity Equity & Inclusion



Virginia Lawrence
CCO-Club Comm. Offcr
Club Director



David T. Kaverman
Club Director
Youth Protection Officer
Youth Services Chair



Carol E. Bornstein
Club Fund Raising Chair



Albert Davis
RYLA Point of Contact



Patrick A. Snyder
iPast President

Birthdays

Sandra F Lindsey
January 29th

Eric W. Michael
January 30th

Denise M Lawson
February 4th

John Davis Matheson
February 8th

Matthew Bacoate Jr.
February 10th

Donald P. Weidemann
February 11th

Steven Shreiber
February 11th

Kelly McCullough
February 11th

Harold Bradley Rouse
February 19th

Virginia Lawrence
February 22nd

Winston C. Payne
February 22nd

Marvin M. Thomas III
February 22nd

Millie J Farmer
February 23rd

Alexander P. Pence
February 23rd

Carter B. Webb
February 23rd

Sophia Stefanidis Ungert
February 24th

Sue Rhody
February 26th

Wedding Anniversaries

Ben Woody)

- Maternal and Child Health: Dr. Amy Mariette (MAHEC)
- Basic Education and Literacy: Marta Alcalá (Asheville City Schools)
- Economic and Community Development: Jeffrey Kaplan (Venture Asheville)
- Supporting the Environment: Lang Hornthal (Eco-Foresters)

We invite you to join us as we formally thank and highlight the accomplishments of these community leaders. Enjoy this celebration with drinks, music, and a seated dinner while we raise money for the Rotary Club of Asheville Foundation. This fundraiser supports our projects, including local scholarships, recognition of teachers and first responders, protection of the French Broad watershed, local food security initiatives, and international support for medical, dental, optical, and literacy projects in Guatemala, Honduras, and Argentina.

Tickets are \$150 per person or \$1,000 for a table of 8 and include dinner with your choice of Braised Airline Chicken Breast with Veloute Sauce, Center Cut Sirloin, or Vegetarian (Chefs Choice) and complimentary self-parking at the Renaissance Hotel in Asheville (March 6th, 6-9pm)

If you have any questions, please reach out to avl.rotary.gala@gmail.com

Buy your tickets BEFORE Feb 24th at: <https://rotaryasheville.betterworld.org/events/people-of-action-awards-gala>

Basic Education and Literacy:

Awardee: Marta Alcalá (Asheville City Schools)

Marta Alcalá, Executive Director of Equity for Asheville City Schools, has spent over 33 years promoting equity, racial justice, and literacy in Asheville. She founded *Motherhead*, a program enhancing literacy and fostering racial equity discussions among multi-racial mothers, and co-founded the *Marvelous Math Club (MMC)*, an afterschool program empowering Black elementary students with asset- and justice-based practices. Her work extends to key initiatives like the Asheville Buncombe Preschool Planning Collaborative and the Asheville City School Foundation. She also co-authored *Relevant Education Grows All Learners (REGAL)*, a justice-centered education approach. Through her leadership, Marta creates safe, inclusive spaces that inspire growth and community transformation.

Community Economic Development

Awardee: Jeffrey Kaplan (Venture Asheville)

Jeffrey Kaplan, Executive Director of Venture Asheville, leads a \$150M mentorship-driven incubator fostering entrepreneurship and innovation in Asheville. Under his leadership, Venture Asheville has created 186 high-growth jobs and earned a Gold Award for Innovation from the International Economic Development Council. Kaplan launched initiatives like the Venture Asheville Honors, celebrating business resilience and raising \$1M to rebuild Western North Carolina's economy post-Hurricane Helene. He also plays a key role in the Mountain Community Capital Fund, supporting local business financing, and serves on the North Carolina Board of Science, Technology, and Innovation, promoting regional research and development.

Disease Prevention and Treatment

Awardee: Dr. Shannon Dowler (US Dept. of Health & Human Services; MAHEC; CDC)

Dr. Shannon Dowler, a family physician and public health leader, has dedicated decades to improving healthcare access and disease prevention. She served as NC Medicaid's Chief Medical Officer, leading its transition to managed care and advancing vaccine equity during COVID-19. Dr. Dowler has worked extensively in STD education, creating the internationally acclaimed rap video "Vigorous: STDs Never Get Old" and writing "Never Too Late: Your Guide to Safer Sex after 60." A past president of the NC Academy of Family Physicians, she has also led public health initiatives with MAHEC and the Buncombe County Health Department, earning numerous state and national awards.

