

DISTRICT 6900 NEWS FOR SEPTEMBER, 2017

From the District Governor
Natural Disaster Trifecta
 By Alec Smythe
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 By Jackie Cuthbert
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 By Pamela Young
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 By Margie Kersey
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 By Elwyn Gaissert
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GRSP
GRSP Update
 By Lynn Clarke
 August GRSP Conclave in Bainbridge, Maynard Knestruck Memorial Weekend Sept. 8-10, DG Alec's support, Endowment Update, Words from a Recent Alumni and photos from one new student starting her year [\[more\]](#)

Literacy
Greetings to you in Literacy Month!
 By Brenda Erickson
 At the recommendation of DG Alec, I have created a Facebook page dedicated to District 6900 literacy work. Our shared experiences offer the greatest source of information and inspiration for one another. This FB page - [Rotary6900Literacy](#) - is meant to be a platform for sharing literacy projects ... [\[more\]](#)

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 By Darlene Duke
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 By Blake Joiner
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 By Stephanie Windham
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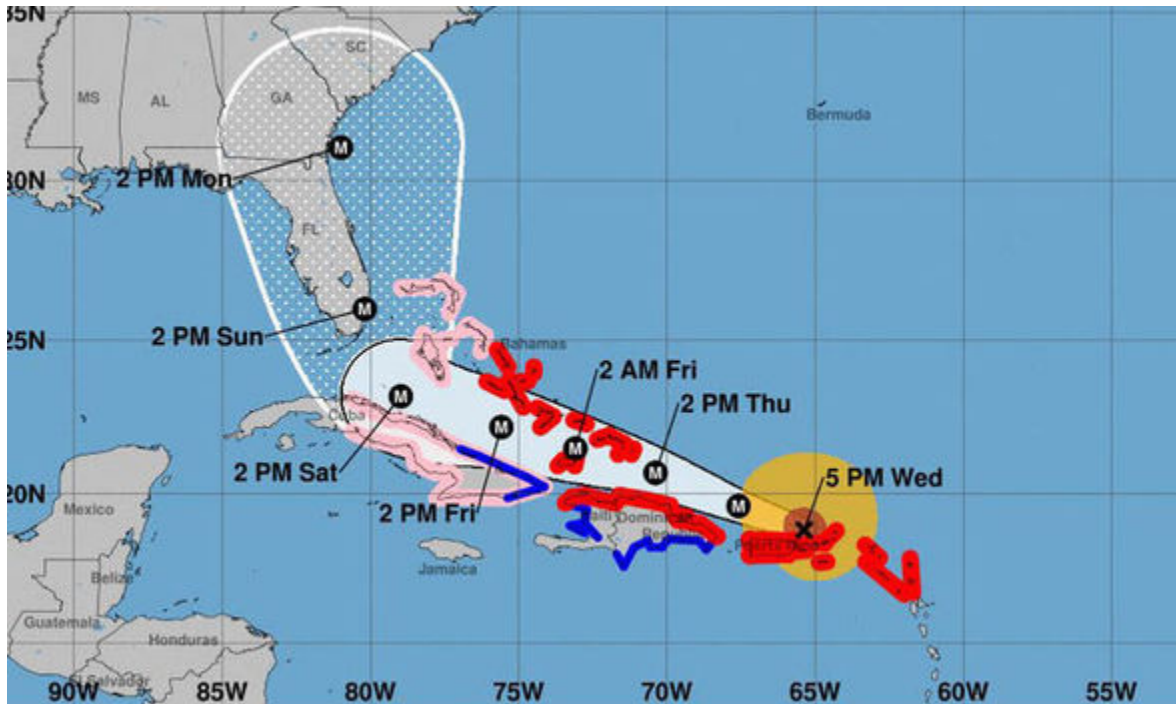
Literacy
Peace Corps and Rotary Join Forces on Literacy
 By Brenda Erickson
 In August, a workshop was held in Denver, Colorado for Rotarians who served in the Peace Corps as volunteers or staff. About 85 people attended the workshop to learn about the Peace Corps/Rotary Partnership including Rotarian guests who wanted to learn more about the partnership, senior Peace Corps and Rotary staff, and other Rotary dignitaries ... [\[more\]](#)

