

The RIM Newsletter

Rotary InMotion



Club 16 (2809) District 6290, Chartered May 1, 1916
<http://www.muskegonrotary.org>

*Is it the truth?
Is it fair to all concerned?
Will it build goodwill and better friendships?
Will it be beneficial to all concerned?*



Celebrating the people, events, and actions of the Muskegon Rotary Club

January 22, 2026

January 29, 2026, 5:30 - 7pm — Light Appetizers & Cash Bar at the Delta
Evening Happy Hour Social Event – Comedian Rick Vuyst “Thank you very mulch guy”

What’s Coming

Jan 29 – No Program at Noon—
Rotary Evening Happy Hour (@Delta)
Feb 5 – Access Health Comm. Collab.

Upcoming Birthdays

Jan 30 Heather Brolick
Feb 4 Laura Lorenz



**Caring
Connections Fund**
[Click here to donate](#)

Stage Manager This Week

Joanie Smith

Greeter This Week

Pete DeBoer

Reflector This Week

Joannie Smith



RIM

Reporting this Edition

Photographer – Wyatt Huggett
RIM Reporter – Ginny Sprague
RIM Editor – Susan Besteman

Muskegon Rotary Jan. 22nd
YouTube Video: [CLICK HERE](#)

Visitors & Guests



Melissa Horton with her guest,
Veronica Campbell (Executive
Director USS Silversides Museum)



Dom Bunker introduces outbound
youth exchange student Alexis
Cunnigham and her parents, Laura
and Alex.



Jim Fisher with guest Kippy Ellis



Kelly DeVos with her guest and
Rooted in Community program
speaker, Sara Gilbert

**No student guests this week due
to our winter weather & school
closings.**



Claire Ritter introduces her guests
and family for her daughter’s
outbound youth exchange reveal

President Dave Alexander reminds
all there is **NO Muskegon Rotary
lunch program
next week** on the
29th. instead,
there is a social
event at 5:30-7pm
at the Delta. Last
day to sign up is
January 26th.



This Week's Program: Rooted in Community



Presenter: Sara Gilbert,
Founder & Director

Introduced by: **Kelly DeVos**
RIM Reporter: **Ginny Sprague**

Following **Kelly DeVos'** introduction
of her soon-to-be family member,

Sara Gilbert spoke
about the role of
foster care in
Muskegon and the
importance of
keeping children

safely connected to family, culture,
and community. Drawing on her
personal experience as an adoptee
and a foster parent, Sara's program
explored foster care in Muskegon.



The foster care system prioritizes
children's safety, intervening when
neglect, abuse, or environmental risks
require a child's removal. The goal is
always family reunification whenever
this can safely be achieved. The
process begins with a report to
Centralized Intake in Grand Rapids.

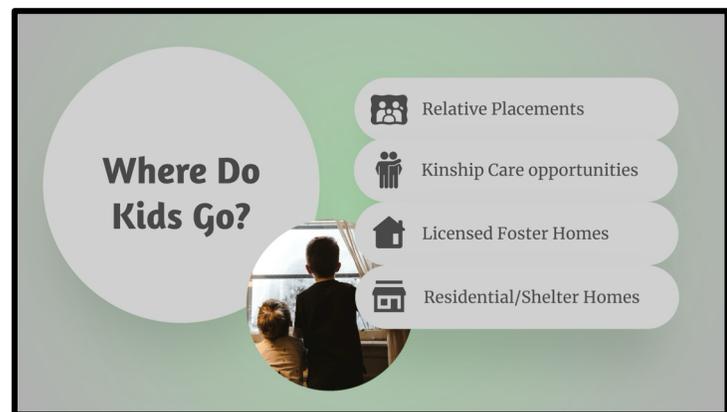
Mandated reporters (teachers and
health care workers) and concerned
individuals can call. This agency takes
reports of potential abuse and
neglect of children, disabled persons,
and vulnerable adults. The contact
information for Centralized Intake is
855.444.3911 or
<https://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/adult-child-serv/abuse-neglect/childrens/mandated-reporters>.