Environment

Awardee: Lang Hornthal (Eco-Foresters)

Lang Hornthal, Co-Executive Director of the non-profit sustainable forestry organization, EcoForesters, has led efforts to conserve and restore Appalachian forests. Under his leadership, EcoForesters completed 26 forest management plans covering 3,300 acres, treated 400+ acres for invasive species, and provided consultations for over 4,000 acres of forestland. Lang organized free workshops, panel discussions, and educational events to promote forest health, wildfire prevention, and invasive species management. He also coordinated post-Hurricane Helene efforts, enabling crews to clear downed trees for communities in need and clear public trails. Lang's advocacy extends to partnerships with organizations like the USDA Forest Service and public events, including panels on forest health after major regional impacts due to the closure of the Canton paper mill and the destruction of Helene.

Maternal and Child Health

Awardee: Dr Amy Mariette (MAHEC)

Dr. Amy Marietta has expanded MAHEC's Project CARA, a prenatal health program for women with substance use disorders (SUD), using a hub-and-spoke model to increase access to care across multiple counties. This initiative has led to fewer babies entering foster care and more

Steven B. Shechter
February 1st
Patrick A. Snyder
February 11th
Carol E. Bornstein
February 13th
Alvin Ward Peacock Jr.
February 14th
Frank Harwell Rutland
February 26th

women achieving recovery. Project CARA also improves birth outcomes, reduces infant mortality, and increases infant birth weights. As a founding advisory council member of Nurture NC, Dr. Marietta has united government leaders, Medicaid experts, managed care organizations, and philanthropic groups like Dogwood Health Trust and The Duke Endowment to address maternal and infant health challenges in North Carolina.

Peace and Conflict Prevention

Awardee: Dr. Oralene Simmons (MLK Prayer Breakfast)

Dr. Oralene Simmons is the founder and president of the MLK Prayer Breakfast in Asheville, which she has led since 1982, growing it to over 1,000 attendees. She is a pioneering civil rights leader from Western North Carolina, who served for 27 years as the Cultural Arts Supervisor under a contract with Asheville Parks and Recreation and led the YMI Cultural Center. She made history in 1961 by integrating Mars Hill College, earning recognition in Jet and Time magazines. Ms. Simmons has received numerous honors, including North Carolina's prestigious Order of the Long Leaf Pine in 2016 and the Making of the King Holiday Award presented by Coretta Scott King. She remains a dedicated advocate for human rights.

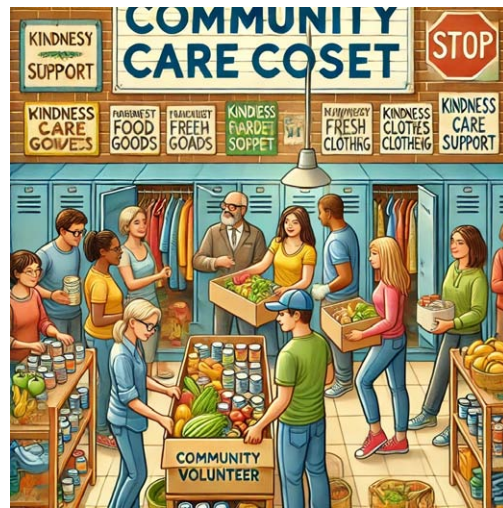
Water Sanitation and Hygiene

Awardee: Asheville Water Resources Department, Ben Woody representing.

Assistant City Manager Ben Woody accepts the award on behalf of the Asheville Water Resources Department and the many individuals, agencies, contractors, and community members who united to restore potable water following Hurricane Helene. The department guided a coordinated response involving local and federal agencies, nonprofits, and private contractors to rebuild water infrastructure across the county. Heroes at every level worked tirelessly to assess the damage, engineer emergency and long-term solutions, and rebuild vital water infrastructure critical to Asheville and surrounding communities. Thanks to their dedication, potable water was restored in just 57 days. Ben Woody's strategic coordination and clear communication helped mitigate the public health crisis, showcasing the strength, resilience, and spirit of our community.

Help Erwin Middle School Families - Volunteer!

Tuesday, January 28, 2025



After the storm, several of us volunteered at the Resource Center established by United Way on the campus of Erwin Middle School. They have asked us to help them restock their pantry and clothes closet. Originally, Manna was to keep them supplied in food, but their resources are too limited at this time to fulfill that commitment.

From Emily Swan, Resource Coordinator: "Erwin Middle School Resource Room is open every Monday 5:00-6:30 for families to supplement their families' food, clothing and household items. From September-December the CAEMS Resource Room served around 300 people in the Erwin District. Often we will see our full students' families, including grandparents, siblings, aunt/uncles, etc. Families can make appointments, request items to be sent home/delivered, or visit on Mondays (where they can also enjoy a free catered meal and

tutoring). On an average day we have anywhere between 2-4 students requesting resources and using our center."

I will add they also offer a washer & dryer so that students and their families can do their laundry.

They established a wish list on Amazon to simplify donating - [here is a link to that list](#). Orders will ship directly to the school.

