



May 11, 2026  
Volume 43 - Issue 24

*"Together we see a world where people unite and take action to create lasting change - across the globe, in our communities and in ourselves!"*

The Rotary Club of Calgary comprises professional and community leaders brought together in fellowship to make a better future.

# UNITE FOR GOOD



Rotary International's theme for the 2025-2026 year

## Birthdays

Joel Snodgrass	May 11
Forry Angus	May 13
Bob Ernter	May 16
Bill Walsh	May 18
Tyson Schmidt	May 20
Lawrence Bates	May 23
Rosemary Crawford	May 24

## Anniversaries

No significant anniversaries this month

## Club Meeting Recap - May 5th

Doug McMillan

Following the Call to Order by President Bill Hamilton and the singing of O Canada led by William Friedson on the piano, Angeline Hayes gave the invocation. Bill welcomed the approximately 65 members and guests and thanked the front of the house volunteers (Bill Redmond, Bob Taylor and Dorothy Loucks) indicating there was little free time for fellowship because of a busy agenda.

Happy Bucks – Bill Hamilton and Franco Savoia (great District Conference); Barb Young (launch of “Ferdinand”- and his trip from Canada to Guatemala)

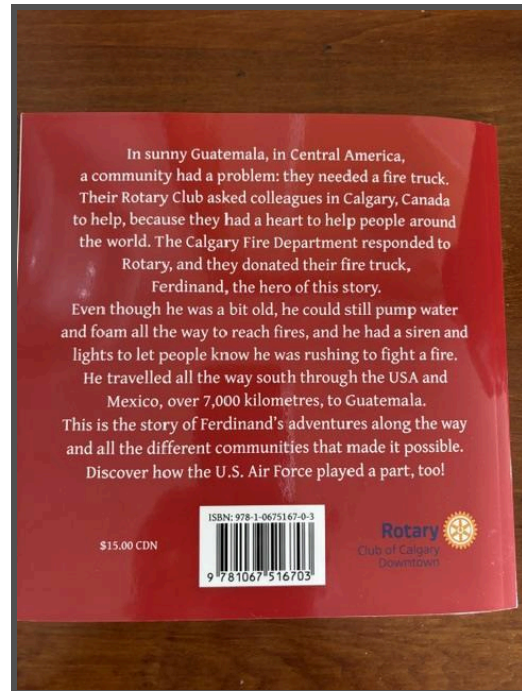
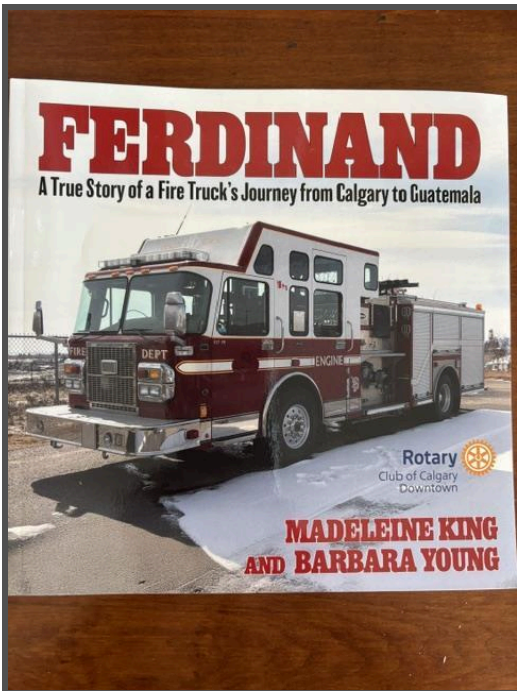
Bill indicated Ralph Lundberg was in Foothills Hospital with pneumonia (a get- well card was circulated). Michael introduced birthdays for members (including over the past month while he was away)- see elsewhere in this and previous COGs.

Gerard D'Mello was assisted by Don Ross, Michael Broadhurst and Emery Varga in presenting "Adopt a Village". This included an impressive impact assessment video courtesy of Rick Castiglione. This program is now about to start in the fifth Ugandan village focusing on fresh water, health, economic development, children's education and the environment. An evening event is planned for Sept 23, 2026 at the Ranchman's Club where it is anticipated that the manual being developed to assist other Rotary Clubs to initiate their similar projects will be launched. Watch for further information and mark your calendars for September 23, 2026.