After a report, the agency uses a
research-based tool
to decide if Child
Protective Services
(CPS) should
investigate. If so, a
CPS worker in the
child's home county
will conduct a
thorough
investigation. Ms.
Gilbert noted that
most cases do not
require children's removal from the
family home, and a case supervisor
will be assigned.

The standard for removal is a
preponderance of evidence of abuse
or neglect. When that threshold is
met and the child is in danger of
continued harm, the CPS employee
will work with our Muskegon County
prosecutor's office to secure a
petition for removal of the child from
the parents. If the Family Court
determines that it is in the best
interest to remove the child from the
home, CPS no longer manages the
case, and the foster care system takes
over. Sara noted that child welfare
cases are primarily managed as civil
cases working with Family Court;
however, in some instances the case
will be assigned to the criminal court

division when police involvement is
present.

Structured case management is
initiated after the child is removed
from the home. The goal is to develop
a comprehensive plan to guide the
family towards reunification while
keeping the child safe and
ensuring their well-being. The
foster care case manager works
with both the child and the
parents.



Ms. Gilbert next described the
placement options the foster care
system has children who have
been removed from their home.
First, the case manager seeks
placement with family members
(relative placement), as this is
believed to be the best method to
support reunification. If this is not
possible, the next option is kinship
placement with trusted adults such as
teachers or family friends who have a
close relationship with the child.

When the first two options are not
available, the foster care system
relies on licensed foster homes. These
homes are the preferred option when
relative and kinship placements are
not available and are central to the

child welfare system. The fourth option includes residential and shelter homes. Residential homes resemble typical large family homes, accommodate several children, and are as family friendly as possible. These homes are located at different distances from Muskegon. Shelter homes, by contrast, provide short-term placement for children and resemble homeless shelters for adults. There are three facilities in Michigan. Muskegon children needing this type of placement option usually go to a facility in Detroit, run by Wolverine Human Services. In addition to the need for foster care homes, Ms. Gilbert touched on the importance of following guidelines to keep siblings in contact with each other, in safe, familiar environments, and addressed the impact of a shortage of foster homes on placing children. She noted that most children needing placement are ages two to seven, but pre-teens and teens are hardest to place. This slide illustrated sobering statistics about the foster care situation in Muskegon.



While the shortage of foster care homes in Muskegon is due to a variety of factors, support is available for people who want to help children who need a home environment to keep them safe and connected to their community.

How do our caregivers do it?

- Community Connection and Understanding
- Training
- Respite/Short Term homes
- Reimbursement Stipend
- Transportation assistance for children.
- Daycare assistance for youth 13 and under.

Closing the program, Ms. Gilbert answered five questions from Muskegon Rotarians.



<https://rootedwestmichigan.org>



Roger Morgenstern engages in Q&A.



Ginny Sprague participates in Q&A.

Muskegon Rotary Board

- Dave Alexander, President
- Roger Morgenstern, President-Elect
- Lisa Tyler, President Nominee
- Tim Arter, Past President
- Kimberly Taylor, Treasurer
- Jane Clingman-Scott, Secretary
- Kim Boersema, Club Coordinator
- Directors:
 - Esther Ricco
 - Melissa Moore
 - Arlen-Dean Gaddy
 - Sarah Rinsema-Sybenga
 - Brandon Turnbull
 - Tom Palmer
 - Dimitri Poland
 - Lisa Kraus

Please email Club Board Members through this [link](#):

RIM Reporting Team

- Editors: Susan Besteman, Jackie Farrar, & Ginny Sprague
- Reporters: Kathy Moore, Roger Morgenstern, Meredith Smillie, & Sue Samaniego
- Photographers: Wyatt Huggett, Brock Johnson, Emily Morgenstern, & Roger Morgenstern

Local Reality: Statistics on Foster Care in Muskegon

Understanding the current landscape reveals pressing needs and challenges within the foster care system.



