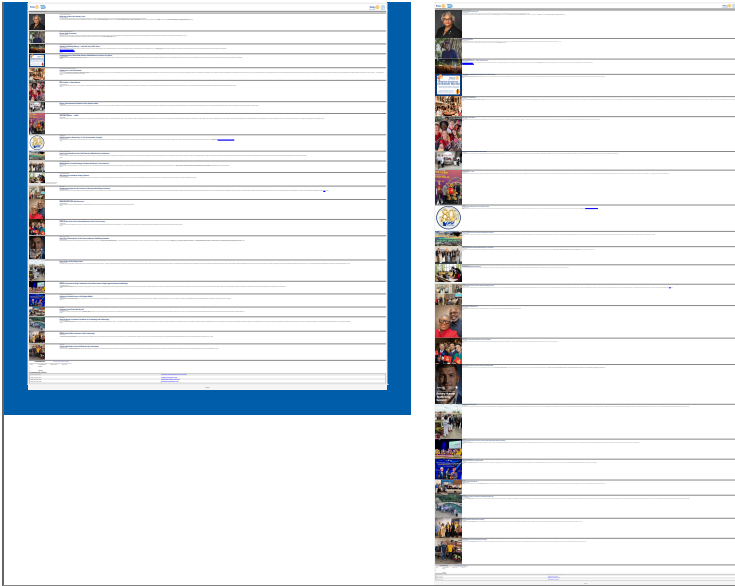


July 3, 2026





From Our District Governor

**Welcome to Our New Rotary Year!**



It is an honor to serve as your District Governor for 2026-2027. I look forward to seeing the difference you continue to make in our communities and around the world, and to accomplishing even more together.

As we begin this Rotary year, I extend my sincere gratitude and congratulations to DG Steve Ivory and the 2025-2026 leadership team for their outstanding service. Because of your dedication, our district achieved and exceeded its goals. Thank you also to our generous donors whose contributions of \$1.131 million to the Annual Fund and PolioPlus far surpassed our \$1 million goal. Your generosity ensures that Rotary's work will continue to make a lasting difference.

I also want to recognize the commitment of our DG Line (IPDG, DG, DGE, DGN, and DGND), along with our Past District Governors and their leadership teams. Your dedication to Rotary's ideals has built the strong foundation on which we will continue to grow.

Rotary International President Olayinka (Yinka) Hakeem Babalola's message for this year is "**Create Lasting Impact.**" As we serve our communities, I encourage every club to highlight how your projects and service contribute to peace. Every act of service strengthens understanding, improves lives, and creates lasting change.

To support Rotary International's message, our District theme is **Peace through Economics, Culture, and Education.** As People of Action, we will continue to focus on Rotary's Action Plan by growing our impact, expanding our reach, enhancing participant engagement, and increasing our ability to adapt.

When we identify needs in our communities, I encourage us to focus on solutions. I also challenge every Rotarian to take **PRIDE** in all you do—**Personal Responsibility in Developing Excellence.**

Together, we will continue serving our communities while working to eradicate polio, empower our youth, and strengthen our clubs through strategic, intentional, innovative thinking and bold leadership.

Let us accept President Yinka's challenge to make this our best Rotary year yet. I know we can.

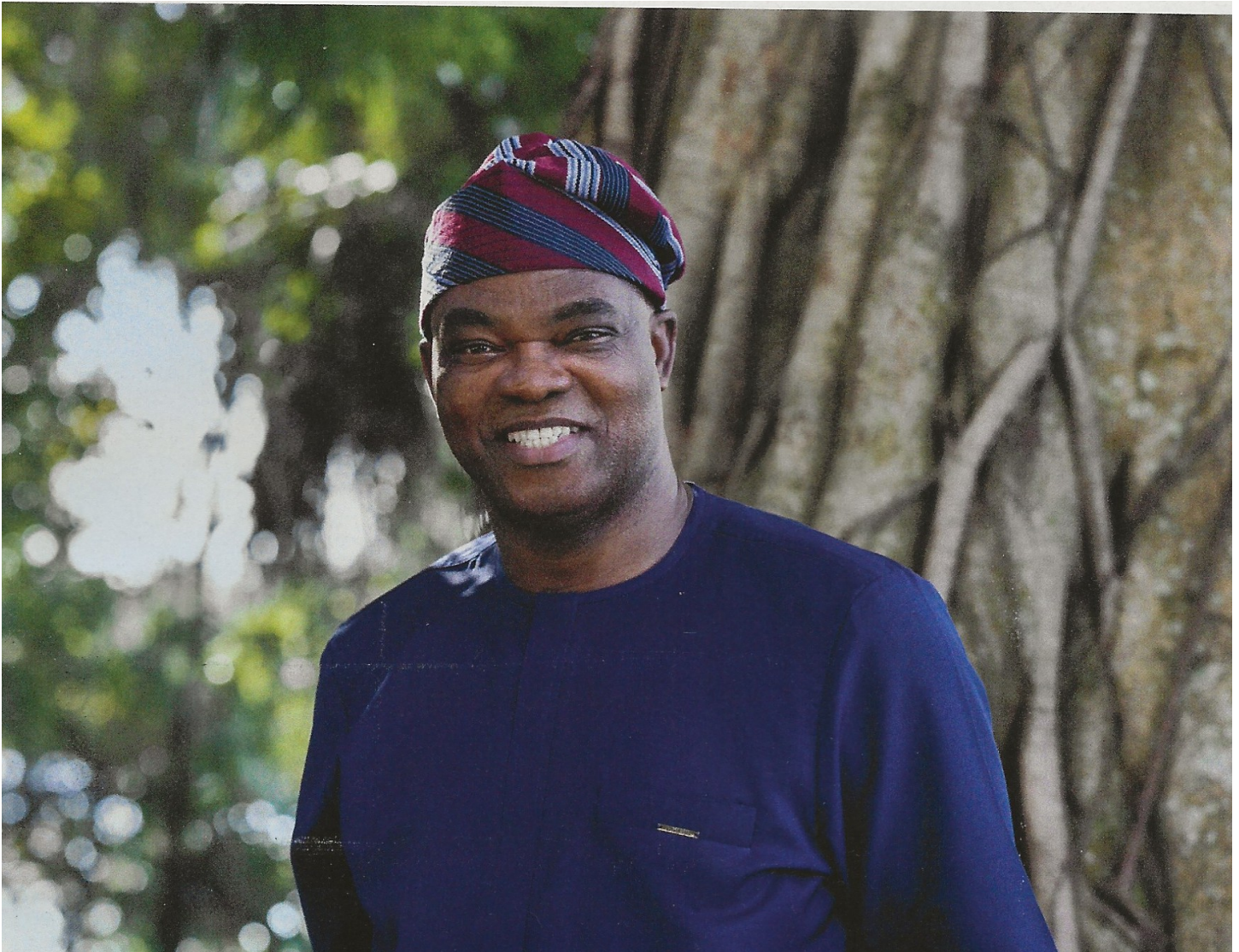
**See you soon!**

Posted by Cynthia Edwards  
July 1, 2026

---

From Our 2026-27 RI President

**Better Than Your Best**



Rotary has a way of surprising you. It surprises you when a stranger across the table becomes a lifelong friend. It surprises you when a small project in one neighborhood ripples outward in ways you never imagined. And it may surprise you when you realize that the person Rotary has changed most ... is you.

