

2014

A Million Mississippi Reflections



rotarylights



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Two Decades of Rotary Lights...

I don't think anyone associated with Rotary Lights would have imagined 20 years ago that it would grow to become the greater La Crosse area icon that it is today. From some very humble beginnings to one of the premier holiday displays in the Midwest is certainly a major accomplishment.

None of this growth would have been possible were it not for the thousands of volunteers that come forward every year to help in a variety of ways. We have helped 12 communities get a light display going in their area. Visiting groups from other municipalities are in awe of the legions of hard workers that provide the "people power" to make the project go. All we ask is that they be a non-profit organization and have as their primary mission "feeding the hungry". We take pride in knowing that in addition to the huge volumes of food that we collect, that the same generosity is being multiplied in 12 other locations.

I have to give a heartwarming shout-out this year to my longtime friend Pat Smith. Pat was instrumental in helping us get established. His knowledge and input towards media and community relations got the word out very quickly as to what Rotary Lights was all about. He is still battling his cancer after 7 years but remains ready to help whenever he can. A remarkable man with a steel attitude and a love for family that is second to none. We salute you my friend. If Pat is able, we hope he will be one of the folks to hit the master switch on opening night and turn on the 3.5 million lights.

We received a surprise call a few months ago from the folks that produce the TV and radio show of Discover Wisconsin. They had heard about us and they had never filmed a lighting display before. They visited with our Board of Directors and wanted to film the 2014 display and air and promote it in the fall of 2015. Talk about putting us on the map! While the lighting display is spectacular, we asked them to concentrate on the core of volunteers that make it possible and the food collections that fill the area pantries. They reach 11.5 million households in 8 states. Can't wait!

On the back of the program is some special information on our new Santa Gift Shop that we call JUST BELIEVE. It is located in Santa's House. While a number of sale items are mentioned, one special one I would like to point out is our new DVD. This was filmed last year, using a drone, by the good folks at Sound Frame Studios. We have made arrangements to send a copy to all our area military folks that are deployed. The perfect gift from home.

On Saturday, Dec. 13th, Rotary Lights, in cooperation with the Radisson and other sponsors will be hosting a reunion for all those folks that met at, got engaged at, or married at Rotary Lights over our 20 year history. Please help us get the word out. If you know someone that meets this criteria, please have them contact Kelly Cleary at kelly@distinctionweddingandeventplanning.com.

Please check out the additional pages we've added to this year's program. Thanks to help from the Preservation Alliance and writer Heidi Blanke we were able to piece together some of the history and early stories of Rotary Lights. It's been a remarkable journey.

On behalf of the Stephens Family (with 11 grandchildren), my fellow Rotarians in Rotary East, La Crosse Downtown, Valley View, After Hours, La Crescent, Caledonia, Onalaska, Holmen, and the Onalaska Hilltoppers, a very dedicated Board of Directors and Steering Committee, and over 3,000 community volunteers, please accept best wishes for a safe and happy holiday season.



Irish hugs,
Pat Stephens
 Pat Stephens,
 President Rotary Lights



rotarylights

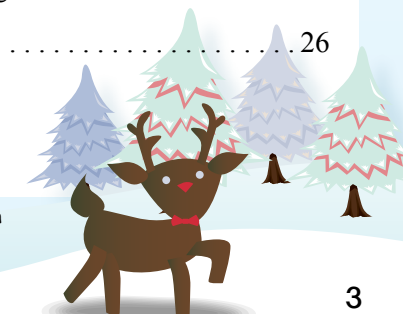
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Photos by Dave Larsen



A Million Mississippi Reflections



Preface: Rotary Lights

It was a spark of an idea, meant to extinguish after its one-time appearance, but instead, it took off like wildfire and, in 2014, Rotary Lights will celebrate its twentieth anniversary.

In 1994, Duane Moore, incoming president of Rotary East, was charged with envisioning a project for his club. On a visit to Rhema Bible Church in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, he was impressed enough by their Christmas light display to meet with organizers for details about the project.

Moore carried the idea home and proposed it to his club. Amidst the naysayers, the idea caught hold. Though not necessarily conceived as a project with staying power, Rotary Lights has not only stayed, it has thrived.

The first lights were turned on November 24, 1995 in front of about 500 spectators. The event was billed as the Coulee Jubilee, and open from the day after Thanksgiving until just after midnight on January 1st, a total of 38 nights. Rotary members determined the event should be more than simply a light display; they wanted it to have impact in the community. From the start, Russ Cleary and D.B. Reinhart helped assure Rotary Lights were available for everyone's enjoyment. Food and monetary donations would be collected, with the food distributed that year to the Salvation Army and WAFER and the money to nonprofit groups assisting with the event.

The display generated excitement in the area, with thousands of people viewing the lights and donating over 13,000 items of food; an average of 1,500 cars drove the magical display each evening.

Fast forward to 2013, when over 225,000 items of food were collected and 200,000 people delighted in a Million Mississippi Reflections; food was distributed to eight agencies. This year, Rotary Lights hopes to top a 20 year total of 3 million items of donated food.

