

Rotary



SERVE TO CHANGE LIVES

Rotary Club of Onehunga One Tree Hill Inc.

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Greetings Rotarians and friends. October the 24th is designated as 'Rotary International **World Polio Day**', and as covid has curtailed the fundraising activities for this event I thought it would be appropriate to mark the day with an email to Members and friends of the Onehunga One Tree Hill Rotary Club. I have included a letter from the Rotary Polio Plus Director **Carol Pandak** with an update on the 'Polio Plus/End Polio Now' programme.

I would also like to take the opportunity to acknowledge the late Ian Deveraux, a former Club member who was an extremely generous supporter of the Polio Plus programme over many years.

Included is a notice of the proposed 'End Polio Now' fundraising event. A Cinema Rotary pre-release screening of **'The Duke'**. This is brilliant comedy starring Helen Mirren and Jim Broadbent. This is scheduled, (covid willing), for the beginning of December.2021. (Confirmation to be advised)

Story Written By:
Carol Pandak

Rotary Polio Plus Director
Oct. 7, 2021



Against the backdrop of an ongoing global pandemic and political upheaval in Afghanistan, we continue to make significant progress in polio eradication, demonstrating the resilience and determination of all those who are working to achieve a polio-free world for children everywhere. Although this year may feel a little different, given current events, on World Polio Day, 24 October, we reflect on the progress we've made and the challenges we've faced not only over the past year but throughout the history of the PolioPlus program.

Celebrating progress

As of 29 September 2021, only two cases of polio caused by wild poliovirus have been reported — one in Afghanistan and one in Pakistan. There has also been a significant reduction in wild poliovirus detected in the environment. Also in decline are cases of circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus (cVDPV), which occur when the live, weakened virus used in the oral polio vaccine circulates in under immunized communities and reverts in strength in a way that can cause

paralysis. (The Global Polio Eradication Initiative [GPEI], of which Rotary is a founding partner, introduced a new vaccine to lower the risk of cVDPVs.)

There is no doubt that the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic was a period of extreme uncertainty for global polio eradication efforts and for immunization efforts overall. Within a few months, though, the PolioPlus program adapted and learned new ways of working to ensure that polio immunization activities could safely continue.

At the same time, those who work in polio eradication used their expertise and the GPEI used its infrastructure to support the response to COVID-19.

Overcoming challenges

The situation in Afghanistan presents more uncertainty but also possible opportunities. As a non-political entity, the GPEI has a long history of working with various stakeholders in the country, including government officials and nongovernmental organizations. World Health Organization and UNICEF staff have largely remained in the country. Polio vaccinations continue through permanent transit teams posted in high-traffic areas of most regions, at border crossing sites, and at a Rotary-sponsored transit point in Kunar Province.

Rotary's Afghanistan PolioPlus chair is part of discussions with local authorities to resume immunization campaigns as soon as possible to protect the progress made to date and safeguard children from the poliovirus.

Despite the political changes, there has been no major impact on surveillance to detect the poliovirus. Case investigation, stool sample collection, and environmental testing continue, and sewage and stool specimens are being shipped to a lab in Pakistan.

We are also monitoring the potential impact of the situation in Afghanistan on Pakistan, the only other country where polio remains endemic, such as an influx of refugees. The PolioPlus program in Pakistan is building on progress it has made by improving campaign quality and increasing community outreach to immunize children who continually miss polio vaccinations in the highest-risk areas: Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Baluchistan.

An optimistic future

On this World Polio Day, we celebrate the progress we've made since Rotary launched its PolioPlus program in 1985, and we marvel at the opportunity to eradicate a human disease for only the second time in history. While being realistic about the challenges, the GPEI has a record of operating successfully during complex health and humanitarian emergencies in countries and regions such as Angola, Northern Nigeria, Somalia, and Syria.

Let's be inspired by the unwavering commitment of our organization, our GPEI and government partners, and heroic frontline workers as we continue our work to improve health for children wherever they live.

These numbers show the progress we've made against polio over the years:

- Nearly 3 billion children have been vaccinated against polio.
- 19.4 million people who otherwise would have been paralyzed by polio can walk today.
- 1.5 million childhood deaths have been prevented by the GPEI's delivery of vitamin A — a nutrient that is essential for healthy growth and development — to children during polio immunization campaigns.
- Cases of polio caused by wild poliovirus have been reduced by more than 99.9%.
- The number of countries that report cases of polio caused by the wild virus has been reduced from 125 to two.
- Rotary has invested more than US\$2.2 billion in global polio eradication efforts.
- Rotary has also helped secure an additional \$10 billion in donations for global polio eradication efforts from governments.
- 122 countries have received support from PolioPlus grants.
- If polio eradication efforts stopped now, within 10 years, 200,000 children could be paralyzed every year.

Carol Pandak has been Rotary's PolioPlus director for 21 years. During that time, she has travelled to more than 35 countries, but her most memorable moment — one she'll never forget — took place in India, when she immunized a baby against polio for the first time.



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"A RIDICULOUSLY CHARMING
 ★★★★★ BRITISH COMEDY" ★★★★★
THE DAILY TELEGRAPH THE PLAYLIST DAILY MAIL
 ★★★★★ ★★★★★ ★★★★★ ★★★★★
THE GUARDIAN FINANCIAL TIMES THE I THE TIMES

THE DUKE

A PRICELESS TRUE STORY



JIM
 BROADBENT
 HELEN
 MIRREN



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IT'S TIME WE
 HAD SOME
FUN!
 Join us at the
 pre-release
 screening
 of this feel-good
 movie

Rotary Screening targeted
 for the beginning of
 December 2021

Proceeds
 support
 Rotary's



