

Rotary
DISTRICT 5520



THE YUCCA

September 2025 ♦ NO. 3

DISTRICT GOVERNOR Tom Simon

Education & Literacy in the U.S. and around the world



Deborah and I enjoy listening to audiobooks as we travel the district attending Rotary meetings. We are currently listening to John Adams by David McCullough who writes that when Adams wrote the Massachusetts Constitution in 1780, he included the words “*Cherish the interests of literature and the sciences... public schools and grammar schools in the towns.*” This language still exists today, together with the preamble, which states that “*Wisdom and knowledge, as well as virtue, diffused generally among the body of the people, are necessary for the preservation of their rights and liberties.*” The right to an education exists in various forms in every state constitution throughout the country. This is a right to truly be “cherished” and not taken for granted.

In 2011, in the remote, highland village of **Laguna Danta, Guatemala**, my wife Deborah and a team of Rotarians and members of **United by Friendship**, met with the village leaders to identify their community needs. Laguna Danta consists of 67 families that speak primarily K’iche, a native Mayan dialect. They have no electricity; they have a washing station fed by a rain catchment system in the village but no running potable water. They walk 4 miles to get to the nearest health clinic, and their children walk the same distance to attend junior high school. Of the range of options, potable water, a health clinic or electricity, the community identified the most pressing need is a school for their children’s future. In similar circumstances throughout the world, Rotarians partner with organizations like **United by Friendship** to build schools that Rotary will then furnish with the necessary materials that create a generation of educated adults capable of engaging with the world outside of their small village. Around the world, villages like Laguna Danta recognize the importance of education over almost everything else. They recognize that with “*wisdom and knowledge*” all else is possible. In 2011, Rotary, in partnership with United by Friendship, fulfilled that need for Laguna Danta by building and equipping a school in 2011.

Every American enjoys the privilege of an education guaranteed by our state constitutions. **Consider supporting The Rotary Foundation** to extend the same opportunities to our neighbors across the border and around the world.



The children of Laguna Danta are excited to be in their new school!



Laguna Danta Village celebrates the opening of their First School



Join Me at the **Path to Peace Conference** **October 3, 2025** **Santa Fe, New Mexico**

Dear District 5520 Rotarians,

Please join me at **La Fonda Hotel in Santa Fe on Friday, October 3, 2025**, from 8 AM to 4 PM for a meaningful and timely event: the **Path to Peace Conference**, hosted by the Rotary Club of Santa Fe Centro and the Rotary Club of Los Alamos.

This one-day gathering will bring together international and local voices to explore healing after conflict, peacebuilding, and **the role Rotary can play in building bridges in our communities and around the world.**

Featured Speakers Include:

Eria Matsumae, Peace Memorial Park Guide from Hiroshima, Japan

Dr. Manuel Montoya, UNM Professor of Global Political Economy

Denise Moore, Clinical Director, Tierra Nueva Counseling

We'll reflect on the past, build hope for the future and close with a public **Peace Pole Dedication** at Thomas Macaione Park. It will be a lasting symbol of Rotary's commitment to peace in the heart of Santa Fe.

This event is \$50 per adult and free for students, with lunch included, catered by La Fonda Hotel. Registration is now open to the public, and seating is limited, so please register soon to ensure your place at the conference.

Date: Friday, October 3, 2025

Time: 8 AM to 4 PM

Location: La Fonda Hotel, 100 East San Francisco Street, Santa Fe NM

Register here: <https://form.jotform.com/250600629390150>

There is more detailed information about the speakers on the attached flyer.

Paul Harris said that *"peace cannot be achieved through force, but rather through fostering and recognizing our interconnectedness."* Please join with me to demonstrate this important and enduring truth.

I hope to see you there!

Tom Simon, District Governor

**The Rotary of Santa Fe Centro Passport Club and
The Rotary Club of Los Alamos
Presents**

**FRIDAY OCTOBER 3, 2025
8:00 am to 4:00 PM**

La Fonda Hotel
100 E San Francisco St.
Santa Fe, NM 87501



**PATHWAY TO PEACE
PEACE CONFERENCE**

**A Journey Through History,
Healing and Hope**

Speakers



Manuel Montoya, PhD

Associate Professor, Economics
UNM Presidential Teaching Fellow
University of New Mexico
*"Economic Diplomacy and Nuclear
Nonproliferation- an alternative
perspective"*



Eria Matsumae

Hiroshima Peace Guide
*"Sharing Hiroshima's
stories and global
lessons of peace and
reconciliation."*



Denise Moore

Clinical Director
Tierra Nueva Counseling
Southwestern College
*"How to build peace in a time
of war: it starts with us"*

Sponsors



Registration Now



Global Grant and International Project Fair

Rotary



October 10-11, 2025
El Paso, TX

Mark your calendars and save this date!

