

**Kevin Casey – Team Leader**  
**Rotary Club of Pacifica**  
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GSE Team Leader Kevin Casey, 51, has been a Rotarian since 1997. He was President of the Rotary Club of Pacifica in 2005-06, and was the first of his club to be re-elected as President for a second term in 2007-08. His favorite accomplishment as President was the initiation of the club's project of annually hand delivering children's dictionaries to each and every one of the 300-400 third graders (age 8) in his coastal city. Kevin originally joined Rotary to be more active in his home town. One of his first club projects was the rehabilitation of a disabled woman's home; after that mission, he was hooked. Since then Kevin has participated in even bigger projects, including, painting the City's Library and building a Rotary Plaza at the Art Center.



Kevin was born and raised just a 15 minute drive away in San Francisco, where he also he graduated from the University of San Francisco with a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration. **After having ten years of experience in banking and accounting, he became a licensed mortgage broker in 1994. Today he enjoys the challenge of making home purchases a reality for his clients in one of the most expensive and complicated property markets in the United States.**

Kevin and Maria have been married for 25 years and are raising three children: Nick (23), Peter (21) and Elizabeth (17). In addition, Kevin and Maria have hosted several exchange students over the years: Nika from Tbilisi, Georgia; Karina from St Petersburg, Russia; Giulia from Trenta, Italy; and Lotti from Munich, Germany. They are currently hosting Elena from Jerusalem, Israel.

Kevin is also active in the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce and Business Network International (BNI) as well as being the President of the Board for a local charity that delivers hot meals to home bound senior citizens. In addition, he also serves on the Board of his daughter's school where his wife Maria teaches science.

In his spare time, Kevin enjoys hiking the many coastal hills around his home and doing construction projects for family and friends. Kevin has completed 4 major personal home reconstruction projects, a skill he gained from his father. Kevin's father built San Francisco's famous Gateway to Chinatown.

## Jennifer Cohrs – Team Member

Sponsored by the Rotary Club of Fisherman's Wharf-SF  
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My name is Jenny Cohrs. I am a 28 year old Literature Major from the University of San Diego. After college, I moved to London, England to travel and be a waitress and bartender. This is where my love for travel was solidified and I made it a personal goal to travel out of the United States once a year to explore how people live in other countries. I moved to San Francisco 5 years ago because it is a great city and it is close to my family.

My mom, dad, sister, brother in law, and nephew live in Southern California where I grew up surfing, playing tennis, and using my mom's creativity to make up games in the backyard. Spending time with them is one of my favorite things to do, all based around humor and staying positive in all situations.

My love for being around people has kept me at my current job for 2 years working for a **public accounting firm** named Burr Pilger Mayer, Inc. **as their recruiter**. I help find entry level accountants by recruiting the best accounting students from 12 different universities like UC Berkeley, Santa Clara University, and Cal Poly San Luis Obispo. Among my responsibilities, I also organize meetings, charity events, and conferences for our firm.

The most exciting part of my job is learning how the recruiting experience we provide relates to our competitors. It is very important to stay educated about industry trends in regards to campus recruiting. There is a lot of competition between companies like Ernst & Young, and other local firms. To attract great candidates, reputation and experience is important. I have developed a Summer Leadership Program for young accounting students. I organize social events, conduct interactive presentations, and build relationships with faculty and the student body. We conduct interviews, offer internships and also leadership programs for emerging professionals.

**In Finland I would like to see how Universities and Firms work to transition students to professionals by visiting University Career Centers and Recruiting Departments at Accounting Firms. I would like to visit Human Resources (HR) Departments and Recruiting Departments in various companies like Ernst and Young. I would like to see how Recruiting Agencies work with accounting firms to place experienced hires.**

Recruiting operates in the Human Resources Department at my firm, so I also help train new employees adjusting to the firm. Visiting HR Departments would be huge benefit to view best practices.

Other interests I have are learning about teas, coffees, wine, vodka, traditional food, desserts, and everything culinary. I like to try new sports, adventures, and would love to go to a Formula One Event or better, try to drive on the track!!

I hear polar swimming, hunting, and snowmobiling are quite popular and wouldn't mind those as well, but only for a second. Then I would need to hit the sauna!

San Francisco is a very unique place and I cannot wait to share our secrets and also find out the secrets that Finland holds culturally, historically, and those that relate to my line of business.

## **Amanda Estes – Team Member**

**Sponsored by the Rotary Club of Central Marin**

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I was born in Savannah, Georgia and lived there until the ripe old age of six months. I lived in Valencia, California until moving to Reno, Nevada with my mom, stepdad and younger brother, Nick, when I was eleven years old. I remained in Reno until I left for college at the age of seventeen. I currently reside in my newly purchased condo in San Rafael, California.



Athletics has always been a large part of my life. I became involved in basketball and softball at a very young age, but volleyball is the sport that I fell in love with and it has shaped a large part of my life. I received an academic and athletic scholarship to Dominican University in San Rafael where I played volleyball for four years while obtaining my Bachelor's Degree in Liberal Studies. While earning my teaching credential, I was an assistant coach at the University, and I continue to coach at the high school varsity level and run a summer volleyball camp.

