



The



# Joshua Tree

September 29, 2026

## SEEING HOMELESSNESS SOLUTIONS FIRSTHAND

This week, members of the Rotary Club of Victorville traded their regular meeting room for a VVTA Direct Access bus and an up-close look at how the City of Victorville and its community partners are addressing homelessness throughout the city.

**William Lamas**, Homelessness Solutions Manager for the City of Victorville, led Rotarians on a Community Outreach Tour that included stops with the City's Homeless Engagement Team, the new FAM Spot youth facility, and the Victorville Wellness Center.

Joining the tour were Rotarians **Bob Basen, Steve Murray, Angel Espino, Don Kennard, Craig Garrick, Dr. Derrick King** and **Chris Ackerman**, along with guests **Jennifer Hernandez** and **Curtis Hurst**.

Lamas began the tour by discussing some of the challenges unique to the High Desert and the importance of connecting people with services. From January through September 29, 2026, he said 4,913 calls had been made to 2-1-1 seeking help with food, housing and other needs. Victorville residents can be connected

with more than 400 referral options depending on their circumstances.

The first stop took Rotarians behind a tire shop along Bear Valley Road, where a member of Victorville's Homeless Engagement Team demonstrated what outreach looks like in the field.



A large photograph showed what the property and neighboring area had looked like before the team began its work, a sharp contrast to what Rotarians saw during their visit.

The City's Homeless Engagement Team consists of four full-time Homeless Engagement Officers and a supervisor who work alongside the City's Homelessness Solutions staff, the Wellness Center and other partners. Their role goes beyond clearing encampments. Team members engage people experiencing homelessness, offer available shelter and services, address health and safety concerns and work with property owners, Code Enforcement and law enforcement when necessary.

Lamas explained that the City continues to place an emphasis on offering shelter and assistance before enforcement in most situations. Different procedures apply to private property, sensitive areas such as waterways and areas near schools, and situations involving an immediate fire or safety threat. Accommodations may



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## LETNER'S LETTER

Huge thank you to William Lamas for giving us an incredible inside look at the

City of Victorville's Homelessness Initiative this week, and to City Manager Keith Metzler for his continued support of our Rotary Club.

We've spent the last couple of weeks learning more about our community. First, the Community Roundtable. Then, getting out and seeing firsthand what the City is doing to address homelessness.

But learning isn't the goal. Making a difference is.

We have a lot of talented, connected people in this Rotary Club, and 75 years of history in this community. The challenge is to take what we're learning and find meaningful ways to put our time, talent, and treasure to work.

That's the Rotary Club we're continuing to build.

Thank you to Craig Garrick for serving as our Community Service Chair and helping move this effort forward. And thank you to everyone who has shown up, asked questions, shared ideas, and been part of the process. We're moving in the right direction.

It's a great time to be a Rotarian!

*Brad*



## Homelessness

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also be necessary for individuals with disabilities who require additional time or assistance.

The stop demonstrated the balance the team works to maintain every day: protecting businesses, neighborhoods and public spaces while also attempting to connect people experiencing homelessness with a path off the street.

The next stop took the group to the upcoming FAM Spot, operated by the Family Assistance Program.



Executive Director **Darryl Evey** walked Rotarians through the developing facility and explained the organization's focus on young people who may be homeless, housing insecure or otherwise in need of a safe and stable environment.

The expanded FAM Spot will include eight bedrooms with bunk beds, along with a full kitchen, recreation areas and classroom space where young people can participate in programs addressing subjects such as anger management, substance dependency, financial literacy and employment.

The project also includes a Tiny Home Village designed specifically for transitional-age youth. Family Assistance Program has been working on the expansion since 2021, with the goal of creating more than simply a place to sleep.



Evey discussed the philosophy of "Housing First", providing people with the stability of housing while simultaneously helping them address

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# CREATE LASTING IMPACT

# Victorville Wellness Center

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employment, education, finances and other challenges. Rather than expecting someone in crisis to solve every problem before becoming eligible for housing, the approach seeks to create the stability from which longer-term progress can begin.

Employment remains an important part of that process. Staff work with young people not simply on finding a job, but on keeping that job, developing financial stability and identifying career pathways that can lead to long-term self-sufficiency.

The facility also includes recreational space and a playground, helping create an environment that feels less institutional and more like a community.

The tour concluded at the Victorville Wellness Center, which opened in December 2023.



The 4.5-acre campus includes 170 interim housing beds for individuals and families, including

specialized recuperative-care beds. But Rotarians quickly saw that the Wellness Center is much more than a shelter.

Clients have access to case management, housing navigation, behavioral health and recovery services, job assistance, legal services and medical care.

The campus includes an on-site medical clinic, and its health care capabilities help provide treatment outside already-busy hospital emergency rooms. The program also includes street medical outreach, motel housing resources and pharmacy services.



Even pets were considered in the design. The Wellness Center includes kennel facilities, removing one of the barriers that can prevent someone experiencing homelessness from accepting shelter because they do

not want to abandon an animal.