Outbound Youth Exchange Reveal



Dom Bunker leads the Muskegon Rotary Club International Exchange Student Reveal—building excitement as destinations are announced!



Rotarians line up with international flags for the big reveal, then sit down with each clue.

Where will Neve McGinn (from Muskegon High School) be going?!

1. It's in the Northern Hemisphere.
2. Not a romance language country.
3. Short winter days but long summer days.
4. Viking culture, strong social systems, & work/life balance focused



Which one will Neve be heading to?



DENMARK!



Neve with her mom and fellow Rotarian, **Claire Ritter**, and stepdad, **Torrin**.

Where will Alexis Cunningham (first student from Oakridge High School) be going?!

1. It's in the Northern Hemisphere.
2. Learning a language that does not use the Latin alphabet
3. Shoes off at the door and respect for elders is deeply ingrained in daily life.
4. Located on a peninsula that has one of the most advanced public transportation systems.



Where will Alexis be going?



SOUTH KOREA!



Alexis with her dad, Alex, and mom, Laura. Alexis will be the first exchange student from Muskegon to go to South Korea.



Spotlight Video Roger Morgenstern



Roger Morgenstern, president-elect of the Muskegon Rotary Club, shares details about an upcoming international service trip to Honduras focused on building libraries and expanding access to education for children and students. In this short interview, he explains Rotary's long-standing commitment to clean water projects, literacy development, and youth engagement through Interact, as well as the club's financial support for student participants. Learn how local Rotarians are partnering with fellow clubs and young professionals in Honduras to strengthen communities, inspire service, and help shape a brighter future through global service. See page 7 for more details!

Watch the video [here!](#)

Rotary ReWine Schedule

1st and 3rd Thursdays each month
5:00-5:15pm Social time
5:15pm Meeting start time at the Core Plaza (Vault)

RSVPs are due by Wednesday at 5pm for the Thursday meeting.

Contact **Kaytie Drake** at kaytieely@aol.com to RSVP (total # of people including any guests you are bringing) or if you have any further questions.

Announcements



President Dave Alexander announced ReWine has its next scheduled meeting at The Vault Thursday Feb. 5th at 5:15pm.

ReWine Updates

Red Robin Fundraiser

Thank you to all the Rotarians that came out to support the Red Robin Fundraiser on January 13. The event raised \$211.00 and will be used to support our Interact and Rotaract clubs!

Adopt-A-Highway Program Looking for Volunteers

Our next pickup for the Muskegon Rotary stretch of highway on I-96 will be on Saturday, April 18. Volunteers will meet promptly at 8:45am for a short safety talk, then head out on the road to pick trash. (We will finish no later than 11:00am, sooner if we get a lot of help 😊). I am also looking for two drivers to drive along with the volunteers who are picking trash. If you can help, please contact Esther Ricco, riccoe@gvsu.edu and she can provide you with details. Be a part of keeping our adopted stretch clean and taking action to protect our environment!

Rotary Evening Happy Hour

President Dave reminded the club about the evening meeting in lieu of lunch on January 29 at the Delta. Information has been e-mailed to members and sign up is required with a deadline of Monday, January 26th. Click the link to sign up.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0C44AFAA2CABFFC16-61558351-rotary>

Thursday, January 29, 2026

- **Who:** This is a private event for Rotarians and their spouses and significant others.
- **What:** Join us for a special Muskegon Rotary Social Event that will take the place of our regular weekly meeting.
- **Where:** Delta Hotel Banquet Rooms (same place as our regular meetings)
- **When:** Thursday, January 29, 2026, 5:30pm – 7:00pm.

Light appetizers & cash bar

A Performance by "Mr. Green Thumb" from WZZM TV turned stand Up comedian - Rick Vuyst. Well known as the "thank you very mulch guy", Rick will share his stand-up comedy routine and take questions around 6pm that evening. Contact Tim Lipan if you have more questions at Lipant@comcast.net.

