



Rotary Heroes Recognition

Saturday, May 4, 2024

District Conference
Radisson Plaza Hotel
Kalamazoo, Michigan, USA

Rotary
District 6360





TOGETHER, WE

FIGHT HUNGER

Rotary  PEOPLE OF ACTION



Albion

Barbara Frederick - “Dedicated Community Leader”

Barbara was selected because of her unrelenting dedication to the Rotary Club of Albion since September 2, 1999. During the past 24 years and 7 months, Barb served as secretary since 2013, is a Paul Harris Fellow, received the Presidential Citation, membership recruitment to bring new energy and innovative ideas to the club, coordinated and participated in club sponsored fundraisers and activities, and is always willing to bring in program speakers from around the county and District 6360 to update members on programs and responsibilities for the betterment of her community and the Rotary club.

In addition to Barbara’s meritorious service to the principles of Rotary, she lived the Rotary pledge during her service as 7th District Calhoun County Commissioner for 8 years, state representative for AFL-CIO and CWA, and work at AT&T for 32 years. Because of her community service and leadership, she has received numerous accommodations and recognitions for her work impacting senior citizens of Calhoun County, civil rights, and social and economic justice.

Barbara’s service to Rotary amplifies servant leadership in all capacities. She has a willingness to always give her best regardless of challenges. Her dedication and service above-self can be emulated by all.



Battle Creek

Jill Anderson - “Servant Leader”

Jill embodies the idea of a servant leader. Through her private life, professional work, volunteer work. Always aware and grateful for her healthy upbringing and nurturing family she has also had the experience of homelessness and personal and financial loss. The thriving life she has built for herself is due to her strong will and a loving support system and she never forgets that.

A family ethic of giving of oneself, literally, motivated her to honor and empower a man to live a long life by donating a kidney to him last fall.

Her professional work with nonprofits demonstrated ethics over profit and often spilled over to volunteer work with many community service organizations such as the SHARE Center and Burma Center and projects such as Color the Creek.

Her vision and commitment to the growth of people and building community is reflected in her role as the President of the Rotary Club of Battle Creek this year and many years in other leadership positions.

Most of all Jill is a hero because she approaches all this work and service from a place of humility. Rotarians seem to do a lot of clean ups in the community and Jill is almost always there picking up garbage with the rest of us, personifying her credo of ‘If not now, when? If not me. who?’



Berrien Springs-Eau Claire

David Faehner - “Major Fundraiser”

Dave has been an exemplary Rotarian. Several years ago, he arranged to partner our Rotary Club with Andrews University to honor middle and high school students from 6 schools in Berrien Springs and Eau Claire at an annual Student Recognition Breakfast. Students are selected by their school staff as those who best exemplify Rotary’s 4-Way Test. Parents, school principals and community dignitaries attend this event each year. Dave also was the major fundraiser for large gifts used to purchase a Rotary clock for downtown Berrien Springs, to be installed in 2024.



Cereal City Sunrise

Robin Morehart - “Ready to Lead”

Robin has been a member for about 3 years and has been involved in numerous committees. She is always ready to get involved or lead.

Robin heads up our signature project to positively impact diabetes in our community. She has led us through screening events, informational events and even sharing ideas about healthier foods. We now look towards creating a food pantry to help people get healthier foods. The Cereal City Sunrise Rotary Club is lucky to have a member like Robin and is excited to call her our Rotary Club Hero!



Charlotte

Randy Crandell - “Silent Philanthropist”

Randy was involved in one of the Charlotte Rotary Club’s first major projects which involved leveling land for eleven soccer fields at Parkview Elementary School and included a shelter with restrooms. This was a project over several years and the total cost was \$160,000.

He also split the cost of \$200,000 to put in a trail around Crandell Lake which he built with his gravel company and sold to Eaton County. It is the largest lake in Eaton County and the trail is complete and the club must raise \$25,000 per year for four years to pay our share. The 2 ½ mile trail is complete and is currently being used.



Coldwater Township Sunrise

Craig Dunworth - “A True Rotarian”

Craig is a founding member with 38 years of perfect attendance. Craig has served the club tirelessly including many years on the Foundation Board as well as the Club Board. Additionally, for numerous years he also handled the financial records for the club and the Foundation as well as all the large fundraiser financials in addition to being the club photographer. Craig handles every obligation well and willingly.