Lamas told the group the Wellness Center is currently operating at



approximately 94 percent capacity. During the tour, Rotarians also learned that approximately 1,000 people have now moved through the program and that the Center recently celebrated its 300th client transitioning into permanent housing.

Those numbers put a human face on what the group had seen throughout the afternoon.

From an encampment behind a local business, to young people being given an opportunity before homelessness becomes a way of life, to individuals receiving medical care, job assistance and ultimately permanent housing, each stop represented a different piece of the same challenge.

For the Rotarians on the tour, it was an opportunity to see work that often happens out of public view, and to meet some of the people doing that work every day.

Homelessness has no single cause and no single solution. As the tour demonstrated, addressing it requires outreach, accountability, shelter, healthcare, employment assistance, community partnerships and, perhaps most importantly, a pathway that gives people an opportunity to move forward.

It was an informative afternoon and a reminder of just how much work is taking place throughout Victorville to make that pathway possible.



## VICTORVILLE ROTARY CLUB OFFICERS

### Board of Directors

|                                 |                          |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| President 2026 - 2028 .....     | Brad Letner              |
| Immediate Past President .....  | Steve Murray             |
| Executive Secretary .....       | Pam Murray               |
| Treasurer .....                 | Darron Poulsen           |
| Foundation.....                 | Jon Hove                 |
| Membership .....                | Bryan Gillespie          |
| Club Service .....              | Arsalee Morales          |
| Community Service .....         | Craig Garrick            |
| Vocational Service .....        | Angel Espino             |
| International Service.....      | Ben Tafoya               |
| Youth Service .....             | Ryan McEachron           |
| Directors/Members-at-Large..... | Bob Basen & Dr. Ron Boyd |
| Joshua Tree/Marketing .....     | Chris Ackerman           |
| Recording Secretary.....        | Pam Murray               |

### Positions & Committee Chairs

|                                |                             |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Scholarships.....              | Kirsten Acosta              |
| Billing .....                  | Pam Murray & Darron Poulsen |
| Public Service Awards.....     | Arsalee Morales             |
| Teacher Mini-Grants .....      | Angel Espino                |
| Special Projects.....          | Rob Kilpatrick              |
| Dan Stover Music Contest.....  | Angel Espino                |
| Read B4K .....                 | Brad Letner                 |
| Grants.....                    | <b>Please Volunteer</b>     |
| Food Baskets.....              | Ben Tafoya                  |
| Interact (Junior Rotary).....  | <b>Please Volunteer</b>     |
| Programs .....                 | Mike Page                   |
| Fundraising .....              | Brad Letner                 |
| S.T.A.R. Students .....        | Chris Ackerman              |
| Club Learning Facilitator..... | <b>Please Volunteer</b>     |

The Victorville Rotary Club meets every Tuesday for fellowship  
at 11:30 a.m. and meeting at 12:00 noon at the Bear Valley  
Country Club, 13229 Spring Valley Parkway, Victorville

### Make-up Days and Locations

|                   |                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>MONDAY:</b>    | San Bernardino East, Imperial Palace, noon                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>TUESDAY:</b>   | Rancho Cucamonga Sunrise, 7:15 a.m.<br>Empire Lakes Golf Course<br>Rancho Cucamonga, 12:00 p.m., Etiwanda Gardens                                                                        |
| <b>WEDNESDAY:</b> | San Bernardino Crossroads, Hilton, noon,<br>Barstow, DiNapoli's Firehouse, 1358 E Main St,<br>Barstow, CA                                                                                |
| <b>THURSDAY:</b>  | Apple Valley, Rusty Bull, 13685 John Glenn Rd, Apple<br>Valley, Noon. Ontario, 12:15 p.m., Doubletree Hotel<br>San Bernardino, Denny's at I-15, 7 a.m.<br>Redlands, Masonic Temple, noon |
| <b>FRIDAY:</b>    | San Bernardino North, Elks Lodge, 12:05 p.m.                                                                                                                                             |

## Calendar Dates

- Oct 5** **Board of Directors Meeting**  
5:30pm Board Meeting  
Coldwell Banker  
12138 Industrial Blvd., Suite102  
Victorville, CA 92395
- Oct 17** **76th Anniversary Fundraiser**  
5:30pm Doors  
6:00pm Dinner • 7:15pm Drawing  
Spring Valley Lake Community Center  
12975 Rolling Ridge, SVL

**Rotary**  
Club of Victorville, CA



## Programs & Events

- Oct 6** Raghada Khoury, Past District Governor,  
**"Rotary Float Ambassador Program"**  
(McEachron)
- Oct 13** **2nd Tuesday Fun: Scandia Night Out**  
**5:00pm**  
Scandia, 12627 Mariposa Rd,  
Victorville, CA 92395
- Nov 10** **2nd Tuesday Fun: Scandia Night Out**  
**5:00pm**  
Los Domingos Restaurant  
Apple Valley
- Nov 17** **2026 Teacher Mini-Grants**

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