

# Rotary



## Club of Asheville THE COG

Wednesday, March 5, 2025



### Club Meeting

Asheville  
Meets at TUTION HALL, TRINITY  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
60 Church St  
Asheville, NC 28801  
Time: Thursday at 12:30 PM

### Speakers

**March 06, 2025**

[Ginger Frank](#)  
The Poppy's Popcorn  
Phenomenon

**March 13, 2025**

[Jessica Peacock](#), Public School  
Forum of NC  
The State of Public Education in  
North Carolina

**March 20, 2025**

[Ilya Shcharbitsky](#), Political  
Freedom and Human Rights  
Activist  
End Plastic Soup

**March 27, 2025**

[Laura Uherka](#)  
New Member Talks

**April 03, 2025**

[Eva-Michelle Spicer](#), [David  
Mans](#), [Dick Hall](#)  
110th Birthday of RCoA

### Coming Events

March 5th  
[Urban Hike](#)

March 6th  
[Rotary People of Action Gala](#)

March 15th  
[YWCA Mother Love Program](#)

March 19th  
[Thirsty Third Wednesday](#)

April 2nd  
[Urban Hike](#)

### Club Leaders

[Eva-Michelle G.](#)

## Today's Program (March 6, 2025) - Poppy Popcorn

By Jane Brody on Friday, February 28, 2025



We've got a Poppin' meeting this week with guest speaker Ginger Murphy Frank, Founder and CEO of Poppy Hand-Crafted Popcorn!

A native of Florida who adopted Asheville, NC as her hometown, Ginger started Poppy for one simple reason: she wanted to be there for her kids' baseball games and performances. She opened up shop in 2014, armed with a decade of retail experience, a hard work ethic and one popcorn machine. As a mom, she knew she wanted Poppy to use high-quality, simple, natural ingredients (including non-GMO corn), and source those ingredients (and beautiful packaging) from as close to home as possible.

Under Ginger's leadership, Poppy has experienced explosive growth and received multiple awards recognizing the company as a top startup in Asheville. In addition to leading massive growth on the direct-to-consumer side of the business, Ginger has also led the brand to partner with over a thousand small retailers and specialty grocers to sell gourmet popcorn throughout the United States. Recent partnerships include contracts with Whole Foods, The Fresh Market, Hallmark, Williams-Sonoma, and more.

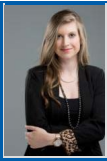
Join us in person and enjoy a great lunch, or [virtually via this Zoom link](#).

Click below to electronically contribute Happy Dollars, Fines, and donations to our Rotary Club of Asheville Foundation, Inc.

Donate



## Tonight's People of Action Awards Gala - Last Minute Seats!



[Spicer](#)  
President



[David Mans](#)  
President-Elect



[Michelle Daniels](#)  
President-Nominee  
Club Director  
International Service  
Chair



[Betty A. Doll](#)  
Secretary



[Cathy Early](#)  
Treasurer



[Anthony D. Lynch](#)  
Attendance Secretary  
Sergeant-at-Arms



[Alvin Ward Peacock Jr.](#)  
Club Director  
Membership Chair



[Janet L. Whitworth](#)  
Treasurer



[Timothy L. Owings](#)  
Club Director  
Rotary Foundation  
Chair



[Michael Thomas](#)  
Sergeant-at-Arms



[Tracy Fames](#)  
Club Public Image  
Chair



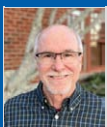
[Alexander P. Pence](#)  
Club Director  
Community Service  
Chair  
Club Service Chair



[Zachary F. Lamb](#)  
Club Director  
Vocational Service  
Chair



[Marcia Whitney](#)  
Club Admin Chair  
Club Director



[Richard T. Devereaux](#)  
Bulletin Editor  
Diversity Equity &  
Inclusion  
Webmaster

By Patrick A. Snyder on Tuesday, February 18, 2025

We've had a few cancelations for tonight's gala and would love to have a full room. **If you didn't get your ticket and would still like to come, let me know!**

We're limited in meal choices as to what was ordered, but I'll do my best to fulfill your request for beef, chicken, or veggie. The first several folks to respond will get a ticket for free (but we'd ask you to donate what you can to the club foundation).

#### Event Details

- Where: Renaissance Hotel – 31 Woodfin St, Asheville, NC 28801
- Parking: Complimentary self-parking
- When: Thursday, March 6th

#### Schedule:

##### 6:00 - 6:45 PM | Check-in & Reception

- Live music by 2 to Toot
- 50/50 Raffle tickets & Wine Wall

##### 6:45 - 7:00 PM | Seating begins

- Piano music by [Rachael Rage](#)

##### 7:00 - 9:00 PM | Dinner & Program

#### Dress Code

This is a night of celebration! You'll see everything from tuxedos and ball gowns to open collars and less formal attire. Dressing up is encouraged—honor your style and enjoy yourself!