Upcoming Key Dates

Monday, September 18th, 2017	20th Anniversary Golf Tournament
Tuesday, September 19th, 2017	Quitman County Governor Visit
Wednesday, September 20th, 2017	LaGrange - Board Meeting
Wednesday, September 20th, 2017	LaGrange Governor Visit
Thursday, September 21st, 2017	Cuthbert Governor Visit
Thursday, September 21st, 2017	Board Meeting
Saturday, September 23rd, 2017	Leadership Development Meeting
Tuesday, September 26th, 2017	Governor's Refreshment
Wednesday, September 27th, 2017	Lake Spivey / Clayton County Governor Visit
Wednesday, September 27th, 2017	District Governor Visit / Board Meeting
Tuesday, October 3rd, 2017	North Columbus Governor Visit
Wednesday, October 4th, 2017	Columbus Governor Visit
Thursday, October 5th, 2017	Muscogee-Columbus Governor Visit
Tuesday, October 10th, 2017	Zone Leadership Training Seminars

From the District Governor

Natural Disaster Trifecta



As I write this, the people of Texas are just starting to see the Harvey floodwaters subside, Irma is plowing through the Caribbean headed directly for Florida, Georgia and South Carolina and last night Mexico suffered a major earthquake. So we have plenty of work to do in our own corner of the globe to help the needy. I've already sent out information on how to contribute towards Harvey recovery. For those looking to help Irma victims, the best immediate bet is the Rotary [DNA-RAG](#) (Disaster Network of Assistance-Rotary Action Group). This group has already set up a fund for District 7020 in the Caribbean, but you can designate funds to any district. We will share information as we learn more about how we can help in the short term.

In many cases there will be lasting damage and a need for significant investments in the areas of community rebuilding, clean water, disease prevention, etc. Clubs might consider mounting global grants to help those in Mexico and the Caribbean recover. These grants will take a while to put together, but the need will be there for longer still.

Posted by Alec Smythe
September 8, 2017

Rotary People in Action

Cesar Gaiters, Rotary Club of South DeKalb



In 2016, Ceasar Gaiter presented Congressman John Lewis with a Trailblazer Award

This month, District 6900 is honoring South DeKalb Rotarian Ceasar Gaiters for his personal contribution to the community. Ceasar is currently CEO of Gaiter Ventures Inc., where he leads the company's community and philanthropic strategy, which is focused on fostering our youth through mentoring and furthering education. He is also the CFO of another non-profit—JABY Inc—and president of its annual fundraiser, *The International Trailblazers Awards*. In its tenth year this year, the *International Trailblazer Awards* have raised more than \$100,000—money that has been used to provide scholarships to disadvantage youths and to fund JABY INC's endowment at N.C. State University

. JABY Inc. has also been involved in providing tuxedos for young men to attend prom, giving school

supplies to needy children, along with using Suite 20 Xpress Hair Salon to provide free back to school hair services for young ladies. Ceasar and his ex-wife Kristy Gaiters started JABY INC in 2007 to handle the day-to-day operations of their philanthropic endeavors.

This year's recipients included Atlanta Mayor Kasim Reed, Tampa Bay Bucs Brent Grimes, Apostle Tim Atunnise and seven others pictured here.

In 2014, Ceasar joined the Rotary Club of South DeKalb, whose values and goals were in line with his beliefs of giving back and serving his community. With the prodding of several Rotarians he respected, he agreed to serve as Club President in 2016. Using his contacts in the community and trying to lead by example, he spearheaded a 60% growth in club membership in his first year as President and kept a 100% retention rate. Leaning on the experience of the Club whose members are committed to the revitalization of South Dekalb allowed Ceasar to take opportunities to visit and connect the club to other clubs in the District through project partnerships and community service events. He is often quoted as saying "for a small club, we are boots on the ground and I couldn't do it without the past leadership of South DeKalb Rotary Club or the support of our members."

