

Meeting Date: March 7, 2023



Today's Meeting



Even though he left the Club bell behind, **President Shawn Seyk** took today's meeting on the road where we convened in the conference room of **City of Woodland Fire Station 3 (Springlake)**. Host **Eric Zane**, Fire Chief, Woodland Fire Department, led us in the Pledge of Allegiance. **Dan Stroski**, **Jim McGibbon** and **Steve Venables** got us through Rotary Grace.



President Shawn then thanked **Chuck Moore** for handling Meals on Wheels this week. **President Shawn** took care of a limited technology service as we did not have Zoom coverage today.



Shawn's Inspirational Quote of the Day:

'Success doesn't stop when you get there.'

No one guessed the author was basketball great **Michael Jordan**.



Visiting Rotarians and Guests



Tom Wendt, President-elect, Woodland Sunrise joined us today.

Lori Ross introduced her guest, son **Zachary Ross** who is currently finishing his EMT training classes and wants to be a firefighter. In honor of her son, **Lori** donated \$100 to the Rotary Foundation.

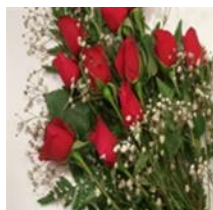


Birthdays



Gary Wegener celebrated his 75th birthday on March 4 (Detroit MI) with his family in the North Beach neighborhood of San Francisco.

Anniversaries



Tom Schwarzgruber got an early warning for his March 13 wedding anniversary (Woodland) with wife **Gail**.



Announcements



Sunrise Rotarian **Tom Wendt** reminded us of their **Club's Wings and Wheels Classic Fly-In & Drive In** taking place 10am-3pm, Saturday, April 29 at Watts Woodland Airport as part of Rotary Visibility Day. The event is good for kids and families. More volunteers are needed to help with the event. Find more event information at

<http://www.woodlandsunriserotary.com> . **Tom** went on to say **Tuleyome** is holding its **Spring Thing 2023** - a day of fun nature experiences - at Woodland Regional Park (20179 CR 102; at intersection with Road 25A) from 10am-5pm Saturday, March 18. More information about **Tuleyome Spring Thing 2023** is available at https://tuleyome.nationbuilder.com/tuleyome_spring_thing_2023

President Shawn says we have about 12-13 tickets left to sell for the July 29th Rotary bus trip to San Francisco to see the SF Giants play the Boston Red Sox at Oracle Park. A \$50 deposit per ticket is required for a reservation. Final trip cost will be \$120 per ticket to be collected within 30 days of the game. Other Woodland Rotary Clubs are now being offered the chance to make reservations. Contact **Yvette Roy** if you'd like to make a reservation.

March is **Women in History Month** and **Lori Ross** has a slate of amazing women, starting with today's speaker **Gena Bravo**, to be our program speakers this month.

Aniek Pflager is working on preparations for the May 9th **Senior BBQ** at Rotary Park in the Yolo Fairgrounds. This is an '**All Hands-on Deck!**' event for Club members, so clear your schedule to attend. Assignment signup sheets will be available soon. **Dena Lawrence** has prepared this event flyer.



Rotary
THE ROTARY CLUB OF WOODLAND

2023 SENIOR CITIZEN BBQ

Make sure your favorite seniors (55+) mark their calendars!

**TUESDAY,
MAY 9TH**

**LUNCH SERVED
AT 11:30AM**

**YOLO COUNTY
FAIRGROUNDS**

**ROTARY PARK
PICNIC AREA**

Chicken • Potato • Fruit Salad • Roll • Ice Cream

FREE OF CHARGE | NO TICKET REQUIRED



Please contact: **Aniek Pflager** at 530.665.4118 or aniek@vanbeurden.com with any questions

Chuck Maltese reminded us of the Club's annual **Mystery Golf Trip** which will take place Wednesday, May 3, 2023. Mark your calendars. More details will be made available soon.

Recognition



Being back in his old stomping grounds, President-elect **Karl Diekman** took charge of today's Recognition.

Karl started off by presenting **Don Huff III** with his 6th Paul Harris pin recognizing **Don** for his significant financial support of the Rotary Foundation.

Karl called **Tom Wendt** up to ask him his experience at Rotary PETS (President Elect Training) in San Jose recently which **Karl** also attended. **Tom** told the story that he managed to travel to San Jose only to find out he left his wallet at home. **Tom** then had to lean on his fellow President-elects while there. **Tom** contributed \$300 to the Rotary



Foundation in honor of the help he received. **Karl** then went on to match that contribution.



