

CLUB NEWS

December 19, 2023



CREATE HOPE
in the WORLD

The Wilmington
Rotary
Club



Founded April 1915 • A Century of Service Above Self

Honduras clinic opens diagnostic lab thanks to club's Global Grant project

Medical equipment bought through a \$44,280 Rotary Global Grant project is in use in rural Honduras. Rotarians from Southeastern North Carolina and Honduras joined on Nov. 7 to cut a ribbon at the Clinica Santa Maria in Reitoca. That remote town is in a mountainous region of the Central American nation.

Attending were **Tolis Vardakis** and **Tom Hoggard** of this club, **Nancy Boston** of the Shallotte Rotary Club, and Nancy's husband Jim. Also participating, along with the clinic's staff and Honduran Rotarians, were **Rev. Robert Kus**, a former member of our club. Since retiring as pastor of St. Mary Basilica in Wilmington, "Father Bob" has lived in Reitoca.

The clinic, which serves a population of 50,000, had been unable to perform even basic diagnostics such as blood or urine tests, for which patients had to travel three hours over bad roads. The Rotary grant paid for nine pieces of equipment to provide diagnostic services in-house. The clinic's full-time staff includes a nurse and technicians. A doctor, a Rotarian from the capital, Tegucigalpa, visits three days a week.

The project's local sponsor is the Tegucigalpa Sur Rotary Club. Our club gave \$6,000 and applied for the Global Grant, which matched local funds from Wilmington East, Wilmington Central, Leland Area, Shallotte, Coastal Pender, Burgaw, District 7730 Passport, Ann Arbor, Mich, and Chestnut Hill, Pa. clubs, and District 7730.



Dr. Tom Hoggard talks medicine with Dr. Marco Mejia, the clinic's medical director. Dr. Mejia is a member of the Tegucigalpa Sur Rotary Club.



Honduran Rotarian Adan Martinez, right, with the staff nurse at Clinica Santa Maria.



Tolis Vardakis, representing Wilmington Rotary Club, and Angel Velasquez, president of Tegucigalpa Sur Rotary Club, cut the ribbon to open Clinica Santa Maria's new diagnostic laboratory in Reitoca, Honduras.



Velasquez presents Tolis with a plaque in recognition of our club's role in leading the project.

Nominations, sponsors sought for 'Leaders' awards

Proposals for our club's third annual Leaders in Service awards are still needed. Nominations, both from club members and the public at large, are open until Jan. 15.

Re-nominating someone proposed in a previous year is entirely acceptable. No need to start from scratch. Just ask, and the LIS Committee will help you renew any old nominations.

In a change from the awards' first two years, a nominee doesn't have to

be an organization's top executive. Anyone in leadership or management, including in unpaid positions, is eligible, other than elected public officials. We have also dropped the former requirement that a nominee must have lived and worked in greater Wilmington for at least three years.

Also new this year will be a separate "Legacy Award" to recognize years of service creating a widely recognized, positive impact on our region. Nomi-

nations will be taken after Jan. 15.

Meanwhile, the committee's solicitors are at work seeking sponsorships for the program, which is our major fundraiser each year. Sponsorships provide donors with tickets to the May 1, 2024 awards banquet. Individual ticket sales will begin in 2024.

To make a nomination online, go to www.leadersinservice.org.

For more about recognizing past honorees and sponsors, SEE: *page 5*.

Rotarians at work servicing local grant projects



First order of business: the money



Kevin Blackburn of Kids Making It and Kim Henry of Theatre for All visited us at the Oct. 17 meeting to accept their grants: \$1,000 to support handicrafts and entrepreneurship for youth and \$2,500 to help produce two nights of theater featuring actors with disabilities.



Cierra Washington and Qailinn Bowen of the Northside Food Cooperative accept \$2,720 grant at Oct. 24 meeting.

Don Arrabia of 2Share accepts \$3,500 grant check Oct. 10.

Club members have been volunteering to help with our three District Grant projects of the 2023-24 Rotary Year.

As required by The Rotary Foundation, grant-supported projects require hands-on participation from Rotarians.

The fifty-percent-match District Grants are awarded by a formula that considers each club's total giving to the Foundation and per-capita giving. For more on this, SEE: page 6.

Our club's District Grants for this year went to:

- **2Share**, to buy beds and other furnishings for low-income children, \$3,500.
- **Theatre for All**, to stage two nights of a play featuring actors with disabilities, \$2,500.
- **Northside Food Cooperative**, to serve two Community Dinners in a Wilmington "food desert," \$2,720.

