

OUR PASSION

Rotary Polio Survivors & Associates (PSA) brings a personal passion and different perspective to the issue of infant mortality. Until the production of a safe vaccine, polio killed hundreds of children without regard to the degree of social development. The advent of the polio vaccine led to the ability to eliminate this scourge. The PSA Action Group is largely made up of people who have had a personal encounter with polio, either themselves, a family member or a friend. Because of this personal interest it is only natural that PSA is dedicated to the present RI coalition program to eradicate polio.

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Alive or living

It is also this near death or disability encounter that PSA understands the difference between being alive and living. Being alive means the ability to breathe, ingest food and water. Living means participating in the life around you. It means being able to make a contribution to your family and community life.

It is for this reason that PSA members are working to establish Community Based Rehabilitation Clinics in areas of recent or continuing incidents of polio. Proper rehabilitation and mentoring can enable a person to participate in the life of the living and to make a contribution to the society in which he or she lives. We believe this is an important distinction from just being alive.

With proper rehabilitation, education and vocational training polio survivors marry and can properly care for a family of their own, contributing to the health and welfare of children who might otherwise not receive such benefits. Polio survivors of today are found mainly in developing countries. They are often shunned and hidden by their families, some never leaving the confines of their homes. As a result many lack social skills and do not attend school due to their lack of mobility, the distance being too great to crawl. At an early age, many polio children are turned out onto the streets to beg. Our work for Community Based Rehabilitation Clinics will provide healthier bodies and minds for these youth.



Our Motto

Our motto is Eradication to Rehabilitation. We must remember that when we speak of the number of polio cases reported we are not just talking numbers. We are speaking of real children, needlessly crippled for life. Children who have contracted polio during the past 25 years have done so through no fault of their own. It may be the fault of their governments, it may be the fault of their parents, it may even be our fault; but in no way is it the fault of the child. We have a moral obligation to see that these children are rehabilitated, educated and mainstreamed into their communities.

Polio can strike at any age but the largest incidence is with young children. Today, polio strikes mainly children under the age of two. It is the ever increasing birthrate in the last of the polio

endemic regions that is our greatest challenge to polio eradication. Routine immunizations are low in these areas, the majority of births occur at home, and the births are not always properly recorded. All of these contribute to the highly vulnerable portion of the child population that is missed during immunization campaigns and often remains missed in the overall scheme. Polio survivors in the remaining endemic regions can and have become convincing vocal advocates for the eradication program.

Our personal experience with polio gives us added enthusiasm and commitment to improving the health environment of all communities. The polio virus must be ingested in order to find a host but can remain active in pooling puddles of sewerage. This means that programs to provide clean water and improved sanitation are paramount to continuing to keep the world polio free. PSA members can make a contribution to these programs.

A basic tenet of Action Groups is to seek alliances with non Rotarians, corporations and institutions that are already active in polio related fields. We have a strong association with an international organization, Post-Polio Health International and are in the process of building an association with the World Health Organization and Roosevelt Warm Springs Institute.

With the World Health Organization we can work to implement the establishment of Community Based Rehabilitation Centers. The Post-Polio Health International offers an international network of polio support groups, many of whose members can become helpful at the community level because they live there and know and understand what will work. The Roosevelt Warm Springs Institute brings a lifetime of experience in physical and mental rehabilitation which is vital to the success of a living, functioning and contributing person.


Our work also involves increasing the awareness of Post-Polio Syndrome to Rotarians and their communities. An increased public awareness can increase the awareness of the medical community, especially in developing countries. Once a person contracts polio, polio lives with them forever.


Improved health is the basis for about everything we hope to do with our Action Group. We remain amenable to joining forces with almost any kind of project that is designed to improve the health of the people of any community. We welcome any opportunity to cooperate and work with Health and Hunger programs wherever they might be. We currently have projects looking for the assistance of Rotary Clubs and Districts willing to be a part of Matching Grants from the Rotary Foundation. We look for projects that will be sustainable in the areas where they are carried out.



OUR PROJECTS

Projects of our group recently carried out and/or in progress:

<p>February, 2008 <i>Kano Nigeria</i></p>	<p>Purchase and delivery of soccer uniforms to polio survivors in Kano, Nigeria involved in local Paralympics. These were the first official uniforms the teams ever received. This project reinforced self-confidence and gave credence to their abilities.</p>  <p><i>Total funding of \$535.00 by PSA</i></p>
<p>April, 2008 Grant facilitated by PSA <i>India</i></p>	<p>This grant provided a van fitted with an hydraulic lift designed to transport polio-afflicted children to and from their villages. Public transportation does not provide facilities for handling wheelchairs. The beneficiaries are polio affected children from in and around New Delhi particularly from the endemic areas of the State of Uttar Pradesh as well as from the State of Bihar, another severely affected area.</p> <p><i>Funding of US\$31,500 by RC Stavanger, Norway, District 2250 and RC Delhi Midtown, India as well as The Rotary Foundation.</i></p>
<p>March, 2009 Grant facilitated and contributed by PSA <i>India</i></p>	<p>Completion of a matching grant facilitated and contributed to by the PSA RAG providing corrective surgeries to polio survivors from the endemic states of India. This grant provides for the surgery and rehabilitation of 200 polio afflicted children over the next 24 months. The beneficiaries are polio affected children from the impoverished communities in and around New Delhi, India and particularly from the endemic and highly affected areas of the States of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Through the rehabilitation program polio affected children will be identified and transported to the hospital, along with one or both parents. This is made possible through the purchase of the van in the previously described</p>

