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## Sharing The Magic Over The Holidays



I hope you and your family had a wonderful holiday season and the new year is off to a great start. December was certainly a special time of year as our clubs shared the magic of Rotary through projects like the jingle jog fundraiser, holiday ham haul for first responders, shop with a cop, Salvation Army bell ringing, presents from Santa for children in need and teaching our youth the Giving Side of Christmas. It was a pleasure to get to participate in many of these and a personal highlight was getting to play Santa to hand out presents with the Jackson-Butts Club. These are just a few of the ways in which our clubs had a positive impact in their communities during the holidays. I look forward to seeing all the amazing ways in which our clubs continue to share the *Magic of Rotary* throughout 2025, Happy New Year!

Posted by Gordon Owens  
January 4, 2025

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2023-2024 Annual Report

## John Hewko Shares Our Annual Report



We are building a healthier, more resilient, and more peaceful world. I invite you to be among the first to read about the difference we're making together in our [2023-24 annual report](#). We have reason to

celebrate. More than 400 million children were vaccinated against polio in 2023, with the support of Rotary and our polio eradication partners. We also have much to be thankful for and to hope for in the future. Our donors contributed more than US\$417 million in gifts and commitments, and we awarded US\$82 million in total funding to more than 1,200 global grants.

The stories about our impact and supporters, alongside the financial information, in this year's report testify to the strength of our partnership. I have confidence in the good the Rotary community will continue to achieve together, locally and globally.

Posted by André Marria  
January 4, 2025

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April 24-27, 2024 | Jekyll Island, GA

## Register For District Conference



We hope you've booked your hotel room for our first-ever joint district conference by now as there are only a few rooms left in our block. [Now it's time to get registered](#). Registration will include meals from lunch on Friday to breakfast on Sunday, our beach tailgate party on Friday afternoon, live entertainment on Saturday night and a few adult beverages along the way. We are using DACdb for registration and most of you don't have a login, so click on the "Guest Registration" tab at the top of the registration form to get started. Visit [GeorgiaUnitedDC.com](https://GeorgiaUnitedDC.com) for more information.

Posted by Ryan Swertfager

Our Rotary Foundation

## Take a New Look at the Rotary Foundation

**YOU DIDN'T KNOW UNTIL YOU KNOW IT!!  
SO, KEEP EXPANDING YOUR  
KNOWLEDGE..." -ANONYMOUS**

Greetings and Happy New Year from your District Foundation Chair! It seems only fitting that as it is a new year, I should send this month's message to New Rotarians. We tend to get so caught up in the business of Rotary that we sometimes forget that not everyone, particularly our newer members, might not be as familiar with all the functions as they would like. So, this month I want to focus on the History of the Foundation specifically. Therefore, if you are a seasoned Rotarian, you can take this month's message off. However, before you do, I might point to this month's quote.

It's hard to imagine that our strong Foundation has its roots in a \$26.50 contribution from then outgoing Rotary President Arch Klumph at the 1917 Convention to set up an endowment with the words, "for the purpose of doing good in the world". What a long way it has traveled and grown since then. Did you know that the Foundation has sponsored over 485 District Grants worth \$30m, over 100 District Response Grants at \$4m, and over 1,280 Global grants worth \$72m and that's just in the Rotary year 2023-2024! Add those numbers up and they are a far cry from \$26.50. The Grants themselves fall in the following areas: Basic education and literacy, Community economic development; Disease prevention and treatment; Maternal and child health, Peacebuilding and conflict prevention; Water, sanitation and hygiene; and the Environment.

Over the course of 100plus years the Rotary Foundation has spent more than \$4 billion dollars making lives better in every community it reaches and every place around the world it touches. Truly you can be proud to be a part of a Foundation and organization that lives up to its Mission statement: "The Rotary Foundation helps Rotary members to advance world understanding, goodwill, and peace by improving health, providing quality education, improving the environment, and alleviating poverty."

I know I'm proud to be a part of all that and I know you are too!! Happy New Year!

