



KeyWay Weekly Newsletter

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This Week's Program:

Member Showcase with Aretta Baldon



Our featured speaker is Aretta Baldon, elected in 2019 to represent District 2 on the Atlanta Board of Education. A proud 25-year resident of Atlanta, Aretta is a community leader, educational advocate, and parent organizer with a passion for ensuring every child has the tools to succeed. In addition to her work on the school board, she has led grassroots efforts from founding Atlanta Thrive, to running a monthly food pantry with the Atlanta Community Food Bank, to serving in leadership with Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. and Providence Missionary Baptist Church. Of course, she also became an honorary

member of the Atlanta West End Rotary Club in January 2024!

Aretta brings more than 20 years of corporate management experience and now owns Shades of Light, a photography and marketing consulting business. Her love for life and positive energy shine through everything she does as a board member, volunteer, and proud Spelman graduate.

Join us to learn more about Aretta's inspiring journey and her commitment to "service above self."

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September's Theme is Basic Education and Literacy: Fridays: 5, 12, 19, 26

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KeyWay Report on Our Speaker Rebekah Enoch, Freedom United August 29, 2025 | AWER Weekly Meeting

AWER Treasurer Rose Caplan led off the meeting by first thanking **AWER President Victoria Seals** for hosting AWER again with fine space and good food for our meeting. Rose then introduced **Ms. Rebekah Enoch**, Program Manager at Freedom United, the world's largest community dedicated to ending human trafficking and modern

slavery, who presented on modern slavery and human trafficking. Rebekah's presentation covered various forms of modern slavery including cyber slavery, forced prison labor, orphanage trafficking, and Uyghur forced labor in China. Rebekah noted that the Freedom United team

joined hands with Human Trafficking Search (HTS) in July 2023. Rebekah served as the HTS Program Director for the two years prior.

Rebekah explained that modern slavery encompasses various forms of exploitation including commercial sexual exploitation, child slavery, domestic servitude, forced marriage, and forced labor. The key elements that define modern slavery are force, fraud, and coercion. A common misconception is that human trafficking requires movement across borders, when in fact it can occur within communities or even in one's home. She emphasized that vulnerability is a key factor in modern slavery, with people in desperate economic situations, those affected by climate change or political instability, and those without legal status being particularly at risk. Modern slavery today is less about "finding slaves" and more about "creating slaves" by exploiting vulnerable populations and trapping them in exploitative situations. The global estimate of 50 million people living in modern slavery conditions in 2021 is likely an undercount since much of this activity happens in the shadows.

Rebekah said forced marriage is a form of slavery. An AWER member countered that people in forced marriages may not at all see themselves as victims of slavery ... nevertheless, Freedom United statistics includes such persons as being in a form of slavery, because their circumstances were not a free choice but have been required or forced upon them. Further, Rebekah explained anyone married under 18 is considered to be in a child marriage. Even when it's a cultural norm, there are people within those countries working to change these practices. When people are married at a younger age, they don't have legal rights to escape abusive situations. The movement to end child marriage is coming from inside these cultures, not just being imposed externally.

Victims, including the cyber industry, can also be included because there are many persons lured by false promises of a good job only to be forced to work with little or no pay, so rather than the job having an opportunity to better their lives, they become victims of pernicious schemes. Rebekah pointed out the exception clause in the US Constitution's 13th Amendment allowed prison labor. She also referred to the notorious Uyghur forced labor in China's Xinjiang region - denied by the Chinese government - involves the mass detention of this Muslim minority group in "education camps" where they are forced to work in industries including cotton picking, manufacturing, and solar panel production.

Freedom United's Freedom Footprint Guide helps individuals assess how their choices impact supply chains and identify areas for change.

- The organization leads awareness-raising campaigns and amplifies survivors' voices.
- They create petitions targeting corporations and politicians to push for policy and practice changes that address modern slavery.
- Freedom United partners with local organizations in affected countries rather than directly providing services.
- They collaborate with manufacturers, labor unions, journalists, and nonprofits to gather and broadly share information.

Rebekah emphasized that addressing modern slavery requires concerted, constant collective action, and that there are roles everyone can take to counter the forms of slavery. She left AWER members with several sources of important information for those who want to join forces against forced labor and other forms of slavery.

