



DISTRICT GOVERNOR Tom Simon

March 2026 ♦ NO. 9

## Claim this Rotary Peace Pole for your Community!

This Peace Pole was presented to District 5520 during the **October Rotary Zone Institute in Albuquerque** as a gift for hosting the Institute. I received it as District Governor. Since then, it has traveled with me to most of my official club visits and inspired conversations about Rotary's role in creating a more peaceful world, dating back to June 26th, 1945, when Rotarians participated in the **founding of the United Nations**. This was months before the end of World War 2, but Rotarians had helped build a consensus around the idea of the United Nations for at least a year prior to its founding, knowing that the war would end and we must be part of the solution to win the peace.

Rotarians are warriors for peace every time we participate in a service project both locally and internationally. International projects are engines of peace because they teach us to work with our Rotarian partners and community beneficiaries across national and cultural boundaries. **Peace poles are being installed in communities around the world to demonstrate Rotary's ongoing commitment to peace.**

Now, you have an opportunity to be selected by the Awards Committee install this **Peace Pole in your community**. Here's what you need to do: Provide documentation that you have permission to place the Peace Pole in a public space. Acceptable documentation includes a letter from the town mayor, city manager, or other appropriate public official, specifying the approved location for installation. The pole will be awarded during the District Conference & Celebration in Santa Fe during the Peace Program on Friday morning, April 10th at the Hilton Hotel in Santa Fe.

**Please submit your documentation to me at [tomrsimon@gmail.com](mailto:tomrsimon@gmail.com)**

Tom Simon, District Governor



“May Peace Prevail on Earth.”

This is the foundational message on all Peace Poles and the heart of the movement. It appears in multiple languages on each pole and is treated as both a prayer and a global intention

**Rotary**  
District 5520



**RIO GRANDE  
PELS**



# **PRESIDENT ELECT LEARNING SEMINAR**

Mar. 13, 2026 1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. [Mountain Daylight Time](#) 📅

Dear Presidents-elect,

**Registration is now open for this year's Presidents-Elect Leadership Seminar (PELS), March 13–14 at the Sheraton Uptown in Albuquerque!**

PELS is required for all Presidents-elect and will give you the tools, inspiration, and connections to lead with confidence.

Your club officers and board members are also welcome to attend. Their presence can be especially valuable as you begin planning for the year ahead. Working together at PELS helps ensure your leadership team is ready, aligned, and energized to make the most of the opportunities and challenges that come with a new Rotary year.

Please feel free to share the registration link below with your leadership team if they are interested in participating.

Register soon to reserve your spot and take the first step in preparing for an impactful year of service.

**Register by Jan 15th for \$30 savings!** Register at web site below.

Warm regards,



**Jeff Weinrach**, District Governor 2026-2027  
(505) 400-1403    [Jweinrach5520@nmia.com](mailto:Jweinrach5520@nmia.com)



**Jen Dresser**, District Learning Facilitator  
484-983-5514    [jendresser.rotary@gmail.com](mailto:jendresser.rotary@gmail.com)



P.S. Save the Dates (all Saturdays, 9–11 AM):

Jan 17 – Pre-PELS I (required for Presidents-Elect; registration opening soon)

Jan 31 – Be A Vibrant Club Workshop (registration opening soon)

Feb 21 – Pre-PELS II (required for Presidents-Elect; registration opening soon)

<https://rotary5520.org/events/president-elect-training/>

# JOIN US IN SANTA FE!

## DISTRICT CONFERENCE

APRIL 9-11, 2026

The Hilton Santa Fe Historic Plaza

**Hilton Santa Fe Hotel**

*Meet fellow Rotarians from across  
District 5520 for an inspiring  
weekend of leadership and  
comraderie*

*See you in Santa Fe!*



**Begin planning your vacation to Santa Fe today, by registering for the Rotary District Conference & Celebration.**

Early Bird Registration starts now and goes through the end of February. Registration begins here:

<https://rotary5520.org/events/2025-26-district-conference/>

Prepare to be inspired by speakers such as pioneering thought leader **Raj Sisodia**, who has profoundly reshaped our understanding of the role of business in society, especially when managed by thoughtful and passionate Rotarians. We will hear from **Alan Mallory**, an international speaker, author, and performance coach known for his engaging storytelling and leadership strategies. He is a world record-holding mountaineer who set a record with his family on Mount Everest in 2008.

