

# Rotarians in Action



January/February 2025

## My Rotary “Why?”

By PDG Scott McLaughlin, District Technology Chair/Webmaster

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We are often asked the question “What is Rotary?” I think it is better to ask the question “Why am I a Rotarian?” For me personally I can only express, for reasons I believe, that one person can create lasting, global change. Through Rotary, I am part of something greater than myself—a network of action that amplifies my impact, turns my passions into progress, and permits me to contribute to a legacy of service that my family and friends can emulate.

- **I am a Rotarian** because I believe that one person can make a difference, and through Rotary, I can help change the world. Whether it's eradicating polio, providing clean water to Haitians, or empowering the next generation of Rotarians, Rotary has provided me the skills and tools to create a lasting impact beyond what I could achieve alone.
- **I am a Rotarian** because through Rotary I will leave the world better than I found it. Rotary has allowed me to be part of something greater than myself, building a legacy of service, compassion, and hope that will continue long after I am gone.

- **I am a Rotarian** because Rotary makes it possible to dream big and serve even bigger. Through my global connections, I have made so many true friends that would have never been in my sphere of influence. I've been able to touch lives in my community and across the world, proving that the power of one person's dedication can ripple across generations.
- **I am a Rotarian** because I want to live a life of purpose. Rotary transformed me into a force for good, amplifying my ability to create meaningful, lasting change that reaches far beyond my own time and place.
- **I am a Rotarian** because I believe action speaks louder than words. Rotary has connected me with service-driven individuals who turn passion into progress, making it possible to tackle the world's biggest challenges together.

Together, we can “Do Good in the World.”

Scott McLaughlin, PDG 2019-20, MD, PHS  
Kearney Dawn Rotary Club

## More Rotary Reasons



In a world often divided, Rotary stands as a beacon of unity and hope. Our projects bring together people of all races, religions, genders, ideologies, and economic backgrounds, uniting us in a shared purpose: to do good in the world.

—John Hewko

**John Hewko** is General Secretary and CEO of Rotary International and The Rotary Foundation. He is the son of Ukrainian immigrants.



In his address to the International Assembly in Florida last week, RI

President-elect *Mário César Martins de Camargo*, asked members to *Unite for Good* by embracing growth, service, and connection as he outlined a plan to expand “the best-qualified team of volunteers on the planet.”



De Camargo is a member of the Rotary Club of Santo André, São Paulo, Brazil.



# Welcome!



**Grand Island** club President *David Plond* welcomes new members *Nicki Stoltenberg* and *Kari Fisk*.



**Holdrege** member induction: *Karen Stute*, Membership Chair; *Bob Isaacson*, Sponsor; *Rick Bergman*, New Member; *Dan Janssen*, Club President.



**Holdrege** Membership Chair *Karen Stute*, with new member *Ed Schrock*, president *Dan Janssen*, and sponsor *Robert McCormick*.



**McCook's** newest member is *Anna LeBay*, who had the privilege of being inducted by PDG *Deb McCaslin*, with club President *Angie Swanson*.

The **Minden** club welcomes *Johnie Kamery* (center) of Highstreet Insurance & Financial Services - Great Plains, representing Minden's first ever corporate member! The beauty of a corporate membership is a company can send anyone from their entity to club meetings to keep their business involved and updated with all that the club does! Pictured with *Dena Beck*, *Kevin Raun*, DGE *Sarah Cathcart*, and club president *Luke Poore*.



## High Country PETS!

*You want to be there!*

Getting ready to be the president of your club? The President Elect Training Seminar (PETS) is for you! PETS is designed to provide essential and current information to incoming club presidents in order to prepare you for an effective and successful year.

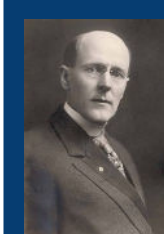
Presidents-elect (PEs) and President-elect Nominees (PENs) will hear addresses by top Rotary leaders and motivational speakers, attend small group sessions on various topics led by knowledgeable and experienced discussion leaders, and network and exchange ideas with your colleagues from four Rotary districts.

Your District Governor Elect, *Sarah Cathcart*, and other district leaders will be there to share their district goals and inform you of the support they will offer. We look forward to seeing you there!

**High Country PETS 2025 is**  
**March 21-23, 2025, in Loveland, Colorado.**

More members added between December 1 and February 14 (per DACdb):

Cheyenne County	Jody Aure
	Ruth Ann Emerson
	Jeff Kromberg
McCook	Dennis G. Berry
Kearney Dawn	Anne Johnson
	Jack Kreman
Lexington	Miguel Angel Manzo
North Platte	Tammy Dugger



The foundation upon which Rotary is built is friendship; on no less firm foundation could it have stood.

