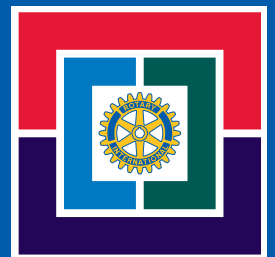


2009 INTERNATIONAL ASSEMBLY

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Speeches



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The Future of Rotary Is in Your Hands

John Kenny
RI President-elect

As I look around this room, I see before me the future: the future of Rotary, and the future of 33,000 communities in nearly every corner of the earth. I see the future, and I see the hope for a better world.

Ninety-six years ago, Paul Harris told those at the 1913 Rotary Convention in Buffalo, New York: "It is a far greater undertaking to be a good Rotarian today than it was yesterday; it will be a far greater undertaking tomorrow than it was today." You are the Rotarians and the Rotary leaders of tomorrow. Paul Harris's challenge to the Rotarians of 1913 is now your own.

Every year, the baton of Rotary leadership passes to a new class of Rotary leaders. Paul Harris passed it to his successors, and they have passed it down to us. We have the responsibility to them, and to all Rotarians, to do justice to our offices and the confidence that has been placed in us.

And that is why we are gathered here today in San Diego. You have all seen the banner that proudly proclaims our purpose this week: "Enter to Learn, Go Forth to Serve."

We are here from all parts of the world to share knowledge and experience. We are here to be part of the tradition of Rotary leadership that has spanned so many generations — to bring new ideas and fresh enthusiasm, to build on the accomplishments of our predecessors, and to leave better districts and stronger clubs to those who will come after us. We are here because we believe the words of the poet Longfellow, who wrote: "We often judge ourselves by what we feel capable of doing. Others judge us by what we have done."

When Rotary was founded, 104 years ago, it was founded on a clear idea: that people of good character, intelligence, and morals, joined together, could achieve a great deal more than they could alone. Rotary has never been a universal concept; we are selective in whom we admit, and that is as it should be. Rotarians are and must be people of a certain caliber, people with the capacity to do great deeds, the sense to do them wisely, and the strength of character to do them honestly and well.

I have always thought it important to bear in mind that Rotary is a voluntary organization, composed of people who are all themselves leaders. And so when addressing such an audience I have never thought it fitting to exhort or demand. Every Rotary club is and must be autonomous; the senior leadership of Rotary International exists not to control but to motivate and guide. We are here to serve the Rotarians and the Rotary clubs of the world. As they have placed their confidence in us, so must we place our confidence in them.

As district governors, you are embarking on one of the most exciting and rewarding years of your life. What do your districts expect of you? First and foremost, they expect, and deserve, your leadership. You are the leaders of Rotary in your communities, and as such, you have a great responsibility.

You have a responsibility to the club presidents in your districts, because the club is the most important part of Rotary. Everything we do, everything we achieve, begins in our clubs. Show me a good club president, and I will show you a good club. Your responsibility to your districts begins with them.

You also have a responsibility to remember that just as you have volunteered to take on the office of district governor, so has every Rotarian in every club in your district volunteered to be a Rotarian. And when working with volunteers, you cannot give commands.

So from where does your authority derive? It derives from your personal ability to lead and inspire. It derives from your vision, your ability to listen, your tact, and your powers of communication. You will have the respect of others to the degree that you earn it through your own conduct.

Former U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower once said: "The supreme quality for leadership is unquestionably integrity. Without it, no real success is possible." In Rotary, we know this to be true. And we as Rotarians must raise our voices to proclaim our values, for they are values to live by.

Every one of you is about to become a district governor. But first and foremost, you are all Rotarians. Offices in Rotary come and go with every Rotary year, but Rotarians we remain.

As Rotarians, we are all responsible for this great organization. As Sir Isaac Newton said, "If I have seen further [than others], it is by standing on the shoulders of giants." Each one of us is standing on the shoulders of generations of Rotarians past, and it is our responsibility to determine Rotary's future.

That is why, in 2009-10, our theme will be: *The Future of Rotary Is in Your Hands*.

Because the future of Rotary will not be shaped at RI headquarters in Evanston — it will be shaped in each and every Rotary club. Because it is for each of us — as Rotarians — to do what is necessary to keep Rotary strong. Because it is our daily actions, and our daily decisions, that determine the course of Rotary for us all.

The Future of Rotary Is in Your Hands.

I do not intend to introduce any new programs or to set any unrealistic new goals in the area of membership for the coming Rotary year. I will simply rely on you as responsible Rotarians to see to it that we have more fully paid members at the end of the year than we had at the beginning. And I will rely on you to do your best to see to the mentoring of our newest members, for retention is no less important than recruitment.

In Rotary, everything begins and ends with our clubs. Our clubs can and do work together; they work through their own districts, in cooperation with other clubs and districts, and with the support of our Foundation. But at the end of the day, everything that we accomplish is done through the strength of our clubs. And so each club must have autonomy to serve where and how it can serve best. It is not for any of us to limit a club's service to only the areas outlined from above in a given year.

But we also strive for continuity in our service, so that we may continue to go from strength to strength. This is why we have emphases, to encourage Rotary clubs to direct their work in the broad areas where we have seen the greatest need and the greatest benefit from Rotary service. Water, health and hunger, and literacy will be our emphases in the year ahead. In this Rotary year, I ask Rotarians everywhere to continue to learn from our experiences and to build upon our successes. I ask you all to continue to work for the health and well-being of not only children but their families, and of people everywhere.

Water is our first emphasis because it is the first necessity for every man, woman, and child. We could, I suppose, all live without oil, but we can none of us live without water. And so we must work to bring clean water to those who lack it, as well as ensure the safety of existing supplies. This is an area in which I have believed strongly, and worked consistently, for the last 20 years. And from my experience I will emphasize, as none of us can do too strongly, that water projects must encompass projects dealing with sanitation, because without adequate sanitation, our good work is easily undone.

Health and hunger is the tent within which so much of our Rotary service dwells. We must all remember that when we work in this area, we are also working toward the greater goal of peace — for how can there be peace in the world when so many will try to sleep tonight without having eaten today?

And we will strive as well to bring literacy, because, in the words of Nelson Mandela, “no country can succeed if its future leaders are not educated.”

If Rotary is to be relevant in the 21st century, it must tackle these real problems of water, health and hunger, and literacy. And it must strive for continuity in the years ahead, which is why your Board of Directors, after consultation with clubs and districts, has adopted the Rotary International Strategic Plan.

The plan is designed to strengthen and proclaim the core values of Rotary: service, fellowship, diversity, integrity, and leadership. Service, because Service Above Self is our primary motto, and our reason for being. Fellowship, because fellowship is why Rotary was founded. It is every bit as relevant today as it was in 1905; Rotary will only have a future if Rotarians look forward to every club meeting and every Rotary event. Diversity, because our diversity is our strength. Integrity, because if Rotary is about anything, it is about attaining and holding high ethical standards in business and private life. Rotarians’ dignity and honesty should and must be translated into our business practices and everyday dealings. This must be done universally, by every single Rotarian, because just as a reputation takes a lifetime to build and a moment to destroy, so can the good name of all Rotarians be sullied by just a few. And leadership, because as Winston Churchill said, the price of greatness is responsibility. And the responsibility for Rotary is yours. Because *The Future of Rotary Is in Your Hands*.

Whether Rotary will thrive or falter, whether our service will mean much to many or little to few, whether Rotary is known with respect or seen as a relic of days gone by — all this is up to you. *The Future of Rotary Is in Your Hands*.

In Scotland, we have a saying that I’m fond of quoting: “We must look beyond our own parish pump.” It means that we must look beyond our own home and our own community. We must look beyond our own needs, and we must be aware that ours is only one community, of one country, of the many communities and countries in this world.

In every one of those communities, there is work to be done. As Rotarians, we will not stand idly by. As Rotarians, we will accept our responsibility. We can, and we must.

My friends, I look forward to receiving your support to help me guide our wonderful organization on the path that has been laid out for us, toward a stronger Rotary and a better, healthier, and more peaceful world. I cannot do it alone. I will need your help. I know that you will not fail me, for I know that you care passionately about our organization. And the future of our organization is with you.

The Future of Rotary Is in Your Hands.

Membership

Dong Kurn Lee
RI President

It is a pleasure to be here today, talking to you about President-elect John's membership goals for the 2009-10 Rotary year.

You all know already just how important new members are to Rotary. New members are our future. They are the next generation of the family of Rotary. We must always be working to bring more qualified men and women into our clubs, to be sure that our Rotary family continues to grow. And we must remember to focus our attention on newly inducted members, so that they will feel at home in our clubs — and remain in those clubs for many happy and productive years.

We all know that the population of the world is growing very quickly. The world's need for service is growing as well. But Rotary membership is not keeping pace with those needs. In fact, over the last five years, our net membership has seen no significant growth, while the world's population has grown by over 80 million just in the last 12 months.

This is why President-elect John challenges you to promote the following membership goals next year:

- A minimum net membership increase of one member per club
- A retention rate of 80 percent
- At least one new club per district

Meeting these goals is essential for the future of Rotary service. We cannot maintain even our current level of service without adding a significant number of new members to our clubs, and new clubs to our districts. And we must all work to retain the members we have, especially our newest and our youngest members.

Sixty percent of the current world population is under the age of 35. Yet the average Rotarian is much older. Our age has given us wisdom and knowledge. But if we do not have younger members, that wisdom and knowledge will never be passed on.

When I was a young man, I was full of ideas and energy. I felt ready to change the world. I knew I could not do it alone. But my father was a Rotarian. I had him as a role model. I knew what Rotary was and what it could do. I knew that by combining my work with the work of others, I could make a real difference, much more than I could ever have done alone.

That is why I joined Rotary. And my life has never been the same. It has been richer and better in every way. I have seen and done so much more. Because of Rotary, I am now part of a global network of volunteers, and together, we are changing the world.

Most young professionals do not have the advantage that I had. They do not see Rotary in their daily lives and do not understand the opportunities that Rotary can offer. They have the talent and the potential, but they lack the outlet. Their abilities are wasted, or at best, directed elsewhere. They never know the joys and benefits of Rotary service. And this is a terrible thing. Because as much as young people need to discover Rotary, we in Rotary need to bring young people into our clubs.

They are the future generations of Rotary leaders. And they have the energy to inspire and renew our clubs. They remind us why we are here and bring us to new levels of service.

Our world is so rich and diverse. On our planet, there are countless different cultures and communities. And there are new Rotarians to be found in each one. We must reach out to people who are different from us and from the members in our clubs. Because this is the way to a stronger club, with more connections and better potential.

How many international projects began because one member of a club was from a different region and knew of a need there? How many projects run more smoothly because one member has a skill that no one else in the club has? How much have we achieved because of that one member in a club who is of a different background or has a different vocation? Our diversity brings us strength. It allows us to do more. We must encourage it, so that all of Rotary will thrive.

This is why President-elect John asks you to work in your district to meet club goals for stronger membership. He will ask clubs to increase the percentage of qualified women; to increase the percentage of qualified professionals under the age of 50; to bring in at least one alumnus or alumna of a Rotary International or Rotary Foundation program; and to work to increase the diversity of membership in all of our clubs.

Rotary has so much to offer the world. As the world grows and changes, so Rotary should grow and change.

President-elect John will rely on each of you to bring in new members and to help keep the ones we have, in the year ahead. I rely on you also, to begin to lay that groundwork now.

Look at the clubs in your districts, and see which ones are growing and which are not. Look to see which clubs are losing members, and find out why. Because retention is the most important part of membership growth. New members do not benefit Rotary unless they stay.

Talk to the current district governors in your district. They are, and will be, important resources for you. Talk to the club presidents in your district — the current presidents and the presidents-elect. Find out how their membership efforts are going now. Ask what the challenges have been, so that you will know where to direct your efforts next year.

And above all, each one of you should bring in a new member yourselves so that when you tell others to bring in members, you will have credibility. In Rotary, we know that true leaders lead by example. Only by bringing in a new member yourself will you be able to ask others to do the same.

I know that with your help, we can increase Rotary's membership. With your help, we can *Make Dreams Real* today and tomorrow. *The Future of Rotary Is in Your Hands.*

Water, Health, and Hunger

Ron Denham

Rotarian Action Groups Committee Vice Chair

I want to share with you this morning one of the truly great opportunities for Rotary service. An opportunity that reaches across the Rotary world, whether you live in an affluent society or in a country that is still struggling to provide the basic necessities of life to its people. I refer to the provision of safe water and sanitation.

Kofi Annan, former United Nations secretary-general stated, "Access to safe water is a fundamental human need and therefore a basic human right." Despite this right, 1.2 billion people lack access to safe water, 2.6 billion lack access to basic sanitation. And when I say "lack access to safe water," I mean there is no source of safe water within at least one kilometer of their home.

The consequences are devastating. Women and young girls walk up to 9 kilometers every day to bring water to their families, sometimes making the trip several times a day. And very often this water is polluted and dirty, spreading disease to all who drink it. For children, the several hours spent every day in carrying water is exhausting. They have little energy left to go to school, where they might learn to read and acquire a basic education. Many of the adult women also spend much of their day in hauling water, time that could be much better used in teaching or growing crops or tending livestock or running a small enterprise where they sew garments, for example — in short, contributing to the economic well-being of their families and their communities.

As we expand our view, we see a human catastrophe: 8,000 people dying every day for the want of safe water; 200 children under age five dying every hour from diarrheal disease, intestinal worms, cholera, and dysentery; a further six million people become blind from trachoma, which indirectly causes hundreds of thousands of deaths in societies where there is no capacity to care for the weak and disabled. Yet most of these deaths are preventable; they are the result of unsafe water and little or no sanitation.

Many more die from other water-related causes, such as the failure of the monsoons or protracted drought. People see their livestock die and crops fail. People go hungry and must watch their children die.

Rotarians are addressing this challenge. In 2000, the United Nations agreed on the Millennium Development Goals. One of the targets for goal 7 is, by 2015, to reduce by 50 percent the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.

Rotarians are rising to this challenge. In developing countries, they are engaged in over 2,000 water and sanitation projects. They are supported by thousands of clubs in the high-economy countries and, of course, by The Rotary Foundation and, more recently, WASRAG — the Water and Sanitation Rotarian Action Group. Together, they are responding to a wide range of needs.

In Malawi, Rotarians are drilling a borewell to bring safe water to an orphanage for children with HIV/AIDS, whose weakened immune systems are particularly vulnerable to the threats posed by unsafe water.

In the Rift Valley of Kenya, Rotarians commissioned a Rotary Community Corps to help over 1,000 households build their own rainwater harvesting and storage cisterns, thus freeing women and children from the 10-kilometer hike to bring water, often polluted, from the river.

