



THURSDAY, JUNE 19, 2025
FOURTH STREET THEATRE

The Magic
Of Rotary

KJERSTEN BRAATEN
TREE TOP



Kjersten Braaten is the National Accounts Manager at Tree Top, Inc., a grower-owned fruit cooperative headquartered in Selah, Washington. Kjersten studied biology at Pacific Lutheran University before building a career in the heart of Washington’s fruit industry.

At Tree Top, Kjersten spent 6 years in Research and Development focused on innovating new products for the company’s retail brand and ingredient customers. Today, she works on the front lines of domestic sales, helping ensure the fruit grown by cooperative members finds strong, sustainable markets. Beyond her formal role, Kjersten is passionate about community outreach and agricultural education. She regularly volunteers for various STEM programs, where she mentors students exploring careers in agriculture.

Kjersten brings a unique perspective on what it means to represent a domestic agricultural cooperative in a global marketplace and how companies like Tree Top adapt to meet shifting consumer expectations and retail trends.

FOR THURSDAY’S MEETING

Greeters – Sharon Miracle, Clark Permann
Inspiration – Sheri-Lou Creson
Sergeant-at-Arms – Bob Romero
Program – Jordan Matson

FUTURE PROGRAMS

June 26th – President Jim DeGrasse's Recognition
July 3rd – No Meeting, Happy 4th of July
July 10th – President Sheri Bissell
July 17th – Michael Connelly, Westwood Golf Club

PROPOSED NEW MEMBER

Unless written objection is received by the Board of Directors by Friday, June 20, 2025, the following candidate will be elected to membership:

Lupita Carrillo
Donor Engagement Director
YWCA Yakima
Classification: YWCA, Donor Engagement
Proposed by: Enri Garcia-Sanchez
Endorsed by: Mike Hummel

Celebrate our
Mollie Davis
Scholars!

Mollie Davis Scholarship
Awards Ceremony

Monday Kaminski
June 16th Conference
5-6:30 pm Center

Light
appetizers
served



RSVP:
robinbeckett@yakimarotarytrust.org

Mollie Davis
SCHOLARSHIP

YOU ARE INVITED
RIBBON CUTTING & GRAND OPENING CEREMONY
AQUATIC CENTER AT MLK JR. PARK

Thursday, June 19th

2:00pm

610 S 9th Street

Tours will be available after the ceremony.

Come see the Rotary Sun Patio.



JUNE SECOND CHANCE SOCIAL



The last Second Chance Social for President Jim's year will be Wednesday, June 25th from 5pm-6pm. We're going back to El Porton for appetizers provided by Rotary and beverages on you.

It promises to be an hour of great conversation, company and connections. Mark your calendar.

Second chances aren't just given, they're created.

REVIEW

There was something different as you entered the meeting this week. It started with a receiving line of friendly faces greeting us and continued as President Jim seemed to be AWOL and was found sitting at a table away from the front of the room enjoying lunch. What happened? Our new members took over the entire day from a new president to inspiration, announcements, sergeant-at-arms and our program speakers. It was fun, entertaining, and wonderfully done!

Yvette Inzunza served as our president and navigated her duties masterfully by channeling her inner Erin Black. Ryan Griffie provided a moment of inspiration by going back to a topic talked about by General Jim Mattis who spoke to us a couple of weeks ago – the polarization of our nation and going on to talk about two aspects of a framework developed by academia: honor culture and dignity culture. Announcements included invitations to Mollie Davis Scholarship Awards Celebration on June 16th at YVC Conference Center at 5pm, the ribbon cutting for the new aquatic center at MLK Jr. Park on June 19th at 2pm, and the Trust All-Rotary Celebration on July 22nd at 5:30pm at the Rotary Marketplace. Sy Ruiz handled sergeant-at-arms that included the surprise presentation of Yvette's blue badge to her.

