

# Past Recipients

This annual Cadwallader Award is presented in honor of Charles N. Cadwallader who served as President of Lincoln Rotary Club 14, District Governor, and Director of Rotary International, as well as sponsored eleven Rotary Clubs in the District. The award is presented to a Rotarian in District 5650 who has made a monumental contribution in one or all of the avenues of Rotary service. The award is made possible by an endowed gift from Charles N. and Ruth Cadwallader.

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|------|---|------|--|
| 1963 | Elijah Leavitt   York   | 1993 | Paul F. Foster   Shenandoah                |
| 1964 | William W. Cook, Sr.   Beatrice                                   | 1994 | Rudolph E. Tomek   Humboldt                |
| 1966 | Al V. Sorensen   Omaha  | 1995 | David C. Livingston   Lincoln 14           |
| 1967 | Paul W. Hyland   Lincoln Northeast                                | 1996 | William R. Mann   Nebraska City            |
| 1968 | Ervin J. Schneider   Auburn                                       | 1997 | Robert L. Carlisle   Norfolk               |
| 1969 | Dr. Ben H. Greenburg   York<br>Dr. Donald J. Bucholz   Omaha West | 1998 | Dr. Ann Coyne   Omaha Suburban             |
| 1970 | Robert L. Voss   Fremont  | 1999 | Roger R. Ludemann   Lincoln 14             |
| 1971 | Bernard J. Klasek   Wilbur  | 2000 | William E. Ramsey   Omaha                  |
| 1972 | Ken Wortman   Aurora  | 2001 | Dr. George Lytton   Lincoln South          |
| 1973 | J.D. Anderson   Omaha   | 2002 | Dan Rose   Wayne                           |
| 1974 | Elmer E. Magee   Lincoln 14                                       | 2003 | Lyle Sapp   Omaha Suburban                 |
| 1975 | E.J. "Pat" Keim   Fremont   | 2004 | Mary Linn Sonnemaker   Bellevue            |
| 1976 | Vernon E. Fisher   Shenandoah                                     | 2005 | Nicolette "Nicki" S. Klein   Lincoln South |
| 1977 | Eugene J. Ely   Auburn  | 2006 | William Schmeeckle   Lincoln 14            |
| 1978 | Hugh L. Tinley   Omaha  | 2007 | J. Robert Perrin   Omaha Suburban          |
| 1979 | James M. Paxton   Omaha West                                      | 2008 | Joseph K. Roberts   Lincoln South          |
| 1980 | David A. Lemen   Council Bluffs                                   | 2009 | Joanne Peters   Omaha Suburban             |
| 1981 | Everett R. Jones   Beatrice                                       | 2010 | Robert Knox   Council Bluffs               |
| 1982 | Earl T. Luff   Lincoln 14   | 2011 | Harry Reyburn   Omaha Suburban             |
| 1983 | John Paustian   Lincoln Northeast                                 | 2012 | Ozzie Gilbertson   Lincoln East            |
| 1984 | Dr. Sol Kutler   Omaha Suburban<br>Walter E. Truex   Norfolk      | 2013 | Roxy Orr   Omaha Suburban                  |
| 1985 | I. Joseph Pemicone   Omaha  | 2014 | Dr. Thomas Cardwell   Lincoln South        |
| 1986 | Erwin H. Goldenstein   Lincoln 14                                 | 2015 | Dr. Charles Erickson   Lincoln East        |
| 1987 | Dr. Clarence Zimmer   Friend                                      | 2016 | Dorothy Zimmerman   Beatrice               |
| 1988 | H.W. "Bud" Henricksen   Fremont                                   | 2017 | Curt Peters   Omaha Suburban               |
| 1989 | Kermit R. Hansen   Omaha Suburban<br>Wayne O. Tanderup   Seward   | 2018 | Dr. John Herdman   Lincoln South           |
| 1990 | Larry McNichols   Omaha Suburban                                  | 2019 | Gretchen Bren   Omaha Downtown             |
| 1991 | Thomas E. Gouttierre   Omaha                                      | 2020 | Clay Ehlers   Lincoln South                |
| 1992 | Dr. Donald W. Miller   Lincoln 14                                 | 2021 | Jon and Bonnie Kruse   Seward              |
|      |   | 2022 | Robert Rapp   Omaha Morning                |
|      |   | 2023 | Rob Simmon   Glenwood                      |
|      |   | 2024 | Dr. Klaus Hartman   Lincoln 14             |



Rotary  
District 5650



presents the

2025 Cadwallader Award

**Blake & Kathy Collingsworth**

Lincoln Giving Spirits  
Rotary  
Evening Club



# 2025 Cadwallader Award

## Blake & Kathy Collingsworth

### Lincoln Giving Spirits Evening Rotary Club

The Collingsworths travel the United States as well as several other countries promoting water safety in their son's memory. They have collaborated with multiple Rotary Clubs globally.

