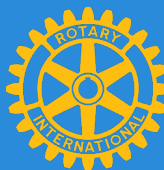


ROTARY REMINDER

Club 63, District 5870

Rotary
Club of Austin



Rotary Reminder (1/7/25) - Mike O'Krent, LifeStories Alive, Founder and CEO

By Matthew Dargis



Mike O'Krent

Founder and CEO, LifeStories Alive & ConvoMasters

Mike O'Krent is the founder of *LifeStories Alive, LLC*, a business specializing in the making of personal history "legacy" videos for families, businesses, and non-profit organizations.

In a life-changing experience, from 1996 through 2000 Mike interviewed Holocaust survivors for Steven Spielberg's Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation, now the USC Shoah Foundation. It was through that experience he discovered the significance and technique of recording the life stories of loved ones, which forms the basis for his LifeStories business.

Since founding the business in 2006, Mike has expanded its expertise beyond capturing personal histories for families to now include recording the histories of businesses and non-profit organizations. The professionally produced videos can be used externally to promote the organization or internally as a training tool for new employees/volunteers.

In 2022 he founded ConvoMasters, an online membership that helps people build better relationships through better conversations.

<https://lifestoriesalive.com>

12-17-24 meeting Highlights

By Darrick Wayne Eugene



Club Meetings/Speakers

January 21, 2025
RCA's DEI 4-Way Test
Public Safety Award
Program

Other Meetings/Events

January 8th
Downtown Breakfast
Cluster

January 10th
Early Act First Knight
(EAFK) - Pacan
Springs Elementary

January 14th
January-VP/Officer
Meeting

January 17th
Early Act First Knight
(EAFK) - Hart
Elementary

January 21st
RCA Board of
Directors Meeting

January 29th
Early Act First Knight
(EAFK) - Wayside
REAL Learning
Academy

January 30th
North Breakfast
Cluster

Club Officers

Darrick Wayne
Eugene
President

Cynthia Brummer
President-Elect

Harold F. Ingersoll
Jr.
Club Foundation (ARCF)
Chair
President-Nominee

Sylvia Holmes
#Past President

Charles Holleman
Club Treasurer

Naomi Val Bourgeois
Club Director

R. John Fox Jr.
Club Director

Mark D. Johnson
Club Director

Kristoffer Sterling
Lands
Club Director

Paul Roger
Williamson
Club Director

Ann Marie Ellis PhD
Global Service Avenue
VP
Club Foundation (ARCF)
Trustee

Teresa Finney
Club Service Avenue VP

Christine Kempff
Club Service Avenue VP

Scott Rainey
Membership Service
Avenue VP

Mary L. Reynolds
Community Service
Avenue VP

Andrew Swanson
Club Foundation (ARCF)
Trustee
Vocational Service
Avenue VP

Vlad Bahrencu
Club Foundation(ARCF)
Vice Chair

Mary Bird Bowman
Club Foundation (ARCF)
Treasurer

Amy M. Jackson
Club Foundation (ARCF)
Trustee

Dale Lowe
Club Foundation (ARCF)
Trustee

Peter R. Meeker
Club Foundation (ARCF)
Trustee

Jaime Phillips
Club Foundation (ARCF)
Trustee

W. Gaines Bagby
Rotary Foundation

(TRF) Liaison
John Anderson
 Barclay IV
 Sergeant-at-Arms
Michael Abelson
 Club Programs Chair
Jennifer Olsen
 Club Executive
 Secretary
 Executive Director

Birthdays

Pauline K. Gubbels
 January 5th
 Paul Roger Williamson
 January 12th
 Joseph Hang
 January 12th
 Barbara Beck
 January 21st
 Pepe V. Lozano
 January 23rd
 Vlad Bahrencu
 January 26th
 Charles Holleman
 January 31st
 Mary L. Reynolds
 February 4th



December 17, 2024 Meeting Highlights

Our last meeting of 2024 was a festive occasion capped by none other than Matias Segura, AISD Superintendent of Schools. However, before Supt. Segura's speech, President Darrick Eugene shared a rotary minute that focused on the founding of Rotary in 1905, where Paul Harris proposed "a very simple project of mutual cooperation and informal friendship, such as each of us once knew it in his village." Darrick could tell by the look of interest that to many members this history was new and appreciated.

The Club was then treated to a reminder about the Helping Hand Home Holiday Party, an annual event where our very own Ronney Reynolds would play Santa to the 30 plus children now living at the facility. Our final announcement before the introduction of the speaker was from President Elect Cindy Brummer, who shared that Past President Harold Ingersoll had accepted the call to be the President Nominee for the 2026-27 rotary year and would be on an upcoming ballot.

