



The Madison WI Rotary News - July 2026 Edition

a publication of the Rotary Club of Madison



Upcoming Rotary Programs at Park Hotel

- **July 1: NO MEETING**
- **July 8:** Chris Kolakowski -- Revolutionary Wisconsin
- **July 15:** Greg Gard -- UW Basketball and Coaching
- **July 22:** Natalie Erdman and Kristin Rucinski -- Homelessness in Dane County and the New Men's Shelter
- **July 29:** Dr. Joe Gothard, Becky Kundert, Sonia Spencer -- MMSD Literacy Efforts and Mad for Reading

Rotary
District 6250



June 2026 Rotary District Newsletter

Here's a [LINK](#) to this month's Rotary District 6250 newsletter so you can read about happenings within other Rotary Clubs in our district and key District and Rotary International news.

Meet President Mark Greene

July 1 marks the start of a new Rotary year, and we want to introduce you to **Mark Greene** who will be our Rotary Club of Madison's president for 2026-2027.



Mark joined our Rotary Club on June 4, 2014. He grew up in Santa Clara, California. He holds a BS degree in Aeronautical Engineering from the United States Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs. He graduated from flight school in Mississippi in September 2001, just days after the 9-11 terrorist attacks, and spent most of the next seven years abroad as a combat pilot. Mark has flown over 170 Combat Missions in the Middle East; and has received six Air Medals; two Aerial Achievement Medals for his actions in combat.

While serving overseas, Mark began to think about a career in law or business. In 2009 he moved to Madison, transferred from active duty to the Air National Guard, and attended the University of Wisconsin Law School. He received his Juris Doctor (JD) in 2012. Following graduation, he's worked as Director of Innovation at TruStage, and Chief of Strategy a generative AI company, Titan AI, that was

acquired by WPS. In 2024, he founded Account Pilot, Inc, a financial wellness platform that automates financial stability and empowers efficient, impactful member engagement for credit unions.

Within the community, Mark has served on a number of boards including: Agrace, Starion Bank, Evjue Foundation, Workforce Development Board, 100 Black Men of Madison, the New Leaders Council of Wisconsin, and chairing the City of Madison's Economic Development Committee.

In his free time, Mark enjoys writing music, exercising, and spending time doing chores on a hobby farm.

We welcome Mark Greene as our club's #114 president!

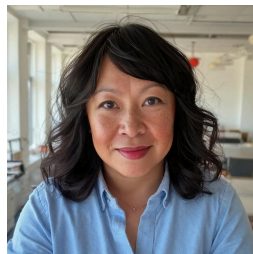
Meet Our Newest Members!



The following joined our Rotary Club on June 3, 2026:



Jake Barreau (buh-roo) is Advancement Officer at the Madison Opera. Jake was born in Baraboo and after graduating from UW-Madison in 2013, he embarked on a 13-year career in collegiate athletics, capped off by one year in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, before moving back to Madison this past February. He and his husband, Hunter, will be moving to the north side of Madison later this month. Jake holds a Bachelor of Business Administration in Marketing and Spanish from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and a Masters in Sports Management from Missouri State University. Jake was among those honored in 2016 for the American Volleyball Coaches Association Thirty Under 30 Award, and he is also a former Big 10 Men's Volleyball Association two-time Defensive Player of the Year. Jake was the 2019 recipient of United Way Inspire Award, and an Advocate Magazine Champion of Pride Honoree in 2020. He has served with the Big 10 Diversity Mentoring Program, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Among Friends Activity Center for Adults with Disabilities, and was the National President for Future Business Leaders of America from 2011-2012. He is also a part of the Association for Fundraising Professionals. Jake enjoys playing volleyball, working out, thrifting, and trying new restaurants. Valerie Kazamias and John Sims are his sponsors.



