

Meet New Member AJ Figueroa

The first thing AJ (Arthur Joseph) Figueroa said to us as he got his new member apron and a fine-free microphone this week was that he had thought all along that Kiwanis is a car club. Over the years, AJ has attended and enjoyed numerous American Graffiti car shows and parades and concluded that Kiwanis must be a super-sized car club.

AJ, who is in the pool business, was talking with Phil Fugit one day and discovered what Kiwanis really is: kids, community service, fundraisers, camarardie, in addition to car shows and parades. Phil invited AJ to a meeting, and he's been a steady presence at our Thursday sessions ever since.

AJ is a native Modestan and graduated from Davis High School, Class of 1999. A couple years later, AJ joined the Marines and served five years, working on F-18s at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar.

Back in Modesto as a civilian, AJ went to work as a heavy equipment mechanic at California High Reach and, later, as operations manager at a Stockton bottling plant. At the same time came higher education: Under the GI Bill, AJ earned a bachelor's degree in business management at University of Pacific in 2013. Since 2015, AJ has owned and operated Figueroa Pool Service and Repairs.

AJ is married, and he and Imelda are rearing two daughters – Jazmil, 21, a third-year nursing student at San Francisco State, and Jocelyn, 13, a Salida Middle School student/soccer player. AJ says the Figueroa family travels a lot enhancing Jocelyn's budding soccer career.

When not traveling to soccer games or working, AJ likes mountain biking, cycling and trail running. He's also prepping for a half-marathon.

This is AJ's first service club affiliation. He said Kiwanis membership will give him a chance to give back to his community and be a model for his children to follow.

Phil is AJ's sponsor. AJ's apron is ready for signing. Be sure to seek him out and welcome him to the club.

George