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Note: Speeches by Steven Culbertson, president and chief executive officer of Youth Service America, and Craig Kielburger, cofounder of Free the Children and Me to We, were not available.
Engage Rotary, Change Lives

Ron D. Burton
RI President-elect

Good morning! Welcome to Rotary's 2013 International Assembly.

Standing here today, I can't help but think back to Nashville, Tennessee, 26 years ago. That was when I attended the International Assembly as an incoming district governor. It was an incredible experience, just as I hope this assembly will be an incredible experience for all of you. But there is something else that links the International Assembly of 1987 with the International Assembly of 2013 — and it's not just that Ron Burton was at both of them.

Twenty-six years ago, my classmates and I were not only gearing up to be district governors but were also gearing up for the biggest, most ambitious program in Rotary's history: PolioPlus. We were getting ready to tackle the first fundraising campaign in the history of Rotary and the biggest commitment, by far, that Rotary had ever made: to eradicate polio from the face of the earth.

Even then we knew it wouldn't be quick or easy. However, if we had known then that we would still be working in 2013 to finally finish the job, I'm not sure a single one of us would have agreed to be governor. But we knew then, as we know now, that we could do it. And we knew then, as we know now, what success would mean — to the children of the world, to the generations that would follow them, and to the generations of Rotarians who would be inspired by our success to achieve even more.

Twenty-six years ago, I sat in the class of Rotary district governors that began the job of eradicating polio.

Today, I stand in front of the class of Rotary district governors that will finish it.

I learned a lot about polio that week in Nashville. And I've learned a lot more since then. But the most important thing I learned — and that all of us learned — was that whether we lived somewhere where there hadn't been a case of polio in 30 years or somewhere with thousands of cases a month, we could do something about it. We could save kids from life in a wheelchair, or on crutches, or crawling in the dirt. We all realized that, through Rotary, we could change lives.

And I don’t think any of us ever looked at Rotary the same way again.

The challenge for Rotary leaders at every level — for me, for you, for the club presidents — is making sure that every Rotarian can have that experience of epiphany, that moment of realizing what Rotary is, what doors it opens, what a privilege it is to be a Rotarian.

My friends, it is an incredibly exciting time to be a Rotarian. I believe Rotary’s best days are ahead of us. We are writing the last few pages of one chapter of Rotary history, as we move ever closer to the end of polio. And we are writing the very first pages of a new chapter as we roll out our Future Vision plan.

Future Vision is a new era for our Rotary Foundation. It takes everything that is wonderful about Rotary and raises it to a new level — by encouraging bigger, more sustainable international projects while providing increased flexibility for local projects, both of which address the needs of the community being served. It’s a big transition — a big change from business as usual — and
helping your clubs through that transition is part of your job. With the help of your district Rotary Foundation chair, you will help your clubs understand Future Vision, benefit from the changes, and do the most they can with their resources to effect positive change in our world.

In my home state of Oklahoma, if you meet someone who’s a big talker, you might tell him to put his money where his mouth is. Well, I’m a big talker about our Rotary Foundation, and I put my money where my mouth is — because I believe that the Foundation should be the charity of choice for every Rotarian, and even more so for every Rotary officer. If you’re going to ask other people to donate, you need to be donating yourself. It’s called “leading by example.” And that’s why, before this assembly, I asked every one of you to make a donation in your own name to The Rotary Foundation. I’m proud to announce that every one of you did — as well as every RI Board member and every Foundation Trustee. Together, we raised US$675,000.

Now, I have to believe that some of this is money that The Rotary Foundation probably would not have received had I not asked. And I think that this is an important lesson for each of us here today: if you want somebody else to do something, you can just sit around and wait for them to get the idea, or you can ask. Doesn’t it make a lot more sense to just ask?

When I was in high school, I was a very active member of the Key Club. You probably all know that Key Club is not a youth program of Rotary International. It’s a youth program of a different service organization: Kiwanis International. And I always assumed back then that, one day, I’d be a Kiwanian.

But do you know why I’m standing up here as president-elect of Rotary International, and not president-elect of Kiwanis International, training their incoming officers?

