

Rotary Making A Difference For The Better Locally and Worldwide!!!

Most people have probably seen the blue and gold Rotary signs in different communities throughout this area. In fact, there are 53 Rotary Clubs in Greater Philadelphia (Rotary District 7450).

These local Rotaries annually generate hundreds of unique projects to support and enhance their local communities and improve the quality of life for all of us.

But Rotary also operates on a worldwide basis ... big time!

Rotary is one of the most effective humanitarian organizations in the world with 1.2 million members in 32,000 clubs in 200 countries. Its motto for individual members is "service above self." And wherever there is suffering or misery or just people in need, Rotary is usually there.

Rotary's worldwide efforts promote health and literacy, reduce poverty and hunger, fight pollution, assist in disaster situations, and attempt to build peace and goodwill internationally.

The global impact of Rotary has been and continues to be staggering.

Most people are unaware that as recently as 1985, more than 1,000 persons were being victimized by polio each day. Since that time, Rotary has expended \$757 million worldwide to immunize two billion children through grass roots fundraising, resulting in 210 countries/territories/areas are now polio free.

Indeed, the World Health Organization, UNICEF and the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention have become Rotary partners and have urged Rotary to finish this job in the four remaining countries where polio is still active. And Bill Gates has also joined this battle with more than \$300 million of his own money given to this Rotary cause.

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon has offered this summary of Rotary's PolioPlus effort: "Rotary has accomplished so much in the face of extraordinary challenges. It has met financial goals, and overcome conflict and lack of security in many countries, and conquered cultural barriers. ... When the final chapter on polio eradication is finally written, it will tell of one of the most spectacular success stories ever in public health and highlight Rotary's remarkable service to humanity."

With regard to education, Rotary conducts the largest independently funded scholarship program in the world. With the idea of building goodwill internationally, 673 Ambassador Scholars from 72 countries received Rotary scholarships last year at a cost of \$14 million. Since 1947, 39,000 of these scholars from 115 countries have been subsidized with more than \$500 million.

Rotary is also educating Peace Fellows with a master's degree program to create highly competent individuals in the art of mediation and compromise. Since 2002-2003, 339 Peace Fellows from 75 countries have received fully paid scholarships at a cost of \$23 million. Most of those completing the Peace Fellowship program are now working in real world jobs that promote peace and understanding.

In addition to all of this, since 1978, Rotary International's Health, Hunger and Human Development grants have launched 324 humanitarian outreach projects in 77 countries at a cost of more than \$6 million.

And in the area of cultural exchange, since 1965, Rotary has sponsored 13,541 teams of four-six different individuals on goodwill visits to 106 countries to exchange vocational, professional and cultural information.

In summary, Rotary is "good people doing good things for people in need," something to feel good about in a world with far too much violence and despair.