In questioning from **Karl**, **Eric Zane** knew the Woodland Fire Department was founded in 1870. **Chuck Maltese** learned the Maltese Cross was the symbol used on many fire service uniforms. **Chuck Moore** discovered the Cincinnati Red Stockings played the first baseball game in 1870. **Lisa**

Dunham found out International Women's Day is tomorrow, March 8. **Blair Voelz** learned the title sponsor of International Women's Day is the John Deere Corporation. **Mark Ullrich** discovered on this day in 1850 Senator Daniel Webster delivered his famous speech about slavery in the United States Senate (more about the speech can be viewed at

https://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/common/generic/Speeches_Webster_7March.htm)



Prior to our program, **Eric Zane** gave the audience a brief **tour of the Fire Station's apparatus bay**. He described the various vehicles and equipment in the bay, as well as explained how the station's mission, staffing and the possible future move of the

station to a new location closer to the housing in the Springlake section of the community.

Rags to Riches



No raffle today.



Today's Program

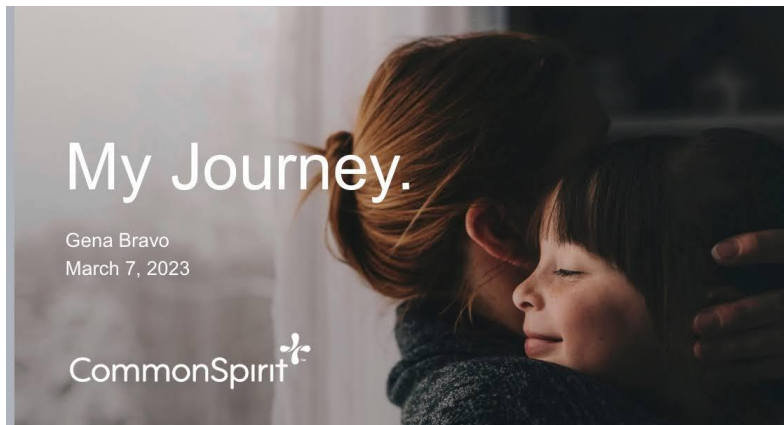


Our own **Gena Bravo**, President & CEO, Woodland Memorial Hospital, was

our program speaker today, giving us her personal story called '**My Journey**'.

My story starts with **My dad**, my **WHY**. My formation into a life of service began in the womb. My father was an Army helicopter pilot in the Vietnam War. During the last trimester of my mother's pregnancy with me, my father's helicopter went down. Everyone involved in the crashed died except for him. Some would say he was the "lucky" one. I would use the term lucky very loosely. He was in a coma for months with a traumatic brain

injury or TBI. He lost an eye. He had pins placed in his arms and legs and plates in his head. I am told the doctors informed my mom that he would never be anything more than a vegetable if he made it through.



He did pull through and he learned to talk, and walk, and eat, and eventually graduate college. He worked a full career and retired from the US Post Office But what no one knew at the time was that was the easy stuff. There is a tremendous amount of mental illness and

lifelong suffering that comes along with a TBI. Along the way, my father was diagnosed with severe chronic pain disorder, anger disorder, substance abuse disorder, severe depression, severe headaches, suicide ideation, seizure disorder and much more. He was very physically and emotionally abusive causing my mom to divorce him after a few years. He turned to alcohol to numb both his physical and mental pain. Much of my life was me and my dad raising each other. Navigating the Veterans Affairs Health system was quite a challenge. I remember as a teenager talking to his physicians and trying to advocate on his behalf after he had locked himself in his room for days.

I never thought once that I would pursue a health-related profession. But as my story continues life has a way of putting you right where you need to be. I was 16 years old and needed to fulfill a community service



hours requirement. I decided to complete these hours at a local hospital. The moment I walked in the door it was almost an out of body experience. I knew I was right where I should be. I completed my hours and ended up staying throughout my high school time. The Pink Ladies, as they were called, sort of adopted me and I was able to participate in every aspect of the hospital from surgery to the family

birth center, to radiology. You name it and I volunteered there. After I graduated high school, I entered nursing school and the picture you see here is my nursing school graduation.

