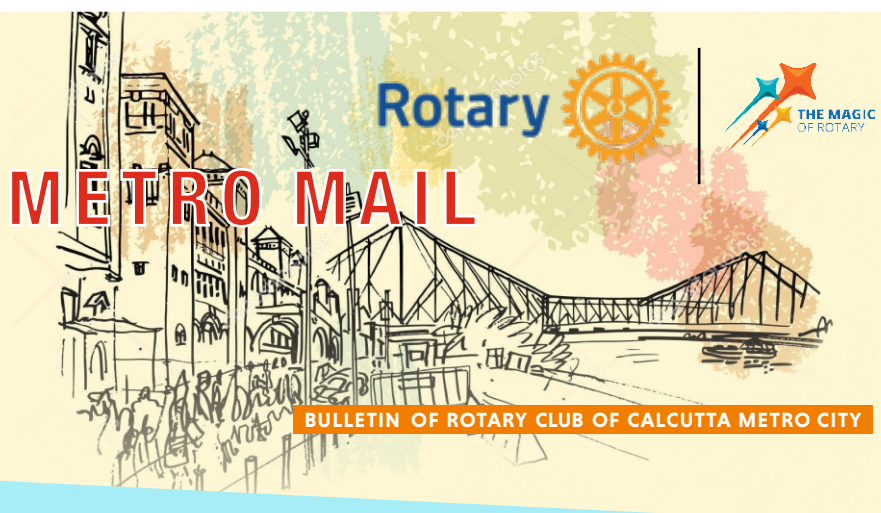


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The withdrawal of the USA from the World Health Organization (WHO) could have significant implications for Rotary International, especially in its global health initiatives like polio eradication, disease prevention, and maternal and child health programs. Impact on Polio Eradication (Global Polio Eradication Initiative - GPEI) :-The USA is a key funder of WHO's polio eradication efforts. If funding is withdrawn, Rotary's PolioPlus program might face challenges in coordination and funding gaps. WHO provides on-the-ground expertise for polio vaccinations, surveillance, and emergency response? Without US support, efforts in polio-endemic regions like Pakistan and Afghanistan could slow down. Funding Shortfalls for Health Programs:-

Rotary partners with WHO for various disease prevention and treatment programs. The USA's withdrawal could reduce WHO's funding, affecting Rotary's initiatives in: Malaria and Tuberculosis control, Maternal and child health programs, Disaster response and pandemic preparedness. Increased Reliance on Other Partners:-Rotary might need to strengthen partnerships with other entities like the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, UNICEF, and national governments to compensate for any funding shortfall from WHO. More grassroots fundraising efforts may be needed to sustain global health projects.

Challenges in Global Coordination :- WHO plays a central role in coordinating international health responses. Without US support, Rotary's ability to work within WHO's frameworks might be affected in outbreak situations (e.g., measles or Ebola response). Need for Advocacy & Policy Engagement: Rotary's advocacy wing may need to engage more with the US government to encourage continued support for global health efforts through bilateral programs even outside WHO.

Mobilizing Rotary's US chapters to push for continued American investment in global health could become necessary.

This situation could push Rotary to develop independent health initiatives, increasing direct partnerships with local health organizations rather than relying solely on WHO frameworks.

Subhojit Roy

Rotary International

Rotary's Response to the U.S.'s Plan to Withdraw from the WHO, USAID Funding Freeze

By **Rotary International**

Rotary notes the recent announcement that the United States intends to withdraw from the World Health Organization (WHO), a partner in the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI). We remain resolute in our mission to eradicate polio. As a founding partner of the GPEI, Rotary has for decades worked closely with all the GPEI partners, the U.S. government, and other governments to end polio worldwide. This effort has reduced the number of children paralyzed by polio by 99.9% since 1988. The global effort to eradicate polio has innovated many times over the years to come close to protecting every last child.

Although this decision creates new challenges, Rotary remains dedicated to ensuring that every child is protected from this preventable disease. We are confident that the GPEI will continue to adapt, to innovate, and to implement effective strategies to keep polio vaccines available for every child in the United States and around the world, especially those in the most challenging and remote regions. The most important decisions leading to a polio-free world are made every day by parents who present their children for vaccination.

We remain committed to working with all GPEI partners to fulfil the promise of a polio-free world. Together, we have ended smallpox, and together, we can ensure that polio becomes the second human disease to be eradicated from the planet.

