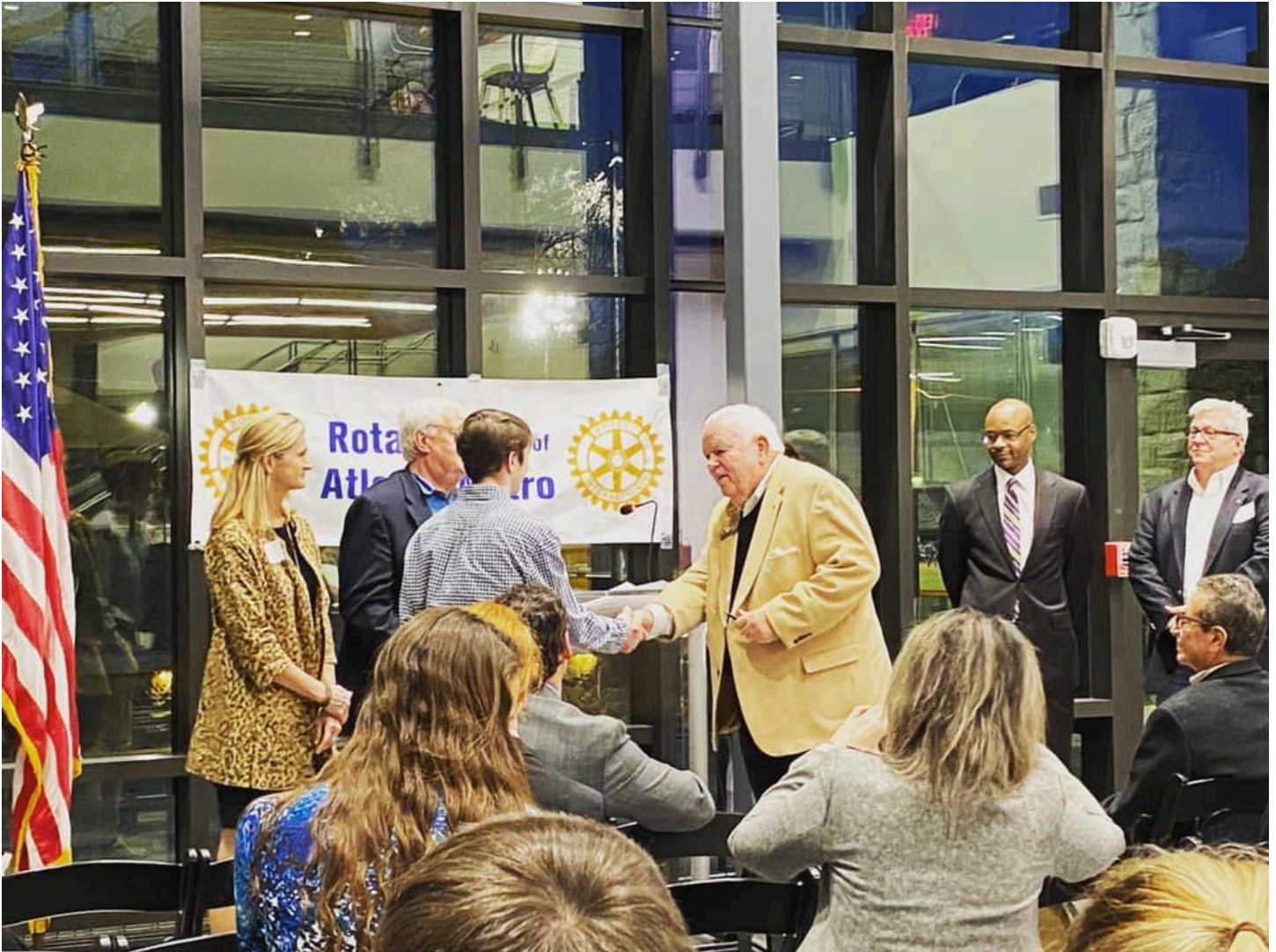


From Our District Governor

Connecting to Rotary in a Whole New Way



DG Jim with the Rotaract Club of Atlanta and the Atlanta Metro Rotary Club in early March - before our days of social distancing

Rotary is secular. Our membership is global and represents many different religions as well as non-believers. But there are challenging times when we all need to look to each other for strength while also seeking the comfort and courage from our individual faith. In my case, there is comfort in knowing that one of the most often repeated phrases in the Bible is four simple words, "This too shall pass."

