

# Rotarians in Action



May/June 2025

## It Began with Rotary Ann

By Cheryl Bryan, District Executive Secretary/Newsletter Editor

daa@5630mail.org or annieb44@gmail.com



My Rotary story begins with a title many of you have never heard: Rotary Ann. That was the designation given to the wives of Rotarians when Bill, my husband, became a Rotarian in Kempton

Park, South Africa, in the late 1970s. It was not until 1987, because of a U.S. Supreme Court decision, that women were permitted to join Rotary. As a mother of young children, I was happy in that supportive, inactive role. (You can read more about it on [The Rotary History Fellowship](#) web page.) Even in that supportive role, I met the first of the amazing people I would come to see as typical among Rotarians.



My next experience with Rotary came in 2009, when Bill was invited to join the **Imperial Rotary Club**. I didn't join until 2012, at Bill's invitation. He was club president, the club secretary had resigned, and they needed a replacement. So right away, I had a job to do, a reason to be engaged, a reason to attend every meeting. I was also able to attend two President-Elect Training Seminars (PETS) with him—the international exposure and experience that gave me a Rotary heart before I joined.

My six years in Imperial were blessed with opportunities to serve not only with the local club but on a district level. PDG Tom Mortimer (2016-17) asked me to take the role of District Public Image Chair. At the Zone Training Institute that year in Denver, there were all of five district public image chairs, seated in a circle in a room they had designated at the last minute, as if they weren't expecting us. Rotary had finally decided that it was okay to brag about all the good we were doing in the world, and Public Image Chairs were assigned to be that voice.



2016 Zone Training Institute in Denver, with AG Bill Bryan, DG Tom Mortimer, PDG Dian Edwards, and Foundation Chair Scott McLaughlin.

I continued as District Public Image Chair with PDG Jerry Milner (2017-18) and PDG Dale Schultz (2018-19), serving a year as a Regional Assistant Rotary Public Image Coordinator (ARPIC) before moving to Tennessee. PDG Dian Edwards (2012-13) also encouraged me to take on more and more responsibilities; we worked together in an effort to start an e-club after we both left the area. I'm grateful to the leaders who entrusted me with those responsibilities. It shows how many opportunities Rotary provides for you if you're just willing to show up!

In 2020, at the beginning of his term, PDG Bob Taylor phoned me at our home near Nashville, Tenn. He mentioned that he needed a District Administrative Assistant, I volunteered, he accepted, and I've been serving in that position ever since. It's been a great job—though a little stressful around PETS and District Conference registration time—but I couldn't have asked for better people to work with than the Rotarians of District 5630. It's been fun adjusting every year to a new "DG boss" and other District Leaders.

Thanks for the ride! I'm going to miss you all and the joyful welcomes and hugs every time I was able to show up in person for PETS and the District Conference. My very best to you and to the clubs of District 5630 as you continue in Service above Self.



With DG Lore Beckius at 2025 District Conference

*I am so pleased to pass the newsletter baton to Ariana Mungia, who has been doing a stellar job as our District Public Image Chair. It's such a perfect fit! I thought it would be appropriate to include her Rotary story here. When I read it, it confirmed my opinion that the newsletter is in good hands.*

*–Cheryl*

## My Rotary “Why?”

I joined Rotaract in January 2022, not fully knowing what I was getting into. All I knew was that I wanted to do something in the community I grew up in, something that made a difference.

Rotary opened up a world of service, friendships, and opportunities I hadn't even imagined. It has helped me grow in ways I hadn't thought possible. My district has become my family. They've stood by me through the hardest moments in my life and cheered me on through my greatest achievements.

I've always felt a deep pull to help people battling addiction, but it's become so much more personal. I've seen it up close, in my own family, in the people I love. I lost a cousin to overdose, and in the same year, I lost my daughters' dad. These losses opened my heart even more to how deeply addiction touches all of us, not just in our communities, but in our own homes and hearts. I want to make sure people know they're not alone in their struggles, that there's hope, help, and support available when they need it most.

Just a month later, at Zone Institute in San Antonio in 2024, I watched a video presented by the Rotary Action Group on Mental Health Initiatives. The story was about a woman who, like me, lost her daughter's dad and felt powerless in the face of that tragedy. That moment opened my eyes to a path forward. After that, I went home, searched for Rotary Action Groups focused on addiction, joined a Zoom meeting with the North America Rotary Action Group for Addiction Prevention, shared my story, and soon I was serving on their board, turning my pain into purpose.

Nearly one year later, just a week away from the 2025 Rotary International Convention in Calgary, I'm preparing to help lead overdose training with OPVEE and raise awareness about the opioid crisis on an international scale.

