



## THURSDAY, MAY 11, 2023 YAKIMA CONVENTION & EVENT CENTER

*Imagine  
 Rotary*

### A ROTARY COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECT FLOWERS FOR MOM

There is something about flowers that delight us, whether we grow them, buy them, or receive them. Flowers raise your spirits. They help us feel less depressed, anxious, and agitated. They are sunshine, food and medicine for the soul. In other words, they make people happy!

Making people happy is exactly what we are going to do this week with a first of its kind hands-on community service project where we will be creating Mother's Day bouquets that will be delivered to residents of Fieldstone. Vases and pre-cut flowers will be ready with Andie Webb leading a how-to demonstration with easy-to-follow instructions. The meeting will include great fun along the way: music from the West Valley 8th Grade Jazz Band, speed interviews, and pictures of our moms.

Specially designed notecards will be available to write a message for each bouquet. Bring a friend along to help brighten someone else's day.



#### FUTURE PROGRAMS

May 18th – Fabiana Ahumada, Saving Bees: One Hop at a Time

May 25th – Academic Scholarships

June 1st – Dan Newhouse, Congressional Update

June 8th – Joey Chapman, GSBA: Washington State's LGBTQ+ Chamber of Commerce

#### SCHOLARSHIP DINNER SNAPSHOTS





## ROTARIANS AT WORK DAY APRIL 29, 2023



### REVIEW

There are rare moments when someone has such a profound message that an entire room is in complete silence. Speaking about Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women, Cissy Strong Reyes was one of those individuals. She is a Umatilla member of the Yakama Nation, Mexican, 39 years old with one sister and one brother. The heaviness of her heart and grief was striking as she shared the story of her sister, Rosalinda Strong.

It began on October 2, 2018. She received text messages from her sister saying she was hurt and not okay. They shared a unique bond and communicated every day. Rosalinda was lost in addiction but that didn't change her love for her - she was a mother of 4 and her best friend. When Cissy went that same day to report her missing, she ran into barriers with law enforcement. They gave her sister's criminal history to her; they wouldn't listen. She had no clue what to do and no one to turn to. She started with social media asking if anyone had seen her sister. None of Rosalinda's friends responded. The ones that were with her every single day never messaged back; it was an immediate red flag. The last time she had seen her was on September 30th. Rosalinda had come home, changed, and told Cissy that she loved her and that she would be back. She was seen entering Legends Casino with friends and leaving with one - she was never seen again. A cousin who saw Cissy's post came to see her at work. She didn't understand why she had come so quickly until she heard the words, law enforcement is not going to help you. Cissy became her sister's voice, advocating relentlessly and hard. A walk was organized through Wapato. They made posters - where is Rosalinda Strong - have you seen my sister.

She received messages that she had been shot or stabbed, was bleeding, and that Cissy needed to look for her. Rumors started going around. Three weeks in, she got a message that she needed to look for a freezer; that was how she was disposed of. She called the FBI. They said it was hearsay. 275 days later, that was exactly what she was found in less than 4 miles from Cissy's home at milepost 64 on Hwy 97. She didn't find out from the FBI. She was working at a hotel in Yakima and happened to have a tv on when she heard that human remains had been found in a freezer. She knew it was Rosalinda. It was 4:20pm on July 4th. It was the most devastating day she had ever experienced. She didn't get to bury her sister for 3 years. The FBI kept her remains that long. It is her cultural way to bury family members after 3 days. In the past 5 years, she has been updated on the case one time.

In her fight for her sister, she used Facebook, traveled to Idaho, traveled to Seattle, and carried pictures of her sister wherever she went. She was in a dark place for 2 years, mad at everything and mad that she had to do these events. Her advocacy is not just for her sister but for other families with no resources or place to go; she doesn't wish the pain and trauma on anyone else. There is an epidemic in the Yakama Nation and Yakima County. There are 40 missing indigenous people in our region; Seattle is second to us. She does events to bring awareness and amplify the voices of the missing. In her community, Native women are more likely to turn to alcohol or drugs for pain. Cissy chose to fight for her sister. She shares her space with other families if they need it and want it, and because her sister still needs justice. Every Thursday for the past 4 years, she has made a post on Facebook about her sister. Her fight has made a difference. She knows it will take time. The last event she had was on her sister's birthday. The Wapato Police Department and Yakima County Sheriff's Department were there. There is a march in Toppenish on Friday and third annual march for Missing & Indigenous People is happening in Seattle. Much more needs to be done - transparency and communication with law enforcement, and more investigators. It took two years for Cissy to come out of the darkness. Today she is a student at Heritage University and dedicated to making a difference for her sister and Indian Country.

What else happened? Theresa Adkison recognized our speaker with the choice of Women's Warrior Song written in honor of Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women. Jan Luring shared blessings for the continued work of our speaker to create awareness. President Rick welcomed our guests, thanked those who worked on clean-up as part of "Rotarians at Work" Day, and made an ask for paver volunteers at the Marketplace project - work is tentatively set for next week. Kathy Miller Parrish introduced her friend, Diana Meacham as our newest member. Diana was born and raised in Lewiston, Idaho, growing up fishing and camping. After graduating from the University of Idaho and living in Seattle for 45 years, she moved to Yakima last November. She is a mortgage professional with Academy Mortgage and has been in the industry since industry since 1994. A world traveler, she has a passion for hiking and enjoys golfing, snow skiing, and her new sport of pickleball. Welcome to Rotary! The final piece was sergeant-at-arms with Rich Austin raising funds to support Rotary Charities.