

The RIM Newsletter

Rotary

In Motion



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, October 1, 2026

October 8, 2026, Bruschetta Chicken at the Lake House Program – Life Leadership

What's Coming

October 15—Winter Paralympics

October 22—No noon meeting-
--attend Harvest Fest!

October 29—Webb Chemical and
Trace Analytics

Upcoming Birthdays

October 11 Heidi Sytsema

October 12 Missy Horton

October 14 Claire Root-Benson



Caring

Connections Fund

[Click here to donate](#)

Stage Manager This Week

Rem Sprague

Greeter This Week

Ryan Sterkenberg

Reflectors This Week

Darlene Collett & Susan Crain

RIM Reporting this Edition

Photographer – Jackie Farrar

RIM Reporter – Kathy Moore

RIM Editor – Susan Besteman

Muskegon Rotary Oct. 1st

YouTube Video:

[Click Here](#)

Reflections

Today we were gifted with two beautiful reflections **Darlene Collet** and **Susan Crain**

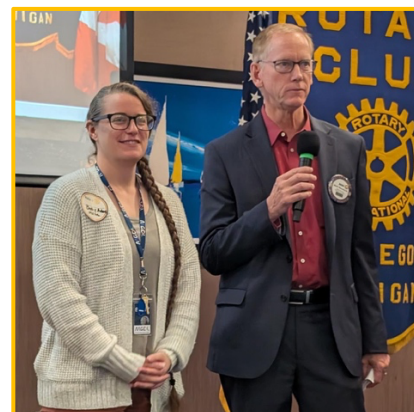


Thank you, Immediate Past President **Dave Alexander**, for leading the meeting today while President **Roger Morgenstern** is away for his daughter's (Rotarian Emily) wedding. Congrats!

Visitors and Guests



Mike Steindler visiting Rotarian with **Jim Fisher**



Betty Adams, guest of **Mark Eisenbarth**

Muskegon Rotary Board

President: Roger Morgenstern

President-Elect: Lisa Tyler

President Nominees: Arlen Dean-Gaddy and Sarah Rinsema-Sybenga

Past President: Dave Alexander

Treasurer: Kim Taylor

Secretary: Joanie Smith

Directors:

Kelli DeVos

Dimitri Poland

Martha Fohlbrook

Esther Ricco

Lisa Kraus

Samantha Scott

Melissa Moore

John Selmon

Club Coordinator: Kim Boersema

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



Jim Rudicil, Sara Cooper, Jeff Shoemaker, Janelle Mair & Khi Guy, guests of **Pete DeBoer**

Student Guests



Marty Systema with Oakridge seniors, Carter Ogren and Malia Anderson, and advisor Taryn Thompson



Kate Kesteloot Scarbrough and her guest, Scott Speck



Ken Byard guest of **Debra Bechtel**

Rim Reporting Team

Editors: Susan Besteman, Jackie Farrar, and Ginny Sprague

Reporters: Kathy Moore, Roger Morgenstern, Meredith Smillie, Sue Samaniego, and Ginny Sprague

Photographers: Wyatt Huggett, Brock Johnson, and Emily Morgenstern



Past President **Dave Alexander** shares a Muskegon Minute and introduces **Bob Lukens**



This Week's Program: Muskegon County Parks Millage Proposal



Muskegon County Parks
2026 PARKS AND TRAILS MILLAGE PROPOSAL

Speaker: Bob Lukens
Introduced by: Dave Alexander

Bob Lukens, Community Development Director for Muskegon County, spoke today regarding the Muskegon County Parks upcoming millage proposal.



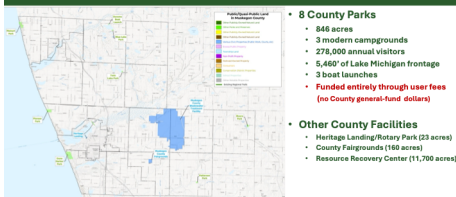
County of Muskegon Parks and Recreation Millage Proposal

Shall the County of Muskegon, Michigan, be authorized to levy annually a new additional millage in an amount not to exceed .50 mill (\$0.50 per each \$1,000 of taxable value) against all taxable property within Muskegon County for a period of ten (10) years, 2026 through 2035, inclusive, for the purpose of acquiring, developing, improving, operating, maintaining, repairing, and preserving parks, recreational facilities, trails, greenways, natural areas, public access sites, and related recreational amenities in Muskegon County? The estimate of the revenue Muskegon County will collect if the millage is approved and levied in the first year (2026) is approximately \$3,625,000.

