



San Antonio Northeast Rotary Club
Chartered May 19, 1987 - District 5840 - Club #24625
www.sanortheastrotary.com

UNITE FOR GOOD



the Nor'easter



Rotary Club of San Antonio Northeast



February 17, 2026

Salsalito Cantina Mexican Restaurant
14535 Nacogdoches Road, San Antonio, TX 78247
Social at 5:30 p.m. - Meeting from 6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.



Rotary's Four Way Test of the things we think, say or do:

1.) Is it the TRUTH? 2.) Is it FAIR to all concerned? 3.) Will it build GOODWILL and BETTER FRIENDSHIPS? 4.) Will it be BENEFICIAL to all concerned?

Our speakers this evening are Madison Interact students Jenna Naser, Eason Tarble, and Laciara Bradish who attended Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA) last month.



RYLA began in 1959 in Queensland, Australia, as a festival celebrating a royal visit by Princess Alexandra. Adopted as an official Rotary International program in 1971, it has grown into a premier global leadership training initiative for young people, focusing on service, citizenship, and personal growth.

In 1975-76, Floyd Harriman of the Rotary Club of Pleasanton was District Governor. He asked W. Dain Higdon, a Past District Governor, to select a committee to determine the possibility of establishing a Rotary Youth Leadership Award Seminar in our Rotary District. A committee was selected which included Rotarians from several clubs. At the time, Dr. Duncan Wimpress, a Rotarian and a director of the San Antonio downtown club, was president of Trinity University. He was approached and agreed to host the meeting on Trinity's campus. Our first RYLA was May 14-16, 1976, with 55 high school students in attendance.

The RYLA program is designed for outstanding high school students to help develop qualities of leadership skills and good citizenship, as well as to emphasize the advantages of the free enterprise system. Young men and women, selected by their local Rotary clubs, are invited to participate in leadership training meetings organized and run by Rotarians.

In 1996, the RI Board of Directors adopted the following minimum standards for the core curriculum of every RYLA:

- Fundamentals of leadership
- Ethics of positive leadership
- Importance of communication skills in effective leadership
- Problem-solving and conflict-management
- What Rotary is and what it does for the local community
- Building self-confidence and self-esteem
- Elements of community and global citizenship

Open to more than 150 outstanding representatives of clubs throughout District 5840, the RYLA Conference is held at the John Newcombe Tennis Ranch in New Braunfels over Martin Luther King weekend each year. Clubs are encouraged to contact their local high schools early in the school year about the RYLA program to insure that the truly outstanding and deserving High School Juniors will be accorded the honor of attending this significant event.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

February 24th	Amanda Potter
March 3rd	Stephanie Post, Supervisory Special Agent, Violent Online Networks and Sadistic Exploitation
March 24th	Mari Tamez, Bexar Heritage Center

Birthdays & Anniversaries

We do not have any individual birthdays or anniversaries to report this week.

We do however a major organization that is celebrating its 121st Anniversary on February 23rd. On February 23, 1905, the very first Rotary meeting was held in Room 711 of the Unity Building in downtown Chicago, organized by attorney Paul P. Harris to foster fellowship and professional networking. The initial meeting included four members: Paul Harris, Silvester Schiele (coal dealer), Gustavus Loehr (mining engineer), and Hiram Shorey (tailor).



At the start of tonight our Happy Bucks pot is up to \$114. That means if your ticket is drawn tonight and you pull the Joker out of the deck, you will leave with at least \$70.50.



UNITE FOR PEACE
DISTRICT CONFERENCE & CLUB LEADERSHIP SEMINAR

FRIDAY, MAY 1ST BRAUNTEX THEATER, NEW BRAUNFELS
SATURDAY, MAY 2ND MARRIOTT COURTYARD RIVER, NEW BRAUNFELS



Join Rotarians from across District 5840 for two inspiring fun-filled days of fellowship, reflection, celebration, and leadership development in beautiful New Braunfels.

