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May 5, 2025





# Rotary Is A Family Sport



During the conference weekend we hosted a special dinner for our club presidents and district leaders. None of our leaders do it alone, our members certainly support us along the way, but often, it's the family that really pitches in to help. One of the things Ashely and I love about Rotary is that family is not just included but encouraged. The family of Rotary has welcomed us with open arms all across our district this year. However, it has been especially nice to share this journey with our real life family. George Stewart, Ashley's dad, is a long time member of the Dunwoody Rotary Club and he and his wife Amy have supported us every step along the way. I was able to pull off a nice surprise for Ashley and the Stewart family, by creating the *Jane Stewart Memorial Fund* in honor of George's mom and our "Grandma" as a way to thank them for all they have done to encourage and support me during the last three & half years serving in the governor line. Thanks again Stewart family!

Posted by Gordon Owens  
May 1, 2025

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GeorgiaUnitedDC.com

## Thank You From Georgia Rotary!



On behalf of DG Bobby from 6910, DG Todd from 6920 and me, we want to extend our sincere thanks to all of the hard work that went on behind the scenes to make the magic of the first-ever Georgia Rotary District Conference happen. Carol Colón who used to be in the Fayetteville Club in our district but has since moved to D6910, served as our overall conference chair and had the tough task of helping us blend all of our traditions and crazy ideas into one spectacular event. Ryan Clements helped us manage the show from the A/V desk, Elwyn Gaissert served as Sgt. at Arms, Mandy Timmons handled decor & public image and Becky Stone organized the tailgate party. There were countless other volunteers that helped manage registration, served as referees or helped setup/breakdown to make sure everything went off without a hitch. We have received nothing but rave reviews and we look forward to the next Georgia Rotary event to bring our new friends together soon. Thanks again!

Posted by Gordon Owens  
May 1, 2025

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[GeorgiaUnitedDC.com](http://GeorgiaUnitedDC.com)

## **Check Out All The Fun We Had**



This year at conference we used a [Kululu Photo Wall](#) to allow all the attendees to upload photos at anytime during the event to share with our group. We had TVs in the Hall of Friendship that always displayed the action and open each session with the latest pics. The [Georgia United DC photo wall](#) will remain live for the next year, so feel free to check it out and download your favorite pictures. We also selected a ton of great pictures that capture the weekend and put them in a [video slide show](#) on our YouTube Channel. It was a great weekend and I enjoyed being a part of the team that made the A/V magic happen.

Posted by Ryan Clements  
May 1, 2025

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Congratulations!

## Club of The Year Winners



This year we made the Club of the Year awards more transparent and published a [scoreboard](#) that any

member could access at any time to see how their club's stats compared to others in their category. We set a finish line of March, 31, 2025 and at that point, we checked the stats to select the winners. Congratulations to our clubs that lead the way in giving more, growing more and doing more:

- Category I | Meriwether County | North Atlanta (runner up)
- Category II | North Fulton | Vinings Cumberland (runner up)
- Category III | Dunwoody | Decatur (runner up)
- Category IV | Peachtree City (tie) | Roswell (tie)

Posted by Gordon Owens  
May 1, 2025

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Sponsored By The Rotary Club of Americus

## Sheffield Leadership Class of 2025



This may be the single hardest task a governor in our district has. We have 67 clubs that do amazing work in their communities that are all led by great Rotarians. So, picking just one person in each category takes a lot of careful consideration. While the scoreboard drives the decision on which clubs will win Club of the Year and is based on numerical stats, the Sheffield Leadership Award has much more to do with an individual effort in setting a club up for success today and carry that club well into the future. Congratulations to this year's class of club presidents honored with the Sheffield Leadership award:

- Category I | Rick Perry, Henry County
- Category II | Rick Clark, North Fulton
- Category III | Dudley Larus, Decatur
- Category IV | Nancy Alterman, Roswell

Posted by Gordon Owens  
May 1, 2025

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Rotarian of the Year

## Our District MVP, Mary Ligon!





Having a great season takes a ton of hard work and preparation. Your club presidents started to get into game shape in July of 2023, a full year before they became the captain of the team. While it was my job to give them the playbook to make their clubs irresistible and to help them show their communities the Magic of Rotary, it was our MVP's job to prepare me to lead. The journey from District Governor Nominee Designate to serving as District Governor is two and a half years and Mary was in my corner every step along the way.

