ROTARIANS URGED TO BE A GIFT TO THE WORLD BY RI PRESIDENT-ELECT

By Ryan Hyland, Rotary News 18/01/2015

Using their talents, expertise, and leadership, Rotary members worldwide are asked to be gifts to the world this upcoming 2015-2016 Rotary year. Rotary International President-elect K.R. “Ravi” Ravindran called Sunday’s address to incoming district governors the “most significant moment of my life.”

“All of you have been given so many gifts. And you have now been given this great gift: one year to take all your talents, all your gifts, everything that you are and can become – and Be a Gift to the World,” said Ravindran, revealing his presidential theme at an annual five-day training meeting in San Diego, California, USA. “You have one year to take that potential and turn it into reality. One year to lead the clubs in your district and transform the lives of others. The time is so short, yet there is so much to be done.”

Highlighting Rotary’s biggest challenge, the eradication of polio, Ravindran said, “A future without polio is a gift that we have promised to the children of the world. And indeed it is a gift that we will give.”

Ravindran, a member of the Rotary Club of Colombo, Sri Lanka, used Rotary’s successes in the fight to eradicate the disease as an illustration of the impact Rotary members can have in the world. When Rotary set a goal of eradicating polio 25 years ago, it was endemic in 125 countries, and more than 1,000 children were becoming paralyzed each day. Today, polio remains endemic in just three countries, Afghanistan, Nigeria, and Pakistan. And in all of 2014, only 333 cases were reported. “We will battle on. We will prevail,” he said.

Ravindran spoke on some of the other challenges facing Rotary, including membership and retention.

“We have to find a way to bring back the fundamentals that built our organization: the emphasis on high ethical standards in all aspects of our lives, and the classification system that encourages a diversity of expertise in each club,” he said. “Too often these ideas are viewed as little more than inconvenient obstacles to increasing our membership. But they have been essential to Rotary’s success, and we ignore them at our own peril.”

Ravindran told attendees that the focus on branding is essential to helping Rotary grow. “We need to reposition our image, which we recognize has faded in many parts of the world,” he said.

Rotary also needs to continue to raise funds for The Rotary Foundation, attract new members, and encourage greater participation from current members, he added.

“There are no easy answers to any of these questions... And yet the answers must somehow be found... We are the ones who must find them,” said Ravindran.

The president-elect closed his speech emphasizing that now is the time to make real change.

“You have one year to build monuments that will endure forever, not carved in granite or marble, but in the lives and hearts of generations. This is our time. It will not come again. Let us grasp it,” he said.

Be a gift to the world
APRIL marks the 60th anniversary of the announcement that Jonas Salk’s inactivated polio vaccine (IPV) was safe and effective; his work is playing a more important role than ever in securing a polio-free future.

Some moments in history carry greater significance than others. Sixty years ago on the 12th of April a vaccine developed by Jonas Salk proved to be safe and effective in protecting children against the polio virus. This gave the world one of the critical tools needed to begin the fight against the crippling disease. Since then, the polio programme has been one of the most successful public health programmes in history, reducing polio cases reduced by 99%. Now, the final 1% is tantalizingly within reach. As we commemorate Jonas Salk’s remarkable achievement, the vaccine that began this journey – the inactivated polio vaccine (IPV) – is playing an important role in the final steps towards eradication, and ensuring that the virus will never be able to return.

**AN INCURABLE THREAT**

For thousands of years, polio was a leading cause of disability, arriving without warning and causing lifelong paralysis. Against the backdrop of increasingly devastating outbreaks in the United States, Jonas Salk was born in 1914. In 1916 alone, over 27,000 people were paralyzed and 6,000 killed in America.

In 1928, with ever-higher numbers of cases, iron lungs were introduced to help patients breathe, keeping many alive who would have died only years before. Yet, in many cases, this restricted otherwise healthy people to a life of reliance on these machines.

**THE DISCOVERY THAT CHANGED THE WORLD**

In 1908, Dr. Karl Landsteiner discovered that polio is caused by a virus. This marked the start of several decades during which understanding of the disease began to grow, setting the stage for scientists to begin to work on a way to prevent it.

At the New York University School of Medicine in 1938, Dr. Jonas Salk began to work on an influenza vaccine. Here he learned techniques that would later enabled him to develop the inactivated polio vaccine at the virus research program he launched at the University of Pittsburgh in 1947.