Delta-Waverly

William “Bill” Stirling - “Exceptional Leader”

The Delta-Waverly Rotary Club has announced Bill Stirling as its 2024 Rotary Hero. Bill’s exceptional leadership skills have been instrumental in motivating, exciting, and encouraging members of the club to take action since he joined the club in 1987. He has served in various roles, including treasurer and board member, and has actively participated in community service projects. Bill’s unwavering dedication and commitment to the Rotary Club’s motto of “Service Above Self” has been impactful through the backpack program, helping many families in need.

In addition, Bill has gone above and beyond by helping a mother from Colt Elementary School who didn’t have a car. He took the time to pick up her child and take him to school so that the mother did not have to use Uber. We are honored, and many Rotarians feel lucky to be part of the Rotary Club that Bill is a part of.

Bill has also been storing the club’s tent and other large items at his church for several years, which has been a significant cost-saving for the Delta-Waverly Rotary Club. The club doesn’t have to worry about where to store these items since everything is in a central location. Furthermore, Bill’s church has contributed to the backpack program for years, thanks to his recommendation. Congratulations, Bill!



Dowagiac

Charlie Gratz - "Our Buckeye"

A Buckeye, of course, refers to a fan of Ohio State University, and Charlie Gratz is a proud and diehard one of those! But a buckeye also symbolizes good luck. According to folklore, carrying a buckeye in your pocket will attract good fortune. We believe that having one in your club is even better. Charlie has been Dowagiac Rotary's lucky charm since 1976, serving the club in various capacities. Sergeant at Arms for many years, Charlie levied fines and collected happy dollars. His wit and sense of humor made this a favorite—and lucrative—segment of our meeting. He has since passed this roll to another Rotarian, but Charlie continues to share a joke, a funny or moving family story, or spurs a spate of sports rivalry before slipping happy dollars into the box. He scores every time in getting a rise out of the Spartans, Wolverines, and Fighting Irish in the room. Charlie also spent several years as a Director for the Dowagiac Rotary Charitable Foundation. His expertise as a professional financial advisor helped grow Foundation assets that, to this day, enable the Foundation to support projects both local and global.

Charlie has never shied away from a fundraising campaign and has never failed to offer moral, financial, and hands on support for club projects. He is the first to sign the volunteer sheet for the Sandhill Crane Run, our annual fundraising event, and the first to spring for District Raffle tickets. Continuing his roster of firsts, Charlie is the first to arrive for our meetings and has an exceptional attendance record. A doer himself, Charlie recognizes and praises the accomplishments and efforts of others working to keep the Rotary Wheel turning. Furthermore, he takes The Four Way Test into the community. When the Dowagiac Union School District was in dire need of substitute teachers, for example, he stepped right into the classroom. His compliments, words of encouragement, and comforting hugs have been lifting us up and moving us forward for forty-eight years.

Indeed, Charlie stands as one of our most enduring members. He holds a Paul Harris Fellow and is a beloved and respected Rotarian. He truly brings good luck and great joy to Dowagiac Rotary. Hence, we have declared "Our Buckeye" this year's Rotary Hero. Charlie stretches towards seven-foot-tall and identifies himself as the "world's tallest grandpa." But if Charlie stood but five-foot-tall, we would all look up to him.



East Lansing

Jeff Fineis - "Very Dependable"

Jeff Fineis has been an East Lansing Rotarian since April 20, 1999. He stepped in as the Club's Treasurer in 2018 on a temporary basis when the existing Treasurer resigned from that position. He remained in that position for a few months until another full-time Treasurer was appointed. Beginning in the middle of 2019, Jeff agreed to take on the Treasurer's duties for the East Lansing Rotary Foundation and has held that position ever since. Jeff is also a Paul Harris Fellow. The East Lansing Rotary Club is lucky to have Jeff as a member and are excited to call him their Rotary Club Hero!



Grand Ledge

Tammy Beson - "Mother Hen"

Tammy Beson, a dedicated member of the Grand Ledge Rotary Club for almost 15 years, exemplifies the Rotary theme of "service above self" in every aspect of her life. As our club secretary, Tammy has shown unwavering dedication to our organization, embodying the values of Rotary in all her actions and interactions.

