

5 minute Bio

I was born in St. Louis, Missouri-the eldest of 4 children-2 sisters and 1 brother.

I had an uneventful Mid Western childhood.

My father was a Rotarian and went to weekly meetings. When I was

12, my parents hosted a party for international visitors at our house.

Sra Suarez, from Puebla, Mexico told my mom that she'd like her to send one

Of her children to Puebla at an appropriate age and I was the child(I won the lottery)

Who went to Puebla. I heard last year that my mom came first to check it out(but I don't remember that)

Mama Suarez had 4 adolescent children, the eldest my age was Beto, then Nina, Reina y Lalo. She also had invited 3 more adolescents from Pueblo(sister city), Nebraska, y Oklahoma(other Rotary kids) -I stayed for 6 weeks and the other 3less. I became good friends with Nina and Beto immediately!

While I had taken Spanish in high school, it was an immersion into a very different world,and I LOVED IT!!! I fell in love with the family as well as the moles and many regional Mexican foods. My mom was not the greatest cook and I'd also never had Mexican food!!! I know this first trip to Mexico influenced me for LIFE.

We have continued our friendship for 59 years. Beto and I went to each others weddings, in Puebla and San Francisco. I even brought our 2 sons at 3 and 5 to meet all his Mexican "cousins" and they broke their first piñata, swam, trampolined and had a blast!!!!

I have gone sporadically over the past many years and I took my daughter in 2024 and we stayed with Beto, and spent 5 days there visiting with my Mexican family.

So I am a second generation Rotarian and it is very meaningful to me.

I went to college at CU Boulder, studied elementary ed and while I worked with 3rd and 4th graders my senior year, the wanderlust hit me and I ended up going to Europe for 2 months with my sister(who'd lived in Germany) and then 3 months in Spain to further learn Spanish.

Upon my return after a summer in DC with my aunt and Uncle, I got a job in Mazatlan Mexico as PR in a hotel on the beach and spent a year there. I had a friend who really taught me Spanish and corrected everything I did and I felt finally comfortable with my Spanish fluency. I travelled by bus from Mazatlan to Cancun for another month or so and ended up in San Francisco in 1975.

I worked for a Travel company who'd I met in Mazatlan and was a sales rep.

In 1983 I started my own travel company, buying and selling airline coupons(which at that time was legal) and other creative travel packages. I met my husband and we married in 1984. We have 2 biological boys and we adopted a 2 year old from Roslaval in 1996 when we moved to Virginia for 3 years and spent time with my parents, sisters, and family.

I sold promotional products with my brother in law who taught me the business.

We moved to SanJose in 1998 and in 2006, My son and I started Got Grease(my sons idea) which picked up Used vegetable oil from restaurants and hotels in San Francisco. We competed with large existing companies and the city of SF and it was quite an experience. Luckily in 2013 we were purchased by a large company who had been buying our oil from us for the majority of our time in business and I RETIRED!!!!!!

Now what I LOVE DOING is TRAVELLING, Particularly internationally!! Because of my Spanish fluency, we have travelled to every country in South America excluding Paraguay. And all over the world.

What I also love doing is GIVING back to our local community and internationally when possible.

I am involved with Patty in Peninsula Food Runners, Jewish Family Services(refugees mainly), as well as politically with Rapid Response for the immigrant community and Amigos de Guadalupe.

I've travelled to India twice with Shadhika a non profit to help young women study , not marry young, get good jobs etc all over India and it was quite rewarding

I look forward now to working more with Rotarian projects and helping those in need. Rotary means members try to use their time, skills, money and connections to help people-locally and around the world without expecting recognition or reward.

I have found a new home And I'm energized and excited with the opportunities!!!