



ROTARY NOTARY

Member Birthdays:

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|--------------|------|
| Deb Brinegar | 2/24 |
| Brian Burrus | 3/3 |

At Rotary Today:

Greeter: Greg Ek

Invocation, Flag Salute, and Four-way test:

Anne Schneider

Special Guests:

Summer Lee

Darcy Meyer

Rotary Anniversaries:

Larry McNeil—40 years

CHARTER MEMBER

Fred Heismeyer—12 years

Brant Westbrook—11 years

Wedding Anniversaries:

Scott & Ann Jensen—15 years

Quote of the Week:

The secret is not to find the meaning of life, but to use your life to make things that are meaningful.

— James Clear

REDUCING FOOD WASTE: ICT FOOD RESCUE SHOWS US HOW



ICT Food Rescue currently has 101 scheduled rescues per week, 72 active volunteers, a full time Director of Operations, a part time director of Community Outreach, and two AmeriCorps VISTAs who work in the new Upcycle Kitchen located at Towne West Square. In 2023 the organization rescued 192,277 pounds of food, which became 160,231 meals that saved the receiving agencies \$369,171 in grocery bills. ICT Food Rescue is currently part of a nationwide partnership with 32 other sister food rescue operations.

When Stephanie Merritt returned to college in 2016 at the age of 46 she took some courses on societal issues regarding food insecurity. Those courses, along with her job as a barista at Starbucks, helped her formulate a plan to “rescue” food, keeping it out of landfills and distributing it to agencies that can serve it. “I saw that they were throwing away their food surplus, which people needed. I just didn’t know how to get it to them,” she told us.

So what exactly is “rescued food”? When produce, bakery and other perishable items no longer meet grocery store standards, they’re taken

from shelves and, most often, discarded. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, 31 % of our nation’s food supply goes uneaten. Discarded food makes up the single largest source of material in our landfills, according to the Environmental Protection Agency.

After pitching her idea to fellow classmates at WSU, Merritt obtained food donations from the Shocker Dining Hall at WSU. She also talked with the owner of Reverie Roasters about donating his company’s surplus food to be “upcycled” to a local agency. In the process, she learned that to rescue food

you have to be a not-for-profit agency. A friend helped her obtain that status, along with establishing a board of directors.

Over time people began finding out about the fledgling agency. Starbucks got on board. It was challenging at first to organize volunteers to pick up the food, but a software program from Food Rescue U.S. was a game changer. Working much like Uber, the software allows food rescues to be entered and communicated with volunteers automatically.

As a result, ICT Food Rescue facilitates 101 rescues each week on behalf of receiving organizations such as Union
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Club Announcements:

On Wednesday, March 6 our club will celebrate its 40th anniversary. A special celebration is being planned for an evening event at the Wichita Marriott from 6:00—8:30 p.m. Reservations are \$40 per person; **your check is your reservation.** Larry Hatteberg will be our speaker for the evening. Kim is accepting reservations for this event through February 28.

Alex Kruse and his wife AbBea had a little girl, Mabel Quinn Kruse, born on February 13. Congratulations to you all!

Coming Events:

Our club's own "Battle of the Brackets" will begin soon. Andover State Bank is providing half of the \$500 prize sponsorship. Are you or your business interested in providing the other half? See Kim for details.

The fourth quarter 2023 Dillons Community Reward check for our East Wichita Rotary Foundation was the largest ever—\$114.84. Many thanks to the 13 households that have chosen our foundation to benefit from this program through your Dillons purchases.

Mark your calendars now for Rotary Night on May 9 at Riverfront Stadium to watch the Wichita Wind Surge take on the Arkansas Travelers. The cost per ticket is only \$10. Payments of cash, checks, or Venmo to Jessica Dunbar will be accepted beginning March 20.

Next Week:

Club Parkinson's will present next week's program.

MORE AT ROTARY TODAY



Anthony Ndungu, Scott Nelson, and Chris Stanyer enjoy lunch together prior to today's meeting. Chris announced that Goodwill is opening a new store at 29th and Greenwich on March 1. Also, Goodwill has purchased the former DAV store at Central and Edgemoor and will open it soon.

Bobbi Hansen introduced new EWR member **Cindy Miller**. Cindy is a former member of Downtown Rotary and retired middle school administrator. Cindy is very involved as a volunteer at the Wichita Art Museum and Designing Women. Interesting fact: she loves to decorate her home for Halloween! Cindy is eager to get involved in our club's many volunteer projects. Welcome, Cindy!



ICT FOOD RESCUE (CONT'D FROM P.1)

Rescue Mission, the Wichita Family Crisis Center, alcohol recovery programs, and foster and veterans' homes. To receive, an organization must be a not-for-profit assisting people who have food insecurity. Merritt said that one in six children in Sedgwick County experience food insecurity, which is defined by the USDA as "a lack of consistent and equitable access to healthy, safe, and affordable foods that promote optimal health and well-being."

ICT Food Rescue works with the K-State extension office, which donates fresh vegetables to the program. A new development was the opening of the "Upcycle Kitchen" in Towne West Square last August. Paid for with federal ARPA grant funds, the kitchen is a place where various components of food are transformed into meals. For example, donations of rice, vegetables, and meat become ready-to-eat meals that are transported to one of the participating organizations. The two on-staff chefs work to create meals that are a good use of the donated items. Meals are "up to standard and really delicious," according to Merritt.

Merritt also noted that a local high school, Northeast Magnet, is rescuing food by setting up a "share" table in the lunch room where students can leave fruits, vegetables, and packaged items for other students in need. Recalling how the recycling symbol of three green arrows was created in the 1970s by USC student, Gary Anderson, Merritt said we all know what that symbol means. It is her dream that one day we will all know how participate in ensuring that all Americans who need food receive it, greatly reducing waste and ending hunger.