—Paul P. Harris

**District 5630 RYE is all over the map this month!**

**Starting at home in Nebraska:** The hosted students (9) and outbound students (5) and their parents, plus Rotarians and Rotexes are gathering in Hastings February 28 and March 1 for Outbound Orientation. **Hastings Sunrise** Rotarians are supporting the event by home hosting students and adults overnight and assisting with meals for the group over the weekend. Students will be doing community service projects at Crane Meadows near Wood River and in Hastings.

**On the road to Tulsa:** Our students and RYE committee members traveled to the annual South Central Rotary Youth Exchange (SCRYE) winter conference in Tulsa, Okla. This multi-district SCRYE organization provided our continuing education and an opportunity for 115 students to gather and socialize for the weekend. It was a long ride, but a great bonding and sharing time. District Youth Protection Officer *Jim Delahunty* of Ogallala attended several sessions about his role and responsibilities. Be prepared to hear more from him in the coming months. *Dick and Paula Witt* had a few proud moments when their son, *Scott Witt* (RYE to Sweden, 1993-94) was the keynote speaker at the conference. He received many accolades (and invitations to join Rotary) following his presentation.

**Back in Nebraska:** Districts 5630 and 5650 RYE leaders are finding more ways to work together and share resources.

1. After gathering students from Ogallala to Lincoln, 12 students plus Rotarians shared a 15-passenger van for the trip to Oklahoma.
2. We received an application for exchange from a student living in Summerland, which lies in District

5650, but her closest sponsoring Rotary Club is O'Neill, located in District 5630. Youth Exchange Officers (YEOs) from both districts are working out the logistics for her exchange.

3. *Paula* was contacted by the Sandy Creek High School principal who asked us to place two international students at their school next year (2025-2026). Located in Fairfield in district 5650, this presents another opportunity for our two districts to make Rotary Magic happen!
4. Finally, Outbound Orientation at the end of this month continues to be a joint effort to educate outbound students and their families in preparation for their exchanges. This year three students will be headed to Japan, one to Brazil and another TBA (South America).

**And back to RYE being all over the map:** Longstanding RYE Committee members, *Lisa Jorgenson* (**Gothenburg**), *Todd Madison* (**Valentine**) and *Paula Witt* (**Hastings**) will be heading to Mérida, Yucatan, Mexico for an international gathering of YEOs. This is perfect timing as we can meet personally with our exchange partners, make exchange agreements, and accept international students into our communities and schools.

If your Rotary Club has not yet responded to Paula about hosting your student in 2025-2026, please contact her ASAP!

**Paula Witt**

Rotary Youth Exchange Chair  
Hastings Sunrise Rotary Club  
[wittinc@icloud.com](mailto:wittinc@icloud.com)  
402-460-0005



*Alvaro, Gothenburg's RYE student, visited the club in late December. Alvaro, who comes from Avila, Spain, shared information about himself, his home, and his family.*

**Grand Island's** RYE student, *Anna*, educated the club about her home in Barcelona, Spain. She spoke of Spain's diverse culture, religion, landscapes and flamenco dance classes, with beautiful pictures of Spanish cuisine.

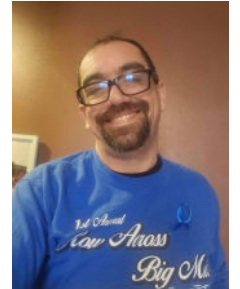




# Rotary



## Rotary Action Group Against Slavery



January was National Human Trafficking Awareness Month, with January 11 designated as National Human Trafficking Awareness Day. The Department of Homeland Security hosts a [Blue Campaign](#) each year which “is a national public awareness campaign designed to educate the public, law enforcement, and other industry partners to recognize the indicators of human trafficking, and how to appropriately respond to possible cases” as mentioned on the DHS website. They ask the public to show their support in the fight to end human trafficking by wearing blue on January 11. *Thank you to those who sent in a picture of themselves wearing blue!*

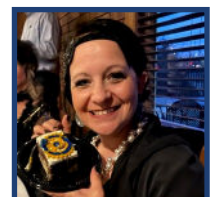
Last month on January 11, the Nebraska Attorney General *Mike Hilgers* and *Colonel John Bolduc* along with members from state and local law enforcement, senators, child advocacy centers and many non-profit workers gathered at the state Capitol to watch Nebraska governor *Jim Pillen* read and sign a proclamation designating January National Human Trafficking Awareness Month in Nebraska. Each year during this press conference *Mike Hilgers* releases/shares the previous year’s Nebraska Human Trafficking Task Force report. In this report you will find new bills and legislation, up-to-date statistics, breakdown of human trafficking cases, upcoming events and many other resources for our state. I have linked the 2024 report here: [Human Trafficking Task Force Report](#).



