



ROTARY CHAMPIONS

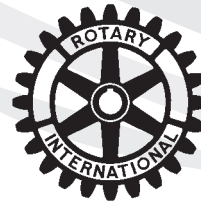
39TH ANNUAL AWARDS

MAY 12, 2026

6:00 P.M. - 8:00 P.M.

ENT CENTER FOR THE ARTS

Rotary



Rotary Champions Pikes Peak, Inc.
PO Box 1012, Colorado Springs, CO 80901

Rotary Clubs of the Pikes Peak Region

Broadmoor

Meets Thursdays, 11:59 am at the DoubleTree

IMPACT Meeting

Meets 2nd and 4th Wednesdays at Black Bear Diner GOG at 7:30 am

East

Meets Mondays, 12:15 pm at the Patty Jewett Golf Club

Colorado Springs

Meets Fridays, 12:15 pm at the Antlers

Garden of the Gods

Meets First Tuesdays, 12:15 pm and Third Tuesdays, 5:30 pm at the Texas T-Bone

North

Meets Wednesdays, 12:00 pm at the Patty Jewett Golf Club

Pikes Peak

Meets Wednesday, 7:00 am at the Woodland Park Library

Rampart Range

Meets Wednesdays, 7:15 am at Academy Vision Science Clinic

Tri-Lakes Dynamic Rotary Club

Meets via Zoom 1st Thursday and in-person 3rd Thursday at Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce

For more information about Rotary and links to the above clubs' websites, please visit www.Rotary5470.org.

WHAT'S ROTARY?

Rotary International is a volunteer organization of business and professional leaders who provide humanitarian service, and help to build goodwill and peace in the world. There are approximately 1.2 million Rotary club members belonging to 33,000 Rotary clubs in more than 200 countries and geographical areas.

Founded in Chicago in 1905, Rotary celebrated 100 years of service in 2005. The Rotary Foundation has awarded more than US\$ 4 billion in grants which are administered at the local level by Rotary clubs.

What is the purpose of Rotary?

Rotary clubs exist to improve communities through a range of humanitarian, intercultural and educational activities. Clubs advance international understanding by partnering with clubs in other countries. Rotary also encourages high ethical standards in all vocations.

What do Rotary clubs do?

Rotary clubs address critical issues at home and abroad by providing health care and medical supplies, clean water, food, job training, youth development, and education to millions of people in need. Examples of Rotary's focus areas include:

- Disease Prevention and Treatment
- Peace Building and Conflict Resolution
- Maternal and Child Health
- Basic Education and Literacy
- Water and Sanitation
- Environment

Rotarians have donated over \$2 billion to polio eradication since 1985.

Rotary



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Welcome to Champions 2026!

This year's award ceremony marks the 38th year that Rotary Champions has honored the finest scholar-athletes in the Pikes Peak region. The purpose of this event is to celebrate, recognize, and reward those young men and women who embody the spirit of Champions - excellence on the playing field, excellence in the classroom, and serving others in our community.

All of the Student Champions honored tonight are winners. Every student is recognized as the #1 student in their sport at their High School. In addition, one scholar athlete (Male and Female) from each sport will be recognized as a medallion winner, tops in their respective sport from the entire Pikes Peak Region. Two of our Medallion Winners (male and female) will be presented with the Scholar-Athlete of the Year Award, which includes a \$10,000 college scholarship.

We will also present the Ian Weikel Champion of Service Award to a deserving student who exemplifies "Service above Self." This award is named after Rotary Champion Medallion Winner Ian Weikel, who was killed in action in Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2006. We are proud to honor Captain Weikel by selecting a Champion who excels in community service who will give a \$1,000 gift to a charity of their choice in the name of both Ian Weikel and the award winner. We would like to give a special thanks to the Pikes Peak Area Rotary Endowment (PPARE) for funding this award.

