

Gala for Good Speech

Good evening everyone and Thank you all for coming.

On behalf of Chris Webb, our Rotary President, and our Board of Directors, I would like to welcome you to what I hope is the first of many collaborative events between Findlay Rotary and Findlay Young Professionals. What a great concept I think this is.

It's certainly our privilege to be part of this Gala for Good—a night that brings together Rotary, Young Professionals, and the community with a shared belief that when we come together with purpose, real impact happens. **This is such a natural partnership.**

This year's Rotary theme—"Unite for Good"—could not be more timely as it aligns perfectly with FYP's vision for this Gala. And Rotary's enduring vision—"Service Above Self"—could not be more essential.

Because in a world that increasingly celebrates being **successful**, we are here tonight to emphasize something deeper... something more meaningful... and that is being **significant**. **Significant** in the lives of others...our families, our friends, our coworkers, and especially our community.....

Success is often measured externally.

- Titles.
- Promotions.
- Followers.
- Revenue.
- Resumes.

And none of those things are bad. In fact, many of you in this room—especially our Young Professionals—are building impressive careers, businesses, and futures. And you should be proud of that.

But significance is measured differently.

Significance is about impact.

- It's about who was helped.
- Who was lifted up.
- Who was included.
- Who was inspired to lead because YOU showed up.

Success asks, "What did I achieve?"

Significance asks, “Who was better off because I achieved it?”

Rotary has always understood this distinction.

“Unite for Good” isn’t just a slogan—it’s a call to action.

It reminds us that:

- Service is stronger when it’s shared AND.....
- Servant leadership matters.
- Impact multiplies when generations work together
- Leadership is not about position. It’s about showing up and participating.

This is why the partnership between **Rotary and Findlay Young Professionals** is so powerful.

Rotary brings:

- Experience
- Institutional memory
- A century-long commitment to service above self

Findlay Young Professionals bring:

- Energy
- New ideas
- A willingness to challenge the status quo

When we unite, we don’t just sustain impact—we amplify and accelerate it.

To our Young Professionals in the room tonight:

- You are not just guests here.
- You are not just volunteers.
- You are not just the future.

You ARE the next generation of Rotarians.

Your mission—**Connect. Impact. Lead.**—aligns perfectly with Rotary’s core values. Let’s break it down.....

Connect: Build relationships that matter, not just networks that look good on LinkedIn.

Impact: Measure success by lives changed, not lines on a resume.

Lead: Lead where you are, with what you have, right now. Fix what’s in front of you!

Rotary is not something you “age into.” (although it may seem like it).

It's something you step into—when you're ready to make **SIGNIFICANCE** part of your journey.

We live in a time where **division is pervasive!**

Isolation is common.

And indifference is easy.

Choosing service—choosing unity—**choosing significance**—has to be deliberate.

It requires us to see beyond ourselves.

To challenge assumptions.

To sit next to people who may not look like us, think like us, or live like us—and still choose compassion.

That brings me to how I want to close tonight.

There is a poem called “*The Cold Within.*”

Some of you may know it.

It tells the story of people gathered around a dying fire, each holding a stick of wood—each capable of saving everyone—yet unwilling to act because of prejudice, fear, or resentment.

The fire dies and so do they.....

Not because they lacked resources.

But because they lacked **unity.**

The essence of the story is simple:

“*The cold within them froze their souls.*”

So tonight, as we gather **at this Gala for Good**, let's remember this:

The greatest threats to our community are not lack of talent, money, or opportunity.

They are division, apathy, and silence.

Rotary exists to fight that.

Young Professionals exist to challenge that.

Together, we exist to overcome that.....by Uniting for Good!

So as a Final Call to Action

Let us choose significance over success.

Service over self.

Unity over division.

Keep the fire burning—by **connecting**, by **impacting**, and by **leading...** together.

Thank you for who you are.

Thank you ALL for what you do.

And thank you for **uniting—for good**.

Here's the poem....."The Cold Within".....by James Patrick Kinney

Listen Carefully to these words!

The Cold Within

Six men trapped by happenstance

In dark and bitter cold.

Each one possessed a stick of wood

Or so the story's told.

Their dying fire in need of logs

But the first man held his back

For on the faces round the fire

He noticed one was black.

The next man looking 'cross the way

Saw one not of his church

And couldn't bring himself to give

The fire his stick of birch.

The third one sat in tattered clothes.

He gave his coat a hitch.

Why should his log be used

To warm the idle rich?

The rich man just sat back and thought

Of the wealth he had in store

And how to keep what he had earned

From the lazy shiftless poor.

The black man's face bespoke revenge

As the fire passed from his sight.

For all he saw in his stick of wood

Was a chance to spite the white.

The last man of this forlorn group

Did nothing but for personal gain.

Giving only to those who also gave

Was how he played the game.

The logs held firm in death's still hands

Were proof of human sin.

They did not die from the cold without

They died from the cold within.