

# Winners for Life

Totem Report March 29, 2017

By Dann Mead Smith

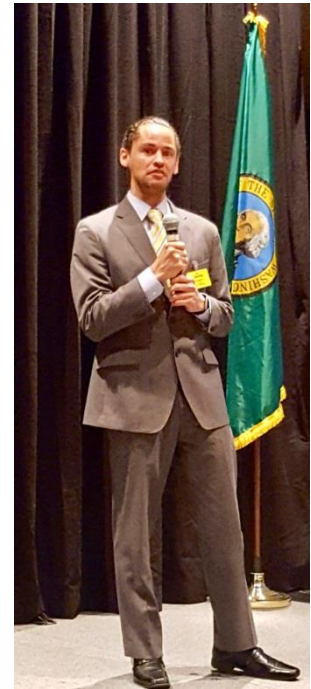
**President Cathy** opened our annual Winners for Life meeting with a special welcome to “the forty four 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students with us today that have overcome obstacles to achieve success and graduate from high school.”

One of those outstanding students, **Devin Harris** of South Lake High School, led us in an acapella National Anthem. Our member **Jaime Mendez** then reflected on “living your dreams” with some inspiring quotes from Eleanor Roosevelt, Oprah Winfrey and Walt Disney.

President Cathy announced that next week’s program will focus on China during both the short and long programs to coincide with the President of China’s visit to our country.

She then introduced **Ken Hamm** as a “special Rotarian” who just celebrated his 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with our club, chair of the Education Committee, and who has been the Gold level sponsor of broadcasting our weekly programs online.

Ken recognized **Seattle Schools Superintendent Dr. Larry Nyland** and all the “parents, relatives and guardians of our Winners for Life, as well as their teachers and counselors.” Ken said how rewarding it is to meet these outstanding young people during this process and asked all the students to join him on stage.



Some examples of the adversity that these students have overcome to achieve success that Ken mentioned were:

- A student has a mother that is an addict and has bounced around several different homes and started high school with a 1.7 GPA and now has A's and B's and is part of the Running Start Program at Seattle Central
- A student with speech and medical issues who is receiving straight A's
- A student whose father was murdered
- A student whose family was dealing with being homeless and kept up with school

Ken closed with: "Every single student has a story. Your perseverance is inspiring to all of us. You are a role model for all of us and we are honored to be able to recognize you."

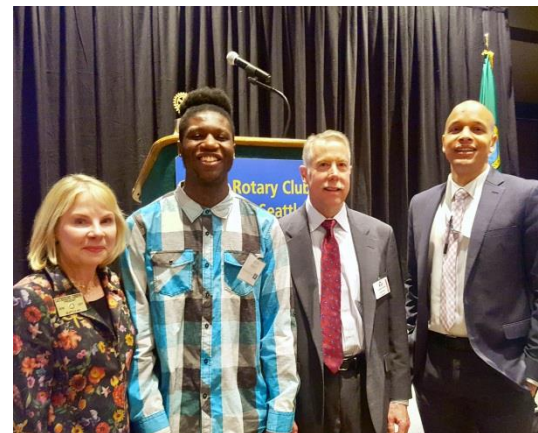
He then introduced our main speaker, **Dwane Chappelle**, the former principal of Rainier Beach High School who is now Seattle's Director of Education and Early Learning. He said it was an honor to be here as he is a huge fan of Winners for Life who remind us to support our young people. He said that we "honor you today because of your resilience. You refuse to take no for an answer and you get up when you are knocked down."

The following is some of the advice that he shared:

- You need "out of the box" thinking
- You need to "expect to win" – mental toughness is needed in life
- You need to make yourself uncomfortable, keep grinding it out
- If you have integrity, then anything is possible
- And, be a winner for life not just when you are acknowledged as you are today

He had the students repeat, "I am ready to win. I am determined to win."

He took questions on:





- The role of fathers and male mentors: “male mentors can help when you don’t have a father in your life; they are extremely important.” He said the City is starting a mentorship program, Our Best.
- His most prominent piece of advice: “believe in yourself and you need to have core values and align them with your goals, and give back to the community.”
- Biggest needs in Seattle Schools: “that teachers are supported in the classroom and kids receive high levels of instruction; and they have what they need to be successful.”

He closed with, “Remember these words and believe in yourself.”

President Cathy recognized **Sharon Brumfield and Ken Hamm** for all their work to make today’s event possible with a plaque and floral arrangement.

We concluded the meeting by joining **David Woodward** in singing “You Raise Me Up” with **Freeman Fong** accompanying. President Cathy asked the Winners for Life to look at your plaques and always “remember that we are behind you.”

