

From Jose Velasco - Utah Rotary District Governor <josevelasco5420@gmail.com@ccsend.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 18, 2023 5:02 AM
To: Baktybek Abdrisaev <ABDRISBA@uvu.edu>
Subject: Conference Edition - Utah Rotary Newsletter



Always check events & resources on utahrotary.org

Kris Swanson Recognized for Foundation Service

District Grants Committee Chair Kristina (“Kris”) Swanson, **Park City Sunrise Rotary Club**, received the Rotary Foundation Citation for Meritorious Service at the Utah Rotary Annual Conference held May 4-6 in Taylorsville.

Nominated by District Foundation Chair Bruce Powell, Kris earned this prestigious award which honors Rotarians and Rotaractors who have been actively involved in service related to The Rotary Foundation.

“When DG Jose told me we could nominate someone, the first name to come to mind was Kris Swanson,” Bruce said. “She had a very bad accident and had to have surgery on her leg. After some recuperation, her doctors determined they would need to do it again. Through it all, she remained focused on Rotary!”

Kris has been a member of three Rotary clubs. She served as club president and later as both the District Peace Chair and District Grants Chair for many years. “Both are major responsibilities, but she has chosen to take them on despite her many life’s challenges because she loves Rotary,” said Bruce Powell.

Congratulations to a surprised and emotional Kris for this well-deserved award.



Jose Velasco
Utah Rotary District Governor 2022-2023
josevelasco5420@gmail.com



Judge Memorial HS Interact Club Named Interact Club of the Year

Interact Club President Abby Pruitt, who plans to study for a career as a neurosurgeon, accepted the Interact Club of the Year Award on behalf of the **Interact Club at Judge Memorial High School**. This club is sponsored by Salt Lake Rotary with John Holmgren as Interact club advisor.

Abby Pruitt and her club have focused on service projects—“too many to list,” said DG Jose Velasco in the award presentation.

This outstanding club of high school students creates fundraisers for service projects and activities throughout the year while they also develop talent and leadership skills among the members of Interact at Judge Memorial.

Rotary Club of the Year Awards

In his year as Governor, Jose Velasco decided to follow in the footsteps of Governor Linda Sappington who, during her Rotary year, awarded a Large – and a Small – Club of the Year based on their number of members.

DG Jose selected from among small-sized clubs (under 37 members), mid-sized clubs (between 38 and 75 members) and large clubs (over 76 members).

Large Club of the Year: **St. George Sunrise Rotary Club** was selected for the 2nd time in as many years for increasing their membership by 7; being very active locally and internationally in service projects as well as overall giving to The Foundation. SGS was also selected for consistent participation in district meetings and events, as well as actively interacting in Friendship Exchanges.



In the new category of Medium Club of the Year:

Murray Rotary Club was named for increasing membership by 12, for being very active locally and internationally in service projects as well as giving to The Rotary Foundation, and for consistent participation in district meetings and events.

Small Club of the Year: **Richfield Rotary Club** was recognized for being very active and involved locally and internationally in service projects as well as giving to The Rotary Foundation as well as for consistent participation in district meetings and events.

Rotaract Club of the Year: **Utah Valley University Rotaract** has greatly upped their level of performance as Rotaractors. With Tristin Smith as club president, they increased membership to 32 and focused their service efforts on several important local projects.

They also partnered with peers from Osh Technological University to jointly observe International Mountain Days, established in 2021 and participated at the 66th and 67th sessions of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women.

For more about their activities scroll down.



Shekhar Mehta Inspires with His Eloquent, Warm Message

Immediate Past Rotary International President Shekhar Mehta and his wife Rashi were assigned as the representative for President Jennifer Jones at our conference.

What an honor his visit has been for all of Utah Rotary. We have, in past years, had the privilege of hosting Past Presidents, Presidents-elect and other RI dignitaries but to be assigned an Immediate Past President is a special honor indeed.

