

SPOKES

NEWSLETTER OF THE ROTARY CLUB OF HATTIESBURG



Club President, Sean Priebe with Miss Deep River, Mia Hall, and Martha Lee.

Upcoming

JUNE 7 HATTIESBURG HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

JUN 14 ANDY IMPASTATO—POLITICAL FORECAST & IMPACT TO HEALTH CARE INDUSTRY

MINUTES: MAY 10, 2016

President Sean Priebe presided over the meeting. Thanks to Ryan Kelly who gave the invocation and to Bill MacLauchlan who led us in the Pledge of Allegiance. Thanks to Kemi Simmons and James Mitchell who served as our greeters today.

Jaclyn Adams then introduced our guest. Eddie Merrell is a guest of Allen Anderson.

Sean reminded club members about RYLA nominations. School counselors have been contracted but Rotarians are encouraged to nominate a rising senior for this year's RYLA slot. So far one application has been received.

Sean also noted that the club has received a letter from the Extra Table thanking us for our partnership with them over the past two years.

The Bike-a-Thon is scheduled for September 24. Volunteer sign-up sheets will be circulated in the near future. That planning committee will meet today.

Jaclyn Adams then introduced today's guest speaker Mia Hall. Mia was Miss Hattiesburg in 2014 and is currently serving as Miss Deep River USA. She will compete in the Miss Mississippi Pageant in mid June. Mia has as her guest today her former director, Martha Lee.

The Miss America organization is the largest support of the Children's Miracle Network. The organization also gives women career opportunities and is the number one scholarship program for women in the world. Being involved in the organization has changed Mia's life in many positive ways. She says it is great to be involved in something much bigger than just herself.

Mia's personal platform is Hidden Hunger. She says there are 15.3 million children in America who are food insecure. Her uncle, a school teacher, discovered many years ago that some of the children in his school would not eat from Friday until they returned to school and were served breakfast on Monday morning. Mia is currently involved in Backpack Buddies here in the Hattiesburg area. They fill backpacks every Friday with food that the children can take home for the weekend.

Mia says there are six basic causes of child food insecurity. The American economy is still slowly recovering from the great depression. Teen pregnancy continues to be a problem in America which fuels food insecurity. She also notes that many Americans are not aware that there is a hunger problem in America. There has also been a large increase recently in food stamp fraud. Parents may be selling their food stamps for money and using the money to buy things other than food for the family. She also notes that some government programs that were thought to be helping have actually become a source of some of the problems. As an example, requiring fresh fruits and vegetables in government feeding programs results in the lack of non-perishable foods that can be eaten over a weekend. And finally, she says there is a lack of corporate support for programs that will help in the fight against Hidden Hunger.

In addition to causing deficiencies in a child's mental and physical growth, hunger creates anxiety, embarrassment and often can lead to crime. Additionally, education takes a hit because a hunger child is less likely to be able to learn.

Rotarians can help in this fight by raising awareness of the problem, donating food that can be used, donating time to help feed hungry children and by becoming a sponsor for the Backpack Buddies program or some other program that is fighting hunger.

Many thanks to Mia for her work and information and also for the beautiful performance of the song she will use as her talent in the Miss Mississippi pageant.

Minutes provided by:
Lamar Evans, Executive Secretary



Our Guests



Staci Cox is the Director of Marketing and Communication at United Way of Southeast Mississippi. After she received her masters in education, she began her work with Luckyday Citizenship Scholars Program. It was through her work with Luckyday that she became passionate about serving others and especially the Hattiesburg community. After working with Luckyday, she moved across campus to be a part of the Think Center, which is part of the Learning Enhancement Center. After working closely with students through Luckyday and faculty through the Think Center, Staci felt a need to get closer to the community.

Staci is the current president of the Parkhaven Neighborhood Association, a member of the Avenues Alliance, a Planning Committee member of Pinebelt Young Professionals, the coordinator of the children's ministry at Ekklesia, Community Action and Service Chair of PRAM and a member of the 2016 Class of Leadership Pinebelt. When asked how she felt about the new adventure in her life she said, "Serving within the Hattiesburg community has been a favorite pastime of my time for years. Having the opportunity to serve a place you love everyday, as a part of your job, is like a dream come true." She continues to say that she is most excited about entering a new environment, "Moving from higher education to non-profit will be an adjustment, but an exciting one nonetheless."

United Way of Southeast Mississippi is a non-profit organization that strives to make a positive impact in Forrest, Lamar and Perry counties. By providing funds to partnering agencies, United Way addresses community issues in four impact areas such as education, financial stability, health, and support services. United Way's mission is to improve lives by leading and mobilizing the caring power of Southeast Mississippi.

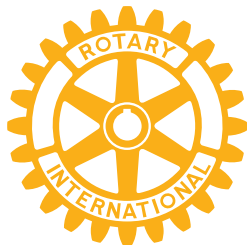
Elizabeth Winton currently serves as the Director of Volunteer Hattiesburg, a volunteer center under the United Way of Southeast Mississippi. Winton directs the organization's activities for the purpose of increasing volunteer engagements in the community and building nonprofit capacity for more effective volunteering.

A Hattiesburg resident, Winton graduated from the University of Southern Mississippi in May 2015 with a major in public relations and minors in communications studies and nonprofit studies.



Rotary

Club of Hattiesburg



2015-2016

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