District 5520 will host a **Global Grant and International Project Fair** workshop to provide you with in-depth knowledge and understanding of Rotary's Global Grant process and demonstration the new Commitment Agreements for the projects.

District Governor Tom Simon has an exceptional team of facilitators. Elizabeth Mahoney is Zone 26's Regional Rotary Foundation Coordinator and PDG Felipe Meza from District 4110, our founding partner.

The Zoom link for this workshop is.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85959715097?pwd=TOp2URQWHAADHI78xSwqILUur27uTn.1>



The International Project Fair is October 10 and 11 in El Paso at the DoubleTree Hotel. Register now for the International Project Fair at

<https://rotary5520.org/events/international-project-fair/>



The International Project Fair brings together Rotarians from our District 5520, from our Mexican neighbors, District 4110 and our Colorado neighbors, District 5470, to share service ideas, seek partners, and strengthen the impact of Rotary in the world. Whether your club is considering a new international project or looking to support existing ones, this is your chance to engage directly with Rotarians making a difference across borders.

If you have any questions regarding our Zoom training or the Project Fair, please contact me rjones9755@aol.com

Hope to see you on-line!
PDG Dick Jones
District Foundation Chair

Why should my club do something for World Polio Day?



**WORLD
POLIO DAY**
24 OCTOBER



Each year on **24 October**, Rotary and Rotaract clubs around the world join with our partners, health organizations, and public health advocates to mark World Polio Day. You have a critical role in this by hosting events and activities to increase awareness about polio and raise funds toward eradicating it.

To build on the success of last year, we need your help!

<https://msgfocus.rotary.org/q/12FVqmUrejUpmTu7kGwp69vg/vv>

Don't
MISS OUT!

Click the Facebook logo to see these and all the other great things going on in our District! Get a Facebook page and join in!



Rotary and Literacy: Strengthening Communities Through Education

Rotary's Area of Focus:

Basic Education and Literacy

Rotary International has designated basic education and literacy as one of its **seven areas of focus**, aiming to strengthen communities' capacity to support learning for all ages, reduce gender disparities in education, and increase adult literacy worldwide.



September is Basic Education and Literacy Month

What does Literacy mean to you?



Is it simply reading a book or a newspaper or a road sign? Literacy is about more than just words and meaning. It is important because it affects peoples' lives directly, impacting their chances of employment, level of income and type of occupation. Research shows that higher literacy skills can lead to better jobs, increased incomes and greater productivity.

Literacy skills also affect social status, level of political participation, opportunities for cultural expression, health, the survival of languages, access to social services and opportunities to learn. Having good literacy skills enhances a country's quality of life by reducing poverty, lowering unemployment, lessening the need for public assistance and encouraging better parenting.

No - literacy is more than just reading the latest James Patterson book. It is self respect, dignity and hope for a better future. Think about how important literacy really is when you have your next club literacy project and do your share to help.



“ Literacy is a bridge from misery to hope ”

Kofi Annan
Nobel Peace Prize
Secretary General of the United Nations

LITERACY YEAR ROUND - JOIN THE BASIC EDUCATION AND LITERACY ROTARY ACTION GROUP!



BASIC EDUCATION
AND LITERACY
Rotary Action Group



CLICK HERE

<https://belrag.org/>



Where is the ... District Governor



On August 28th Deborah and I finished a series of three wonderful meetings with Rotary clubs in Texico/Farwell, Melrose and Clovis. We continue to be deeply inspired by the good work these clubs are doing to further the Rotary mission of creating lasting change for the better in their communities. On our way home we took a short detour to the Bosque Redondo Memorial, which is located on the grounds of the historic Fort Sumner, headquarters of the Bosque Redondo Indian Reservation where over 400 Mescalero Apache and 7,000 Navajo were held as prisoners of war. The museum tells their stories and is well worth the detour.



The Clovis Rotary Club was generous in their support of the Year of Cheer initiative and provided these gifts, which are now in my home office. I'll be delivering them to UNM Children's Hospital soon. Please participate in this District wide service project to bring cheer and smiles to hospitalized children.

