



Welcome to the new Rotary Year. Will this be the year we celebrate the eradication of polio worldwide? It is within our grasp, and we anxiously wait for that long-anticipated announcement.

Kathy & I just returned from the International Convention in Montreal, and once again, it has renewed our commitment to Service, both locally and internationally. There's nothing like being around 20,000 of your closest Rotary friends, celebrating all the good we are doing in the world. Between RI President John Kenny's opening remarks to our new RI President Ray Klinginsmith's closing challenge to be Bigger, Better and Bolder, we were treated to some incredible entertainment, inspiring speeches and joyful fellowship.

People have asked me what was the best part of the Convention for me, and I always go back to the address given by Dr. Bruce Aylward, Director of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, World Health Organization. He opened his remarks by stating that when he received a letter 8 months ago from RI President John and Foundation Trustee Chair PRIP Glenn Estess, asking him to give a report to 20,000 Rotarians from around the world about our progress in Polio eradication, he wondered: "will I have good news, or will I have bad news?" We waited, and when he said "I don't have bad news", the applause started to swell, but he immediately said "I don't have good news". You could hear a pin drop. With a smile on his face, he stated "I have terrific news!" The applause was thunderous, and when we finally settled down, he went on to report that there have been no new reported cases of polio in the two most endemic provinces of India, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, in the past 6 months, and in fact, the last reported case of Polio in the entire country was on April 29th! In addition, the rate of new polio cases in Nigeria has decreased in the past year by 99%!

There is still work to be done, but we are up to the task, and will see this to the end.

So, my Rotary friends, when your Club Foundation Chair asks you for a contribution this year to Polio Plus, keep in mind, it could be the last time he or she ever has to ask. We will fulfill our \$200 million Gates Challenge this year, and in our lifetimes, watch them put polio on the shelf with smallpox.

Kathy & I are indeed fortunate to be about to embark on our journey through District 5130. We look forward to visiting each and every one of your Clubs over the next 5 months, and seeing firsthand all of the good that this District represents.

Jim Flamson, Governor
Rotary District 5130
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