



# Utica Rotary Hub

Utica, NY, USA

June 9, 2025

## Gala spotlights Reed, Loftus and Stanley restoration



*Gala-goers crowded the dance floor after enjoying a banquet on the Stanley stage. SEE PAGE 2. Jerry Kraus photo.*

## Rotary honors outstanding educators (see page 4)



**FROM LEFT: Mark McFarland (New Hartford), Tim Papienuk (New York Mills), Kagan Crawford (Notre Dame), Jeffery Brown (Proctor), Amanda Hartnett (Sauquoit) and Stephen Costanza (Whitesboro). Missing from photo - Norin Lavender (Clinton). Robert Stronach photo.**

Deadline for next newsletter (6/16) is Saturday, June 14 at 3 p.m.; submit to [news@uticarotaryclub.org](mailto:news@uticarotaryclub.org).

Editor Robert Stronach

# Gala spotlights Reed, Loftus and Stanley restoration

By Joseph Abraham

The Rotary Club of Utica, celebrating 110 years of service to the community, honored Earle Reed and Peter Loftus with the prestigious “Service Above Self” Award at this year’s annual Gala. The black-tie event took place on Friday, June 6, 2025, at the historic Stanley Theatre in Downtown Utica.

Sponsored by Hage & Hage LLC, the “Service Above Self” Gala served as a fundraiser for the Stanley Theatre, supporting the thoughtful restoration of a space that will enhance the theatre’s capacity to host pre-show gatherings and post-show celebrations. The restoration will preserve its historic charm while enriching the patron experience.

The Gala shone a spotlight on Earle Reed and Peter Loftus, whose remarkable contributions to the community embody Rotary’s enduring commitment to “Service Above Self.”

Reed, founder of the renowned Utica Boilermaker Road Race, is widely recognized not only



**Peter Loftus and Earl Reed**

for launching one of the nation’s premier road races but also for his enduring commitment to community development and support. His vision and leadership have brought national attention to the region and inspired generations of volunteers and runners alike.

Loftus, educator, actor, and director, was the creative force behind the annual Players of Utica production of the “Scrooge!” musical on the Stanley Stage for decades; in more recent years, he has directed the performances of SummerStage at Rome Capitol Theatre, and the M. Proctor

Theatre Guild at Grace Church. Through his artistic direction and dedication to local theatre, he has created beloved traditions that have brought joy to thousands while mentoring young performers and cultivating a deep appreciation for the performing arts.

“Earle Reed and Peter Loftus represent the very best of what it means to serve a community,” said Joe Caruso, Utica Rotary “Service Above Self” Award chairperson. “Whether through civic leadership or the arts, they’ve each created lasting legacies that continue to uplift and inspire.”



**Utica Rotarian Joe Abraham (standing) with CNY Rotary President Lizzy Martin, her husband, Scott, and New Hartford Rotarian Mia DeBernardis. About 150 people attended the Gala.**



## New Member Proposed: Jasmin Arias

***The board proposes Jasmin Arias for membership to Rotary Club of Utica. Per bylaws, club members have five days to submit a written objection to Secretary Jill Koch.***

Jasmin Arias, who is an assistant vice president with Bank of America, says she is “a proud resident of Utica, where I live with my husband, Frank, and our three wonderful children.”

In addition, “we are a proud Navy family. Our eldest is stationed in San Diego.”

She also says she embraces the values of service and commitment.

“In my free time during the summer, you can find me tending to my flourishing garden or getting lost in a captivating book. I am passionate about cooking and love experimenting with new recipes and creating delicious meals for my family.”



## Calendar of Events

**6/12 Meeting | Tour and talk  
noon | Children’s Museum**

**6/14 Service | Street cleanup  
10 am | Varick Street, Utica  
Meet in lot next Nail Creek Pub**

**7/2 Celebration | End of Rotary Year  
5:30 pm | Piggy Pats pavilion**

**8/17 Service | Charity Golf Outing  
noon | Hidden Valley Course  
in Whitesboro**

# Rotary Clubs honor outstanding educators

By Jerry Kraus

The Rotary Clubs of Utica, New Hartford, North Utica/Whites-town, and Sauquoit honored seven Utica-area teachers at their annual Outstanding Educators Awards Luncheon, held Thursday, June 5, at Five Points Public House/ Irish Cultural Center in Utica. The program was hosted by Rotary Club of Utica and its Outstanding Educators Program Chair Bart Gorman. It is an annual event of the area Rotary Clubs' community service committees. The 2025 recipients of the Outstanding Educators Awards are:

- Norin Lavender, a music and band teacher at Clinton Central High School.
- Mark McFarland, a math teacher and sports coach at New

Hartford High School.

- Tim Papienuk, an English teacher at New York Mills Junior/Senior High School.
- Kagan Crawford, a history teacher at Notre Dame Junior/Senior High School.
- Jeffery Brown, a chemistry teacher at T.R. Proctor High School.
- Amanda Hartnett, a chemistry teacher at Sauquoit Valley High School.
- Stephen Costanza, a chemistry teacher at Whitesboro Central High School.

