Palo Alto RotaryPinion

November 23, 2026
Writer: Steve Emslie

CREATE LASTING IMPACT

Celebrating 104 years of Service

CREATE LASTING IMPACT 2026-2027



President **CHARLIE WEIDANZ** called the meeting to order at 12:30 and asked

President-Elect **ERIC** to introduce guests: Daniel Goe, Mayur Gowda, and David Campbell.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY



RANDA introduced **ERIC JENSEN** to provide the opening remarks for the day.

ERIC is a long time Palo Alto resident and has been at the Palo Alto Police Department for 30 years, currently serving as Business Manager for the department.

ERIC delivered an inspirational thought adapted from a TED talk he recently encountered. The message focused on how happiness is derived from practicing gratitude for everyday necessities like water and light. He also wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving!

BLUE BADGES



New members **GARRY LIM** and **JENNY SAVAGE** were awarded Blue Badges for completing their orientation requirements under the mentorship of **BRUCE GEE.**
To earn their Blue Badges, members must meet specific requirements including six months of good standing and participation in service or social events.
BRUCE presented the blue badges and shared personal anecdotes about meeting JENNY at a sandbagging event and knowing GARRY through Scouts.

THE ROTARY FOUNDATION update

BRUCE GEE reminded members that this is the season to support The Rotary Foundation and Polio Plus. He encouraged members to keep the foundation in their giving plans for year end. BRUCE reminded members about making donations to the Rotary Foundation to support global causes like Polio eradication. He noted that recent foundation gifts funded

an $11,000 grant for the Women's Justice Initiative in Guatemala
BRUCE gave PolioPlus pins to everyone to remind us to make our donations.

HOLIDAY PARTY VENUE 12/10/2026

YUDY DENG will host this year's annual Holiday Party at her home on Thursday, **December 10th, from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.** She is looking for volunteers to help make it a fun and creative evening. Please reach out to **YUDY** directly if you would like to be involved.

VOCATIONAL SCHOLARSHIPS

Led by **JOY OCHE** Chair of the Vocational Scholarships. Joy discussed the legacy of the Dr. Robert Smithwick, a former Rotarian and the first Board President of Foothill College. Our scholarships total over $430,000 which have aided 490 students over the past 20 years.





Current recipients
Angela and Ruiyan shared how these funds supported their education at Foothill College and Cañada College: Angela in dental hygiene and Ruiyan in fashion design.

CAMP RYLA



Through the presentation by **PAM KRUDOP,** students **Sophie and Derek** shared how attending the RYLA camp improved their communication skills and personal confidence. They were able to attend Camp RYLA, a Rotary youth summer camp, through scholarships provided by our club's Charities Fund.



TODAY'S PROGRAM

La Comida, Palo Alto's Senior Meal Provider



NANCY COUPAL introduced La Comida Board President **Bill Blodgett** and briefly mentioned that after losing its base of operations, it has re-established dining operations.

Bill reviewed the La Comida operation which serves approximately cations: Stevenson House and Bryant Street near Avenidas.

The organization faces rising food costs and funding gaps because county assistance only covers approximately 64,000 of their yearly meals. This leaves a significant funding gap

that can only be closed with the generosity of the community.

The program emphasizes both nutrition and social connection for seniors aged 60 and older in Santa Clara County. Blodgett emphasized that the social connection is almost as important to senior health as the nutritional benefits provided by La Comida.

Bill also stressed that in addition to community monetary contributions to address the need to fund 10,000 meals not reimbursed by Santa Clara County, the organization relies on community volunteers to help in meal set up, clean up, and serving.



The work is very rewarding and encourages members to check out the La Comida website for details on volunteering. Palo Alto Rotary has a long history with La Comida as Rotary set up the first La Comida dining room back in 1972. Blodgett ended his presentation to remind members that La Comida never turns senior away and does not want to cut services as federal and state funding is reduced.

Q&A: **ERIC JENSEN** asked how Blodgett got involved with La Comida. Blodgett retired from HP in 2008 and was looking for something to do and volunteered and became hooked on the program. He has been actively involved ever since.
KRISTINA LUGO asked about volunteering commitments and can teenagers help? Blogdett said teens on summer break often help out. He stressed that making a regular scheduled commitment is ideal
HENRIETTA BURROUGHS asked about paid staff. Blodgett said there are 4.5 kitchen staff and two site managers, one at each location and an Executive Director.