Tu Le is Team Leader at Wisconsin Homes Team, eXp Realty. She was born in Laos, and moved to Madison from Hoboken, New Jersey in 2010. She previously worked in Manhattan from 1997 to 2010, as a Creative Designer for major fashion hubs, specializing in texture, color theory, and composition. Tu lives in Madison and has 4 grown children. She holds an Associate of Applied Science Degree from the International Academy of Design and Technology-Chicago. Tu was among the 2016 Brava Women to Watch Honorees, and in 2023, one of Brava's 10 Madison Asian American Pacific Islander Women You Need to Know. She has been a board member of Art Lit Laboratory, Friends of UW Health, and assists with Madison's Reading Projects Read(y) to wear show as Madison's "Tim Gunn". Tu is also a part of Wisconsin Realtors Association. She enjoys playing tennis, pickle ball, and volunteering for local non-profits. Rhonda Adams and Rowan Childs are her sponsors.



Jacob Morrison is Design Principal at Potter Lawson. Jacob was born in New Roads, Louisiana and moved to Madison in 2019 from New York City. Jacob and his wife, Anne, reside in Madison and have two children. He holds a Master of Architecture from Savannah College of Art and Design and was their Affiliated Fellow to the American Academy of Rome from 2023 to 2024. He has served with the City of Madison Landmarks Commission and on the Board of Trustees for the Madison Museum of Contemporary Art. Jacob is also a part of the American Institute of Architects, the International Interior Design Association and the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards. Jacob enjoys cycling, drawing, and has been collecting comic books for 40 years now. Jason Ilstrup is his sponsor.

MRF Officers Elected for 2026-2027

The Madison Rotary Foundation Trustees have elected the following officers for the 2026-2027 Rotary year:

President
Charles McLimans



Vice President
Jen Savino



Secretary
Pat Jenkins



Treasurer
Dave Duchow



Asst. Treasurer
Chris Rich



We extend our thanks to each of these members for their willingness to serve as leaders of our Madison Rotary Foundation for one-year terms beginning July 1, 2026.

In Memory of Melanie Ramey



It is with great sadness that we share the passing of longtime member and friend, Melanie Ramey who passed away on June 8th at the age of 85.

Since joining our club in 1991, Melanie has been a dedicated leader, mentor, and champion of service. She served as Club President in 1998-99 and played a pivotal role in shaping many of the programs and traditions that continue to strengthen our club today.

Melanie helped create our Rotary Ethics Symposium, mentored countless Rotary scholars, and generously opened her home to Youth Exchange students. Her vision and commitment to philanthropy led to the tradition of inviting members to celebrate their birthdays with a gift, rounded up to \$100, to our Foundation which has generated more than \$600,000 for our foundation to date.

Melanie's contributions continued throughout her years of service. Most recently, she managed our Meeting Sponsorship Program from its inception in 2022.

Known for bringing both humor and hard work to every endeavor, Melanie made a lasting impact on our club and the many lives she touched. Her dedication was recognized through our club's highest honors, including the Joseph Werner Award and the Manfred Swarsensky Humanitarian Service Award.

Melanie leaves behind a remarkable legacy of leadership, generosity, and service. She would often say that this Rotary Club was her family, and she truly appreciated all of the friendships she made through being a member of the Rotary Club of Madison. She will be deeply missed.

Our club has made a \$100 gift to the Madison Rotary Foundation to establish a memorial fund in her name. Anyone wishing to make a gift to this fund may send their contributions to the Madison Rotary Foundation, 2 S. Carroll Street, Suite 255, Madison, WI 53703 or online at: <https://rotarymadison.org/donate/madison-rotary-foundation-memorial-fund>

Review of Last Month's Guest Speaker Presentations

June 3: Dr. Christine Whelan -- Purpose is a Verb

--submitted by Eric Krieghoff



Dr. Christine Whelan argues that purpose is active, communal, and built daily. Using a humorous story about needing help removing tight cowboy boots, she illustrates "purpose in action" through collaboration. She reframes purpose not as a single fixed life aim, but as "rocket fuel" powered by values, strengths, and positive impact. Purpose improves well-being, longevity, income, and goal achievement. She encourages a daily purpose statement linking values and gifts to helping others. Through a bricklaying parable, she highlights seeing one's work as contributing to something greater. Purpose grows brick-by-brick through intentional actions taken today and building meaning together in community.

June 10: Dr. Danielle Hairston-Green -- From Voices to Vision: Building Stronger Communities Through Father Engagement

--submitted by Sharyn Alden



On June 10, Rotarians learned how a statewide, fatherhood assessment program is supporting absent fathers who are not involved in their children's lives. **Dr. Danielle Hairston-Green** discussed the Fathers in Focus Conference, the Focus on Fathers Virtual Workshop Series, and the Fatherhood Peer-to-Peer Initiative. She is the assistant dean of the UW's Human Development & Relationship Institute.

