

DISTRICT 6900 NEWS FOR FEBRUARY, 2021

- From Our District Governor  
**Facing Challenges; Adapting to Change; Delivering Hope**  
 By Kirk Driskell  
 As we welcome in 2021 with a renewed sense of hope, encouragement and goals it is with out question they will intersect with the challenges of COVID-19. I can honestly say that I was praying we would be in further along in restoring our "normal" lives. This pandemic is serious as it affects the health and lives of many with little known about it. Uncertainty is uncomfortable and is inconvenient as we have to adapt our plans. Uncertainty is a part of life and how we react to it will direct our paths. Our intentions do not determine our destination; our actions do. [\[more\]](#)
- RI Convention and District Conference 2021  
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- The Rotary Foundation  
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- Rotary Leadership Institute  
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 By Stephanie Windham  
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- GRSP Update  
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 By Scott Rich  
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 By Carol Jones  
 It's not every year that an organization celebrates its centennial anniversary. May 2021 will mark the **Rotary Club of Thomasville's** 100th birthday - and the club intends to celebrate all year long. Rotary Past President Jeff Zoller (pictured with President John Brown) summed up the core spirit of the club and its membership when he said, "Over the past 100 years, the Club and its members have made significant and diverse service contributions to the city, with innumerable members involved in service projects to youth and the community. Members have served in diverse leadership roles within the business, education, medical, and government spheres, including members who have served in city, county, and state governments." [\[more\]](#)
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 By Julie Bond  
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- Our Rotary Foundation at Work  
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 By Trammie Patrick  
 Jacobs Ladder offers tailored services to children of all ages with Autism, ADHD, Brain Injury, CP, Down Syndrome, Learning Differences, or any developmental syndrome. Their interpersonal Whole Brain Model of Care is individually customized and daily implemented in loving environments to ensure every child and young adult reaches their full potential, no matter the neurological or behavioral challenges faced. The District Grant awarded to **Roswell Rotary** and the **Rotary Club of Milton** funded a much-needed commercial oven for the Taste of Love kitchen. [\[more\]](#)
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 By Ron Swofford  
 In January, members of the **Rotary Club of Lake Spivey/Clayton County** were treated to a special presentation from Mary Chase Mize, a PhD candidate at Georgia State University (GSU). What made the program special? First, her description of a new way Rotarians can serve their communities. And second, her background - Ms. Mize received her undergraduate degree from Mississippi State University in 2013, with scholarship assistance provided by her hometown Rotary Club, the Rotary Club of Somerville Tennessee. [\[more\]](#)
- Serving During the Pandemic  
**Americus Delivers Protective Equipment**  
 By Angela Smith  
 Thanks to Karen Beaver at the Georgia Center for Non-profits and Chris Brand with FODAC, the **Rotary Club of Americus** was able to distribute PPE to organizations and agencies experiencing a critical need during the post-holiday spike in COVID-19 cases. Americus Rotarians delivered 5,500 masks (including 4,000 KN95) and nearly 300 bottles of ... [\[more\]](#)
- From Facebook  
**Making a Difference in Our Communities**  
 By Jackie Cuthbert  
 Our clubs have been busy in the community! **Milton** and **Alpharetta** supported a Meals on Wheels for Pets program for the local Senior Program, while **Buckhead Rotarians** were working with Livable Buckhead and Doc's Healing Hives to create a bee habitat. **Marietta Metro** participated in the Keep Cobb Beautiful tree chipper program, **Emory Druid Hills** sponsored a program on COVID-19, and **North Cobb** worked with the Ladies of KSU to collect coats, hats, gloves and scarves. See more about these projects. [\[more\]](#)
- From Facebook  
**Serving Up Thanks to First Responders and Health Workers**  
 By Jackie Cuthbert  
 As we continue to work through the pandemic, here's how the **Rotary Clubs of Barnesville, Montrie, Thomaston Upson and Thomasville** have served up their thank you's to first responders and health care workers. [\[more\]](#)
- From Facebook  
**Making a Difference in Our Education; Inspiring Youth for the Future**  
 By Jackie Cuthbert  
 Our clubs continue to inspire youth and support education. **Peachtree City** has been sponsoring new Interact Clubs, while **Paulding County** supports the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, **Cordale** participates in the Growing Garden program, **East Cobb** supports AVID at Wheeler High School, and **Carrollton** provides technology for special needs students. Be inspired by their ideas. Two of these clubs used District Grants from the Rotary Foundation to fund their projects. [\[more\]](#)

From Our GRSP Alumni

**Open Letter to District 6900 Rotarians from GRSP Class of 1996-97**

By Angela Smith  
 Carolina Mateus was Carl and Judy Tott's GRSP student in 1996 when Carl was Americus Rotary President. Carolina married their son Glenn a number of years later. In Carolina's text to Carl following a group chat with her GRSP class, she stated "After the situation in DC on Wednesday [January 6, 2021], the GRSP class of 1996-97 decided to write a letter to GRSP headquarters mentioning our love and deep belief in US democracy and thanking the program for shaping us to be ambassadors of peace as we moved into our adult lives. After sending the letter, many other GRSP classes joined in signing it and we have since received warm responses from Rotarians." Carolina shared the information and following letter with Carl. [\[more\]](#)