Because no one ever invited me to a Kiwanis Club and no one ever asked me to join Kiwanis. I did, however, get invited to, and asked to join, the Rotary Club of Norman, Oklahoma. I’m here today because someone asked me.

You have to ask. You — not the person sitting next to you or the person in charge of the membership committee or someone else who you might think would be better at it or who maybe has more time. Membership is not someone else’s job — it’s my job, it’s your job, it’s every Rotarian’s opportunity.

You have to ask. You need to find those people who are waiting to be asked, find the people who never thought about Rotary, and let them know that you’d like to have them in your club. And if you do a good job and they say yes, and they become members — your job isn’t over. It’s only just beginning, because you need to mentor them, make sure that they find a meaningful role in the club — and that they get satisfaction out of Rotary.

If we kept every new member who joined Rotary, we wouldn’t need to talk about membership anymore. We get plenty of new members in Rotary every year — about 120,000. But every year, just about that many members leave. And that’s why our numbers have stayed the same, at about 1.2 million members, for more than 15 years.

It’s time to do something about it — not just talk about it but actually do something about it. The first thing we need to do is take a look at those who are leaving and find out why they’re leaving and what, if anything, we can do about it. We are committed to seeing Rotary membership climb to 1.3 million by 2015. That’s an absolutely achievable goal — but we need to determine why so many who come in the front door go right out the back door. In 1987 Rotary was given the opportunity to extend membership to women. It was, indeed, a red-letter day for Rotary. But if you look around you, it quickly becomes very obvious that there should be a lot more women in this room today than there are. There is no reason that half of the incoming governors shouldn’t be women. That’s something we all need to work on. Additionally, we need to work on bringing
younger members into Rotary — making sure that today's Rotaractors, Interactors, RYLArians, Youth Exchange students, Foundation Scholars, and Group Study Exchange team members become tomorrow's Rotarians.

In many cases we must encourage clubs to become a little more flexible in some of their rules and traditions. That doesn't mean that everything has to change — it means that times have changed and we must be willing to change if we want to survive. Whether it is the willingness to adjust certain things in an existing club, such as trying out new meeting times or meeting places, or reconsidering our formats for new clubs, we must take a hard look at ourselves and be willing to adapt.

Every Rotarian should ask themselves: Would I join my Rotary club today? If not, why not? What needs to change to make my Rotary club more attractive and one that I can be proud of?

Every Rotarian is different; we all have our own reasons for joining Rotary. They are as varied as the individuals themselves. Sometimes the reason you joined Rotary isn't the reason you stay. But every one of us here and everyone who's made the commitment to take a leadership position in Rotary — every one of us has had that experience of finding the thing in Rotary that gets us excited about Rotary.

And whatever it is to you, however you got that feeling that made you a Rotarian for life — that is what I want you to share, what I want you to help other people discover, so that they can find that feeling for themselves. When Rotarians get involved — when they get engaged — lives change.

And that is why, my friends, my governors, our theme in 2013-14 will be Engage Rotary, Change Lives.

In 2013-14, your job as district governor will be to inspire Rotarians, get them engaged, share with them the gift that every one of you has been given to be a positive force for change in our world. By your example, show them the kind of potential that each of them has through Rotary. Help them chart their own courses in Rotary, so that each one of them will find the thing in Rotary that speaks to them — so that they will open their eyes and their hearts to the power of Rotary service and be inspired.

The most important thing we can do for the future of Rotary is make sure that Rotarians are engaged and that each one of us is doing the most we can. If we really want to take Rotary service forward, then we must make sure that every single Rotarian has the same feeling about Rotary that each one of us here has today. We need to make sure that every Rotarian has a meaningful role to play, that they're all making a contribution, and that their contributions are valued. Because when that happens, the members who come in the front door don't go right out the back. They stay in Rotary, they become Rotarians, they bring in new members, and they make a difference. The job of membership isn't done when we bring in a new member. It's not done until that new member is engaged in Rotary, is inspired by Rotary, and uses the power of Rotary service to change lives.