In 2019, the Institute conducted a fatherhood needs assessment. They learned when a father's love and support are missing, it not only impacts the child's emotional well-being, it affects the community as well.

She understands what it is like to grow up wanting her father to be present. He left the family when she was three years old.

She wrote numerous letters to him,; she sent him stationery and stamps. He never wrote back.

She found a way to make people believe her dad was just super busy. "I told them he was a Chief on an Indian reservation, and he had to take care of his tribe." The made-up story helped her get through life.

In 8th grade, she found out where her dad lived. She walked across Philadelphia with excitement and hope. But when he saw her, he walked out the back door to work on his car. Then, when she graduated from high school, he was there. People had mostly forgotten the Indian Chief story by then. He explained he ran away because he thought he had nothing to offer his family.

"But he said he was blessed because I gave him a second chance. I waited 30 years to hear that." He also became a loving grandfather.

In 2005, he died at 54. Dr. Green felt she had lost him twice. While her story is personal, stories of missing dads are pervasive. She said research has found that fathers want to be fathers; they want to be present in their children's lives."

June 17: Dr. Barry Burden -- Outlook for the 2026 Midterm Elections

--submitted by Ellsworth Brown



Sitting in the hotel cafe writing the summary of our speaker's presentation after Rotary today I overheard two people debating the outcome of **Dr. Barry Burden's** speech: they could not agree on his conclusion.

Dr. Barry Burden was unbiased and thorough, covering political parties well and fairly with a practiced, well informed, and clear delivery—a true expert whom we have heard before.

Burden covered national and state scenes at midterm: Republicans 217 to 212 in the House, 53 to 45 in the Senate. Subjects included past presidential races, numbers of candidates, typical midterm dominant party losses and reasons for possible success or failure. He covered Wisconsin's gubernatorial race and more.

But the most important part of Burden's presentation was his opening warning that he would begin and end with "on the one hand . . . and on the other". At this time there are no sound forecasts.

Our thanks to **Eric Krieghoff**, **Sharyn Alden**, and **Ellsworth Brown** for providing these summary articles for our guest speakers during the month of June. If you missed an previous Rotary guest speaker presentations, you can watch most of them on our club's [YouTube Channel](#).

Rotary International Foundation Campaign Exceeds Goal

Our thanks to **Mike McKay** who chaired this year's Rotary International Foundation fundraising campaign during the month of May. We are pleased to report that we raised at our meeting this week that we raised **\$52,855**, exceeding our **\$45,000** goal.

We sincerely thank everyone who contributed to the campaign this year. Reaching our goal also qualifies our International Projects Committee to be able to seek matching donations from our Rotary District and Rotary International for the upcoming year.

Thank you!

Excellence in Education Grants Application Deadline is July 15

Our Madison Rotary Foundation is beginning its process for the 4th annual Excellence in Education Grants Program. Kelly Ruppel chairs the 15-member committee this year, and an email has been sent out to organizations that have applied in the past. This grant program supports organizations that are working to eliminate educational disparities and create greater opportunities for all students to succeed. Grant funding may be used to expand or enhance existing educational programs, strengthen partnerships, improve infrastructure, provide teacher training, increase access to resources, or support other innovative initiatives that advance educational equity.

We encourage members to help spread the word about this grants program. **The deadline to submit applications is July 15.**

Here is a [link](#) to our club's website page where you can find the guidelines and application materials:

- **Guidelines:** <https://portal.clubrunner.ca/11965/Documents/en-us/b43556c8-f4c8-4119-bfb5-356817459909/1/>
- **Application Fill-in Form:** <https://portal.clubrunner.ca/11965/Documents/en-us/969dbf0a-54bb-4fbb-8b02-fd61cc68c576/1/>
- **Excel Budget Template:** <https://portal.clubrunner.ca/11965/Documents/en-us/4e721bf7-e911-42e1-9d85-ab0c173ba207/1/>

Innovation Grant Application Deadline is August 3

The Rotary Club of Madison and its Madison Rotary Foundation announce a deadline of August 3, 2026, for this year's **Rotary Innovation Grants Program**.

