

January #UtahRotary Newsletter

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District 5420 Newsletter - January 2026



Welcoming 2026 with gratitude, purpose and momentum

As we turn the page into 2026, I find myself pausing — just for a moment — to take in what these first six months have meant. Gratitude doesn't feel like a strong enough word for what I feel when I reflect on this journey with you. It has been an extraordinary honor to serve alongside Rotarians who show up, lean in, and lead with heart.

These past six months have been filled with moments that reminded me *exactly* why Rotary matters. I've witnessed service that was quiet and tender, leadership that was bold and courageous, and fellowship that felt like family. You have welcomed me into your clubs, your projects, and your lives — and that has been one of the greatest gifts of this year.

One of the most powerful reflections of who we are as a district came during our **District Day of Service**. What followed was nothing short of remarkable. My inbox — and our social media feeds — were flooded with videos, photos, and stories capturing Rotarians at their finest: extending kindness, lifting burdens, and meeting needs in ways both simple and profound. Each post told a story of compassion in



action. Each image was a reminder that service doesn't have to be grand to be transformational — it just has to be intentional.

If you haven't yet shared your District Day of Service experience, I would love to see it. Please email me your photos or stories, or post them on social media and tag our district. These moments deserve to be celebrated, remembered, and shared — because they inspire others to pause with purpose and step into service.

As we step into the final six months of this Rotary year, our focus now turns toward **membership**. Membership is not about numbers alone — it's about people. It's about inviting others to experience the connection, meaning, and impact that Rotary has given each of us. Every new member brings fresh energy, new ideas, and a future full of possibility for our clubs and our district.

I encourage you to look around your tables, your projects, and your communities and ask: *Who needs Rotary?* And just as importantly, *who does Rotary need?* The answer may surprise you — and it may change someone's life.

Thank you for an unforgettable first half of this year. Thank you for your service, your stories, and your steadfast commitment to doing good in the world. I cannot wait to see what we accomplish together in the months ahead.

Here's to 2026 — and to all the purpose, promise, and people still to come.

With Gratitude and Admiration,

Your friend and District Governor, Suzanne



Utah Rotary District 5420

Serving With Purpose >

Engage, Share, Inspire -

District Group Facebook Page for all Utah Rotarians

Our monthly Rotary District Newsletter is a powerful way to stay connected and serve with purpose across Utah Rotary District 5420. One of the best ways to engage between newsletters is through our district Facebook page, **Utah Rotary District 5420 Serving with Purpose.**

This page is for you. We encourage all clubs and Rotarians to post, engage, and share what's happening in your club—service projects, fundraisers, socials, awards, and upcoming events.

Feel free to post directly, tag your club, and celebrate the great work you're doing in your communities. When you share your events and stories, you help inspire other clubs, strengthen district connections, and amplify Rotary's impact.

Visit our Facebook group today, join the conversation
and post something from your club this week!

District Wide Service Project 2026

Shoes for Orphan Souls

Be part of our first District Wide Service Project for 2026. We are teaming up with six other districts and *Buckner Shoes for Orphan Souls* to provide much needed new shoes.

The Buckner organization assumed leadership of the program in 1999. The largest humanitarian aid project of Buckner International, Buckner Shoes for Orphan Souls has continued to partner with organizations and individuals to collect and distribute new shoes to vulnerable children in the US and around the world.

Why Shoes You Ask

- They help prevent health issues
- Improves school attendance
- Increases self-confidence

Why New Shoes

- New shoes last longer
- Give children living in poverty something that is theirs.

ROTARY DISTRICT 6040 + BUCKNER
25 FOR 25!
Challenge
NEW SHOES PROVIDE HOPE.
HELP US COLLECT 25,000 PAIRS OF NEW SHOES TO CELEBRATE THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF OUR COLLABORATION!

Buckner Shoes for Orphan Souls and Rotary District 6040:
25 years of collaborating to provide hope for children through new shoes.