#### Beverages & Bar

- **Complimentary Wine:** House white (Chardonnay) & red (Cabernet) during the reception and dinner.
- **Cash Bar:** Beer, mixed drinks, and additional beverages available for purchase.

#### Fundraising & Auctions

##### - Bring cash for the raffle & wine wall fundraisers!

- **50/50 Raffle** – \$5 per ticket or 5 tickets for \$20
- **Wine Wall Mystery Bottles** – \$25 each. It could be a Silver Oak or...Yellowtail!
- **Silent Auction - Check or Credit Card Accepted**

- [3 Nights at the Summer Scales Lake House](#) : A luxurious 4-bedroom, 3.5-bath waterfront retreat in Rumbling Bald Resort (off-peak season).
- Lake James Boat Day : 4 adults with lunch and round-trip transportation
- [Private Asheville Trolley Tour](#) : 2 hr private tour for up to 34 guests (must be scheduled) by Gray Line Trolley Tours of Asheville

#### LIVE Auctions – Check or Credit Card Accepted

- Ultimate Spanish Feast: Paella & Wine Dinner for 8 by El Maestro de la Paella Chef Alan West and Hunt Mallett, owner of Winehaus.
- Asheville Revival Package: Includes a Grove Park Inn & Spa package with 2 nights, breakfast and a \$500 gift card, \$200 Laila gift card, Amazing Pubcycle tickets for 4, and 2 tickets to Asheville Community Theater.
- NC Heart Necklace: 14K gold, designed and manufactured by Spicer Greene Jewelers, crafted in the shape of NC, is adorned with a delicate heart, and our mountain scenery.
- [One-Week Stay in a Tuscan Villa](#) for up to 4 people.
- [6-Night South African Safari for Two](#): Stay at Zulu Nyala Heritage Safari Lodge or Tented Safari Lodge, including meals & two game viewings per day. [More details here.](#)

If you have any questions or special accommodation requests, please let us know.

This promises to be an **unforgettable evening**—filled with live **music, inspiring stories, and exciting chances to win!** Most importantly, your participation supports the Rotary Club of Asheville Foundation and our mission to create lasting change in our community and beyond.

We can't wait to celebrate with you!

See you tonight!

Pat Snyder

# People of Action Awards Gala

TICKETS ON SALE!

Rotary  
Club of Asheville



Thursday March 6th 6-10 pm  
Renaissance Hotel, Asheville  
Free Parking  
Tickets: \$150  
Tables: \$1,000

- Dr. Oralene Simmons (MLK Prayer Breakfast)
- Dr. Shannon Dowler (HHS, Healthcare Consultant, ...)
- Asheville Water Resources Department, Ben Woody
- Dr Amy Marietta (MAHEC)
- Marta Alcalá (Asheville City Schools)
- Jeffrey Kaplan (Venture Asheville)
- Lang Hornthal (EcoForesters)



Ticket Sales

Celebrating People of Action



Chris Werte  
Diversity Equity & Inclusion



Virginia Lawrence  
CCO-Club Comm. Offcr  
Club Director



David T. Kaverman  
Club Director  
Youth Protection Officer  
Youth Services Chair



Carol E. Bornstein  
Club Fund Raising Chair



Albert Davis  
RYLA Point of Contact



Patrick A. Snyder  
iPast President

## Birthdays

Anthony D Lynch  
March 6th  
Kyle R. Boyd  
March 10th  
Jessica Z Hendrix  
March 15th  
Ross Sloan  
March 15th  
Alan L West  
March 15th  
Julie O'Dwyer  
March 15th  
Laura C Uherka  
March 18th  
Christy Cheek  
March 21st  
Kristy Wilson  
March 28th  
Patrick A. Snyder  
April 3rd

## Wedding Anniversaries

Joshua A Burrill  
March 8th  
Kirk Borland  
March 22nd  
Rachel Rion Moran  
March 23rd

## Bring Us Your Wine--LAST CALL!

By Patrick A. Snyder on Wednesday, February 26, 2025

Last call for wine donations!

*If you forgot your wine last week or still have a bottle to donate to the fundraiser, please bring it with you to the regular meeting on Thurs Mar 6th. (Don't bring it to the gala, it will be too late to include it). We'll add any you bring to the meeting to the wine wall at the gala that night. It can be a nice bottle or a cheap bottle, either one helps us raise more funds at the event.*



Thank you to all who have signed up to attend the People of Action Awards Gala! We've got 240 people signed up and have already raised over \$23K in ticket sales for our foundation. We'll also be raising more funds at the event through a 50/50 raffle, a wine wall fundraiser, and several amazing auctions.

