



MESSAGE FROM DISTRICT GOVERNOR KELSEY MITCHELL

I am truly excited to have the opportunity to visit your clubs and meet so many incredible people who embody the spirit of Rotary. Each time I attend your events and club meetings, I am inspired by the warmth, dedication, and energy that radiates from every Rotarian. The passion for service and the warm welcome I've experienced so far have been nothing short of remarkable, and I am looking forward to continuing this journey of connecting and collaborating with each of you.

I am thrilled to see the vibrancy and energy in our Rotary Leadership Institute (RLI) program! The enthusiasm for continuing education and leadership development is truly inspiring, and it's exciting to witness so many Rotarians eager to grow their skills, knowledge, and commitment to service. RLI is such a critical part of strengthening our clubs and empowering us to make an even greater impact in our communities, and I am proud to see our district embracing it with such passion.

I am also incredibly excited for the upcoming Friendship Exchange, the first since COVID. This opportunity to reconnect with Rotarians around the world and share in the spirit of international fellowship is something so special. The power of Rotary is in the bonds we build, both locally and globally, and I can't wait to see the friendships and partnerships that will blossom through this exchange.

The magic of Rotary is alive and well across our district, and I see it in action everywhere I go. From impactful community projects to heartfelt moments of fellowship, you are all making a difference and creating lasting change. It is a privilege to witness firsthand the selflessness and generosity that define our Rotary District. I can't wait to continue sharing in this wonderful experience with all of you.



Kelsey Mitchell

District Governor
2024-2025

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Check Out the District's NEW Website

Redesigned to connect our communities to the world of Rotary!

[Donate](#) [My Rotary Login](#) [Member Login](#)



[Home](#) [Events Calendar](#) [Foundation](#) [Youth Services](#) [Our District](#) [Training](#) [Legacy Campaign](#) [Newsletters](#) [Contact Us](#)

Welcome to our official Rotary District 6960 Website

To change the world, we must take action today. What would you do?

Through our extensive network of Rotary Clubs, we actively engage in various service projects addressing critical issues such as education, health, diseases, and community development. We strive to make a lasting difference in the lives of those in need, fostering sustainable solutions that empower individuals and communities.

[Find A Club](#)

Behind the scenes, the District 6960 team has been working hard to refresh and redesign RotaryDistrict6960.org to make it easier for our local Florida communities to connect with the world of Rotary. [Click here](#) to visit the website and explore what is happening in our District.



Registration Open Now!

It's never too early to get yourself registered for the 2025 Rotary District 6960 Conference

2025 District Conference

June 6-7 at The Westin, Cape Coral



Kelsey Mitchell
RD 6960's Governor

[Register](#)

Don't Miss Out on the Event of the Year

Rotarydistrict6960.org

2024-25 District 6960
Membership Team

Donald Thomas

District Membership Chair

David Lowden

District Membership New Clubs

Teresa Brennan

District Membership Committee

Brad Corbett

District Membership Committee

Jim Henry, PDG

District Membership Committee

Bob Knight

District Membership Committee

Carol Peterson

District Membership Committee

Darryl Keys

District Membership Committee

ROTARY MEMBERSHIP

by PDG Darryl Keys

It goes without saying that membership is essential to Rotary's future as we cannot achieve anything without members. Yet we see that membership numbers in the USA are in long-term decline and we are not immune to this problem in District 6960. In the last Rotary year we experienced a net loss of over 4% of our members here in SW Florida, with 31 of our 53 clubs losing members, and only 16 clubs celebrating a net gain.

If we want to address this decline, we must ensure we are adding value to each member's experience and such value should be regularly checked. We also need to focus on **intentional attraction strategies**, bringing in the kind of members who will be a good fit for our clubs, or who offer longer term potential to Rotary.

Rotary has a history of funding scholarships to help young people go to college, so why not also invest in our own program which directly benefits your club, and Rotary's long-term potential?

For decades, businesses around the world have successfully embraced internships for young people, teaching them skills and immersing them into their corporate culture. The idea isn't just to give a helping hand to young people, it's to capture some of the new ideas they have picked up in their recent college experience and to learn the point of view of their rising generation.

There is a simple way that you can use this tried and tested technique **in your club**, providing a **1 year fully paid club membership 'scholarship'** (dues, meals, training) for 2 young emerging leaders in your community.

