

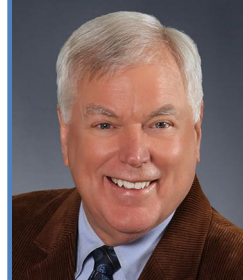


## Overcoming Obstacles



BE THE INSPIRATION

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"All the News that Fits We Print"

## BEFORE THE BELL

The Rotary Club of Sebastopol held the morning Overcoming Obstacles 2019 event – the ninth annual leadership conference – for participating West County High School students. The conference this year was held at the O'Reilly Media campus. The students were selected to attend the conference based on their perseverance in overcoming obstacles in their lives – obstacles not faced by most of their peers. The class of 2019 was a remarkable group with a clear understanding of their goals.

Each of the students was paired with a Rotarian "mentor", who served as a guide for the day and stayed with them during the morning leadership conference, and provided support for them as they prepared to speak to the assembled Rotary Club and guests at the noon meeting

Mentors for the day included: **Tony Given, Bob Cugini, Mia Del Prete, Ellen Harrington, Robin Maybury, Ruthie Dunlap, Dorothy Rodella, Pam Graber, and Aleia Coate.**



**Sonoma County YWCA Domestic Violence Hotline 707-546-1234**

## Future Programs

May 3, 2019

**Trade Path Awards**

May 10, 2019

**The Honorable Tomochika Uyama,  
Consul-General of Japan**

May 17, 2019

**DARK**

**District Conference in Reno**

May 24, 2019

**Larry Robinson  
Center for Climate Prevention**

May 31, 2019

**Dr. Abhijit Kale  
The Buck Foundation**

## Events

**Friendship Dinners  
June 15<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>**

**Debunking:  
June 29<sup>th</sup>**

**Fall Fundraiser:  
October 26<sup>th</sup>**

## Miscellany

**MAKEUP NOTIFICATIONS--[JackEDunlap@gmail.com](mailto:JackEDunlap@gmail.com)**

**On-line Make-Ups:  
[www.RotaryEClubOne.org](http://www.RotaryEClubOne.org)**

**Domestic Violence Hotline:  
**707-546-1234****

**[sebastopolrotary.com](http://sebastopolrotary.com)**



After coffee and snacks, and some get to know you conversation, morning Master of Ceremonies **David Schreiberman** called the conference to order at 9:15 am. **David** welcomed the students, committee members, speakers, and, unknown to the students, members of the community who would serve as judges. **David** spoke of the goals and methods of Rotary International, described upcoming events, and stressed the value of the morning session with an emphasis on networking.

**David** introduced the first guest speaker of the morning, Jose Guillen. Jose has had a long and distinguished career as a court administrator for the Superior Court and has also provided training in courtroom procedures throughout the Western Hemisphere and also in Afghanistan. He had to overcome significant obstacles on his road to success.



His formative years were in Guatemala where he was born. His father lived many miles away and only visited the family a few times a year. Jose felt he was not given a family oriented upbringing although he loved his parents. When he was a young teenager, the family began the process of immigrating to the United States. They were not all able to enter together and he was left in the care of his grandparents. He finally arrived in downtown LA, a long way from his childhood small town home in Guatemala.

Jose said that he had feelings of inadequacy that he has spent his whole life trying to cope with. He was lucky enough to be hired into a program with the Court system and he put his heart into the work, eventually working his way to the top. He also spent time in law enforcement. He urged the students to try to understand the coping mechanisms that they have developed to meet their obstacles and know that these coping mechanisms to not define them.



The second speaker of the morning was **Aleia Coate**, past president of Sebastopol Rotary. **Aleia** grew up in an alternative lifestyle household. Moving frequently, she lived in farms and tenements in various places in the United States. There were sometimes up to 30 people in the extended family. Eventually her mother brought her to California, where she struggled to fit in with normal middle class living. School was a challenge for **Aleia**. She was often in trouble for being too



friendly and too talkative. Despite being moved around again, she persevered and turned her people skills into working skills. Foregoing college, she got a job at the local bank, and eventually became the youngest branch manager ever.



**Aleia** urged the students to use their skills positively, and to work hard using those skills on the road to success. She has recently changed positions, leaving banking for a financial advisor position. She said that she had to take the hardest test she had ever taken to get the job.

The third speaker was John Balletto. John is a member of the Sebastopol Sunrise Rotary Club. He is a prominent agriculturalist and winery owner in West County. John didn't always have it easy. As a young man, his hopes of a college scholarship in Track to San Jose State were dashed when his father became ill and died. John became the family head at age 17, and started a vegetable plot on four acres, rather than go off to college.

