

# Rotarians Support the Efforts and Recognize the Challenges in Eradicating Polio Worldwide

Story by Ed Kolybaba on Nov 10, 2018



With seven months still within the 2018-19 Rotary year, the Rotary Club of Kelowna Sunrise moved significantly toward achieving its goal of raising US\$2500 toward the PolioPlus Fund of The Rotary Foundation. As of the first of November, the club had raised CAN\$2032 in support of eradicating Polio throughout the world through the PolioPlus Fund.



As in past years, the club collected tips while serving at all of the home games of the Okanagan Sun Football Club. This year's collection amounted to \$731.00. Brian Fennell, coordinator and organizer of the program, credited the club Rotarians who had come out to volunteer game after game to provide beverage service at the North and South Beer Gardens at the Sun's home park.

In recognition of World Polio Day on October 24<sup>th</sup>, donations designated to the PolioPlus Fund were received from many club Rotarians and all fine collections were designated to the Fund at the club's regular meeting on October 26th. This resulted in a collection of \$1296.

The following information, copied from the *Rotary Weekly*, dated October 26, 2018, provides international news on the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) of which The Rotary Foundation is a partner, a partnership which also includes the World Health Organization, UNICEF, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

*Since its formation, the GPEI has trained and mobilized millions of volunteers and health workers, gained access to homes not reached by other health initiatives to immunize children, brought health interventions to underserved communities, and standardized timely global monitoring for polio cases and poliovirus, a process also known as surveillance.*

*The results have been monumental. Thirty years ago, the paralyzing disease affected 350,000 children in one year. Because of massive vaccination campaigns around the world, cases have dropped more than 99.9 percent, to only 20 reported so far this year. Polio, which was endemic in 125 countries in 1988, now remains so in just three: Afghanistan, Nigeria, and Pakistan. More than 2.5 billion children have been vaccinated, and more than \$14 billion has been invested in the fight to eradicate the disease worldwide.*

*After 30 years of bold action, historic achievements, and sometimes discouraging setbacks, Rotary and its partners in the **Global Polio Eradication Initiative** (GPEI) have nearly brought polio to an end.*



These statistics and information clearly demonstrates Rotary's strength as an organization in tackling the challenge of ending the disease globally and spearheading one of the most ambitious public health initiatives in history, the GPEI.