I need everyone to look in your cabinet and **bring a bottle of wine to the meeting tomorrow** that we can include in the wine wall. How this works is that we'll have a table of wine bottles wrapped in paper. Guests can buy a mystery bottle for \$25. That bottle might be a cheap bottle of wine or something really special and really expensive. So we could use donations of both good ones and average ones. I know one member has already donated 6 really nice bottles that we'll include! But we need a lot more for this fundraiser. If we get 100 bottles, we'll make another \$2,500 and several folks will leave with some

wonderful surprises!

We'll also have a 50/50 raffle and will auction off a week in a villa in Italy, a 6-night photography safari in South Africa, and "stay"cation as well.

In addition to the wine, we need a few volunteers:

- 2 Volunteers for check-in from 6-7pm
- 1 Volunteer to the wine wall
- 1 Volunteer as an usher to help awardees to and from the stage as needed.

Please let me know if you can help and thank you all again for all the support for this event.

Pat Snyder  
Past President

## Rotary Meeting Summary (February 27, 2025) - Community Grant Winners

By Richard T. Devereaux on Friday, February 28, 2025

We had a very busy meeting this week. New member Dr. Eric Russell was inducted. Michael Thomas received a Paul Harris Award. And David McCartney introduced our second five Morrill Community Grant winners.

The program consisted of short talks from these 5 local nonprofits who were recipients of our Harry R. Morrill Community Grant Awards.



Each of the organizations made a 5-minute presentation describing how they plan to use their grant.

1. [Verner Center for Early Learning](#) - Whitney Rea
2. [Food Connection](#) - Flori Pate, Melissa Reavis
3. [Riverlink](#) - Justin Young
4. [The ARC OF Buncombe County](#) - Linda McDaniel
5. [On Track Financial Education & Counseling](#) - Amanda Frick Keiser, Ariel Walsh

[CLICK HERE TO READ DESCRIPTIONS OF THE FIVE WINNING PROJECTS](#)

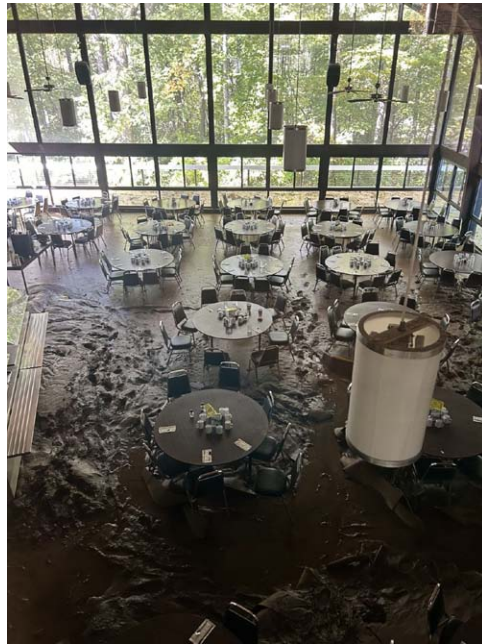
[CLICK HERE TO READ A BRIEF, AI-GENERATED SUMMARY OF THE OVERALL MEETING](#)



## Help Blue Ridge Assembly Recover from Helene

By Donna Rogers Ensley on Thursday, February 27, 2025

Calling all District 7670 Rotarians and friends to



participate in a unique, district-wide volunteer project!! **We are partnering with YMCA Blue Ridge Assembly (BRA) to help in their Helene recovery efforts. Rotary clubs, the district and RI have pulled together resources to provide \$100,000 to rebuild Robertson Dining Hall at BRA. Volunteers are needed for a morning or afternoon shift (roughly 2 ½ hours per shift) on March 8, 15, and 22.**

Many of you may know that BRA is where we have held our RYLA, Rotary Youth Exchange, and other programs over the years. We want to be a part of helping them come back so we can be back at their fabulous facility in the future.

Lunch will be provided by BRA between shifts (from 12-12:30 pm) for all volunteers to have an opportunity for food and fellowship together. Bring your work clothes, gloves and a spirit of "service above self" and connect with your District 7670 peers.

[Click on this link](#) to reserve your spot. You are welcome to sign up for more than one shift, but please be sure to sign up!

If you have any questions, please reach out to Donna Ensley at 828-768-6061 or via email by [clicking this link](#).

See you there!