Posted by Bob Hagan  
January 3, 2025



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Tour the Canadian Rockies | June 26-July 2, 2025

## Post Rotary International Convention Tour



The Rotary International convention is June 21-25th, 2025 in Calgary, Alberta. Don't miss the chance to visit highlights of the Canadian Rockies and the great resorts while in the area! Plus spend July 1st in Canada as the country celebrates Canada Day - and still be home for July 4th celebrations. It's a win-win! Check out [the full itinerary](#) and contact [Chris Archer](#) if you are interested in joining fellow Rotarians on this amazing trip.

Posted by Chris Archer  
January 4, 2025

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Freezing For A Reason | Saturday, February 1

## Have you taken the Plunge? Anyone can!



The Polar Bear Plunge 2025 is very close, but there is still plenty of time for YOU to raise some serious money! This is the absolute easiest way to raise funds for any charity you support. Does your Rotary Club or other organization you support need to raise money? On February 1, 2025 the **Rotary Club of Alpharetta** will host a ready-made fundraiser just for you! We are Freezin' for a Reason! Our 8th annual Polar Bear Plunge lets you create your own team, raise funds, take the "plunge", and get a check! Last year the average team earned around \$5000.00! The sky is the limit for you, so start a team today! You do not need to come to Alpharetta to participate. You can plunge in whatever body of water near you. Last year we had teams in Utah and Brazil. The sooner you start, the more funds you will raise.

Start a team today to get those end-of-year charitable donations. [Scan the QR code in the flyer](#) and get

started.

Posted by Paul Ray  
January 3, 2025

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## Take Action to Secure Your Rotary Legacy



Children perform for visitors at the Mollejones Community Center in Costa Rica. In partnership with CATIE (Centro Agronómico Tropical de Investigación y Enseñanza), a group of women living near Turrialba, Costa Rica, launched an ecotourism cooperative to attract visitors and grow their community-based tourism businesses. Members of Rotary clubs in Cartago, Costa Rica, and in Denton, Texas, USA, partnered with CATIE to support the project through a Rotary Foundation global grant.

He believed he would get better, but the medical clinic didn't have the resources to help him — **Rotary did.**

They knew clean water could be captured from the spring year-round, if only they had the engineering know-how — **Rotary does.**

She knew she could make a difference for others, if only someone believed in her enough to help with her education — **Rotary will.**

Learn how an at-demise commitment, completely revocable, of as little as \$25,000 can secure Naming Rights on a perpetual endowment to support the good work of Rotary. Honor yourself, your family or your most important life influence? Email District 6900 Major Gifts Chair, Lee Hollingsworth at [lee@leehollingsworth.com](mailto:lee@leehollingsworth.com) to learn more.

Posted by Lee Hollingsworth  
January 4, 2025

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January 15th, 2025 | 1PM

## Join A Special Mega Meeting On Peacebuilding





Join us in a special Rotary Mega-Meeting and Podcast with The Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter School for Peace and Conflict Resolution. This is a unique opportunity to meet the team educating youth to follow in the footsteps of Nobel-Prize winning President Jimmy Carter. Space is limited and seats are filling up fast, so please register now at: [Mega-Meeting.com](https://Mega-Meeting.com).

We will be joined by Charles E. Davidson, Ph.D. who directs the school's Center for Peace Technology and heads the Rotary/Carter School Collaboration for Peace. *"For decades, the Carters tirelessly walked in the shoes of the people they strived to empower, transforming countless lives in the process," Davidson says. "We teach our students to identify the underlying causes of conflict and equip them with the cutting-edge theory and practical skills to put their knowledge into action, whether that be at the local, national, or global level."*

If the meeting is full, you can watch it on [YouTube LIVE](#)

Posted by Gordon Owens

January 4, 2025

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In Memoriam

## Remembering Four Rotarians Who Served Our District Well

In the last quarter of 2024, Rotary District 6900 lost four fine Rotarians who meant a lot to their clubs and the district.