Sincerely,
Kelly Steele
Rotary Champions Chairman

Finally, one of our Champions will be presented with the Spirit of Champions Award. This Award recognizes the student athlete who has overcome tremendous obstacles to become one of our community's finest student athletes.

We Rotarians are honored to be in the presence of such outstanding young adults this evening. This program exists because of the eight Rotary Clubs in the Pikes Peak region. The purpose of Rotary is to encourage and foster the ideal of service above self as a worthy enterprise, both at the local and international levels. Rotarians around the world work to promote education, which we believe is the most integral component in the development of world peace and understanding.

Of course, an event of this scope and size requires support beyond that of local Rotarians. Without our generous financial supporters, this event would not be possible. We give our sincere thanks to each of those supporters for making this program successful.

We also want to thank other important people whose efforts have combined to make these young people Champions - the parents, teachers, coaches, athletic directors, and administrators. We applaud your hard work and dedication without which these young men and women would not have been able to achieve at such a high level. We hope you enjoy this evening's program, and we wish each and every one of you continued success in your future endeavors.



Champions 2026

39th Annual Awards, May 12, 2026
ENT Center for the Arts

Parade of the Athletes and Introductions

Welcome.....	Kelly Steele
March On.....	Mike Finn
National Anthem.....	Russell Middle School of the Visual and Performing Arts
Opening Remarks.....	Paul Yankey
AD Recognition.....	Mike Finn
Masters of Ceremonies.....	Jesse Kurtz & Jessica Mendoza
Medallion Winners.....	Jesse Kurtz & Jessica Mendoza
Spirit of Champions.....	Jesse Kurtz
Ian Weikel Champion of Service Award.....	Tom Tudor
Remarks.....	Mayor Yemi
Presentation of Scholar-Atheletes of the Year.....	Mayor Yemi
Scholar-Athlete Remarks.....	TBD
Closing Remarks.....	Mike Finn

Master of Ceremonies

39th Annual Awards, May 12, 2026
ENT Center for the Arts



Jesse Kurtz

Jesse Kurtz is a 25-year veteran sportscaster based in Colorado Springs. For the last 12 years he's served as one of the radio broadcasters for Air Force Football. In addition to his role as "The Voice of the Falcons", Kurtz is the lead anchor/host and Executive Producer of the Mountain West Network where he broadcasts college sports content all year long.

Prior to heading up the Mountain West Network, Kurtz spent more than 15 years as a television sports anchor/reporter, including ten years at the CBS affiliate (KKTV) in Colorado Springs. During that time, he also worked as a sideline reporter for nationally televised NFL games and college basketball contests.

Widely respected by his peers, Kurtz has been recognized on a local, regional and national level with the following awards:

- Four-time Emmy Award Winner (2014, 2015, 2016, 2020)
- National Edward R. Murrow Award recipient for Sports Reporting (2010)
- Four-time National College Sports Video Award Winner (2022, 2023)
- Two-time National Telly Award Winner – Sports Feature Story Telling (2020, 2022)
- Seven-time regional, Edward R. Murrow Award recipient for Sports Reporting (2005,'07-'10, '12-'13)
- Five-time Best Sportscaster the Colorado Broadcaster's Association (2005-'06 '08-'09, '11)
- 17-time Associated Press Award winner (2004-11)
- Colorado High School Athletic Directors Association Media Person of the Year (2006, 2012)
- Society of Professional Journalists National Mark of Excellence for Sports Reporting (1999)

A native of Arvada, Colo., Kurtz graduated Cum Laude from Colorado State University with a double-major in Technical Journalism and Speech Communication.

Master of Ceremonies

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Jessica Mendoza

As a Colorado native, Jessica is proud to be a Thompson Valley High alum. She started off as a writer but fell in love with broadcast after joining CSU's television station where she anchored sports and traveled to cover CSU athletics. Jessica is an avid Broncos and Nuggets fan.

Her internship in Denver solidified her passion for journalism and pushed her to pursue a career in reporting.

