

[Admin](#) [Communication](#) [Membership](#) [Website](#) [Organization](#) [For Clubs](#) [For Members](#)
[Attendance](#) [Events 2.0 \(Beta\)](#) [Help](#)

Ann Lee and Umma

Governor's December Letter

[Welcome](#)

[Edit Stories](#)

[Edit Nested Site](#)

[Pages](#)

[Edit HTML Pages](#)

[Edit External Links](#)

[Edit Download Files](#)

[Edit Journals](#)

[Back to District](#)

[Governor 2011-12](#)



Dear Rotary Friends,

We have much to be grateful for as the calendar year draws to an end and families and friends surround us with love and warmth through the holidays.

I am constantly reminded of the impact Rotarians have on our world. The recent District polio immunization trip to Nigeria opened eyes and hearts to the realization of how Rotary can make a difference. I watched your fellow Rotarians as they entered into new surroundings so much different than home - truly stepping outside of their comfort zone, then suddenly finding comfort with the new. This is how Rotary works - new faces, new friends, new understanding - world peace. Rotary embraces all, no matter what race, religion, creed or ethnic background.

I was happy to be back in Nigeria and grateful to finally see the school, built through persistent prompting, by the state government. As we entered the recipient village, DGN Marty and I were met by a local chief and deeply moved by his words, "My people were in darkness and they have now been brought to light through knowledge." Rotary, collaborating with governments, is truly making a difference.

The benefits of working with Rotary are far reaching throughout the world. Clubs in developing countries, work to bring clean water, blood banks, education and more. Governments are discovering that with our help, all efforts are multiplied and a working partnership creates greater positive effects for all.

NID (National Immunization Days) team members leave the experience with a greater awareness and understanding and are motivated to help in other ways. Teams have included Rotarians from the USA, Canada, Europe and Asia and jointly have partnered to assist those less fortunate. All teams usually pack an extra suitcase to contribute educational and medical supplies to local schools and clinics. Our district team was more generous than most.

Be proud of the Rotarians in your district who just completed their NID experience traveling with me to Nigeria and embrace the message they can bring to your club membership. They have walked the dusty streets in temperatures

hovering around 100, held hands with children and adults - Muslims and Christians, worked tirelessly beside total strangers, painted classroom walls they may never see again, sang with weary but joyful voices and danced with happiness on tired feet. They dropped the precious drops of polio vaccine into the mouths of children, and spread D7780 fellowship and love throughout their journey. Beside Rotarians from other parts of the USA and Hong Kong, they made new friends, immunized 10,480 children in four days, and returned from a life-changing experience. They represented you well and, on your behalf, thanked the workers and Rotarians who work tirelessly every day on eradicating polio to get the job finished.

It is this type of personal involvement with Rotary that motivates others, grows membership in clubs, develops leaders, and with cooperation creates service to humanity that is far greater and more productive than ever before. The same can be said for personal involvement within our local communities.

A humanitarian is defined as "a person who works to make other people's lives better". Rotarians are humanitarians and Rotary is making the world a better place. Rotary is an intricate puzzle and there are still some missing pieces. Someone next to you could be one of those missing pieces waiting to be asked to join.

Building Communities and Bridging Continents

indeed is what Rotary is best at doing. World Peace begins with each of us. As we work to create understanding and peace here at home, we find understanding and peace radiating outward beyond our borders.

Together we can make Rotary better and we can make the world a better place. Each of us is needed to make change happen. Let us please continue our work together in greater depth for all mankind. Thank you for all that you do.

Michael and I wish you hearts and homes full of an abundance of love and peace this holiday season.

Ann Lee

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Go Back

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