

Meet Gene Boes

Introduction by Rob LoBosco

My fellow Rotarians, I'm pleased to present the next up in our first look at the 2018 models. Introducing new member, Gene Boes, CEO of Northwest Center.

Northwest Center is a non-profit serving the developmentally disabled. It provides preschool early intervention, two schools with inclusive classrooms, and employment services to over 150 companies in the Puget Sound area. It employs 950 people, including 400 with disabilities.



Gene had served on the center's board since 2015 when asked to take the helm last year. He had previously served on the board of Cure Autism Now.

His connection to the world of Autism is deep and personal. Twenty-five years ago, Gene and his wife, June, and their two-year-old son, Andy, welcomed Victoria into their family. Tori has autism and requires significant support.

Gene and June experience the joys all parents know. But they also face a lonely struggle that most never will. Much of their free time is spent exposing Tori to society and teaching her to interact. They must plan for her support long after they can provide it themselves.

But Gene is not one to shrink from a challenge. He grew up in Ohio as the second of ten children. His father, grandfather, and uncle were all pilots in the military. He attended Notre Dame on an ROTC scholarship and became a Navy pilot, serving two deployments in the Persian Gulf.

In 1988, he was stationed on Whidbey Island, where he met the Pacific Northwest, but more important, his future wife. He spent his last three years in the Navy at the Pentagon, while also earning his Master's degree.

In 1995, he came back to Seattle for a career in management consulting. He worked at Deloitte for two years, Microsoft for close to 14, and as an executive for Loft9 and the North Highland Company.

Gene considers himself a lifelong learner. In fact, when asked what attracted him to Rotary, he responded in part that he's looking for smart people he can learn from. I told him we'd be more than happy to help him look.

Gene credits his success to the many mentors and coaches he's had in his life. They helped him reach his potential and develop a passion for helping others reach theirs.

He's been an adjunct professor at Seattle Pacific and Seattle Universities, and is a Mentor for the Albers School of Business.

His favorite quote is from Teddy Roosevelt, who extolled the virtue of being the man in the arena rather than his critic; of striving valiantly for a worthy cause, accepting only victory or defeat, but never timidity.

Gene is anything but timid, yet his passion for service is unmistakable. It has rubbed off on his son, Andy, who joined the Peace Corp after graduating from Notre Dame, and now works for a non-profit in Boston while attending law school.

For fun, Gene likes to talk about football with Andy – the Hawks and the Fighting Irish, of course.

Please join me in thanking his sponsor, Mike Gano, and welcoming Gene to Seattle 4.