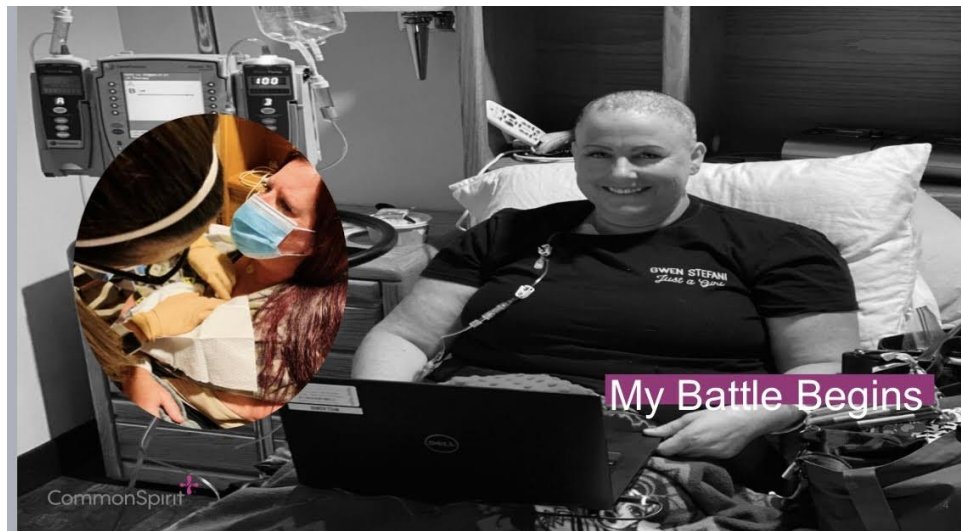


I joined Mercy General Hospital as a new nurse. My aspiration was to work in the Emergency Department. After working my way through the neuro unit and 5 years the

intensive care unit I landed my dream job in the ED. I was living my true calling. I was working for a mission-based organization serving the most underserved in our community. My personal story allowed me to understand that we all start out in our life with hopes and dreams and sometimes circumstances intersect our lives in various ways. Sometimes these circumstances cause people to become so broken they can't be fixed. Everyone comes into healthcare at some point in their life and it is our job when they do to treat them without judgement and with empathy because for some people it might be the only time in their life they ever feel kindness.

MY WHY - As time went on, I was offered various opportunities in leadership which I turned down. I never thought of myself as a leader. I believed my path was to make a difference on the front line. In my personal life I had taken on various leadership roles. I was the vice-president of my nursing class. I was the president of the local little league. Years later, my boss and my biggest mentor didn't give me a choice after our Emergency Department Manager took a new position. I remember the day vividly when it truly clicked for me. One of my former peers as an ED nurse ran into me in the hallway and asked, "how I liked being a paper pusher?" It was in that moment I realized that as a front-line nurse I could impact the lives of the patients I took care of each day but as a leader I could impact the policy and the care that was provided by every nurse in the facility I worked at. I grew in my aspirations and roles and eventually moved to Woodland as the Chief Nurse and Chief Operating Officer of Woodland Memorial Hospital.

April 24th, 2021, a Saturday evening, I was getting ready to go out to dinner for my wedding anniversary and I noticed in the mirror my left shoulder was swollen. I asked my husband "does



my shoulder look swollen to you?". He verified Yes, your whole chest is swollen. As I felt around the area, I felt a large hard lump in my breast. We went out to dinner and celebrated our anniversary. The next day, Sunday, I started to Google my symptoms, I tried not to let myself go down too many rabbit holes but by the end of the day knew I needed to get in to see my physician right away. Monday, January 26th, I called, and my OB GYN had a cancellation appointment and was able to see her that morning. She was very concerned about the lump and sent me immediately over for a mammogram. I was scheduled for an ultrasound that afternoon and by that evening I knew I had cancer. I knew before I even heard the words. As a nurse, I read the clues - the tech asked me if I was alone and the look on the radiologist's face is a look I will never forget. A look that said she would rather be anywhere but in that room.

My husband **Scott** (Firefighter with West Plainfield Fire District) was in the parking lot when I walked out still in shock, and I burst into tears. As a nurse, I thought this was never going to happen to me. I am the caretaker.

