

Starbucks's Corporate Commitment to Veterans and a Message of Unity

Totem Report November 9, 2016

By Dann Mead Smith

Our member **Jimmy Collins** introduced our main program. He has been working with Starbucks over the last nine years “to hire America’s heroes.” He introduced our featured speaker, **John Kelly** as “a friend, who has worked on Capitol Hill, then at Microsoft and is now is at Starbucks leading social impact initiatives.”

We viewed an inspirational video that showcased Starbucks’s work with military veterans and their initiative to hire 10,000 veterans (they have already hired 8,500 to date John said): <https://news.starbucks.com/multimedia/keywords/honoring%20veterans>

John told the story of his first meeting after starting at Starbucks, “a remarkable conversation between military members and their spouses about how they were missing an opportunity to help veterans, and what was their role and responsibility at Starbucks.” After the meeting their first impression was, why wouldn’t they hire veterans? And also, what is the purpose? They don’t want to hire veterans out of pity or patriotism, but because they, as well as their families, are great for business.



John mentioned some of the other key reasons they embarked on this initiative to hire 10,000 veterans and the benefits:

- “They are critical to our success: their values are very similar to Starbucks” and Starbucks realized that their sense of service is what Starbucks strives for, but what they were missing.
- It was not about the number of 10,000, as they could hit the number and the project could still fail. It was not just about hiring and honoring them, but about creating a culture so they could do what they do best, serve.
- Starbucks has benefited as an enterprise; “it’s good for business.”
- Starbucks is learning from them; “our culture is so much better with them being part of it.”
- The average volunteer hours for veterans at Starbucks is 169 hours versus 126 for nonmilitary employees.
- This program also helps close the military/veteran and non-military divide in our society.

John said their plan is to keep hiring: “Veterans are great at service and they still want to serve.”

John concluded, “Starbucks future is in service, just like Rotarians. Your service is so important to this country, our mission is the same as yours.”

Visit www.starbucks.com/veterans if you are interested in learning more.

President Cathy thanked Starbucks for giving everyone gift cards and for joining Seattle 4 as a new corporate member.

President Cathy opened our special **Veterans Day program** with **Arnold Ness** who did an outstanding job with his “Trumpet Fanfare” playing the opening bars of all of the armed forces hymns! **Erick Slabaugh** then read from “The Watch”, a military poem which concludes with:



They stood the watch so that we, our families and
Our fellow countrymen could sleep soundly in safety, Each
and every night
Knowing that they stood the watch

All the members and veterans of the Coast Guard, Marines, Air Force, Navy and Army stood and were recognized and then they sat as everyone else in the audience gave them a standing ovation. President Cathy paid a special tribute to our member, **Admiral Tom Hayward** who has been in Rotary for 44 years, 14 as a member of our club and who had an extraordinary military career: graduated from the Naval

Academy, served in Vietnam, Commander for the U.S. 7th Fleet, Commander in Chief for the U.S. Pacific Fleet, and then served as the Chief of Naval Operations from 1978-1982. President Cathy thanked him for his distinguished service.

We were introduced to two new members who were both military veterans: **Joe Phillips** “re-introduced” us to **John Hojaboom** “who is known to many of us” and is celebrating his 50th wedding anniversary next April with his wife Carolyn who attended the meeting; and **Jan Levy** introduced **Jaime Mendez** as someone who is like “capturing lightening in a bottle when you talk to him and leaves you exhausted and energized.”

President Cathy thanked **Ken Hamm** for his Gold Sponsorship and the Washington Policy Center for being the Day Sponsor that allows the program to be videotaped for viewing on the club’s website.





Larry Granat announced our annual Holiday Program: “The Holiday Songbook” which will be presented by the 5th Avenue Theater. Larry encouraged us to bring family members to this final 2016 program and ensured us that you will “leave with a song in your heart.”

The Short Program showcased the Seattle Rotary Service Foundation. **Jim Moore** reminded us of the important work that our Foundation supports and how our work is leveraged by the Rotary International Foundation. This allows us to invest in many vital service projects including the USO which received a \$50,000 grant to purchase a “mobile canteen” van. **Bill Center** said that not only does this serve military families and veterans around the Puget Sound but that it’s also a “rolling billboard for USO and our club.

Thank you from all of the military service families.”

President Cathy asked our former member and club president **Ralph Munro** to close out the program with a “message of unity” the day after the Election. Ralph said he was pretty disappointed in the tone of the election with the name calling and the “violations of the Rotary Four Way test” and how many of us were voting against someone versus voting for a particular candidate. “We must build friendships and relationships across the lake, across the mountains and the country. This is not the time to isolate ourselves; the time of redemption is now.”



He concluded with what Rotarians can do:

- 1) Be a forum for civil discourse
- 2) Look around for what’s going on around the country and look at places that are left behind and what we can do to help them in the new economy
- 3) Help build and support an education system; “the future lies in every third grader in the Rainier Valley and Georgetown”
- 4) Serve as a shining example for all people

We all stood and **Jimmy Collins and Burr Stewart** led us in “God Bless America.”