

A Toast to Rotary International – District 9700



When I think about how to propose this Toast, I recall the words of a wise old Past District Governor (is there any other type?) who once said to me, “We tend to think of Rotary International as being ‘over there’ and ‘important’, but Rotary International only exists to support the Rotary Clubs and without the Clubs, it is of no use.”

So I see a Toast to Rotary International as a Toast that includes all the Clubs in the world and thus all of us as Rotarians, and our friends and supporters, because we could achieve little without them.

What, then, is the real Rotary International? I believe that far more than the hierarchy, machinery and headquarters organisation, it is every Club in the world, and thus all of us, too. So I see this Toast as more about Rotarians than about the machinery.

Rotary is a global network of 1.2 million neighbours, friends, leaders, and problem-solvers who come together to make positive, lasting change in communities at home and abroad.

Solving real problems takes real commitment and vision. For more than 110 years, Rotary members have used their passion, energy, and intelligence to take action on sustainable projects. From literacy and peace to water and health, we are always working to better our world, and we stay committed to the end.

Our motto has always been: Service Above Self.

For more than 110 years, our guiding principles have been the foundation of our values: service, fellowship, diversity, integrity, and leadership.

Rotarians believe that we have a shared responsibility to take action on our world’s most persistent issues. Our 35,000+ clubs and 1.2 million members work together to:

- Promote peace
- Fight disease
- Provide clean water, sanitation, and hygiene
- Save mothers and children
- Support education
- Grow local economies

We are people of action - we connect passionate people with diverse perspectives to exchange ideas, forge lifelong friendships, and, above all, take action to change the world.

We are problem solvers - together, we apply our professional experience and personal commitment to tackle our communities’ most persistent problems, finding new, effective ways to enhance health, stability, and prosperity across the globe.

We are opportunity creators - Rotarians look for opportunities to improve our communities today and invest in the next generation for tomorrow.

We are community builders - we collaborate with community leaders who want to get to work on projects that have a real, lasting impact on people’s lives.

There can be no greater example of these aspirations than the PolioPlus/End Polio campaign, started by an Australian Rotarian, Sir Clem Renouf, and now nearing its goal. Originally, Rotary was told by the World Health Organisation that the goal was impossible and could never be achieved; three years later, they came back and asked to come on board. From over 1,000 cases a day around the world at the start of the campaign, we are now down to only ??? reported cases so far this year. And we **will** reach this goal of eliminating polio from the world.

So please stand and join with me to drink a Toast to Rotary International, and to think of all that the Toast means. **Rotary International!**

[Researched and Written by PP Greg Madden, 2017.

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