1. Look into your community and invite 2 young emerging leaders to become full members of your club for 1 year. Your club can either select these interns from your member networks or launch an application process where PR coverage (local media, local colleges) will encourage potential participants to apply. You can publicize this opportunity to local businesses and non-profits to encourage applications, while using this initiative to get to know these organizations better.
2. The intern will be expected to play a full, mutually beneficial role in your club, attending club meetings and events and participating in club committees, being encouraged to bring ideas from a younger generational perspective. The intern will learn about Rotary, develop skills related to club administration, enhance your club's public image and acquire skills through the various personal development resources offered to Rotary members (RLI, District training events and The Learning Center).

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2024-25 District 6960
Rotary Foundation Team

Jim Hinck

District Foundation Chair

Barb Spangler, PDG

District Foundation Vice-Chair

Julie Pedretti

District Global Grants Chair

Cindy Cedeno

District Grants Chair

Steve Schlueter, PDG

District Legacy Gifts Chair

Dr. Tam Mustapha, PDG

District Major Gifts Chair

Pam Akins, PDG

District Paul Harris Society Chair

Doug Smoot

District Paul Harris Fellow Chair
EREY Chair

David Lusty, PDG

District Major Donors Chair

Eldon Bohrofen

District Endowment Chair

Nancy Ross

District Wealth Transfer Chair

Tom Setchel

Annual Fund Share Chairman

Cheryl Willett

District Polio Co-Chair

Richard Willett

District Polio Co-Chair

Rich Kirschner, PDG

Zone Foundation Advisor

*Click a name to contact a
member of your
District Foundation Team*

THE ROTARY FOUNDATION

by Rich and Cheryl Willett

Thank you for your continued support in eradicating the polio virus. World Polio Day, October 24, is fast approaching. It's a day for Rotary members, public health advocates, and all who want a world free from polio to come together, recognize our progress in the fight to end polio, and talk about the actions we need to take to end polio for good. On that thought, we encourage every club to hold or participate, during the Rotary year, in a fundraising event to raise money for Rotary's contribution to eradicating polio and for every Rotary member to become a member of the PolioPlus Society.

One of our greatest pleasures in Rotary is planning and participating in events to raise money for one of our many causes. An event to raise money for eradicating polio can be a single or multi-club event that not only raises funds but also spreads the news about Rotary's contributions locally and internationally.

In southwest Florida, our best time for an event is in season when our population grows by nearly 25%. Whether you're hosting a fundraiser for World Polio Day, posting on social media to raise awareness, or giving a talk on polio to an organization, no action is too big or too small. Just remember to register your clubs' action at endpolio.org/register-your-event. Last year's numbers for registered World Polio Day events were over 1,400 events in 90 countries. Let's do our part to increase the number of events for this year.

Next on our list is to be sure you know how to become a member of the PolioPlus Society. You need to do two things to become a member. First, go to my.rotary.org/en/polioplus-fund, select PolioPlus Fund, and make a recurring, donation of at least \$100. Of course, you can donate more. The Gates Foundation has committed to seeing the eradication of polio to completion with their 2-for-1 match. That's \$2.00 for every \$1.00 you donate for a total donation of \$3.00. That's your donation times three. Keep in mind that a \$0.00 donation times three is \$0.00. That's a terrible loss.

Second, complete a PolioPlus Society member form. To obtain the form, check with your club president or email your request to polioplus6960@gmail.com to receive your form by email. When you complete the form, email the form back to the PolioPlus6960 email address.

This final push in eradicating polio is like pushing a car up a long hill and we're just inches from reaching the top. If we find ourselves exhausted and step away, the car starts slowly at first but soon rolls quickly right back down the hill. We know you won't step away, you're a Rotarian.

When Rich was 18 years old his 55 Pontiac broke down as he turned off the main road and started up a long incline into his parents' driveway. On his braces and crutches, he pushed the Pontiac up the incline and out of danger. He didn't stop until he succeeded. Let's succeed together in eradicating polio.

One last item, our goal is to visit all the clubs in our district to make a presentation about Rotary's efforts to eradicate polio worldwide. To schedule a presentation, contact us at 239.340.4928, 239.405.1329, or email your request to polioplus6960@gmail.com.

With Gratitude,
Rich and Cheryl Willett
District 6960 Polio Co-Chairs

YOUR CLUB ON THE MOON – PEACE ON EARTH

Anti-Bullying Initiative

The Rotary Club of Lakewood Ranch recently hosted Rotarian Dave van de Velde of the Rotary Club of Dr. Phillips in Orlando at their weekly luncheon. Dave spoke with the members about a project he is working on to bring Rotary clubs to the moon.