Tammy's commitment to putting the needs of others before her own has earned her the title of "mother hen" of our club. Her nurturing and caring nature ensures that no detail is missed and that every member as well as visitor of the club feels valued and welcomed.

In addition to her role as secretary, Tammy actively participates in community service projects, such as our Dictionary Project. Her involvement in distributing dictionaries at a local school, where her grandchildren attend, highlights her passion for education and community engagement. Tammy's organizational skills are unmatched, as she ensures that the club runs as smooth as possible. From attending leadership trainings, welcoming new members, and even making sure our member's look sharp in their freshly washed aprons for our Annual Chili Cook-off. Tammy's dedication and passion make her an invaluable asset to the Grand Ledge Rotary Club. It is with great pride and admiration that we nominate Tammy Beson for the 2024 Rotary Hero award. Her selfless service and tireless commitment to the Rotary values make her a true hero in our eyes.



Gull Lake Area

Don Deibler - “Dependable, Diligent & Dynamic”

Don Deibler is one of the “sparkplugs” of our club. He truly cares for everyone and lives our motto of “Service Above Self”. A member of Rotary Club of Gull Lake Area for the past thirteen years, he has done it all. Don is project-oriented, which is not surprising for a former construction manager, and was one of the leaders of the Ross Township Park Playground project.

Don served two years as President during the pandemic, organized projects such as Thanksgiving baskets for our local food pantry, and food packing at the South Michigan Food Bank. A former Boy Scout leader, Don loves to work with youth, whether it be an Interact club or RYLA campers. Every year he works to raise monies through the 4th of July Raffle and our Italian Dinner to support the work of Rotary in our community and throughout the world. He serves on our club’s Local Grants Committee, the Public Image Committee, and our Youth Service Committee.

These days, Don serves as chair of the district’s RYLA committee and is actively growing that program. In his spare time, you might find Don and his lovely wife Brenda, on their boat, “Livin’ the Dream” on Lake Michigan or wherever it will take them.



Harbor Country

Steve and Hilary LaGattuta - “Great Partners & Helpers”

Harbor Country Rotary Club’s heroes are Steve and Hilary LaGattuta. Both are long standing members of our club with many accomplishments for the club and community here, notably including our club’s interest in the schools by assisting with personal products, hats and mittens and teaching grade schoolers how to raise and eat vegetables from seed to soup! We have enjoyed their great tradition as hosts for our Holiday Party at their lovely home!

For all they have done for Harbor Country Rotary and our community, Steve and Hilary are our heroes!



Haslett Okemos

Mike Hamel - “Dependable Leader”

Chief Michael Hamel is the Haslett-Okemos Club Hero for 2024. Mike is a real-life hero as the Fire Chief in Meridian Township. He also continues to be a leader in our club as a past president, Haslett-Okemos Foundation board member and frequently jumps in to help without being asked. Mike has also been instrumental in fundraising for leading our Annual Golf Outing for the last few years.



Hastings

Michelle Skedgell - “Nature Nurturer”

Michelle currently is the Executive Director of the Pierce Cedar Creek Institute, an environmental education and community center. Her Rotary “credentials” include:

Member of the Hastings Club’s Family (Chairperson), Hospitality, and Sgt. at Arms Committees. She is also a Past Board member and Club President.....the Club’s strategic planning was completed during her term as President. Michelle is the Founder and Chair of the Barry County Operation Pollination Committee and District Chair of the Environmental Group. She is a wonderful Rotarian and a strong member of our club!

Hillsdale

Heather Tritchka - "Life Changer"



In June of 2023, Heather met Flavia Nampala, a member of the Baluba Rotary Club in Uganda, who was visiting Heather's hometown of Hillsdale, Michigan.

After connecting over their mutual involvement in Rotary International, Heather learned that Flavia was in the process of working with the local Hillsdale College to create an education program in her village of Baluba. Flavia explained that the village of Baluba faces many economic challenges, and education in her village is not government funded. As a result, many of the children in her village are unable to attend school for more than a year or two, and many families must save for several years to afford just one year of education for one of their children. Heather immediately asked how she could help. Flavia calculated that an entire year of education at the Joy Learning Center in Baluba would need to cover the cost of books, a backpack, a cup of porridge for lunch each day, the tuition itself, and even a pair of shoes. She estimated that in her village, it should cost about \$300 in US Currency for one child to afford their education for an entire year.