The awards program comes at the culmination of a year-long program during which area Rotary clubs hosted two students from

each of seven area high schools.

The students had an opportunity to introduce themselves to the Rotary members, and to learn about Rotary's community, regional and international service, which are the fulfillment of the Rotary motto of "Service Above Self."

At the end of the school year, the students from each school are asked to select the teacher whom they believe exemplifies the Rotary motto, and the values of Rotary, as exemplified in its Four Way Test:

- Is it the Truth?
- Is it Fair to all concerned?
- Will it build Goodwill and better Friendships?
- Will it be Beneficial to all concerned?





# There's chemistry between students and good teachers

By Robert and Mary Stronach

One recipient of the Outstanding Educator Award, Kagan Crawford, is a brand-new teacher who decided to pursue a career in education after serving in Afghanistan with the U.S. Army. His history students at Notre Dame High report that he says he likes to talk and now he gets paid to do it.

Another honoree, Jeffery Brown, began his career as a chemist at a brewery and found a teaching path instead after getting into coaching sports. His subject at Proctor High? Chemistry, of course.

There must be something about

chemistry teachers that inspire students because Brown wasn't the only one to be honored. There also were Amanda Hartnett of Sauquoit Valley High School and Stephen Costanza of Whitesboro Central High.

Hartnett revealed that "teaching is like herding cats" because her chemistry students are "observant and curious and bring great joy."

Costanza, his students claim, prioritizes understanding rather than just moving ahead with a lesson. "He provides real-life examples" and "all the tools needed to be the best."

"A coach and mentor" is how stu-

dents describe New Hartford High School math teacher Mark McFarland, who also coaches boys and girls varsity sports. "He's available to help" and he likes to remind students to "never settle for less than the best."

New York Mills English teacher Tim Papienuk found students and staff rallying around him when he was diagnosed with stage 4 cancer, and students decided to return the motivation by providing inspirational quotes for him to read when he was receiving cancer treatments. His inspiration also resulted in him being selected as a Rotary Outstanding Educator for a second time. "All I need," he quipped, "is one more" to match three-time NFL Most Valuable Player "Tom Brady."

There was one final honoree whom Clinton High students describe as living "Service Above Self" because, instead of being present to accept his award, music teacher Norin Lavender was back at school conducting band rehearsal for that evening's concert.

They add: "He never discourages anyone from doing something hard."



Program Chair Bart Gorman

# Help clean up along Varick Street and stay for a brew

By Tina Pavlot

Join us for our volunteer event of the month, Saturday, June 14 at 10 a.m. Be prepared to pull weeds and pick up litter along Utica's iconic Varick Street.

We'll plan to stay in the area after for a bite, and a pint or two!

There's usually ample parking available along the street and in

the City's lot next to Nail Creek Pub where we'll plan to meet.

To sign up, contact me at cpavlot@mtb.com or (315) 717-6652.

## Our meeting this week is at the Children's Museum

Our Rotary meeting this Thursday, June 12, will be at noon in the Children's Museum, now located at Holland Avenue and Memorial Parkway in Utica. There will be a talk and tour.

A longtime partnership with the Community Foundation of Oneida and Herkimer Counties and a synergistic collaboration

with ICAN has led to a complete renewal for the Children's Museum.

"Together they create equitable opportunities for our neighborhoods, our families and our region's economy," according to information provided. "The museum is the first in the country to be guided by Universal Design

from conception through completion. Universal Design (UD) is a process that empowers diverse populations by improving human performance, health and wellness, and social participation. This approach addresses barriers faced by people with disabilities and other populations the design process typically overlooks."



## Rotary's 'BREW Fellowship' and more

When Rotarian Tina Pavlot first heard about the BREW Fellowship (Beers Rotarians Enjoy Worldwide), she says it was love at first sight and she immediately signed her and her husband up as lifetime members.

Rotarian Colin Hubbell is no stranger to beer as the proud owner of community favorite brewpub, The Beer Hub. While Colin often hosts friends and Beer Hub fans for private tast-

ings, this time he did it for a cause; To raise funds for clean water. Colin and Tina's love for beer and the support of the community resulted in a \$600 donation to the BREW Fellowship.

She said that "\ 25% of our gift goes directly to the Rotary Action Group, WASHRAG (Water Sanitation Hygiene Rotary Action Group)."

"Colin has hosted our Rotary Club on numerous occasions. If

you've yet to discover the Beer Hub it's worth a visit! They pride themselves on an expertly curated beer and liquor selection, unique sandwiches and engaging atmosphere. Stop in Monday through Saturday at 2643 Genesee Street, Utica. Interested about the BREW Fellowship and others? Find out more here [BREW - Welcome!](#) and here [Rotary Fellowships | Rotary International](#)."