That is why this year, we are called to harness the change within ourselves, to look to the future, and to ***Create Lasting Impact.***

Now, I want to be clear about what those words mean. Change is only the beginning. Impact is what endures. We must think of the long-term impact of every project. How can a new water system contribute to the long-term health of a community? Can residents help other communities build their own? How can a new classroom be part of a wider strategy to improve education in the area? That is the sort of thinking we need.

As we prioritize impact, we must also consider how our actions can contribute to peacebuilding. Peace does not happen by accident. It must be built deliberately and strategically. As you plan your next project, ask yourself: "How does this create the conditions for peace?" Consult the Pillars of Positive Peace to learn how we can bring the world one step closer to peace in everything we do.

The more you change your community and the world, the more you will change. Don't just tell people about the projects you have run or the funds you have raised. Tell them how Rotary has shaped who you

are. Those personal stories open doors, inspire new members, and remind all of us why we are here.

Storytelling is also an excellent way to recruit new members and raise funds. We need more people standing with us and more resources if we are to end polio, spread peace, and have a lasting impact on the world. We have set a goal of increasing membership to 1.25 million Rotarians and more than 125,000 Rotaractors by 2030, just in time for Rotary's 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Sit down with your club and look back over your accomplishments in the last few years. Find your best year. Maybe it was a record year for new members. Maybe you reached a fundraising milestone. Maybe you completed a project that the whole community is still talking about. Once you find that year, I challenge you to do better than your best.

In these ways and more, we will Create Lasting Impact across the globe, in our communities, and in ourselves.

Thank you, my dear friends. Now let's get to work!

**YINKA**

**President, Rotary International**

Posted by Cynthia Edwards  
July 2, 2026

---

July 19, 2026 | Piedmont Park

## **Atlanta Is Making History – And We Need YOU There**



When the world gathers, Rotary shows up. As the FIFA World Cup closes out in Atlanta, District 6900 has a once-in-a-generation opportunity to stand on a global stage and declare: *human trafficking will not be tolerated in our city*. On **Sunday, July 19**, we are calling on every Rotarian in our district to roll up their sleeves, light a candle, and be part of something that will echo far beyond the final whistle.

## TWO WAYS TO BE PART OF HISTORY

### **Dignity Kit Packing — Volunteer Day of Service**

Join volunteers, corporate partners, and community organizations at **Piedmont Park** for a hands-on day of service packing dignity kits for survivors of human trafficking. Powered by UPS and The UPS Foundation, this event brings together Atlanta's finest in a coordinated effort to support survivors and strengthen prevention efforts — right alongside One Music Fest.

### **Candlelight Vigil — Shine a Light on Human Trafficking**

As the sun sets, join us at **7:30 PM at Piedmont Park** for a Candlelight Vigil co-hosted by **Rotary International District 6900**, the Rotary Action Group Against Slavery, UPS, and the City of Atlanta. This is a moment of reflection, unity, and public commitment to ending human trafficking.

As Dave McCleary, Global Chair of the Rotary Action Group Against Slavery, put it:

*"This will be a powerful moment for our community to stand together and show that human trafficking will not be tolerated in our city. As the world has gathered in Atlanta, we are sending a clear message — this will not happen here."*

## EVENT DETAILS

**Where:** Piedmont Park, Atlanta, GA

**When:** Sunday, July 19, 2026

**Volunteer Day of Service:** Late morning (time to be confirmed)

**Candlelight Vigil:** 7:30 PM

[Sign Up for the Day of Service](#)

[Sign Up for the Candlelight Vigil](#)

*Registration is open now. This initial form gauges interest and participation — confirmed timing and details will follow.*

## QUESTIONS?

**Day of Service:** Pat Smith — [psmith2@ups.com](mailto:psmith2@ups.com) | 404-435-8745

**Candlelight Vigil:** Dave McCleary — [dave@endhtnow.com](mailto:dave@endhtnow.com) | 770-480-2620

Posted by Dave McCleary

June 25, 2026

---

# Nominations for 2029-2030 District 6900 District Governor Are Open



Rotary  
District 6900



## District Governor Candidates Wanted

Seeking passionate leaders for Rotary 6900  
District Governor position for 2029-2030

*Provide Rotary Resume and Club  
Resolution by Saturday, October 31 to  
D6900ExecutiveSecretary@gmail.com*



**Nominations for our 2029-2030 District Governor are open.** We need your help in identifying qualified candidates and officially nominating them by resolution of your club. The certified club resolution form will be sent to club presidents along with Article 16 of the Rotary Manual of Procedure that outlines the role and responsibilities of a District Governor. Any candidate clubs nominate must meet the following qualifications:

### ***Qualifications of a Governor-nominee.***

Unless excused by the board, the person selected as a governor-nominee shall at the time of selection:

- be a member in good standing of a functioning club in the district;
- have served as club president for a full term or as charter president for at least six months;
- demonstrate willingness, commitment, and ability to fulfill the duties and responsibilities of a governor in section 16.030.;

- demonstrate knowledge of the qualifications, duties, and responsibilities of governor as prescribed in the bylaws; and
- submit to RI a statement that the Rotarian understands those qualifications, duties, and responsibilities, is qualified for the office of governor, and is willing and able to assume and faithfully perform those duties and responsibilities.

Once nominated, send the club resolution along with a brief "Rotary Resume" for the candidate by **Saturday, October 31, 2026** to Mandy Timmons, District 6900 Executive Manager at [d6900executivesecretary@gmail.com](mailto:d6900executivesecretary@gmail.com). Our district nominating committee which is chaired by our District Governor and consists of our Governor line along with our Past District Governors will **interview candidates on Saturday, November 14, 2026**. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to Mandy Timmons via email, phone, or text at 678-438-7696.

Posted by Cynthia Edwards  
June 30, 2026

---

From Our (New) Past District Governor

## Thanks for a Year Well Done!



In this month of **FIFA World Cup and Rotary Leadership Changeover**, I want to sincerely thank everyone for the honor and privilege of allowing me to serve you all as DG. We United for Good and had a very special and memorable year. You all continue to amaze me with all of your hard work,

ideas, generosity and action to serve and help others so selflessly. I want to wish District Governor Cynthia Edwards and her leadership team the best as they work very hard to create lasting impact in the community and world. I want to thank the presidents for leading their clubs so effectively, the governor line and PDG Bob Hagan for mentoring me, the PDG's for selecting me, and the leadership team that always supported me and the district. It takes a village.....

June has been one of my most memorable months overall. It started off with a [local news magazine telling my story](#) and how Rotary has enabled me to engage in the community. It was an honor to be called one of Fayette County's Phenomenal Men. Thank you Rotary for enabling this!

And it included attending the International Convention in Taipei from June 13-17 with 16 Rotarians from D6900. This event had approximately 38,000 Rotarians from all over the world and was educational and exciting and fun. Our Rotarians did great work and all engaged so well. We had a several hundred member Zone Gathering, a District Dinner and exchanged lots and lots of ideas in the House of Friendship. The photos with this article are from RI Convention in Taipei - we had a great time! You might want to consider joining us for the convention in Barcelona next year!