PHOTOS:

"Recognizing Ordinary People...
doing extraordinary things"



9TH ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL

Trailblazer AWARDS



Hosted By
Pastor Yves McKenzie
& Tensie Taylor

Black Tie Affair
Sunday July 16, 2017
Porter Sanford III Performing Arts Center
3181 Rainbow Drive Decatur GA. 30034
Tickets: \$60

Performances by
Lushun Price
& *Tony Terry*



Atlanta Mayor
Kasim Reed



Tampa Bay Bucs
Brent Grimes



Apostle
Tim Atunnise



Pastor
Micheal Benton



Junior Chef
Lauryn Strong



Ken Watts



Dekalb Co. Judge
Gregory A. Adams



Actor
Lamman Rucker



Publisher
Atlanta Voice
J.L. Ware



Col.
Bill Cunningham

Sponsored by:

JABY Inc. /Dekalb County Superior Court/Suite 20 Day Spa

Gaither Ventures/Suburban Custom Awards/TLC Rentals /Contracts & Grants/Power Moves PR

Info: 404-913-9791 Tickets Available on Eventbrite

Posted by Jackie Cuthbert
September 5, 2017

Club News

Join the 10th Annual Peachtree City Dragon Boat Festival



The 10th Annual Rotary Club of Peachtree City Dragon Boat Festival is scheduled for Saturday, September 23, 2017, and you will not want to miss it. Featuring teams from different communities and countries, the excitement is sure to thrill. New races and events will highlight the day.

The Rotary Club of Peachtree City would like to challenge other Rotary Clubs to join the fun!

No experience is required. The Rotary Club of Peachtree City provides experienced coaches to ensure your paddling experience is safe and fun. We will train participants the weekend before the race.

The Festival is a fantastic way to support our communities. The 2017 Charity Partners are: Bloom Our Youth, Breast Cancer Survivors' Network, Midwest Food Bank and Fayette Council on Domestic Violence (DBA Promise Place). If you have a desire to help these amazing nonprofits join the festival with a team, as a sponsor or as a vendor. It would be great to have some Rotary Club teams there to compete against each other. All you need is 11 or 12 Rotarians, co-workers, or friends that want to have a fun time and support a good cause.

For more information, visit the <https://www.ptcdragonboats.org>

PHOTOS:



Posted by Pamela Young
September 9, 2017

Stop Bullying Now

Join the Fundraiser to Support “Be the Voice”

OCTOBER 15, 2017: SAVE THE DATE!!

Over 3 million kids will be bullied this year, making it the most common form of violence experienced by young people in our nation. To combat this epidemic, Be THE Voice® was developed. BTV focuses solely on empowering the student bystander to find his/her “voice” when witnessing a bullying situation. Students have a great deal of influence over each other . . . they are truly the key to changing the culture of bullying in their schools.

At the completion of the first Be THE Voice® campaign, pre and post survey data revealed an astonishing 56% decrease in bullying (in our 2200 student beta test school). To date, 11 Georgia schools have implemented the BTV program, impacting over 20,000 students in less than 18 months. Other schools are requesting the program, and our goal is to introduce it into as many schools as possible.

To that end, Be THE Voice® is holding its first fundraiser, a Color Blast Fun Run, on Sunday, October 15, 2017, 2-6 pm at the Elkins Pointe Middle School Athletic Track, 11290 Elkins Road, Roswell, GA 30076.

This is the first ever, over-the-top, colorful fundraiser for Be THE Voice, and the funds raised at the event will be used to expand the program into additional schools and subsequently serve to empower kids to be upstanders and be positive forces in the world. Who wouldn’t want to be a part of all that?!

How can you help?

- Event Sponsorships - various levels for corporate and individual sponsorship participation
- Participant Sponsorships - for those students/families who may wish to participate but are unable

- Participate – come run or walk the track and have colorful powder thrown on you, play in the inflatables, join

the dance off, eat yummy food, etc. . . . and bring your whole family!

More info to come very soon, but go ahead . . . right now . . . and mark it in your calendar.

Just be sure to make plans to be there on October 15th to help us Be THE Voice!

Questions? Contact Event Co-Chair Katha Stuart • jkstuart@bellsouth.net • 404-660-9659

Posted by Katha Stuart

September 5, 2017

The Rotary Foundation

Set Your Goals to Make a Difference - Support TRF!

Goals. Every study ever completed agrees that the likelihood of success is improved when you set a goal. Your Rotary club is no different. If you want a strong Rotary club that is growing and vibrant, you need to set goals. Have a vision of what you want to accomplish.

