

# Special Olympics Invites Rotarians to #RiseWithUs

Totem Report March 28, 2018

By Dann Mead Smith

**President Mark** was excited for our “action packed program and celebration of Special Olympics today!” **Sten Crissey** reflected on his time with Special Olympics as they were first getting started in Washington and his service as their treasurer. He remarked about how much they have grown; “learning more about them today will be a treat for all of us.”

**Trish Bostrom** played the banjo and led us in a rousing *You are my Sunshine* to celebrate the start of spring. Birthday girl **Jane Tornatore** introduced us to several prospective members.



**Rob LoBosco** introduced us to 24-year-old **Taylor Shimizu** of Intersection, who he said embodies energy, optimism and determination. Taylor recently lost her fiancé, who was only 29 years old, so she is looking to Rotary as a way to meet “new friends and take on new challenges; Rotary will be her connection to the past and route to her future.”

And **Connie Miller** introduced us to another new member, **Reggie Woods** of Bank of America’s commercial banking team whose passion is service with a focus on youth education and sports, serving as a coach and mentor.

President Mark introduced our member **Don Kraft**, who has 69 years of perfect attendance in our club, as part of Don’s #4Bits series that focuses on the history of our club. Don mentioned that like Taylor, he also had an advertising classification when he joined the club when he was 21.

Don’s #4Bits focused on the legacy of African Americans in our club and reflected on February 28, 1985 when our state’s first African American Supreme Court justice, Charles Smith, was our club’s featured speaker as part of Black History Month. Justice Smith encouraged Rotarians to do three things: check the rosters of organizations we belonged to, check our employee rosters, and read one book on African American history. At that meeting, Don asked our member **Luther Carr** for advice and his wife, Frances Carr, provided him with several books to read. Frances, who spent part of her career working for former Mayor Norm Rice, was a guest at today’s meeting.

Don gave us an overview of Luther's life as a track, basketball and football star including his football career at UW and with the Oakland Raiders. He then started a construction company and had "an unparalleled civic career." He became the second African American member of our club.

Don concluded with: "You know, as I think about it, a lot of good has happened in human relations in the Northwest since 1985... the next two presidents of Seattle Rotary will be women of color. Judge Charles Smith is now a part of Black History. And, in my opinion, so is Rotarian Luther Carr."

**President Mark** introduced our member **Beth Knox**, to tell us more about "what is happening in Seattle this summer." Beth is the President & CEO of the 2018 USA Games Special Olympics and former president of Seafair, who also organized the Seahawks Super Bowl parade. She recognized our member **Dave Lennox**, CEO of Special Olympics Washington, who she is working with on the 2018 Games.



The games will be held July 1-6 in Seattle and focus on athletes with intellectual disabilities. She said the games will promote a message of acceptance and inclusion and the power to transform lives. We viewed a video that promoted the games and featured a quote from an athlete commenting that he has "waited 25 years to have it here, to work together as a team and show what you can do."

She shared some statistics of the games:

- 4,000 athletes will be in Seattle
- 10,000 volunteers
- 50,000+ fans
- \$76 million total economic impact
- And "most importantly, thousands of lives transformed."

She encouraged us to get involved either as a volunteer or to cheer on the athletes especially as part of the July 1<sup>st</sup> opening ceremony at Husky Stadium.

The legacy of the games will be measured by the "economic impact, memorable experiences, and showcasing Seattle as a city of inclusion."

Former Seahawk **Ray Roberts**, a Special Olympic Ambassador, talked about how he has been “transformed” through his connection to Special Olympics. He said a platform has been developed for these athletes which has “become transformative for me. I become inclusion. If you want that, get involved. Jump in feet first; you will be transformed.” He challenged us to join him in supporting the [Special Olympics 2018 Club](#).

“Join me volunteering, clapping, and cheering and for a toast at the end.”



One of the Special Olympic athletes, **Devon Adelman** (skiing and soccer), then addressed us, talking about her challenges of growing up and how Special Olympics has changed her life. She has graduated from high school and college, spoke at the UN, and was honored at the White House. It has enabled her to “learn new skills, make and keep new friends for life, build confidence and learn skills for life. It creates inclusion.”

“Don’t miss out, create a community for all people.”

Former Seattleite Karen Moyer, co-founder of the Moyer Foundation, interviewed Tim Shriver, who is Chairman of the Special Olympics, which his mother, Eunice Shriver founded, to wrap up the program. Karen commented on how inspired she was by Ray Roberts and that she “is going home changed.”

Tim Shriver’s request is to “check your rosters and check your employees.” He encouraged us to hire developmentally disabled athletes as employees and to support unified high school sports teams with athletes playing together, which would be a “transformational change.”

He concluded with, “check your rosters, attend the games, and just show up. See the beauty of every human being.”

**President Mark** closed the meeting with “this has been an exciting program, I am so inspired.” Everyone in attendance I am sure agreed.