If you know of a local nonprofit that would like to apply for a grant of up to \$5,000 on a relatively quick turnaround to explore or launch an innovation that will enable them to better serve their constituents, operate more efficiently, extend its reach or do something amazing, please let them know about this grant program. Lindsey Giese will chair the 15-member Innovation Grants Committee this year.

Here is a link to this year's application form and guidelines: <https://portal.clubrunner.ca/11965/Documents/en-us/9601d5a5-f55a-489b-a935-5a9b731e381c/1/>

New Scholarship Funds Announced

Our thanks to the following for making gifts to the Madison Rotary Foundation in support of our four-year college scholarship program:



Jeffrey & Angela Bartell Scholarship Fund. Jeff and Angela Bartell who provided a \$50,000 gift to establish the Jeffrey & Angela Bartell Scholarship Fund. The first recipient was named last month. Jeff was a founding partner of the Madison office of the Quarles & Brady Law Firm, and Angela served as a Dane County Circuit Judge for 30 years and then became a mediator and arbitrator for 15 years. Jeff is a past president of our Madison Rotary Foundation and Angela is a past president of our Rotary Club of Madison.



Himmelsbach Worzala Family Scholarship Fund: Loretta Himmelsbach has contributed \$40,000 to become a partner with her brother-in-law and his family's Worzala Family Scholarship Fund to create the Himmelsbach Worzala Family Scholarship Fund. Loretta joined our Rotary Club in 1995, transferring from the Rotary Club of Springfield, Illinois, and has served on our

Scholarship Committee. David Worzala, a former member of our club, and his wife, Julie, established this fund in 2009. They also contributed an additional \$10,000 to fund fund this year.

Jeff Tews & Susan Rather Scholarship Fund: Jeff Tews and his wife, Susan Rather, contributed \$100,000 to establish the Jeff Tews & Susan Rather Scholarship Fund. Jeff



has been a Rotary member since 2009. He has served on the Madison Rotary Foundation Board of Trustees and on a number of club service committees. Jeff and Susan started the BrightStar Care franchise in Madison, a company which provides in-home care services, in 2006. They retired in 2025. Their first scholar will be named in 2027.

Our sincere thanks to **Jeff & Angela Bartell, Loretta Himmelsbach, David & Julie Worzala** and **Jeff Tews & Susan** for their gifts to expand our scholarship program.

They join 18 other donors who have set-up scholarship funds within our Madison Rotary Foundation to provide four-year college scholarship assistance for eligible students.

Rotary Information Report: Rotary Club of Madison Senior Service Award

Written by Jerry Thain, Presented by Jeff Bartell – June 17, 2026

Our Club's Senior Service Award has been given to more than 500 deserving recipients in the larger

Madison community over the past 51 years. The award is given to individuals, couples or groups who have contributed significant amounts of unpaid volunteer time. This includes volunteerism through any non-profit program or organization. Although the primary focus is on service for the betterment of Madison or Dane County, service that benefits a broader level of society may also be considered.

The award is for senior service, meaning individuals must be retired or at least 65 years of age and have made contributions that represent and foster the Rotary ideal of "Service above Self." The volunteer efforts may be of short or long duration, on behalf of one organization or multiple organizations. If it is of short duration, then it must have a significant impact. In all cases, the scope of activity and the degree of significance and impact are taken into account.

Special considerations are given to so-called "unsung heroes," those whose contributions may might otherwise go unrecognized and for whom the award provides a unique opportunity for recognition of their service. However, those who have received recognition for their service are not precluded from receiving the Senior Service award.

The awardees over the years have engaged in virtually every type of volunteer service: assisting at health care facilities or educational activities or environmental improvement efforts or providing essential support for an arts organization. The list is almost endless. It is impressive to read the extensive list of awardees and delightful to realize how our community is enriched by so many of these wonderful volunteers. The committee is sure that there are many more of them and we encourage any Club member to send a nomination for an award to the committee for its' consideration. The Committee happily handles submission of the necessary paper work but we consider "finding" those deserving of this recognition the job of all Club members.