Up to 30% of the funds will be available for distribution by the County to local units of government within the County to use for the purposes identified in this proposal. By law, a portion of the millage may be subject to capture by brownfield redevelopment authorities and those authorities governed by the Recodified Tax Increment Financing Act, 2018 PA 57, including the Downtown Development Authorities of the Cities of Montague, Muskegon, Muskegon Heights, and Roosevelt Park, Fruitport Charter Township, and the Village of Ravenna; the Tax Increment Financing Authorities of the Cities of Norton Shores, Muskegon, and Whitehall; the Local Development Finance Authorities of the Cities of Muskegon and Whitehall; and the Brownfield Redevelopment Authorities of the Cities of Muskegon, Norton Shores and Whitehall and the Townships of Ravenna and Whitehall. The total amount of captured tax increment revenues from such millage in the first calendar year of the levy is estimated at \$132,000.

Bob highlighted the current funding needs to address public input, staff capacity, missed grant opportunities, and park planning. Parks matter for economic development including attracting and retaining talent and residents, reducing medical costs, reducing transportation costs, and increasing property values. In 2024, tourism generated \$409.4 million in economic impact for Muskegon County. Parks also improve our quality of life.

Muskegon County Parks System and Other Facilities



2026 MUSKEGON COUNTY PARKS & TRAILS MILLAGE AT A GLANCE



Why Consider a Millage?

A millage is one potential funding mechanism that could support implementation of the Park Commission's mission, vision, and established priorities.

Potential uses of millage funding may include:

- Addressing needs within local park systems
- Responding to community input on parks, trails, and recreation
- Supporting park and trail development projects
- Maintaining and enhancing park and recreation assets
- Assisting with public and private funding opportunities
- Supporting coordination, planning, and grant administration
- Providing staff assistance for local park planning, MDNR recreation plans, grant management, and regional trail development

1 "mill" = \$1 in tax for every \$1,000 of a property's taxable value. MCPRC is seeking a 0.5 mill locked in for 10 years. An example Bob gave is a property valued at \$271,076 would pay \$67.77 to the mill annually. With this, approximately \$3.5 million annually would be generated with 70% for County Parks and regional trails and up to 30% for local units of government. If approved, the funding would eliminate the need for \$25 motor vehicle permit fees at Muskegon County Parks (Pioneer, Meinert, Twin Lake, & Dune Harbor Park South).

For additional information, click this link:
<https://muskegoncountyparks.org/millage/>

Millage: Timeline for MCPRC

- November 3: General Election

- Potential next steps if approved by voters:

- Update County Parks and Recreation Plan in 2027
 - Update Strategic Plan
 - Extensive public input on capital plan
 - Review staffing needs
 - Confirm budget and timelines
 - Develop Pioneer Park and Dune Harbor Park North Master Plans
 - Incorporate Shoreline Trails and Greenways PI
 - Confirm priority regional trail routes
 - Confirm priority water access locations
 - Confirm County Fairgrounds projects
 - Incorporate Heritage Landing Master Plan



<https://muskegoncountyparks.org/millage/>

WHO WOULD MANAGE THE MILLAGE MONEY?

- Elected Officials & Citizen Parks Boards would be placed with charge
- Muskegon County Millage Funds: County Board of Commissioners & County Parks and Recreation Commission
- Shared Revenue with Local Units: Local Township Boards or City Councils, Local Parks Advisory Boards

Spotlight Video Chris McGuigan



Chris McGuigan joined Rotary thinking it was simply something a community leader was expected to do. What he discovered was something much deeper. Inspired by fellow Rotarians who demonstrated the meaning of Service Above Self, Chris came to see Rotary not as a place for networking or status, but as a community built around respect, caring and doing good for others. In this Rotarians in Action conversation, Chris reflects on the people who changed his understanding of Rotary—and why he remains a committed believer in its ability to make a difference, both in Muskegon and around the world.

Watch the video [here!](#)

ReWine Meeting Schedule

5:00 p.m. Social Time
Meeting starts 5:15 p.m.

Thursday October 15th at Pigeon Hill Brewing Company, 895 Fourth Street, Muskegon.