**Steve Stanfield from the Rotary Club of Americus** served as District Governor in 2006-2007 and remained very active in the years that followed - particularly as he shepherded our efforts to renovate cottages and establish a museum highlighting the role of Rotary and Warm Springs, Georgia in the story of efforts to End Polio. Steve and his wife Jeannie have a special spot in the hearts of District 6900. See Bob Hagan's tribute to Steve later in this newsletter.

**Neill Ferrill** was a beloved member of the **Rotary Club of Vinings Cumberland**; you can see the club's remembrance in the story below.

The **Bremen Rotary Club** mourns the loss of Walter Hackett, 29-year Rotarian and four-time President of the club. The family has requested donations to the bremen Rotary Walter H. Hackett Scholarship Fund.

GRSP and the **Rotary Club of Pelham** will not soon forget **Larry Frosteg**, Trustee Emeritus of the Georgia Rotary Student Program. Larry served as host family and as a Trustee of the Georgia Rotary Student Program for many years, being presented with the Frank E. Bentley, Sr. Leadership Award by District 6900. He was named Trustee Emeritus in 2009 and continued to serve the program as the



coordinator for the GRSP Larry Frosteg International Pelham Student Weekend in the spring and as the conductor of the Student Selection draft in our Winter Trustee meetings, which always included his beloved commentary.

Posted by Jackie Cuthbert  
January 3, 2025

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RYLA

## Start Thinking About RYLA 2025!

A promotional graphic for RYLA 2025. The word "RYLA" is written in large, bold, multi-colored letters (R: blue, Y: orange, L: teal, A: pink). Below it, the dates "June 7-11, 2025" are in bold black text. Underneath the dates is "GEORGIA SOUTHWESTERN STATE UNIVERSITY" in a smaller, grey, sans-serif font. At the bottom is the website "www.RYLA6900.com" in orange and yellow text. To the left of the main text is a blue circular icon with a camera and a lowercase 'f'. The background features abstract, colorful brushstrokes in blue, orange, pink, and teal.

  
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# RYLA

## June 7-11, 2025

GEORGIA SOUTHWESTERN STATE UNIVERSITY

[www.RYLA6900.com](http://www.RYLA6900.com)

**Susan Ruckman**  
District Chair  
[susanruckman@gmail.com](mailto:susanruckman@gmail.com)

**Jaclyn Donovan**  
District Chair  
[jaclyn.k.donovan@gmail.com](mailto:jaclyn.k.donovan@gmail.com)

It's a new year and that means it's time to start thinking about RYLA!! Not that we ever really stop thinking about RYLA... but now we can say that RYLA is happening This Year!! RYLA 2025 will be held June 7-11 on the campus of Georgia Southwestern State University. Cost per student is \$500, and this covers all necessary expenses related to attending RYLA. For any students riding our charter buses from the Atlanta area, there is an additional \$50/per student cost.

RYLA 2025 will be held June 7-11 on the campus of Georgia Southwestern State University. Cost per student is \$500, and this covers all necessary expenses related to attending RYLA. For any students riding our charter buses from the Atlanta area, there is an additional \$50/per student cost.

We hope that you and your club will consider sponsoring a student (or more than one) to

attend RYLA this year! We have seen first-hand how it can change the lives of our students and want to share that experience with as many students as possible.

If you and your club want to get in on all the great things that come along with sponsoring a student to RYLA, use one of the following routes to send in your RSVP:

1. Use this link to complete our RSVP online: <https://forms.gle/SVmSGCg1K4ZK8HZu6>
2. Go to [www.RYLA6900.com/ryla-forms](http://www.RYLA6900.com/ryla-forms) and download the “Club Commitment Form” to send in.
3. Email Susan Ruckman or Jaclyn Donovan to sign up or ask any questions.