The Calgary Seniors Resource centre was the recipient of a \$25,000 grant for our club. Franco Savoia introduced Sydney Keieger-Jenkins (pictured below) who thanked the club indicating many seniors in need would benefit from the “human connection” program. Bill indicated the Ferdinand book was on sale at the District Conference and additional copies were on sale outside the meeting room. Thanks to Madeleine King and Barb Young for their work on this project including authoring the book. (Net proceeds go to our international projects). Doug McMillan presented banners from the Rotary Club Shillong and the Rotary Club Doon Shivalik Hills in India which he exchanged with banners from our club during a recent visit.



Our Guest Speaker was Joanne Pitman, CBE Superintendent (introduced by Steacy Pinney) who indicated her favourite book was “What we Owe the Future” by William MacAskill. After thanking Rotary for their many contributions to education of children (including the Big Book Sale and Kids' Literacy Network of which she is a member), Joanne described the Calgary Board of Education’s role with 142,400 students in 251 schools and 16,000 employees. This includes 44,000 students with English as a second language, 29,000 with special needs and 6,400 indigenous students.

Major efforts being made to improve reading literacy have reduced the percentage of grade three students needing additional reading support from 32.9% to 10.3 % over three years. Joanne emphasized the importance schools within communities indicating this was guided by connections, communication and transparency. A new word emerged for all of us to consider for the future- NetWORDing!



The anticipated meeting with Past Rotary President Jennifer Jones on May 12, 2026 has been postponed. There will be no club meeting May 19, 2026 as this is the night of the Presidents Dinner. The next lunch meeting will be June 2, 2026.

The meeting closed with all reciting the Four Way Test and toasting Rotary Canada.

## District Conference 2026 - Brings Inspiration, Fellowship, and New Ideas

Diane Macdonald

### Inspiration, Resilience & Renewed Purpose in Red Deer

District Governor Manon Mitchell and her organizing team delivered an outstanding Rotary District Conference in Red Deer from May 1–3, welcoming approximately 400 Rotarians from across the district, including 20 members from the Rotary Club of Calgary Downtown.

The weekend featured inspiring keynote speakers, engaging breakout sessions, a vibrant House of Friendship, and entertainment from several musical groups which created an energetic and memorable atmosphere throughout the conference.

Members left the weekend encouraged, inspired, and energized by conversations focused on leadership, resilience, inclusion, and the future of Rotary.

### Building Stronger & More Welcoming Rotary Clubs

One of the keynote speakers, Louisa Horne, a Rotarian from Halifax, focused on how clubs can grow, thrive, and flourish in today's environment.

She emphasized the importance of creating meaningful experiences for new members, noting that without proper orientation and opportunities to become involved, many members remain with Rotary for only a short period of time. Her presentation encouraged clubs to clearly communicate expectations while ensuring new members feel welcomed, connected, and valued from the very beginning of their Rotary journey.

Her message resonated strongly with attendees as clubs across the district continue to focus on membership growth, engagement, and retention.

### Chris Koch: "If I Can"

One of the conference's most memorable presentations came from Chris Koch of Nanton, Alberta, whose keynote address titled "If I Can" combined humour, honesty, and extraordinary determination.

Born without arms and legs, Chris shared how his philosophy of simply trying has shaped his life and achievements. Today, he independently operates farm equipment, competes in marathons on his longboard, and has travelled to six of the seven continents.

Attendees were both inspired and entertained as Chris shared stories of learning through failure, including a recent attempt at the skateboard park beside the conference venue that left him with a few scrapes and another lesson learned.

His central message was both simple and powerful: if you never try, you will never know what is possible.

### **Chandra Crawford's Honest Journey Beyond Olympic Gold**

Olympic gold medalist Chandra Crawford delivered another deeply impactful keynote presentation.

The 2006 Winter Olympics cross-country skiing champion openly discussed the intense pressures that followed her success, including her struggles with depression and bulimia. With remarkable honesty, she spoke about the difficult journey toward recovery and self-acceptance.

She reflected on her 44th-place finish at the 2014 Olympics, describing it not as a disappointment but as one of her greatest personal victories because of what it represented in her recovery journey.