Here are QR codes for their Amazon wish list or to simply donate funds. If I have an upcoming visit, you can also bring gifts to a club meeting at a time that I plan to visit. My calendar is available at

<https://www.rotary5520.org>



UNM Amazon Wish List



El Paso Amazon Wishlist



UNM Donations



El Paso Hospital Donate



CLICK HERE

The State of
Membership
As of 1 July 2025

Come to share ideas about how club and district leaders are improving the club experience for members and participants

Membership 45 minute You Tube video from Rotary International. Ideas to improve membership. To get new members and to keep the ones you have. Get some new ideas!



**Presenting The 2026 Float
Unite For Good
Rotary Presidential Message
‘Unite for Good’
Tournament of Roses Theme
“The Magic in Teamwork”**

<https://www.rotaryfloat.org/>

Our 2026 Rose Parade float bursts with color and energy, celebrating the beauty of teamwork in nature — and in service to others. Set in a lush, dreamlike landscape, the Float showcases a diverse gathering of iconic wildlife working in harmony, just as Rotarians unite for good across borders and around the world to create lasting change.

Towering giraffes, playful zebras, and a curious hippo gather beneath blooming trees of brilliant pink and orange. A vibrant toucan peeks from the treetops, while a green snake winds gently along a branch. Nearby, a flamingo surveys the scene, adding elegance and balance to the habitat. Toward the front, a proud tiger watches over her two cubs — a reminder of both strength and nurturing.

Every element, from the cascading floral canopies to the dynamic animal poses, represents the strength found in community, diversity, and collective purpose.

This year’s float reminds us that when we come together, whether in the wild or the world of service, there is **Magic in Teamwork**.



To all Rotarians in District 5520:

You’re invited to the International Project Fair (formerly Bi-District Conference) on **October 10–11 in El Paso, Texas**—a unique opportunity to connect with fellow Rotarians, learn about global grant projects, and explore ways we are doing good in the world.

This fair brings together Rotarians from our District 5520, from our Mexican neighbors to the south, District 4110 and our Colorado neighbors to the north, District 5470, to share service ideas, seek partners, and strengthen the impact of Rotary in the world.

Whether your club is considering a new international project or looking to support existing ones, this is your chance to engage directly with Rotarians making a difference across borders.

**Registration is now open.
Click | Connect | Engage**

CLICK HERE

Rotary

District 5520



Rotary **Leadership** Institute

When: October 3th at 1:00 to 4:30pm
October 4th 8:00 am to 4:00pm

Where: Truth or Consequences

**Holiday Inn \$159.00, 2201 N Date St,
Truth or Consequences. NM 87901
575-894-3900**

Why: RLI is a grassroots coalition of Rotary districts implementing a leadership development program for future leaders of Rotary Clubs.

To register

CLICK HERE



The Rotary Leadership Institute seeks to provide quality education in Rotary knowledge and leadership skills to Rotarians interested in developing their Rotary participation and to those identified by Rotary Clubs as having a potential in club leadership. These educational opportunities will teach skills that will benefit the members in their lives and in their volunteer service.



What an astonishing thing a book is !

"It's a flat object made from a tree with flexible parts on which are imprinted lots of funny dark squiggles. But one glance at it and you're inside the mind of another person, maybe somebody dead for thousands of years. Across the millennia, an author is speaking clearly and silently inside your head, directly to you. Writing is perhaps the greatest of human inventions, binding together people who never knew each other, citizens of distant epochs. Books break the shackles of time. A book is proof that humans are capable of working magic."

Carl Sagan ; Cosmos "The Persistence Of Memory"

Larry A. Lunsford selected to be 2027-28 Rotary International president

By Etelka Lehoczky



Larry A. Lunsford, a member of the Rotary Club of Kansas City-Plaza, Missouri, USA, is the selection of the nominating committee to become Rotary International's president for 2027-28. He will officially become the president-nominee on 15 September if no other candidates challenge him.

Lunsford attended Truman State University in Kirksville, Missouri, on an academic scholarship, earning bachelor's and master's degrees in accounting. He first encountered Rotary when he received a Rotary Foundation Ambassadorial Scholarship to spend the 1981-82 academic year at the University of Newcastle in Australia.

A certified public accountant, Lunsford spent seven years working for Ernst & Young before joining a family-owned business, Bernstein-Rein Advertising, in 1990. He is currently executive vice president and chief financial officer for the Bernstein group of companies. He has held positions on the boards of the Kansas City Spirit Festival and the Variety Club as well as serving as director of a local bank

and treasurer of the Epilepsy Foundation for the Heart of America. He has also served on Truman State University's alumni and foundation boards and received the university's Distinguished Service Award.

