



# The New Hub

Official Newsletter of the Rotary Club of Belmont & Redwood Shores

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## Rotary "Cars For Vets" program presents another wounded veteran with needed transportation

What a great way to celebrate Independence Day! On July 5th, at Summit Auto Body in Belmont, newly-minted Club President **Geoff Wiggs** presented the keys to a beautifully refurbished 2000 Chevrolet Blazer to **Roberto and Maria Rojas**. The car had been donated by long-time club member **Dennis Pettinelli**, and the work to put the vehicle into top shape, was done by **Summit Auto Body**, which donated their time. Roberto was a member of the U.S. Navy, assigned as naval communications electronics technician. During the push by the Marines to take Fallujah, Iraq, in 2004, all of the Marine radio operators were either wounded or killed and the Marines had no one left who could operate their field radios. To support the battle, the Marines sought assistance from the nearest naval detachment. Robert, as a communications technician, (cont'd on p. 2)

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with no combat training or experience, was strapped into battle gear and headed out to the field. During the battle for Fallujah, Roberto's vehicle was hit by an IED (improvised explosive device). Robert suffered severe head trauma and traumatic brain injury.

Although the Veterans Administration has programs to assist individuals reintegrate into society after receiving such wounds, Roberto was unable to take advantage of these programs because most of the services available are limited to single soldiers and Roberto was not able to secure assistance for himself along with housing for his family.

Dennis Pettinelli had also brought gifts for the family, and when President Geoff was helping the children pick up the toys that Dennis brought, Geoff asked the kids if they would like him to help put the toys into their car. Geoff said "The little girl looked at me very seriously and said, 'We don't have a car, mister.' When I told her 'This is your car now,' the look on her face was absolutely priceless. Shock and awe. The kids then proceeded to spend the rest of the event playing in the back seat of the Blazer. It was nearly impossible to pry them out of the back seat."





**Club President Geoff Wiggs presents the keys to Roberto and Maria Rojas.**



**Dennis Pettinelli congratulates Maria and Roberto on their new Blazer.**