	<p>grant. The surgeries are followed up with calipers and special shoes. Physical therapy is provided to each patient with the assistance of social workers who will also assist with placement in schools or finding suitable jobs. This grant works as a great social mobilization and awareness activity for polio eradication, particularly in the resistant and reluctant minority population.</p> <p><i>Funding of \$25,500 from District 3450 and Rotary Clubs of Hong Kong and Taiwan along with RC Delhi Midtown, India and The Rotary Foundation.</i></p>
<p>April, 2009 Facilitated and funded through PSA and personal contributions</p>	<p>The travel of Nigerian polio survivor, Ayuba Gufwan, to the United States. While in the US, Ayuba spoke at several Rotary Clubs, public schools and to staff at a local hospital. He attended the Post-Polio Health International Conference in Warm Springs, GA to gather information on post-polio syndrome to disperse to polio survivors back in Nigeria. Ayuba was an inspiration to all audiences as he advocated for polio eradication and the rehabilitation of polio survivors.</p>
<p>July, 2009 Grant <i>Jos, Nigeria</i></p>	<p>Two grants will be submitted to the Rotary Foundation the beginning of the Rotary year 2009-2010. These grants together will purchase the equipment and supplies needed to construct 600 bicycle wheelchairs for polio survivors, the gift of mobility.</p> <div data-bbox="511 1018 1360 1627" data-label="Image">  </div> <p>The wheelchairs will be built in Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria and distribution will be within all northern endemic states of Nigeria. As corrective surgeries and rehabilitation facilities are not readily available in Nigeria, the wheelchair is the first step to really provide independence for a physically disabled person. By purchasing and bringing into the community the machinery to build these wheelchairs, the project will be</p>



	<p>sustainable even after it is complete as all that will be needed is additional funding to procure more parts for building of additional wheelchairs. Beneficiaries will be identified and given the chairs free on condition they attend school and/or vocational training. Wheelchair presentations draw large crowds and will be used to create awareness of the need for polio immunization as well as the need to effectively rehabilitate polio survivors.</p> <p>These grants will be funded through the tremendous generosity of lead club, <i>RC of Traverse City, Michigan, RC Naraguta, Jos, Nigeria, District 6290, District 6220, District 7780, District 7190 and multiple Rotary Clubs within these districts totaling approximately \$100,000 and the contributor list continues to grow.</i></p>
<p>Future <i>Kaduna State, Nigeria</i></p>	<p>Preliminary action has currently begun to construct a rehabilitation/corrective surgery facility in Kaduna, Kaduna State, Nigeria. This will be located in the high risk region of northern Nigeria and should serve as a referral center for all the northern regions of Nigeria. It will be a cooperative effort with the PSA RAG, the Government of the State of Kaduna, WHO, and other interested parties.</p>

THINGS YOU CAN DO

Rotarians must do more than contribute financially to polio eradication. We have an obligation to reach out and educate our public to the fact that poliomyelitis is still a threat. Our advocacy efforts must be strengthened.

- ✓ Develop educational programs to use at local primary, middle and high schools.
- ✓ Motivate your Rotary Club to contribute \$2000 or more to PolioPlus each year for 3 years.
- ✓ Focus your Rotary projects for water, sanitation, health, and literacy in the remaining polio endemic regions to aid a faster cooperative response with those communities at the same time contributing to the future of a permanently polio free world.
- ✓ Identify polio survivors in your own communities, seek out local Post Polio Support Groups and see if there is a way your Rotary club could assist.
- ✓ Start a Post Polio Support Group if none exists in your community.
- ✓ Invite a polio survivor to share their story as a speaker at your Rotary club. This always generates increased giving to PolioPlus and increases Rotarians awareness of Post-Polio Syndrome
- ✓ Join the Polio Survivors and Associates Rotary Action Group. You do not have to be a polio survivor to join and help. A lifetime membership is US\$100.
- ✓ Get your Club involved with a project to assist polio survivors. If your heart aches for the child left crawling on the ground due to the crippling effects of polio contact us for ways in which you can help provide corrective surgeries, rehabilitation, and address mobility issues through personal contributions or matching grant opportunities.

LINKS

Polio Survivors & Associates Rotary Action Group
Post-Polio Health International
Roosevelt Warm Springs Institute for Rehabilitation
World Health Organization

www.rotarypoliosurvivors.com
www.post-polio.org
www.roosevelt rehab.org
www.who.int

Ann Lee Hussey
Chair, Polio Survivors & Associates, Rotary Action Group