Today, I serve in roles I never thought I'd be ready for, from helping promote the Rotary International Convention in Taipei in 2026, to mentoring Interactors, preparing for my Rotaract presidency year, serving on a Rotary Action Group board, holding positions at the district level, and now, I'm honored to take over our district newsletter and carry forward the great work Cheryl Bryan has done over the years.

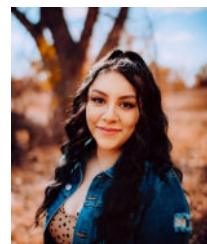
These roles have challenged me, strengthened me, and opened doors I never imagined, all within a wonderful international organization that brings people together across borders.

I'm proud of how far I've come and excited for all that's still to come. Service isn't a one-time action, it's a way of life, a deep commitment to making a difference wherever we go. I'm especially grateful to our district for trusting me with these roles, and to all the Rotarians I've crossed paths with who inspire me, teach me, and show me what service truly means.

My hope is that through my roles and experiences, you realize you're not alone, you're part of something bigger. Whatever your passions, whatever your skills, there's a place for you in Rotary. Get involved and see the impact you can make, whether it's close to home or across the world, because together, we can achieve so much more.

### Ariana Mungia

District Public Image Chair  
Lake Mac Rotaract  
Ogallala Rotary Club  
arianamungia@gmail.com



District 5630 was well represented by Rotarians, Rotaractors, and members of the New Generations program at the Young Professional Forum in Ensenada, Mexico June 13 and 14. They joined passionate changemakers from Zones 29, 25A and 25B to learn, connect, and collaborate on ways to strengthen Rotary's impact—both locally and globally.



# MAGICAL MOMENTS OF 2024-25 - 1



**Chappell:** Club members worked together to make burritos, raising \$2000 for their annual college and RYLA Scholarships. *Milt Rogers, Connie Loos, Anita Nein, and Sam Daily* check out the new water fountains they donated to the Chappell swimming pool. *Milt and Anita*



spoke to the Creek Valley 6th graders about polio, its history, and hope for its eradication. —Shauna Mashek

**St. Paul:** The **Interact** Club, led by Rotarian Riley Peters, provided many Magical Moments for the club. In December, they raised money by wrapping Christmas gifts for the community. In January, they showed up at Mercy Meals in Grand Island to help pack meals. In May, they were amazing at trash pickup along Highway 281. In June, they helped accommodate 300 BRAN (Bike Ride Across Nebraska) participants.—Katie Mathews



A most memorable moment for the **Holdrege** club was being named **Large Club of the Year** at the District Conference in Ogallala. Representing the club are Membership Chair *Karen Stute*, President *Dan Janssen*, Robert McCormick, Secretary *Lane Schultz*, and Treasurer *Kim Klein*.



**North Platte Noon** Rotary assembled 50 care packages for our soldiers. Our members came together—donating items, funds, and time—to create personalized packages filled with encouragement and essentials.

With the help of a district grant covering additional supplies and postage, the packages were thoughtfully assembled by the club and sent through Operation Christmas Card. A true team effort with a lasting impact. —Kirsten Parker

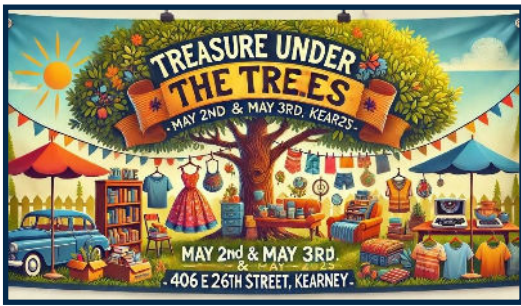


# MAGICAL MOMENTS OF 2024-25 - 2



**Cambridge Area** Rotarian *Alynn Ahlemeyer* visited the Arapahoe, Cambridge, and Southwest Kindergarten classes to share with them the story of Josh the Otter. This story is based on a child named Joshua who unfortunately drowned. The story talks about water safety. Our club feels this is an important message for our children. After the reading of the story each Kindergarten student received a bag with their own copy of the book, a coloring book and a sticker.

Thank you to our area schools for allowing Cambridge Area Rotary Club to come share this message.—Debbi Runner



Above: *Gary Anderson, Dave Lenz, and Norm Westerbuhr*. Right: *Audrey Kauders and Sue Hardessen* — pleased with the money raised!



**Kearney Noon** Rotary has been active with past fundraising projects such as Dancing with the Stars, Travelog, and RYLA. Our primary current project is the Dolly Parton Imagination Library (Literacy).

In Spring 2025, Noon members brainstormed, created and implemented a fresh project designed to engage Rotary members and to increase Noon Rotary Club visibility in our community. Our "Treasure Under the Trees": Yard, Plant, Garage Sale involved all club members. The "set up and take down" was lots of work, created camaraderie, and was a fabulous success! All unsold garage sale items were packaged up and donated to the Crossroads Homeless Shelter.