This Year's Dedicated Support Partners

Rotary District 5420, Rotary District 5136, Rotary District 5126, Rotary District 5186, Rotary District 5148

Rotary District 6040 | **BUCKNER SHOES** | Your gift of new Shoes changes lives! buckner.org/rotary6040

So here is the deal. The goal is to collect 25,000 pairs of shoes from the six Rotary Districts combined. Our district is committing to collect 2,000 pairs of shoes by April 1st. The shoes should be tennis shoes, any color. Sizes can range for elementary grade students.

We are focusing on drop off points in northern and southern Utah. More information will be available as negotiations progress.

We are urging each club to start planning your strategy to begin the process for purchasing new shoes as we plan our collection process. If you have any questions please contact me:

David Nelson

District 5420 Community Service Chair

435-773-4212

How to help Ukraine through Rotary



Some Ukrainians are suffering much more than others.

Rotarians from the 50 Rotary clubs in Ukraine know their communities. They know the older people, the families whose father is away at war, or is dead, those whose homes have been damaged, those who could be helped most by an electric generator. **Rotarians come to the Rotary warehouse and take electric generators back to their communities to the people who need them the most . . . for light, for cooking, for heat.**

We thank The Rotary Action Group “Rotary in Sweden Helps Ukraine.” Since the invasion they have worked with the Ukrainian District and Rotary clubs to know what is needed most. **During the winter they are asking for as many electric generators (the inverter type) as we can provide for \$350 each.**

If you and/or your club want to help, please **write your checks to “Utah Rotary Foundation”** and mail them to Jerry Summerhays at 5022 West Rambutan Way, South Jordan UT 84009. Every few weeks we wire the money to “Rotary in Sweden Helps Ukraine”. It is amazing how fast the generators reach the families!

When the coldest weather is past, we will switch to funding a global grant to provide their next priority - hospital medical equipment to treat wounded soldiers. Would your club like to investigate being the international sponsor of this global grant? The grant is mostly written, awaiting funding.

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

For more details see the December issue of this newsletter

Endowment SHARE - Profiles in Philanthropy

Jon and Suzanne Wilhelm

As most of you are probably aware by now our District Governor Suzanne set a goal of \$10,000,000+ for Endowment-SHARE contributions during her year with a grand celebration on May 2, 2026.

In a great example of walking the walk if you are doing the talk, Jon and Suzanne are setting an amazing example of generosity. They recently set up an Endowment-SHARE Named Fund of \$250,000, not only becoming Arch Klumph Society members but also cementing their legacy. Spendable earnings from this Named Fund will support district and global grants annually and perpetually.

Suzanne is well known to our members having just completed a 45 club tour around the state with her uplifting messaging. She honed her style and fundraising prowess for 10+ years as CEO of *Root for Kids* prior to retiring and devoting her time to her new husband, Jon, and to Rotary.

Jon is one of those quiet people who lets great deeds speak louder than words. He is the CEO and founder of Paramount Tax Services with 117+ USA offices. His support of an innovative water well drilling enterprise in Africa is awe-inspiring. After getting inducted into Rotary by President Nominee Larry Lansford at the District Conference, Jon committed to extending his philanthropy to Rotary as well.



Egor Shulman

D5420 Rotary Foundation Chair 2025-2028

drfc5420@gmail.com

Endowment-SHARE

Write Rotary into your Legacy



Every gift to The Rotary Foundation changes lives today.

An Endowment-SHARE bequest does something even more powerful -- it keeps changing lives long after we're gone.

With a few sentences in a will, a beneficiary designation on an IRA or life insurance policy, or a simple estate plan update, your values can keep working quietly for good, year after year.

Imagine Utah Rotarians decades from now funding local and international projects because of decisions we made today. Your bequest can turn “someday I’ll do more” into a permanent source of hope.

Bequests are not just for the very wealthy. Whether your legacy gift is modest or major, when it’s combined with those of other Rotarians, the impact multiplies.

Talk with your financial or legal advisor, then let your District Rotary Foundation Chair know how he can help. Take the next step, make your commitment, and become part of Rotary’s circle of legacy givers.