What would have been an ordinary year in Rotary has become our most difficult year. It isn't ordinary at all. It is historic. We are missing the core of what physically brings us together - our meetings, our conferences, our galas, our handshakes and our hugs. However, the core of who we really are as Rotarians is stronger than ever.

First, we are finding we are not too old to learn. We are quickly learning about things we can do with our computers that most of us never tried. We now know how to Zoom, Skype or FaceTime, keeping safe distance but getting the important work of Rotary done. I have had the honor of continuing to induct new

members into clubs by Zoom! And, as we refine our abilities to hold virtual meetings, we are trying new approaches to reach new people. Like no other time in history, we are checking on the well-being of our club members, and there is crosstalk among clubs on how we might better work together.

And the work of Rotary is needed now more than ever. From what I have heard, almost every one of our clubs has taken on new projects to address needs in their communities caused by COVID-19. Our clubs are supplying food and medical supplies and finding innovative ways of support as only Rotarians can. Rotary International and The Rotary Foundation have stepped up and committed hundreds of manhours and millions of dollars to help in the current crisis. Those dollars come from our dues and contributions. We are a very big part of this important work that is truly "Service above Self."

When "this too does pass", we will look back with some sadness about missing so many of our important gatherings and being together in person, but we will also gather the facts about all that we did as clubs and Rotarians to help. And I suspect we will realize this has been one of our greatest years.

Posted by Jim Squire
May 1, 2020

The Rotary Foundation

As the World Shakes, Rotary District 6900 Rocks!!!



This photo comes from Global Grant Scholar Sean Minton, who is sheltering in place with wife Amy in London and working on getting ethical approval for interviews related to his masters dissertation, which he will begin writing in June. Amy is recovering from an upper respiratory infection due to COVID-19 and Sean tested positive as well but is asymptomatic.

We hope every District 6900 Rotarian is well and safe at home, far away from the COVID - 19 virus. If you're out there working among our Healthcare Heroes, the we send our thoughts, prayers, support and deepest gratitude to surround you daily as you fight to save our friends and neighbors. Thank you.

The past five weeks brought immense challenges into Georgia - nightly news media displayed issues "front and center" that were unimaginable in January or February, 2020. The numbers of ill and dying people were too large to comprehend; yet they climbed higher daily as the lines of people needing food grew longer.

Rotarian compassion, generosity and resources stretched beyond capacity; still you found just one more way to do a little bit better each day. As your District Foundation representatives, we were fortunate to be beside you in these challenges and to experience, first hand, all the goodness you brought to our world's dark problems.

Through recent Disaster and Global Rotary Foundation Grants, people were fed - children and vulnerable

seniors - with packaged, delivered meals. Entire communities, locally and internationally, were protected with scarce garments, masks, soap and sanitizing chemicals that you make possible. Rotarians drilled wells, connected pipes, pumps, and faucets - bringing clean water into schools where it never ran before - making basic hand washing and essential sanitation possible.

Thank you District 6900 for all you are doing now and will do in the future. You inspire us all.

Posted by Anne Glenn

May 1, 2020

Serving During the Pandemic

Urgent Request for Disaster Relief Funds - District 6900 and The Rotary Foundation



So Now What? What are we doing today that makes tomorrow different? Here are two actions you, with your Rotary Club, can take now that help other District 6900 Rotarians give life changing care in their corners of the world.

- **Opportunity #1 - At Home** - This world's corner is Southwest Georgia, where all types of PPE and hand sanitizers are needed in every community. District 6900 is seeking money that will be used by Rotarians to purchase protective and sanitation supplies. These supplies will be distributed to SWG First Responders, Community Assistance Leagues and Non-Profit organizations who are in direct contact with the children, elderly and disabled citizens in their neighborhoods.

Here's the Why: This Georgia area has the highest per capita COVID-19 death rate in the USA. Infection rates are still growing.

