



# ROTARY SPOKES

## Rotary Club of Ventura

Est. May 1, 1919

“The Friendliest Club in Rotary”

August 20, 2023

### JANET BARRON: CASA



Janet Barron, Training Manager for Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of Ventura County gave a presentation at our meeting August 16, 2023.

CASA has been serving youth in Ventura County since 1985. It is sometimes confused with Casa Pacifica, which serves some of the same population and, for a time, provided office space to CASA.

CASA serves abused and neglected youth in the juvenile dependency system. They are ages 0 to 21; most are 5 to 18. But increasing numbers are infants born addicted to drugs.

After they reach 18, youth can opt to remain in the juvenile system until age 21 (“extended foster care”) and continue to receive CASA advocacy and other services. Since 2019, CASA also serves youth accused of delinquency in the juvenile justice system.

Last year, 229 advocates in Ventura County served 254 youth. Advocates come from many walks of life, including those in helping professions, empty nesters, those who were in the dependency system as children, and those interested in the law. Most advocates are women but 42 are male and more male advocates are needed. There is a waiting list of 237 youth.

CASA began when Judge David W. Soukup in Seattle asked community members to provide him information about the kids to help him make decisions in juvenile cases. There are now CASA programs in every county in California, and in every state in the country EXCEPT North Dakota (go figure)! CASA of Ventura is a 501(c)(3) non-profit.

Volunteers are interviewed, and their background and references are checked. After receiving 40 hours of training, they are sworn in by the juvenile court judge as officers of the court. The main requirements are compassion and liking kids.

CASA volunteers meet with their appointee weekly. They can share a snack, work on homework, or go on expeditions to the theater or pumpkin patch. They have access to the juvenile’s file, attend the child’s court hearings, and write reports the court considers in making decisions.

To volunteer or for more information go to [casaofventuracounty.org](http://casaofventuracounty.org).

## MEETING AUGUST 16, 2023

**Attendance:** I counted 35 members and guests.

**Lunch:** Food Affairs by Stacey served steak chili, corn bread with honey butter, green salad, fruit, and ice cream sundaes for dessert.

**Introductions: Jessica Brandon.** She discussed lessons from the *Ted Lasso* television show: the importance of community, kindness, and its slogan, “Believe.” Like the soccer team in the show, Rotary is a team sport, where groups of folks work together to make other people’s lives better. (If you’ve got Apple TV, it’s a great show with humor and a lot of heart!)



**Song: Bev, Jessica and Clyde** led singing and dancing to “Hokey Pokey.” That’s what it’s all about!

### Announcements:

**President Neal Lassila** congratulated **Jeff Lambert** on his appointment as **CEO of the Ventura Housing Authority**.

Wishing a **speedy recovery** to our caterer, **Stacey Tipton**, who suffered a fall and broke her hip.

Rotary has emailed requests for aid for the **Maui fires**. Among many there who lost their homes are two Rotary chapter presidents.

**Madhu Bajaj: (1) We will not have a lunchtime meeting August 30** because it is the 5th Wednesday of the month. Instead, we will meet **5:30 to 7:00 at Stembassadors**, 1238 N. Ventura Ave. Please sign up so they know how many to expect.

**(2) Seeking help to plan this year’s Holiday Social.**

**Sandy Lassila:** If you haven’t already signed up to volunteer for the **Beachside Bash**, your help is needed! **Dan Holmes** has volunteered to be the official photographer.

**Saurabh Bajaj:** Please attend next week’s meeting to learn about what is happening with the Julius Gius Memorial Rotary Foundation.

**Hutch** presented **Mark Sauer** with his **Paul Harris + 4 pin** (blue sapphires). Mark has been a member since 1995 and serves as our Treasurer. Contributions to the Rotary Foundation fund projects like End Polio Now, which has reduced polio by 99.9 percent since our efforts began in 1979.

**Happy Dollars.**

**Finig: Chrissy Stamegna** quizzed us about dogs.





## RESTAURANT RAID

On August 17, 2023, club members visited CRAVE, KarynSue Rose-Thomas's new Kofi and Gelato Bar at Portside Ventura Harbor. Congratulations!

## Rotary Club of Ventura Vocational Corner

### Member spotlight



*Brenda*

**BRENDA ALLISON**  
CEO-Coast General Insurance Brokers

My insurance brokerage provides insurance and non-insurance solutions to manage the risks of entrepreneurs and commercial organizations. We are a portfolio [brokerage](#) so we handle [all](#) of the property and casualty needs of an organization as well as their employee benefits. We have 11 employees and 6 independent brokers throughout California. While we [insure](#) organizations in almost all industries, [the majority](#) of our clients are in construction, transportation and agricultural businesses with 50 or more employees.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

(For more complete and up-to-date information, check the ClubRunner app on your phone, or our website)

**August 23 lunch meeting: Saurabh Bajaj, Julius Gius Memorial Rotary Foundation update.**

**August 24: Board Meeting**, 12:00-1:30 p.m., Crowne Plaza Hotel.

**August 30: NO LUNCH MEETING—EVENING MEETING** at Stembassador's IDEA Center, 1238 N. Ventura Ave., Ventura, 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. Brief program at 6 p.m. This is a JGMRF-funded project led by Alex Wulff and students. Tour the center, meet student makers, and learn about the entrepreneurial opportunities. Refreshments will be served. Space is limited, please sign up if you will attend so we can plan accordingly. There is a small parking lot, lots of street parking. Carpooling is encouraged. You may have to walk. Wear comfy shoes/clothes. Questions: contact Madhu.

**September 6 lunch meeting: Conversations in Rotary with Aaron Campbell and Keith Moschetto.**

**September 13 lunch meeting: J. Ryan Stradal**, author of the bestselling novels *Great Kitchens of the Midwest* and *The Lager Queen of Minnesota*. He most recent novel, *Saturday at the Lakeside Supper Club*, was released in April this year.

**Sept. 23: End of Summer Beachside Bash**, national ribeye steak cookoff, brew fest, car show, and more. San Buenaventura State Beach, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

### !!! HAPPY BIRTHDAY !!!

Harold Wulff  
August 15

Saurabh Bajaj  
August 18

Dave Loe  
August 19