Over the next 13 days everything moved at a rapid pace. One of my closest friends and colleagues, Dr. Sonia Reichert, became my oncologist, I was diagnosed with stage 3 breast cancer that metastasized to 2 sets of lymph nodes. My MRI showed 4 tumors measuring 7 cm. I had biopsies, scans, and a port placed. On May 7th I received my first dose of chemotherapy.

I had a long road ahead of me. I had a very intense chemotherapy regimen over the 18 weeks, to be followed by a bilateral, mastectomy, 6 weeks of radiation, and a final year of chemotherapy (TDM1). It had been 2 almost 3 years since I had had a mammogram. The truth is as a nurse, a caretaker, I never learned to put myself first. I had recently moved to a new county, took on an executive role at a new hospital, and led a team through a pandemic. All excuses. As a nurse, I know better.

I thought I was immune, and I found out no one is immune. This has fueled my fire. This has made me realize I am right where I need to be, sharing my story, helping others so that their story is different than mine.



A worldwide pandemic made my diagnosis, what would be a difficult situation, the most challenging obstacle I've yet to face personally and professionally. However, I had the choice to let breast cancer define my day to day or to control

my story and let life prevail instead. Sure, I had to slow down here and there but overall...I kept on going. That is who I am, and I wasn't going to let anything take that from me. I made it to huddles and rounds, I helped to vaccinate our staff, and took to the streets to ensure those most in need also had access. I was recognized at Congressman John Garamendi's **Women of the Year** event for my public service work. I had chemo, surgery, then radiation and then got right back to my desk and the hospital halls that rang for me for what I know to be a higher calling.

I continued to make cherished memories with my friends and family and those closest to me. I received an unwavering amount of love and support. I hold dear every sunset, gesture, laughs, and tears shed. I embraced my body, my new body for all it was and all it could be for the treasured vessel that it is. It has allowed me to forge ahead, to love fiercely, and to serve proudly. To accomplish my dream to become a hospital president and therefore pave the path for many other women to follow. To be a symbol of strength and hope for many other little girls and young women that obstacles will always be part of our journey but that it is up to us how we tackle them and, in many ways, how our story is written. It has allowed me to live my best cancer life.





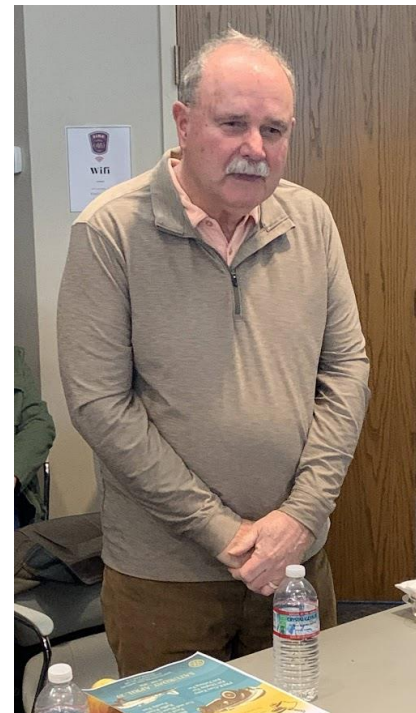
I don't know where my next chapters will take me. I do know I have a lot of life left to live. A life full of gratitude. Gratitude to everyone in this room and the work you do. **Thank you for the research, the knowledge, the testing, the**

treatments, the care, the kindness that has allowed me to stand here today - cancer free. If there is anyone in this room that has lost their **WHY**, look at any one of those faces, that is your why, that is why you do what you do.

Thank you!

Derrek Kaff mentioned his admiration for **Gena**, because when the COVID vaccines first became available in late 2020, Yolo County Public Health officials did not designate any priorities as to who would receive the vaccinations first. **Gena Bravo** decided then to make police and firefighters a top priority and helped them get the first COVID vaccinations at Woodland Memorial Hospital, an action **Derrek** says was really appreciated by those front-line public safety personnel.

Mark Ullrich, joined by **Roger Kohlmeier** who serve together on the Woodland Healthcare Foundation Board of Trustees, told **Gena** it is 'wonderful to have you as our leader'.



Upcoming Programs

March 2023

Water and Sanitation Month

14: **Jayne Williams**, All Leaders Must Serve
<https://www.allleadersmustserve.org/>



21: **Robin Taylor**, Lawyers Without Borders
<https://www.lawyerswithoutborders.org/about-us/leadership>



See more program listings on the Club's website at:
<http://www.woodlandrotary.org/Programs.cfm>