Rotary Lights is a guiding star of the Coulee Region Christmas season. Enjoy the following pages of our twenty year history.



Early Steering Committee-2000/2001

What is Rotary?

Rotary Lights is sponsored by area Rotary Clubs who, in turn are part of an international service organization. That organization is built on providing humanitarian aid, fostering high ethical standards, and promoting peace and goodwill throughout the world.

Any project or activity is based on the Four Way Test, questions on which Rotary decisions are based:

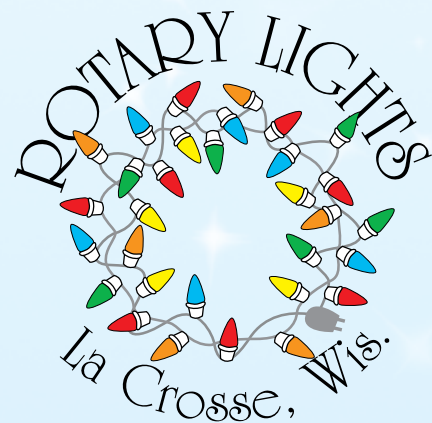
- Is it the truth?
- Is it fair to all concerned?
- Will it build goodwill and better friendships?
- Will it be beneficial to all concerned?

As Rotary Lights entered the planning stages, these questions were addressed. Out of those discussions came the decision to collect food for hunger agencies and money for participating nonprofits. The questions were the basis for creating Rotary Lights as a free-to-the-public event.

Rotary does more than light up Riverside Park between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day. You may recognize some of these projects, all of which Rotarians have played a part in organizing, fundraising, and labor:

- Kids Coulee
- Myrick Hixon Ecopark
- Trees for Tomorrow
- International Gardens

On an international level, Rotary provides exchange programs for high school students, works tirelessly to eradicate polio, seeks ways to provide clean water, and much more.



Participating Rotary Lights Clubs are:

- After Hours
- Caledonia
- Holmen
- La Crescent
- La Crosse Downtown
- Onalaska
- Onalaska Hilltoppers
- Rotary East
- Valley View Rotary

The First Year



In Spring 1995, Duane Moore and Pat Stephens presented their idea to the other area Rotary Club presidents who, in turn, took the idea to their clubs. Though some called the idea crazy and impossible, it was generally met with enthusiasm. However, things began changing from the start.

“The original idea for Rotary Lights was Myrick Park,” says Moore, where the recently completed Kids Coulee, a Rotary project, stood. Cars would enter from the east side of the La Crosse Street park entrance, circle the park, and exit to the west. But, the Department of Transportation nixed the idea, Moore explains. “You’d back traffic up on La Crosse Street so that it backed up onto Losey Boulevard and Highway 16 and that would create a complete bottleneck in this town.” Further concerns were voiced by Northern States Power as “there isn’t even a place to plug an extension cord.”

Myrick park neighborhood residents were duly concerned about noise and traffic. Pettibone Park was also considered, but annual spring floods would play havoc with the electrical wiring.

Ultimately, Rotary Lights settled at Riverside Park.

Throughout the summer, organizers, predominately members of Rotary East, met weekly at the downtown Pancake House. Details were suggested, reviewed, dismissed or put into action. Elmer Grassman, a Downtown Rotary member, took an early leadership role, organizing nearly everything. “Pat Stephens volunteered to chair the entire project. Jack Pappenfuss sourced the lights and arranged for delivery. Myrna Schmidt, from Downtown Mainstreet, inquired about moving the Festival of Trees {not originally a Rotary project} from a vacant store to the park. Gary Luecke and Judy Carpenter solicited sponsors to help cover costs,” said Moore.

On a cold October night that year, 250,000 lights were unpacked and wound on large wooden spools, donated by area electrical companies, at the Myrick Park main shelter. “It was a cold evening,” reminisces Moore, “and the original paper cartons were used as fuel in the shelter house fireplace to create heat.”

Jim Moe was instrumental in designing and creating some of the early displays. Assisted by Andy Wettstein and many other community members, Moe collected old TV and radio antennas to create the Big Tree at the Rotary Lights entrance. It is now the centerpiece of Rotary Lights, replacing a canopy that covered the State Street entrance for the very first year; that canopy was impossible to keep lit because of the natural elements.

Moe also played the role of Santa Claus, sitting for hours in his own sleigh.

Other lighted displays were built, Christmas trees were decorated, Santa’s sleigh anchored the north end of the park, entertainment lined up, and Rotary Lights opened to the public with tremendous success. Rotarians staffed Rotary Lights that year, with Jan Moore, Duane’s spouse, coordinating the volunteers. Many, she said, came straight from work the first night and were ill-prepared to work hours in the cold, dressed in office wear.

It was a learning experience.

“Putting up the lights was another new adventure,” says Moore. “Tangled strings of lights delayed the process many times. Hooking too many strings of lights together would cause blown fuses. Power strips were used to connect multiple strings of lights. These were wrapped with plastic bags and sealed with tape to keep out the rain and ice.”

