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Phone: 401-837-0328

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Cheers to 50 Years!



Rotary Cumberland / Lincoln



By MARK BERGER
Berg's Eye Communications

Reaching any type of milestone should be cause for celebration. Whether its either something personal or professional, time is often taken to reflect and honor those who built its foundation and those continuing its mission.

One such example would be The Cumberland-Lincoln Rotary. They recently announced its upcoming 50th anniversary of helping various causes throughout these two northern Rhode Island towns. Their outreach extends from providing scholarships for high school students heading off to college, supporting the Northern RI Food Pantry, Franklin Farm, the Hotel for Homeless Dogs, Happy Basket program in Cumberland, Holiday Baskets program in Lincoln, Cumberland's 4th of July Parade, Lincoln's Memorial Day Parade, active supporters of the Cumberland High Helping Hands Club, and the origination of the two Town of Cumberland Holiday Ornaments.

Chapter President Claudia Rocha said the Rotary has a long-standing tradition of being a viable community resource. The group's devotion toward helping others and volunteerism drives them to want to do even more.

"Being part of an organization that has become integral in our towns for that long is truly a testament to the people who have contributed to its success," said Rocha, who also serves as Vice President, Relationship Manager at Navigant Credit Union. "The Rotary has been a part of numerous events to assist various members of our community. We are happy and blessed to be a part of these two towns for 50 years and we'd like to celebrate our anniversary with a special fundraiser aimed to support our towns' middle schoolers with the hope that this can continue to be an age group we support throughout the entire school year."

Rocha noted that the organization has thrived through the efforts of its members and the community. However, the group has seen requests for assistance and overall membership decline post-Covid. She hopes to reverse that trend.

"Rotarians nationwide are known for their motto 'Service Above Self,' and we are proud of what we accomplished over the last 50 years. Yet, I'd like to spread the word that we are still here in the communities. We welcome the opportunity to invite those interested in service projects to visit us and learn more about what we'd like to achieve," she said.

Claudia added that new members can offer fresh ideas and suggestions that can often lead to a positive change.

The Cumberland Lincoln Rotary Club is putting together

Step Into Summer! – a summer activity drive for select in need 6th and 7th grade middle-school students in Cumberland and Lincoln.

"We believe that every child deserves the opportunity to thrive, and we'd like to offer these students screen-free items to encourage them to stay active, explore their creativity, and make the most of their break. To ensure the success of this initiative, we are seeking sponsorships and donations to help cover the costs of the toys, activities and backpacks. We are reaching out to local businesses, organizations, and our generous community members for their support," said Rocha.

The event is scheduled to coincide with the end of the school year. These backpacks will feature sporting goods, games, summer toys, coloring materials, sunscreen and other essential items.

The group is currently accepting donations and has created an Amazon Wish List of the items to be included in the bags for those who would like to directly purchase items. Sponsors of the Step Into Summer! fundraiser will be featured on the backpacks and be named in press releases and social media posts.

Anyone interested in making a donation may visit their list of items available for purchase at:

<https://www.amazon.com/registries/gl/guest-view/2GGE3OD58ANEC>.

Additionally, local businesses are being asked to donate gift certificates or coupons for ice cream, drinks, food and entertainment that can be added to the activity bags. Once the materials have been collected, the Rotary will seek volunteers to fill the bags, which will be delivered to the respective middle schools.

She said it is important to remember that not all students have plans or things to keep them occupied during the non-school months.

"Most kids can't wait to get out of school and play outside, attend camps or go on family trips," Claudia said. "For some kids, however, the reality can be far different and less fun. These bags are just a small way of providing a little extra joy and motivation to keep their minds open to new adventures."

Rocha invites the community to consider attending a future Rotary meeting and potentially joining them. They meet twice per month on Mondays at noon at the Amica Headquarters located in Lincoln. Please reach out to Claudia via email at clrotaryri@gmail.com for the schedule and more information about the Chapter or the fundraiser.

The Cumberland Lincoln Rotary Club was chartered on September 11, 1975.

Today, the Cumberland-Lincoln Rotary consists of: Michael Aragao, Shameem Awan, Dennis Burns, Laura Cabral, Timothy Draper, Janice Geddes, Ted Murphy, Debbie Parziale, Claudia Rocha, Bob Spadano, and Amy Shallcross Vogel.