In many parts of the world people have water, but it's polluted. In Guyana, Rotarians are helping a river community to implement rainwater harvesting. These low-lying communities depend on the river for water. In flood, the river rises many feet, washing fecal matter from latrines and dead and decaying animals from the forests. The consequence? Diarrhea, dysentery, and death, especially among children.

In the Dominican Republic, Rotarians built a factory to produce slow-sand filters. Thousands of people, especially children, have been saved from illness and even death by these simple filters, which remove 99.9 percent of bacteria.

And in Rajkot, India, a feisty local Rotarian, outraged that the city council would not provide safe water to 150,000 destitute, disease-prone slum dwellers, took matters into his own hands and recruited a team to build a dam. Some five years later, these people have safe water and no longer face the constant threat of disease, malnutrition, and death.

Sometimes, the problem is more complex than harvesting rainwater or digging wells. In Bangladesh and Nepal, people are dying by the thousands from arsenic in the water. Local Rotarians working with engineers from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology found that simply placing rusty iron nails on the top layer of a sand filter will remove the arsenic. As in so many cases, a simple, economical solution saves lives.

In Ghana, local Rotarians supported by Rotarians from North America have launched a campaign to rid the country of Guinea worm disease.

In Haiti, the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, Rotarians are supplying filters to provide clean drinking water to 15,000 to 20,000 students.

But survival depends on more than clean water for drinking. When basic personal needs are satisfied, the community can use water for irrigation and improve agricultural and livestock practices, thereby alleviating hunger.

The Rotary Club of Mumbai proved this in a region about 100 kilometers east of Mumbai. This community depended on the monsoon rains to grow rice, a relatively low-value crop that flourished in the heavy monsoon rains. Rotarians built check dams and ponds to hold the water. Now, instead of growing low-value rice, the community harvests three cash crops a year. The change has alleviated hunger and enhanced the health and well-being of the community.

I could spend all morning telling you about Rotarians in over 80 countries who are implementing more than 2,000 safe water and sanitation projects ranging in value from a few thousand dollars to several hundred thousand, all having the same purpose: reducing sickness and improving health.

Now let me turn to the corollary of safe water — safe sanitation. Imagine a life without a clean, private place to defecate and urinate, the embarrassment of going to the toilet in an abandoned plot or on the open street and, for women, the fear of assault at night. This is the reality for 2.6 billion people, mostly in Africa and India, who live in extreme poverty.

In Ethiopia, for example, 95 percent of the rural population lacks safe sanitation. An open field, or open sewer, is the local toilet. It may sound gruesome, but it is the reality.

In the slums of Nairobi, where one million people lack sanitation, Rotarians have helped the local community to tear down primitive, unsanitary latrines and replace them with toilet blocks to bring safe water, toilets, and hand-washing facilities to a disease-prone community.

In Natal, South Africa, Rotarians from the local club helped the community install separate toilets for boys and girls at the secondary school. The girls now have privacy. They are comfortable attending school every day. Sanitation affects not only their health but their education and, in turn, literacy.

Most of these initiatives are driven by the vision and will of Rotarians working at the grassroots level with the community. They bring together all stakeholders. They assess the need — the causes of disease, sickness, death, disability. They choose the most appropriate solution, one within the capability of the community and compatible with local culture and customs. It must be easily operated and maintained, and the community must be able to pay for the service in the long term. In short, it must be truly sustainable.

Appropriate technologies are often simple, as in the case of arsenic and the rusty nails. Another classically simple solution is SODIS (solar disinfecting). Polluted water is put into a plastic bottle, shaken, and placed on a corrugated roof in the tropical sun. Eight hours later, the combination of ultraviolet light and elevation of the temperature to 51 degrees [Celsius] will render the water potable.

Rainwater harvesting is invariably sustainable. Help the household to catch the water falling on the roof. Help the community to catch and save the rain falling in the watershed — divert streams, slow down the flow, build check dams and ponds, recharge the wells.

Whether the best solution is a well, a pipeline, or filters, it must always reflect local needs. As one district governor from India wrote: “If you give people what you want to give, it has no value. You must give them what they want.”

As with water, sanitation solutions are often simple and cheap. Hand washing is the most effective way to reduce water-related disease. The use of clean water and soap, especially after using the toilet or latrine, would save one million lives a year and would reduce child mortality by 45 percent.

Rotarians can call on many resources for assistance. When you decide to carry out a water or sanitation project, there are many resources at your disposal. You are not alone!

You can team up with other Rotary clubs already engaged in a project who seek help to scale-up to serve a larger community. Most likely you will want the support of The Rotary Foundation, a Matching Grant or a 3-H Grant, for example.

You could contact the district coordinator, who is a member of the Water Resource Group, for information on how to implement a sustainable water project or access relevant resources. Or contact local NGOs, who are familiar with the country, have specific expertise, and are always looking for opportunities to assist Rotarians.

Increasingly significant is the Water and Sanitation Rotarian Action Group, with almost 1,000 Rotarians in over 62 countries waiting for your call. They are developing “best practices” to ensure sustainability. They can help to evaluate specific technologies. But this group is more than the sum of its parts. It has assembled a library of presentations to help you, as governor, promote water and sanitation projects in your district. The Web site, www.wasrag.org, is the place to go.

The Future of Rotary Is in Your Hands. Encouraging every club in your district to undertake a sustainable water or sanitation project to ensure a disease-free, healthy community is the best way of achieving Rotary’s mission.

Literacy

David Fowler
RIBI Vice President

Can you imagine what life would be like if you couldn't read or write? What would your lives be like without literacy? How would you even get here without being able to fill in the travel forms, or how could you preorder your district governor's jacket?

Yet there are 800 million people on our planet who simply cannot read or write. Two-thirds of them are women and three-quarters of them live in the developing world. Without the prospect of an education, how can these people ever hope to lift themselves out of poverty?

Past RI President Glen Kinross has said, "Poverty is the root cause of so much disease in the world, poverty is the root cause of so much hunger in the world, poverty is the root cause of so much pollution in the world." Poverty, we know, also breeds crime, creates political unrest, and can even lead to terrorism. So if Rotarians can help the people of the world to read and write, then they will be lifting folk from poverty and working towards world peace.

In Rotary International we have a wonderful asset in our resource groups, and the one for literacy is no exception. As the general coordinator for two years, 2006 to 2008, I was uniquely privileged to see the huge range of literacy projects being undertaken by clubs and districts. These fall broadly into two areas: teaching reading and writing, and encouraging the development of reading skills.

Of the first type of projects, concentrated language encounter, or CLE, which was devised by Rotarians in Australia, has been an outstanding way of teaching reading. Through Rotary Foundation 3-H Grants and Matching Grants, this method has been used widely in Thailand, Bangladesh, Philippines, Nepal, South Africa, Brazil, and many other countries, teaching thousands to read.

Anyone who attended the convention in Salt Lake City cannot fail to remember the young Turkish girl, born without arms and sheltered at home by her parents until the age of 18 because of their concerns for her well-being. This girl, Emine Yüzay, heard from her brothers and sisters about a free CLE course being sponsored by Rotarians. She joined the course and managed to read, turning the pages with her toes. She became so successful and changed by these new skills that she now teaches Turkish women to read and write using the CLE method. And, thanks to the magic that is Rotary, Emine now has prosthetic arms. Emine Yüzay, a literacy champion indeed.

Rotarians are also helping to teach people to read using a method called CALS, the computer-assisted learning system. This originated in Canada and can be used anywhere in the world where there is a computer with a broadband connection.

Projects that encourage the love of reading involve many clubs working with their local schools by listening to students practicing their reading or by donating books to schools or libraries. Providing dictionaries as gifts to schoolchildren is really popular in the United States and Canada (90,000 were ordered last year in Florida alone), and the idea has now spread to the UK (55,000 last year), Nigeria (22,000 last year), New Zealand, and other parts of the Rotary world. Most dictionaries have a bookplate in the front saying that they are a gift from a Rotary club, and so they become gifts for life and are a lasting memento of a link with Rotary, both for children and parents.

In 2001, Rotarians in Texas started sending containers loaded with books and school supplies to a district in South Africa. And this continues today. The U.S. effort has now spread well beyond

Texas, with 16 states contributing to the project. Shipments have grown from three every year to three every month, and the books are now distributed throughout southern Africa. These Rotarians are truly literacy champions.

Rotarians realize that help with literacy is needed at home as well as abroad, and that a lack of literacy skills can be a problem for adults as well as children. In the United Kingdom, we have five million adults who cannot read or write and can't read safety instructions on machinery or labels on medicine bottles.

Adults with reading needs tend to require specialized help. Even more of a challenge is our prison populations, so many of whom are illiterate. And, of course, illiteracy itself is a form of imprisonment, or even slavery. Indeed, 150 years ago, it was illegal to teach a slave to read. The reason? Literacy is the first step to freedom!

But there are Rotarians who do help with these challenging literacy projects, especially with young offenders. Once these young people can read and write well enough to fill in the forms to get a job, many don't return to prison again. It is also remarkable to see how rapidly adults learn to read, once they have overcome the barriers that have prevented them from learning in the past. They learn in just a matter of months rather than years. And, it is often said, if you teach a woman to read, then she will teach her children or grandchildren to read.

So there are many opportunities for Rotarians to get involved with literacy projects. Whether for young or old, at home or abroad, there will be literacy projects for your districts and your clubs.

The RI Literacy Resource Group can help with project ideas and ways to get literacy projects underway. Just go to the RI Web site and search the keyword "literacy," and you will find a wealth of brochures, sample projects, fact sheets, and suggested contacts. The resource group encourages the organization of literacy seminars in clubs, districts, and zones and the presentation of awards to literacy champions, who could be Rotarians, teachers, or students.

If I leave you with just one thought today, it must be that a literacy project is something that each and every club in Rotary International can undertake.

This then is our opportunity. For those of us who have been lucky enough to learn to read and to write, for those of us who have benefited from an education and have had the opportunity to avoid a life in poverty: We can all be literacy champions. Rotary can be the world's literacy champion. Let's do it!

Our Rotary Foundation Today

Jonathan Majiyagbe
Rotary Foundation Trustee Chair

I have been asked to speak this morning on the topic of The Rotary Foundation today, which is a more challenging task than one might imagine. Right now, our Foundation is at perhaps the most pivotal point in its history. Through our Future Vision Plan, we are transforming our way of thinking and operating, and building “A Foundation for the Future.” The Rotary Foundation today is not what it was yesterday, nor what it will be tomorrow. We are in transition, a state of flux that will propel us into what promises to be an extraordinary future.

Fortunately, our Foundation is very well-positioned to embark on such radical changes. In 2007-08, contributions of almost US\$115 million to our Annual Programs Fund broke the previous year's record by more than \$11 million. The Arch C. Klumph Society welcomed 25 new members who contributed \$250,000 or more, and the number of Major Donors who contributed \$10,000 grew by 147. We expect 2008-09 to be an even more successful year. In 2009-10, you will be asked to build on these successes and lead Rotary and its Foundation on to still greater achievement.

In addition to an increased level of giving in recent years, we've also seen an explosion in the number of grant applications, especially for Matching Grants. In fact, this year, we will be awarding our 30,000th Matching Grant. To put this in perspective, let's consider the fact that the first 10,000 Matching Grants were awarded in the 35 years between 1965, when the program started, and 2000. It took only four years to award the second 10,000 grants, and now, we are fast approaching the 30,000 mark.

The popularity of the Matching Grants program says many things about The Rotary Foundation and Rotarians. It speaks to Rotarians' growing interest in international service and the way they seize opportunities to help people in need. And it reflects the Foundation's desire to address specific issues of great concern. In the areas of water and sanitation, literacy and education, and health and hunger, for example, our Matching Grants projects are making an enormous difference in the world.

In part, it was the surge of interest in Matching Grants that led us to embark on the Future Vision Plan. From an administrative standpoint, it has become increasingly difficult and sometimes financially counterproductive to keep up with the demand for this program. In some cases, our administrative costs even exceeded the amount of the grant. On the positive side, we saw how enthusiastic Rotarians were about humanitarian grants and how proficient they were becoming in carrying out these projects.

As you will learn shortly and in more detail from Trustee Ron Burton, the Future Vision Plan simplifies the grant-making process, which will cut administrative costs. It will also give Rotarians more flexibility and provide them with more innovative and ambitious ways to carry out service in their communities and abroad.

Two of our programs will remain unchanged: PolioPlus and the Rotary Centers for International Studies.

PolioPlus is our corporate project and the top priority of Rotary International and The Rotary Foundation. With the support of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, we now have the opportunity to finally cross the finish line to a polio-free world. Eradicating a disease is not easy. We've encountered many obstacles: war, natural disasters, political issues, and lack of sufficient funds. But Rotarians have always found a way around those obstacles.

Dr. Margaret Chan, director-general of the World Health Organization, lauded Rotarians for their ability to “open doors at the highest political levels and open the doors of homes at the grass-roots level.” She attributed this skill to the respect and trust that Rotarians have earned. I agree, but I would add another quality to that assessment — tenacity.

Rotarians have worked for almost 25 years for a polio-free world. We have raised hundreds of millions of dollars and volunteered countless hours to mobilize and immunize. We have never slowed down or considered giving up. We are almost there. And if ever we needed to be tenacious and to persevere, now is that time.

As district governors, you can motivate your clubs to raise the money needed to meet Rotary’s challenge. Talk to new clubs in your district and new Rotarians who have not had the opportunity to support our earlier fundraising efforts for polio eradication. We cannot let this opportunity slip away. We must keep our promise to the children of the world.

Another program that will not be affected by the Future Vision Plan is our Rotary Centers for peace — though, certainly, their purpose fits nicely with the plan’s area of focus on peace and conflict prevention/resolution. Today, more than 400 graduates of our Rotary peace programs are working in the areas of conflict resolution, humanitarian aid, diplomacy, and government. Each year, about 80 more Rotary World Peace Fellows join their colleagues, putting Rotary’s ideals into action in war zones and unstable regions worldwide.

This growing network of peacemakers has the potential to transform our world from a place where the smallest conflict can escalate into a full-blown war to an environment where diplomacy and conflict resolution are the first options of choice. As Rotary Center graduate Nani Mahanta put it: “It’s not about bringing peace overnight. It’s an attempt to work for a worthy goal, where the resources of society could be used for productive purposes. It’s about accepting difference and resolving conflicts through dialogue, institution building, and ensuring human security.”

