



Spectrum



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Kid, You Can project helps children take first steps



Posted on October 11, 2022 by Anna Tumanova, president, Rotary Club of Moscow Center, Russian Federation



Olga Paramonova works with a child to help him take his first steps, assisted by the Katusha verticalizer.

I remember how impatiently I waited for my Varvara to run. I waited for my daughter's first step for 10 months. But there are parents who wait for years. And there are those who will never experience this happiness.

What is it like for a young person who can't lean on his own feet? How do they see the world? What is their social circle? Are they confined to the four walls of a small apartment, where they are heroically dragged along by their mother, whose life begins and ends with a child with special needs?

Louis Pasteur once said: "There's nothing like the opportunity to be the cause of a good change in someone's life." I find this saying truer than ever.

Spring was rough for Rotary clubs in Russia. There was a barrage of hatred and curses directed at us as individuals that

shook us to our core. But in it, we clung to the belief that the work we do through Rotary is more necessary now than ever. Our projects are about changing lives.

We went forward with our project to work with an international partner from Armenia with the support of Rotary clubs in the United States. The "Kid, You Can" project grew out of a district grant. At a volunteer forum, a member of the Rotary Club of Moscow East met Olga Paramonova, an unusually enthusiastic rehabilitator. She has spent more than two decades devoted to helping children with various musculoskeletal system disorders be able to stand and take their first steps.

Paramonova overcomes inertia and indifference at orphanages and among some instructors at rehabilitation centers. She motivates people to work to put children back on their feet. She believes everyone can be helped. A child may not be able to walk on their own, but they can definitely improve their situation.

A miracle happened with Romka. Romka and his mother, Yulia, came to the center where our club supplied a Katusha verticalizer, a multifunctional device which helps people with disabilities learn to keep their balance and restore their center of gravity. Romka had many diagnoses. He has autism and cerebral palsy. He can't even sit up.

Paramonova worked for one year and four months without a break, with the mom's full commitment and the support of the club. And then we saw the miracle: Romka hanging completely on the instructor's legs, getting up on the rollers, and then getting into his shoes, going for a toy. Then he took his first two independent steps toward his mom. We were speechless. You should have seen the look in Yulia's eyes. We wanted to bring that miracle back into the world, and multiply it.

"There's nothing like the opportunity to be the cause of a good change in someone's life." LOUIS PASTEUR

I asked my friends to chip in for one more Katusha for my birthday. I knew exactly where to take it.

Our club has helped provide equipment, but the real miracle lies with Paramonova. Her technique instills courage in even the shiest child. She gets down on their level and rolls around with them on the carpet. Then sweaty, and happy, they eventually take those first steps, overcoming their fear of heights to emerge victorious. We cry every time we get a video from a parent of this triumph.

We will be going soon to our partner clubs with equipment for more children unlikely to walk on their own. And I believe, each of these six participating clubs will make a movie about their own miracle stories.

Together with our partners in Armenia and India, we have applied for further funding and are waiting for support from The Rotary Foundation. Our next phase will involve 14 clubs. More children who will be able to get back on their feet and more mothers will sprout wings of joy.

We meet calendar months' 2nd & 4th Saturdays at GPT Group, JC 25, Salt Lake, Kolkata 700098 at 6.00 PM

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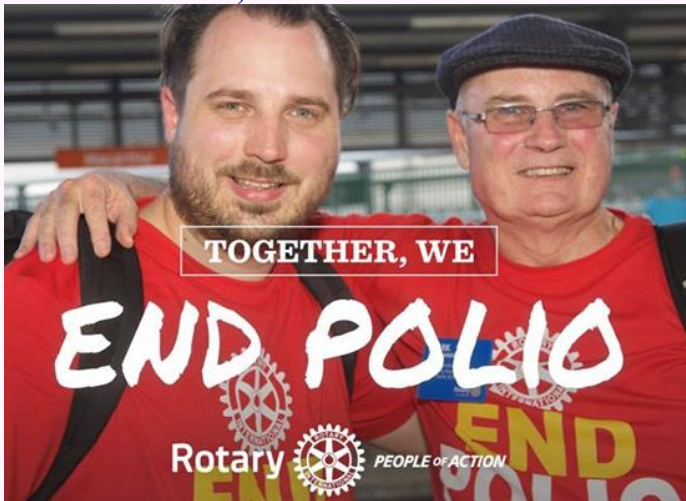
What else has this project taught me? Whenever we share our project with others, we always see an increase in donations to the Foundation. When we showed a video of Romka's rehabilitation at our district conference, we raised a record amount for the Foundation.

Whatever Rotary means to us, the world judges by the results of our projects. Let's create more projects like this one and be the cause of good in the world.