AG Donna and DG Connie

## Volunteers Needed: Install Skirting, Restore Stability, Rebuild Lives!

By Alan L West on Tuesday, March 4, 2025

### VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!



We have answered the call in so many ways since **Hurricane Helene**—delivering heaters, propane, meals, and immediate aid to those in crisis. But now, **five months later, the work is far from over.** Our neighbors are still living in storm-damaged homes, waiting for the help that will **restore their dignity, security, and comfort.**

Now is the time to take the next step. **We have invested \$30,000 in Zone Grant funds to purchase insulated skirting for manufactured homes,** but funding alone isn't enough. **We must put in the time, energy, and effort to get the job done.**

### The Mission: Install Skirting, Restore Stability, Rebuild Lives

- **When:** Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday – **March 17, 18, & 19 (volunteer one day, two days, or all three days)**
- **Time:** 8:30 AM – 3:30 PM
- **Where:** Habitat for Humanity Repair Project – Locations in our Community
- **What We'll Be Doing:**
- Installing insulated skirting on manufactured homes for families recovering from the storm.
- Providing stability, warmth, and energy efficiency to those who need it most.
- Taking the final step from **funding to impact**—ensuring our Zone Grant makes a real difference.

### The Urgent Call: We Need 6 Volunteers Per Day, and I need you to commit and sign up ASAP (today if you can)!!!

- You can sign up for **one day, two days, or all three:** [Sign Up - Skirting the Storm](#)
- **No special skills are required**—just a willingness to serve.
- **Rotary presence is imperative** to fulfilling our Zone Grant commitment!

**Rotarians, This is Our Moment.** This is more than just a service project—**this is our responsibility.** This is what it means to be a **Rotarian, a leader, a person of action.**

- **Sign up TODAY!**
- **Wear your Rotary gear and bring your work gloves.**
- **Let's finish what we started and rebuild lives together.**

**And don't forget—take photos!** Let's show our zone and our community what it truly means to

be **Rotary in action.**

**RSVP NOW!**—sign up at [Sign Up - Skirting the Storm](#)

Yours in Service,  
Alan West  
Disaster Relief Volunteer Coordinator  
Rotary Club of Asheville

**P.S.** We've stepped up before, and we'll do it again. If you can't make it, personally ask a fellow Rotarian to take your place. **Together, we will get this done!**

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## Help Build/Repair/Weatherize Housing for Needy Families

By Alan L West on Tuesday, February 11, 2025

### Multiple Volunteer Opportunities Available!!!

We are called to serve, and **now is the time to step up!** Two incredible organizations, **Energy Savers Network** and **Habitat for Humanity**, need our hands, hearts, and determination to make a lasting impact on families in Western North Carolina.



Energy Savers

### Network Needs You!


**Hurricane Helene left many homes damaged**, and families are still struggling to recover. Energy Savers Network, fueled by new funding from Duke Energy, is ready to provide **critical energy efficiency upgrades**, but **first, we must weatherize homes** before upgrades like heat pumps, insulation, and appliances can be installed.

- **What's Needed?** Volunteer for **weatherization projects** to ensure storm victims receive essential home improvements.
- **Where?** Locations include Weaverville, Fairview, Woodfin, Candler, Black Mountain, and Hot Springs.
- **When?** Shifts vary (11 AM – 3 PM or 1 PM – 5 PM). Pick a day and place that works for you!
- **Sign up here:** [Energy Savers Network Volunteer Link](#)

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### Habitat for Humanity – Building & Repairing Homes, Changing Lives!

Whether it's constructing affordable homes for first-time buyers or **repairing storm-damaged houses**, Habitat for Humanity is working hard to ensure families in **Buncombe and Madison Counties** can live safely and comfortably.

- **What's Needed?** Volunteers for:
  - **New Home Construction** – Build the foundation for a brighter future!
  - **Home Repairs for Hurricane Victims** – Help families stay in their homes by fixing roofs, heating/cooling systems, and accessibility modifications.
- **Where?** Various locations across the Asheville area.
- **When?** Flexible shifts available.
- **Sign up here:** [Habitat for Humanity Volunteer Link](#) 

### Rotarians, Let's Do What We Do Best!

- **Sign up.**
- **Show up.**
- **Make a difference.**
- **Wear your Rotary gear** and capture your impact—**take photos** and share the inspiration!

**Encourage a friend or fellow Rotarian** to step in. Together, we create lasting change! If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to me.