The project started in 2018 when Dave learned of an attempted suicide by a high school student. Dave, a very successful entrepreneur and business leader, felt something had to be done about bullying and took a very non-traditional, business-like approach aimed at taking market share away from the bullies by getting students to sign a pledge not to bully. Past District Governor Ron Janssen teamed up with Dave to assist in the anti-bullying efforts.

The program launched and was overwhelming successful. The principal of Leesburg High School confirmed that the culture of the school had dramatically changed from one of hostility and antagonism to caring and support. School attendance jumped from 88 to 92 percent, and fights, which were once a weekly occurrence, dropped to zero and remained at that level for the remainder of the school year. What was even more significant is the historic graduation rate of only 67 percent increased to 85 percent and has remained at that level since.

One of the eight companies Dave founded was in the space industry, so he used his professional connections to make arrangements to have a drive with 1 terabyte of storage enclosed in a capsule on a moon lander. Any student who took the pledge would be sent to the moon via their digitized picture. Participation took off like a rocket.

Your Club on the Moon - Peace on Earth

Dave had a lot more room for just high school pictures, so he decided to put Rotary on the moon with his digitized copy of The Rotarian magazine. He then started inviting Rotarians and Rotary/Rotaract clubs to submit images, many of which include members holding "Peace on Earth" signs and banners. The project evolved into what is now known as "Your Club on the Moon – Peace on Earth", drawing attention and excitement to Rotary's peace initiatives.

Why the Moon?

The moon is a place that everyone on earth can look up and see. It is the only place where humans have set foot yet is still at peace. Perhaps that's because the first person to walk on it was Rotarian Neil Armstrong. Finally, it is a way of bringing together Rotarians from around the globe to attract attention this cause.



Calling All Rotary and Rotaract Clubs

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All Rotary and Rotaract clubs are invited to join this program to make a larger impact. There is no cost to the club, simply send in a photo of club members, preferably holding a "Peace on Earth" sign or banner, and it will be included on the drive. If possible, add your club's name and country to the photo. The more pictures delivered to the moon, the greater the attention drawn to this wonderful cause! Click [here](#) to view a video of some of the participating clubs.



The drive with the pictures, and other digital data, will be enclosed in a capsule aboard the Griffin lunar lander, placed atop a SpaceX Falcon Heavy Lift which is currently scheduled to launch in September 2025 destined for the South pole of the moon. NASA's cutoff for receiving pictures is January 1, 2025. It's free for clubs because all costs for the rocket have been covered by Dave. Like all rocket programs, delays can be expected. If a mishap should occur, Dave has already purchased space on a backup rocket and will have a duplicate chip ready to go. Clubs can submit photos via email to picturesonthemoon@gmail.com and should include the club's name, email, and address.

Rotary in Action at Marie Selby Botanical Gardens



In August, members of the **Sarasota Sunrise Rotary Club** had an amazing time volunteering at the beautiful Marie Selby Botanical Gardens. Our club regularly participates in service projects here, working together to help maintain and enhance this incredible Sarasota gem. It's always rewarding to see the positive impact we can make, and we invite fellow Rotarians and community members to join us in future projects. Whether you're a seasoned volunteer or new to Rotary, we welcome your support in our mission to serve others and create lasting change. Let's make a difference, one project at a time!



Healing in a Divided World

2025 PRESIDENTIAL PEACE CONFERENCE

[Learn More](#)

Cape Coral Animal Shelter Wins Big at Rotary Race



As part of our Cardboard Boat Regatta held back on March 30, 2024, the Rotary Club of Cape Coral hosted the **1st Annual First Responders Race**, featuring participants from the Cape Coral Fire Department racing against members of the Cape Coral Police Department. While the Police Department was officially declared the winner, the big winner was the Cape Coral Animal Shelter! Both the CCPD and CCFD donated their prize money to the Cape Coral Animal Shelter. A check was presented to Liz McCauley and Gloria Tate, representing the Cape Coral Animal Shelter, at our September 11th meeting. Thank you to our First Responders and our friends at the Cape Coral Animal Shelter!

Rotaract Club at FGCU Rechartering Underway



After being dormant for several years, the Rotaract Club at Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) is completing a rechartering and recertifying process that is expected to be complete by October 6. The Rotaract Club is sponsored by the Rotary Club of Bonita Springs, led by 2024-25 President Joe Murgalo. Bonita Springs Rotary Club member Vincent Modarelli is serving as the FGCU advisor and Bonita Springs Club member Julie Pedretti is serving as the Sponsor Advisor.

