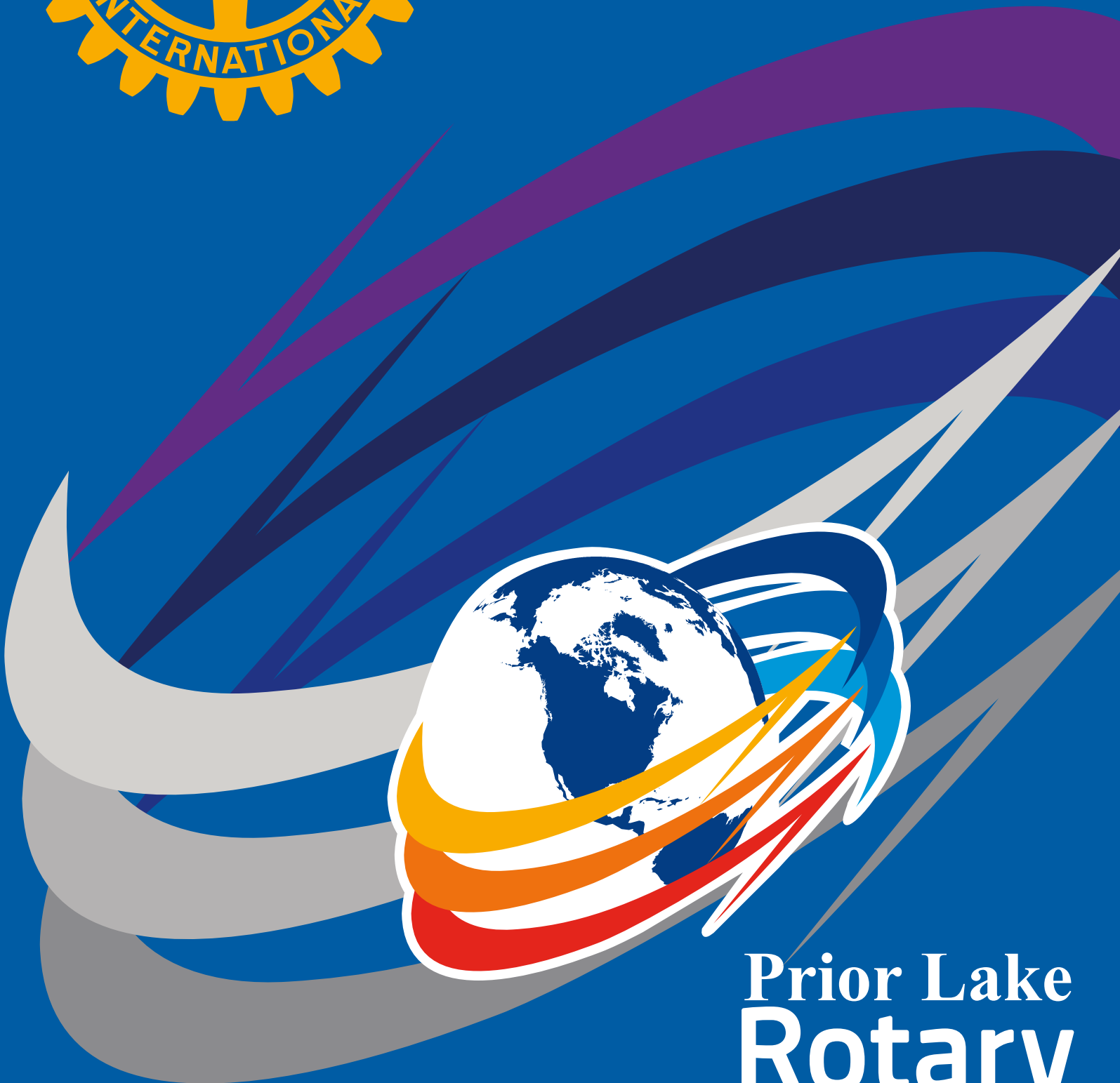




ROTARY SERVING
HUMANITY



Prior Lake
Rotary

Telling the Rotary Story



Rotary
Club of Prior Lake



Doing Good;
Serious Fun



A Year in Retrospect



priorlakerotary.org

Mission Statement

The mission of the Prior Lake Rotary Club is to enhance the quality of life for the residents of the Prior Lake area and people throughout the world, through service, civic engagement and meaningful partnerships.

Club Motto

Prior Lake Rotary: Doing Good; Serious Fun.

Who We Are

Chartered in 1978, the Rotary Club of Prior Lake is made up of nearly 80 members from a cross section of the community including business owners, school district leadership, and city leaders.

2015-2016 Prior Lake Rotary Club Board

President – Doug Gesme

President Elect – Vic Noer

President Elect Nominee – Mary Erickson

Past President – Joe Dols

Secretary – Mary Erickson

Treasurer – Mitch Poppo

Club Service – Darcy Rose and Marlys Gesme

Community Service – Corey Stich and Shelly McWilliams

International Service – Joan Lompart and Mary Selinske

Vocational Service – Frank Boyles

Youth Service – Michelle Jirik

Foundation – Paul Hofslie

Public Image – Paul Perez and Samantha Hermsen

Membership – Deb Severson and Katy Uzpen

Project Alert/D.A.R.E. – Tim Bell and Jeremy Stangler

Prior Lake Rotary Foundation Board

President – Kyle Haugen

Vice Chair/Secretary – Laurie Hartmann

Treasurer – Paul Hofslie

At Large – Guy Selinske

At Large – Frank Boyles

At Large – Jack Haugen

At Large – Gerry Wersal



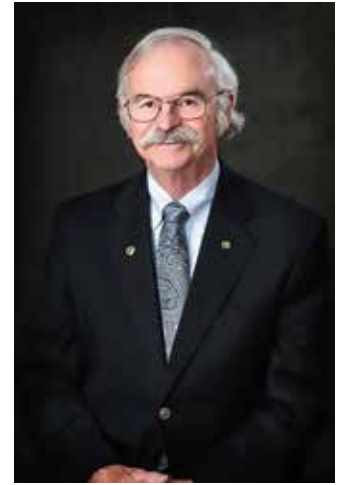
2016 - 2017 Club President Doug Gesme

Rotary International President (left)

John Germ, member of the Club
Chattanooga, Tennessee, USA

District Governor (right)

Jim Hunt
(White Bear Lake Rotary Club)



ROTARY SERVING HUMANITY

2016-2017 Rotary Theme

Rotary Serving Humanity

Rotary's founder, Paul Harris, believed that serving humanity is "the most worthwhile thing a person can do," RI President-elect John F. Germ said, and that being a part of Rotary is a "great opportunity" to make that happen.