PREVIOUS PROGRAM details

Last week's speaker, DANIEL FELLS, a ten year veteran of the NFL, has sent the link to his YouTube channel so may share more about his focus: "Fuel the Future"

Daniel Fells, Ten year player in the NFL
book@fueltheirfuture.com | calendly.com/fueltheirfuture25

Channel: https://www.youtube.com/@DanielFellsspeaks

CLOSING

CHARLIE thanked our speaker and all who attended. The meeting was adjourned.

MEETING VOLUNTEERS

Greeters: Len Ely, Eric Jensen
Welcome Desk: Rebecca Geraldi
Hybrid Host: Dana Tom
Pinion Writer: Steve Emslie
Pinion Editor: Ginny Lear

UPCOMING PROGRAMS & EVENTS

November 30 12:15 - 1:30 PM Club Meeting	**James Horsman, Senior Manager, Public Policy, San Jose Chamber of Commerce** Topic: AI Literacy, how it works and how it will make our work more efficient
December 7 12:15 - 1:30 PM Club Meeting	**Gunn High School Choir** A joyful, seasonal half hour of songs
December 14 12:15 - 1:30 PM **Final club meeting of 2026**	**William Durham, Professor of Human Biology emeritus, Stanford University** Topic: The Unexpected Impact of El Niño in the Galápagos
December 21 **December 28** **Happy New Year!**	**CLUB IS DARK.** **No Meetings**

January 4, 2027	Michael Kirst, Prof. Emeritus, Stanford University and former President, California State Board of Education





Rotary District 5170

RICHARD D. KING

ANNUAL YOUTH SPEECH CONTEST

2026–2027



SERVICE ABOVE SELF

WHO MAY ENTER?

- Students **in grades 9–12**
- Students attending a public or private high school within Rotary District 5170
- Each student may compete in only **one** Rotary Club speech contest

YOUR SPEECH

- Must be **4 to 5 minutes** long
- Must be the **original work** of the student
- May address any timely topic of interest
- Must clearly relate to the Rotary motto: **"Service Above Self"**
- The theme must be clearly identified in the speech, although it does not have to be the specific topic of the speech

IMPORTANT CONTEST RULES

- **Do not** identify yourself or your school in the title or content of your speech.
- **Do not** include identifying information through your attire or other means.
- Follow the contest rules carefully at every level of competition.
- A student may compete at only **one** club-level contest.

HOW THE CONTEST WORKS

CLUB CONTEST → AREA CONTEST → REGIONAL CONTEST → DISTRICT FINALS

Palo Alto Rotary & University Rotary Club Contest

JANUARY 20, 2027

6 PM

Palo Alto City Council Chambers
250 Hamilton Avenue, Palo Alto, CA

★ THE FOUR-WAY TEST ★

Your speech must clearly relate, apply, or interweave all four principles of Rotary's Four-Way Test:

1. Is it the **TRUTH**?
2. Is it **FAIR** to all concerned?
3. Will it build **GOODWILL** and **BETTER FRIENDSHIPS**?
4. Will it be **BENEFICIAL** to all concerned?

WIN UP TO $4,150 IN CASH PRIZES!

CONTEST LEVEL	1ST PLACE	2ND PLACE	OTHER PARTICIPANTS
CLUB CONTEST	$150	$75	$25
AREA CONTEST	$300	$150	$50
REGIONAL CONTEST	$700 EACH (Top 2 Winners)	—	$300
DISTRICT FINALS	$3,000	$1,500	$750 (Other Finalists)

★ A student who wins 1st place at the Club and Area levels, earns the top 2 at Regional, and wins the District Finals could receive up to **$4,150** in prizes!

GET READY!

- ✓ WRITE your speech.
- ✓ PRACTICE your delivery.
- ✓ SHARE your ideas.

YOUR VOICE CAN INSPIRE CHANGE!

GOOD LUCK!

We look forward to hearing your voice!

Questions? Contact: Justin Wang <justin@trifectaed.com> or Annette Glanckopf <annette_g@att.net>