From helping me draft a team of district leaders to planning all the events that went into getting our clubs ready for the 2024-2025 Rotary season, she was there. When it came time to make improvements to our processes to make life easier for our club presidents, she was a great sounding board. And on the occasion we had to throw a penalty flag, her knowledge of Rotary policy & procedure was invaluable.

Probably her most important role is that of Momma, as she is who PDG André and I call when we get into a sibling squabble. Congratulations to my dear friend, mentor and our Rotary District 6900 Rotarian of the Year, my MVP, Mary Ligon.

Posted by Gordon Owens  
May 1, 2025

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Sponsored By The Rotary Club of Stone Mountain

## Follow Me Award To Cedric Hill





Cedric Hill has been a standout Assistant Governor throughout this Rotary year. During PETS he worked on brining the Atlanta Southern Crescent, Columbus, Muskogee Columbus, & North Columbus clubs together to work on projects and have a bigger impact in the community than any one club could achieve on its own. The three Columbus clubs, hosted one of our 3-day law enforcement trainings for ending human trafficking, taking great care of the various agencies in attendance. Cedric never misses an opportunity to show up and support his clubs in their service projects or make a connection across town to expand the impact Rotary has in the area. During my official visits to the area, Cedric & I became the Okra brothers as we harvested okra from the Merci Med community garden and got it to a cooking demonstration to help families learn how to use fresh produce. I look forward to seeing how Cedric continues to bring this area together to support his real passion for service, helping youth create peace through his Cure Violence program. Congratulations to Cedric Hill for being named this year's Follow Me award winner.

Posted by Gordon Owens  
May 1, 2025

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Foundation, Polio Plus & Membership

## GOAT Award Winners



While the cutoff for awards at conference was March 31, 2025, the Rotary year is far from over. We treated this like the All Star break and gave the club in each category an All Star medal for being in the lead on March 31st. Just like in sports, there can only be one greatest of all time in per capita giving and membership growth so we gave out some GOAT awards to the following:

- Per Capita TRF | \$698 | North Atlanta
- Per Capita Polio Plus | \$914 | Vinings Cumberland
- Net New Members | +15 | Johns Creek North Fulton
- Members Sponsored | 8 | Michael Griffin, Henry County

Posted by Gordon Owens  
May 1, 2025

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## Certificate For Meritorious Service

### Congratulations To Kay Williamson



It was my pleasure to present Kay Williamson with the Certificate For Meritorious Service from The Rotary Foundation. It was extra special to have Vice Chairman of The Rotary Foundation, Larry Lunsford, on hand to help me present the award to Kay during a special dinner for club and district leadership at our Georgia United District Conference. Kay, a long time & active member of the Meriwether County Rotary Club, has worked tirelessly to make sure our clubs take full advantage of our district grant funding and all the appropriate documentation is maintained. Kay is a key member of our district foundation team, please join me in congratulating her in this prestigious award.

Posted by Bob Hagan  
May 1, 2025

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## Membership Hall of Fame

### 46 New Members In 3 Years



As the incoming District Membership Chair, I have big shoes to fill. Our current chair, Dave Schwickerath,

was awarded with a Membership Hall of Fame award as he has sponsored 46 new members in just three years. Talk about leading by example! I was so pleased that Dave's passion for bringing more people into the family of Rotary won't stop just because he is no longer the chair. He is going to stay a part of the district membership team next year and I look forward to continuing to work with him to grow Rotary in our district.