How Rotary members are fighting against polio



Posted on October 14, 2022



Mark and Dave Anderson

Mark and Dave Anderson will be riding the trains in Sydney 24 October to raise awareness and funds for End Polio Now. Rotary members have been at the center of the worldwide effort to eradicate polio for more than three decades. Rotary launched PolioPlus in 1985 and helped found the Global Polio Eradication Initiative in 1988. At that time, wild poliovirus paralyzed hundreds of children every day, with an estimated 350,000 polio cases across more than 125 countries in one year. Since then, cases have plummeted more than 99.9%, sparing more than 20 million people from paralysis.

But as recent polio detections have revealed, polio remains a threat everywhere as long as it exists anywhere. In the days and weeks leading up to World Polio Day, 24 October, Rotary members around the world are holding events to raise awareness of the need to End Polio Now. Below are a few of those efforts.

Australia: Ride the train to end polio

Mark and Dave Anderson, members of the Rotary Club of Beecroft, will travel the entire train system in Sydney, visiting more than 189 stations on 24 October in an effort to raise funds and awareness for End Polio Now. They have conducted the challenge each of the past four years, raising more than \$450,000, matched two to one by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Their goal this year is to raise another \$200,000. You can help out by riding the train with the dynamic duo if you are in Australia, or by visiting their challenge page.

Japan: Decorated buses



Rotary members in District 2630, Japan, worked with local transportation companies to decorate buses with End Polio Now colors. They used red (a color in the EPN logo); purple (the color used to mark the little finger of children who receive the polio drops during immunization days); and yellow (the color of vests worn by vaccination volunteers). In addition, End Polio Now appears above the entrance of the buses.

Korea: Walking to end polio



Hwamun Park, a member of the Rotary Club of Incheon Sinsegae, has been carrying an End Polio Now flag along the Camino de Santiago, a network of pilgrimages leading to the cathedral of Santiago de Compostela in Galicia in northwest Spain. As a hiker, completing the pilgrimage has been on her bucket list. A fellow Rotarian offered to donate a dollar for every mile that Park walked. She walked more than 1,000 miles between May and July, talking to many people she met about Rotary's top priority. "Integrating Rotary's initiatives with what you want to do in life, that's how Rotarians live," Park says.

France: Marathon

Michel Porhel, a member of the Rotary Club of Laval Ambroise Paré, is planning to repeat his 2019 fundraising effort, when he competed in the Marathon des Sables, raising €5,000 (roughly \$4,800) for polio eradication. On 21 April, he will set off on the 240-kilometer event (about 150 miles) with an even more ambitious fundraising goal, supported by members of his club and other Rotarians in District 1650.



Austria: Ultra Cyclist raises \$1.2 million

Eleven days, six hours, 45 minutes. That's the time it took Kurt Matzler, a member of the Austrian Rotary Club Innsbruck-Goldenes Dachl, to cycle 3,000 miles across the United States during the Race Across America in June, raising \$1.2 million for End Polio Now.



Matzler finished sixth among individual cyclists and crossed 175,000 feet of elevation change, with temperatures up to 122 degrees Fahrenheit in the Mojave Desert. He only allowed himself four hours rest a day. Matzler, who has completed the same race previously with cycling teams, had a particularly rough time of it this go around, having to detour due to wildfires increasing the amount of elevation change, and facing both cold and wet conditions in the Rockies. He also overcame several bike repairs to complete his goal.

'I could not keep silent': Iranian physicist resigns to join protests

Michele Catanzaro in Nature on October 12, 2022

Iranian cosmologist Encieh Erfani tells Nature that protesting students are shaming the professors who refuse to speak out.



Mahsa Amini's death in police custody has sparked protests in Iran and worldwide, such as in Toulouse, France, on 9 October. Where a woman reacts during the march following the death of the young Iranian woman, Mahsa Amini

Credit: Alain Pitton / NurPhoto/Getty

For the past four weeks, Iran has been convulsed by daily protests following the death in police custody of a 22-year-old woman, Mahsa Amini, on 16 September. The authorities' response has been beyond brutal. More than 185 people have been killed and more than 110 students have been taken into custody. Many universities are, in effect, closed. Sharif University of Technology in Tehran, Iran's leading center for science and technology, has seen some of the worst crackdowns.

Academic staff are conflicted about what to do. But silence was no longer an option for Encieh Erfani, a cosmologist who studies dark-matter candidate particles. On 23 September, Erfani resigned from the physics department at the Institute of Advanced Studies in Basic Sciences in Zanjan, and is now in a secure location.

"Why should I stay in a system that is a brutal dictatorship?" she told Nature. "I could not keep silent while blood is being shed in the streets."

Why did you choose to resign?

