

President Cindy's Vision Builds on our Strength, Value Proposition, Communications, and Fellowship

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By Pete DeLaunay



President Cindy Runger opened her first meeting as president of Seattle Rotary #4 with inspirational words of wisdom about our club's position of strength in support of service projects, the importance of full engagement in service projects and fellowship, and how our club can grow career, mind, and spirit! Her words were amplified by Totem Star youth program founder, Daniel Pak, who described the importance of "loving what you do and doing what you love" as his organization has nurtured and encouraged more than 2,000 young people to embrace their passion for music.

Past President and District Governor Nominee, **Cathy Gibson**, reinforced the district's theme, *Be the Inspiration* by encouraging Rotarians to "engage in the daily work of helping others" and support for President Cindy's leadership team. "Together we will inspire the world," she said.

While President Cindy has several goals for her year, a regular *Greet & Grin* feature will provide a time at each meeting for Rotarians to meet a fellow Rotarian in the room they didn't know and to say "hello". She asked past president **Tim Bendokas** to revive his committee, *Legends in our Midst*, and at one meeting each month to recognize one of our members who display exceptional professionalism, service, and fellowship. President Cindy was his committee's first choice.

He described President Cindy's challenges, spirit and accomplishments from her Vietnam birthplace, to being bullied and overcoming it when her family lived in Idaho, where watching the Fonz on the Happy Days TV program helped hone her English speaking.



Moving on to her undergraduate work at Gonzaga University where her athleticism shined in track, her speaking abilities grew as a debater while maintaining honor society status; and her leadership was highlighted as Gonzaga University student body president. She was awarded a full scholarship to Gonzaga Law School and, upon graduation, she accepted a staff attorney's position with the Washington State Senate that led to an appointment as aide to then-Governor Gary Locke. Following her interest in investments, she took an entry-level position at Piper Jaffray & Co in Seattle where she "cold-called" her way from \$50,000 investors to those with a

net worth of \$25 million. He concluded by thanking past president **Paul Ishii** for bringing Cindy Runger to the Rotary Club of Seattle in 2005. Past President Tim concluded by recognizing president Cindy for her service on the Gonzaga University Board of Regents, her work with UniBank, her many leadership positions with Seattle Rotary, and her devotion to son Thor who was in attendance along with many friends, associates, and relatives.

President Cindy then shared her vision for the coming year with three crystal clear observations:

1. She said our club's **Position of Strength** with more than 400 members enables our club to make genuine contributions to service while fostering a sense of fellowship. She called out a coming Rotary First Harvest Packing event, followed by a fellowship lunch as an example of giving back as Rotarian friendships are developed.
2. She described our club's **Value Proposition** as a platform for growing career, mind and spirit by giving back locally and internationally.
3. Lastly, she said our club's meetings are **Special to Share** with others by encouraging Rotarians to leverage club social media channels with action photography and club briefs via our group Facebook page.



President Cindy then asked fellow Rotarian **Paul Suzman** to introduce Daniel Pak, founder of Totem Star a music development program for at-risk youth. Pak is a self-proclaimed 'master of aloha' – from his native Hawaii – who chose a passion for music as a singer/songwriter and helping kids, instead of a career in metallurgy, where Pak earned his UW degree.

"You gotta love what you do and do what you love," he began, "with action and impact to use life energy to do something positive to shine a light and let others shine a light." His Totem Star program was launched in 2010 to help

transition youth out of juvenile detention to a life-changing transformation through music production, mentoring and performing original compositions.

Pak performed an original composition, "I will be your superhero" as an example of how young people can share their voice through music. He described Totem Star's West Seattle studio as a place where, Monday-Friday, youth from all over Seattle build a powerful community with no boundaries. Totem Star performers have taken their talent to outside venues from the Experience Music Project to events for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Pak has also brought celebrity guests to the Totem Star studio where artists such as Macklemore & Ryan Lewis perform with aspiring youth.

Pak concluded his inspiring presentation and music by asking Totem Star performer, Justus White, to join him on stage for another original composition, "Small World". "Youth come from all parts of the city," Daniel says, "but music brings it all together." To learn more visit Totemstar.org.

President Cindy wrapped up her first meeting with a pledge to provide a weekly inspirational proverb, “No task is too big when done by all,” as she rang the adjournment bell for the first time.