Link to the Senior Service Award nomination form here:

<https://portal.clubrunner.ca/11965/Documents/en-us/d514732c-cdc1-43b3-9ec2-7289f84535bb/1/>

Rotary Senior Service Award Recipient Anne Karch

Introduced by Jeff Bartell - June 17, 2026

As a member of the Senior Service Award Committee, I am so pleased to have the opportunity to present this Senior Service Award today for two reasons: first, I'm likely to become a senior before too long; but second, as a member of the senior service award committee, I get to learn about all the wonderful things seniors are doing around town for the betterment of our community and to fulfill the Rotary ideal of "Service Above Self".

Our award recipient today is a prime example of that. **Anne Karch**, will you please stand so the Rotarians can see you while I tell them why the Committee selected you to receive this award?

Anne is an exceptionally skilled and knowledgeable teacher and linguist. She holds a PhD in curriculum and instruction, a master's degree in reading, as well as a certificate in teaching English language learners.

Anne has been a dedicated volunteer at Literacy Network for more than 10 years, where she had devoted more than 1,000 hours as a tutor, working one-on-one with adult learners to build reading, writing and literacy skills. Her work has supported adults in Madison and Dane County working toward earning American citizenship and a high school equivalency diploma.

In addition to tutoring, Anne has served on the Literacy Network board of directors, where she provides thoughtful and knowledgeable leadership and contributes to the organization's strategic direction. I mentioned that Anne tutors students toward citizenship and a GED. One such student was Amada, who went only as far as middle school in Mexico before she moved to the U.S. Amada enrolled in Literacy Network and started working with Anne. As Amanda built her English skills, she got a new job – followed by a promotion. Then, with Anne's continuing tutoring, Amanda became a U.S. citizen and earned her equivalency diploma in May of last year – the same month her daughter graduated from high school.



In the interest of brevity, I won't go into Anne's 30-year volunteer work and leadership role with the Dup15q Alliance which works to empower individuals living with Dup15q syndrome, a rare genetic disorder, to reach their full potential through advancing research and treatments, supporting families and promoting advocacy.

Suffice to say that Anne Karch superbly embodies the Rotary ideals of "Service Above Self," and I am honored to present her with Rotary's Senior Service Award.

Youth Service Award to Stacy Nemeth

Presented by Jason Ilstrup -- June 24, 2026



Each year, our club recognizes six members for their outstanding service to our Rotary Club in one of the five avenues of service which are club, community, international, vocational or youth services.

It is my privilege to present a Youth Service Award in recognition of a member whose dedication and commitment to student success have made a lasting impact on our Foundation's scholarship program and the lives of countless students.

Stacy Nemeth has been a member of our Rotary Club for 19 years and is COO of the Fiore Companies. For six years, Stacy has served on our Scholarship Committee and was chair for the past 3 years. She has generously given her time,

expertise, and thoughtful attention to annually reviewing lengthy scholarship applications and serving on the panel to interview each of the students. Through her genuine interest in helping students achieve their educational goals, she has played a key role in ensuring that our scholarships are awarded to the most deserving students who are selected to receive four-year college scholarship assistance. She has also served as a mentor to several of our Rotary scholars.

Stacy's volunteer service has been performed quietly and without expectation of recognition. Behind the scenes, she has made a meaningful difference, and we are deeply grateful for her contributions.

In recognition of her ongoing dedication to our Club, we are honored to present her with the 2026 Rotary Club of Madison Youth Service Award.

I'd ask Stacy to please come forward so we may congratulate you as President Anthony presents her with a certificate and an award pin in recognition of her exceptional contributions to our Rotary Club. Thank you.



July 2 -- Steve Goldberg -- Adm. Date: 8/6/2003

Foundations. WEA Member Benefits Foundation Director 2006-08

July 2 -- Oscar Mireles -- Adm. Date: 5/1/2013

Community Services-Retired. Latinos Organizing for Understanding & Development Director 2016-18 Formerly Rotarian at Madison 1994-99

July 3 -- Patrick Marsden -- Adm. Date: 6/4/2003
Insurance. State Farm Insurance Formerly Rotarian at Sycamore, IL 1987- 2001 PHF (5)

July 3 -- Lisa Smith -- Adm. Date: 1/8/2025
Community Services. Girl Scouts of Wisconsin-Badgerland

July 4 -- Tripp Widder -- Adm. Date: 7/6/1994
Law-Retired. Director 2001-02; MRF President 2007-08 PHF (4)

July 6 -- Brad Pohlman -- Adm. Date: 1/7/2026
Religion. Luther Memorial Church

July 10 -- Kirsten Houghton -- Adm. Date: 10/4/2023
Accounting. SVA Certified Public Accountants, S.C.