By 1952, Salk and his colleagues announced that they had developed an injectable vaccine against polio. Following small trials in the Pittsburgh area of the United States, Canada, the US and Finland launched trials on an unprecedented scale, involving 1.8 million children. Finally, in April 1955, Salk’s vaccine was declared “safe, effective and potent.” By 1957, cases in America had dropped by almost 90%, and by 1979, stopped altogether.

With the development of the oral polio vaccine (OPV) by Dr. Albert Sabin in 1961, the world was given the tools to both stop outbreaks, and strengthen and build immunity to ensure that children could grow up without the threat of polio.

**A GLOBAL FOCUS**

Despite the dramatic impact of the vaccine in America, polio continued to affect some 350,000 people in 125 countries around the world. In 1988, driven by Rotary International who had become crucial advocates in the fight against polio, the World Health Organization, UNICEF, and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention joined Rotary to launch the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI).

Since then, the GPEI has supported governments to end transmission of polio globally. The combination of the oral polio vaccine and IPV led to the eradication of polio in the Americas, in the Western Pacific, and Europe. With the declaration of the WHO’s South-East Asia Region as polio-free in 2014, 80% of the world’s populations now live in polio-free regions – a public health milestone that was unimaginable when Salk first began his work on vaccines.

**THE ROLE OF THE INACTIVATED POLIO VACCINE TODAY**

Now, on April 12th 2015, as we celebrate the 60th anniversary of the introduction of Salk’s IPV we are reminded of more than 10 million people walking today who would otherwise have been paralyzed by polio.

In the past six months, just two countries have reported cases of wild poliovirus: Afghanistan and Pakistan. As a polio-free world comes into sharper focus, Salk’s vaccine is once again demonstrating its importance. In 2015, 120 countries are introducing his IPV into their routine immunization systems (some countries, like Nigeria, already have). With the phased removal of OPV crucial in order to completely eradicate all polioviruses, reaching all children with IPV will be essential in securing the gains made against polio for future generations.

**POLIO ERADICATION DRIVE STUMBLES IN PAKISTAN**

By Radio Vatican, 20/03/2015

http://en.radiovaticana.va/

The Polio Eradication Drive in Pakistan, which was scheduled for Friday, has been postponed till Tuesday because of security concerns and lack of administrative preparedness, officials said. The officials in the Sindh provincial government said the nationwide polio campaign was devised in two phases, Dawn newspaper reported. In Karachi, the first phase started on Monday and was to end on Thursday, but the officials deferred the last day of the campaign. They said the rest 49 percent of the targeted children would be vaccinated in the next phase, which has been rescheduled for Tuesday. The Dadu and Qambar districts of the province have recorded three fresh cases this year. Another confirmed polio case was reported in Sukkur.

Over 16,000 families in Pakistan refused to vaccinate their children against polio during the first two days of the latest round of polio campaign in the country, as community opposition and Taliban threats block efforts to eradicate the crippling disease from the country. The third three-day National Polio Campaign of 2015 started on Monday with the target to vaccinate 35.5 million children below the age of five, but 16,400 families refused to vaccinate their children. About 610,333 children were missed because they were not available when vaccination teams visited their homes. Around 80,000 teams were formed to vaccinate children at their doorsteps and over 9,000 teams were deputed at fixed centers and over 4,000 at the transit points. Pakistan is one of only three countries along with Afghanistan and Nigeria where the polio virus is still endemic.
Ask almost anyone at the United Nations and they will know that Rotary, having helped to spearhead the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, has contributed to the 99 percent worldwide reduction in polio cases since the initiative began.

That recognition is no accident. For the last three decades, a network of Rotary representatives has been strengthening ties with the United Nations, its specialized agencies, and other international organizations like the League of Arab States and the European Union. These connections have enhanced Rotary’s global visibility and resource network.

For example, some Rotary representatives met three years ago with staff from the Organization of American States (OAS) to review recommended literacy requirements. That meeting led to representatives briefing the ministers of education for all OAS member countries on an approach to improve reading skills. Ecuador bought into the program and agreed to work with three Rotary districts and eight clubs on a Rotary-funded effort, backed by the OAS, which has been training teachers to meet literacy goals.

“We flew to Ecuador and met with the vice president, who happens to be a Rotarian” says Richard Carson, Rotary’s representative to the OAS. “It was a successful project and has been going on for three years now.”

“Just by having a presence at the United Nations building and in meetings of [nongovernmental organizations], it’s given Rotary much greater credibility,” adds Joseph Laureni, the primary representative to the UN in New York.

