

December #UtahRotary Newsletter

Suzanne Leonelli

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To: abdrisaev05@yahoo.com

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District 5420 Newsletter - December 2025



A season of gratitude and purpose

My dear Rotary family,

This time of year always invites us to pause—to breathe in the quiet blessings around us, to sit for just a moment in the stillness, and to remember why we give our hearts to this work. But this year... this year feels different for me. Deeper. More tender.

As I look across our district and reflect on this journey as your Governor, I find myself overwhelmed in the most beautiful way. My heart is full of moments—tiny miracles, really—that were gifted to me by each of you. Traveling to your clubs wasn't a schedule I completed...it was a pilgrimage of the heart. Every handshake, every hug, every conversation in a hallway or a parking lot, every home-cooked breakfast, every shared story, every laugh, every tear you trusted me with—they became threads that wove themselves into a tapestry of what it truly means to be a Rotarian.

This month, I had the honor of welcoming a brand-new satellite club of the Richfield Rotary Club - Sanpete County Rotary Club. Eight incredible members who said yes to stepping into service, yes to joining us, yes to being part of something bigger than any one of us. Their



beginning is a reminder—Rotary grows when hearts open, when we invite others in, when we’re bold enough to say, “Come stand with us.” We *must* continue to grow Rotary, not simply in numbers, but in impact, in courage, in presence, in the lives we touch and the communities we lift. Growth is not a metric—it is our legacy.

Monday is our District Day of Service—a moment for us to step forward together and remind our communities what compassion in action looks like. Whether your club serves that day or another, it doesn’t matter. Service isn’t confined to a calendar. It breathes through us every day of the year. If your club participates, please share photos, videos, and stories. Let’s fill Facebook and our district pages with evidence of kindness—hands working, hearts showing up, connections being made. Let the world see who we are. Let the world *feel* who we are.

In Gratitude, Thank You... for the hours you give, for the compassion you share and for the moments no one sees but that change someone’s life forever. Thank you for letting me walk this path with you. You have made me better. You have made me braver.

And you have reminded me, countless times, why Rotary matters.

As we step into this season of light, love, and reflection, may we hold close the truth that service—real, tender, heart-deep service—is the greatest gift we can give.

With so much love and gratitude,

Suzanne Leonelli

District Governor, Rotary District 5420

How to help Ukraine through Rotary

There are two ways



Ukrainian Rotary Clubs are distributing 350-400 generators to families in Ukraine. Each generator costs \$350 to purchase and transport along with associated supplies.

How many \$350 generators can you or your club fund?

Give \$350 cash per generator to help transport, amazingly rapidly, a shipment of 350 to 400 electrical generators and associated supplies for Ukrainian Rotary clubs across Ukraine to distribute free of charge to needy families.

Please mail your personal and club checks to me, Jerry Summerhays at the address below. Write your checks to "Utah Rotary Foundation," our new district 501(c)(3)."

The Rotary Action Group ***Rotary in Sweden helps Ukraine*** asked me to send our money every two weeks during their winter campaign. When they get enough from many clubs, mostly in the US and Canada, they send another shipment of generators, usually every 3-4 weeks.

Jerry Summerhays, 5022 W Rambutan Way, South Jordan, Utah 84009



**President Zelenskyy visiting a specialized clinic for wounded soldiers funded through
"Rotary in Sweden helps Ukraine."**

Can you or your club help fund a Global Grant?

Commit a sum of money to a global grant that will be approved and matched by Rotary to provide urgently needed medical equipment and supplies for a central hospital or an outpatient clinic in Ukraine. The draft of the global grant is already written.

As soon as **“Rotary in Sweden helps Ukraine”** receives commitments for \$150,000 from clubs around the world, they will submit the global grant. Every 3 - 4 months another global grant is funded and approved. There is a single Rotary Grants Officer over Ukraine who works closely with the “Rotary in Sweden helps Ukraine" Action Group” and approves a global grant in minimum time.

I will then ask you for your personal or club checks.

I send **personal checks** in one envelope to Rotary so you get credit towards your major donor status. **Club money** will be wired to the global grant account in Sweden. The equipment going to Ukraine is already arranged.

Jerry Summerhays, District International Service Chair

5022 W Rambutan Way, South Jordan, Utah 84009

I met with **“Rotary in Sweden helps Ukraine” Action Group** leaders at the recent International Rotary Convention in Calgary. They have done many both **cash** and **matching global grant projects** since the war started. They have **slicked the process incredibly**, working with the Ukrainian District 2232 and its 50 Rotary clubs. We thank them for providing the path and the oversight, the Rotary way...all volunteers, working with governments and Ukrainian clubs and Rotarians who know the people of their town and their needs and are connected to make things happen.

Jerry Summerhays, District International Service Chair, SummerhaysGS@gmail.com

Richfield Satellite Club of Ephraim - 1 month old!