In Service & Fellowship,  
Alan West  
Disaster Relief Volunteer Coordinator

## Two Asheville Rotary Greats on Stage!

By Jane Brody on Thursday, February 20, 2025

"The Oscar and Matthew Show," moderated by John Boyle

Join us at the East Asheville Library for a program sponsored by the Friends of the **East Asheville Library on March 18th** for a night of discussion and local tale-swapping! **John Boyle (The Answer Man) will moderate** a free-flowing discussion with 2 of Asheville's most prominent businesspeople and community leaders:

- **Oscar Wong, founder of Highland Brewing Company**
- **Matthew Bacoate Jr, community leader and advocate for Black-owned businesses**

Free to all who wish to attend! Doors open at 6pm, discussion starts at 6:30.

Hope to see you there!

The Friends of the East Asheville Public Library present

# Asheville Greats: Oscar Wong and Matthew Bacoate Jr.

in conversation with John Boyle, The Answer Man

6:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 18, 2025

East Asheville Public Library, 3 Avon Road

Doors open at 6 p.m.



Oscar Wong, founder of  
Highland Brewing Company

Matthew Bacoate Jr, community  
leader and advocate for Black-  
owned businesses

Want to join the Friends of the East Asheville Library, volunteer, or donate to support their work? Visit the Friends information table.

## Show Some Mother Love

By Alan L West on Tuesday, February 25, 2025



Here's our chance to **put "Service Above Self" into action!** On **Saturday, March 15, from 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM**, we need **15 volunteers** to support the **YWCA Mother Love program**—a vital initiative empowering young mothers and their children.

This project is especially important because **our club secured a \$4,000 grant for this program (\$2,000 from us, matched by the district), and our hands-on participation is essential to fulfill our commitment!**

## MotherLove

Sign Up Here: [YWCA March 15](#)

**The Mission: Move, Organize, and Make a Lasting Impact!**

- **When:** Saturday, March 15 | **9:00 AM – 11:00 AM**
- **Where:** YWCA of Asheville (185 S French Broad Ave)
- **What We'll Be Doing:**
- **Organizing inventory** to assess current needs.
- **Moving materials & some furniture** from multiple storage areas.
- **Relocating items** to a storage shed (if available).
- **Supporting TWO impactful YWCA programs** that uplift young mothers and their children.

This is more than just a service project—it's an opportunity for us to **strengthen our Rotary impact in Asheville** while directly helping families in need.

**WE NEED YOU!** Please **Sign Up** so we can ensure we have the **15 volunteers** needed to make this happen: [YWCA March 15](#)

**Wear your Rotary gear and bring your energy!** And don't forget to **take photos** for our grant report.

Let's show the YWCA and our district what the **Rotary Club of Asheville** is all about—**people of action making a difference!**

In Service & Fellowship,  
Alan West  
Rotary Club of Asheville

**P.S.** If you can't attend, please encourage a fellow Rotarian to join in. Every pair of hands counts!

## Save the Date--Habitscaping Conference, May 17

By Janet L. Whitworth on Wednesday, March 5, 2025

**YOU CAN [REGISTER NOW FOR THIS CONFERENCE](#)**

**Cost: \$25**

The Rotary Club of Asheville and Bee City USA - Asheville are partnering to bring an important environmental conference to Asheville on May 17, 2025. **Habitatscaping: Supporting Nature with Native Plants** features the inspirational keynote speaker and prolific author, Dr. Douglas Tallamy. Throughout the day, there will be additional presentations, local native plant vendors will have plants for sale, and local environmental nonprofits will exhibit.

[CLICK HERE FOR TICKETS](#)

**About Keynote Speaker Dr. Douglas Tallamy**

Dr. Douglas Tallamy is an entomologist (insect researcher) at the University of Delaware and the inspiration for the nonprofit [Homegrown National Park](#). He authored several influential bestsellers: **Bringing Nature Home**, **Nature's Best Hope**, and **The Nature of Oaks**,

[Read Janet Whitworth's blog post about replanting oaks in the wake of Hurricane Helene.](#)





## Kick the CART Bucket - Give Direct

By Richard T. Devereaux on Thursday, February 20, 2025



Week after week we're all encouraged to dutifully pitch our coins .... or dollars .... into those blue CART buckets. **But did you know you can make a tax-deductible online contribution directly to [CART](#), allowing both you and our club to get credit?**

Yes you can!

Click on the image below to set up your account and make an online contribution. [Here are some easy instructions](#) on how to set up your account.

CART stands for Coins for Alzheimer's Research Trust



## Do You Have a MyRotary Account?

By Richard T. Devereaux on Monday, February 24, 2025



If you're a member of The Rotary Club of Asheville, you automatically already have a [MyRotary](#) account, but if you haven't used it yet, you need to activate it.