You will have opportunities to engage with fellow Rotarians from all parts of our District and join Santa Fe Rotarians for **home hospitality on Thursday evening**.

We'll celebrate Youth Exchange, RYLA and the Next Generation during Saturday's youth programs. We'll celebrate the accomplishments of Rotarians throughout the District at Friday's All Club Luncheon and Saturday Night's Awards Gala.

Space is limited so don't wait to register.

Tom Simon, District Governor



DG Tom

# RYLA Update



**Erin Connelly**  
Rotary District 5520  
RYLA Chair  
505-660-1825

[econnelly.rotary@outlook.com](mailto:econnelly.rotary@outlook.com)

## Campers, Clubs and Counselors .....Oh my!

**APPLICATION** (Campers, Outreach and Recruitment)

Online and available at <https://www.IsMyRotaryClub.org/App/?ID=358>

This link is also posted on our RYLA webpage

( <https://rotary5520.org/page/rotary-youth-leadership-award> )

On the RYLA webpage, click on 'Join The Camp-Apply) Here' at the top of the page.

Each applicant will receive an auto-response email with additional information.

GOAL : 160 campers Stat: 17 applications

Clubs - Consider sponsoring

**CAMPER COMMITMENT FORM**

Clubs sponsoring students, please submit a [Camper Commitment Form](#) and remit

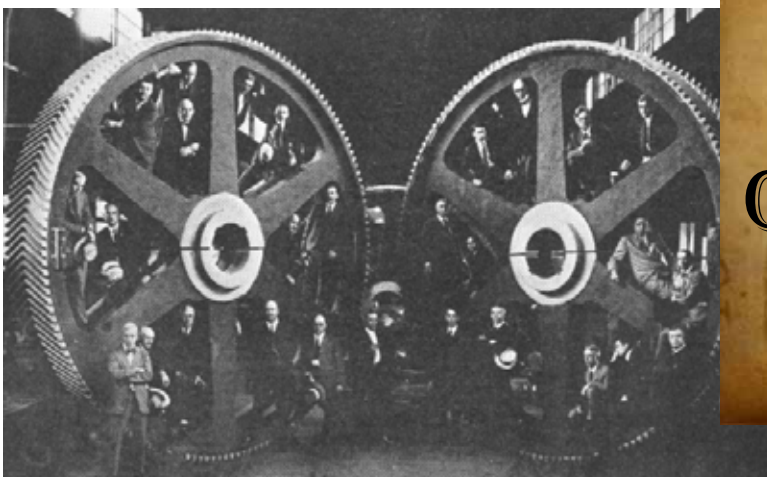
**SPONSORSHIP FUNDS TO RYLA FOUNDATION** as instructed on the form if you have not already done so.

GOALS: 50 clubs, 160 sponsorships. Stas: 14 clubs, 79 sponsorships

**COUNSELORS** - We need you or someone you know who would be a great counselor

Contact Boys Camp: Joe Gudenrath, [jtgudenrath@gmail.com](mailto:jtgudenrath@gmail.com). Girls Camp: Jill Cook, [jillcook4910@gmail.com](mailto:jillcook4910@gmail.com)