District 5420 has a new club - the first in several years! Congratulations to the Richfield Club for sponsoring the Richfield Satellite Club of Ephraim, regenerating the former Sanpete County Rotary Club. Official start - October 20, 2025!

We can and need to do more to sponsor new clubs in the district. Starting new clubs is the fastest way to grow Rotary because 90% of new club members are new to Rotary. All it takes to start a satellite club is eight members and to charter a new club - only 15 members.

I encourage all clubs to look around the areas you serve and consider whether a new club that meets in the morning or evening or a club that offers a different experience might be an opportunity to pursue. Or, in the case of the Richfield Satellite club, an opportunity to restart a club in an area that used to have one (the Price-Helper area would be another such opportunity).

If you have ideas but are unsure how to proceed, I can help! Please reach out to me, I'm a resource to help you start a new club and grow Rotary in our district. My email is srf2624@yahoo.com and my cell phone is 435-522-8123.

Scott Florence, New Club Development Chair



Orem-Lindon celebrates 50 years!

The **Rotary Club of Orem-Lindon** marked a major milestone on November 10, 2025, celebrating its 50th Anniversary — “50 Years of Service: A Golden Legacy” — at the Orem Senior Friendship Center.

Club member Christmas Lutu, dressed in gold to match the theme, emceed the event with energy and humor as guests enjoyed a delicious buffet dinner.

A highlight of the night was recognizing those who helped build the club’s legacy. Past presidents were honored with the light-hearted “Butt’n Gear” Award, acknowledging the dedication that keeps the club moving forward. Three longtime community partners received Paul Harris Awards for their sustained support of the club’s initiatives.

The club also paid special tribute to Roger Lewis, our only remaining founding member. Roger and his family were celebrated for his remarkable 50 years of continuous membership and service—a crowning moment that drew warm applause and heartfelt appreciation.

Attendees received a special message of recognition from Rotary International President Francesco Arezzo, delivered by District Governor Suzanne Leonelli Wilhelm. Other honored

guests included Scott Rosenbush, serving as Wilhelm's Chief of Staff, Past District Governor Jose Velasco, and District Rotaract Chair Martha Velasco.

With 80 people in attendance, the celebration reflected the club's strong bonds and enduring mission. The club extends sincere thanks to **Utah Valley University Rotaract** for their indispensable help with event setup and takedown.

Cathy Ambrose, President, Orem-Lindon Rotary Club

End of Year Giving - Where heart meets smart

Give a gift that does good (*and Feels Good!*)

As the year winds down and we eye those last slices of pumpkin pie, it's also the perfect moment to think about the kind of gifts that don't require wrapping paper, tape, or wrestling with mysteriously shrinking gift bags. Yes, we're talking about year-end philanthropic giving to The Rotary Foundation, the gift that never gets re-gifted!



Our District's Unite for Good team has been out in full force this year, cheering on clubs, celebrating milestones, and reminding us that every dollar we give becomes fuel for hope. Whether it's clean water across the world, polio vaccines for children, or peacebuilding in places that desperately need it, your generosity this season helps Rotary finish the year strong.

And here's a bonus: the tax savings. While The Rotary Foundation is busy improving lives, the IRS is quietly whispering, "Hey... you can deduct that." It's not often that altruism and accounting become best friends—but year-end giving is where heart meets smart.

So, before you ring in the new year, consider making a gift that changes lives and leaves you smiling well into 2026.

Happy Holidays,

Egor Shulman

D5420 DRFCc 2025-26

Inspirational Rotary Videos

<https://youtu.be/4L9xgreBkTs?si=4dbUuzl0xoSCTOTw>

https://youtu.be/EN2giwMwSME?si=EZ_US3kwkXPCn-It

Annual Fund-SHARE - Every Rotarian a Sustaining Member - \$100/year and/or Paul Harris Society - \$1,000/year

Learn more about Endowment-SHARE giving options (gifts larger than \$1,000):

<https://www.rotary.org/en/donate/planned-giving>



The Rotary Foundation Giving Tuesday

December 2, 2025

The Rotary Foundation is promoting **Giving Tuesday** as a way for us to Unite for Good.

This Global Day of Generosity is an opportunity for all members to make a big impact with a gift of any size. A donation to [Annual Fund-SHARE](#) supports projects you're passionate about, both in your community and around the world. A gift to [PolioPlus](#) helps transport vaccines and immunize children to keep them safe.

Here's how you can help promote giving on **Giving Tuesday**:

- [Watch](#) our **Giving Tuesday** video with your club and your friends – encourage your as of yet non-Rotarian friends to learn about Rotary.
- [Donate](#) to The Rotary Foundation on **Giving Tuesday**.
- [Download](#) our **Giving Tuesday** graphics and share them with others.