You’ve spent years “doing good in the world.” Now is the perfect time to make sure that good never stops.

Up to 50 individual \$10,000 or more bequests will be matched by an anonymous donor – that’s \$500,000 – and get you reserved seats at May 2nd Gala.

For more information and proper forms please contact Egor Shulman, District Rotary Foundation Chair at drfc5420@gmail.com 435-619-1317.

Useful links:

[You Tube video - Your Legacy - The Rotary Foundation](#)

[Wills & Living Trusts](#)

[Beneficiary Designations](#)

Egor Shulman

D5420 Rotary Foundation Chair 2025-2028

drfc5420@gmail.com

Rotary Youth News



Rotary Youth Exchange celebrates Christmas

Current inbound Exchange Students and their host parents celebrated Christmas with a potluck dinner with recipes from around the world. Joining them for the feast - Utah exchange students who were abroad last year.

We enjoyed Quiche Lorraine from France, potato salad from Germany, sopapillas and empanadas from Chile, Hachi-Parmentier from Belgium, Spanish tortilla from Spain, Brigadeiro from Brazil, Spaghetti Carbonara from Italy, Ris Alamande from Denmark, cabbage/ramen salad from Japan, rice and beans from Puerto Rico, kebabs from Turkey, and Santa Lucia rolls from Sweden. Mmmmm!

It was definitely an eclectic meal, not your traditional Christmas feast, but it was delicious and we had a great time learning about what Christmas and the other December/January holidays and how they are celebrated in countries around the world.

Aaron Lowe, District Chair

Rotary Youth Exchange

Let's Talk Peace this month.



The way we communicate with ourselves and others determines the inner peace we experience. And we cannot create peace in our world until we strive to make our own lives peaceful.

Kris Swanson, District Peace Chair, has created a follow-up session to the ***Create Your Piece of Peace*** presentation offered to clubs last year.

Invite Kris to speak at your club. Both ***Let's Talk Peace*** and ***Create Your Piece of Peace*** are available!

Email Kris@kristinaswanson.com to schedule your club presentation today.

Rotary International Peace Fellowships

Recruit candidates you know

Each year, Rotary International awards up to 130 fully-funded fellowships for dedicated leaders from around the world to study at one of Rotary's peace centers.

Through academic training, practice, and global networking opportunities, the Rotary Peace Centers program develops the capacity of professionals to become effective catalysts for peace. The fellowships cover tuition and fees, room and board, round-trip transportation, and internship and field-study expenses.

Applications open in just a few short months, so it's time to start recruiting interested individuals.

More information may be found here or by contacting Kris Swanson, District Peace Chair. All applicants from our District will work with Kris and a District Committee to complete their application. Successful candidates start early!

Kris Swanson District Peace Chair

kris@kristinaswanson.com



Upcoming Events in the District & the World



Join Utah District 5420 Rotaract as we explore the amazing resources Rotary has to offer all members!

MY ROTARY TRAINING

- ✓ Managing your Club Roster
- ✓ Paying your Invoice
- ✓ Professional Development

JOIN US!



Sunday Jan 25, 2026 | 8pm



drr@utahrotaract.org



utahrotaract.org

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



Email District Rotaract Representative Savannah for a Zoom Link

savannahb@utahrotaract.org

St George Sunrise Rotary Club presents our 10th Annual...

Evening of Elegance

Unite for Good Around the World

Garden Room

March 14, 2026

Dixie Convention Center

1835 S Convention Center Dr. St George

Social Hour/Silent Auctions 5:30

Dinner Begins @6:30

Formal Attire Suggested

Hosted Open Bar

Cost \$125/person

Sponsorship available



Proceeds to support:

Backpacks for Kids

Washington County Search and Rescue

P.A.W.S. (Providing Animals with Support)



An Evening of Elegance March 14th

Unite for Good Around the World

The **St. George Sunrise Rotary Club** invites our Rotary District family to come together in support of An Evening of Elegance, a night of fellowship, service, and impact. This year's theme, "Unite for Good Around the World," reflects Rotary's shared mission and the power of clubs supporting one another.

