



Kiwanis[®]

CLUB OF ROANOKE

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Contact: Jeanne Bollendorf, Communications Committee, Kiwanis Club of Roanoke jeannekiwanis@gmail.com

Kiwanis Club of Roanoke Presents an Exciting Lineup of April Speakers

Join Us Every Wednesday in April for Inspiring Programs Over Lunch at the City Market Building

ROANOKE, Va. — The Kiwanis Club of Roanoke invites the community to join its weekly Wednesday luncheon meetings this April for an outstanding series of guest speakers covering topics from personal resilience and local food systems to urban farming and sustainable waste. Meetings are held in Charter Hall on the third floor of the City Market Building, with networking and lunch beginning at 12:00 PM.

Each week features a distinguished speaker sharing their expertise and passion with Kiwanis members and guests. The public is encouraged to attend and experience the energy and community spirit that defines the Kiwanis Club of Roanoke.

April 8 — Vicki Gardner, Author: “Survival Has Consequences”

The April program series kicks off with a powerful and deeply personal presentation by Vicki Gardner, author of “Survival Has Consequences.” Left for dead after a live television interview turned into a horrific double murder, Gardner — a respected community leader — shares her extraordinary fight for survival. Her story goes beyond surviving a gunshot wound; it is an unflinching account of enduring painful surgeries, navigating frustrating legal battles, and confronting the lasting psychological scars of trauma.

Raw, honest, and unexpectedly hopeful, her book is a testament to resilience, community strength, and finding gratitude in the aftermath of unthinkable violence.

Gardner spent decades building businesses and strengthening communities as Executive Director of the Smith Mountain Lake Regional Chamber of Commerce and past President of the Virginia Chamber of Commerce Executives. She brings a leader’s perspective on growth, challenge, and perseverance.

April 15 — Brynne Beierle, Blue Ridge Hydroponics

Virginia's cannabis landscape has changed dramatically in recent years — and Roanoke's own Blue Ridge Hydroponics has been right there growing alongside it. Since taking over the shop in 2023, owner Brynne Beierle has cultivated a community hub for home growers of all kinds, at a moment when Virginians finally have the legal right to grow cannabis plants at home for personal use. Blue Ridge Hydroponics carries everything a home cultivator needs — from professional-grade grow lights and nutrient solutions to organic soil amendments and full hydroponic systems — and Beierle and her team bring the expertise to match. Whether you're curious about getting started or just want to understand what the homegrow movement means for Roanoke, this is your chance to hear from someone who lives and breathes it. Come with questions. Beierle has seen it all — and she's happy to talk about *all* your "tomatoes."

April 22 — David Stewards, Star City Compost

Every week, Roanoke throws away tens of thousands of pounds of food — and most of it ends up in a landfill, breaking down into methane and contributing to climate change. Davey Stewards decided to do something

about it. As co-founder of Star City Compost, Roanoke Valley's first and only commercial food waste recycling operation, Stewards and his team collect food scraps from homes and businesses across the city, running them through five state-of-the-art aerated composting bunkers capable of producing over 780 cubic yards of rich compost each year. That's banana peels, coffee grounds, pizza boxes, and dinner leftovers being transformed into living, life-giving soil. What started as a backyard experiment with a tractor and a big idea is now a worker-owned business with residential curbside pickup, drop-off sites, and commercial clients including Hollins University. Stewards will share the gritty (and yes, sometimes smelly) journey of building something that didn't exist before — and why he believes composting is one of the most powerful things Roanoke can do for its future.

April 29 — Maureen McGonagle, Roanoke Foodshed Network

What does it take to feed a region — equitably, sustainably, and for generations to come? That's the bold question driving Maureen McGonagle and the Roanoke Foodshed Network. Founded in 2020 and spanning nine cities and counties across Southwest Virginia, the RFN unites an extraordinary coalition of farmers, healthcare providers, nonprofits, universities, and community advocates in pursuit of one vision: good food for everyone. Backed by a multi-year USDA grant and partners ranging from Carilion Clinic and Virginia Tech to Feeding Southwest Virginia, the network runs working groups on healthy food access, farm development, regional food identity, and local distribution. McGonagle, whose work spans farm tours, community grants, and building farmer-to-farmer networks, will share the stories behind the data — what it really looks like to transform a food system from the ground up in our own backyard. For anyone who eats (so, everyone), this is a talk you won't want to miss.

How to Attend

- When: Every Wednesday in April; networking and lunch begin at 12:00 PM
- Where: Charter Hall, Third Floor, City Market Building, Roanoke, VA
- Guests are welcome — come for the speakers, stay for the community

Check us out online at www.roanokekiwanisclub.org

About the Kiwanis Club of Roanoke:

The Kiwanis Club of Roanoke is a community service organization in the Roanoke Valley of Virginia that has been serving the needs of youth, older adults, and the environment for 106 years. Our Club provides funds and sweat equity to over 25 charitable organizations, sponsors youth leadership clubs in Roanoke City & County (Key Clubs), as well as an Aktion Club for adults with special needs. We host the largest breakfast in Roanoke and funds are used to provide grants for area non-profits, scholarships for high school students, and financial aid to vocational students. Signature projects include Roanoke Valley Greenways, Kiwanis Playground in Melrose, and the Kiwanis Nature Park. Join us to fulfill your desire to serve the community and build friendships that will last a lifetime. All are welcome to join or participate in programs.