- **Opportunity #2 - Far Away** - Remote Bangladesh is this corner of our world. Over the past three years, Clubs in District 6900 supported a Rotary-sponsored rural hospital as they expanded cancer detection and treatment services into remote communities through equipping mobile testing vehicles with clinics reaching patients with no alternative access to care. During the past month, this hospital was designated a COVID-19 Treatment only facility by the Government and the entire city is quarantined. Along with other districts in Norway and Bangladesh, the North Columbus Club and District 6900 are submitting a Global Grant Request from The Foundation to purchase food, ventilators and COVID-19 testing kits for the hospital. We need \$4,500 in additional funds to complete the grant.

Here's the Why: The hospital is not equipped for COVID patients - they have no automatic ventilators

or virus testing kits. Patient families have no food while their key source of support is sick and they have no possibility of returning home at present.

Both of these needs are urgent. If your Club or individual Rotarians want to support either or both of these efforts, please contact Anne Glenn, Grants Chair Rotary District 6900 at adillardglenn@gmail.com

Posted by Anne Glenn
May 1, 2020

The Rotary Foundation

District 2020-21 Grant Deadline Extended to Monday, June 1, 2020



Rotary Opens Opportunities

Due to the current situation with COVID-19, the deadline to submit your District Grant application for 2020-2021 has been extended. The new deadline is **Monday, June 1, 2020**. This should allow extra time for you to evaluate community needs and to work with your community partners to determine the best use of funds to meet those needs. This applies to both standard and competitive grants. Competitive grants will be reviewed on Wednesday, June 3rd 2020.

Please do not wait until June 1 to submit your grant. It is best to **submit at least one week prior to the new deadline** so the grant application can be reviewed, and changes made if necessary.

Due to the extension, no District Grant applications will be accepted after June 1, 2020.

Yours In Rotary Service,

Gillian Leggett

Posted by Gillian Leggett
May 1, 2020

From Our District Chaplain

May Day 2020 Rotary District 6900 Prayer



Father God, we are so very grateful for these days, as challenging as they are, while we all are dealing with such odd, peculiar, puzzling, and unprecedented difficult and sad times, we are ever-humbled by your watchcare over us. Father, there are so many emotions related to the intrusion of death, the disruption of our work-life, Rotary life, and all activities that we certainly have taken for granted prior to this awful pandemic.

Help us to consider Father God the life-lessons that you are teaching us about being so busy; about going and doing and seeking to always be amused, entertained, enticed... over-busy, overloaded, and overworked. Yes Father God, as Rotarians we should be actively zealous civic-community, district, and global servant-leaders, but perhaps this time, our isolation, is a time for solitude, fortitude, gratitude, and knowing, understanding, and living out spiritual beatitudes... focusing on being still, being introspective, being refreshed, being re-charged. Help us to see that being sequestered is an oddity that perhaps is a commodity that can supply all of us with much needed contemplation and self-examination.

And now Father God, we pause to consider and lift up to you our District Governor Jim Squire, First Lady

Donna, Jim's beautiful family, and our District Leadership. The sad, tough, and disappointing decisions that have been made by District Governor Jim and his District Team to suspend our District Conference and cancel so many other District events cannot be overlooked. Father we are so thankful for Jim's exceptional leadership and we praise you that such acuity and insight is certain and sure confirmation and true evidence of your abiding care, grace, love, and providential protection working through Jim for our benefit.

Our District Governor has honorably reflected your compassion, empathy, and sympathy for all Rotarians and our families during these invasive, disruptive, and tragic times. So, we celebrate our District Governor, Donna, his family, and his Leadership Team. We celebrate that Jim Squire has put "Service to Our Health, Well-being, and Safety Above Self."

Thank you so much Father God for being with us all during these days. Perhaps Lord, the most difficult year in the history of Rotary District 6900 and Rotary International.

Guard us, guide us, protect us... provide for us as only you can. This is our hope and prayer. AMEN and AMEN.