Set in beautiful Southern Utah, this elegant evening will take place on Saturday, March 14 at 5:30 pm at the Dixie Convention Center – Garden Room. The event will feature dinner and a fundraiser benefiting meaningful local causes including Backpacks for Kids, PAWS, and Search & Rescue. Your attendance, sponsorship, or donation directly supports St. George Sunrise Rotary and strengthens the collective impact of our district.

When we unite as a district, our impact multiplies. We hope you'll join us for this special evening.

A special thank you to our major sponsors, Paramount Tax & Accounting and Infinite Solutions Inc.

Tickets & donations <https://live.givebutter.com/c/StGeorgeSunriseRotary>



The **St. George Rotary Club** will celebrate the semi quincentennial of the signing of America's Declaration of Independence July 4, 1776 with two important projects. Before this nationwide party – 250 years in the making – St. George Rotary has a goal to sell 250 cases of sweet, delicious California navel oranges for our first 2026 fundraiser.

Then, on Saturday, April 25, 2026 (Arbor Day) we will plant 250 “Little Joe” ponderosa pines in Pine Valley where 15,662 acres, including thousands of trees and 17 homes, were burned to the ground in the Forsyth Fire in June 2025.

What are your club's plans to celebrate this milestone in our nation's history? Will you have a car show featuring 250 cars? Invite 250 of your neighbors and friends to join Rotary? Help 250 children improve their reading skills? Donate 250 lbs. of canned goods to your local food bank, or increase your club's per capita giving to The Rotary Foundation to \$250?

We are now six months from this nationwide party, so please consider what you can do to celebrate America, then share your plans and projects in your local media and in District 5420 to “say Rotary” 250 times!

What is your 250?

Linda Sappington, District Governor 2020-2021



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, June, 13-17, 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.



**POLAND
GRAND TOUR**

12 DAYS

VIP ACCESS TO ROYAL
AND HISTORIC SPLENDORS
&
EXCLUSIVE MEETINGS WITH
WORLD-FAMOUS PERSONALITIES
including:

LECH WALESA
Former President of Poland
& Nobel Peace Prize Winner

2026 TOUR DATES:
JUNE 28 - JULY 9, 2026 • JULY 19 - 30, 2026
AUGUST 2 - 13, 2026 • AUGUST 23 - SEPTEMBER 3, 2026



 www.PolandGrandTour.com  contact@historyexplorer.com  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.



In November the **Murray Rotary Club** pitched in with the Murray



December was a very busy month for the **Murray Rotary Club**. We started the month with our annual "Operation Santa" where we invited 100 children from Title 1 elementary

Chamber of Commerce, Murray Children's Pantry, and other volunteers to make Thanksgiving a little bit better for 220 local families. We moved and loaded meal boxes that were matched up with whole turkeys and delivered to the elementary school of the student (family) needing some extra help during the holiday. A small gesture with a very large and welcomed impact for those in need.

Editor's Note: Apologies for not including this submission in the December newsletter.

schools to a shopping spree at the local well and specifically stocked Goodwill Store. Accompanied by an adult, each child had \$70 to spend plus a new pair of winter boots. They arrived at the store with Murray Police cars and Murray Fire engine escort and were greeted by Santa and Mrs. Claus. Pictures were taken with the Claus's and each child received a small gift in addition to the boots and shopping spree. The two-hour event was, again this year, well supported by the first responders, Goodwill, and school system and was a great success. A week later Murray Rotarians turned out to ring bells for the Salvation Army for 8 hours at 2 locations helping to fill the pot for the people served.