A Closing Thought From Our District Chaplain

**It Starts with Thinking for Ourselves ...**

By Gregory Adams  
 Shackles on our minds and bars around our hearts will imprison our souls. That's why it is so important not to allow any one person to control the way we think. I remember when I was a child, my parents would often tell me, Greg, think for yourself. It's funny now, but I understand why they were telling me to do that. And I'm sure a ... [\[more\]](#)

**Upcoming Key Dates**

Tuesday, February 9th, 2021	<b>Smyrna Board &amp; Official Visit</b>
Thursday, February 18th, 2021	<b>Quitman Board &amp; Official Visit</b>
Thursday, February 25th, 2021	<b>Milton Official Visit &amp; Board Meeting</b>

From Our District Governor

## Facing Challenges; Adapting to Change; Delivering Hope



As we welcome in 2021 with a renewed sense of hope, encouragement and goals it is without question they will intersect with the challenges of COVID-19. I can honestly say that I was praying we would be in further along in restoring our “normal” lives. This pandemic is serious as it affects the health and lives of many with little known about it. Uncertainty is uncomfortable and is inconvenient as we have to adapt our plans.

Uncertainty is a part of life and how we react to it will direct our paths. Our intentions do not determine our destination; our actions do. I have been so encouraged by the actions of the Rotarians in District 6900. You are truly “People of Action.” I have witnessed the innovation of new clubs being formed, long standing club traditions changed, new fundraisers birthed, and front line service projects delivering immediate needed relief. That is the Rotarian Spirit, we have an incredible District because of our Rotarians' willingness to adapt in the time of need to meet the needs of their communities.

As we look ahead do not be discouraged..... We can view the day filled with opportunities or problems. We have the ability to choose how we view the challenges that lie ahead. Stay positive, keep serving and making an impact in our communities.

***“It is not enough to say that we have arrived until we answer the question, “Where and to what purpose” Arthur H. Sapp, 1929 RI Convention***

Thanks for all you continue to do.

DG Kirk

*Pictured: DG Kirk joined this Rotary mask and sanitizer distribution project in early January.*

Posted by Kirk Driskell  
February 1, 2021

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RI Convention and District Conference 2021

## Rotary International Convention Goes Virtual; District Conference Cancelled

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Since our last communication with you, COVID conditions have continued to forecast difficulty with ensuring Rotary can safely hold large gatherings.

**RI Convention:** Rotary International has decided to move the International Convention scheduled for Taiwan this June to an online convention - much as last year's Honolulu convention moved to a virtual setting. We will be sharing more information with you as details become available.

**District Conference:** Meanwhile, here in Georgia our deadline for committing to the District Conference in Sandestin was just a few weeks away, so Governor Kirk and many people in district leadership spent considerable time in thought and discussion weighing the pros and cons of holding the conference. In the final conclusion, it was felt we could not ensure conditions would be safe and could not in good conscience risk the health of anyone in attendance. As such, Governor Kirk has elected to cancel district conference.

Governor Kirk is still looking at options for clubs to celebrate this year. He knows it is especially tough on this year's presidents who have given so much in the name of Rotary. Stayed tuned for further communication.

Many of you have registered already. We will process refunds. There is nothing you need to do. If you have

reserved a room, please cancel directly with Sandestin.

I was, along with you, looking forward to reconnecting with my fellow Rotarians at the beach. That day will come where we can once again be together and celebrate all that Rotary means to us and our communities.

Posted by Jackie Cuthbert  
February 5, 2021

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The Rotary Foundation

## 2020-2021 District Grants Upcoming Deadline



Greetings District 6900 Rotarians.

The time to close out all District Grants for 2020-2021 is near. If you have an open District Grant ALL documentation is to be uploaded to the district website, reviewed, and ACCEPTED by the District Grants team no later than **March 31, 2021**. If you have a grant that is currently in overdue status, documentation is to be uploaded immediately. Thank you to those clubs that have already uploaded their spending documentation.

This has been a very interesting year to say the least. The current pandemic has continued to impact our work as Rotarians. Yet, we have risen above the intermittent lockdowns and worked with our partnering organizations to complete the spending of the grant funds. Well done!

Should your club have any issues with completing the spending of your grant funds, please contact me immediately to discuss options. If at all possible, please have your documentation uploaded one week prior to the March 31, 2021 deadline to allow time for review, comment, and approval. Not uploading your documentation by the deadline may affect your clubs eligibility to apply for a District Grant for 2021-2022.

Please do not hesitate to contact me, Gillian Leggett via the comments section on your club's grant page or via other contact methods listed below. The grants team is here to help.

Yours In Rotary Service,

Gillian

gkleggett@att.net

404-202-2409

Posted by Gillian Leggett

February 1, 2021

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Rotary Leadership Institute

## **Our Own PDG Margie Kersey Named to New RLI Board**



Under the direction of Michael McGovern, Rotary International Chair and Past Rotary International Vice President, Rotary Leadership Institute (RLI) International will seat its inaugural board of directors this month. The RLI Board includes two Rotarians from the RLI Sunshine Division (covering Florida, Georgia, Puerto Rico and the Caribbean) including our own PDG Margie Kersey (pictured with husband Ron) and

PDG Timothy Schuler of District 6950.

These two will join 18 other Rotarians from around the world on the new board. The inaugural board has been charged with developing by-laws, reviewing procedures and creating policies for the organization. The goal is to create a consistent product that serves the needs of the Rotarians and member Districts.

