

# EARLY BIRD WEEKLY



**Exchange News.** One of our “outbounds,” Justice, had originally decided during her interviews that Short Term exchange (weeks instead of a school year) would be right for her. Recently, at the Country Fair in Salem, she became much more keen on the idea of Long Term. Then, another Long Term had to drop out and she grabbed the opportunity.

Congratulations, Justice!

**Assistant District Governor, Dr. Renée Fontenot,** was our speaker last week on developing an Elevator Pitch.



Renée left her Rotary Club of Milledgeville, GA back in 2005 for Oregon to be closer to her parents.

Now she is serving District 5100 as its ADG for the Portland Metro area.

Back in Georgia she would have classes of a thousand teaching the concept of the elevator pitch. Which, in essence, is describing our club in the ten to thirty seconds you might have between floors of an elevator.

We’ve all done it. Someone asks, “what is Rotary,” or “why are you a Rotarian?” You fumble for words that really sell it and completely misread the room.

Polio, for example. For most people here under the age of 40, polio is something that bad that happened to people a lifetime ago. So pitching eradication of something most people think is already long gone is the wrong message for the wrong audience. Or at least wrong for a 15 second pitch.

Renée’s club, Tualatin Rotary, educates children, builds communities and feeds people. And she would love to have you join her for lunch one day.

Setting the stage, think back. **How did you**

**learn about Rotary?** Who are we? What do we do? Why should the listener be interested? How can they learn more or participate?

For Rod, as a school principal, he was always on the lookout for ways to fund school programs and activities. Rotarians, he was told, have really deep pockets.

Linda says that Ron Wolfe invited her.

Bob says (tongue in cheek), “I was lied to.” Then-Fire Chief, Mike Sherman, invited

Bob to lunch at George Fox. For those of you that don’t know, Bob would help charter this club and would become its first “elected” president.

Doug learned about Rotary from his Rotarian father.

What did you know about Rotary?

Rick knew about our club from his friend (and former Early Bird) Terry

Paskett while helping Terry’s work with our parks projects here in Newberg.

Raquel (Brazilian native) knew about our youth exchange program and had read a book about one of our Rotarians given her by her employer.

Thinking about your elevator pitch, imagine getting the question, “why are you raising money ... again!?” Well, we’re always raising money for something, right?

Maybe it’s a specific project like a playground or fire-med equipment for a local or international need, or books, or clean water and working sewers.

Maybe it’s just lining the Foundation’s coffers. And if your listener bristles at rich getting richer, are you aware of how incredibly little of our raised funds go to administrative overhead? And how the money we use gets matched and multiplied by Rotary’s District and International Foundations?

Other examples of what no one wants to know in the 15 seconds you have is our six guy origin story 100+ years ago. Unless they’re related to Paul Harris or hardcore history nerds (Robin’s not reading this, is

he?), the focus needs to be more here and now.

The goal of your elevator pitch is, “how do I learn more,” or “sure, I would love to join you for breakfast one Thursday morning.”

Renée continued with some examples of neighboring club elevator pitches. These also read a lot like mission statements.

Portland’s Pearl Rotary is, “a member driven, action oriented, fun inducing club working in service to communities and growing today’s leaders.”

Portland’s New Gen Rotary is “passionate about service, community and global citizenship. We are a community of active professionals who love to volunteer together, network with other professionals, learn from other business and community leaders, and build great friendships.”

Where to Start: First, read the room (know your audience). Is this a potential member? Or potential speaker? Community project partner? Donor / sponsor / fundraiser participant? Or even a recipient of the services and grants we offer, like students or community members?

What does this person want or need to know? In other words, WIIFM (what’s in it for me).

Make it personal and draw from [Rotary’s seven areas of focus](#).

- Peace building and conflict resolution.
- Disease prevention and treatment.
- Water, sanitation and hygiene.
- Maternal and child health.
- Basic education and literacy.
- Community economic development.
- Protecting the environment.

Next up was a group exercise with ten minutes for each table group to come up with some ideas for our club’s “pitch.”

Who is your audience?

Why should they be interested?

Who are we, to them?

What do we do really well?

And how do we share how they can learn more and even participate!

We didn’t have time to go through all the responses but those may be sorted and presented to us soon.