We also provided roving musicians and lemonade. We raised \$2,000 for club projects. We'll do it again next year!! —Sue Hardessen and Cindy Powell



# MAGICAL MOMENTS OF 2024-25 - 3



**McCook Rotary** collaborated with the McCook Police Department, Prairie Plains CASA, Poppin on the Bricks, and Linda Maiden-State Farm to organize National Night Out in August 2024, which included a bike decoration contest, a parade, and families interacting with local heroes: police officers, firefighters, and EMTs.



**Gothenburg:** This collage includes our youth basketball tournaments, RYE student *Alvaro Munoz*, Harvest Festival pavilion party, Magic on Main Street hot dog feed, weekly meeting, Purple Pinky Project, Red Sand Project, roadside cleanup, and the pavilion roofing project.

The Gothenburg club is very active, so this is just a taste, but it's a solid representation of the past year.—Deb Egenberger



# MAGICAL MOMENTS OF 2024-25 - 4



The **Valentine Rotary Club** presented a check to the Heart City Theater Project in the amount of \$4,000. This is one of several projects Rotary has funded in Valentine this year.

The project aims to purchase and rebuild an old theater to provide films and live entertainment for the community.

Other projects include a new slide at the Ecology Park, \$4,000 donated to the Cherry County Ag Society for the Fairground project, and \$2,000 to the Sandhills Cancer Fund. —Laura Vroman

Pictured are from L to R: Sherri Britton, Jerilyn Colburn, Jaime Eggert, Regina Osburn, Danielle Arganbright, Ray Blackford, Jenny Moore, Nadeane Allard, and Joan Johnson



A list of magical events from the **Arnold** club: Open Mic Night with *Buzz Lohmiller* demonstrating different bird calls; Culture Night, enjoying tabletop nachos and learning some trivia about Mexico; *Kay Lohmiller* and *Nancy Cool* handing out treats to the children who came for a combination Trunk or Treat, movie night, and donation collection for PolioPlus with the help of a Purple Pinkie monster. The club, with grant money help, also provided new trees for the Arnold Recreation Area, with the help of *Jose Melendez*, winner of Arnold's Four-Way Test Contest.—Val Daly



# MAGICAL MOMENTS OF 2024-25 - 5



## THIS BIKE IS SPECIAL... & SO ARE YOU!

It was donated to our local Rotary Club. Then it was restored and provided to GIPS. Now it has found you!



Included: helmet, lock & pump. Be safe and enjoy your bicycle!



**Grand Island:** Our District Grant project this year was to help get bicycles for Grand Island Public School's "Families in Transition" program, which provides bicycles to students who need transportation so they can attend school.

We collected 30 donated bicycles; 19 were repaired and distributed; 11 were donated to Orphan Grain Train to be used as scrap/parts for their bicycle program. We also purchased 6 new bicycles for the new school year. All bicycles given to students include a helmet, air pump and lock.

—Tonja Brown



**North Platte Noon** Rotarians had great fun with potential new members at their social at Pal's Brewery on May 29, featuring live music, food, drinks, games, and prizes.—Sonja Voycheske



## Welcome!



**Holdrege** added two new members on May 29. Pictured: *Karen Stute*, Membership Chair; *Roger Allmand*, Sponsor; *Julie Maaske*, new member; *Bethanne Kuck*, new member; and *Dan Janssen*, Club President.



April 24: **St. Paul** welcomed *Brenda Starkey* and *Jordan Robinson* as new members.

### Other members added since May 1

<b>Cambridge</b>	Alynn Ahlemeyer
<b>Grand Island</b>	Joeli Walrath
<b>Kearney</b>	Katherine McLaughlin Megan Meuser-Baker
<b>North Platte</b>	Jodi Hinds Kevin Hinds Kelsey Keady



# The “Plus” in PolioPlus

Musa Muhammed Ali, a farmer in Borno state, Nigeria, received a hand-operated tricycle funded through Rotary’s PolioPlus grants. Now instead of having to pay for transportation when he needs to buy feed for his animals, he can spend that money on other necessities. His life was changed by the “plus” in PolioPlus.

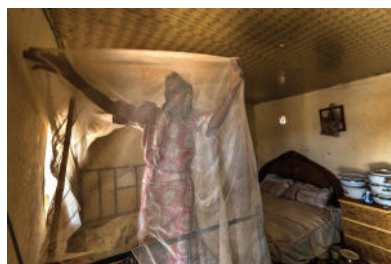
The “plus” in PolioPlus might also be access to water, additional medical treatment, bed nets, or soap. A 2010 study estimates that vitamin A drops given to children at the same time as the polio vaccine have prevented 1.25 million deaths by decreasing susceptibility to infectious diseases.