This morning I pulled up a Foundation giving report for our district. It lists each club and how much that club has given to the Foundation so far this year. To date, the clubs in D6900 have given a total of \$103,912. Thank you! About \$30,000 of that went to PolioPlus and \$72,000 to the Annual Fund. But I also saw something disturbing on the report. This report also lists the Foundation Giving goals for each club. Out of 70 clubs, only 18 clubs have set goals. This is the lowest in our district's history. Most years we have goals entered from 67-68 of our clubs.

Goals are not just about giving. They are about Doing!

Does this mean that we don't care about The Rotary Foundation any more? I don't think so. Several of the clubs who have already sent in donations don't have goals entered.

Does this mean The Rotary Foundation is simply an afterthought? Clubs will just send whatever is left over at the end of the year? I don't think that is true either. Clubs have applied for, and received funding, for some very aggressive District Grant projects. We have several new members in the Paul Harris Society and Global Grant applications are taking off! We have 3 grants waiting for Foundation approval, 2 more getting final signatures so they can submit and another 7 in development. And that doesn't include the 29 Global Grants and 2 Global Scholars already in progress.

Clearly, The Rotary Foundation is a priority for our clubs. So why are we not setting goals? I don't know, but I would encourage your club to enter your Foundation giving goals today. It only takes a few minutes. Go to Rotary. Org, log in and click on Rotary Club Central. Once there, click Goal Center and enter your Foundation goals today.

Questions? Contact me or any member of the Foundation team. We are here to help you Do Good in the World.

Posted by Margie Kersey
September 8, 2017

RLI

Give Yourself the Gift of Attending the Rotary Leadership Institute

Rotary Leadership Institute is coming to Sandy Springs, Ga on October 21, 2017. Thank you Sandy Springs Rotary Club for sponsoring! The location is Sandy Springs Charter Middle School, 8750 Pride Place (formerly Colonel Drive), Sandy Springs, GA 30350. Parts 1, 2, 3 and Graduate Course in Foundation will be offered. Here is a direct link to registration <http://www.IsMyRotaryClub.org/Register/index.cfm?E...> Registration closes 10 days prior to the event.

Other upcoming events for RLI in D6900, other Georgia districts and Sunshine Division can be found by going to www.rlitraining.org. Check out the other dates and locations for a RLI event near you. Thomasville Rotary Club will be hosting RLI on January 20, 2018 and D6900 District Conference will host RLI on Friday, April 27, 2018 at the Sandestin Conference Center.

Hope to see you soon at many of these RLI events!

Posted by Elwyn Gaissert, II
September 9, 2017

District Conference 2018 Update

And the Award Goes to ...



By Ryan Clements and Rene Lanier

At this year's District Conference, the Saturday evening general session will be solely focused on recognizing our clubs' outstanding community and international service projects in an Oscars-style format. The goal is to celebrate Rotary and the good Rotarians do in the world - to celebrate **ROTARY: MAKING A DIFFERENCE**

Each club will have the opportunity to submit one community and one international project for consideration. If projects are shared between clubs, then the lead club will prepare the submission. **Now is the time to capture all of the awesome projects you do throughout the year in pictures and videos!**

Project submissions will be due by **March 15, 2018** through the District website, and should be described

in 250 words or less but may be accompanied by photos and video. After an initial round of judging by Assistant Governors to determine nominees in both community and international categories, all Rotarians throughout the District will have the opportunity to vote for their favorite project - because of its impact, uniqueness, scope, innovativeness, the needs it met or because it was so memorable - between April 1 and April 21 through the District website. And then, at District Conference on the evening of Saturday, April 28th, each nominee will be highlighted and *your* favorite projects will be announced. So let the projects begin and best wishes for great success on everything you do, great or small, that makes this world a better place - that makes a difference!

Specific details on award categories and voting guidelines will be issued directly to clubs soon. Please email District Conference Award Chair, Rene Lanier, with any questions at rlanier111@gmail.com. We're excited for the dramatic changes in our awards structure this year and hope all clubs will take the opportunity to highlight how Rotary is making a difference in our communities and around the world!

On a different note, members from across the District will have the opportunity to add their own special touch to District Conference by collaborating on a shared Spotify playlist. Music from the playlist will be played in the **Friendship Lounge** (formerly the House of Friendship) and other areas for all to hear. Go to http://bit.ly/6900district_conference_playlist to join the list and add your favorite song celebratory or beach-themed song.

