

The Nerve



A Weekly Newsletter of the Rotary Club of Tuscaloosa

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This Week, March 12, 2013 Eric Suder with the Suder Foundation

A 30-year business veteran, Eric Suder is the Founder and Chief Executive Officer of ESI, a leading manufacturer of business communications systems.

Suder possesses broad experience in sales, marketing, and product management. Prior to founding ESI, he held executive-level management positions in both telecommunications and other industries with companies including Candela Electronics, Unisys, Qwip Systems, and Exxon Office Systems.

Suder's strong commitment to social responsibility has led ESI to develop and participate in numerous global and community programs dedicated to have a positive impact on the lives of others. ESI's "Success with Significance" philosophy is an integral part of the company's mission statement.

Examples of the company's generosity include: establishment of the ESI Humanitarian Relief Fund in partnership with MediSend International; a secondary education student mentoring program; fundraising efforts to fight cancer; and sponsorship of the arts through support of the world-famous Dallas Symphony. Other institutions benefiting from ESI's support include Habitat for Humanity, the Collin County Children's Advocacy Center, Shared Housing, and Dallas Social Venture Partners.

One of Suder's personal interests has been to help students with academic potential fulfill their goals through higher education. He funds direct scholarships for selected children of ESI employees. Suder also funded endowments to the University of Texas and his alma mater, West Virginia University, enabling these institutions to provide 10 scholarships each year to qualified students with financial need.

After learning about the particular challenges first-generation students encounter in pursuing their college degrees, he created the Suder Foundation in 2008 to direct additional resources toward their support. Through its First Scholars Program, The Suder Foundation will dramatically improve the graduation rate of these first-generation students by providing them financial, academic, emotional, and social assistance at selected state universities throughout the United States.

Last Week, March 5

Last week Rotarians welcomed **Mr. Gary Minor**, Director of PARA. He began by commending Rotary for the great amount of young people in our club, and cited the importance of recruiting in order to carry on the good works of the previous generations in many of our Service Organizations. He noted that The Rotary Club had an edge on that compared to others in our area!

He introduced us to the newest PARA Facility, the Faucett Center in Northport, at 13040 Eugenia Faucett Drive between Rose Blvd. and Hwy 171. Try out the center in March for free! This is a state of the art facility that offers a climbing wall, pools, exercise facilities and community rooms.

PARA's mission and goal is to enrich the community with exciting recreational and cultural opportunities. When people relocate to an area, Employment is the #1 reason, and recreational and cultural opportunities fall second. Having these components in a community attracts businesses and people to the area.

PARA manages Ole' Colony Golf Course, all the recreational facilities in the area, like Sokol Park, Bowers Park and also houses the Arts Council. They have two large events that they sponsor each year – the West Alabama Christmas Parade and July Jubilee. PARA employs 90 full-time year round employees and that number increases to 350 in the summer. They have seen an increase in membership of 22% over the last 5 years, and 60% over the last 10 years. People are staying close to home and enjoying their own community more.

PARA is funded by Northport, Tuscaloosa, and the County Commission. Membership Fees and donations account for about 28% of their budget. They have a goal to make Tuscaloosa the best place in the country to live, so they want to improve the quality of life here with more programs and facilities. The City Walk is still in development, but will offer a beautiful walkway through the City of Tuscaloosa beginning at Rosedale and ending at Jaycee Park. PARA is constantly working to improve the beauty of the area with these types of projects. Another project is the Dog Park which will be at Sokol. There is a project in place currently to turn the McAbee Center into a Senior Center through a partnership with Focus.

PARA has partnerships with the Tuscaloosa Tourism & Sports Commission (TTSC), YMCA, Focus, Community Foundation of W. Alabama, Tuscaloosa Tennis Association and Kiwanis. Through these partnerships they are able to determine projects for the good of our citizens, as well as visitors to our area. The development of Sokol Park for Football and Soccer, and Bowers for Softball will allow enough new fields for our local teams as well as tournaments that TTSC works to attract to the area. Tourism is the 3rd largest industry in Tuscaloosa County. Tourists to our area result in dollars for our city that the citizens do not have to pay. The project will provide 9 regulation Softball Fields at Bowers Park, and 18 Regulation multi-purpose Fields at Sokol for Soccer, Lacrosse, Ultimate Frisbee Tournaments, etc. This is needed because Tuscaloosa falls below the national average for a community of our size. We want to be the City of Champions for our youth as well!

