Kyle Curtis grew up in White Swan located on the Yakama Indian Reservation where his family has lived for countless generations. Kyle is a graduate of Eisenhower High School and received his Bachelor of Arts in Finance and minor in American Indian Studies from the University of Washington. His academic achievements include studying abroad in China and completing a Harvard Business School Executive Education program on “Building Sustainable Communities in Indian Country.”

Kyle returned home to the Yakima Valley after working for Liberty Mutual Insurance as a Financial Analyst in Seattle. Back in the valley, he started to work for his family businesses in White Swan and Wapato. The family runs and operates a cattle ranch, various restaurants, and convenience stores as well as a petroleum and propane distribution company. Kyle previously served as Vice President and Chief Financial Officer where he managed various budgets, insurance, payroll, hiring of upper management, and strategic planning.

Kyle is a graduate of Leadership Yakima which is a program through the Greater Yakima Chamber of Commerce that strengthens and educates community leaders by providing participants with in-depth insights into a variety of issues impacting the Yakima Valley. Through this experience, he spent a year touring the Yakima Valley and learning about various industries, the valley’s history, and quality of life.

Kyle was elected as a Yakima County Commissioner, District 2 in November 2022. Honored to serve, he is committed to being accessible, transparent, and collaborative.

In Kyle’s presentation “Pride in The Valley” he will share his personal journey of discovery, learning and the challenges faced when coming out as gay. Regardless of the individual circumstances, there is no right or wrong way to come out and each story is a deeply personal and often life-altering process. Kyle will share his journey and life events that make him who he is today.
There were a lot of special moments this week as we introduced a new member, recognized some special people, handed out grants to community organizations, and heard three remarkable stories from Pete Bansmer, Sunny Cameron, and Mary McFadden. Russ Wilkinson began with a message of gratefulness with his invocations. President Rick presented a gift from The Rotary Foundation to Jennifer & Terry Bliesner. Through donations to the Rotary Foundation, Rotarians are working toward ending polio, improving lives and solving some of the world's biggest problems, understanding, goodwill, and peace by improving health and the environment, providing quality education, and alleviating poverty. Terry and Jennifer’s award was in recognition of their cumulative donations of $10,000 to The Foundation.

Rick Pinnell introduced Magaly Sollis as our newest member. Magaly grew up in Guerrerro, Mexico along the Pacific Ocean. She immigrated to Yakima with no English skills as a teenager; she is a first-generation immigrant, DACA recipient, and the proud daughter of farmworker parents. She graduated from Mabton High School and went on to receive a BA in Education from Heritage University. In 2020, she was awarded the Heritage University Violet Lemley Run Alumna of the Year Award for her service to the Latino immigrant community in the Yakima Valley. Today, Magaly is the Executive Director of La Casa Hogar and the first Latina to hold that position. Recently married, she and her husband David enjoy being at home with their four cats, two dogs, and visiting national parks. She has summited Mt. Adams four times, Mt. Rainier once, and Mt. Hood one time - wow! We are so happy to have her as part of our Rotary family!

After introducing Magaly, Rick Pinnell was surprised as Craig Mendenhall announced that he was chosen as the recipient of this year’s First Citizen Award. The award was created as a way to showcase members’ service to our community, nation, and state; to say thank you for that service; and to encourage conversations among our members. Rick lives in Yakima, spending his Saturdays at the YMCA and a lifelong love and service for the community; he graduated from Leavenworth High School, attended WSU, and went on to serve in Vietnam. After his discharge he made his way to San Francisco where he met Mary Jo. She wouldn’t let him come home to Yakima; job offers didn’t pay enough, so they moved to Yakima, and together started a lifetime commitment to our community. He grew up in a Rotary family and followed his dad as a president, treasurer, secretary, and another Rotarian. Rick has served on the Program Committee, Essex Club, and the Board of Directors. He has provided health insurance to students in need. Eisenhower Interact represented by Interact Adviser Lisa Acosta and Leanne Antonio presented the last three Rotary grants for the year. Rotary Club in America!

Terry and Jennifer’s award was in recognition of their cumulative donations of $10,000 to The Foundation. Terry is a member of the Yakima Rotary Food Bank board and is the first Latina to hold that position. At the same time she was working in the family business with the rest of her siblings. Before she was 6, they purchased a five-bedroom home in a small town. The house was so big that they decided to rent it out as a business. They put up their own signage and opened a taco shop in Yakima. All total her mom had 12 children. Education was of utmost importance. Growing up her parents had lots of sayings “don’t be afraid, if you want something you work hard for it and never expect good to come from it.” They all attended college. They assimilated into the American culture without letting go of their heritage. Terry is currently working with the skills and values instilled in them through their parents.

The program ended with Rotary Encounters with famous or infamous, Bob Romero’s encounters were with Joe Walsh (Eagles) and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar. Ken Marble’s encounters were Ted Bundy and Howard Shultz (not at the same time). Want to know more? You’re going to have to ask them.