Farming is not an easy job, but John worked hard and became a successful grower of vegetables for the Bay Area market. He said that every time he got a little money – he bought land. As with all farming, John struggled with markets and the weather but eventually saw the potential of wine grapes over vegetables. Today, John is a highly successful farmer producing some of the finest Pinot Noir in the world. John's story of struggle and perseverance inspired the students and guests.

## AT THE BELL

**President Larry Ford** rang the bell slightly early as various guests, Rotarians and students filed into the meeting. He identified the six students and they were given a standing ovation. **Kathy Mayhew** led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance. **David Schreibman** provided the Thought for the Day.



*"Nothing in the world is worth having or worth doing unless it means effort, pain, difficulty. I have never in my life envied a human being who led an easy life. I have envied a great many people who led difficult lives and led them well."* Theodore Roosevelt.

## ROTARIANS & GUESTS

**Bud Daveiro** introduced visiting Rotarian Brian Bauer from the Sebastopol sunrise club.

Also visiting was Barb Spangler, our own District Governor

And Kathy Flamson, District Governor Elect.

**Bob Rogers** introduced our First Lady, Gerry Reilly Ford

**Tom Lambert** introduced his wife, **Sally**. Good to see you **Tom** and **Sally**!

**David Schreibman** introduced his guest, Mo Katz.

**Jerry Warren** introduced his wife, **Kay**.

**Keller McDonald** introduced Laura Van Gorder.

**Richard Petersen** introduced his wife, **Deborah**.

**Harry Simms** introduced his wife, **Susanna**.

**Michael Hixson** introduced two guests: Vera Gorr and Fred Kusin.

**Scott Briggs** introduced his wife, **Sally**.

**David Schreibman** was given the podium, and introduced even more guests. These included the speakers from the morning leadership session **Aleia Coate**, **John Balletto**, and **Jose Guillen**.

**Toni Beal** introduced several educators from West County High School District in attendance, including **Claudia Camacho**, **Leah Woody**, **Kim Finch**, and **Carmelina Grant**.



## 🍎 OVERCOMING OBSTACLES PROGRAM 🍎



**Rick Wilson** took the podium as Master of Ceremonies for the Overcoming Obstacles meeting of 2019, the ninth such meeting. **Rick** said that this meeting is his favorite meeting of the entire Rotary year. The students share stories that are “not for the faint of heart,” and give inspiration to all with their courage and determination.

The first student speaker was **Emma Castleberry**.



**Emma** said that she is always early to everything. She was even early being born arriving as a 3 pound premie, with an attendant stay in the hospital. Her early childhood was a happy one, but she soon became subject of often debilitating anxiety. Sometimes her days were spoiled, once even ruining a visit to Disneyland, the happiest place on earth.

**Emma** has had various types of help and therapeutic coping skills training. She feels she has conquered her issues. She feels her childhood “ended early.” She often felt that she should attend a small college with plenty of support, but now has the confidence to go off to attend the University of California Santa Cruz next fall.



### Cheyenne Van Wicklen



Cheyenne is a student at Laguna High School. She lives in Forestville. She has had difficulty in school over the years and has battled successfully. She said that she has always avoided attention. She often just pretended she didn't care. She is now developing skills to have a successful future and leave her earlier problems behind her. She credits the staff at Laguna with providing her with the ability to trust others again. She also credits a childhood friend with helping her regain the ability to focus. She wants to attend cosmetology school and have her own business or perhaps work in stage makeup.

### Aidan Briggs



Aidan is a senior at Analay High School. As a child, he was withdrawn, and considered quiet and shy. He felt that everyone else was smarter than he was. He gave his best efforts to keep up but always felt he was falling behind. He tried many types of sports as well with the same results. He was diagnosed with a rare condition that made him lethargic and tired. He eventually had serious, but successful surgery, to reduce the effects of his condition.

Even though he was bedridden and convalescent of many months, his classmates rallied for him. He began to catch up both physically and academically. He was proud to let the doctors know that he is now capable of "running up the mountains in Yosemite." He plans to study biology with a goal of becoming a physician's assistant.

### Jaden Varville



Jaden's early schooling was marked by an inability to keep up with her classmates. It turns out that Jaden was afflicted with visual processing difficulties that made her academic work a struggle. Jaden said that although this is not a rare disability, it is rare enough that it is perceived so by others.

Jaden coped by going headlong into the 4-H program. With her disability understood she is able to keep up with others. When her role model and mentor, her 4-H instructor died unexpectedly, Jaden vowed to win in competition in her honor. Jaden did win the grand champion award in her honor. Jaden has two interests and is unsure which she will follow; the electrical trade, or the medical field.

### Paola Sanchez Carmona



Paola attends El Molino High. She came to the United States when she was under a year old. Her parents did not speak English in the home and she was at a distinct disadvantage because of that. She was placed in classes for slow learners. She was not challenged. Nevertheless she persisted. She challenged herself to work harder.