The Rotary Foundation will again recognize the top three clubs in fundraising, donor participation, and online giving. Find out [which clubs were recognized last year](#) and set a giving goal for your club this year. **Just be sure the gifts are made on 2 December!**

Thank you for your leadership and support. As we approach this day of giving, remind other members that every contribution, no matter the size, helps Rotary create positive change in the world.

We know that with your help, together we can make an even bigger impact this **Giving Tuesday!**

Happy Holidays,

Egor Shulman

D5420 DRFCc 2025-28

Drfc5420@gmail.com



Utah Rotaractors are highlighted by the UN

A joint initiative between **Rotary District Rotaract**, the **Orem-Lindon Rotary Club**, and **Rotaractors from Utah Valley University (UVU)** and **Osh Technological University in the Kyrgyz Republic** was recognized in the **United Nations Secretary-General's report on sustainable development (A/80/255, July 24, 2025, p.11)**.

The UN report commended their advocacy for mountain women, families, and communities, highlighting the group's contributions during the **67th, 68th, and 69th sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)**. This recognition places their work among the global best practices achieved between 2023 and 2025 by the **550 members of the United Nations Mountain Partnership**.


The **Big West Rotaract**, representing 28 districts across three Rotary Zones in Western North America under **General Secretary Stephanie Velasco (2023–2026)**, a contributor with UVU Rotaractors. During the **67th CSW session in March 2023**, Rotaractors

participated in two key UN events: a **side event co-hosted by the Permanent Mission of the Kyrgyz Republic** on March 8 and a **parallel event hosted by UVU Rotaractors** on March 6.

In 2024 and 2025, the joint Rotaract teams visiting the United Nations included **20 and 19 students**, respectively. Their work has directly contributed to the forthcoming **United Nations General Assembly Resolution on Sustainable Mountain Development**, to be adopted in **December 2025**, which will outline global best practices and recommendations for advancing sustainable mountain communities.

Martha Velasco, District Rotaract Chair

Baktybek Abdrisaev, Orem-Lindon Rotary Club.



Rotary Youth News



Exchange students had an awesome time in The Narrows

In November our district was happy to host 24 exchange students for a multi-district youth exchange activity in St. George. These students - from all over the world - currently live in Arizona, California and Utah. We took them to Zion National Park and hiked the Narrows.

Temperatures in the mid-60s made for a bit of a chilly time. So did hiking for five hours in the Virgin River! Nevertheless, the kids had an experience of a lifetime they will never forget about our beautiful state and country.

Aaron Lowe, Youth Exchange Officer

Help recruit students for next year's exchange

Youth Exchange is one of the greatest Rotary programs. Each year we send multiple students from Utah across the world to broaden their cultural experiences and learn about other countries.

We are now accepting applications for the upcoming year.

If you know anyone who might be interested, please direct them to website: <https://www.utahrotary.org/rotary-youth/youth-exchange/outbound-students/>. Here they can learn more about the program, find contact information if they have questions, and apply for the program.

Applications are due December 15th.

Aaron Lowe, Youth Exchange Officer, (801) 592-0913, transitreg98@gmail.com



Upcoming Events - the District & the World



The America 250 Celebration is a year-long commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, culminating on July 4, 2026.

The festivities include national and state-level initiatives to reflect on the past, honor the nation's history, and plan for the future.

Your Rotary club can contribute by creating new projects in your municipality or county. Your Service Above Self project can be connected to a Main Street economic development initiative, school program, or non-profit organization.

For more information, contact your city or county's America 250 committee, or for great ideas, visit [America 250 Utah](#).

Linda Sappington, District Governor 2020-2021

Rotaract

District 5420



Join Utah District 5420 Rotaract as we welcome Big West Rotaract
General Secretary & Past Zone Rotary Public Image Chair,
Stephanie Velasco

PUBLIC IMAGE TRAINING

- ✓ Elevate Club Image
- ✓ Branding 101
- ✓ Public Image Materials

JOIN US!



Sunday Dec 7, 2025 | 8pm



dr@utahrotaract.org



utahrotaract.org

*** Email District Rotaract Representative,
Savannah for a Zoom Link!***



Rose Bowl Float 2026

In the November 2025 issue of the *Rotary Magazine* on page 17 a profile “Float on” featured how Rotary’s story is spread through the Rose Parade a tradition since the 1890’s. As with Ray Bushnell’s story of his childhood,

I too have a story. Growing up in Los Angeles, my dad would drive us to the park to see the floats after the parade not realizing one day I’d be a part of that process. In 2014 this postcard caught my eye sitting in a Rotary club meeting.

All I read was “Volunteers donate more than 6,000 hours in preparing decorations and applying them to our float.”

What experience would that be for my family?



