



Please enjoy this edition of the Sunrise Rotary Club newsletter. Sunrise Rotary is an active club of about 50 members who take pride in our community. Through our service projects and fellowship, we are changing lives and making a positive difference. If you would like to subscribe a friend to our newsletter, please send their [email to Dorothy Zimmerman](mailto:Dorothy.Zimmerman) and we will add their name.

Margot DeConna and Food4Kids Backpack Program



The Food4Kids Backpack Program of North Florida partners with 52 schools in Alachua, Bradford, Levy, and Dixie counties to help serve students identified as food insecure by teachers and professionals at their school. Children served by the Food4Kids Backpack Program take home bags every weekend during the school year with enough food packed to feed all school-aged children in the home. The food packed includes at least 7 meals per child. **Each week, approximately 1,300 children rely on Food4Kids to provide weekend nutrition – nearly double the number of children we served during the 22-23 school year.** Food4Kids relies on contributions from our community in order to meet the needs of our community's most vulnerable children.

Margot DeConna is the Executive Director of the Food4Kids Backpack Program of North Florida. She has also served as Director of Advancement for the Humane Society of North Central Florida, is a two-time Past President of the Junior League of Gainesville and has an extensive record of community involvement through other organizations.

Speakers

March 06, 2025
[Margot DeConna](#)
Food4Kids Backpack program

March 13, 2025
[Theresa Beachy](#)
Center for Non-profit Excellence (Community Foundation of NCF)

March 20, 2025
[Harvey Ward](#)
Mayor of Gainesville

March 27, 2025
[Brian Kramer \(8th Circuit State Attorney\) and Stacy Scott \(Public Defender\)](#)

Sunrise Rotary Club March Food Drive for Food4Kids

The Sunrise Rotary Club is collecting nonperishable food items throughout March to support the **Food4Kids Backpack Program**. The most successful food drives focus on food pairings that makes it easier for children to prepare meals, such as:

- Cereal & shelf-stable milk
- Peanut butter & jelly
- Soup & crackers



Events

March 6th
[Wild Game Feast](#)

March 11th
[Spring Social](#)

March 19th
[Board Meeting](#)

March 22nd
[Ichetucknee Springs Paddling Social](#)

April 16th
[Board Meeting](#)

April 26th
[District 6970 Assembly](#)

May 14th
[Board Meeting](#)

June 6th
[District 6970 Conference](#)

June 11th
[Board Meeting](#)

Please bring your donations to each Rotary meeting in March. Together, we can help fight food insecurity in our community!

Here's some interesting statistics on Food4Kids:

- 1 in 4 children in our region are food insecure.
- Food4Kids started at Terwilliger Elementary School in 2010.
- In 2025, we are in 50 schools and serving 1,388 students.
- Food4Kids operates in Alachua, Levy, Dixie and Bradford counties.
- Our weekly bags include 7 meals and snacks for up to 4 children per household.
- Our annual food budget is in excess of \$200,000 – we rely on donations from the community to purchase the food we distribute, in bulk, from food distributors.
- You can buy 1 family-sized box of cereal at Publix for \$7.19 or \$3.60/box if it's BOGO. Food4Kids can turn that same \$7-8 into a case of TEN bags of cereal.

Volunteer Opportunity: Help Pack Spring Break Backpacks for Kids!

Join us on **Saturday, March 8, from 8:00–10:00 AM** for a hands-on service opportunity supporting the **Food4Kids Backpack Program!** We'll be visiting the warehouse where food is stored and distributed, helping to pack **250 bags** of nutritious food for local school children to take home over spring break.

- **Location:** Food4Kids Warehouse (350 NW 39th Ave suite D, Gainesville, FL 32609)
- **Time:** 8:00 – 10:00 AM
- **Task:** Packing food bags to support children facing food insecurity

This is a great way to make a direct impact on our community. Friends and family are welcome!

RSVP or questions? Contact Karen Thomas at k.thomas@ufl.edu to sign up. We hope to see you there!