She started her professional career in Eau Claire, Wisconsin and after two years reporting on news and sports in the Chippewa Valley returns home to run the sports department at KKTU. During her first week at KKTU, Jessica had the chance to experience covering the Colorado Avalanche hoisting the Stanley Cup for the first time in more than 20 years!

Jessica loves following the professional teams out of Denver, but also loves covering local sports from the high school level to the RMAC.

Special Guests

Paul Yankey



Paul Yankey is the Lead for Marketing, Strategy, International Business, and Sports Management at the University of Colorado Colorado Springs and serves as an Assistant Teaching Professor of Marketing. In this role, he provides academic leadership across curriculum development, faculty coordination, and program direction, with an emphasis on applied learning, ethical decision-making, and real-world relevance.

His teaching and leadership work integrate marketing strategy, organizational behavior, and applied psychology to help students develop clarity, sound judgment, and principled performance in complex environments. His work is informed by resilience research and collaboration with the Lyda Hill Institute of Human Resilience, with particular attention to decision-making and leadership under pressure.

In addition to his university leadership role, Paul is an author, speaker, and advisor to organizations across business, nonprofit, and athletic contexts.

At UCCS, Paul remains focused on preparing students to lead with competence, integrity, and discernment in an increasingly complex global landscape.

Blessing ‘Yemi’ Mobolade



Blessing ‘Yemi’ Mobolade was born in Nigeria to two bi-vocational pastors. His father was in finance and his mother was a secondary education teacher. At age 17, he immigrated to the United States, following in the footsteps of his brother to pursue the American Dream through education. He has bachelor’s degrees in business administration and computer information systems from Bethel University (Mishawaka, Ind.) and master’s degrees in management and leadership from Indiana Wesleyan University (Marion, Ind.) and theology-intellectual leadership from the A.W. Tozer Theological Seminary, part of Simpson University (Redding, Calif.).

Mobolade moved to Colorado Springs in 2010 and started a church and then cofounded The Wild Goose Meeting House in 2013 to address the needs for cultural gathering places in 2013. He co-founded COSILoveYou to unite more than 100 churches in a common mission while working at First Presbyterian. In 2017, he assumed the role of VP of Business Retention for the Colorado Springs Chamber and Economic Development Corp. In 2019, Mobolade served the City of Colorado Springs as a small business development administrator. In this role, he established tools to assist entrepreneurs with starting a business, COSOpenForBiz.com and Permit Partner, and led many collaborative efforts across the community’s public and private sectors. Mobolade stepped down from this position in March 2022 to officially launch his mayoral campaign.

Mobolade was sworn in as the 42nd Mayor of Colorado Springs on June 6, 2023. This is his first four-year term as mayor. He is the first Black man and immigrant to be elected mayor of Colorado Springs and one of the youngest.

In Memory of our Founder



Dick Powell

Richard “Dick” Powell was a member of the Garden of the Gods Rotary Club in the early 1980s when he had an idea about honoring the kind of fabulous high school students he saw daily as assistant principal at Coronado High School. He was tired of the negative press young people were receiving. He took his idea of an event to his Rotary club’s Board of Directors, thinking they would surely embrace it. They did not. Soon, Dick became president of his Rotary club and succeeded in convincing his board to create a first-class event to recognize the outstanding community minded scholar athletes in the Pikes Peak region.

Rotarians held the first Rotary Champions event in the spring of 1985 and the tradition continues to this day.

Dick Powell passed away peacefully on May 27, 2021, at the age of eighty-nine. Dick was a well known and respected educator for 40 years in Colorado Springs.