Germ unveiled the 2016-17 presidential theme, Rotary Serving Humanity, to incoming district governors on 18 January at the International Assembly in San Diego, California, USA.

"I believe everyone recognizes the opportunity to serve Rotary for what it truly is: not a small opportunity, but a great one; an opportunity of a lifetime to change the world for the better, forever through Rotary's service to humanity," said Germ.

Rotary members around the globe are serving humanity by providing clean water to underdeveloped communities, promoting peace in conflict areas, and strengthening communities through basic education and literacy. But none

Rotary at a Glance (as of May 2017)

Members in Rotary: 1,235,100

Number of Club: 35,247

Rotaractors: 216,062

Rotaract Clubs: 9,394

Interactors: 465,474

Interact Clubs: 20,238



District Governor Jim Hunt with RI President John Germ

The District Conference

The annual District Conference, held April 27-29 in St. Paul, was very exciting! In all, 19 Prior Lake Rotarians and several spouses attended at least one session. And every session was worth the price of admission. Prior Lake Rotarians also contributed to the conference; Paul Perez was one of the District Conference chairs and Patrick Stroh presented one of the breakout sessions on "Innovation on Finance for Rotary." And when two or more Prior Lake Rotarians gather, there is sure to be fun and socializing!



Fun at the Prior Lake Rotary Olympics!

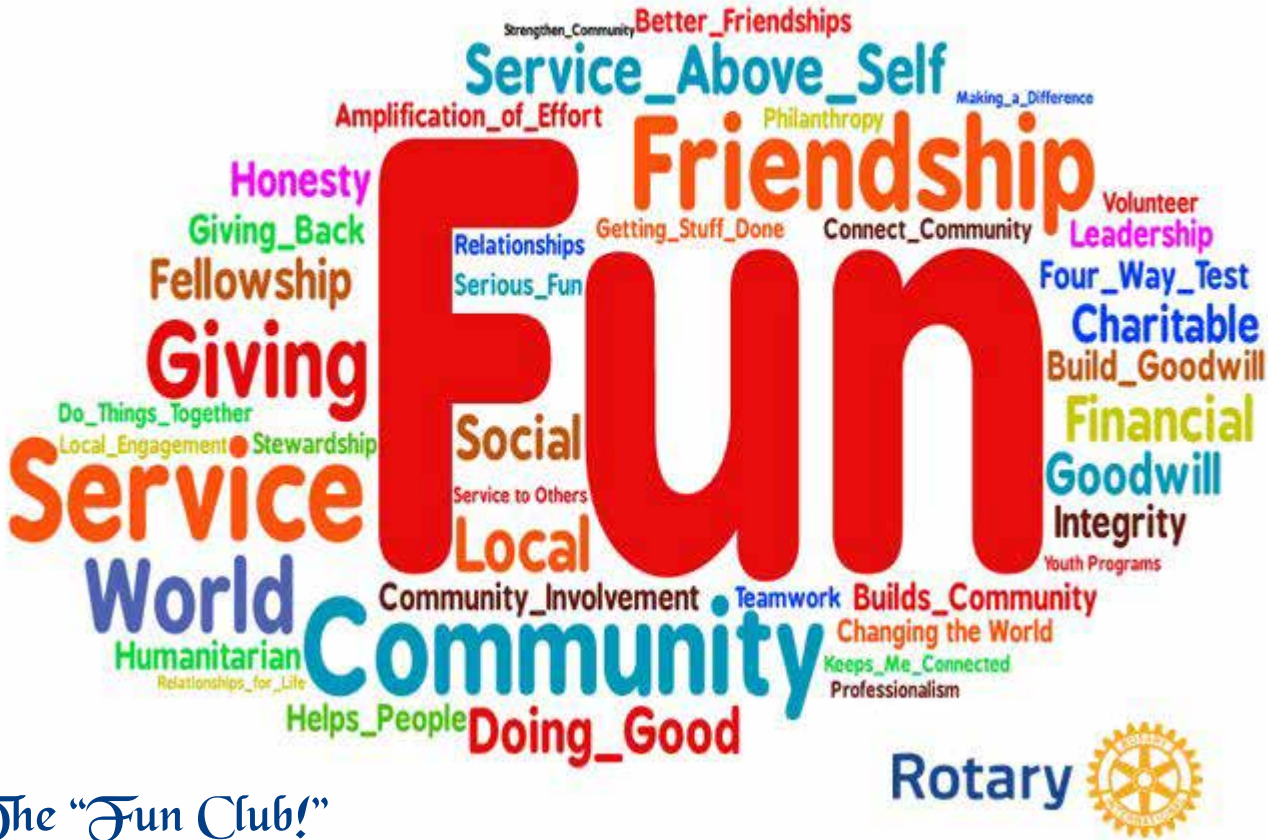


Share Bear stopped in to say hello at the morning meeting; here he is with Wade Rabenhorst



The Witches of Prior Lake Rotary taking over!

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The “Fun Club!”

In advance of District Governor's Jim Hunt's club visit on July 27, 2017, he asked Prior Lake Rotarians to answer the following question: What 3 words (or short 2 to 3-word phrases) would you use to describe Rotary? He put the answers into a word cloud. The results confirmed what we already knew - we have a great deal of FUN!

Dannon Hultskotter, Minnesota Viking's VP of Marketing and Fan Engagement, and Prior Lake resident, presented to the Club on January 25, 2017. He shared what was planned for Winter Fest coming to Prior Lake February 16-28. But before that, he shared this with the members in attendance: "This is my first Rotary Club meeting ever. I gotta say, I speak to a lot groups throughout the year; this is by far the funnest meeting I have ever been to." That is why members get up early every Wednesday. We have FUN!

Another guest speaker, John Crudele, a Rotarian from Eden Prairie, said the following, "Your club's energy and spirit is amazing. Unbelievable in the joy around service above self and all the

involvement." And, "I think your Happy Bucks line is the longest I've seen. Announcements went almost 30 minutes. You have so much to share and it's all meaningful. You have created a wonderful community and culture where people both give and feel that they are "received!"