Resources mentioned during the meeting:

- Freedom United website: freedomunited.org

- Freedom Footprint Guide:
freedomunited.org/freedom-guide-for-ending-modern-slavery/
- Belonging365.com - Resource for inclusive language and practices
- DiversityResources.com - Website mentioned during DEI discussion

— Neil Shorthouse, Keyway Speaker Reporter

September is Basic Education and Literacy Month

Building Community Through Learning

September is Rotary International’s official focus month for Basic Education and Literacy, one of Rotary’s seven core areas of focus and a cornerstone of its efforts to foster individual growth and sustainable community development

Let’s celebrate Basic Education and Literacy Month by lifting up local learning. Whether through material support, personal mentorship, or simply spreading awareness. Our combined actions make a difference. Let’s show how AWER builds brighter futures, one lesson learned at a time.

Volunteer Drivers Still Needed

Assist Freedom University Students

Freedom University provides tuition-free, college-level classes to undocumented students in Georgia, who cannot attend the state’s top public universities or obtain driver’s licenses. Every Saturday afternoon, students need rides to class. Volunteering as a driver is a simple way to live out Rotary’s values of Service Above Self, Education, and Fellowship.

Sign up here: freedom-university.org/volunteer

An Invitation from M. Agnes Jones:

W.O.W. Sessions

Our community partner, M. Agnes Jones Elementary (MAJ), invites AWER members to participate in monthly W.O.W. (Working on the Work) sessions as part of their STEAM initiative, “We Are the World: Conquering Hunger through Sustainability and Creativity.”

Every 3rd Tuesday | 3:00–4:00 PM | 1040 Fair St. SW, Atlanta, GA 30314

AWER has invested \$4,000 in District Grant funds to support MAJ’s outdoor STEAM lab. These sessions will let us engage directly with students and educators. Business owners, chefs, health advocates, and community leaders are especially encouraged to join. This is a chance to deepen our impact and help shape the next generation of changemakers.

<u>MARK YOUR CALENDAR</u>	<u>CELEBRATIONS</u>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9/12: Dr. Bryan Johnson, APS Superintendent • 9/14: Streets Alive! <i>Peachtree St.</i> • 9/19: Shelly Goodrum, Washington Cluster Superintendent • 9/26: Club Assembly • 9/27: WEND Candlelight Concert • 10/3: District Governor Steve Ivory • 10/25: ATL Tech. College 5K • 10/26: Streets Alive! <i>West End</i> <p>Sign up to be a program chair here today!</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Happy Birthday</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">9/3 Uku Urb</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Happy Anniversary</i></p>
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Meeting Agenda

1. Call to Order
2. Invocation & Pledge
3. Introduction of Guests
4. Tasse Trivia
5. DEI Moment
6. Announcements
7. Program/Speaker
8. The Four-Way Test
9. Adjournment

RY2025–2026 Board of Directors

President: *Dr. Victoria Seals*
Co-Presidents-Elect: *Debra Stokes & Chris Hempfling*
Immediate Past President: *Jared Evans*
President-Nominee: *TBD*
Secretary: *Neil Shorthouse*
Treasurer: *Rose Caplan*
Club Administration: *Chris Hempfling*
Membership Chair: *Sonia Hantman*
Public Image Chair: *Jared Evans*
Service Projects Chair: *Carolina Ramos*
The Rotary Foundation Chair: *Debra Stokes*
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Chair: *Marilyn Jackson*

<p>JOIN ONLINE Zoom Link - Click here Meeting ID: 874 0116 4307 Passcode: Service</p>	<p>Dial In 1-646-558-8656 Meeting ID: 874 0116 4307 Passcode: 846122</p>
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Stay Connected with AWER

✉ **Email:** inforotaryawe@gmail.com 🌐 **Website:** atlantawestendrotary.org
 📘 **Facebook:** facebook.com/RotaryAWE 📷 **Instagram:** [@rotaryatlantawestend](https://instagram.com/rotaryatlantawestend)

THE FOUR-WAY TEST of the things we think, say or do



- first* **Is it the TRUTH?**
- second* **Is it FAIR to all concerned?**
- third* **Will it build GOOD WILL and BETTER FRIENDSHIPS?**
- fourth* **Will it be BENEFICIAL to all concerned?**