GOAL: 20 each Stat: 10 each



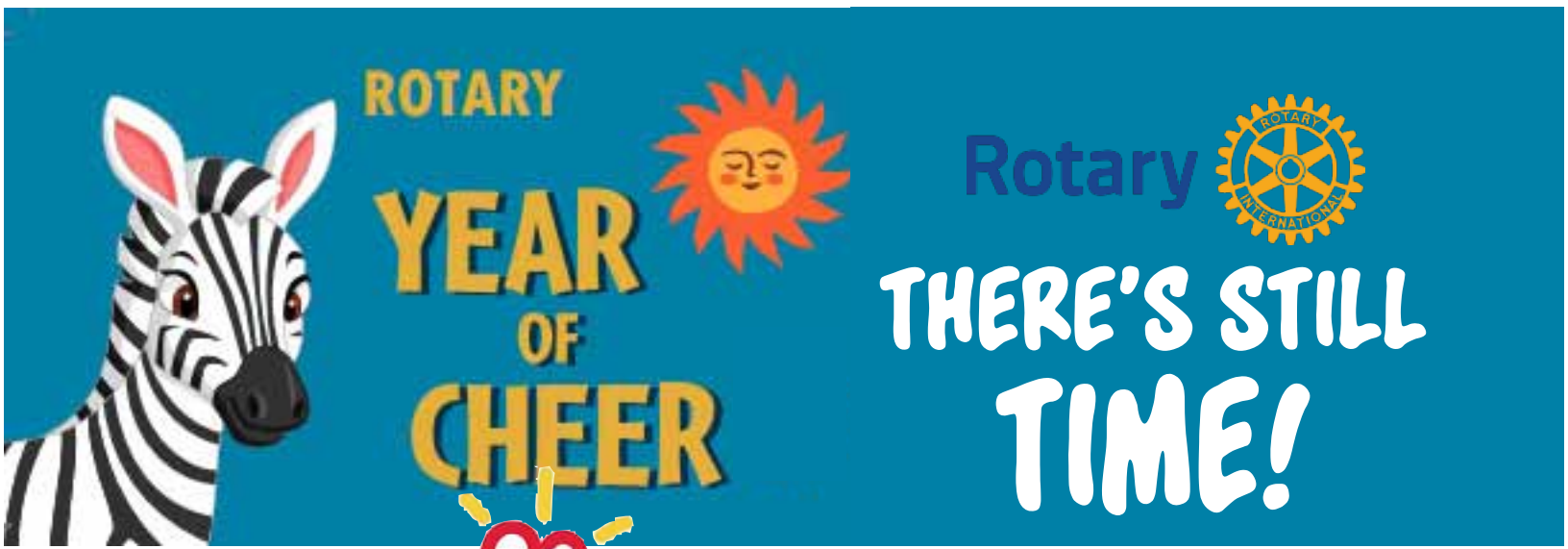
Rotary 

## OUR HISTORY

From the  
Rotary Global History Fellowship  
<https://rghf.org>



Members of the **Rotary Club of Wooster, Ohio**, met recently at the iron foundry of one of the members and posed for this picture. The "Rotary" wheels are sixteen feet in diameter, weigh twenty-seven tons each, and were made for a large tin works in India. Receiving its charter in March, 1921, the Wooster Club members had a great time talking about how they are going to wear such a large Rotary pin in India.



**El Paso Children's**  
HOSPITAL



**CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL**

# The Rotary Year of Cheer Small Acts. Big Meaning

The Year of Cheer is a District 5520 supported, club-specific year-long effort to bring cheer and hope to the young patients of El Paso Children's Hospital and UNM Children's Hospital.

Children's hospitals have a "Donation Closet" meant to be filled with toys, stuffed animals, games, craft kits, and the like. However, it is reported that these supplies are quickly depleted after the holiday rush of generosity and gift giving.

The Year of Cheer initiative focuses on providing hospital staff with items they need to soften the pain and fears children face during these serious health challenges. Adding joy to birthdays or celebrating special milestones brings an extra touch of care to these young patients, and provides comfort to their families as well.

We are grateful for the support of current DG Tom Simon – a true champion for this cause. When Rotarians come together, small acts of kindness become moments of joy for children who need them most — and that's something worth being part of. Thank you for jumping in, adding a toy, and brightening a child's day.

