



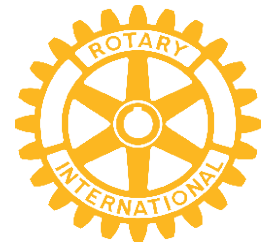
## THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2024 YAKIMA CONVENTION & EVENT CENTER

*Create Hope  
in the World*

### NEW MEMBER MEETING GETTING TO KNOW OUR NEW ROTARIANS

This week we are going back in time to a format that is completely planned and organized by our newest Rotary members. Working as a team, they will take over every aspect of the meeting from serving as our president, to greeters, music, invocation, sergeant-at-arms, and our program speakers. Together, they represent all aspects of our community – real estate, financial services, education, city management, law, insurance, banking, healthcare & health services, building & construction, business services, food & beverage, retirement communities, and charitable organizations.

Membership is the engine that powers who we are. New members bring new ideas, new energy, and new life. Not only will this Thursday be fun, but an opportunity to introduce yourself, hear their stories and express how appreciative we are to have them as part of our Rotary family.



#### FOR THURSDAY'S MEETING

President for the Day – Anthony Peterson  
Greeters – New Members  
Music – Raul Martinez & Arthur Salido  
Invocation – LaDon Linde  
Sergeant-at-Arms – Sara Watkins & Andi Hochleutner  
Attendance – Courtney Beckler

#### FUTURE PROGRAMS

February 15th – Blair Day, Efforts to Create the Nation's First Commission on Boys & Men  
February 22nd – Chris Wickenhagen, Kathy Geil & Sheriff Bob Udell, Yakima's New Local Crime Lab  
February 29th – Mark Cheney & Steven Sanchez, Registered Apprenticeships

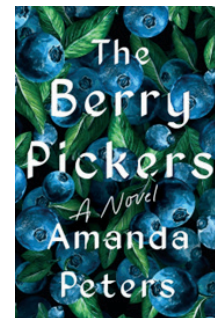
### SUPERBOWL BOARD



The Ways & Means Committee is back in action this week with a Superbowl Board for this year's game between the San Francisco 49ers and the Kansas City Chiefs on Sunday, February 11th. The last board for the Apple Cup was so successful that they are doing two board for this game. The cost is \$10 a square with 100 squares per board. There will be two winners with 1/2 going to the winner and 1/2 going to Yakima Rotary Charities.

## ROTARY BOOK CLUB SELECTION

The Rotary Book Club selection for February is *The Berry Pickers*. The 2023 Barnes & Noble Prize winner and the winner of the Andrew Carnegie Medal for Excellence in Fiction, this riveting mystery novel about a four-year old Mi'kmaq girl who goes missing from the blueberry fields of Maine is about the search for truth, the shadow of trauma, and the persistence of love across time. Get your copy and start reading today. The meeting to discuss is set for Tuesday, February 27th from 5pm to 6pm at the John I Haas Innovation Center.



### REVIEW

It was one of the most exceptional programs that we've ever had. The room overflowed with Rotarians, guests, and community members to celebrate Black History Month with soulful music, a powerful invocation, and an extraordinary speaker. It all started with students from Davis, East Valley, Eisenhower, and West Valley serving as our greeters. You couldn't get into the room without saying hello first. Heather Hill, in town as a guest artist for the Yakima Symphony, followed with beautiful renditions of *Lift Every Voice* and *Ride Up the Chariot*. Anthony Peterson shared *Harlam*, a poem written by one of his fraternity brothers, and President Erin introduced Raymond Santana as our speaker.

Raymond was one of five boys tried and convicted of the rape and brutal assault of a young woman in Central Park in April 1989. All between the ages of 14 and 16, they became collectively known as "The Central Park Five." In December 2002, their convictions were overturned when DNA matched the crime to a convicted murderer and serial rapist who confessed. Raymond had spent five years in prison for a crime he didn't commit.