Her presentation reminded attendees that resilience is often measured not by medals or achievements, but by perseverance through life's most difficult moments.

### **From Syria to Nova Scotia: A Story of Resilience & Gratitude - Death by Chocolate founder**

Another unforgettable presentation came from Tareq Hadhad, whose family owned a successful chocolate factory in Syria for nearly 40 years before it was destroyed during the conflict in 2012.

Forced to flee to Lebanon as refugees, the family spent three difficult years rebuilding their lives before receiving an opportunity to immigrate to Canada. Supported by the community of Antigonish, Nova Scotia, the Hadhad family rebuilt their chocolate business and once again began sharing their products with customers across Canada and around the world.

His story was a moving reminder of resilience, hope, and the life-changing impact of compassion and community support.

### **Fellowship, Learning & Connection**

In addition to the keynote presentations, conference attendees participated in breakout sessions, networking opportunities, and fellowship activities throughout the weekend.

The House of Friendship provided members with opportunities to connect with fellow Rotarians, learn more about Rotary initiatives and projects, and celebrate the many ways clubs across the district continue to make a difference locally and internationally.

Several musical groups also provided entertainment throughout the conference, contributing to the welcoming and celebratory atmosphere of the weekend.

### **Returning Home Inspired**

Members of the Rotary Club of Calgary Downtown returned home from the conference with a renewed sense of purpose and optimism for the future of Rotary.

The weekend reinforced the importance of building welcoming, vibrant, and progressive clubs while continuing to create meaningful opportunities for both new and long-time members. It also served as a valuable reminder to continue sharing Rotary's impact within our communities and to remain open to new ideas, fresh perspectives, and opportunities for growth.







Shamah Splendid Secondary School Update

## **Continued Progress at Shammah School in Kibera**

A few months ago, we shared a short update in the COG about the impact of the Rotary Club of Calgary Downtown's \$10,000 contribution toward the construction of a kitchen at Shamah School in the Kibera slum of Nairobi, Kenya.

We have since received another encouraging update from Dan Munyori of the Rotary Club of Nairobi Karengata highlighting the continued progress being made at the school and the growing impact of Rotary support.

### **Phase 1: Building a Modern Kitchen**

Shamah Splendid Secondary School is a mixed boys' and girls' school located in the informal Kibera settlement.

Funding provided by the Rotary Club of Calgary Downtown in 2023 made it possible to construct a modern kitchen for the school. The project, valued at \$10,000, was completed in February 2023 and included kitchen utensils, a modern cooking jiko, and a refrigerator provided by additional donors.

The kitchen is now fully operational, and the school reports that student absenteeism has decreased significantly since the program began.

### **Phases 2 & 3: Classroom, Library, Laboratory & Staff Room**

The success of the kitchen project inspired further international Rotary support.

Rotarian Walter Lam from Rotary District 5340 in San Diego, who himself was a refugee from Uganda and grew up in Kibera during the early 1970s, visited the school and was deeply moved by both the needs of the students and the impact of the work already completed.

Recognizing the urgent need for additional classroom space, Walter quickly organized funding through his club and additional club-to-club partnerships. An initial \$7,000 contribution funded the construction of a modern classroom capable of accommodating 30 students. The classroom was completed in October 2023.

Through continued efforts and additional fundraising, the school has since added a fully functional library, laboratory, and staff room, with total project support reaching approximately \$17,000.

### **Phase 4: Modern Washroom Facilities**

The next phase of development will focus on constructing modern washroom facilities for the school.

The project is expected to cost approximately \$15,000, and \$5,000 has already been secured. Construction is anticipated to begin within the next few weeks.

### **Growing Success Beyond the Classroom**

The impact of these improvements has extended well beyond the school's infrastructure.

According to the update, the school has experienced exceptional progress in both academics and athletics. Students recently earned recognition as regional champions in handball and top performers in women's soccer within Nairobi. The school has also continued to excel in performing arts and theatre programs.

Walter Lam continues to visit Kenya annually and regularly attends District Conferences, maintaining a strong connection to both the community and the ongoing development of the school.

The Rotary Club of Nairobi Karengata expressed sincere appreciation to the Rotary Club of Calgary Downtown for helping establish the foundation for this ongoing progress. What began as a single kitchen project has now grown into a larger, multi-phase initiative that continues to improve educational opportunities and daily life for students in Kibera.