Freddie Wehbe, Entrepreneur Extraordinaire

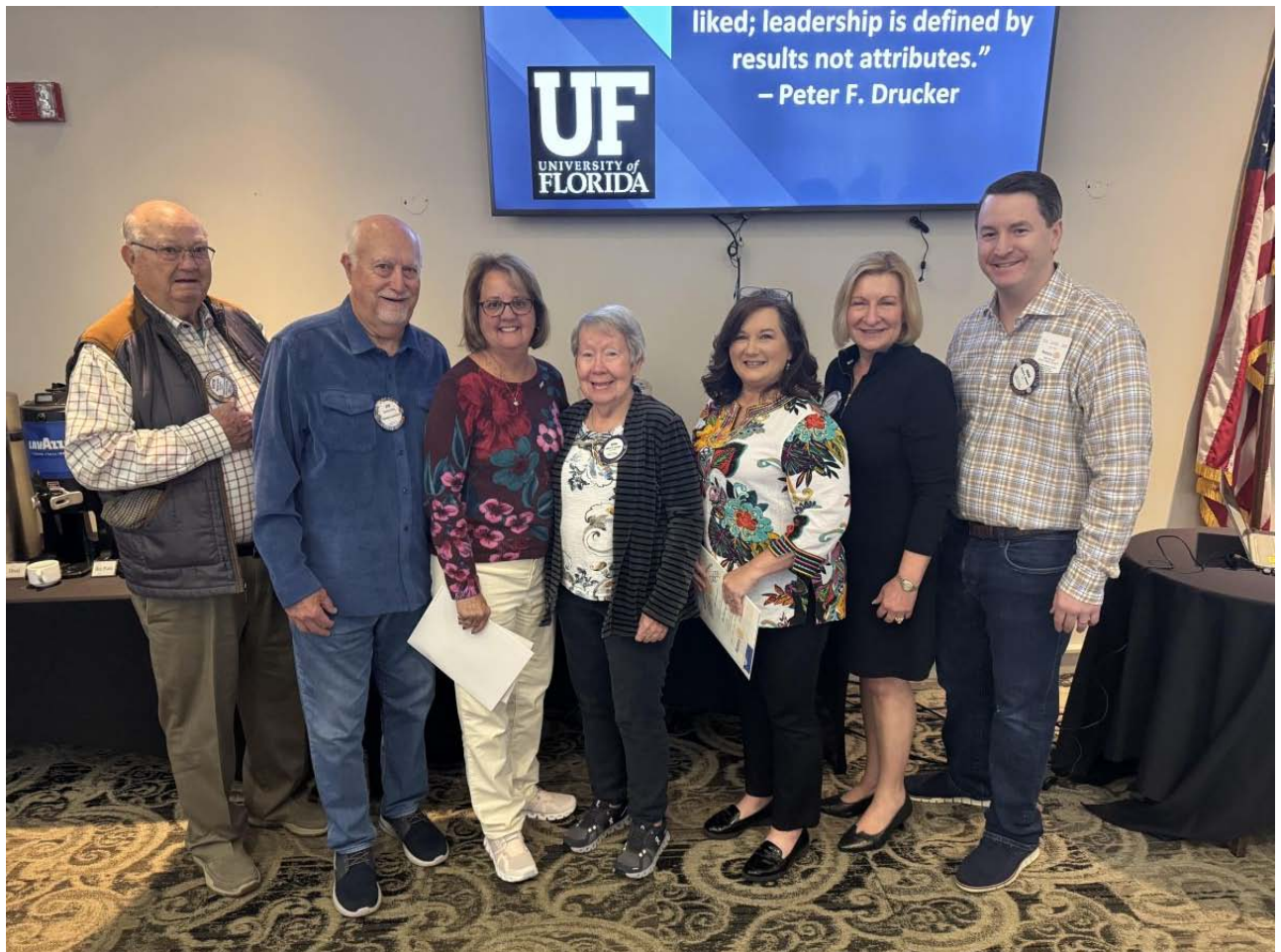
Last week we were privileged to hear from Freddie Wehbe, one of Gainesville's most noted entrepreneurs. While attending FIT in Melbourne to become an aerospace engineer, Freddie started delivering Domino's pizzas in 1987. Freddie earned his MBA from UF and bought a Domino's



Pizza store. By 2012, he owned a Domino's Pizza chain that was selling more pizzas than any Domino's Pizza outlet in the world! His first online order was received in 1997, by fax, and he was told by Domino's CEO that customers would never order pizza online. Today, Domino's has \$19B in online sales. He is a believer in the management philosophy championed by Peter Drucker. Freddie believes that giving back to the community through philanthropy should be built into your business model, much to the chagrin of Wall Street types. He sold Domino's in 2015, and is now involved as a development partner of Spurrier's Gridiron Grill, creating many podcasts such as Hoop: There It Is!, and even represented three clients for whom he sold three Super Bowl Ads this past year, among many other business ventures. Bobbie Robinson introduced Freddie before he spoke to the club.

Two New Members Inducted Last Week

Sunrise Rotary gained two new members last week. A big welcome goes to Cindy Hooker and Jan Stoorza, who can now join in Rotary service and fun! We'll hear more about both new members soon.



Pictured from left: Wayne Smith, Jim Cato, Jan Stoorza, Mitzi Austin, Cindy Hooker, Sherry Houston and Kevin Golden. President Kevin inducted both Jan and Cindy into Sunrise Rotary.



