# KEYWAY WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

February 4, 2026

## Meetings

February is Peace and Conflict Prevention Month

2/6 Program Speaker

**Our Rotary Family**
## BIRTHDAYS

2/16 Carolina Ramos

## WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

## Rotary Online

https://atlantawestendrotary.org
https://rotary6900.org/
https://rotary.org/

### ROTARY CLUB OF ATLANTA WEST END

Fridays, 12:15 pm
Georgia Tech Hotel & Conference Center*
800 Spring St NW
Atlanta, GA 30308

### LEADERSHIP

| | |
|---|---|
| President | Victoria Seals, PhD |
| President-Elect | Christopher Hempfling |
| Immediate PP | Jared Evans |
| Vice President | Debra Stokes |
| Treasurer | Rose Caplan |
| Secretary | Neil Shorthouse |
| Public Image | Jared Evans |

**Feb. 6, 2026**
## This Week's Program: Tharon Johnson

This week, the Rotary Club of Atlanta West End welcomes **Tharon Johnson**, Founder and CEO of Paramount Consulting Group, a bipartisan government affairs and communications firm based in Atlanta. Tharon advises corporate, political, and civic clients on government relations, campaign strategy, and public messaging, bringing a disciplined, relationship-centered approach to complex public environments.

A nationally recognized political strategist, Tharon has advised leaders at the highest levels of federal, state, and local government, including service as a senior advisor to the Biden-Harris campaign in Georgia. His career reflects a pragmatic understanding of how policy, politics, and trust intersect, and how responsible leadership can reduce friction rather than inflame it.

Presented as a moderated fireside chat, this program will focus on peacebuilding and conflict prevention, Rotary's Theme of the Month for February. The conversation will examine how ethical communication, coalition-building, and strategic restraint can de-escalate conflict and strengthen civic culture, followed by audience Q&A.

**JOIN ONLINE:** Zoom Link - Click hereMeeting ID: 874 0116 4307 Passcode: Service | One tap mobile: +13052241968

**KeyWay Report**
## Quasandria Curry, Westside Works

**President-elect Christopher Hempfling** presented **Ms. Quasandria Curry,** Director of Westside Works a bout workforce development

programs in Atlanta. It was founded in 2014 in the historic Vine City neighborhood; Westside Works is a key initiative of CareerRise. Quasandria explained that Westside Works was established as part of **Arthur Blank's** vision in response to community needs during the Mercedes-Benz Stadium development. When Blank presented his stadium plans to the Neighborhood Planning Units (NPUs) of English Avenue and Vine City, community residents asked what he would do for their neighborhoods, which had experienced significant disinvestment with no grocery stores, banks, or job resources. Westside works prioritizes these two neighborhoods.

CareerRise acts as the manager and strategic operator of Westside Works creating a neighborhood-based workforce collaborative in Atlanta that trains local residents for high-demand jobs . Together, they provide free career training, job placement services, and support in sectors like healthcare, IT, construction, and culinary arts, directly addressing community economic mobility. which connects Atlanta residents to high-demand career opportunities. A hallmark of the program's success has been its involvement in the build-out of the Mercedes-Benz Stadium, where residents received specialized training and credentialing in construction trades, leading to full-time employment. Since then, over 700 individuals have graduated from the program, securing stable, living-wage jobs and collectively earning more than $20 million in wages for themselves and their families.

Quasandria explained that Westside Works as a trusted resource and gateway to jobs paying livable wages. Its success lies in connecting Atlanta residents to high-demand opportunities one person, one household, one community at a time. She said Westside Works, specializes in linking residents with immediate job openings using weekly Job Clubs to access personalized assistance such as in refining participants' resumes, enhancing interview techniques, finding the "perfect job match" with an employer.