Thursday, November 19th at the Muskegon Museum of Art, 315 West Clay Avenue, Muskegon

RSVP by Wednesday at 5pm prior to each meeting by contacting Kaytie Drake at kaytieely@aol.com
Total # attending, including guests

Announcements



Thurs., Oct. 22nd at 5 – 8pm
Baker College

Culinary Institute of Michigan
336 West Clay Ave., Muskegon
[Harvest Fest 2026 Tickets](#)

[Eventbrite](#)

Ticket includes admission to the event, one complimentary drink ticket, all-you-can-eat food, and a surprise gift to take home at the end of the evening!

Volunteers Needed—[CLICK HERE](#)

Sponsors Needed—[CLICK HERE](#)

***No Lunch Meeting on Oct. 22nd—Attend Harvest Fest!**

In lieu of the weekly raffle sale at our **October 8th** and **October 15th** lunch meetings, Harvest Spirits raffle tickets will be on sale. The Harvest Spirits Raffle drawing will be held at 7:30 p.m. during Harvest Fest. You do not need to be present to win.

**Harvest Fest
Beverage Bundles Raffle***
October 8 and October 15
\$20 for one ticket
\$35 for two tickets
\$50 for three tickets
Each bundle is valued at more than \$150 up to \$199!



Microforest Help Needed Oct 17th

Rotary and Rotaract Volunteers are needed for October 17, anytime between 9 am and Noon, at the Muskegon Lake Nature Preserve Microforest, 2529 Lake Avenue in North Muskegon.

This is a fall work bee to plant strawberry plugs, weed around existing trees and shrubs, spread new cardboard and bark chip a beautiful extension to the existing microforest.

We could use up to 20 volunteers Please let **John Noling** or **Doug Wood** know if you can join us. Please bring family or friends who love the idea of planting a new forest for the planet.

This is our big chance to get everything ready for winter. Gloves, tools, and refreshments provided. One hour service or more welcome!

Muskegon Rotary is a solid partner with the Muskegon Lake Nature Preserve non-profit for this Environmental Stewardship initiative.



Kids Food Basket -- Volunteer Oct. 19th Noon

Tennille Woodward is looking for more volunteers for our monthly Kids' Food Basket commitment. See Tennille if you are available October 19th at noon to help or in the upcoming months. Our schedule is the 3rd Monday of every month—ten people needed each time.



**Kids' Food
Basket**

Honduras Trip – Mar. 13th



Interested in learning more about the Rotary's Library Build Project with Chispa in Honduras March 13-20th? Trip details/registration can be found here: <https://www.chispaproject.org/lago> You have a chance to hear from Sara Brakhane, Chispa's Director, on Oct 20th at 6 PM for a zoom call as she reviews the upcoming trip and answers your questions. Sara will also be Muskegon Rotary's program speaker on November 12th.

Link to Oct 20th virtual meeting:

meet.google.com/oqj-tksi-tah

Deadline to register for the Honduras trip is Nov 30th. Questions? Talk with **Linda Juarez**, **Susan Crain**, or **Sarah Rinsema-Sybenga**.



Reimagining International Projects What Your Partners Wish You Know

An interactive workshop to explore how power imbalances shape international aid—and learn practical strategies for building trust, strengthening local leadership, and sharing power more equitably.



Who: For Rotarians from West Michigan

Presenter: Sara Brakhane, Executive Director of Chispa Project

When: Nov 11th, 6-8 PM

Where: Muskegon Area District Library Headquarters
4845 Airline Road, Muskegon, MI 49444



RSVP to Susan Cloutier-Crain
susancrainmkg@gmail.com
Co-Chair of Muskegon Rotary's World Services Committee

El Salvador Trip – March 31st



Our Club is looking for Rotarians and Interact students to attend two service trips: Honduras from March 13-20 and El Salvador from March 31-April 8. Your Club's board has approved contributing \$500 for any Rotarians attending their first overseas trip, as well as \$500 for any Interactors wanting to go. Please spread the word! For more information, see **Sarah Rinsema-Sybenga** about Honduras or **Esther Ricco** about El Salvador.

In Memory & Honor

On October 15, the Club will honor the memories of three recently deceased Muskegon Rotarians: Ara (Doc) Demirjian, Kevin Donovan, and Ed Hendrickson. There will be a brief presentation during the Club meeting followed by a formal dedication of their memorial bricks at Rotary Park at 2:00 p.m. Please join us!



