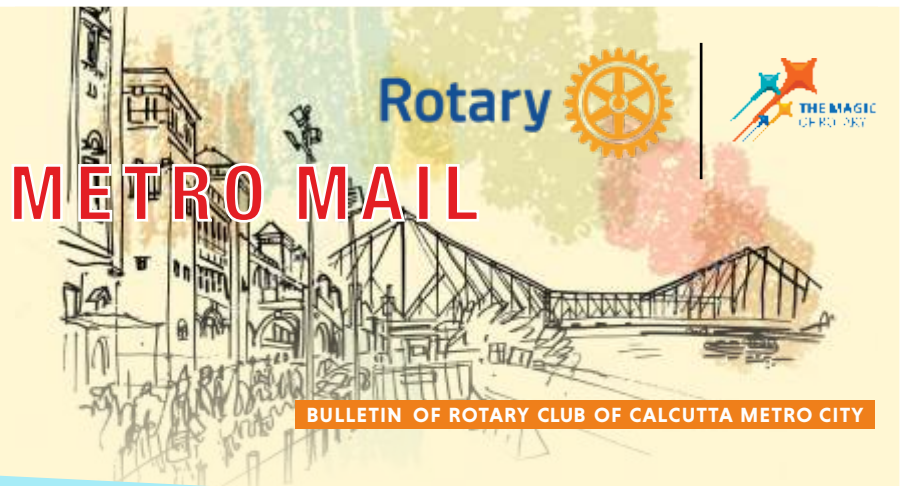


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The Global Polio Eradication Initiative, led by Rotary since 1988, is a shining example of what relentless dedication and innovative public relations can achieve. With a 99.9% success rate, it has transcended geographical, cultural, and linguistic barriers to become one of the most effective health campaigns in history. In India, the journey was particularly For Indian Rotarians, this campaign was not just a challenge—it was a mission to unite a diverse and vast population to eradicate a crippling disease. Rotary’s strategies were not confined to boardrooms but played out in bustling streets, religious congregations, and village fairs.

Reflecting on my personal involvement, I am proud to have been hands-on with several strategic PR efforts. A standout moment was ensuring the live telecast of the Polio-Free India Declaration from Vigyan Bhawan, courtesy of Jawhar Sircar, then CEO of Prasar Bharti. This event symbolized the culmination of years of work, amplified by dynamic, on-the-ground strategies that went beyond the traditional.

Special campaigns like engaging underserved communities, particularly among the Muslim population, and leveraging the influence of Shah Rukh Khan as the first celebrity ambassador were groundbreaking. I still recall presenting the Polio Champion Award to SRK in 2003 during my tenure as Club President of my erstwhile Rotary Club. From partnerships with institutions like Darul Uloom Deoband to iconic slogans like “*Do boond zindagi ki*,” Rotary’s campaign wove emotion and urgency into its message. This historic effort was not just a health drive but a unifying force that showcased the power of grassroots PR in changing lives—and history. But are we vigilant enough? Are we serious about the immunization programs? Dropping our guard risks importing cases from polio-endemic countries and vaccine-derived poliovirus outbreaks due to reduced immunization and to avoid the risks we must take these measures: **Sustain Awareness:** Continue public campaigns on immunization importance, **Strengthen Surveillance:** Ensure robust monitoring of polio and vaccine coverage, **Advocate for Vaccination:** Partner with government agencies for routine and supplementary immunization drives and **Engage Communities:** Address vaccine hesitancy through trusted community leaders. Rotarians must remain committed to keeping India polio-free.

Subhojit Roy

Rotary International

Presidential Message - October 2024



With World Polio Day on 24 October, I'm proudly rooting for Rotary as we team up around the world to End Polio Now.

I had the honor of attending a Strike Out Polio event in July at PNC Park, home of the Pittsburgh Pirates MLB team. The Rotary Club of Delmont-Salem hosted the event, which raised \$1.3 million for PolioPlus. Later in the summer, I joined members of our Rotary family in supporting the Más Millas Menos Polio (More Miles Less Polio) bike ride. Felipe Meza Chávez and his team rode all the way from Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, to One Rotary Center in Evanston, Illinois, to raise money and awareness. The ride took 12 days, and Felipe and his team collected more than \$100,000 to support the fight against polio. It was a joy to greet them as they arrived in Evanston.