In Memory of Donna Sawaya



Donna Sawaya became a member of the Rotary Club of the Garden of the Gods in 2001. The Garden of the Gods Club is the original founding Club of the Champions program and is now one of the seven area Rotary Clubs that govern the activities of the Rotary Champions Foundation nonprofit organization that puts on the annual Rotary Champions event. Donna served as Garden of the Gods club president in 2004-2005, becoming the first female president of the Club. Donna also co-chaired the Rotary Champions event in 2012. Donna was always positive and energetic, and she personified service above self during her tenure as a Rotarian. Donna always had time to support any Rotary initiative, particularly those efforts that addressed the needs of children. Donna often made considerable donations to projects for low-income children, specifically Rotary projects intended to promote higher attendance and academic performance, including frequent contributions to an annual year-end trip to the zoo rewarding the academic efforts of 50 children at John Adams Elementary school. Donna Sawaya represented the best of Rotary and willingly supported a wide range of programs. Donna was especially taken with the goals of the Rotary Champions program, and she has made a very substantial bequest to the Rotary Champions Foundation to ensure that Champions remains financially viable well into the future. Her generous gift has been established as an endowment gift of the Rotary Champions Foundation that can be used by the Foundation to match funds raised from other sources up to an annual limit that preserves the endowment fund and assures the long-term success of the Champions program. We as the board of directors of Rotary Champions will forever be grateful to Donna Sawaya, a friend, and a tremendous Rotarian.

Rotary Champions Board of Directors

Daniel Korleski.....Broadmoor Rotary Club

David Peak.....Broadmoor Rotary Club

Kelly Steele Downtown Rotary Club

Chip Frazer Downtown Rotary Club

Dave LawyerEast (Chair) Rotary Club

Mike Finn.....East Rotary Club

Steve Gaines.....Garden of the God Rotary Club

Mary Cavanaugh..... North (Exec Admin) Rotary Club

Jason Stephenson North Rotary Club

Cathy Skiles..... Pikes Peak Rotary Club

Max Levy..... Pikes Peak Rotary Club

Roger Kort..... Rampart Range Rotary Club

Tom Tudor Rampart Range Rotary Club

Christy Smith Tri-Lakes Dynamic Rotary Club

Champions 2026 Sponsors

Below is a list of very special people and companies who have made this program possible by sponsoring Champions. Many have contributed every since Champions began in 1985!

Rotary Club of Colorado Springs

Mr. Stephen Blazer

Rotary Club of East Colorado Springs

Tri-Lakes Dynamic Rotary Club

Pikes Peak Rotary Club

Rotary Club of North Colorado Springs

Broadmoor Rotary Club

Rampart Range Rotary Club

Interquest Rotary Club

The Nehme Team

Rotary Club of Garden of the Gods

Mr. Steve Gaines

Mrs. Cathy Skiles

Thank you to our in-kind contributors

Antares Choir - Russell Middle School of the Visual and Performing Arts

Thank you to those who contributed to the 2026 Champions Scholarship Program. Your contributions help recognize Outstanding Academic and Athletic Achievement and Community Service among Southern Colorado's high school students. We look forward to your help to honor Rotary Champions student athletes in 2026.

Ian Weikel Champion of Service Award



Awarded to the champion who best demonstrates “Service Above Self” in their daily life, this award is named for former Rotary Champion Medallion Winner, Ian Weikel, who was killed in action in Iraq while serving his country. The Pikes Peak Area Rotary Endowment Trustees are pleased to partner with the Rotary Champions Foundation to provide a \$1,000 cash award to an El Paso or Teller County 501(c)3 organization of the recipient’s choice.

Pikes Peak Area Rotary Endowment (PPARE) is supported by the seven Rotary clubs, and over 400 male and female Rotarians, in El Paso and Teller Counties. The primary purpose of PPARE is to provide financial support to local 501(c)3 organizations and their projects within the Pikes Peak Region. The PPARE Trustees give particular emphasis to youth programs that focus on the prevention of a problem rather than a cure for it. In addition, funding for new projects rather than for existing programs and projects that satisfy a current unfulfilled need are of primary importance to the Trustees.



