

The District Connector

JUNE 2025



2024-2025
District Governor



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Rotarians. My final newsletter as District Governor. It has been an awesome year and I appreciate everyone's support. Clara and I can't thank everyone enough for the hospitality and opportunity to serve our fellow Rotarians. This year went by quickly and hopefully, its been as good for you as it has been for us. As we close this year, I want to take the time to remind you about a couple of important bits of Rotary. We are a service organization that relies on volunteers. It makes it double critical to understand the needs of our members. We must regularly reach out to our membership to reevaluate our club priorities. We know we will lose some members to natural causes, job transfers, retirement, etc. What we must guard against is apathy. It is tragic that we sign someone up to be a Rotarian, only to lose them, and I believe they signed up because they have heard or seen the great work we do in our communities both near and far. It's now the time when we will now cull the herd to eliminate the non-performers. Or those that owe significant back dues. Before we do, please reach out to them and find out why. What are we not doing to engage them?

I leave the position but not the district. I will be taking on chair of the membership committee. DGE Chris is expanding the committee to include club development sub chairs. One in each area of the district. Our goals for next year are clear. Membership is the number one priority goal for RI. (Polio eradication is the number one goal for The Rotary Foundation). North America is on a downward spiral in membership.

A recent study showed that with the current trends Rotary will no longer exist in North America in 50 years. Unacceptable! As we start the new year, let's look at new ways to retain our members, by first addressing the reasons for departure. Second, looking at new ways to provide

options or alternatives to members, such as new types of clubs (impact, companion, service based, cause based, profession based or any other type you can dream of).

I look forward to hearing your ideas. I am available to come to your club or to a group of clubs gathering to share a membership chat.

Don't forget this is Fellowship Month. There are hundreds of fellowships from Antique Autos to Motorcycle riders to whiskey connoisseur to RV lovers to Young Rotarians. Start a local chapter today. Another great way to meet people and invite them to be a Rotarian or a Rotaractor.

Lastly, let me say one more time. Thank you Thank you Thank you for all you do for Rotary and Rotaract communities. It's been my pleasure to serve.

Craig Walling, District Governor

The **Rotary Club of East Ascension** recently had MADD Louisiana: Saving Lives, Supporting Victims , present at their weekly meeting. Under the dedicated leadership of Executive Director Sunny Wall, who has served MADD Louisiana for nearly 12 years, their mission remains strong: **Eliminate impaired driving Prevent underage drinking Provide victim services at no charge**

They credit their success to incredible volunteers—like Paula Zachary, who honors her son, Brandon Zachary's memory after losing him in 2007—and Sunny's tireless efforts, over 6,000 DWI offenders each year in Louisiana and Mississippi hear directly from victims and survivors through their programs. They also lead vital efforts such as:

Walk Like MADD, Law Enforcement Recognition (honoring officers with 30+ DWI arrests annually), Court Monitoring, Victim Impact Panels, Victim Services & Fund Development

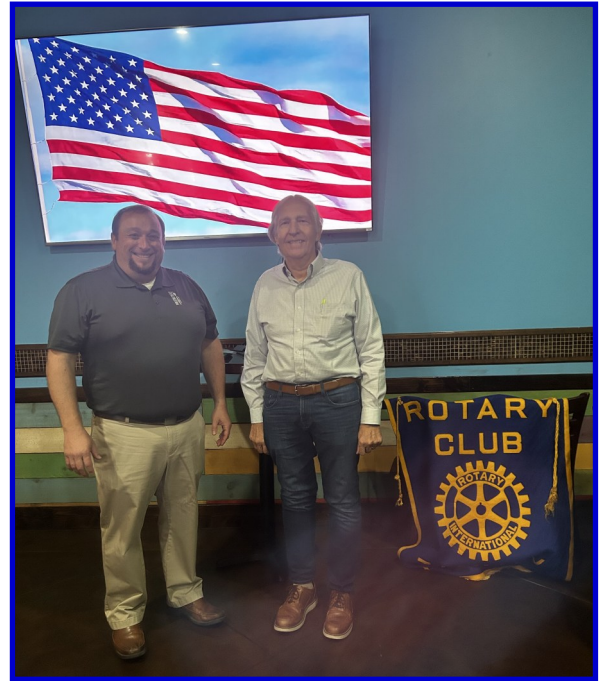
Together, they are turning pain into purpose.

Pictured L to R: Paula Zachary, Sunny Wall, Isabella Corona, and Club President Alyson Boudreaux.



What an inspiring Rotary meeting recently. **The Rotary Club of Zachary** was honored to have Brian Gallion from Kids' Orchestra speak, sharing updates on the organization's impactful work with local youth. Last year, 1,094 students were served through a robust music and enrichment program.

Kids' Orchestra offers instruction on 14 different instruments, with students receiving over 200 hours of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) support. In addition to homework help and instrument instruction, the program includes after-school snacks and meals, with 90% of participants receiving financial assistance.



The organization also provides private lessons and summer camps, continuing its mission to foster creativity, discipline, and community in young musicians.

For more information please see www.kidsorchestra.org.

Pic L-R Brian Gallion with Kids Orchestra and Rotarian Carl Herrick

JUNE

"What binds Rotarians together is a unity of desire and a unity of purpose to serve society and to serve mankind...a unity in diversity."
PRIP C.P.H. Teenstra 1965-66

Rotary 



ROTARY FELLOWSHIPS MONTH

Rebecca Hart recently addressed the **Rotary Club of Zachary** with a powerful message on effective facilitation through the lens of servant leadership. Emphasizing that great facilitators serve rather than steer, she equipped Rotarians with practical tools to lead meetings and discussions with greater impact.