\* QR Code will take you to both hospitals and will allow you to donate money or to buy gifts.



**Interested in hosting a toy drive, but don't know where to start?** Reach out to any of these District Year of Cheer Representatives:

Alice Mehlberg, Co-Chair: [amehlberg@yahoo.com](mailto:amehlberg@yahoo.com)

Berdel Boulanger, Co-Chair: [berdelboulanger@gmail.com](mailto:berdelboulanger@gmail.com)

Evelyn Bryant, Logistics Coordinator: [bryantevelyn49@gmail.com](mailto:bryantevelyn49@gmail.com)

Fred Bryant, Jack-of-all-Trades and Master of Many: [fredbryant300@gmail.com](mailto:fredbryant300@gmail.com)

Rachelle Ford, Social Media and Communications: [rachellecford@gmail.com](mailto:rachellecford@gmail.com)

Geneva Van Matre, Southern Region lead contact: [ggvm62@gmail.com](mailto:ggvm62@gmail.com)



To Highlight your club's impact on the community!

**Hello Public Image Chairs, Club Presidents and District 5520 Leaders,**

I'm excited to share that we've launched the District 5520 Story Bank at [rotary5520.org/stories](http://rotary5520.org/stories) - a showcase of the incredible work happening across our clubs in the district.

To make this valuable for everyone - we need YOUR club's stories :)

**Why submit your stories?**

- Share your success District website and social media.
- Use the stories on the site to show people the huge impact Rotary has in the community
- Get community service ideas for your club.

**How to submit:**

Scroll to the bottom of the district homepage at [rotary5520.org](http://rotary5520.org) and click "Share a Story" or go directly to the form below. The form takes about 10 minutes and asks for:

**Project details and impact**

- A photo
- A memorable moment or quote
- Contact information
- What makes a good story?



**The form includes:**

- Recent projects (last 6-12 months)
- Measurable impact (people served, funds raised, lives changed)
- Community partnerships
- Unique approaches to service



Every story submitted gets reviewed and published within a week. The best stories also get featured on my LinkedIn (5K+ connections) and in district communications.

**For questions, please email me. Thank you for all you do!**

**Meredith Eisenberg**

District 5520 Public Image Chair  
[meredith@mereditheisenberg.com](mailto:meredith@mereditheisenberg.com)

Confused? It's simple! I think

Put your club's impact on the community on stories for the world to see, and

Put your club activities, like socials, new members, speakers on Facebook for Rotary to see.

Get your club activities on the District Facebook page so we can see all that our District is doing!



CLICK THE FACEBOOK LOGO TO SEE ALL THE OTHER GREAT THINGS GOING ON IN OUR DISTRICT!

GET A FACEBOOK PAGE AND JOIN IN!

## EXAMPLES OF STORIES POST

### Record-Breaking “Pack the Bus”: Ruidoso Rotary and Food 4 Kids Ensure No Child Goes Hungry During Winter Break

On a Saturday morning outside Albertsons grocery store in Ruidoso, the Ruidoso community showed up in force—delivering a record-breaking \$6,000 in monetary and food donations to ensure Lincoln County children wouldn't go hungry during winter break.

The Rotary Club of Ruidoso partnered with Food 4 Kids for their annual “Pack the Bus” fundraiser, collecting food items that would be packed into backpacks and delivered to families before schools closed for the holidays.



### Deming Rotary Launches Vial of Life Program to Protect Vulnerable Residents

When Roselva Zuniga spoke at a Deming Rotary Club meeting about a simple program that could save lives, the club listened. Now, thanks to her initiative and a partnership with Deming's first responders, the Vial of Life program is rolling out across the city to protect homebound and vulnerable residents



## EXAMPLES OF FACEBOOK POST

Dennece Knight from the El Paso Children's Garden project recently gave the **Rotary Club of West El Paso** a follow-up presentation about the economic impact to the community and social/educational impact of the proposed Garden to El Paso and the Las Cruces area. It will be a fantastic and totally unique regional destination attraction. State of the art design, management and execution.