His eloquent and warm messages were inspirational, educational and motivational. President Shekhar graciously accepted every opportunity for Utah Rotarians who wished to be photographed with him.

President Shekhar reminded us all the work of Rotary is unique to each of us. We all have the desire to help and serve at different levels, but the most important factor is to imagine what it means to be part of the legacy of Rotary as we serve with the full conviction you are making a difference in someone's life through your "service above self" and/or providing to the Rotary Foundation.

Thank you, President Shekhar and Rashi, for joining us as a representative for RI President Jennifer Jones and for sharing your wisdom with us. Thank you to PDG Scott Leckman and Kay for hosting President Shekhar and Rashi during their visit to our district.



Brian Mullahy Leads with the News

KUTV-Channel 2 news anchor Brian Mullahy introduced his few moments on stage with a refreshing twist – objective, funny and informative - on the day's news. During a Q&A, Brian provided an open and honest perspective of today's life as a reporter impacted by the information/misinformation dictated by producers and news directors at every news organization.

“The humanitarian spirit in Utah communities is alive and well,” said the award-winning news reporter. “We see it in every occasion whether it’s a small disaster or large event; or whether it’s a group of neighbors or groups like Rotary clubs.”

He mentioned this humanitarian spirit is particularly reflected in recent events of flooding in Northern Utah, either through sand bagging, providing food and/or shelter, or salvaging some of the families’ belongings out of the waters in the homes.

Sharon Eubank Lauds the Partnership between Rotary & the LDS Church

Sharon Eubank, Executive Director of LDS Charities, spoke on the similarities and incredible humanitarian service provided around the world through a partnership between the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and Rotary International.

“That is the reason the Church provided the gift of \$5 million in support of RI’s program for the eradication of polio,” she said. “This gift – one of several from LDS Charities - has now been matched 2x1 by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, to become a gift of \$15 million.

Sharon also addressed compliments and questions from the audience regarding some of the actions of the Church in different matters including humanitarian work around the world, local service and the complexity of dealing with many government, private and non-profit organizations.





The Magic of Rotary Delivers a Fire Truck to Mexico

Past District Governor Oscar Montano (District 4140 in Central Mexico), shared a story he called the "Magic of Rotary" describing in hilarious detail a problem-riddled trip to deliver an donated fire truck to the small city of Jalisco.

As Gov. Jose translated, Oscar Montano described the lengthy journey from California to Jalisco which was full of surprises and mechanical failures. Although some of the experiences along the way were very funny, some were also miraculous, which created an adventure worthy of Rotary.

Perhaps the most impressive miracle occurred after the truck was delivered to a grateful community. The first night a house fire broke out. Three lives were saved as the new equipment, in the hands of a capable crew, did what it was supposed to do thanks to the ***Magic of Rotary***.

Paul Harris Pts Reward Heroine Who Saved Family from Arsonist

POINTS

In the early part of 2022, arson by a single individual was a serious problem in the hills of Centerville/Farmington.

A family, newly relocated from Louisiana and California to Centerville, witnessed a fire which was too close for comfort. Randi Stevens, the wife and mother, was eager to prevent a repeat of this life-threatening situation so she distributed 14 fire extinguishers to her neighbors at her own expense just in case there was a "next time" due to drought and risk.

Not long after, she was preparing food for her local fire department as a way of thanking them for their service. While bringing groceries in from her car, a person nearly ran her over in an effort to start another fire. She took the lead, and with her family, put the fire out even before the fire department arrived and also restrained the individual until the police showed up.

For her initiative and bravery, the **Centerville-Farmington Rotary Club** made her a Paul Harris Fellow, honoring her and her family for their quick actions which saved many homes in the area.

This highlights the opportunity for Utah Rotary clubs to recognize some of the heroes in their communities while making Rotary relevant. Say thank you in this way to first responders, citizens, students or children going above and beyond the call of duty. Almost every club in our district has a bank of points to be used for this purpose.