South Korean Inbound Exchange Student Arrived!



From South Korea to Muskegon... Jay has officially arrived!

Jaebeom "Jay," our newest Rotary Youth Exchange student from South Korea, officially landed in Muskegon this past weekend and is ready to jump into the full American high school experience!

Pictured with Jay is the Cunningham family, who will be hosting him for the first part of his exchange. Jay will be attending Oakridge High School, where he plans to trade in the judo mat for the gridiron and give American football a try! Though, as a phenomenal judoka, we have a feeling he may already know a thing or two about tackling.

A huge Rotary thank you to fellow Rotarian **Laura Cunningham** and her husband, Alex, for opening their home and giving Jay such a warm Muskegon welcome, to **Dominique Bunker**, and to **Kristi Pawlak** for all the help behind the scenes making sure Jay successfully made his way to the United States. Welcome to Muskegon, Jay! We can't wait to see what adventures this year brings!

Caring Connections

Greg Borgman reminds us to inform the Caring Connections Crew if you hear of anyone in our club who may need us to send them congrats, bereavement, or any kind of special achievement note.



It's Big Read Season!

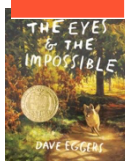
Brad Hastings announced the Lakeshore Big Read books are available.

Big Read is a county wide reading initiative. During Oct and Nov our community reads a set of books connected by a shared theme. The 4 books this year:

Big Read: The Circle, by Dave Eggers

Middle Read: The Eyes and the Impossible, by Dave Eggers

Little Read: What Can a Citizen Do, by Eggers.



Books this year are connected through the theme "Our Choices Matter" and all by award-winning author, Dave Eggers, who will be coming to Muskegon on Nov 17th. Rotary's DEI Committee has purchased the books to encourage Rotarians to participate in this community conversation. For the next several weeks we'll have books available before and after Rotary—first come first served!

<https://madl.org/blogs/post/big-read-lakeshore-2026/>

DEI Committee – Know Your Voting Rights

Know Your Voting Rights!

- Understand your rights as a voter
- Know what to expect at the polls
- Learn when, where, and how to vote
- Learn what to do if you experience discrimination or intimidation at the polls

Panelists:

Karen Whitehouse (Muskegon County Clerk)
Lori Hayes (Muskegon County Election Director)
Marria McIntosh (Thredz.org)
Meghan Cullen (American Civil Liberties Union)

Moderator:

Dave Alexander (Retired Journalist)

Read Muskegon

2709 Peck St.
Muskegon Heights, MI 49444
Tuesday, Oct. 20th 6:30-8pm

FREE EVENT

Light Refreshments Provided
Muskegon Rotary Club with support from the Community Foundation for Muskegon County

RSVP Here



Below are the links to the Facebook event and the SignUpGenius form to RSVP.

Facebook Event:

https://www.facebook.com/share/1DsCp_hfnXY/

Sign Up Genius:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0C44AFAA2CABFFC16-66224770-know#/>

The SignUpGenius RSVP is in the Facebook event description, and the QR Code on the flyer also links to it. Please distribute and share with your networks. See **Brad Hastings** for questions.

The Soul Box Project Comes to Muskegon

A Lakeshore Community Memorial and Gun-Violence Awareness Display

You are invited to view The Soul Box Project, a Gun Violence Awareness Display, hosted by Muskegon Central United Methodist Church, 1017 Second Street, Muskegon. Come, Remember, Reflect, Learn.

Sept 22nd – Oct 8th

Sept 22nd 10-12pm
Oct 8th 10-12pm

Free and Open to the Public
Come. Remember. Reflect. Learn.

Open to the Muskegon's Lakeshore Communities and Surrounding Areas

The Soul Box Project Comes to Muskegon

A LAKESHORE COMMUNITY MEMORIAL AND GUN-VIOLENCE AWARENESS DISPLAY

Hosted by Central United Methodist Church • 1017 Second Street, Muskegon, MI 49442

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
September 20	21	22	23	24	25	26
		10-12pm	10-12pm	10-12pm		10-4pm
27	28	29	30	October 1	2	3
	5-7pm	10-12pm	10-12pm	10-12pm		
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
12-4pm	5-7	10-12pm	10-12pm	10-12pm		

FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC | COME. REMEMBER. REFLECT. LEARN.