One obstacle to that form of peacemaking has been the lack of people educated and trained in conflict resolution. The Rotary Centers program was designed specifically to fill that gap, but we have only just begun. We must educate more future peacemakers and send them into our troubled world where their skills are so sorely needed. Our Rotary Centers Major Gift Initiative seeks to ensure the continuation of this worthy program by building an endowment of \$95 million by 2015. Your district can help. Consider becoming a Peacebuilder District by contributing \$25,000 from your District Designated Fund.

I have mentioned the Rotary challenge for polio eradication and the fundraising initiative for our peace centers. Then, of course, we have Every Rotarian, Every Year, the fundraising effort that supports our humanitarian and educational programs, and the Permanent Fund, which will enable The Rotary Foundation to continue its vital work for generations to come. You might say that the Foundation is asking a lot of Rotarians. But let’s consider the reasons:

In our world today, an estimated 600 million to 1 billion people suffer from malnutrition, with 20,000 individuals dying each day from hunger-related causes.

A billion people lack access to safe drinking water, and one half of the people in the developing world are suffering from diseases caused by contaminated water.

An estimated 880 million adults — two-thirds of them women — cannot read or write. There are 42 million people living with HIV/AIDS worldwide, while millions of others suffer from tuberculosis, malaria, and other infectious diseases.

More than 20 significant armed conflicts are underway in the world, with some 300,000 child soldiers pressed into combat. As a result of these conflicts, over 35 million people are either displaced within their own homeland or are refugees in another country.

This vast group of people who live in poverty, whose basic needs are not being met, must be given hope. Hope to see their own lives improved, and hope to see the lives of their children improved. For without that hope, we will see our world dissolve into further conflict, with degraded living conditions and increased misery. Family of Rotary, The Rotary Foundation can be a source for that hope.

The realities we now face are challenges that Rotarians can meet by supporting The Rotary Foundation and by actively participating in its programs. The Rotary Foundation today is preparing to become even more responsive to the urgent needs that we see all around us; but we cannot do it without the enthusiastic support and participation of every Rotary district.

This is an exciting time to be a Rotary leader. When you go back to your districts, I hope that each one of you will promote the changes that will create a strong and vibrant Rotary Foundation, a Foundation that will address the urgent needs for clean water, sufficient food, adequate health care, and education for all. A Foundation that promotes understanding and brings peace. A Foundation that will be recognized worldwide for its achievements in all of these areas. The Rotary Foundation, a Foundation for the future.

Future Vision Plan

Ron Burton

Rotary Foundation Trustee Vice Chair

It has been a few years since I was sitting where you are today, but I vividly remember my experience at the International Assembly. It was full of excitement and one that I'll never forget. It brought many new friends from every corner of the globe and gave me the opportunity to witness firsthand the true internationality of Rotary for the first time. It also presented a tremendous challenge. I remember the massive amount of information that was presented, the outstanding speakers in the plenary sessions, and the dedicated training leaders. The Rotary experience never ends.

Today, my friends, I have the pleasure of sharing with you some exciting information about our Rotary Foundation and encouraging each one of you to join The Rotary Foundation in its vision to build "A Foundation for the Future."

As a member of the Future Vision Committee for the past two years, I can tell you that the work that the committee is doing is the most fulfilling and challenging, yet frustrating and exhausting, that I have ever done in Rotary. When I return home after these meetings, I am not only fulfilled but completely worn out, as the meetings are always long and spirited. The work that has been completed thus far has been comprehensive. I hope you have some familiarity with the Future Vision Plan. Regardless of your level of knowledge, I encourage you to visit the Foundation booth here at the assembly to learn more details of the plan and to visit Rotary's Web site to find more information on those details.

Today, I get to share with you my excitement about this unprecedented opportunity for our Foundation in the coming years. I am confident that each of you possesses the resilience to adapt to the change being considered for our new Foundation and challenge you to be very open to the ideas being considered.

So, you ask, "Why the change?"

Based on frequent and focused feedback from Rotarians worldwide, the Trustees recognized the need to reassess our Foundation's current programs and operations and to envision its potential in our second century of service beginning in 2017. Rotarians worldwide have asked for a more strategic approach in leveraging the Rotary brand, our expertise, our leadership, and the commitment we bring to the table. The Trustees listened to these concerns and formulated the future vision based on this feedback.

As my district governor classmate, Past Rotary Foundation Trustee Chair Bob Scott, said, "Being everything to everyone has left the Foundation struggling to realize its mission." The Rotary Foundation's programs have not changed significantly since they were established. Scholarships began in 1947; both Group Study Exchange and the Matching Grants programs began in 1965. And — guess what? — they all operate in much the same way as when they began. Yet the world has changed significantly since these programs first started. Humanitarian and educational needs are growing, and The Rotary Foundation can help Rotarians respond more effectively.

The Foundation's significant growth has also been a challenge. We have been a victim of our own success! The Foundation has to remain relevant to address priority world needs of those most in need: the children, the poor, the hungry, and the less fortunate with limited resources and opportunities.

We must continually strive to improve our Foundation, making it stronger, more prominent, and more accessible. We must focus our work on positively impacting those who need assistance in making their lives more productive and successful, which will make the world a better place for all.

The Rotary Foundation has gained significant recognition in recent years because of its leadership in polio eradication. Our partnership with the World Health Organization, UNICEF, and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has greatly enhanced Rotary's image in the world of international development.

The Future Vision Plan offers the opportunity to deliver the kind of outcomes that will help the Foundation and its work be more recognizable and have a global impact.

The Rotary Foundation has focused on this transformation to integrate the passion and commitment of our 1.2 million plus Rotarians, to leverage the strengths and successes of our current Foundation service projects and activities focused on "Doing Good in the World," and to address the major concerns expressed by Rotarians.

So let's talk about the emotions and stages of change we understand will occur as we move forward in the Future Vision Plan. I am sure you would agree with me that change brings discomfort. Whether or not we perceive this change to be "good" or "bad," I can guarantee you that there will be a sense of loss of what was. Maybe we even doubt the facts, doubt our doubts, and struggle to find information about the change that we believe is valid. Folks, I admit that I am not absolutely, 100 percent committed to every aspect of the plan. However, I have always said and repeat this afternoon that the plan as it stands today will not be the final plan after the pilot phase. But I can tell you all that I do believe we need to change and recognize that the Future Vision Plan is moving our Foundation in the right direction.

As we progress in this initiative, the change and all it means will hopefully become clearer and start to settle in. And where we are today is a pivotal place; we must move on with the change and discover the possibilities that change presents. I encourage each one of you to do so.

At the next stage, the pilot phase, we will see and understand the light at the end of the tunnel. We will have a new sense of control and hope. We will be optimistic about the good outcomes, because we have choices in the plan. And, in the end, we will understand the change and be more confident. We are all thinking logically, and our behavior is much more productive in moving our Foundation forward. We have insight into the rewards of the change and are successful in building the new Foundation. What a wonderful success story!

Now, you may be asking yourself, "What are the benefits? What's in this for me?" Let me share some key points that may address your questions:

The Rotary Foundation's mission clearly defines the scope of activity in the areas of peace and international understanding, health, education, and poverty alleviation. The Future Vision Plan directly supports the mission of The Rotary Foundation by promoting activities within these key areas. I believe Rotarians support this mission in the work they do today. We are laying "A Foundation for the Future" that will allow Rotarians more flexibility in effectively responding to the growing needs around the world, whether in their local communities or in a community on the other side of the globe. The plan attempts to optimize contributions to our Foundation so that clubs and districts can maximize the use of funds for greater impact and sustainability in their work.

By leveraging our resources and focusing on significant outcomes, Rotarians and the Foundation can reach more people in need and make a more enduring impact. It is important to remember that all existing humanitarian and educational activities are possible under the new grant structure — but in a different way. The Trustees and other senior leaders recognize the significance of the change that is being put forth. The change affects (1) the grassroots — Rotarians, clubs, and districts; (2) the leadership; and (3) the Secretariat services. The plan emphasizes a new way of doing business to achieve our mission of Doing Good in the World.

You will learn more about the pilot in the breakout session this afternoon. The intent of the pilot is to find out what works and what doesn't. The pilot is a critical step in validating the strategies and assumptions in the plan. We are confident in the plan, but we also recognize that it will have challenges and unknowns that will be addressed and evaluated by the districts that agree to participate in the pilot.

After this assembly, the Foundation will be asking interested districts to apply to be a pilot district and help implement the Future Vision Plan. Once again, this will be a grassroots effort. That will ensure Rotarian commitment when the Future Vision Plan is implemented throughout the entire Rotary world.

The Foundation believes that the Future Vision Plan will:

1. Simplify the Foundation programs and administration to make it easier to understand and provide better ways for Rotarians to do good in the world
2. Focus the service interests of Rotarians and the Rotary movement to align service outcomes with the mission of the Foundation
3. Increase ownership of Foundation activities at the local level
4. Provide the necessary funding to achieve the goals by leveraging resources of all stakeholders and potential partners
5. Heighten recognition, visibility, and fundraising capabilities

Our mission is to enable Rotarians to advance world understanding, goodwill, and peace through the improvement of health, the support of education, and the alleviation of poverty. That's what the Future Vision Plan is all about. We think The Rotary Foundation is poised for unprecedented change, unequalled opportunity, and unparalleled growth, and the Future Vision Plan is the catalyst that will take Rotary and its Foundation to unimagined new heights. This will all be made possible because of your efforts and the efforts of Rotarians worldwide to help improve our Foundation.

We look forward to working with a diverse and representative group of districts to help us build our Foundation for the future.

Thank you and good luck in your year as governor!

Our Rotary Foundation Goals for 2009-10

Glenn E. Estess Sr.
Rotary Foundation Trustee Chair-elect

It is a very great pleasure for me to be here today in San Diego, greeting this new class of district governors-elect along with so many members of our family of Rotary. It is an especial pleasure to have the honor of sharing with you my own goals for the coming year, for our Rotary Foundation.

Having the chance to be Foundation chair is one of the best parts of being a past RI president. It is also a wonderful opportunity because a former RI president is in a position to speak about The Rotary Foundation in a way that few people can. Because every past RI president has had the incredible opportunity of seeing, up close, hundreds of the many thousands of projects that our Foundation makes possible, all around the world, every year.

This means that I can tell you firsthand that our Foundation supports work that no one else does, in a way that no one else can. Through the Foundation, we can take on challenges that no one else has the ability or the inclination or the organizational resources to tackle, because we share our resources and our skills in a way that no one else does — with love, with kindness, and with simple generosity. And that's why, when I was traveling with my wife, Mary, during Rotary's centennial year, she so often said to me, "The finest people in the world must be Rotarians."

What we saw, over and over again, was a pure and overwhelming desire to be of assistance, a desire that, thanks to the Foundation, is backed with financial and practical resources. Rotarians have both the skills and the desire to take on needs that seem so large or so intractable or sometimes even so insignificant that no one else can do it, or no one else will try or bother.

I saw so much as president that I will never forget — images and voices and memories of that wonderful year, some of them painful, some of them exhilarating. I will never forget the little girl I saw in Monterrey, Mexico, who had been deaf since birth, whose hearing loss could have easily been corrected with a hearing aid. But her parents did not have the money, or the access to health care, to have her evaluated, to purchase the device, or to have it fitted and adjusted for her needs.

But Rotarians knew of her need and the needs of other children like her. And so, with the aid of a Matching Grant, they bought dozens of rebuilt hearing aids. They brought one to that little girl in Monterrey, and I was there when she received it. I saw that one little girl sitting with her mother as her aid was adjusted, and I saw the look on her face when it was turned on and she heard her mother's voice for the first time. I saw the biggest smile you ever saw. And there wasn't a dry eye in that room.

As much as all of us there were rejoicing for that little girl and for her family and for the new life that had been opened up for her, I think all of us there were in awe and wonder of how that moment had arrived.

That moment did not arrive because of one person, or even because of a few people. It happened because of all of us: every Rotarian who serves, every Rotarian who builds trust in our organization, and every Rotarian who is dedicated to doing the things that we as Rotarians have committed to do.

And it happened because of The Rotary Foundation.

The year ahead of us will be a pivotal one in determining the course of the Foundation in this, our second century of Rotary service. There are new challenges before us — challenges that we must rise to meet, to keep the promises we have made and to be able to keep Rotary's promises for many generations to come.

The first of those promises, of course, is the promise to eradicate polio. This is our No. 1 priority as an organization, and it will remain so until the job is done. The race to finish polio has been a long race, more of a marathon than a sprint. But in any race, when you get to the end, when you see that finish line up ahead — still a little ways up the road, but well in sight — it is always natural to want to run a little faster and a little harder. That finish line is in sight, and it is time to give it everything we have. Eliminating polio is our first priority, and it is the first of the 2009-10 goals for our Rotary Foundation.

Our second goal is to work through our Foundation to achieve a better world, through the six areas of focus of the Future Vision Plan. They are:

Peace and conflict prevention/resolution

Disease prevention and treatment

Water and sanitation

Maternal and child health

Basic education and literacy

Economic and community development

All of these areas are priorities for us as Rotarians and echo the priorities set by President-elect John's theme and emphases. They are the areas in which Rotary service has been the most effective and had the greatest impact in past years and decades. And they are the areas where we should be focusing our efforts in the years and decades to come.

Our third goal is to implement the Future Vision Plan, which will help to revitalize and strengthen our Foundation so that it can adequately support another century of Rotary service. As you have already heard, part of that implementation will be the pilot of the new grant structure. I encourage you to have your districts apply to be part of the pilot, so that we can move to full implementation with a tried and effective structure.

Our fourth and final goal is to support Every Rotarian, Every Year and the Permanent Fund. Not every Rotarian realizes that every dollar, pound, yen, and euro in our Foundation's accounts comes from voluntary donations. None of it — absolutely none — comes from dues. It really is up to every one of us to make sure that Rotarians continue to give to the Foundation, generously, and that we continue to set a positive example by making our own donations every year.

It is not always easy to understand just how much the work of our Foundation can change lives. But they say that a picture is worth a thousand words, so I would like to take advantage of the big screen behind me to cut my speech short by about half an hour.

Our Foundation helps people go from this (screen shows a harrowing photograph of a man clinging to a rope near the edge of a broken stone bridge) to this (a photo of the restored bridge appears on screen).

Rotarian Ken Frantz, of the Rotary Club of Newport News, Virginia, USA, saw that first picture, of a broken bridge over the Blue Nile in Ethiopia, in an issue of National Geographic magazine. He learned that that bridge had been broken for over 70 years and that the only way to cross it

was by clinging to a rope, pulled by 12 men, with certain death below. Children were cut off from schools, communities were cut off from health care, and farmers were cut off from markets.

