Rotary Club of Thomasville

Thomasville HTML Template

AUGUST 18, 2020

This Week's Program

Eliza McCall will discuss how Second Harvest of Southwest GA has handled Covid 19 and the needs of the community.

In 1982, a small group of volunteers representing several Valdosta churches formed the Unity Food Bank with the goal of giving community non-profits with easy, affordable access to the foods and services necessary to carry out their charitable work. The group operated in a borrowed basement, distributing loads of food donated from another community food bank.

Over the last 31 years, the organization has grown and transformed – changing names and leadership, becoming independent and nationally-accredited, and expanding geographically and operationally. Today, Second Harvest of South Georgia is the leading hunger-relief organization in the region and the second largest food bank in the state.

We serve a nearly 12,000 square mile region made up of 26 counties. In addition to our Valdosta headquarters, we have branches in Thomasville and soon in Tifton. From these locations, we serve more than 400 partner agencies through a variety of programs including the Food Bank, Kids Cafe, Mobile Food Pantry, and Teachers' Harvest among others.

Last Week's program

One of the standout features of our Rotary Club is the Classification Talk, when new members take the podium and introduce themselves in a very personal way to the rest of the club. As members of the Rotary Club of Thomasville, we are a collection of more than 130 individual life stories and life

MEETINGS

August is Membership and New Club Development Month

8/20	Eliza McCall - Second Harvest
8/27	Steve Depaola - Psychology of Negative Elections
9/3	Jack Hadley and Melanie Martin - Imperial Hotel
9/10	Valerie Scoon
9/17	Wayne Johnson - served under Betsy Devos
9/24	Ranges at Oakfield - New Thomas County Shooting facility
10/1	Regular Meeting - GRSP Kickoff and Student
10/8	Alan Carson - City Manager

BIRTHDAYS

8/23	Rankin Smith
8/23	Stephan Thompson
8/27	Kellie Merck
9/1	Mary Beth Donalson
9/2	Rick Piper
9/3	Dawna Bicknell Tanner
9/4	Korey Taylor
9/6	William Felts
9/7	Vann Middleton
9/11	Debbie Goodman

WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

8/19	Gary Tucker (60)
8/19	Carlton Bryant (45)
8/26	Copper Comita (31)
8/26	John Comita, Jr. (31)
8/28	Albert Park (49)
8/29	André Marria (47)
8/29	Walter Marria, Jr. (47)

experiences… each of them different and each of them interesting. It is our stories and experiences that we bring to Rotary, and it is the tapestry of our combined stories that makes our club both special and successful.

In his Classification Talk, Gerry Gilmer updated his life story, first told to club members in 1996, when Gerry was first inducted into our club. Gerry characterizes himself as a paid communicator, and his resume pretty well supports that characterization. Gerry has been a professor of communication, an administrator at TU, a newspaper man, a lobbyist, a manager of TV and radio stations, a quiz show host, and a full time Methodist pastor.

Gerry attributes his many life and career experiences to “winks” from God. The book, When God Winks, says that a Christian’s career path is a product of similar endeavors moving toward the final chapter in his life… those endeavors having been prompted by God’s nudging (God’s winks). Thank you, Gerry, for sharing your story with us… again!

The program speaker was Danilo Pistelli, owner of Mom and Dad’s Italian Restaurant in Thomasville. Danilo walked us through the incredible story of how his family made it to America and eventually established a small family restaurant that has survived for more than 40 years and provided livelihoods for two generations of the Pistelli family.

The Pistellis were initially sponsored to come to the U.S. in 1969, but their visa was denied because immigration quotas had been filled. It took another 4 years and some political help from their stateside relative to finally get an approved visa. The family – father Osvaldo (39 years of age); mother Tita (38 years of age); brother Massimo (13 years old) and Danilo (9 years old) – arrived here in 1973, speaking little to no English, with $47 in their pocket and $10,000 in debt.

Mother and father went to work at their relative’s restaurant in Tallahassee, busing tables and washing dishes. By 1977, Osvaldo Pistelli was planning to open his own restaurant in another Florida city, but on a random visit to Thomasville, he saw a ‘for sale’ sign on the old Singletary Flower Shop building, and that’s where Mom & Dad’s in Thomasville was born. Two years later, in 1979, they bought their current location on Smith Avenue, and built a commercial kitchen in the back of the building.

In 1985, Danilo graduated from college and returned home to work in the family business. In 1998, a bar was added to the building, and about two years ago, a bakery was added to the back of the

9/2	Michael Beaty (49)
9/4	Teri White (21)

YEARS OF SERVICE

8/24	David Hufstetler (3)
9/1	Gary Tucker (38)
9/1	Debbie Goodman (26)
9/4	Randy Watts (6)
9/15	Tom Everett (14)

ROTARY ONLINE

https://thomasvillerotary.org
https://rotary6900.org/
https://rotary.org/

ROTARY CLUB OF THOMASVILLE

Thursdays, 12:15 pm
The Plaza Restuarant
217 Broad St
Thomasville, GA 31792

SOCIAL MEDIA

LEADERSHIP

President	John Brown
President-Elect	Wayne Newsome
President Nominee	Danny Braddy
Immediate PP	Kim Walden
Treasurer	Teri White
Secretary	Angela Williamson
Public Image	Michael Bixler
Public Image	Michael Bixler

Directors

Club Vice President	Scott Rich
Foundation	Fran Milberg
Membership	Janet Liles
Service Projects	Adrian Smith Burns
Youth Service	André Marria
Admin	Cameron Jahnke

property. Mom (Tita) passed away in 2001, and Dad (Osvaldo) died in 2012… but they left a solid foundation, and their legacy thrives today under Danilo's and wife Anna's capable direction.

Statistics tell us that, after 18 months of operation, the survival rate for small family restaurants is about 10%... making the Pistelli family's accomplishment all the more remarkable. As the country and local area emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic, Mom & Dad's is open for business, and Danilo looks forward to welcoming his many Rotarian friends.