Margie is a member of the Stone Mountain Rotary Club and is an estate planner. She began working with Sunshine Division in 2008 when it expanded to include the three Georgia Districts. She is the current Chair of Sunshine Division, founder of RLI Sunshine Online and a current Discussion Leader. She has served as the Sunshine Curriculum Chair for several years. Margie served as our District Governor in 2011-12, and has served as our District Chair for The Rotary Foundation..

Thomas Schuler is a real estate attorney in Seminole, Florida. He was instrumental in the founding of RLI Sunshine Division in 2005. Schuler, along with other like-minded leaders, organized the eight Florida districts and then applied to become a Division. Tim continues to serve RLI Sunshine as a Discussion Leader and General Counsel. He has served in multiple positions, including twice as the Chair of Sunshine Division - the only member to do so.

Posted by Stephanie Windham  
February 5, 2021

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GRSP Update

## **Celebrate 75 Years of GRSP This August in Thomasville**

by GRSP Trustee Scott Rich, Rotary Club of Thomasville



A tremendous project is underway in downtown Thomasville, Georgia to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of the Georgia Rotary Student Program. To be located at the main entrance to a strikingly new downtown

hotel, Rotary Districts 6900, 6910 and 6920 have the opportunity to name the main hotel entrance plaza and fountain in honor of the 75th GRSP anniversary year, 2021.

The plaza of the hotel will be named the GRSP Peace Plaza. The fountain located in the plaza will be named the Will Watt Memorial Fountain. A 24-inch bronze seal will be placed in front of the fountain denoting the anniversary and dedication date. A historical marker will be located at the hotel - with one side denoting Will Watt's vision for GRSP and the other side the history of GRSP.

You can join in the celebration and see the fountain when the **Rotary Club of Thomasville** hosts the 75th Anniversary GRSP Conclave in August 2021. The event is scheduled for August 20-21 ... mark your calendar now and watch for details.

Why Thomasville? GRSP was founded by Past District Governor and Thomasville Rotarian William A. (Mr. Will) Watt, Sr., in 1946 at the conclusion of World War II. Mr. Will wanted to promote world peace through understanding. For generations, Rotary members in Districts 6900, 6910 and 6920 have promoted world peace by generously funding and offering scholarships to international students for one year of study in a Georgia college or university. Georgia Rotarians believe "Peace is Possible" and through GRSP promote international goodwill through friendship and understanding.

Posted by Scott Rich  
February 5, 2021

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GRSP

## **Katheryne Fields Named GRSP Marketing and Development Director**





Georgia Rotary Student Program (GRSP) Chair Bert Guy recently announced Katheryne A. Fields as the inaugural Marketing and Development Director. In her role at GRSP, Fields will work to strengthen the program's strategic initiatives, fundraise and market the student scholarship program throughout the state. In the role, Fields will be working closely with the GRSP Chair, officers, directors, and trustees as well as Georgia Rotary Clubs, GRSP students, government officials and the public.

Fields brings more than 20 years of writing, communication, marketing, strategic planning and corporate events experience, 10 in a supervisor's position with five of those years in public education and non-profit foundations for education. "I am excited by this opportunity to serve and promote that 'Peace is Possible'," said Fields "I have witnessed the benefits of the student scholarship program. I am excited to connect and and reinforce the bonds between Rotarians, education leaders, alumni of the program and the state at large."

Fields began her career as a sports writer for the Griffin Daily News and served as a state editor for the Asheville Citizen Times. From 2010 to 2015, Fields served as the Marketing Director and brand ambassador for Chick-fil-A of Griffin. In recognition for her efforts in the community, she received the Griffin-Spalding County Chamber of Commerce Ambassador of the Year Award in 2013.

Fields previously represented Southern Crescent Technical College as the Director for Institutional Advancement from 2015 to 2019. During her tenure at SCTC, she was responsible for fundraising for the college by acquiring funds, grants, gifts and scholarships. In that role, she collaborated with various department deans and vice presidents plus SCTC Foundation Trustees to create civic and donor presentations as well as grant applications. She assisted the Foundation in raising \$175,575 in grants in

Fiscal Year 2019 and helped acquire the Foundation's largest-gift-to-date, \$1,000,000 for College Renovation and Expansion in FY 2018. She was named the recipient of the 2019 National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD) Excellence Award for SCTC. Most recently,

Fields served as the marketing director for Gordon State College, where she served as the primary spokesperson for the college and as the crisis management adviser to the president. Fields managed the college's website and social media platforms. She created a five-year strategic enrollment management marketing and communication plan at Gordon to spearhead the branding efforts and recruiting initiatives within the college's 14-county service region. A native of Rome, Ga., Fields holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Communication from Berry College. She is an alumna of 2018 Leadership Griffin and 2017 Leadership Henry chamber programs. A Toastmaster and former Rotarian, she is excited to return to her local club in Griffin, where she and her husband Dale, an avid golfer, reside. "Katheryne's experience in higher education, marketing and development will prove invaluable to GRSP," said Guy. "Her impressive accomplishments speak to her abilities. I am extremely happy that Katheryne has joined our team and know she will quickly contribute to our program." Fields will began her new role effective January 22 and can be reached at [kfields@grsp.org](mailto:kfields@grsp.org).

Posted by Jackie Cuthbert  
January 13, 2021

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Club News

## **Vinings Down Hill 5K Run for the Kids Sets Records During Pandemic**



On January 27, 2021, the **Vinings Cumberland Rotary Club** gathered virtually to celebrate its donation of over \$100,000 to 17 charities specifically targeting children's projects. All this raised by a 66-member Rotary Club with money during the pandemic in the August 2020 Vinings Down Hill 5K run for the Kids.

