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**Sent:** 04 September 2018 21:43  
**To:** [mjparry111@hotmail.com](mailto:mjparry111@hotmail.com)  
**Subject:** Join me in celebrating World Polio Day



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My dear friends and fellow Rotary leaders,

This year, on 24 October, Rotary will again mark World Polio Day. I am writing to ask all of you to join me on that day in raising global awareness of the urgent need to End Polio Now.

I have been a Rotarian since long before Rotary committed to eradicate polio. When I was inducted as a member in April of 1980, the idea of taking on polio eradication as a corporate project had not yet been seriously raised; polio still ravaged the lives of some 350,000 people, nearly all of them children, every year.

Today, the world is a very different place. Thanks to the vision of Rotary's leaders then, and the commitment of the generations of Rotarians who have followed, we now have fewer cases of polio than at any time in history. As I write this message, only 14 children have been paralyzed by the wild poliovirus in all of 2018. Only three countries are still polio-endemic; wild virus still circulates in only one remaining reservoir, on the border of Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The success of this work has come as the result of decades of concerted and sustained effort by Rotary and all of our partners in the Global Polio Eradication

Initiative. Rotary's involvement has been wide-ranging: we have raised over 1.9 billion dollars to date, and have contributed countless volunteer and staff hours to the practical work of eradication, including immunization, fundraising, and advocacy. Our success has been tremendous, and we are confident that our work will soon be complete.

Yet significant challenges remain, and the need for continued funding is acute. Until eradication is certified—at least three years from the time the last poliovirus is found anywhere in the world—every single child must be immunized, at a continuing cost of hundreds of millions of dollars per year. If any of that work is slowed or stopped, if any of our momentum is lost, we risk losing everything we have worked for, for so many years.

This is why I am asking every Rotary club to find its own way, on 24 October, to raise awareness of Rotary's work to eradicate polio. At [EndPolio.org](https://endpolio.org), you can find some great resources to help [plan an event](#), where you can also [promote your event](#), find nearby events, and join our [World Polio Day livestream](#) from the College of Physicians in Philadelphia at 18:30 United States Eastern Time.

I look forward to coming together with all of you on World Polio Day—when we can all *Be the Inspiration* to End Polio Now.

Yours in Rotary,  
Barry Rassin  
Rotary International President, 2018-19

Recipient list: District governors, assistant governors, club presidents, regional leaders (RPICs, RRFCs, E/MGAs, and RCs), and the board of directors