Each one of you has been chosen. You were chosen to be members of your clubs, and you were chosen to be district governors. And each one of you has made a choice — the choice to take on the responsibility of Rotary leadership.

How much your districts achieve — how many Rotarians you inspire, how many lives those Rotarians go on to change — depends on you: your enthusiasm, your dedication, your openness to new ideas, and sometimes your willingness to go out on a limb. Because after all, that's where the fruit is.
But no matter how much you accomplish — no matter where this year of Rotary service takes you — I can promise you this: the life you change the most will be your own.

The moment is here. The time is now. We begin this journey together — and together we will lead Rotary to a better future, as we Engage Rotary, Change Lives.

Thank you.
Diversity in Membership

Sylvia V. Whitlock
Governor, District 5300

An author wrote:

Never judge someone by the way he looks
Or a book by the way it is covered
For inside the tattered pages
There’s a lot to be discovered!

I learned from my grandmother, “Never judge a book by its cover.” I really understood that phrase only when I had a thought-altering experience many years ago.

I was raised in a third-world culture where class distinctions were the rule of the day and the main earmarks of prejudice. Because I was a light-skinned black person, I thought myself immune to the pronouncements of worthlessness heaped on darker-skinned persons. As a young person unschooled in the history of the black race, my response to differences was largely only skin-deep. One of the insidious consequences of prejudice is that you can be taught to undervalue and fear — even hate — groups to which you yourself belong. For South Pacific, the acclaimed musical commentary on life in the ’40s, Rodgers and Hammerstein wrote the poignant song, “You’ve Got To Be Carefully Taught.” Lieutenant Cable, a young American conflicted over his love for a Polynesian girl, sings

You’ve got to be taught to hate and fear,
You’ve got to be taught from year to year.
It’s got to be drummed in your dear little ear.
You’ve got to be carefully taught.

You’ve got to be taught before it’s too late,
Before you are six, or seven, or eight,
To hate all the people your relatives hate.
You’ve got to be carefully taught!

We are all carefully taught, way before kindergarten. My soul-searching moment came when I ran out of gasoline on a busy New York City expressway and my car sputtered to a halt in the fast lane, where there was no shoulder. I walked ahead to the police phone to report my plight and was told by the person on the other end of the line, “If you’re still there in an hour, call us back.” As I stood there befuddled, a car going in the other direction on the other side of the freeway pulled up, and the driver, a black man with a ragged handkerchief tied around his head, called out, “What’s the matter, baby?”

I can’t adequately describe for you the hesitation with which I explained my problem, because I was looking right at the cover of this man and it was everything I had been taught to avoid. He said, “I’ll get you some gas, baby,” and in the 10 minutes or so before he returned, a million unpleasant scenarios played in my head. He returned, poured gasoline from a can into the gas tank, poured some in the carburetor, and started my car. I offered to give him the $3 I had with me, but he refused it, saying the gas had cost him only 29 cents. Remember, this was in the 1960s!

I went on my way — I was only about 10 minutes from home — went inside and took a deep breath to reconstruct what had just happened. What had happened was that I had found, inside some tattered pages, a gem! I replayed the potentially dangerous situation in my head and...
realized it had been concern for my safety that had led me to believe in a seemingly undesirable quantity. I dug deep to find the genesis of the beliefs that had excluded this man from my circle of acceptables. It is a journey we must all take, ideally without the push of a precarious situation. It is a journey that will serve us well as we seek to truly serve.

When I was invited to join the Rotary Club of Duarte, California, USA, which was at the time engaged in a court struggle over the admission of women, I learned about the place to which many women were relegated, in the minds of men and women! We received a few gender-related, unpleasant telephone calls, and I found myself wondering anew about the deep-seated beliefs that were leading many to reject the idea that women could be capable Rotarians. Had we looked around, we would have seen, as Past RI President Majiyagbe described it, women working alongside men in almost every area of employment, as physicians, professors, engineers, construction workers, business executives. When the first Rotary bylaws were written, they specified that Rotarians should be “persons of integrity.” In the ensuing years, when the workplace was largely populated by men, that somehow morphed into “men of integrity.”

