

This Week's Program: Rotary District Governor Cynthia Edwards

This **Friday, October 2**, will be a special day for the Rotary Club of Atlanta West End as we welcome **District Governor Cynthia Edwards** for her official club visit. The day will begin with our **quarterly Board Meeting at 11:00 a.m.**, where Governor Edwards will join our club officers and board members. All Atlanta West End Rotarians are also welcome to attend the Board Meeting. Following the meeting, Governor Edwards will be our featured speaker during our regular weekly program, where we'll hear more about her priorities and the work taking place throughout District 6900. We are also pleased to welcome **Assistant District Governor Butch Carter** for the day's activities. We look forward to a great day of fellowship, district connection, and Rotary leadership.

Cynthia Edwards



MEETINGS

October is Economic and Community Development Month

BIRTHDAYS

10/5	Frances Ellison-Dansby
10/14	Annabelle La Force
10/21	Joel Alvarado
10/28	Don Schewe
10/29	Fabian Wilson

WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

10/11	Christopher Hempfling (13)
10/19	Rose Caplan (41)

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	Christopher Hempfling
President-Elect	Rodney Fields
Immediate PP	Victoria Seals, PhD
Vice President	Rodney Fields
Treasurer	Melanie Sewell
Secretary	Neil Shorthouse

Cynthia Dorsey Edwards is President/CEO of Storehouse of Solutions, LLC, a management consulting firm that supports businesses, community-based organizations, and educational institutions through customized workforce, leadership, and organizational development training. She also provides personal and professional development, including career guidance, resume writing, interviewing skills, and professional image development.

Public Image CJ Stewart

Cynthia earned an MBA from the University of West Georgia, a BA in Sociology from the University of North Texas, and certification as a Global Career Development Facilitator.

A native Texan, Cynthia has built a distinguished career spanning nearly 18 years with the Bell System in sales and marketing, 24 years with Georgia Piedmont Technical College where she retired as Vice President, and more than a decade leading her own consulting firm.

Cynthia joined the Rotary Club of Stone Mountain in 2009 and has served in numerous leadership roles, including Club President (2013-2014 and 2020-2021), Director of Membership & Fundraising, Chairman of the DeKalb Rotary Council (2021-2023), and Assistant Governor for Rotary District 6900 (2023-2026). During her 2020-2021 presidency, the club was named Club of the Year in its size category. She has received the Rookie of the Year and the Guardian of the Legacy awards from her club. She also received the Outstanding Leadership Award from the DeKalb Rotary Council. Cynthia is a Paul Harris Fellow, a Benefactor, and has sponsored 20 people into Rotary.

A graduate of Leadership DeKalb and Leadership Newton, Cynthia has been recognized for community service and leadership with many honors, including the U.S. President's Volunteer Service Award, U.S. Congressman Hank Johnson's Trailblazer Award, and a congressional designation as one of the Top 20 Global Women of Excellence in 2023. She is also the founder of Time Out for Us, a women's empowerment group.

Her affiliations include Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., the National Council of Negro Women, CDF Action, and Word of Faith Family Cathedral.

She is married to Dr. Lonnie J. Edwards, Sr., a retired Superintendent of Schools, and they have three adult children and six grandchildren.

JOIN ONLINE: [Click Here](#) | Meeting ID: 874 0116 4307 | Passcode:

KeyWay Report: Club Assembly

Rodney Fields, AWER President Elect, in the absence of **President Christopher Hempfling**, convened and led the meeting. Major points and discussion included the following:

- The next Rotary International Convention will be held in Spain in June, 2027
- **Jared Evans** reported the **Dr. Gigi Bastien** of Morehouse School of Medicine who plans to rejoin AWEAR in 2027
- L.E.A.D. Atlanta is host a major event at the Battery on Sunday, September 27th.
- Mark Newman reported on the formerly-known-as West End Mall which has begun its total redevelopment which will be undertaken in 3 phases. Mark emphasized the need to have members of the development team, which is headquartered in NYC, but who does have some Atlanta staff, to be urged to become an AWER member.
- It was also noted by Mark that there is a small data center being considered for the West End, though it is facing some headwinds in the Atlanta City Council
- Several suggestions emerged to increase membership AND increase attend suggested for membership included **Tyler Perry** Productions, the several banks in the West End, Rice Innovation Center for Entrepreneurship – RICE; Pittsburgh Yards; Georgia Tech; the federal organization now headquartered in the West End at formerly Fort McPherson; West End Neighborhood Development - WEND (**Ms. Myrna Fuller**, its director is an Honorary Member of AWER)
- AWER's meeting frequency could be changed to include on meeting one Friday a month and on another Friday service program/project could be offered, such as at the Atlanta Community Food Bank who's headquartered are now in East Point.