Annual District Raffle

The annual District 6290 50/50 Raffle is underway led this year by Raffle Chairperson, our own, **Brandon Turnbull**. Brandon and **President Dave** will roll out sale of the \$20 tickets as the month progresses. Tickets need to be purchased by the end of February. More details to come.





**Muskegon Rising
Podcast Audio & Video!**



Muskegon Rising

The new Muskegon Rising Podcast Season 3 launch commenced last week and comes in audio and video form. Scan the QR Code above and support the video to help support the Muskegon Rotary Foundation through this fundraising opportunity. We will have a program on this on February 19th. Thank you, producer **Mike Vogas** and hosts **Aaron Maike** and **DJ Hilson**, for your efforts at this community building and fundraising opportunity!

<https://www.buzzsprout.com/2269729/episodes/18515690-why-muskegon-is-rising>

CLICK HERE FOR ALL PODCASTS



Frank P. Marczak Jr.
APR 27, 1940 - JAN 13, 2026

Obituary for former Rotarian Frank P. Marczak Jr.---[CLICK HERE](#)

YOU'RE INVITED TO:
**COFFEE
CONNECT**

A New Member Rotary Event

NEW MEMBERS AND THEIR SPONSORS ARE INVITED TO JOIN US FOR COFFEE AND CONVERSATION



2026 DATES:
FEBRUARY 18
APRIL 15
JUNE 10
SEPTEMBER 9

**8:00-9:00
A.M.**

MUSKEGON MUSEUM OF HISTORY & SCIENCE
430 W. CLAY AVE
MUSKEGON, MI 49440



Missy Horton speaks on behalf of the Engagement and Retention Committee—sharing the need for a new Caring Connections point person and teasing more Coffee Connects coming soon.

Caring Connections

The Caring Connections Committee is looking for a coordinator. If interested please contact **Mary Anne Gorman** by [clicking here to email her.](#)

Sargeant-At-Arms **Ed Hendrickson** is improving. Cards and calls are appreciated.

**Life Leadership-
Interviewers Needed**

Stephanie Tushek is looking for volunteers to interview candidates for the Life Leadership Conference. Contact **Stephanie** or **John Noling**.

Joint Service Project Muskegon & GR Rotary Clubs – Feb 21st [CLICK HERE TO SIGN UP](#)

The Muskegon & Grand Rapids Rotary Clubs join forces for good on February 21st to help volunteer at Feeding America. The event is from 9-11:30am at 3070 Shafer Ave SE, Kentwood, MI 49512. Click the link above or scan this QR Code to sign up! You need to fill out the Feeding America Waiver Form too—Print out the last page (page 9) of this RIM and email or bring the form back to **Roger Morgenstern**.



Roger Morgenstern discusses an upcoming collaboration with the Grand Rapids Rotary Club and Feeding America West Michigan on Saturday, February 21. See page 8 for more details.

Rotary
CLUB OF GRAND RAPIDS

FEEDING AMERICA
West Michigan

**YOUR LOCAL
FOOD BANK**

Rotary
Club Of Muskegon

JOINT SERVICE PROJECT & SOCIAL GATHERING

WITH THE
ROTARY CLUB OF MUSKEGON

AT
FEEDING AMERICA WEST MICHIGAN
[3070 SHAFFER AVE SE, GRAND RAPIDS, MI 49512](#)

Saturday, Feb. 21

9:00 am
Arrival, Welcome & Orientation

9:30 - 11:30 am
Service Project in the Reclamation Department

12:00 - 1:30 pm
Social Gathering:
Fellowship with
Catered Lunch at FAWM

**FEED A FAMILY,
CHANGE A LIFE!**

**END
HUNGER NOW!**

WHO

- 70 Volunteers Needed
- Youth age 16+ are welcome to participate

PREPARING FOR THE SERVICE PROJECT

- Please read the event information below, review and sign the Liability Waiver, and kindly bring a non-perishable food item to the Joint Service Project. *Thank You!*

SIGN UP HERE

Honduras Service Trip

Join **President Elect Roger Morgenstern**, other members of our Club, and Grand Haven Rotarians as we travel to the capital city of Honduras to work on our third library project through the Chispa Project. We will be at the Rolando Roll Elementary School in Tegucigalpa, Honduras from June 21-28 and will work to set up the library, including painting murals, assembling shelves and organizing 700 Books for 321 Students and 18 Teachers.