“We’re not just a name you see on a billboard. We have the wherewithal to have people in the field who are out there and who you can meet and say hello to.” Adds Bradley Jenkins, a former Rotary representative to the UN now serving as an adviser: “It is a constant chance for us to coordinate what we are collectively doing. As far as water goes, it’s known we have over 8,000 Rotary clubs involved in water projects. We talk about their work pretty frequently at the agency meetings we attend, and of course, we constantly talk about our Rotary Peace Fellows.”

The roots of Rotary’s representative network actually predate the formal chartering of the UN after World War II. In 1942, Rotary clubs from 21 nations organized a conference in London attended by ministers of education to develop ideas for advancing education, science, and culture across nations. This meeting was the impetus for what is known today as UNESCO – the UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization.

Delegations of Rotary members helped draft the UN Charter in San Francisco in 1945 and gave the organization strong support during its early years, until the Cold War turned it into an ideological battleground. Rotary’s participation decreased over the following decades in keeping with its policy against political involvement.

The spark that restored Rotary’s interest in the UN was the launch of the campaign to eradicate polio in 1985, and the ensuing partnership with the World Health Organization and UNICEF.

“When the advent of PolioPlus [Rotary’s campaign against polio], it became very important to re-establish our presence,” says Jenkins.

One man was instrumental in restoring the connection. Sylvan Barnet Jr., a pioneer in international public relations, joined the Rotary Club of New York in 1987. At a Rotary event in New York City that year, RI President Charles Keller met Barnet, recognized his public relations skills and interest in the UN, and tapped him to re-establish Rotary’s consulting status with the UN’s Economic and Social Council.

“From that time on, he became a bulwark in Rotary’s close relations with the UN and various organizations,” Keller wrote in a letter to the Barnet family after Barnet’s death in January. “The strong support of RI for the UN through the years has been in large part a product of our representatives. Barney [Barnet] was the first, and the model for all those who have followed.”

Says Laureni: “Barney basically started this all by himself and built it up to what it is today. We are all following in his footsteps. Everyone knew him, liked him, and respected him.”

Over time, the influence of nongovernmental organizations at the UN has increased, as issues concerning the environment, health, education, and human rights have taken over a larger portion of the agenda. As a result, Rotary’s influence has grown. Rotary’s efforts in child and maternal health, water and sanitation, and education, have benefitted from these ties, and they dovetail with many of the UN’s Millennium Development Goals.

Rotary’s Board of Directors has gradually expanded the representative network to include UN specialized agencies headquartered in Geneva, Vienna, and Paris. Representatives are also linked to other major international groups, including the World Food Program, the Organization of African Unity, and the Commonwealth of Nations. The network today includes 30 Rotary leaders, appointed by the RI president, who communicate Rotary’s priorities on a regular basis to these various bodies.

In 2013, the Board added two youth representatives to the UN, and appointed former Rotary General Secretary Ed Futa to serve as dean, in charge of setting the direction and strategy for Rotary’s outreach in the international community.

The representatives in New York also organize an annual Rotary Day at the United Nations at which about 1,000 Rotary members and their guests celebrate the decades-old special relationship between the two organizations.

** Restoring the connection **

By Arnold R. Grahl, Rotary News 23/03/2015
Enjoying calm winds and peaceful Pacific waters, Seung Jin Kim dove off his 43-foot sailboat, the Arapani, to swim with some dolphins nearby. The serenity that day near the equator was a stark contrast to the 60mph winds and 23-foot waves he had to fight around Cape Horn, the southern tip of South America. But Kim, a veteran sailor and member of the Rotary Club of Seokmun, in Chungcheongnam, Korea, expected such challenges when he set out in mid-October on a 25,600 mile journey around the world. In addition to fulfilling a lifelong dream, Kim is using the trip to raise awareness and funds – his goal is $200,000 or more – for Rotary’s End Polio Now campaign.

He’s now more than halfway through the voyage, which is expected to take eight months. As of February 23rd, he’d passed through the South Atlantic and is now in the middle of the Indian Ocean en route to Western Australia.

“I want to give people the belief and aspiration to create a better and more prosperous future,” says Kim, who chose Sailing With Hope as the theme of his voyage. “Rotary is doing that with polio eradication, so I’m sailing around the world in support of the effort to wipe this disease from the face of the earth. I want people to know how close we are.”

To spread the word, the Arapani carries a 68-foot mast whose sail is emblazoned with the End Polio Now logo. He hopes people who see the logo will be curious enough to look into his cause.