### Why bother?

- You'll gain access to all kind of valuable Rotary resources that can help your committees and projects
- You'll access complete information on your membership and giving history to the Rotary Foundation, including your Paul Harris Fellow status
- You'll find lots of information on our club history, statistics, and goals
- Easy access for making donations to the Rotary Foundation that will ensure credit to you and our club
- **It's easy--5 minutes to fully set up your account**

[Click this link](#) for an easy, step-by-step setup guide. If you run into problems contact our Club Webmaster, Rick Devereaux by [clicking here](#).

Why wait?? Do it Now!

## Tennent Scholarship Applications Open

By Sharon Kay LeDuc on Friday, January 31, 2025



# BUZZ TENNENT SCHOLARSHIP

The Rotary Club of Asheville decided in 1998 that there was a need for a scholarship program that was based upon academic merit as well as financial need. The funds for these scholarships are derived from fundraising and donations. The amount available varies from year to year as does the number of qualified students. In 2024, thirteen local students were awarded \$1,000-\$9,000 each.

Applications Due April 13, 2025

**CRITERIA**

- Be a high school senior
- Have un-weighted GPA of 2.0 if planning to attend 2 year program at technical school, community college or junior college and 3.0 if planning for 4 year college
- Be enrolled in a college, university, community college or technical school
- Have three letters of reference
- Be a Buncombe County resident

QUESTIONS? Contact Sharon LeDuc at SKLEDUC@PRODIGY.NET




Apply Here

TINYURL.COM/TENNENTSCHOLARSHIP

Applications may be submitted by high school seniors in Buncombe County for Tennent Scholarships. Multiple scholarships are awarded and are based both upon academic merit and financial need. Due date is April 13. Application is at [TINYURL.COM/TENNENTSCHOLARSHIP](https://tinyurl.com/tennentscholarship)

For more information, check out the [Tennent Scholarship folder on our website](#).

## Bring us Your SWAG!

By Eva-Michelle G. Spicer on Wednesday, February 5, 2025



### SHOW SOME SWAGer!!

Each week we give out nice consolation prizes for our 50/50 raffle. We're out of prizes! So, if your company has cool SWAG (like a pot holder!) or you'd like to re-gift something that they "really shouldn't have" that you got over the Holidays, please bring it to our meeting tomorrow so that we can re-stock the prize closet. Your "stuff" might just be someone else's treasure!

## 2025 Rotary People of Action Awards Gala

Tuesday, January 28, 2025

[Tickets on sale now!](#)

# People of Action Awards Gala

TICKETS ON SALE!

Rotary  
Club of Asheville



Thursday March 6<sup>th</sup> 6-10 pm  
Renaissance Hotel, Asheville  
Free Parking  
Tickets: \$150  
Tables: \$1,000



Ticket Sales

- Dr. Oralene Simmons (MLK Prayer Breakfast)
- Dr. Shannon Dowler (HHS, Healthcare Consultant, ...)
- Asheville Water Resources Department, Ben Woody
- Dr Amy Marietta (MAHEC)
- Marta Alcalá (Asheville City Schools)
- Jeffrey Kaplan (Venture Asheville)
- Lang Hornthal (EcoForesters)

*Celebrating People of Action*



Thursday March 6<sup>th</sup> from 6-9pm, The Rotary Club of Asheville is delighted to host our second recognition gala honoring our local community heroes. Rotary clubs worldwide focus their efforts on seven areas, and we are thrilled to present awards for outstanding achievement to individuals who embody a "service above self" mindset in our local region. The following awardees will be honored for their dedication in specific areas at our People of Action Gala event:

- Peace-building and Conflict Resolution: Dr. Oralene Simmons (MLK Prayer Breakfast)
- Disease Prevention and Treatment: Dr. Shannon Dowler (US Dept. of Health & Human Services; MAHEC; CDC)
- Water Sanitation and Hygiene: City of Asheville, Water Resource Dept (Assistant City Manager, Ben Woody)
- Maternal and Child Health: Dr. Amy Marietta (MAHEC)
- Basic Education and Literacy: Marta Alcalá (Asheville City Schools)
- Economic and Community Development: Jeffrey Kaplan (Venture Asheville)
- Supporting the Environment: Lang Hornthal (EcoForesters)

We invite you to join us as we formally thank and highlight the accomplishments of these community leaders. Enjoy this celebration with drinks, music, and a seated dinner while we raise money for the Rotary Club of Asheville Foundation. This fundraiser supports our projects, including local scholarships, recognition of teachers and first responders, protection of the French Broad watershed, local food security initiatives, and international support for medical, dental, optical, and literacy projects in Guatemala, Honduras, and Argentina.

