



THURSDAY, OCTOBER 9, 2025 YAKIMA CONVENTION & EVENT CENTER

*Unite For
 Good*

JACKIE CRUZ: ACTRESS, SINGER, STORYTELLER & TRAILBLAZER A CELEBRATION OF NATIONAL HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH



You may know Jackie Cruz as the unforgettable Marisol “Flaca” Gonzales from Netflix’s Orange Is the New Black, where she lit up all seven seasons with her wit, edge, and heart. But Jackie is far more than a fan-favorite character - she’s a powerhouse performer, a fearless creator, and a voice for resilience and reinvention.

Born in Queens, New York, and raised between Los Angeles and the Dominican Republic, Jackie’s journey to stardom is as compelling as her on-screen presence.

From surviving a life-threatening car accident at 17 to being homeless at 16, Jackie transformed adversity into artistry. Her music, including the autobiographical track “Sweet Sixteen,” and her acting career reflect a deep well of lived experience and emotional truth.

Jackie’s film credits span genres and generations - from romantic comedies like Things Like This to thrillers like Husband, Father, Killer, and indie gems like Woozy. She’s shared the screen with legends like Harvey Keitel and Christina Ricci, and her recent role in History of Evil showcases her range and depth as a dramatic actress.

Named one of Hollywood’s “Top Latino Powerhouses Under 40” by The Hollywood Reporter, Jackie is also a fashion icon, bilingual singer, and advocate for representation in media. Whether she’s performing, producing, or speaking, Jackie brings authenticity, charisma, and a fearless spirit that inspires audiences everywhere.

Join us for an unforgettable lunch with Jackie Cruz - where stories come alive, and inspiration takes center stage.



FOR THURSDAY’S MEETING

Greeters – Felix Rifa, Andy Lucero, Celina Sanchez, Maria Rodriguez, Sy Ruiz, Lupita Carrillo, Yvette Inzunza, Sonia Rodriguez True, Marisol Fast, Rodrigo Renteria-Valencia
 Music – Davis High School Mariachi Band
 Inspiration – Lupita Carrillo
 Program – Rodrigo Renteria-Valencia
 Attendance – David Cobia

FUTURE PROGRAMS

October 16th – Foti Panagakos, PNWU Dental School & Tour
 October 23rd – Vocational Scholarship Awards
 October 30th – Dr. David Knight, School Finance
 November 6th – Angelena Campobasso, Arts Washington Tribal Cultural Affairs

ONE DAY. ONE FOCUS: ENDING POLIO



WORLD POLIO DAY
IS 24 OCTOBER



World Polio Day is a time for Rotary members, public health advocates, and all who want a world free from polio to come together, recognize our progress in the fight to end polio. Since Rotary began its mission to eradicate polio in 1988, we've reduced cases by 99.9%. We're closer than ever; only two countries remain endemic. You can do your part by donating to the PolioPlus Fund at rotary.org. All donations are matched 2:1 by the Gates Foundation; tripling your impact. Together we can end polio!

COMMITTEE MEETING NOTICE

There will be a meeting of the Social & Sports Committee immediately following Rotary on Thursday, October 23rd. If you are on the committee, please mark your calendar and plan to attend.

Rotary 
**OPERATION
HARVEST**

October 11, 2025
Community Food Drive

REVIEW

We took our game on the road this week to YVC. Our music was chosen by Felix Rifa with "Bonito y Sabroso" by Cuban singer Benny More. Andy Lucero followed with an inspirational message of how the recognition of Hispanic Heritage Month is an opportunity to honor and reflect on the profound impact that the rich culture and meaningful contributions of Hispanic individuals have on communities both locally and the world. President Sheri welcomed our guests and made one last announcement for Operation Harvest volunteers to distribute bags. Charlie Eglin continued the theme by sharing an Operation Harvest letter that he sends out to his friends, neighbors, and family to contribute with a financial donation. He includes a self-addressed envelope to the Rotary office. His efforts continually bring in over \$5,000 every year. If you'd like to do the same, a copy of the letter was sent to your email. With a last-minute substitution, Kellie Connaughton came off the bench for a happy bucks themed sergeant-at-arm. For a dollar fine or more, Rotarians got to share good things happening in their lives – it was great fun!

Sonia Rodriguez True continued our celebration of National Hispanic Heritage Month by sharing the cultural tradition of Quinceañeras. It is a tradition in Latino families, originating from Mexico with Mayan and Aztec roots to celebrate a young woman's transition into adulthood on her 15th birthday that includes a church ceremony followed by a celebratory reception. For Sonia, one of the best parts of this summer has been going to Quinceañeras. The Yakima Valley Museum currently has a Quinceañera exhibit showcasing the beauty of a traditions of so many families in our community.

Rich Austin had the honor of introducing Bryan Huddle as our featured speaker. Bryan has worked extensively with injured soldiers at Walter Reed Army Medical Center and the Lakeshore Foundation; and served as the Head Coach for the 2004 USA Paralympics Track and Field. A retired teacher of 34 years in public schools, a track and field coach with 26 state championships, and a motivational speaker, he shared not only his own story, but the stories of individuals he has helped.

As a young kid, his view of school was one of punishment. That changed when a teacher in 5th grade invited him to run the 400-meter race for the track team. He told Bryan, if you win, you

get out of school on Friday for the meet. That's all it took. His coach told him he could go somewhere with his running. Scholarships and college suddenly came into the picture. Years later he was recruited by Eastern Washington University. He transferred to Central Washington University in his second year and completed his teaching degree. His fiancé at the time saw a flyer for a 6th grade teaching position in Sultan. It was 4 days before the first day of class. All the other teachers had handpicked their classrooms; he started the year with 24 "Welcome Back Kotter" type students. His strategy was to build relationships first – the academics would come. Once you win their hearts, you'll win their mind. He shared the story of the student who was picked on all the time. That student shared that he could put his whole fist in his mouth. Bryan had him show the entire class; they loved it. It was a defining moment for that young boy; he had value.

His first experience with an amputee came from a news story on KIRO. There was a guy with no legs kicking 51-yard field goals and running 100-meter races and winning. His name was Tony Volpentest. He found out he lived in Mt. Lake Terrace, Washington, contacted him, and shared a couple of things for him to do to improve his running. Tony wins the Paralympics and through his friendship meets Ross Perot. After the bombing in Oklahoma City, Bryan was asked to help with a prosthetic leg for one of victims buried in the rubble. All of a sudden, he became an expert in amputees. A phone call from Disabled Sports USA asking him to come to Walter Reed completely changed his life. He walked into a room of soldiers, walked back out, went to the restroom and cried. He'd never seen that type of carnage. He ended up making 4 trips to Walter Reed and 18 trips to the Lakeshore Foundation in Alabama. One by one he shared stories of the soldiers he helped – they were engaging and inspiring!

He ended with three things to say to athletes, students, employees, customers, and community. The first he shared at the beginning of his talk; *you've got to win their mind before you're going to win their heart.* The second was *people don't care how much you know until they know how much you care.* And the last one was *life isn't always fair; you have to get used to it.* When something gets dropped in your way, you've got to find a way to do it. It was another great meeting!