



# THE YUCCA Rotary



DISTRICT GOVERNOR Tom Simon

May 2026 ♦ NO. 11



## District Conference Santa Fe is in the Books!

“Fun, high-quality events...”

“This was amazing! Good job, an awesome experience!”

“Opportunities to connect...”

“Presenters were outstanding and the fellowship was great. I got to meet new people from other cities who all made me feel welcome as a new Rotarian.”

“Much more than I could have ever asked for. Truly life changing.”

“Great presentations and keynotes...”

“Excellent speakers, workshops, recognition of many people in the District”

“It was fun!”

“Stellar entertainment, the best speakers, breakout sessions, well organized.”

“Best I’ve attended and I’ve been to many!”

These are samples of the feedback we received from the Rotary District Conference that took place in Santa Fe in April. I know that it can be burdensome and expensive to travel to a Rotary event, which is why every event that we as a District ask you to attend must provide something more than programming. It must provide an opportunity for connection, inspiration and lasting impact that you would never receive through a virtual meeting. **We are committed** to always making the in-person event worth your time and money



Alan Mallory: Facing our “Everest.”

Raj Sisodia:  
“Every great purpose is a healing purpose.”





# The Power of Showing Up: **Rotary Events That Inspire**

Rotary International Directory **Wyn Spiller** said it so well in her recent video message



A student from Lightning Boy Foundation performs the Hoop Dance during opening ceremonies at the 2026 District Conference & Celebration.

**Here are some outstanding opportunities for Rotarians of District 5520 to show up for each other and for yourself, online and in person:**

- June 6, 2026 Club Officer Training for 2026-27 leaders. Online.  
<https://convention.rotary.org/en-us/>
- June 13-17, 2026 Rotary International Convention, Taipei, Taiwan  
<https://convention.rotary.org/en-us/>
- June 27, 2026 District Governor's Installation for Jeff Weinrach, Albuquerque, NM  
<https://rotary5520.org/events/rotary-district-5520-installation-and-celebration/>
- August 21 -22, 2026 International Project Fair in Juarez, Mexico  
<https://rotary5520.org/events/rotary-district-5520-installation-and-celebration/>
- September 3-5, 2026 Zone Institute, Pheonix, AZ  
<https://www.zoneinstitute.org/>

**Tom Simon, District Governor**



# April 16-17, 2027

Home Hospitality is always a lot of fun! Vic (far right) and Joni (center) were kind enough to host Laura Gonzalez, me and Mike Garretson. Laura's husband, Rey, took the photo. Thank you for a great evening of good fellowship and a great dinner.



DG Tom giving Donette Wagner recognition for all her dedicated years of service to the District. Sorry to see you go, Donnette.



Folks, the District Conference would not have been a success without these two hard working ladies. District Executive Secretary Donette Wagner and District Conference Chair, Carolyn Moore. Thank you!



Congratulations to Katie Williams for receiving the "Service Above Self" award from DG Tom!

“

What could be more symbolic of Rotary than a great symphony orchestra, bringing together in perfect harmony people from many different countries, nationalities, races, creeds, and cultures, representing many specialized talents but each playing a different note on a different instrument, and each essential for the perfection of the whole?

— Address to 1956 Rotary Convention, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA

”



May is designated as Youth Service Month in the Rotary world, a dedicated time to celebrate and showcase the impact of over 350,000 young leaders involved in Rotary programs worldwide. It focuses on empowering the next generation through service, leadership, and international understanding.

**Key Rotary Youth Programs Focused on in May:**

**Interact:** Service clubs for youth ages 12-18 (often listed as 14-18) that promote leadership and community service.

**Rotaract:** Clubs for young adults (18-30+) that foster leadership, professional development, and international service.

**Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA):** Intensive training programs for young leaders to build skills and confidence.

**Rotary Youth Exchange (RYE):** A program fostering international peace by sending students abroad and hosting international students.

**EarlyAct:** A service club for elementary students (ages 5-13) that promotes caring and respect.

**How Rotary Clubs Celebrate:**

**Mentorship:** Rotarians mentor and guide young leaders.

**Joint Projects:** Collaborating with Interact and Rotaract members on local, community, or international service projects.

**Recognition:** Highlighting the accomplishments of young leaders through club events and social media.

**Support:** Encouraging clubs to sponsor participants for RYLA or RYE.

Youth Service Month underscores that investing in young people is essential to Rotary's mission of creating lasting change in communities/



**What this theme means**

Rotary International President-elect **Olayinka H. Babalola** announced Create Lasting Impact at the International Assembly in Orlando. The message calls on members to:

- Make clubs more welcoming and inclusive
- Carry out projects that produce measurable, sustainable change
- Let Rotary transform us personally, not just the communities we serve
- Focus on long-term impact rather than short-term activity

**Year of Cheer!!**

**Now on Facebook**

The purpose of this page is to collaborate together, share ideas, and celebrate the good work of Rotarians across District 5520 as we support children and families in our region.

