

ROTARIANS AND THE HOPE CENTER BRING HOPE TO THE HOMELESS

Third Thursdays are traditionally the days when the Rotary Club of Lexington foregoes a formal meeting, and instead looks for ways to “Do Rotary, Differently.” Last week was no exception.

Club members supported The Hope Center by preparing sandwiches for the HopeMobile, which delivers meals and essential resources throughout the community. Rotarians were welcomed by Chris Peck, Chief Advancement Officer, who shared insight into the organization’s work.

Members valued the opportunity to serve and learn more about the Hope Center’s impact, reflecting Rotary’s commitment to Service Above Self and the strength of community partnerships in addressing complex challenges with purpose and dignity.

The Hope Center is a campus-based resource in Lexington that goes beyond emergency shelter, offering recovery programs focused on accountability and life skills, along with employment support and pathways to transitional and permanent housing. The campus includes an on-site medical clinic and dedicated services for veterans.

The recently completed Quantrell Center expands capacity with a modern, purpose-built space that strengthens service delivery and supports dignity. At the core of daily operations, the Jacobs Hope Cafeteria serves three meals a day, 365 days a year, ensuring consistent access to food.

Chris noted his thanks to his friends in Rotary, saying “It meant so much to me to have fellow Rotarians volunteer here! Thank you so much for always being so supportive.”

The Hope Center is currently in need of basic hygiene items for men, including shampoo, razors, toothpaste, toothbrushes, socks, bath towels, and men’s underwear. To donate, please reach out to Alisha D. Chaffin (alisha@zegaroffice.com) or Chris Peck (cpeck@hopectr.com).

– Alisha Chaffin



L to R (first photo): Alisha Chaffin, Franklin Thompson, Barry Stumbo, friend of Rotary, Chris Peck, Sarah Diener, Mary Ellen Fflis, Peggy Trafton, Jamie Schrader, Paul Chewing. Not pictured: Brad Blain and Scott Neal.

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UPCOMING PROGRAMS

Apr 30 Keeneland/Derby Meeting, Gabby Gaudet & Tom Leach

May 7 Leon Hirsh, Rotary’s Fight for Polio Eradication

May 14 Tommy Bell Award

May 21 Doing Rotary Differently

May 28 Scholarship Day

UPCOMING EVENTS

Apr 24 Early Morning Mixer, 46Solutions, Lexington Green, 8:00-9:30am

Apr 25 RYLA, Life Adventure Center, Versailles, 8:00am-6:00pm

Apr 27 God’s Pantry, Backpack Pack-Up, 817 Winchester Rd., 1:00- 2:30pm

Apr 29 Call to the Post Membership Event, Rooster’s, Richmond Road, 5:00-7:30 pm

May 22 Early Morning Mixer, 46Solutions, Lexington Green, 8:00-9:30 am

May 30 Dancing with the Lexington Stars, Carrick House, 6:00- 11:00 pm

The ROTARY Club of Lexington

WHEEL HORSE

April 23, 2026
— TODAY’S PROGRAM —

Presiding: President Dean Hammond
Inspiration, Pledge, & 4 Way Test: Phil Gray
Introduction of Guests: Barry Stumbo

Introduction of Speaker: Chris Campbell
Speaker: Dr. Jay Morgan, President, Morehead State University
Location: The Mane on Main

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MEET OUR SPEAKER



DR. JOSEPH A. (JAY) MORGAN

Dr. Joseph A. (Jay) Morgan has served as the fourteenth president of Morehead State University (MSU) since July 1, 2017. His focus at MSU has been on student success, performance outcomes, academic excellence, as well as university rankings and responsiveness to the state. Prior to service at MSU, Dr. Morgan served as the vice president for academic affairs and student success for the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education, which coordinates higher education in Kentucky. Before state-wide service at the Council, Dr. Morgan served as provost and vice president for academic affairs at Murray State University,

as well as associate provost, university faculty regent, leadership program director, graduate program coordinator, and professor. He also has career service in business and as a high school teacher and coach.

Dr. Morgan holds a Ph.D. from Oklahoma State University, a B.S. and an M.S. from Murray State University, and completed a graduate track for school superintendent, as well as a certificate in management from Vanderbilt University. Dr. Morgan served as Board Chair of the Council of Presidents of the Ohio Valley Athletic Conference/Division 1, as well as Board Chair of a football conference, among other boards. He is a former member of the board of trustees of a medical university, vice chair of a public university board, an economic development board, a bank board, and several foundation boards and state financial boards. Additionally, his former public service includes four terms as an elected member of a city council, board president of a chamber of commerce, board chair of the United Way, was formerly named Citizen of the Year, is a Rotarian, and has been involved with

economic development, banking and other workforce initiatives.

