

CONTACT: Suzanne Frey
949-858-8255
sfrey@toastmasters.org
Photo Available Upon Request

Toastmasters members elect Gary Schmidt International President

Top officer of 250,000-member organization hails from Clackamas, Oregon

RANCHO SANTA MARGARITA, Calif., Sept. 15 – Gary Schmidt, of Clackamas, Oregon, has been elected President of [Toastmasters International](http://www.toastmasters.org). He is the top officer of the world's leading organization devoted to teaching skills in communication and leadership. Schmidt was elected for a one-year term at the organization's 78th annual International Convention, held in August 2009, in Mashantucket, Conn.

Toastmasters training provides people with the great gift of confidence. Once you have confidence, you develop communication and leadership skills, and the best leaders use their communication talents to serve others. Schmidt's theme for his term in office reflects his philosophy on Toastmasters: Confidence. Leadership. Service.

An active Toastmaster for nearly 15 years, Schmidt has spent most of his career in politics, serving as a key staff member for United States senators Mark Hatfield and Gordon Smith. He worked as a field office manager for Senator Hatfield and then as a field representative for Senator Smith. Schmidt, who has also worked as a speechwriter, is currently the public affairs manager for Clackamas County.

Within Toastmasters, he has held a number of distinguished leadership positions. "Despite the forward momentum of our organization, we can always improve on our success," says Schmidt, a member of the Clackamas Stepping Stones Toastmasters club. "As U.S. President Thomas Jefferson once said, 'I like the dreams of the future better than the history of the past.'"

Schmidt first got involved with the organization as an unemployed college graduate who felt he could not express himself effectively in job interviews. "The greatest skill Toastmasters provided me with is confidence," he says. "Once we have improved self-confidence, we develop our talents leading others. And the more I learned about leadership in Toastmasters, the better employee I became as well."

"I credit Toastmasters for my continued personal growth and development. I'm proud to become the next president and look forward to an exciting year where we look at new and innovative ways to service our 250,000-plus members across the globe," adds Schmidt.

About Toastmasters

[Toastmasters International](http://www.toastmasters.org) is a nonprofit educational organization that teaches public speaking and leadership skills through a worldwide network of clubs. The organization currently has 250,000 members in 12,000 clubs in 106 countries. Since its founding 85 years ago in October 1924, the organization has helped more than four million men and women give presentations with poise and confidence. For information about local Toastmasters clubs, please visit www.toastmasters.org.