



## Upcoming Events

*Speaker schedule and upcoming events can also be found on  
Charlotte Rotary's website under "Events / News".*

**\*Tues., Oct. 29 - Weekly Meeting:** *April Whitlock, Head of Corporate Citizenship, LendingTree and Executive Director, LendingTree Foundation*

*\*Remember to bring a coat, sweater or any warm clothing for donation to Western NC.*

**Tues., Oct. 29 - Service Committee Meeting:** 1:30 p.m. in Studio 2. Join Service Committee Chair [Donna Dunlap](#) for more information on how to join this committee and how you can help.

**Fri., Nov. 8 - District Event: Tree Planting in honor of RI President Stephanie Urchick's visit to the area.**  
Lunchtime - Confirmation on time to follow. Mnt Museum, 2730 Randolph Rd.

**Fri., Nov. 8 - District Event: The Rotary Foundation Celebration**, Gastonia Conference Center, 145 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Gastonia, NC 28052.

**Wed., Nov. 20 - Leadership Impact Group Monthly Meeting** 5:30–7 p.m., Lost Worlds Brewing, 1100 Metropolitan Ave., Suite 165, Charlotte.

**Tues., Dec. 17 - Volunteer Opportunity: Blood Drive!** Join Charlotte Rotary and the American Red Cross Blood Drive, 10 a.m. - 2:30 p.m., [www.redcrossblood.org](http://www.redcrossblood.org) and use sponsor code Charlotterotary or call 1-800-redcros to make your appointment.

## This Week's Meeting



***Andy Ellen, President and General Counsel, NC Retail Merchants Association***

by **Susie Masotti**

Rotary member [Luther Moore](#) introduced this week's speaker – Andy Ellen, President of the North Carolina Retail Merchants Association. Andy came to the NCRMA as general counsel in 1998 and took on the role of President in 2012. He is responsible for the NCRMA and 12 affiliated companies. He is passionate about promoting a positive environment for the retail industry from all aspects – public, legislative and regulatory agencies to enhance his members' opportunities for success. Andy has been named to the Power List of Business NC for

the past 3 years, as well as one of the top five most effective lobbyists in NC by the NC Public Policy Institute many times. He has been recognized by the National Retail Federation, a recipient of the Triangle Business Journal's Corporate Counsel Awards. Andy is originally from Southern Pines, received

his undergraduate degree from Elon University and his Juris Doctorate from Campbell University. He and his wife Tricia live in Wake Forest and have two daughters currently in college.

Andy thanked everyone for having him serve as speaker. The North Carolina Retail Merchants Association was founded in 1902 as a trade association and today represents 25,000 stores across the state whose business represent 75% of North Carolinas' retail sales volume. The Association serves every type of retailer, from multi-state chains to local small businesses. States. [Click here to read more.](#)

[Click here for a recording of the meeting.](#) The program's introduction begins at approximately 24 minutes and 30 seconds.







Thank you to Kevin Ellis and NC Business for recognition of the Rotary Club of Charlotte in the following article: [\*Everyone pays cost for organized retail crime - Business North Carolina\*](#)

## Club News



***Welcome to the club!*** Byrd Bergeron is a recent Charlotte transplant from Cincinnati, where she spent the last nine years deeply involved in community service through the Junior League of Cincinnati, serving in various leadership roles, including on their board. She has also contributed her time and expertise as a board member of St. Joseph's Orphanage and participated on several committees with the local chamber.

Byrd is the proud owner of a large leisure travel agency, a dynamic and ever-evolving business that keeps her on her toes. She relishes the challenges and rewards that come with managing a team of 48 fully remote employees, which has helped the company thrive. However, running a remote team has left her craving more face-to-face human interaction, which she has fulfilled through volunteer work in her community.

Having only recently moved to Charlotte, Byrd is eager to rebuild the sense of community that has been so important in her life. She views Rotary as an opportunity to give back and become engaged in her new city, as well as connect with like-minded individuals who share her passion for service and making a positive impact.