Putting up Christmas lights in a park meant new challenges. Wind, snow and ice forced strings of lights into bunches and too many cords of lights hooked together blew fuses. On the ground, volunteers, including those providing entertainment, were cold. Yet complaints were minimal, replaced by a high level of enthusiasm from volunteers, sponsors, and visitors. Year by year, it all went into making the event better for everyone.

Since then, Rotary Lights has become a staple of the La Crosse Holiday Season and a family tradition for countless volunteers and visitors.



Let There Be Light

Rotary Lights bulbs may come in packages, but they end up on spools, dozens of spools. Until 2011, when traditional bulbs were switched to LED bulbs, every strand of lights was tested for nonfunctioning bulbs. It was a job requiring hundreds of hours.

On a hot September day this fall, for example, before the leaves start turning colors, Butch Rogowski and Tom Svec unwound and repaired string after string of lights. The two keep up a teasing patter as they work their way through 1000 strings of bulbs. Not only do bulbs burn out, but squirrels gnaw the wires, and weather takes its toll.

Before the advent of LED lights, when a single bulb could play havoc with the rest of the string, volunteers from Friends of Luther checked them all over. Like members of a book club or stitching group, the volunteers sat in a circle, miles of bulbs strung between and among them. About 20 volunteers started at 7:30 am, with one in charge of getting doughnuts. They sat on stools, fixing lights, though it often seemed the lights broke before they finished repairing them.

Because LED lights are best viewed from a particular angle, rope lights (more traditional bulbs encased in a plastic tube) are used on displays.

Early in Rotary Lights history, Pat Stephens had an opportunity to chat with the person in charge of Chicago's Michigan Avenue Christmas light display. Stephens inquired about how an organization that large stored its lights and was told new lights were purchased every year, with the old ones thrown out and not available for donation. Stephens found the idea inconceivable, especially when compared to Rotary Lights, an organization epitomizing repair and reuse.



With few exceptions, volunteers create all displays. Some displays are designed, planned, and constructed in a linear manner, some are cobbled together with an end goal in mind, but no distinct design at the start. Leo Chaput, from the La Crescent Rotary, is the mastermind behind most of the displays.

Pat Stephens describes the process, breaking down hours of work into a few sentences. "We always start off on a napkin and usually over a beer, then we bring it down here {the Rotary Lights building}; they will sit down with colored chalk and make it on the floor. Then they weld the frame around it, then they follow the colored chalk as to what color rope light is going to be used on it and we have our electrician that will wire it up and our computer guy that will bring it to life."

The Ferris wheel and merry-go-round are the only purchased displays, and those required significant overhaul before being usable. Displays which might cost thousands of dollars if

purchased from a catalog, are creatively constructed by volunteers for a fraction of the cost. Nothing goes to waste and lights and equipment are repaired multiple times before being discarded.

Andy Wettstein has been involved in stringing, coordinating, and wiring the lights from the start when his uncle, John Wettstein, asked him to take the company bucket truck and help put lights in the trees. Since then he and his wife, Amy, a long-time committee member, have been part of the backbone of Rotary Lights. Today, Andy oversees the technical aspects, but not without a significant amount of hands-on work.

"Once all the rope lighting is on," says Amy Wettstein, "Andy will come in and he'll take all the cords and splice them all together so it's wired into one plug-in."

Andy elaborates. "We call it plug-and-play, which is a pretty good terminology. When you're doing displays of this magnitude and complexity, you have volunteers from all walks of life that may or may not know how to do anything like that. So, we make it as easy as possible to set up and take down. All of our computers and equipment are labeled, everything is plug-and-play. It's a lot of work to make it that way, but in the end, it's a lot easier to work with."

While every display has a story behind it, from time to time, a display has personal meaning. Amy and Andy Wettstein helped create the angel wings lighted display. "That was made with another couple" explains Amy. "Their son died of AIDS, and we had a stillbirth in 2006. So, in 2006 that display was made."

Once the displays were disassembled, storage was an issue. In 1999, for example, Rotary Lights equipment and displays were moved three times prior to settling in their permanent home on Market Street, a building owned by Rotary Lights, called the Lighthouse, (but, in true Rotary fashion, shared with other nonprofits upon request). It takes over 300 hours to take everything down and put it all away—that's like working around the clock with a cadre of helpers for two straight weeks.

The number of lights has increased yearly with the addition of new displays:

1995	250,000	1996	350,000
1997	425,000	1998	650,000
1999	650,000	2000	700,000
2001	750,000	2002	800,000
2003	890,000	2004	1,130,000
2005	1,400,000	2006	1,550,000
2007	2,210,000	2008	2,410,000
2009	2,500,000	2010	2,550,000
2011	2,600,000	2012	3,150,000
2013	3,560,000	2014	3,560,000





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Ho! Ho! Ho!

