

## **President Tanaka's May Message**

Dear fellow Rotarians,

From the moment I was nominated as Rotary International president, I knew I would choose a theme that would focus on peace. This is why I planned three peace forums – to give Rotarians an opportunity to think about peace, to talk about peace, and to share their ideas on building peace together. The final Rotary Global Peace Forum takes place this month in Hiroshima, Japan.

We hear the word peace every day. But most of us spend little time thinking about what peace is. On its simplest level, we can define peace by what it is not. It is a state of no war, no violence, and no fear. It means that you are not in danger of hunger, or persecution, or the suffering of poverty.

But we can also define peace by what it is, and by what it can be. Peace can mean freedom of thought and of speech, freedom of opinion and of choice, and the ability for self-determination. It can mean security, confidence in the future – a life and home in a stable society. On a more abstract level, peace can mean a sense of happiness, of inner serenity, of calm.

However we use the word, however we understand peace, Rotary can help us to achieve it. Rotary helps us to meet the basic needs of others – to provide health care, sanitation, food, and education when and where they are most needed. It helps to meet the inner needs as well, for friendship, connection, and caring. And Rotary helps us to build peace in its most traditional sense, by reducing the causes of conflict. It builds bridges of friendship and tolerance among people and nations. It helps us to understand one another.

However we define peace, whatever peace means to us, we can bring it closer through service. Peace, in all of the ways that we can understand it, is a real goal, and a realistic goal for Rotary. Peace is not something that can only be achieved through treaties, by governments, or through heroic struggles. It is something that we can find, and that we can achieve – every day, and in many simple ways.

And so I thank you for your commitment to Peace Through Service – and to a Rotary goal of a more peaceful world.

Sakuji Tanaka  
President, Rotary International