When she's not working or volunteering, you can usually find Byrd outdoors, where she feels most at peace. Whether hiking or enjoying time on the water, nature recharges her spirit. One of her greatest joys is watching her children explore and learn about the world, fostering their curiosity and encouraging their budding passions. For Byrd, life is about growth, connection, and finding joy in both work and play.

*Welcome Byrd!*

***Welcome to the club!*** Many of you may know Velva Woollen from her incredible work in the Charlotte community. Born in High Point, Velva moved to Charlotte at the age of 7. A graduate of East Mecklenburg High School, Salem College, and Duke University, she has lived in various cities but proudly calls Charlotte her home.



Velva's leadership journey began early, as she became the first President of the Board of Directors of Discovery Place. She then served six years as a Charlotte City Councilwoman, where her leadership was instrumental in building the first multi-income housing units, renovating low-income housing projects like Earle Village and Piedmont Courts, and establishing the Housing Trust Fund. Affordable housing has long been her passion, and she was a key figure in creating the Charlotte Mecklenburg Housing Partnership. Following her City Council service, she chaired the Charlotte Housing Authority for six years.

Velva's community service extends even further. She has served as a founding member or board member for numerous organizations, including the Women's Impact Fund, Charlotte Women of Vision, Good Friends, Lifespan, INREACH, Sugar Creek Charter School, Sharon Towers, Carolinas Medical Center, and the Metropolitan YMCA of Greater Charlotte. She also contributes to the OrthoCarolina Research Institute and Covenant Presbyterian Church, where she serves as Elder Emeritus.

Her leadership and dedication have earned her several prestigious awards, such as the YWCA Women of Achievement Award, Charlotte Woman of the Year, and the Order of the Long Leaf Pine for her work in job training and workforce preparedness during Governor Jim Martin's term.

Velva is also a mother to four adult children and grandmother to ten. She lost her beloved husband, Tom Woollen, in 2022. She continues to leave an indelible mark on the community. *Welcome Velva!*



### *Service Above Self*

Stay connected with our club's impactful work by referring to this year's service schedule below.

Members are welcome to attend our Service Committee Meeting, coming up on October 29th in Studio 2, immediately following our weekly meeting. Join us to learn more about upcoming service opportunities!

### *Get involved in our impactful year of service!*

Charlotte Rotary's 2024-2025 Monthly Service Focus schedule highlights a range of opportunities to make a difference, from supporting Classroom Central last August to the Goodwill Christmas in July drive next summer. Each month offers a chance to contribute to meaningful initiatives led by our dedicated committee chairs.

If you are interested in the Service Committee, join us at the upcoming Service Committee Meeting on Tues., Oct. 29th, immediately following the weekly meeting in Studio 2, to learn how you can participate. Or contact Service Chair, [Donna Dunlap](#) at [donna.dunlap@bbbscentralcarolinas.org](mailto:donna.dunlap@bbbscentralcarolinas.org) or Executive Secretary [Christine Cipriano](#) at [christine@charlotterotary.org](mailto:christine@charlotterotary.org) to find out how you can help.

*Let's come together to make a positive impact throughout the year!*

\*Note: Western, NC Support is underway separately - See below.

- **August** was Classroom Central Supply Drive (Karen Calder, Chair)
- **September** was the First Responders Scholarship Luncheon (Rex Reynolds, Chair)
- **October** was the Polio Proclamation and Polio fundraiser for Polio (led by Laura Meier and Tish Atkins)
- **November** =
  - The Rotary Foundation Awareness (Chair, Joe Morris)
  - Big Brothers Big Sisters Book Drive with a book assembly and social on Dec. 4 (Donna Dunlap, Chair)
- **December** =
  - The Salvation Army Bell Ringing and Red Kettle Campaign (Chaired by Mark Norman and Maggie Mitchem-Flanigan)
  - American Red Cross Blood Drive, Tues., Dec. 17 (Terri DeBoo, Chair)
  - Charlotte Rescue Mission Breakfast (Tracey Reading, Chair)
- **January** = Crisis Assistance Ministry Hat, Glove & Scarf Drive (Chair needed)
- **February** =
  - Scouting for Food/Scout's Food Drive (Jonathan Russell, Chair)
  - Coins For Alzheimer's Research Trust (CART) Even on Feb. 20 (Tish Atkins, Margaret Donovan, and Virginia Owen, Co-Chairs)
- **March** = Tree Planting Project (Phil Volponi, Chair)
- **April** = Ronald McDonald House Project (Denise Cubbedge, Chair)
- **May** = Samaritan's Feet Project (Carol Hardison, Chair)
- **June** = Nourish Up Project (Catherine Bracey, Chair)
- **July** = Goodwill - Christmas in July Drive (Jennifer De La Jara, Chair)