Jim Moe is credited with insisting Santa be present at Rotary Lights from the start. Moe, originally the Market Street Santa, who greeted children from the sleigh in his front yard, hooked up Rudolph and transported his sleigh to the north end of the park. Aside from a few intensely cold evenings, Moe could be found nightly settling children on to his lap.



from their own pockets for each child. Valley View Rotarian Laurie Tweten has teamed up with her club and the Onalaska Rotary to do this. For some children, it is the only Christmas gift they will receive and, more often than not, a child receives additional gifts.

The event can be heartbreaking. One year, a child held her wrapped present, as those around her gleefully tore off gift wrapping. Pat Stephens relates the story. “She said she didn’t want to open it because it might be the only thing she gets for Christmas, so she was saving it for Christmas Day.”

“The feeling is completely different now,” he says of the current Breakfast with Santa format. “It’s a tearjerker. Santa comes in and you’ll never see a guy get more hugs.”

Over the years, a number of men have played the role of Santa’s assigned helpers and, for the first years, did so outside. Today, Santa holds court in his well heated and insulated Santa House. Typically, Santa rides in the Rotary Lights parade, then climbs onto the stage and, as the last of the Skyrockers fireworks fade, flips the switch, setting the park ablaze with over three million lights. Sometimes, he has assistance from a young audience member or a local celebrity.

In mid-December, Santa joins a very special group of children for breakfast. Originally Breakfast with Santa was a ticketed affair, marketed mainly to Rotarians and their offspring. After a few years, Rotary Lights committee members felt a paid meal was not in keeping with the Rotary Lights mission of feeding the hungry. Since 2012, Breakfast with Santa has been reserved for children who may not have the privilege of a Christmas breakfast.

Santa also presents each child with at least one gift, courtesy of Rotary Club members, who purchase individually chosen gifts,



Lighting Up With Love

Dozens of couples have ignited their romance at Rotary Lights, though none with a history like Amy and Andy Wettstein.

Amy relates the story. "My dad started working for Andy's family's company as their fleet technician in 1998. The Wettstein family, for the employees of Wettstein's, did an Oktoberfest party. We went to the picnic and my mom and I were standing in line and waiting to go through the food line and there was these two young guys in front of us. One was Andy. Anyway, I told my mom 'he's pretty cute. Wouldn't mind getting to know him better,'" but Andy was busy volunteering at the park, So I went down there to meet him, and we volunteered together.

Their first date was at Rotary Lights opening night. Little did Amy know her first date would be the start of so many years of Rotary Lights volunteering. Now that's a commitment!

"We were like the sweetheart couple of Rotary Lights." While Amy and Andy neither got engaged nor married at Rotary Lights, they did make the park part of their wedding celebration.

Amy and Andy are just one of many couples who found love under the lights. One man proposed on bent knee as his love's son visited with Santa. Another made use of the ready-made, Rotary Lights "will you marry me?" lighted sign, used half a dozen times during the season. Andy relates one story:

"I went and got the carriage ride ready for them, talked to those people, and so they knew he {the prospective groom} was coming out of the Freighthouse. Once they got in, the carriage ride people

called me saying they had entered the park. I ran down and got the sign lit up."

Still others have donned wedding regalia and exchanged vows in the warmth of the Ice Castle.

No one knows how many couples started their long-term relationship at Rotary Lights. In addition to engagements and marriages, Rotary Lights is often the scene for wedding photos or a walk through the park as part of the wedding festivities.

In celebration of Rotary Lights' twentieth year, Pat Stephens relates, "we are going to have a gathering, a reunion, if you will, of all those people that met at, got engaged at or got married at Rotary Lights."



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With a Little Help from Our Friends

Rotary Lights can be defined in terms of thousands: thousands of lights, thousands of visitors, thousands of pounds of food, thousands of donor dollars, and thousands of volunteer hours. It all happens without taxpayer funding or without paying a single staff member. From the hot chocolate that warms up the volunteers to the electricity used for the lights, to the people directing traffic as you enter and exit the park, Rotary Lights success is a result of the many people who give their time, money, ideas, and energy to create this seasonal landmark.

This year, over 3000 volunteers, working year round, will make it all possible. Rotary Light's first year, was staffed solely by Rotarians. Volunteers came straight from work, dressed in office wear, and were ill-prepared to work hours in the cold.

Rotary Lights is overseen by a 17-member Board of Directors and a 24-member Steering Committee. It seems that once a Rotary Lights volunteer, always a Rotary Lights volunteer. Pat Stephens is proud of the volunteer longevity. "The nice thing about the project is we have such loyal people. Eighteen of our people on our steering committee have been involved all 20 years."

As the years went by and the steering committee gained experience, community volunteers came on board, so that now volunteers are a mix of ages, occupations, and affiliations.

In early November, volunteers begin setting up displays and stringing lights. From Thanksgiving to New Year's Day, volunteers direct traffic in the park, collect food and monetary donations, provide entertainment, supervise Santa visits, and maintain the displays. But that's just the tip of the iceberg.

For example, Amy Wettstein and crew bake 300+ dozen cookies to distribute to volunteers. Committee and board members seek out sponsors and larger monetary donations.

