



Rotary Club of Centennial Colorado



Centennial, Colorado

July 25, 2017



BUSINESS MINUTE Allen Jackson gives the Business Minute talking about his business The Tutoring Center located at 6838 S. University Blvd.



Mark Jackson, our guest speaker, spoke on Overcoming Unsurmountable Odds. Mark was a successful stock trader who, by the age of 30, was a millionaire. After Sept 11, 2001, he opened his business to outside investors and promised more than he could deliver. He was indicted under the Colorado RICO statute and was sentenced to 15 years in prison. He had a choice of going to trial or pleading guilty. He was able to plead guilty to one charge under CORICO and got a shorter sentence.

His initial incarceration was at the Buena Vista prison. Upon check in he was given a sheet of paper with his charge on it. He told the guard he did not need it as he knew what he was convicted of. The guard said you will need it. When he got to his cell, he was met by an inmate that filled the door to the cell. The inmate asked if he

was a “CHMO”. Mark asked what a CHMO was and was told a child molester. Mark said no, but the inmate wouldn’t believe him and asked for his sheet of paper. After reading what the charge was he was let in the cell.

About 6 weeks after entering Buena Vista Mark develop a serious infection in his leg. At first the guards ignored his request for help but eventually they saw how serious it was. He was sent to Salida for medical treatment. Flight for Life was called and he was transferred to St. Anthony Hospital. The infection was so serious he had to be resuscitated on the flight. He had a 9 month recovery. An emergency room nurse told Mark he could get better but it was up to him to do it. At that point Mark realized that his life was up to him. He could wallow in self pity or get better by embracing his sentence. He chose the later.

After recovery from the infection, he was transferred to the Sterling Correctional Facility in Sterling, CO. This is the prison where death row inmates are sent. At Sterling he realized he needed to learn a lot on how to survive in prison. He learned to find the best inmates, never complain, take showers, work out, do not talk about your sentence, and sit with your own race.

At Sterling Mark started tutoring inmates in getting their GED. In the ended up doing something that had never been done before, he was able to get over 100 inmates to take and pass the GED. He tutored inmates on business and the law. He stated teaching self-help classes to the inmates.

While in the yard at Sterling he commented to an inmate that he was in for 15 years. The inmate said he had all day. Mark responded said that he also had all day for 15 years. The inmate told him to stop insulting him as he had all day for the rest of his life and that 15 years was nothing. A learning moment.

While at Sterling the Director of Prisons for Colorado was assassinated. The Sterling facility was put on lockdown for three months. During the lockdown, his cellmate was removed never to be seen again. While in the lockdown, Mark continued to do his exercising by doing pushups using the stool he had in the cell. He also started keeping a journal of his experiences. He plans on publishing the journal. The murder of the Director of Prisons was done by the 211 gang.

Mark’s goal was to get better every day. By making others better he said he got better and felt better.

2015-2016 Club Officers

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UPCOMING EVENTS

AUG 1—PAT GREENWAY: THE LISTEN FOUNDATION

AUG 2—CLUB BOARD MTG

AUG 8—MEET OUR NEWEST MEMBERS

AUG 10—VOCATIONAL SERVICES MTG 6:30 PM

AUG 12—CENTENNIAL UNDER THE STARS

AUG 15—SPOTLIGHT ON A CENTENNIAL BUSINESS: LOST HIGHWAY BREWERY

AUG 22—CONGRESSMAN MIKE COFFMAN—CONGRESSIONAL UPDATE

About 4 years after entering Sterling, his case officer called him into his office and told him he was being transferred to a prison camp near Delta. While in Delta Mark continued to tutor the inmates. After about 9 months, Mark was called into his case officers office and was told he was being transferred to a half-way house in Denver. At the halfway house, he got a job as a dishwasher at a nearby restaurant. He vowed to be the best dishwasher the restaurant ever had. It was always about bettering himself. About 6 months later he was sent home with an ankle bracelet.

His parole officer was concerned about the restitution he had to pay. Initially it was \$21 million, but with interest while in prison, the amount grew to around \$25 million. It worked it out with the court to pay \$25 per month. A year and a half after being sent home with the ankle bracelet he was paroled to where he has most of his freedom back.



Ken Hope doing his magic with one of the Little Libraries.



Inductees Mike Ober, Samantha Rowe, and Doug Hanna with their sponsors. Congratulations and welcome to the Rotary Club of Centennial.



John Peterson pinning the Rotary pin on our newest member David Livingston.



Randy Earnest getting his past president badge from our new president.



Samantha Johnston receiving her Appreciation Service award.



Tim Eunice receiving his president elect pin.

TRAVEL GIFTS

These are travel gifts from the past two weeks

- Shirl—honey from Michigan
- John McCarty gifts from Charleston
- Byron Koste brought back a leather and copper gift and some BBQ sauce

CLUB BUSINESS

- PrimeTimers— South Pacific on Oct 8
- Aug 12 Centennial Under the Stars