

# Rotary Club of Louisville



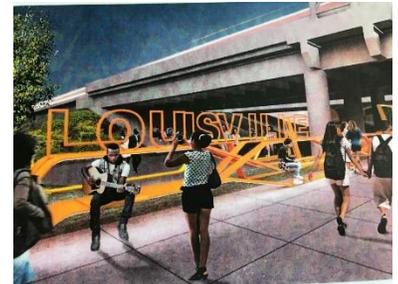
## 2019-20 A Year in Review

2019-2020 was extraordinary in the 108-year history of the Rotary Club of Louisville. Under President Luke Schmidt's leadership, the Club faced unprecedented challenges, not the least of which was the COVID-19 shutdown of in-person meetings beginning March 19th and continuing through the balance of the year.

This was not the first time the Club had to cease in-person meetings. In November and December of 1918, the Spanish flu epidemic forced a six-week suspension of Rotary Club activities throughout Kentucky. But the 2020 epidemic disrupted the last 15 weeks of the Rotary year and was still ongoing as the next year began. This time the Club was able to meet virtually, maintaining regular Thursday meetings which routinely drew from 80 to 110 participants. Virtual meetings of the Board and key committees kept Club business moving. Despite budget adjustments and the postponement of a few activities, innovation and persistence enabled the Club to achieve major goals.

This is a partial list of the year's accomplishments:

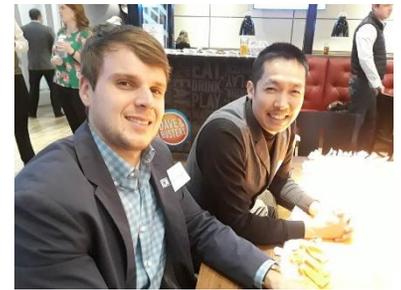
- Completed The Louisville Knot, a new cityscape sign created and erected on Main Street, under the Ninth Street overpass. The Louisville Knot is our Club's expression to see the elimination of the "Ninth Street Divide".
- Celebrated the service of Louisville Rotarians, including the Lifetime Service Award to Barry Barker and Rotarian of the Year to Alice Bridges. Rick Harned received Rotary International's "Service Above Self Award", a prestigious recognition given annually to only 150 of the 1.2 million Rotarians worldwide.
- Continued strong support for Rotary International's anti-human trafficking initiative. On October 16<sup>th</sup>, the Club co-sponsored a major conference at the University of Louisville to provide education and raise awareness about the issue.
- Supported the Rotary Foundation's Annual Fund, contributing \$61,633 for an average of \$157 per club member. Nine Rotarians became first-time Paul Harris Fellows and 26 reached Paul Harris PLUS recognition. The Club now has 168 Paul Harris Fellows.
- Continued the Unsung Hero Awards, despite having to cancel the recognition event itself, joining with four other Clubs and Kosair Charities to provide certificates, scholarship applications and \$250 monetary awards to deserving seniors in 47 high schools.
- Established a Community Impact Committee which as its first project pursued creative solutions to the graffiti problem on signs and underpasses. As protests and civil unrest grew in Louisville and across the nation, President Luke asked the group to give thoughtful consideration to other ways RCL could address community issues.
- Continued the holiday tradition of bellringing for the Salvation Army and invested both funds and volunteer hours in the monthly meals at the Life Change Center and the rebuild of the St. Benedict's Early Childhood Center playground.
- Redesigned and improved the Rotary Honors Scholarship program. The Club modified scholarship guidelines to align with the community wide Evolve502 initiative, added Opportunity Grants to encourage student persistence, and working with JCPS and JCTC awarded \$350,000 in innovation grants to promote educational attainment.
- Contributed \$25,000 to the Community Foundation of Louisville's COVID-19 Response Fund to assist those negatively impacted by the economic downturn.



- Strengthened the Rotary Honors Mentoring Program at Iroquois and Western high schools. 60 Rotarians and community volunteers contributed almost 350 hours during 15 mentoring sessions, engaging more than 550 students in discussions of academic success and career planning. The Club also invested in the Educational Justice program, engaging Rotary Honors Scholars in one-on-one tutoring of middle school students.



- Committed to several international projects, including a District Friendship Exchange in El Salvador and the Uniendo America Rotary Project Fair in Guatemala. The Rotary Fund of Louisville provided \$15,000 to water projects in both countries, an additional \$16,000 to water and sanitation projects in Uganda and Kenya and \$5000 for diagnostic equipment for a Children’s Cancer Clinic in Montevideo, Uruguay. Our Club also contributed \$7,500 to help Mayan women in the mountains of Guatemala learn to install and maintain solar lighting, enabling their children to do homework at night.
- Continued to serve as Louisville’s premier weekly platform for speakers and issues. Mayor Fischer again delivered his annual State of City address at a club meeting at the West Louisville YMCA on February 6. At the start of the pandemic, Dr. Michael Saag, a leading epidemiologist, explained the complexities of the escalating public health crisis. In June, at the height of protests over the deaths of Breonna Taylor and George Floyd, Metro Council President David James and ACLU and Black Lives Matter representative Katurah Herron addressed the causes of civil unrest. This event kicked off a new speaker series focused on race and social justice in the Louisville community.
- Sponsored business synergy events and industry tours, including visits to the overnight shipping operation at UPS Worldport and DDW, The Color House, a globe-leading supplier of food colorings and held the first Committee Fair.



At year’s end, as leadership transitioned from President Luke to President Julie Schmidt, the Rotary Club of Louisville remained strong, and was well positioned to deliver on its stated mission “to provide a fellowship of inspired business, professional and civic leaders with exceptional opportunities for humanitarian and civic service, while promoting integrity, understanding and goodwill on a local, national and worldwide basis.”



To learn more about the Rotary Club of Louisville, visit:

<http://www.louisvillerotary.org/>

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