**What an amazing endeavor!**



Our District Governor Tom Simon visited the **Rotary Club of Truth or Consequences** Tuesday! He inspired us to serve more, invite more, and unite more.



“Visibility isn't vanity; it's fuel. When people see service in action, they want to join it.”

# ROTARY LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE RLI

Rotary  
District 5520



- 🕒 March 20-21, 2026
- 📍 **French's** - 1111 University Blvd NE, ABQ
- 🏨 **Hotel on own** - suggested: Embassy Suites nearby

## WHY ATTEND RLI

- ✓ Leadership
- ✓ Education
- ✓ Skill Building
- ✓ Networking
- ✓ Collaboration
- ✓ Engagement

Rotary Leadership Institute (RLI) offers dynamic training that builds leadership skills, deepens Rotary knowledge, and connects members across clubs. Participants gain practical tools, fresh ideas, and lasting relationships. Attending RLI empowers Rotarians to strengthen their clubs, expand impact, and grow personally and professionally within Rotary.

### Dr. Carla Spaniel

District 5520 RLI Chair  
drcarloarec@gmail.com  
(575) 808-0708

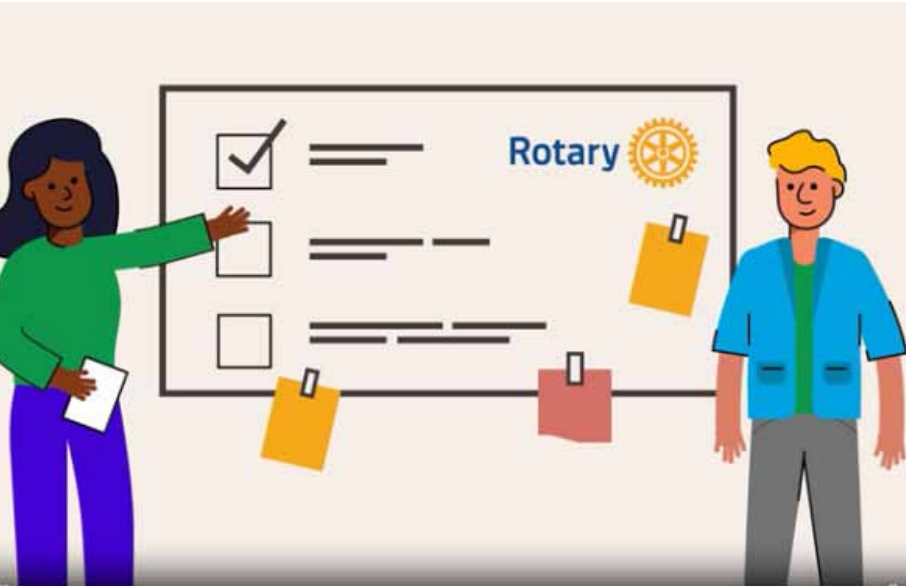


**Price: \$40**

Includes snacks, drinks both days and lunch on Saturday

February 2026

Ideas for strengthening membership



## Why creating new clubs matters

If we want to expand Rotary’s reach, building new clubs is important. But it’s also essential to assess the needs of the community first. Kelly Willman recognized potential Rotarians among her colleagues at AtlantiCare Regional Medical Center in New Jersey, USA, but she knew that many health care professionals have inflexible schedules. Rather than trying to bring these prospective members to Rotary, she decided to bring Rotary to them. To do so, [Willman established the Somers Point Healthcare satellite club of the Rotary Club of Somers Point.](#)

Whether it’s a satellite club or a more traditional one, you have many options that could suit the needs of its prospective members. Explore flexible alternatives for starting clubs:

[Club flexibility page](#)

