

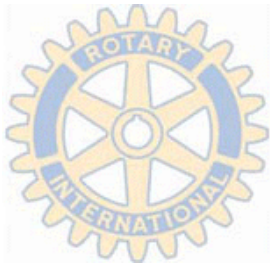
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# THE SPARKPLUG

**Rotary Club of Decatur #180**  
**February, 2007**

[www.decaturreotary.org](http://www.decaturreotary.org)

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## **A Message from the President**

Greetings Fellow Rotarians,

February truly puts the *International* in Rotary International with the designation of “World Understanding Month”. On February 12th Noel Myers, Gary Peek, my husband Terry and I will present our report and recommendations to the club on our recent trip to the Amor Y Vida (Love and Life) Orphanage in Mérida, Mexico. We were all touched by what we saw and learned and look forward to sharing photos and stories with you.

Our relationship with the orphanage began in the 1990s when Noel Myers was working as a consulting engineer in Mérida, Mexico. During his years in Mexico, Noel became acquainted with businessman Tom Kelleher and his wife Katinka. In 1989, Katinka and a group of her friends from Mérida had recognized a need for an orphanage and established Amor Y Vida. The women raised money to purchase a house and to feed and clothe the children. Noel was impressed with the care they provided for the children. After returning to Decatur, he talked to our club about support for the home. In 1995 Rotary Club of Decatur partnered with the Mérida Itzaes Club and received matching funds for a van for the orphanage. Over the years we have purchased laundry equipment, kitchen appliances, window screens, van tires, and tables and chairs for the study room at the orphanage. It has been several years since Noel was in Mérida, and because he is the only member from our club to have visited, we felt that it was important to travel to Mexico to meet the children, their caretakers and the Kellehers and to assess the current needs of the orphanage.



Amor Y Vida currently has 15 girls and 14 boys along with the young mother of one of the babies. The children range in age from 10 months to 12 years. Calling the home an orphanage is somewhat of a misnomer. With the exception of one handicapped child who was abandoned at a hospital, the children have families who have either had the children taken away from them by the government or who have voluntarily surrendered their children to the care of the home. Each child comes to Amor Y Vida with a story. We will be sharing some of those stories with you on the 12<sup>th</sup>. Those beautiful children with their big brown eyes and ready smiles stole our hearts, and we know you will feel the same when you see their photos and learn of their reactions to the suitcases of clothing, books and art supplies that we took with us.



While in Mérida, we met the officers and their spouses from the Mérida Nuevas Generaciones Club for a delightful evening with dinner and a discussion of potential projects for the orphanage. They are willing to partner with us on future projects at Amor Y Vida.



I wish every Rotarian in our club could travel to Mérida. It makes me proud to know that we have helped improve the lives of the children who have passed through the doors of Amor Y Vida. I look forward to returning soon and hope that you will join me.

In Service,  
*Heather Stoa*

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"It is better to light a candle than curse the darkness." Chinese Proverb

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## February Birthdays

Birthday cakes and candles may have originated with the Greeks who used to take round cakes representing the full moon to the temple to honor Artemis, the goddess of the moon. Candles were placed on the cakes to make them look as if they were glowing like the moon. Others think the tradition of celebrating with a birthday cake and candles began in Germany with Geburtstagorten, a sweet German layer cake that was said to have been used for birthdays. The Germans placed small candles on their cakes believing that the smoke from the flames would take their wishes up to heaven. Today people make silent wishes as they blow out their candles hoping that blowing out all the candles in one breath will bring them good luck.

Happy Birthday Rotarians. May all your wishes come true.

2/4 Jackson Owens  
2/5 David Tyrolt  
2/7 Jim Finn  
2/8 Kelly Day  
2/9 Kit Paulin  
2/13 Tim Stock  
2/17 Glenda Williamson  
2/18 Bill Blake  
2/20 Bob Hawkins  
2/21 Kevin Kehoe  
2/28 Barb Dunn



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## February Programs

Once again our Program Committee has been hard at work lining up terrific speakers for the month. Invite a friend or co-worker to join you for these outstanding presentations.

- February 5 Tammy Fadler, a native of Vietnam, will share her experiences and desire to achieve success in the U.S.
- February 12 Heather Stoa, Gary Peek, and Noel Myers report on the trip to the Amor Y Vida Orphanage in Mérida, Mexico.
- February 19 Bob Turner with Tate & Lyle will give us the scoop on Splenda.
- February 26 Kim Bauer presents Looking for Lincoln.



## February Speakers' Honorarium

Each month, Rotary Club of Decatur donates funds in honor of our speakers to a Decatur or Macon County school library for the purchase of new books. This month the donation will be sent to Sangamon Valley Middle School.