In addition, our club made a \$1,000 grant, without a district match, to **Kids Making It**, as well as pledging to buy \$1,000 worth of hand-crafted products: pens to be used as gifts for our weekly guest speakers.

Club members stepped up first on Nov. 17, serving the first of the Northside Co-op's two Community Dinners. More than 150 families were served, and each took home a turkey.

Then, on Dec. 6 and 7, Rotarian volunteers helped to set up the auditorium and lobby at the Second Street Stage in the Hannah Block USO building, and to serve as ushers for the Theatre for All production.

Next will be a work day to help 2Share, on a date to be announced in January 2024.

Second requirement: participation



Two of the hundreds of guests at Nov. 17 Northside Community Dinner.



Volunteer servers at Co-op dinner: Kevin Crane, Rafaela Dejanovic, R.B. Richey, Peter Maloff, Charlotte Davis, Lucy Holman, and Lynn Richey.

Nancy Bullock, Vicki Scott, Don Adkins, Paul Lawler, Terry Smith, and Cathy Barlow serving as ushers at Theatre For All performance on December 6.



Vince Howe, above, nails top plate onto freshly raised wall section. Left: John Meyer, Dale Smith and a member of the homeowner's family steady another section of wall as it's nailed into place.



Jack Clark and Kevin Crane admire John Meyer's reach with a power drill.

Walls go up as Habitat's Rotary Build house begins



Michael Gillespie, above, and Kevin Crane, below, busy swinging hammers.



On three "build days" in October and November, members of this and other area Rotary Clubs helped to assemble a Habitat for Humanity house.

With a budget of \$60,000, plus unpaid labor from volunteers, the home buyer and her family, the house should be complete by early spring 2024.

Wall sections were prefabricated in January then erected on the Castle Hayne site Oct. 28. Roof sheathing was installed Nov. 4 and vinyl siding on Nov. 18.

Licensed professionals do plumbing and electrical work; skilled workers hang dry-wall, doors, windows, and other amenities.

Volunteers will still be needed for two more build days, painting on Jan. 6 and installing hardware Jan. 13.

This house will be home for a single mother named Tysheia and her two children. She works as a school bus driver and is contributing labor to the project. She will become a homeowner through a mortgage held by Cape Fear Habitat.

Our club contributed \$6,000 and individual members gave another \$13,100 toward this multi-club Rotary-sponsored project.



Dale Smith with Tysheia, a single mother, who is buying the house from Cape Fear Habitat. She and her family help build, contributing 'sweat equity.'



Jack Clark and a member of Tysheia's family make sure that walls are plumb and all corners are square.



The house near the end of the first build day Oct 28. Roofing—trusses and deck—and vinyl siding were installed on two work days in November.



Rotarians boost youth leaders

Five members of our club served as discussion leaders Dec. 2 at the Rotary Youth Leadership Awards Wilmington-area conference at UNC-Wilmington.

Dori Bishara, Terri Everett, Rosie Guendner, Mark Ihnat, and Chris Utesch, plus five Rotarians from other clubs, spent that Saturday morning in round-table conversations with juniors from nine area high schools, both public and private. Participants were nominated by the schools' guidance counsel-

ors. Both Mark and Chris are RYLA alumni.

Also helping: **Mike Beau-doin, Bob Kitchen, Charles Mintz, R.B. Richey**, and two Rotarians from other clubs.

The Wilmington Cape Fear, East, Central, and West clubs joined us in contributing members and funds toward the conference's \$3,110 budget, plus the cost of sending 13 of the participating students to the District 7730 RYLA conference. That will be Jan. 26-28 at Pine Knoll Shores, at \$300 per student.



Terri Everett, left, and Mark Ihnat, right, were among RYLA discussion leaders.

Holiday bell-ringers for charity



Dozens of Rotarians, like Sarah Stone and Charlotte Davis, have been ringing the bell on Tuesdays at Sam's Club, encouraging donations to the Salvation Army's Red Kettle campaign. To remind shoppers of who we are, these volunteers are wearing the club's new 'branded' aprons. The aprons replace the 'Rotarian at Work' T-shirts we have worn during projects since 2017.

Under-40 Rotarians socialize



Young Rotarians, plus a few guests and a couple of older members, at an Oct. 25 social gathering of our Under 40 Committee. From left: Chris Utesch, Tyler Wooden, Alex White, Laurel Matthews, Mark Ihnat, Albert Sementa, Griffin Lisle, Russell Clark, Donna Shiro, Stacy Wooden, Cat Marinich, and Katie Corpening.