# ***HOLIDAY BOOK DRIVE!***

**EVERY TUESDAY DURING THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER!**



**GOAL: 100+ BOOKS TO PROVIDE WINTER  
BREAK READING FOR YOUNG SCHOLARS!**

**PLEASE BRING NEW BOOKS!**

ELEMENTARY, MIDDLE, OR HIGH  
SCHOOL READING LEVELS!

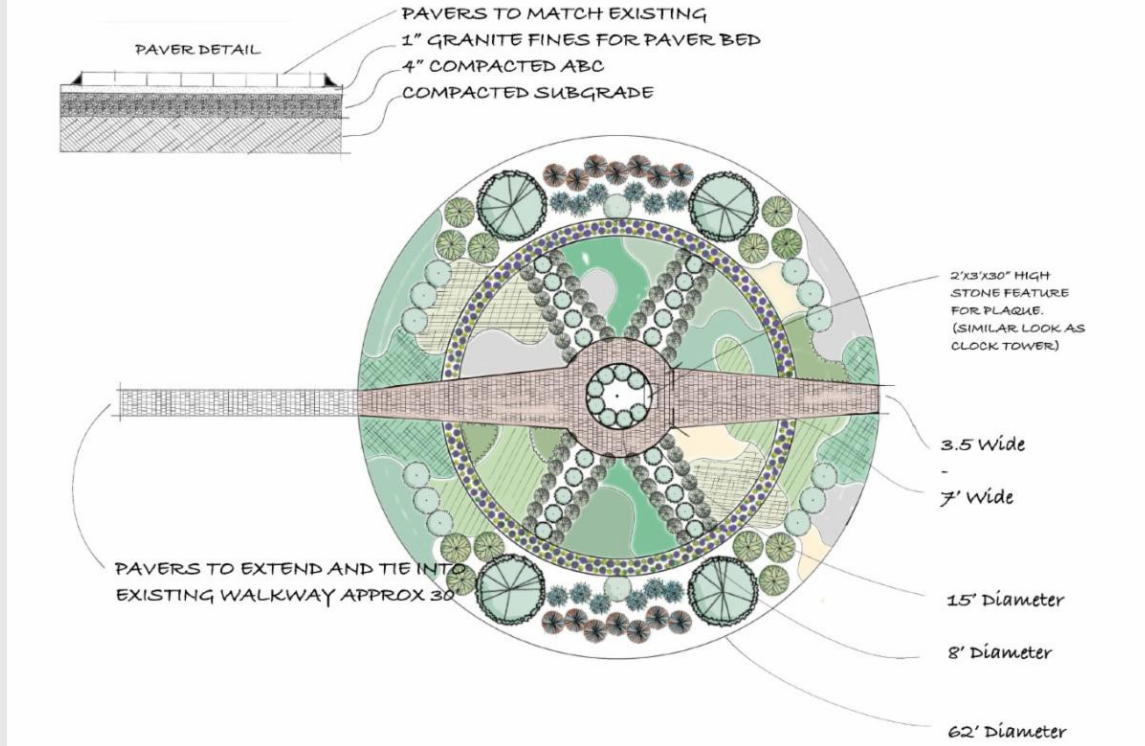


**GREAT SPOTS TO SHOP!**

WALMART, TARGET, BOB'S, COSTCO, SAM'S CLUB, OR AMAZON!