I cannot thank you enough for your generosity and commitment to our mission and service overall. I have attached two video links for you all to use and share of the results of our collective efforts.

- [D6900 Year End Summary video](#)
- [D6900 Year End Photo Collage video](#)

We have given **\$1.19M to annual fund and polio plus**, done **hundreds of service projects** and grants. We also have grown, **creating three new clubs**, one Rotaract club, expanded the Peachtree City Club with a vibrant new companion club, and revitalized the **Rotary Club of Atlanta Brasil**. The exciting news about NAPA, Johns Creek Central and Atlanta Ascent is that all of these clubs are mostly young professionals and already growing rapidly! We have also continued to strengthen our governance and processes. We have had extremely well-done major events: PELS, CLLS, District Conference, International Convention, and more.

**PHOTOS:**



Posted by Steve Ivory  
July 1, 2026

RYLA

**RYLA 2026 - A Rave Review**



RYLA brings together young people from different backgrounds - home, educational, religious, and lifestyle - for the opportunity to challenge themselves through small team activities, large group activities, and candid, round-table discussions. RYLA programming includes individual personality profiles, conflict resolution styles, and ropes course activities in a schedule designed to encourage each student's growth in the areas of teamwork, communication, and trust. RYLA aims to build new leaders for your schools, communities, and clubs.

Included once again was the opportunity to participate in a service project which allows the students to experience the Rotary motto of "Service Above Self" firsthand as RYLA partnered with Rise Against Hunger to package 17,280 meals that will be sent overseas to less fortunate countries with inadequate food supplies. New in the RYLA lineup is a scavenger hunt of activities designed around Rotary's seven Areas of Focus, teaching the students more about what Rotary can do for the world around them.

One of the recurring themes of RYLA is the student who accomplishes a feat he/she would have never dared to imagine before coming to camp. The most memorable of these culminating events are always the board break, which allows students to break through their fears to reach their goals, and the Trust Fall from a 5-foot platform into the waiting arms of teammates. And just as always, most of the students who were very hesitant to spend 5 days with over 100 strangers became the friends who did not want to part ways at the end. This speaks volumes to the benefit of RYLA and the positive changes it can create in young lives.

Even more telling of the long-lasting influence of RYLA is the fact that 90% of the counselors were once RYLA participants themselves - they believe in it enough to commit the time and energy to return each year and make RYLA the best experience possible. Over 25 Rotary members - coming from Americus, Peachtree City, Fayetteville, Moultrie, and Roswell - volunteered directly with RYLA as staff, chaperones, talent show judges, or to meet the buses in Atlanta and Columbus. We also had at least 2 Rotary spouses and 9 community members volunteering in some capacity to make RYLA possible, not to mention all those working at the club level to secure the nomination and selection of student participants. And once again, this year we had the honor of welcoming many district leaders, among them DG Steve Ivory, DGE Cynthia Edwards, and DGND Amy Benton. PDG Gordon Owens even volunteered again for the whole week as a counselor - that makes 3 years for him (and counting)!

If you want to change the life of a young student, send them to RYLA. They will discover their potential and develop the skills needed to be leaders in their communities, careers, and everyday lives. And they achieve these goals while having fun, building friendships, and creating memories that will last a lifetime.

**PHOTOS:**











Posted by Jaclyn Donovan  
June 26, 2026

---

## **Rotary International President Visits District 6900**



RI President Francesco Arezzo selected our district to visit immediately following the RI Convention in June in Taipei. DGN Amy Benton volunteered to be his weekend aide and our RI President and his wife Anna Maria had a packed schedule.

He was amazed by the **Little White House in Warm Springs**, visited and **spoke at RLI** and attended an awesome **peace pole ceremony** at the King Center, placed very close to MLK's burial site. Special thanks to PDG Gordon Owens and Dave McCleary for coordinating this wonderful tribute to peace at a historic location.

On Sunday, thanks to Rotary connections, Amy and Jeff Benton took the president to a **Braves game against the Brewers** which did not turn out great for the Braves but the VIP experience was deeply appreciated by our leader. Jeff also taught President Francisco much about the rules and nuances of baseball. On Sunday evening, the governor line entertained the RI president at a nice **Italian restaurant, Enzo**, which is owned by a new Rotarian in Trilith.

The **Rotary Club of Peachtree City** hosted a district event honoring the RI President - allowing him to do what he loves most - engaging with and taking photos with Rotarians. DG Steve introduced the president after he highlighted the year end summary of our results and impact.

DG Steve then drove the RI president and Anna Maria to District 7680 in Charlotte and was present for a leadership dinner, tree planting at the Mint Museum, lunch with the **Rotary Club of Charlotte** and a peace pole planting at Thompson Park. Overall, it was a great visit and amongst the last things RI President Francisco will do this year before heading to Evanston to transition off.

It was a great way to end our Rotary Year!

**PHOTOS:**





Posted by Steve Ivory  
July 1, 2026

---

Our Rotary Foundation

**The Ides of June ... 2026!**

我們一起邁過扶輪  
終結小兒麻痺

TOGETHER, WE  
END POLIO

Rotary

END  
POLIO  
NOW



If, by chance, you studied the ancient language of Latin or perhaps Roman history somewhere in your past, the phrase, "The ides of March" will be familiar to you. In 44 BCE (Before the Common Era) Julius Caesar was assassinated on March 15 and the term, "Beware of the Ides of March" was born, signifying a potentially bad omen. However, the 15<sup>th</sup> of any given month can also simply signify the middle of the month and provide us with a chance to look back over the first half of the month and then look forward to what is yet to come. The Ides of June 2026 provides we as Rotarians with a very special moment to do just that. This year, the Ides of June signified the end of our International Convention in Taipei, Taiwan. The convention was full of presentations delivered by the very top of our organization that looked back over our Rotary year with all its accomplishments, while they also focused on the goals of the next Rotary year and where we are going.

I had the opportunity to attend this year's Rotary Convention in Taipei, having just returned. It was my first visit to this stunningly beautiful country. An experience I will never forget and one that will be hard to match in the future. Imagine spending a week with more than 37,000 of your closest Rotary friends. The picture with this article is one of my favorite photos from the convention as I share this photo with my dear friend, outgoing District 6900 District Governor Steve Ivory, a facsimile of the World Polio Chair Mike McGovern and of course the "End Polio Now" Bear. I have so many photos from the adventure I wish I could share with you all, however what I want to focus on in this month's opening year article is a speech that was delivered by our Rotary Foundation Chair Holger Knaack at "Rotary26."