What, then, was the genesis of that belief — the belief that women were not worthy of, or capable of, being Rotarians and working to provide the same humanitarian assistance that men were providing? It may not even have been a relegation of women to a place of lesser importance and value but, I would like to believe, a feeling that women could not and would not do the heavy work that needed to be done. Or, more likely, it may have been that some men were so invested in the valor of their commitment to Rotary that they did not want to share it with women.

Either way, the result is that a part of our society excluded, without good reason, another part.

Within our classification system we can find people of every race, color, creed, ethnic origin, and gender. Our most important requirement is that persons we invite to serve be “persons of integrity.” We have learned from the presence of women in Rotary that they are capable of adding much to our ability to serve. They can and do work alongside men, bringing their mystique to the boardrooms, the work trenches, the financial negotiations, and all of the jobs that they have been so successful at for the past 25 years.

Yes, there is a gender perspective, but it is not a conflict-producing perspective. Susan B. Anthony said, “The day will come when man will recognize woman as his peer, not only at the fireside but in the councils of the nations. Then, and not until then, will there be the perfect comradeship, the ideal union between the sexes, that shall result in the highest development of the race.”

We need to take time to look deep inside ourselves to find where our biases originate and how we extinguish them. Younger generations are more accepting because we have taught them — even if we don’t practice it ourselves — that there is a common humanity, whose generosity is not segmented by race, creed, color, gender, age, or sexual orientation. At a recent institute with a younger generations theme, they called their presentation “Rotary — Refresh.” Are we there yet?

And what about ethnic diversity? Margaret Mead, the renowned anthropologist, said, “If we are to achieve a richer culture, rich in contrasting values, we must recognize the whole gamut of human potentialities, and so weave a less arbitrary social fabric, one in which each diverse gift will find a fitting place.” In many countries, we have a de facto segregation of races, yet in many we do not, and still Rotary meetings seem to be populated by individuals more alike than diverse. As we grow new generations used to sharing their space with people of different colors, different genders, and different sexual persuasions, we can expect to see not just a tolerance for, but a spirit of inclusion toward, people of different backgrounds, whose common goal is Service Above Self — a Rotary refreshed!

Chilean writer Isabel Allende said, “Peace requires everyone to be in the circle — each one to contribute to its wholeness, inclusion.” Mahnaz Afkhami, a lifelong advocate of human rights,
said, “We have the ability to achieve, if we master the necessary goodwill, a common global society blessed with a shared culture of peace that is nourished by the ethnic, national, and local diversities that enrich our lives.”

We are no longer small, residential communities. Our community is the world. We are here today, in this place — a community of more than 500 districts, as diverse a group as we could ever imagine — and we will walk out of here with friends from places we hardly knew anything about. We are the world! We cannot replace hate and fear with apathy toward others at whom we smile and whom we do not hesitate to serve but will not walk alongside.

Service engenders pride, and why should we deny those opportunities to others, even as we need their help with the vast amount of work to be done? We can also help them to help themselves by encouraging them to fish along with us. Michael Jackson sang, “Make a little space, make a better place, heal the world.” Peace is our goal — let’s start within our hearts. We are the world!
Who Touched You?

Richard D. King
Past RI President

Mr. President, Mr. President-elect, my colleagues in service:

We have come here today from the corners of the globe to learn more about Rotary and more about how to be a successful district governor. Now, it may seem to you, after being here for a few days, that one of your biggest jobs this coming year will be to eat a lot of food! Your clubs will feed you morning, noon, and night as you visit them and their activities in your district.

When I was nearing the end of my term as governor, my wife saw me coming out of the shower one morning and said, “Well, I can see that you’ve had every free meal they’ve offered you this year!” My wife is a dancer. I met her in my Las Vegas revue. Her academic degrees are in finance and business, but her great love and professional career have been performing as a dancer and choreographer, and she has performed with many of the great names in Hollywood. She is physically fit. She does aerobics every day — I think she weighs the same as when she was born — I mean dancing. I saw her walk across the stage one day in her costume, and I thought to myself, “Now there goes a girl who ought to be married to a Rotarian!” So I took her away from the dull show business life and gave her the thrill of following me around the world listening to my speeches!

