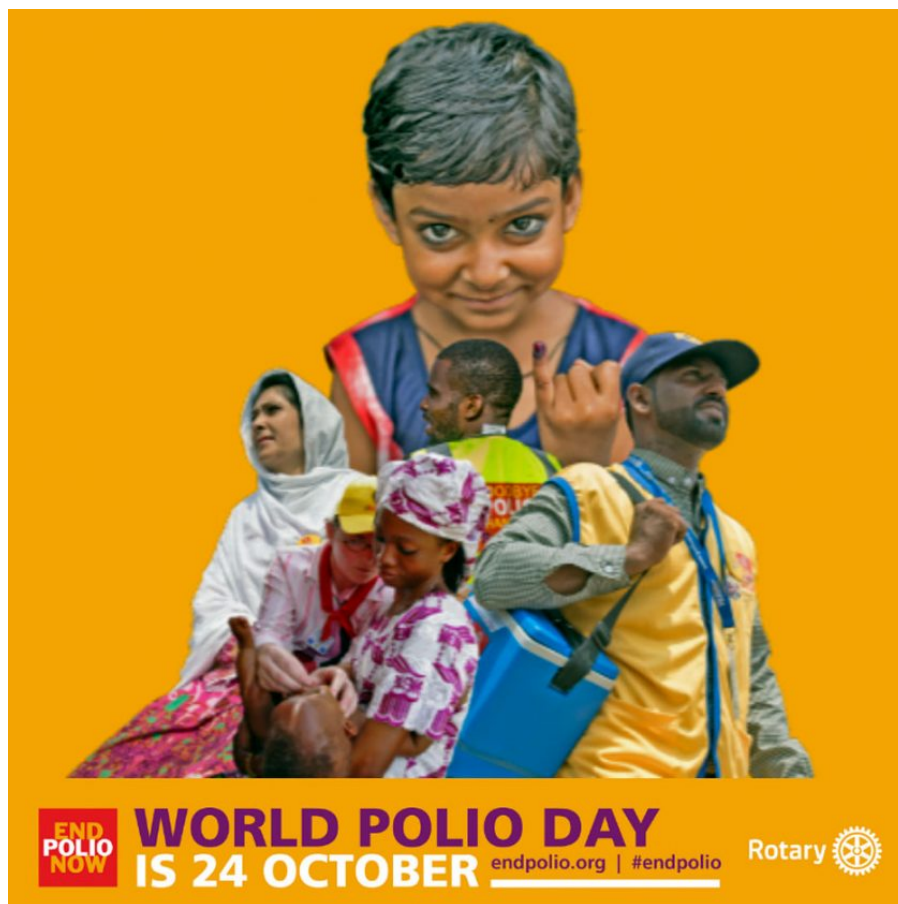


# LAKE PLACID NEWS

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## **ROTARY CLUB NEWS: Working to eradicate polio**



As we well know, our foremost focus today is on eradicating the coronavirus.

However, for over four decades, Rotary members around the world have been fighting a similarly challenging virus — the one that causes polio.

When Rotary and its partners launched the Global Polio Eradication Initiative in 1988, there were 350,000 cases of polio in 125 countries every year.

Since then, they've made great progress bringing an end to the disease. Today, polio cases have been reduced by 99.9%.

However, there are still two countries left that continue to report cases of wild poliovirus: Afghanistan and Pakistan. And Rotary remains committed to bringing a complete end to this paralyzing disease.

With polio nearly eradicated, Rotary and its partners must sustain this progress and continue to reach every child with the polio vaccine. Without full funding and political commitment, this paralyzing disease could easily return to polio-free countries, putting children everywhere at risk.

Rotary has committed to raising \$50 million (U.S.) each year to support the global polio eradication efforts. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation will match every \$1 Rotary commits to polio eradication 2-to-1, up to \$50 million per year.

*“Rotary was the first organization to push for a polio-free world, and so many Rotarians have been part of fundraising, vaccination, and advocacy efforts,”* said Bill Gates, co-chair of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. *“The final steps to a polio-free world are the hardest.”*

Closer to home, you possibly know family or friends who in the 1950s, prior to the life-changing vaccine, suffered from this crippling and fatal disease.

At the age of 4, my husband's brother died within two weeks of contracting the virus. And there are still many polio survivors who spend every day of their life incapacitated by the effects of the disease.

In May, the World Health Organization reported that, worldwide, 80 million children under the age of 1 were not receiving routine vaccinations for a variety of diseases.

As UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta Fore warns, *“We cannot exchange one deadly outbreak for another.”*

Oct. 24 marks World Polio Day, which focuses on raising funds to promote child vaccinations to help completely wipe out the disease.

Rotary International’s *“End Polio Now”* campaign states five major reasons to eradicate polio:

1. To improve lives. Today, 19 million people who would otherwise be paralyzed by polio are walking, and 1.5 million people who would otherwise have died are alive.
2. To invest in the future. If all eradication efforts stopped today, within 10 years, polio could paralyze as many as 200,000 children each year. A polio-free world will be a healthier world for children everywhere.
3. To improve child health. Polio surveillance networks and vaccination campaigns also monitor children for other health problems, like vitamin deficiency and measles, so we can address them sooner.
4. To lower health care costs. The global effort to eradicate polio has already saved more than \$27 billion in health care costs since 1988 and expects to save \$14 billion more by 2050.
5. To make history. Polio eradication will be one of history’s greatest public health achievements, with polio following smallpox to become only the second human disease eradicated from the world.

Rotary is a global network of 1.2 million neighbors, friends, leaders and problem solvers who unite and take action to create lasting change in communities around the globe. For more than 110 years, Rotary’s people of action have used their passion, energy and intelligence to improve lives through service. From promoting literacy and peace to providing clean

water and improving health care, Rotary members are always working to better the world.

Visit [endpolio.org](http://endpolio.org) to learn more about Rotary and the fight to eradicate polio.

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