

President's MESSAGE



Dear fellow Rotarians,

As we look back on Rotary's first 100 years of service, we can celebrate the great milestones and turning points that have defined our organization. One of Rotary's most significant developments was the creation of The Rotary Foundation of RI, whose programs and projects have brought dignity and hope to millions of people around the world.

The Rotary Foundation started as the dream of one man - Past RI President Arch Klumph. In 1917, he proposed an endowment fund with the express purpose of "doing good in the world." But despite his enthusiasm, the idea did not immediately take off. The first contribution was in the modest amount of US \$26.50 from the Rotary Club of Kansas City, Mo., USA. It wasn't

until 1947 - the year of founder Paul Harris' s death - that Rotarians began contributing large amounts to honor his memory. Since then, The Rotary Foundation has provided more than \$1.4 billion in grants for projects in more than 165 countries.

I would like to thank all those Rotarians who have given so generously of their time and money. Without your support, we would not be able to fund all those programs that have improved the quality of life for so many people. Through the Foundation, Rotarians are helping to overcome hunger, poverty, disease, and illiteracy - the basic afflictions of the human condition that are the main obstacles to world understanding and peace.

November is Rotary Foundation Month, a time to consider how you can make a meaningful contribution. The Foundation provides an effective vehicle for Rotarians to realize their own dreams of helping others. Whether it's in the form of financial support or hands-on service, everyone can participate in the programs of the Foundation. In 2001, the Council on Legislation set a goal for every Rotarian to contribute \$100 or more each year to the Annual Programs Fund. During the 2004-05 centennial year, we hope to raise a total of \$100 million through the Every Rotarian, Every Year initiative.

Perhaps the greatest achievement of Rotary's first century has been PolioPlus. In August, I attended RI's Polio Summit in Delhi, India, where more than 1,300 Rotarians, health officials and government leaders (including India's president) convened to coordinate the final push to wipe out polio in Bangladesh, India, Nepal, and Pakistan. Epidemiologists report that India is on track to stop poliovirus transmission by the end of 2004. It is only a matter of time before polio is eradicated forever, thanks to the Foundation and our global health partners. PolioPlus will serve as our lasting legacy to the world's children.

With so many pressing needs and economic challenges, The Rotary Foundation is more timely and relevant than ever before. As Arch Klumph expressed years ago, "We should think of the Foundation as being not something of today or tomorrow, but think of it in terms of years and generations to come. Rotary is a movement for the centuries."

These are indeed prophetic words as we look forward to celebrating Rotary's first centennial. We are literally making history as we eradicate the last few cases of polio. The Rotary Foundation will continue to touch millions of lives and alleviate needless suffering. During Rotary's centennial year, let us Celebrate Rotary by making a personal contribution to the Foundation. Perhaps your dream - like Arch Klumph's - will change the course of Rotary history.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Glenn E. Estess Sr." The signature is written in a cursive style.

Glenn E. Estess Sr.
President, Rotary International