Grant recipients included the Good Samaritan Health Center, Calvary Children's Home, American Red Cross, Arts Bridge Foundation, Atlanta Union Mission, Bankhead Boys Association, Breakthrough Atlanta, Canine Companions, Girls on the Run, Hero for Children, Kate's Club, Kenrod, Inc, Kyle Peasee Foundation, LaAmistad, Lekotek of Georgia, MUST Ministries and Youth Villages.

The money was raised by individual and corporate sponsors and featured the 2020 Charles Heinz Memorial Sponsorship, honoring the late founder and director of the race with over \$58,000 of the total grant funds.

Over 350 runners from all over the Atlanta area, across the USA and around the world (including former GRSP and Rotary Youth Exchange students) ran on their own, logged their time and sent their information into Race Chair Jolene Northrop. For 24 years, the race has always been an hands-on 5K race run by hundreds of Rotarians and volunteers in Vinings, a village across the Chattahoochee River northwest of Atlanta. This year, the race was almost complete cancelled because of the COVID pandemic. Instead, it was a record breaking success because of the persistent hard work of Jolene and her committee - Co-Chair Ann Hudgins, Sponsor Chair Betty Smith, Race Administrator Terri Hilderhoff, Grant Chair Steve Hughes, Paul Harris,, Kathy Gacutan and others.

The club's next race will be in August 2021- hopefully welcoming the typical 1500 runners live as in person

in Vinings as we celebrate our 25th anniversary. The legacy of the Charles Heinz Memorial Sponsorship of 2020 will continue to contribute to its success.

**PHOTOS:**



*David  
(Taiwan), Lars  
(Norway),  
Lucila and  
Nilton (Brazil)  
participated  
far away from  
Georgia*



Posted by Ross Henderson  
February 2, 2021

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Club News

**For Club's 100th Birthday, the Gift is Trees ... to the City**



It's not every year that an organization celebrates its centennial anniversary. May 2021 will mark the **Rotary Club of Thomasville's** 100th birthday - and the club intends to celebrate all year long. Rotary Past President Jeff Zoller (pictured with President John Brown) summed up the core spirit of the club and its membership when he said, "Over the past 100 years, the Club and its members have made significant and diverse service contributions to the city, with innumerable members involved in service projects to youth and the community. Members have served in diverse leadership roles within the business, education, medical, and government spheres, including members who have served in city, county, and state governments."

To that spirit, President John Brown and his club members have a list of activities planned to celebrate this historic achievement, if current social conditions will allow. One such activity, a gift to our city, has already been successfully completed. Keen observers may have noticed recent activity on the west side of Paradise Park, where a team of arborists took the better part of the week of December 7 to plant 24- 15-foot live oaks (*Quercus virginiana*,) - a gift to the city from Thomasville's Rotarians. At cost of \$20,000, the trees were purchased from and planted by Lake Landscape, LLC of Whigham (pictured: Chris Collier from Lake Landscape). The City of Thomasville will play a key role in ensuring the continued good health and growth of the trees by providing irrigation.

Rotarian and Thomasville city councilman Jay Flowers was instrumental in project coordination between the club and the city. An ad hoc committee appointed by President John to select the perfect gift was led by Past President Jeff Zoller, and composed of senior Rotary members John Glenn, Homer Pankey, Harry Tomlinson, Warren Stafford, and Wayne Newsome. After two years of careful thought and planning and a slate of approximately a dozen proposals, the committee selected a gift that will enrich the lives of Thomasvillians for generations, 24 live oak trees which will continue to provide beauty and grace to Thomasville's focal green space, Paradise Park.

Thomasville's Big Oak which stands at the corner of Crawford and Monroe Streets is probably one of our most famous examples of a live oak, having stood its ground for well over 300 years. The live oak, which is the state tree of Georgia, has many attributes: it is highly wind resistant; its wood is dense and strong and as such is responsible for the nickname "Old Ironsides" given to the naval frigate USS Constitution which was made of wood from live oak trees. Its acorns provide food for turkeys, quail, ducks, deer, squirrels, and racoons, to name a few. These trees are highly adaptable to soil types and moisture conditions.

All of this said, we should not forget the importance of trees to our existence in general. They cleanse our atmosphere, cool our environment, beautify our surroundings, provide a habitat for animals, and so much more.

**PHOTOS:**







Posted by Carol Jones  
January 28, 2021

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Serving During the Pandemic

## **District Clubs Join to Distribute Masks and Sanitizer**



Our District was approached to help facilitate getting masks and sanitizers distributed to non-profits and others that our Clubs support! Thanks go to the **Emory Clifton Rotary Club** and the Georgia Center for non-profits that secured the donation, and Chris Brand and FODAC for helping coordinate this effort.

**Douglas County** Rotarian Ken Flick (pictured) and partner Paul Zachos picked up thousands of items! And has already delivered sanitizer and masks to the Good Samaritan Center and Harvester Christian Academy.

The Mitchell-Baker Service Center thanked the **Camilla Rotary Club** (pictured) on Facebook for donating hand sanitizer and masks. "We appreciate it so much and are already putting it to good use!"