Friday, May 1st

The conference kicks off at the historic Brauntex Theatre, 290 W San Antonio St, New Braunfels, TX 78130 with a powerful and timely keynote address from JC (James) Clapsaddle, recipient of Rotary International's highest service recognition—the Service Above Self Award. Selected as one of only 150 Rotarians worldwide for this honor, JC has played a critical role since 2023 in Rotary International's humanitarian relief efforts supporting Ukraine amid the ongoing war and as coordinator for the Seeds of Hope International Peace Leadership Academy.

[Seeds of hope planted in Northern Ireland - Rotary Digital - July 2025](#)

His presentation, "Rotary's Role in World Wide Peace," will offer a firsthand perspective on Rotary's impact in times of global crisis and the vital role Rotarians play in advancing peace through service.

Saturday May 2nd

We'll gather at the Courtyard by Marriott – New Braunfels (located at [750 IH 35 North New Braunfels, Texas, USA, 78130](#)) to begin the day with a meaningful Peace Pole installation at a local park, symbolizing Rotary's enduring commitment to peace and understanding.

Returning to the hotel, we'll celebrate the incredible work accomplished across our District this past year, recognizing outstanding clubs and Rotarians during our awards program. Following lunch, we'll shift our focus to the future with Club Leadership Learning Seminar for Rotary Year 2026–27, equipping incoming leaders with the tools, insights, and inspiration needed for a successful year ahead.

Join the fun with raffles throughout the conference! Two-day conference attendees receive one raffle ticket, first-time District Conference attendees receive two tickets, and everyone will have the opportunity to purchase additional raffle tickets during the event.

Pricing

2 Day - \$125 Early Bird until March 31st
\$150 April 1-26

First Time Attendee (2 Day) \$100

Friday only - \$60

Saturday only \$75

[Register for the District Conference](#)

Reserve Your Hotel Room

Courtyard by Marriott New Braunfels River Village
750 IH 35 North New Braunfels, Texas, USA, 78130:

[Book your group rate for Rotary District Conference](#)

Hotel rooms are limited, so we encourage you to book your hotel room soon!

Whether you come for inspiration, celebration, or leadership development - or all three - this District Conference promises to be a meaningful and memorable Rotary experience.

2nd publication

Cathy Criado has applied for membership in the San Antonio Northeast Rotary Club. Cathy is a Real Estate Broker. Cathy has already attended several of our club meetings, and has been a guest speaker. Please contact club president Trina Forcey if you have any questions.



We were pleased to welcome Kathy Benitez as our guest speaker last week. Kathy was joined by her daughter Kristina. Kathy spoke to us about how she takes sea glass that she finds on Alaska beaches and turns it into one-of-a-kind jewelry, wind chimes and wall art. Kathy brought some of her artwork with her to show to those in attendance. After her presentation, club president Trina Forcey presented Kathy with a speaker's certificate of appreciation and a copy of the Rotary magazine.



On February 23, 2026, Rotary International celebrates its 121st anniversary, marking over a century of "Service Above Self" since Paul Harris founded the first club in Chicago in 1905. You can observe this milestone by supporting The Rotary Foundation, which enables projects that promote peace, fight disease, provide clean water, and support education worldwide. How to Donate for the 121st Anniversary

- Online (Fastest): Visit rotary.org/donate to make a one-time or recurring (Rotary Direct) gift.
- Targeted Giving: You can choose to support the Annual Fund-SHARE, the PolioPlus Fund, or specific Global Grants.
- Commemorative Giving: Make a donation in honor of the 121st anniversary, or to mark "World Understanding and Peace Day", also on February 23rd.



The Rotary Club of San Antonio is partnering with River Aid SA for the 31st Annual Basura Bash River and Waterway Clean Up on Saturday, March 7, 2026, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon.

Check-in: 8:30 a.m. – Cleanup starts at 9:00 a.m.!

Meeting Point and Parking: Olmos Basin Park Northside

Start Point: Olmos Creek at Olmos Basin Park

End Point: Olmos Creek upstream at Jones Maltsberger

For more information and to register, please go to the link below:

<https://www.rotarysa.org/events/rotary-day-sa-2026>

Attire: Long pants, closed toe shoes, (long sleeve shirt recommended). If you have work gloves, please bring them. Sunscreen and bug repellent is also encouraged. Water will be provided but please bring a Reuseable Water Bottle!

