

**Inside the Event -
The Waterbury Rotary
Summer Concert Series
Lynn Mason – Coordinator
August 2015**



The annual Summer Concert Series runs from June through August at the Rusty Parker Park in downtown Waterbury. The Waterbury Farmers Market provides the backdrop with food options for concert goers to picnic on the lawn. Music starts at 7pm.

What's the story behind the Rusty Parker Concert Series?

It all started in 1982 when Rusty Parker died. He was a large part of the community and a Rotarian. He started with WDEV as a teenager and was known for his early morning radio show. When he died in 1982, stricken by a heart attack while on the air, the Rotary Club wanted to do something special to celebrate his life. They decided to renovate the park and dedicate it to him. They also decided to have a concert series in his memory. The idea took off and people of the community generously donated. The first concert series was in 1983 with just 3-4 concerts. Along the way, Rotary had support for the series from Waterbury businesses and individuals but it was a financial struggle. Ann Casey who enjoyed the Thursday evening concerts left a bequest in her will to help support the series and from there it was able to grow.

When did you take it on? What inspired you coordinate the program? How has the programming evolved since you have taken it on?

I took it on in 2010 which is when I joined

Rotary. Tami Bass, with Rick Darby who were Rotarians at the time were booking the concerts with a small committee. Tami asked if I would be interested in taking over the bookings as it was becoming difficult for her with her travels. I started working with the bands to cut the pricing a bit which enabled us to increase the concerts from 7 to 11 each year.



Has the Rotary been able to formally measure the series' impact on the community, or has it been informal? What are the three best impacts or best feedback that you get surrounding the events?

Rotary has not measured the impact on the community in an official way but you can see evidence of the impact when you go to a concert and see the response. The community is very thankful for what Rotary does, the children dance and everyone enjoys dinner in the park with family and friends.

Do you attend the concerts each time or just book them? What's your favorite part of your role?

I try to attend each concert and very much enjoy connecting with the community each week. As for the bookings, yes I do book and have a committee that helps with the fundraising. We now keep the concert series healthy by fund raising and offering

sponsorship to local businesses. The business of the week have a chance to sponsor a concert which allows them to do handouts, put up banners, whatever they choose to do to promote their business.

This is a lot of work for you and your Rotary committee. What is your biggest inspiration for all this work?

We are inspired by seeing how the series has been received by the community and by businesses. It's an enjoyable evening had by all young and old. Our hope is to see this continue for years to come.

Rotary Club of Waterbury

2015 Summer Concerts in the Park

June		
11	Mano Malo	— Blues/Funk
18	Studio 2	— Beatles Tribute Band
25	Radio Flyer	— Rock & Blues
July		
2	Unusual Suspects	— Blues
9	Mellow Yellow	— 60's—70's Tribute Band
16	Slant Six	— High Energy Dance Band
23	Dave Keller	— Funky Soulful Blues
30	Preydon	— Celtic Rock
August		
6	Eames Brothers	— Blues, Funk, Soul, Rock
13	Stone Cold Roosters	— HonkY Tonk
20	John Lacard	— Rocken Blues