Being a Rotarian, Ken decided to do something about it. And being a Rotarian, he turned first to Rotary. Three clubs in Virginia and one in Ethiopia offered donations that were matched by The Rotary Foundation. With the help of Rotarian and local volunteers, 25,000 pounds of steel, cement, and equipment were packed on the backs of 250 donkeys. And the bridge was repaired.

But Ken didn't stop there. He leveraged donations from 31 Rotary clubs, including his own, along with Rotary Foundation Matching Grants, to build 40 more bridges in 11 other countries by the end of 2007. His goal is to be building 500 footbridges each year by 2020. Each one of those bridges builds economies, strengthens communities, and saves lives.

Because of our Rotary Foundation, Ken Frantz didn't have to look at that picture he saw and sigh and say, there is nothing I can do. Because of our Rotary Foundation, he could build that bridge — and has gone on to build hundreds more.

Mother Teresa, who was a longtime friend of Rotary, was once asked how she was able to keep doing the work that she did. How did she go on, day after day, doing work that was so difficult, so overwhelming, and that sometimes seemed so futile? Her answer was simple. She said, "I do what I can, where I am, with what I have."

In Rotary, we try to do the same thing. We try to do the most good we can, wherever we are, with what we have. And that is why our Rotary Foundation has a simple motto: Doing Good in the World.

In Rotary, we can do good in so many ways because there are over 1.2 million of us. We can do good in so many places because we are in over 200 countries and geographical areas. And we can do so much good that changes the world because we have the strength of our Rotary Foundation behind us.

Every Rotarian, Every Year

Brenda Cressey
Regional Rotary Foundation Coordinator

Did you know that just eight short years from now, in 2017, we will celebrate The Rotary Foundation's centennial? Imagine, 100 years of Doing Good in the World, the motto of our Rotary Foundation. And think for just a minute on our new mission: to enable Rotarians to advance world understanding, goodwill, and peace through the improvement of health, the support of education, and the alleviation of poverty. It's only through your personal commitment, involvement, and financial support that we will be able to fulfill that mission.

Wouldn't it be an interesting exercise to learn how many life-changing stories could be shared just in this room today? Life-changing stories, all made possible because of our Rotary Foundation. Indeed, since the Every Rotarian, Every Year fundraising initiative began, donations to the Annual Programs Fund have doubled, from \$55 million in 2003-04 to \$113 million at the end of 2007-08. However, only 26 percent of all Rotarians are contributing to the Annual Programs Fund, the primary source of support for most of our Foundation programs.

Imagine: What if every Rotarian in your district actually made a contribution during your year? What message would 100 percent participation send to the world? What impact might that have on the world? If that happened, what would it do for the membership in your district? Certainly, our Rotary clubs and districts would be in position to plan and implement more humanitarian projects.

On 1 July, you will become the top leader in your district. Please allow me to ask you these questions:

What will you want to accomplish in your year?

What will you do today to ensure that each and every Rotarian in your district understands the importance of his or her annual contributions, no matter how big or how small?

Rotary is the premier volunteer service organization in the world. Can we become the premier fundraising and philanthropic organization in the world as well?

If we do not create our own philanthropic legacy, who will? If you are a Rotarian and you do not understand that you are the instrument of peace, then how will you change the world?

Please allow me to share this anonymous quote with you: "To the world you might be one person, but to one person you might be the world!" When was the last time you changed a life? Was it when you looked into the eyes of that young child as you placed those two precious drops of polio vaccine into their mouth? Or could it be when you witnessed a mother receiving the gift of sight and looking into the face of her child for the very first time? Let me suggest that you may never know or realize the lives you have changed with your contributions to the Foundation, but at the same time you are confident those contributions are making a tremendous difference in the world.

How will you change the world? Through your personal commitment and passion for Rotary and for whatever it is that keeps Rotary relevant to you and keeps you active, involved, and connected to your Rotary club and your community.

Our Rotary Foundation belongs to Rotarians. It is dedicated to furthering Rotary's programs throughout the world. It's you, the leaders, who will determine which programs to support and at what level of funding. It's up to each of you to help shape the world's future and to make a

meaningful difference in the lives of others: *The Future of Rotary Is in Your Hands*. Our success will be measured in how we change the world, and as Rotarians and leaders that success depends on you. You need not do this alone. You have an exceptional team to ensure your success: current and past directors and trustees, your regional Rotary Foundation coordinators and their zone team members, and your own district Foundation teams. Please, let us never forget our 100,000 Rotary Foundation alumni, who can share how our Foundation changed their lives and how many of them today continue to change the lives of others because of that experience.

I ask the question, Why Every Rotarian, Every Year? When you make a gift to the Annual Programs Fund, you share your gift with the world. When you wear your Rotary or Paul Harris Fellow pin, you show the world that you care enough about the world to make a difference, one Rotarian at a time with Every Rotarian, Every Year.

In the coming year, we'll be in the midst of five years of Every Rotarian, Every Year success. Fundraising success is one thing, but the real success story is what Rotarians have accomplished in the world with their philanthropy. Such success is the momentum for moving forward in the Future Vision Plan and into The Rotary Foundation's centennial.

You are the key to ensure continued success as you begin to focus on the bigger picture. You are the ones to set the stage for our Rotary Foundation to become the world's premier fundraising and philanthropic organization. You will be the ones who will be pivotal in The Rotary Foundation's success as we support three major fundraising initiatives at the same time as Every Rotarian, Every Year: Rotary's fundraising challenge for PolioPlus, Rotary Centers Major Gifts Initiative, and our Permanent Fund goal of \$1 billion by 2025.

How will you help to realize success in each of these four areas? It has everything to do with you. You must share your Foundation stories so that Rotarians understand how their contributions are put to work helping the lives of thousands of people.

While it's true we are doing a much better job of sharing the good we do with those outside of Rotary, often that goodness is kept secret, mostly out of humility. However, the simple truth is that Every Rotarian, Every Year equals more Foundation projects and programs and, therefore, more engaged and impassioned Rotarians.

Let me end with one of my personal Foundation stories, one I'll never forget. I was helping deliver wheelchairs with a group of Rotarians. A grandfather, having no legs, was carried into a room on the back of a young man, his grandson. The grandfather was placed gently on the seat of his new red wheelchair. As he sat straight and tall, he immediately flashed us a great smile. He then quickly raised his arms into the air and thanked his lord with tears running down his face, and then he began thanking us over and over again for this special gift of mobility. Suddenly, he began to twirl his wheelchair round and round in the middle of the floor in complete happiness and joy. At that same moment, standing against the wall in the back of the room, I watched tears falling down the face of his young grandson, and it became clear to me how the good work of Rotary changes not just the life of one person but the lives of all those around that person. Later, we learned that this young man had been his grandfather's legs for many years and so, on that day, he was given a new life as well.

Let us never forget the magic of The Rotary Foundation. Let us never forget the importance of our total support. Let us never forget that as Rotary leaders, we must ensure our Foundation will forever allow Rotarians to offer hope to those who feel hopeless and provide opportunities to help lift people, around the world, from having to live in extreme poverty.

Governors-elect, incoming leaders of Rotary International, this is your responsibility. Please go back and help every member in your district understand the importance of supporting the Annual Programs Fund — Every Rotarian, Every Year.

As you leave here today, please remember the words of our President-elect John Kenny: *The Future of Rotary Is in Your Hands*. And please remember the words of Past RI President Arch Klumph, the founder of our great Foundation: “No one can tell us what Rotary will be tomorrow, but one thing is certain: What Rotary will be tomorrow depends upon what we Rotarians do today.”

Your RI Secretariat

Ed Futa

RI General Secretary

The RI Secretariat exists to assist our member clubs and districts in all of their Rotary work. That means our Secretariat staff must be extremely knowledgeable about Rotary and Rotary Foundation policy and programs. We must be able to share that knowledge with Rotarians through a variety of media in a number of languages. And we must be prepared to answer your questions about a wide range of topics — from building membership to fundraising to effective training techniques.

The Secretariat is made up of RI World Headquarters in Evanston, Illinois, just north of Chicago, and seven international offices in Argentina, Australia, Brazil, India, Japan, Korea, and Switzerland. Together, the staff in these offices answer thousands of e-mails, telephone calls, and letters from Rotarians every day. They produce print and electronic publications designed to inform Rotarians and help them to become more involved and successful in Rotary. They review hundreds of grant applications to make sure they are complete. And they assist RI and Foundation committees and the RI Board and Foundation Trustees as these groups set the course of Rotary.

The general secretary acts as the chief operating officer of the RI Secretariat. I'm the 12th person to serve in this role. The first general secretary, Ches Perry, served for 32 years — from 1910 to 1942. Ches played such an important role in the development of Rotary that founder Paul Harris referred to him as “the builder” of Rotary, while Paul himself was “the architect.”

The early general secretaries were very instrumental in shaping many of today's policies. More recent general secretaries have overseen the tremendous growth in the scope of the organization.

My eight-year tenure, for example, has coincided with a global transformation in technology and communication. So one of my major challenges has been to find ways to use the new technologies to expand service to Rotarians in the most cost-effective manner possible. One significant project has been the improvement of our Web site at www.rotary.org and the expansion of information available on the language sites. But we're not done. We'll continue to improve our site and increase the offerings, including continually adding more photos to our Rotary Images database. You can also look for some new opportunities for e-learning coming to the Web site later this year.

Having the right technology is also key to efficiency. That's why we've undertaken a critically important project to consolidate all our membership data in one place. Once we've merged the information from all of our stand-alone databases, we'll have a more complete profile of our membership, and we'll be able to give all of you access to more and better information. Staff will be able to work more efficiently and communicate better with our members.

We're also using technology to reduce the flow of paper coming from the Secretariat. We've mitigated rising printing and mailing costs by sending much information electronically. That also boosts our ongoing efforts to be “green.” Other environmentally friendly practices are being instituted throughout World Headquarters. The staff Green Committee has worked to eliminate the use of Styrofoam cups and disposable water bottles. We're also stepping up recycling efforts and trying to use less paper internally.

This year, the Secretariat has joined with Rotarians to support two key initiatives: The Rotary Foundation Future Vision Plan and Rotary's US\$100 Million Challenge, which we recently learned will now be a \$200 million challenge.

Staff from all parts of the Secretariat are involved in preparing for the Future Vision pilot and as-

sisting the Future Vision Committee as it finalizes the details. Staff teams are working to develop a smooth transition plan for the next four years, as well as communications about the plan and the pilot and specialized training for the pilot districts. We've created an online pilot application, which will be available on www.rotary.org through Member Access immediately following this assembly.

Our involvement in Rotary's ongoing work to eradicate polio increased with the initial announcement of the \$100 million challenge grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation in 2007. Since then, we've created the End Polio Now Web site, where non-Rotarians can learn more about polio and Rotary's role in its eradication and contribute to the challenge. We've also created an exhibit on the problem of polio and Rotary's response over the past two decades. If you have a chance to visit RI World Headquarters, be sure to spend time in our lobby looking at the video, photographs, and artifacts on display.

To support the challenge, we want to publicize your fundraising efforts so that others, both inside and outside of Rotary, will know about your good work. I encourage you to share your district's success stories and to visit the RI Web site frequently to learn about new major gifts to the challenge and to get some ideas for fundraisers.

We also did some fundraising of our own. Staff contributed more than \$6,000 to Rotary's \$100 Million Challenge in our Jeans for Polio fundraiser, which gave contributors the opportunity to wear jeans to work one day a month.

Not all our work focuses on new initiatives, of course. Every three years, we begin the process of preparing for the Council on Legislation, which offers an opportunity for you to express your concerns and share ideas for moving Rotary forward. By the 31 December deadline, the Secretariat had received hundreds of pieces of proposed legislation for the 2010 Council.

This proposed legislation is now being prepared for review by the Constitution and Bylaws Committee on behalf of the RI Board. After the committee approves it, the proposed legislation is compiled and translated into five languages in addition to English. By the end of September, RI will send you 10 copies of all duly proposed legislation. I encourage you to make sure that your district representatives and alternates are well trained and understand the voting process as well as the substance of the proposed legislation.

And much of our other work is ongoing as well. We continue to analyze membership trends and explore ways to strengthen recruitment and retention. Our training materials have been improved and expanded to address more club-level issues. And we are creating more resources to help Rotarians run their clubs and districts more efficiently, plan effective projects, recruit and educate new members, and promote Rotary's good work around the world.

In January, we'll be sending the latest Humanity in Motion public relations materials to all clubs. This year, the focus of the print, television, radio, Internet, and billboard PSAs is on building membership and ending polio. Encourage your club to use these materials to tell the Rotary story to your community. I believe that all Rotarians have powerful stories to tell about the people we've helped and how helping them has changed us. We need to tell these stories so that others will realize the impact of Rotary and the sense of personal fulfillment that being a Rotarian can bring.

I hope that you will take the opportunity to meet with some of the Secretariat staff who are at this assembly. Ask them questions about the resources available to you, tell them what your district needs from the Secretariat, describe your service and membership successes, seek their counsel on matters of Rotary policy, and exchange business cards so that you can keep in touch over the coming year. Their job — and mine — is to make sure that all of you have the information and assistance you need to succeed in leading your districts next year.

Vocational Service: The Abandoned Avenue

Rajendra K. Saboo
Past RI President

When President-elect John Kenny asked me to speak to you about vocational service, normally considered a lackluster subject, I was thrilled. Not only because speaking at a plenary session of the International Assembly is an honor but also because vocational service has been the guiding spirit in my journey in Rotary, in my life.

As I was putting my thoughts together, I was overwhelmed by the question: Have we abandoned this avenue?

Often, I have come across Rotarians who call Vocational Service “Vacational” or “Occasional” service. I have seen, at the club and even at the district level, that this avenue receives least importance, and Rotarians assigned to the task are, more often than not, least active.

But today is a new beginning. Standing here before you, I am filled with hope. I can feel a new surge of energy in this hall. As I look around, I see you all, who by the nature of your position, philosophy, and commitment have dedicated your lives to service. You are the leaders all set to act your truth, live your belief, and work your values — elegantly, consistently, and passionately.

In each one of you I can see the legendary Olympic hero Michael Phelps. When asked before the games if he would become the second Mark Spitz, who was then the gold medal record holder, Michael replied: “Mark has been an all-time great, but I will not like to be a second Mark. I will like to be the first Michael Phelps.”

Not sitting on the shoulders of others, but standing tall on your own feet, you will symbolize Rotary’s new heights ahead.

Friends, vocational service has been my guiding light in my career.