The Nehme Team

George Nehme, GRI, CRS, C2EX 719.491.1837

Rebecca Nehme, GRI, CDPE 719.963.1622

Gabby Nehme, 719.213.7357

nehme@livsothebysrealty.com

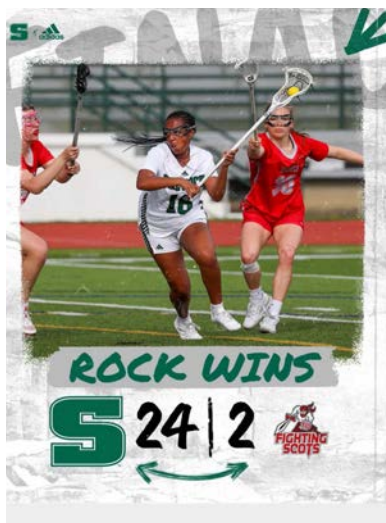
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Where Are Our 2025 Champions Now?



Amara Langstaff

Hello members of the Pikes Peak Rotary Clubs. This is Amara Langstaff, winner of the 2025 Female Scholar Athlete of The Year. I hope this note finds you all doing well. I wanted to provide a quick update on my academic and athletic achievements at Slippery Rock University in Pennsylvania. I want to start by thanking you all again for your generous financial support and trust in me. Your support has been and will continue to serve as a critical stepping stone in my academic and future career.

My freshman year here at Slippery Rock University has been unforgettable, I am currently on the women's lacrosse team and I am proud to share that we are currently ranked #3 Nationally at the D2 level and hope to advance further as the post-season progresses. I've had the opportunity to play in a handful of games already, and have been fortunate enough to score my first collegiate goals this spring season. Academically, I am a Public Health major with an International Affairs minor. I currently have a 4.00 GPA and am looking to maintain it as the spring semester comes to a close. I am excited to share that I was classified as a sophomore by my second semester due in part to the number of AP credits I earned from high school. This will allow me to take junior level courses as early as this coming fall semester. I am also taking two summer classes through my University and attending summer classes in Sorrento, Italy this June/July focused on International Organizations and Health Nutrition. My campus involvement has included joining 11 clubs, and this coming fall, I have joined committees associated with the Pennsylvania Public Health Services and a tobacco-smoke free campus initiative.

In closing, it is with great gratitude that I share this brief update as I continue with my educational pursuits in Public Health as I endeavor to put into action many of the ideals found in the Rotary Club Mission statement.

Sincerely,
Amara B. Langstaff



Connick Goodwin

A Big Hello and Congratulations to the 2026 Rotary Champions!! I have no doubt in my mind that it took much dedication, hard work, flexibility, and sacrifice to get to where you are today. I commend you for your accomplishments, and I am sure that I am just one of many who applaud you for your diligence and commitment to success. Congrats!

Being nominated as the male scholar-athlete of the year was an incredible honor, and I've tried to live up to it during my first year at Rice University. I'm pursuing a double major in Mechanical Engineering and Mathematics with a minor in Applied Mathematics, and I've balanced academics with hands-on projects and community work: contributing to Rice Eclipse's flight-stabilization efforts, assisting with elementary-school science experiments, and serving as a Learning Assistant for an intro coding course. Outside the classroom, I DJ on the radio, play shows around campus with a rock band, and keep fit with long runs around Houston while trying to work off the extra calories from deep-fried Oreos at the rodeo. I have been pushed and challenged to grow in so many ways, and it has been an incredible experience so far. And, if you know about Rice's residential college system, HFH!

If you are going to college soon, get excited! It is an incredibly engaging environment of learning, growth, academics, and community. It for sure has its ups and downs, but I have found it to be so rewarding. Get involved, seek challenges, and prioritize your learning. Again, Congratulations, and here's to the 2026 Rotary Champions!