Furthermore, the district also has excess points available if any club needs additional support. Contact your club's Foundation Committee or D5420 Foundation Chair Bruce Powell at brucepancho85@gmail.com for more information on how to make good use of this opportunity in your club!



Peace is Possible
One community at a time

Global Grant for Positive Peace

Kris Swanson updated conference attendees with a presentation on the work of District 5420's Peace Committee. She described the Committee's participation in the SLC Zone Institute, their work interviewing candidates to the Peace University Programs of Rotary. Kris and her committee have also given Positive Peace presentations to clubs in our district.

Our District's Peace Committee is also working in Northern Colombia to educate children in the positive change for peace dialogue and conflict resolution among future generations, funded by a Global Grant. The committee is currently selling

Colombian coffee as a fundraiser among Utahn Rotary clubs to add to Global Grant fundraising. [Click here to purchase delicious coffee.](#)

We counted PDG Carlos Avendano from District 4271 and his son Juan Camilo among those in attendance at our conference and the follow-through on the Global Grant for Positive Peace which will change the lives of thousands of children in Colombia.

Comprehensive List of Service Projects

Karlene Wells provided a perspective about service projects being done by most of the clubs in District 5420, not an impact report, but a comprehensive understanding of the service project clubs create, build and complete to benefit communities local and beyond, with a perspective of "Act Local - Think Global."

The list of those service projects will soon be posted on the District [website](#). Some can be repetitive in different areas in our state, but there are also those clubs which have found more innovative ways to serve and to have their members be part of the service in a meaningful way. This kind of engagement is relevant to the life of a club, and the larger the diversity of the projects, the more the engagement is lively.

We know the list is lengthy, although the most important part of this presentation was to bring it in front of the audience to make this district relevant. Rotarians in every club, make your service vibrant and honorable service to our world!



Rotaract Is Rotary's Future

Ignacio Gonzalez from Talca, Chile, is the Rotary world's leading Rotaractor as a member of RI President Jennifer Jones cabinet and her presidential representative. At D5420's District Conference, he shared the current vibe and trends Rotaract is experiencing in its evolution.

Rotaract is no longer a youth program and in the current year, members are now asked to pay RI dues because they are and should be working side-by-side with Rotarians. It is understandable such changes will still need time to accept on both sides of the aisle but as Rotarians we should

be prepared to offer Rotaractors a seat at the table and the opportunity to express themselves and actively participate to the fullest.

According to Ignacio Gonzalez, it is time to be part of the legacy and adapt to being part of the decision making as well as giving to the Rotary Foundation as suggested by Rotary International.

No longer do Rotaractors need a sponsor club or an advisor. What they need is Rotarian mentors and Rotarian partners who can help them understand the rewarding work and legacy of Rotary.

UVU Rotaract Hosted a UN Conference; the Ambassador for the Kyrgyz Republic



The 67th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women was co-hosted by 28 **UVU Rotaractors**, led by President Tristin Juarez-Smith and Alitha Thompson and included students from Utah Valley University, Kyrgyzstan, China, India, South Sudan, and Uganda.

Rotaractors managed all logistics, research, and presented how the SEL model empowers mountain women and girls. Stephanie Velasco highlighted the impact RI Friendship Exchanges, specifically Utah Rotary District and Northern Mexico Rotary District 4100, have provided to their respective communities.

Additionally, they hosted the current Ambassador for the Kyrgyz Republic to the United States and Canada, H.E. Baktybek A. Amanbaev. and Patrick Hanish, the Director of the Office of Iranian Affairs in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs at the U.S. Department of State.

They have attended training meetings, District events and conference breakouts in numbers, more than any other Rotaract club in our district. They partnered with their club partner Orem-Lindon Rotary club and other Rotaract clubs throughout the year. Three Rotaractors spoke of their presentation at the United Nations in March where there were 22 Rotaractors participating in different panels hosted by the General Secretary of the UN in New York City.