Anyway, I was standing there, dripping wet, coming out of the shower with a towel around me that wouldn’t reach. And by the look on her face, I could tell we were going to have a conversation I would not enjoy. We did, and I didn’t. She said, “Why don’t you get physically fit?” Then she went to the store and bought a little trampoline and put it in the corner of our bedroom — right underneath the Rotary wheel over the bed. I asked her what in the world it was — it looked like a little spaceship from Mars — and she replied, “Now Rick, you jump up and down on this every morning, and you will get in shape.” I couldn’t think of anything else I’d rather do less, but I thought, “What the heck; I love my wife, I’ll jump!” (Because I’m not as dumb as I look!) I hated every minute of it, but on the third day, I got so interested in what was on television, I came down on the edge of the trampoline instead of in the middle of it and broke my leg. I was so happy this happened after only three days, and I could throw the trampoline away.

I wore a cast on my leg, and just to show you how the clubs in my district loved and respected their district governor, I received get-well cards from club presidents all over the district. I could sum up their sentiment by showing you this one card from a club president. He took the time out of his very busy year to write a personal get-well message on the inside. “Dear Governor Rick: We want you to know that the Rotary Club of San Lorenzo, California, by a vote of 17-15, hopes you recover!” (Which I thought was a landslide, considering that club.) Then he wrote a touching P.S.: “We were going to send flowers, but that lost 5-27″ I know you too can look forward to being as much loved and respected as I was.

As a matter of fact, if you have been in Rotary for a number of years, you probably cannot tell me the name of your district governor when you joined Rotary. Most of us here today probably don’t remember the name of the club president when we joined. But all of us remember the name of the person who invited us to become a Rotarian — that individual who touched us and changed our lives.

And who touched you? Who started you on the journey that brings you here today?
This is an exciting time to be an officer of Rotary International. The job of the visionary district governor is to change the clubs in his or her district from what they are to what they ought to be. Rotary will give you no bigger job, no bigger challenge, no bigger opportunity, no bigger responsibility than to serve as a district governor.

The average Rotary club is made up of very un-average people. They are usually of above-average intelligence, competence, income, education, and achievement. They are goal-oriented, successful people — or they wouldn’t be in Rotary. They are executives, professionals, managers, owners, and goal setters in their business and personal lives. And yet, somehow, when we bring these successful, highly educated, above-average people to the Rotary meeting, we start dealing with them as if they were in the second grade. We set goals with regard to membership that are far below what we should expect from ourselves. They are far below what we do in our personal business lives. In fact, if we paid as little attention to attaining our business goals as we do our Rotary goals, our businesses would probably go bankrupt.

And who touched you?

From time to time, friends and business acquaintances ask me the question, “Why are you in Rotary?” One night at home, I sat down at my desk and came up with 20 answers to the question, “Why should anyone join Rotary?” A detailed analysis is available at the Rotary Resource Center, but may I give you a summary of those 20 answers?

Why join Rotary?

1. Friendship
2. Business development
3. Personal growth and development
4. Leadership development
5. Citizenship in the community
6. Continuing education
7. Fun
8. The development of public speaking skills
9. Citizenship in the world
10. Assistance when traveling
11. Entertainment
12. The development of social skills
13. Family programs
14. The development of vocational skills
15. The development of ethics
16. Cultural awareness
17. Prestige
18. Association with nice people
19. The absence of an “official creed”
20. The opportunity to serve

In other words, while it is certainly true that Rotary changes the lives of the people we serve, it changes more the lives of Rotarians. In my judgment, looking at these 20 benefits, few business and professional people can afford not to join Rotary. But we must touch them and ask them.
Over the past few years, I have attended many seminars relating to membership growth. They are often well attended. They often have good speakers. They almost always relate statistics and talk about the problem. They are well intentioned. But more often than not, no action plan is developed — no decision or plan to do something about the problem. There is no development of a specific district and club goal, and no plan implemented as to how the goal is to be reached.