Chairman Knaack began by reminding us that when Arch Klumph created the Foundation in 1917, he did so for mainly one rudimentary and fundamental reason. He understood that Rotary Clubs could accomplish so much more working in concert together than they could ever accomplish by themselves. As he stated, "that idea is still the engine of everything our Foundation does." The point of his speech that day was to share with us why he believes that idea matters even more today! He made the point that the Rotary Foundation, "does not exist in some tower in Evanston." But rather, it exists within our districts, our clubs and in the very hands and if I may personally add, in the very heart of every Rotarian. He wanted us to be sure to know that the decisions of where our Foundation dollars are ultimately invested lay with us and us alone. The decisions are made by the districts, the clubs and donors themselves and not some bureaucrats in an ivory tower. Those dollars are funneled through district grants and global grants and land in every one of our areas of focus. He went on to point out that where the professional staff of the Foundation come not play is to ensure the grants are tracked and managed properly, that they are executed efficiently and that they have the greatest impact they can have, but it is YOU the Rotarian foot soldiers who bring all the ideas to the table, manage the relationships and see to it that every dollar is put to the best use possible to raise up the people we service.

Chairman Knaack reminded us that when we think of our Grants for the coming year, we need to keep in mind all the areas of work our grants cover, including maternal and child healthcare, education, prevention of disease, advancement of clean water and sanitation initiative, the betterment of economic development help for protecting the environment. He went on to say that all of these grants are shaped by Rotarians who know their communities better than anyone else and thus will ensure the greatest impact. It was exhilarating to hear him speak. It made me sit up and truly be proud to be a Rotarian and to think about how I get to play such an important role with each of you as we together bring these grants across the finish line. How humbled I am to play any role in it.

To add to all of this, how satisfying it is to know that we not only do all these things but that others notice it as well. Did you know that for 17 consecutive years our "world class" charitable foundation carries a four-star rating from Charity Navigator.

We now sit at the beginning of a new Rotary year. This year is my last year of the three-year appointment

as District 6900's Foundation Chair. Let's make this year the best Rotary year every for those we serve in the good name of The Rotary Foundation!

If I can personally assist you in any way, please don't hesitate to reach out to me via cell or email. I'm here to help and together we will....Unite for good!

Posted by Bob Hagan  
June 26, 2026

---

GRSP Update

## **GRSP Conclave Slated Aug. 21-23 in Savannah, Georgia!**

by Katheryne Fields, GRSP Executive Director



Rotarians and guests are warmly invited to a very special Conclave to welcome the Georgia Rotary Student Program Class of 2026-2027 and celebrate a historic milestone—our 80th Anniversary! This commemorative kickoff event will take place August 21-23, 2026, at The DeSoto Hotel in historic Savannah, Georgia.

Conclave is where it all begins for GRSP. This year, 38 international college scholarship students from 20 countries around the world will gather to meet each other for the first time, connect with their host families, and engage with Georgia Rotarians. These incredible students will be representing GRSP at 23 colleges and universities across the state.

Founded in 1946 in the aftermath of World War II to foster peace through understanding, GRSP has

brought approximately 4,000 students from 113 countries to Georgia. As Jim Drake, 2026 Conclave Chair and GRSP Chair Emeritus, shares:

*"Celebrating GRSP's 80th anniversary is a powerful reminder this program is about more than just classroom education. It's about coming to realize that although we are from different countries, have different languages and cultures, in the end, our similarities far outweigh our differences."*

## **Weekend Highlights**

- **Orientation & Informational Sessions:** Important sessions for students, trustees, officers, host families, and friends will take place throughout Friday and Saturday to set the foundation for a successful year.
- **Official City Welcome:** The Class of 2026–2027 will be officially welcomed to Georgia's "First City" by Savannah Mayor Van Johnson.
- **GRSP Alumni Keynote:** Hear a special address from GRSP Class of 2015 Alumnus Nipuna Ambanpola of Sri Lanka, UGA Graduate, and Industry Analyst for Data & AI
- **The 80th Anniversary GRSP Cabaret:** On Saturday evening, attendees (business/smart attire) will enjoy a special celebratory dinner and the always-entertaining "Cabaret." This popular variety-style performance and parade of flags will showcase our students' home countries through traditional dress, cultural presentations, skits, and musical performances.
- **Fellowship & Socials:** The weekend includes a social for the students and a separate mixer for Rotarians to connect and celebrate eight decades of global impact.
- **Savannah Scavenger Hunt:** Test your skills and explore the historic and scenic city of Savannah in an unforgettable scavenger hunt with the new GRSP scholars to wrap up the weekend.

## **Lodging & Registration Information**

The DeSoto Hotel, located at 15 E Liberty, Savannah, GA 31401, has a block of rooms set aside for Conclave participants who require lodging. **Please note that the hotel registration link is separate from the meal registration link.**

- **GRSP Scholars:** Pre-registered for the event and all meals.
  - Scholars will be housed with Savannah area Rotarians.
  - Transportation to Savannah for scholars is the responsibility of their sponsoring rotary Clubs.
- **Rotarians and Guests:** Please register for meals and reserve your lodging using the links provided on the website.

## **? Important Deadlines & Pricing Details:**

- **Deadline for Rotarians and Guests to Reserve Hotel Rooms using the GRSP special rate: July 19, 2026**
- **Deadline for Rotarians and Guests to Reserve Meals: August 3, 2026**
- **Friday Welcome Dinner Buffet:** \$99 per person
- **Saturday Anniversary Cabaret Dinner Buffet:** \$99 per person

## **Gear Up: The GRSP Store is Live!**

Be sure to check out the **Official GRSP Online Store!** We've partnered with CivicSwag to bring you high-quality gear. To browse the collection, simply visit [www.grsp.org](http://www.grsp.org) and click "**SHOP.**" It's the best way to ensure you're sporting the latest GRSP apparel in support for our 80-year legacy.

A special thanks to the Savannah-area Rotarians who will serve as weekend hosts for our students. Let's come together to celebrate 80 years of peace, understanding, and worldwide Rotary family fellowship!

**Learn more and register at:** <https://www.grsp.org/conclave2026/>

Posted by Katheryne Fields  
June 24, 2026

---

District Conference 2027

## Join Us in Asheville for the 2027 District 6900 District Conference



It's never too early to add District 6900's 2027 Conference to your calendar. Next year, we're headed to Asheville, NC from Thursday, April 22 to Sunday, April 25. The host hotels are the Embassy Suites and the Doubletree, located in downtown Asheville, both in the Hilton family of hotels. Asheville is a beautiful city nestled in the Blue Ridge Mountains - known for its creative spirit, deep roots, and steady mountain rhythms. And we'll have lots of fun and inspirational activities planned for you to enjoy!

Registration for the conference is open on the District website - click [2027 District Conference](#).

The Registration Fees for the conference are as follows (per individual):

- Early Bird Special - from July 1 - December 31, 2026 - \$350
- Regular Registration - from January 1 - March 31, 2027 - \$425
- Late and On-site Registration - April 1 - April 25, 2027 - \$450

You can make your room reservations now using one of the following links to get our special group rate:

- [Rotary Club - Embassy Suites Room Block](#)
- [Rotary Club - DoubleTree Room Block](#)

Hotel reservations will include breakfast tickets (2 per each King-size bedroom and 4 per each Queen-size bedroom.) Breakfast tickets are valued at approximately \$25 each.