If you prefer to purchase items locally, bring them to a meeting, and we will make sure they are delivered.

In service,

Disaster Relief Committee
Rotary Club of Asheville

Club Turns out for 44th Annual MLK Breakfast

By Richard T. Devereaux on Tuesday, January 21, 2025

The cold weather did not deter us! **20 members of**

44th Annual MLK CELEBRATION

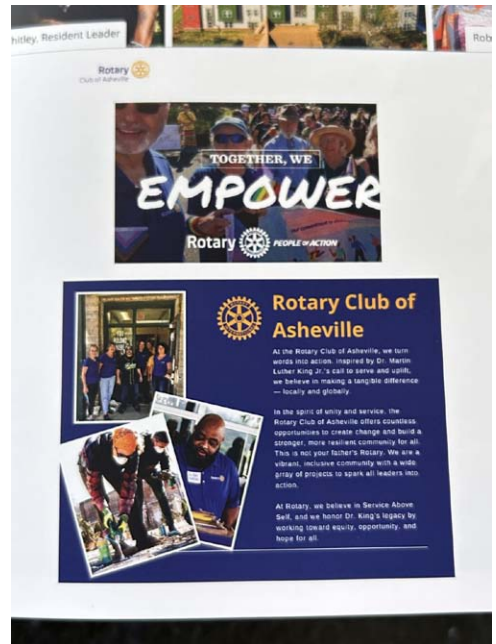


Prayer Breakfast - Jan 18,
Candlelight Ceremony - Jan 19,
Peace March & Rally - Jan 20

the Rotary Club of Asheville turned out and filled two tables at the annual Asheville-Buncombe Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Prayer Breakfast at the Crowne Plaza on January 18. As Bronze sponsors, our club was prominently featured in the program with a half-page ad.

This premiere Asheville gathering inspired and united over 1,100 community members this year. **The guest speaker was Jonathan McCoy**, Director of the Center for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (CDEI) and Instructor of History at Mars Hill University (MHU). President Eva-Michelle Spicer thanked our DEI committee for organizing the effort: *"WOW! What an inspiring event! I am so honored to have been at the table and in the room with such incredible community leaders. The club's involvement as a sponsor speaks volumes to our work in Peace and Conflict Resolution. Again, I am proud to be a Rotarian with all of you and so grateful for your*

leadership."

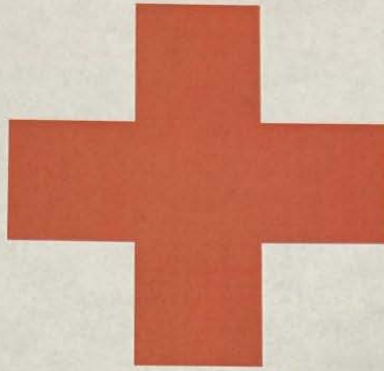


Give Blood - Help Save Lives!

By Reilly Wilkes on Saturday, January 18, 2025

Rotary Club of Asheville Red Cross Blood Drive on Thursday, February 20th, during our regular club meeting. Questions?? [email Reilly Wilkes](mailto:Reilly.Wilkes)

Give blood. Help save lives.



Blood Drive
The Rotary Club of Asheville
at Trinity Episcopal Church

Fellowship Hall
60 Church St
Asheville, NC 28801

Thursday, February 20, 2025
11:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

To schedule an appointment, please call
1-800-RED-CROSS or visit RedCrossBlood.org
and enter Sponsor Code "AVLRotary".

Bring your Red Cross or Photo ID.

**Create a flurry of hope! Come give blood Jan. 27 to
Feb. 28 for a \$15 e gift card rcblood.org/flurry**



Scan to schedule
an appointment.

American Red Cross

1-800-733-2767 | redcrossblood.org
Download the Blood Donor App

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**Celebrating Excellence: Asheville Police Officers
Recognized by Rotary**

By Reilly Wilkes on Thursday, January 9, 2025



At our January 9 meeting, the Rotary Club of Asheville proudly recognized eight Asheville Police Department officers for their exemplary service as "Officers of the Month" from July through November 2024.

July 2024: SPOs Matthew Stapanowich, Aaron Buyanovsky, and Officer Jose Amaya

These officers resolved a complex fatal hit-and-run on July 18, demonstrating outstanding teamwork, investigative skill, and professionalism. Their efforts led to the swift apprehension and charging of the suspect, bringing closure to the victim's family.

September 2024: SPO Debbie LeCroy, Cadet Maria Bengel, and David Sayegh

During Hurricane Helene, these team members supported recovery efforts by providing meals, managing donations, and ensuring officers were well-prepared. Their tireless work, long hours, and attention to detail exemplify dedication to their colleagues and community.