Posted by Mark Barbour
May 1, 2020

District Celebration

Join Us at Jimmy's Fish Camp - Saturday, June 13



We invite you to join us for a District 6900 celebration on Saturday, June 13 at the Bibb Mill Event Facility in Columbus, GA on the banks of the beautiful Chattahoochee River.

We are taking a page from the playbook of what would have been this weekend's District Conference - celebrating at Jimmy's Fish Camp with a Happy Hour from 11:30 AM to 12:30 PM followed by a Lunch and Awards Presentations.

Stay tuned for more information on the event and how to register.

Posted by Blake McBurney
May 1, 2020

GRSP Update

What's In Store for GRSP in Today's Environment?



Elin Fyhrlund with host family Ken and Janice Townsend, North Columbus

NEWS FOR STUDENTS NEXT YEAR

We have received no information in regards to next year at newsletter submission date; however, a decision is to be made shortly as to whether or not we will even have a program this year in order to allow students who were offered scholarships before the pandemic to explore other options. My gut feeling is that we will have a program and I have already made inquiries to some host families and all the trustees in regards to next year, i.e., if the dorms close, would the host families be able to house the student or would the clubs want to sponsor a student for the next semester? Our district stands at about 50% wanting to sponsor a student for next year; however, the other two districts are overwhelmingly in favor of continuing the program through next year.

We have heard nothing from the universities about issuing the form I20s, which allow a student to seek a visa from the consulate in their countries in order to come to the US. My own experience is that it is

nearly impossible to get anyone at the universities to answer an email or a telephone call to find out when or if they will be issuing the I20s for next year.

DISTRICT CONFERENCE AWARDS

We would normally be giving out information from District Conference in regards to awards given to each club for giving and to individual Rotarians or students, but this will have to wait until after the District celebration on June 13.

INCENTIVE CHECKS

Trustees were mailed checks in February. We have three or four clubs that are still waiting on these checks, but for the most part, the clubs who earned them for giving to the GRSP endowment should have received them. If you believe that you should have received a check, but didn't, please let me know and we will find out where your check is.

For those clubs that wish to receive a rebate for next year, it is not too late to get in your donations to make the \$50 per capita in giving that is required to receive an incentive check. A club can ask their trustee for that information or can request from me or the Savannah Office. Any of us would be happy to review what is needed to assure a club some extra funds to be used in whatever way the club desires.

PHOTOS:



Sebastian Velez with Susan and Bill Smith, Brookhaven RC



Will Watt III, Maria Carbonell & Machel Watt, Thomasville

Posted by Lynn Clarke
May 1, 2020

From a GRSP Alumnus ...

The Joy of Learning New Cultures

by Ivonne Nobuhle Meares (Ivy), Kennesaw State, sponsored by East Cobb and Vinings Cumberland, Class of 2018-19



Going to a foreign country, in another continent, thousands of miles away from home...if that doesn't sound terrifying enough, imagine counting on people that are at the time just names at the end of emails or on documents, to be waiting at the airport when you land. They were there when I landed holding a placard that read "Welcome Ivy!" They were there throughout the year. They became my other family and Georgia, my other home.

Attending college, going on outings with other GRSP students, and travelling with my host parents were the most exciting things to do during the year. Going to school gave me the opportunity to make friends for a lifetime and learn about the American culture from a local's perspective. It was fun celebrating Halloween and eating so much pumpkin pie, turkey and stuffing on Thanksgiving day, picking out a Christmas tree, decorating it and opening presents on Christmas day, watching the oyster drop in Biloxi a few seconds before the new year and the fireworks that follow, and finding the baby in my piece of King Cake. I also discovered that my absolute favorite water activity was tubing and I learned the hard way that one needed to be physically fit before taking on the water skis. The best part of it all was having friends, host families and exchange students to share each laughter and every moment with.

As I got to know all the other GRSP students coming from all over the world, I gained knowledge about their cultures and I became proud, and more appreciative of my own culture and theirs. I expanded my global horizons.

It is a very difficult task to sum up a year into a few paragraphs because there's so many experiences - home sickness, culture shocks, awkward moments and adventures. GRSP is a life in one year. I now have four families in counting, nine siblings, four dogs and one cat whom I love and I am absolutely grateful for. This year has been one of the best years of my life!