The cost is \$850, plus airfare (total estimate at \$1,250). We're looking for 5 or 6 more individuals to go, including students. Our Club has committed \$300 to assist students in raising money, plus another \$300 grant from WEHOP, a consortium of Lakeshore Rotary Clubs doing service projects in Central America.

Please see **Roger** or **Sarah Rinsema-Sybenga** if you'd like more information. Deadline to sign up is Feb. 15!



Giving kids their first books

In Spanish, "chispa" means "spark," which is exactly our goal: to inspire and empower Honduran students with access to books.

Chispa Project works to create school libraries and spark a passion for learning that will grow and be nurtured through a community driven approach. Since 2016, over 70,000 books have been delivered to more than 100 schools and organizations.

What's next? Read about the NEXT CHAPTER for 2026, as the Honduran school year starts in February. We have 10 new libraries planned, and we'll continue supporting our 2025 schools for another whole year to enhance the sustainability of their Chispa libraries.

Joint Service Project & Social Gathering February 21st: Rotary Club of Muskegon, Rotary Club of Grand Rapids, & Feeding America

Rotary
CLUB OF GRAND RAPIDS

FEEDING AMERICA
West Michigan

**JOINT SERVICE PROJECT & SOCIAL GATHERING
WITH THE ROTARY CLUB OF MUSKEGON**

FEEDING AMERICA WEST MICHIGAN
3070 SHAFFER AVE SE, GRAND RAPIDS, MI 49512

Saturday, Feb. 21

9:00 am
Arrival, Welcome & Orientation

9:30 - 11:30 am
Service Project in the
Reclamation Department

12:00 - 1:30 pm
Social Gathering:
Fellowship with
Catered Lunch at FAWM

**YOUR LOCAL
FOOD BANK**

Rotary
Club Of Muskegon

On behalf of FAWM, we warmly invite you to bring a non-perishable food item to support our joint service project and help make a meaningful difference in our community.

Most Needed Items

FAWM cannot accept opened, repackaged or home-processed foods.

Peanut butter*	Canned fruits
Canned meats* <small>(chicken, tuna, salmon etc.)</small>	Mac & Cheese
Beans* <small>(dry or canned)</small>	Breakfast bars
Canned veggies	Oatmeal
Canned entrees* <small>(beefaroni, ravioli, spaghetti & meatballs, soups etc.)</small>	Cereal
	Rice <small>(and other dried grains)</small>

***High-protein items are especially appreciated!**

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

FEEDING AMERICA | **YOUR LOCAL FOOD BANK**
West Michigan

Reclamation Explained

Reclamation, from a food bank perspective, is the process of reclaiming or rescuing food from going to waste. Reclamation is often referred to as the Band-Aid department because it's where donated food is inspected and either discarded or made suitable for distribution to neighbors in need.

Feeding America West Michigan relies on volunteers to do the bulk of this work and they play a crucial role in ensuring the food we provide to neighbors in need is safe for consumption.

Main Reclamation Projects

There are 3 main projects handled by volunteer groups in the Reclamation Department, including:



Sorting Fresh Produce



Quality Control



Repacking Bulk Product

How to get involved

Anyone interested in volunteering can sign up for a shift at FeedWM.org/Volunteer. Groups interested in volunteering should submit a request to Reclamation Manager Frank Almonte at FrankA@FeedWM.org. Be sure to review the dress code and age policy available at FeedWM.org/Volunteer before submitting your request!

Did you know?
In just one hour, you can help provide up to 200 meals' worth of food!