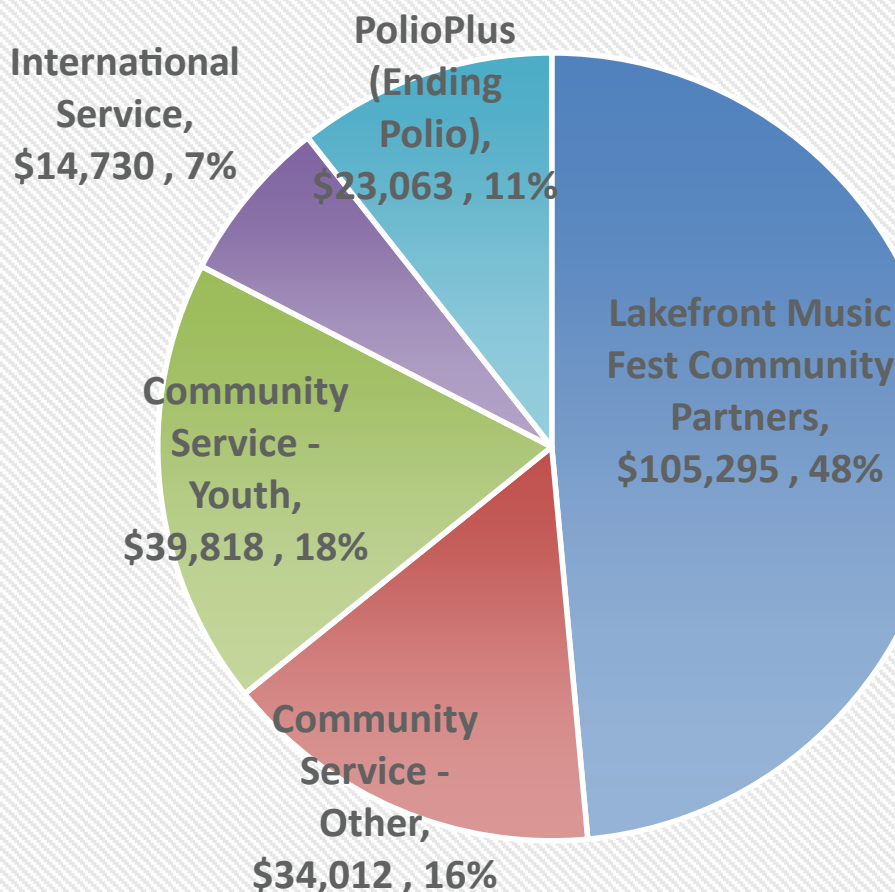
Prior Lake Rotarians

Prior Lake Rotarians in the District
Prior Lake Rotarians' reach of doing good goes well beyond our Club boundaries. Members serve at some of the highest levels within the Rotary 5960 District, and all points in between. In 2016-2017, this included District Governor Elect Kyle Haugen, District Governor Nominee Designate Paul Perez, District Membership Chair Deb Severson, Fund Development Committee Paul Hofslie (Chair) and Jack Haugen, Visioning Facilitation team members Mitch Popple and K. Haugen, Northstar Youth Exchange Board member Bill Schult and Country Officer Susan Perez (Belgium and France), and Grants Sub-Committee members Guy Selinske and Gerry Wersal. Gerry was also the Stewardship Officer.

Rotary Dollars @ Work



The Club, known for their fundraisers, the community favorite Valentine's Gala and the regional event, Prior Lake Rotary's Lakefront Music Fest, uses the funds raised for the Prior Lake Rotary Foundation, a 501c3, to do good. The good is through projects and programs the Club participates in and/or funds, and worthy non-profit organizations the Club contributes to. In total, the charitable giving for the 2016-2017 Rotary year was \$216,918. The chart above breaks down the giving by category.



Thousands of Volunteer Hours Provided by Rotary Club Members Charitable dollars given, or used for projects and programs in 2016-2017 was

\$216,918

Community Service Other

\$34,012

- A Breath of Hope
- Bedraces For Bridging Sponsorship
- Bridging
- CAP Agency
- Carver Scott Humane Society
- Firefighter's Appreciation Dinner
- For the Love of Pete
- Fore the Y (YMCA)
- Gateway Park Refresh
- HopeKids
- Just Cause Charity
- Lakefront Days Sponsorship
- M.S. Bridie Bash
- Majestic Hills – Heroes on Horseback
- Northern Star Council BSA
- Prior Lake Association Fireworks
- Prior Lake Players
- Prior Lake VFW - Veterans Harvest Market
- Rotary - Sponsored Projects
- Shakopee Prior Lake Water Ski Association
- Southern Valley Alliance for Battered Women
- Special Olympics of Minnesota
- Stage and Spotlight Theater

Lakefront Music Fest Community Partners

\$105,295

- River Valley YMCA-\$49,635
- Laker Athletic Booster Club/Patrons of the Arts and Activities--\$55,660
(Donation amounts from 2016 Lakefront Music Fest)

Community Service Youth

\$39,818

- Camp RYLA
- Christmas Gifts for Needy Students
- Cub Scout Pack 1909 Sponsorship
- D.A.R.E. Scholarships
- Eagle Scout Troop 331
- Hatcher Memorial Scholarships
- Interact
- Junior Achievement
- Laker Educational Foundation
- MUNA
- PLHS Senior Party
- Prior Lake Wrestling Club
- STRIVE
- STRIVE - Scholarships/Awards
- Youth Exchange - Inbound
- Youth Exchange - Outbound

International Service

\$14,730

- American Refugee Camp
- Fast for Hope
- Haiti Outreach
- International Village Clinic (India)
- Iringa Hope
- Shelter Box
- The Oyster Women's association
- Travel to FFH - Nicaragua
- Travel to India - Polio NID

Rotary International PolioPlus (End Polio)

\$23,063

The Rotary Foundation



Foundation Giving

Foundation giving are funds given to The Rotary Foundation, the engine that runs many of the projects and programs locally and internationally, including Matching Grants, Peace Scholars, and PolioPlus. Besides numerous members that are Paul Harris Fellows, which means they have given at least \$1,000 cumulatively, there were 14 that were Paul Harris Society this year. The Paul Harris Society is an official Rotary Foundation recognition program that honors individuals who pledge to contribute \$1,000 or more to the Annual Fund, PolioPlus Fund, or approved Foundation grants each year.



Overall, Prior Lake Rotarians gave \$49,297 to The Rotary Foundation last year, or \$624 per member; both those numbers were the highest ever for the Club, significantly outpacing the previous highs from last year. Consequently, both of these numbers were the tops in Rotary District 5960. The Club also achieved EREY

status; EREY stands for Every Rotarian Every Year, which means that every Rotarian in the Club gave at least \$25 to the The Rotary Foundation's Annual Fund. Prior Lake Rotary was one of four clubs achieving this designation.

