



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Dear fellow Rotarians,

One of the things I appreciate most about serving as president of Rotary International is the people I get to meet. Much of my time is spent traveling and visiting Rotary clubs around the world. A Rotarian welcome is something quite special. But let me tell you, there's nothing so warm as the welcomes that have been rolled out for me by Rotaractors. These are young people who are committed to Rotary ideals, who are pouring their hearts into service, and who, in the process, don't forget to have fun.

One of the highlights of my recent travels was a trip to Ghana, where I visited a district that boasts some 60 Rotaract clubs. They aren't satisfied with that number, though — in fact, they're excited about a plan to double it. They'll do it, too.

Rotaractors are vaccinating children against polio. They're donating blood where the supply is dangerously low. They're providing handwashing facilities to schools where children previously had no way to get clean. In short, they're all about transformational service: carrying out projects that make a real difference in their communities.

In Nakivale, Uganda, one special Rotaract club is making a difference in its community — which happens to be a refugee settlement. These young leaders are turning what others might see as disadvantages into opportunities for service, building community and opening up new possibilities to those who are most in need of them.

In Turkey, Rotaractors are visiting children in the hospital every Wednesday to lift their spirits by playing games with them. They also are mentoring new students at their university and teaching them leadership skills.

Rotaractors are blazing the path for Rotary to be more relevant in this new century of service. And World Rotaract Week, which we're celebrating 11-17 March, is the perfect opportunity to get to know your local Rotaractors and talk to them about how your clubs can work together. If your Rotary club doesn't already sponsor a Rotaract club, know that you don't need to be near a college or university to do it: Community-based Rotaract clubs are a great option. And remember that Rotaractors are part of the Rotary family.

When Rotaractors are ready to leave their Rotaract club, we don't want them to leave that Rotary family behind. I'm asking all Rotarians to help them make the transition into a Rotary club or to start a new one: I'm happy to charter as many new clubs as we need to give everyone a place where they feel at home while making the world a little better. Service should be fun, it should be inspirational, and it should be open to all.

If there's one thing Rotary has always excelled at, it's diversity. In the past, that often meant diversity of profession, nationality, and outlook. We've made great strides when it comes to diversity of age and gender, and as we welcome more Rotaractors into our organization, we'll become even stronger.

Rotary is powerful. Together with Rotaract, it is unstoppable. Working side by side, we have the potential to *Be the Inspiration* in every part of society, to every person we meet.

**BARRY RASSIN**

*President, Rotary International*