



La Rotariana

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We are called to serve

In a world often affected by violence, misunderstanding, hate, poverty, discrimination, intolerance, and so many other calamities, it is reinvigorating to remember that Rotarians raise above all these to serve without expecting recompense, to extend a helping hand without regard for color of the skin, language, or ethnic origin. Yes, we are called to serve, and to serve selflessly. Let us look forward with great hope and the satisfaction that stems from serving others.

Club celebrates Fourth Anniversary

It seems like yesterday when on December 8, 2008, a small group of Latinos met for breakfast at Wim and Luisa's home to talk about starting a Latino Rotary Club. Just four months later, on April 23, 2009, the club was chartered by Rotary International. Sponsored by the Irondequoit Rotary Club, the Rochester Latino Rotary Club became the reality envisioned by then District Governor Michael Leone. Since its inception, the club has looked not only to satisfy the needs of the local Latino community but also to the needs of people in Nicaragua, Mexico, and the Dominican Republic. The first international project was to help repair the roof of a school in El Sauce, Nicaragua.

Locally, the club has been involved in fostering literacy by providing dictionaries to students in the fourth and eighth grade at Eugenio María de Hostos Charter School, scholarships to college-bound Latino students; reading materials to parents of pre-school children; books and magazines at a health clinic on Clinton Avenue North for patients to take home, and many more.

A community farm in the Dominican Republic received funding for seeds and plantain plants. In Mexico, the club provided equipment for a hospital neonatal unit and equipment for a school for indigenous children.

To foster understanding among different people, the club members have hosted DGE from Argentina, Turkey, Indonesia, Australia, and the Dominican Republic. Besides, it has hosted Group Study Exchange teams from Finland and Mexico and a Friendship Exchange Group from Sweden, and a group of Mexican Rotarians.

To celebrate this milestone, the club held a dinner dance on April 27 at the Holiday Inn. The event served as an opportunity to recognize and honor Michael Leone who had the vision of attracting Latinos to Rotary by starting a Latino Rotary Club. Michael has been a dedicated Rotarian for many years serving as District Governor and supporting causes such as the eradication of polio. District Governor Gaven Hurley and Assistant Governor Luisa Baars together with Club President Diana Hernández presented Michael with the Luisa Baars Award.

The keynote speaker was Dr. José Acevedo, a pulmonologist and critical care specialist who is the President/CEO of Finger Lakes Health. He gave a riveting presentation on the impact of the Affordable Health Care Law, better known as Obama Care. Besides making health insurance available to millions of uninsured Americans, the law will drive states to create insurance exchanges allowing individuals to choose the insurance that best meet their circumstances. The Law also insures that individuals cannot be denied insurance for pre-existing conditions.

Fourth Anniversary photos



Above: Tricia Cruz, Luisa Baars, Mark Reynolds, Paul Irving, Relton Roland, and Yveth Reynolds pose during the Fourth Anniversary Celebration.

Left: New members inducted: Deysi Reagan-Calderón, Idalia Chang, Merlita Snow, and Dr. Hector Flores were inducted during the Fourth Anniversary Celebration.

Photos, continued



Partial view of attendees at the Fourth Anniversary Celebration



President Diana, AG Luisa, Past DG Michael, and DG Gaven during the presentation of the Luisa Baars Award to Michael Leone

Luisa Baars Award

The Luisa Baars Award is given to individuals who have distinguished themselves for their leadership skills and service to the community. The first recipient was **Stuart Mitchell**, President/CEO of PathStone Corporation and an Honorary member of the club. Stuart has been guiding an organization that reaches out to the most vulnerable populations in the communities it serves. The second recipient was **Daisy-Rivera Algarín**, a true activist and dedicated public servant. Her efforts have resulted in numerous Latinas obtaining scholarships to further their education. **Father Lawrence Tracy**, who has served the Latino community as a Catholic priest for over 40 years was the third recipient of the award. And this year's recipient, Michael Leone, has been a Rotarian for many years living up to the ideal of Service Above Serve. Once more we want to say THANK YOU for your service, dedication, and inspiration.

More photos

Dr. José Acevedo (right) delivered an excellent presentation regarding the Affordable Health Care Law. He highlighted the high cost of providing healthcare to the uninsured/underinsured since many postpone visits to healthcare providers which in turn makes their conditions more difficult and costly to treat. The lack of access to prevention services is another factor contributing to the poor outcomes experienced by many. There are also disparities regarding the healthcare services and outcomes among minorities. The law will also help lower costs because healthcare providers will be paid to keep patients healthy.

Abraham Hernández (below) served as MC during the celebration. Over the years, Abe who is the President elect and Chair of the Fundraising Committee, has been the force behind the successful fundraising activities.

These activities have brought the necessary funds to undertake service projects locally and abroad. A major effort of the Rotary Foundation has been the eradication of polio. These efforts involving millions of dollars as well as countless hours of work by Rotarians all over the world to immunize children have resulted in that today there are only 3 countries where polio is endemic. These

countries are Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Nigeria. The club has contributed yearly to this effort.

