

Truth, Trust, and the Poynter Institute

On May 19, Rotary Club of Sarasota Bay welcomed Sarah Sweeney and Aaron Schrockman from the renowned Poynter Institute for Media Studies in St. Petersburg. Poynter trains tens of thousands of journalists each year, owns the Tampa Bay Times, operates PolitiFact, and leads a global media-literacy network in more than 80 countries.

Sarah Sweeney

Sarah shared her journey from Fortune 500 healthcare marketing to Poynter's mission-driven work supporting quality journalism and media education. Aaron reminded us that "everyone with a phone is committing acts of journalism" and showed how easily we accept information we already agree with.

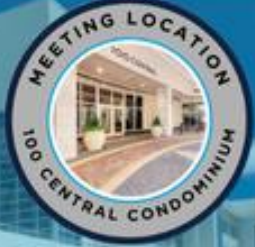
Their message to Sarasota Bay Rotarians was simple and urgent: democracy depends on citizens who know how to find, question, and share trustworthy information.

Enjoy the Presentation: [Link](#) 

Upcoming Meetings

June 16th	100 Central	Dr. Davis Schneiderman President, Ringling College
July 7th	100 Central	Dr. Anshu Chandra, a Rotarian, helped establish an eye clinic in Haiti, and will join us via Zoom.
July 21st	100 Central	Noelle Tenaglia, outgoing president of Riverview Interact club







Dr. Jim Minor
Riverview High School Int'l Baccalaureate program

Discover how Dr. Jim Minor and Riverview High School's innovative IB E2 Program are preparing Sarasota students to tackle real-world challenges with global mindsets and local impact.

Tuesday Noon
June 2, 2026

Zoom Meeting ID: 860 6855 4560
Passcode: 908057

Club of Sarasota Bay
Rotary
District 6960

Riverview IB E2: Results That Change Futures

At our June 2nd meeting, Dr. Jim Minor, Director of the Riverview High School International Baccalaureate program, will present an update on IB E2 outcomes for the Class of 2026 and recent graduates. Over seven years, the E2 initiative has built a strong support system for underrepresented IB students through intensive case management, targeted academic counseling, and a "Last Mile Fund" that removes financial barriers at the point of college entry.

Dr. Minor will share the latest data on college enrollment and persistence for students who have come through E2, which has achieved a remarkable record: for seven consecutive years, 100% of E2 students have either enrolled in college or already graduated. This year, the Rotary Club of Sarasota Bay Foundation is deepening that impact with a \$16,000 grant to support Riverview's IB E2 counseling and Last Mile Fund. Dr. Minor will highlight how these funds are being used to keep seniors on track academically, secure financial aid, and close final gaps that might otherwise keep students from enrolling or persisting in college.



Spotlight: Rotary United for Good to Create Lasting Impact

COMMUNITY MICROFOREST PLANTING

Planting Day
Friday, June 5th - 9AM



What's Happening Here? The Promenade Estates Microforest Park and Walking Trail



Welcome to our Park In Progress:
The Promenade Estates Park and Walking Trail will feature a lake-encircling microforest with high-performance habitats that protect the environment and combat climate change. The upland, waterside, and aquatic plants are all native, selected to benefit wildlife and provide resilient beauty.



Join us on June 5th,
World Environment Day,
For a Rotary-sponsored
planting of 500 trees, shrubs,
and ground covers. Text
703 342 6185 for more
information



Many valuable habitat types and a shady walking trail



Spotlight: Art Siciliano Presented Second Paul Harris Pin



Photo: Penny Nurukka

Paul Harris Fellow recognition honors individuals whose contributions to The Rotary Foundation help Rotary do “good in the world,” and it is one of Rotary’s most prestigious acknowledgments of service and generosity. Art’s second Paul Harris recognition—his first “Multiple Paul Harris Fellow” level—reflects additional gifts in his name that bring his cumulative support to at least 2,000 dollars, magnifying Rotary’s impact through projects such as polio eradication, clean water, education, and peacebuilding around the globe.

Rotarians can support The Rotary Foundation in many flexible ways that fit their budget and goals.

- **ONE-TIME GIFTS** online through MyRotary or by check via our club Foundation chair Suzi Atherton
- **ROTARY DIRECT** recurring giving (monthly, quarterly, or annually) to the Annual Fund, dependable support all year long
- **TAX ADVANTAGED GIFTS** such as IRA qualified charitable distributions or donations of appreciated securities, which can reduce taxes while helping Rotary do more good.
- **LEGACY GIFTS** through your will, trust, life insurance, or beneficiary designations to the Rotary Foundation Endowment, sustaining Rotary’s work forever.