In the long association with my German partners in the needle manufacturing business, I had their total confidence and even represented their interests. I had all the opportunities to get the exclusive technical know-how, have the specialized machines copied, a duplicate factory of my own started, and lots of money made. But it was Rotary’s influence that made me shun such thoughts. And after 32 years, when we parted and I sold out my interest, people wondered what would Saboo’s identity in society be. No matter what people said, my values and faith in ethics stood by me. And I grew in my self-esteem. And perhaps in society’s too.

Without talking about programs and projects under this avenue, for which you will have ample opportunity in your discussion group, I wish to present a scenario.

In dealing with Vocational Service, we seem to skirt the very first line of the second object of Rotary: “High ethical standards in business and professions.”

In those early years of the last century, just about the time when Rotary was born, barons of business proudly trumpeted: “Business is business. The public be damned.” The society was inundated with self-seekers who were unrestrained in their practices to amass wealth or power.

In such selfish and narrow business conditions, Rotary dealt with this sensitive subject of ethics with courage and conviction. In 1910, at the first Rotary convention in Chicago, Arthur Sheldon,

known as the father of vocational service, said that “business is the science of human service” and that “he profits most who serves his fellows best.” How true this maxim was. And it still endures.

Is it different now? We see great corporations reduced to nonentities. We see shareholder values tumble. We also see regulators and facilitators of services in the society succumbing to temptations. More recently, we have seen the debacle of the giants in the financial sector bringing wave after wave of suffering to those who have lost their money, their jobs, their security, their future. And all this for the sake of the bottom line, increasing assets for individuals. Few, playing the game of numbers, juggling the fate of others.

Rotary’s doctrine of ethics becomes all the more relevant today than at any time before.

You will often hear, “Evil present in the society gets reflected in any organization, and Rotary is no exception.” “Rotary is not for preaching.” “Ethics is good to talk about but not practical.”

Please tell them, if you will: “Ethics is not outdated. Integrity and honesty have not been redefined.” Ethics is not confined to business or profession alone — it reflects in totality and moves in tandem with family values. The fruit never falls far from the tree, and your children will be what you are or what you do.

A story is told of one proud father, Bobby Lewis, who was taking his two little boys to play miniature golf. At the ticket counter, he was told of the entrance charges, “\$3 for you and \$3 for any kid older than six.”

Bobby said, “The younger one is three, and the other is seven; so I guess I owe you \$6, including me.”

The man at the counter exclaimed, “Hey, mister, did you just win a lottery or something? You could have saved yourself three bucks telling me that the older one was six; I would not have known the difference.”

Bobby replied, “Yes, that may be true, but the kids would have known the difference. And would have always carried it in their minds.”

At times, I have been confronted by the question “What is ethics?” and so I submit an exercise for our actions, the age-old question: “How would we feel if we were in the other person’s shoes?”

- Would we act the same way if we were to be reported on the front page of the *Wall Street Journal*? Or the paper our home friends read?
- Would we do it if our children picked up the same behavior?
- Would we change our mind if the person on the receiving end of the ethical transgression was a loved one?
- And the simplest of all: What would our mother think?

My dear Rotary leaders, The Four-Way Test is very much relevant even today. Please make clubs and members realize that mere essay competitions and plaque distribution in schools are not enough, nor is framing the words of the test and hanging the plaque in workplaces. The real test will be: “How much am I able to apply it to myself?”

Rotary has a profound statement: the Declaration for Rotarians in Businesses and Professions. It is an undertaking every Rotarian ought to make.

The fact is, most people favor righteousness — or so many of them would not pretend to have it. The difference is between knowing the path and walking it. The path is not easy. But Rotarians are no ordinary people. They just need to have the courage, the determination to walk their talk. And remember, knowledge without action is like snow on a hot stove.

It is very significant that one of the priorities of the RI Strategic Plan is to emphasize Rotary's unique vocational service commitment. This is mentioned in your workbook. It is crucial that to be able to influence others through business and vocational associations — which must be done — one has to be ethical first, and then to lead by personal example. In Gandhi's words, "A man is the sum of his actions."

In a geography class, an inquisitive child asked the teacher, "Sir, what is the weight of the earth?" The lecturer, taken somewhat aback, promised to answer the next day, went home, consulted his books, and the following day came to the class with the answer. "Son, the weight of the earth is one billion tons." Innocently, the boy questioned again, "Sir, with people or without people?"

The little story makes me think that, without people, the loss of weight of the earth might be minuscule. But in the case of Rotary, its value will reduce drastically, without our classifications.

Must we not restore the importance of classification? My classification is my identity in Rotary. Let us remember the words of Paul Harris: "Each Rotarian is a connecting link between the idealism of Rotary and his trade or profession."

Vocational excellence awards, career guidance, and vocational talks and visits are very prevalent and useful activities. Basically, they are recognition of the worthiness of all useful occupations. Please continue them with vigor.

Most important is sharing one's expertise and knowledge. This truly enhances one's own vocational fulfillment. This I learned from my wife, Usha.

When we shifted to Chandigarh, Usha's interest in gardening was further enhanced and she grew exquisite flowers, which would always get maximum prizes in competition. After a few years, she found that as soon as there were her entries, other competitors would withdraw. Soon, she realized that this was not what she wanted. She made her seeds and seedlings available to all garden lovers, shared her experience and expertise, and invited them to our garden.

From Usha, I learned the value of sharing vocational skills and spreading out the resultant joy. I recommend that you listen to your spouse or partner — they are full of wisdom. It is not flattery, it is reality.

Rotarians are talented, creative, experienced people. When they share knowledge, they can truly brighten up the lives they touch — brighten up society.

The four Avenues of Service are so placed in order that one leads into the other. Club Service is the organizational structure that comes first. Then comes the Vocational Service avenue, which is the basis — the requirement — for membership.

Thus, Rotary becomes a group of like-minded people from different vocations, and when such people, with clean hands, big hearts, and open minds, extend themselves to serve the community, acceptability of Rotary in society becomes all the more profound.

If you take out vocational service, Rotary becomes purely a community service organization. And if you take out ethics from vocational service, then vocational service falls flat.

The world is full of nongovernmental organizations working for humanitarian causes. Then there are many organizations espousing ethics and values. But there are very few that are equally focused on ethics-based profession/vocation on one hand and humanitarian service on the other. Rotary is one such organization.

In the wake of the deteriorating business and professional environment, the world is looking for people who are ethically sound and committed to social responsibility.

Rotary is already strong in community service and international service. Can Rotary become equally strong in vocational service? Can you and I give Rotary a new identity through this powerful combination? Can we start the process of infusing renewed enthusiasm for ethical standards in Rotary?

If we can, Rotary will be recharged, ready and relevant to the needs of the 21st century. And people will be lining up to join us.

Look beyond yourself, beyond your year. You can be the trendsetters. I urge you to

- Find active and doer Rotarians for your district Vocational Service committees. Encourage clubs to do the same.
- Make ethics an essential subject in all the training programs.
- Prepare vocational project guidance sheets and distribute them.
- Give assignments to those who have their values in the right place.
- Have a clear understanding of the second Avenue of Service.
- Make sure that through club programs, there is an opportunity for every Rotarian to participate.
- Encourage Rotarians to volunteer their knowledge, experience, and time.
- Ask clubs to develop close connections with business and vocational associations.

In the 2006 Winter Olympics in Turin, Italy, Canadian Sara Renner was leading her team in the grueling cross-country ski race when her left ski pole snapped. She pushed on, but it was hopeless. On an uphill slope, several skiers passed her. Then, something extraordinary happened. A man stepped forward from the side of the course and handed Renner another pole. She got back in the race and made up some of the lost time. In the end, her team captured the silver medal.

Later, Renner learned that her benefactor was Bjornar Haakensmoen, the coach of the Norwegian team. Haakensmoen became an instant hero in Canada, with newspapers full of praise for him. Haakensmoen did not understand all the attention. “The Olympic spirit is the way we try to follow,” he said. “If you win and don’t help somebody when you should have, what win is that?”

Vocational ethics at its best. Ethics becoming proactive in this world of free market competition. Something for Rotarians to learn.

Vocation originates from the Latin word *vocare*, meaning “to call.” Your and my vocation calls us to contribute our talents, share our knowledge, and spread the richness of our success.

Once I asked my spiritual guru, “Swamiji, the time I spend, the positions I get, the business I have to sacrifice at times for Rotary, is that all worthwhile?” His reply was simple, “It is, if it makes you a better person.”

I can never repay Rotary. And on my last journey, my hands will not be empty — they will be filled by what Rotary has given me, thanks largely to vocational service.

Ask yourself, “Does Rotary make you a better person?”

Traveling through the Vocational Service avenue is like a life journey. There are no shortcuts, nor is it a highway. It is a street that passes through towns, villages, communities where people meet people; where you will meet people, you will lift them up and, in turn, they will help you climb uphill to the top. This journey will shape your character, invoke the genius that inhabits you, and offer you opportunities to realize your full potential.

In this journey, the one year of your leadership will be very significant. Dare to walk on the abandoned avenue, Vocational Service; overcome the hurdles and make the avenue alive with the resounding words *responsibility, credibility, accountability*.

Your identity will not merely be the photographs in the participants book or the glowing compliments in the publications during the year. Your identity will be the footprints you will leave on the sands of time — sands of the year 2009-10 — footprints of perseverance, courage, resilience, action, planted firmly, that winds of change will not be able to erase.

Your journey will then be memorable to you, and to others who follow you. My friends, awake, arise, and be ready to march forward. You have a destiny to achieve.

Service to Youth

Friedrich Neddermeier
RI Training Leader

“It was the greatest year of my life” is the most-often heard sentence when you talk to an exchange student who just has returned home from the exchange year. It expresses all the pride of the student, because it says “I did it, I have learned valuable information for my life.” These 17- or 18-year-old boys and girls have mastered one school year in a foreign country. They have learned to live and to behave correctly in a new culture, a culture which might have been very different from their home culture. They have lived with caring host families and were supported by their hosting Rotary club. They have attended school together with the local youth, and they have solved difficulties without the supervision of their own parents. Through their mostly positive experience, the youngsters gain in self-confidence and independence; they become more tolerant against the unknown and are willing and able to solve problem situations.

We, the Rotarians, have the opportunities and the obligation to serve young people and to help them in their education and development. Youth is our greatest treasure; they are our future. Through our commitment and our programs, we can help them to find their way into society so they can become responsible leaders of the future. Our actions are immediately “repaid” by the youngsters through their enthusiasm, their activity, by their smiles. But when working with young people, we have to protect them and create a safe environment. During the group discussions, this responsibility will be covered in detail.

In Rotary we have many programs to serve youth. There are local and international programs, programs to support the underprivileged or to sponsor the gifted and talented. Our four structured youth and young adult programs are Rotaract, Interact, RYLA, and Rotary Youth Exchange.

As district governor, you are in the position to start or to improve programs for youth or young adults. You can and should support and supervise the programs. Rotary clubs need frequent information through your monthly newsletter, the district Web site, or other means. The presence of the district governor is needed during committee meetings and during orientations, especially when non-Rotarians are involved. Young program participants also should be included in district and club events.

To fulfill these requirements, you have access to a great variety of support services. We have the very competent members of the RI staff in Evanston or in the international offices. From the RI Web site, you can download handbooks, fliers, and forms. Further, a Youth Services Resource Group has been established with a coordinator for each zone. The coordinators will support you and your district officers with their advice and program information.

All four programs — Rotaract, Interact, RYLA, and Youth Exchange — have an international and a local dimension. Internationally, the young participants are our ambassadors of goodwill and peace. Let me give you some examples.

As its annual project, a Rotaract club raised money to buy a ShelterBox. Their box later was sent to a region struck by a natural disaster where people had lost everything. A box contains a tent and utensils for the daily life of a large family or clan. Can you imagine the pride and joy of the Rotaractors after they received the message that they were helping a family to survive?

In some areas of the world, RYLA camps are conducted internationally with students from several countries. A participant told me that it was easy to make friends with neighbors from the adjacent country. It was surprising for him to find out how many things they had in common and how many similar problems they have to overcome.

And finally the exchange programs. Living abroad, the students get an inside view of their host country's life. They learn and teach, receive and give. An exchange student told me about being elected by her host club to participate in a National Immunization Day and how moved she was by the opportunity to help to immunize young children against polio.

Local Rotary clubs gain from these programs. Organizing a summer camp, supporting an Interact club, or conducting a RYLA seminar enables Rotarians to work together, which positively influences their club life. So we get a positive internal effect. Our programs also reach the community. Youth programs do not only involve the participants. They reach families, neighbors, schools, and friends. The service of the Rotary club gets known in the community and creates a positive image. Youth programs strengthen Rotary.

Participating in youth programs brings us a multifaceted success. I encourage you to start these programs — Youth Exchange, RYLA, Interact, and Rotaract — or improve existing programs where necessary.

Rotary's Public Image . . . Your Responsibility!

Bob Aitken

Public Image Resource Group General Coordinator

Please raise your right hands. Say after me: "I do!" Congratulations. Now, I'm prepared to wager that you all came to San Diego believing you were merely undergoing training to prepare as a district governor. The good news is that you have just been signed up for another major challenge in your Rotary district: that of district public image coordinator. Wow! I'm sure you agree this is very exciting — and it is, because development of Rotary's public image is the responsibility of every single Rotarian — and one of the most vital challenges confronting you and me as dedicated Rotarians at this time, in the early years of Rotary's second century of service.

Friends, we cannot grow Rotary's membership worldwide without growing Rotary's public image or public relations in every community in which we serve! You have some two million public image team members awaiting your leadership and direction. And, as with other challenges and responsibilities, you have authority in 2009-10 to appoint a vast support team — district committee chairs and district committee members, club committee chairs and club committee members, whatever structure you desire. But the real public image leadership and inspiration must come from you. You need to issue the call to action. If you really believe in the benefits of development of Rotary's public image and you really want to make it happen, your belief will flow through to your team. Your Rotarians will understand that Rotary's public image is their individual responsibility.

So, what is the real meaning of public image/public relations?

The words may vary slightly but the meaning is almost the same. It is "the management function that creates, develops, and carries out policies and programs to influence public opinion or public reaction." Your Public Image Resource Group has worked closely with the talented staff within the Rotary International Public Relations Department as they brought to fruition the very effective Humanity in Motion public service announcements in the last three years. Graphics, images, and voiceover from this outstanding resource now enhance television, radio, and print media; billboards; and Rotary club literature in all parts of the world, and they're so easy to use! DVDs and CDs carrying these impressive resources were delivered to every Rotary club in the world early last year.

Successive RI Boards have lent incredible support to the public relations program by way of generous funding of Public Relations Grants during this time. Millions of dollars of funding for innovative public relations projects have been made available to Rotary clubs and districts — a clear indication of how highly RI leaders rate the importance of lifting Rotary's public image.