Heather recognized the tremendous opportunity to help the village of Baluba and quickly brought this information back to her local Rotary Club where she organized the Hillsdale Rotary Club's Uganda Education Project. Her goal was to find 38 sponsors willing to donate \$300 each to cover an entire year of education for each of the 38 children at the Joy Learning Center in Baluba, Uganda. Through her tremendous efforts, Heather was able to meet her goal before the end of the 2023 calendar year, securing sponsors for each of the children for an entire year, and even raising enough money to be able to sponsor some children for a second year! Shortly after the beginning of the new year, the Hillsdale Rotary Club—in partnership with the Baluba Rotary Club—sent the sponsorship money that had been raised, but soon after received even more exciting news. Because the teachers were given the guarantee that all their wages could be paid, they agreed to accept 20 more students off their wait list. They also informed Heather that the estimate of \$300 per child per year had been a bit generous, and that they would be able to stretch the funds enough to pay for the entire education costs of all 58 students for the entire year!

Because of Heather's hard work, her generous spirit, and her commitment to truly exemplifying Rotary's mission of "Service Above Self," she has forever changed the lives of 58 children who will now be able to receive an entire year of education. The Hillsdale Rotary Club is deeply honored to have Heather as one of our members, and Heather is undoubtedly our Club Hero.



Kalamazoo

Nancy Peterson - “A Quiet Force”

Nancy has been a Rotarian for over ten years. In addition, she was the Foundations Division Chair from 2017-2019.

In 2023 Nancy retired as director of market communications at a global manufacturing company and has since embraced Rotary even more. Nancy was the driving force behind the transition to the Finance module of DACdb while heading the club website committee and helping with the club public image and membership activities. At the same time, Nancy is involved at the district level with the District Conference Committee (since 2016) and she is the 2023-2024 Public Image Chair for the District.

Nancy is also a generous supporter of the Rotary Foundation as a PHF +7. While Nancy does not like the spotlight, she truly deserves to be recognized for her tireless efforts the Rotary Club of Kalamazoo in our Public Image activities and with our membership process as we transitioned to new leadership in 2023.



Lansing

John Cauley - “Lifelong Commitment”

John Cauley is Lansing Rotary's Hero for his decades of service above self and his lifelong commitment to the Four Way Test. Joining in 1984, John has been an active and integral part of the Lansing Club for over 40 years. He has served as Club President, Foundation President, supports all club appeals, and is Paul Harris Fellow three times over. For the past several years, John has served as Club Secretary – no small feat in a club of over 150 members. John's commitment to Rotary, knowledge of our Club's history, and caring approach to relationships with members has provided a positive leadership example to all and steered our Board through difficult situations. Never one to rest on his reputation and achievements, John continues to sponsor new members and mentor many more into leadership positions within the Club. John exemplifies the Four Way Test and is a true Rotary Hero to our Lansing Club and community.



Mason

Bruce Johnston - “Loud & Proud”

Bruce has been a fixture in the Rotary Club of Mason since joining in 2013. President of the club in 2016-17 and then again for the term 2024-25, Bruce has also chaired the club Membership committee. Bruce never shies from a challenge and has worked on the annual Golf Outing, Duck Race, Holiday Family project and nearly every other project the club has undertaken. He is a determined and tireless fundraiser. An outspoken and amusing member at club meetings, they would not be nearly as much fun without his upbeat and comedic presence. You both notice when he is present and miss him when he is not. He makes every effort to help guests feel welcome and is always quick with a smile and a hearty handshake. He has quickly asserted himself as a well admired and loved member within our club. He even convinced his lovely wife, Shanda to join. Bruce Johnston is a well-deserving of recognition as the Rotary Hero for the Rotary Club of Mason.



Oshtemo

Sue Ailes - “Treasurer Extraordinaire”

Sue Ailes is a worthy recipient of the Oshtemo club’s Rotary Hero for her long-time service as the club treasurer.

Sue sacrifices her time for a stressful position as the treasurer, coordinating and leading many different tasks. Sue recently started living in Kalamazoo only part-time, but has continued her full-time role as treasurer.