[Understanding Satellite Clubs \(video download\)](#)

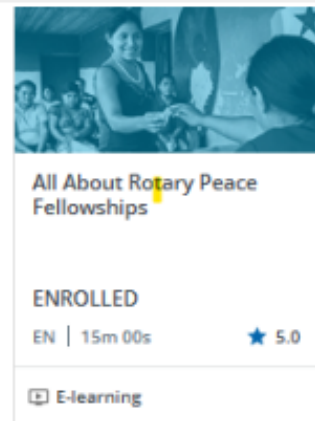
[Building New Clubs Using Innovative Club Models \(video download\)](#)



## Featured course

Complete the **All About Rotary Peace Fellowships** course to learn about the flagship program of The Rotary Foundation, which equips peace and development leaders with advanced knowledge and skills to become effective catalysts for peace.

In 2026, with the addition of the new peace center at Symbiosis International University in Pune, India, up to 170 fellowships will be awarded, up from 130 previously. [Applications are accepted online](#) annually from 1 February to 15 May. Selected fellows will start their studies in 2027.



[CLICK HERE](#)

To learn more about the Rotary Learning Center

[CLICK HERE](#)

**Clean water and sanitation is a human right.** When people, especially children, have access to clean water, sanitation, and hygiene, they lead healthier and more successful lives. We don't just build wells and walk away. Rotary members integrate water, sanitation, and hygiene into education projects. When children learn about disease transmission and practice good hygiene, they miss less school. And they can take those lessons home to their families, expanding our impact.



**Rotary**  **Youth Exchange**



Inbound Exchange Students and District Youth Exchange Committee members at the Winter Conference in Tulsa, OK, January 2026.

**Rotary Club of West El Paso serves up Root Beer Floats!**

Several loving members of the Rotary Club of West El Paso made root beer floats at a Valentine's Day party for residents at the Texas State Veterans Home in El Paso on February 12.

It's our annual way of honoring their service to America and their long lives. Residents and our club members were entertained by a wonderful live performance of lots of Frank Sinatra songs! Everyone had a ball and lots of joyful synergy abounded! Thanks to everyone who attended from the club.





Inbound Exchange Students and District Youth Exchange Committee members at the Winter Conference in Tulsa, OK, January 2026.

**PUT THIS on YOUR CALENDAR!**

**EPIC DAY OF SERVICE**  
DO MORE GOOD

**May 16, 2026**  
[epicdayofservice.org](https://epicdayofservice.org)

Rotary 

**LEAD**

A Rotary Fellowship

**Fellowship  
Spotlight**

<https://rlead.org/>

Rotary  A Rotary Fellowship of Leadership Education and Development

We believe in a world where **Rotarians and Rotaractors** have the leadership skills and knowledge to create positive change in their local and global communities.

Together, we enhance the leadership capacity of Rotarians and Rotaractors by providing education and connecting like-minded leaders through digital resources and leadership events.



**No. 46 – February 1, 2026**

*1 minute to discover Rotary news*

## **The Rotary International Forum on the Future of International Organizations**

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We invite you to take part in the Rotary International Forum on the Future of International Organizations on March 13 and 14, 2026, at UNESCO House in Paris.

Hundreds of participants from some twenty different countries have already registered.

In a world in upheaval due to geopolitical, health, climate and social crises, international cooperation has never been so crucial... and so precarious.

Peace is not decreed: it is built through encounters, mutual understanding, and collective action.

This World Forum will bring together diplomats, institutional leaders, researchers, NGOs, young leaders, entrepreneurs and Rotarians from all over the world to reflect together on a central question: how can we reimagine multilateralism in the service of peace, health and education?

The discussions will focus on four themes: culture, peace and education with UNESCO; global health and crisis preparedness with WHO; youth and innovation with UNICEF; and the future of multilateralism and the challenge of legitimacy.

A day of debate, proposals and commitments, culminating in the presentation of a White Paper to the major international organizations.

