



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Dear fellow Rotarians,

A well-known saying goes, “If you want to change the world, go home and love your family.” That doesn’t mean people should ignore the needs outside their own homes; instead, they should pay attention to the needs within.

It can be tempting, when our priority is service, to focus only on the things that look like service: the projects, the planning, the work that yields a visible benefit to those who need it. But to do that work effectively, we need to keep our own house in order. In Rotary, that means conducting ourselves in accordance with the principles of Rotary, treating others with respect, and following The Four-Way Test. It means maximizing our impact by planning carefully and stewarding our resources wisely. And it means looking after the long-term health of our organization by ensuring that our membership is strong, engaged, and healthy.

Our membership has hovered around the same 1.2 million mark for 20 years. We aren’t growing, and our membership is getting older. We have too many clubs that don’t have the knowledge or motivation to have an impact: clubs that don’t know what we’re doing on a global level, clubs that don’t know about our programs or our Foundation, that don’t even know how to get involved. And with a membership that is still mostly male, we clearly aren’t doing enough to become the organization of choice for women who are seeking to serve.

We are a membership organization first. If we want to achieve the goals we’ve set for ourselves, we need to put membership first. All of us have a responsibility to take membership seriously, not only by inviting prospective members, but also by making sure new members are welcomed into clubs that offer them something of value. If you see someone walk into a meeting and hesitate, be sure that person has a place to sit and is part of the conversation. If you’re enthusiastic about a Rotary program, make sure your club knows about it and knows how to get involved. If you see a need in your community, talk about it at this week’s meeting. If we want to be part of an organization that’s strong, that’s active, that’s having an impact – start at home, and *Be the Inspiration* in Rotary.

**BARRY RASSIN**

*President, Rotary International*