And don't forget that to provide a showcase of all our District's achievements and good works for the 2017-18 year, all clubs and Rotarians should use the social media hashtag **#18Rotary6900** when posting on any social media platform about their club's projects or activities. This simple step will let us to develop a collection of stories and pictures that tell an amazing story of service, leadership, and friendship for the 2017-18 Rotary year.

Finally, conference registration, housing reservations, and the process for securing a room for hospitality suite purposes will be unveiled on October 1st!

Posted by Ryan Clements
September 5, 2017

GRSP

GRSP Update



GRSP CONCLAVE

This year the Annual GRSP Conclave was hosted by our District's **Rotary Club of Bainbridge**. Every third year our District hosts the Conclave - a weekend dedicated to discussing Rotary and what is required of the students who were selected for this cultural scholarship. The students arrive each year filled with anticipation about who they will meet. The Bainbridge Club did an outstanding job of hosting these students, as well as the Officers, Directors, Trustees and Host Families from around the state. The venue was perfect and the food was delicious. We also enjoyed the annual cabaret that the students put together after only 2-3 hours of practice. We heard songs, watched and participated in dancing and watched skits. We were all thoroughly entertained and look forward to a year of talent. We have heard from the students over the last several years that they did not have enough free time to bond with each other. GRSP heard them and the Bainbridge Club arranged for a Sunday morning game of frisbee golf. As we left the weekend a little later than usual on Sunday morning, many of us drove home in silence as our students slept most of the way home—a far cry from the excited chatter we heard driving down.

Due to the generosity of Dale Covington from the **Marietta Rotary Club**, we were able to give out solar sunglasses to each student. They were thrilled beyond measure and modeled them for the camera. Thank you, Dale, for this very kind gesture for the students!!

MAYNARD KNESTRICK MEMORIAL WEEKEND

This weekend was named after a very important person to the Georgia Rotary Student Program. Maynard Knestrick was a member of the original Clayton County Rotary Club for many years and was passionate about this program unique to Georgia Rotarians. Several years ago, the sponsors of the weekend decided to name it in his honor and it carries his name to this day. Once again the Rotary Clubs of Lake Spivey/Clayton, Griffin and Henry County will be hosting the student weekend of September 8-10. This weekend will be dedicated to bonding the students as opposed to teaching the students. They will have quite a bit of free time with very little organized activities.

GOVERNOR'S VISITS

This year we have yet another district governor who is supportive of GRSP. DG Alec has not only allowed,

but encouraged, trustees to come with him to his club visits and board of directors visits along with your AG. Please welcome your trustee and set aside a time for a program about the Georgia Rotary Student Program, whether or not your club hosts a student. Again, this program is unique to Georgia and has been in existence for 70 years. The Georgia Rotary Student Program has commissioned a very good short video about the program, which your trustee would be happy to show your club.

ENDOWMENT

The GRSP Office is busy calculating the checks that will be sent out in response to those clubs that donated at least \$50 per capita last year. Your trustee should be delivering those by the middle of October. The check will be written out to the Club and the Club may use this money to help subsidize the student or for another service project. This is GRSP's effort to give back all of the income from the GRSP Endowment each year. While your trustee is visiting your club, ask about matching funds that may get you to your next level of giving.

FROM AN ALUMNI

Mhairi Dunnett, a 2016-17 student from Edinburgh, Scotland attending Kennesaw State University writes: "When I found out I had been accepted into the GRSP programme, I did not even think about the fact that I would be moving 4000 miles away from home at age 18. I was so excited to accept and start this amazing new chapter of my life and meet everyone. I knew my GRSP experience was not going to be the same as the other GRSP students, due to the fact that I was already good friends with five of the other Scots coming into this. I was a little disappointed to hear that I was placed with two other Scots (whom I did not know prior to this) and a Swedish girl, as I would only get to learn about one new culture instead of three, but as soon as we all met I knew that this year was going to be one of the best I will ever have.