Help Us Tell Roger Morgenstern's Story – Brave Rotarians Contest

Following our Harvest Fest Fundraiser, we're kicking off the fall Brave Rotarians Contest—and we're looking for storytellers! Share a brief memory, anecdote, or reflection about Roger Morgenstern. Whether your story is inspiring, meaningful, or simply captures what makes Roger memorable, we'd love to hear it. Help us celebrate Roger's impact by sending your story to Meredith Smillie at meredithasmillie@gmail.com. To participate in the Brave Rotarians Contest, make a \$100 gift to fulfill your

suggested contribution to The Rotary Foundation. Your entry could win you a Paul Harris Fellow Award! More details, including sign-up sheets, are coming soon.

Questions? Contact **Meredith Smillie** at meredithasmillie@gmail.com or call her.

Job Shadowing Opportunities Needed



Chauncey Williams asks Rotarians to help the Innovation Academy of Muskegon with job-shadowing opportunities for high school Juniors.

Still Searching for Life Leadership Students



Tenille Woodward announced she is looking for more high school students for the Muskegon Student Leadership Conference which is a pre-emptive event to Life Leadership in the summer. Only one student has signed up so far so if you know of any high school student, please nominate them to Tenille for the conference on Friday, November 20th.

MUSKEGON STUDENT LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE
Find Your True North

TWO DAYS. ONE SHARED CHALLENGE.
YOU. YOUR TEAM. YOUR IMPACT.

NOVEMBER 20-21, 2026
DOWNTOWN MUSKEGON
SIX LEARNING LOCATIONS

144 STUDENT LEADERS
12 FAMILIES
COUNTLESS POSSIBILITIES

PRACTICE LEADERSHIP. BUILD CONNECTIONS.
Find Your True North.

Rotary PRESENTED BY THE ROTARY CLUB OF MUSKEGON
OPENING DOORS. EMPOWERING LEADERS. BUILDING OUR COMMUNITY.

SCAN TO APPLY!
PHOTO AND LETTER
APPLY BY OCTOBER 2, 2025

MUSKEGON STUDENT LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE
Find Your True North

Two days, 144 student leaders, 12 families. Six leadership experiences. One shared challenge. The future of Muskegon is in the room.

NOVEMBER 20-21, 2026
DOWNTOWN MUSKEGON • SIX LEARNING LOCATIONS

READY TO OPEN A DOOR?
Scan to volunteer, donate, sponsor or make a connection.

COMMIT BY SEPTEMBER 15

SEP 15: Sign up and help
OCT 20: Meet & connect
NOV 20-21: Help us open the door

Rotary Organized by Muskegon Rotary
Powered by Community

Connect • Collaborate • Lead • Make an Impact

OPEN A DOOR for a student leader.
Donate one thing. Introduce us to one person. Sponsor one experience.

FEED THEM	Sponsor a meal, pizza, snacks or drinks.	\$51 VALUE \$3,900+
EQUIP THEM	Provide bags, water bottles, journals, pens or shirts.	\$51 VALUE \$4,800+
CHALLENGE THEM	Donate supplies for one of our six classroom learning spaces.	\$51 VALUE \$750-\$1,000
REWARD THEM	Donate gift cards or prizes.	\$51 VALUE \$500-\$1,000
HOST THEM	Provide one of our six classroom learning spaces.	\$51 VALUE \$500-\$1,000
MOVE THEM	Help with transportation to and from the event.	\$51 VALUE \$500-\$1,500
PRINT IT	Sponsor signage, badges and conference materials.	\$51 VALUE \$500-\$1,000
FUND IT	Make a financial contribution toward whatever needs.	\$51 VALUE ANY AMOUNT

Strong Leaders. Strong Schools. Strong Muskegon.



Tennille Woodward visited the Happy Hour Rotary Club of Huntersville, North Carolina and was able to do a flag exchange! Thank you, Tennille!



Muskegon Rising

Flag Corp Volunteers Needed

Please volunteer to join the Flag Corp on **Wednesday, November 11, Veterans Day**. This is the last opportunity for this patriotic service in the 2026, our semi quincennial celebratory year!

Registration is Open!



**Barcelona, Spain
June 26-30, 2027**

[Rotary International Convention](https://convention.rotary.org)