Midvalley Rotary Club proudly welcomed two new members. Club members poured love into the Sleep in Heavenly Peace (SHP) bed delivery, building twin single and bunk beds, and fitting each one with mattresses, sheets, blankets, and a handmade quilt. The smiles and awe on the children's faces were priceless. Our 14th annual Operation Santa was a success, serving 100 children and 54 families across elementary schools in the Canyons School District. Partnering with Walmart, Unified Police, Unified firefighters, and



The Spanish Fork Rotary Club presented a \$23,000 check to Wendy Osborne and Lillian Kump at Tabitha's Way - a local food pantry with locations in Spanish Fork, Pleasant Grove, and Saratoga Springs. This generous donation was possible because of our Rotary members, individuals in the community, as well as businesses. The \$23,000 will provide 115,000 meals for individuals and families in our community!

Our club was also happy to help stock the shelves at the Nebo Pantry at Landmark High School. Clothing, food, and hygiene items are collected

community volunteers created unforgettable moments as each child discovered meaningful gifts for themselves and their families. We closed the season at our Christmas social during the Utah Grizzlies teddy bear toss, generously sponsored by Les Schwab.



The **Bountiful Rotary Club** kicked off the season with heartfelt support for Salvation Army's Angel Tree,

for children and families facing extreme hardship. About 1,500 students in the Nebo School District are currently homeless, couch hopping, living with relatives, or living in a car. Landmark High School serves as a staging ground for kids in need of the items we donated..



In December, 25 **Utah Valley University** Rotaractors observed United Nations International Mountain Day. By using student-engaged learning, they planned the event, raised funds, managed logistics, and media campaigns among others. The event featured

sponsoring gifts for families in need to spread holiday cheer. Members rang bells beside the iconic red kettles, urging passersby to drop coins and bills for vital community aid. Pride swelled as we honored our new Paul Harris Fellows, those who've given back generously with sustained contributions. Wrapping up the festivities, our annual Christmas party buzzed with laughter, shared stories, and lots of meat! We strengthened bonds while reminding everyone service above self truly shines this time of year. The best Club on the Planet.

world renowned climber Lynn Hill, trade policy expert from the Kyrgyz Republic, Dr. Muktar Djumaliev, and Dr. Matt Olson, Utah Valley University's assistant professor of earth science. All speakers emphasized the impact of global warming on snowpack, discussing consequences for water security in the State of Utah and worldwide, as well as effects on biodiversity. During the event, Ms. Lynn Hill presented United Nations certificates to Rotaractors and educators, including Cathy Ambrose, President of the Orem-Lindon Rotary club in recognition of their advocacy for sustainable mountain development in the State of Utah and continued support of sustainability and international cooperation..



Hurricane Valley Rotary had plenty of fun in December. Rotarians sorted dozens of boxes of canned goods for Bridge Utah, a local food pantry.

They also supported The Giving Tree, a program bringing holiday gifts for children.

Happy Dollars collections from the club were given to help families in need to pay winter utility bills.

And, of course, the club's annual holiday party brought them closer



The **St. George Sunrise Rotary Club** has been part of the Utah Rotary Dictionary project for years! In addition to some of the local St. George schools, our club has the “super fun” opportunity to go out to Colorado City, Hilldale, Orderville and other small rural locations. The excitement of the 3rd graders when we arrive is off the charts. And, if you think we no longer need a printed dictionary, just make the trip out to those places and see how thrilled

together. The club is looking forward to a great 2026!

the children are to have a dictionary of their very own! This year we met two adults in those schools who still had their personal dictionary from years ago! Wow!



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2025

[January](#)

[February](#)

[March](#)

[April](#)

[May](#)

[June](#)

[July](#)

[August](#)

2024

[January](#)

[February](#)

[March](#)

[April](#)

[May](#)

[June](#)

[July](#)

[August](#)

[September](#)

[October](#)

[November](#)

[December](#)

[September](#)

[October](#)

[November](#)

[December](#)



Newsletter Contributors

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David Nelson, District Community Service Chair

Linda Sappington, District Governor 2020-2021

Egor Shulman, District Rotary Foundation Chair
2025-2028

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Jerry Summerhays, District International Service
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Kris Swanson, District Peace Chair

Martha Velasco, Midvalley Rotary Club, District
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Jim Wilcox, Murray Rotary Club

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