



NEW MEMBERS



Joanne Dickerson-Harper

Retired from the Federal Government after 30 years as a contracting officer for a number of U.S. agencies (Veterans Administration, U.S. Navy, Coast Guard, etc). She currently works at Joaquin Miller Elementary School as an attendance officer and is president of the St. Vincent de Paul / St. Columba Church Conference. She was the featured speaker at Berkeley Rotary in April 2015 and joined the club a few months later.

"After I spoke at a Berkeley Rotary meeting last year about what St. Vincent de Paul is and what it does, I talked to a number of the club members. I realized how perfectly Rotary fits with what I am doing with my life. I knew about Rotary, of course, but I hadn't understood that we share the same belief system. People should have a roof over their heads, food, and the ability to take care of their families. It's eye-opening what Rotary does in this regard - so much more than I thought. I am awed by all the projects - like the fund-raising at Golden Gate Fields to provide ESL (English as a Second Language) education to the track workers and the free health clinic Rotacare in Richmond to those without health insurance. And Rotary does it all in a big way."



Joleen Ruffin

Executive Director, Berkeley Community Fund, who joined in January 2016, was born and raised in Zimbabwe and moved to the U.S. at age 17, to attend college. She has a background in operations management and student development.

"When I was growing up, the name ROTARY was associated with the polio eradication campaign, leaving me with a favorable impression of the organization. Fast forward 25 years: I was re-introduced to Rotary through the Berkeley Rotary college scholarship program. The word Rotary had stayed in my mind. Rotary's motto is service above self; it's about being generous--with your time, your money, your gifts. What I love about Rotary is that the members are incredible... so genuine about how much they care. Beyond the serious causes we take on, it's also fun. Rotary reminds me of the TV show Cheers - you want to go where everybody knows your name. Camaraderie, service and doing good in the world."



Jason Draut

Chief Investment Officer and Financial Planner, Wynn Capital Management, joined Berkeley Rotary in May 2015 because a client of his (and former club president) invited him to a meeting. The client knew Jason was seeking more opportunities to serve his community and to help people who need help.

"Rotary's a wonderful place to make a difference and to meet new people. I've enjoyed working on the Kite Festival, at Dollar Day at Golden Gate Fields, and at the Centennial event. I pretty much knew what to expect in the way of community work because it was well explained in advance. But I've been pleasantly surprised by the diversity of weekly speakers- I now find myself asking "what am I going to hear about today? What will I learn about my community? If someone I knew asked me about joining Rotary, I'd say 'you get as much out of it as you put in.'"



Rebecca Phuong

Business Consultant, Information Technology, Kaiser Permanente, Oakland (and recent U.C. Berkeley graduate), was an active Interact (Rotary-sponsored program for high schoolers) member at El Cerrito High School for four years. She joined our club in May 2015.

"As an Interact member, I always knew I wanted to be part of Rotary. And this was the right time. I've participated in Berkeley's Kite Festival and the Centennial celebration, and am working at the District level with Interactors and with the East Bay Rotaractors (college students in Rotary-sponsored programs) as the liaison with Berkeley Rotary. Berkeley Rotary has a huge impact on the community - it has really shaped our area. My community has expanded because of Rotary, as has my support system. Do it now. Do it yesterday!"