Upon graduating from college, I was fortunate to obtain a fifth grade (ten and eleven year olds) teaching position with the Larkspur-Corte Madera School District (LCMSD) in Marin County. Our district ranks in the top 10% in California. Hall Middle School was awarded the distinction of becoming a National Blue Ribbon School in 2000 and a California Distinguished School in 2006. I am proud to be a part of this dedicated community. The administrators, teachers, and parents work collaboratively to create lifelong learners and foster a deeper and more meaningful education for all of our students.

**I am interested to see how Finnish schools allow both students and teachers to explore and dive deeper into curriculum, and in my opinion, foster a stronger understanding and deeper desire to learn. I understand that the teachers of Finland are free to create curriculum while fostering cooperative learning. I am also aware that students are not tested until they are approximately sixteen. While I know testing will not disappear in the United States, I am eager to see how the Finnish produce such high performing students without the use of annual standardized tests.**

Successful schools are a direct result of surrounding support systems. I am intrigued to learn more about Finland's local government and how they are able to provide a free education for all students through the college level. The education system in Finland focuses on giving students the individual support they need in order to succeed. I am curious to see if that support comes from local community volunteers or government dedicated funds. I am also interested in learning about local businesses and their role in creating an overall successful country. In order to be as successful as Finland, there are so many pieces of the puzzle that must fall into place, and I am excited to learn how another country operates.

I am always looking for ways to improve my skills as a teacher in order to meet the changing needs of my students. In recent years, I have worked to incorporate the arts, project-based learning, and technology into the curriculum of my classroom. Most recently, I've been exploring the concept of a flipped classroom as well as collaborative teaching. I have enjoyed the challenge of implementing these new ideas and strategies within my classroom. I look forward to spending

some time with Finland's educators to further expand my repertoire of knowledge which I will then share with my colleagues.

**In addition to being a teacher and tutor, I am also part of the volleyball community.** I have been coaching in Marin for the past thirteen years where I help student-athletes understand what it means to be part of a team and help instill a strong work ethic. In addition to coaching at the college, high school, and club levels, I have also founded and directed a volleyball summer camp. For the past five years the camp has been held at Marin Academy where we have had campers and employees return year after year. One of the perks of having such a successful camp is that I have been able to give away several scholarships, giving children opportunities they otherwise would not have had. It also gives young adults an employment opportunity to work with young kids and share their knowledge.

When I'm not in the classroom or on the volleyball court, I love spending time with friends and family. I live in a beautiful area where there are endless hiking trails to explore. Being a sports fan, I love going to the San Francisco Giants baseball games in one of the most amazing cities in the United States. I also enjoy exercising, going to the movies, wine tasting, and traveling. I recently fell in love with horseback riding and hope that it becomes a large part of my life. I am always looking for the next adventure and can't wait to see what Finland holds!

I am excited to study and explore Finland's unique educational system, culture, government, and local businesses. I hope to be able to spend a good amount of time in classrooms and learning about Finland's education system. I welcome the opportunity to see firsthand how and why Finland is successful through participation in the Rotary Exchange.

I have enjoyed meeting members of my sponsoring club, Central Marin, and have already learned a lot about Rotary and the work it does on a regular basis. I am looking forward to this Rotary exchange experience, and by incorporating what I learn into my teaching practice, my students and the five other fifth grade teachers who I collaborate with on a regular basis will also benefit.

**Samantha Lief – Team Member**  
**Sponsored by the Rotary Club of Ignacio**  
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I am thirty-seven years old, married with three step-children. I earned a double Bachelors of Arts degree from Mills College before departing on a Fulbright fellowship to Morocco. Later, completed a Masters of Arts degree in International Policy Studies at the Monterey Institute of International Studies. This international degree led me to pursue a government career with the Defense Intelligence Agency. During this time I deployed to Mosul, Iraq to serve under Operation Iraqi Freedom. While in Iraq, I met my husband who was a Weapons Sergeant with the Albanian Special Forces. In 2008, I resigned from federal service and joined my fiancé in Albania. While in Tirana, I got married and wrote *Dancing in Combat Boots*— a memoir still pending publication. Upon returning to Washington DC with my husband, we decided to start new careers and build our own business.

Service to others is what initially drew me to government service. A strong desire to help people inspired me to get another diploma from the National Personal Training Institute as a certified personal trainer and nutritional consultant. We founded our business, Double Eagle Fitness in 2010. Double Eagle Fitness slowly evolved into a **health service business offering personal training, nutritional consultation, and basic self-defense classes for all ages**. Growing up slightly overweight and having lost thirty pounds enables me to empathize with what Double Eagle's weight loss clients experience every day. We train a range of clients: from those who are morbidly obese to those who want to build muscle, maintain weight, complete a marathon and those who just need a coach to motivate and instruct them with proper form and technique.