PARA has recently received a grant that will further enhance the Queen City Walking Trail (recently installed a bridge near the library on Jack Warner Parkway), make improvements to Bowers Pool, and some money from the City of Tuscaloosa will provide new gym floors at Belk, McAbee, and Phelps Centers.

The Rotarian of the week was Anthony Holloman, and he was introduced by Dr. Charles Nash.



Announcements, March 5

- Tuscaloosa Rotary Honor Flight will be making its 4th flight on May 18th and we will be taking both WWII and Korean War Veterans to see their memorials in Washington, D. C. More information will be posted on the Club's Website, and anyone interested in helping out with this year's flight or knows a potential veteran or guardian can e-mail Rotarian Jordan Plaster at james_plasterjr@ml.com.
- On Tuesday 3/19/13 we will have our meeting off-site at the Tuscaloosa Amphitheater. Mark it on your calendar!
- J.G. Brazil presented a multiple Paul Harris Fellow award to Mr. Bob Almon

- Clark Swail gave a Director's Report on Membership. He addressed President Leitner's goal for the year of "Plus One" on Membership, and we are currently ahead for the year. Also Rules of membership were addressed and unfortunately , some members were lost due to attendance and/or payment of dues – but this is fair for all. We have also recruited new classifications per the goal, and Clark noted that if you have had a job change that will affect your classification – please notify Liz Obradovich for a reclassification. Lastly we have a goal of recruiting out of Rotaract whenever possible.
- One activity that is part of our Adopt a School partnership with Northside High School is the Student of the Month Program. Two students are chosen by the faculty each month based on improvements in their school work, an act of kindness, and outstanding performance. In years past, we have hosted the students of the month at one of our Rotary meetings. However, since the school is one-half an hour drive away and our meeting lasts about an hour, this took two hours out of their school day. This year, they asked if we could host a luncheon near their school twice a year to honor the students of the month. On Wednesday, February 27th, I hosted the first of these at Jabos Pizza Parlor near their school. A picture of the students is attached to this e-mail The Students of the Month through February are:

August—Haley Barnette and Riley Malone
 September—Jim Burns and Savannah Smelley
 October—Alex Pryor and Brandon Moore
 November—Rayleigh Stripling and Kristen Young
 December—Daniel Hunter and Omar Tuzani
 January—Tyler Thomas and Madison Parker
 February—Autumn Bolton and Blaine Hudson



Guests, March 5

Guests at the March 5th meeting of the Rotary Club of Tuscaloosa included: **Joseph Rose** (Human Resources), guest of Joe Duckworth; **Joe Duckworth**,

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

March 19
Off-site at
Tuscaloosa
Amphitheater

March 26
J. Wesley Brown
Marshall Space
Flight center

April 2
Caroline Novak
A+ Education
Partnership

“If there is any one particular in which I would have Rotary distinguished from other organizations, it is in the quality of character which results in the doing of things.”

— Paul Harris

Jr. (Duckworth-Morris Real Estate), guest of Joe Duckworth; **Fitzgerald Washington** (Buffalo Rock Company), guest of Charles Nash; **Dave Pass**, (Real Estate), guest of James Leitner; **Diana DeFatta** (Intern Tuscaloosa Tourism & Sports Commission), guest of Tina Jones; **David Hardin** (Medical Student), guest of Mike Harden.



At the Head Table, March 5

Joe Duckworth (speaker intro), **Dr. Charles Nash** (guest intro), **Clark Swail** (pledge) and **Pam Parker** (Invocation)

ABSENT? MAKING UP ATTENDANCE IS EASY...

- Visit with the Morning Rotary Club every Thursday at 7 AM at Indian Hills Country Club.
- Attend another club's meeting within two weeks before or after an absence.
- Participate in a Rotary event, such as a committee meeting, social function, Interact event, etc.
- Make up at E-club online: www.rotaryclubone.org.

REPORT ALL MAKEUPS TO CLUB SECRETARY NANCY JONES