Throughout November, Charlotte Rotary is collecting books for the Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Carolinas Holiday Book Drive! Help bring joy and inspire young readers by bringing a new book each Tuesday. Your donations will make a wonderful impact this holiday season. Let's come together to make a difference—one book at a time!



### ***District Grant Awarded for Rotary Garden Monument Project!***

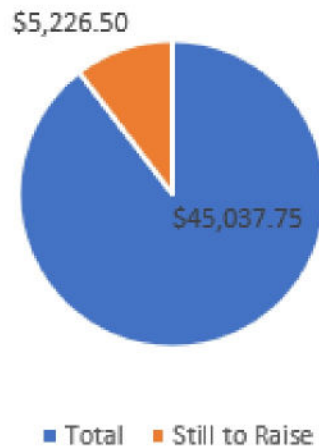
Charlotte Rotary is proud to announce that we have been awarded a District Grant of \$17,680 to install a Rotary Garden Monument in Thompson Park by St. Mary's Chapel along the Sugar Creek Greenway. The garden, shaped like the iconic Rotary wheel and measuring approximately 66 feet in diameter, will help promote Rotary's brand to thousands of visitors. St. Mary's Chapel hosts 5–6 weddings each weekend during the spring, summer, and fall, making this a prime location for increased community visibility.

This project, in partnership with the Catawba Lands Conservancy (CLC) and Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation, will contribute to environmental protection, pollination, and provide a serene space in a bustling urban setting. The garden will be permanently maintained by Parks and Recreation, ensuring its lasting impact on the community.

### ***Almost there!***

Since this is a matching grant, fundraising is needed and is making great progress! We've already raised \$45,037.75 toward our \$50,264.25 goal, thanks to the generosity of our members and community partners. If you'd like to contribute and help us reach the finish line, please see [Joe Morris](#), [Tony Zeiss](#), or [Stuart Hair](#). Every contribution counts as we work toward completing this beautiful addition to Thompson Park.

## Monument Garden Fundraising Total Project Cost: \$50,264.25



## Western NC Disaster Relief



### *Western North Carolina Relief*


*"Some of you or your neighbors changed sizes this year. Donate those incorrect sizes to your neighbors in need." ~ PP David Anderson*

Charlotte Rotary's current efforts to help Western NC, led by Past President [David Anderson](#) and [Robert Shaw](#), are to donate to organizations already making a significant impact in Western North Carolina relief. If you'd like to contribute items, Charlotte Rotary's efforts are focused on coats, blankets and sweaters. Please bring warm clothing to donate at our next meeting. The items you bring will be distributed through Crisis Assistance Ministry. David will be collecting the items on the hotel level of the parking deck.

David and Robert are also looking for volunteers to help collect the coats. Reach out to David if you can help at [dlanderson62@gmail.com](mailto:dlanderson62@gmail.com).

Our meeting venue, Fairfield Inn and Suites, is also actively supporting Western NC. The hotel is focused on baby and pet supplies. We invite Rotary members to help by donating pet food at next week's meeting—small bags, a few cans, anything helps!





## ROTARY DISTRICT 7680 MATCHING GIFT CHALLENGE


Your gift today can go twice as far!

**Rotary District 7680 is THRILLED to announce matching contributions!**

The first \$50,000 in new contributions to the District will be matched dollar for dollar by the District, giving us \$100,000 to meet critical needs.

This initiative aims to raise funds for disasters occurring in hard-hit areas of 7680 and in our sister District, 7670.

**DONATE NOW**



***Western NC Disaster*** - Charlotte Rotary members are encouraged to visit the **Rotary District 7680 website** for the latest opportunities to support our neighbors in Western North Carolina who have been devastated by Hurricane Helene. Your assistance can make a meaningful impact as we work together to help with recovery efforts in the region.

Rotary District 7680 is also thrilled to announce matching contributions! The \$50,000 challenge is still in effect and District 7680 will match every dollar donated in that challenge for a total of \$100,000. We know that this money will be used for midterm and long-term needs in two districts.