## Making Food Insecurity a Thing of the Past in Our Community

Franco Savoia

Food insecurity is a pressing issue across Alberta, which currently has the second-highest rate in Canada. It's a complex challenge—one that affects individuals and families in ways that go far beyond access to meals.

During the pandemic, the number of charities providing emergency food support grew significantly with Rotary clubs stepping up to offer vital financial assistance. In response, a Rotary Food Security Committee—made up of representatives from several clubs—was formed. Over two years, their efforts led to the creation of Bread, an app designed to make it easier for people to find emergency food resources. RCCD and the West Club both played key roles in bringing this tool to life.

At the same time, the YYC Food Collaborative emerged and continues to grow. This collective focuses on two critical areas: meeting immediate food needs and advancing advocacy and policy changes to address the root causes of food insecurity. Today, 46 organizations, including RCCD, are part of this coordinated effort. RCCD's involvement closely aligns with its funding strategy and commitment to improving food security.

The Collaborative meets monthly, with RCCD represented by F. Savoia. The Major Donations Committee, in reviewing the food security area of focus, has prioritized its efforts on advocacy, collaboration and mid to long-term systems change.

At the YYC Food Collaborative's April 23 meeting, new opportunities were highlighted for Rotary members to contribute their time, talent, and resources toward reducing food insecurity in our community.

RCCD members who are interested in getting involved are encouraged to reach out to [fsavoia@shaw.ca](mailto:fsavoia@shaw.ca)

## Rotary Stay-in-School Program: Timothy Angelo D. Curtis (Class of 2011- Mentored by Vern Kimball)

Timothy Angelo D. Curtis

I am now a community educator, researcher, and advocate, while completing an MA in Educational Research with a (first-class honours) BA in Psychology. I was unaware of my learning disabilities in middle school and found myself needing to exert extra effort to succeed. The Rotary Stay-In-School Scholarship recognized my potential at a critical time and helped me see post-secondary education was within my reach. My mentor, Vern Kimball, encouraged me to build on my strengths while practicing self-compassion through challenges.

Since then, I've founded a community advocacy initiative; facilitated health programs across Southern Alberta in schools, communities, and the youth justice systems – where I contributed to the development and evaluation of multiple health education programs, supported justice-involved youth in meeting probation outcomes, and mentored many equity-deserving young people. I've coordinated a town hall and community research initiatives aimed towards community-informed policy changes in Calgary. Since my return to academia, I've been honoured to receive the Canadian Graduate Scholarship (CGS-M) from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

Now, as the first in my family to pursue graduate studies, I aim to support young people's access to education and realizing their potential – just as the Rotary Stay-In-School Scholarship has done for me.

[Be part of stories like Timothy's.](#)

Become a mentor and help shape the future of a student in our community.

[Join us at the 2026 Rotary Stay-in-School Golf Tournament](#)

Support the program. Change a life.

# Save the Date: "Adopt a Village" Fundraiser set for September 23, 2026

Heidi Lacey

The Rotary Club of Calgary Downtown will host its upcoming "Adopt a Village" Fundraiser on September 23, 2026, from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at the Ranchmen's Club in Calgary. The evening will focus on raising awareness and support for the club's ongoing "Adopt a Village" initiatives which work alongside international communities to develop sustainable solutions to poverty through education, health, economic development, clean water, sanitation, and community leadership programs.

The fundraiser will also provide an opportunity to share lessons learned from completed projects while encouraging participation and sponsorship for future initiatives. Support from donors and sponsors has already helped provide important resources and infrastructure within participating communities, including:

- Rainwater harvesting tanks
- Biogas plants and rocket stoves
- Solar panels
- Sewing machines and beehives
- Livestock such as cows, pigs, goats, and chickens
- Fruit tree and coffee seedlings

Tickets for the fundraiser are \$75 per person before July 1 and \$85 afterward.

Sponsorship opportunities are also available for the event, meals, and beverages, along with general cash or credit card donations. Qualified donations will receive a tax receipt.

Members are encouraged to mark their calendars and support this important initiative as the club continues its work creating sustainable, community-driven change internationally.



