

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, September 17, 2026

September 24, 2026 Honey Glazed Pork Loin at the Lakehouse Program – Peace Builders International Peace Day

What's Coming

October 1— Muskegon County Parks
Millage Information
October 8— Life Leadership Students
October 15— Winter Paralympics

Upcoming Birthdays

September 24 John Noling
September 24 Bev Thiel
September 28 Nancy Crandall
September 28 Dimitri Poland
September 29 Andrew Zahrt
September 29 Amy Deming
September 30 Bill Loxterman
September 30 Carla Flanders



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

Stage Manager This Week

Theresa Bernhardt

Greeters This Week

Jeff Dana and Pete DeBoer

Reflector This Week

Claire Root-Benson

RIM Reporting this Edition

Photographer – Emily Morgenstern
RIM Reporter – Meredith Smillie
RIM Editor – Ginny Sprague



President Roger begins the meeting smiling for the photographer and playing Tom Petty's song, *Runnin' Down a Dream*.

Reflection



Claire Root-Benson, offers a Reflection on Rotary's work to protect the environment, sharing a poem from Wendell Berry's *Sabbath Poems*

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](#):



Registration is Open!



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

[Rotary International Convention](#)

Muskegon Rotary Sept. 17
YouTube Video:
Not available

Visitors and Guests



Mary Anne Gorman reintroduces former Muskegon Rotarian, Lisa Stafford, owner of Stafford HR Solutions.



Bill Erickson introduces his lovely wife, Teresa Erickson.



Rita Caviness introduces Lisa Wright, Wright Choice Counseling, Deanna, and Sara Johnson, Executive Director of The Hope Project. (Pictured L-R)



Karen Kekelik introduces her husband, Steven Kekelik, CEO of IndiGrow.



Bill O'Brien introduces TJ Meerman, Mona Shores HS District-Wide Student Services Coordinator who is helping to relaunch the Mona Shores Foundation.

Student Guests



Kendrah Robinson introduces North Muskegon Counselor, Shana Woodwyk, and seniors Bear and Delaney. (Pictured L-R)

This Week's Program: The Hope Project



Melissa Horton introduced speaker **Rita Caviness**, Director of Education and Community Engagement, at The Hope Project. Sara Johnson, Executive Director of The Hope Project, also presented later in the program.



Rita Caviness began her remarks by saying that her goal was to make her audience better understand what human trafficking is. She followed with the vision, mission, and core values of The Hope Project.



The Hope Project has served over 330 survivors of human trafficking in Muskegon and Newaygo County.

Human trafficking is defined as the transporting, soliciting, recruiting, harboring, providing, or obtaining of another person for the purposes of forced labor, domestic servitude or sexual exploitation using force, fraud, and/or coercion.



Rita clarified that sex work is not considered as trafficking as those individuals are in control of their bodies and income. However, she reiterated that there is no such thing as a child prostitute, and that children are victims of sexual abuse and assault.

There is no true definition of a victim or typical stereotype when it comes to human trafficking. Force, fraud, coercion and manipulation occurs when people have their documentation held; others are profiting from the use of their bodies, and they are often drugged and manipulated to provide sexual acts.

The Hope Project serves children as young as 11, although is now serving a minor as young as eight, and their oldest client is in her 60s. Youth can become victims of online grooming in as little as 18 minutes. The lack of safe love at home heightens the risk of vulnerable youth both online and in our communities.

A Hope Project client bravely shared her survival story with us accompanied by her therapist, Lisa Wright. Lisa provides clinical support services to The Hope Project.

Our speaker is a survivor of sex trafficking. Her first memory is of being sexually abused at the age of three. Her uncle offered to put her to bed and began touching her inappropriately. Her mother met men, and she allowed them to have sex with her, as did her mother. This abuse ended around the age of ten, when she moved to her father's home.

There she suffered severe physical and emotional abuse by her father and stepmother. At 16, she left her sister and tried to escape. At 17, she made her first suicide attempt and noted many mental health inpatient stays. She began attending church and began to find God. She was subsequently raped and was referred to The Hope Project. She has found hope at The Hope Project and uses her story to help others. Deanna continues to attend counseling and support groups and has found light at The Hope Project. Deanna shared that God and The Hope Project have saved her life. Deanna has moved so far forward she is now able to live independently and is thriving.

The Hope Project is an after-care service provider. They often accompany police when rescues are happening. They provide therapy groups, trauma education, outpatient therapy, and support through any legal proceedings. They provide one-on-one case management services, a mentor program that assists clients in meeting their needs, helping them move towards independence by offering personal hygiene products, showers, food assistance, and employment skills.



To learn more about how you can get involved and support The Hope Project click on the QR code or visit their website:

<https://www.hopeprojectusa.org/>
If you see something, say something. Rita left us with the mantra "to get mad" about human trafficking.



Sara Johnson, Executive Director of The Hope Project, joined the Q&A session following Rita's presentation.

Sara is a member of the Lakeshore Human trafficking Task Force and invited interested persons to get involved with the Task Force. The Task Force holds an annual Community Forum in January, which is Human Trafficking Awareness Month.
<https://lhutf.org/>

In answer to an audience question, about supporting The Hope Project, Sara directed everyone to take one of the brochures on the tables for information on The Masquerade Ball to be held on November 7, the organization's biggest fundraiser.

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

This Week's Birthdays



Rotary in Action Bill Erickson



For Bill Erickson, service is not something you add to a busy life, it is part of the way you live it. He joined Muskegon Rotary in 2011 and immediately recognized he was with "like-minded people" who value *Service Above Self*. He is still part of the non-profit world, working at the Muskegon Rescue Mission, and he runs a non-profit Christian rock music station.