Tickets are \$150 per person or \$1,000 for a table of 8 and include dinner with your choice of Braised Airline Chicken Breast with Veloute Sauce, Center Cut Sirloin, or Vegetarian (Chefs Choice) and complimentary self-parking at the Renaissance Hotel in Asheville (March 6<sup>th</sup>, 6-9pm)

If you have any questions, please reach out to [avl.rotary.gala@gmail.com](mailto:avl.rotary.gala@gmail.com)

Buy your tickets BEFORE Feb 24<sup>th</sup> at: <https://rotaryasheville.betterworld.org/events/people-of-action-awards-gala>

## Basic Education and Literacy:

### Awardee: Marta Alcalá (Asheville City Schools)

Marta Alcalá, Executive Director of Equity for Asheville City Schools, has spent over 33 years promoting equity, racial justice, and literacy in Asheville. She founded *Motheread*, a program enhancing literacy and fostering racial equity discussions among multi-racial mothers, and co-founded the *Marvelous Math Club (MMC)*, an afterschool program empowering Black elementary students with asset- and justice-based practices. Her work extends to key initiatives like the Asheville Buncombe Preschool Planning Collaborative and the Asheville City School Foundation. She also co-authored *Relevant Education Grows All Learners (REGAL)*, a justice-centered education approach. Through her leadership, Marta creates safe, inclusive spaces that inspire growth and community transformation.

## Community Economic Development

### Awardee: Jeffrey Kaplan (Venture Asheville)

Jeffrey Kaplan, Executive Director of Venture Asheville, leads a \$150M mentorship-driven incubator fostering entrepreneurship and innovation in Asheville. Under his leadership, Venture Asheville has created 186 high-growth jobs and earned a Gold Award for Innovation from the International Economic Development Council. Kaplan launched initiatives like the Venture Asheville Honors, celebrating business resilience and raising \$1M to rebuild Western North Carolina's economy post-Hurricane Helene. He also plays a key role in the Mountain Community Capital Fund, supporting local business financing, and serves on the North Carolina Board of Science, Technology, and

Innovation, promoting regional research and development.

#### **Disease Prevention and Treatment**

##### **Awardee: Dr. Shannon Dowler (US Dept. of Health & Human Services; MAHEC; CDC)**

Dr. Shannon Dowler, a family physician and public health leader, has dedicated decades to improving healthcare access and disease prevention. She served as NC Medicaid's Chief Medical Officer, leading its transition to managed care and advancing vaccine equity during COVID-19. Dr. Dowler has worked extensively in STD education, creating the internationally acclaimed rap video "Vigorous: STDs Never Get Old" and writing "Never Too Late: Your Guide to Safer Sex after 60." A past president of the NC Academy of Family Physicians, she has also led public health initiatives with MAHEC and the Buncombe County Health Department, earning numerous state and national awards.

#### **Environment**

##### **Awardee: Lang Hornthal (EcoForesters)**

Lang Hornthal, Co-Executive Director of the non-profit sustainable forestry organization, EcoForesters, co-leads an organization that is busy restoring and conserving Appalachian forests. Their effort over 10 years has resulted in over 100,000 acres being put under stewardship. Under his leadership, free workshops, panel discussions, and educational events were organized to promote forest health, wildfire prevention, and invasive species management. He also coordinated post-Hurricane Helene efforts, enabling crews to clear downed trees for communities in need and clear public trails. Lang's advocacy extends to partnerships with organizations like the USDA Forest Service and the NC Wildlife Resource Commission, as well as working with stakeholders to address the impact of the Canton Paper Mill closing.

#### **Maternal and Child Health**

##### **Awardee: Dr Amy Marietta (MAHEC)**

Dr. Amy Marietta has expanded MAHEC's Project CARA, a prenatal health program for women with substance use disorders (SUD), using a hub-and-spoke model to increase access to care across multiple counties. This initiative has led to fewer babies entering foster care and more women achieving recovery. Project CARA also improves birth outcomes, reduces infant mortality, and increases infant birth weights. As a founding advisory council member of Nurture NC, Dr. Marietta has united government leaders, Medicaid experts, managed care organizations, and philanthropic groups like Dogwood Health Trust and The Duke Endowment to address maternal and infant health challenges in North Carolina.

#### **Peace and Conflict Prevention**

##### **Awardee: Dr. Oralene Simmons (MLK Prayer Breakfast)**

Dr. Oralene Simmons is the founder and president of the MLK Prayer Breakfast in Asheville, which she has led since 1982, growing it to over 1,000 attendees. She is a pioneering civil rights leader from Western North Carolina, who served for 27 years as the Cultural Arts Supervisor under a contract with Asheville Parks and Recreation and led the YMI Cultural Center. She made history in 1961 by integrating Mars Hill College, earning recognition in Jet and Time magazines. Ms. Simmons has received numerous honors, including North Carolina's prestigious Order of the Long Leaf Pine in 2016 and the Making of the King Holiday Award presented by Coretta Scott King. She remains a dedicated advocate for human rights.