His story began in 1989. He was 14 years old, had never had any dealing with the law, didn't know what Miranda was, and didn't know what he wanted to do with his life. He loved hip hop music and sketching in his pad. April 19th was a holiday weekend with no school the next day. His normal curfew was 9pm; because there was no school, he was allowed to stay out a little bit longer. He and a couple of friends decided to go to a party. There was another group of boys there he didn't know. The party was across the street from Central Park. Being a follower, he saw a group moving across the street to Central Park; he moved with them. He had never been inside the park and was at the mercy of the people he was with. They got hit by the spotlight of a police car. Everyone scattered. He ended up walking around with guys he didn't know trying to find the guys he came with. Instead of walking out, he ended up deeper in the park. When they got to the reservoir, they saw a kid assault a man jogging. Everyone ran out of the park.

He was picked up and charged with trespassing, riot, and menacing – all misdemeanors in family court. His dad was supposed to pick him up. What he didn't know was that at around 1am, a woman's body was found in the park. She had lost 85% of her blood, been bound and gagged with injuries around her head and eyes. It was initially thought to be a homicide case. They called in homicide detectives. They were the elite of the police force with 20 plus years of experience. It was CSI, good cop, bad cop – Raymond didn't know, he was 14. They wanted to know who he was with, what had he seen, what happened to the woman. He didn't know about the woman. The questioning came with intense pressure. His grandmother who spoke very little English came because his dad had to leave. His grandma was asked to go out into the hallway to talk. Inside, they would curse and yell at Raymond. Grandma would come back, and it would start all over again. He was told that the other kids in the precinct were saying he did it. He was shown a picture of Kevin Rich-

ardson with a scratch on his eye. Raymond lied; he said Kevin did it. They asked how. He didn't know. They needed Raymond to place Antron, Yusef, and Kory there – he lied again. He needed Raymond to be there – he lied. He saw the other four kids for the first time when he was taken to the booking system. It was there that they realized they had all gone through the same process. They believed once they discovered they had lied, they'd be let go. That never happened; they were super predators.

DNA was found on the victim. All five boys were subjected to handprints, footprints, saliva, blood, hair, and clothing samples. There was no match. Law enforcement didn't come back and ask why they lied. In a span of 18 months, Raymond was charged, tried, and convicted for a crime he didn't do. He had been in the news every day for 2 ½ years. Their family members were threatened and assaulted. Raymond spent the next 7 years trying to figure out a label he didn't earn. Thirteen years later most of them were back out on the street. They didn't know how to function in society. There was no halfway house. Job applications ask if you've been convicted of a crime. They had to say yes. Rape in the first – no job. If they wanted to give you a chance and asked the case – Central Park Five – no job. Their convictions were overturned in December 2002 after a convicted murderer and rapist confessed and was a DNA match. He gave them four other unsolved cases – all of them had the same injuries as the Central Park victim. Even with that the District Attorney tried to connect him to the boys as a sixth man.

Raymond, Antron, Yusef, Kevin, and Korey became "The Exonerated Five." They were scapegoats. They were the poster boys for finding children to lock up to fix a budget where incarcerated children generated \$200,000 a year. The filed suit against the city – it became a federal case to allow access to all records to pinpoint the exact time the DA and prosecutor knew they didn't do it but went ahead anyway. It took 11 years to get through litigation and get a settlement. The put pressure on every elected official. It was a blessing to have Ken Burns do a film. It leveled the playing field and gave them back their voices. Ken became Raymond family; he gave him a platform. The settlement money meant he could have sat on a beach for the rest of his life. The last 20 years had turned him into a fighter. Today Raymond uses his voice to share his story around the country talking to children, holding nothing back, so that it won't happen to others. He encourages them to pursue their passions, to go out and occupy the space – be an attorney, be a police chief, be a prosecutor – and to do it without cutting corners and make decisions based upon what is right for the community versus what is right for themselves. During his visit to Yakima, he spoke to students from Davis, Ike, and Stanton, spoke at a community dinner, had breakfast with Young Leaders of Color, talked to us, and traveled to CWU. He inspired us to do better. A special THANK YOU to President Erin Black for securing Raymond as our program speaker, finding sponsors and community partners, providing opportunities for our youth and community to participate, and representing Downtown Rotary every step of the way!