Here is where/how you can make a directed donation:

**Disaster Recovery | Rotary International Zones 33/34 ([rizones33-34.org](http://rizones33-34.org))**

PLEASE SEND CHECKS TO OUR DISTRICT PO BOX AND NOT TO THE ZONE. THE ADDRESS IS:

Rotary International District 7680

P.O. Box 79132

Charlotte, NC 28271

**Click here for instructions on how to donate.**

The District is also presently working to provide grant applications to those in need. More information on applications will be coming very soon.

## Beyond the Club



Don't miss out on the latest updates and insights in the District Newsletter—it's a great way to stay connected and informed!

**Click here to read the District Newsletter.**

### ***Foundation Celebration!***

Friday, Nov. 8, 5:30–9 p.m., Gastonia Conference Center, 145 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Way, Gastonia



Join District 7680 in welcoming Rotary International President Stephanie Urchick as keynote speaker! Register now using this link: [Register \(dacdb.com\)](https://dacdb.com)

You can take advantage of the District Sponsorship categories and perks, and a flyer with all the details is above. Please share this information with any potential sponsors you know. If you prefer, you can pass along their contact details to **Mike Walker** or the **District team**, and we'll handle the outreach. **Register now!**

## Membership Update

07/01/2024 249

09/30/2024 253

10/22/2024 251

(Welcome back Yazmin DeHaven; Resignations: Richard Campbell, Jessi Little, Patti Mashburn)

Meeting Attendance - Tuesday, October 22, 2024: 95

Guests in attendance: John Bauer (Milwaukee Rotary), MaryAileen Clark (Tish Atkins), Kevin Ellis (J Hill), Ayo Johnson (J Hill), Jose Luis (Jennifer De La Jara), Dominick Mortarotti (Kim Brattain)

## Milestones (Week of Oct. 29 - Nov. 4)

### Rotary Anniversaries

*49 years:* Sadler Barnhardt

*46 years:* Brent Trexler

*42 years (50 total):* Don Carmichael

*37 years:* Ken Poe

*35 years:* Al Allison

*34 years:* Katie Tyler

*32 years:* Jim Kelley

*27 years:* Robert Freeman

*10 years:* Greg Hatcher

*7 years (31 total):* Jim Hintz

*6 years (10 total):* Scott Gakenheimer

*5 years:* Ken Fuquay

*5 years:* Paul Haddock

### Birthdays

31 - Kevin Utsey

### Wedding Anniversaries

2 – Carolyn & Chase Saunders

3 – Beth & Tony Zeiss

4 – Susan & John zumBrunnen

## 2024 - 2025 Board Members

- President Kim Brattain
- President-Elect Patrick Baker
- Immediate Past President Edwin Peacock

- Secretary Bill Gill
- Treasurer Craig Field
- Sergeant at Arms Mike Wollinger

**Current Directors:** Linwood Bolles, Woodson Bradley, Benton S. Bragg, John F. Cantrell, Tish Atkins Charles, Terri DeBoo, Andrew "Andy" B. Dinkin, Dena R. Diorio, Donna Y. Dunlap, Joel D. Ford, Stuart P. Hair, David Head, Jesse G. Hite, Virginia Owen

## Contact Us

For more information about how to get involved, volunteer opportunities and meeting topics, contact Christine Cipriano, Executive Secretary at [christine@charlotterotary.org](mailto:christine@charlotterotary.org)



Photos from our luncheons, historical photos, and other events and projects can be found on the club's Flickr site. Click here [charlotterotary6006](#) to view pictures from recent meetings.



Recordings of weekly club luncheons can be found on the club's Vimeo site. Click here <https://vimeo.com/user24733153> to watch recent videos.



**Guest Check-In** If you have a guest who would like to preregister for the weekly meeting, a QR code is provided for easy scanning, or the link can be found here: [Visitor Pre-Register \(jotform.com\)](#)

Rotary Club of Charlotte | 1850 E 3rd St, Ste 220 | Charlotte, NC 28204 US

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



Try email marketing for free today!