

Thank you to the CSIET for granting this honor to Roosevelt High School and for recognizing the work we are doing. And thank you for bringing me here to accept this award in person.

Thank you, World Affairs Council of Seattle, for nominating us and supporting us in this important work.

The late James Clowes, a professor at the University of Washington, gave this inspiration to many of those working to open the world to our students, said, *“Honesty and humility are the catalysts through which the world can be both heard and transformed.”* We take these words to heart at Roosevelt.

However, I want to talk about the students, because this is about the students! Our students live in “interesting times,” don’t they? This generation is bombarded by information 24-hours a day through an electronic network and has an awareness of the world which I certainly did not have at their age. But often is it a superficial knowledge gained through the filter of the media, the internet, and the entertainment industry. “A mile wide and an inch deep,” some would say. It is our responsibility as educators to help them engage on a different level, on a deeper level, on a personal level.

This happens when a student steps out of the comfortable bubble of home and sits down one-on-one for a conversation at a kitchen table on the other side of the world, over a steaming cup of fragrant tea. This happens when a young man from Yemen becomes my most valued yearbook staff member for the year. What will I do when he heads home at the end of the year?

In my experience it was a small group of dedicated, passionate and exhausted classroom teachers who dreamt of taking high school students from Seattle all the way to Cape Town, South Africa. When the anxieties and hesitations are overcome,

a miracle can occur – high school students in a black township in South Africa and their peers from a well-to-do Afrikaner school a few kilometers away, are brought together for the first time by a group of American teachers and students for a retreat. What is the site of the retreat? Robben Island, where Nelson Mandela was once held as a political prisoner of the apartheid regime.

In my experience it was been the lone Latin teacher laboring for years to establish a Roosevelt in Rome partnership with the University of Washington.

In my experience, it was not just a happy coincidence that in a crowded room one Halloween afternoon in Seattle groups of young people from Serbia, representing three cultures, sat down with peers from Northern Ireland, Catholic and Protestant, and Seattle students from diverse backgrounds, and shared their thoughts on identity, tolerance, and acceptance.

The Roosevelt High School Community is a deep well of resources - the intense dedication and risk-taking creativity of passionate teachers, the support of tireless parents, the encouragement of administrators, and of course, the excitement and endless energy of engaged students. Trust, Integrity, Honesty, Understanding, Listening, these are the pillars of our programs. For all these people standing with me here, in spirit, I humbly accept this award.