It was indeed a special moment when Supt. Segura stepped to the front of the room and recognized Rotarians Mary and Ronney Reynolds, whose daughter, a teacher at Pecan Springs Elementary School recently received an award from the Superintendent. In his speech, he shared several recent accomplishments of the district including, reducing teacher and staff turnover, increasing the four-year graduation rate to 96.3% and various metrics recognizing the districts outstanding financial stewardship.

A little known fact about Superintendent little-known he is the first homegrown Superintendent in the History of AISD. The Rotary Club of Austin serves several schools in AISD through special programs including Pecan Springs Elementary School and Lively Middle School and we look forward to a continuing and lasting relationship with the District and with Superintendent Segura.

###

December Operation Vacation

The Rotary Clubs of **Austin** and **Killeen** hosted a December military family, SSG Abdel Gonzalez, wife Adriana, son Thiago(7) and daughter Victoria (4 mos.) from Ft. Cavazos for an R&R weekend at the Westin Austin @the Domain. Toyota Killeen loaned them a rent car for the weekend and Killeen Rotary gave them gas money for the trip. The hotel was decorated with tremendous holiday decor to make this a very special Christmas for the family. The hotel provided a two night stay with complimentary breakfast each morning. The family had a chance to explore all kinds of unique Christmas events at the Domain nearby the hotel. The County Line at the Lake hosted an "All you can eat" BB Q dinner Saturday nite. The Rotary Club of Austin put together backpacks full of goodies , gift cards, clothes, toys, snacks and Austin souvenirs for each member of the family. The family had a most memorable Christmas in Austin. What a great way to thank our military for their service. Thanks to Rotary and our many sponsors.



Club Meeting Details: Join us in-person or on Zoom!

This week's meeting will be held in-person at Ben Hur Shrine Temple (7811 Rockwood Lane, Austin, Texas) and also live-streamed on Zoom!!

For those of you who can't join us in-person, you're invited to our LIVESTREAM Weekly Lunch Program!

When: Every Tuesday (almost) Noon to 1 PM Central Time (US and Canada)

*****For our Zoom guests, please clear your caches and bookmarked Zoom meeting links and check your time zone settings.*****

QuickLink:

<https://rotary-austin-org.zoom.us/j/85690378301?pwd=bXMxcDBqK1drNmNqZW1ZV3JlZ2FFdz09>

IMPORTANT STEPS TO CONNECT TO OUR WEEKLY MEETING, USING THE FOLLOWING MEETING ID & PASSWORD TO LOGIN:

When the Rotary year begins on July 1st, we have a new meeting link. You should always be able to connect by typing in the Meeting ID and password as shown here.

- 1) Go to zoom.us/join
- 2) Enter the meeting ID in this box and passcode if prompted (Meeting ID: **856 9037 8301** Passcode: **361851**)

While we will have cookies, water or tea available at the meeting, we will not be offering a meal. Please bring your own lunch if you plan on eating.

Join Meeting

Meeting ID or Personal Link Name

Enter Meeting ID or Personal Link Name

Join

Rotary wins Volunteer Float Award at Rose Bowl Tournament of Roses Parade



Rotary Club of Austin Hands-ON Community Service Projects



Rotary Club of Austin hand-on service opportunities

- Early Act First Knight
- Books for Me
- Helping Hands for Kids
- Scholarships
- Career Closet Clothes Drive
- Book Donation
- Clothes for primary students at Pecan Springs
- Rotary Gardening Day at Community First
- Blood Drives
- Rise Against Hunger