Rotaract Club's officers for 2024-2025:

- President: Sydney Sanford
- Vice President: Olivia Gareau
- Secretary: Elise Steinbrecher
- Treasurer: Brooke Walker
- Membership Chair: Tori Berquist
- Service Chair: Ella Scharf

They are currently recruiting members and determining annual goals and service projects.

Around the Rotary Club of Babcock Ranch



Our Golf and Spirit Fellowship Committees, led by Mohit Pohani, are bringing the community together. The first **Golf Social at Top Golf on August 24th** drew participants aged 3 to 60, and our Spirit Socials now attract nearly 30 attendees each time.

Area Governor Priya Ahluwalia has been actively visiting clubs across Area 5. She recently attended the Ave Maria Club's charter night and hosted a **President's Social** for all Area 5 club presidents, strengthening connections and reinforcing our commitment to service. Additionally, she accompanied District Governor Kelsey Mitchell on her official visits to the Immokalee Club, Babcock Ranch, and Fort Myers East Club.

Club Secretary and **Ukraine Project** champion Patrice Courtney Strong spoke at the Rotary Institute in Spokane and met with Rotary International's John Hewko. We are fundraising the last \$40,000 needed to install solar at Chernihiv Maternity Hospital in Ukraine.

We invite you to dine to Eradicate Polio: Join us on October 24th for our second annual "**Dine to Eradicate Polio**" event, with three Babcock Ranch restaurants donating 10% of their sales to support polio eradication.



We are excited to collaborate with the **Fort Myers Sunrise Club** for our second annual Lakes Park Fundraiser.

Finally, together with the Babcock Ranch High School Interact Club, we collected vital donations for people impacted by **Hurricane Helene**, showcasing the power of community in times of need

The Rotary Club of Fort Myers' City of Palms Rotary Cup

4-person scramble at Riverhall Golf Club

October 12, 2024 | 8:30 Shotgun start



- \$150.00 /golfer - Swag, lunch , 2 drink tickets and golf
- Helicopter ball drop - top prize \$3000.00
- Hole in One contest
- Putting Contest
- Raffle

SIGN UP

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Your club will ADD 2 NEW MEMBERS immediately on adopting this program which meets all of Rotary's strategic objectives – *Expand Our Reach, Enhance Participant Engagement, Increase Our Impact and Increase Our Ability to Adapt.*

So, what happens at the end of the 1 year scholarship and why is it an investment In Rotary's future?

You help your interns to join the other 'graduating' interns from other clubs in your area to form a new community Rotaract club. An area comprising of 6 clubs, who each embrace this program can feed 12 potential members into this Rotaract club. If your club repeats this program every year, it could add 12 new members to that Rotaract club EVERY year. As we know, Rotaract has been a big challenge in our District, such that we have NO Rotaract at all. Here is a simple way to drive and build Rotaract.

If every club in our district did this, we would increase our membership by over 100 members. If all of Rotary's 36,000 clubs adopted this program, we will see Rotary's membership increase by 72,000 members – an immediate 6% increase, IN THIS ROTARY YEAR. Our age profile will also be reduced and make us a younger, more inclusive organization.

All good initiatives start somewhere, and for a modest investment, YOUR club can play an important role in being the catalyst for positive change and be a part of our district demonstrating to the rest of the world how to successfully invest in Rotary's future! **What's not to like?**

Still waiting to sign up for Rotary Leadership Institute (RLI)?

Watch this to learn more!



E-Club
Rotary
District 6960



In partnership with Golisano Children's Hospital in Fort Myers, our **District E-Club** has created the "Scentsy Buddy Project". The goal of the Project is to provide Scentsy Buddies for the comfort of children in the Pediatric Sedation Unit



Donate
Donate to purchase a
Scentsy Buddy for a Child
in the Sedation Unit



Shop
Join the Scentsy Party where
your purchases help us to
purchase Scentsy Buddies



*If you can find it in your heart to support this project please click the **Donate Button** to make your tax deductible donation.*

*If you are one of the millions who enjoy Scentsy Products then the **Shop Button** brings you to the E-Club's Scentsy Party where you can choose from a wide selection of products. Your purchases earn credits the **E-Club** can use to buy Scentsy Buddies for the Sedation Unit.*

Please share these links through your social media accounts