Participating clubs include **Alpharetta, Atlanta West End, Americus, Camilla, Douglas County, East Cobb, Emory Clifton, Fayetteville, Lake Spivey/Clayton County, Metro Atlanta, Monroe-Forsythe, Moultrie, Newnan, Roswell, South DeKalb, Stone Mountain (pictured) , Thomasville, Tucker and Vinings-Cumberland**. Local businesses and non-profits also helped.

**PHOTOS:**





Posted by Jackie Cuthbert  
February 2, 2021

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Serving During the Pandemic

## **Columbus Shares Lunches with Hospital Workers**

MANY THANKS  
TO OUR  
FRIENDS AT  
THE  
ROTARY CLUB  
FOR PROVIDING  
US WITH  
LUNCH!



WE APPRECIATE  
YOUR SUPPORT!

EMERGENCY  
DEPARTMENT STAFF

**St. Francis**

EMORY HEALTHCARE



Even though the **Rotary Club of Columbus** isn't meeting in person, the great work of Rotary continues. Having both in person and virtual meetings for a few months, the Board decided that because with case counts and hospital occupancy rates are still much higher in January than where they were in December, the club would suspend the in person meetings. It was also decided to give the meals that we would have had at the Trade Center( where we would normally meet) to those in the Health Care community and frontline workers in our community battle against COVID-19. This step would also benefit the trade Center by providing work for their food services team, a win-win!

Spectra Food Services (the catering team working in the Columbus Trade Center) made 90 boxed lunches and bottles of water for delivery one Friday to St .Francis Hospital and stayed to help Rotarians load the meals and water onto Hospital Trolleys as the staff came down from the wards. Tricia Jeffcoat, Director of

Signature Service, arranged to have department and unit heads of the COVID wards and support services to receive lunches for their teams. It was clear they were very thankful for this token of our appreciation for the great job they are doing, illustrated by the picture they sent to us in thanks. You can get a sense of what it was like being there by [watching the video](#).

Those watching were asking about Rotary and it was a great opportunity to show service above self. There was a repeat performance on the following Tuesday at Piedmont Columbus Regional Hospital when 90 boxed lunches and bottles of water were brought again by our wonderful culinary team and Rotarians to help the department and unit heads from COVID wards collect the meals for their teams. Their hospital photographer also took the action team photograph for us. We received a very nice thank you email from their Leadership teams the next day as they had reviewed it on their conference call together.

Many thanks to Christina Clifton for organizing this at Piedmont. Amongst our thanks from all concerned, here is one from the Trade Center: "Thank you so much for letting the Trade Center be a small part of giving back to the healthcare community! It means the world to us! Thank you for being champions of service!!!," Hayley Tillery.

These are our first two weeks of community healthcare meals of gratitude, there will be more to come.

### PHOTOS:





Posted by Julie Bond  
February 2, 2021

Our Rotary Foundation at Work

## District Grant Supports Jacobs Ladder Taste of Love Kitchen



Jacobs Ladder offers tailored services to children of all ages with Autism, ADHD, Brain Injury, CP, Down Syndrome, Learning Differences, or any developmental syndrome. Their interpersonal Whole Brain Model of Care is individually customized and daily implemented in loving environments to ensure every child and young adult reaches their full potential, no matter the neurological or behavioral challenges faced.

The District Grant awarded to **Roswell Rotary** and the **Rotary Club of Milton** funded a much-needed commercial oven for the Taste of Love kitchen. Taste of Love allows students to learn real-life kitchen and food skills. This year's curriculum centered around safety of food, knives, and appliances (stovetop and oven), using hand tools, reading recipes, identifying, and measuring ingredients and instructions on how to clean the kitchen. This is a great way to integrate other areas of focus into the school day, including peer interaction, reading and math goals and generalization of language skills.

A Roswell Rotarian made the Rotary International aprons. In December, the students baked cookies for both Roswell Rotary and the Rotary Club of Milton for their weekly lunch meetings as a gesture of thanks.