You can visit Asheville's online planning guide and request your own copy at [Request a Free Asheville Destination Guide | Exp...](#)

Posted by Cynthia Edwards  
July 1, 2026

---

Rotary Youth Exchange

## **D6900 Rotary Youth Exchange Students Ready for a Year Abroad**



After many hours of training and preparation, including new language learning, our outbound Rotary Youth Exchange (RYE) students officially “graduated.” These high school students will spend the 2026-2027 school year in Brazil, France, Germany, Italy, Slovakia, and Sweden.

Last December, each student learned at the “Big Reveal” event which country they would be traveling to. Since then, students worked at their own pace on individual language study, and together attended training workshops to prepare them for this cultural immersion program.

The Rotary Clubs of Columbus, Decatur, Marietta Metro, Newnan, and Roswell are sponsoring this year’s group of outbound students: Celie, Ellie, Gabby, Irene, Kellen, and Payton. We know they will have an incredible experience!

RYE program applications will open soon for the 2027-2028 academic year. For more information about how your club can sponsor an outbound RYE student or can host an inbound student from abroad, contact [Bob MacDonald](#), District Chair for RYE.

Posted by Kelly Caudle  
June 25, 2026

---

Our Rotary Foundation

## Why Rotary Foundation Giving Matters



actual students benefiting from the “mBots Robots for Primary Schools” project, funded by the Foundation, Districts in Serbia, US, USAID

Look at these faces. Children and a teacher, at a desk absorbed in a laptop, a big a small thing. It is the beginning of everything we say we care about.

Education is the one of the quietest and most powerful tool the Foundation funds. A child who can read can question. A child who can question is harder to deceive, harder to recruit into hatred, harder to frighten into cruelty. Most hate is not born in the heart — it is taught to a mind that was never given anything better to hold. Education fills that space first, and crowds the hatred out.

From learning comes health. A girl who finishes school marries later, raises healthier children, and breaks a cycle of poverty that no single grant could touch. From learning comes peace, because people who understand one another have less to fear and less to fight over. From learning comes respect — the kind we earn through service, not the kind we demand.

This is why The Rotary Foundation matters. Through our Annual Fund, Polio Plus and their matching programs, a gift does not merely add — it multiplies. Dollars become classrooms. Classrooms become futures. Futures become a world with less ignorance and more dignity.

And there is a reward the giver keeps: the deep satisfaction of knowing your resources became someone's possibility. We do not give because it is easy to ask. We give because the result is permanent.

Look again at these faces. They will not remember our names. They will live the difference we chose to make.

This Rotary year has extraordinary. **Under DG Steve Ivory and PDG Bob Hagan, we collectively donated \$1,134,737 in the 2025-26 Rotary year.** We've answered the prayers of parents worldwide. We've increased goodwill and better friendships everywhere.

**Join the fellowship of Foundation donors, there is still time.** We have new Arch Klumph Society Members coming in (\$250k in cumulative giving), many new Major Donors (\$10,000 and more), and a host of donors doing what they can - all in all a wonderful group to join. ***Email me at [lee@leehollingsworth.com](mailto:lee@leehollingsworth.com) for more information.***

Posted by Lee Hollingsworth  
June 26, 2026

---

Laws of Life

## **Registration Open for the Teacher & Rotarian Workshop Luncheon**



Registration is now open for the annual character education and partnership luncheon on Friday, August 21, from 11:30 AM-1:15 PM at the Emory Conference Center Hotel in Atlanta.

The Teacher & Rotarian Workshop Luncheon is the Georgia Laws of Life Essay Contest's annual gathering for inspiration, professional learning, and connection. Educators, Rotarians, volunteers, and community partners come together to explore the impact of character education and reflective writing, hear powerful student and alumni stories, and strengthen partnerships that help students thrive.

We are excited to announce this year's featured speaker, **Duane Carver**, a 2008 Georgia Laws of Life State Winner whose life was forever changed by the program and the relationships he built through Rotary.

After experiencing homelessness as a child and working a full-time job throughout much of high school, Duane's award-winning essay connected him with Rotarians and mentors who helped shape his future. Today, he is a successful attorney with engineering and law degrees from top universities. Duane credits Georgia Laws of Life and Rotary with helping him discover something many students need to hear: that they do not have to navigate life's challenges alone.

Attendees will also hear directly from current student winners as they share their award-winning essays

and personal stories.

The luncheon offers Rotary members a unique opportunity to see firsthand how partnerships with local schools' support youth development, literacy, character formation, and community engagement. Educators will gain practical insights and inspiration to help students engage in meaningful reflection and writing.

All participating schools and sponsoring Rotary Clubs receive two complimentary tickets. Educators attending the luncheon are eligible for continuing education credits and substitute reimbursements.

Register for the Teacher & Rotarian Workshop Luncheon [here](#).

### **Returning Contest Sponsors: It's Time to Register for 2026-2027**

Each year, Rotary Clubs across Georgia make it possible for thousands of students to engage in meaningful reflection, strengthen their writing skills, and share the values that guide their lives. We are grateful for the clubs that continue to invest in students through the Georgia Laws of Life Essay Contest.

As planning begins for the new school year, now is a good time to reconnect with your partner school and confirm your club's 2026-2027 participation. Registering early helps us coordinate with schools, provide timely resources, and prepare for another successful contest year.

Confirm your club's 2026-2027 sponsorship [here](#).

Posted by Carol Gray Walker  
June 26, 2026

---

Rotary Leadership Institute (RLI)

## **Welcome Our New RLI Directors**



We are honored and excited to introduce ourselves as the new Co-Directors of the Rotary Leadership Institute (RLI) Sunshine Division for District 6900. It is a privilege and a pleasure to serve in this role and

contribute to the growth and development of the district membership.

Many of you know that the Rotary Leadership Institute is vital to providing Rotarians with the knowledge, skills, and connections needed to be effective leaders in our clubs and communities. We are committed to upholding our tradition of excellence and to expanding opportunities for learning, collaboration, and service.

In the coming months, we look forward to collaborating closely with clubs. We will need your assistance in securing venues and finding discussion leaders as we share the valuable resources that RLI offers and support your leadership journey. Together, we can strengthen our clubs and enhance Rotary's impact in both our local and global communities.

Thank you for your warm welcome and support. Please feel free to reach out to us with any questions or ideas. We are eager to hear from you and to work alongside you in fulfilling our shared mission.

Yours in Rotary Service,

Walter Marria Jr and Andre Marria

Posted by Walter Marria, Jr.  
July 1, 2026

---

End Polio Now

## **Polio at the Start of the Second Quarter of the 21st Century!**

by Bob Hagan, District 6900 Rotary Foundation Chair



Let the title of this month's Polio article sit with you for a moment. Can you believe that we have already traveled one quarter of the way through the 21<sup>st</sup> century? It seems like just yesterday the world was petrified about the potential effects of Y2K and now we have already moved 25 years past it.

If you have already read my Foundation article for July 2026, then you are aware I just returned from Taipei and the "#Rotary26" convention. What a time it was! Attending a convention with over 37,000 Rotarians was quite an adventure. Without a doubt, one of the highest attended breakout sessions, as you might imagine, was the session focused on where we are in the fight to eradicate Polio worldwide. The session was entitled, "Join the Experts: A Polio Free World".