Lunsford joined the Rotary Club of Kansas City-Plaza in 1991 and has since served as district governor (2001-02), RI director (2013-15), and trustee of The Rotary Foundation (2021-25, vice chair 2024-25). He has been a member of RI committees, including the Executive Committee (chair 2014-15), Membership Growth Committee (chair 2016-18), and Nominating Committee for President of RI (chair 2023-24). He also has served on The Rotary Foundation's Executive Committee (chair 2023-24), Finance Committee (chair 2022-23 and 2024-25), and Participant Experience Committee (chair 2023-24).

Lunsford has been awarded The Rotary Foundation Distinguished Service Award, The Rotary Foundation Citation for Meritorious Service, and the RI Service Above Self Award. He and his wife, Jill Lunsford, have two children and one grandchild. They are Major Donors, Bequest Society members, multiple Paul Harris Fellows, Benefactors of The Rotary Foundation, and Sustaining Members.



Here's the Taipei registration link:

<https://convention.rotary.org/en-us/2026-rotary-convention-taipei>



"Over the past three years, Just Be A Child has worked with the Kenyan Rotary clubs distributing 21,000 books to 249 schools, reaching another 100,000 children."



The most books donated to charity in seven days is 657,061 and was achieved by the Rotary Club of Jamaica from 1 to 8 May 2010. The books were distributed primarily to the Jamaica Library Service and also to schools (kindergarten through high school level).

For ongoing book distribution, Dolly Parton's Imagination Library has given out over 186 million books globally to date, and Books For Africa has shipped over 41 million books, making them two of the largest book donation programs.

EL PASO WINE & FOOD FESTIVAL
• EST. 2013 •

Culinary Institute
by Southwest University

It's time! Ticket are on sale now for 12th Annual
elpasowinefest.com

Grand Tasting
Saturday, November 1st
Gastronomic Battle
Sunday, November 2nd

Dia de los Muertos Weekend
Savor the Sip / Celebrate the Spirit

FIRST TEE
DESERT CLASSIC
In Memory of Jonathan Rogers

PRESENTED BY

WestStar

Rotary
West El Paso

first tee
greater el paso

Friday
October 24
2025

Painted Dunes Golf Course
12000 McCombs St
1:00 pm Shotgun

(915) 252-6511
FirstTeeDesertClassic.com

BET YOU DIDN'T KNOW WE HAD A BLOG SITE FOR ROTARY INTERNATIONAL?!?



**LOTS OF
GOOD
STUFF!**

Rotary 360 | The official blog of Rotary International

THE YUCCA

Greeting Rotarians

Send me your article material to the same email address rotarymaterial@gmail.com.

Keep your articles short and concise. Photos are OK, just remember to put down the names of the folks in the photo. We (the Yucca readers) would like to see flyers of your upcoming fundraisers and events and photos of the aftermath. We will keep you informed of the district happenings and upcoming events, conferences, seminars, training etc. Send me flyers of your fundraisers.

Learn how to use Facebook in order to get ALL your club activities on the District Facebook page.

Let's keep it simple - The deadline for articles will be the first of every month. I will get the newsletter out as soon as I can after that.

Don Powell

Send me flyers and other information about your events and fundraisers.

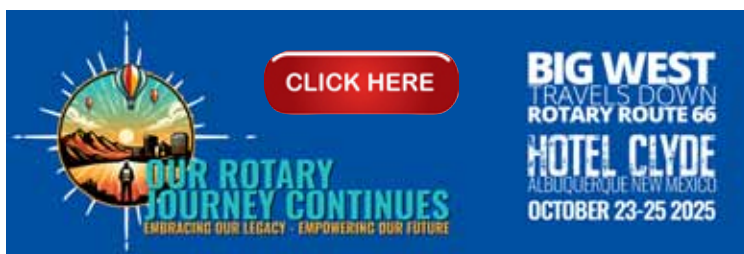
Who knows - we may want to come for a visit!