Sincerely,
Connick Goodwin



Air Academy

Kinley Asp

Gemma Braza

Xavier Cofield

Ford Farrell

Jackson Gorr

Audrey Husman

Aubrie Iverson

Parker Lee

Amylia Nohrenberg

Bailey Williams



Cheyenne Mountain

Jordan Bayer

Porter Bifkin

Mia Binnings

Wyatt Boley

Walt Cameron

Addison Gurschick

Clare Jones

Caroline Maytan

Alyssa Sadri

Elyse Wilmes

CHAMPIONS 2026



Coronado

Kallea Cote	Tyler Markel
Carson Greene	Genevieve Speer
Emma Hylton	Braden Taylor
Benjamin Knutson	Tully Thomas
Emelia Lommel	Collin Wolf



Doherty

Wyatt Buckmiller	Sophia Melpakam
Vincente D'Amico	Khalil Parker
Evelyn Ecks	Kacia Pearson
Cayson Kasti	Madison Schlitz
Sontee Keys	Makayla Sickles
Greyson Losey	Selah Robinson



Falcon

Kaiya Abe

Camri Staker

Peyton Gehrke

Julian Stoner

Elyse Gipson

Tyler Palaia

Rhylee Rollman



Fountain-Fort Carson

Alexa Queen

CHAMPIONS 2026



Lewis Palmer

Caroline Anderson	Matthew Fydenkevez
Sydney Blazer	Chase Gallagher
Morgan Bush	Aubrey Gross
Deiliah Cooley	Noah Thompson
Stuart Denham	Rylee Watts



Liberty

Briyahna Barrow	Bunny Rhodes
Aiden Evitts	Jack Rymer
Lizzie Graham	Brodie Smith
Grace Joiner	Jason Stolk
Destry Pauly	Morgan Stone



Liberty Tree Academy

Wesley Rains

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Mesa Ridge

Emma Yancey

Alan Edwards

Savana Iverson

CHAMPIONS 2026



Palmer Ridge

Corinna Arellano
Caitlyn Beverly
Emery Daughtry
Parker Futz
Quinn Marr

Jack Martin
Reese Meyer
Keegan Mulloy
Claire Munroe
Roxy Palmer

Esther Paulson
Sebastian Sadd
Gavin Schmidt
Danica Thompson
Owen Twesme



Sierra

Marissa Donjuan
Vivian Valenzuela
Julian Woolard



The Classical Academy

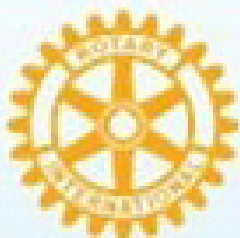
Whitney Meister



Thomas McLaren

Sara Christensen

Piper Shannon



The 4-Way Test

of things we do and say:

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?

Thank you Rotary for
all you do for **OUR KIDS!**



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Rotary Youth Exchange

The most powerful force in the promotion of international understanding and peace is *exposure to different cultures*. The world becomes a smaller, friendlier place when we learn that all people - regardless of nationality - desire the same basic things: a safe, comfortable environment that allows for a rich and satisfying life for our children and ourselves. Rotary Youth Exchange provides thousands of young people with the opportunity to meet people from other lands and to experience their cultures. *This plants the seeds for a lifetime of international understanding.*

For more information, go to www.mountainandplainsrye.com

RYLA

Rotary Youth Leadership Award (RYLA) is a leadership development program run by Rotary. Secondary school students attend a 3 day weekend that includes presentations, activities, and workshops that cover a variety of topics, including:

- Leadership fundamentals and ethics
- Communication skills
- Problem solving and conflict management
- Community and global citizenship

For more information, go to www.Rotary5470.org

Interact

Interact is a club for youth ages 12-18 who want to connect with others in their community or school. Interact club members have fun while carrying out service projects and learning about the world. Interact clubs organize at least two service projects a year: one that benefits their community and one that encourages international understanding. While Interact clubs receive guidance from individual Rotary clubs, they govern and support themselves.

For more information, go to www.Rotary5470.org

And, did we mention scholarships?