

As I continue to travel around the District, visiting clubs, projects and fundraisers, I continue to be impressed with all that our Clubs accomplish.  When combined as a total whole, the work of Rotary is evident in our communities.

But at one recent meeting I was stopped short by a Rotarian's personal concern.  I had finished my talk and as I was leaving she thanked me and expressed how she wished she could do more.  I have been haunted by the words of her personal struggle, expressed to me as, "How many people will die on my watch? Isn't this a question we all should be asking of ourselves?

I am reminded of the questions I had asked each of you at the beginning of our year, "How many lives will you change?  How many lives will you save?"   As we enter the last quarter of our Rotary year together, I pose these questions to you once again.

We are one global community made up of multiple neighborhoods.  Those in need are all around us.

Ponder for a moment these statistics:

* 3.575 million people die from water-related disease each year.
* Every 20 seconds, a child dies from a water-related disease.
* 2.5 billion people lack access to improved sanitation, including 1.2 billion people who have no facilities at all. More people in the world have cell phones than access to a toilet.
* 774 million adults in the world are illiterate - people who cannot read or write.  2/3 of all non-literates are women.
* Every year 15 million children die of hunger
* Preventable diseases claim the lives of 11 million children annually.
* 3 billion people in the world today struggle to survive on US$2/day.
* 1000 women die daily from pregnancy and childbirth

In the time it has taken you to read this sentence, someone has died of hunger and we know that 1 out of 8 children under the age of twelve in the U.S. goes to bed hungry every night - some of them live in your town.

Our polio program has immunized billions of children and also increased the immunization rates of all preventable diseases.  Polio, chickenpox, whooping cough, measles and diphtheria are not diseases of the past and many still reside at low levels here in the U.S.  They remain a plane ride away.  Yet here in our own nation 20% of 2 year olds still are not fully immunized.

As the last quarter of our Rotary year begins, take pride in all that you have accomplished thus far and may that enthusiasm carry us forward to continue to do even more than any of us thought possible.  Let us take to heart the question, "How many will die on my watch?" We CAN say yes when asked to give of our time with our Club projects. We CAN save lives here and overseas and change the statistics you just read with a contribution to Our Rotary Foundation.  Our Foundation contributions will provide clean water, build sanitation facilities, create smiles, provide food, supply vaccines, and enable others to read, here and abroad.

Thank you for your generous compassion to 'do good' in our world, continuing Rotary's work of Building Communities, Bridging Continents.

***How many lives will you save this year?***