July 10 -- Wendy Wink -- Adm. Date: 5/22/2024
Associations-Business & Professional-Retired. Former member of Club 1997-2014 PHF (3)

July 11 -- Adolf Gundersen -- Adm. Date: 9/4/2024
Foundations-Retired. Former member at West Roxbury/Roslindale, MA 2010-12

July 12 -- Jeff Tubbs -- Adm. Date: 3/6/2002
Construction. J.H. Findorff & Son Inc.

July 13 -- Cheryl DeMars -- Adm. Date: 11/5/2008
Health Services-Retired. Sgt. At Arms 2012-13; Director 2013-15 PHF (6)

July 13 -- Jennifer Ginsburg -- Adm. Date: 6/4/2025
Community Services. Safe Harbor Child Advocacy Center

July 16 -- Joe Loehnis -- Adm. Date: 4/1/2015
Arts-Performing. Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra

July 17 -- John Sims -- Adm. Date: 5/19/2010
Financial Institutions. US Bank Former member of Club 2001-05 PHF

July 21 -- Tina Choles -- Adm. Date: 6/4/2003
Retail-Services & Products. Choles Floral

July 21 -- Scott Haumersen -- Adm. Date: 5/7/2003
Education. One City Schools Director 2023-25 PHF (4)

July 21 -- Dave Mollenhoff -- Adm. Date: 7/7/1982
Real Estate. Lakeridge LLC Director 1987-89, 1991-92, President 1990-91 PHF (8)

July 22 -- Shawn Carney -- Adm. Date: 6/30/2021 BB# 4054
Community Services. Catholic Charities of Madison Former Member 2004-12 PHF

July 23 -- Peng Her -- Adm. Date: 5/3/2023
Community Services. The Hmong Institute, Inc.

July 24 -- Denise Hanson -- Adm. Date: 1/7/2026
Community Services. Root 2 Rise

July 25 -- Roth Judd -- Adm. Date: 9/9/1987
Law-Retired. Director 1997-99, President 2000-01 PHF (9)

July 26 -- Sandy Morales -- Adm. Date: 4/1/2015
Community Services. Big Brothers Big Sisters of Dane County Director 2017-19; MRF President 2024-25 PHF

July 28 -- Korbey White -- Adm. Date: 1/3/2024
Community Services. Improve Your Tomorrow Wisconsin

July 29 -- Angela Titus -- Adm. Date: 12/7/2022
Government-State. Wisconsin Historical Society Director 2025-27 PHF

July 29 -- Jennifer Weitzman -- Adm. Date: 12/7/2016
Advertising, Publicity & Public Relations. jamgd Former member Sun Prairie 2006-16 PHF (4)

July 30 -- Dewey Bredeson -- Adm. Date: 5/5/1993
Housing. Bay Tree Real Estate Group, Inc. 100% Attendance since 8/12/1998; Sgt.-at-Arms 2023-24 PHF (5)

July 30 -- Kaleem Caire -- Adm. Date: 11/1/2017
Education. One City Schools Former member 2010-14

July 31 -- Joy Cardin -- Adm. Date: 6/29/2022
Communications-Retired. Director 2025-27

July 31 -- Peggy Gunderson -- Adm. Date: 2/7/2024
Advertising, Publicity & Public Relations. Strategic Brand Marketing



Get Social with Us! Visit www.rotarymadison.org



Rotary Club of Madison, 2 S. Carroll St., Ste. 255, Madison, WI 53703
Phone/Text 608-255-9164 Fax 608-255-9007
Email rotaryoffice@rotarymadison.org

Visit our website for more resources: www.rotarymadison.org Resources include links to weekly meeting videos and our social media communications which include photos from our weekly luncheons and other Rotary events. If you prefer not to be included in photos we use, contact the Rotary office to let them know.