In recent years, area restaurants have stepped in to voluntarily feed volunteer working longer shifts. Sometimes a restaurant will open its doors to volunteers, other times the food will be brought

on site and set up in the volunteer trailer. These donated meals not only provide sustenance, they also offer a way to encourage volunteers to stay at the park, rather than leaving to find a meal.

The volunteer coordinator, for many years Jan Moore, and now Sarah Dahlke, begin working with nonprofit organizations in August, helping determine who will do what. Pat Stephens picks up that thread mid-fall, designating the final assignments. Some will place large, plastic candy canes around the park; others will unload trucks or string lights; still others, often in sub-zero weather, will assist in dismantling the displays come early January. In exchange for their efforts, nonprofits decorate a small Christmas tree in the park and receive funds, based on a pre-designated rate. About 110 organizations, representing over 3,000 volunteers, take part in Rotary Lights, some performing the same tasks year after year. Despite the hard work, organizations gleefully accept the opportunity to share in creating Rotary Lights magic.



Feeding the Volunteers

Each year, there are just over 3,000 volunteers who help make Rotary Lights possible. To help us feed this army of big hearted souls, we asked some of our local food vendors to provide lunches, beverages and snacks to keep our troops moving. On behalf of all the volunteers we extend a very sincere thank you for helping us out. This is another great example that we live in a very special community.

Beedle's Bar and Restaurant
Blue Moon
Bodega
Burger King
Cabin Coffee
Culver's of Onalaska
Dublin Square
Fayze's
King Street Kitchen

La Crosse Beverage
Maid Rite
Marge's on Rose
Old Style Inn
Pepsi
Preferred Distributors
Pickerman's
Piggy's
Pizza Doctors

Pogy's
Radisson
Reinhart Foods
Rooster Andy's
Schmidty's
Shimmy's
Sloopy's
Wendy's Mormon Coulee

Let's not forget the homemade chocolate chip cookies. We're convinced some people volunteer just because of the cookies. They are made (all 300+ dozen), for the volunteers, with TLC by Amy Wettstein with special help this year by the Alpha Xi Delta and Alpha Phi Sororities.

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That's Entertainment

The early years of Rotary Lights entertainment were a cold business. Performing on an outdoor stage, it was nearly impossible to warm up a voice or an instrument. Yet, groups continued to entertain, despite the weather-related hardship. "For all those years," says Pat Stephens, "all our entertainment was outdoors on the band shell. But, once we went to the ice castle, there's 35-40 groups a year that sign up for it, some by tradition." Middle school and high school choirs and bands come from as far as Black River Falls and Tomah, "making it a field trip."

For 20 years, Steve Earp, of SSE Music, has donated his equipment and time so groups can have first class sound, and it can be heard throughout the park. Mariann Peterson has assisted in this endeavor.

School music groups throughout the district are well represented, but other groups perform as well. Cloggers, barbershop quartets, and even Christmas presentations have taken the stage.

The nativity scene is the most complicated and volunteer intense "entertainment." Normally relegated to weekend nights, the nativity involves about 200 volunteers, from rotating choirs, to volunteers providing food, to those posed in costume. Brought to Rotary Lights in 1997 via the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, 18 different churches now take part in the production, with four churches assigned per weekend; in total, 700 volunteers keep the event on track year after year. "When they get going," Stephens explains, "they've got everybody in costume, they've got eight people in the trailer feeding the group and keeping them warm. When you see the choir, for example, there are two or three choirs, one out there and others getting warmed up."



It's All About the Food

While most people enjoy driving or strolling through Rotary Lights for the sheer beauty, entertainment, and holiday appeal, another group of people anxiously wait for closing each night. That's when the donated food is delivered to area food pantries.

Since the start of Rotary Lights, Feeding the Hungry has been the driving force.

Each of the twelve participating food pantries is assigned nights on which all collected food goes to that agency. The number of nights assigned to a particular pantry is primarily based on the pantry's client size. Over the years, the number of recipient pantries has grown from two to twelve, plus the Hunger Task Force.

The agencies are responsible for supplying a vehicle in which to place the food and for getting it from the park at closing time.

Food collections also take place out of the park, giving those folks who many not have the opportunity to get to Riverside Park or who walk the display and can't carry their food donation a chance to pitch in. "The food collection has been phenomenal," says Pat Stephens. "We have about a dozen food drives that take place under the Rotary Lights umbrella that are not part of the park collection. We were getting calls from people who were having Christmas parties and they call and say we always exchange gifts and we really don't need the things we're getting and we'd really like to give some food. Would you have a way to pick it up and bring it back to the park?" Stephens couldn't say 'yes' fast enough.

While the food pantry clients are the true beneficiaries, guests donating the food and volunteers receiving it have their share of feel-good moments. 2014 Mrs. Oktoberfest Sue Dillenbeck recalls a car driving through packed with food for donation. The driver had been a food pantry recipient and this was his way of paying back. Jan Moore also tells of a special donation. "This car came through; I didn't know how the car was going to make it around the circle, it was such a beat up old thing. A little girl, in a little pink jacket, reached out and gave me one can of tomato soap. It was so precious, the smile on her face. She was able to give. She was so proud to hand that can of soup."