A highlight of the year was to be honored by the presence of our Foundation banquet keynote speaker, Mary Beth Selene-Growney, who is a current Trustee of The Rotary Foundation and past Rotary International Board member on November 1. We also honored two Paul Harris Fellows – the Prior Lake Lions organization and David Brown, Bridges Alternative Learning Center Coordinator and STRIVE leader.



Prior Lake Rotarians at the District's One Rotary Summit and Mid-Term Rally

District 5960

Zone	District	Club ID	Club Name	Top Per Capita Rank	AF Per Capita	100% TRF Giving	EREY Club
28	5960	2163	Prior Lake, MN	1	\$624.02	Y	Y
28	5960	23174	Arden Hills/Shoreview, MN	2	\$460.53		
28	5960	2166	Roseville, MN	3	\$440.65		
28	5960	24438	Lakeville, MN			Y	Y
28	5960	2153	Le Sueur, MN			Y	Y
28	5960	2155	New Brighton/Mounds View, MN			Y	Y
			Total Count			4	4

Foundation Giving Milestone

In the 2016-2017 Rotary year, the Rotary Club of Prior Lake achieved a milestone. Through fundraisers like Prior Lake Rotary's Lakefront Music Fest, the club has been able to give generously. But that generosity goes beyond the club level to the individual members of the club. Members have given more than \$500,000 (\$504,391 actual) to The Rotary Foundation (TRF). The Foundation is the charitable arm of Rotary International whose money is used for projects and programs. And this is a special year for The Rotary Foundation as it celebrates its centennial anniversary.

THE ROTARY FOUNDATION



YEARS OF DOING GOOD IN THE WORLD

Although the Rotary Club of Prior Lake is in its 38th year, the giving to TRF has seen unprecedented leaps in the last 5 years. In those 5 years, individuals have given \$131,739. Not coincidentally, the Club's current Foundation Director, Paul Hofslie, took over in 2012. Paul, a member of over 22 years and past club president, has led the Foundation committee that educates members and collects pledges to the Foundation. The club is perennially in the top tier in the District in per member giving. This year, both the total dollars and the per capita giving are new high thresholds for the club.

About the accomplishment, Paul said, "Passing this level of giving is a huge milestone. It shows the generosity that our club members have. They

want to help make the world a better place. I am very proud to be associated with such people." When asked what his focus has been since he took over the Foundation committee, Paul stated, "Two main things: to educate members of all the good The Rotary Foundation does in the world, and to increase the level of giving to the foundation by members by making the members feel pride in giving their money. They know that the money they give is being used wisely."

Paul has taken his experience, knowledge, and passion for The Rotary Foundation to the District level as the Fund Development Committee Chair. The main goal of the committee is to encourage Rotarians throughout the District to make The Rotary Foundation their charity of choice. And there is good reason for that: TRF is a highly lauded non-profit organization when it comes to financial oversight and transparency. It has been placed at or near the top by numerous non-profit watchdogs including Charity Navigator. In fact, 91% of the funds are spent directly on programs.

Of all the dollars given by the District to The Foundation, 50% of the dollars come back to the District in three years to be used for projects and programs. Prior Lake Rotary has used these dollars over the years including the first international project that was initiated in the 1994-1995 Rotary year for an irrigation project in Chimbote, Peru. Rotary Foundation dollars have also been used for other local and international projects like starting the STRIVE program in the school district, the Gateway Park to Lakefront Park, and digging wells in The Gambia. Said Prior Lake Rotarian Guy Selinske, who has initiated some of these projects and serves as a mentor on the District's Grant Subcommittee, "Using Foundation dollars is a great way for Rotary clubs to leverage their funds and to engage in projects they otherwise would not have the wherewithal to take on. In some cases, the club can put up as little as \$8,000 and that can translate into \$36,000 for grants and projects."

PolioPlus: Overview

In 1985, Rotary launched its PolioPlus program, the first initiative to tackle global polio eradication through the mass vaccination of children. Back then, there were 350,000 cases annually. Rotary has contributed more than \$1.5 billion and countless volunteer hours to immunize more than 2.5 billion children in 122 countries. In addition, Rotary's advocacy efforts have played a role in decisions by donor governments to contribute more than \$7.2 billion to the effort.

PolioPlus: Challenges

Most people would be surprised to know that polio still exists in parts of the world. But we are close – closer than ever before! And Rotary International, through the PolioPlus program, is working with other organizations like the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the World Health Organization, the Centers for Disease Control, and UNICEF to eradicate polio, which will be the second disease eradicated from the face of the earth; small pox was the other one. This past year, 2016, there were 37 confirmed cases in three countries – Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Nigeria.

The polio cases represented by the remaining one percent are the most difficult to prevent, due to factors including geographical isolation, poor public infrastructure, armed conflict and cultural barriers.

PolioPlus: Local Focus

Rotary Club Supports Polio Eradication Efforts & Raises Awareness

Locally, the Rotary Club of Prior Lake has raised funds and awareness to help the eradication of polio. For the last six years, tip jars were put out at Lakefront Park during Prior Lake Rotary's annual Lakefront Music Fest with all money going towards PolioPlus, Rotary International's



signature project. Funds for PolioPlus were also raised at the Club's annual Gala through a fund-a-need auction.

Through these efforts, the Rotary Club of Prior Lake has lead our district, District 5960, in contributing to PolioPlus the last 4 years. Over those years, the Club has given over \$58,000. This year, the Prior Lake Club once again sponsored Lakefront Days. As part of the sponsorship, the Club could have our logo painted on the hill at Lakefront Park. Instead, we decided to use the End Polio Now logo on the hill to raise awareness. And at Thursday night's wine and beer tasting, Rotarians popped popcorn in End Polio Now t-shirts at our booth and nearly \$100 in donations were raised through the Popcorn for Polio idea.



The hill at Lakefront Park during Lakefront Days

DONATE





Prior Lake Rotarian Wendy Hirschev at the Polio Rally in India

India:

National Immunization Day

During January 5-8, 2017, two Prior Lake Rotarians, Jim Gilbertson and Wendy Hirschev, joined a group of 49 Rotarians from 11 countries in Agra, India for the Mega Polio Campaign. On the first day, the Rotarians participated in a rally to promote the message that it is critical for parents to bring their children to the polio booths. The Rotarians administered polio immunization drops to babies and young children during the drive in small villages outside of Agra. They also visited schools that had been rebuilt and are still supported by the Agra Taj Mahal Rotary. The visiting Rotarians were treated like heroes with their names listed on banners, flyers, and in the local newspaper.

