

# Female Entrepreneurs Talk Lessons, Leadership

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By Gary T. Smith

The first program of November began with a special segment to launch the annual campaign that funds Rotary's service work.

"The service work we do as a club is funded by you," **President Mark** said. "When we joined the Rotary Club of Seattle, all of us agreed to give every year to the Seattle Rotary Service Foundation (SRSF) as a condition of membership." This past year, 30 service projects were funded through SRSF.

We also agreed to give to The Rotary Foundation – the service fund operated by Rotary International. A good deal of The Rotary Foundation money makes its way back into our club in the form of matching grants.

## **Open Your Wallet, Change a Life**

"But it's not just about giving money, really. It's about make a difference in the world," he said. By opening our wallets, we're changing lives.

**Michael Troyer** and **Linda Cheever** described recent work of the two foundations. Troyer said that in 2017, club members gave nearly \$250,000 that funded 35 different programs and 12 Winners for Life Scholarships. The goal for 2018, he said, is to raise \$250,000 for local and international projects funded directly by the club.

Troyer described several of the projects we funded this year, from dictionaries for low-income third graders (for many of whom, it is the first book they have owned) to a project for Afghan girls and women to reduce early marriage by teaching them about their rights and of the value of education.

Cheever said The Rotary Foundation (the Rotary International fund) focuses on six key areas, such as promoting peace and providing clean water. She explained that of your contribution to the international foundation, 50% comes back to the district and 50% goes to the Rotary International World Fund, and both those sources can be combined with priorities funded by the club. This process allows for larger scale projects.

She described two projects in which Seattle 4 is currently engaged as a partner with the District. One is Rotary Beds for Homeless Families, where our club will provide 60-80 beds for families currently transitioning into a home but lack beds. Another is the Tiny



Houses Project, where our District funds combine with the Club to help the local community.

Past President **Karl Ege** made the formal request to the club, reminding members that these two contributions are the only sources of funds to support our club actions in the community.

## Honoring and Learning from Female Entrepreneurs

The main program was about entrepreneurial leadership. President Mark first recognized one of Seattle's early female entrepreneurs. A true pioneer in her industry, Seattle 4's own **Laurel James** founded Super Jock 'n Jill in 1975, believed to be the first running store in North America.



Coral Garnick of the *Puget Sound Business Journal* then led a conversation with three very successful Seattle entrepreneurs: Angela Shen of Savor Seattle Food Tours, Rebecca Lyman of Garrigan Lyman Group, and Jody Hall of Cupcake Royale and Goodship.

Shen's company gives guided tours of Seattle's eating and drinking hotspots. Lyman heads a marketing agency for the digital age, connecting customers to brands through digital media and strategies. Hall provides goodies with a buzz – in the first instance, from sugar or caffeine, and in the second, from marijuana.



Here are some of Garnick's questions and the panel's answers:

### What do you wish you had known going in?

Shen – Don't let perfection be the enemy of the good enough. Launch it broken, fix it live. If I had waited another six months, we would not be the market leader we are today.

Hall – Regarding Goodship, the marijuana business is the Wild West. It's

like “this is your business; this is your business on drugs.” And I should have paid myself sooner. I just received my first paycheck after more than two years.

### **How are you affected by Seattle’s new regulations and taxes?**

Shen – I’m not always on the same page as our leaders. It’s forced some changes, a lot driven by increasing pressure on labor costs; technology may help us address some of these challenges of the high cost of doing business here.



Lyman – Salaries are skyrocketing with competition from the big growth drivers here hiring the same kinds of people as we are. We’re fortunate to have Amazon and other big companies, but there has to be room for everyone to play.

Hall – I really believe in affordable care for all. I was astounded, coming from Starbucks, that entrepreneurs have to pay twice as much for half the coverage for employee health care. And I support raising the minimum wage, but that will have an impact on Cupcake Royale. Raising the wage one dollar is a \$100,000 hit, so we are underwater in a year or two. Should I have less people? Or automate?

### **Have attitudes toward women entrepreneurs changed?**

Shen – Even today, I still meet people who, within the first 30 seconds, say something about a “cute, little business.” I would say, never underestimate anyone or treat anyone as smaller. Think big, always.

Lyman – There are more groups and support for women entrepreneurs now.

### **Lessons learned for entrepreneurs?**

Hall – I strongly believe in Peter Drucker’s dictum that ‘culture eats strategy for breakfast.’ The other is from Maya Angelou, at the end of the day, “people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget



how you made them feel.”

Shen – It’s the hardest thing to leave the comfortable and start a business, but it’s like window shopping. 99% of the people in the world are window shoppers; unless you try it on, you’ll never know.

To open the program, **Rob LoBosco** provided the invocation, and **Linda Rough** led the singing of *This Land is Your Land*, accompanied by **Todd Summerfelt**.

