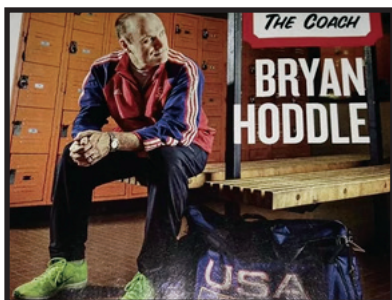




## THURSDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2025 YAKIMA VALLEY COLLEGE CONFERENCE CENTER

*Unite For  
 Good*

### BRYAN HODDLE COACHING & ASSISTING DISABLED ATHLETES & INJURED VETS



Coach Bryan Hoddle has worked extensively with injured soldiers at Walter Reed Army Medical Center Hospital in Washington, DC as well as Lakeshore Foundation in Birmingham, Alabama, helping amputees, traumatic brain injuries, blind and wheelchair soldiers. He was selected as the 2001-02 Veterans of Foreign War Teacher of the Year for the State of Washington and is the recipient of its 2001-02 Veterans of Foreign War National Citizenship Education Teacher Award.

In August of 2002, he was named Program Director for the USA Paralympics Track and Field Performance Coaching Staff. In the summer of 2000, he served as Assistant Manager for the World Junior Track and Field Team and was selected Head Coach for the 2004 USA Paralympics Track and Field Team held in Athens, Greece. Coach Hoddle, with the support of H. Ross Perot, coached Tony Volpentest, the 1996 Paralympics 100-meter and 200-meter champion. He has also coached Marlon Shirley, triple world record holder, the world's fastest amputee and the 2000 and 2004 Paralympics 100-meter Champion. He was selected by the Salt Lake City 2002 Olympic Committee to carry the Olympic torch in Olympia, Washington as well as lighting the cauldron and speaking on behalf of all the torch bearers.

Coach Hoddle taught for 34 years in public schools in the State of Washington. He is highly respected in track and field. Coaching high school track and field, his track athletes have amassed 26 state championships, as well as numerous national age group titles. He is also the Past-President of the Washington State Track and Field Coaches Association. He currently serves as Director, Northwest Track and Field in Seattle. Bryan is a graduate of Central Washington University where he majored in Physical Education and also received a minor in Education. He is the winner of the 1997 and 2014 PNW Track and Field Ken Foreman Contributor Award as well as a Hero in Running for 2013 by Runner's World Magazine. He initiated Run with a Soldier Day with USA Track in Field in 2014 and at the 2014 USA Track & Field Convention, was selected as one of 6 Americans to receive the USAFT Presidential Award.

Bryan is a nationally respected motivational speaker, having spoken to over 350 schools, organizations, and businesses over the past 35 years. He talks to business leaders, civic leaders, athletes, parents and school children about the five characteristics of a champion and how to apply those in one's life Vision, Focus, Persistence, Discipline and Commitment. He's currently on the Board of Trustees for the Invictus Foundation, and continues to work with athletes and injured soldiers.

#### FOR THURSDAY'S MEETING

Music – Felix Rifa  
 Inspiration – Andy Lucero  
 Sergeant-at-Arms – Yvette Inzunza  
 Program – Dana Eliason

#### FUTURE PROGRAMS

October 9th – Jackie Cruz, Celebration of National Hispanic Heritage Month  
 October 16th – Foti Panagakos, PNWU Dental School & Tour  
 October 23rd – Vocational Scholarship Awards  
 October 30th – Dr. David Knight, School Finance

## ROTARY OPERATION HARVEST

Operation Harvest is less than 2 weeks away. There is a need for VOLUNTEERS to DISTRIBUTE bags to preassigned routes BEFORE Operation Harvest, between October 3rd and October 9th, and to COLLECT food on the day of, October 11th.

If you can help, please contact the Rotary office today or fill out the attached sign-up sheet and return.