Posted by Jaclyn Donovan  
January 3, 2025

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GRSP Update

## **Meet João Vilela, Class of 2024-25**

by Katheryne Fields, GRSP Executive Director



# JOÃO VILELA

- ✓ From Brazil
- ✓ Attending Mercer University
- ✓ Wants to pursue a career in diplomacy
- ✓ Sponsored by the Rotary Clubs of Macon, Downtown Macon and Macon North



*"I aspire to pursue a career in diplomacy, with a commitment to nurturing global harmony."*

 [www.grsp.org](http://www.grsp.org)

João Victor Verçosa Vilela, 21 from Brazil, says that Rotary International's ideals, with an emphasis on service projects, international goodwill and cultural understanding, resonate deeply with his personal and professional objectives. He is attending Mercer University and since his arrival, this future diplomat has embraced his time at Mercer by being invited to take part on a reading group about Benjamin Franklin, being part of the Model Arab League, sharing his country's culture with other students and most recently nominated to a conference in California. He is thankful his professors are helping him become the better version of himself. João is sponsored by the Rotary Clubs of Macon, Downtown Macon and Macon North. João states that The Georgia Rotary Student Program has been a dream come true for him. He says, "Getting to know all the Rotarians is amazing and they are all so welcoming and excited to make me experience a bit of their world." He has also impacted his community through service opportunities such as making Boston Butts during Thanksgiving for families in need.

João states that The Georgia Rotary Student Program has been a dream come true for him. He says, "Getting to know all the Rotarians is amazing and they are all so welcoming and excited to make me experience a bit of their world." He has also impacted his community through service opportunities such as making Boston Butts during Thanksgiving for families in need.

Posted by Katheryne Fields

January 3, 2025

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In Memoriam

## **Past District Governor Steve Stanfield**



Because of the tremendous influence PDG Steve Stanfield had on District 6900 over the last several decades, it is hard to know where to begin to celebrate the man. Therefore, I believe the best way is to start at the beginning. Born February 19, 1947, Retired Army Lieutenant Colonel Stanfield spent 21 years honorably serving his country and was Honorably Discharged in 1990.

PDG Steve joined the Rotary Club of Americus attaining his Blue Badge on August 1, 1993. He had an immediate impact at the District level, as he was instrumental in creating the Sheffield Leadership Award in 1994. The prestigious award is presented annually to District 6900 Club Presidents by size category who best exemplify the extraordinary leadership traits represented by the Sheffield family.

PDG Stanfield was his club's President in 1999-2000 and went on to serve his club as the Club Foundation Chair from 2016 to 2019 after having served District 6900 as an Assistant Governor from 2001 to 2004 and as District Secretary 2004-2005 before becoming the District Governor in 2006-2007. He was also the District Polio Plus Subcommittee Chair from 2008-2010 and was the District Polio Chair 2010-2011. In 2020-2021, he received the Decades of Service Award from his club. He was a 2<sup>nd</sup> Tier Major Donor from Rotary International and multiple Paul Harris Fellow as well as making sure all his family carried the same designation. PDG Steve served the district for many years as the Chair of the Disaster Relief program and ensured his family were heavily involved in disaster relief activities. He also helped prepare group study exchange teams.

As District Governor his special project was enhancing the district on the awareness of polio. He dedicated his year, and for years after his term as District Governor, to raising money for the refurbishment of the Roosevelt swimming pool at Warm Springs as well as the update to the Polio room in the museum. PDG Steve was also instrumental in the completion of the Anne Henderson Johnson House. The eradication of Polio was his passion. The culmination of that passion was realized as he received the prestigious Service Above Self Award for his outstanding contributions in so many areas in 2011.

PDG Steve Stanfield was an outstanding Rotarian, an outstanding human being and was a true friend to all he encountered throughout his 77 years. Please keep his wife Jeannie and son, daughter and his four grandchildren in your thoughts and prayers.

Posted by Bob Hagan  
January 3, 2025

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Told By Senator John Albers

## The Star Spangled Banner



Roswell Rotarian, Senator John Albers worked with his home club to help produce a video to share with the 13 Interact Clubs they sponsor about the history of The Star Spangled Banner. The video turned out awesome and there is no reason to keep it a secret or to only use it for Roswell Rotary. Any club that would like to share the video with their Interact Clubs or other school organizations they partner with, feel free. You can [watch the video on YouTube](#) and share it from there. Enjoy!

