I want to welcome my fellow Rotarians, their families, honored quests, and my family to the 2008 Instillation Banquet of the Officers of the North Port Arthur Rotary Club.

The theme for the 08-09 year, as set by RI president D K Lee, is “Make Dreams Real”. We all know that ‘dreams’ can be the birthplace of what could be a lifetime of effect. When we often speak of dreams, our thoughts go to lofty ideals of fame and fortune. For some, dreams could simply be a life slightly more advanced than the one they perceive they have.

I dedicate this speech to those in my life who had vision, for my life, far beyond my own;

My parents, who sacrificed so much so that my sister and I could be on of the haves;

My wife, who’s striving for excellence has pushed me to demand the same for myself;

My children, whose unconditional love passes my own understanding?

I’d like to share a challenge with you that my dad shared with me:

“God provides us with opportunity; it’s up to us to do the work”

My dad left his farming community in North Louisiana to pursue a career in industry, because someone told him “you can do this”. He used basketball as his only means of financially affording a dream of a college degree in Geology. Unlike today, when an offering to play college sports is seen as a pinnacle in and of itself, my dad told me, “play it because you want to, not because you have.”

Again, “God provides the opportunity; it’s up to us to do the work”

Like many of your fathers, my dad finished his work in 2000 to begin a new work helping to prepare an eternal place for those he loves. I’m sure he remembers that “God provides the opportunity; it’s up to us to do the work”

As Roger McCabe was making his presentation to the District 5910 members at the President Elect Training Seminar in Dallas this year, he reminded us of the theme of “Make Dreams Real”, and then he added something that sparked a passion inside many of us when he challenged us to find projects that serve children.

With the RI theme and Rogers challenge on our hearts over the course of the weekend, an inspiring thing happened during the final dinner I shared with Pierce Harrington, my presidential counterpart at the Spindletop Rotary Club in Beaumont, and his wife. From that meal, an idea was formed that we hope will become reality when our 2 clubs join together on a campaign that will serve the most vulnerable children of Jefferson County, by distributing information on the “Baby Moses” or “Safe Haven” law and “Shaken Baby Syndrome”

This is just one of many projects that will be laid at the feet of our club this year. With faith in a power greater than our own we will pick up these challenges and do the work.

We understand that, “Faithfulness is not determined by the amount entrusted, but by the character of the person who uses it.”

Rotarians have the character of those rich in humility and humanitarianism, which has allowed us to make a difference in the far reaches of the earth and in addresses not too dissimilar from our own.

When we think the task may be too big for us, let us remember chronicled story of King Jehoshaphat in 2 Chronicles 20 & David and Goliath in 2 Samuel 17. Remember to put God between ourselves and our enemies, that God has been preparing us for the task at hand, and that Giant Killers are allowed by God to see what can be and not just what is.