

# EARLY BIRD WEEKLY



NewbergRotaryEarlybirds.org

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Last week? Story Slam!

What is a Story Slam?

It's a 3-5 minute opportunity to share your personal story of how Rotary has impacted your life or impacted the lives of others. And captures the "Heart of Why We Serve". Stories attract people to Rotary and keep us together as a group.



First up was **Karen Hall** on Newberg Early Bird club and why we're amazing in how we serve our community.

Not only do we serve by making our parks more alive and reinvigorated, but we also work with other community organizations. We provide meals and gifts during the holiday season.

We do a BBQ at the beginning of the school year for our incoming freshmen to welcome them to NHS. We provide books to the SMART reading program so kids who may not have an opportunity to own books can take them home and share their reading experience with their families.

We sponsor tiny food pantries around town. Take what you need, leave what you can.

One of the most fun things about our club is our participation in Newberg Old Fashioned Festival and our sponsorship of the pancake breakfast.

"I've been going to the Old Fashioned Festival since I was a little girl. Rotary has been holding that breakfast for as long as I can remember. I would walk past the Rotarians serving breakfast thinking they have so much fun. And I would think, man, that would be so much fun to do that for the community. I sit at the long tables and visit with people I do and don't know."

Several years ago, when invited and joined Early Bird Rotary, she thought, "oh my

gosh, I'm gonna get to serve with the Rotary breakfast. I'm so excited!"

A few years later, COVID. Festival canceled. But in 2021, even with the festival canceled, Rotary took a chance on non-festival attendance and health guideline challenges, and re-opened the breakfast.

Guests were so happy and grateful to feel a sense of the old normal.

And those are the things about my club that changes lives and make it such a great place to be part of.



**Raquel Peregrino de Brito** has been an Early Bird since October 2018 after exposure at pancake breakfast and after reading Ken and Joan's book that had been given her by her employer.

She joined the club as a busy mom with two kids. So not a lot of money or time, but she was good with Excel ... so started helping with her organizational skills. Her first big involvement was the Christmas Auction.

It was her first time participating in a fund raising, working with different people with a common goal to support the community, international project and exchange students.

An exchange student herself, this really touched her heart to be part of. The opportunity to experience different cultures and languages before their lives become anchored by adulthood is so important.

Serving is important to us, as a family, exposing our kids to the many opportunities our club provides to serve. Be it food to those in need, build things, pick up garbage.

"We planted the seeds of service in our kids and water them by our example in giving of our skills, time and resources."

A Rotarian is someone who gives of what they have to someone else to help them.

I see that in this club with all the friendships that I have and the success in the projects that touch our community to serve and change lives.

I say to people all the time, "Do you want to do something good? You should become a Rotarian."



Ken, "Kenny," Austin III. "I remember, growing up in Newberg, my father was a Rotarian. I was in my late 20s when I joined Rotary. At that time it was kind of the "old man's club." I remember at that time I had hair.

One of the first things he remembers about what a Rotarian is. There were three of them sitting in camp on an elk hunt. He was a Noon member. They were talking about RotaDent and the club was trying to assemble a group to travel to South America to perform dentistry.

This was when, to count as a make-up, there had to be three Rotarians and had to meet a week before and a week after. Computers and virtual meetings weren't a thing yet so it got him thinking about making attendance easier.

Trying to get perfect attendance, Kenny was in Sherwood's club when a past District Governor was in attendance. Kenny raises his hand wishing Newberg had another club so it would be easier to make up meetings.

Next thing he knew he had a packet in his hand about how to start a Rotary club.

Pretty soon he was having regular breakfast at J's with Bob and a few others (Kenny named me but Bob recruited me a little later that year) discussing how to get more members to hit the 25 threshold for a charter.

About a year and a half later we chartered the Early Birds. "For me, that is my biggest Rotary accomplishment." (I would argue that's just his most visible accomplishment).

For those that were moving from the Noon Club we had things we did and did not want to be to distinguish ourselves.

We didn't want singing (don't know if that's still a Noon thing), we wanted to have fun, and we wanted to be out by 8:00 am.

Today we are one of the District's most esteemed clubs and one of the few still growing.

He wrapped up with a soberingly humble and emotional moment, "Thank you to those who joined."