Rotary, USAID projects

Rotary has collaborated with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) since 2009 on different types of programs. Our current programmatic efforts and communications with USAID personnel and leadership are on hold due to the stop-work order issued by USAID. Rotary International has already notified members whose projects are directly impacted by this order and is working to continue to support them in their impactful work.

We are navigating the implications of the recent stop-work order issued for Hearts of Europe projects that are part of a partnership with USAID. All projects that are currently in an implementation phase have been notified and given information about what actions need to be taken while the stop-work order is in effect. We are working directly with those projects that are not yet being implemented to determine alternative funding for their important work.

Mário César Martins de Camargo Calls on Members to Unite for Good

The RI president-elect speaks about the power of Rotary's members

By **Etelka Lehoczky**



Rotary International President-elect Mário César Martins de Camargo asked members to *Unite for Good* by embracing growth, service, and connection as he outlined a plan to expand “the best-qualified team of volunteers on the planet.”

“Rotary’s greatest asset is not our history, our projects, or even our unmatched global reach. It is our members,” de Camargo said at the organization’s International Assembly in Orlando, Florida, USA, on 10 February. He noted praise from one of Rotary’s partners about “the extraordinary dedication” of Rotary members. “That recognition from an outsider deepened my understanding: Rotary’s greatest gift to the world is its people.”

De Camargo, a member of the Rotary Club of Santo André, São Paulo, Brazil, emphasized the importance of seeking out new perspectives and strengthening Rotary’s service to communities around the globe. He outlined three “essential pillars” for growth: innovation, continuity, and partnership.

Innovating while also building a consistent legacy

Noting how quickly the world changes, de Camargo urged members to innovate.

“Technology, social expectations, and economic conditions evolve constantly, and Rotary must evolve with them,” he said. “Innovation is how we adapt to this changing world.”

One important way to do this, de Camargo said, is by embracing and promoting a variety of club models. Satellite clubs, cause-based clubs, enterprise clubs, and passport clubs offer people different ways to experience Rotary. Noting that his wife helped charter a satellite club with nearly 50 members, he said, “Future Rotary members are out there. We must meet them where they are.”

De Camargo also emphasized the importance of leadership continuity and said he observed its benefits during his extensive travels in the past 18 months. Districts thrive, he said, when governors build on their predecessors’ efforts, ensuring that programs and strategies continue without interruption.

He cited an effort to build wells in Nigeria, an initiative in Pakistan that helped people affected by devastating floods to find a better future, and a Rotary grant-funded program in India where children get lifesaving care.

The power of partnership

Rotary members working alone can achieve great things, de Camargo said, but collaborating with others makes it possible to change the world. He noted that Rotary’s historic effort against polio has been undertaken with partners such as the Gates Foundation, the World Health Organization, and UNICEF. Without these partners, de Camargo said, Rotary couldn’t have had the same impact. He suggested exploring other kinds of partnerships to attract members and revitalize clubs.

Partnering with business associations, professional organizations, and academic institutions can help Rotary attract members while embracing diversity in professions and perspectives, he said. “By reaching out to professionals who share our values of service and engagement, we can expand Rotary’s capacity to do good in the world.”

Ultimately, de Camargo said, all of Rotary’s achievements and growth depend on members. By focusing on attracting and retaining them, Rotary can renew its strength as well as its ability to create change in communities for years to come.

Chicago Tribune : Curing the Loneliness Epidemic, Rotary-style

By John Hewko



This article originally appeared in the Chicago Tribune's Opinion Section

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February 1905, a Chicago lawyer named Paul Harris resolved to fill a hole in his life. He had arrived in the city a few years earlier, and though he’d built a successful law practice, something was missing. The young man was lonely. The sense of camaraderie and community he had known growing up in a small Vermont town was glaringly absent in the hustle and bustle of urban life. “Everywhere there were people but nowhere a familiar face,” he lamented.

To overcome his feeling of alienation, Harris asked three acquaintances if they wanted to meet regularly to share friendship. Their first meeting took place that February in downtown Chicago. There, they decided to form a club, where people could come together—not just to do business, but to form lasting, genuine connections. Because they would rotate their meetings at each other’s offices, they chose “Rotary” as a fitting name for the group.

That one club soon became dozens and then hundreds, until finally there were thousands of clubs in small towns and big cities across America and the world. They meet for fellowship, networking and community services.