Bill traces his conviction for service back to his father, a factory worker raising seven children who still found time to serve breakfast at church, help with building projects, and do whatever needed doing. That example taught Bill that life is bigger than raising a family, paying the mortgage, and taking care of yourself. There is always a larger community that needs you. Bill continues that lesson in the community he proudly calls his town.

When asked what legacy he hopes to leave, his answer is simple, "Bill was there to help."

Muskegon Rising Podcast S3E18 Melissa Horton Lakeshore Museum Center



In the latest episode of the Muskegon Rising Podcast, host DJ Hilson sits down with Melissa Horton, Executive Director of the Lakeshore Museum Center.

They discuss the Museum Center's extensive work, from the Hackley and Hume Historic Site, the Heritage Museum of Business & Industry, to the Muskegon Museum of History & Science. Melissa highlights the Center's free programming for students, interactive exhibits, and preserving the stories of industries, innovators, and philanthropists who shaped our region. This episode reminds us why the Lakeshore Museum Center deserves continued community support.

Watch: https://youtu.be/_nrDJKSBEpw?si=ZGIBfRuMySs9hLbq

Listen: <https://www.buzzsprout.com/2269729/episodes/19803746-melissa-horton-lakeshore-museum-center>

Induction



Jim Fisher introduces the newest Rotarian in the world, **Kristen Wade**.

Kristen Wade grew up as a minister's daughter, living in several communities and graduated from Fenton High School. She attended Adrian College, earning a BA degree. She attended Grand Valley State University, earning a MBA degree.

While she was attending Adrian, Kristen met her husband, John, and they moved to Shelby. The couple has been married for 31 years and has two children, a daughter, and a son.

Kristen spent 30-plus years in HR and government leadership, including 28 years with the County of Muskegon, and more than a decade in executive leadership. Retiring a year ago, Kristen founded HR Higher Version, an executive coaching and leadership development practice, dedicated to helping high-performing leaders successfully transition into executive leadership roles.

A community-minded citizen, Kristen served on the YMCA board, including as Chief Volunteer Officer. Currently, she serves on the Oceana County

Committee of the United Way of the Lakeshore. Outside of work, Kristen

enjoys spending time with her husband and family, being outdoors, staying active kayaking, hiking, hunting, and fishing, and enjoying life along the lakeshore. Kristen is excited to join the Muskegon Rotary Club and find new ways to serve and contribute to the community she has called home for many years. Welcome, Kristen!

Presidential Announcements

President Roger shared a few announcements with the Club.

1. ReWine will meet tonight at 5:15 p.m. at Socibowl, 441 West Western Avenue. Please RSVP to Kaytie Drake.

Their next meeting will be October 1st at the Lake Effect Bistro inside the Shoreline Inn.

2. ReWine is cancelling the Adopt-a-Highway clean-up on Saturday, September 26.

Announcements



Tim Lipan invites the Club and their families to the Milwaukee Clipper on September 22 for networking, socializing, and tours. Please sign up for the event and for tours.



Lisa Kraus with her wine bottle prop asking for donations for the new wine, beer, and spirits bundle raffles. The Committee is also looking for just \$4,000 more in sponsorships to reach their sponsorship goal! All Club members are asked to purchase tickets for the **September 22 Harvest Fest at the CIM!**



Announcements continued



Linda Juarez, flyer in hand, for the World Community Service Committee, encourages Rotarians interested in an service trip to Honduras in March 13-20, 2027 to attend a workshop in November. Sarah, Director of the Chispa Project, will do a workshop on Wednesday, November 11 on reimagining international work and will present the program at our meeting on Thursday, November 12. Sign ups for the service trip to Honduras are due by the end of November.



Muskegon Rising



Rotary Night Out on The Milwaukee Clipper!

Who: All Rotarians, Interact, Rotaract and their family and friends

What: Rotary social event on the S.S. Milwaukee Clipper, "the Queen of the

Great Lakes" a 361-foot floating National Historic Landmark Museum built in 1904.

Where: 2098 Lakeshore Drive at the end of McCracken in Lakeside.

When: Tuesday, September 22, 2026,
5:30pm – 7:30pm

What Do I Receive?

Enjoy the comradery of Rotary members and their guests in a relaxed, social atmosphere.

- Free admission
- Tours of the Ship's museum, theater, dance floor, horseshoe bar, gift shop, dining area, and Captains quarters.
- Appetizers, water, and adult beverages
- Free ice cream in the Soda Bar
- Many other attractions to see and experience on this floating landmark.

How Much Does it Cost: FREE

* The ship does not have an elevator, and there are steps that may limit where a person can visit.

ReWine Meeting Schedule 5:00 p.m. social time Meeting starts 5:15 p.m.

Thursday October 1st at Lake Effect Bistro and Lounge (located off the main lobby of the Shoreline Inn) 750 Terrace Point Drive, Muskegon.

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

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



Peace Builders Committee

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
Free and Open to the Public

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 49440

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

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

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 semiquincentennial celebratory year!



**Thursday, October 22
5:00 to 8:00 p.m.**

The CIM The Culinary
Institute of Michigan-
Muskegon, MI 49440

[Harvest Fest 2026
Tickets, Thursday, October 22
5PM - 8 PM | Eventbrite](#)



Polio eradication efforts reported as of 09.14.26 *

25 cases in Afghanistan and four cases in Pakistan.

Total cases for 2026 is 29.

The total cases for 2025 is 35.

*Source: Rotary Foundation
Confirmed Global Wild Virus Type 1
WHO HG



World Polio Day on 24 October is much more than a date on the calendar. It's a vital time for Rotary and Rotaract clubs around the world to join our partners, supporters, and public health advocates to raise awareness and funds that will help us end polio for good.

We made a promise to the children of the world: No child should suffer the consequences of this vaccine-preventable disease.