Posted by Audley Knight  
May 1, 2025

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The Magic of Rotary Awards

## Our Best Service Projects



While our generosity to The Rotary Foundation funds the good work we do and growing our clubs helps lighten the load, we truly show the Magic of Rotary to our members, our community and around the world through the service we do. I asked for clubs to submit their best projects in 6 categories this year and here are the overall winners:

- Club Fundraiser | Alpharetta | Freezin For A Reason Polar Plunge
- Member Engagement | East Cobb | Magic of Rotary Passport
- Impactful Service | Atlanta Southern Crescent | The Giving Side of Christmas
- New/Improved Project | Dougherty County | Helping Hands Food Packing
- Peace Pole Install | North Cobb | The Extension +10 more...
- World Polio Day | Peachtree City | \$50 Matching Challenge

Posted by Gordon Owens  
May 1, 2025

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EndPolio.org

## \$400,000 Match To End Polio



A generous donor in our state has committed \$400,000 in matching funds to Polio Plus for any Georgia Rotarian that [gives at least \\$100](#) to help us eradicate polio between now and the end of the Rotary year. Your \$100 gift will get matched by our donor, turning it into \$200 and then the Gates foundation will double that gift making it \$400. So for just \$100, you can help us save 667 children around the world by providing them with the polio vaccine. Please consider giving at least [\\$100 to Polio Plus](#) and help us take advantage of this extra matching opportunity.

Posted by Bob Hagan  
May 1, 2025

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Unite For Good

## DGE Steve Is Ready To Go!



My wife, Ashley, has served as DGE Steve's chief hazing officer as her brother is a West Point grad and

Steve went to the Naval Academy. As a fun way to give Steve some advice as he prepares to lead our district in July, I had Ashley help me with some props in her Go Army, Beat Navy t-shirt. The Naval Academy mascot is a goat. Just like a goat, he will have to eat just about anything as he visits clubs next year and occasionally you will have to butt heads to get the job done. But his primary role is to clear the path so our clubs can grow more & do more.

I gave him a cocktail glass, as at some point only a glass of his favorite beverage and a break will relax the pressures and pace of serving as governor. I then gave him a hand grenade, and instructed him, that like a good Marine, sometimes you just need to blow things up and start over.

Finally, I have him a coffee mug with the Naval Academy phrase, "Don't Give Up The Ship." This has double meaning. On one hand, Rotary leadership is designed to Give Up The Ship, as come July 1 I will turn over the district to Steve to steer us into the next Rotary year. But I reminded him that while he is at the helm, don't give up the ship to those whispering in his ear about how to do it or the way we've always done it. He gets to choose the path forward. I wish Steve and his wife, Anna, along with all the district & club leadership the best of luck leading the way next year.

Posted by Gordon Owens  
May 1, 2025

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Check Out The Fun

## Our 360 Photo Booth



It was cheaper to buy a 360 Photo Booth than rent one for the conference weekend. [Check out the great time](#) people had when they stopped by the 6900 Magic booth in the Hall of Friendship at the Georgia United District Conference. If you want to use the booth at your next event, reach out to me to make arrangements as there will be a small fee but a fraction of the cost of renting one. [Watch the 360 Video](#)

Posted by Mandy Timmons  
May 1, 2025



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Georgia Opioid Crisis Abatement Trust

## Opioid Grants Coming Soon



At Georgia United DC we announced that the 3 Rotary districts in Georgia are working with the Georgia Opioid Crisis Abatement Trust to do local projects funded by settlement money. The trust has committed \$500,000 to be split between the three districts for projects like placing Narcan boxes in schools or establishing awareness campaigns. We had a well attended breakout session and clubs are raring to go on these projects. Be patient, we are in the final stages of dotting the i's and crossing the t's with the trust. Once we have everything in place we will send out communications about how to leverage this funding in your local area. To learn more visit [GAopioidtrust.org](https://GAopioidtrust.org).