At the core of her message were the Six Ps of Preparation:

- **Purpose** – Know why you're meeting
- **Product** – Define the desired outcome
- **Participants** – Understand who's in the room
- **Probable Issues** – Anticipate challenges
- **Process** – Select the right approach
- **Place** – Create the right environment

She also shared the Four Cornerstones of a Good Facilitator: Expertise, Empathy, Enthusiasm, and Clarity — essential traits for guiding groups effectively.

Hart cautioned against the Seven Deadly Sins of Facilitation, including allowing the group to lose direction, lacking neutrality, poor listening, and failing to adapt.

Her message was clear: effective facilitators lead with humility, preparation, and a genuine desire to elevate others — a true example of servant leadership in action.

Pic L-R Rebecca Hart and Rotary President Daniel Gomez



The **Rotary Club of East Ascension** recently welcomed 2 New Members!!

They are excited to welcome Rhonda Lamendola and Mindy Murray to their Rotary Club Family! Rhonda is a retired educator with over 35 years of experience, bringing a wealth of knowledge and a heart for service. Mindy serves as the



Stakeholder Relations Advisor for Methanex and is passionate about community engagement. Both Rhonda and Mindy share a deep commitment to service and are eager to make a difference right here in Ascension Parish.

A heartfelt thank you to their sponsors, Liz Dunn Laurent and Leann Borne Baham, for helping grow our Rotary family!

Pic L to R: Rhonda Lamendola, Liz Laurent, Mindy Murray, Leann Baham, and Club President Alyson Boudreaux.

This month marks the 20th anniversary of Rotary Action Groups.

These independent, Rotary-affiliated groups bring together people from around the world who have expertise, experience, or a deep passion for a particular humanitarian field. They use their knowledge and global network to help Rotary and Rotaract clubs and districts plan and implement impactful service projects. Since 2005, more than 50,000 Rotary Action Group members in 150 countries have supported thousands of service projects in critical areas like disease prevention, education, water, and the environment. They have been key in transforming hundreds of small-scale projects into large-scale sustainable initiatives. Collectively, they have raised over US\$10 million for more than 10,000 projects worldwide.

The Rotary Action Groups program (originally called Rotarian Action Groups) started in 2005 to differentiate service-oriented Rotary Fellowships with a signature project from those facilitating networking around a topic. What began as just eight groups has grown significantly in global reach and support with service priorities. Today, 26 action groups support several priorities of Rotary's Action Plan by providing technical expertise, partnerships, funding, and resources to member-led projects. They also develop leaders and attract new participants to Rotary from all walks of life. As we celebrate their 20th anniversary, let's look back on how they have helped clubs and districts scale support for important causes.

Leading Rotary Forward

Rotary Family Health Days, organized by the Rotary Action Group for Family Health & AIDS Prevention, is the largest Rotary member-led health program outside of PolioPlus. The program offers free health screenings, testing, counseling, and referrals for preventable and non-communicable diseases at the program sites as well as guidance on nutrition and healthy lifestyle choices. Since 2011, this program has expanded to 16 countries in Africa and Southeast Asia and administered over 13,000,000 free health services to over 3.5 million people.

ROTARY ACTION GROUPS

Leading positive change for **20 YEARS!**



25+
action
groups

50,000+
group
members
since 2005

In 150+
countries

\$10 million+
raised to
make a
difference

10,000+
humanitarian
projects
supported

The Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Rotary Action Group (WASH-RAG) has supported various organizational initiatives to help increase Rotary's impact. Among those is the pilot project Enhancement Processes (2013-2016). This project demonstrated the value of building regional coalitions of Rotary members and participants with expertise in project design and implementation to support nearby clubs and districts with their related service priorities. WASH-RAG also supported the WASH in schools Target Challenge. This Rotary-UNICEF pilot program motivated clubs to work collectively to improve education quality and access. They did this by working with communities to provide improved water, sanitation, and hygiene services, teacher training, and stronger learning curricula.

The Environmental Sustainability Rotary Action Group (ESRAG) created a flight carbon estimator that calculates compensation fees to offset carbon emissions. These fees can be directly donated to the Rotary Foundation. The tool is still used today. ESRAG has played a key role in supporting our clubs with project guidance before and after the environment became Rotary's seventh area of focus. To help clubs develop effective environmental projects, ESRAG created a handbook with input from United Nations Environment Programme in 2019. ESRAG co-founder Karen Kendrick Hands was invited to present to the Environmental Issues Task Force, which made the recommendation to the Rotary Foundation and Rotary International boards to add the environment as the seventh area of focus in 2020.

In 2022, the Rotary Action Group for Reproductive, Maternal and Child Health (RMCH-RAG), in partnership with Rotary districts, ministries of health, and two professional medical associations, became the second recipient of The Rotary Foundation's Programs of Scale award for its initiative, Together for Healthy Families in Nigeria. Started as a five-year pilot project in the same year that the Rotary Action Groups program was created, the RMCH-RAG was instrumental in transforming this project into a large-scale effort. The initiative brought together global and national partner-

**JUNE IS
ROTARY FELLOWSHIP MONTH**

