

# Rotary Club of Washington, D.C. and Embassy of Colombia Host Annual Ambassadorial Reception

*An evening centered on cultural diplomacy, international service, and community connection*

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, April 27, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Rotary Club of Washington, D.C., in partnership with the Embassy of Colombia, hosted its Annual Ambassadorial Reception on Friday, April 17, 2026, at the residence of His Excellency Daniel García-Peña Jaramillo, Ambassador of Colombia to the United States, located at 1520 20th Street, NW, Washington, D.C.



Ambassador of Colombia receiving award from Donnie Shaw, President of the Rotary Club of Washington, DC

The cocktail reception brought together more than 70 guests, including ambassadors, senior diplomats, Rotarians, civic leaders, cultural diplomacy advocates, and community partners for an evening centered on cultural diplomacy, international service, and community connection.

“

This gathering was more than a reception; it was a celebration of service, cultural diplomacy, and shared purpose.”

*Donnie Shaw, President of the Rotary Club of WDC*

Distinguished attendees included Her Excellency Robie Kakonge, Ambassador of Uganda to the United States; Her Excellency Agniola Ahouanmenou, Ambassador of Benin to the United States; His Excellency Esteban Moctezuma Barragán, Ambassador of Mexico to the United States; His

Excellency Luis Ernesto Vargas Silva, Permanent Representative of Colombia to the Organization of American States; and Mr. Dawit Haile, Head of Political Affairs at the Embassy of Eritrea, among other members of the diplomatic community.

The program featured remarks from Donnie Shaw, President of the Rotary Club of Washington, D.C.; Marilyn Nevy Cruz, Assistant Governor for Rotary International District 7620; Ligia Corredor, representing FUNDAMIRA; and Jan Du Plain, a leader in cultural diplomacy and partner of Rotary. The evening also honored Ambassador García-Peña Jaramillo for his hospitality in opening the Colombian Ambassador's residence for the occasion.



Ambassadorial Reception Guests

"Tonight, we came together in the spirit of friendship, service, cultural exchange, and international understanding. These values are at the very heart of Rotary," said Donnie Shaw, President of the Rotary Club of Washington, D.C. "This gathering was more than a reception; it was a celebration of service, cultural diplomacy, and shared purpose."

Marilyn Nevy Cruz also underscored the importance of building relationships across cultures and countries.

"Cultural diplomacy is not symbolic, it is powerful," said Marilyn Nevy Cruz, Assistant Governor for D.C. in Rotary District 7620 and one of the Rotary Club of Washington, D.C.'s youngest past presidents and first Hispanic/Latina president in its 114-year history. "It allows us to see one another not just as representatives of nations, but as partners in addressing the challenges we all share."

Proceeds from ticket sales will support FUNDAMIRA's, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization working in the United States and Colombia to expand educational opportunities in rural Colombia. The funds raised will help advance FUNDAMIRA's priority project: the creation of an Information Technology classroom for primary students, youth, and adults to help reduce illiteracy rates and expand access to digital education.

To highlight FUNDAMIRA's mission, guests viewed a short video about the organization and the communities it serves in Colombia. The program also featured remarks from Ligia Corredor, who traveled from Florida to share more about FUNDAMIRA's work in Colombia's South Pacific region, where communities continue to face challenges including poverty, displacement, flooding, and limited access to basic infrastructure such as clean water and sanitation.

Colombia is home to one of Latin America's largest Afro-descendant populations, and many rural Afro-Colombian communities continue to face barriers to education, literacy, and digital inclusion. Supporting FUNDAMIRA means expanding technology access, literacy, and opportunity

for Afro-Colombian children, youth, and adults while advancing equity through education.

The reception concluded with Cumbia, a Colombian dance and music presentation by Carolina Hernandez of the GET Dance Company, celebrating Colombia's rich cultural heritage and the power of the arts to build cross-cultural understanding.

The event also reflected Rotary's strong regional reach, with attendees representing Washington, D.C., Montgomery County, the greater DMV region, North Carolina, and civic organizations including the Capitol Hill Club. Clara Montanez, a Colombian Rotarian and member of the Metro Bethesda Rotary Club, played an important role in strengthening the event's connection to the region's Colombian and Rotary communities.

Montanez has been a member of Rotary since 2003, beginning with the Rotary Club of Washington, D.C. before joining the Metro Bethesda Rotary Club in 2018. She has served as president of her club and currently serves on the board of its local foundation. She has also supported international projects in Colombia, with a focus on preventing infant mortality through education and water initiatives in La Guajira and Medellín.

Mr. Shaw also recognized the Rotary connections that helped bring the evening's purpose to life, including Montanez for her humanitarian work in Colombia and Tom Poole, a Rotaractor whose work with the U.S. Department of Agriculture supported improved fertilizer-use efficiency and soil health in Colombia.

The reception was organized with leadership from the Rotary Club of Washington, D.C.'s Embassy International Relations Committee. Mariama Keita-Thiero, a member of the Rotary Club of Washington, D.C. for the past four years, newly elected board member, and Co-Chair of the Embassy International Relations Committee.

"I believe deeply in the power of cultural diplomacy to build bridges of understanding, friendship, and service," said Mariama Keita-Thiero. "Events like this remind us that when we come together across cultures and countries, we strengthen not only international relationships, but also within our local communities."

The Embassy International Relations Committee actively engages with foreign embassies in Washington, D.C., and collaborates with Rotary clubs in capital cities around the world to build relationships, encourage cultural exchange, and support diplomatic goodwill.

About the Rotary Club of Washington, D.C.

Founded in 1922, the Rotary Club of Washington, D.C. is one of the region's historic civic service organizations, bringing together leaders across business, professional, international, civic, and government sectors. Guided by Rotary's motto of "Service Above Self," the club supports local and global initiatives that advance peace, education, health, economic opportunity, and international understanding.

## About FUNDAMIRA

FUNDAMIRA works to expand educational opportunity and community development in rural Colombia. Its priority project focuses on creating an Information Technology classroom for primary students, youth, and adults to help reduce illiteracy rates and increase access to digital learning tools.

Mariama Keita-Thiero

Rotary Club of Washington, DC

+1 323-481-2255

[email us here](#)

Visit us on social media:

[LinkedIn](#)

[Instagram](#)

[Facebook](#)

---

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/908389258>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2026 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.