WAFER Food Pantry currently receives about 20,000 pounds of food from Rotary Lights, helping out with what their executive director calls a "balancing act" for their clients. "It's a particularly hard time of year," since families choose between meeting daily needs and a few Christmas gifts. Rotary Lights food offers an opportunity for clients to choose "something they couldn't get otherwise."

La Crescent Area Food Shelf's director echoes the sentiment. Rotary Lights food donations "continue to keep our shelves full."

While Rotary Lights food is generally distributed to clients by late winter, the impact is felt year round, helping clients have variety and saving food pantries the cost of purchasing items.



The Mission of Rotary Lights: "To Help Feed the Hungry of the Coulee Region"

2,495,866 Food Items (and counting)

Year Number of Food Items Collected

1995	13,010
1996	20,014
1997	31,482
1998	42,323
1999	66,211
2000	86,475
2001	91,634
2002	101,789
2003	121,040
2004	125,892
2005	135,756
2006	171,252
2007	186,374
2008	204,178
2009	206,479
2010	204,188
2011	226,642
2012	232,580
2013	229,173



2,495,866 19 Year Total

The generous gifts of food that are collected unfortunately only last 8-10 weeks. The demand is high and growing. If you or an organization you are involved with would like to help organize an event in partnership with Rotary Lights to help us increase food collections, contact Rotary Lights at 608.784.9993.

We collected items at the gate and other food items through the efforts of:

- AFSCME Local 2484-La Crosse County
- AFSCME Local 340-Western Wisconsin Cares
- Trane
- Juniper Neighbors
- La Crosse County Employees-Downtown Campus
- Sand Lake Elementary
- Northern Hills Elementary
- La Crosse County Library System
- UW-L CBA Student Advisory Council (SAC)
- The La Crosse Area Jeep Club
- The Trane Company collected over 3 pallets of food in 2013. A tremendous and appreciated effort.
- Rotary Lights would like to partner with any groups that would like to be involved with food drives from November 1st through December 31st.

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE TO HIT THE 3 MILLION FOOD ITEM MARK?

Food Pantries Sharing Collections in 2014:

Caledonia Food Shelf
La Crescent Food Basket
Salvation Army
WAFER

Couleecap
New Horizons
Holmen-St. Elizabeth
UW-L Food Pantry

Holmen Lutheran
Onalaska Food Basket
TLC Center
Place of Grace



Celebrating Twenty Years of Rotary Lights

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Brightening our communities

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During the 2013-2014 Rotary year,
these projects and more were supported:

La Crosse Police Canine Unit • Responsibility Retreat • Sandcastles
Together Against Bullying • Parent and Caregiver Flex Fund
The Pause Project • Respect Retreat • A Peace of My Mind Exhibit
Rotary Lights • LIVESTRONG at the YMCA Program
Caring: A Collaboration between Viterbo & Salvation Army
Viterbo Non-Traditional Student Scholarship • International Owl Center
Semillero Mi Angel Guardian • Robotics Scrimmage Playing Field
Nick Quarberg Eagle Project • Mobile Meals Presentation Display
Blue Dragon Boat Race • La Crescent Neighbors Day 2014
Assistive Technology Loan Closet Equipment Update Sandcastles
WisCorps Crew Program-Capacity Building Proposal



Supported by La Crosse Area Rotary Clubs & their members including:

Caledonia • Holmen Area • La Crescent • La Crosse After Hours • La Crosse Downtown
La Crosse East • La Crosse Valley View • Onalaska • Onalaska Hilltopper





2014 Participating & Benefiting Non-profits

7 Rivers Community High School
ABLE
American Cancer Society/Colleges
 Against Cancer
American Red Cross-Scenic
 Bluffs Chapter
Aquinas Catholic Schools
ASAP Horse Rescue and
 Adoption Program
Bar City Van Club
Bethany Lutheran Home
Boys & Girls Clubs of
 Greater La Crosse
Boy Scout Troop 21
Campus Autism Education
 and Awareness
Causeway Caregivers
Central FBLA
Central GCS
CenturyLink
Child Abuse Prevention Task Force
Citizen Advocacy of La Crosse
Congregational Preschool
Coulee Connections
Coulee Council on Addictions
Coulee Montessori
Coulee Region Adult Day Center
Coulee Region Human Society
Coulee Region RSVP
Couleecap, Inc.
Fuzznuts
Girl Scouts of WI Badgerland Council
Great Rivers United Way
Habitat for Humanity - La Crosse Area
Holmen Band Boosters
Holmen DECA
Holmen High School Interact Club
Holmen Knights of Columbus #9385
Holmen Lutheran Church
HorseSense
Housing Authority of the
 City of La Crosse
Hunger Task Force
La Crosse Area Astronomical Society
La Crosse Area Crime Stoppers
La Crosse Area Family YMCA
La Crosse Area Suicide
 Prevention Initiative
La Crosse BoyChoir
La Crosse Central Dance Team
La Crosse Central DECA
La Crosse Dive Unit
La Crosse Health Science Academy
La Crosse Jaycees
La Crosse Lions
La Crosse Police Reserve
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 & West Salem
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 Resource Management
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UW-L Student Affairs Division
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UW-L Student Council for
 Exceptional Children
UW-L Student Physical Therapy Club
UW-L Vanguard
UW-L Women's Basketball
Viterbo Marketing Students/
 Childrens' Museum
Viterbo Student Nurse Association
West Salem High School Music
Westby Syttende Mai Royalty
Western Technical College SHRM
Western WI Juvenile Diabetes
Wisconsin Covenant