Posted by Nancy Alterman  
January 4, 2025



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Buckhead Rotary Ham Haul

## Delivering Holiday Meals To First Responders



Buckhead Rotary brought back the holiday tradition of delivering Honey Baked hams, sides and pies to fire and police stations across Dekalb County this Christmas Eve. A small but mighty team help organize all the meals into a single bag making it easy for volunteers to pick up their assigned deliveries. Club members in partnership with Livable Buckhead and other community organizations made quick work of making the first responders working on Christmas Day merry and bright. We had a total of 48 volunteers who served 51 dinners to approximately 60 police and 185 fire fighters. There were approximately 150 hours of service logged for the event...Good will and better friendships created and it was definitely beneficial to all concerned! The club got awesome media coverage with most major news outlets featuring the story during their broadcast and online. All in, they reached an audience of over 225,000 people with the Magic of Rotary. [Check out this video from 11 Alive News.](#)

Posted by Denise Starling  
January 4, 2025

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RLI

## Be Part of RLI in Thomasville - February 1

Join us for Rotary Leadership Institute in Thomasville on Saturday, February 1, 2025 at Southern Regional Technical College. The address is 15689 U.S. Highway 19 North, Thomasville, Georgia 31792. The event will be hosted by the RC of Thomasville and will offer Parts 1, 2, & 3. A registration fee of \$100 will cover the Student Guide, breakfast, snacks, and lunch. Members can register by going to [www.rlisunshine.org](http://www.rlisunshine.org), and can email me with any questions.

Posted by Tracy Van Norman  
January 3, 2025

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Club News

## **Atlanta Southern Crescent Gives "Gift of Giving"**







The **Rotary Club of Atlanta Southern Crescent** recently held its annual "Giving Side of Christmas" program - partnering with:

- Kinship Care, an organization created by the Clayton County government for grandparents and others caring for grandchildren
- the Clayton County Parks and Recreation Department.

In its 17th year, this year's Giving Side of Christmas served about 80 children - giving them the opportunity to experience the joy of GIVING at Christmas. The children make a list of people they would like to shop for, and assigned a personal shopper. They receive a "Rotary Buck" for each person on their list. The personal shopper takes them to the "Christmas Store" where everything costs 1 "Rotary Buck." The shopper helps them make their selections.

The children take their purchases to the "Banker" to pay with the Rotary bucks and then to the wrapping station where the presents are wrapped, name tags are put on them and then all put in a shopping bag. They leave with Christmas to give! They then enjoy pizza and Santa! We had two special helpers: Personal Shopper, District Governor Gordon Owens, and our banker, Assistant Governor Cedric Hill.

## PHOTOS:















Posted by Claudia Mertl  
January 3, 2025

Our Rotary Foundation at Work

## Griffin Builds Handicapped Ramps with Competitive Grant



The **Rotary Club of Griffin** has utilized a Rotary District Competitive Grant to construct a few

handicapped ramps, including this one which significantly improves accessibility for a local family's child with mobility challenges. Collaboration was a key component of this initiative. The Rotary Club of Griffin partnered with Griffin Habitat for Humanity, fostering a sense of communal responsibility and engagement. Members of the Rotary Club of Griffin got their hands dirty, constructing the ramp themselves for the family in need in Griffin.

#### **PHOTOS:**



Posted by Janice Wallace  
January 3, 2025

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In Memoriam

**Neill Ferrill, RC Vinings Cumberland**





In May 2022, beloved **Rotarian and past president of Vinings Cumberland Rotary Club, Neill Ferrill**, was diagnosed with a glioblastoma brain tumor. For 29 months he showed incredible strength participating in clinical trials, numerous rounds of chemo, radiation, and 7 brain surgeries. He continued to attend his Rotary meetings until almost the very end. His wife, Robin, would drive him to meetings and was his biggest cheerleader. Neill passed away peacefully in her arms in November. Neill will be remembered for his infectious smile and his quick wit. He believed in giving back to others, finding joy and gratitude in your present blessings, setting goals and working hard, making the most of every opportunity, and cherishing time spent with those you love. He will be greatly missed by so many including his Vinings Cumberland Rotary Club family.