Basic
Education
& Literacy



Maternal &
Child
Health



Peace &
Conflict
Prevention/
Resolution



Disease
Prevention
&
Treatment



Water,
Sanitation
& Hygiene



Community &
Economic
Development



Support the
Environment

The Truth Keepers

Poynter Institute Brings Media Literacy Mission to Sarasota Bay Rotary — May 19, 2026



Sarah Sweeney
Director of Marketing

Aaron Schrockman
VP, Poynter /
PolitiFact

On May 19th, the Rotary Club of Sarasota Bay welcomed two representatives from one of the most important — and least known — institutions in American public life: the Poynter Institute for Media Studies in St. Petersburg.

Sarah Sweeney, Director of Marketing, and Aaron Schrockman, VP of Partnerships and Executive Director of PolitiFact, introduced Poynter to a club that proved itself more informed than most. When Sarah asked how many members had heard of Poynter, more hands went up than she typically sees — “a larger percent than most,” she said.

Founded 50 years ago in St. Petersburg, Poynter began as a training school for professional journalists — funded by the legacy of Nelson Poynter, who upon his death gave his highly profitable newspaper, the St. Petersburg Times, to a nonprofit he created. “I have not yet met my great-grandchildren, and I might not like them,” he said — meaning he couldn’t trust his passion for community journalism would survive in his family. So he gave it away.

Today, Poynter owns the Tampa Bay Times, operates PolitiFact, runs a global fact-checking network in 80 countries, and reaches 151 million people with media literacy education. In election season, PolitiFact draws more traffic than NFL.com or Disney.com.



The Truth Keepers

MEDIA LITERACY FOR EVERYONE

Poynter Institute • May 19, 2026



Aaron Schrockman delivered the core media literacy message with candor and humor. The turning point for Poynter came around 2017–2018: “Everyone with a phone is committing acts of journalism every day.” That realization expanded Poynter’s mission from training journalists to reaching everyday citizens — because a media-literate person can both produce better content and recognize bad information.

His key tip: “Your brain fails when it sees something it agrees with. You don’t have natural skepticism. Your defenses are down.” Social media amplifies this — every platform is engineered to keep you engaged, not to surface truth. The fix: be as skeptical about things you believe as things you don’t.

On AI, Aaron reframed the threat: it’s not just deception — it’s exhaustion. “They’re trying to throw so much stuff at us that we all throw our hands up and say, I don’t know what to believe. I give up.” His counsel: pursue knowledge, not just information. Communities that keep asking hard questions will get to a better place.

Stay connected with Poynter:

- June 3rd, St. Pete — Journalists on covering the ICE stories in Minneapolis
- Bowtie Ball, November 14th (past honorees: Anderson Cooper, Katie Couric)
- Free daily newsletter: poynter.org/newsletters/the-poynter-report
- Support the mission: poynter.org/support
- Contact: Sarah Sweeney — ssweeney@poynter.org | 949-648-6873

Rotary 
Club of Sarasota Bay

Spotlight: RCSB Foundation

One Stop Cares
Preventing Homelessness. Strengthening Lives.



The Rotary Club of Sarasota Bay Foundation is proud to support One Stop Cares with a \$1,000 grant in service of their mission to prevent homelessness before it happens.

One Stop Cares serves individuals and families across the Sarasota area through their Embrace–Inspire–Empower (EIE) program — providing personalized guidance, critical resources, and long-term stability planning to those facing difficult moments in life. Their approach is proactive: reaching people at the point of greatest vulnerability, before a housing crisis becomes irreversible.

In acknowledging the Foundation's grant, One Stop Cares wrote: "This support means far more than a donation — it represents hope, stability, and compassion for individuals and families working hard to remain safely housed."

The \$1,000 grant directly supports EIE program services, enabling staff to continue walking alongside clients as they build housing stability, access financial guidance, and find their footing in the community.



Rotary 
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Sponsor: Stacy Ridenour

THANKSGIVING GIVE BACK EVENT — 2025

Serving Our Community • November 2025



477 MEALS SERVED

Providing hot meals and critical
resources to neighbors in need
this Thanksgiving.

Each year, the Thanksgiving Give Back Event brings the full scope of One Stop Cares' mission into the community — and in 2025, the results were extraordinary.

477 meals were served, both onsite and as take-home packages for families. 99 individuals connected directly with life-changing services at the resource tent — a hands-on hub where 11 organizations provided support across employment and career development, health and wellness, financial guidance, and education and community programs.

Beyond the meal count, the resource tent is where lasting change begins. Families sit down with service providers who can open real doors to stability — not just a warm meal, but a genuine pathway forward.

One Stop Cares will recognize the Rotary Club of Sarasota Bay Foundation as a valued community partner in their June 2026 newsletter.



Rotary
Club of Sarasota Bay



Sponsor: Stacy Ridenour