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 By email: bob@bobaitkenmedia.com.au



Dear Rotary Friends,

I have held off writing this note of thanks in the hope of having final fundraising figures to pass on to you. However, our dedicated team at RI is still finalising those details. It is very important to ensure the numbers are correct.

The end of July is closing in and I did not want to get too far down the track before expressing sincere thanks to you all for your magnificent support in the Rotary year just ended.

Whilst we do not have final numbers yet, the news is all good.

Our inspiring leader, RI Past Director Robert Hall (Vice Chair, END POLIO Countdown to History Campaign Committee) advised that we DID make our US\$50 million goal and thus achieved the full matching goal offered by the Gates Foundation.

With a month to go in the 2018/19 Rotary year, it looked likely we would miss the goal by about US\$4 million, along with the US\$8 million match from the Gates Foundation.

Around the world, senior leaders responded in magnificent fashion and dollars poured in from most unlikely sources.

So, please accept the heartfelt thanks of the entire END POLIO NOW team for your leadership and patience. It has been a pleasure working with you all and I extend warm best wishes for your future Rotary leadership and enjoyment.

I leave you with the following very positive message from RI Past Vice President Mike McGovern, International PolioPlus Committee Chair –

“We learned today (July 20) that the wild poliovirus case count for 2019 has reached 56 cases in Afghanistan and Pakistan, the remaining two countries that still report cases caused by the wild virus. This means that the case count for the year is now higher than the total number of cases in 2018. It is important that we have perspective and remember how far we’ve come since we started PolioPlus in 1985, when there were hundreds of thousands of cases of polio each year. We’ve had less than one hundred cases per year in the last four years and the final cases are in a small number of geographic areas.

While we’ve experienced challenges in Afghanistan and Pakistan, we’re seeing progress in other important areas. Nigeria has not reported a wild polio virus in over three years, and the Africa region could soon announce the certification of the eradication of the wild poliovirus. Out of the three types of poliovirus, only type 1 continues to affect children. Type 2 is certified eradicated, and there hasn’t been a type 3 virus identified since 2012. We are using innovative techniques to reach more children than ever before in some of the hardest-to-reach areas of the world – and our surveillance systems are continually becoming more sophisticated.

Until we see the last poliovirus, it’s vital that we continue immunizing every single child, and we can only do that with the support of every one of our 1.2 million members. We must not get frustrated or

slow our efforts. Instead, we need to double down on the promise we made over thirty years ago: to ensure that no child ever has to suffer the paralysing effects of polio. It is crucial that we remain optimistic about the future and continue raising funds and awareness necessary to bring an end to this disease.

All donations to END POLIO NOW are matched 2:1 by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Please spread the word and encourage your friends and networks to donate.”

Your friend in Rotary service,

Bob

PDG Bob Aitken AM JP
RI END POLIO NOW Coordinator, Region 9, 2019/20

BOB AITKEN MEDIA

Phone 0417 722 190

Email bob@bobaitkenmedia.com.au