- **Early Act First Knight character programs @Harris, Hart, Wayside and Pecan Springs Elementary Schools** teaching students the Four Way Test, character traits to live by and reducing referrals to the office by 50+%-Rotary volunteers can attend the monthly knighting ceremonies and cheer on the selected winners for the current trait and congratulate the parents that attend. (Monthly-master schedule arranged each year with the schools and members are asked to sign up for any date they can attend.)
- **Books for Me program @ Pecan Springs:** Rotary volunteers hand out free books to students (Twice a year-Fall and Spring-volunteers sign up for a 30-45 min. block in advance to hand out books to the children and help them write their name inside so they can take it home and add it to their home library-encourages students to read at home)
- **Helping Hand Home Events for Abused Children(three events per year):**
 - **Splash Day:** Rotary Volunteers organize and volunteer for Splash Day usually between July and August. Volunteers come to the Helping Hand Home and supervise the Splash day activities (water slides, arts & crafts, photo center) and serve lunch to counselors, children and volunteers.
 - **Christmas party:** Rotary Volunteers wrap Christmas presents after the Tuesday Rotary meeting a week before the Christmas party. The night of the Christmas party (usually the second or third Tuesday evening in December for two hours), the volunteers hand out treats, sing Christmas carols, help kids unwrap presents and interact with the children and counselors. Rotary volunteers also serve as Santa and the elf to hand out the Christmas gifts selected by each child with the help of the counselors back in November and sponsored by the Rotary Club.
 - **Cluster Lunch for Helping Hand Home counselors and children:** Rotary Volunteers collect and set up lunch for the Home and serve it to all the children and counselors.(Usually set up in the Spring and event takes about two hours at lunchtime)
- **Scholarships for Selected High School graduates in the Austin area:** Rotary Volunteers sign up to serve on this committee to work with the high school counselors to select candidates, the candidates are then interviewed by a Rotarian, the committee selected the winning students and the winners and their families are invited to a Scholarship Presentation Dinner where the winners are announced and given their scholarships. (three-four month commitment usually January-April)
- **Clothes Drives for the UT Career Closet:** Rotarian Volunteers round up gently used business clothes and deliver them to the UT Career Closet. Clothes are collected at the Rotary meetings. (twice a year-Fall and Spring)
- **Book Donation weekly for Lively Middle School library:** The books are selected from a list provided by the Librarian, signed by our speaker each week and a Rotarian Volunteer collects the books and delivers them to Lively Middle School. (Weekly)
- **Clothes for primary students at Pecan Springs:** Rotary Club collects children's clothes at the beginning of the school year and delivers them to Pecan Springs clothes closet (once a year)
- **Rotary Gardening Day at Community First:** Rotary Volunteers & friends can sign up to work on an assigned date to help Community First plant sustainable gardens that serve the homeless people living at Community First, provides food to be handed out to the homeless communities by the Mobile, Loaves and Fishes Van or to be sold at Community First to buy plants and seeds for the next harvest.(usually four times a year on prearranged dates- a 2 hr. shift each time)
- **Two Blood Drives for Austin:** Rotary volunteers and friends can sign up to give blood on the assigned blood drive day held at the Rotary meeting place twice a year (Once in Fall and once in Spring-45 min. -1 hour commitment)
- **Rise Against Hunger:** Central Texas Rotarians and guests gather to support the Rise Against Hunger foundation at a meal packing event. At the event, we work together from start-to-finish in a meal assembly experience to combine rice, soy, dehydrated vegetables and a packet of 20 vitamins and minerals into life-changing meal packages.

Announcing the 2024 Rotary Club of Austin 4-Way Test Public Safety Award



The Four-Way Test Public Safety Award

Applications Due by: December 1, 2024

Award Ceremony: Tuesday, January 21, 2025

The Rotary Club of Austin believes there is a path to public safety that avoids divisive language, appreciates the sacrifice of public safety personnel and protects and supports vulnerable communities. Out of that spirit, the Rotary Club of Austin's leadership decided to implement this award to recognize and support public safety behavior and practices that uplift all communities. In doing so, we felt that the Rotary International Four-Way Test best exemplifies the characteristics of public safety systems that benefit all citizens.

• **Is it the TRUTH?** – By recognizing that some communities are more vulnerable to harm when traditional public safety systems are used in ways those systems are under resourced and ill equipped to handle.

• **Is it FAIR to all concerned?** – Creating an environment where the needs of vulnerable communities receive attention, public safety systems improve capacity and trust is developed between the two.

• **Will it build GOODWILL and BETTER FRIENDSHIPS?** – Through collaboration and partnership amongst Austin citizens, vulnerable communities, and public safety systems.

• **Will it be BENEFICIAL to all concerned?** – By empowering vulnerable communities, redesigning public safety systems, and reducing harm, A rising tide lifts all boats.



To Nominate Call: 512.462.1333 or Email: office@rotary-austin.org

Promote your business, support our Club!



- * Advertising space costs only \$250 for 6 months of promotion (\$500/yr)!
- * ALL PROCEEDS go toward helping CLUB OPERATIONS!
- * Contact the Rotary Office for details.

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ROTARY CARES HOW YOU'RE DOING!!!

HOW ARE THINGS IN YOUR LIFE?!!

Is there anything that your Rotary Club of Austin "family" can support you with (i.e. family changes, death of a loved one, illness or other health concerns, lost a job, other professional needs, etc.) or do you know of another Rotarian who may need help?

Click [here](#) to let us know
(or you can send an e-mail to office@rotary-austin.org)

ROTARY CARES

Anybody can be going through a battle you know nothing about.



Club Meeting Place and Time

Austin
Meets at Ben Hur Shrine Temple
7811 Rockwood Lane
Austin, TX 78757
Time: Tuesday at 12:00 PM

RCA Vision Statement: To build a diverse fellowship of Austin-area business and community leaders transforming lives throughout the world.