He has taught, worked, and traveled in more than fifteen countries for academics, business, research, and development. Since he joined MSU, the University has broken records for private fundraising for scholarships, university graduation rates, grants and contracts, federal appropriations, and foundation endowments, achieved record highs in U.S. News and World Report rankings, and has been elevated to Carnegie Research University status and earned the Carnegie Community Engagement classification. He has led the way for a new science and engineering building, three new residence halls, a new music and business building, a veterinary science building, an applied science building, and major renovations to over ten campus buildings and athletic facilities. His tenure has marked over \$400 million in campus facility improvements. Dr. Morgan notes that MSU is striving to become a Top 10 Regional University in the South by staying focused on student success, and at #12, believes MSU is well on its way.

The Rotary Club of Lexington
401 W. Main, Ste. 305
Lexington, KY 40507
Phone: 389-8100

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+1 859 231-9527
James.A.Richardson@ms.com
NMLS #1255648
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TOYOTA BLUEGRASS MIRACLE LEAGUE
The League's 20th anniversary season kicked off April 18, with strong support from Rotary volunteers who cooked, served, and cheered throughout the day. Mayor Gorton opened the event by throwing out the first pitch and spending time with volunteers and families.
Registration grew to 150 players, expanding the League to 10 teams and increasing the number of games—and families served—each Saturday. Despite rain cutting the day short, most attendees were fed, with leftovers donated to the Catholic Action Center.
The crowds are a testament to the need for a safe, welcoming space for players and families. I have to say that it seemed that Rotarians were everywhere, making sure that everyone had enough to eat, that the coolers remained full of drinks, and most importantly that everyone felt welcomed and appreciated.
A major 20th anniversary celebration is planned for September 11, the evening before opening day, please mark your calendar! Eileen O'Brien



WELCOME, NEW ROTARIANS

Graham Priest
Contact Information
Home Address: 3438 Fleetwood Drive,
Lexington, KY 40502
Email: tgrahampriest@gmail.com
Ph: 859-457-4445
Financial, CPA, Banking
Sponsor: Markus Cross
Look for their bios in an upcoming issue of *The 5th Page*.

Lori Donaldson
Contact Information
Home Address:
Email: lori.donaldson@eastersealsbg.org
Ph: 859-552-9151
Assns & Orgs: Easterseals of the Bluegrass
Sponsor: Jim Richardson

Rotary's speaker on April 9 was Rear Adm. Charles M. "Mike" Brown, who was in town to celebrate U.S. Navy Week. Lexington is one of twelve cities nationwide that participated in this annual event. Navy Week highlights the impact our Navy has on the Commonwealth, the nation, and the world.

The Admiral was introduced by Rotarian Eric Brooks, who did a wonderful job highlighting some of the Navy's ships that have links to Kentucky—the USS Ashland, USS Henry Clay, and the USS Abraham Lincoln. During his remarks, Admiral Brown also mentioned the USS Kentucky, which is a ballistic missile submarine nicknamed "Thoroughbred of the Fleet." He also mentioned CDR Dudley "Mush" Morton, a native of Owensboro, and captain of the USS Wahoo, the submarine that sank the most Japanese ships in World War II.

A native of Montgomery, Alabama, he thanked Rotarians for giving the University of Alabama (his favorite team) former University of

Kentucky coach, Paul "Bear" Bryant. Admiral Brown acknowledged Rotary veterans and family members of those serving in the military. He said of them, "you sacrifice but you serve too." His relationship to Rotary goes back forty-one years, when in 1985 he received a \$1,000 scholarship from the Rotary Club of Montgomery. He mentioned that he and more than forty other sailors will visit Mammoth Cave, Louisville, the Corvette museum, and that the Navy band will perform at Thursday Night Live and at Keeneland. He encouraged Rotarians to ask the sailors why they joined, what they do, and why they stay in.

It was noted that although Kentucky is a land-locked state, it is integral part of the world economy. The United States has been a maritime nation since 1607 and seas shape history and oceans are the lifeblood of commerce. Kentucky alone produces \$50 billion in exports, which is seventeen percent of the state's economy and the source of 120,000 jobs. Bourbon, automobiles, agriculture, and aerospace make Ken-

tucky one of the top ten exporting states in the country. Ninety percent of the world's economy is tied to maritime shipping and ninety-five percent of all communications cable is underwater.
In addition to its critical peacetime role, the U.S. Navy is America's away game with more than one hundred ships forward deployed daily. He said, however, that our supremacy is under attack with threats in the Red Sea and the Strait of Hormuz. China is also challenging the U.S. presence in Asia and the Pacific Ocean. In addition to military dominance, China is also focused on protecting world leaders aligned with their policies. The U.S. Navy is Teddy Roosevelt's "big stick."
He concluded his remarks by saying that recruiting and retaining qualified sailors is facing a strong headwind. As influencers, he encouraged Rotarians to identify young men and women who want to serve their country – he believes they are out there and crave leadership development opportunities.
– Paul B. Chewning

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