



Holyoke Rotary Club News

Issue: May 2019

Innovation through Rotary

By Alexandria Ritchie, a member of the Rotaract Club of Virginia Commonwealth University and the Rotary Club of James River, Richmond, Virginia, USA

Both Rotary and Rotaract have contributed so much to who I am as a young person. The spirit of innovation that I've found in this family has been instrumental to my journey.

During my very first meeting as a member of an Interact club, I listened as our faculty adviser talked about the project the club had just finished. They had raised funds to provide livestock to a family in South America. The livestock would benefit the family for years to come because it would help provide goods that they could sell in a local market for profit. I remember thinking how amazing and different this type of service seemed. Looking back, I now realize that I was falling in love with this idea of sustainability.

I came away from Interact feeling inspired because our service was going to help people with a sense of permanence. A big part of my early love for Rotary came from the fact that sustainability allows for intentional relationship-building. I learned that sustainable service requires a sense of bold innovation. As I joined Rotaract, and then later Rotary as a dual member, I always kept this idea with me because it gave me a sense of empowerment and a belief in possibility.

I owe so much to my Rotary family because all my experiences have energized my love of service, belief in leadership through inspiration, and change through creativity. As I pursued a degree in biomedical engineering with a goal of becoming a physician, I started applying these Rotary values to my life outside of Rotary.

I chose the degree I did in a large part because of my mom and brother. My brother Oliver was born with a chromosome anomaly that sadly cost him his life. He is such a huge part of my drive to become a doctor. Amid this struggle, my mom had a negative experience with the epidural she was given to numb the pain during delivery. The epidural was not placed correctly resulting in a lot of additional pain. I have had the incredible opportunity to help create a potential solution to others suffering this problem, that has since developed into a company. I have Rotary largely to thank for our success thus far.

Without Rotary, I would not have been brave enough to embrace bold innovation. Rotary helped me develop the skills I need to be able to be successful both in medicine and with our product. I have learned how to interact with people from a wide variety of backgrounds, properly function with a large team, and convey the value proposition of something I believe in. Being a Rotarian has also taught me the importance of collaboration. Bringing together people of diverse talents and ideas under a common vision makes innovation possible and it's what gives us hope for a better future. Thanks to Rotary, I have a deep appreciation for the value of innovation within the field of medicine.

Looking ahead at Rotary's future, I see us as Interactors, Rotaractors, and Rotarians embracing this sense of collaborative innovation and unity in all things including membership, engagement, leadership, and of course, service. We owe it to the organization that we love so much to challenge ourselves by thinking outside of the box when it comes to engaging people of different backgrounds and visions. It is this spirit of diversity and collaboration that allows Rotary to stay relevant, and impactful to the world around us. When we as Rotarians challenge ourselves to be creative, bold, and intentional in our efforts to recruit and engage new people in Rotary, we secure our future for years to come.

Member Birthdays

PParsons, Kerry	May 11
Randall, Bonnie	May 20
Florio, Helene	May 23
Nelson, Gina	May 30

Rotary Anniversaries

Ross O'Connell, Maureen	17 years
Rodriguez, Navae	1 years

Upcoming Meetings

DATE: May 7, 2019
INVOCATION: Christine Burns
EVENING MEETING: 5:30 - 7:00 PM at Slainte
PROGRAM SPEAKER: District Membership Meeting.

DATE: May 14, 2019
INVOCATION: Helene Florio
PROGRAM CHAIR: Ed McCarron
PROGRAM SPEAKER: Richard Lawrence, District 7890
 Chair- Water and Sanitation, Pure Water Proejcts

DATE: May 21, 2019
INVOCATION: Barbara Baran
PROGRAM CHAIR: Marian Poe-Heineman
PROGRAM SPEAKER: Scholarship Recipients

DATE: May 28, 2019
INVOCATION: Rebecca MacGregor
PROGRAM CHAIR: Peter Rosskothén
PROGRAM SPEAKER: Delaney House Staff,
 Demonstration for Club.

Upcoming Program Assignments

June 4	Paul Harris Award
June 11	Marty Schoenemann
June 18	Marie Sheedy
June 25	Changing of Guard