In middle school she finally got a chance to excel. She had a teacher that made learning fun and she took to it. She takes all regular classes, and has left the slow learner stuff far behind. She would like to attend the JC and eventually become a firefighter.

## Bridget Niclaes



Bridget is a student at El Molino. Her mother was too wrapped up in her own issues to pay proper attention to her children. The problems got so bad that Bridget was forced to move in with her brother. She has always felt insecure and unworthy in many ways. Through the intervention of friends and other family, she feels healed. She is now a student scholar athlete participating in three sports and being named All League first team in soccer. She plans to study nursing at SRJC.

With speeches complete, the students introduced their guests.



Emma Castleberry introduced Diana and Loretta Castleberry

Aidan Briggs introduced his mom and dad, Frank and Jennifer Leslie



Jaden Varville introduced her mom, Rachel Varville

Paola Sanchez Carmona introduced her friends, Estephany Onofre and Sheila Ruiz



Cheyenne Van Wicklen introduced her friend, Darby Martin





Bridget Niclaes introduced her dad, Tom Niclaes, and her friend, John Kulczewski

After another standing ovation, **Rick Wilson** announced that due to several unexpected donations, the scholarships to be awarded now stood at \$2600 for the selected winner and \$1600 for the other five students. All students received \$200 in cash money to be spent as desired.



While the judges tallied their scores, **Rick Wilson** introduced Margaret Burton. Margaret was one of the original six students selected as Overcoming Obstacles winners nine years ago. Margaret recalled the moment in the first Overcoming Obstacles event when the \$1000 scholarship to be awarded to the winner was augmented through immediate donations, so that all of the students received \$1000. Margaret is presently working with the group *Bring Change to Mind*, whose goal is to work in High Schools around reducing the stigma attached to mental health issues. One of the organization's main supporters is Glenn Close. Glenn will be speaking more about the organization at the Commonwealth Club in San Francisco on May 7<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm. Tickets start at \$35, and are available at:

<https://www.commonwealthclub.org/events/2019-05-07/glenn-close-bring-change-mind>

**David Schreiber** identified and thanked the judges: **Yvette Williams Van Aggelen**, **Alexandra Advocate**, **Ben Broadbent** and **Mayor Neysa Hinton**. The judges had agreed that Bridget Niclaes would receive the \$2600 scholarship.



Many thanks to this year's sponsors: **Rick Wilson**, **Scott** and **Sally Briggs**, **Karen Daniels**, **Mia** and **Jim Del Prete**, **Sally** and **David Ewald**, **Larry Ford** and **Gerry Reilly-Ford**, **Jim Passage**, **Richard** and **Trish Power**, **Diana** and **Daniel Rich**, **Dorothy Rodella**, **Harry** and **Susanna Simms**, **Jerry** and **Kay Warren**, and the family of the late Paul T. Pera. Additional tanks to our last minute contributors, who gathered over \$4,000 in contributions: **Frank** and **Kathy Mayhew**, **Jim Pacatte**, District Governor Barb Spangler, **Hal Kwalwasser**, **Les Crawford**, and **Tom Boag**. And thanks to O'Reilly Media, for use of their conference room.

## 🍎 THE FINAL BELL 🍎



With that, **David Schreiber** turned the meeting back over to **President Larry Ford**, who thanked the committee chairs **Tom Boag**, **David Schreiber** and **Richard Petersen**, and called the meeting one of the highlights of his Presidency. He rang the bell at precisely 1:30.

**ALERT!** This Friday will be the last day of the Rotary Foundation Month raffle. Tickets will be on sale before the meeting (one for \$20, six for \$100). Winning tickets will be pulled during the meeting. Prizes include: four restaurant gift certificates, eight or more bottles of wine, and Paul Harris Fellow points. Don't miss out!!!

## **FUTURE PROGRAMS:**

### **May 3: Trade Path Awards**

### **May 10: The Honorable Tomochika Uyama, Consul-General of Japan**



Consul General Tomochika Uyama began his career with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan in 1986 and has been involved in the diplomatic service for over 30 years. His assignments overseas have included postings in Egypt, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, and the Permanent Mission of Japan to the International Organizations in Geneva. His domestic assignments in Tokyo have included positions at the Economic Affairs Bureau, Latin American and Caribbean Affairs Bureau, and in the Ministry of International Trade and Industry.

### **May 17: DARK, District Conference in Reno**

### **May 24: Larry Robinson, Center for Climate Prevention**



Larry Robinson is a retired psychotherapist who now devotes his time to pottery, poetry and seeking solutions to the growing climate crisis. He has been a member of the board of directors of the Center for Climate Protection since 2012. From 1998 to 2010 he served on the Sebastopol City Council.