

RYLA District 6420 Presenters 2024



Friday, May 3, 2024- "Let's Power Up!"

Carl & Dianna Cole have been working with youth and young adults for over four decades in the Greater Rockford and Freeport region through their non-profit organization, Sounds of Good News and the Young Eagles Success club youth character program. This year's workshop experience will focus on success tips that will inspire and empower the participants to embrace a "Movement for Improvement" on their new journey "Up = Ultimate Positivity". Topics will include: current challenges in education and society, attitude and altitude, choices and consequences, and unity and peace. Professor Carl Cole and his wife, Dianna, have received several regional and state community service awards as well as national recognition for their efforts in working with young adults!

Saturday, May 4, 2024- "Professionalism Doesn't Matter, Said No Employer Ever!"

Andrea Gibbs has spent 30 years in manufacturing & business-to-business marketing in Product Management & Marketing Communications. She has a Bachelor of Political Science degree and a master's degree in Business Administration. Andrea has taught at Rockford University as an adjunct professor and has also taught continuing education for General Electric, Collins Aerospace, and the Rockford Police Department. During this presentation, participants will learn to interact using good communication skills at home, school, and the workplace. Modern technology is also covered along with the do's and don'ts of using electronic devices today. Andrea loves to speak French, travel, and cook...she is always looking for a great pasta recipe! Ask her about the Wooden Spoon story, and she will know that you pay attention to the details!



Saturday, May 4, 2024- "Seventy-Two.Five"

Billy Willis has worked with teenagers for over 15 years, serving previously as a youth director. For the past 3 years, he and his wife, Katy, have traveled as public speakers, speaking at youth camps, conferences, and retreats. Billy has a passion to inspire and challenge teenagers to become dreamers and achievers in the face of adversity and to pursue lives of meaning and purpose. Billy enjoys the outdoors, playing sports, board games, drinking coffee, and watching Chicago sports teams...especially the Cubs and Bears! Tragically, too many teenagers waste their teenage years living and pursuing "things" that don't matter. During this presentation, Billy will challenge students to understand that they can pursue a purpose right now...right where they are. His presentation will discuss the concept of looking at life through using 72.5 and leaving a legacy of kindness, selflessness, and character.

Saturday, May 4, 2024- "Rotary Interact"

Gary Francque has had a career in law enforcement for 36 years and also served as the Chief of Police. His experience includes: community policing, criminal investigations, and youth and family service work. He received a Bachelor of Arts from Western Illinois University in Criminal Justice Administration and has been in public speaking for 30 years. Gary was also honored to present at the 2019 Rotary International Conference in Hamburg, Germany this past year. His public speaking venues include law enforcement training, community presentations, and Rotary presentations across the district. Gary lives by his life mantra- love one another through "service above self". His presentation will include information on Rotary's Interact clubs known world-wide whose purpose is to provide an opportunity for young people ages 12 to 18 to work together and develop leadership skills while discovering the power of helping others.





Saturday, May 4, 2024- "Rotary Youth Exchange"

Tom Brooks has spent many years working with youth exchange students from all over the world and served as the District Youth Exchange Outbound Coordinator from 2006 to 2012. He became the District Chairman in 2012 and is also a member of the Loves Park Rotary Club. Tom served as Club President in 2003 and is the current club President. He also has served on the Board of the Central States Rotary Youth Exchange Multi District Committee. Tom also proudly served as the Governor of District 6420 for 2020-2021. Tom had a 23 year career in marketing and advertising and joined the Blackhawk Area Council of the Boy Scouts of America as a district executive and retired from scouting after 14 years. During his presentation, Tom will share the importance of the youth exchange program and the positive outcomes of promoting peace and celebrating our cultural differences throughout the world.

Saturday, May 4, 2024- "Rotary Showcase- Polio Eradication & The Iron Lung"

Richard (Bud) Phillis, M.D. did his undergraduate study at St. Ambrose College in Davenport, Iowa, prior to entering medical school at the University of Illinois College of Medicine in Chicago. He had 4 years of post medical school training at City Hospital in St. Louis, Missouri and practiced Internal Medicine in Rock Island and Moline Illinois from 1964 to 2000. Bud joined Rotary in 1983 and has been passionate about "Service Above Self", the Rotary motto. As a Polio survivor, Bud has been involved with Polio eradication by helping raise money for eradication of the disease. For the past 6 years, he has presented on water filtration providing clean water to schools in the area of Nairobi, Kenya. Locally, Bud started the first Community Health Clinic in the Quad City area in the 1980's. He was also instrumental in starting the Quad City Health Initiative, an organization that accesses health needs in the Quad City area.



Sunday, May 5, 2024- "Seize the Day...the Time is Now to Make a Difference!"

Bill Johnson has been in public speaking for 30 years, has a Bachelor's Degree in Communications, and also has a Master's Degree in Youth Studies from Loyola University in Chicago. He has also been named as Volunteer of the Year for the Northeastern Special Olympics and Most Inspirational Teacher multiple years through Western Illinois University. Bill will focus on showing youth how they can make a difference in the world. He will show that through service to others, you will find meaning and purpose in life! Bill has also been a hospice Chaplain volunteer, Special Olympics Volunteer, and he has spent 20 years in the music industry (A&M and CBS Records) promoting music and artists to radio stations in the Midwest. He has worked with artists such as U2, Ozzy Osbourne, Michael Jackson, the Red Hot Chili Peppers, and Metallica.