“The success of our fundraiser depends on how much publicity we get,” says Kim. “The bigger the crowd of people we can attract [when he completes the trip], the more money we can raise for polio eradication.”

While he is in daily contact via satellite phone with his support team, which includes Korean Rotary members, he acknowledges that the solitary aspect of the journey is difficult. “The toughest part of this trip was the moment I realized I was all by myself in the middle of the ocean. A sullen feeling of loneliness suddenly invaded me,” says Kim.

Kim, who expects to return to Korea in late May, will have crossed the Pacific, Antarctic, Atlantic, and Indian oceans. He says the things he’s most looking forward to are a home-cooked meal and being able to sleep under the same roof as his family. But he’s already anticipating setting sail again. “I want to do this again, he says, “but with young sailors who have the same dream of sailing around the world.”

Kim’s journey is sponsored by 18 districts in Korea. The day he set off, Korean Rotary members posted poems, inspirational words, and photos around the marina. “I am so grateful for [the members’] support and encouragement. They are a wonderful inspiration for me,” says Kim.

Sun-Hyung Cho, governor of District 3620 and part of the support team, says the district’s Rotary members are closely following Kim’s progress.

“We are so proud of his voyage around the world,” Cho says. “This is important for Rotary because Kim’s message can help convince other Rotarians to get more involved in the End Polio Now fight. I believe positive attitudes attract positive reactions from others. Kim’s positive thinking has helped gain attraction to our cause.”

You can support Kim’s voyage by contributing to End Polio Now
After the first cases of Ebola reached Liberia’s capital, Monrovia, last June, local Rotary members feared that the city’s limited health care system wouldn’t be able to contain the highly infectious, often-deadly disease. Those fears were realized when infections quickly multiplied, underscoring the speed with which Ebola can spread in an urban center. It was the first time the hemorrhagic fever had threatened a major city since it erupted in West Africa last March.

Now, after months of crisis-level response, and with the number of new cases declining, club members are looking to the long term, planning three projects that will have a sustained impact in the Ebola fight in their community.

“We were at the mercy of Ebola,” recalls David Frankfort, a member of the Rotary Club of Monrovia and chair of its Ebola committee. “We didn’t have enough trained health personnel or proper medical equipment to handle the onset of the epidemic here.”

The Monrovia club quickly stepped up efforts to control the spread of the disease in the city. By October, members had donated 220 non-contact infrared thermometers, 10,000 examination gloves, 100 plastic buckets with spouts for handwashing, 120 pairs of rubber boots for health care workers, 80 mattresses, fuel coupons for Ebola response vehicles, and books for students who had to stay at home after the government ordered the closing of all its schools in June.

The 53-member club is also working directly with the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare to enhance local support for Ebola patients, health workers, and support staff.

“When this crisis hit, we weren’t going to stand by and wait for help to arrive; we created our own emergency action plan,” says Frankfort. “We felt a responsibility, as a Rotary club, to show our community that responding to disasters like this is what we are all about.”

The Rotaract Club of Monrovia also pitched in, conducting a door-to-door outreach campaign aimed at raising awareness about Ebola prevention and home management. The effort was co-sponsored by the Liberian Nurses Association.

In addition, Frankfort says that dozens of clubs worldwide have assisted Rotary members in Monrovia, including the Rotary Club of Marl, in Buckinghamshire, England, which raised more than $113,000 for the effort.

CASES DROP, RESPONSE STAYS STRONG

The Ebola epidemic, the worst on record, has claimed more than 3,600 lives in Liberia. In the three worst-hit countries – Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea, – the death toll is more than 8,620, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). Ebola, which causes vomiting, diarrhea, and internal bleeding, is spread through direct contact with blood or other bodily fluids. It has no known cure.

However, the rate of new cases has declined in recent months, prompting the government to end the country’s state of emergency in November. But William Martin, senior adviser to Liberia’s Health Minister and a member of the Monrovia Rotary club, says more has to be done to end the epidemic.

“Our biggest concern is that this disease doesn’t stop at the border. The boundaries of these three countries are poor. People migrate back and forth all the time,” says Martin, who serves on the Presidential Advisory Council on

Ebola. “Eliminating cases in Liberia isn’t enough. We [the government] must continue to prepare for cases.”

His club, which is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year, is also ready to continue the fight. “I’m extremely proud of what we’ve been able to accomplish so far. Every one of our members agreed that this outbreak is something we must take on as a challenge,” he says. “But we can’t stand down.”