**PHOTOS:**



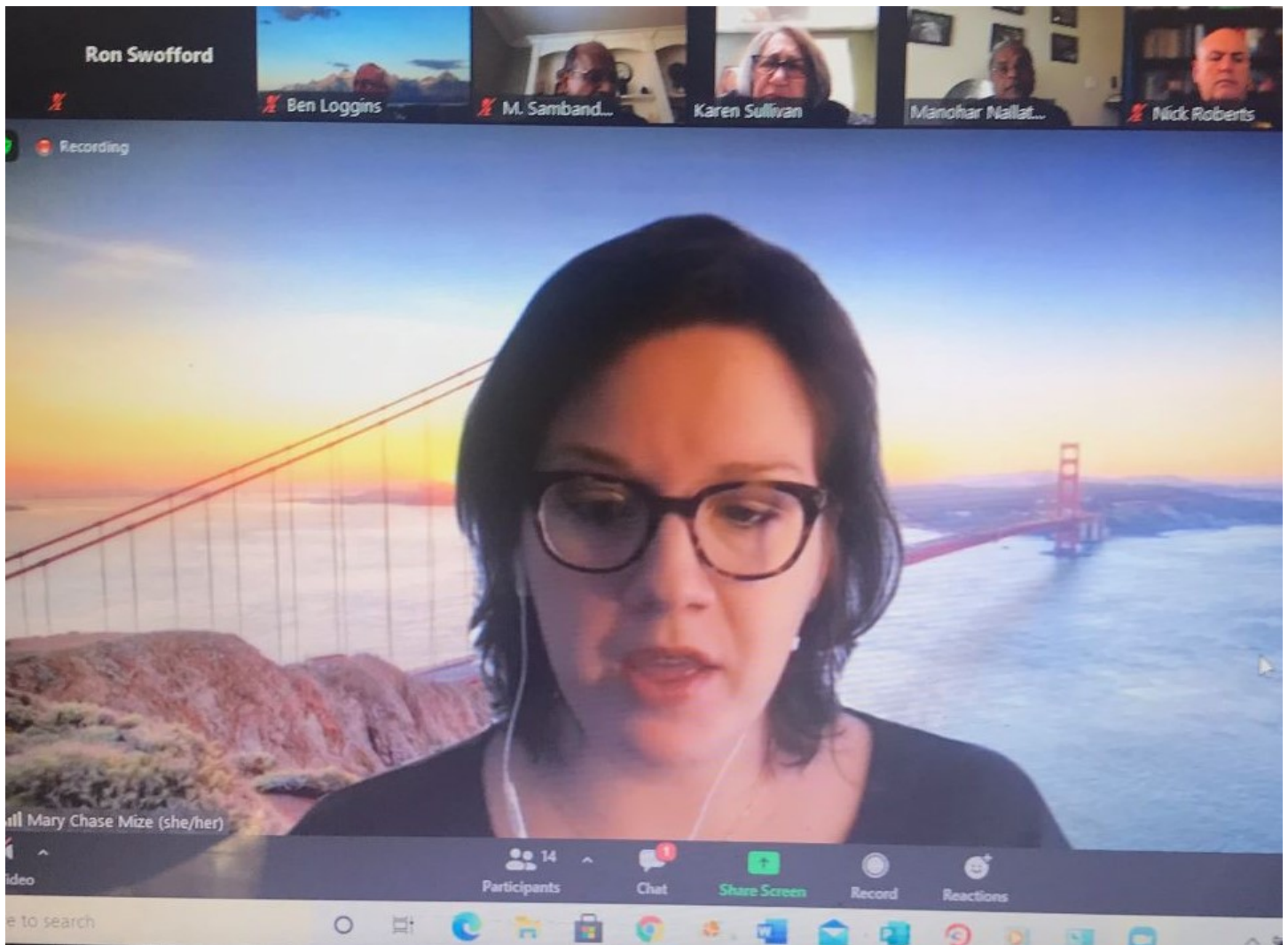


Posted by Trummie Patrick  
February 5, 2021

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Club News

## **Graduate Student Focuses on Assisting Seniors; Preventing Suicides**



In January, members of the **Rotary Club of Lake Spivey/Clayton County** were treated to a special Zoom presentation from Mary Chase Mize, a PhD candidate at Georgia State University (GSU). What made the program special? First, her description of a new way Rotarians can serve their communities. And second, her background - Ms. Mize received her undergraduate degree from Mississippi State University in 2013, with scholarship assistance provided by her hometown Rotary Club, the Rotary Club of Somerville Tennessee.

Since graduating from Mississippi State, she has earned a master's degree in clinical mental health counseling from GSU, and is working on both a PhD in Counselor Education and Practice and a Master of Arts degree in Gerontology - all at GSU.

Since 2018, Ms. Mize has been working with a research team that has partnered with the Administration for Community Living, which is a unit within the United States Department of Health and Human Services that was created to assist older adults and people of all ages with disabilities to live where they choose and with the ability to be active in their communities. A role of Ms. Mize's research team has been to initiate grant-funded research about how to equip home-delivered meal volunteers with skills to help older adults who might be experiencing mental health distress, especially those who may have thoughts of suicide. Suicide, Ms. Mize explained in her presentation, not only is a leading cause of death across the human lifespan but especially so for older adults. Older adults constitute 16% of the U. S. population but account for about 19% of all suicide deaths. Furthermore, researchers believe that suicide behaviors by older adults exceed the number of reported suicides by 40 to 100 times, which means, Ms. Mize says, that

although older adults already have one of the highest rates of suicide in the U. S., many more of their suicide deaths go unreported or unnoticed.

Precipitating factors are many. Older adults, for example, who complete suicide are more likely to be widow(er)s, to live alone, to perceive their health status as poor, to experience poor sleep, to experience loneliness, and to experience one or more stressful life events such as financial discord. Ms. Mize comments that many researchers agree that social isolation and loneliness play a key role in the high rate of suicide in later life.

The enhanced opportunity for service Ms. Mize presented to the club was an opportunity to participate in her research program and receive two days of Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) free. The training is valued at \$500. This is a training model that is recognized by the Centers for Disease Control and is used in crisis centers across our country to equip volunteers like Rotarians with skills to help someone at a time when they are in their greatest need. Ms. Mize further explained that she was an ASIST Master-level trainer who during 2019 and 2020 had trained more than 150 metro Atlanta volunteers. As a result of that training, she said she has learned of 35 individuals who used the ASIST training to help older adults and other community members who were in distress and experiencing suicidal thoughts.

Training volunteers, Ms. Mize said, especially Rotarians, is meaningful because “by nature of simply who they are, are already well-positioned to support vulnerable individuals....” For additional information about suicide in the older adult population or the ASIST program, please contact Ms. Mary Chase Mize at email [mmize1@student.gsu.edu](mailto:mmize1@student.gsu.edu).

