

SRSF Supports FareStart & Seattle's Growing Pains

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By Pete DeLaunay



President Mark opened the meeting with Bill Center's invocation followed by the Rotary Rogues performing the Rotary version of the Beatles' classic, *Come Together*. Troy Coalman of FareStart described how the SRSF grant helps support the food service training program. A moderated panel of two local reporters provided their perspective on "changing Seattle" and the challenges of having a civil discussion.

Past President Bill Center's inspirational invocation touched on several predictably important topics; the solution to the influx of refugees seeking asylum is "economic development in the countries of origin," and how attitude and outlook are instruments of peace.

Troy Coalman of FareStart said a grant from SRSF has helped enable his organization to graduate 260+ individuals, 87% of whom were homeless. FareStart students get professional-grade foodservice training AND housing. Troy said, "food is a pathway to hope – we change lives one meal and one job at a time." He invited Rotarians to volunteer as waiters for FareStart's well known Guest Chef Night on September 6.



President Mark said the Winners for Life program recognizes 40 students each year for having overcome challenges and provides ten scholarships. He asked members who "have a passion for kids" to consider joining the Winners for Life Task Force aimed at improving the program.



President Mark then gave the microphone to KCTS and Crosscut Executive Editor Greg Hanscom who led a conversation about Seattle's growing divisiveness with Crosscut columnist Knute Berger and Mónica Guzmán, former Seattle Times writer and current Evergrey co-founder.

Self-proclaimed "Mossback" and Seattle native Knute Berger said only 20% of



Seattle's population is considered 'native'. "Unprecedented growth has resulted in a class shift from Seattle's former large middle class," he said. "Driving and walking is painful and largely punished if you want to get anywhere."

Coming to Seattle eleven years ago, Mónica Guzmán said her love for Seattle came from her view that people would step up to deal with those who aren't doing the right thing. "I am concerned about divided Seattle, how difficult it is to listen to one another," she said. "Seattle is the laboratory to figure them (key issues) out."

"Polling data reveals how people in Seattle have lost patience with the homeless crisis," said Greg Hanscom, "with few people thinking the government is dealing with it well."

Knute 'Skip' Berger said there is anger among working-class people in Seattle about the so-called "head tax" and how no thought has been given to the fabric of Seattle. "Ballard's industrial area and home of the North Pacific Fishing Fleet is threatened by officials who are more interested in apartments than the economic interests of the area that many think are being overlooked," he said.



As co-founder of The Evergrey, a Seattle-focused digital news publication, Mónica Guzmán rubs shoulders with Amazon employees among other high-tech workers. "We have a high volume of high-income millennials and that continues to grow with 50 new software developers coming to Seattle every week," she said.

She described Nextdoor, the online neighborhood communications platform, as a good example of how to successfully build an online audience by narrowly defining it. People are paying attention to their neighborhoods while city council members seem to be thinking citywide and not so much about their districts.

There is a growing political divide, said Crosscut's Knute Berger, that has been "wedged" between NIMBY (not in my backyard) folks who want to maintain their neighborhood lifestyle and YIMBY (yes, in my backyard) who want to promote equitable urban development.

The panel concluded with reference to a July 19 local media forum on the "many faces of homelessness."