Furthermore, Utah Valley University was recognized for their support of Rotaract for many years with a Paul Harris Fellow Award. The Rotaract Mentor is Rotarian Baktybek Abdrisaev, who is a teacher at UVU was awarded the Paul Harris Fellow for his support and work with Rotaract.

Our district is part of the Big West Rotaract, a Multi District Informational Organization (MDIO), a group of 30 member Rotary districts across three Rotary Zones (see Bigwestrotaract.org) Since 2009 BWR has focused on providing Leadership Training and Education to Rotaractors in the Western United States and Canada through leadership training Institutes, conferences, information exchange, and digital resources. Stephanie Velasco is currently one of the Directors but on July 1, 2023 she will become the General Secretary to serve through June 30, 2026, and she can be our best liaison to further Rotaract strength in our district.



Friendship Exchanges Cement North & South American Relationships

Stephanie Velasco gave an overview presentation about the district's three Friendship Exchanges to Mexico and Colombia.

Outbound: In February 2022, 37 Rotarians from District 5420 spent a week on a Friendship Exchange to Puerto Peñasco, Mexico District 4100. They completed six service projects in the community, in partnership with the local club, in four of RI's areas of focus including Water and Sanitation, Maternal and Child Health, Protecting the Environment, and Growing Local Economies with 7 Past District Governors among the group.

Inbound: After last year's International Convention a group of twelve

Rotarians from Colombia (District 4271) including three Past District Governors came to Utah for a Friendship Exchange.

Later, a group of eleven from the Puerto Peñasco club in Mexico's District 4100 traveled to Utah where they also participated in service projects by invitation from different local clubs.

Both groups visited several areas and clubs from the south to the north in our district and we were able to establish relationships certain to continue for years to come.

Video Message from the Rotary International President

RI President Jennifer Jones's message for Rotarians during RY2022-23 has been "Imagine a world which deserves our best, where we get up each morning knowing we can make a difference. To better engage our members, we need to adapt and re-tool. Find out what they expect of Rotary and provide it to them. Do not wait until they leave Rotary to ask why they left. Engage them on the first meeting and provide them the opportunity to make a difference."

At our conference we heard President Jones thank all of us for our ability to serve and to see the world as an opportunity to make a difference. Utah Rotarians have done that and we have served proudly. Thank you all.





Zone Director Vicky Puliz Congratulates Governor Jose & Governor-Elect John Redd

RI Director for Zone 26/27 Vicky Puliz (2021-2023), a graduate of the University of Utah, in her video message reminded district and club leaders about the importance of efforts for continuity in our district and to make every activity fun and engaging.

Congratulations to Governor Jose Velasco and Governor-elect John Redd for their focused work with club presidents and officers as well as their efforts to increase the training in the district, especially emphasizing membership growth and foundation giving.

Director Puliz would like to see Rotarians in District 5420 following Paul Harris's work based on fellowship, service and the legacy of Rotary.



Hall of Friendship Dresses the Lobby

This year, we modified the name House of Friendship to "Hall of Friendship." We dressed the lobby of the Mid-Valley Center for the Performing Arts to provide an "experience" to all attendees while walking through the presentations of clubs, vendors, businesses and organizations partnering with Utah for many occasions, projects and events across the state.

There were a total of 30 tables, many with 7 'x 7' banners which will be used for years to come to strengthen these clubs' public image in their community by creating a statement wherever they display. President Shekhar referred to the Hall of Friendship as impressive and an illustration, a great demonstration of the work of District 5420.

From Quilts to Peace - Conference Service & Breakout Sessions

There were three breakout sessions at our conference: Ignacio Gonzalez led a Rotaract-Rotary workshop. Stephanie Velasco led a Positive Peace workshop. Representatives of LDS Charities led an in-depth presentation on JustServe.org, which connects people who want to volunteer with service projects in our area.

There were also two service projects – baby quilts to tie and file folder games to color – both which were coordinated by Karlene Wells on Friday and Saturday with large participation by Rotarians.