Steve Yates and Principal Jo McDonnell present one of Williston's Students of the Month for October with a certificate, yard sign, and copy of her teachers' citation.

Williston Middle School remains a club priority

Members of our club presented Student of the Month awards on Oct. 18 and Nov. 15 at Williston Middle School, honoring youth who live in harmony with Rotary's Four-Way Test.

Rotarians have also donated snacks, gift cards and other goodies to be shared by Williston's teachers and staff. A faculty "Sunshine Committee" helps distribute these gifts.



Proud parents and family members at Oct. 18 ceremony.



Giving new-member talks were: Katie Crosby, on Oct. 17; Kevin Crane, Oct. 24; Rafaela Dejanovic, Oct. 31; Dan Daniel, Nov. 7; and Allan Lusk, Nov. 28.

New members are inducted and tell us about themselves

The club's membership continues to grow, with several new Rotarians joining us and introducing themselves through new-member talks.

Katie Crosby spoke on Oct. 17. Assistant director of corporate and foundation engagement with UNC-Wilmington, she was inducted Sept. 29. Gabe Rich sponsored her for membership.

Kevin Crane gave his talk Oct. 24. Inducted Aug. 29, he has three years of

prior Rotary membership in Nashville, Tenn. He is station manager at WHQR radio, sponsored by Cleve Callison, his predecessor in that position.

Rafaela Dejanovic was inducted Oct. 17 and introduced herself Oct. 31. A native of Croatia, she is a dentist and took over retired Rotarian Coleman Burgess's practice. Her sponsors are Michael Gillespie and Stacy Ankrum.

W.G. "Dan" Daniel, who joined on

Sept. 29, gave his talk Nov. 7. Previously in the Charleston (S.C.) Breakfast Rotary Club, he is chief development officer for the Good Shepherd Center. Steve Coggins is his sponsor.

Allan Lusk, in charge of ticket sales for UNC-Wilmington athletics, was inducted Nov. 21 and gave his talk a week later. He previously worked for a number of minor-league baseball teams. David Grandey sponsored him.

Wilbur Jones, Steve Yates, Nancy Bullock and Dale Smith presented information about the club at Capt'n Bill's volleyball tournament.



We fight Alzheimer's, promote Rotary

A \$500 club sponsorship, plus another \$500-plus our members spent on raffle tickets, benefitted the Alzheimers Association at an Oct. 14 volleyball tournament. The Mussler family, owners of Capt'n Bill's Backyard Grill, organized the tournament in honor of a relative who died of Alzheimer's disease.

In honor of the late **Ann LaReau**, our club sponsored a team that included former Rotarian Josh Rosenberg. Members also set up a table with information about Rotary.

And our team won!



Our winning team: Josh Rosenberg, Jess Nester, Marissa Vann and Miguel Hernandez.

History from St. Mary pupils



Eighth-graders from St. Mary Catholic School gave a special slide-show presentation to the club Oct. 17 to mark the school's 150th anniversary. Aubree Cooper, left, and Mia Singleton, right, with Principal Joseph Poletti, had speaking parts.

Southport's Braswell to be DG

Shawn Braswell of Southport Rotary Club will be our district governor for 2026-27. She will follow current District Governor **Allen Quigley** of Wilmington West (2023-24), **Christopher Crooks** of Jacksonville (2024-25) and **Andrea Young** of Wilmington West. (2025-26.)

Shawn is District 7730's public image chair and assistant governor for Area 4, which covers Brunswick County. She was president of the Southport club in 2021-22.



Gifts to Foundation recognized with Fellowships

Two new Paul Harris Fellows and one repeat Fellow have been named as the result of several large donations to The Rotary Foundation.

Vince Howe won an Oct. 31 raffle drawing from buyers of the Attractions coupon books; a \$1,000 contribution to the Foundation from the club's book sale proceeds made him a Paul Harris Fellow.

The same day, **Mimi Cunningham's** gifts in the name of **Hailey Bishton Roberts** made the former Rotary ambassadorial scholar a Fellow. Hailey, from England, visited

this club during Mimi's 1994-95 presidency.

Tolis Vardakis became a Fellow "plus seven" on Nov. 28, for Foundation gifts totaling more than \$8,000 over the years. Tolis is a member of the Paul Harris Society, meaning he has pledged to give \$1,000 a year for ten years.

In other Foundation business, the club presented District Governor **Allen Quigley** with a \$1,600 check to the Foundation on Oct. 17. That represented \$10 per member.