Well, the rest is history as we were the first Utah decorators. We’ve applied seeds, rice, fruit, flowers and more in consecutive years since 2014. This year, members of the committee kept reaching out to me, realizing my passion for this effort and inviting me to join the committee. This month I was voted in to the Advisory Board. The float represents Rotary’s values of service and community uplift. It showcases the transformative impact of Rotary’s service projects in communities both locally and across borders. The Tournament of Roses parade provides a prestigious platform to share our message of service above self with millions of viewers around the world, inspiring hope and igniting change. <https://www.rotaryfloat.org>.



For information about Cambodia including dates, contact Paul Stringham. pbstringham@gmail.com

Utah Rotary E-Club Christmas Fundraiser



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Don't miss the 2026 Rotary International Convention!

Connect with Rotary members from around the world as we unite for good in Taipei City, Taiwan, for the Rotary International Convention, 13-17 June 2026.

The convention is a unique opportunity to learn, collaborate, and be inspired in a vibrant city rich in culture, iconic landmarks, and culinary delights. This transformative event is your opportunity to renew relationships made at previous conventions, create new ones, and share with like-minded changemakers the exciting work that your club is doing.

The Rotary International Convention is our biggest event of the year! Learn more and register today at convention.rotary.org.

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917-722-5050

The Club Hub

Get ideas, support other clubs! Send your service projects & fundraisers to Newsletter Editor [Lola Beatlebrox](#) for this monthly section of the newsletter.



The **Rotary Club of Midvalley** served the annual Thanksgiving lunch to



In November, **St. George Rotary** was particularly thankful for a substantial

more than 100 members of the West Jordan Senior Center.

It was fun engaging with the participants who were very grateful to get to know the Rotarians.

The club collaborated with “Sleep in Heavenly Peace,” a non-profit serving children in need - 100% of donations go toward building children’s beds. The volunteers helped build the bunk beds from scratch including staining. There is a scheduled date when the members will participate in the delivery and assembly of beds.

Continuing the Operation Santa appreciation, a Paul Harris was awarded to the Riverton High School girls’ basketball team who volunteer each year.

donation from the PGA TOUR for managing spectators at the October tournament at Black Desert Resort. We also distributed 1247 paperback dictionaries to 3rd graders in 15 local elementary schools; posted – then a week later collected - more than 2200 flags in honor of veterans interred in two local cemeteries; spent the Monday of Veterans Day weekend sorting food for the Salvation Army in response to the government shutdown; and, best of all, inducted our ninth couple as new members, bringing our total to 75, to achieve our president’s membership goal for RY2025-26!



November has been a busy month for the **Spanish Fork Rotary Club**. At the beginning of the month, our District Governor, Suzanne Leonelli Wilhelm visited. She was very kind and encouraging. We are grateful to be working alongside her in Rotary. Additionally, we completed our annual dictionary project. Generous local businesses and Rotary members gave away dictionaries to 3rd graders in 21 elementary schools in Nebo School District. We did this



In October, ten **Utah Valley University Rotaractors** assembled hygiene kits in Utah County. With the resources provided by the **Orem-Lindon Rotary Club** and under the instruction of Rotarian Cherise Armstrong, Rotaractors completed 20 men's hygiene kits and twenty women's hygiene kits. They will be donated to the homeless community around the Orem area.

because we know that words really do matter! We want to make sure that all children have the needed resources to help them be successful now and in the future. Rotarian Lana Dahl, brought her father, Vern Tanner, who gave away dictionaries at Taylor Elementary where he went to school 80 years ago!



In November eight Rotaractors assembled birthday kits which contained plates, napkins, cake mix, cupcake liners, frosting, candles, a birthday card, and balloons.

They put together more than twenty birthday kits to be donated to Tabitha's Way.



The **Utah E-Club** helped the **Valley West Club** serve a fabulous Thanksgiving meal to one of our local transitional housing organizations for

St. George Sunrise Rotary Club logged in more than 2000 volunteer hours helping during the Huntsman WORLD Senior games! Lots of smiles and new friends made!

families that have suffered from domestic abuse. Many of the families had never experienced a Thanksgiving dinner and were very grateful to those who took time out of their day to serve them.



Pumpkins for Polio

On Oct. 27, the **Southern Utah University Rotaract Club** hosted the Pumpkins for Polio event in the Leavitt Center to raise funds and educate attendees on the viral disease. Students were invited to paint pumpkins and share snacks.

This year SUU Rotaract experienced an attendance growth of about 30 people, showing growing community interest in supporting the movement. “Pumpkins for Polio helps support other countries around the world where polio has not yet been eradicated,” explained Rotaract Club President Elise Hilton. “Every dollar goes to helping people be vaccinated and helps people learn how to vaccinate others.”

Not only did this event provide students with the opportunity to connect with others, but it also educated them on the effects of polio. Attendees had the chance to scan a QR code to donate to the cause via Venmo and watch an informative presentation about the disease.



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Newsletter Contributors

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2025-2026

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2025-2028

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