Jan received her Rotary pin from Mitzi Austin on behalf of her sponsors, Mitzi, Wayne and Jim.



Cindy received her Rotary pin from her sponsor, Sherry Houston.

Meet New Member Cindy Hooker

Cindy Hooker and her husband are from East Tennessee, where they raised their two children, Tristan and Matt. Tristan is serving in the USAF and Matt will be leaving for Colorado in the fall. Cindy moved to Florida four years ago from Columbia Falls, Montana, where they lived for six years. For nearly 20 years, Cindy has had the privilege of building and leading nonprofits. Currently, Cindy is the Executive Director of Gianna's Place Gainesville, which is a safe place for single college women facing an unexpected pregnancy. Cindy is truly grateful to be a part of this community and to serve through Rotary.



President-elect Bobbie is Trained, Locked and Loaded

President-elect Bobbie ventured to Orlando this past weekend to attend the District 6970 PETS training. PETS stands for President-Elect Training Seminar, and every president-elect in Rotary is required to attend the PETS in their district. Bobbie got to mix and mingle with every president-elect in District 6970. She's locked and loaded to lead us using the metaphorical definition of locked and loaded as being fully prepared for an activity or task. Lead on, Bobbie.



From Left: Lynda Reinhart – Asst. Governor-elect, Bobbie Robinson – President-elect Gainesville Sunrise, Diane Robar President-elect Downtown Gainesville, Kim Clawson – President-elect Greater Gainesville, Jon Thomas – President-elect Gainesville, Annia Rufino – President-elect Santa Fe College Rotaract.



Bobbie Robinson with Mario Cesar Martins de Camargo, President-Elect, Rotary International.



Bobbie Robinson with Dale Moe, District Governor-Elect.



Pining at the completion of PETS.

Sunrise Rotary Spring Social Set for March 11

By Sherry Nungesser Houston



Mark your calendars! Our Sunrise Rotary Club is hosting a Spring Social on Tuesday, March 11, 2025, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at Spurrier's Gridiron Grill.

Enjoy delicious appetizers and great company in a relaxed setting—it's the perfect opportunity to connect with fellow Rotarians and introduce a potential new member to the club.

This is our final chance to say good-bye to Ron and Dianne Farb, and a special send-off has been arranged!

Please RSVP to Sherry Houston at snhouston3@gmail.com to reserve your spot. We look forward to seeing you there!

Chuck Parker, Shaq and the Krewe of Bacchus

Our own Chuck Parker is back from New Orleans, where he represented gators everywhere by riding in the Krewe of Bacchus Parade 2025 during Mardi Gras. It appears that the Gator was generic, but we all know Chuck made sure everyone knew he was a Florida Gator. Shaquille O'Neal reigned as King in the Krewe of Bacchus Parade. They had to build a new throne this year since Shaq is so big. The new throne is 4 feet wide and 8 feet tall in order to accommodate Shaq. During the parade, Shaq threw 250,000 doubloons with his face on them and 1,000 basketballs to the revelers. There were 38 floats in the parade and Chuck rode the Baccagator float. I don't know how many or what Chuck threw; maybe we'll find out! Here you go!



On the left, Chuck gives the Gator Chomp at the head of the Baccagator float. Above, the float in action.



Chuck, still wearing his scaly reptile suit, with his buddies celebrating with a cool something after the parade.

Let's Get Behind Our Rotary Youth Exchange Student in PK Yonge's Chicago: Teen Edition

Our Rotary Youth Exchange student, Victor Malmgren, visited our meeting last week with exciting news—he'll be taking the stage this spring in PK Yonge's production of Chicago: Teen Edition!

This high school adaptation of the Broadway classic preserves the show's signature jazz-infused music and gripping story line while being tailored for younger performers. The musical follows Roxie Hart and Velma Kelly as they navigate fame, corruption, and scandal in 1920s Chicago, using the media and legal system to their advantage.

PK Yonge's performing arts program has a strong reputation for excellence, showcasing the dedication and talent of students and teachers alike. If you'd like to support Victor and his cast mates, sponsorship opportunities are available in the playbill. Options include:

- Full-page ad – \$75
- Half-page ad – \$50
- Quarter-page ad – \$25

New this year, students can also earn Thespian points through TV commercial sponsorships. [Download the sponsor form at this link for complete details.](#) Let's help Victor take full advantage of his year in the US and support him in this endeavor.



Dear Sponsor—
Funds raised through program ad sales support the talented students in our production of Chicago Teen Edition and future PKY Performing Arts Program events! Please return form with payment by April 1st to be featured in our playbill.

Make checks payable to University of Florida.