Here are some examples from Nigeria of the many ways the polio eradication campaign is improving lives.

## Preventing disease

The Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI), of which Rotary is a spearheading partner, funds 91 percent of all immunization staff in the World Health Organization’s Africa region. Eighty-five percent of these staff members give half their time to immunization, surveillance, and outbreak response for other initiatives.

For example, health workers in Borno, Nigeria, use the polio surveillance system, which detects new cases of polio and determines where and how they originated, to find people with symptoms of yellow fever. During a 2018 yellow fever outbreak, this strategy resulted in the vaccination of 8 million people. And during an Ebola outbreak in 2014, health workers used the system to prevent Ebola from spreading beyond 19 reported cases.



**In Borno, malaria kills more people than all other diseases combined.**

World-wide, a child dies of malaria every two minutes. To prevent its spread,

insecticide-treated bed nets are often distributed for free during polio immunization events. In 2017, the World Health Organization, one of Rotary’s partners in the GPEI, organized a campaign to deliver antimalarial medicines to children in Borno using polio eradication staff and infrastructure. The effort reached 1.2 million children. Rotary and its partners also distribute soap and organize health camps to treat other conditions.

## Providing clean water



Within camps for displaced people, vaccinators are sometimes met with frustration. “People say, ‘We don’t have water, and you’re giving us polio

drops,’” says Tunji Funsho, chair of Rotary’s Nigeria PolioPlus Committee. Rotary and its partners responded by funding 31 solar-powered boreholes to provide clean water in northern Nigeria, and the effort is ongoing.

The poliovirus spreads through human waste, so making sure people aren’t drinking or bathing in contaminated water is critical to eradicating the disease.

## Creating jobs

Polio left Isiaku Musa Maaji disabled, with few ways to make a living. At age 24, he learned to build hand-operated tricycles that provide mobility for disabled adults and children, and later started his own business assembling them. Rotary’s Nigeria PolioPlus Committee recently ordered 150 tricycles from Maaji to distribute to polio survivors and others with mobility problems. His relationship with local Rotarians has motivated him to take part in polio vaccination campaigns.

## Improving health care

Health workers and volunteers supported by PolioPlus grants have built an infrastructure for delivering health care and collecting data that, in many parts of the world, didn’t exist before. It’s used to improve overall health care and to fight other diseases, proving that the legacy of PolioPlus is more than eradicating a deadly disease from the planet—it’s also building a stronger health system that provides better access to lifesaving interventions for the world’s most vulnerable children.

*Adapted from article by Vanessa Glavinskas  
Photography by Andrew Esiebo  
[rotary.org/en/plus-polioplus](https://rotary.org/en/plus-polioplus).*

*The polio eradication campaign needs your help to reach every child. Thanks to the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, your contribution will be tripled.*

**Donate to End Polio**



**Thanks for the memories, Lore! We've been blessed by your leadership.**



**SARAH CATHCART** Rotary District 5630

**INSTALLATION DINNER**

**YOU'RE INVITED TO OUR PASSING OF THE PIN DINNER**

— AN EVENING OF CELEBRATION, REFLECTION, AND NEW BEGINNINGS AS WE WELCOME OUR NEW DISTRICT GOVERNOR!

**JULY 18TH, 2025**  
 Social: 5:30pm - 6pm  
 Dinner: 6:00pm  
 Program: 7:00pm

**Ben Younger Band**

**Greg Clark**  
 Keynote Speaker  
 Hot Meals USA

**REGISTER NOW**  
**TICKET: \$40**

Meal, program and donation to Hot Meals

**UNITE FOR GOOD**

<https://forms.gle/ovsapsichv33t6GA>

Please join us in a special evening of celebration, reflection, and new beginnings as we honor our incoming District Governor, Sarah Cathcart, at the **Passing of the Pin Installation Dinner!**

Join us for an evening filled with fellowship, live music by the Ben Younger Band, an inspiring keynote from Greg Clark of Hot Meals USA, and a meaningful program that supports a great cause.

**Friday, July 18, 2025**

**Social Hour: 5:30 PM – 6:00 PM | Dinner: 6:00 PM**

**Program Begins: 7:00 PM**

**First Lutheran Church, 3315 G Avenue, Kearney**

**Tickets: \$40 – Includes dinner, program, and a donation to Hot Meals USA**

**Register Now: [Click here](https://forms.gle/ovsapsichv33t6GA) or scan the QR code**

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



**MICHAEL HOLZFASTER**

**SCOTT MCKELVEY**

**TRIANGLE BAR RANCH**

**2024-25 RI President: Stephanie Urchick | District Governor: Lorena Beckius**