Other highlights included being invited into the home of fellow Rotarian, Rahul Wadhwa and seeing The Taj Mahal, one of the Seven Wonders of the World.

Fast For Hope

This District-led international project was started in 2007. The objective was to deliver service in a

new way, not simply by the typical grant model, but also with individual capacity building in the community. A key to the approach was to build relationships before we build stuff. We wanted to be able to bring Rotarians. Nicaragua has been the focus area for Fast For Hope. Because of the extreme poverty there had become a culture of dependence, to seek help from others and to follow the directions of government leaders. Important for the community to realize that their voice, thoughts and dreams matter. The team invited El Corozo, Nicaragua to join us in this initiative in spring 2012, and efforts really started to get underway in fall 2012.

The Fast For Hope team schedules cultural delegations to visit Nicaragua to experience life in the community firsthand and to create personal relationships with members of the community. The delegations are made up of both Rotarians and Rotarians' spouses or significant others. Our club supported two members, Joan Lompart and Marlys Gesme, on a 10-day trip to Nicaragua in October of 2016. Joan and Marlys came back and shared their amazing journey with the club.

About the Trip

Our trip to El Corozo was awakening as to the poverty in Nicaragua. El Corozo is off the main roads with a dirt road that often gets washed out and is impassable. There is no work in El Corozo



Prior Lake Rotarian Jim Gilbertson administering vaccination drops



Joan and Marlys with other members of the Fast For Hope delegation

so often people can't get to work. There was a town meeting and we learned what the people want in their community; mainly a passable road! The people we did meet were interesting and grateful for our caring enough to visit. the land is rich although the people are poor monetarily. There seems to be great hope for El Corozo with more micro farming. Rotary's role is to support a plan the community agrees upon and can implement and carryout.



We stayed a majority of the time at Kairos School. Typical meal is rice and beans for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Juices were amazing! They consisted of hibiscus tea, watermelon mint, and other fruity mixes. Our housing was dorm style with bunk beds and cold shower. We had hot coffee every morning out on the porch in rocking chairs. One day we visited the school in El Corozo where we sang songs. We visited a reading post that was set up, and we got a tour of a farm. The crops they raised are rice, beans, sorghum and corn, and there are two crops per year.

Rotarian Named District Governor

For the second time in three years, the Rotary Club of Prior Lake will have a club member serving as Governor for District 5960.



Prior Lake Rotary Club member Paul Perez was selected to serve as District Governor for the 2019-2020 Rotary year. Perez will work closely with fellow club member Kyle Haugen, who will serve as District Governor for the 2017-2018 Rotary year.

Perez has been a member of the Rotary Club of Prior Lake since April of 2003 and served as Club President in 2013-2014. Before he became President, Perez was involved in numerous roles within the club's signature event, Lakefront Music Fest, including two years as event chairman.

Following his time as President, Perez has stayed involved in the Lakefront Music Fest as a member and co-chair of the Talent Committee, and has also been the club's public image director. At the district level, Perez has been a member of the Public Image and PolioPlus Committees, has served multiple years on the district's Board of Directors and attended the Rotary Zones 28-29 Institute as an Emerging Leader in September 2016.

"I have been fortunate to receive so much support from members of my Club and other Rotarians in the District. I look forward to working with them and others to further our Rotary efforts," Perez said.

As published in the December 31, 2016 Prior Lake American

Luau Party

Hele mei hoohiwahiwa means "Come celebrate!" That is what the invitation said for the Club's Luau party held October 8 at Cleary Park. This was an event you just didn't want to miss! There was great food featuring our very special guest Kona who was the main course. We also had festive Luau beverages and, of course, fellowship with each other. All members and guests were encouraged to dress appropriately despite the seasonably cool temps.



The ladies ready for the luau

Lakefront Music Fest Kick-Off Party

This year's kick-off party for the 8th annual Prior Lake Rotary's Lakefront Music Fest was held on March 7 at Mystic Lake Casino's Grand Ballroom. Hundreds of attendees came out for the party, which included the Shaw Brothers winding the crowd up. Mike "Muss" Mussman from K102 was the emcee, and SMSC Chairman Charlie Vig presented the Club with a check as



exclusive presenting partner. The crowd got excited when the country headliner, Billy Currington, was announced.

We also unveiled the Chevrolet Colorado that is the raffle grand prize, donated by our exclusive raffle sponsor, Jeff Belzer's. Our photographer, Adam Grim from Adam's Travel Photography, was on hand to capture the evening. A special thanks to Mystic Lake Casino Hotel for hosting the event as part of their sponsorship.



Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community Chairman Charlie Vig (l) with Prior Lake Rotary's Lakefront Music Fest co-chairs Guy Selinske and Darcy Rose with the presentation of the presenting partner check

Roaring 20s Gala

Saturday, February 18

And it was... A Roaring Good Time! Prior Lake Rotarians and guests took the Roaring 20's theme to heart and dressed the part! The 16th annual fundraising event was held on February 18, at Mystic Lake Casino's Hotel's Grand Ballroom. There were live and silent auctions, and Steve Millar and Diamondhead provided entertainment that got attendees out on the dance floor all night. All proceeds from the event, 100%, will go to fund the Club's giving, projects, and programs both locally and throughout the world. Factor (formerly the Rupert's Orchestra of Minneapolis). As advertised, this was THE party of the year proudly brought to you by the Rotary Club of Prior Lake. Attendees came dressed to party, enjoyed a wonderful meal, and had a good time for a good cause.





Bri hanging with some other Exchange Students

Rotary Outbound Youth Exchange Seeing the World

Prior Lake High School graduate Brianna (Bri) Rykken applied for Northstar Youth Exchange through Rotary and was selected to go to Jaca, Spain. Prior Lake Rotary sponsored her. Bri stayed with one host family, which is unusual. She had a host sister and Bri was glad she was able to stay the year with the family. Bri was able to play hockey for a club team in her town, Club Hielo Jaca.



Bri's father and mother, Tom and Joni, were able to make the trip to Spain to visit her. And her sister Tessa was already in Spain and was able to meet up with them.

More on Bri's Adventure:

The following are some questions Bri was asked during her year.