https://donpowell.biz/District-Newsletter/starting_rotary_club_en.pdf



STARTING A ROTARY CLUB

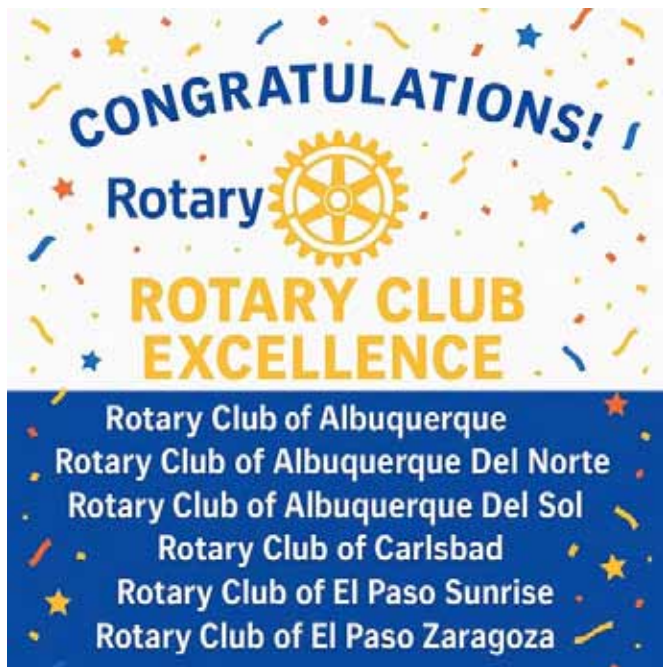
CLICK HERE



Oh! No!

If you forgot to register before the deadline, I suggest you beg and plead with Tom Walker to let you sign up!

Tom Walker
(505) 237-0237
ftwalker1@comcast.net

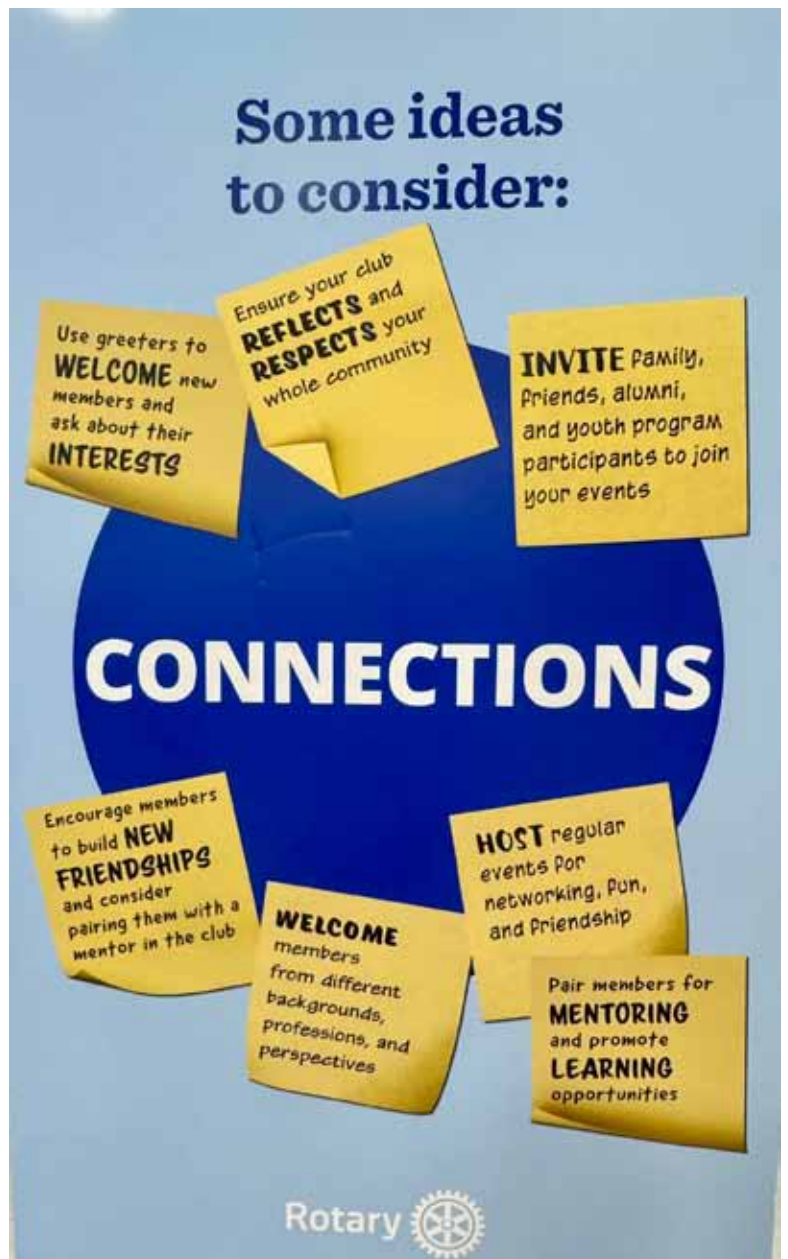


August 2025

Together, we end polio



End Polio Now! Newsletter



**DISTRICT LEADERSHIP SESSION
FEBRUARY 27-28, 2026
SOCORRO, NEW MEXICO**



**E-CLUB
GLOBAL
TRAVELERS**



Another great Rotary Fellowship to join!
<https://www.rotaryglobaltravelers.com/>