

CORTLAND BREAKFAST ROTARY NEWS

We Have Fun, And We Get Things Done!

✳️ CORTLANDBREAKFASTROTARY.ORG

✳️ EDITED BY SOPHIE WELBURN



President Mark Roberts

Front Desk:

Pat Clune
Jessie Farrell

Thought for the Day:

Pat Clune

Raffle Winner: Conrad Janke

Attendance: 19

Zoom: 1

Guests:

Casey Pennington
Kaitlyn Boylan
Frank Kelly
Pino Alarco Hernandez



“Sustaining Dignity & Community”

Casey Pennington
& the Crown Table Movement

This week, the Cortland Breakfast Rotary Club welcomed Casey Pennington as guest speaker to introduce the growing Crown Table movement!

Pennington has personally experienced food and housing insecurity, so understands the challenges of navigating the social services system. She realized that while those struggling to access housing, food, and other resources are viewed as incompetent and as failures, they are in fact trying to work against a system that is set up to place them in that position.

When access to WIC and SNAP benefits was threatened in the fall of 2025, Pennington noticed community members expressing their concerns about securing food on social media forums such as the Cortland County Mutual Aid group and parents’ groups on Facebook. In fact, Cortland County has a higher food insecurity rate than the New York state average, and one in five children in the county experience housing and/or food insecurity.

Pennington felt a strong desire to do something, and reflected that while she often likes to remember Mr. Rogers’ advice to look for the helpers, she admitted that “there are times I want to be the helper too.”

Pennington first reached out to Brian Fitz who is a board member of Cortland ReUse with a proposal to organize a meal, and while she expected red tape and a “no,” she was instead surprised by the response of “Let’s do it! Let’s figure it out!” Through a chain of connections facilitated by Fitz, Pennington was able to form various partnerships. Through these connections, Pennington strove to figure out how to blend and work across everyone’s different skills and access to resources to make a positive impact.

(Continued on page 2...)

UPCOMING EVENTS

Area 17 Social Gathering

✳️ April 2, 2026 @ 5:30pm

Join us at Vespar Hills Golf Club in Tully for an evening of fun and fellowship!

Ride for Rotary

✳️ May 31, 2026

McGruff Tournament

✳️ June 18, 2026

Casey Pennington continued...

Centering around a goal of providing food and community while preserving dignity, the Crown Table Feast was organized to be held on November 25th, 2025.

The word spread, and on that day forty-one community members were served. Donations included food and takeout boxes from Texas Roadhouse and Moe’s Southwest Grill, as well as gift cards to local grocery stores, and even COVID-19 test kits.

A follow-up event involved collecting gently used toys, which in addition to gift cards to Area 51 and All My Friends bookstore were provided to 10-11 local families for the holiday season.

The next planned event is a clothing swap to take place in May, with the intention to help families including those with rapidly growing kids have access to a new wardrobe. Pennington is still seeking a location for this event.

As the Crown Table movement continues to grow, Pennington hopes to see it become an “All-Year Community of Care,” continuing to engage in ways that sustain dignity, community, and mutually supporting networks.



Image from “Professor’s idea brings county together for Crown Table Feast”; SUNY Cortland 11/26/2025 article.



3/15- Sophie Welburn

Anniversaries
None

CONFERENCE 2026
Strength in Every Ability

- Service Without Limits
- Fellowship Without Barriers
- A Public Image That Reflects All of Us

REGISTRATION NOW OPEN

SATURDAY, APRIL 11
SYRACUSE MARRIOTT DOWNTOWN

CNY Rotary 

More info at CNYRotary.org

[LEARN MORE HERE](#)

Happy Dollars

Sophie Welburn: Saw and heard first robins of the season, and seeing flowers pushing up out of the ground.

Frank Kelly: Passed one of Sheriff Mark Helms' deputies on the way in; granddaughter who is to be an outbound exchange student will be coming to the meeting next week.

Dianne Higgins: Heading south to Savannah, then Florida next week, see everyone in a month!

Bob Martin: Great concert at the State Theatre, saw Keb' 'Mo.

Jeremy Boylan: For our guests; we are so lucky to have the Center for the Arts in our community which hosts great concerts.

Steve Cinquanti: Saw Bad Sneakers, a Steely Dan tribute band, at Palace Theatre.

Conrad Janke: For Casey, our speaker; the Community Service Club had Jeremy as their speaker.



Cortland Breakfast Rotary Club members venture out into our community to help Senior citizen who need a hand, raking leaves, collecting brush, trimming hedges, cleaning gutters, etc.!

[SIGN UP FOR A TEAM HERE](#)

Cortland ReUse



Volunteers needed to help them get settled in their new location on Port Watson Street; March 18th from 9am-3pm, help with setting up shelves and possibly painting. Give what time you can!

Nothing About Us, Without Us: Women Who Led the Disability Rights Movement

A virtual discussion, March 15th, 4 p.m.

Celebrate
WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

MARCH 2026

hosted by Emily Krichbaum, Ph.D.,
National Women's History Museum



➔ 

Please RSVP by March 13th



FIRST 55 TO PAY CONRAD ARE IN!

District 7180, Area 17 Social Gathering



The Loft at Vesper Hills



4589 Octagon Rd. Tully,

THE ROTARY CLUBS OF:
TULLY, THE ROTARY CLUB OF CORTLAND, CORTLAND BREAKFAST,
WHITNEY POINT

April 2, 2026; 530pm—730pm
Cost. \$15 per person, includes our d'oeuvres. (Let us know if you prefer gluten free)

The first 55 people to reply to Conrad Janke are in!

Text: 315-460-0258

Email: conradjanke@mac.com

Venmo: @Conrad-Janke, or pay your Club Treasurer

A chance to meet and socialize with Rotarians from our area, guests are welcome;

Featuring each Club explaining their Service Projects;
A District Outline from District 7180 President **Bob Balk**.