

DEAR FELLOW ROTARIANS,

There are as many reasons to come to Rotary as there are Rotarians – maybe even a few more. But each of us has stayed in Rotary because it adds something to our own lives. Through Rotary, we are *Making a Difference* in the world; and the more involved we become, the more of a difference Rotary makes to each of us. Rotary challenges us to become better people: to become ambitious in the ways that matter, to strive for higher goals, and to incorporate Service Above Self into our daily lives.

What kind of difference Rotary clubs and individual Rotarians make through their service will always be their own decision. As an organization, we are guided by the three strategic priorities our Board has set in our strategic plan: to support and strengthen our clubs, to focus and increase our humanitarian service, and to enhance Rotary's public image and awareness.

In the year ahead, our clubs will have the support of a greatly augmented array of online tools, including a refreshed Rotary.org, a simplified Rotary Foundation grant application process, an improved My Rotary experience, and a rebuilt Rotary Club Central. As we look to strengthen our clubs, two specific challenges stand out in our membership: our gender balance and our average age. To keep our clubs strong, we need to build a membership that reflects the communities we serve and that will continue to develop knowledgeable leaders for generations to come.

For many years, one idea has stood at the heart of all our service: sustainability. Sustainable service means our work continues to have a positive impact long after Rotary's direct involvement has ended. We don't dig wells and walk away; we make sure communities can maintain and repair those wells. If we build a clinic, we make sure that clinic has a way to keep running without ongoing support from us. And when it comes to polio, we aren't working to contain it; we're working to end it.

Eradicating polio is the ultimate in sustainable service. It is an investment that will yield not just a long-lasting but a *permanent* benefit, on a global scale. It is and must remain our No. 1 priority until the job is done.

For 112 years, Rotary has made a difference to more lives, in more ways, than we can ever count or will ever know. Today, each of us bears a torch, its flame lit by Paul Harris, that has been passed forward from generation to generation, in *Rotary: Making a Difference*.



IAN H.S. RISELEY
President, Rotary International



ON THE WEB

Speeches and news from
RI President Ian H.S. Riseley at
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