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## February Penny Fund

Pennies collected in the month of February will be donated to Anna Waters Head Start. Funds will be used to purchase books, CDs, videos, and arts and crafts supplies to help the children learn about other cultures. Please give generously!



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## District 6490 Newsletter Available On-line

The latest district newsletter has been published on the District 6490 Web site. You may read it on-line by visiting <http://www.Rotary6490.org/Newsletter.cfm>.



### Smile!

Glen Dalluge has volunteered to take digital photos of members for our on-line directory. If you do not have a photo or would like a more recent photo, please see Glen before or after the meeting for a quick picture. Or if you have a photo that you would like to have used, please give it to Heather Stoa or e-mail it to her at: [hstoa@hotmail.com](mailto:hstoa@hotmail.com). She will scan photos and return them to you.

Our directory is great for checking contact information or remembering the name of the new member you sat with at lunch. The directory is only available to our club members. If you need assistance with logging in and remembering your password, please contact Vice-President Steve Furrow at: [Steve.Furrow@admworld.com](mailto:Steve.Furrow@admworld.com).

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## Changes in Membership

Welcome to our newest member, Sue Watts, General Manager of William Street Press. Sue is married and has two sons. She was sponsored for membership by Paula Finn.

Although congratulations are in order for Mike Wakeland as he begins his new position in state government, it regretfully means that we lose him as a member.

We currently have 125 members.



## Kudos for Weekly Service to Our Club

Thank you to Vice-President Steve Furrow for presiding while President Heather Stoa and the rest of the delegation traveled to Mérida, Mexico; to Jim Montgomery, Bill Owen, Kevin Kast, and Miley Palmer for beginning our meetings with thoughtful invocations; to Sergeants-at-Arms Al Luchetti, Dave Goebel, Paul Stanzione and Dick Shelby for recognizing visitors and collecting Happy Bucks; to our greeters Wegi Stewart, Diana Knaebe, and Tim Stock for making everyone feel welcome, to David Coopriider for leading us in song.

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## Grants Awarded to Organizations Serving Area Youth

Many thanks to the Grants Committee: Paul Stanzione, chair; Cathy Ashby, Kelly Day, Bob Hawkins, Bob Pancoast and Jane Shade for reading and ranking over 40 grant applications. The following grants recipients will be coming to our meetings to receive their checks and tell us about their organizations and projects.

American Red Cross	Safety camp for children	\$1,000
Old King's Orchard	After school program for at risk youth	\$950
Shemamo Girl Scouts	G.i.r.l.	\$900
UCP Land of Lincoln	Play Group 0-6 yrs disabled children	\$850
Baby Talk	STEPS Therapy	\$850
Children's Museum	Museum on Wheels	\$425
YMCA Teen Leaders	Engaging Teens in Community Service	\$800
Dove	Teen Dating Violence	\$800
Big Brothers Big Sisters	Academic Promotion Ceremony	\$800
Jr. Fire Cadets Summer	Youth Leadership	\$800
Decatur Public Library	Overhaul Bookmobile	\$750
Teen Challenge	Residential Care	\$750
Decatur Arts Council	Performing Art Series for Youth	\$625
Webster Cantrell Hall	School Program	\$500
Easter Seals	Trust Walk Training Class	\$500
Gallery 510	Young Artists	\$500
South Shores Elementary	African American Reading Skills	\$500
Robertson Charter School	Pen Pals in Kenya	\$500
St. Teresa High School	Entrepreneurship	\$350
Decatur Arts Council	Supplies for Art Field Trips	\$350
Macon County Casa	Court Appointed Advocates	\$300
YWCA	Notebook for Mentoring	\$200



### January Scholar-Athletes

St. Teresa High School students Joel Pezzelle and Carley Smith were accompanied to the January 29th meeting by their parents and principal, Joe McDaniel, as they were honored by Tony Wilkins as the Scholar-Athletes of the Month. Joel ranks 38th in his class and plans to stay involved in sports throughout college. He participated in baseball, basketball, track and cross-country in high school. Carley is 18th in her class and plans to study journalism at the University of Missouri. Carley played basketball, softball and soccer for St. T. Both young people were active in extracurricular activities.

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Please remember The Rotary Foundation and include a \$25 quarterly contribution with your check to be used for the humanitarian efforts of Rotary International. Our club was able to write a matching grant in 1994 for the purchase of a new van for the Amor Y Vida Orphanage in Mérida, Mexico. With the help of the District Governor, we are in the process of partnering with area clubs and Indian clubs to apply for District Matching Funds and The Rotary Foundation Matching Funds for Dr. Sinha's eye clinic in the Bihar province in India.

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*HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY*

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For past issues of **The Sparkplug**, to read board minutes, to consult the board manual and club by-laws, or to look up member contact information, visit our Web site at [www.decaturrerotary.org](http://www.decaturrerotary.org)

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