The Task Force has also rolled out a new poster displaying the Nebraska Human Trafficking Hotline number: **833-757-5665 (833-PLS-LOOK)**. I don’t know about you, but when I am anxious or in stressful situations, I have trouble recalling information, so I encourage everyone to make note of the number by storing it in your phone. That way if you ever see something suspicious and would like to report it you won’t have to waste precious time looking up the number. Even if you are unsure about what you are seeing, please make a call. Every law enforcement officer I have ever talked to stated they would rather be called to a false alarm than have a potential trafficker get away and the victim not be rescued.

My club’s January project was distributing these posters throughout McCook and surrounding communities. We hung them on public bulletin boards, in restaurants, convenient stores, and public bathrooms. The posters are free to the public, so if you would like some to distribute in your own community, please let me know.

**Angie Swanson**  
District Chair, [RAGAS](#)  
(Rotary Action Group Against Slavery)  
McCook Rotary Club  
[AngieSwanson@hotmail.com](mailto:AngieSwanson@hotmail.com)  
308-352-6016



# MAGICAL MOMENTS



The last week of January, which was Human Trafficking Prevention Month, **Gothenburg** Rotarians spread awareness of human trafficking through the Red Sand Project.

More than 51,000 reports of human trafficking are reported every year in the U.S. via phone calls, texts, webchats, emails or online tips to the National Human Trafficking Hotline. Human trafficking is the fastest growing criminal enterprise and it impacts every community in the world.

Did you know...



- There are an estimated 50 million victims of human trafficking worldwide — including about 4 million in the U.S. — whether in forced marriages, forced labor or for sexual exploitation.
- In the U.S., 75% of trafficked victims are exploited for sex, 25% are trafficked for labor.
- Children are particularly vulnerable. Nearly half of all human trafficking victims are younger than 18.
- Victims come from all demographics, all communities.

The millions of grains of red sand poured represent the millions of victims of human trafficking who have fallen through the cracks. If you see something suspicious, say something. You just might save a life. Learn more at [redsandproject.org](https://www.redsandproject.org).



Posted by PDG, *Deb McCaslin* of **Broken Bow**: "Great fun yesterday meeting with the Interact Club at Mosi Secondary School in Zimbabwe. We are in the process of launching a pen pal project between these students and student members of District 5630 in Nebraska. They are so excited about making friends and learning about how other schools operate. The questions about Nebraska were spot on, especially about our winters and how our homes keep out the cold. This is an exciting adventure!!!! Thanks everyone!"



**Holdrege** Rotarians helped pack about 300 bags for Backpack Blessings.



In 2025 **Cheyenne County** will begin serving as the official operator of the Southern Nebraska Panhandle Toys for Tots program, which has been organized by the Gudahl family. The program collects new, unwrapped toys and distributes them to children who may otherwise go without during the holiday season.

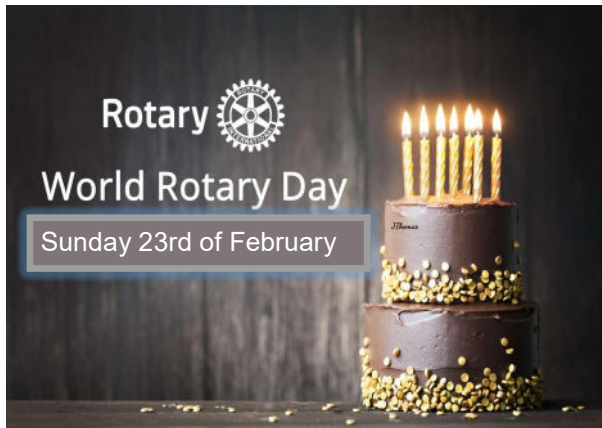


The **Hastings Noon** and **Hastings Sunrise** clubs came together on February 11 to pack 19,440 meals at Hearts and Hands Against Hunger.

Service above Self is fun!