The Monrovia club plans to institute three major projects for long-term relief. Members will donate $80,000 to an orphanage caring for children who lost parents to the disease. They are buying an oxygen machine for the John F. Kennedy Medical Center, one of Liberia’s largest and oldest medical facilities, which lacks proper equipment for Ebola patients. Martin says the machine will be crucial to the hospital’s treatment of infected patients. The third initiative is to provide scholarships for people to study health and social work subjects.

Ebola’s impact on Liberia was magnified by its deadly reach into the health care system. More than 300 medical workers contracted the disease, and 178 of them died from it. This was a significant blow in a country whose population of 4.4 million was served by only one doctor for every 100,000 people before the outbreak started, according to WHO. That compares with WHO’s recommendation of at least one doctor for every 600 people. As the club’s efforts transition from emergency response to long-term relief, members will focus on filling gaps the government can’t address, Frankfort says.

“There is going to be a strong focus on community outreach and awareness,” he says. “It’s crucial that people are educated on Ebola, because taking even a small step back can be disastrous for this country.”

Our club is working directly with the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare to enhance locally needed support for Ebola patients, health workers and support personnel. While international assistance is somewhat delayed and mainly focused on materials and providing health workers, our club first solicited funds to buy locally available items (i.e. fuel, per diem, medicine, mattresses, buckets, etc.) and most importantly: community awareness. The needs are far beyond the capacity of our Government. We continue to support awareness (also via our Rotaract Club) and donate washing buckets and chlorine solution to communities as well as reading and activity packets for primary school children at home (schools are closed). Also developing grants to support orphans, create ongoing local health sector scholarships, and restocking of hospital needs (also in cooperation with Medical Supplies Network).

To contact the project creator, please email: david.liberia@outlook.com
Thousands of women across Rotary deserve recognition on International Women’s Day, March 8th, and while it isn’t possible to highlight them all, we chose to profile several of them. These are women who work tirelessly on behalf of others, and whose efforts touch lives across the world, often in remote and inhospitable places. With projects focused on child and maternal health, economic development, and other humanitarian concerns, these women are proof of Rotary’s diversity and global reach.

Ola Al-Awamleh Almasri, Rotary Club of Amman Capital, Amman, Jordan

Almasri helped build a water-catchment system for a public school in Jordan with a large enrollment of underprivileged students. She’s also organized and supported vocational projects that train students to become entrepreneurs. She was recognized by Forbes as one of the top 50 businesswomen in the Arab world.

Fary Moini, Rotary Club of La Jolla Golden Triangle, San Diego, California, USA

Over the last 10 years, Moini has taken 19 trips to Afghanistan to work on projects ranging from school construction to setting up computer labs. Her fellow Rotary members called her “inspirational” in her involvement in the building of a school in Jalalabad, and in helping to provide neonatal and midwife training for medical professionals.

Christina Covotsou-Patroclou, Rotary Club of Limassol - Berengaria Cosmopolitan, Limassol, Cyprus

Covotsou-Patroclou is a charter member of the Interact Club of Limassol, and helped launch the Rotaract Club of Limassol-Amathusia, the first Rotaract club in Cyprus. A former Paul Harris fellow, she worked with ShelterBox in 2006 to provide aid in Lebanon.

Deepa Willingham, Rotary Club of Santa Ynez Valley, Solvang, California, USA

“Together, we have created a site that is affecting the lives of 30,000-40,000 people.”

Deepa is founder and chair of PACE Universal (Promise of Assurance to Children Everywhere), a nonprofit organization that educates girls in the world’s poorest areas and works to prevent child trafficking. Working with Rotary clubs around the world, the center she formed provides education, micro-loans, health care, clean water and sanitation, and community infrastructure.

Teodora Alinsod Lucero, Rotary Club of Santa Rosa Centro - Laguna, Philippines

A midwife, Lucero is operating a birthing clinic that delivers an average of 500 babies a year. She also organizes a free medical clinic and workshop for pregnant women in underserved communities. In 2013, the National General Assembly of Midwives presented her the Gaward Agham Special Award for Excellence in clinical care.

Carolyn Jones, Rotary Club of Anchorage East - Anchorage, Alaska, USA

The first woman to serve as a Rotary Foundation trustee, Jones has traveled to Russia as a Rotary volunteer five times, three of them as a preschool teacher for developmentally delayed children in orphanages. But her volunteer efforts have taken her elsewhere as well: “In the 27 years that I’ve been a Rotarian, I’ve administered polio drops in India, planted trees in Brazil, promoted microcredit in Costa Rica, and delivered baby formula in Uganda,” Jones says.