Membership

Until We Meet Again... Membership at a Distance



Are you looking for ideas to engage members while we're physically distancing ourselves from each other? Has your club started meeting online? Here are some of our favorite resources to help:

- Watch membership webinars and speeches from recent conventions and the International Assembly in the new [Club Programming collection](#) on Vimeo.
- Share the updated [State of Membership](#) presentation at your next meeting.
- Discover the professional and personal development opportunities in the [Learning Center](#). From [Leading Change](#) to [Building Rotary's Public Image](#), these online courses allow you to learn new skills from your home.
- Encourage your members to exchange ideas in the [Meeting Online learning topic](#) in the Learning Center.
- Invite DG Jim Squire to help with an online New Member Induction at your next virtual meeting - no need to wait to make new members official!

Find more resources at rotary.org/membership.

RYLA

RYLA 2020 Cancelled

RYLA 2020 CANCELED



BUT WE'LL SEE YOU IN 2021!!

In the midst of all that is happening around us and the uncertainty that comes with COVID-19, Georgia Southwestern State University has decided that its campus will not be open to students or camps this summer. So that unfortunately means that RYLA 2020 will not happen. All clubs that submitted sponsorship commitments should have already heard from Susan Ruckman with more details, and any club that submitted payment will be receiving a full refund. This is obviously not what we wanted - we will certainly miss the opportunity to meet all the awesome student that would have been coming our way - but the safety of our students and our RYLA family comes first. If you have questions or need more information contact Jaclyn Donovan. RYLA 2021 or bust!

Georgia Laws of Life Announces State Winners



At Paul Duke STEM High School in Gwinnett County, participation in the Georgia Rotary Clubs sponsored Laws of Life Essay Contest soared from 12 students last year to 718 students for the 2019-2020 contest.

The Georgia Laws of Life Essay Contest announced state winners for the 2019-2020 contest. Cindy Huynh, an 11th grader at Brookwood High School in Snellville, won the competition with her essay about standing up to bullies. Sha'niya Rogers, a 9th grader at Westover High School in Albany, won the George A. Stewart Jr. Character in Action award with her essay about working through homelessness to achieve in school and for her family. Each of these outstanding student writers will receive a \$1,000 prize.

Savannah Johnson, in 11th grade at Lafayette High School, was awarded 1st runner-up. Faith Fitzgerald, a 9th grader at Thomasville High School, won 2nd runner-up. The 3rd runner-up winner was Reagan Beach, a senior at North Cobb High School. Wade Chappell, a 10th grader at North Springs Charter High School, was awarded 4th runner-up. Hyuk Lee, a senior at Lambert High School, won 5th runner-up.

Along with state winners, awards go to 170 school level winners and 53 lead teachers from 72 high schools throughout Georgia. In total, the contest awarded \$21,100 to participating students and teachers. Additional students receive honorable mention recognition. More than 43,000 high school students across Georgia shared their values in a personal, *Law of Life* narrative for this year's essay contest. Georgia Laws of Life will share student winners reading their outstanding essays via social media in the coming weeks.

At Paul Duke STEM High School in Gwinnett County, participation in the Georgia Rotary Clubs sponsored Laws of Life Essay Contest soared from 12 students last year to 718 students for the 2019-2020 contest. The **Rotary Club of Peachtree Corners** partners with the high school for the contest and other programs throughout the school year. Paul Duke principal Dr. Jonathon Wetherington said, "We feel like the Laws of Life Essay is a wonderful instructional opportunity for our students that aligns well with our school's purpose."

Rotary clubs across Georgia conduct the Laws of Life Essay Contest through the nonprofit Georgia Rotary Districts Character Education Program, Inc. (GRDCEP). Rotary club members volunteer to read and judge essays, serve on the contest's Board of Directors, and volunteer their professional expertise to help build character and ethical literacy among students. "The essay contest is an opportunity for Rotarians to illustrate Rotary's *Service Above Self* motto with their community," said Carol Gray, Midtown Atlanta Rotary Club member and Executive Director for GRDCEP.

