

President's message

Happy 115th birthday, fellow Rotarians and members of the family of Rotary!

Much has changed in the world since 1905. Then, the global population was roughly 1.7 billion. Today, it is 7.7 billion. There were 5 telephones per 100 people in the United States 115 years ago. In 2020, it is estimated that 96 percent of the U.S. population has a cellphone — and both China and India have more than a billion cellphones in use.

In the 115 years since Rotary was founded, seemingly everything has changed except Rotary values. We began, and remain, committed to fellowship, integrity, diversity, service, and leadership. While our Service Above Self motto dates to 1911, the ethos behind those words had already been ingrained by Rotary's founders.

As the pace of change worldwide continues to accelerate, the need for Rotary service is greater than ever. It's one thing to read about service projects, quite another to see them in action and to see the grateful faces of people who have benefited from them. Rotary projects change lives and connect the world. And over the past year, I have seen some amazing Rotary projects in action.

Gay and I visited Japan's Fukushima prefecture last year. Few places in the world have had to deal with the kind of devastation that visited Fukushima in March 2011, when a tsunami touched off by an earthquake led to disaster at a nuclear power plant. But the story of Fukushima today is not one of destruction; it is one of hope and renewal. Rotary grants have helped improve access to medical and mental health care for victims of the disaster and reduced the isolation of these communities by sharing the experiences of people from other parts of the world who have also recovered from disasters. Our grants have also helped to foster self-motivation and encourage sustainable long-term community recovery across the region.

In Shanghai, I learned about the Careers in Care program. This helps migrant workers fill the need for skilled professionals in elder care facilities. After taking a course, trainees receive certification to boost their employment prospects, while the care industry benefits from an expanded talent pool. Rotary projects like this are successful because they address a local need, and they have the potential to attract local government funding to sustain their impact.

And in Guatemala, Gay and I went to Sumpango. Global grants there provide mechanical cows to produce soy milk; an improved water distribution system; water filters; clean compost latrines; family gardens; support for income generation; and training in WASH and literacy programs. The food items sold there not only provide nutrition to women and children, but also create a source of income for local women.

In every area of focus, and in every part of the world, Rotary projects are improving lives and helping communities adapt in a time of rapid change. As we celebrate another great year for Rotary, let us rededicate ourselves to strengthening the connections that make our service so impactful. We will make lives better as *Rotary Connects the World*.



MARK DANIEL MALONEY
President, Rotary International



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In Sumpango, Guatemala, workers demonstrate the mechanical cow. Many children in Guatemala are lactose intolerant, and soy milk is a substitute for cow's milk.