

Dr. Mary A. Papazian
Remarks
21st Annual Turnaround Scholarship Benefit
Kiwanis Club of San José Foundation
Villa Ragusa
Campbell, CA
April 5, 2018
6:00 p.m.

Thank you, Marty, for that wonderful introduction, and thank you all for that warm welcome.

It is my great privilege to serve as the Honorary Chair of the 21st Annual Benefit for the Kiwanis Turnaround Scholarship Program.

Thank you to the members of the 15 Kiwanis Clubs represented here tonight...

...to the teachers, counselors, and administrators from 13 of our local school districts...

...and to the many donors, volunteers, sponsors, and friends who have joined us to raise even more scholarship resources for the young people of our region.

I want to say a special word of welcome to the many San José State alumni here this evening...

I like to say that the people of San José State are the university's legacy, and the university's promise.

The work of Spartan Kiwanis on behalf of Turnaround Scholarship recipients underscores this point.

You Spartans are helping to build a legacy of investment in the next generation. And you are helping to give these students access to the promise of higher education.

2018 marks the 51st year of the Turnaround Scholarship Program. I want to acknowledge what a tremendous accomplishment 51 years represents.

A lot has changed in our region in the last half century.

Robust state funding for our public universities and colleges has plummeted. At the same time, housing costs and transportation costs have risen. These place even greater strain on family budgets.

What has *not* changed in the last 50 years is the drive of young people in the South Bay to achieve their educational dreams.

Whether aspirations take the shape of a bachelor's or associate's degree, or a vocational program certification, our young people are determined to make those dreams a reality.

These students are courageous, and they're tenacious. This is especially true of the young men and women who receive Turnaround Scholarships.

And I want to say a word here about the term "Turnaround." I believe this word indicates the astute perception you Kiwanis have for the obstacles these scholarship recipients have faced.

And faced *down*.

One of the critical skills we can develop in life is the ability to course correct...to turn around when the path we are walking starts to lead us away from where we want to go.

This is not the kind of skill that is taught. It is a skill that only can be learned. And our ability to develop it depends on our persistence, our courage, and our strength of character.

I applaud you for honoring the tremendous effort that Turnaround students have dedicated to learning this essential skill.

By raising scholarships for these young people, you honor their resilience in overcoming adversity, and their determination to obtain an education.

You give them the resources they need to achieve their dreams.

I know the Kiwanis motto is this:

"Serving the children of the world. One child, one community at a time."

But as I look around this room...

...and as I see the resolve of several hundred dedicated South Bay community members...

...and as I sense the cumulative power of 51 years of successful scholarship fundraising...

...I'd like to suggest that on this joyous night, we tweak the motto just a little bit.

I'd like to suggest something along the lines of this:

“Serving the children of the *South Bay*. *Every* South Bay child, *every* South Bay community, one year at a time.”

Thank you. And my most heartfelt congratulations on another successful Turnaround Scholarship Benefit.