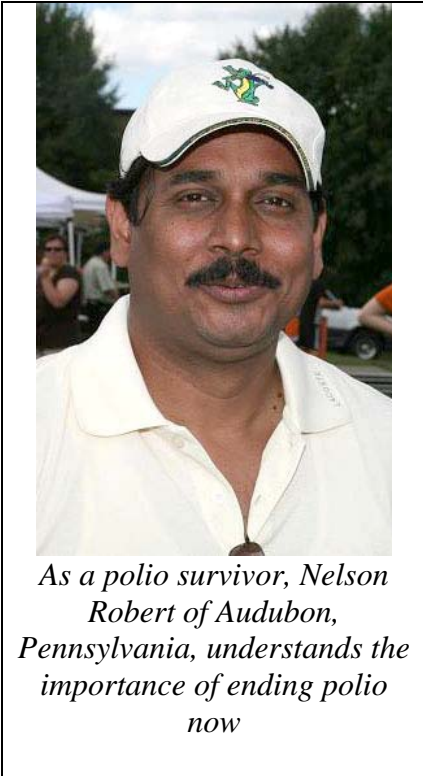


Another Reason to END POLIO NOW

---By Carol Metzker



For Nelson Robert, polio is more than a virus contracted by people in faraway places. It is part of his personal history. The quality assurance manager at Globus Medical in Audubon, Pennsylvania, survived the disease but he is still affected daily by its affect.

One day 41 years ago, his mother returned home from her job as a schoolteacher to find Nelson in bed and running a high fever. She lifted him out of bed and discovered that the one-year-old who had been walking and running just hours before was unable to stand. Very frightened, she whisked Nelson to the doctor who diagnosed the boy's case as polio.

“Even though my dad worked in a hospital, we weren't aware of the vaccine,” said Nelson.

Although the polio vaccine had been developed and was in use in the United States in the 1960s, it was barely known in Chennai, India, where Nelson, his parents and four siblings lived at that time.

Nelson survived polio, which can be fatal, but it left his right leg partially paralyzed.

Polio changed many aspects of his life. Experiences including childhood sports, accessibility to buildings and the way Nelson now drives a car have differed from those of the people around him. As a boy, “I wished I could play cricket the same way others played,” Nelson recounted. “I could still bat the ball, but someone would run for me.” Traveling was—and still can be—a challenge when transportation and facilities are not designed for people with one strong leg and one weak one. “My car is equipped with a special pedal so I can operate the accelerator with my left leg,” he said.

The virus did not affect his education, however. According to Nelson, his parents were hard workers and they ensured that he was able to go to school. He earned two undergraduate degrees in chemistry and engineering, and later earned an MBA. He now works at Globus Medical in Audubon and his family is active in the local community.

Nelson Roberts understands why the campaign to end polio now is imperative. For some children, polio “can cause a lifetime of suffering,” he said.

The Rotary Foundation is asking every Rotary club worldwide to raise \$2,000 each year for the next three years to raise \$200 million and meet the Gates Foundation Challenge. Help your club take the challenge to END POLIO NOW.