Paw Paw Lake

Brandy Culverhouse - "Ms. Get It Done"

The Rotary Club of Paw Paw Lake chose Brandy Culverhouse as our Club Hero for the year 2023-2024. She is very active in our Interact Club in a local High school. Brandy serves as the current (2023-2024) President of the Paw Paw Lake Rotary club and on July 1, 2024 will become an Assistant Governor for Area 2. Brandy is also on the Foundation Trustee Committee for District 6360. Brandy has an 8 year old daughter named Vada and she is by far the best part of her life! Brandy has two fur babies named Wrigley (cat) and Stella (dog). Brandy works in Home Health Care for Corewell Health and is in her pre-nursing program at Lake Michigan College. Brandy is also active in her community serving as the Head Coach for the Watervliet Flag Football Cheer team, is a Board Member of the Watervliet South/ North School PTO, and is an Assistant Coach for the Watervliet 8U Softball Team. In Brandy's down time she enjoys reading a good book, watching baseball and football, a peaceful bonfire, going to the beach, going to the gym, attending church, and spending time with her friends and family! You will catch her rooting for the Cubbies, the Bills, and Notre Dame. Brandy loves to help others and treats others as God treats us with love and kindness! Brandy is a true *Service Above Self* club member.



Portage

Emily Turner-Hollman - "Service First!"

The Rotary Club of Portage board is happy to announce the selection of Emily as our Rotary Club Hero. She's been heavily involved in our club including serving consecutive years as President (2021-2023). She's very active volunteering and can always be found in the community assisting on various projects. Emily has been very generous with her time and commitment to our club. She has been and continues to be an incredible asset to us and we're blessed to have her!



South Haven

Tom Ruesink - "Mr. Reliable"

Tom has served as the club's Master of Arms for many years. As such he runs the "happy bucks" and 50/50 drawing at each club meeting. Tom also coordinates the annual member donations to "We Care" at the Christmas party. His "cheery" and pleasant demeanor always puts our members at ease and makes the club meetings very enjoyable. Tom attends most if not all club functions and has been a "staple" of the club since joining in 2012. Tom's dedication to the club's success exemplifies his *Service above Self*, and it is with great pleasure The Rotary Club of South Haven nominates Tom as our "Club Hero".



St. Johns

Andrew Jenkins - "Entertainer Extraordinaire"

Rotary Club of St. Johns proudly nominates Andrew Jenkins as our Rotary Club Hero. Andrew has been in our club for 24 years, and is always there when needed. He has been the Emcee for our big fundraising dinner for many years, and this year helped the Chair, Co-Chair, and Committee take the event in a different direction, which was a huge success. He is always jumping in and helping with our invocation, and last fall he played a very big role of helping set up the rededication of the St. Johns Rotary Community Building in Honor of Donald A Rademacher, who was a prior Rotarian. We don't know what we would do without Andrew!



St. Joseph-Benton Harbor

Randy Bettich - "Ever-Ready"

Randy joined the Rotary Club of St Joseph-Benton Harbor 22 years ago. He was President in 2006 and served as Trustee of the Club's Foundation 2007 – 2012, serving as Foundation President the last year. His involvement over the years has never diminished. He has co-led or been primary lead in charge of the club's premier community event, the Rotary Track Meet, for sixteen years. This event has drawn participation from upward of fifteen high schools in southwest Michigan, awards financial scholarships, and is the largest non-school sponsored track meet in the state.

Randy is a long-standing member of the Sargeant-At-Arms and Invocation Committees. He is a Benefactor of the Club's Foundation and a Paul Harris Fellow, supporting The Rotary Foundation at the Patron level.

"Ever-ready" describes Randy well as he is ever present behind the scenes to make a difference. By example, this year when the International Committee launched a fund-raising campaign to provide prosthetic limbs for amputees in the Dominican Republic, he not only opened his home to host our speaker visiting from the Dominican Republic, but also provided funds for a financial match incentive to spur club contributions. The effort exceeded club goals.

Randy has served on Boards of numerous community organizations and is current President of Lake Michigan College Foundation and a Board Trustee of the Humane Society of Southwestern Michigan. He credits running the Rotary Board as launching him into Board service throughout the community.



