



# The Promise-Keeper

a newsletter of the Zones 31 and 32  
Polio-Eradication Campaign  
Volume 1, Issue 3, April 2003



## Final Countdown & NIDs by Don Osburn

**Final Countdown** All reports indicate a successful Polio Eradication Campaign as Rotarians continue to respond to Rotary's plea, "Fullfill Our Promise - Eradicate Polio". The passion for humanitarian service by Rotarians, Rotary Clubs and Campaign Leaders has never been greater. However, a caution flag will hang over the campaign until the final count is made. We only have a short time remaining to drive the stake and claim the greatest "Rotary Success Story" ever. The two areas of focus for the remainder of the campaign must be: 1. To insure that all club commitment forms have been processed. 2. To encourage the transmittal of all funds to the Rotary Foundation.

When Rotary International President, Bhichai Rattacul announces our total Rotary commitment at the International Convention, you will forever be a part of that legacy. The children of the world will thank you.

**National Immunization Day (NID) Travel** Rotary Headquarters does not organize NID travel, however, periodically individual Rotarians do. These Rotarians have led polio immunization groups in the past and may lead more in the future. If interested contact them directly: Ezra Teshome, WA, eztesh@aol.com (groups to Ethiopia); Dave Groner, MI gronerfh@beanstalk.net (working on a group to India); Brad Howard, CA rotary@howardtours.net (location to be determined); Barrie Howie, Canada, barry@transcanadadental.com (location to be determined).

- March 29, Bangladesh Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia launched the 11th NIDs by administering drops of the oral polio vaccine and Vitamin A supplement to more than 20 million children at Shishu Hospital in the capital, Dhaka.
- April 6, hundreds of thousands of health workers fanned out across India in a massive polio vaccination drive hoping to reach 98 million children in a single day.
- UNICEF and the WHO joined Afghanistan's Health Ministry in an April 15th three-day campaign to immunize more than six million children against polio.

(Don Osburn, national coordinator of the Polio Eradication Campaign for zones 31 and 32, served as Rotary International Director 2000-2002)

## The Challenge by Bruce Frassinelli

Getting rid of polio once and for all is not going to be a slam dunk. Rotary's \$80 million commitment comes just in time. The number of polio cases has increased six-fold between 2001 and 2002, according to the World Health Organization. The WHO says there were 1,925 cases of polio globally as of April 1.

In response to the largest polio-case increase in recent years, Dr. Gro H. Brundtland, WHO's director general, says the organization launched a massive immunization campaign in the epicenter of the problem in early April immunizing 80 million children in six Indian states during a six-day period. Rotarians from all over the world were among volunteers who traveled to india to help in this gargantuan effort. Brundtland says 83 percent of all new polio cases are now found in India. Uttar Pradesh, in particular, has become the number one priority for the WHO effort.

In 2002, the epidemic -- the largest in the world since the Global Polio Eradication Initiative began in 1988 -- spread across northern India, resulting in a six-fold increase in new cases over 2001. Pradesh was especially hard hit, with that state now accounting for 64 percent of all new polio cases worldwide.

Of major concern is the fact that the epidemic spread from Uttar Pradesh to polio-free areas within India, as well as to other countries. For example, (*con't on pg 3*)

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## Getting the Message Out

Getting the message out on Rotary's polio-eradication campaign is vital if we are to achieve our \$80 million U.S. fundraising goal. With the lowest number of polio-endemic countries ever, the world's press is focused on the Polio-Eradication program.

In 2003, a number of major media outlets ran feature-length stories on the Initiative. The New York Times ran a front-page story on the rise in polio cases in India last year; the Los Angeles Times published a five-page spread on Rotary International's role as the campaign catalyst; USA Today ran a feature on world-renowned photographer Sebastiao Salgado and his work in publicizing polio containment. These were followed by items in the Wall Street Journal and BBC World television and radio, focused on India's February immunization campaign. Many stories highlighted the fact that never before in the initiative's history have so few countries remained endemic with wild poliovirus. The features focused on the importance of reaching and vaccinating every child under the 5, if polio is to be eradicated from those remaining seven countries.