**Like and share as we grow this page and this project together!**



Follow us on Social Media  
**Rotary District 5520 Year of Cheer**  
 Supporting El Paso and UNM Children's Hospitals

Celebrating successes, sharing ideas, and sending requests to Rotarians and friends as we support hospitalized children and their families.  
*Like and share as we grow this page and this project together!*

Questions & stories to share:  
 email [rachellecford@gmail.com](mailto:rachellecford@gmail.com)




# RYLA Update



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

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

## DEADLINES!



While there is flexibility with RYLA deadlines, certain dates - like providing final attendance numbers to Manzano Mountain Retreat - are fixed. Application and camper commitment forms (along with sponsorship funds) are still being accepted!

### APPLICATION (Campers, Counselors/Camp Administration)

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

The application 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: 90 applications

### Clubs - Consider sponsoring

Do you need assistance with outreach and recruitment?

### 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: 25 clubs, 96 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: 12 each



## Erin visits Ruidoso!

The Rotary Club of Ruidoso is proud to continue investing in youth leadership in our community.

On Tuesday at K-Bob's, we welcomed **Erin Connelly**, President-Elect of the Rotary Club of Santa Fe and Chair of Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA) for Rotary District 5520.

A huge thank-you to Erin for driving down to share her passion for RYLA in person—and for bringing her mom along to share in the day!

# CONFERENCE SNAPSHOTS!



Deborah & Tom Simon



Carolyn Moore is recognized by DG Tom Simon for chairing the conference.



Deborah Simon & Kerry Quinn



Speaker Raj Sisodia,  
Conscious Capitalism



Alan Mallory



Alan Mallory wowing us  
with his electric violin



DG Tom Simon thanks Mistress  
of Ceremonies Terry Strle

# District Conference Student Exchange Talent Show!



THE  
*Party Guy*



Once again... **Rotary Del Sol** was recognized at the Rotary District 5520 conference as the “**fun club**” because ...well... nobody ever leaves our meetings without a full heart and a smile on their face



Epic Day of Service is the third Saturday in **May 16**.

<https://www.epicdayofservice.org/>

RYLA student applications are due to the RYLA Chair by **May 30**.

Preliminary District Grant applications accepted **May 1 through June 1**

Club Officers should plan to attend Club Leadership Assembly on **June 6**.

<https://rotary5520.org/event/club-officer-training-for-rotary-2026-27-leaders/>



## Rotary Club of Carlsbad

We are proud to recognize PR Leyva 8th grade student **Paisley Lucas** for her outstanding achievement in winning the District Rotary 4 Question Essay Contest!

Paisley's hard work, creativity, and dedication to excellence truly set her apart. This accomplishment is a reflection of her commitment to learning and her ability to express thoughtful ideas through writing.

We are incredibly proud of Paisley for representing our school so well. Congratulations on this well-deserved honor—we can't wait to see all you accomplish in the future! Thank you to **Ekta Bhakta** for her support to our students and **Mrs. Ruiz** for being a great Sponsor for our Rotary Interact Club

<https://www.epicdayofservice.org/>

## Ruidoso Rotary Serves 700 Residents, Raises Nearly \$13,000 for Scholarships in 51st Year of Enchilada Dinner



**Rotary** 

# OUR HISTORY

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




Paul becomes a founding member of the Prairie Club of Chicago. On one of the club's early hikes a beautiful young woman from Edinburgh, Scotland points out a tear in his jacket and offers to fix it. Jean Thomson and Paul Harris were married several months later. In two years he bought her a large home and they named their home after a road in Edinburg, "Comely Bank." There they started their life long friendship garden and entertained guests from around the world.

**100%** Congratulations to the Rotary Club of East El Paso and President Kevin Long for becoming a "100% Paul Harris Fellow Club"!

**Rotary**   
Club of Albuquerque  
Metro

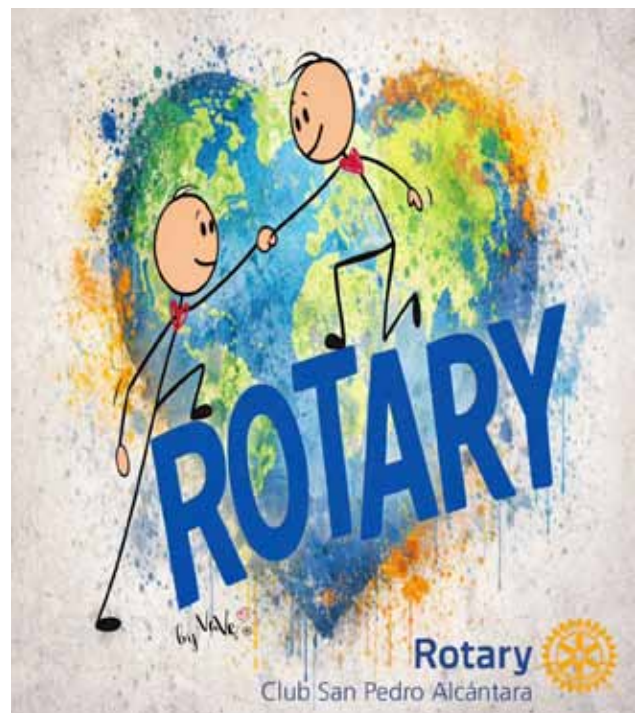
presents

*\$1.00 from every  
pint purchased  
goes to Rotary's  
Polio Plus campaign*



**pints**  
for  
**POLIO**

Thursday, MAY 7th, 2026, 5:30pm  
Come have a pint after work,  
then hang out for Nerd Nite later  
hosted by Santa Fe Brewing Co. at Green Jeans