Posted by Kay Williamson  
May 1, 2025

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Rotavette.com

## \$11,250 Given Away



Congratulations to former Roswell Rotarian and current member of the Big Canoe Rotary Club, Don Rolader for winning the Rotavette Raffle. According to the [raffle rules](#) we needed to sell 1001 tickets to give away the car. We ended up with a pot of \$22,500 to split between the winner and The Rotary Foundation. Thanks to all who purchased tickets and helped us raise some extra money for The Rotary Foundation and congratulations to Don who is \$11,250 richer.

Posted by Gordon Owens

May 1, 2025

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GRSP Honorees

## Thank you for your support of GRSP!



A big thanks to District 6900 for your continued support of GRSP! The flag ceremony is always one of the highlights of district conference. This year, GRSP chair Ian Bond surprised Carolina Klockner from Brazil who is hosted by the Rotary Club of Savannah with the William A. Watt award for the best GRSP student. The award is sponsored by the Thomasville Rotary Club. On Sunday, the Sandy Springs Rotary Club announced their selection for the Frank E. Bently GRSP Leadership award as Betty Price from the Rotary Club of Roswell. Last but absolutely not least, on Thursday night at a leadership dinner hosted by DG Gordon, the Griffin Rotary Club recognized the following clubs with the Jake Cheatham award for the best per capita giving in each category:

- I | Muscogee-Columbus
- II | North Columbus
- III | Dunwoody
- IV | Thomasville

Posted by Katheryne Fields  
May 1, 2025

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## Promoting Peace with a Simple Message







*Editor's Note: While this month's newsletter is focused almost exclusively on all the district conference news (we are saving club stories for our June edition), we felt this story belonged with this issue. Why? Because it highlights our focus on peace and the power of working together, across districts and clubs, to make a difference.*

On April 19, the Rotary Club of North Cobb collaborated with the Rotary Club of Winder and its President Al Darby and Barrow area Rotary Clubs to celebrate the 25th anniversary of Apalachee High School by planting a Peace Pole in front of the school. This was followed by a sumptuous barbecue for over 250 staff, students, first responders, supporters and community members.

The Peace Pole was created by the students of Devereaux Advanced Behavioral Center (some of the most vulnerable children in our community). Its message - "May Peace Prevail on Earth" - was translated to the Cherokee language and Spanish, in addition to its English version. The Cherokee Nation was represented at the event by Re. Dr. Jones.

DG Gordon Owens (6900) and DG Bobby Hildreth (6910) attended the event. Gordon said, "it amazes me how such a simple peace pole can be so meaningful."

Dr Ada Wikina reiterated that. "For us in Rotary, peace is more than a concept - it's action, it's community, it's a legacy. Through our work, we strive to creating lasting, meaningful change. And we know that when we come together, our ability to spread peace grows stronger and wider."

**PHOTOS:**















RYLA Update

## Countdown to 2025 RYLA Experience: June 7-11!



Only one month until RYLA! We are so excited that our favorite time of year is rolling back around again. If your club is sponsoring a student (or multiple students) for RYLA 2025, here are a few final reminders to check off:

1. Make sure you are paid the fees for each student you are sponsoring: \$500 each plus \$50 for each student riding the charter bus from Atlanta
2. Confirm that you have submitted all student names and contact information to Susan Ruckman using the registration brochure
3. Contact your students and remind them to complete the entire student application packet (sent to



them by Susan) and return it ASAP if they have not already done so

4. Coordinate with rudeness, parents and club members to make sure students arrive at RYLA on Saturday, June 7 and have a ride home on Wednesday, June 11
5. Volunteer as a Chaperone by giving us #OneDayfor RYLA - experience the magic of RYLA for yourself! Reach out to Jaclyn Donovan Ruckman for more information.