"The Board of Directors is comprised solely of dedicated Rotarians from all three Georgia Rotary Districts," said Ed Outlaw, Board Chair and member of Peachtree City Rotary Club. "With a recent 3-year, \$230,000 grant from The Templeton Foundation, GRDCEP is growing and seeking volunteers to serve on the board and board committee," continued Outlaw. For more on serving as a Board of Director or Committee Member, please contact Carol Gray, Executive Director, caroljgray@georgialawsoflife.org, 404-590-8039.

Posted by Natalie Marshall
May 1, 2020

Serving During the Pandemic

Bringing Virtual Joy to Atlanta Neighborhoods



Paige McKay Kubik is the President of the **Rotary Club of Atlanta West End** - and the current "Semi-Conductor" (band director) of the all-volunteer Seed & Feed Marching Abominable. The last Saturday of April, the S&FMA led an "unparade" that visited [Atlanta neighborhoods and hospitals](#). The 100-plus members of the Seed & Feed Marching Abominable, a popular 46-year-old Atlanta street theater band, teamed up for a virtual marching band performance to deliver music to some metro Atlanta locations on Saturday, April 25, 2020. (Photo: Hyosub Shin / Hyosub.Shin@ajc.com)

Posted by Jackie Cuthbert
May 1, 2020

Serving Before and During the Pandemic

Muscogee-Columbus Leaps into 5K to Benefit Mercy Med



On leap day 2020, the **Rotary Club of Muscogee-Columbus** hosted its very first 5K run to support a local healthcare organization, Mercy Med. Mercy Med provides healthcare services including medical, dental, counseling, physical therapy and other services to the local community at low or no costs. No one is turned away because of their inability to pay. Nestled in the middle of a lower socioeconomic area, Mercy Med ensures the most vulnerable in our community have access to good health. In addition to healthcare services, the organization also has a robust garden where locals can get fresh, organic fruits and vegetables. For these residents, Mercy Med is the only place for miles to get fresh fruits and vegetables.

So, when Mercy Med was suggested as the 5K beneficiary, the club jumped at the chance to support such a worthwhile organization. Rotarians went right to work planning and executing an amazing inaugural event which gifted Mercy Med with a \$9,310 check! Little did we know that the money raised would soon be put to immediate and necessary use to help Mercy Med fight COVID-19 by serving as the test location for community-wide testing.

At the start of this journey, the Rotary Club of Muscogee-Columbus, a club of 23 members (and growing), would have never guessed that our efforts would aid in tackling what has proven to be the most persistent issue of our time. Now under a shelter-in-place order, the Rotary Club of Muscogee-Columbus continues to search for ways to support our medical community and ease the daily burden felt by COVID-19. Just within the past two weeks, we have provided food to the doctors and nurses of Mercy Med and a local downtown hospital and are having masks produced for a midtown hospital. Rotary Club of Muscogee-Columbus may be a small club but we are mighty in our impact; doing our part to make a difference in our community and in our world.

PHOTOS:



Snacks for Mercy Med and St. Francis Hospital

Serving During the Pandemic

Lake Spivey-Clayton County Provide Needed Medical Supplies



Rotarians from the **Rotary Club of Lake Spivey/Clayton County** are reacting to the Corona virus not only in the usual way of practicing social distancing, limiting travel only to what is essential, and conducting meetings via Zoom, etc. but also by implementing a major new service project. This project is based on the immediate and profound need for critical supplies such as sanitizer, gloves, and masks as stated by many organizations that are battling the pandemic.

Fellow Rotarian Lata Chinnan and her husband Manjeet provided the catalyst for the new project by offering to match up to \$10,000 in donations designated for the purchase of critical supplies to be given to organizations battling the pandemic. The response has been immediate, on-going, and gratifying. Instead of waiting to collect an arbitrary target amount before obtaining and distributing critical supplies, Rotarians and friends have begun to locate sources for the supplies, to obtain them, and to distribute them even as funds are being donated and matched. Note in the accompanying photo, a nurse at the Jonesboro

Posted by Ron Swofford
May 1, 2020

Marietta Rotarians Flatten COVID-19 Dilemma Facing 80 International Students at Reinhardt University