And I was thrilled to see Team End Polio raise global awareness around the 2024 Paris Olympics. This world-class roster of athletes, global leaders, and polio eradication supporters came together to advocate for a world where no child has to live in fear of being paralyzed by polio. Some of the athletes on

Team End Polio are polio survivors themselves, adding weight to their advocacy.

These are just a few examples of the many ways Rotary has teamed up recently to End Polio Now. It is vital that we continue to seek out and recruit teammates in polio eradication, especially after the challenges our eradication efforts have faced this year.

The Rotary world was heartbroken to learn about the tragic passing in August of Aidan O'Leary, director for polio eradication at the World Health Organization.

I knew Aidan and worked with him directly. He was a tireless advocate in the fight against polio and a kind, genuine man. We will remember him both for his advocacy and his warmth.

But where there is hardship, there is also hope. I feel hopeful whenever I consider the countless ways Rotary supports the fight every day to eradicate polio.

As people of action, we don't have the luxury of giving in to despair, even in the face of tragedy. The best way to honor Aidan's memory is by teaming up and reaching our goal to End Polio Now.

We made a promise to the children of the world and their families. It is incumbent upon us, together with our global partners, to end this threat once and for all.

There are so many ways we can team up to eradicate polio. You can donate to the End Polio Now campaign, join or initiate a PolioPlus Society in your club or district, or take inspiration from the fundraisers I mentioned above.

I encourage Rotary members around the world to continue to seek out new teammates, so that together, we end polio.

Stephanie A. Urchick
President 2024-25

The Polio Shot Heard Round the World

A son recalls his father's great medical achievement

By Dr. Peter L. Salk



I have been president of the **Jonas Salk Legacy Foundation** since its founding in 2009. As you can imagine, focusing my attention in that role on the legacy of my father's many contributions to humanity — including his creation of the **Salk Institute for Biological Studies**, just up the road in La Jolla on a bluff overlooking California's magnificent Pacific Coast — has a special significance for me.

My father, Dr. Jonas Salk, developer of the first polio vaccine, was born in New York City on 28 October 1914, exactly three months after the beginning of World War I. From his earliest days, he was someone who wanted to do something to be helpful to humanity. That impulse and drive may have come in part from an incident that was imprinted in his memory when he was a little boy. At the end of the war, on Armistice Day in 1918, he witnessed a parade filled with soldiers who had come home from battle. Some had been injured or maimed, walking with crutches or using a wheelchair. My father always had a sensitive side, and he was deeply affected by what he had seen.

As he grew older, my father considered going to law school and running for Congress.

Illustration by Cristian Barba Camarena His mother, who had come over to this country from Russia, astutely advised him that this was not a good decision — especially since, as she put it, "you can't even win an argument with me." I think she wanted him to become a rabbi, which I don't think was in my father's character.

As it turned out, my father decided to go to City College in New York, and there his studies took an unexpected turn. In his first year, a chemistry course was offered, and this appealed to him. The problem was that the class met on a Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath. His parents were very observant in following Jewish traditions and customs, which meant that my father had a difficult decision to

make. In the end, he took the chemistry class, which was the starting point for what turned out to be a long and productive career. After college, having had such a positive experience training in the sciences, my father enrolled in the New York University College of Medicine. From the start, he knew that he wanted to go into research. During a first-year micro-biology class, a professor spoke about vaccines. He explained that, though doctors could use chemically inactivated toxins to vaccinate against bacterial diseases such as diphtheria and tetanus, they could not use inactivated viruses to immunize against viral diseases such as influenza or polio because protection against infection with viruses required that the body experience an actual infection with the living virus. That didn't make any sense to my father, and when he asked his teacher why, the professor basically responded, "Well, just because." That unsatisfactory answer set my father on a journey of discovery that would fulfill his dream to help humanity, in ways and to a degree that he could never have imagined. And it was a journey on which his family, including his three sons, would be carried along.

Following medical school, after a two-year clinical internship at New York's Mount Sinai Hospital, my father went to work with Dr. Thomas Francis Jr., then the head of the epidemiology department at the University of Michigan. My father had previously worked with Dr. Francis on influenza while still a student at NYU College of Medicine, and that had been a seminal experience for him. Working alongside his mentor at Michigan, my father made important contributions to the successful creation of an influenza vaccine, utilizing a chemically inactivated virus, that was introduced for use by the Army at the end of World War II.

