

DEAR FELLOW ROTARIANS,

On 23 February, we will mark 112 years since the founding of Rotary. It is incredible to think about how much has changed, in our world and in our organization, since the first Rotary club met in Chicago with Paul Harris as its president.

Some things are easy to compare between now and 1905. There have been changes in technology, medicine, and society. When we look at a map of the world in 1905 and a map of the world today, we can see what's different. What we can't do is compare what is with what might have been. There is no way to compare our world as it exists now with the world as it would have been without Rotary.

Rotary has risen to so many challenges in its 112 years. We've answered conflict with peace, and poverty with education. We've responded to a lack of basic health care with projects large and small, from equipping clinics in tiny villages to eradicating polio across the globe.

We will never know how different the world would have been if Rotary had never been founded; if any one Rotary club had never been chartered; or if any single Rotarian had declined the invitation to join a Rotary club.

But I will say, with absolute faith and complete confidence, that the world is a far, far better place now than it would have been without Rotary and that Rotary itself is stronger because of every one of you.

The world needs Rotary more than ever. It needs our courage, our optimism, and our idealism. It needs the voice of tolerance, cooperation, and hope that we can offer. It needs the example of an organization that has proven that the citizens of all countries can work together successfully, gladly, and in friendship.

None of us ever knows the full impact of our actions. None of us knows the effects that will ripple out from the things we do and say, the decisions we make, the opportunities we seize, and those we let pass. But I think we all know that when we choose to do good, good will follow; and that when we choose Service Above Self as our life's path, the direction it will take us will be a good one.

No one can see the future. No one knows what changes lie ahead. But I have faith in Rotary, and in Rotarians, that with every passing year, you will make our world a better place through *Rotary Serving Humanity*.



ON THE WEB

Speeches and news from RI
President John F. Germ at
www.rotary.org/office-president

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John F. Germ".

JOHN F. GERM
President, Rotary International

