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## Gilchrist County Rotarians welcome future Interact Club members



**Alexis Haynes (left) and Hailey O'Steen, both who will be juniors next year at Trenton High School, pose next to the Gilchrist Rotary Club banner on Monday (March 19). These two students were the first future Interact Club members to appear at the meeting that afternoon. By the start of the meeting, they were joined by other THS and Bell High School Interact Club members.**

### **Story and Photos**

**By Jeff M. Hardison © March 21, 2018 at 2:18 p.m.**

**TRENTON** -- Years ago, the Rotary Club of Trenton sponsored an Interact Club at Trenton High School.

During the weekly meeting of the Rotary Club of Gilchrist County on Monday (March 19), there was a trifecta of two programs and one relatively big announcement that brought happiness from hope – now and in the future – as well as a \$1 donation to the club.

The two programs were about the Food4Kids Backpack Program of North Florida; and the announcement of progress in the Rotary Club of Gilchrist County sponsoring two Interact Clubs that are starting next fall – one at Bell Middle High School and one at Trenton Middle High School.

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The third part of the trifecta day was the announcement by Gilchrist County Rotary Club President Bob Clemons of his intent to seek election to the Gilchrist County Board of County Commissioners – where he plans to run for the position (District II) being vacated by Gilchrist County Commissioner D. Ray Harrison Jr. – who is also a Rotarian with this club.

Harrison is not seeking reelection, Clemons said.

By Clemons making the announcement during a meeting, Gilchrist County Rotary Club Sgt. At Arms Damon Leggett assessed a fine of \$1 to be paid by Clemons. Other fines and donations were collected in a relatively efficient manner,

It was another wonderful Rotary Club meeting at the Woman's Club of Trenton, 819 S.W. Gilchrist County Road 339, in Trenton.



**Chef Jason Fuchs takes fresh chicken quesadilla servings from the oven at the Woman's Club kitchen.**

The club has found Chef Jason Fuchs, owner of Springwater Events of High Springs, catering the weekly lunch.

A chicken quesadilla bar, with all of the trimmings, was the main course of the day for lunch. Black beans and rice was available in this buffet style of service. Individually wrapped red velvet cupcakes with frosting and brownies were available for dessert. Tea and water were the drinks of the day.

Fuchs said he gives the Rotarians the meals for the cost of the food. Cooking and service to the buffet table is by him, as he lets other staff members from his catering service work elsewhere on Mondays.

This caterer said he likes to give to the Rotarians.

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**Dr. Andrew Nguyen. A medical doctor and Gilchrist County Rotary Club member, plays the piano at the meeting. This club sings Rotary songs. Dr. Nguyen said he plays cello and violin as well, although he feels those instruments are a little more difficult to master. He plays musical instruments from his home country of Vietnam as well, he said. Monnye Brown, an honorary Rotarian, is the usual pianist for this club. She was absent from this meeting.**

## **FOOD 4 KIDS**

Rotary Club of Gilchrist County President-Elect Aaron Haynes brought the programs on Monday.

He introduced Jennifer Moore, founder of Food4Kids Backpack Program of North Florida.

This program works like this - Partner with schools to Identify at-risk children; Raise funds and collect food; Sort and pack food into backpacks; Distribute backpacks to kids for the weekend; They return the backpack and we get ready for the next week.

The story of the origins of this program is captured on its website, where it notes "Several years ago on a Monday morning, Jennifer Moore took pizza, juice and cupcakes to Terwilliger Elementary School to celebrate her daughter's birthday with her third-grade class. She noticed that as most kids were still finishing their first slices of pizza, a few were already asking for seconds and thirds."

When she asked the teacher about these children, she learned that the reason they

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were so hungry was because it was a Monday, and there was a very good chance that the last full meal they had eaten had been at lunch on Friday.

The program started at that elementary school in Alachua County.

Now the program has grown to the point where more than 750 children are being fed seven meals during the weekends. It grew from one school to now, where there are 28 schools. The most recent two are Chiefland Middle School and Chiefland High School.

These children are fed breakfast and lunch in Levy County, she said. There is not always supper at home.

Some children can even wonder if home will be there after school. Are their parents being served with an eviction notice? Is there electricity? Is there food?

Moore said Food4Children runs on volunteer service and donations.

To visit the Food4Kids website to learn more –including how to donate or help in other ways, click [HERE](#).



**After the meeting, people involved with the Interact Clubs in Trenton and Bell paused for a photo opportunity. They are (from left) Gilchrist County Rotary Club President-Elect Aaron Hayes, Bell High School Interact Club Faculty Advisor First Sgt. (Ret.) Jon Meinhardt, BHS Interact Club Member Nolan Frazier, BHS Interact Club President Sahara Henderson, BHS Interact Club Member Rebekah Floyd, THS Interact Club President Alexis Haynes, THS Interact Club Member Ty Powell, THS Interact Club Member Hailey O'Steen and Gilchrist County Rotary Club President Bob Clemons.**

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**Ceremoniously ringing the bell to close the meeting are (from left) Gilchrist County Rotary Club President Bob Clemons, THS Interact Club President Alexis Haynes and BHS Interact Club President Sahara Henderson.**

## **INTERACT CLUBS**

The Rotary Club of Gilchrist County had a Poker Paddle event on Nov, 4, 2017, President Clemons said.

That event generated \$3,000—which the club voted to put toward the start of Interact Clubs in Bell and Trenton. This money will provide a stipend to the faculty advisors, as well as to go toward club supplies.

The Interact Clubs will begin in the fall of 2018 with the Rotary Club of Gilchrist County being the sponsor of both clubs, President-Elect Haynes said.

Both schools have their club presidents in place. They are Trenton High School Interact Club President Alexis Haynes and Bell High School Interact Club President Sahara Henderson. Both presidents were presented with their gavels to be used during the next school year.

Both schools have faculty advisors for their clubs. At Bell High School there are two advisors Ag Teacher Bill Martin and JROTC Instructor Army First Sgt. (Ret.) Jon Meinhardt.