For recent grants from the Foundation, SEE: *page 2*



R.B. Richey presents Paul Harris Fellow certificate to Hailey Bishton Roberts, thanks to a donation from Mimi Cunningham.



Vince Howe: Wins PHF in book raffle.



Tolis Vardakis gets his PHF "plus 7" pin from R.B. Richey on Nov. 28.

Rotaractors meet puppy 'Donna'

The UNCW Rotaract Club has met regularly this fall, learning about service opportunities. Rotaract is Rotary's branch for young adults, typically college students. The UNCW club's advisors include Rotarians **Lucy Holman** and **Michael Gillespie**. The Nov. 2 meeting featured Paws4People and one of its service dogs in training, named in honor of our own **Donna Shiro**.



Donna the dog

Raffle pays off big, fills CART coffers

Past President **Mimi Cunningham** won an unusually large prize—more than \$600—in our weekly raffle on Oct. 31. The rest of the \$1,800-plus pot went to the CART fund for Alzheimers' research. That was part of a \$2,230 total to CART for the year up to that date.

Holding the fourth ticket drawn that day, Mimi first collected \$5, then drew a card from a deck that shrinks every week that someone draws a card without winning. Her lucky king of clubs was a winner. (The queen of clubs would also have won.) Either way, we're regal!



Newly settled Ukrainian refugees with some of their Rotarian sponsors.

A peaceful Christmas for Ukrainian families

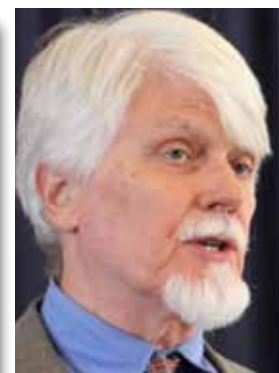
Rotarians from this and other local clubs hosted Ukrainian war refugee families Dec. 2. Our club is helping the Wilmington East Rotary Club to resettle these families. Representing our club were **Mike Beaudoin**, **Jack Clark** and **R.B. Richey**.



The crowd goes wild! Mimi Cunningham pulls king of clubs and wins huge payout.



Quigley: district governor



Snider: Beekeeping



Patulski: football career



Volety: UNC-Wilmington



Pyron: business recruiting



Vardakis: gramophone



Warner: Veterans Day



Tucker: UNCW athletics

Sports, veterans, business, & music among program topics

Athletics past and present, economic development and education, and such sweet subjects as beekeeping and antique phonographs were some of the topics of recent guest speakers' presentations.

District Governor **Allen Quigley** made his official visit to the club on Oct. 17. He described his "Road Show" training project and District 7730's Mental Health Task Force, focused on suicide prevention.

Walt Patulski, a former defensive lineman for Notre Dame and the Buffalo Bills and winner of the 1971 Lombardi award, told stories about his football career on Oct. 24.

Bringing new employers to the region was the subject of **Cliff Pyron's** program Oct. 10. A former member of this club, he is director of Wilmington Business Development

Nov. 7, in honor of Veterans Day, retired Army **Col. Kirk Gibson Warner** spoke about veterans' contributions to the nation, starting with the Revolutionary War. He is an author and a lifelong Rotarian.

"The weird world of bees" was **Dr. Anthony Snider's** topic Nov. 14. He is a retired professor of envi-

ronmental sciences and a beekeeper.

The Nov. 21 program recognized honorees and sponsors from the previous two Leaders in Service awards. UNCW Chancellor **Dr. Aswani Volenty** spoke about the university's present and future.

For Foundation Month on Nov. 21, four Rotarians described projects that Rotary Foundation grants support. **Gabe Rich** discussed our Honduras health clinic Global Grant project; **Larry Sackett**, the 2Share beds-for-kids project; **Dale Smith**, Theatre for All's productions with disabled actors; and **Alex White**, the Northside Food Co-op's Community Dinners. For more on these projects, SEE: *pages 1 and 2*.

Rotarian **Tolis Vardakis** spoke Dec. 5 about his restoration of a 1908 gramophone, with his friend **John Wulfmeyer**, who repaired and repainted the horn. Tolis played a 1916 recording of Enrico Caruso.

Tiffany Tucker, UNCW's assistant athletic director, spoke Dec. 12, discussing the challenges coming as college athletes begin accepting compensation for use of their names, images and likenesses.