In 1947, seeking to head a laboratory of his own, my father moved on to the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine. There he took charge of creating the Virus Research Laboratory and, with his growing interest in polio, received a grant for polio research from the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis.

As all of this was going on, my father had married and started a family. He met my mother, Donna, while working one summer at the Marine Biological Laboratory in Woods Hole, Massachusetts. They married on 9 June 1939, the day after he graduated from medical school with an M.D. degree. I was born five years later, the first of my parents' three sons. During my childhood, polio epidemics became an increasing global scourge. I can remember my parents not allowing us to visit a beloved amusement park when we were on vacation, out of fear of our becoming infected. On another occasion, our family accompanied my father to a polio meeting at the Greenbrier resort in West Virginia. There I saw a girl at a swimming pool who had been disabled by the disease. Because I was around the same age as the girl, that encounter had a lasting impact on me.

During all this time my father and his team were rigorously working to develop a vaccine that would be effective against all three immunologic types of polio. The first human studies with the experimental vaccine were conducted at the D.T. Watson Home for Crippled Children outside of Pittsburgh. These tests included children who had already experienced some form of paralysis due to polio. Because they had already been infected by at least one of the three types of poliovirus, there was no danger they could become paralyzed again if they were injected with the chemically inactivated virus of the same type. It turned out that when these children were injected with the inactivated virus, their antibodies against the virus were boosted. Since antibodies in the blood stream were all that was needed to prevent the virus from traveling to the brain and spinal cord and killing the nerve cells that control muscle movement, when that information was confirmed, my father knew that the vaccine he and his team had been working on should be a success.

At one point early on, my father had tested the experimental vaccine on himself and his lab workers. And one day it was our turn, me and my two brothers, ages 9, 6, and not quite 3 years old. As you can imagine, I was not very happy to be part of this joyful experience. Our father came home with the vaccine, and he proceeded to sterilize the daunting glass syringes and the metal needles by boiling them on the kitchen stove. I was absolutely not a fan of needles — but what child is? I stood there, miserable and looking out the window, my arm held out and awaiting the injection. And then something miraculous happened: I didn't feel the needle. It didn't hurt, unlike every other shot I'd ever had. And for that reason, that day is burnt into my memory forever.

Two years later, on 12 April 1955, my father joined Dr. Francis at a press conference at the University of Michigan. Dr. Francis had been tasked with analyzing the results of the vast clinical trial of the experimental vaccine, and now he made an announcement that would change medical history: The vaccine had been demonstrated to be up to 90 percent effective in preventing polio. Pandemonium broke loose. Kids were let out of school, church bells rang, factory whistles blew. The pall of fear that had pervaded this country for so many years was lifted. I get goose bumps thinking about it even all these years later.

In 1955, more than 10 million children received one or more injections of the Salk vaccine. Within one year, polio cases and deaths in the United States had been nearly halved, a trend that continued and made a vision of polio eradication a possibility.

Today, that goal is getting ever closer to reality. Rotary International has been a champion in ensuring that one day — and, I hope, one day soon — that goal will be reached. Rotary helped found the **Global Polio Eradication Initiative**, and it continues to put a major emphasis on getting the job done, as does the **Gates Foundation**, with its generous donations, and the other organizations that are part of the GPEI. Everyone is working unbelievably hard, and practical work is being done on the ground where it's most essential. Efforts are underway to remove obstacles and deal with societal issues that have impeded progress in some remaining parts of the world.

The contributions Rotary has made toward eradicating polio have been indispensable, and its indomitable spirit has been a driving force in this effort. I've had the great pleasure on many occasions of speaking to and with members of Rotary, and each time it has been an uplifting experience. The desire shared by Rotary members to help the world is inspiring and mirrors the driving force in my father's life.

My father was the author of several books. One of them, recently published in an updated version as *A New Reality: Human Evolution for a Sustainable Future*, he co-wrote with my brother Jonathan. Seeing that title, and the titles of the other books he wrote, provides insights into where my father's interests and hopes lay. They also suggest where we should turn our efforts and

energies next.

As my father did with polio, we need to go beyond theorizing. We can have grand desires for the human species, but we need to create and utilize real and useful tools that can have a direct impact on societal interactions and environmental imbalances. Humanity seems to be facing monumental problems, but they can be overcome. Just look at what my father accomplished. Seventy years ago, there was a vaccine in a bottle, and today we're almost at the point of achieving a once unimaginable outcome.

