



Ron D. Burton

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Dear fellow Rotarians:

As we all know, on November 8th the worst recorded storm to make landfall flattened entire coastal towns and villages in the Philippines. Thousands of people were killed and hundreds of thousands more are struggling to survive without access to food, water, and shelter.

I know we all want to help. I am urging our clubs to take action to provide emergency aid now and begin planning for the future when we can help rebuild homes, schools, and businesses. While Rotary is not an emergency disaster-relief organization, we are in the business of helping people in need. Every one of our six areas of focus is affected when disasters of this size occur.

I saw first-hand the difference Rotarians can make after one of the deadliest tornadoes on record tore through communities in my home state of Oklahoma. The widespread destruction was heartbreaking. Almost immediately after the storm, Rotarians were out in force cleaning debris, collecting food and water, and comforting families who lost everything. The Rotary clubs in the affected areas showed perseverance and strength. We helped pick up the pieces and build them back up.

What really moved me was the support and compassion from clubs around the world. In the face of calamity, we were not alone. Rotary's collective spirit is the essence of how we *Engage Rotary and Change Lives*.

Rotary partner ShelterBox has committed aid for thousands of families in the form of emergency shelter and other relief assistance. They were already in the Philippines when the typhoon hit providing aid to families who lost homes in the 7.1 magnitude earthquake that struck the Philippines in September.

Such disasters are the reason why we entered into our partnership with ShelterBox. On Friday, I visited their website and sponsored a ShelterBox to help a family in need, and I encourage you to do the same if you're able to do so – any level of support will help to change lives for the better. The organization welcomes help from Rotary members to identify need and provide support. You can contact them at rotaryrequest@shelterbox.org.

We have more than 21,000 Rotary members in the Philippines. The hardest hit areas include Districts 3860, 3850, and 3830. We are working with our governors in the affected areas to determine what type of support will be most effective, and we will continue to provide updates on www.rotary.org.

I know I can count on Rotarians around the world to come to the aid of our friends in the Philippines. If you have any questions about how you can help, please write to relief@rotary.org.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Ron Burton

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