Membership grew by two with the introductions of Esther Magasis and Howard Head as our newest Yakima Rotary members. Lila Mowatt had the honor of introducing her friend and colleague Esther, who she ironically met the day she was introduced and bonded over their shared faith. Esther was born in Seattle to a Japanese mother and a Jewish father from Brooklyn. At age 10 she drafted her first contract to commit her younger brother to stop stealing her things forever; he signed it despite the fact that he couldn't read. She spent much of her teens working in film and tv documentary story telling. She attended WWU where she received a degree in International Business. It is also where she met her significant other Dylan who is a teacher at Davis High School. After college she entered the non-profit world where she ran the Jewish Family Services Food Bank in Seattle. In 2018, she moved to Yakima, and since 2020 has served as the Director of the Yakima County Human Services Department. A.P. Peterson followed with the introduction of Howard. Howard is the CFO of Kwik Lok and a CPA and Charter Global Management Accountant. With a career spanning over 25 years his past experience included serving as the Vice President of Operations/Finance at Hollander Sleep Products, Director of Manufacturing/Controller at Harley Davidson, and as Director of Finance at CSM Bakery Supplies. He holds a bachelor's degree in accounting from Florida A&M University and is a certified Lean Six Sigma Green Belt. Both Esther and Howard already have a history of service. Esther volunteers for FIRST Washington and Howard previously volunteered for the Boys and Girls Club and is a member of OIC of Washington's Board of Directors. They are going to make amazing members.

Our program featured two other new members, Alyssa Ford and Rodrigo Renteria Valencia with classification talks, sharing their stories and journeys to where they are today. Alyssa was born and raised in the Yakima Valley as the oldest of four siblings. Her roots run deep in Central Washington, where her formative years were spent attending school in East Valley before moving to Naches for high school and enrollment at YVC as part of Running Start. It was an experience that not only expanded her education but also led her to meet her future husband, Jason, a Las Vegas native attending YVC on a basketball scholarship. After graduating in 2016, Alyssa and Jason moved to Las Vegas, where she earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Marketing Management from Western Governors University. Her professional career began in Las Vegas as the Executive Assistant to the CEO of Keller Williams and later a move to Director of Operations. Covid brought a return to Yakima and a role as CEO of the local Keller Williams office. Although she appreciated the company's training culture, she realized real estate wasn't

for her. At the urging of her mother (who works at the Union Gospel Mission), she began doing contract work with for the Mission and quickly fell in love with the job.

Today, as the Director of Community Engagement at Union Gospel Mission, she oversees fundraising, donor relations, marketing, public relations, and support programs that assist individuals facing homelessness, poverty, and addiction. Outside of work, she is an avid reader, enjoys hiking, attending sports games, concerts, snowshoeing, paddle boarding and the Oregon Coast. She and Jason have one daughter. She ended with a video highlighting the lives transformed through the Mission's long-term recovery program and a favorite quote from Ted Lasso to "be curious, not judgmental." We all experience trauma that shapes how we see the world. You never know what someone is going through.

Rodrigo Renteria Valencia is the Dean of Graduate Education, Research & Strategic Initiatives at Central Washington University. Recently while attending a conference that reunited him with many of his friends and colleagues, they asked him why he jumped from faculty to administration or as they called it the "dark side." At first there wasn't a clear answer. They asked what he saw in this type of leadership – the answer was service - it reshaped the conversation. The move to administration was not about the title; it was about the responsibility behind it. His path to leadership is deeply personal. He credits the example and strength of his mom and his grandmother; their lessons continue to shape and guide him today.

How does dedication, leadership and migration relate to service? For Rodrigo, the answer lies in the story of his family that began years ago in the state of Colima, Mexico, where his grandmother was raised. She only completed four years of education, and alongside her husband, worked as a rancher. His grandmother understood the importance of education. Rodrigo's mom and siblings were all born in Colima and studied through high school - at that time when a high school diploma was considered a terminal degree often accompanied by a teaching credential. Recognizing the limitations of local opportunities, his grandmother made the decision to move with their three daughters and son to Mexico City so they could continue their education while his grandfather stayed to raise the cattle. Because of his grandmother's boldness, Rodrigo's mom earned a degree in architecture, while her siblings pursued degrees in psychology and accounting. His parents met while attending University in Mexico City. As a young boy, his parents moved to the outskirts of Mexico City, settling in a low-income area where they began building a house that they worked on for 15 years but never fully finished. They migrated just like his grandmother had; because of that he reflected that it left him with a sense of never fully belonging to one place. Rather than seeing it as a loss, it became his superpower.

The value of education was embedded in his life from the beginning. His mother, an educational administrator for over 20 years, modeled a life of service and dedication to her community. Surrounded by learning, it took him decades to fully realize that the best way to be a critical thinker in the world and to change the world is through education. He also learned to be more in the world, the importance of social commitment, and empowering others. They are the same values that he is trying to do in his position at CWU, and why he became a Dean.





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