In the 1970s, Finland was one of the world's unhealthiest nations with a growing obesity and cardiovascular disease rate. Today, Finland seems to be one of the fittest countries thanks to a combination of strict legislation changes limiting salt and fat as well as government sponsored competitions to quit smoking. I want to know how Finland went from sickness to wellness to fitness in a matter of thirty years. America is currently the sixth most obese nation in the world and we need help! How do Finnish personal trainers attract and retain their clientele? How do Finns discern personal safety? Would Finns benefit from self-defense courses as we do in America? Since there is no longer an obesity epidemic in Finland, how can Americans benefit by emulating Finnish nutritional practices?

Living with Finnish families will shed light on how active people are and how eating habits are formed. Viewing what children eat at school is crucial to maintaining good eating habits. Eating food grown locally is important here in California so I would like to visit Finnish farmers' markets, grocery stores, butchers, and bakeries. I would like to visit or learn about the Finnish attitude toward organic food, genetically modified food products, slaughterhouses, and whether or not the Finns are farming fish or consuming wild caught fish. What is the Finnish attitude toward convenience foods? Do families take the time to prepare fresh food or do they simply purchase and assemble frozen or pre-packaged foods?

As far as fitness, I'm very interested in visiting any kind of Finnish sports/fitness facility. What types of fitness activities exist in Turku compared to what we have in America? What sports are practiced year round and which winter sports keep people active and fit when it is so cold outside? What role does the sauna play in fitness and overall health and wellness? To what extent are senior citizens active? I would love to meet local personal trainers especially those who run their own businesses in Turku. The 2009 CrossFit Games winner, Mikko Salo, owns a gym in Pori and would love to talk to our GSE team about fitness and nutrition. His location is CrossFit Pori Oy, Hevosaankatu 7B, 28600 Pori. Same with Aleksi Hakunti who runs CrossFit Turku--Virusmäentie 65 I, 358 40 5749628.

Regarding self-defense, I want to learn about crime in Turku. What are the most common crimes? What do Finns do to prevent crimes? Are there self-defense classes that are completely separate from martial arts? Self-defense is focused on raw survival while martial arts are a set of skills learned over time with no element of fear or surprise. Double Eagle Fitness teaches elementary school age children self-defense concepts as young as six years old. We teach them observational skills, awareness skills, assertive body language, confidence, self-esteem, listening to their intuition, learning the common ruses strangers use to lure or kidnap them. **How common is child abduction and bullying in Finland? How diverse is Finland and how does that diversity relate to the crime rate?**

I am so excited to get to Turku and meet our hosts—especially our host families. In my American day-to-day life, I follow the Paleolithic style of eating which means that 90% of the time, **I do not eat dairy, grains, sugar, or any processed foods.** While in Turku I intend to eat exactly as a typical Finn! I usually work out five or six days a week because it is part of my job as a personal trainer to stay in shape. While in Turku, I know I may not be able to train every day. If my host family wants to exercise, I would love to train them and show them that you do not need any equipment—just a small indoor space—to stay fit. Overall I am a very flexible, fun-loving American woman who has traveled extensively and knows how to blend in and adapt to Finnish ways. I want to become a Finn for a month and learn by immersion!

**Lacey Weiszbrod-Perez – Team Member**  
**Sponsored by the Rotary Club of Foster City**  
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Meet Lacey. Lacey is a 30 year-old newlywed who enjoys meeting new people and is very excited to experience the Finnish way of life with you. She has a large extended family that loves playing cards or board games of all types and eating big meals together. Be sure to ask Lacey to see photos from her two big adventures in 2012 – she became a proud auntie and ran with the Olympic torch during the London Olympic Games.

Lacey is a young ethics professional who took her mom’s advice to study law and business close to home at the University of California, Berkeley. Her career started in government and telecommunications before moving to Silicon Valley and focusing on the technology sector. Lacey is an accountant who currently works in the Compliance Department at Visa Inc. She writes the Visa Inc. Code of Business Conduct & Ethics and leads investigations into possible unethical behavior within the company. Lacey is thrilled to grow in her chosen career path by learning from the Finnish tradition of practicing principled business. Lacey would like to talk to you about what beliefs or practices makes Finland a country that is internationally recognized for conducting business with the highest levels of integrity. She is specifically interested in understanding how a corporate culture that encourages employees to “speak up” about internal business misconduct is created.

Lacey’s exchange “wish list” is to meet with employees at two of the World’s Most Ethical Companies award winners – Stora Enso and Kesko. She is also hoping to have a conversation with people from Nokia, Neste Oil, or any other **corporation that prioritizes ethics and compliance**. Feel free to invite her to join you at the office for a morning or afternoon so she **can shadow your vocation and meet with Internal Audit, Compliance, or coworkers in an ethics related field**. Lacey cannot wait to get to know you and bring best-in-class **workplace ethics** back to Corporate America thanks to your mentorship! The Rotary Club of Foster City also shares in Lacey’s enthusiasm to share friendship between chapters.