

# ROTARY CLUB NEWS: New leadership, youth group at Rotary

L [lakeplacidnews.com/opinion/columns/2023/07/06/rotary-club-news-new-leadership-youth-group-at-rotary](https://lakeplacidnews.com/opinion/columns/2023/07/06/rotary-club-news-new-leadership-youth-group-at-rotary)



Here are some of the organizers of the June 22 Rotary Club of Lake Placid's Changeover Dinner at the Lake Placid Pub & Brewery, from left: Carolyn Bordonaro, Susan Friedmann, Tracey Coolidge, Krista Frei and Martha Spear. (Provided photo)

Every year the leadership of Rotary Clubs changes, usually with a new president or co-presidents.

2023 is no different, with outgoing Rotary Club of Lake Placid president William "Bill" Flederbach passing the gavel to incoming president Kathleen "Kate" Thompson this month. Rotary Clubs around the world celebrate this passing of leadership with a Changeover Dinner each summer.

"The changeover event is a more than 100-year tradition for Rotary and one of the most special nights of the year because you get to enjoy the company of your fellow Rotarians, thank your outgoing officers and welcome and wish good luck to your new incoming officers," Rotary Club board member Stephanie Pianka said.

For the Rotary Club of Lake Placid, 2023's Changeover Dinner was at the Lake Placid Pub & Brewery's Hop Loft on June 22. Entertainment during cocktails included massage therapists Gretchen Lansing and Laura Schmidt from Healing Elements, with massage chairs in the curtained-off children's room; professional caricature artist Joe Ferris from Willsboro offering portraits, and a silent auction of international items. The Pub served a delicious and bounteous meal.

The outgoing and incoming presidents led a ceremony honoring the past year's board and welcoming 2024's leaders. At the end, each guest left with a hand-painted rock representing the diversity and steadfastness of Rotarians in Lake Placid and beyond. Leftover food from the dinner was kindly packaged up by the Pub and taken to the firehouse by a Rotarian.



Lake Placid New York Rotary Foundation treasurer Lee Lamparski holds her caricature portrait by Joe Ferris. (Provided photo)

—

Accomplishments in the past year

—

During Bill Flederbach's year as president, club activities were robust. The club held or joined annual community-building activities such as the Dam Duck Race at Lisa G's, food drives for the Lake Placid Ecumenical Food Pantry, singing holiday songs at Elderwood of Uihlein at Lake Placid, giving out free hot chocolate at the Village Holiday Stroll and family ice skating events, giving a Valentine's Party at Greenwood Apartments and participating in Lake Placid Community Day.

The Tina Leonard Award committee raised their goal of \$25,000 to endow the award in perpetuity for a Lake Placid High School senior who has overcome obstacles and achieved in the face of adversity.

Two new bus shelters were installed, and the third will be installed this summer.

The Club gave away over \$14,000 to 12 organizations and projects the International Service Committee made multi-year commitments to support a clean water and menstrual hygiene management training in Uganda, and a mobile ophthalmology operating theater in India, among other projects.

The Lake Placid New York Rotary Foundation facilitated the funding for the Tina Leonard Award and bus shelter construction, and took on a land surveyor scholarship fund and the WOODS project.

Rotarians kept a stretch of highway clear of trash and debris, cleaned up and did gardening at village playgrounds, and spruced up Shipman Youth Center's yard several times.

The club sent seven volunteers to support the 2023 FISU Winter World University Games in January.

Finally, the club initiated a grant request that was approved by the Generous Acts Fund of the Adirondack Foundation to begin a free financial literacy education program for middle schoolers at Shipman Youth Center and Saranac Lake Youth Center. This will roll out in September at the two youth centers. Participating students will receive a cash award at the end to invest as they see fit.

—

Looking ahead: Rotary youth group forming

—

In her first year as president of the Rotary Club, along with all the annual activities and ongoing projects, Kate Thompson will be overseeing the introduction of an Interact club, which is a global Rotary group for youth, in the Lake Placid Central School District. Interact

clubs bring together young people ages 12 to 18 to develop leadership skills while discovering the power of Rotary's motto "Service Above Self." Nicole Trainor and Keith Clark from the high school, Kate and other Rotarians have worked on this for several years.

"Moving to Interact will allow for our students to open doors to outside community service organizations and opportunities," Nicole Trainor said. "Our students will be supported in their endeavors and have the opportunity to continue their services after graduation. During their time in Interact they will build their leadership skills and build up a community they've grown to love."

New Rotarians joining the club is going to be a priority this year.

"I look forward to carrying the 2023 momentum into 2024 with service projects and supporting youth leadership development opportunities with Interact," Kate said. "We welcome visitors and new members to Rotary, people who want to get involved with supporting the community and meeting needs such as leader of the Teddy Bear Picnic, an almost 30-year tradition."

In closing, Bill Flederbach said, "It has been a wonderfully productive year for our club. We are only one of 46,000 Rotary clubs around the world, but we are pretty special, I think. While it has been great, I am happy to step back and let Kate Thompson take the captain's wheel. We are all excited for the coming year's volunteer work, philanthropy and community projects."

The Rotary Club of Lake Placid offers hybrid meetings weekly on Thursdays at 7:20 a.m. at the Hampton Inn (new location) and virtually. [RotaryLakePlacid@gmail.com](mailto:RotaryLakePlacid@gmail.com) and find us at [rotarylakeplacid.org](http://rotarylakeplacid.org) or on Facebook.

(Martha Pritchard Spear is a member of the Lake Placid Rotary Club.)