#### CLUB SERVICE / VOCATIONAL SERVICE

Kathy and Blake Collingsworth began their Rotarian careers in 2011 as Honorary Members of the Merritt Island Breakfast Rotary Club in Merritt Island, FL. Blake joined the Lincoln East Rotary Club in 2012 where he served as President in 2016-2017. Kathy joined the Lincoln Rotary Club 14 in 2013.

In August of 2018 the Collingsworths founded the Lincoln Giving Spirits Evening Rotary Club with 22 members. Blake served as the 2018-2019 President of the Lincoln Giving Spirits Evening Rotary Club and is the current Foundation Chair. Kathy served as the 2019-2020 President and is currently serving as a Public Image Co-Chair. She has served as the primary Public Image Chair, Foundation Chair, Membership Chair and Secretary. They are always the first to volunteer for anything the Club needs and they continually support the Club by hosting events at their home and providing their facility space for Club meetings and fundraisers. Under their leadership, the Lincoln Giving Spirits Evening Rotary Club has doubled in members.

Both Blake and Kathy are active Rotary Foundation supporters and have been recognized as Paul Harris Society Members and Major Donors. They have both also received the Presidential Citation.

#### COMMUNITY SERVICE / INTERNATIONAL SERVICE / YOUTH SERVICE

Kathy and Blake Collingsworth experienced every parent's worst nightmare 16 years ago when they found their 2 year old son, Joshua, unconscious and unresponsive in their backyard pool. Three days later, they faced the most difficult day of their lives as they removed Joshua from life support.

They thought they had taken every precaution, but according to the CDC, drowning is the number one cause of unintentional death for children ages one to four, and the second leading cause of unintentional death for children ages one to fourteen. In the days after Joshua's passing, they made it their mission to change those statistics.

A month after Joshua passed, Blake and Kathy created the Joshua Collingsworth Memorial Foundation (JCMF). The goal was and still is, to serve as a catalyst to strengthen water safety awareness and create an early childhood educational program that empowers children to be safe in and around all bodies of water.



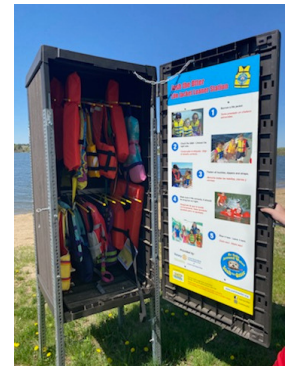
They do this in the following ways:

The Collingsworths created the Josh the Otter Water Safety and Awareness Program in 2008. The program is designed to teach young children about water safety through the use of a children's book written by Blake titled "Josh the Baby Otter". During fun, educational Josh the Otter events children listen to the book, recite the water pledge and sing the Josh the Otter safety song. Children frequently have the opportunity to meet Josh the Otter in person when volunteers wear the Josh the Otter costume. The book has been translated into 12 languages and over 600,000 books have been distributed globally. The program has been presented in classrooms, community centers, zoos, pools and childcare facilities around the world.

The Float 4 Life concept was developed through the collaboration of the Joshua Collingsworth Memorial Foundation (JCMF) and the YMCA of Lincoln, Nebraska in 2009. Together they implemented one of the first infant and toddler water training courses in the city. This is done through educational programs and by teaching children the lifesaving skill of flipping onto their back, floating (like an otter) and reaching for the side of the pool.

In 2019, JCMF celebrated the grand opening of the Float 4 Life National Training Center in Lincoln, Nebraska. The Float 4 Life Center combines a variety of physical and educational components of water safety through one-on-one float lessons and Josh the Otter water safety education. The Center also serves as the National Training Facility for instructors who want to learn water safety and floating techniques. The Center holds an average of 250 weekly lessons. In 2022, the Center partnered with the local Autism Family Network to teach water safety to children living with autism.

JCMF partnered with the Lincoln Giving Spirits Evening Rotary Club, the Lincoln East Rotary Club and the Nebraska Parks & Recreation Department several years ago to provide life jacket loaner stations on the beaches and boat docks of local lakes. Currently, life jacket loaner stations can be found at Pawnee Lake, Branched Oak Lake and Conestoga Lake. There are plans underway for more partnerships so more life jacket loaner stations can be installed at other Nebraska lakes.



#### WATER SAFETY FOR KIDS ROTARY ACTION GROUP

In collaboration with other Rotarians, Kathy and Blake are in the process of finalizing the Water Safety for Kids Rotary Action Group (RAG) Featuring Josh The Otter. This RAG will address drowning on a global level by using Josh The Otter as the centerpiece when providing educational programs, community engagement projects and advocacy efforts to significantly reduce drownings. Specific goals and action items include:

- Enhance global water safety awareness through campaigns and local partnerships.
- Increase access to water safety education via workshops and online platforms.
- Support community-based initiatives with resources and expertise.