We've been working all year to make RYLA an amazing experience for every single student. If you have any questions or need more information, please reach out to Jaclyn or Susan.

Posted by Jaclyn Donovan  
May 4, 2025

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Laws of Life

**Join the Laws of Life Honor Roll Society; Read 2024-25 Essay Collection eBook**

Laws  
of  
Life



THE GEORGIA  
ROTARY CLUBS  
LAWS OF LIFE  
ESSAY CONTEST

  
*Bridge  
to the  
Future*

*The Essay as a  
Pathway*

*"A #2 pencil and  
a dream can take  
you anywhere."*

*-Joyce Meyer*

2024-2025

The Georgia Rotary Clubs Laws of Life Essay contest is proud to announce two exciting updates this spring - the launch of the second annual Honor Roll Society and the release of the 2024-25 Georgia Laws of Life Essay Collection e-book.

**Join the Honor Roll Society:** "Every great leader started with a great teacher." In celebration of Teacher Appreciation Week, and continuing all month long, we invite you to say thank you in a meaningful way. The Honor Roll Society celebrates teachers who shape our story by recognizing teachers, coaches, mentors and role models who've helped shape the character and lives of Georgia students and leaders. For every \$25 donation made in the month of May, you can nominate someone who made a difference in your life. Honorees will be recognized on our website and social media, and each gift will directly support character education efforts in Georgia high schools.

Whether it was a teacher who helped you find your voice, a coach who taught you perseverance, or a mentor who modeled integrity - this is your chance to say thank you with a lasting gift. Make your nomination and donation at [www.georgialawsoflife.org](http://www.georgialawsoflife.org)

**Enjoy Reading Our 2024-25 Essay Collection:** We are thrilled to release this year's Essay Collection e-booklet, featuring the full essays of our State Winners, a list of School Winners, program highlights, impact statistics and recognition of our valued Rotary partners and supporters.

With over 30,000 students from 65+ schools participating this year, the contest continues to amplify student voices and promote the values of ethics, empathy and resilience that align so deeply with Rotary's mission. You can download the ebook at [www.georgialawsoflife.org](http://www.georgialawsoflife.org)

We invite all to help us celebrate these milestones and share with family and friends. Together we are making a lasting impact - one essay, one student and one life at a time.

Posted by Carol Gray Walker  
May 3, 2025

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GRSP Update

## **GRSP Establishes New Lynn Clarke GRSP Women in Leadership Award**

by Katherine Field, Executive Director, GRSP





The Georgia Rotary Student Program is proud to announce the inaugural Lynn Clarke GRSP Women in Leadership Award. The first recipient is GRSP student Atche Bilyal, who received her award from District 6910 GRSP District Chair James McCoy at the April 22 meeting of the Rotary Club of Hall County, one of Atche's three sponsoring clubs - Hall County, Gainesville and white County. Atche is a student at Brenau University. She received this honor for "advancing World Peace through Understanding, exhibiting extraordinary leadership and serving as an international ambassador for Bulgaria and GRSP.

Atche's many Service Above Self accomplishments led to her selection as the first recipient of this award

- Atche founded the only international Rotaract Club in the 1610 District, Rotaract Club of Tilburg International, with the support of Rotary District 1610 Zuid-West of Netherlands, which turned out

to be a great success

- She helped organize area Rotarians here and participated in the Women Build 2025 with Habitat for Humanity
- She showed an immediate desire to connect and assist family businesses in North Georgia, winning Brenau's Annual Speech Competition followed by her research and journey presented at the National Conference on Undergraduate REsearch in Pittsburgh this April

We were impressed by Atche's desire to learn network and experience American culture from Rotarians and her fellow GRSP classmates. In addition to this award, Atche was honored as a Top 5 Finalist for the International Youth Representative for the Europe, Mediterranean and Arab States Region for the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Foundation.

**PHOTOS:**





Posted by Kathy Fields  
May 3, 2025