Come with me as we embark on a world tour to enjoy Rotary public relations success stories in recent times:

- In Kyoto, Japan, Rotary negotiated with a large taxi company to carry mobile billboards — calling for applications from prospective peace fellows — on the back windows of 200 taxis.
- In Taipei City, Taiwan, on Clean the Earth Day, more than 3,000 Rotarians, Rotaractors, and Interactors — wearing club vests with the Rotary emblem — earned the admiration of the public as they spent the day cleaning suburban areas.

- Rotary District 3810's support for the amputee ward at Philippines General Hospital has substantially boosted Rotary's public image in the Philippines.
- Rotary public relations scored a major coup in Australia when digital media company Adstream generously sponsored distribution of *Humanity in Motion IV* images, and voiceover to every radio and television station in Australia, achieving millions of dollars' worth of free television and radio time!
- New Zealand's six Rotary districts continue to provide the perfect working national model for public relations in the Rotary world. All six districts combine PR Grants money — and their own budget funds — each year to provide a national telephone number for Rotary inquiries, strategically placed billboards, and Rotary messages played as trailers in movie houses across the nation.
- Humanity in Motion images took off in a big way in Iowa, USA, when districts 5970 and 6000 combined resources to produce a 16-page, full-color tabloid sharing Rotary success stories with 575,000 readers of 47 newspapers across the state.
- Another wonderful example is the Bury Me in Books literacy program, with containerloads of books pouring into southern Africa for young families. The generosity of American Rotarians working in conjunction with their African counterparts has resulted in extraordinary image building for Rotary in the eyes of those African families receiving books for the first time in their lives.
- In Italy, 10 districts jointly staged a premiere of the George Clooney movie *Michael Clayton*, shown in 63 theaters all over Italy to raise funds for polio eradication. Rotary's image was everywhere, with 92,000 vouchers, 2,000 posters, and 45,000 mini posters printed.
- Similarly, in France during Rotary's centenary year, 18 districts raised €720,000 for research on brain diseases from an Action Dreams and Operation Cinema movie premiere. Again, there was a great media response, with more than 100 press clippings collected.
- In District 4420 (Brazil), the Rotary Club of Santos-José Bonifácio promoted Rotary's public image with three large advertisements in *O Estado de São Paulo*, one of Brazil's largest newspapers.
- Without doubt, the success story of 2008 was the screening of the End Polio Now message and the Rotary emblem on the British Houses of Parliament on 23 February.

Perhaps the best new public relations story for Rotary International in recent years is ShelterBox. The brainchild of Rotarian Tom Henderson from the Rotary Club of Helston-Lizard, Cornwall, England, ShelterBox is a disaster relief program that has taken the world by storm. ShelterBox has now raised over \$45 million and sheltered more than 60,000 people in 46 countries. This simple club program has filled a Rotary void. We now have the ability to respond immediately to natural disasters anywhere in the world, and the public, along with Rotary clubs, responds generously whenever disaster strikes. That's great public relations, but we do have to keep demanding that our ShelterBox colleagues continue to highlight the major role of Rotary in all press releases.

Your challenge is to go back to your districts and build on this Rotary awareness legacy of success stories and quality Rotary service. And I have some exciting news for you on the subject of Public Relations Grants for 2009-10. PR Grant application forms in all languages will be distributed to you at today's PR breakout session. The deadline for applications has been brought forward to 30 July, to enable RI's Public Relations Department staff to process paperwork and get the resources to you faster than ever during your year in office. However, to take full advantage of the Public Relations Grants, every district must budget significantly to increase the impact of the work. Grant conditions require that you contribute one-third of the value of the grant from district funds, but why stop there? Contribute as much as possible to grow your public relations

projects, and encourage your Rotary clubs to do likewise. A district PR budget of \$10,000 to \$20,000 minimum in these changing times is essential if we are to really grow Rotary membership!

Some factions within Rotary will argue that, for many years, Rotary did not seek recognition for its good works and should not be doing so in the 21st century. We need to explain to these people that in the past, Rotary never had to compete for membership or the charity dollar as our clubs do today. Further, all charitable organizations are subject to great public scrutiny on all counts in these modern times, and every Rotarian must recognize the need to continually develop community relations, or public image. Increasing membership is absolutely vital for Rotary's next 100 years, and a strong, successful public image is the key ingredient: Successful, community-minded citizens want to be involved with successful community organizations.

Senior Rotary leaders believe that as Rotary's public image grows, public giving to our Rotary Foundation will also grow. A growing, healthy Rotary Foundation is absolutely vital if Rotary is to cope with the humanitarian, educational, and world-peace challenges confronting our civilization at this time.

Communication is the key to success with Rotary's public image initiatives. We urge you to communicate with your zone and district public image leaders during your year in office. Make full use and take advantage of the wonderful resources developed by the RI Public Relations Department. Manager David Alexander and his very professional staff will support you and your district teams in every way possible.

We urge you to take advantage of RI resources, including:

- The full range of Humanity in Motion images and recordings for total media and billboard exposure
- Generous RI Public Relations Grants
- RI's zone public image coordinators as they strive to plan and conduct effective public image zone and regional seminars throughout their huge areas
- The new Rotary club public relations "game plan"
- A growing list of simple promotion projects to celebrate Rotary's anniversary on 23 February, many of which involve the community

Now, before we leave the topic of available resources, don't overlook the importance of the Rotary World Magazine Press — *The Rotarian* and 31 regional magazines in 26 languages. Grow public knowledge of Rotary through these magazines. Share them with your friends and work-mates. Encourage your Rotarians to read the magazines thoroughly to grow their Rotary knowledge and be better able to promote Rotary's good works themselves.

As a district governor, you will have a duty to support the production, distribution, and subscription collection of the Rotary regional magazine in your part of the world. Subscription to a Rotary magazine is a condition of membership in Rotary, and you must help your clubs and members understand that requirement. The magazines are self-funded, and a maximum subscription level is essential to ensure that the magazines remain viable. On the Rotary calendar, April is Magazine Month — recognition by the RI Board of the importance of our certified Rotary magazines. During your next break, call at the RI Media Booth and collect the information sheet vital for support of your regional magazine in your year in office.

You are about to go into a discussion session on public relations, and you will have the chance to share experiences and success stories. Learn all you can from your colleagues here. Prepare well in your district over the next few months, and be determined to leave your governorship with the general public knowing more about Rotary, respecting our wonderful achievements, and even more ready to support us in the future.

We have a wonderful story to tell, so let's make sure that we do.

Leadership

Luis Vicente Giay
Past RI President

We have arrived at the final day of an outstanding assembly, filled with friendship and internationality that will forever remain in our hearts and minds. We have good reason to celebrate, knowing that you are prepared, committed, and ready to make 2009-10 one of the best years in Rotary's history.

We are fortunate that our next leader is a great Rotarian. He is capable, genuine, ethical, trustworthy, sincere, motivating, and a hard worker. We will have a true leader to inspire us: President-elect John Kenny.

In a few hours, you will return to the reality of your districts, of your clubs, to the daily work of Rotarians. That is when you will fully realize that *The Future of Rotary Is in Your Hands*.

I have been a Rotarian for 48 years. I was only 33 when, like you now, I attended the International Assembly. Let me assure you, and the reasons are many: What lies ahead for you is an exceptional experience, second to none. It will be a time marked by high emotions, extremely hard work, and great satisfaction. But you have only 365 days to complete your mission. It's now or never. Three words that you must not forget: *now or never*. This morning, I wish to share with you some important points about your year as district governors.

First, you must understand that Rotary leadership is unlike other leadership. In other organizations or groups, someone issues an order and everyone obeys. This is referred to as vertical leadership. In Rotary, we're all in the same boat: We're volunteers. This is referred to as horizontal leadership. What separates us from the other groups is our will, that is, our willingness to serve others. It is the product of motivation, the fuel that propels people forward. Motivation is a fire within. John Gardner said: "The world is moved by highly motivated people, by enthusiasts, by men and women who want something very much or believe in something very much." So we must take good care of Rotarians. They represent the force and the humanitarian engine that drives Rotary, the glue that holds the organization together and is the key to its growth and the service it provides.

Remember: Unprepared people have no place in Rotary. Successful administrations require planning. Therefore, prepare a plan and act accordingly. In recent years, governors have been given new tools to improve their leadership: district and club leadership plans, suggested new district structuring, support from other sources for membership development, improved Rotary Foundation resources, and areas of emphasis in the service arena. Take advantage of them! They will help you delegate duties, involve more people in the management process, and uncover the creative capabilities of Rotarians. Those who know which road to take arrive much faster at their destination.

Do not forget that leaders enjoy other people's company. Treat all clubs the same, whether they are strong or weak. Don't compare or criticize them. View each club as a separate entity, just as each child in a family has unique qualities.

Also, encourage Rotarians to serve. Spark their enthusiasm, bring out the best in them. Create environments that allow them to expand their capabilities and help shape the future. Rotary is a volunteer service organization, and our leaders are responsible for acknowledging all our members. John Dewey said: "The most profound need of human nature is the desire to feel important." Therefore, don't deprive anyone of this right. Appreciate and value everyone equally

because every person matters. Each person counts, each person serves, each person is essential. If we all work together, the results will be very different, and Rotary will be the better for it. It will depend on you to ensure that Rotarians, motivated by your leadership and your example, become more active, more useful, more eager to serve, pushing to speed up Rotary's record of service.

This brings us to an important point: team spirit. What must you do to ensure that Rotary's future, which is in your hands, succeeds and progresses? You must build a team with a true work ethic shared by all! You must understand and implement in your districts a team that works with the Shinkansen effect.

But what is Shinkansen? Let me explain. It was the Japanese who invented the famous "bullet train" that stunned the world with its unmatched speed. The bullet train's secret is that each car has its own small engine and the sum force of these engines produces a final speed that is faster, more efficient, and nearly instantaneous. The combined effect of these motors all moving the train in unison is called the Shinkansen effect. Envision Rotary as a huge train, with its engines and cars. Your assignment is to ensure that *all* Rotarians achieve Shinkansen, the sense of teamwork that creates better service. Shinkansen — the feeling of all for one and one for all. Shinkansen — this effort that lends value to our work and imagination to our service. Shinkansen — if we can apply the Shinkansen effect, so desperately needed by Rotary, its future will most certainly be brighter. Shinkansen. Shinkansen.

At this time, I would like to ask you for something very special: Be visionary leaders. In order to meet Rotary's future head on, we need leaders with vision. What, exactly, is a visionary leader? I would say that he or she is a leader plus. This involves a combination of professional and personal skills interwoven with a razor-sharp sense of social trends. Such a leader inspires people to reach their full potential so that they're ready to react instantly to changes and prepared to move forward.

However, to be such a visionary leader, a person must have a solid knowledge base and team support in order to foresee problems long before they become a reality. A leader plus is one who is always looking ahead, beyond the frontiers of human potential, taking a stand, observing reactions and making assumptions about what is to come. He or she knows where the organization is going and what is going to happen when the future arrives.

It is the visionary leaders who have changed the course of history because they had the wisdom, ability, and courage to lead at the highest level. Visionary leaders are ordinary people with a spark of genius and inventiveness. In a word, they are brilliant!

And that brings me to my final piece of advice: Always strive to find the genius of Rotary. I know Rotarians like I know the back of my hand, and I know what they're capable of. I have seen them do incredible things, such as offering a kidney to save a child's life, helping a dying woman in the middle of the Kenyan bush, or removing a child from the streets and placing him in a safe home. I have seen Rotarians work, sacrifice, devote themselves to a cause, share, and serve.

That is why I place my trust in the people of Rotary, who work wonders, and in The Rotary Foundation, whose influence extends beyond its programs, contributions, distinctions, and awards. The Foundation embodies the genius of Rotary. Talent enables us to do some things better than others, but genius turns into reality everything that talent alone cannot.

Genius is an intrinsic virtue of idealism such as ours, which enables us to achieve really great things. Just like the spirit of Rotary, genius is not visible, but it's there, a moving force, motivating people, making dreams real, and turning everyone, Rotarians and non-Rotarians alike, into happier and more fulfilled people.

Rotarians' talent is what guides them to select scholars and fellows for educational program awards — and Rotary genius opens for them the doors of unknown worlds. Rotarians' talent is the force behind the work of our volunteers — though it is the genius of Rotary that leads them to work in an unimaginable world where the impossible becomes possible. The talent of Rotarians enables them to do a cataract operation on a blind woman who had never seen her own children — but it is the genius of Rotary that moved her, after the surgical bandages were removed, to exclaim, upon seeing her children for the first time, "Thank you, Rotary. My children are more beautiful than I imagined!" Rotarians' talent is what transports polio vaccine to the farthest points — though it is the genius of Rotary that has the ability to intervene and stop conflicts so that children can be immunized.

So, that's why Rotary needs genius leaders, visionaries who are progressive, ready and on target to put our members' talent to work, enhancing the genius of Rotary that inspires us.

That is your job, my friends, and I have tremendous faith in each of you as the custodians of Rotary's future. That is why my message of today is full of optimism, great optimism and confidence. We have in Rotary and in our Rotary Foundation an incredibly valuable resource for serving others, always keeping in mind that no one is too poor to give, and no one is too rich to receive.

In concluding, I urge you to continue working and supporting our organization, to care for it while enjoying it. Continue caring for people, teaching them, encouraging them, and making true leaders of them. Make next year the best year of your lives.

The challenges of the future will only be one more test to prove what Rotary and Rotarians can do. Put all your heart into everything you do, because following your heart is the recipe for success. But remember that there is no key to the doors of your heart, because they only open from the inside. Your mission, therefore, is to win over the hearts of others!

One stormy, snowy night, someone rang the bell at the door of a mountain lodge. Once inside, an exhausted elderly man greeted the innkeeper, sat down quickly, and asked for a bowl of soup. As the innkeeper served his guest, he asked the old man, "How did you get up here, so high on the mountain, at your age and in this weather?" After a few spoonfuls of soup, the man replied, "Nothing special. I just put my heart in front of me and it was easy for my body to follow."

So, now, I say to all of you, when you take care of your personal matters, do so with your head. But when you lead Rotarians, do so with your heart. Be visionary leaders who offer expertise and forge a path that others chose to follow until they can discover their own way. Be visionary leaders who value differences, compensate for weaknesses, and build on strengths. Be visionary leaders who are aware of their duty and the tremendous commitment of knowing that *The Future of Rotary Is in Your Hands*.

I wish you all the best, now and always.