2014 Rotary Lights "Ice Castle" Entertainment Schedule

(Events and times subject to change)

Mon. Dec. 1	6:00-6:30	Bob Allen (La Crosse Area Astronomical Society)
	6:30-7:00	Blair-Taylor HS Vocal Choir
	7:00-8:00	Blair-Taylor HS Handbell Choir
Tues. Dec. 2	6:00-6:30	La Crescent-Hokah HS Caroling Ensemble
	6:30-7:30	Flutistry
Wed. Dec. 3	6:00-7:00	Sons of Norway
Mon. Dec. 8	6:00-7:00	Longfellow MS/LDI Holiday Band
	7:00-7:30	Melrose-Mindoro Select Choir
	7:30-8:00	Longfellow MS Show Choir
Tues. Dec. 9	6:00-8:00	Sparta HS Music Night
Wed. Dec. 10	6:00-6:30	Aquinas HS Band
	6:30-7:30	Bangor HS Vocal Jazz and Jazz Band
	7:30-8:00	La Crosse Brass Quintet
Thurs. Dec. 11	6:00-7:00	ClogJam
Mon. Dec. 15	6:00-6:30	West Salem HS Band & Choir
	6:30-8:00	Dan Sebranek & String Ties
Tues. Dec. 16	6:00-6:30	Winona MS 8th Grade Choir
	6:30-7:30	Lincoln MS Music Night
Wed. Dec. 17	6:00-6:30	River City Strings
	6:30-7:30	Westby HS Band and Choir
Thurs. Dec. 18	6:30-7:30	Life In Harmony
	7:30-8:00	Arcadia HS "Adam's Family"
Mon. Dec. 22	6:00-7:30	Holmen HS Jazz Band & Orchestra
	7:30-8:00	Logan HS Show Choir
Tues. Dec. 23	6:00-7:00	A Note Above



20
years of
light

Thank you
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2014 Traffic & Food Assignments

<u>Date</u>	<u>Traffic Control</u>	<u>Food Goes To</u>
Friday, Nov. 28	La Crosse Rotary	Salvation Army
Saturday, Nov. 29	CenturyLink	Onalaska Food Basket
Sunday, Nov. 30	Valley View Rotary	Holmen Lutheran
Monday, Dec. 1	Radisson Hotel	Place of Grace
Tuesday, Dec. 2	Merchant's Bank	WAFER
Wednesday, Dec. 3	Mid-West Dental	Holmen Lutheran
Thursday, Dec. 4	WalzCraft	La Crescent Food Basket
Friday, Dec. 5	Fowler and Hammer	Caledonia Food Basket
Saturday, Dec. 6	Altra Credit Union	WAFER
Sunday, Dec. 7	Wells Fargo Advisors	Onalaska Food Basket
Monday, Dec. 8	Festival Foods	Place of Grace
Tuesday, Dec. 9	Dahl Automotive	New Horizons
Wednesday, Dec. 10	Gundersen Health Systems	TLC Center
Thursday, Dec. 11	Community Credit Union	WAFER
Friday, Dec. 12	Associated Bank	Holmen-St. Elizabeth
Saturday, Dec. 13	Organic Valley	Onalaska Food Basket
Sunday, Dec. 14	Coulee Bank	WAFER
Monday, Dec. 15	State Bank Fin./Cleary Manage	Salvation Army
Tuesday, Dec. 16	Inland Labels	Onalaska Food Basket
Wednesday, Dec. 17	Dairyland Power	New Horizons
Thursday, Dec. 18	Hawkins Ash/Beta Alpha Psi	Salvation Army
Friday, Dec. 19	Reinhart Food Service	WAFER
Saturday, Dec. 20	Doug and Merri Shupe Family	Holmen-St. Elizabeth
Sunday, Dec. 21	Oktoberfest Family	Onalaska Food Basket
Monday, Dec. 22	La Crescent Rotary	La Crescent Food Basket
Tuesday, Dec. 23	Kwik Trip	WAFER
Wednesday, Dec. 24	Dave Thurston Family	Salvation Army
Thursday, Dec. 25	Pat Stephens Family and Friends	TLC Center
Friday, Dec. 26	Wettstein Brother's/SSE	Holmen-St. Elizabeth
Saturday, Dec. 27	Ona Hilltoppers/Holmen Rotary	Onalaska Food Basket
Sunday, Dec. 28	Rotary East	Couleecap
Monday, Dec. 29	Onalaska Rotary	Onalaska Food Basket
Tuesday, Dec. 30	Caledonia Rotary	Caledonia Food Basket
Wednesday, Dec. 31	Citizen Advocacy	WAFER



HAPPY HOLIDAYS!