Tell us about one or two accomplishments you've had in the past three months that you are especially proud of and would like to tell us about: *I scored my first Spanish goal in my hockey game. I went to the Spanish movie theater and understood the whole thing.*

Tell us about one exciting or fun activity you have done in the last couple months. *We went for a long weekend to Madrid and toured the city, went to a play in Spanish, and saw Christmas lights.*

What is your greatest challenge or opportunity you are experiencing at this point in your exchange? *The language is very difficult to catch on to and understand completely but I am working very hard and can tell I am improving every day.*

As Bri ended her presentation to our club upon her return:

"Muchisimas Gracias, Rotary, por este oportunidad!" (Many thanks, Rotary, for this opportunity!)





Peang presenting President Doug Gesme with the flag from his country

Rotary Inbound Youth Exchange

Kittiphum (Peang) Thanomthin: From Chiang Mai, Thailand

Host Families: 24.1

Josh and Angela Eifert (Reece)

Tom and Joni Rykken

Bill and Roberta Schult (Alex and Will)

Youth Exchange Counselors: Bill Schult, Jr. and Paul Perez

**Here are some excerpts from an article
published in the July 8, 2017 Prior Lake
American**

**Peang flourishes in Prior Lake!
A Patrick Stroh interview**

Last Saturday, I woke up and looked at my task list for the day. One of the tasks on my list was to interview Peang, our Prior Lake Rotary Exchange Student. What I didn't realize before this interview was how this "task" was actually an opportunity to get to know an incredible young man and see my community and country through his eyes. It was truly a pleasure and the best thing I did all day. Here are excerpts of our conversation:

Question: Peang, tell me a little about yourself

Answer: My name is Kittiphum Thanomthin, but I go by Peang or KT and I'm 17 years old. I'm from the province of Chiang Mai in Thailand where I live with my parents and one older brother. I'm a senior at Prior Lake High school, but

when I return to Thailand, I'll have two years of school to complete.

Question: How did you get connected to the Rotary Exchange Program?

Answer: I had two cousins who were in the Rotary Exchange Program and they had a fantastic experience. I applied to be in the program and selected the U.S., Germany and Austria as my top choices to travel to. I was fortunate to get my top choice, the U.S., and then later I found out I'd be coming to Prior Lake, Minnesota. I came to Prior Lake last August and I go back to Thailand in July.

Question: Tell me about where you've stayed in Prior Lake

Answer: I've had three great Rotary host families since being in Prior Lake. I stayed with Angela and Josh Eifert then Tom and Joni Rykken and currently Bill and Roberta Schult. Tom and Joni's daughter Bri is also in the Rotary Exchange program and she is currently in Spain. These guys have all been great hosts.

Question: What have been some fun or new experiences for you in Prior Lake and the U.S.?

Answer: There have been so many! My host families have done so much with me. Additionally, two very memorable days were when I went to the Minnesota State Fair with Paul and Anna Perez, and when I participated in the Polar Plunge – that was the craziest thing I've ever done. I played soccer on the Prior Lake JV team this past fall, and am currently on the JV Track team. I've been snow skiing, cross country skiing, and played broom ball – all very interesting since I had never even seen snow before coming to the U.S.

Question: What is a major difference between Minnesota and Thailand?

Answer: Independence and activities. There are so many things you can do here! You can go fishing, hunting, all the sporting activities, there is just so much to do here and all things that I can't do in Thailand. I really am going to miss it here. Also, the education system is not the best in Thailand and it is so good here. I got to go on a college campus visit with William Schult to

Bemidji State and the choices of majors, minors and all the activities and clubs was just incredible – way more than what you'd get in Thailand.

The Prior Lake Rotary club has now had 25 inbound exchange students including Peang and 16 outbound exchange students in the Rotary Youth Exchange program. While the exchange students get a great deal out of this program, the host families comment on the incredible experience they have as well. Bill Schult commented at the end of this interview, "It's just been a privilege to get to see Peang really come out of his shell. From when he first arrived to where he is today is incredible. I could have never imagined seeing this shy kid from Thailand dressing up in a cow costume and jumping at the Polar Plunge. What a great young man!"

Group Study Exchange

Prior Lake Rotary host the GSE team from Australia and Timor Leste from May 3-6. The Group Study Exchange (GSE) program is a unique cultural and vocational exchange opportunity for business people and professionals between the ages of 25 and 40 who are in the early stages of their careers. The program provides travel grants for teams to exchange visits in paired areas of different countries.



The team consisted of team leader Ainsle and

group members Graciana, Yogish, Anna, Ignacia, and Laura. It was a busy three days including presenting at our meeting on Wednesday, visiting the Mall of America, touring US Bank Stadium, touring Seagate, touring SMSC operations including Mystic Lake Casino, horse races at Canterbury Park, and the social on Prior Lake at the Lompart's. And then there was karaoke at TJ Hooligans. Here's how the night ended as told by Rotarian Kyle Haugen:



The last night in Prior Lake was spent at Canterbury Park before ending with karaoke at TJ Hooligans

It's about 2 a.m., and there's usually not a good reason to be up at this point. Instead, me and a few other Prior Lake Rotarians just closed down a karaoke bar with a bunch of Australians singing "Hey Jude" at the top of our lungs. Yet another reason why #Rotary is such a great organization. I'm so glad that I've been able to spend the last few days with our Group Study Exchange team here in Prior Lake. They're great people who are going to help us as Rotarians make a difference for years to come!



The team visits Mystic Lake Casino Hotel and other SMSC facilities

Gateway Park Grant

Prior Lake Rotary's Gateway Park received a refresh and upgrades this past year through Rotary's District Grant process. The process allows for matching funds from other Rotary Club's. The Gateway Park was also a District Grant during Rotary International's centennial year 2005.



Prior Lake Rotary board members stopped at Gateway Park to check on the progress

This project was a two-part process – spring and fall – and this was in partnership with the City of Prior Lake. Phase one included weeding and removing and replacing plants from the two rain gardens. Rotarians and Prior Lake High School Interactors worked with the City to replant vegetation in and around the basins with pollinator-friendly plants. In phase two, there was more weeding and additional planting. The water fountain was replaced with a zero-pool water fall; the waterfall is safer as it uses rocks at the base to eliminate drowning hazard of pooled water. The rocks at the bottom also provides a safe water source for bees and butterflies. A grand entrance consisting of pillars with a metal gateway arch with the Rotary name and logo prominently displayed was constructed as a nice project upgrade.



