

# Meet Johnny Lau

*Introduction by Rob LoBosco*

“If you are planning for a year, sow rice. If you are planning for a decade, plant trees. If you are planning for a lifetime, educate children”. So says a Chinese proverb, roughly translated. Johnny Lau, our newest Rotarian, doesn’t just recite those words from his native country. He lives them.



Johnny graduated from one of China’s top universities with a business degree and a focus on real estate. This was right on the cusp of China’s long economic boom. He could easily have cashed in one of the most lucrative real estate markets in history. And he might have, if not for that old Chinese proverb.

For while the Siren’s call of financial success was loud, even louder was the call to improve the lives of his fellow Chinese by expanding their access to the world’s best education. He came to the U.S. in 2003 as a one-year visiting scholar at Duke University. He’s been here ever since. In the interim, he started the Institute for Pacific Exchange, a for-profit organization that provides educational consulting and cultural exchange services to Chinese families who want their children to study in the U.S. In short, the institute helps visiting scholars navigate the language, academic, and cultural challenges they face upon arrival.

His business has kept him with one foot in each country, spending about half of each year in China. But, two years ago he got married, and a few months ago became a father. So, the travel will need to slow down a bit. He intends to raise his son in the U.S. Johnny is passionate about bridging the gap between the Chinese and American cultures. He served on Mayor Murray’s delegation to establish a Friendship City relationship with Shenzhen. And he volunteers as the host of Chinese Radio Seattle, a live radio show that airs simultaneously here and in China.

He joined Rotary to help connect what he calls a “new type of Chinese” to our community. He loves America, but also loves his native country, and believes Rotary can do more than governments to bring people together.

Johnny was sponsored by David Woodward. Please join me in thanking David and welcoming Johnny to Seattle 4!