Although there wasn't a tremendous amount of new News on the fight, that doesn't mean there wasn't any news or that there wasn't any good news. When the top leaders of the 40-year march to eradicate Polio speak, to listen is good idea. Michael K. McGovern, the chair of the International PolioPlus Committee, had much to comment on. He stated that even though we have sustained some years of disappointment in the quest and we face, as he stated, "international factors", still there is good reason for optimism. Even to the point of stating that this year could be the year we see the last case of the wild polio virus in Pakistan. Certainly, there has been political unrest and different wars to deal with still there is good news in the fact that vaccine refusal rates are at the lowest levels ever.

Johrita Solari, who is the chair of the Polio Eradication Advocacy Task force here in the United States echoed the fact that the eradication story is, as he put it, "the rare, good news story" in a world that seems always filled with nothing but bad news. He went on to point out that, "Polio eradication is an inspiring example of the power of collective action, enduring commitment, and effective partnerships, with proven results".

Chairman McGovern went on to point out that for five straight years, the United States has appropriated \$265 million dollars to the Polio eradication effort. Valarie Wafer, who is a member of the international PolioPlus Committee, also spoke in the breakout session and her main point was to express strong support for polio survivors to continue to tell their personal stories and that in the countries of Pakistan and Afghanistan polio survivors are actually going door to door with vaccination front line workers to get the children vaccinated! Now that is commitment.

Other panelists spoke about the necessity of employing as much technology to the effort as possible, particularly around education. Gaining the trust of those in the outlying areas of Pakistan has been perhaps the biggest obstacle in the vaccination effort. Therefore, the approach of bringing nutrition experts along with maternal care professionals has helped make greater inroads in the eradication efforts.

We now sit at the beginning of a new Rotary year. This year is my last year of the three-year appointment as District 6900's Foundation Chair. How wonderful if by the end of this year we could say, eradication has been achieved. Certainly that is my goal and I know it's your goal as well. So, let's make this year the best Rotary year ever for those we serve in the good name of PolioPlus and the Rotary Foundation! Always remember that we together can end Polio. We are this close. We must continue to spread the word and keep awareness of this terrible disease at the forefront of our thoughts and work. Keep the contributions coming as every dollar counts and is matched 2 for 1 by the Gates Foundation. This is OUR legacy as Rotarians!

If I can personally assist you in any way, please don't hesitate to reach out to me via cell or email. I'm here to help and together we will...Unite for good!

**PHOTOS:**



I'M  
HELPING  
ERADICATE  
POLIO

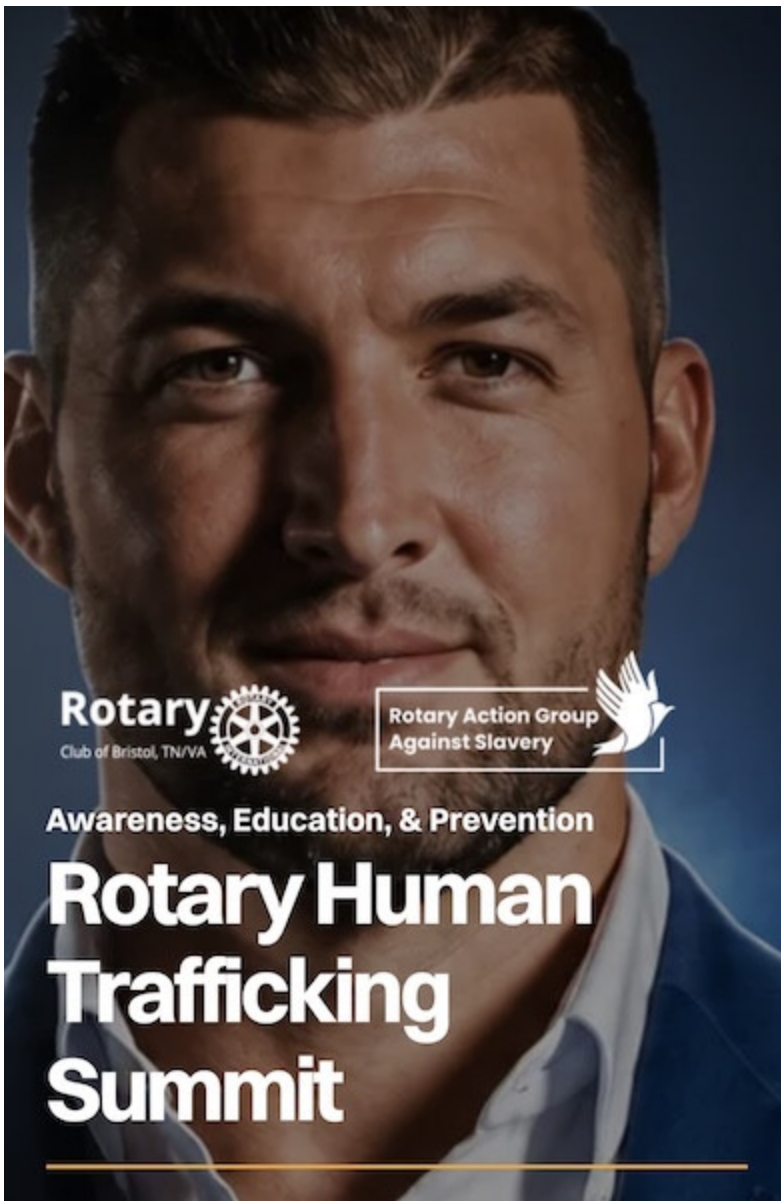


Posted by Bob Hagan  
June 25, 2026

---

Monday, July 27, 2026

## **Hear Tim Tebow Speak at The Rotary Human Trafficking Summit**



Rotary District 6900 members are encouraged to join fellow Rotarians from across the region at the **Rotary Human Trafficking Summit** — a powerful, one-day event dedicated to awareness, education, and prevention of human trafficking. The summit will be held on **Monday, July 27, 2026, from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM** at the **Marriott Meadowview Resort & Convention Center, 1901 Meadowview Pkwy, Kingsport, TN 37660**.

**Keynote Speaker: Tim Tebow**

Headlining the event is **Tim Tebow** — two-time national champion, former NFL quarterback, bestselling author, broadcaster, and philanthropist. As Executive Director of the Tim Tebow Foundation, Tim has dedicated much of his life to combating human trafficking and child exploitation through prevention, rescue, and survivor care. His passion for protecting vulnerable children has made him one of the most recognized voices in this fight worldwide.

*"When you hand your phone to your kid, know that the world and people with bad intentions are trying to lure them into something evil." — Tim Tebow*

## Expert Speaker Lineup

Joining Tim Tebow is an extraordinary group of national advocates, law enforcement leaders, and anti-trafficking experts:

- **Dave McCleary** — Chairman, Rotary Action Group Against Slavery (RAGAS) & Anti-Human Trafficking White House Task Force Member
- **Josh Loaiza** — Director of Strategic Partnerships, 3 Strands Global Foundation
- **Marc Pritchett** — Founder, Destiny Rescue
- **Peter Donovan** — Chief of Field Operations, The Sentinel Foundation
- **Dr. Ashley Poklar** — Clinical Psychologist, The Sentinel Foundation
- **Haley Griffith** — Education & Outreach Coordinator, Community Coalition Against Human Trafficking (CCAHT)
- **Sabrina Dorman-Andrews** — Co-Founder & Executive Director, New Creation VA
- **Alexa Bast** — Program Coordinator, Tennessee Businesses Against Trafficking (TBAT)
- **Trish Southerland** — Director, TN Bureau of Investigation Human Trafficking Task Force

## WHY ATTEND?

Human trafficking is not a distant problem. Northeast Tennessee accounts for up to 50% of all human trafficking cases reported statewide — and the numbers are rising. Predators are targeting children through social media, video games, and popular apps. This summit will equip attendees with the knowledge and tools to recognize, prevent, and respond.