Key Opportunities and Possibilities to Pursue

- The Beltline community service project near Booker T. Washington High School drew approximately 11 participants, including non-members who joined organically.
- A Fall Town Hall on the West End Mall redevelopment is scheduled for September 30th, 6:30–8:30 p.m., at Wild Heaven Brewery, with a Zoom option available.
- Several new volunteer opportunities were identified, including a standing Tuesday noon program at Abundant Love Unitarian Universalist Church and the Atlanta Community Food Bank.
- Member recruitment efforts are being explored through business cards with QR codes, corporate outreach, and targeting institutions such as the Russell Innovation Center and Pittsburgh Yards.
- The club discussed the possibility of shifting to a less frequent meeting schedule, inspired by other district clubs such as Atlanta Ascent and Atlanta Metro.
- The 2027 Rotary International Convention will be held in Barcelona, Spain, in June.
- Gigi Bastien, a former club member now at Morehouse Medical, has extended an invitation for club members to attend the 2026 David Satcher Global Health Equity Summit on October 8th.
- CJ and Kelli's organization, L.E.A.D. (Launch, Expose, Advise, Direct), Inc. and the LEAD Center for Youth, is hosting the annual Community Champions Award celebration on Sunday, September 27th, from 2:00–4:00 p.m., in partnership with the Atlanta Braves Foundation.

Community Service Reflection and Upcoming Opportunities

The club reflected on the recent Beltline cleanup service project near **Booker T. Washington** High School, which was considered a success. Approximately 11 participants attended, including community members who joined after learning about the event through social media. The Beltline provided all necessary materials, making the project accessible and easy to execute.

Looking ahead, two new volunteer opportunities were proposed. The first is a standing Tuesday noon program hosted at Abundant Love Unitarian Universalist Church in the West End, where an organization — believed to be PAD (Policing Alternatives and Diversion) — provides casework services for homeless individuals, including assistance with IDs, paperwork, and lunch. Volunteers are needed to assist with food service and general support. Members interested in participating were encouraged to contact the member who introduced the opportunity for a warm introduction to the church.

The second opportunity is the Atlanta Community Food Bank, now headquartered in East Point near Camp Creek Marketplace, where volunteers can sign up for one- to two-hour shifts to pack and distribute food boxes.

West End Community Development Update

A significant portion of the meeting was dedicated to discussing ongoing and proposed redevelopment projects in the West End neighborhood.

- The West End Mall redevelopment referred to as "One West End," is a large-scale, multi-phase project expected to span five to seven years. It is anticipated to resemble a mini-Ponce City Market, featuring mixed-use commercial, retail, restaurant, and residential spaces, potentially including a rooftop. Additional nearby developments discussed include
- A proposed data center in a large building (over 100,000 square feet) across the railroad tracks: currently owned by a Palestinian-American entrepreneur. The facility previously served the film and television industry. The data center concept under consideration is described as lower in power and water usage compared to traditional facilities. The Atlanta City Council is reviewing legislation related to the data center proposal, and a vote has not yet taken place. Community sentiment appears to be a significant factor in the deliberations.
- Murphy's Crossing, described as perpetually in development.
- The Biltray Box Factory, currently under renovation.
- Lee and White corridor, transitioning to multi-family residential units.
- A potential hospital site connected to the MRFA/MET area.
- New apartment developments along Sylvan Road

These developments and opportunities create excellent resources to which AWER could connect and possibly attract new members. Members were encouraged to attend the Fall Town Hall on September 30th to stay informed and to advocate for the club's visibility among developers and new businesses entering the area.

Bridgette Long, MPA highlighted the Russell Innovation Center for Entrepreneurs and Pittsburgh Yards as particularly strong targets due to the concentration of entrepreneurs and business owners in those spaces.

Member Recruitment and Engagement Strategies

The club engaged in a broad discussion about how to grow and retain membership. Several strategies were proposed and questions arose.