PREPARING FOR THE JOINT SERVICE PROJECT:

- **Liability Waiver:**
All Rotary Volunteers **must sign the attached waiver and bring it to FAWM on 02/ 21**. Participants under 18 must have it signed by a parent or guardian.
- **Parking:**
Please carpool, if possible, due to limited parking spaces, and park in the front lot at FAWM.
- **Food Safety Guidelines:**
As we work with open food for public distribution, strict adherence to food safety rules is required:
 - Volunteers must wear hairnets (provided), or personal ballcaps.
 - No food, drinks, gum, mints, toothpicks, or similar items are allowed.
 - Cell phone use is **not permitted** within the Reclamation space. Please leave phones, jewelry, and personal belongings in your vehicle or at home.
 - **Footwear Policy:** Closed-toe, closed-heel shoes are required (e.g., sneakers or boots). Sandals, Crocs, slides, UGG's and flip-flops are not permitted.

SERVICE PROJECT: 9:30-11:30 AM

- **Arrival** By 9:00 am at FAWM for the welcome and mandatory orientation.
- **Tasks** Volunteers will be working in the Reclamation Department.
(Sorting fresh produce, Quality Control, Repacking bulk products)

LUNCH & SOCIAL GATHERING: 12:00 - 1:30 PM

- Following the Service Project, all volunteers are warmly invited to gather for fellowship, great conversations and a complimentary, catered lunch at FAWM.



**Feeding America West Michigan
Liability Waiver and Release**

Feeding America West Michigan (also known as Second Harvest Gleaners Food Bank of West Michigan, Inc.) is a non-profit organization dedicated to the collection and distribution of food to those in need. I intend to assist Feeding America West Michigan as a volunteer. Volunteer activities may include, but are not limited to, food reclamation, gleaning or distribution at Feeding America West Michigan facilities or off-site activities such as gleaning on farms or assisting with mobile pantry food distribution. In consideration of participating as a volunteer and in recognition of the non-profit status of Feeding America West Michigan, I hereby agree as follows:

The minimum age for volunteers is 8 years old. Volunteers under age 18 must have a Liability Waiver and Release signed by a parent/guardian. All volunteers younger than age 16 must volunteer with an adult.

Youth volunteer group's safety ration is 1 adult volunteer for every 7 volunteers under age 18.

I hereby release Feeding America West Michigan from, and waive on behalf of myself and my heirs and any minors indicated below, any and all causes of action, claims, demands, damages, costs, expenses, and compensation for damage or loss to myself and/or property that may be caused by any act or failure to act, of Feeding America West Michigan, or that may otherwise arise in any way in connection with any voluntary activities with or for Feeding America West Michigan. This Liability Waiver and Release extends to Feeding America West Michigan together with all of its staff, officers, directors, affiliates and agents.

I assume the risk of any and all dangerous conditions in and about Feeding America West Michigan facilities or in connection with any off-site voluntary activities.

IT IS MY LEGALLY BINDING AGREEMENT BY THE LIABILITY WAIVER AND RELEASE TO EXEMPT FEEDING AMERICA WEST MICHIGAN AND ALL STAFF, OFFICERS, DIRECTORES, AFFILIATES AND AGENTS FROM ALL LIABILITY WHATSOEVER FOR PERSONAL INJURY, PROPERTY DAMAGE AND WRONGFUL DEATH.

This waiver contains the entire agreement between myself and the parties released and their affiliates.

I hereby give permission to Feeding America West Michigan to use my photos and likeness in all forms and media for advertising, portfolio, demo, trade, editorial, including the right to edit or alter, without restriction or compensation. I release Feeding America West Michigan and photographer all forms of claims and liability related to my photo use.

I have read and understand Feeding America West Michigan Liability and Release and the Volunteer Policy. I agree to follow the guidelines and understand that my continued service may be contingent upon my ability to work productively and safely within these guidelines. I am signing voluntarily.

Date: _____

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____

Authorized Minors: _____

04/2022