Please give ad information, graphic, and payment to the student, or email directly to lbhomerich@pkv.ufl.edu

Advertising Size	# Ads	Amount	Total
Quarter page (7.5" x 11.5") GREAT FOR BUSINESS CARDS!		\$25	
Half page (11.5" x 17.5")		\$50	
Full page Sponsor Ad (17.5" x 17.5") Nice for personal messages!		\$75	
NEW: TV COMMERCIAL! Great deal & you help students earn Thespian points!		\$100	

Business Name: _____ Contact: _____

Phone: _____ Ad Copy: Included _____ OR Emailed from _____

Credit for this ad sale goes to PKY Student: _____

Help Us Spark a Grant-Winning Idea—Time is Ticking!

Sunrise Rotarians, we're gearing up to apply for a Rotary District 6970 grant, but we need *your* ideas to make it happen! Whether it's a pressing community need, a potential partner, or a project with impact, we're looking for fresh, meaningful initiatives.

Think big—and think Rotary's areas of focus:

- Promoting Peace
- Providing Clean Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene
- Supporting Education
- Saving Mothers and Children
- Fighting Disease

- Growing Local Economies
- Protecting the Environment

Don't delay—grant applications are due well before April 1, and the clock is ticking. Share your ideas at our next meeting or email them to Bobbie Robinson or Rory Causseaux ASAP. Let's turn inspiration into action!

Last Call for Wild Game Feast Tickets and Raffle Tickets



Thanks to all who are sponsoring, volunteering, selling event tickets and selling raffle tickets for this Thursday's Wild Game Feast. This year, the WGF raffle debuts multiple 2nd chance offers (2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th place consolation prizes). So if you're not lucky enough to win the all-expenses-paid trip of a lifetime to Western Europe, Iceland, Hawaii, or Alaska, you still might be able to score something like the special 40th anniversary WGF-branded aged bourbon that Feast Master, Matthew Braddy, displays above. So buy more, with more chances to leave with a trip or something cool! It's \$25/ticket, or 5 tickets for \$100. You don't even have to be present to win. Contact Paul Schneider in our club, and he will hook you up with tickets, or buy them at the Feast.

Tickets for the WGF entry are \$85, or \$100 at the door. Contact Darleen Morgan to get a ticket before you arrive. See you there!

Join the Sunrise Rotary Paddling Trip – March 22!

By William Menadier

Ichetucknee Springs State Park



2025 Paddling Social

Rotary Club of Gainesville Sunrise

Join us for fun & fellowship paddling the Ichetucknee River, experiencing one of Florida's iconic spring fed waterways. Then bring your appetite as we gather for lunch and tales from the river at Great Outdoors Restaurant.



GREAT OUTDOORS RESTAURANT
18587 High Springs Main Street
High Springs, FL 32643

Rentals:

Paddle Board: \$60.00
Single Kayak: \$45.00
Double Kayak: \$65.00
Double Canoe: \$65.00

"Bring Your Own":

\$15.00 per "boat"
\$15.00 for first person +
\$13.00 per extra person

Parking: \$4.00 - \$6.00

Saturday, March 22nd
Paddle @ 9:00am | Lunch @ 12:00pm

12087 Southwest, US-27, Fort White, FL 32038

Sunrise Rotarians, grab your paddles and get ready for a day of adventure on the beautiful Ichetucknee River! Our annual Paddling Social is set for Saturday, March 22, starting at 9:00 AM. After a morning on the water, we'll gather for lunch and camaraderie at the Great Outdoors Restaurant in High Springs. Club members not able to kayak or paddle: Join the exhausted group of outdoors folks at the Great Outdoors Restaurant around noon to enjoy the merry-making and lunch.




Rentals are available, or bring your own kayak, canoe, or paddleboard. Spaces are limited, so sign up soon and don't miss this chance to experience one of Florida's iconic spring-fed rivers with fellow Rotarians!

For pricing and details, [download and print out the event flyer](#) or reach out to the trip organizers, Bill Menadier or Dan Rodkin. See you on the water or at the Great Outdoors Restaurant!

A Big Thank You to Dorothy Zimmerman




For three weeks in February, the bulletin editor was very involved in trying to boost the economies of both England and France. This meant lots of British pounds (1 pound = \$1.25) and Euros (1 Euro = \$1.05) were inserted. It was also tough setting my alarm clock to be awake between midnight and 4am to listen to the Gator basketball games on my iPhone. Dorothy stood in and produced the weekly bulletin for three weeks. I'm sure you noticed the uptick in the quality of the bulletins. Thanks, Dorothy.



PHILOSOPHY FUSE

The opinion of 10,000 men is
of no value if none of them
knows anything about the
subject.

MARCUS AURELIUS



Join Us

Gainesville Sunrise
Meets at Hilton University of Florida Conference Center Gainesville
1714 SW 34th Street
Gainesville, FL 32607
Time: Thursday at 07:00 AM



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