Topics covered include:

- Modern trafficking tactics and how predators operate online
- Digital safety for children — social media, gaming, and apps
- Warning signs every parent, educator, and healthcare professional should know
- Prevention strategies and community response
- Survivor advocacy and support resources in the NETN/SWVA region

This summit is designed for Rotarians, parents, educators, healthcare professionals, first responders, law enforcement, church organizations, nonprofit leaders, and all community members ready to take action.

## REGISTRATION & DETAILS

**Location:** Marriott Meadowview Resort & Convention Center, 1901 Meadowview Pkwy, Kingsport, TN 37660

**Date:** Monday, July 27, 2026

**Time:** 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM

**Registration Fee:** \$20 per attendee

**Proceeds:** All proceeds benefit the Bristol Rotary Charity Fund supporting human trafficking prevention, education, and awareness

**Register:** [www.rotaryhumantraffickingsummit.com](http://www.rotaryhumantraffickingsummit.com)

**Questions:** (423) 481-3234 or [stophtnow2026@gmail.com](mailto:stophtnow2026@gmail.com)

**Together, we can END human trafficking in our region. Bold Action. Real Impact.**

*Hosted by the Rotary Club of Bristol, TN/VA · Presented in partnership with RAGAS & 3 Strands Global Foundation*

Posted by Dave McCleary  
June 25, 2026

---

## **Peace Pole At The King Center**



On Saturday, June 20, Rotary District 6900 made history in one of the most meaningful locations in America — planting a permanent Peace Pole at the entrance to the Peace & Meditation Garden at The King Center in Atlanta, just steps from the tomb of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the Eternal Flame that bears his legacy.

The dedication ceremony was led by Rotary International President Francesco Arezzo, who joined district members, representatives from the City of Atlanta, and The King Center for the unveiling. The gathering was a testament to what Rotary looks like when it operates at its best — local commitment backed by global leadership, united around a single, powerful message.

At the base of the pole, a bronze plaque carries the words of Dr. King himself: “Peace is not merely a distant goal that we seek, but a means by which we arrive at that goal.” In that spirit, the pole’s message — May Peace Prevail On Earth — is inscribed in four languages chosen by the City of Atlanta: English, French, Spanish, and Arabic, welcoming a world that gathered in Atlanta this summer for the FIFA World Cup.

This installation was the capstone of a district-wide effort launched during the 2024-25 Rotary year. Inspired by a challenge from then-Rotary International President Stephanie Urchick, District 6900 planted more than 50 peace poles across metro Atlanta and the southwestern half of Georgia over the past year — in parks, at schools, and in front of libraries. This one, an eight-foot granite post at one of the most visited civil rights landmarks in the world, stands as the most significant of them all.

The pole will endure long after the ceremony. Every visitor who walks through the Peace & Meditation Garden — whether they come from Atlanta or the other side of the world — will pass a message placed there by the men and women of Rotary District 6900. That is the lasting impact of service done well: not just what it accomplishes today, but what it says about who we are for generations to come.

**PHOTOS:**





Posted by Gordon Owens  
June 20, 2026

---

Club News

## **District Investment Helps Transform Law Enforcement's Fight Against Human Trafficking**



The **Rotary Club of Columbus** welcomed an important and timely program last week focused on the ongoing fight against human trafficking and the role specialized law enforcement training plays in protecting vulnerable individuals.

Bobbi Star - Rotarian, Co-Founder, and Executive Director of Micah's Promise - introduced the program, while Jason Dennis facilitated a distinguished panel featuring Joseph Austin of the Columbus Police Department, Captain Johnny Middlebrooks of the Talbot County Sheriff's Office, and Mike O'Keefe of the Muscogee County Sheriff's Office. Together, the panel discussed the topic, "End Human Trafficking: A Law Enforcement Report."

Over the last two years, Rotary District 6900 has made a significant investment in combating human trafficking through specialized training for area law enforcement officers. Through the District's End Human Trafficking Committee, \$15,000 was provided to bring nationally recognized trainer Dan Nash to Columbus. The Rotary Club of Columbus partnered in the effort by providing the venue and hospitality for the training event.

Each officer shared how the training challenged long-held misconceptions and transformed the way they investigate cases, prosecute offenders, and interact with victims. They spoke about learning new communication techniques that help victims open up and emphasized the importance of strengthening partnerships between law enforcement and the community.

“The training made us look at victimology completely differently,” the officers shared, explaining how understanding trauma has changed their approach to investigations and survivors.

Bobbi Starr noted that a significant shift is occurring in the fight against trafficking, with greater focus being placed on pursuing the buyers who drive the industry. She also emphasized that many of the girls served through Micah’s Promise are commercially sexually exploited children and that without intervention, many victims of childhood exploitation become adults trapped in prostitution.

The panel expressed gratitude for Rotary’s investment in law enforcement education and highlighted the importance of collaboration between community organizations and law enforcement to protect the most vulnerable.

President Alan Harkness also recognized Past President Meredith for her leadership in securing the grant that funded the Dan Nash training, helping make this transformative program possible.

Posted by LeighAnn DiCesaris  
June 26, 2026

---

Our Rotary Foundation at Work

## **Update on Global Grant to End Spina Bifida**



When you dig a well or build a habitat, progress is obvious. But public health projects usually take time – often measured in years – to see results and benefits. The **Rotary Club of North Atlanta (RCNA)** and their partners are in the third year of a planned five-year global grant project to reduce severe birth defects in Ethiopia, supported by District 6900 and The Rotary Foundation. Collaborators include Emory University, two other U.S. Rotary clubs, the Rotary Club of Addis Ababa Central Mella and the ReachAnother Foundation.

Ethiopia has one of the highest worldwide rates of neural tube defects or NTDs (including spina bifida and anencephaly). The Rotary project provides supplemental vitamin B9 (*folic acid*) to Ethiopian women at who are at a 10-fold higher risk because of a prior NTD pregnancy. The B9 supplement helps to prevent NTDs, but it must be taken before and during pregnancy to be effective.

Eligible mothers have been recruited for the program at six public hospitals in Addis Ababa since November 2023. Candidates must be of reproductive age with an NTD history.

Each participant receives daily *ReachAnother Foundation Folic Acid Supplementation Program | 2026 Mid-Year Report* confirms birth defect prevention and positive pregnancy outcomes. Among the findings for the 113 mothers who have given birth out of the 2783 mothers currently enrolled in the program:

- 111 mothers (98.2%) have had a normal birth

- One child died at birth
- One newborn had an NTD.