Interact Club at Prior Lake High School

The Prior Lake High School Interact had a successful 3rd year with a total of 33 members. Interact Board members this year were President Kali Ploof, Vice President Christina Laridaen, Communications Coordinator Alyssa Ploof, Secretary Sarah Scherer and Treasurer Connor Hofslie.



Interactors doing check in at the Trunk or Treat event

A new project that the Interactors did this year was Trunk-Or-Treat in October. People decorated the trunks of their cars with a Halloween theme, and then children trick-or-treated from car to car! The club raised \$752 in donations, which went to St. Jude Children's Hospital!



Other Interact projects included partnering with Prior Lake Rotary Club to do Gateway Park weeding and replanting, Build-A-House – gingerbread house making for Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity, and helped the Prior Lake Rotary Club with the annual Gala fundraising event.



Their final and most successful event was "Night-in-a-Box" on May 25, in which 16 Interact members slept outside Prior Lake High School in cardboard boxes. This year ShelterBox was the beneficiary of the fundraiser, and a partner in the event. ShelterBox Ambassador and board member Greg Krauska was in attendance talking about the organization and conducted activities for the Interactors. The event raised over \$3,700! That is enough to purchase 3 ShelterBox boxes that will be sent to areas suffering natural disasters or humanitarian crisis.



Interactors getting ready to sleep in boxes for Night in a Box



Strive

STRIVE, Students Taking Renewed Interest in the Value of Education, is a program for high school students who have faced some challenges but want to make the most of their last year of high school. STRIVE was created right here in our District by Rotarian Don Mooney of the White Bear Rotary Club. For the 7th year, Prior Lake Rotary supported this program at Bridges, the Area Learning Center for the Prior Lake Savage Area School.

In all, there were 22 students and 20 mentors; 16 of those mentors were Prior Lake Rotarians. The program consists of 2 meetings per month. One meeting is a one-on-one meeting between mentees and mentors to check in on how goals are going and to discuss anything else going on in a student's life. The other meeting is a guest speaker speaking on appropriate topics such as interviewing and other life skills.

David Brown, Bridges Area Learning Center Coordinator, talked about the program status midway through the year. "I have said this a



Shelterbox's Greg Krauska with Interact Rotary advisor and Prior Lake Rotarian Susan Perez

couple of times this year and really want to emphasize how great this year's group is - both students and mentors! I can see that through your mentorship you are having a real and meaningful impact on a young person's life. You are helping us to fulfill our district mission of educating all learners to reach their full potential as contributing and productive members of an ever-changing global society. Thanks for all you are doing, your time and energy for our students!"



Mentor and Prior Lake Rotarian Dan O'Keefe talked about his student at the year-end STRIVE banquet

Strive Wrap-Up

Nine Prior Lake Rotarians participated in a very inspirational Bridges Senior Recognition Banquet on Thursday, June 1, at Fong's. Students were recognized for overcoming a variety of obstacles to graduate from high school. There were many great and funny stories shared along with many tears and hugs. Bridges is the Alternative Learning Center for Prior Lake - Savage School District. The nine Rotarians are mentors in the STRIVE program at Bridges along with five non-Rotarian mentors who were also present. The STRIVE program is supported by the Prior Lake Rotary Club. The mentors also awarded their students \$500 scholarships for achieving goals in the program. The most improved student was awarded \$750.

Muna

Once again, Prior Lake Rotary supported a delegation from Prior Lake High School on a trip to Winnipeg, Canada for the annual Model United Nations Assembly event. This year the club supported 3 teams – two students per team – to help them become global citizens.

The following students were selected to represent Prior Lake High School: Faduma Ali (12th grade), Aaron Blanchard (12th), Christina Lari-daen (12th), Brennan Wolfe (11th), Kyle Wong (11th), and Alexander Zheng (11th). The students were chaperoned by Prior Lake Rotarian Michelle Jirik and two advisors from Prior Lake High School, Ryan Wagner and Erin Hester.

Each team represented a country. Kyle and Christina – Bangladesh, Faduma and Aaron – Ukraine, and Brennan and Alexander – Hungary. The team of Kyle and Christina received Honorable Mention Award for most accurately portraying their country, which was a great honor!



Besides the intense MUNA event, the group toured the Canadian Museum of Human Rights, enjoyed an evening at the Forks ("one of the loveliest must-see places in Winnipeg"), went dancing at the Hitch N Post, and went to the Escape Room, which is where kids get locked in a room and have to find clues to escape.



The students in tourist mode

Christmas Party

December 8, 75 guests made up of Rotarians and family members, including a few tiny tots, gathered at Lakefront Park Pavilion for some holiday cheer. Santa even showed up for the Club's annual Christmas Party. Our FUN Committee outdid themselves!



Holiday cheer!

Mystery Trip

The annual Mystery Trip was held on Saturday, April 22. We had a total of 58 Rotarians, spouses, and friends of Rotarians join in the fun. We started out with a tour of the Wabasha Street caves, followed by a layover at the Summit Brewery in St. Paul. Our final stop was to the ultimate man cave where we enjoyed a phenomenal private concert with the Prairie Dog Fight Club Band, with Prior Lake Rotarian Dave Card on drums. We ended the night with some pretty amazing karaoke. Thank you also to The Pointe for catering the event.



One cold cow!

Polar Plunge for Special Olympics MN

On a blustery February on a Minnesota lake... Okay so it was in the 50s. But the Prior Lake Rotarians participating in the Polar Plunge for Special Olympics MN would tell you the water was plenty cold! Six Rotarians and our Youth Exchange Student Peang, along with his host dad Tom, all plunged in and made it out on the other side. As a team, Prior Lake Rotary raised \$3,893, which placed us 6th overall for any team!

About Special Olympics MN:

Special Olympics Minnesota is founded on the belief that people with intellectual disabilities can, with proper instruction and encouragement, learn, enjoy and benefit from participation in individual and team sports, adapted as necessary to meet the needs of those with intellectual and physical disabilities.



Club members also participated in the Bed Races for the Bridging event again. SKOL!



Rotary International Convention

On to Atlanta: Rotarians Attend Rotary Convention

The Prior Lake Rotary Club was well represented at the annual Rotary International Convention held in Atlanta in June. In all, 17 Rotarians and 6 spouses attended this unbelievable and sometimes life-changing event. Attendees (non-Rotarian spouses in parenthesis) included David and Joan Fawcett, Doug and Marlys Gesme, Jack Haugen (Mary), Kyle Haugen (Carrie), Joan Lompart (Brian), Vic Noer (Maria), Paul and Susan Perez, Darcy Rose (John), Don and Edith Schroepe, Guy and Mary Selinske, Dan Stanley, and Mary Viereck (Paul). David and Edith are actually members of different Rotary Clubs since the two couples go on snow bird status.



