



ROTARY NOTARY

HOW HOPE AND COMMUNITY TRANSFORMED A YOUNG LIFE

Member Birthdays:

Deb Brinegar	2/24
Brian Burrus	3/3

At Rotary Today:

Greeter: Greg Ek

Invocation, Flag Salute, and Four-way test:
Anne Schneider

Special Guests:
Sarah Myers

Rotary Anniversaries:
Brant Westbrook—10 years

Wedding Anniversary:
Scott and Ann Jensen—14 years



Today's speaker, Alexandria Ware (L) founded Culture Creations, Inc. With her is Sarah Myers, who founded ICT Tree Huggers. Both young women are passionate about making the Wichita community a place of acceptance, safety, belonging and support.

Alexandria Ware was three years old when she entered the foster care system and never left. Many youth whose lives begin that way struggle throughout their lives with issues that prevent them from realizing their full potential. But not Alexandria, who was placed in 55 different foster homes and knew by the age of 15 that she wanted to dedicate her life to helping kids in foster care. In 2022 407,000 children were in foster care in the U.S. (source: [childwelfare.gov](https://www.childwelfare.gov)).

Ware is a Wichita native who graduated from Southeast High, then K-State, and earned a Master's degree at OSU. She then founded Culture Creations, Inc. to help kids "in the system" as she had been. The organization's mission is to create quality in the well-being of foster youth through advocacy, culturally-affirming self-care, and

preparation for a meaningful transition to life beyond foster care. Statistics bear out the need for her work: Only 50% of young adults who age out of foster care when they turn 18 graduate from high school, and only 25% obtain a college degree.

Ware's impact is felt throughout the U.S., as she has briefed members of Congress and the Domestic White House Policy Council. A major part of her work is helping youth heal from past traumas. Her own healing did not begin until she was 25. She pointed out the differences between growing up in a foster home and growing up with biological parents with this scenario: If you get in trouble in your birth home, you'll probably be grounded. But in foster care, getting in trouble can mean a new placement in a different home.

Ware explained that having a sense of community along with feeling connected is how she succeeds. She seeks to create that same sense of belonging with the youth in her program. During the holidays she organizes a party to help create traditions and a sense of family. She believes in holding youth accountable and not supporting bad decisions. An important message she shares is "Use words, not fists" to express feelings.

According to Ware, each of us has been touched in some way by the foster care system. It's essential for us to give these youth hope, fueling in them the desire to complete high school, attend college, and later, own a business or join Rotary. If you'd like to help Alexandria Ware in her work, you can: volunteer to serve on a committee, sponsor an event, adopt a graduate, or make a donation. Her website is: www.culturecreationsinc.co

Quote of the Week:

Never give up on a dream just because of the time it will take to accomplish it. The time will pass anyway.

— Earl Nightingale

Club Announcements:

Plan to join your fellow Rotarians for a **Club Mixer** on **Thursday, March 9** at Shocker Sports Grill and Lanes, located on the WSU campus inside the Rhatigan Student Center. More details to follow! Consider bringing a friend who is interested in Rotary!

The US Naval Concert Band will perform in Wichita on Monday, March 6 at 7:00 p.m. Tickets are free! All the details and a link to get free tickets are in Kim's pre-meeting email of February 7.

Donations will be accepted through March 22 for the Amani House Women's Shelter in Kenya. Refer to Kim's pre-meeting email for details and a link to contribute online.

Battle of the Brackets Sponsors Are:

Our own **Shane Pullman** along with his business partner Linda Nugent of Nugent & Pullman Realtors have sponsored this year's Battle of the Brackets. Thanks to them we will have a \$150 cash prize for the winning bracket and three \$50 winners selected at random from non-winning brackets. Purchase your brackets by cash, check or Square at any meeting. The online link will be available soon! Remember, Selection Sunday is March 12!

Next Week:

NO MEETING on **Wednesday, March 1**. See you back at the Wichita Country Club on March 8!

MORE AT ROTARY TODAY



(L) **Kelly Dandurand** delivers EWR's Member News, a summary of the latest member happenings. In this week's news, **Denise Hearson** has been promoted to Vice President—Retail Banking and BSA Officer at Andover State Bank.

(R) **Deb Brinegar** shared with us the importance of being "Red Cross Ready," meaning having an emergency plan in place in the event a natural disaster strikes. A great suggestion—put a list of your important contacts in your car's glove box for easy retrieval in the event your phone loses power or connection to the internet.



CHECK OUT THE FLAG BANNERS

The next time you join us for a meeting, be sure to check out the refurbished flag banners that hang from the pillars on the north wall of our meeting room at the WCC. The banners got some much-needed "TLC". Some of the flags were reattached but also some of the beautiful new flags our members have brought back from their travels, or flags that have been presented to our president from visiting Rotarians, were added to a banner! With an emphasis on swapping out flags in disrepair or from area US clubs, Dave Sproul and I added some of the exciting and diverse flags from international clubs, truly showcasing the world-wide scope of Rotary International!

One of the now five banners, with one being added in this process, is solely full of international destinations! Japan, Scotland, Australia, Kenya, Sri Lanka --- it is amazing to think that someone in our club traveled to one of those countries sometime in the past, or at some point over the years a Rotarian, from one of these countries, has visited our club!

My thanks to Dave, who is one of our charter members and also serves as our Rotary Foundation chair, for his invaluable help on this project!

— Kim Hurtig



The EWR banners are set up before every meeting behind the buffet table on the north side of the room.