In Ethiopia, about 7 out of 100 mothers who have had one child with an NTD are predicted to have another affected child: 1 out of 113 is a major reduction.

These results must be interpreted with due caution because it is not a scientific study, and more robust data is forthcoming. Nonetheless, the program's nascent results are encouraging, and it could become a template for similar efforts in other countries with high NTD rates.

Meanwhile, Ethiopia is making major strides toward a sustainable solution by fortifying wheat and salt with vitamin B9, for an even greater national impact on the reducing the burden of this often-devastating birth defect. A pharmaceutical company in Ethiopia is now making the high dose vitamin B9 tablets.

R.I. President Francesco Arezzo and his wife visited the award-winning project in Ethiopia and recognized the work of Rotarian Dr. Yakob Ahmed and others. While in Ethiopia, President Arezzo met with the President of Ethiopia and the Minister of Health.

Posted by Jon Yaeger  
June 26, 2026

---

## Club News

### Doggone Good Time Had By All!



40 volunteers, 25 minutes and 500 pounds of dog food. **Buckhead Rotary** headed on the road to the Fulton County Animal Shelter for their Monday lunch and a short volunteer activity where we helped

break up 40-pound bags of dog food into smaller bags to be distributed to foster families. This was a huge need and with the number of Buckhead Rotarian volunteers, we were able to accomplish what would have taken the staff two weeks to do. It was a fun time filling bags and building fellowship. This was followed by lunch and blue and yellow Rotary themed cupcakes to celebrate our accomplishments. We also donated canned pumpkin to be used for cat and dog lick mats to help relieve boredom and stress for the shelter animals.

“The food bagging your group accomplished today will truly make a difference and save the Pets for Life team a tremendous amount of time.” Audrey Shoemaker, Director Fulton County Shelter

Additionally, Buckhead Rotarians were featured prominently in the June 3rd Northside Neighbor Article, “Fulton County Animal Shelter Over Capacity.” The article detailed the Pets for Life program, and how this outreach program provides much needed supplies to keep pets with their people and prevent them from being “surrendered” at area shelters. This article highlighted the benefit of the Buckhead Rotary program we created, our Pawsitivity Partnership with LifeLine and Open Hand, where we deliver pet food to those in need on the third Saturday of every month filling this growing community need!

**PHOTOS:**



Posted by Shelley Hammell  
July 2, 2026

---

Club News

## Roswell Rotary Continues Tradition of Leadership and Fellowship



In June, the **Roswell Rotary Club** proudly continued one of its longest-standing traditions by hosting its annual Past Presidents' Dinner — a gathering that has brought together club leadership for more than 30 years. The evening serves as an opportunity for past presidents and the current Board of Directors to come together for fellowship, reflection, and leadership transition as the club prepares for a new Rotary year. More importantly, it provides an opportunity for incoming leadership to receive wisdom, encouragement, and perspective from those who have previously served in the role of club president.

Amazingly, of the 29 living past Presidents of Roswell Rotary, 25 of them were in attendance!

This year's dinner was graciously hosted by Past Roswell Rotary President and Past District Governor Bob Hagan, who opened his home for the occasion. The event was coordinated by Roswell Rotary Events Chair Bob Clarkson, who partnered with a local Outback Steakhouse to provide an outstanding catered dinner for the evening. Current Roswell Rotary President Trummie Patrick opened the evening by welcoming everyone, giving thanks to those that helped this night happen, and passed the microphone to each past President in the club. One by one, former club presidents stood and introduced themselves by their year of service, offering incoming Roswell Rotary President Leslie Bassett words of encouragement and leadership advice as she prepares to lead the club during the 2026-2027 Rotary year.

The evening was marked by perfect weather, meaningful fellowship, and a strong sense of connection between the club's past, present, and future leadership. Leslie Bassett thanked the group for their support and reflected on the importance of preserving traditions that strengthen unity within the club. She gave a powerful, yet measured, look into what she plans to accomplish in the coming Rotary year, while acknowledging the treasured advice of those Past Presidents in attendance.

Events like the Past Presidents Dinner are a reminder that Rotary leadership is never carried alone. Through mentorship, fellowship, and a shared commitment to Service Above Self, Roswell Rotary continues to build lasting bonds that strengthen not only the club, but also the broader mission of Rotary throughout Roswell, Georgia, and internationally.

Posted by Trummie Patrick, III  
June 24, 2026

---

Club News

## **Emory Druid Hills Celebrates Club Leadership**



The **Rotary Club of Emory Druid Hills** recently celebrated its annual installation of officers, marking the transition of leadership for the 2026–2027 Rotary year. The event was attended by club members, family, friends, and prospective members, creating an atmosphere of fellowship and celebration. The ceremony was led by District Governor Steve Ivory and incoming District Governor Cynthia Edwards.

After an opening welcome by Rotarian Jaslin Chahal, outgoing Club President Bhairavi Nadgonde reflected on the club's accomplishments during the 2025–2026 Rotary year, highlighting successful service projects and community impact. International Service Chair Pravin Kakadiya also shared updates on the club's international initiatives and contributions.

A key highlight of the evening was the installation of Rani Singh as President for the 2026–2027 Rotary year. District Governor Steve Ivory formally installed and pinned President Rani Singh, while incoming District Governor Cynthia Edwards installed and pinned the new Board of Directors and officers: President-Elect & Executive Secretary Jaslin Chahal, Secretary Ganesh Sawdayya and Treasurer Ravi Gupta.

In her inaugural address, President Rani Singh shared her vision for the coming year, focusing on membership growth, impactful service projects, fundraising efforts, strengthening the club's public image, and increasing support for Rotary International. The evening also included the presentation of club awards by outgoing President Bhairavi Nadgonde, recognizing members for their dedication and service throughout the year. The ceremony concluded with a heartfelt vote of thanks delivered by Past President

Chatur Chhabhaya.

Following the formal program, guests enjoyed a musical performance by local singers Anita Sunny and Vipul Parmar, who entertained attendees with a selection of popular songs. The celebration continued with fellowship and dinner, making the event a memorable start to the new Rotary year. The Rotary Club looks forward to another year of service above self under the leadership of President Rani Singh and her dedicated team.

**PHOTOS:**



Posted by Rani Singh  
July 1, 2026

Club News

## **North Cobb Helps Feed and Refresh the Community**



**North Cobb Rotarians** went to Kennesaw State University to help our friends at KSU CARE Services on a project supporting Fast Start Academy who help advance children's education. They provide them with free food to send home with the kids because some of them are struggling with food insecurity. Backpack Buddies of Metro Atlanta provided the backpacks and supplies, and this Rotary helped get them packed with goods.

North Cobb also helped out the Acworth Police Department, serving those who protect us! The summer heat is on, but we're making sure our local heroes stay cool! We have partnered with our friends at iLoveKare to deliver refreshing drinks to the Acworth Police Department in preparation for next week's heatwave. It's our way of saying "thank you" to the officers who work tirelessly to keep our community safe, even in the toughest summer conditions. Stay tuned as we continue to find ways to support our neighbors and keep our APD hydrated

Posted by Jose Gonzalez  
July 1, 2026

---