



THURSDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2022 YAKIMA CONVENTION & EVENT CENTER

*Imagine
 Rotary*

ANNUAL ROTARY CHRISTMAS PARTY

4pm – 6pm



Tis the season to celebrate traditions with the annual Rotary Christmas Party. Gather your children, grandchildren, family, and friends for a Merry Little Party filled with delicious food and delightful conversation. Kids will be treated to crafts that include making a pinecone bird feeder, creating their own ornament, and decorating sugar cookies. A hot chocolate bar will keep everyone warm and toasty.

Last week we rang bells outside with a jingle, jingle, jingle. Now it's time to come inside to mix and mingle. Don your ugly Christmas sweater or holiday Cheer outfit. President Rick and Gay are the perfect inspiration. Winners will receive a bottle of wine!

The special guest of the day will be Santa! Don't forget to bring an unwrapped gift for a needy child in our community. And since you KNOW the place to go, let it snow, let it snow, let it snow!

FUTURE PROGRAMS

December 22nd – No Meeting, Happy Holidays
 December 29th – No Meeting, Happy New Year
 January 5th – Christine Cote, Perry Technical Institute

MOLLIE DAVIS SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION PROCESS IS OPEN

ROTARY BELL RINGING



REVIEW

While it was a frosty day outside, it was warm and cozy inside with greetings at the door from Mina Worthington who had help from President Rick. Music was a perfect fit for the holiday season and our program as Linda Kaminski shared two videos, a re-enactment of the 1914 WWI Christmas Truce produced in 2014 to commemorate its 100th anniversary and a second video that explained its significance. Kurt Labberton followed with a story of a homeless man being tended to by a nurse cleaning his wounds and brought to tears because it had been so long since he'd been touched by another person. Something that many of us have forgotten especially because of Covid. Hug those you love. It was a quiet day for announcements. All the shifts for Rotary Bell Ringing were filled (The last volunteer came up to me after Rotary to take the last shift). THANK YOU to everyone who participated! Doug Rich was in charge of raising money for Rotary Charities with the last sergeant-at-arms for 2022.

Jane Davis had the honor of introducing Shirleen Wilhelm as our program speaker. Over two years ago, Shirleen joined the Quilts of Valor Foundation, a national non-profit organization with the mission of awarding comforting and healing Quilts of Valor to service members and veterans touched by war. The Foundation was started in 2003 by Catherine Roberts, a mother whose son was serving in Iraq. The idea came to her in a dream through two images. The first was a soldier sitting in despair on the edge of a bed dealing with the demons of war; the second image was that same soldier sitting upright on the edge of that same bed smiling with a quilt wrapped around him. The message received was that quilts = healing; she began making quilts and began Quilts of Valor.

Today, the Foundation is made up of roughly 10,000 volunteers belonging to 575-600 groups nationwide. Each state has a coordinator, districts, and local group leaders. There are over 20 groups in Washington. Seeing a need in our own community to honor veterans, Shirleen registered the Yakima County Group in July 2021. She serves as the group leader. Their first sew date was held in August 2021 at the Selah Civic Center. Within weeks they had already outgrown the space. They were blessed to find a new location at the Bethlehem Church Event Center. They have 45 members, each bringing their own creative spirit to the group, from piecing together blocks, to sewing quilts, serving as a long-arm (person who sandwiches the quilts together), binding,

volunteering to serve at community events, and helping organize award ceremonies.

Each quilt has its own special meaning!

- **The Top** with its many colors, shapes, and fabrics represent the many individuals with whom the veteran served, our community.
- **The Batting** or center of the quilt provides its warmth. It represents the hope that the quilt will bring comfort, peace, and healing.
- **The Backing** is the strength that supports the other layers. It represents the strength of the recipient, the unit, family, and the strength from grateful strangers, and our nation.
- **Each Stitch** represents the love, gratitude, and sometimes the tears of the maker.

When presented to a veteran they represent a three-part message from the giver. (1) To HONOR the veteran for leaving all they held dear to stand in harm's way to protect us whether they served active-duty stateside or overseas. (2) To acknowledge that FREEDOM IS NOT FREE. A service member or veteran has signed a blank check payment to the United States of America for amount up to and including their life. And (3), to offer COMFORT and a tangible reminder that no matter where they served, he or she has never been forgotten.

The Yakima Quilts of Valor Group is growing. Their last awards ceremony in November was held at VFW. Eleven veterans were wrapped with the hug of a quilt. They expected 80-85 people to attend; 100-125 showed up. Since July 2021, 65 Quilts of Valor have been presented in our community. They have another 30 nominations and 45 veterans to interview. Their core values are to treat all people with respect, honoring all faiths and beliefs; to always strive for excellence and to be better; to serve others; and to be accountable to their donors, fellow members, and recipients. They recognize the demons of war that plague soldiers. It is about reaching out and touching another, without judgement, reaching out with acceptance, and with an acknowledgement of service to our nation.

Last spring Yakima Rotary awarded a grant to the Yakima Quilts of Valor to help them purchase fabric. Shirleen thanked us for our support and encouraged each of us to nominate a veteran we know.