From our family
to yours.

Locations

Onalaska (Home Office)
701 Sand Lake Rd.
Onalaska, WI 54650

Antigo
718 5th Ave.
Antigo, WI 54409

Appleton
920 Association Dr. W.
Appleton, WI 54914

Dubuque, IA
150 John F. Kennedy Rd.
Suite 500
Dubuque, IA 52002

Eau Claire
3301 Golf Rd.
Suite 101
Eau Claire, WI 54701

Green Bay
2929 S. Ridge Rd.
Green Bay, WI 54324

Madison
17 Applegate Ct.
Suite 200
Madison, WI 53713

Mankato, MN
209 South 2nd St.
Suite 202
Mankato, MN 56001

Platteville
490 E. Business Hwy. 151
Suite B
Platteville, WI 53818

Rhineland
2005A N. Stevens St.
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Gundersen Health AP
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Hawkins Ash CPA's
Inland Labels
Kwik Trip
Logistics Health
Mayo Clinic Health System
Merchant's Bank
Midwest Dental Care

Onalaska Rotary
Radisson
Reinhart Food Service
Rotary Club of La Crosse
Rotary East-La Crosse
Doug and Merri Shupe
TCI
Valley View Rotary
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Rotary Lights 2014

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Mike Diveley - Onalaska Hilltoppers Rotary
Bill Hoel - La Crosse Rotary
Aaron Miller - After Hours Rotary
Terry Miller - La Crosse East Rotary
Larry Peterson - Valley View Rotary
Nancy Proctor - Holmen Rotary
Jim Spencer - Holmen Rotary
Karla Stanek - La Crosse East Rotary
Beth Stempinski - Caledonia Rotary
Pat Stephens - La Crosse East Rotary
Joe Thesing - La Crescent Rotary
Dave Trapp - La Crosse Rotary
Jim Warren - Valley View Rotary
Bill Wiesjahn - Onalaska Rotary
John Wettstein - La Crosse Rotary

Rotary Lights 2014 Steering Committee

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Sponsor Night in the Park

Rotary Lights would like to thank the following special corporate supporters for sponsoring a night in the park. In addition to the \$1,000 sponsor gift, the employees of these companies also volunteer their time to staff the park.

Nov.. 29 CenturyLink
Dec. 1 Radisson Hotel
Dec. 2 Merchant's Bank
Dec. 3 Midwest Dental
Dec. 4 WalzCraft
Dec. 5 Fowler and Hammer
Dec. 6 Altra Credit Union
Dec. 7 Wells Fargo Advisors
Dec. 8 Festival Foods
Dec. 9 Dahl Automotive
Dec. 10 Gundersen Health Systems
Dec. 11 Community Credit Union
Dec. 12 Associated Bank
Dec. 13 Organic Valley
Dec. 14 Coulee Bank
Dec. 15 State Bank Financial/Cleary Management
Dec. 16 Inland Labels
Dec. 17 Dairyland Power
Dec. 18 Hawkins Ash
Dec. 19 Reinhart Food Service
Dec. 20 Doug and Merri Shupe
Dec. 23 Kwik Trip

2014 Park Program-Park Staff

For 20 years Rotary Lights has worked in partnership with the La Crosse Park and Recreation Department to put together one of the Midwest's premier holiday lighting displays that works hard to "feed the hungry". Special thanks to the Department for their help and understanding over these years.

Administration

Steve Carlyon-Director
Gar Amunson-Superintendent
Jason Odegaard-Rec Supervisor
Staff: Kerry Gloede
Patti Brown
Heather Stein
Marilyn Burkhardt

Board

Paul Medinger-President
Ryan Cornett-Vice President
Mark Terpstra-Secretary
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Jerry Every
Jim Webb
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A VERY SPECIAL REUNION

On Saturday, December 13, 2014
from 4 pm to 6 pm at the Radisson Hotel,
Rotary Lights will be hosting a reunion for all those
folks that met at, got engaged at, or married at Rotary Lights
over the last 20 years.

Please pass this message along to any folks that you know
fit in one of these categories. We don't have a list, so we need
help spreading the word.

Food and refreshments, prizes, and exchanges of stories
and pictures will highlight the gathering. For additional
information or to register for this fun event, please contact
chair Kelly Cleary at 608-397-4178 or
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Rotary Lights Carriage Rides

Cost: \$20 per couple
 \$30 per family

**We proudly support our troops, ask about our Military discount.*

Scheduled Dates in the Park:

• Nov. 28 & 29 • Dec. 5, 6, 12-14, 19-23, 26-28

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