Like many other students, the best thing for me about this program has been the people I have met and shared this incredible journey with. I could not imagine going to school with anyone else or anywhere else. The other GRSP girls and I at Kennesaw have become very close and surprisingly were not sick of each other yet. I am so fortunate that I get on well with my roommates because they have also quickly become integrated into my social circle. A great thing about Kennesaw is that there is a very active International Student Association which means that there are always opportunities for you to meet people and to learn about another culture, as well as a room in the Student Centre where you can hang out with other International students and make new friends. I will sorely miss the friends I have made here at school, the Americans and the Internationals at school, but that just means that I will have to travel to one of the many countries they are from to go see them - which is ok by me!

None of this experience would be the same without my three Host Families: Vince and Cynthia; Bev and Pat; Ryan and Teresa, and every Rotarian in my Sponsoring Clubs of Vinings Cumberland, Marietta Metro and Paulding. I would like to thank everyone for making this year special and trying their hardest to help me accommodate into Georgian life, including allowing me to experience traditional American holidays like Thanksgiving and spending Christmas Day at the beach in St Augustine. I will never forget my first week, before school started, where Cynthia made me eat anything and everything in sight - from Southern staples like grits (my first food in the US) and fried okra to regular foods like lobster and peanut butter which I had never tried. I can now happily say I am a regular at Chick Fil-A and it will definitely be one of the things I miss most about Georgia.

Coming from the UK and having family live here in the United States, I had a good expectation of what American life was like. However, I was greatly mistaken at how different the North was from the South. I was quickly thrown into the world of Rotary, something I had not much experience with before. I was

nically surprised to learn about all the great organisations and programs, both in the world and in the local communities, which Rotary proudly supports. I am very happy to be a part of such an incredible organisation and the Rotary motto 'Service above self really is a helpful reminder of just how much we can influence the people we meet, big or small, and that is definitely something that I can say everyone I have met this year has done. Thank you."

START OF A NEW YEAR FOR LUCILA

PHOTOS:





Lucilla is from Brazil - above welcomed by her East Cobb hosts; below, waiting to meet Congressman Barry Loudermilk with her Vinings host



Posted by Lynn Clarke
September 5, 2017

Literacy

Greetings to you in Literacy Month!

At the recommendation of DG Alec, I have created a Facebook page dedicated to District 6900 literacy work. Our shared experiences offer the greatest source of information and inspiration for one another. This FB page - [Rotary6900Literacy](#) - is meant to be a platform for sharing literacy projects and ideas. Please tell your literacy story, as it will help someone in our district who is searching for a project or needs an answer to a question. Your failures and your successes are important for our learning. I will offer my story first, in hopes that it will propel others to tell theirs. District 6900 is rife with projects, each a dearth of information for our clubs. Tell your story and/or become a resource for the clubs of RD6900. Simply being able to answer a Rotarian's question can lead to a project that leads to another child reading.

My Story: For 45 years, my passion has been to help little people read. I am a Rotarian, a Montessori teacher, the mother of three, the grandmother of four, and the champion of an early-literacy program called Souns. Souns is a hands-on, letter-sound program. Young children do not know how language and print fits together. How does print work? What does a particular sound look like in print? What does a particular symbol represent in sound? Research tells us that the greatest results come from interventions with children younger than 3. With Souns, intentional play is the classroom and the hand is the teacher. Simply: If you do not know letter-sounds, you cannot sound out words. If you cannot sound out words, you

cannot read. Fundamental literacy speaks to the interests and sensitivities of the young child. By the time a child says, "I want to read!" he or she deserves to have a few of the most fundamental tools of printed language in place to begin the journey into literacy.

Now It is Your Turn! Share your talent, project, and experience (good or bad) to Rotarians in our district.

My contact information: <mailto:brenda.c.erickson@gmail.com>. I strongly urge anyone interested in fundamental literacy to read Stanislas Dehaene's *Reading in the Brain: The New Science of How We Read*.

Posted by Brenda Erickson
September 9, 2017

Club News

Kennesaw State Honors South Cobb Rotary Club's Generous Financial Support



Kennesaw State University President Sam Olenz (left) paid tribute to the **South Cobb Rotary Club** and its President Darlene Duke (center) for the group's steadfast commitment over the past 40 years to fund

dozens of scholarships for Cobb County students and various faculty projects. Olens praised the organization, which has been in existence nearly 80 years, for living up to its motto, "Service above Self."