Thank you for the graphic, Club San Pedro Alcántara. Just in case you are in the neighborhood, Rotary Club San Pedro Alcántara meets at Avenida Calderón de la Barca, Magna Café, 29660 San Pedro de Alcántara, Málaga, Spain



Support the businesses that support District 5520 Programs



# QUALITY LAWN CARE

We offer comprehensive lawn and yard maintenance including: Mowing, Aerating, Power raking, Trimming, Yard cleanup, Fertilizaion, Weeding, and more!

Rotary Member:

**Vivian Hairston**

Rotary Club:

**Albuquerque Del Norte**

**505-836-4000**

abqqualitylawncare@msn.com

www.qualitylawncareabq.com

5500 Esperanza Dr. NW

Albuquerque, NM 87105



<https://business.rotary5520.org/businesses>

**Note** to those Rotarians stepping up to take responsibility to lead their clubs and to those taking new roles in running the District.

Thanks to the men and women that stepped up to lead their clubs next Rotary year. It always reminds me of the famous "help wanted" ad attributed to Ernest Shackleton, Antarctica explorer. It takes grit to step up just like it did to answer this ad.

Men wanted for hazardous journey, low wages, bitter cold, long hours of complete darkness, safe return doubtful. Honour and recognition in event of success.  
- Ernest Shackleton.

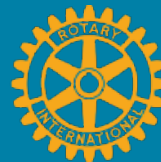
\* Even though the mission failed — they never even set foot on the Antarctic continent — the survival story is unmatched. Shackleton's leadership, optimism, and refusal to lose a single man turned disaster into one of the greatest rescue stories ever recorded. BE A LEADER LIKE SHACKLETON!



ROTARY  
YEAR  
OF  
CHEER



Rotary



THOUGHT THE YEAR OF CHEER WAS WRAPPING UP?

**NOT A CHANCE!**

Over **4,300 toys** have been delivered!  
Hold Onto Your Stripes... **We're Not Done Yet!**

**We're kicking the dazzle into high gear!**

The toy drive is rolling right into the next Rotary year under District Governor Jeff Weinrich.

That means more smiles , more laughter, more “—*that made my whole day*” moments for children and families at our Miracle Network hospitals.

**Because let's be honest—**

once you've seen what one small toy can do... **you don't stop.**

So keep those Zebra Drop Zones stocked, keep the momentum going, and let's make this next year even bigger, brighter, and bolder.



**THE DAZZLE LIVES ON—AND IT'S JUST GETTING STARTED.**

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: [berdel.boulanger@gmail.com](mailto:berdel.boulanger@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)





ROTARY CLUB OF SANTA FE PRESENTS

# Art in Bloom

AN EVENING WITH

## BILL BARRETT

DISTINGUISHED ARTIST OF THE YEAR 2026



MEET BILL BARRETT  
& DEBORA BARRETT



ARTIST REMARKS  
& CONVERSATION



GUIDED PREVIEW OF THE  
FUTURE CHILDREN'S  
DISCOVERY GARDEN



HOR D'OEUVRES STATION  
& CASH BAR



CELEBRATE ART, NATURE  
& COMMUNITY

RESERVE  
YOUR SPOT



WEDNESDAY, JUNE 17, 2026

5:00 PM - 8:00 PM

SANTA FE BOTANICAL GARDEN

715 CAMINO LEJO, SANTA FE, NM

PRESENTED WITH SUPPORT FROM

**LewAllenGalleries**



**MAESTRO**  
FINANCIAL PARTNERS



SAVE THE DATE!

DISTINGUISHED ARTIST OF THE YEAR GALA & AUCTION  
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2026 • LA FONDA ON THE PLAZA



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?

[Click here for FORM](#)

**The form includes:**

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

[Click here for STORIES](#)

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.

**Rotary District 5520  
Installation and  
Celebration**



June 27, 2026  
11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.  
58 Vista de las Sandias  
Placitas, New Mexico

**Join US**

**Rotary**  
Club of West El Paso



# JULY 4<sup>TH</sup> PARADE!

**HONORING OUR PAST  
BUILDING OUR FUTURE**





GoPazón de Niños

8th Annual

5k

RUNWALK

DONATION \$35 - FREE T-SHIRT & MEDAL

AUG 23, 2026

08:00 AM

Union Plaza, 117 Anthony St.  
Downtown, El Paso, TX.



Rotary



Club Camino Real  
of El Paso

Your donation supports  
open heart surgeries  
for childrens in need.

**DON'T LET THEIR HEARTS STOP BEATING**

SHORT-SLEEVED DRI-FIT & BAG TO  
THE FIRST 3000 REGISTRANTS