Posted by Thomas House



January 3, 2025

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## Club News

# Griffin Daybreak Celebrates December



Rotary District Governor Gordon Owens visited with **Griffin Daybreak Rotary** and shared his vision of the theme, the Magic of Rotary, in which Rotarians around the district do what they can to help communities locally and around the world. Pictured with DG Owens is Daybreak President Dylan Blasingame. In addition, Daybreak Rotarians helped the Salvation Army by ringing the bell at the Griffin Kroger store. Pictured here are Debby Daniel-Bryant and Jackie Wilson showing holiday spirit at the kettle.

## PHOTOS:







Club News

## Rotary Club of Columbus Partners with Salvation Army to Spread Holiday Cheer



The **Rotary Club of Columbus** joined forces with the Salvation Army to ring in the holiday season and support the community through the annual Red Kettle Campaign. A dedicated group of 29 Rotary members volunteered their time and energy, spreading cheer with warm smiles and the familiar sound of ringing bells. Thanks to their efforts and the generosity of the Columbus community, a total of \$729.66 was raised. This included \$328.34 collected at Hobby Lobby and \$401.32 at Walmart Grocery. The funds will help provide food, shelter, and essential services for individuals and families in need, ensuring that hope and joy shine brightly in Columbus during the holidays.

"As Rotarians, our motto is Service Above Self, and this event is a wonderful example of our commitment to giving back to the community we love," said Meredith King, President of the Rotary Club of Columbus. "We are grateful to everyone who donated and joined us in making a difference."

The Rotary Club of Columbus is proud to continue its tradition of meaningful service, making the holiday season brighter for those in need. Together, with the generosity of the community, they are helping to create a season filled with hope and goodwill.



## Club News

# Atlanta Southern Crescent/Clifton-Emory Satellite Collects Winter Coats



This fall, charter founder Yamin Farhat, President of the **Rotary Satellite Club of Atlanta Southern Crescent/Clifton-Emory** (RSCASC/CE) Angeli Abrol Duggal, and Angeli's five year old daughter, Avya Duggal, led the Club's winter service project to collect winter coats and clothes for Atlantans in need. Rtn. Neil Shorthouse from Atlanta West End Rotary, and a member of St. Luke's Episcopal Church, helped RSCASC/CE partner with St. Luke's, and Dunwoody Mayor Lynn Deutsch, a supportive, community-focused leader, helped Avya partner with Director Judi Carlson at Malachi Storehouse, St. Patrick's Episcopal Church, to mobilize the distribution of coats and clothing. Together, the Club was able to donate over 800 articles of clothing and 60 baby and expectant/new mom essentials this fall!

Avya and her mother, Angeli Abrol Duggal, President of the Rotary Satellite Club of Atlanta Southern Crescent/Clifton-Emory, partnered with the Glenn Institute and The Westminster Schools (where Avya is a



preFirst student) to kick off her Coats for Kids pilot project in November, with the goal of making this an annual student-driven fall service project. True to the Westminster spirit of service, Stacy Chalmers, the Glenn Institute of Philanthropy and Lower School Director of Student Life, was incredibly supportive of Avya's project and ensured everything came together quickly and seamlessly. Avya enthusiastically spoke to her class about collecting warm clothes for other kids, the importance of giving to those in need and Rotary's mission of service above self. The Club members stepped up across the US to donate - Past President Dr. Jeevan Makam brought a large box of winter clothes from Boston to donate to St. Luke's (all the way from Boston to Atlanta), PP Pia Valeriano donated beautiful women's winter wear, Mrs. Sushma Dersch generously donated her late husband's winter and memorable Army jackets when he served in the U.S. Army, and Karina participated with the Atlanta Arts Collective, where they collected and delivered a truckload of winter wearables to Hurricane Helene victims in western North Carolina.

## PHOTOS:







Posted by Angeli Abrol Duggal  
January 3, 2025

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