

Upcoming Speakers

10/26 - **Morgan Guess**, Co-Founder, The Guess Anti-Bullying Foundation
11/2 - **Robert Tashjian**, McCracken County 4H Club (Excellence Awards Presentation)

Club Leaders



Glen Anderson
President



Melanie W. McNeill
President-Elect



Shawn Turner
Secretary



Thomas Scott Taylor
Treasurer

Mardie R. Herndon
Rotary Foundation Chair

Don Barger
Sergeant-at-Arms



John A. Williams Jr.
iPast President

Denise A. Chapman
Club Executive Secretary

Board of Directors Currently Serving

Barry Smith
Bruce Akin
Clay Howerton
David Hutcheson
Dee Dee Whittaker
Don Barger
Frank Bennett
John Williams, Jr.
Lewis Carr
Maurie McGarvey
Melanie McNeill
Randy Bridges
Scott Taylor
Shawn Turner
Susan Carr
Terry Reeves

Birthdays

J. William Howerton
October 22
Laura A. Duff
October 23
Arthur P. Feather
October 26
Milton M. Livingston Jr.
October 28
Tonya Goodale
October 30
Jessica Shay Morgan
October 31
Danny Evitts
November 02



GearTeeth

The Rotary Club of Paducah

Website: www.paducahrotary.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/rotaryclubofpaducah

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Fostering Hope for America

October 19, 2016



Speaker: Davina Alexandra Merritt, Author and Speaker on Foster Care. Davina was introduced by Rotarian Clay Howerton.

Topic: Davina shared her story of growing up locally in a foster home. Facing dire medical issues and the issues often faced by children in foster homes, she now works on behalf of foster care initiatives and has authored or co-authored four books on the topic.

Top Ten Takeaways for Rotarians:

-Davina was a fourth generation foster child. She and her four siblings were uprooted from their home in Chicago and placed, separately, in foster homes across Illinois. Ironically, each of them were placed in homes with local schools whose mascots were "Bulldogs". For years, it was the only connection she had with her siblings.

-When she arrived in Brookport at the age of 7, Davina carried everything she owned in a garbage sack. Today, she works with Fostering Superstars (www.fosteringssuperstars.org) distributing "Hope Totes" to foster children. "If you're belongings are in a garbage bag, it makes you feel like garbage," Davina said. The organization accepts donations to allow them to place \$25 gift cards for each child inside their tote bag.

-Davina listed several "heroes" in her life. Among them, her Foster Grandmother whom she described as poor, loving, had various health issues, and was extremely compassionate...an "overcomer". "Her problems made her feel as if she had no purpose," Davina shared, "but little did she know her purpose in life would be to give me hope, and make me an "overcomer"."

-As a child, Davina was legally blind and later diagnosed with what would likely be a fatal brain tumor. Facing the situation with extremely limited financial resources, slim chances of surgical success, and deteriorating health, Davina was "written off" to hospice care. A St. Louis neurosurgeon discovered Davina, performed the surgery for free, and restored her ability to function.

-Davina survived two brain surgeries, and five additional surgeries, that eventually led to her having to re-learn to walk and redevelop her learning skills.

-Following her first surgery at age 14, Davina's High School Special Education Teacher helped her re-learn many of her basic learning skills. They set a goal of getting Davina physically and mentally able to travel to Chicago to revisit her birthplace.

-Unwanted, Ward of the State, Slow Learner, Blind, "would never work", Disabled, Worthless. Davina said these were her "titles" growing up. Today, her "titles" are: Author, National Speaker, Trauma Coach, and Award-winning Salesperson, Foundation Founder.

-Davina has authored or co-authored the books: "Fostering Hope for America" and "Journey to Hope", both available in bookstores and on Amazon.

-Through various organizations, Davina works with various foster homes throughout Western Kentucky and Southern Illinois. You may contact Davina about sponsorship opportunities for foster care homes and the children they serve at davinaspaker@gmail.com.

-To learn more about Davina and the programs she works with, go to www.fosteringssuperstars.org her You Tube video www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sb0T8nD2snc; or on Facebook by searching "Davina Alexandra".

Our speaker next week will be Morgan Guess, Co-Founder of the Guess Anti-Bullying Foundation,

and daughter of fellow Rotarians Craig and Susan Guess.

Announcements

October 19, 2016

New Member Proposals - Upon recommendation of the Classification/Membership Approval Committee and the Board of Directors, **Wendy Kester, Terrance Adams** and **Anthony Barnes** have been proposed for membership in the Rotary Club of Paducah. *Objections must be filed in writing to the Club Secretary within seven days. It is not necessary to respond if you do not object to this recommendation.*

Bell Ringing Slots Still Open: Rotarian Joni Goodman reported that 65% of the volunteer slots have been filled for the annual Kettle Bell Drive. Rotarians will staff the Salvation Army collection posts Wednesday, December 7th. 44 Slots still need to be filled to cover all available times. To see available time slots and sign up, click: <http://signup.com/go/YMTFJF>.

Guests

October 19, 2016

Wendy Kester – guest of Jim Brown

Stacey Reason – guest of Mary Hammond

Jonas Neihoff – guest of Lorraine Schramke

Mayor Gayle Kaler – guest of Club

Caroline Meiners & John Holtgrewe – student guests from Paducah Tilghman

Natalie Shadrick & Hayden Brotherton – student guests from McCracken County

Eliza-Kate Carter – student guest from Community Christian Academy