Rotarians gathered at the District 5960 party arranged by District Governor Elect Kyle Haugen

Attendees had so many options during their time in Atlanta. Obviously, the convention was the highlight, and Rotary was front and center. The Georgia World Congress Center was the site of the convention; opening and closing sessions were held there, and that is where each convention day started where various topics were covered. The speakers were incredible including Bill Gates, golf legend Jack Nicklaus, activist

and favorite son of Atlanta Andrew Young, and actor Ashton Kutcher. 33.15 We also heard Rotary International General Secretary John Hewko give a rousing update on the status of Rotary. There were breakout sessions covering numerous topics, and Prior Lake Rotarians came away inspired with great ideas they can bring back to our club and community. The House of Friendship was also held at the Center. Here, there were hundreds of booths covering Rotary programs and specific projects and booths selling items including local vendors. It was an awesome experience seeing Rotarians from around the world and getting to talk to them.



Away from the convention, there were other opportunities to see the city including the Georgia Aquarium, the College Football Hall of Fame, and the National Center for Civil and Human Rights. The host city even set up special events to get a flavor of the city. Some of these included the Zone 28 and 29 night at the World of Coca Cola, Blue Jeans and Blue Grass Festival, and the Women of Rotary held at the Carter Center. Speaking of taste, there was no shortage of restaurants around the hotel and convention center, and Prior Lake Rotarians took advantage of doing some heavy sampling. Despite all that was going on, there were plenty of opportunities for club members to get together to enjoy the friendship of each other.

Among the attendees were some first-timers. Said long-time member Joan Lompart, "It was amazing to see all the countries represented at the convention in all of their traditional clothing. I saw outfits from Nigeria, Thailand, Mexico, West Africa, Brazil, and Argentina that were truly gorgeous.

This was my first International Convention, to

see the difference a group can make in the eradication of polio was another highlight! With the Gates Foundation pledging their continued support; it is exciting that we will see this debilitating disease eliminated in our lifetimes.

Andrew Young, a humanist from Martin Luther King's era, was a dynamic speaker with much wisdom. It was also great spending more social time with members of our club and getting more acquainted."



This was also Dan Stanley's first Convention. He said two things struck him. (First) "The reach of Rotary is very apparent when you attend the Rotary International Convention, you have doers from all over the world and from numerous cultures present at the convention. It makes you realize that when an initiative is conceived by Rotarians it is quickly and efficiently disseminated around the world without the political drag and inefficiencies of working through governments. PolioPlus (program) is a great example of an idea conceived by Rotarians and put in action where it is needed and the successes of this effort speak for themselves. (Second) For me it was very uplifting to see that Rotarians can work so well together despite the seemingly large divisions there are in our current times; it gives you hope for better things in our lives. It only served to validate my involvement with Rotary, I know that my time and giving are going to the proper group!"

The 2018 Rotary International Convention will be held in Toronto, and there are already several Prior Lake Rotarians registered to go. On to Toronto!



District Governor Installation

It was a special night on June 20, at Mystic Lake Casino Hotel. About 200 people, both Rotarians and non-Rotarian guests, gathered for the District Governor installation event. Prior Lake Rotary's own Kyle Haugen was the guest of honor and became District 5960's 2017-2018, and the first ever District Governor from our club in our 39-year history!

Besides the installation, outgoing District Governor Jim Hunt was recognized, five new assistant governors were installed, and a new member, Adam Thusty, was inducted into our club. And since Prior Lake Rotary hosted the event, we had a little fun while raising over \$1,000 towards the eradication of polio, too!

Regarding the night, Kyle stated, "I was honored to be installed as our Rotary District 5960 Governor for the 2017-18 year. I'm very humbled to have been chosen and appreciate all the support I've received in preparation for the role. It was a great night celebrating with friends and family and especially great that Cooper and Carrie Haugen could be a part of it. Thanks to my fellow Prior Lake Rotarians for putting on such a great party!"

8th Annual Prior Lake Rotary's Lakefront Music Fest

The excitement for this year's Lakefront Music Fest held July 14-15 started at the Kick-Off Party back in March at Mystic Lake Casino Hotel where the country headliner, Billy Currington, was announced. Once The Fray was announced as the rock headliner, and the rest of the lineups were filled, it was full steam ahead and soon would bring the event to new heights! Prior Lake Rotary's Lakefront Music Fest, an event to raise money for the Prior Lake Rotary Foundation, brought record crowds to Lakefront Park in Prior Lake, MN.



The Fray headlined Friday night

The rest of the rock lineup on Friday was regional favorite Kat Perkins, followed by The Mowgli's. 35.1 The crowd swelled to over 10,000! Not to be outdone, country night exceeded everyone's expectations. Up-and-comer Brianna Alomar began the evening, and then David Nail took the stage. By that time the crowd was already nearing record levels, and it just continued. In all, 14,217 people had come through the gates! Billy Currington entertained the record crowd with his numerous #1 hits!



Kat Perkins got the crowd going early

So how successful was the event? The net profits exceeded \$318,000! Those profits were shared with our Community Partners, the River Valley YMCA, the Laker Athletic Booster Club, the Patrons of the Arts and Activities, and the Prior Lake/Savage elementary school Parent Teacher Committees. The total given was \$108,555!

The success from the event has built year-over-year, and the volunteers, including those from our Community Partners, are also a key component to our success. There were 979 volunteers who worked nearly 3,500 hours! The great summer weather was also a huge factor, as were our event sponsors. Mystic Lake Casino Hotel and SMSC were our Exclusive Presenting Partner for the 8th year and even increased the sponsorship to \$100K, which includes \$50K in cash and \$50K in in-kind donations, including the Kick-Off Party! This year our Exclusive Raffle Partner was Jeff Belzer's. They donated a pickup truck as the top raffle prize!



Billy Currington brought in a huge crowd!

The Club meets every Wednesday at 7 a.m. at The Wilds Clubhouse; come have breakfast on us!

WE ARE THIS CLOSE TO ENDING POLIO

Now is our chance to change the world. To make
sure no child is disabled by polio ever again.

Join in. Speak out. Donate. Be a part of history.

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ThisClose

**The Club meets ever Wednesday at 7 a.m. at The Wilds Clubhouse;
come have breakfast on us!**



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