Strategies:

- **Business Cards with QR Codes:** A member is in the process of having business cards printed with a QR code linking to the club's information. Cards would include space for the referring member's name on the back, allowing for tracking of referrals.
- **Corporate and Institutional Outreach:** Members discussed targeting local banks, businesses near the West End Mall redevelopment, and institutions such as Morehouse Medical, the Russell Innovation Center, Pittsburgh Yards, Hammond's House museum, and the FDA building near Tyler Perry Studios.
- **One-Pager for Businesses:** A proposal was made to create a one-page document summarizing the club's value proposition to share with local business owners.
- **Referrals from Atlanta Rotary Club:** A past attempt to receive overflow referrals from the larger Atlanta Rotary Club was mentioned, though it did not yield significant results previously.
- **Leveraging Existing Connections:** Members were encouraged to think of people they encounter in professional settings — such as the Chief Marketing Officer at Morehouse Medical, recently invited by a member — as potential recruits.

Questions

- *Should the club pursue a high corporate membership fee, such as \$1,000, to attract institutional members?* Members suggested first focusing on generating interest in the club before introducing a significant membership fee. The priority should be demonstrating value to prospective members and organizations.
- *Could the Atlanta area RCs send rejected or overflow applicants to this club?* This approach was attempted in the past without significant success. However, members agreed it remains a worthwhile avenue to revisit, particularly given the Atlanta Rotary Club's selective membership process.

Meeting Format and Club Engagement Discussion

A substantive conversation took place regarding whether the club should alter its current weekly Friday lunchtime meeting format. A member shared that two other district clubs — Atlanta Ascent and Atlanta Metro — meet once a month and hold one service project per month, with the district's support for such flexible structures.

Arguments in favor of reducing meeting frequency included:

- Difficulty for working members to attend every Friday at noon.
- Atlanta's traffic making travel time prohibitive for members who work or live outside the immediate area.
- Feedback from prospective members at the recent service project expressing hesitation about a weekly commitment.

Arguments against reducing frequency included:

- Risk of further declining attendance if members only meet once a month and miss that single meeting.
- Potential impact on the club's arrangement at Georgia Tech, which may depend on regular weekly use of the space.
- Concern that reduced frequency reflects a commitment issue rather than a scheduling one.

A hybrid model was proposed as a possible middle ground: combining fewer traditional in-person Friday meetings with Zoom sessions and standalone service project events, offering multiple ways to participate throughout the month.

The group agreed a survey to calling all members to gather input

Question: Would meeting less frequently impact the club's finances? Dues would remain the same regardless of meeting frequency. However, if the club's arrangement at Georgia Tech were affected, there could be indirect financial and logistical implications.

Actionable Next Steps / Assignments

- Attend the Fall Town Hall on the West End Mall redevelopment: September 30th, 6:30–8:30 p.m., at Wild Heaven Brewery (Zoom option available). Members attending are encouraged to speak with developers about joining the club.
- Consider attending the 2026 David Satcher Global Health Equity Summit at Morehouse on October 8th. Bridgette Long, MPA will email the club with details from Gigi Bastian's invitation.
- Members interested in volunteering at the Tuesday noon program at Abundant Love Unitarian Universalist Church should contact the introducing member for a warm handoff and coordination.
- Develop a targeted list of local businesses and institutions to approach for membership recruitment, avoiding duplication of outreach efforts among members.
- Finalize and distribute business cards with QR codes linking to club information to support member referral efforts.
- Send a membership survey regarding meeting format preferences, including specific options such as reduced frequency, hybrid models, and alternative meeting times or days.
- Members experiencing difficulty accessing the Zoom meeting link should contact CJ Stewart or Madison Abraham (admin@leadcenterforyouth.org) at LEAD to ensure a clickable link is included in the Keyway newsletter each week.
- Members who have not yet paid dues should use the payment link in the club newsletter or contact the treasurer for assistance.

Respectfully submitted,

Jared Evans, Neil Shorthouse, C.J. Stewart

Agenda, Connections, & Four-Way Test

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

Sign up to be a program chair in the new Rotary Year here today!

A Little Dues, A Lot of Good

Supporting District 6900 starts with staying current on your district dues. Keeping your dues up to date ensures we can continue providing leadership development, youth programs, district events, club support, and the many resources that help our clubs thrive.

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?