## "ADOPT A VILLAGE" FUNDRAISER SAVE THE DATE



SEPTEMBER 23, 2026  
6:00 PM - 9:00 PM  
RANCHMEN'S CLUB CALGARY  
(710 - 13 AVENUE SW)

### Fundraiser Success

- Enhance awareness within our Club and District, and other clubs, about "Adopt a Village" Rotary projects.
- Encourage sponsorship, donations and participation in upcoming Projects.
- Opportunity to leverage learnings from completed projects.

### What Your Support Provides

- Rain water harvesting tanks, biogas plants, rocket stoves.
- Solar panels, Sewing machines, beehives.
- Livestock – cows, pigs, goats, chickens.
- Seedlings – fruit trees, coffee.

[www.rotaryclubofcalgary.org](http://www.rotaryclubofcalgary.org) | [www.ranchmensclub.com](http://www.ranchmensclub.com)

## About "Adopt a Village"

- Collaborating with international impoverished communities to find and act on sustainable solutions to poverty.
- Build and Strengthen community leaders and local entrepreneurs to be catalysts for change
- Based on Community Needs Assessment, priorities identified and specific programs with budgets developed for education and training, nutritious food, economic development, health, clean water and sanitation.

### How to Get Involved

- **Attend the Fundraiser:** (\$75 pp before July 1 | \$85 pp after.
- **Sponsor the Fundraiser:** Event (\$5000), meal (\$3000), beverages (\$2000).
- **Sponsor the Fundraiser:** Cash or Credit Card Donations to help fund.

Qualified donations will receive a tax receipt



[www.rotaryclubofcalgary.org](http://www.rotaryclubofcalgary.org) | [www.ranchmensclub.com](http://www.ranchmensclub.com)

## News from the Bar-B-Q Committee

Diane Macdonald

Please note some changes:

- The previously scheduled BBQ at St. Monica School has been cancelled.
- We're in the process of finalizing a replacement BBQ at Bishop Kidd Junior High School in Forest Lawn on Wednesday, May 27<sup>th</sup>
- West Dover School BBQ on Thursday, June 11<sup>th</sup>
- PowWow BBQ on Sunday, June 21<sup>st</sup>

Watch for the sign-up sheet for the May 27<sup>th</sup> event which will be emailed out within the next week or so

## YOUR VOICE!

[Click here](#) to tell us your ideas, feedback, bouquets and complaints!

## Club Meeting Dates

President Bill Hamilton and Program Director Terry McMahon

May 19- Evening meeting- President's dinner

June 2- Panel discussion on the subject of homelessness. The panelists are Patricia Jones, CEO of the Calgary Homeless Foundation; Dr. Ron Kneebone of the U Calgary School of Public Policy and Bo Masterson of the Calgary Homeless Foundation and formerly with our Community Hubs project

June 16- Guest Speaker: Alice de Kooning, Haskayne School of Business on entrepreneurship and innovation

June 30- President's final meeting

## Proudly Presenting Our Corporate Members



## Upcoming Events

[May 12 Club Luncheon – Guest Speaker: Jennifer Jones](#)

*May 12, 2026 12:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. Mountain Daylight Time (UTC-06:00)*

[Presidents Dinner](#)

*May 19, 2026 6:00 p.m. - 9:30 p.m. Mountain Daylight Time (UTC-06:00)*

[Frank n' Stein \(3rd Thursday\\_\)](#)

*May 21, 2026*

*4:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.*

[Youth Committee Monthly Meeting](#)

*May 27, 2026*

*12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.*

[Jun 02- Club Luncheon – Panel re homelessness](#)

*Jun. 02, 2026 12:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. Mountain Daylight Time (UTC-06:00)*

[Frank n' Stein \(. 1st Thursday\)](#)

*Jun. 04, 2026*

*4:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.*

[June 16 Luncheon - Alice de Koning](#)

*Jun. 16, 2026 12:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. Mountain Daylight Time (UTC-06:00)*

[Frank n' Stein \(3rd Thursday\\_\)](#)

*Jun. 18, 2026*

*4:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.*

[Youth Committee Monthly Meeting](#)

*Jun. 24, 2026*

*12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.*

[June 30 - Club Luncheon – Annual General Meeting](#)

*Jun. 26, 2026 12:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. Mountain Daylight Time (UTC-06:00)*

[View entire list](#)

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