Nothing, that's what gnawed at Abigail Merchant's heart. Abigail, a senior at Reinhardt University in Waleska, GA, along with almost all of Reinhardt's student body of more than 1700 individuals, was at home embracing the university's implementation of distance learning. But many of her friends among some 80 international students at Reinhardt couldn't fly back home for their distance learning and life with family and friends. Instead, they are quarantined in their dorm rooms by the "shelter in place" requirements connected with the COVID-19 virus. Every day these students can get two-bagged meals at the dining hall. Otherwise, they have nothing in the way of additional foodstuffs such as tuna and canned fruits, bottled water, pasta and pasta sauces, frozen fruits and veggies, eggs, deodorants, seasonal allergy medications,

paper towels and toilet paper.

As Abigail discussed this dilemma over the phone with her grandfather Jim Fausett—an Architect, Emeritus Professor and member of the Rotary Club of Marietta—she mused, “Could Rotary help these students?” Jim raised this question to President Chris Bethel during the Club’s ZOOM meeting on April 8. “Absolutely yes” was the immediate response of President Chris that week and President-Elect Mary Ansley Southerland the following week. In the meantime, Jim Peeler, another Rotarian and former Navy veteran, said he and President Chris could coordinate this project’s promotion via video teleconferencing and phone calls with club Rotarians and most importantly with Reinhardt’s Dean of Students Dr. Walter May, Student Health Center campus nurse Kristy Hough and others at the university. A flurry of e-traffic and phone calls ensued in the collection of funds for the “Reinhardt Challenge” grant as it was called. By Monday, April 20, the RC of Marietta raised and sent \$1230 to Reinhardt’s food pantry for needy students. In addition, a large quantity of food and other items collected by Rotarians and others will be delivered to Reinhardt today - May 1.

Posted by Dale Covington
May 1, 2020

Serving During the Pandemic

Douglas County Sponsors Meals for Hospital Workers



The Douglas County Chamber and Douglas County Economic Development Authority joined forces to support our Douglas County restaurants and provide daily meals to the over 500 healthcare workers at Wellstar Douglas Hospital and public safety workers serving on the front lines during the Coronavirus

pandemic. They created the Douglas Strong Fund to support this effort as well as create a fund for the recovery effort of COVID-19. 100% of funds will be used to purchase meals which will be delivered to Wellstar Douglas Hospital and public safety departments. All meals will be provided by Douglas County restaurants who will be paid for these meals. This is a win-win-win front line workers need our support, local businesses need our patronage, and the residents of Douglas County want to do what they do best, help each other.

This initiative allowed **the Rotary Club of Douglas County** to apply our Service above Self motto as we were able to sponsor a whole days worth of meals! We delivered 500+ meals to healthcare workers at Wellstar Douglas Hospital! This truly was a community effort and we were happy to be able to support a restaurant in our community, while also, serving those on the front-line!

Posted by Samantha Rosado
May 1, 2020

Club News

RI Past President Barry Rassin Speaks to Lake Spivey-Clayton County via Zoom



Total non-video participants: 7



SAMSUNG



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During the current COVID-19 quarantine, many clubs in the district are conducting their regular meetings using the popular software program, Zoom. The **Rotary Club of Lake Spivey/Clayton County** jumped on this early, and Program coordinators Gina McCombs and Claudia Mertl quickly recognized that meeting via Zoom not only addressed the quarantine limitations but also removed geographical limits on who could be invited to present programs at the meetings. As a result, the Club has enjoyed several speakers from well beyond Jonesboro, Georgia.

The club's most recent speaker - Past Rotary International President Barry Rassin - greeted the club from the Bahamas. While providing members ample time for serious individual questions about Rotary, President Barry also used his presentation to take the Club on a light-hearted virtual tour of several countries that he and his spouse, Esther, visited during his 2018-2019 term as RI President. Captured in the adjacent photograph are the attentive faces of several of our club members and guests as "Tour Guide Barry" and Esther took the quarantined Rotarians to visit colleagues in many of the 60 countries they visited for real during his term as President of Rotary International.

Posted by Ron Swofford
May 1, 2020
