



THIS WEEK'S PROGRAM

November 14, 2023

2023-2024 Board Members

President Edwin Peacock

Pres Elect Kim Brattain

Past Pres William Bradley

Secretary John Cantrell

Treasurer Craig Field

Exec Sec Christine Cipriano

Directors 2022-2024

Will Barnhardt

Glenn Bouley

Margaret Donovan

Laura Little

Mark Norman

Diego Ramon

Robert Shaw

Directors 2023-2025

Patrick Baker

Linwood Bolles

Terri DeBoo

Andy Dinkin

Donna Dunlap

David Head

Joel Ford

Membership Terri DeBoo

Foundation Joe Morris

Programs Andy Dinkin



Debra Corbett, Rotary District Governor

by **Susie Masotti**

Past District Governor, **Joe Morris**, introduced today's speaker by reminding everyone that Debra "Debb" Corbett's bio in this week's newsletter would allow everyone to read of her wonderful work inside and outside of Rotary on their own. On a personal note, Joe said that Debb brings a history of outstanding service to both her club and our 14-county district. She has been both an exceptional supporter and leader in many ways in Rotary and we are very fortunate to have her as our Governor.

Debb began her comments by mentioning that over 500 Rotary Governors meet at the beginning of each year, and she introduced the newest District Governor Nominee Designate, Assistant Governor, and Charlotte Rotary Past President, **Jerry Coughter**.

Debb was born in 1984 in Pasadena, TX, and is the youngest of four children. She graduated with both her BS and MS degrees at Texas A&M where the common greeting is "Howdy." Howdy is intended to signify that you are family, I have your back, you belong. The Rotary Club has given her the same "Howdy" feeling on a local, regional, national, and international level.

Having worked in her practice as a therapist with young people, she encourages all Rotarians to get involved in one of our programs that works with youth. She believes that in working with young people through Rotary

you are nurturing future Rotarians to continue the work we do today.

When she first joined Rotary, it was through a friend who had mentioned Rotary to her two years before she joined. She now wonders why her friend hadn't kept inviting her to Rotary. Perhaps she would have joined sooner. The way we build our program is by talking about it – mention something to a friend about this week's speaker, an activity your Club is hosting, a volunteer opportunity that you're working on. These are all conversations that can help you talk more about the Club that you love and why you love it. Did you know you can get a Rotary symbol on your license tag? It's a billboard and a conversation starter.

In the Rotary Mission Statement, the key words are "Together People Create Change." We cannot make change alone, but our combined resources do make a difference. Rotary starts and ends with members. Specifically, this coming year we want you to focus on growing membership but also caring for current members. People don't just join Rotary to serve – they join for many reasons and when we invest in our fellow members we are investing in our Club. Break bread with friends by bringing them to a weekly meeting. She then tasked Club President **Edwin Peacock** to regularly recognize members who are "breaking bread" to grow rotary or recognize them for their care of a fellow Rotarian.

Our district is comprised of 53 clubs – we are a membership organization, but service is our product. A new initiative this year is focusing on Mental Health. Debb shared that she lost one of her older brothers to suicide in 1986 which led her to becoming a therapist. Talking about mental health requires us all to be vulnerable with an open heart. Step into this program with courage. Dare yourself with new projects and new ideas and you might fail, but you'll fail forward.

Current programs include the SFTL (Seminar For Tomorrow's Leaders) program which brought her to meet a young man with cochlear implants. He was quiet and shy at one of his first meetings and obviously anxious. The next year she was asked to speak about his work leading in his own community, the change was remarkable. The youth of our programs need our encouragement and support.

The Rotary Foundation is the fuel needed for Rotary to run. Just this week we will gather as a district at the Foundation Banquet to honor Drew Kessler, award four scholarships, and recognize winners of our Art Competitions. Did you know that Rotary Donations are set aside for three years and then come back to your club? Half of the funds go to the Foundation itself and half come back to the District the funds came from.

Debb is especially proud of the Polio Plus program which is on track to completely eradicate Polio – only two countries remain where Polio is endemic. The Youth Exchange program provides young people with a life-changing opportunity. Charlotte Rotary Club should be proud of the work they have done in this effort. The Friendship Exchange program was with Turkey

last year which led to a global project to provide aid after the earthquake there. Your Foundation donations are working.

When it comes to public image and public relations, Debb reminded all of us that Rotarians are great at doing the work but aren't great at telling others. We need to work on getting the word out about what we do every day to make change. Rotarians stay because they know they belong, they contribute, and they make a difference. Think of what programs here in Charlotte would not be around if Rotary didn't exist. Share the stories of what we do with others.

Debb closed by reminding everyone that the District Conference is coming up in Charleston, SC April 19 – 21 at the beautiful Francis Marion Hotel. For a \$20 donation to the Rotary Foundation, you can enter for a chance to win a free trip to this District Conference, be looking in your e-mail for information on how you can enter the drawing.

A recording of the meeting can be found here: <https://vimeo.com/884570527>

The speaker's introduction begins at approximately 27:00 minutes.