Community-led risk mapping: Building peace in conflict zones

by Jaefer Jemal Muhammed, a 2026 Rotary Peace Fellowship finalist, University of Bradford master's degree program from Rotary 360 - The official blog of Rotary International



Jaefer Jemal Muhammed

In 2023, Fano militants intercepted the minibus I was traveling in near Merawi, Ethiopia, ransacking our belongings looking for weapons. I didn't bear any arms, I wasn't a soldier. I was a project manager tasked with building a gas station that will fuel ambulances and clinics, restoring essential services for more than 50,000 civilians amidst an ongoing conflict. In that moment of terror, staring down an AK-47, I realized peace isn't created in conference halls alone. Sometimes it is forged on a road between two hostile towns when infrastructure is built to restore trust and dignity.

Peacebuilding as infrastructure

Traditional peacebuilding models, while crucial, can sometimes overlook the systems that hold fragile communities together. In places like Amhara, where formal institutions have stalled or collapsed due to active conflict; roads, fuel, electricity, and healthcare are more than amenities — they are instruments of trust. When people can drive ambulances safely, access power during lifesaving treatment, or send their loved ones to clinics without the fear of crossfire, the foundations of peace are laid quietly.

This philosophy has guided my work for the past eight years as a project manager and lead architect operating in conflict-affected regions of Ethiopia. It is also the basis for the DangerScout Model, a community-driven danger mapping framework I developed while managing infrastructure projects in war zones.

The DangerScout Model

Before sending workers in and commencing the gas station project, I spent three days in Merawi to understand movement patterns, military presence, and civilian behavior. A striking pattern emerged: violence flared as the rebels struck the military when it moved between towns. Safe zones shifted quickly and to safely operate within the town, informal intelligence among locals was crucial. That's when the idea emerged: tap into the real-time knowledge of minibus drivers.

I partnered with three local drivers who navigated cross-town routes transporting passengers. Through an informal network of drivers, they tracked clashes, checkpoints, and armed convoys looking for safe passages. In exchange for modest stipends, these "Danger Scouts" began couriering construction documents, reporting safer roads for material transportation, and mapping danger zones in real time, all while doing their usual work.

Lessons learned

With the internet down, this analog network became our firm-to-site communication system and after four months, the fuel station was completed without a single safety incident. Today, as the conflict still continues in our region, the gas station fuels over 10 ambulances, minibuses, and multiple clinics. More importantly, the model is replicated in over 12 infrastructure projects across West Gojjam, where we have learned a few key lessons:

The model, while efficient, needs to be paired with other emergency protocols, since the driver's networks mostly fail to predict covert attacks carried out by a small number of commandos.

In almost all sites, getting the rebel's buy-in was a must since the towns were controlled by the militants.

It is vital to carry the private construction firm's licenses and to show proof of no affiliation with any governmental agencies or personnel.

It is also important to pre-store 80-100% of construction materials in safer times so that construction can continue uninterrupted during conflict flares outside of the construction zones.

Quiet blueprint of peace

Not every peacebuilder needs to be a diplomat, negotiator, or scholar. Some of us are just architects, drivers, and nurses trying to restore dignity and trust. The DangerScout model is peacebuilding in action, a subtle weaving of local knowledge, economic inclusion, and shared risk. In conflict zones, every liter of fuel and mile of road becomes a quiet peace process, enabling healthcare workers to save lives and reach those in need.

I invite you to share your own experiences of tapping into unexpected community networks and post your thoughts below. If this story resonated with you, please consider sharing it with your Rotary club or social media so we can continue highlighting how community-led infrastructure can lay the foundations of peace.

About the author: Jaefer Jemal Muhammed is a project manager and architect based in Ethiopia with over eight years of experience managing infrastructure projects, including those in conflict-affected regions. He is the co-founder of the Bahir Dar Chess Club and an active supporter of the Amhara Women Federation's advocacy programs. He is currently researching decentralized solar microgrids for rural clinics and advising on energy policy frameworks to support healthcare resilience in war-affected communities. He is a 2026 finalist for the Rotary Peace Fellowship at the University of Bradford.



Station for the minibuses driven by the DangerScouts