Also, residents and job seekers attend our monthly Opportunity Fairs, where people can engage with employers, explore community resources, and connect with training providers. Whatever support you require, we're here to lend a helping hand! One person who has experienced the effectiveness of WestsideWorks is **Latavious Moore**. With his keen interest in the cooking and food preparation he says it was the Westside Works Culinary Academy that helped him break free from constantly chasing labor-intensive jobs and discover a true career. He says he's "incredibly grateful' for the opportunity. He credits the program and his work in it as enabling him to transform his life and "given me a future I'm proud of." Not surprising because Westside work's approach includes career advisement, which helps participants understand potential career pathways and advancement opportunities beyond entry-level positions. Further, the organization emphasizes hospitality and creating a supportive family environment, which contributes to high retention rates.

Career advising is typically the first service provided, focusing on career exploration, skills assessment, and understanding previous employment challenges to develop an effective path forward. The organization has developed partnerships with Atlanta Technical College and Morris Brown College, among others, to support educational advancement. Westside Works also maintains an active advisory council equivalent to a board of directors, with members engaged in fundraising and community outreach. The organization conducts community canvassing to understand residents' needs and preferences, partnering with schools, faith-based organizations, and service providers like MARTA. Some residents are paid to serve as outreach team members, helping to connect the organization with the community.

Quasandria also referred to a national study that urges business, education and nonprofit organization leaders to find new ways to unify to overcome personal economic mobility challenges: According to Harvard's Opportunity Insights director, **Professor Raj Chetti**, Atlantans in poverty have only a 4% chance of not being in poverty during their lifetimes. This ranks Metro Atlanta 50$^{th}$ out of the 50th largest metropolitan areas in enabling people in poverty to escape it.

## Hammonds House Museum Exhibit Opening: Beau McCall

Beau McCall, Diva Worship: Diana Ross, 2024

Lesa Adébóyè, newly appointed President & CEO and Chair of the Board of Trustees at Hammonds House Museum, warmly invites Rotary Club members, their families, and friends to the 2026 season opening of *"Beau McCall: Divas, Blues, & Memories."* Join her on **Friday, February 13 at 6:00 PM** for the opening reception and meet the artist. Tickets are $20 or $45 with a museum membership. More info: hammondshousemuseum.org

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## AWER Annual Business Meeting - February 27, 2026

At the **annual business meeting** of the Rotary Club of Atlanta West End, which must be held **on or before the last Friday of February**, the following key activities should occur:

1. **Election of Officers and Directors**:
    - Members elect the club's President, President-Elect, Secretary, Treasurer, and any open Director positions.
    - Candidates may be nominated by the President-Elect, a nominating committee, or from the floor.
    - If only one person is nominated for a position, they may be elected by acclamation.
    - The elected officers and directors will serve from **July 1 to June 30** of the upcoming Rotary year.
2. **Financial Report**:
    - The club's financial condition must be presented and reviewed, providing transparency on the club's finances over the past year.

These components ensure accountability, transparency, and continuity in leadership as required by the club's bylaws. View at these links the club's bylaws and constitution.

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## Calander, Agenda, Connections, & Four-Way Test

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR** Works
• 2/13: FBI Special Agent in Charge Paul Brown
• 2/20: Mr. Blake Elsberry, former sole commissioner of Chattooga County
• 2/27: Club Assembly/Annual Business Meeting/Club Officer & Director Elections
• **March Program Director Urgently Needed!**
• May Program Dir. Carolina
***Sign up to be a program chair here today! Mar. Apr. & June are vacant and need YOU!***

**Meeting Agenda**
1. Call to Order
2. Invocation & Pledge
3. Introduction of Guests
4. Tasse Trivia
5. DEI Moment
6. Announcements
7. Program/Speaker
8. The Four-Way Test
9. Adjournment


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## Never a Bad Time to Catch Up (ON DUES)!

***Starting February 9th, members using ACH must re-authorize their bank accounts*** via a new, one-step login process before making their next payment. Click **here** to take action on the District 6900 website. Log in, click on your name, and navigate to the invoices tab. Your club, your club treasurer, and your community will thank you!

THE FOUR-WAY TEST of the things we think, say or do

*first* Is it the TRUTH?
*second* Is it FAIR to all concerned?
*third* Will it build GOOD WILL and BETTER FRIENDSHIPS?
*fourth* Will it be BENEFICIAL to all concerned?