

Meet Matt Barnhart

Introduction by Rob LoBosco

My fellow Rotarians, I'm honored to introduce to you our newest member, Matt Barnhart, who believes we all have a civic duty to make the world a better place. And he means it.

Matt grew up with only an older sibling and no close cousins, leaving him with little experience caring for younger children. To fill that void, he volunteered to serve as a Big Brother to a disadvantaged 11-yr-old in Seattle for a year. That year turned into five, with Matt continuing the relationship even after moving to Bellingham. That's a pretty good Big Brother.



But wait, there's more! Years later, Matt got a visit at his office from his Little Brother, now 20-years old, homeless, and 45-days clean of drugs. The young man was headed to rehab, and he was scared. Matt took him into his home, helping him get his GED; a job; a driver's license; but mostly, a solid shot at a better life. Today, Matt's Little Brother is married with a child and gainfully employed in construction. Now, that's a really good Big Brother.

I have a big brother – he used to beat me up. So, you know, six of one...

Matt is also a pretty good Rotarian. He was a member of the Bellingham Bay Club for ten years, where he served as co-director of their largest fundraiser, and earned a Paul Harris Fellow recognition for his exemplary work in community service. He is excited to be back in Rotary and among people he respects and admires.

Matt was inspired to serve by his maternal grandfather, a man he greatly respected for his honesty, hard work, and desire to help others. I'll bet he would have made a great Rotarian.

Matt was born in Honolulu (I made him produce the long form of his birth certificate). He was an army brat, moving to San Antonio, Texas, Stuttgart, Germany, and Denver, Colorado before settling nearby in Bellingham, where his parents and older sister still reside. Matt left Bellingham to attend Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma. After graduating, he moved to Seattle to work for the Seattle Opera as its Art Director, for Allsop Computer Accessories in the marketing department, and later for Allsop's cycling company, Softride Bicycles.

In 1995, after moving back to Bellingham, Matt founded Pivot Lab, a strategic communications firm helping companies in the retail, hospitality, food-and-beverage, and technology markets.

He has received numerous industry awards for his communications work. He still owns the firm, but is building up a second customer base in Seattle, where he now lives.

Matt moved to Seattle a year and a half ago after getting married for the first time. It was a packaged deal, with a 12-yr-old girl, Annick, passionate about dance, and a 9-yr-old boy, Rowan, passionate about sports. Matt had some exposure to dance, but little to sports. However, his love of those kids has him learning quickly about both. He now watches football, baseball, and basketball with his son, and recently attempted a difficult catch while dancing with his daughter. Tearing his bicep was, according to Matt, totally worth it.

His wife, Erica, owns a marketing firm for non-profits, but is also the Executive Director of the Nancy Bell Evans Center on non-profits and philanthropy, and a senior lecturer, both at the University of Washington.

For fun, Matt enjoys skiing, backpacking and cycling. He traveled throughout Europe on a break from college and looks forward to traveling more in the future. Most important, he now can do these with his new family.

Please join me in welcoming Matt to Seattle 4!