

# THE STAFFORD HIGHLIGHT

December 18, 2024



Rotary Club of Stafford  **People of Action**

## December 18 – Annual Club Meeting and Election of Officers

Standard Rotary club bylaws require that at least four officers plus directors for the coming year be elected no later than December 31. Those officers are president, president-elect (to follow the elected president), secretary and treasurer.

An effective Rotary club has its president line in place for at least 2 years in the future, so it's important to not only elect a president for the coming year, but also a president-elect.

An effective Rotary club also has a Board rotation/replacement process in place. Depending on Board terms (2 or 3 years), a number of seats need to be replaced every year. A Board position is a good way to get an emerging leader up to speed on the workings of the club. The president, immediate past president, president-elect, secretary, and treasurer are automatically members of the Board.

## December 11 Meeting

President Jamie presided. PDG Sandy gave the Thought of the Day: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world: indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." — Margaret Mead

**Program - Stephanie Johnson with Stafford Education Foundation**

## Club Calendar

December Is Disease Prevention and Treatment Month

- ❖ December 18 – Annual Club Meeting
- ❖ December 25 – No Meeting! Merry Christmas!
- ❖ January 1 – No Meeting- Happy New Year!
- ❖ January 7 Get the Puck Out Polio! Noon game v. Rangers!
- ❖ February 20-22 – RI Peace Conference in Istanbul
- ❖ June 21-25 – Rotary International Convention in Calgary, Alberta

Stephanie shared her various roles in the community, including her passion for education, which was inspired by her mother, a lifelong educator. She also mentioned her father's involvement in community service through organizations like Rotary. Stephanie expressed her pride in her family's contributions to education and community service.

### **Stafford County Schools Challenges and Solutions**

Stephanie discussed the challenges faced by the Stafford County public schools, particularly in providing resources for teachers and opportunities for students. Despite budget constraints, the board has been working towards finding external funding sources for innovative teaching grants. Stafford also highlighted the board's commitment to continuous improvement and the importance of providing resources for educators. The board has been providing scholarships to students pursuing education as a career, with plans to increase the amount in the future.

Stephanie discussed the establishment of a fund to support students with IEPs and the Reflect, Stafford initiative, which aims to increase diversity in the schools by funding the education of existing staff members.

### **Model UN, Claude Moore Scholars, and Fundraisers**

Stephanie discussed the Model UN program for middle schoolers, which is open to all students and is funded by Amazon. She highlighted the Claude Moore Scholars program, which provides a pipeline for high school students into healthcare careers. She mentioned the upcoming "Tee-Off for Education" event and the "Hippity Hop 5K" fundraiser. Stephanie emphasized the importance of stakeholder engagement and encouraged the audience to sign up for the monthly giving campaign. She also stressed the need for collaboration between PTOS, the Foundation, and Stafford County Public Schools. She ended by encouraging the audience to partner with SEF.



## Announcements

- ❖ Donna reported for the Membership Committee – There is one new member ready to join our club, probably in January.
- ❖ Jamie expressed concern about some members not paying their dues. The board voted to remove some individuals if they don't pay soon. Jake will be sending out statements for unpaid dues. The board also met recently to discuss the membership roster. Stafford mentions a potential gap in the service help schedule on January 22nd that may need to be filled virtually due to uncertain weather. Additionally, an application for a legal environmental writer is being forwarded for consideration this week.
- ❖ IPDG Rene discussed upcoming Rotary club activities and initiatives. The club will host young entrepreneurs at their February evening meeting to connect them with students.
- ❖ Kristy reported on community service projects: Operation Warm and a literacy project involving interact and Rotaract clubs. The club will assist with relocating office items for Holly. Kristy plans to send a survey to get ideas for future community service projects from all members.
- ❖ Donald reported on international service projects. He mentioned that the club had signed a memorandum of agreement on projects in Africa. He also reminded everyone about the Rotary Foundation and the upcoming foundation event in January.
- ❖ President Jamie encouraged those interested in attending the emerging leader program at Chesapeake PETS to let him know. He also mentioned that everyone should expect a small Christmas gift in the mail and reminded them to RSVP for the holiday party at his place in Arlington by Friday. Lastly, he announced the resignations of Cherise Taylor, and Dylan Oaks and asked for a new secretary, which Nikki volunteered for. Nelda, who was absent due to health issues, was reported to be recovering from a successful surgery.
- ❖ President Jamie asked Cheri to prepare an agenda for the upcoming annual club meeting on December 18, which will include a report on the year's finances and the foundation's activities.

## December Is Disease Prevention and Treatment Month

**My sister's journey with polio**  
**Posted on December 4, 2024**  
**By Emi Chemat**

My sister, Tish Abiera-Reyes, caught polio as a toddler. My mum and her went to a celebration in Manila and she caught it there. She wasn't the only one – a lot of her friends caught it too – at the same party.

I can only guess that one person (the carrier) brought it to the party attended by people from all over the country and it spread. Just like that. They all went back to their different cities, kids got sick, doctors were frantic, and no one knew what it was.

This was in the 1950s. My family was blessed with many resources. Tish had 13 operations before she turned 21 to ease the strain on the weakened muscles of her right leg. These included surgeries to stop the growth, surgeries to add to the length of the leg, surgeries to adjust the tilt of the leg. And after all that, there were a couple more when she had grown up, to counter complications that arose from polio in the rest of her body.

My sister could drive, she could dance, she could swim, she was super popular, and to top it all – beautiful. But the best part was, she truly was my best friend. She was the best wife to her husband, Ed, an amazing mother to Tina, and the proudest grandmother to Carina. Her world revolved around Carina, and to her very last breath – she passed away in 2019 – I am so sure she was thinking of her granddaughter.

But not all polio stories end this way. Not all are that lucky. I have seen some of my sister's friends who decided not to undergo the numerous surgeries she went through, and they were confined to wheelchairs, braces, or walking sticks which eventually became walkers and wheelchairs. I have seen some who were not so financially blessed, lying in bed, not able to move freely, and at the mercy of a caregiver. I have seen some who have been able to walk only through sheer persistence, adjusting to life with a leg dangling.

This is not how it should be. We need to stop this from ever happening again. There is a vaccine that can protect these children from the polio virus. Since 1988, Rotary has reduced the number of cases worldwide by 99.9%. But the battle is not over. As long as polio exists anywhere, it is a threat everywhere.

Join us in the fight to eradicate this disease by making a donation of any size to End Polio.

*Emi Chemat is president of the Rotary Club of Cypress-Fairbanks, Texas, USA, and Interact co-chair for Rotary District 5890*