Closing Remarks

Dong Kurn Lee
RI President

I would like to share with you a story. It is a story that I told to my own incoming officers one year ago, and one that you may have heard already in Rotary, because it teaches a lesson that every Rotarian should understand.

One morning, a wise old man was walking down the beach. Far ahead of him, he saw a small child, who seemed to be dancing. As he walked, he came closer and saw what the child was doing. She was picking up starfish, one at a time, and throwing them out to sea. As the old man came to the child, he said to her, "What are you doing?"

She said, "I am throwing the starfish back into the water. The tide is going out, and if they are left on the beach they will die."

The old man looked up and down the beach. It was covered with starfish.

"But there are thousands of starfish, and many kilometers of beach," he said. "The tide is going out quickly, and you are only one person. Don't you see how hopeless it is, what you are trying to do? You can't make a difference to the starfish."

As the old man spoke, the child continued to bend and throw, bend and throw. When the old man finished his speech to her, she straightened up and tossed one more starfish.

She smiled at the old man, and said, "I just made a difference to that one!"

And the old man realized that it was the child who was truly wise.

When we are faced with a great task, there is only one place to begin: the place where we are standing.

We know that there are countless people who need our help, and that the world is full of the hungry, the sick, and the illiterate. We know that we cannot reach them all. But this is not a reason to do nothing. It is a reason to begin. And it is a reason to begin today.

In Korea, we have a saying: If you put off a task for a day, 10 days will pass. I can tell you from my own experience that the months ahead will go quickly. The first of July may seem very far away, but soon you will begin your new jobs. You will be leading your districts. You will be doing your very best, because *The Future of Rotary Is in Your Hands*.

President-elect John has asked you to continue the good work that Rotary has been known for, and to continue our 104-year-old tradition of fellowship and service. He has asked you to continue our work in water, health and hunger, and literacy, to continue working to improve the lives of children and of people everywhere. This is why we are Rotarians. This is why you and I are here. We are here because we want to help, and because we can.

In Rotary, we choose our work with the simplest calculations possible: where we can do the most good, in the long term, with the resources we have. We do our best to distribute our resources fairly and to consider carefully how those resources might be doing more. And we strive to make every Rotary year better than the last.

Every International Assembly is a different experience. Each one is inspiring, and each one is wonderful. Every one gives us all a sense of vision — a sense of the full power, and potential,

of Rotary. At an assembly, we begin to feel just what we are capable of. And we realize that what we accomplish is up to us.

I ask all of you, in the months ahead, to do your very best in your current clubs, because how this Rotary year ends is how your year will begin. I ask you to do your best to bring in a new member, so that there will be more hands to do Rotary's work. And I ask you all to carry the sense of excitement that we have all shared here in San Diego back to your clubs and your districts. We have achieved so much already in this Rotary year, and we can do so much more in the years to come.

There is no time for you, or for any of us, to waste. The needs are great, and our numbers are limited. But, as Past RI President Bill Boyd has said: "Even though we will never bring about a perfect world, we have no excuse not to try. And if we leave a better world than was left to us, then we have not failed."

I ask each of you to continue to work to *Make Dreams Real* in this Rotary year, because *The Future of Rotary Is in Your Hands*.

Closing Remarks

John Kenny
RI President-elect

This week, this wonderful journey of fellowship and discovery, is nearing its end. Soon, each of us will leave this place. We will step into cars, and onto planes, and soon find ourselves back in our homes, back in our own Rotary clubs, surrounded by all that is familiar. And although we have only been away for a few days, everything we see will look different. Because while we have been here, every one of us has changed.

We have seen, and grasped, the vast wonder that is Rotary. We have seen how much Rotary has done, and is doing, in so many corners of the world. And, most important, we have seen how much there is for Rotary to do. We have begun to understand the importance of the tasks that lie before us — and to comprehend that lives will hang in the balance of our decisions. A Rotary office is a great responsibility, and it is one that no Rotary leader takes lightly.

There is a story of a young priest who spent some weeks tending to the needs of a dying bishop. As the bishop's last days drew near, the young priest asked him for a blessing, to inspire him in his service to God and his parish. The dying bishop said, "I give you a blessing that you should always fear God as much as you fear your parishioners." The young priest was shocked. Surely he should fear God much more than his parishioners? Soon enough, of course, he realized what it was that the bishop had wished for him: that he should always conduct himself privately as he did before others. That he would make no decision before God that he would not make before his congregation. Because we cannot ask of others what we do not demand of ourselves. And when we take on the responsibilities that come with leadership, we also take on a responsibility to be, at all times, and in all ways, the person that our position requires us to be.

Rotary leadership begins with taking responsibility — for our behavior, for our decisions, for the sacrifices we are willing to make for Rotary service and Rotary's future. Ever since we first put on a Rotary pin, each one of us has been the face of Rotary to everyone who meets us. Everything we do, and everything we say — in our clubs, in our jobs, in our communities, and in our homes — reflects upon us all and shapes the future for us all. Each of us takes pride in Rotary, and rightly so. Rotary is something of which we should all be proud. We have accomplished so much. And we will — we must — accomplish so much more.

In the past weeks and months, I have thought long and hard about this moment. What words would I choose for my last opportunity to address you at this assembly? How could I best motivate and inspire you, to send you away with a sense of hope, of optimism and, at the same time, of the gravity of your task?

I tell you all again, my friends, my fellow officers, my fellow Rotarians: *The Future of Rotary Is in Your Hands.*

We stand, each of us today, at a turning point in Rotary's history. We are closer than ever to making the world polio-free. We have the opportunity to help finish the job that Rotary started more than two decades ago. We are realists. We know that there is still much to be done. But we are also patient, and we are persistent. We know that what we do will have an impact that will resonate far beyond our own lives.

We, and those who came before us, have brought ourselves to the place where we now stand — with only four polio-endemic countries remaining, and a 99 percent decrease in the annual number of polio cases. And this week, we have learned that we are closer than ever to our goal,

because of the confidence that has been placed in us by Bill and Melinda Gates and the Gates Foundation. This new grant, and the one that preceded it, are messages to us all. They ring out loud and clear, telling us that yes, polio can be eradicated. And they tell us that around the world, Rotarians are known as people who can be counted on to do what it takes, and to finish what they start.

In this Rotary year, I ask you all never to forget why we are here, why we are Rotarians. We are Rotarians because we know that people of intelligence and determination can achieve so much more when we work together. We are Rotarians because we believe in Service Above Self. And because we believe in stepping forward to do what needs to be done. Water. Health and hunger. And literacy. These are the needs we will address. They are the needs that are enduring, from year to year, country to country, throughout the world.

So much depends on what we do as Rotarians. So much depends on you all. *The Future of Rotary Is in Your Hands.*

Partners in Service

Celia Cruz de Giay
RI Training Leader

I'm very happy to be here, and I want to thank President-elect John and his wife, June, for the opportunity to speak to you on a topic very dear to my heart.

I hope your experience here at the International Assembly is extraordinary. We are here to share our cultures, our visions of the world, our projects, and our dreams. Our diversity enriches and unites us. We will learn a great deal from one another because this meeting is essentially a large-scale social and cultural exchange, an exchange of friendship and service. Here, handshakes and smiles become expressions of affection that compensate for the lack of a common language.

During the plenary sessions, discussion groups, and fellowship meetings, you will have the chance to share your ideas and experiences with people who may not share your nationality, language, or beliefs. However, like you, they are eager to share their experience, knowledge, talent, and resources with the less fortunate.

Over the next few days, you will learn something that you will carry with you for the rest of your lives: the understanding that belonging to Rotary is much more than a mere privilege. We hold in our hands a rich heritage built over 104 years of history. It is our duty to care for it, to strengthen it, and to help it to grow, so that, when the moment arrives to place it in the hands of our successors, we will be able to do so with the peace of mind that results from a job well done.

The fact that your spouses are here means they are true leaders in our organization, people who have earned respect and consideration. Because of their dedication and hard work, they have been chosen to lead their districts during the coming year. I congratulate you, too, since I'm sure you played a major role in their success.

Being the spouse of a district governor is an honor and a tremendous responsibility. I feel that you must decide, first of all, what type of spouse you aspire to be or can be. Are you going to be completely immersed in district activities? Are you going to participate part time and only on certain occasions? Or, for personal, professional, or family reasons, will you only occasionally lend a hand to help achieve the service goals the district governor has established? Whatever you decide, it will be a purely personal matter, because the level of your involvement and commitment will depend on you and you alone. Remember, "teamwork generates force," and success will come more easily if the two of you work together.

Let's take a look at what is expected of you.

First: Be well-informed about Rotary. Knowledge is power, and it will allow you to promote Rotary ideals, create your own image, and reinforce the leadership of your spouse. An old proverb says "No one loves the unknown." Therefore, study, learn about, and discover Rotary and the service opportunities available through its programs. And let others know that we are part of an organization that has earned the respect of world leaders and governments because of the extraordinary service it provides around the world.

Second: Be involved. Meet with the spouses of other Rotarians in the district and learn about their projects, problems, needs, and achievements. Make sure they understand the importance of their participation and the need to work as a team.

Third: Cherish the family of Rotary. Involve your family in district activities, because family members are Rotary's greatest asset when it comes to doing good. Strive to motivate spouses,

Interactors, and Rotaractors to join Rotarians in their service projects so more people benefit from Rotary's goodwill.

Fourth: Strive for excellence in everything you do. Excellence results from doing a little more than what is expected of you, taking on added risks, and dreaming dreams that others think impossible.

Fifth: Be motivators, so that your attitude, convictions, and beliefs are clear, strong, and contagious. Your enthusiasm should be so strong that others will be motivated by its sheer force and the hope you project. Why? Because in an organization of volunteers like ours, people achieve extraordinary things when they are motivated. Motivation is the force that moves our members to action, that pushes each of us to do things right and to give that extra "plus" effort needed to reach our goals, no matter how difficult they may be.

Remember that people are motivated through example. Confucius said that "the superior man acts before he speaks, and afterward speaks according to his actions." I cannot ask others to do what I myself am unwilling to do. I cannot ask people to give of their time if I do not give of my time first. I cannot ask for contributions if I do not contribute. I cannot ask for a commitment if I'm not willing to commit first. Setting an example is critically important, and you must be ready and willing to do so.

Motivation is also transmitted through recognition. It is said that after the survival instinct, the strongest motivating force in the world is the satisfaction of a job well done. Motivated people work with mind, heart, and hands to reach their goals. They can move mountains simply by seeing their dreams come true. Therefore, when you see members of the Rotary family giving that extra "plus" effort, acknowledge them, because it is vitally important to sustain the enthusiasm of each volunteer.

Your mission will be to motivate everyone you meet. Motivate everyone associated with Rotary, so that all may become more effective in their Rotary work and motivate people outside of Rotary, encouraging them to join, so that our organization may grow and we can all work and serve together for the common good.

The experience of accompanying my husband during his year as governor was a milestone in my life. Why? Because it allowed me to go outside our own club and visit other clubs and meet other Rotarians in the district. I learned to appreciate the tremendous work they do and to understand that no one can become the leader of a community without first having been immersed in the trials and tribulations of its residents and inspired by their causes. I came to understand that nothing can be achieved without empathizing totally with the people we are serving.

Often, our own situation prevents us from understanding the problems around us. We have all heard the word "hunger" countless times, but do we really know what it means? One day, I decided to really feel what it's like to be hungry, so I made up my mind not to eat for three days. I didn't make it through the second day. And there are people who are hungry and malnourished their entire lives. Ask them the meaning of hunger!

I recently ran into a Rotarian and his wife who both looked so very unhappy, unable to smile, robot-like. Later, they told me that their only son was addicted to drugs. Ask those parents the meaning of drug addiction!

The elderly mother of my best friend lives alone. While going downstairs, she fell and lay on the floor for 24 hours until help arrived. Ask that elderly woman the meaning of loneliness!

When I think about those people, I realize that any of us could be in a similar situation. That is why, my friends, if you really want to help your spouses and the Rotarians in your district to serve the people, you must become involved. When you do, you will become more motivated

and you will be better able to spark the enthusiasm of the people you meet. You will be doing your part to provide better service and increase service opportunities.

And perhaps, ladies and gentlemen, the same thing that happened to me will happen to you. Throughout the wonderful experience of accompanying my husband during his term as district governor, I saw many Rotarians and their spouses generously opening their homes to young people participating in the international Youth Exchange program. I saw Interactors and Rotaractors visiting the elderly and lifting their spirits with music and songs. I observed Rotarians working with schools, hospitals, libraries, and community centers, and I saw firsthand the financial support they provided. I saw the magnificent work that Rotary does in every city, town, and village. And my desire to serve grew because I realized that true happiness is helping others.

That is why the day I was invited to be a part of this great institution, I accepted immediately. Today, I'm proud to serve side by side with men and women of goodwill and to know that I'm now reciprocating for the good fortune and luck that I've been blessed with in my life. But more than anything, I'm proud to continue to be the partner in service of my husband, Luis.

I would like to conclude with the words of two women whom I deeply admire. Mother Teresa of Calcutta said: "When we die and it comes time for God to judge us, he will not ask: How many good things have you done in your life? Rather, he will ask: How much love did you put into what you did?"

And the words of my mother — the model for my life — who told me as a youngster that I must always remember: "Give to others your best, and you will receive the best in return."

I'm certain, my dear friends, that if you infuse everything you do with love and you offer people the best you've got, if you use your talents and skills and give your spouses the gift of your participation and commitment, you will enjoy, together with them, one of the greatest experiences of your lives.

Good luck to each and every one of you. May God bless you, always.

Bridges to Prosperity

Fary Moini

Rotary Club of La Jolla Golden Triangle, California, USA

I was born in Iran in a middle-class, comfortable family. My parents were pro education. My three sisters, two brothers, and I all went to a university. I received my degree from the University of Tehran in nursing.

I practiced as a nurse in Iran until the start of the Islamic revolution in 1979. I then requested to go to the United Arab Emirates to be the head of the nursing department at the Iranian Hospital in Dubai. I worked there for several years but eventually, due to the religious extremist pressures, I decided to immigrate to United States and became a U.S. citizen in 1984.

I started to work with a friend at his specialty clothing business and later purchased the two branches of the business in San Diego. Life was going on but something was missing. In December 1999, a dear friend introduced me to Rotary. I remember the first time I arrived at my present Rotary club, La Jolla Golden Triangle, here in San Diego. I felt at home immediately, and my life was never the same. I now wake up and look forward to participating in my club, learning and growing in many ways.

But the biggest change was the answer to a question I had been asking myself — and many of you may be asking the same question: Why am I here? What is the reason?