Posted by Ron Swofford  
February 5, 2021

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Serving During the Pandemic

## **Americus Delivers Protective Equipment**



Thanks to Karen Beaver at the Georgia Center for Non-profits and Chris Brand with FODAC, the **Rotary Club of Americus** was able to distribute PPE to organizations and agencies experiencing a critical need during the post-holiday spike in COVID-19 cases. Americus Rotarians delivered 5,500 masks (including 4,000 KN95) and nearly 300 bottles of sanitizer to service agencies and non-profits, especially those serving the elderly and most vulnerable.

**PHOTOS:**







Posted by Angela Smith  
February 5, 2021

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From Facebook

# **Making a Difference in Our Communities**



A shout out to the **Rotary Clubs of Alpharetta and Milton** - in partnership with BrewAble -for collecting donations for Senior Services of North Fulton's Meals on Wheels for Pets program. Senior Services says, "Thank you to all who donated - the fur babies of our senior clients are pawsitively overjoyed with your generosity!!!"

**Buckhead Rotarians** joined Livable Buckhead and Doc's Healing Hives to tackle the second phase of our Buckhead Parks Bee Habitat project -- establishing the base for the pollinator garden that will help feed the hives once they are in place. They also built and painted a picket fence around the garden to secure our hives. Stay tuned for the next phase -- planting the garden and decorating the fence and the celebration of the arrival of the Queens!!!

The **Rotary Club of Marietta Metro** completed its annual participation in the early January Keep Cobb Beautiful tree chipper program. Thanks to all who attended and thank you to Keep Cobb Beautiful for a great event benefiting Cobb County. And special thanks to Robert Donovan for bringing grandson Max (raising the new Rotary generation!) and of course Lynn Lanier for leading the efforts for our club for yet another year!

The **Rotary Club of Emory Druid Hills** sponsored an online session on COVID-19 in early January, featuring Dr. Rakesh Shah - an Emergency Medicine Physician from Atlanta - in his usual form of presenting complex medical information in a very simple language.



Partnering with the Ladies of the KSU Women's Basketball Team, **North Cobb Rotary** will make its second donation to our friends at Coats for loving arms! This round of generous contributions from the Lady Owls included over 30 coats and 20 sets of hats, gloves, and scarves! #The club will continue its Coat Drive at Thursday morning meetings, collecting items to provide warmth to those in need through the winter season

**PHOTOS:**





Posted by Jackie Cuthbert  
January 31, 2021

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From Facebook

## **Serving Up Thanks to First Responders and Health Workers**



As we continue to work through the pandemic, clubs are recognizing first responders and health workers:

- **Barnesville Rotarians** love to eat and love to share, so they sponsored a lunch for the COVID testing site! They wrote, "The volunteers along with our Health Department staff are working tirelessly to help get people tested and vaccinated. Thank you April Mason and Linda Olivier for helping make it happen!"
- The **Rotary Club of Moultrie** hosted its annual Law Enforcement Appreciation Day - honoring 2020 officers of the year from the Moultrie Police Department, Colquitt County Sheriff's Office, Georgiaa Dept of Community Supervision, Colquitt County Prison, Georgia Department of Public Safety Troop G, Post 12, Georgia Department of Public Safety Game Warden, Georgia Dept of Natural Resources Region V Law Enforcement Division, Doerun Police Department, Berlin Police Department and Georgia Bureau of Investigation. "Thank you to Southern Regional Technical College for hosting us and Joe Kems BBQ Sauce and Catering for feeding us - it was a great day!!"
- The **Rotary Club of Thomaston Upson** said "Thank You" to the Upson County Health Department for their tireless efforts to keep the community safe with lunch for for the ten people working on the vaccine team.
- **Thomasville Rotarians** fired up the grill for burgers and hotdogs to say THANKS to over 60 firefighters and EMTs! With almost military-like precision, nearly 100 boxed meals were assembled, and a little before noon, the meals started flying off the serving table. It was a very dreary rainy day, but you could not tell it by the good time had by all!

**PHOTOS:**



Posted by Jackie Cuthbert  
January 31, 2021

From Facebook

## **Making a Difference in Our Education; Inspiring Youth for the Future**



The **Rotary Club of Peachtree City** is so very proud to sponsor Interact Clubs at Starrs Mill High School and The Foundry School! "These awesome young adults are making a difference in the world already! Both schools participated in our annual Winter Coat Drive and collected over 100 items between the two groups! "

**Paulding Rotary Club** welcomed the Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) and President Jeb Gordon presented FCA's Robbie Finley with a check for \$1,000 . The FCA brings a Christian ministry to young athletes and coaches in Paulding's middle and high schools. They provide camps and retreats for coaches and athletes, that teach leadership skills and provide guidance.

During January 277 Pre-K Students and 15 Pre-K Teachers at Crisp County Pre-K and Crisp Academy received a copy of "Captain Kale and the Superfoods" by Amy Roth. Most of the books were purchased by the **Rotary Club of Cordele** through a District Grant from The Rotary Foundation. Additional community resources such as the Cordele Garden Club provided additional funds. The books are part of The Growing Garden program - designed to help with addressing literacy and nutrition through the Get Georgia Ready Reading Campaign, Talk with me Baby and Tasty Success. Through collaboration with UGA Extension, Crisp County, Crisp County School System, Crisp County Community Council - GA Family Connection Collaborative, Crisp Area Arts Alliance, and Amy Roth - book author.