After the death of Mahsa Amini, students were shouting: "The streets are covered in blood and our professors are silent." As a faculty member, I teach students and I could not stay silent any more. The twenty-third of September is when schools and universities open in Iran. I have great memories of that day, ever since I was a child. I told myself: if I want to resign, I have to do it on this day. It does not make sense to continue.

What is it like to teach and do research in Iranian universities?

Iran's universities are under the control of the government. University presidents get selected by the minister of science and education. In committees that evaluate professors applying for academic posts, there are mullahs - clerics - evaluating you from the political point of view. Apart from the scientific evaluation, you have to pass a non-scientific evaluation concerning your background, your family, your political activities. If you pass the scientific evaluation but you fail in these respects, for sure you will not get hired.

The pressure on women is much greater, because they check whether your dress code is according to the rules. You must be careful about what you wear, what you do, what you say. Talking

about women's rights is not allowed. I am aware of sexual-harassment cases but nobody can talk about them.

It seems your frustration had been building for a long time.

You are working for the government and you ask yourself: why should I stay in a system that is a brutal dictatorship? I did not want to stay in that system. I could never speak out about it, because of the atmosphere. I could not do anything positive there; I just had to keep silent about everything. Although blood is being shed in the streets, faculty cannot speak out.

How engaged are researchers in the protest movement?

Professors are largely silent because the heads of universities are with the government. If professors join the students, they will get fired. Student protesters might be suspended for one or two semesters or, in a really hard situation, they might get kicked out of the university and have to transfer somewhere else. But for faculty members, if you get fired there is no job for you anymore, because you are on a government banned list. However, some faculty members have said that they are not going to teach classes until detained students are released.



Physicist Enciehf Erfani resigned from her post in protest on 23 September. Credit: Enciehf Erfani

How is this protest different from those in the recent past?

It's completely different. Students used to protest for a few days and get arrested and everything would go silent again. You never heard about students going on strike. This is completely new. The other thing is the nature of the slogans the students are shouting. You used to hear calls to release imprisoned students. Now, they are saying: "Death to the dictator."

Female students are now removing their hijabs inside the university. You never used to see that in a university in Iran. They are crossing many, many red lines. A few faculty members are resigning: that, too, is completely new. And Iranian scholars outside Iran who have collaborations in Iran and used to stay silent are now supporting those inside.

What is the significance of the crackdown on Sharif University?

The government made a big mistake in attacking Sharif University. It represents the elite of Iranian science. All of us, during our schooldays, had dreams of going to Sharif. What's happening there makes all of us sad. Why have they done that? Just because of some slogan they did not like?

What should the global scientific community do to help people in Iran?

Policymakers are thinking about sanctions, but sanctions affect the lives of all Iranians. If I am denied an international bank account because of sanctions, I cannot pay registration fees for conferences overseas; I cannot receive international grants, pay for flights or book accommodation abroad. If I get financial support from any international organization, they have to pay me in cash. Getting visas is also a big problem.

In experimental science you need instruments, but we cannot buy them because of sanctions. Telescopes larger than about 35

centimeters are under sanctions, because it is deemed that they could be used for spying. Imagine, a telescope under sanctions. If you want to impose sanctions, then impose them on the minister of science and education. The heads of universities should not get their visas easily and should not be allowed to be involved in collaborations. They don't have their positions because of their scientific ability, but because of their close relations with the government.

Could the students defeat the regime?

I am not a social scientist. But I was born three years after the 1979 Islamic revolution that brought the present regime to power, and my generation is not supporting the rules of the regime any more. I will just not keep silent. It's over - enough is enough. I hope that other people will realize that, and not only scholars. Everyone has this responsibility.

Brief outline of the Global Grant 1991152

Purpose: 'Fight against Anemia in Women'

Objectives: Treat women of Anemia by screening and treatment and prevent by educating them

Title: 'Matri-Raksha' - protection of mothers

Scope of work: Provide screening camps, minor and major surgeries, medicines, awareness training, healthcare professional training and providing diagnostic equipment at community health centers

Coverage: Both districts of 24 Parganas, West Bengal, India

Sponsors: Rotary clubs of Salt Lake Metropolitan Kolkata of District 3291, India and Nidau-Biel, Biel-Bienne, Biel-Buttengen of District 1990, Switzerland:

Grant Partners: Rotary Foundation India, the Rotary Foundation of Rotary International,

Associates: Related Government and civic bodies, NGO's

QUOTE

Our progress as a nation can be no swifter than our progress in education. The human mind is our fundamental resource.

John F. Kennedy

UNWINDS

The easiest way to make your old car run better, is to check the prices of new cars

Birthdays of members in October 2022

Sanjay Agarwal on October 5, 2022

President Elect Ansul Agrawal on October 7, 2022

Past President Dr Chitra Ray on October 15, 2022

October is Economic & Community Development month

TAILPIECE

RCSLMK's regular meeting on Saturday, October 8, 2022