Rich: Clinic in rural Honduras



Sackett: 2Share furniture grant



Smith: Theatre for All arts grant



White: Northside Food Co-op grant



Tolis Vardakis with his restored 1908 gramophone. With him is John Wulfmeyer, who repaired and repainted the horn. As part of his presentation, Tolis played an original 1916 record by the famous opera tenor Enrico Caruso.

Newsletter photos

by Robby Collins, Mike Beaudoin, Bunny Donahue, Lynn Hershey, Bob Kitchen, John Meyer, Donna Shiro, Tolis Vardakis, Alex White, Steve Yates, Nick Reinhart of UNCW Rotaract, and Courtney Rickert of Theatre for All.

Upcoming programs & events

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 19

Family holiday party. With entertainment from **Ray Kennedy** and Opera House Theatre Company.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 26

No meeting: Christmas holiday.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 2

No meeting: New Years holiday.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 9

International Committee report, with Rotarians **Gabe Rich** and **Mike Beaudoin**.

MONDAY, JANUARY 15

Board of Directors meeting, 5:15 p.m. LS3P Architects conference room, 101 N. Third Street, Fifth Floor.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 16

Real estate done different: cold storage at ILM Airport, with **Michael Braddock** of Frontier Scientific Solutions.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 23

Annual economic update, with **Dr. Mouhcine Guettabi**, professor of economics at UNCW business school.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 30

Report from the hospital, with **Dr. Roxie Wells**, chief executive strategy officer with Novant Health.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 6

Focus on economic development, with **Josh Hallingse** of Wilmington Chamber of Commerce.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 13

Rookie Teachers of the Year awards, with Rotarians **Mike Beaudoin**, **Charles Foust**, and five beginning teachers from New Hanover County Schools.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 19

Board of Directors meeting, 5:15 p.m. LS3P Architects conference room, 101 N. Third Street, Fifth Floor.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 20

Allocating money from the hospital's sale, with **William Buster** of New Hanover Community Endowment.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 27

Rotary's work in Moldova, with **Donna Bunting Flake** of Wilmington East Rotary Club.

TUESDAY, March 5

Service Above Self awards for police and first responders, with Rotarian **Ben David**, district attorney.

Program suggestions are welcome

Send ideas to Paul Lawler: paul@enjoywilmington.com

Rotary news briefs

Sierra Leone grant: The club has awarded a \$2,000 grant to the "Let Girls be Girls" project in Sierra Leone, International Committee Chair Gabe Rich announced Nov. 21. The project, by Missions of Hope, provides education about teen pregnancy in the West African nation.

Polio walk raises \$16,000: The District 7730 Walk Around the District for Polio generated more than \$48,000, including a two-for-one match from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, District Governor Allen Quigley reported. The event took place on Oct. 20.

Cleaning up after landscapers: A Dec. 2 work day began to restore plant beds and mulch at the Rotary Wheel Garden after paid landscaping contractors failed to adequately keep the site weeded and clean. Terry Smith said his committee has hired a new firm to conduct routine maintenance in the garden, a showplace in Greenfield Park.

Socializing after hours: Members of Wilmington area Rotary Clubs and their guests met for appetizers and drinks the afternoon of Nov. 29. The latest of our informal Fifth Wednesday socials was at Junction 421 restaurant.

Buying books for schools: We have gathered wish lists from the six elementary schools we serve, Literacy Committee Chair Debby Gomulka reported Oct. 17. The club has provided \$7,500 to buy books for those schools. The committee is also reviving its "Little Free Libraries" project, which was delayed by the Covid pandemic.

Club earns district awards: We brought back two honors from the District 7730 Foundation Banquet Nov. 4: the Rotary Citation for completing a majority of goals specified by Rotary International; and the District Governor's Award for meeting specific goals described as going above and beyond for our members, our community, and Rotary.

Blood drive resumes: The next Rotary-sponsored blood-donation day will be from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Dec. 21 at the Masonic Lodge, 2910 S. College Road, followed by an 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. donation day Dec. 28 at Independence Mall.



Leaders in Service honorees Dr. Thomas Dalton, Capt. Terry Bragg, and J.C. Lyle with Dale Smith Nov. 21. Not present, but named on the plaque, were Chris Coudriet, Dr. Yousry Sayed, and Amy Wright.

Board of Directors Meeting

5:15 pm, 3rd Monday of each Month
LS3P Architects conference room
101 N. Third Street, Fifth Floor
Wilmington, NC 28401

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Submit News Items

Send photos or other information for the newsletter to jmeyer1@ec.rr.com. Please include all pertinent details: names, dates, etc.

Website

www.WilmingtonRotaryClub.org