Exiting the stage with humor, passion and sincerity, the embodiment of Early Bird culture, "Hey Kari, can I borrow one of your Kleenexes?"



**Casey Hostetler**, "While the theme this year is Serve to Change Lives, my story, I believe is proof that when you serve as a Rotarian you change not only the people you serve but also the people with whom you serve."

"My story starts in 2015 when I joined this club thinking that I was joining a "networking group." I was wrong. I quickly learned that Rotary wants you to serve with your time and money, of which I had neither."

[chuckle from the back of the room] With a good natured giggle, "I thought I would get more laughs than that."

[that comment lit up the invisible LAUGH sign]

She went on to serve on the pancake breakfast and Habitat builds. When you get to serve with somebody else you get to know them on a deeper level than you would at a networking group. So you have conversations with people outside your normal sphere and they become a bit like family. So this club has become like a family to her.

Now envision your sponsor and mentor touching you sexually and inappropriately. That was her experience in 2016. All the feelings one would expect from an unwelcome advance arising from a place of trust and respect were there. Denial, self doubt, all of it. That was the slow beginning of the darkest part of her life (that person was ejected from our club).

The next year she road-tripped America with her husband, David, for fourteen months. Even though she was leaving us for an extended time she wanted to keep Rotary with her and joined an e-Club and visited Rotary clubs across the U.S. and attended the International Convention in Toronto. "It was wonderful."

It made her feel like she had other "family" when she visited new clubs along her journey.

Returning to Oregon in 2018 was the bottom of their low, suffering from anxiety and depression. Normally she likes big crowds and being the center of attention. But she would have panic attacks at the thought of being in a large group of people.

The worst question anyone could ask? "How are you?" Runners up were, "How were your travels?" "Why are you back?"

How do you say, "Well, we lost \$80,000 in and investment and were forced to come home early." [ed. interpretation: It's one thing to roil in your own misery without pulling a well meaning friend in with you.]

She didn't want to be involved with Chamber, didn't want to attend church ... but she wanted to come to Rotary.

Being a Rotarian means, be who you are.

You have changed my life, so thank you for your service in Rotary.



**Rick Condon**, US Navy Ret.

The Early Bird group is the number one group. He knows because he visits other Rotary Clubs when he is traveling with his construction crew. It drives them nuts because he leaves work to visit Rotary meetings in towns he's working. But they have to keep working.

Rick joined us about eight years ago because he wanted to serve his community. In fact, we have benefited since before he actually joined when he volunteered to work with former Early Bird, Terry Paskett. He helped on Memorial and Hoover Parks. Terry would become Rick's sponsor.

He didn't have his own business yet but started a new construction company a while after joining Rotary with nothing but a hammer, sliding T-square, a circular saw and

a beat up truck.

He learned from his new friends in Rotary how to run a business. "The military don't teach you that. They teach you personal management and how to defend the nation."

Rick called out Jay Ouellette as a big mentor. "You people have taught me how to run a business. I may not look like I'm paying attention, but I'm listening to what everyone is saying around me." [ed. So is he the precocious kid that you don't want repeating your foul language? Or is he like Santa's mole?]

John taught him contractual law when Rick almost got himself burned really bad.

Terry taught him accounting. [from the back of the room, Terry affirmed that it was difficult ... which drew a warm laugh]. He finally hired someone to do it for him.

He observed Dennis and how he runs his company.

"I'm getting old. I'm almost 60 and thinking about getting out of the business so had his business valuated."

His from-nothing business is now worth \$300,000.

Because of the relationships forged in Rotary he no longer lives payday to payday. A month ago, for example, he's in Fred Meyer. He handed out \$500 to people to help with groceries and identifying himself as, "I'm a Rotarian and I would like to help you buy some groceries." Or go to Black Bear and buy old people's breakfast [older than 60, presumably].

So thank you, to you guys!



**Sandra Albo**, our sixth of five. :D

Her late husband, Mike, was one of our first presidents. He too really liked to have fun and even had Ken Jr. playing with Play-Doh.

"All of you folks have added so much to my life." We have met people from all over the world through Rotary.

Sandra joined as an Honorary Rotarian in 2012 after Mike's passing and wanted to make sure we all knew we were appreciated for the part we played in their lives.