"The South Cobb Rotary Club has been helping Kennesaw State University for more than half our life, since we were only chartered in 1963," said Olens, who addressed the club's scholarship recognition meeting at the Presbyterian Village in Austell. "There may be other civic organizations with more members, but there are none with a greater heart than the South Cobb Rotary Club. This partnership between us not only strengthens Kennesaw State, but the whole community," Olens said. "You can be proud of the high degree of service by your club."

Kennesaw State Trustee Bob Prillaman (right), who is also a member of the South Cobb Rotary Club, presented Kennesaw State's Owl Award to Duke on behalf of Kennesaw State University Foundation President Jo Ann Chitty.

In accepting the Owl Award, Duke noted the contributions of her fellow members over the years to help Kennesaw State students continue their college education and become productive members of the community.

"We are a small, but mighty club," said Duke. "This award to the South Cobb Rotary Club recognizes the work of both past and current Rotarians, and will continue to serve as an inspiration to future Rotarians."

Posted by Darlene Duke
September 5, 2017

Club News

East Cobb Supports Local School and More



By Blake Joiner

The **Rotary Club of East Cobb** furthered its partnership with Wheeler High School during a ribbon cutting ceremony launching Wheeler High School's new AVID program. AVID stands for "Advancement Via Individual Determination." The program teaches students effective study skills, time management skills, leadership skills, and strategies for academic success. Students enrolled in the program attend classes that focus on the development of critical thinking, math, and literacy skills to better prepare students for college and beyond.

Students interested in the program submitted applications and were selected after interviews with AVID facility members. The first year will focus on 9th and 10th grade students with plans to expand as the program grows in coming years. The program is lead by AVID certified instructor, Ben Needle who, along with other staff members, has gone through extensive training in the AVID process. AVID Program Manager, M. Allison Childress, and Wheeler High School Principal, Dr. Peter Giles, were present at the ribbon cutting. For the Rotary Club of East Cobb, Past President Sam Pierce, current President Jerry Johnson, Long Term Strategic Planning Committee member Tammy Palmgren, AVID site team member Jonathan Lyons, and many others were instrumental in establishing the partnership and kicking off this new program.

This project and others funded by the Club's Annual Dog Days 5k Run and Tot Trot represent a significant commitment to the community. In July, the 12th annual race attracted more than 700 runners and walkers, and raised more than \$90,000 for community and non-profit organizations.

The money raised goes to support and benefit non-profit groups and organizations such as the Cobb Center for Family Resources, Polio Plus, Cobb Library Foundation, Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, Project Mail Call, Cobb County Public Safety, Canine Assistance, Atlanta Area Boy Scouts Council, CCA Veterans and numerous other non-profit groups.

PHOTOS:



Posted by Blake Joiner
September 5, 2017

Club News

Griffin Rotary Embraces Youth Service and Supports Teachers in the Community



The **Rotary Club of Griffin** welcomed over 100 new teachers and administrators to its July 27 meeting for its annual New Teacher Appreciation luncheon. The 2017 Georgia Teacher of the Year, Casey Bethel, presented the program. Mr. Bethel praised the Rotary Club of Griffin for bringing together educators and community leaders. The Club also presented donations to the Griffin-Spalding Education Celebration which provides school supplies to teachers for use in the classroom, and to the Griffin-Spalding Partners in Education to support its classroom and field trip grants for teachers.

The Rotary Club of Griffin also sponsored Gray Long, a rising junior from St. George's Episcopal School in Milner, Georgia, to attend RYLA at Georgia Southwestern State University. Gray spoke to the club at its August 3 meeting to thank them for allowing him to participate in RYLA.

PHOTOS:



Posted by Stephanie Windham
September 5, 2017

Literacy

Peace Corps and Rotary Join Forces on Literacy



In August, a workshop was held in Denver, Colorado for Rotarians who served in the Peace Corps as volunteers or staff. About 85 people attended the workshop to learn about the Peace Corps/Rotary Partnership including Rotarian guests who wanted to learn more about the partnership, senior Peace Corps and Rotary staff, and other Rotary dignitaries. About 50 Rotarian Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs) from outside Colorado attended. While they were not fully aware of the partnership, they were enthusiastic about bringing the partnership back to their Districts and clubs.