I feel a devotion to my father, and I feel a responsibility to ensure that his ways of thinking and his contributions are fully understood. He embraced the entire world in his scientific, humanistic, and philosophical vision for the future, and the elements of his legacy will continue to reach into everyone's lives.

Dr. Peter L. Salk is president of the Jonas Salk Legacy Foundation in La Jolla, California, and a part-time professor at the University of Pittsburgh School of Public Health.

Rotary Foundation Receives Highest Rating from Charity Navigator for 16th Consecutive Year

By Rotary International

The
Rotary
Foundation



For the 16th consecutive year, The Rotary Foundation has received the highest rating — four stars — from **Charity Navigator**, an independent evaluator of charities in the U.S.

The Foundation earned the recognition for adhering to sector best practices and executing its mission in a financially efficient way, demonstrating both strong financial health and commitment to accountability and transparency.

"We are delighted to provide the Rotary Foundation with third-party accreditation that validates their operational excellence," said Michael Thatcher, president and CEO of Charity Navigator. "The Four-Star Rating is the highest possible rating an organization can achieve. We are eager to see the good work that the Rotary Foundation is able to accomplish in the years ahead."

Charity Navigator analyzes nonprofit performance based on four key indicators, referred to as beacons. Currently, nonprofits can earn scores for the impact and results, accountability and finance, culture and communities, and leadership and adaptability.

Charity Navigator is the largest and most utilized independent charity evaluator in the U.S. Since 2001, the organization has been an unbiased and trusted source of information for more than 11 million donors annually.

Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA, to host 2028 Rotary International Convention



Rotary has announced that Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA, will host its convention in 2028.

The Rotary International Convention welcomes tens of thousands of members and their friends and family each year from around the world. Rotary and Rotaract clubs in the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul are excited to showcase their beautiful metropolitan area and the incredible community service projects they have underway.

The Rotary International Board initially selected Minneapolis to host the convention in 2029. The change to 2028, with the convention occurring 27-31 May, gives members a chance to explore an additional location in 2029 before Rotary's 125th anniversary convention in Chicago, Illinois, USA, in 2030. A replacement host city for 2029 has not yet been chosen.

Club News

Football Kit Distribution



Rotary Calcutta Metro City donated the entire football kit including training kits for the Nayagram Thana Balika Vidyapith Football team at Nayagram, Jhargram on 1st October 2024. The program was also part of the Eazy School 3 campaign.

The football kit donation was supported by Vidyapeeth, a non profit organization based in United Kingdom.

The program featured handing over football equipment consisting of 30 footballs, 85 team jerseys, 36 hurdles, 36 discs, 84 marker cones and 12 fitness poles.

The girl's tribal team, mostly first generation learners, also played a friendly exhibition match on the occasion.

The girls and the school authority were very happy to receive the latest football equipments, which shall help develop their football skills.

Rotary Calcutta Metro City has been supporting girl's football for the past few years in rural Bengal. Last year the club supported a similar team in Sandeshkhali, Sundarbans.

The club was represented by PP Rtns Subhojit Roy, Bandana Das, Rtns Shankar Das, Tilak Dasgupta and Club President Rtn Sunando Sen.

Anandayatra for the Children of Sundarbans



Rotary Club of Calcutta Metro City in association with SHER presented the "Anandayatra" on 7th October'24 (Chaturthi) for 22 underprivileged girls & boys of Sunderbans.

We met and interacted with the girls & boys at Kundu Bari where they had stopped for their lunch break. They had already visited 14 Pujo pandals in North Kolkata before the lunch break. They were all very thrilled and happy to be able to see so many Durga protimas and the artwork at the Pujo pandals.

The project has supported 7100 families of Sundarbans and Rotary Calcutta Metro City has been continuing its support to the project.

For this Club Public Image project, our club was represented by PDG Shyamashree Sen, PP Subhojit Roy, PP Dipu Mullick, Rtn Dipanwita Banerjee, along with her daughter Ruhee and President Sunando Sen.

Greetings

*Happy Birthday to
PP Rtn Amrita Basu for 28th October!*



Edited & Published by PP Rtn Subhojit Roy

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