Thank You to the District from the Rotary Foundation Chair

District Foundation Chair Bruce Powell recognized District 5420's Major Donors in RY2022-23 as well as the district's many active Paul Harris Society members. Bruce awarded the audience with coins for correct answers to questions about and for continuing their giving to the Rotary Foundation through the many ways available.

Thank you to all Rotarians giving to the Rotary Foundation!

Rotary Youth Exchange Students Thank Utah for Their Generosity

Emma is from the Netherlands and Aina is from Spain. At the end of their 10-month exchange in Utah, they will join 20 other Rotary Youth Exchange students on a tour by train beginning in Los Angeles, then visiting San Francisco and Seattle. They'll continue on through Glacier National Park, Chicago and Niagara Falls. On the 4th of July they'll enjoy fireworks in Boston and ending in New York and Washington, DC.

Then they'll fly back to Utah to say their good-byes before heading home. Many thanks go to the Rotary Clubs of Salt Lake City and Heber Valley for providing fantastic host families and counselors.

They are also grateful to clubs in Moab, Park City and St. George for organizing unforgettable activities to add to their experience here.

Their request for donations to their great railway adventure resulted in gifts totaling \$1400. Thank you, Utah Rotary for your generosity, your friendship and memories made in your beautiful state.



Governor Jose Thanks Chief of Staff Wendi Hassen and All Club Presidents for Their Hard Work & Dedication

At District Conference 2023, Wendi Hassen, DG Jose's hardworking and dedicated Chief-of-Staff, introduced all club Presidents, reading all names of those attending (31 Rotarians and 3 Rotaractors) as well as those not in attendance (13 Rotarians and four Rotaractors).

We appreciate the work, leadership, service and support of all club presidents, boards and committees for honorably preserving the legacy of Utah Rotary's District 5420.

Governor Jose Thanks His Conference Committee for an Outstanding Conference Event

A special thank you to the District Conference Committee, but specially to Floyd Hatch, Brent Uberty and Stephanie Velasco for their hard work and months of planning. They successfully brought it all together for a very positive outcome.

Thank you, too to all who attended and in anyway supported D5420 in a conference created for all to enjoy and "Celebrate Imagination."



CELEBRATE
IMAGINATION



Thank You to Past District Governor Linda Sappington for Putting Together This Special Conference News Edition

At the Conference Past District Governor Linda Sappington talked about the challenges and rewards of her year leading Utah Rotary during the pandemic.

She continues to serve the district as Public Image chair in Governor Jose's cabinet.

We are grateful for her wealth of good cheer and expertise in editing all the content for this Conference newsletter.

Get ideas, support other clubs! Send your service projects & fundraisers to
Newsletter Editor **Lola Beatlebrox**

Save the Dates

May 2023

May 27-31 RI Convention in Melbourne, Australia

May 27-June 4 St. George Rotary travels to Guatemala to build stoves in Mayan Villages

June 2023

June 10 Induction of John Redd as District Governor 2023-2024

June 16-17 Bountiful "Coats for Kids" Car Show

June 24 Foundation Gala dinner

July 2023

July 10 Deadline to Submit Data for Service Impact Report

September 2023

Sept. 9 Utah Rotary Day of Service
Sept. 11 All Clubs Dinner

October 2023

Oct. 24 World Polio Day

November 2023

Nov. 8-12 Zone Institute in San Diego

Coming in 2024

Friendship Exchange to Colombia
Rotary Youth Leadership Academy in Mt. Pleasant, UT.



Newsletter Contributors

Lola Beatlebrox, District Newsletter Editor
Linda Sappington, Past District Governor
Jose Velasco, District Governor, 2022-2023



District Facebook - public

District Blog

District Facebook - members only

Rotary District 5420 | 1587 E. Spyglass Hill Drive, Draper, UT 84020

[Unsubscribe abdrisba@uvu.edu](mailto:abdrisba@uvu.edu)

[Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)

Sent by josevelasco5420@gmail.com powered by