Bernadette Blackstock, Rotary Club of Glassboro Sunrise, Franklinville, New Jersey, USA

The CEO of People for People Foundation, Blackstock helps normally self-sufficient people who have fallen on hard times to afford food, clothing, rent, utilities, medications, and other life necessities. “Since 2003, our foundation has served over 10,000 families,” Blackstock says.

Ginger Vann, Rotary Club of Baker - Baker, Louisiana, USA

Vann coordinates a tutoring program for at-risk students. With the help of her club, she renovated a derelict school building and worked with tutors to reach 50 students a day. She’s also passionate about workforce development in Baker, where well-paying craftsman jobs often go unfilled. “We’re not going out there and finding just anybody; we’re targeting the unemployed, underemployed, and veterans,” Vann says.
For thousands of years, the Batwa Pygmies lived among the Silverback mountain gorillas in the Bwindi Impenetrable Forest of southwest Uganda. But in 1992, the forest was declared a World Heritage Site to protect the endangered Silverback, and the Batwa lost their home. Forced to transition from hunter-gatherers to farmers, they did not adapt well, and their very survival was threatened.

Over the years, Rotary members in the United States, Uganda, and other parts of the world helped with efforts to aid the Batwa. Most recently, those efforts have focused on the creation of a nursing school to serve the entire southwestern part of the country.

Dr. Scott Kellermann, a physician and Rotary member from California, USA, discovered the plight of the Batwa in 2000, when he and his wife, Carol, traveled to the area as medical missionaries to assess the indigenous people’s needs. He describes the situation they found: “Abject poverty. No access to health care, no access to education, no clean water, no sanitation, land insecurity, and food insecurity.”

The Kellermann’s survey found that 38 percent of the Batwa died before the age of five – twice the rate of Uganda as a whole – and that the average life expectancy was 28.

**BUILDING A HOSPITAL**

Shortly after his first visit, Kellermann and his wife sold their possessions, including his medical practice, and moved to Uganda – where they stayed fulltime until 2009 – to help the Batwa. Starting with mobile clinics held under trees and with IVs hanging from branches, they treated “200, 300, sometimes 500 people a day,” Kellermann recalls. Eventually, they launched a foundation and built Bwindi Community Hospital.

Kellermann’s Rotary connections helped to equip it. Projects supported by a series of Rotary Foundation grants and backed by members in Uganda, the United States, and other parts of the world provided an operating theater, a dental unit, generators, solar panels, and clean water and improved sanitation, and taught the Batwa how to raise small livestock to improve their nutrition.

Now, the infant mortality rate is down to 6 percent, and the number of women dying in childbirth has declined 60 percent.

“Rotary has been incredible,” says Kellermann. “It doesn’t just throw money at a problem. It goes through a local Rotary club so Rotarians on the ground come out to make sure the projects are successful. What Rotary did was look at the broader picture and say, hey, a hospital is great. But you need to prevent these diseases. You need to provide water and sanitation. You need to teach these women how to feed their kids.”

A project aimed at reducing the incidence of malaria distributed thousands of bed nets to families through tribal healers. “In 2006, we were losing one to two kids every week to malaria,” Kellermann says. “After Rotary helped us distribute 25,000 bed nets, we went nine months without a kid dying from malaria. Rates have dropped over 90 percent.”

**CREATING A NURSING SCHOOL**

A few years ago, two entrepreneurs, James Jameson and Steve Wolf, met Kellermann while they were in the area to track gorilla. After they learned of the need for a nursing school, they contributed more than $650,000 to plan, design, and build it. The Uganda Nursing School Bwindi opened in November 2013. The pair also paid to send Jane Anyango, a registered nurse at the Bwindi hospital, to Queen Margaret University in Edinburgh, Scotland, where she earned a master’s degree in nursing that enabled her to take over as the school’s principal teaching tutor. And they provided iPads, loaded with a year’s worth of textbooks, for every nursing student at the new school.

Last year, Jerry Hall, a past Rotary International vice president, led a vocational training team of nursing educators who spent two weeks developing the school’s curriculum, instruction, and administration. Hall had met Kellermann during a previous project, when Hall was a Rotary director, and he had become a strategic planning consultant for the hospital.