I assure you, we are all here on this planet for a reason. We just need to pay attention and find it. To my sadness and amazement, I found my reason and passion in life through the tragedy of 11 September 2001, when thousands of innocent lives were lost.

A short time after the events of 11 September, while I was watching television, I saw an Afghan woman and her little girl. This unknown mother and daughter were my inspiration. I understood the language they were speaking and empathized with their despair. Their plight motivated me to be on the path that I am now on. This has led me to an unbelievable journey of my life.

In early 2002 with the assistance of Rotarian Steve Brown, who is my hero, mentor, and teacher, I was on my way to the Pakistan-Afghanistan border to work in the two refugee camps near Peshawar, Pakistan. I remembered that I had heard from many Rotarians that, when you join Rotary, you will be a part of large family of Rotarians around the world. I did not understand what they meant until I went to Pakistan and lived with Rotarian Zamarud Shah and his family. They took care of me for the entire two months while I was working as a volunteer at the refugee camps.

The condition of the clinics at the camps where I was working was horrifying: no heating system, no hot water, open sewers, no baby cots, and no proper delivery table. One time I stayed overnight at the OB/GYN clinic, and we had a delivery at 3 a.m. They did not have a delivery table with the straps, so the mother needed to hold her own legs. The gloves the doctor used were the same types used here for food handling. Worst of all, in the middle of the delivery, the electricity shut down and we had to use the flashlight to deliver the baby. There was no water heater and thus no warm water in the middle of winter to wash the baby.

After everything was settled, I basically felt ill because of the situation. The next day I sent an e-mail to my Rotary club and asked for \$700 to buy a generator, and in less than a week I received \$7,000 from members of my club. Wasn't that amazing? With these donations from generous Rotarians I was able to purchase a water heater; delivery table; generator; materials to repair and build the sewer system, bathrooms, and kitchen cabinets; medicine for the children's clinics; and a year's worth of food supplies for the orphanage.

One of the highlights of my trip was the honor of meeting last year's Rotary International president, Mr. Wilfrid Wilkinson, in Pakistan in 2002 at the refugee camps, and accompanying him to visit another refugee camp close to the border of Afghanistan.

Upon my return to the United States, I presented the idea of building a school in Afghanistan for the refugee children who were returning to their war-torn homeland with few school facilities. When I first talked to Steve about the idea of building a school in Afghanistan, he said, "It is a bad idea," but with his dedication and effort and the support and encouragement of many Rotarians around San Diego, we raised enough funds to be on our way — this time to Afghanistan.

In November 2002, Steve, Flouran Wali (an American Afghan lady), and I left for Afghanistan. We took with us architectural drawings for an Afghan school prepared by Rotarian Rick Clark, one of the dedicated members of our club. We first traveled to Peshawar, Pakistan, and met up with some of my new Pakistani Rotarian friends. From there, we drove through the Khyber Pass to Jalalabad. Our journey to Afghanistan had started.

As soon as we arrived in Afghanistan, we had several meetings with the local governor and many officials at the various ministries in Kabul, seeking approval for the school. Our plans were approved and supported by the Ministry of Education, and we were welcomed by the local governor and local elders to start building the school. The facility has 20 classrooms, a computer center, science lab, library, and multipurpose hall for community gatherings.

We were present for the grand opening of the school in March 2004. The memories of that day will forever remain in my heart and mind. Seeing the children, girls and boys in line to attend the school that we built, instead of going to tents where they had been going to school, was a scene I will never forget.

Today, our school has 3,500 students — 1,200 girls and 2,300 boys — set up for grades 1 through 12. At one time, the school did not have girls attending beyond grade 6. We later learned that the reason for this was the lack of female teachers. According to their culture, the girls and their families are not comfortable having male teachers after grade 6. So, we hired an additional eight female teachers and have been paying their annual salaries of \$650 per teacher. With 5 female teachers hired by the Afghan government and 8 by us, the school now has 13 female teachers. This has increased the number of girls in the school and now allows girls to attend the higher grades.

Building the school was just the first seed we planted. In 2002, we also visited the Nangarhar University in Jalalabad, which is the second largest university in Afghanistan, with approximately 4,000 students and 250 professors. This visit spurred our next Rotary project in the region. The chancellor of the university and the various department heads described the total isolation the university was experiencing from the rest of the world. They asked if we could help them. At that time, they did not have any form of communication such as telephones or computers. They were teaching from very old lecture notes prepared during the Russian time.

By March 2004, we provided a computer center with Internet access, which was revolutionary for the university. With a touch of a button, we connected them to the rest of the world. We were able to see firsthand what a difference we made in such a short time. Rotarian Steve Spencer from San Diego State University accompanied Steve Brown to teach and train Afghan professors and students how to work with the computers. After several days of training, he said, "Now, let's talk about computer viruses." One of the professors told him he has some antibiotic at home that could be used to help. It sounds funny now, but after three months, the same professor advised us he had found his earlier publications from the University of Tehran on the Internet and he had also applied for and received a grant in the amount of \$300,000 for building a new veterinarian department. Isn't that amazing?

Our overall goals are to improve the higher education in Nangarhar University and increase the enrollment of female students. Among 4,000 students, there are only 20 females at the main campus.

So far we have accomplished many things at Nangarhar University that will help us achieve this goal. We have built and provided an international learning center, which is named in honor of Mr. Steve Brown; a small guest house for visiting professors; an Internet satellite facility for the university medical school; a computer lab with Internet for the main campus; and a female dormitory with library, computer center, dining room, and kitchen.

Further, through our efforts and meetings with the representatives of the World Bank, the Afghan Ministry of Higher Education, Nangarhar University, and San Diego State University, we were able to secure \$4 million in grants to build partnerships between the two universities to help build Nangarhar University's English language program and civil engineering program. This has resulted in several Afghan English professors and engineering professors attending institutes here in San Diego last summer. Additionally, with the assistance of The Rotary Foundation and the generosity of a Rotary district in Michigan and the University of San Diego, we were able to bring two English professors from Nangarhar University's English faculty to study for master's degrees emphasizing teaching English as a second language.

In May 2005, we were able to bring six professors from Nangarhar University to San Diego for the month under Rotary's Group Study Exchange program.

We also were successful in securing a \$150,000 grant from the U.S. Department of State under its Global Connections and Exchange Program to use technology to connect students in six schools in San Diego to all 15 high schools in Jalalabad. Through this program, working in conjunction with some Rotary programs (GSE and scholarships), we hope to bring a combination of approximately 14 Afghan high school teachers and university professors to our Rotary district in the next 12 months. In addition, we have sent 12,000 English dictionaries to Afghanistan, which were delivered to Nangarhar University and Afghan schools.

In the past seven years, we have been able to assist not only the education community but the medical community and Nangarhar Province as a whole. We have established an Internet system at Nangarhar Public Hospital and sent two ultrasound machines there, purchased pediatric equipment for Nangarhar Teaching Hospital, arranged for the shipment of \$2.5 million (wholesale value) of unexpired medications to be distributed in Jalalabad, and assisted in funding a micro-credit project in the province. We eventually hope to use technology to establish peer-to-peer relationships to connect Afghan professionals in the medical and public health fields with their counterparts elsewhere.

We have also been able to build and strengthen Rotary connections in Afghanistan through sponsoring the chartering of the Rotary Club of Jalalabad and providing ongoing assistance to Rotary clubs in Kabul, Logar, and Herat. We are also pleased that we have been able to establish a Sister Cities relationship between San Diego and Jalalabad. In 2004, we brought the mayor of Jalalabad to San Diego for a meeting of the mayors.

Our next activity is in the formative stage today and involves building a bridge over the Kabul River to connect many small villages to the city of Jalalabad, to give opportunity to the children to go to school and to provide all villagers access to the health facilities. We are working with an organization known as Bridges to Prosperity, which was featured in the August edition of *The Rotarian* magazine.

As stated by Eleanor Roosevelt: "It isn't enough to talk about peace. One must believe in it. And it isn't enough to believe in it. One must work at it."

I am profoundly grateful to be a Rotarian, which gives me the chance to serve as a passionate volunteer with the opportunity to make a difference in the world. We are impacting so many men, women, and children around the world. Our bigger goal is building peace and understanding, and the only way it can be achieved is through people-to-people projects and showing others that we feel and care for them. It is not enough just to send money, food, and medicine. They need us — you and me — to be physically present and teach them how to fish, to keep their dignity and worth as humans. One smile or a simple hug gives hope and builds friendship.

As Mother Teresa said: “We all cannot do great things, but we can do small things with great love.”

God bless you all and thank you for giving me this opportunity to share my amazing journey with you.

Understanding Poverty and Changing Lives, One Child at a Time

Deepa Willingham

District Governor-nominee/Founder, PACE International

I would like to begin this morning with a great big thank-you to President-elect John and his lovely wife, June, for giving me this honor to come and speak to you about what has really been the fulfillment of a dream of mine: the dream of giving back the gift of education.

This morning, I want to begin with the story of a little girl named Shanti (slideshow begins). This picture was taken the first day Shanti arrived at our school with her mother; she was scared, unhappy, and uncertain as to where she was coming to. This next picture is the same girl just three months later, a girl full of vibrancy and smiles like every little girl or boy should have on their faces.

Unfortunately, two weeks after this happy picture was taken, Shanti and her three-year-old brother were left alone by their mother one weekend while she traveled to the city for work. The little brother ran into a neighborhood pond and Shanti ran after him in order to pull him out. Some villagers dove in also and did manage to save the little boy, but not our Shanti.

That day, away from school, Shanti became one of the child mortality statistics that our president, D.K. Lee, talks about so passionately. Currently, that statistic stands at 26,000 children dying each day from preventable causes.

We need to ask why so many children are dying each day! You will see that the answer invariably will be that most of these children are children of poverty. Therefore, let us begin this morning's talk with a quote that is particularly relevant to our understanding of the problem. Gandhiji was right: "The tolerance of poverty is the worst form of human violence."

Poverty: What is that word, poverty? Is poverty the same in the United States as it is in Africa, for example? No, it is not. It is generally agreed that there are three broad categories of poverty: extreme poverty, moderate poverty, and relative poverty.

I have developed this simple graphic to help us easily understand the three categories. Imagine that the flat round surface represents society and the ladder represents the steps people have to take to reach the next level of existence. The less that the round surface — or society — provides in terms of basic services, the narrower the ladder, meaning that few people can ever hope to reach even the first step of the ladder, let alone have the ability to climb it. Notice, also, that not only is the ladder narrower, but there are many more steps involved, indicating the difficulty of such a climb.

So what is the definition of extreme poverty? It means people living on less than \$1 to \$2 a day. They have no, or minimal, shelter. They have no clothing and not much food. They and their children are chronically hungry. They have no access to health care, sanitation, or clean water, and no education available for their children. They also do not qualify for any bank credit.

The most important thing to remember about them, our fellow human beings who are living in extreme poverty, is that they live with no hope in their hearts, they have no voice in their destiny, they have no ability to determine their future. And what is sad is that their societies have completely failed them by not providing any safety nets. This type of poverty exists in many parts of Africa, South Asia, and in pockets in other parts of the world.

Due to lack of time, I am only going to briefly touch on moderate and relative poverties. Moderate poverty, which means that people are living on \$2 to \$3 a day, exists mostly in countries of Central and South America. Relative poverty is what we have here in the United States and is defined as a family of four living on less than \$50 to \$60 a day.

With this basic understanding of the levels of poverty, let us now look at some alarming numbers that exist on our planet today because of extreme poverty.

There are more than three billion people — half the human population — living on less than \$2 a day. Further:

- There are 2.6 billion people with no access to sanitation or clean water.
- There are 140 million children who have never been to school.
- Approximately 26,000 children die each day from preventable causes.
- More than 2.5 million children die each year from armed conflicts or are engaged as soldiers.
- Over two million children, mostly girls, are sold each year for the sex trade or as slaves. This is the fastest-growing business of global organized crime.

Now that I have overwhelmed you with these alarming numbers, all of you are probably wondering: “What can I do? I am just one individual!”

My friends, herein comes the “power of one.” I, too, am just one person, and I find these numbers staggering and I feel overwhelmed. My heart aches with sadness. But I also know and believe that I can make a difference by doing my share, however small that may be! I, a simple Rotarian from a small town in Southern California, got inspired to form an organization called PACE Universal, which stands for Promise of Assurance to Children Everywhere. We — mostly Rotarian colleagues and I — started this organization in 2003 with two simple mission statements: that PACE will be an educational, nutritional, health, and social development program for young girls in the slums of Kolkata, India, and other poverty-stricken areas of the world; and that we will build a prototype PACE Learning Center, which will serve as a model for others.

When we began, we thought we would offer the program for only 25 girls the first year. Within six months, we had 80 girls in the program. And now we are teaching 130 girls in a rented facility, with 300 more on the waiting list. We have purchased land and have plans for a permanent building that will house the prototype learning center. Our partner in India is the Rotary Club of Calcutta Metropolitan. With the construction of the permanent building, we and our partner hope to provide education to 600 girls and 400 boys.

This first center, located in an impoverished village outside Kolkata called Piyali Junction, will be called the Piyali Learning Center. It will bring literacy, clean water, sanitation, and solar ovens to the community. And it will house a medical and a dental clinic, a computer learning center, a vocational training center, a microcredit center, a field services center, and a volunteer service center. The aim of this learning center will be to bring about sustainable changes to the lives of the citizens of Piyali Junction, who are currently living on less than \$1 a day. Our objective will be to help them get to the third or fourth step of the ladder within a span of 10 years.

In the past five years, we have already seen much positive change in the community, brought about by the presence of the school and the programs that have been initiated. Over the next four years, we will be dotting the community with clean water systems, sanitation facilities, solar utilities, and many other basic services that will completely change the face of poverty in that community.

Lessons learned in Piyali Junction are also guiding us, in my Rotary District 5240, to undertake many village rehabilitation pilot programs in Mexico, Romania, and other sites around the world. These studies will undertake a similar multitier, multiyear approach in which Rotarians from my

district will pool their resources and bring all the basic services that are missing from these communities. We will help these villagers stand on their own feet and begin climbing that ladder that I talked about.

So you see, my friends, this Rotarian's actions are a perfect example of how the power of one can work, changing the life of one child, one community, one village at a time! I started this journey believing that if I light a small flame somewhere in the world, then that flame would inspire others to do the same, and soon, with all the little flames together, we can create a bonfire to eradicate that which is not just and that which we, as a human race, ought not to tolerate. And that is the existence of extreme poverty.



ROTARY INTERNATIONAL®

One Rotary Center
1560 Sherman Avenue
Evanston, Illinois 60201 USA

