



THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2023 YAKIMA CONVENTION & EVENT CENTER

*Imagine
Rotary*

BETE DEMEKE UPDATE ON PROJECT MERCY



Bete is the President and Vice-Chairman of the Board of Project Mercy, a US-based and registered 501© (3) non-profit organization implementing programs designed to eliminate poverty in rural communities.

Project Mercy started operations in Africa nearly forty years ago providing aid (shelter, food, health care, education, and resettlement assistance) to refugees in seven countries. For the past twenty-four years, the organization has focused its efforts exclusively in

Ethiopia with development programs that lift communities out of poverty.

Prior to joining Project Mercy, Bete has over thirty years of experience with IBM in Information Technology. His last post was as the Vice President of Software for IBM's Growth Markets, headquartered in Shanghai, China. He was responsible for managing a multibillion-dollar business and leading over five thousand employees, in more than 140 countries, across Asia, Central and Eastern Europe, Middle East and Africa, and Latin America. Bete was a member of IBM's Growth and Transformation Team (GTT) – a selected group of senior IBM executives that are change-agents for transformation and growth of the company. Following a two-year sabbatical from IBM to serve in Project Mercy, Bete retired from IBM in mid-2016 and now holds the responsibilities as President of Project Mercy Inc.

Education: Bete holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration and Systems Analysis from Taylor University and a Master's in Management from Northwestern University Kellogg School of Management.

FOR THURSDAY'S MEETING

Greeters – Verlynn Best, Steven Gustafson
Music – Rotary Choir
Invocation – Tim Carlson
Sergeant-at-Arms – David Hargreaves
Program – Bruce Bacon

FUTURE PROGRAMS

March 2nd – Imagine Rotary
March 9th – Regina Malveaux, Washington State Women's
Commission
March 16th – Gloria Mendoza, Engaging Community in
Economic Development
March 23rd – Craig & Jake Kupp

TURKEY & SYRIA EARTHQUAKE DISASTER RELIEF

ShelterBox is responding after the recent devastating earthquakes in southern Turkey and northern Syria that have claimed the lives of more than 45,000 people, and left millions more injured and homeless. A partner of Rotary International, ShelterBox teams have already arrived in the area to provide emergency shelter for families. Emergency tents have arrived in Turkey. A truck of aid carrying thermal blankets has crossed the border into Syria with more trucks of aid coming. Our Rotary District has already made two \$10,000 donations: one to ShelterBox Canada and one to ShelterBox USA. If you would like to join in their efforts, you are encouraged to do so by going online to ShelterBox USA. Your gift may be the difference between life and death.



FIRESIDE/SCHOLARSHIP DINNERS



CLASS DINING

Sign-ups are underway for both hosts and attendees for the annual Yakima Rotary Scholarship Dinners. Dates are Wednesday, April 19th through Wednesday, May 3rd. These fun, informal dinners are the perfect opportunity to gather outside of our normal meetings and enjoy great food and fellowship. Options include a kid-friendly dinner, a dinner with a game of pickleball for fun, and Bring Your Own Bunch that must include a new member.



LET'S HAVE DINNER TOGETHER

The cost is \$125 a member and includes your spouse, significant other, or a friend. Everyone pays whether or not you attend. There is no charge for those who host a dinner. All proceeds go to support our Academic and Vocational Scholarship programs. Last year, we awarded scholarships to 40 local students worth \$85,300. Check your calendar and choose the date or date(s) that work best for you. Sign-ups will continue next week at Rotary. You can also email the Rotary office or text Carolyn Flory at 509-961-9242. You will have a wonderful time!

REVIEW

Title IX and its 50-year legacy was the topic for our speaker this week. Introduced by Bruce Bacon, Karen (Blair) Troianello was the named plaintiff in a successful class action gender equity lawsuit known as *Blair v Washington State University*. While the lawsuit argued on the State of Washington's Equal Rights Amendment and not Title IX, she understood the foundation that it gave her and others as not only plaintiffs but student athletics. The State of Washington's Equal Rights Amendment was proposed the same year that Title IX was passed as part of the Education Amendments Act in 1972.

Karen was still in high school at that time, discovering that she was good at running. After high school she was offered the opportunity to compete at a private college with no money attached. Private school was too expensive, so she made her way to WSU to study journalism. She found her way to a tryout for track from a flyer on a bulletin board and found herself surrounded by a group of women who loved the sport. At the end of her first year, she was offered one of the first scholarships available for women at WSU. It was through her volunteer service on a student athlete advisory committee that she learned about the bigger picture and ongoing work to get the university in compliance with Title IX. In 1975, a blistering research paper was written about rampant sex discrimination in WSU athletics; that led to a chain of events and the class action lawsuit bearing her name. The court ruled that WSU had discriminated and had to distribute funds more equitably, but that it did not have to include football in the budget. Because of that, the ruling was appealed. In 1987, eight years after the initial suit was filed the Washington State Supreme Court ruled in their favor and that football had to be included. By then Karen had already graduated and was working.

Looking back, she often wondered if it was all worth it or if she should have dedicated her time to other pursuits. She takes heart in statistics that state that minority female athletes get better grades than their non-athlete counterparts; that an increase in female athletes leads to an increase in women in the labor force; that 4 out of 5 women executives played sports growing up; and the significant health benefits gained from participating in sports. In 2005 there were 3 million girls playing high school sports up from 294,000 in 1971-72. Be-

fore Title IX fewer than 32,000 women participated in college sports representing 16% of all NCAA college athletics. In 2019 that number increased to 222,920 representing 44%. For her it was a perfect example of the Field of Dreams...if you build it, they will come.

Other happenings included our continued celebration of Black History Month with Anthony (A.P.) Peterson sharing his story and the kick-off of sign-ups for this year's annual Fireside/Scholarship Dinners. Anthony's story was based upon the principles of service and hard work, two things he learned from his mother. His mother grew up in Parkland, raised on a farm by her adoptive parents. She knew what hard work was and instilled it in her children. She was a single mother raising three kids. His mom did not complete high school but obtained her GED and went on to work in service to others as a CAN. She enrolled the kids in programs that included the Boys & Girls Club. For Anthony it served as a group of second parents who gave him experiences that included his first college visit. As a young adult he not only gave back to them when he could, but worked there during the summers. He attended Eastern Washington University as a football walk-on but got kicked out of school and off the team because of a fight. He moved back to Tacoma where his mom gave him 3 months to figure out what he was going to do next. He transferred to CWU and played 1 more year of football before channeling all his football energy into other things including his studies. His mom, who now lives with him and his family, gets all the credit for the values of hard work and service that guides him in his life and job at OIC helping others with work development and training.

Dana Eliason shared the dates for the Fireside/Scholarship dinners as Wednesday, April 19th through Wednesday, May 3rd. See the article in this week's Tooter edition for more details. President Rick thanked our greeters, Drew Harris and Dave Heinl. Kate Loeb and her daughter led us by video in the Pledge of Allegiance. Russ Wilkinson provided an invocation that included the origin of Valentine's Day and the principle of love. Brad Hansen fined everyone an equal amount of \$3 each as part of his sergeant-at-arms.