Nor was Rotary alone: In 1917, Melvin Jones, another Chicagoan, founded the Association of Lions Clubs, and it too grew over time. Thus, Chicago has become the birthplace of two of the world’s oldest and largest community organizations.

Contd. to pg 4



C.A. Rehm of the Rotary Club of Chicago with early members William Jenson, Silvester Schiele, Rotary founder Paul Harris Paul Harris, Harry Ruggles, and General Secretary Chesley Perry, making a "talkie" on the occasion of the 27th anniversary of the founding of the first club.

Photo by Rotary International

More than a century later, Harris would likely not be surprised that the clubs he founded to combat isolation and loneliness have become a powerful global force for human connection. In recent years, however, the idea of belonging to traditional civic organizations is perceived to be obsolete. Many who flock to online communities see them as something for their grandparents' generation.

Are they really?

While technology can be a tool to bridge gaps, it is no substitute for real-world engagement. Despite being more digitally connected than ever, many people are struggling to forge the kind of deep, meaningful relationships that give life purpose. We have thousands of online "friends" but fewer real confidants. We work longer hours, move more frequently, and engage in fewer communal activities. The decline of religious and civic participation, coupled with the rise of remote work and social media, has left many of us feeling isolated—even in crowded cities.

In a recent Harvard **study**, every fifth American reported feeling lonely, and that number was even higher among young adults and seniors. The late John Cacioppo, a University of Chicago professor who spent years studying the biological impact of social isolation, concluded that chronic loneliness increases the risk of heart disease, stroke, dementia, and premature death. Moreover, loneliness contributes to higher rates of anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation.

The dire situation prompted Dr. Vivek Murthy, who was then the U.S. Surgeon General, to declare last year that loneliness and social isolation is a pressing health epidemic, on par with smoking or

obesity in terms of its detrimental effects. A 2015 **meta-analysis** published in Perspectives on Psychological Science found that prolonged social isolation carries the same health risks as smoking 15 cigarettes a day.

Given the prevalence of loneliness, the vision of Harris—that people, no matter their profession or cultural background, could come together to form meaningful relationships and create lasting change—is more relevant today than ever. With its historical reputation of being a city of joiners, Chicago is the perfect place to look for an antidote to the loneliness epidemic. Reviving people's interest in joining civic organizations is an effective solution.

About 14 years ago, my wife and I left our circle of friends in Washington DC and relocated to the Chicago area. By then, our daughter had left for college, and we were empty nesters in a new city with cold winters. While my day job and business travels kept me connected, I made a conscious effort to foster new friendships. My passion in cycling led me to the discovery of a weekend riding crew, a group of like-minded lawyers and executives. Since 2012, through my friends in Rotary, I have participated in the El Tour de Tucson, a rigorous 102-mile ride staged against a backdrop of mountains, desert, and cacti. Over the years, my Rotary cycling mates and I have raised more than \$72 million to support polio eradication.

My wife, Marga, originally from Argentina, joined the Rotary Club of Chicago—the organization's first club—which enabled her to quickly integrate into the local community. She later became club president and found meaning in community services, such as organizing relief efforts for refugees in Ukraine or working on cervical cancer prevention in Bolivia.

At their core, community membership organizations are about more than service projects. They are about creating spaces where people of all backgrounds come together to find support, and a sense of purpose. In recent years, many traditional membership organizations have modernized their rules and reinvented themselves, creating programs and causes that appeal to the young generation.

As we face this loneliness epidemic, the solution is within our grasp. It begins with each of us choosing to connect—to reach out to a neighbor and to join a local group. In doing so, we not only enrich our own lives but help build a society where no one has to feel alone.

Grandma's rich homemade chicken soup might seem outdated for some, but it's still the best cure for the cold and flu, even as it provides spoonfuls of comfort. The same can be said about the community membership organizations that our grandparents and parents were and are passionate about. They can work miracles at a time when loneliness threatens our collective well-being.

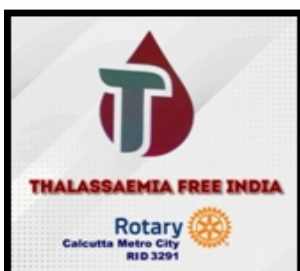
John Hewko is the CEO of the Evanston-based Rotary International

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Greetings

Happy Birthday PP Rtn Rajnish Kapoor for 17th February

Happy Birthday PP Rtn Md Firoze for 20th February



Edited & Published by PP Rtn Subhojit Roy

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