Hall’s club, the Rotary Club of Reno, Nevada, USA, along with Rotary members in Kihihi, Uganda, and 18 other clubs, raised $67,000 for a global grant totaling $247,000 that provided furnishings, classroom supplies, and lab equipment for the school.

Hall says that after the vocational training team returned home, a team member affiliated with the University of San Francisco arranged for Anyango to have access to the university’s trove of digital information. Another team member arranged to have flash drives loaded with nursing curriculum sent to the school.

“The technology they have at the school is the first of its kind in Uganda,” says Hall. “The chair of the Uganda Nursing Council attended a grand opening celebration during our stay and was blown away by some of it.

“The potential is tremendous,” adds Hall. “Once we get trained nurses out to the villages and regional areas, you’ll have people with midwifery skills who can deliver children out there safely and provide prenatal care. None of that is available today.”

A nurse immunizes a child at Bwindi Community Hospital in southwest Uganda. 
Photo Credit: Courtesy of Bwindi Community Hospital
In July, we covered a tremendous story about a man named Albert Manero, who had created a 3D printed myoelectric prosthetic arm for a little boy named Alex. That arm provided Alex with the opportunity, for the first time in his life, to give his mom a full hug. While that story seemed to have a very happy ending, in reality it wasn’t even close to being over with.

“My mother taught us that we’re supposed to help change the world,” Manero told 3DPrint.com. “We’re supposed to help make it better.”

Although Alex was quite happy with his new arm, and Manero certainly made a huge difference in Alex’s life, his goal of changing the world still is what drives him. Manero has showed this with several other 3D printed prosthetic arms which he has created for more children, though his organization Limbitless Solutions.

Manero doesn’t simply sit down and accept what he creates. He is always looking to iterate upon his designs, trying to make the next one even better than the previous. As for Alex, he is a huge fan of Iron Man as well as Robert Downey Jr. who plays the Iron Man character in the popular films.

Thanks to Manero, his organization Limbitless Solutions, the volunteer 3D printing prosthetic group e-NABLE, the #CollectiveProject, and none other than Iron Man himself, Robert Downey Jr., little Alex was treated to an extraordinary surprise.

As Manero led Alex through the halls of a hotel building and up to a room where Downey was awaiting him, Alex had no idea that he was in for the surprise of a lifetime. As Manero and Alex walked into the room, they were greeted by Robert Downey Jr., who presented to Alex a 3D printed myoelectric arm that looked almost exactly like the arm Downey wears in the Iron Man films. Also on hand was the real Iron Man arm, which Downey put on to compare to Alex’s.

“[I] had the absolute privilege of presenting a brand spanking new 3D printed bionic Iron Man arm to Alex, the most dapper 7-year-old I’ve ever met,” Downey explained. “Dude, it’s even cooler than I thought.”

The incredible looking arm not only looks great but it actually allows Alex to pick things up and take part in other normal task which he found incredibly difficult prior to having a prosthetics.

“He keeps working and working until he gets it right,” said Alex.

The odds are that this won’t be the last arm that Manero creates for Alex, but it just may be the coolest yet. This goes to show that even Hollywood celebrities have soft spots in their hearts, as Robert Downey Jr. took time out of his busy schedule to help make this boy happy. As for Manero, he is certainly on his way to changing the world, one step at a time.

limbitless-solutions.org/
James Cameron is competing at the Arnold Sports Festival, which starts today in Columbus, Ohio. The Guelph man has cystic fibrosis, cystic fibrosis-related diabetes, is hearing impaired and has had a double-lung transplant and many other “medical adventures,” he says.

He’s not just beating the odds, he’s body slamming them.

**ALL THAT, AND THE GUY IS A BEAST OF A BODYBUILDER**

“If I’m training and I make the muscles hurt, whatever else is hurting kind of doesn’t happen anymore,” says Cameron. “It feels a lot better when I’m working out.”

What the ripped 5 foot 7 inch, 152-pounder has worked recently is his way into the coveted bodybuilding competition at the Arnold Sports Festival, an annual sports convention that is named after Arnold Schwarzenegger, which starts today in Columbus, Ohio.

It’s a remarkable turnaround for him. When he was 23, Cameron thought life starts today in Columbus, Ohio.

Cystic fibrosis is a genetic disease that can have various effects on the body, but mainly it affects the digestive system and lungs. The disease can cause infection and loss of lung function and eventually causes death in the majority of people who have it.

