



Dear fellow Rotarians,

I feel a growing sense of anticipation as we count down to Rotary's centennial. As we approach Rotary's 100th anniversary next month, thousands of clubs around the world are planning service projects, banquets, parties, and other special events to mark this milestone occasion.

January is Rotary Awareness Month, an ideal opportunity to enhance the public image of Rotary. We are very fortunate to serve as Rotarians during this historic time. Our centennial birthday may be our greatest opportunity to tell the public about Rotary. Even though the organization is nearly 100 years old, many people still are not familiar with Rotary's purpose or humanitarian mission.



RI is offering a wide range of public relations tools to assist Rotarians in promoting the centennial. These resources include two Centennial Promotional Kits, PowerPoint presentations on various aspects of Rotary history, and a special video on Rotary humanitarian efforts. In early 2005, clubs and districts will receive a CD-ROM with public service announcements for television, radio, print, and billboards as part of a global public image campaign. Many clubs are preparing their own centennial displays for libraries, town halls, and storefronts, as well as newspaper sections and inserts on community projects and profiles of local club members.

To enhance awareness in your community, work with the local media to cover your efforts. During this centennial year, I am asking Rotarians to carry out projects in four areas of emphasis - family of Rotary, health concerns, literacy, and water management. More than one billion people do not have access to safe water. This month's In Focus section describes the need to properly manage and protect the world's limited water resources. Rotarians can raise awareness in their communities by helping to build water wells, fund water conservation, conduct river cleanups, and install sanitation systems. Water - the world's most precious commodity - is truly a gift of life.

Volunteer to serve on your club's centennial committee and make a difference. The centennial is the time to recruit new members and get them immediately involved in a Centennial Community Project. These can range from creating a centennial park to building a new hospital wing or shelter for the homeless.

You can celebrate the centennial in a way that best matches the traditions, customs, and culture of your region. Rotary's Web site (www.rotary.org) lists 100 ways to commemorate the centennial and promote awareness.

And of course, don't forget the grandest celebration of all - the 2005 RI Convention in Chicago from 18-22 June. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to gather with fellow Rotarians from all over the world and reflect on a century of service. Join the Rotary Centennial parade through the streets of Chicago, hear renowned speakers such as CNN founder Ted Turner (son of a Rotarian), and cheer Rotary's remarkable progress in fighting polio.

I encourage Rotarians everywhere to Celebrate Rotary in their own special way. Even if you don't like birthdays, this is one celebration you will not want to miss!

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

Glenn E. Estess Sr.
President, Rotary International