October 2024: SPO Brittany Vick

SPO Vick assisted a kidnapping victim with compassion and skill, overcoming language barriers to ensure her safety. She coordinated resources, facilitated relocation, and pursued leads to support the victim and her family. Though the case remains unsolved, her actions provided vital aid during a traumatic time.

November 2024: SPO Madison Johnson

SPO Johnson played a pivotal role in post-hurricane recovery as an Outside Agency Liaison. Her investigative efforts led to multiple felony arrests, significant recoveries of narcotics and stolen items, and resolution of a major breaking-and-entering case. Her leadership and dedication earned praise from peers and partner agencies.

These officers embody the highest standards of service and commitment, making Asheville safer through their tireless efforts. Congratulations to these deserving honorees!

Instagram User? Follow [rotaryasheville!](#)

Thursday, January 9, 2025

If you're an Instagram user, use your phone to **click on the below icon to see what's happening in our Rotary Club**. Then follow, like, comment, and share! The more you engage, the more followers we attract!



Rotary Club of Asheville Offers Disaster Relief Grant

Friday, November 22, 2024

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEDIA CONTACT: Kyle Parks
Parks PR, (813) 352-1325
kyle@parkspublicrelations.com

Rotary Club of Asheville Offers Disaster Relief Grant to Support Recovery Efforts in Western North Carolina

ASHEVILLE, N.C. (November 22, 2024) — The Rotary Club of Asheville has launched a Disaster Relief Grant program to aid in the recovery and rebuilding efforts following the devastation caused by Tropical Storm Helene.

Rotary Clubs and individuals in the United States and Canada have contributed more than \$150,000 in donations to help support this initiative, which will provide financial assistance to eligible organizations in our community.

Nonprofits, schools, and government agencies with 501(c)(3) status are invited to apply for grants of up to \$5,000. The Rotary Club of Asheville Disaster Relief Committee will evaluate applications on a bi-weekly basis, ensuring that funds are distributed efficiently to those with the greatest need.

"Our mission is to support recovery and rebuilding efforts for those affected by Tropical Storm Helene," said Janet Whitworth, chair of the Rotary Club of Asheville's Disaster Relief Committee. "We are proud to collaborate with Rotary Clubs across North America to help Western North Carolina."

Interested organizations are encouraged to submit a project budget, their most recent IRS Form 990 or year-end financial statements, and any supplementary materials. Applications can be [submitted online](#) or emailed directly to Janet Whitworth at jwhitworth711@gmail.com.

The Rotary Club of Asheville will continue the grant process until the funds have been fully utilized, to make sure that the community receives the necessary support to rebuild and recover.

About the Rotary Club of Asheville:

The Rotary Club of Asheville is a service club of engaged and passionate members who desire to do good in the community and world while honoring shared ethics and core values. The club, which has over 165 members from a wide range of backgrounds, finds ways to help the community at local, national, and international levels. This can involve anything from doing volunteer projects overseas to finding ways to support nonprofits in Asheville and Buncombe County. For more information, visit <https://www.rotaryasheville.org/>.

Exciting Keynote Speaker at Rotary District 7670 Luncheon

Friday, January 3, 2025

The
Rotary
Foundation



Rotary District 7670 leaders were initially disappointed when our original luncheon date had to be rescheduled due to Hurricane Helene. One of the main reasons for our disappointment was the loss of a highly anticipated, dynamic keynote speaker. We had the privilege of securing Marty Helman, a Trustee of The Rotary Foundation, who has an incredibly impressive resume and is known for her impactful work and legacy in Rotary. We feared that her packed schedule would prevent her from joining us, but we are thrilled to announce that she will be with us on **February 1, 2025**, to deliver an inspiring address.

Marty Helman is renowned as both a powerful speaker and a Rotarian committed to making a lasting difference in the world. At the luncheon, she will share insights into her incredible journey and the profound impact of Rotary's work globally. You won't want to miss her inspirational words.

In addition to Marty's speech, we'll provide an update on our district's ongoing disaster response efforts, particularly regarding the aftermath of Hurricane Helene and the impact it has had on our communities.

The luncheon will take place at **noon on February 1, 2025**, at the **Hilton at Biltmore Park**, a central location with easy access and free parking. This convenient time ensures that we won't have to drive in the dark, making it a perfect opportunity to gather with fellow Rotarians.

The program will be engaging, the food excellent, and the venue is ideal for our gathering. Be sure to register by **January 24, 2025**, on **DACdb** to secure your spot. We look forward to seeing you there and sharing an afternoon of inspiration and fellowship!

Rotary Four Way Test



The 4-Way Test *of things we do and say:*

1. Is it the **TRUTH**?
2. Is it **FAIR** to all concerned?
3. Will it build **GOODWILL** and **BETTER FRIENDSHIPS**?
4. Will it be **BENEFICIAL** to all concerned?