#### **Water Sanitation and Hygiene**

##### **Awardee: Asheville Water Resources Department, Ben Woody representing**

Assistant City Manager Ben Woody accepts the award on behalf of the Asheville Water Resources Department and the many individuals, agencies, contractors, and community members who united to restore potable water following Hurricane Helene. The department guided a coordinated response involving local and federal agencies, nonprofits, and private contractors to rebuild water infrastructure across the county. Heroes at every level worked tirelessly to assess the damage, engineer emergency and long-term solutions, and rebuild vital water infrastructure critical to Asheville and surrounding communities. Thanks to their dedication, potable water was restored in just 57 days. Ben Woody's strategic coordination and clear communication helped mitigate the public health crisis, showcasing the strength, resilience, and spirit of our community.

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## **Rotary Club of Asheville Offers Disaster Relief Grant**

Friday, November 22, 2024

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**MEDIA CONTACT:** Kyle Parks  
Parks PR, (813) 352-1325  
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### **Rotary Club of Asheville Offers Disaster Relief Grant to Support Recovery Efforts in Western North Carolina**

ASHEVILLE, N.C. (November 22, 2024) — The Rotary Club of Asheville has launched a Disaster Relief Grant program to aid in the recovery and rebuilding efforts following the devastation caused by Tropical Storm Helene.

Rotary Clubs and individuals in the United States and Canada have contributed more than

\$150,000 in donations to help support this initiative, which will provide financial assistance to eligible organizations in our community.

Nonprofits, schools, and government agencies with 501(c)(3) status are invited to apply for grants of up to \$5,000. The Rotary Club of Asheville Disaster Relief Committee will evaluate applications on a bi-weekly basis, ensuring that funds are distributed efficiently to those with the greatest need.

"Our mission is to support recovery and rebuilding efforts for those affected by Tropical Storm Helene," said Janet Whitworth, chair of the Rotary Club of Asheville's Disaster Relief Committee. "We are proud to collaborate with Rotary Clubs across North America to help Western North Carolina."

Interested organizations are encouraged to submit a project budget, their most recent IRS Form 990 or year-end financial statements, and any supplementary materials. Applications can be [submitted online](#) or emailed directly to Janet Whitworth by [clicking this link](#).

The Rotary Club of Asheville will continue the grant process until the funds have been fully utilized, to make sure that the community receives the necessary support to rebuild and recover.

For more information or to submit an application, visit [www.rotaryasheville.org](http://www.rotaryasheville.org)

#### About the Rotary Club of Asheville:

The Rotary Club of Asheville is a service club of engaged and passionate members who desire to do good in the community and world while honoring shared ethics and core values. The club, which has over 165 members from a wide range of backgrounds, finds ways to help the community at local, national, and international levels. This can involve anything from doing volunteer projects overseas to finding ways to support nonprofits in Asheville and Buncombe County. For more information, visit <https://www.rotaryasheville.org/>.

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## Rotary District 7670 to Host District RLI Event – March 29th, 2025

By Sarah J McGuire



Rotary District 7670 is excited to announce a **District RLI (Rotary Leadership Institute)** event on **March 29th, 2025**, at **Crossroads Church in Asheville, NC**. This is a fantastic opportunity for Rotarians looking to enhance their leadership skills and deepen their understanding of Rotary's impact.

#### Event Details:

- **Date:** March 29th, 2025
- **Location:** Crossroads Church, Asheville, NC
- **Time:** 8:30 AM – 3:45 PM
- **Cost:** \$95.00 (includes lunch)

We are offering **all three parts** of the RLI program, designed to provide Rotarians with the tools and knowledge to become stronger leaders within their clubs and communities. Whether you're a new Rotarian or a seasoned leader, this event will help you build on your leadership capabilities and make a

bigger impact in Rotary.

The **\$95 registration fee** covers all three parts of the program as well as lunch, so you can focus on learning and connecting with fellow Rotarians throughout the day.

**Registration** is now open! To sign up, simply visit the following link: [Register for District RLI Event](#)

Don't miss this incredible opportunity to grow as a leader, connect with fellow Rotarians, and strengthen your understanding of Rotary's vital work. We look forward to seeing you there!

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## Rotary Four Way Test



## The 4-Way Test

*of things we do and say:*

1. Is it the **TRUTH**?
  2. Is it **FAIR** to all concerned?
  3. Will it build **GOODWILL** and **BETTER FRIENDSHIPS**?
  4. Will it be **BENEFICIAL** to all concerned?
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