



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Dear fellow Rotarians,

In my travels over the past year, I've visited many strong, vibrant clubs and districts that are transforming their communities. When I attend their meetings, I can feel the energy. When I meet their members, I can see they are people of action. And when I look at their communities, I can recognize the impact of their work.

I've also visited communities with Rotary clubs that were hardly more than social clubs. It shouldn't ever be that way. Fortunately, there's a simple approach that I believe can help revitalize any club.

I'd like to challenge every Rotary club to come up with at least one high-impact service project. Each club already has the potential, the resources, to make it happen. It has the power to change people's lives — completely.

It doesn't take millions of dollars. One of the most transformational projects I've been a part of involved providing a Jeep to a group of midwives in Haiti. We had asked the midwives what we could do for them, and they told us they needed a way to reach expectant mothers in a remote part of the country. We supplied a Jeep, painted it pink, and put the Rotary logo on it. Three years later, we went back to see how they were doing. They were excited by the outcomes: They told us that the mortality rate for mothers and infants in that region had dropped by 50 percent.

That's what I call transformational service.

But Jeeps don't last forever, and after eight years on the road, that vehicle was on its last legs. So we bought a pink Land Cruiser. It's still on the road, allowing the midwives to provide prenatal care to women in that remote region.

What makes a project transformational? It doesn't have to involve a lot of money, but it has to reach people and have a major impact in the community. That is the key, and that is where careful planning and thorough research come in. So do your research. Leverage your resources. Seek partnerships that can increase your impact. And then take action.

Of course, service is only part of what a strong club must offer. It must also have good speakers, provide leadership development, involve Rotaract and Interact, and bring value to its members and reasons to participate in Rotary events.

If your club is transformational and well-organized, everything else will follow. Members will be engaged, and new members will be eager to join you. Fundraising will be easier: People love to give when they see how their money is making a difference and when they know the organization is accountable. Your club will be vibrant, relevant, and alive — and it will *Be the Inspiration* to those within its ranks as well as to the community it serves.

**BARRY RASSIN**

*President, Rotary International*