### **District 7450 ConocoPhillips Grant**

Earlier this year, the Refinery of ConocoPhillips in District 7450 made a grant of \$5,000 to The Rotary Foundation for the Polio-Eradication Campaign through the Chester, PA Rotary Club. Patrick Prosser, Community Relations Manager, wrote: "Providing this funding to the Rotary Foundation through the Chester Club has great significance for the Trainer Refinery and me. A large percentage of the oil we process comes to us from the very part of the globe Rotary is focusing its polio eradication efforts. To think that, together, we can improve their welfare and eradicate the dreaded disease of polio is truly rewarding." Prosser, a member of the Chester Club, reported that his brother and sister were stricken with polio in their youth. Fortunately, excellent medical care enabled them to recover. He still remembers how this illness affected the entire family.



*Left: PDG Jim Spencer accepts check from Scout Kevin Whittaker (see article, right)*

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## Giving from the Heart by PDG Jim Spencer

**Middleburgh, NY January 9, 2003.**

In 1985, Rotary International began a program to rid the world of polio by the year 2005, the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Rotary. The campaign has been a success in that only 10 countries in our world remain polio endemic. In the year 2002-2003 Rotary has entered the final stages of that campaign with a pledge to raise 80 million dollars to finally eradicate polio. Rotary Clubs all over the world have pledged to raise that money. One approach has been to go into our communities and ask other organizations and businesses to help. Many organizations have made major commitments and are helping Rotary meet the goal. Frequently as a result of this, individuals make personal commitments often in large amounts.

The experience related below is not a commitment for a large sum of money considering the goal of \$ 80 million but is it truly an example of "the widow's mite." These children gave from their hearts a sum that would equal the major contribution of a person of wealth. Please consider publishing this item in your paper. It shows we have young people who care and that when presented with a good cause they will give from the heart. - James A. Spencer. P.D.G., Zone Leader, Zone 31 Polio Eradication Campaign. Tel 518-827-4448; Fax: 518-827-7787; e-mail: poppop@midtel.net

Over the next few weeks, Kevin and Joshua Whittaker went to friends, family and neighbors asking for donations for a very worthy cause. They even gave some of their own money to help the children they had heard about. Rather than spend their money on video games, movies or candy, they chose to help the world's children. At a recent Rotary meeting in Middleburgh, Kevin Whittaker presented Jim Spencer with their donation of \$37.54 for Rotary's Eradication program. The Middleburgh Rotary club was moved by this gesture from the heart. Jim Spencer, a Polio Eradication Campaign Zone Leader in Rotary International Zone 31, said that Kevin and Joshua's donation will enable 75 children in our world avoid the ravages of polio as a result of immunization. Those children will be able to run, play and grow up to be healthy young adults. All this, because two young men cared more about their fellow man than themselves.

As a result of their example, Scout Pack #30 has made a pledge to donate a portion of the proceeds of their next fundraiser to the Polio Eradication program. Employees of the NYS Department of Taxation and Finance in Albany, NY heard of the contribution of the Whittaker children have asked Jim Spencer to speak at a noontime program featuring charitable causes. All stemming from the concern of two scouts for children on the other side of this world. Joshua and Kevin are a wonderful example wonderful example to all Rotarians and the world of "Service Above Self."

## Polio Eradication Campaign

### R. I. Headquarters: *Fulfilling Our Promise: Eradicate Polio Campaign Contributions*

As of 28 February 2003, the polio eradication fundraising campaign received US\$35,419,045.60 in cash and SHARE District Designated Funds (DDF). Total contributions raised will be announced on 3 June 2003 at the third plenary session at the RI Convention in Brisbane, Australia. Commitments and pledges will continue to be accepted until 30 June 2003.

In 1985, Rotary launched PolioPlus, one of the most ambitious humanitarian programs ever undertaken by a private-sector organization. PolioPlus was the catalyst for the World Health Assembly's resolution in 1988 to eradicate polio. Today, thanks to Rotary's US\$500 million commitment and its leadership in mobilizing volunteers, the world is on the threshold of eradicating the poliovirus. Great progress has been made. Fewer than 10 countries still have polio. The number of cases worldwide has decreased 99 percent since 1985. The greatest obstacle to victory is adequate funding. A \$275 million shortfall must be overcome in the period 2002-05.