To date six Latino students have been provided scholarships to help defray cost of a college education. Six junior high students have participated in the District Oratorical Contest, two of them reaching the final phase and placing within the top five finalists. One student was sent to Puerto Rico to participate in the Rotary Youth Leadership Academy, one student participated in the Young Entrepreneur Academy, and one student is scheduled to participate in the Rotary Youth Leadership Academy training to be held at RIT. The District has awarded a grant to fund a scholarship for a Latino student which will allow the club to provide four scholarships during the coming Rotary year.

The Literacy projects which help children and adults locally and children abroad constitute an important focus for the club. It is believed that Latino students need additional help to overcome the many obstacles they face in school. Ranging from language barriers to poverty and lack of parental support, students are at greater risk of dropping out of school at a young age. The lack of a proper education perpetuates the cycle of employment in low paying jobs, unemployment, and violence. By providing tutoring, reading materials, parental support, and school supplies, the club hopes to improve the outcomes for Latino students. Without Abe's efforts none of these projects would have been possible.



Daisy Rivera-Algarín (left) spoke at a regular club meeting on May 22. She is an Economic Development Marketing Specialist-Bilingual for the City of Rochester. She provides outreach, technical, and zoning support to small businesses. Daisy is part of the planning team for the North Clinton Avenue revitalization project.

Daisy was part of the Latinas Unidas (LU) Founding Team and the President of the organization for many years. Besides the networking activities carried out by LU, there is the Soy única, Soy Latina event that provides young Latinas the opportunity to learn about leadership and the importance of an education and the development of a sound mind in a sound body. The creation of the Scholarship Foundation for Latina Women is one of the many achievements of Daisy and the organization she steered for many years.

Daisy indicated that for any organization to succeed, it must remain focused and centered on its mission statement and strategic plan. That is what LU has done in its almost 20 years of existence. Another initiative of LU is the Reconocimiento Award which every year selects 4 Latinas to be recognized for their leadership, professional, and community service skills. Plans are under way to expand LU to other cities. The community owes a great debt of gratitude to Daisy for her vision and efforts to improve the quality of life of its members.

Photos and more photos



Charol Rios-Davis is the Chair of the Service Projects Committee. As such she has been very busy organizing projects such as the Three Kings day celebration, the Thanksgiving Food Baskets, donations to Ibero's Food pantry, and many others. She is pictured here holding the awards received at the District Conference. The Community Service Award was given for the Dance for Health event that featured Zumba and Yoga classes. A main contributor to the event was **Antonia Scott**, a Zumba instructor and member of the club. The club is very grateful to have Charol and Antonia as members and dedicated Rotarians. Their enthusiasm and energy is contagious.



The Club is very fortunate to have **Dr. Miriam Vázquez** (left) as one of its members. She is an educator with a passion for literacy. Over the years, she has organized numerous literacy projects that she carries out with great enthusiasm. She has even recruited members of her extended family to purchase and donate school supplies destined to Nicaragua and to migrant children in the Rochester area. She is holding the Literacy Award received by the club during the District Conference.

Luisa Baars (right) is holding two additional awards received by the club at the District Conference held in Lake Placid at the beginning of the month. The Conference was well attended and inspiring. Rotary is about giving back, about caring for the less fortunate, whether they are in our backyard or across the oceans. Thus when a club embarks on an international project it is living up to the Object of Rotary as well as to its surname, International. Since its inception, the club has been embarked in international projects. The award was received for the project at the Minatitlán Regional Hospital in Mexico whereby incubators and related equipment were provided with a matching grant.

The second award was for the Newsletter, *La Rotariana*. Clubs are encouraged to maintain its membership and others informed of its activity. One such means is the newsletter. Luisa is the editor. The club feels very honored for having received these awards. It also means that the club must maintain high standards of service.



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FUTURE EVENTS

1. May 31—Family Bowling Night (TBA)
2. June 10—Luis E. Ormaechea, Holiday Inn at 6:30 pm
3. June 30—Rochester Latino Rotary Club Leadership Exchange at the Escher's Home—1:00 pm
4. July 1, District Leadership Exchange at Ventosa Winery in Geneva

For additional information, visit:

www.latinorotary.com and
www.rotary7120.org

Planning meetings

Several planning meetings were held during May including a general club meeting and two board meetings. Among the issues discussed were the projects to be funded, the budget, contributions to the Rotary Foundation, and membership fees. The club has as a goal that every Rotarian donate at least a hundred dollars to the RF. In an effort to start the donation to the RF by each member, it was decided to **increase the membership to \$130.00 per year**. The \$20 additional dollars will be divided equally between the Polio Plus Campaign and the General Funds of the RF. As before, half the dues are due in June and the other half in December. The initial fee remains at \$15.

Board of Directors

Luisa Baars, Founder

Diana Hernández, President

Abraham Hernández, President-Elect/Fundraising Committee Chair

Roberto Burgos, First President/Club Administration Chair

Elisa DeJesús, Past-President/Foundation Committee Chair

Wim Baars, Treasurer

José Santana and Diana Irizarry, Secretaries

Miriam Vázquez, Literacy Committee Chair

Charol Ríos-Davis, Service Projects Committee Chair

Diana Irizarry, Oratorical Contest Chair

Raquel Pedraza, Sunshine Committee Chair

Luisa Baars, International Projects Committee Chair/Editor La Rotariana