

## END POLIO NOW!

Dear Fellow Rotarians,

In 1979, James Bomar Jr., the president of Rotary at the time, travelled to the Philippines as part of Rotary's earliest work to immunise children against polio. After he had put drops of vaccine into one baby's mouth, he felt a child's hand tugging on his trouser leg to get his attention. Bomar looked down and saw the baby's brother looking up at him, saying earnestly, "Thank you, thank you, Rotary."

Before Rotary took on the task of polio eradication, 350,000 people — nearly all of them children — were paralysed by polio every year. That child in the Philippines knew exactly what polio was and understood exactly what Rotary had just done for his baby brother. Today, 31 years after the launch of PolioPlus, the children of the Philippines — and of nearly every other country in the world — are growing up without that knowledge, and that fear, of polio. Instead of 1,000 new cases of polio every day, we are averaging less than one per week. But as the fear of polio wanes, so does awareness of the disease. Now more than ever, it is vitally important to keep that awareness high and to push polio eradication to the top of the public agenda and our governments' priorities. We need to make sure the world knows that our work to eradicate polio isn't over yet, but that Rotary is in it to end it.

On 24 October, Rotary will mark World Polio Day to help raise the awareness and the funding we need to reach full eradication. I ask all of you to take part by holding an event in your club, in your community, or online. Ideas and materials are available for download in all Rotary languages at [endpolio.org/worldpolioday](http://endpolio.org/worldpolioday), and you can register your event with Rotary at the same link. You can also join me and tens of thousands of your fellow Rotarians for a live-streamed global status update at 6 p.m. Eastern time at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta. I'll be there along with CDC Director Tom Frieden, other experts, and inspirational presenters, sharing an inside look at the science, partnerships, and human stories of polio eradication.

It is an incredibly exciting time to be a Rotarian. We are gathering momentum for the final race to the finish: to the end of PolioPlus and the beginning of a polio-free world. It is truly a once-in-a-lifetime chance to End Polio Now, through *Rotary Serving Humanity*.



John F Germ

President, Rotary International