## UPCOMING EVENTS



### Topic:

## Rotary Youth Exchange

**Wednesday, March 19**  
**11:30 a.m. MT/12:30 p.m. CT**

Via Zoom: <https://tinyurl.com/2e2ewz9x>

**Hosted by**

**Dena Beck**, District 5630 Trainer (Minden)  
**Paula Witt**, RYE Chair (Hastings Sunrise)

*Submit your topic ideas!*  
*to Dena ([dena68959@gmail.com](mailto:dena68959@gmail.com)) or*  
*Scott ([dg.2019@5630mail.org](mailto:dg.2019@5630mail.org))*

**OGALLALA 2025 DISTRICT CONFERENCE** District 5630

### Harvesting the Magic of Rotary

## April 25th & 26th

**CONFERENCE SPEAKERS**

**Davanne Moul**  
Senior National Sales Director  
Mary Kay

**ADAMS BANK & TRUST**  
Saturday Night Dinner Sponsor

**PRIP Mark Maloney**  
Past Rotary International President & RI Foundation Trustee Chair

**PDG Pedro & Elba**  
Las Paredas - Argentina | District 4945

**Shawna Secker**  
District Governor 5390  
Montana | SCRYE

**TASTE OF THE WORLD**

- Inspiration & Leadership Growth  
- Networking & Fellowship  
- Celebrate & Recharge

**REGISTER NOW!**

**Robert Evenen**  
Nebraska Secretary of State

**Whitney Smith**  
District Governor 5470  
Southern Colorado

**the LAST CHANCE**

**Sponsors**

**Platinum:**  
McQuillan & Wendell PC, L.L.O.

**Gold:**  
Jessica Leibhart, DO  
Araucker CENTRAL HOME

**Silver:**  
FARM BUREAU FINANCIAL SERVICES  
Mary Eisenhammer  
-LuRae & Mike Hagan

**Bronze:**  
-Bob & Jo Mayber  
Pinnacle Bank

### Applications Now Open for Great Plains RYLA

## July 7-11

- Open to high school sophomores and juniors.
- You must be able to attend camp from noon on Monday to noon on Friday.
- You must submit an application, which will be reviewed by your local club. After review, your club will schedule an interview. If you are accepted, you will receive a scholarship to attend RYLA 2025.

Go to [greatplainsryla.org](http://greatplainsryla.org) to apply. **Applications close on March 31.**

**Want to join the RYLA staff?** Apply today, and be part of this incredible experience. Apply at [greatplainsryla.org/volunteeropportunities](http://greatplainsryla.org/volunteeropportunities). Applications close March 15th.

## NOMINATE OUR 2027-2028 DISTRICT 5630 GOVERNOR!

We are now accepting nominations for the District Governor of Rotary District 5630 for the 2027-2028 Rotary year!

Nominees must have at least 6 years of Rotary experience and have served as a past club president.

If you or someone you know possesses the passion, experience, and leadership skills needed to take on this significant responsibility, we encourage you to submit a nomination.

send nominations to

[lrenacbeckius@gmail.com](mailto:lrenacbeckius@gmail.com)  
[arlanafmungla@gmail.com](mailto:arlanafmungla@gmail.com)

## District 5630 Summit: A Magical Day



At our District 5630 Summit on January 4 at Mid-Plains Community College in North Platte, we were honored to welcome *Amelia Stansell*, The Wonder Woman against Slavery, who delivered a powerful, interactive, and eye-opening presentation filled with raw insights and lifesaving information. The presentation and superhero skit were also very entertaining!

Following Amelia's session, some of our own superheroes shared their expertise on the Rotary Foundation (PDG *Bob Mayber*); membership (District Chair *Aaron Colwell* and PDG *Deb McCaslin*), and Public Image and Branding (PDG *Scott McLaughlin*). A special thanks to our sponsors: Molly O'Holleran, Angie & Michal Swanson, Nancy & Ron Cool, William & Kay Lohmiller, and the following Rotary Clubs: Kearney Dawn, Kearney Noon, Grand Island, Broken Bow, Lexington, and Grand Island Sunrise.

**THANK YOU TO OUR 2024-25 DISTRICT 5630 SPONSORS**



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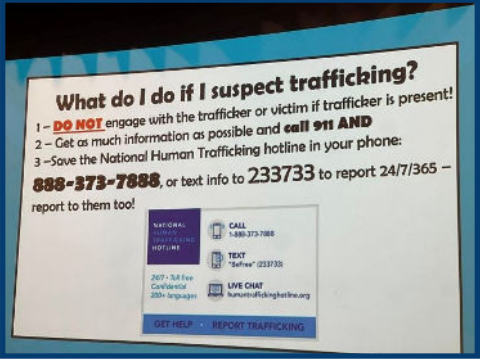
TRIANGLE BAR RANCH

## Congrats to these Paul Harris Fellows

Club President *David Plond* presented 5 **Grand Island** Rotarians with Paul Harris+ pins on February 11.



And in **North Platte**, Club President *Brian Phares* received his Paul Harris +7 pin.



**2024-25 RI President: Stephanie Urchick | District Governor: Lorena Beckius**  
Send your club news items and photos to Newsletter Editor Cheryl Bryan ([daa@5630mail.org](mailto:daa@5630mail.org))