## ROTARACT PICKLEBALL TOURNAMENT

Join Yakima Rotaract for a School Drive Pickleball Tournament

Saturday, October 25, 2025

1:00pm - \$40 Registration

Clemens View Park, Naches Washington

Two Divisions – Fun & Open

Special Halloween Theme & Best Costume Contest



## REVIEW

There was a great vibe from the ring of the bell to start us off to the ending Play of the Day. It was also the start of a month-long recognition of National Hispanic Heritage Month. Lupita Carillo chose our music with the song “Bidi Bidi Bom Bom” by Selena Quintanilla. Sonia Rodriguez True shared her favorite bible passage Matthew 25, 35040 while reflecting on the deep faith that shows up in her culture and the meaningfulness to Rotary’s mission to serve others. President Sheri welcomed our guests; thanked everyone who participated in the picnic, Sunfair parade and first Rotary Roasters; and read one of many thank you notes from students and teachers at McClure Elementary for their backpacks and school supplies.

Erin Black introduced our newest member, Kaitlyn Gottlieb. Kaitlyn is no stranger to Rotary having been a part of Rotaract and served as a past president. Her husband Jacob was in attendance (they were celebrating their anniversary); together they are the proud parents of an adventurous 3-year-old daughter. A graduate of Pacific Lutheran University, Kaitlyn has a degree in Communication with a focus in Public Relations and Advertising and currently serves as the Major and Planned Giving Manager for TVW. With a natural gift for connecting with people, she builds relationships that strengthen and support engagement across Washington state. Outside of work and service, she enjoys live music, nature with her family, tending to her goats and chickens, and exploring Yakima’s beer and food scene. Congratulations to Kaitlyn; we are so happy to have her on Team Rotary!

The celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month continued with Sy Ruiz’ best food inspired sergeant-at-arms and Celina Sanchez sharing her own story. Celina was born in the United States and migrated back to Mexico with her parents when she was very young. She moved back to the U.S. at the age of 14 where she was immediately placed in ESL classes. While meant to help, they limited her ability to practice English. Her family moved to Yakima in 2007. Enrolled in regular classes she suddenly had to push herself; by senior year she was taking IB classes. As a young person she often felt that she had to erase parts of herself to fit in, thinking she had to set aside her heritage in order to succeed. Her maternal grandmother was a mid-wife, often traveling by horse, his grandfather the life of the party. Her fraternal grandmother, who lost her own mother at 11 years old, married young and sent her dad away at 7 to live with an uncle, a decision he never completely understood. When Celina reflects on their lives, it isn’t just about heritage; it is about the struggles, sacrifices, and resilience passed down through generations. We all carry pieces of that. Celina’s own journey helping raise her siblings, to waitressing in her uncle’s restaurant, working in the orchards, and becoming the first person to graduate from college were all built on that founda-

tion. Heritage is not just about looking back, it is about how we carry stories forward, and for her the embrace of both worlds, the challenges of migration, and the beauty of culture.

Dana Eliason had the honor of introducing Christian Connors as our featured speaker to share the story of “Houdini Was,” a book written by her second-grade students about their classroom hamster. A teacher, Christian got the idea for a classroom pet the night before school in 2007. She went out to purchase Houdini and all the bells and whistles to go with her. The next morning, she came early to greet her kindergartens, Houdini was gone. 14 days passed and nothing. They knew she was alive; food and water left out every night was gone in the morning. The cage went on the floor next – Houdini emptied out everything not secured down. The trail led to another classroom; with the help of carrots, she was finally caught. Fast forward, Christian moves to 2nd grade and gets a lot of her former kindergarteners who knew Houdini. The year is going great, that winter Houdini dies. The kids start asking where she is; Christian starts to cry. It was the most beautiful week of creating the story of “Houdini Was” bringing together academics, real life connections, and learning how to deal with grief. They entered a nationwide Scholastic contest and won. 10 years later Christian put together a video to celebrate the books 10-year anniversary that coincided with her students’ high school graduation. There was no celebration – it was spring 2020. Shared with us, it was beautiful and emotional.

In 2021, her dad (Ken Smith) pushed her to translate to Spanish. The hurdle was copyrights. Ken came back 3 months later with the rights to the book and has 500 copies printed. He kept it going. Suzy Diaz, the Director of Collective Impact for YVPE (Yakima Valley Partners for Education) was instrumental as well. With a focus that started in the Lower Valley that included Heritage University, it is moving to the mid and Upper Valley. A mascot was created, banners and a slogan were made, and a parenting guide was published with questions to ask before and after reading. It has been a full circle ripple effect to see it all come around and see Houdini’s story inspire hope, reading, and joy. President Sheri’s Play of the Day weaved it all together with the words “Books are a uniquely portable magic.” It was a great Rotary Day!