I am grateful to have represented our District at this occasion. An abundance of positive energy confirmed the value of a partnership between Rotary and the Peace Corps. Peace Corps volunteers who return home are so right for Rotary. They have lived "Service Above Self" during their time in the Peace Corps. Avenues need to be examined to engage RPCV's (Returning Peace Corps Volunteers) in our district. They are future Rotarians...ready for the support and purpose Rotary has to offer as they return home.

This article includes some highlights of the workshop. Visit [this link](#) and get involved.

The workshop began with some history about the partnership and how Rotarian Sue Fox (a 1960s Peace Corps Volunteer in Liberia) worked with other Rotarians from District 5450 to create the framework for a partnership - and then petitioned senior Peace Corps and Rotary staff and volunteers for approval. An initial Letter of Collaboration was elevated to a Memorandum of Understanding and signed at the District 5450 Conference in 2015 by RI General Secretary John Hewko and Peace Corps Director Carrie Hessler-Radelet.

Then Rotarians shared their experiences of working with this program:

Brenda Erickson (Peachtree City, Georgia) works with literacy projects in South Africa. The Rotarians travel to South Africa and work with Peace Corps volunteers who work at different sites where young children need assistance with reading and basic language skills.

Carl Dickerson (Pensacola, Florida) has a Literacy and Library Project where Peace Corps volunteers in Costa Rica identify schools that need all types of books in English and Spanish. Rotarians travel to Costa Rica to work with Peace Corps volunteers to sort and tag the books and organize them into a library. The volunteers enjoy the Rotary visitors and help them to use their time productively. Rotarians' clubs help pay for the shipping and occasionally with purchasing specialized books. Rotary clubs like to support schools when volunteers have some connection with their clubs through family or friends or they already knew the club before they left for service.

Emily Joy (RPCV working with Mercy Corps in Portland, Oregon) served in Paraguay and she worked very hard to bring Rotary clubs and Peace Corps Paraguay staff together. There was goodwill and enthusiasm on both sides, but in the end, both Rotary clubs and the Peace Corps staff hadn't heard about the partnership and it demonstrated that more communication needs to take place by both agencies because there is turnover in the volunteer ranks of Rotary and with Peace Corps staff and everyone needs to be constantly reminded of the partnership and its benefits.

Senior Peace Corps staff Ashley Bell and Ted Adams and Rotary's Director of Programs and Grants Victor Barnes and Services and Engagement Program Manager Ellina Kushnir provided updates and perspective about how both Peace Corps and Rotary view the partnership. They are all pleased with the progress that has developed and the number of ways that both agencies can benefit from the partnership. Rotarians were on hand to share their experiences working with Peace Corps volunteers, RPCVs and Peace Corps staff.

Attendees heard about how they can apply for District and Global grants to support projects that Rotary clubs and Peace Corps volunteers work on together. There was some discussion about the challenges of Global Grants because Peace Corps volunteers serve for two years or less and Global Grants take much longer to be developed and approved.

Rami Sayeed, a RPCV who served in Mozambique, talked about how a Rotary Scholarship that he was awarded has helped him earn a PhD from the University of Cape Town, South Africa, where he is studying Community and Economic Development of new immigrants and refugees. Rami shared that the scholarship from Rotary has helped him continue his Peace Corps service but in a different direction than he would have thought possible.

The final session of the day had the attendees breaking up into small groups to talk about: 1) How Rotary clubs and RPCVs groups (i.e., RPCVs of South Florida or RPCVs who served in Guatemala) can find one another and work together to do community and international service projects, 2) How can both agencies systematically communicate with the field and encourage grassroots cooperation, 3) How can we find and catalog successful projects and help others learn from these successful partnerships, 4) What are other ways that Rotary clubs, RPCVs and PCVs can work together and benefit one another. These small group suggestions are being collated and written up into recommendations that will be shared with all workshop attendees, RPCV groups and Rotary clubs, Peace Corps staff and RI and TRF.

Finally, District 5450 Governor Abbas Rajabi shared his story about being taught by a Peace Corps volunteer in his home country of Iran, which inspired him to continue his service towards others. In the Persian tradition, Abbas read a poem that he wrote in tribute to Peace Corps and Rotary and how both organizations inspired him. Abbas also again recognized and thanked Sue Fox posthumously for her dedication to the partnership and the vision of both agencies working together.

Posted by Brenda Erickson
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