**East Cobb Rotarians** are proud of their partner Wheeler High School and the AVID faculty and students! Great results! "Wheeler's AVID program is currently completing its 5th year and the numbers don't lie! Look at these GPA's by grade level! Extremely proud of our AVID students, teachers and active supporters! What an outstanding job and keep up the work!"

Carrollton Elementary School recently received a generous donation of Chromebooks from the **Rotary**

**Club of Carrollton** to provide more technology for special needs children in the school's prekindergarten program. Pictured from left are CES Principal Kylie Carroll, Rotary Club of Carrollton Past President Sandra Morris, Director of Student Services Mary Raburn, and Assistant Supt. of Teaching and Learning Dr. Anna Clifton. Morris secured the Chromebooks by successfully applying for and receiving grant funding through Rotary organizations.

**PHOTOS:**





3.578

GPA for 9th Grade  
AVID Students



3.549

GPA for 10th Grade  
AVID Students

3.285

GPA for 11th Grade  
AVID Students

3.251

GPA for 12th Grade  
AVID Students





Posted by Jackie Cuthbert  
January 31, 2021

From Our GRSP Alumni

## **Open Letter to District 6900 Rotarians from GRSP Class of 1996-97**

from Carolina Mateus, Class of 1996-97, sponsored by Rotary Club of Americus

*Carolina Mateus was Carl and Judy Tott's GRSP student in 1996 when Carl was Americus Rotary President. Carolina married their son Glenn a number of years later. In Carolina's text to Carl following a group chat with her GRSP class, she stated "After the situation in DC on Wednesday [January 6, 2021], the GRSP class of 1996-97 decided to write a letter to GRSP headquarters mentioning our love and deep belief*

*in US democracy and thanking the program for shaping us to be ambassadors of peace as we moved into our adult lives. After sending the letter, many other GRSP classes joined in signing it and we have since received warm responses from Rotarians." Carolina shared the information and following letter with Carl:*

7th of January, 2021

Dear Georgia Rotarians and Our Beloved Host Families,

As GRSP students, we love Georgia and it will always have a special place in our hearts. Through this program, we have embraced the values of diversity, integrity, peace and understanding among nations and people, respect for different perspectives, and collaboration towards shared goals and values.

We, as members of the GRSP Alumni, were deeply shocked and saddened with what took place in Capitol Hill yesterday. Nonetheless, we are relieved that democracy has prevailed and that Georgia has taken center stage in the national debate.

Independent of anyone's personal political opinion, we are saddened by the deep division we have seen in the United States.

Georgia Rotarians showed to us how they welcome diversity and the move towards peace from the founding of the program in the aftermath of the war.

We are only ambassadors to the lessons of peace and understanding we learned in Georgia from you.

We have had challenging and successful careers, and raised happy, diverse and open families since we left your wonderful state. We have always carried the message that peace is possible. In these divisive times, we would like to offer our assistance if needed. We would be happy for instance to have an event to update you on how we are and how our year in your state made us more open, accepting, and loving; which is what the world needs.

We are confident and counting on you to continue to be the beacon and guiding light of unity and respect, and the leaders of democracy, integrity, law and order for Georgia and the world.

Our thoughts are with you. Georgia is always on our minds.

Sincerely, GRSP Alumni 1996-97

Seda Tokcan (from Turkey, living in France) Roberto Futuro (from Brazil, living in Crete) Meike Leisink (from The Netherlands) Peter Makszin (from Hungary living in Qatar) Maria Andreeva (from Russia) Olga Balezina (from Russia) Iwona Dost-Gorecka (formerly Gorecka) (from Poland, living in The Netherlands) Anna Marie Balle (formerly de Vera), (from the Philippines, based in Germany) Carolina Mateus (from Colombia, living in the US) Luciana Cury (from Brazil) Misja De Schepper (from Belgium) Simen Olstad (from Norway) Jan Jaap Badon (from The Netherlands) Jessica Holmquist (formerly Eriksson), (from Sweden) Dr. Adamantia Moschou (former Skarlatou), (from Greece) Ieva Smilgaine (from Latvia, living in Spain) Cecilia Freaza, (from Argentina in London,UK) Juliana Polastri (from Argentina, living in London, UK). Eric Larsson, from Sweden in London Jenny Wollin (former Nilsson), (from Sweden) Marlana Hartfiel (from Germany) Lakshmi Nidamarthi (from India) Raul Marques (from El Salvador, living in Miami)

Posted by Angela Smith  
February 5, 2021

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A Closing Thought From Our District Chaplain

## **It Starts with Thinking for Ourselves ...**

Shackles on our minds and bars around our hearts will imprison our souls. That's why it is so important not to allow any one person to control the way we think.

I remember when I was a child, my parents would often time tell me, Greg think for yourself. It's funny now, but I understand why they were telling me to do that. And I'm sure a lot of your parents said the same things to you.

But believe it or not, there are so many others who will allow someone else to think for them, to tell them to hate, to kill, or to destroy someone else's life, by whatever means that they can do it. And here are a few ways that they do it. They have negative conversations about an individual or even apply physical harm. It really doesn't matter how they get their program of control over, just as long as it gets done. And they do it without regards to the negative impact that it puts on those individuals lives.

But I'm reminded that we should do unto others, as we would have them do unto us. It's the essence of our Rotary Four-Way Test. Therefore; I encourage everyone to just free your minds, then your hearts will follow. Love unconditionally and not because of. For when love is in the room, hate has to either sit in the corner or leave the building.

Happy February!

Posted by Gregory Adams  
February 5, 2021

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