Three Rivers

Judy West-Wing - “Christmas Party Coordinator”

Judy West-Wing is an amazing member of the Three Rivers Rotary Club who as a retired St. Joseph County Administrator-Controller does a superb job of planning and organizing our annual Children’s Christmas Party. Each December, the Club puts on an outstanding party for about 75 underprivileged 6-8 year olds selected by schools in the Three Rivers and Centreville communities. There is a wonderful meal prepared for them followed by singing and then they are given a present by none other than Santa Claus! The kids are so excited and sometimes it is the only gift that they receive. Judy begins the organizing of this event in late October-early November to get everyone on-board for this special event.

All Rotarians are willing to purchase two \$25 gifts - 2 boys or 2 girls or one of each and they must be wrapped. Some Rotarians do not like to shop, so they give Judy the money and she will do the shopping for them. She comes from a large family with lots of children, so she knows what the “going” toys are each year! In addition, the Club pays for Judy to purchase gloves, mittens, warm hats and socks for each child. They get a very large sack with those items and also a lot of treats; cookies; candy; and coupons from various local establishments that she goes around town to collect.



Union City

Paula DeJongh - “Mindful Magician”

The list of things that Paula has not done for the club would be easier to list than the things she has done for the club over the years. Paula has been willing to do anything it takes to support the club including having the club meet at her business “All Things Serenity”, restarting the Interact club, re-starting the elementary reading buddies, attending and presenting at conferences on behalf of the club, being the best secretary in the land, recruiting new members, supporting fundraisers by volunteering and donating, and so many other acts of mindfulness and support that could easily go unnoticed. Union City Rotary would truly be in peril without her consistent and thoughtful efforts to support the members of Union City Rotary and the citizens of Union City, Michigan. She’s truly the epitome of a hero in every meaning of the word.



Vicksburg

Syd Bastos - “Determined Pathfinder”

The Rotary Club of Vicksburg is indebted to Syd Bastos for her diligent efforts to create our new satellite club, dubbed IMPACT by Rotary Club of Vicksburg. This group includes over a dozen individuals who devote themselves exclusively to providing volunteer hours to a host of non-profit organizations within the southern tier of Kalamazoo County. In addition, the group has initiated a spring golf outing to raise funds for Mlolongo Primary Schools in Syokimau, Kenya. The net funds from this project will go to the Rotary Club of Syokimau to support a latrine project for this school’s 1700 students.



Williamston Sunrise

Janet Eyster - “Public Servant”

Janet Eyster epitomizes the term “Public Servant,” having dedicated fifty years to serving the Williamston community. Beginning her journey as a statistician in the Michigan Department of Public Health while completing her PhD, Eyster led studies on the effects of toxic compounds in milk. Transitioning to academia, she became an analyst at MSU College of Medicine before actively participating in local initiatives like passing school financing millages and serving on the school board for 16 years, overseeing the construction of a new high school. In 2007, she stepped up as township treasurer, showcasing her dedication to public service by personally evaluating roads and making tough decisions, like foregoing repairs on her own road for the greater good. A Rotarian at heart, she recently spearheaded a successful grant for tree planting in the township park, symbolizing her lasting legacy of selfless community improvement. Janet Eyster’s lifelong commitment to leadership and service truly defines her as a remarkable public servant. For all of these reasons and more she is our club’s Rotary Hero!

Our Causes

Rotary is dedicated to causes known as the *seven areas of focus* that build international relationships, improve lives, and create a better world to support our peace efforts and end polio

“As a humanitarian organization, peace is a cornerstone of our mission. We believe when people work to create peace in their communities, that change can have a global effect.

By carrying out service projects and supporting our communities, members take action to address the underlying causes of conflict, including poverty, discrimination, ethnic tension, lack of access to education, and unequal distribution of resources.”



**PEACEBUILDING AND
CONFLICT PREVENTION**



**DISEASE PREVENTION
AND TREATMENT**



**WATER, SANITATION,
AND HYGIENE**



**MATERNAL AND
CHILD HEALTH**



**BASIC EDUCATION
AND LITERACY**



**COMMUNITY ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT**



ENVIRONMENT

- **SMART**
- **COMPASSIONATE**
- **PERSEVERING**
- **INSPIRING**

Rotary
District 6360