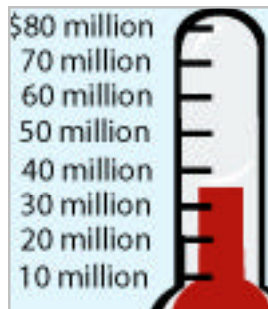
For this reason, the RI Board of Directors and the Trustees of The Rotary Foundation have unanimously decided to launch a one-year campaign to help fill the funding gap. The campaign seeks \$80 million in cash and pledges during the period 1 July 2002 through 30 June 2003. (Pledges may be paid over a three-year period.)  
Progress Toward US\$80 Million

As of 28 February 2003, the polio eradication fundraising campaign has raised more than US\$35 million in cash and SHARE District Designated Funds (DDF). More than 5,000 club commitments have been received. Additional pledges and club commitments arrive daily. So far, 520 districts and 104 countries have supported the campaign. Rotarians' push to fill the \$80 million funding gap has been overwhelming. However, there is still more work to be done to ensure that the goal is met. It is not too late for you or your club to participate in the campaign. Consider conducting a small fundraiser. For example, your club may choose to abstain from a meal at your weekly meeting and donate the money saved to the eradication campaign. Or, you might engage your community by placing collection buckets at area businesses. It only takes US\$.60 to fully immunize a child, and every penny counts. Learn about more fundraising ideas. If your club or district has participated in a successful fundraiser, e-mail campaign staff. There is still time for your individual pledge or club commitment to be included in the campaign announcement at the RI Convention on 3 June 2003 in Brisbane,

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## Polio Campaign *con't*

Australia. To be included in the announcement, pledge forms need be submitted by 1 May. Pledges and commitments will be accepted until 30 June 2003. Download pledge forms from R. I. website: [www.rotary.org](http://www.rotary.org)



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## The Challenge *con't from pg. 1*

Brundtland explains, polio transmission was found in the Indian states of Gujarat and West Bengal and in the country of Lebanon for the first time in 10 years.

The polio-eradication effort was hampered by rampant and unfounded rumors about after-effects of the polio vaccine in infected areas, which contributed to keeping residents away from immunization centers.

"We have 15 years of experience in polio eradication," Brundtland says. "We have the tools and have the strategies to finish the job. Today there is simply no moral or economic justification for any child anywhere in the world to be crippled by polio."

The polio virus is now circulating in just seven countries around the world, reduced from more than 125 when the campaign was launched in 1988. The seven countries with highest to lowest risk are: India, Nigeria, Egypt, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Niger and Somalia. . - *Bruce Frassinelli is publisher & editor of The Promise-Keeper.*



*Iron lungs keep polio victims alive in the 1950s.*

## Fundraising Ideas

Rotarians have been flexing their creative muscles to help clubs reach campaign goals.

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Canadian clubs made a donaton for 800 snowmen built by city's schools, businesses, and families to raise polio funds, and also sold snowmen pins.

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District 5060 (parts of British Columbia, CN & Washington, USA) Rotarians are pushing an iron lung through communities to fill with donations.

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A district in Denmark collected 5 tons of national currencies being made obsolete by introduction of the euro, which netted US\$135,000.

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Rotarians in Bloomington, Minn., USA, sold "I Helped Rotary Eradicate Polio" stickers at a community festival.

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A district in Arizona, USA, bought "selfless" piggy banks for each club. Members keep the pig for a week and fill it with the help of friends/associates.

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An Iowa, USA, district is sending 10 collection boxes to Rotarians to fill with donated quarters. Proceeds are expected to exceed \$400,000.

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Clubs in Kingston, Canada, are substituting bread and water for some Rotary Club meeting meals and donating the difference.

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District 6400 (parts of Ontario, CN & Mich., USA) plan a "Million Dollar Dinner/Gala," which will culminate with drawing for a Jaguar automobile.

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Australia Rotarians arranged for McDonald's to promote polio eradication on four million tray mats during Rotary Awareness Month.

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District 9820 (Victoria, Australia) invited former US Senator Harrison Schmitt, last astronaut to set foot on the moon, to speak at a fundraiser dinner.

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District 7780 (part of Maine, USA,), received pledges from Ocean National Bank and Kennebunk Savings Bank to display polio eradication exhibits.

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District 5450 (northern Colorado, USA) organized fundraising concert with Sound of Rockies Chorus.

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Drechteland, Netherlands Club helped organize bicycle fundraising tour from Vladivostok, Russia, to Schleveningen, Netherlands, May 2003.

## Promise Keeper Contacts

Following is a list of contacts for the Polio Eradication Campaign newsletter in zones 31 and 32.

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