**AT THE HOSPITAL AND STRUGGLING BADLY**

Asked about staring death squarely in the eyes, Cameron says: “You know what, I had a period where I was just kind of crying my eyes out. But then after that, I felt content. Like, incredibly calm. And I’m like – ‘Wow, this must be what it’s like, coming close to death.’” He says his lung capacity was down to 10 or 11 percent, “At 10 or 11 percent lung capacity, if you stand up you’re out of breath,” says Cameron.

Then one day, he got word – he was to be the recipient of a double-lung transplant. Today, he’s a new man.

“It’s quite a difference having new lungs put in,” he says. “The recovery was very rocky. After about six years everything settled down and I was finally in the clear.”

The Burlington native, who is a personal trainer, moved to Guelph about three years ago to be with his girlfriend, Jackie Cooper.

Cooper, who also pumps iron, is always there for Cameron when a health struggle might hit, he says. “I call her ‘Nurse Jackie’,” says Cameron, with a laugh.

He’s using his story to raise awareness about cystic fibrosis and organ/tissue donation and to hopefully inspire others.

**MENTORING MANY, AS WELL AS THOSE LIVING WITH CF**

‘Fitness saves lives!’ reads his Twitter bio. “The people who have CF, I encourage them to do what I do. I give them copies of my diet, I give them copies of my workouts. All the food that I eat, everything. All the supplements, all that stuff. So they can see my blueprints for what it is,” says Cameron “All they have to do is put in the hard work and they’ll get it done.”

Cameron, who deals with loads of side effects due to the meds he is on, played a lot of sports growing up and was intrigued by bodybuilding.

That intrigue got multiplied a couple years back, when he was at the Schwarzenegger event and got to meet the man himself and have his photo taken with him.

“Shortly after the Arnolds, I did my first bodybuilding competition – which has been on my bucket list for a really long time,” he says.

He ultimately was able to earn a spot as a competitor at the annual event in Columbus. The Arnolds run from today to Sunday. Cameron is competing in the lightweight category.

**OVER THE MOON TO HAVE MADE IT**

“My whole goal was just to make it there. So once I go on stage and I see the crowd – I’m just going to experience the moment and enjoy it, and just cherish that moment,” he says. He is over the moon to have made it, and any sort of success is just gravy.

“If I get a trophy or anything like that, that’s fine. But it’s not important to me right now.”

Cameron is raising money for the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation.

For info visit gobfundme.com/kmhuds
Connect with James at facebook.com/trainlikeme

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**FIGHTING BACK AGAINST PARKINSON’S WITH WEIGHTS IN HIS HANDS**

By Jill Macyshon, 27/03/2015 ctvnews.ca

A Winnipeg man has taken up body building as a way to fight off the effects of Parkinson’s disease. Four years ago, 66-year-old Steve Van Vlaenderen was diagnosed with the nervous system disorder. The disease inhibits motor skills, sometimes resulting in the slurring of speech, stiffness and is well-known for causing visible tremors. Parkinson’s painful progression can also leave sufferers bedridden, and there is no cure.

**BODYBUILDING: A RESPONSE TO PARKINSON’S**

After his initial diagnosis, Van Vlaenderen was left feeling depressed, but instead of throwing in the towel, he hit the gym and started training.

“I had no hope at all – I’d lost all hope,” he said. “Then I decided to take charge of my own health. I told my partner I was going to go to the gym the next day and here I am.”

The 66-year-old, who has a noticeable tremor on the right side of his body, has been weight training for roughly 18 months.

In that time, he has radically overhauled his lifestyle, shedding more than 60 pounds and developing healthy eating habits.

And on Saturday, Van Vlaenderen will compete in the Manitoba Amateur Body Building Association Championship in Winnipeg.

Competitors will be judged based on their ability to pose, control their muscles and show off their physiques.

Training for the event has been no easy task. Van Vlaenderen is in the gym five days a week for two-hour sessions.

“It takes a lot of discipline and control,” he said.

His trainer has been sizeably impressed by his dedication, “For Steve to undertake (this) it’s tremendous, it blows me away (and) it’s so inspiring,”

And Van Vlaenderen doesn’t just carry the weight of his own diagnosis on his shoulders, he is hoping that his fight will help inspire others.

“I want to get the message out to people with Parkinson’s (to) take charge of your health, learn as much as you can about your own body and help doctors along.”

You can connect with Steve Van Vlaenderen on facebook at:
facebook.com/stevemvanvlaenderen

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