I submit that there is no greater assignment that will come to you as an officer of Rotary International than that of building and strengthening membership in our clubs.

So, how do we build membership?

Every effort at success must involve a plan — a business plan — to accomplish the task. And every successful plan begins with a specific, clear goal. Every year, the Trustees of The Rotary Foundation set a specific financial goal. They ask every district governor to set a specific goal in his or her district. And the successful district governor asks the same of every club president. The district governor helps the club president to set a realistic goal.

We need to set specific goals for membership growth, retention, and development, just as we do for The Rotary Foundation.

The next question, then, is how to reach the goals. A business plan needs to be developed for each club in the district. Some clubs ask their members to write down names of people they think would make good Rotarians. Then they divide the club into teams, and the teams call on the potential members. Other clubs have two or three potential-member receptions every year. And other clubs take out full-page ads in their local newspapers, perhaps with a photo of every member, and then ask each member to pay for his or her part of the ad. Still other clubs look for surrounding communities that could develop new clubs, or a breakfast or dinner club. The point here is that we are leaders of business and professional people. Our members know they need to have a business plan in place for their businesses to grow. And we need to do the very same to grow the business of Rotary. We are asking you to see that the clubs in your district work their business plans to grow.

Why not 1.5 million Rotarians? Why not 5 million? Rotary is a vast, private United Nations — the most powerful, prestigious, important organization of competent community leaders the world has ever known. In the words of Albert Schweitzer, "Rotary is necessary for the future."

And who touched you?

I remember two men. I can still see one sitting in my office the day he invited me to a Rotary meeting. He became a district governor, much loved and respected by all who knew him. He was my Rotary sponsor. He changed my life; he touched me.

And just a few years later, I was in India, in the Great Indian Desert. I had been leading a Group Study Exchange team, and we had been traveling for three or four weeks, often without showers, water, beds, toilet seats. I was feeling exhausted. And all I wanted was a bath and a good night’s sleep. The Rotary club adjourned at about midnight, and the president of the club said to me: “Tonight we have a great honor for you, Rick. You are going to spend the night with a 94-year-old Hindu, in his 200-year-old home out in the desert.” And right away, I knew there would be no bath, no running water, no toilet seat. But I was so tired, at least, I thought, I could get some sleep. At about 12:30 in the morning, my host took me into his living room and sat down in the middle of the floor. I realized he wanted to talk. I decided I would be a gracious guest for about 20 minutes, and then I was going to bed, whether he liked it or not. And he began to talk.

He had been a Rotarian for half a century, and for the same 50 years he had been a journalist for the Times of India. And he knew them all: Lord Louis Mountbatten, Winston Churchill, Nehru, Mahatma Gandhi, and the giants of the 20th century who had crossed the pages of his legendary
land. He talked about them and the new Indian democracy, which was then just about 30 years old. He talked of the Hindu religion and of its philosophy of tolerance. He talked of the eternal things: of hope, of love, of friendship, of wisdom, of his dreams and aspirations for the future.

On and on into the night he talked: of life, of liberty, of Rotary, of peace, the deepest sentiments of the human soul. Eventually, he got up off the floor and went to the corner of his living room where he had a little Hindu shrine. He picked up a small, faded paper and he came and stood in front of me. I can see him today, standing there with such dignity and majesty — a five-foot, brown-skinned, wrinkled, white-haired old man. And then he said, “Rick, this poem reflects my dreams for my life and my country.” Ninety-four years old! “It is the poem your great American poet Robert Frost read at the inauguration of John Kennedy.” And he began to read. He was mistaken: Frost had read a different poem at Kennedy’s inauguration, but I didn’t correct him. And always in my mind, I see him as he stood there that night and read Frost’s immortal words:

The woods are lovely, dark, and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

I looked at my watch and it was 5:00 in the morning, but I wasn’t tired anymore. I had been refreshed in the human spirit, as if I’d had a long shower and 12 hours of sleep. I looked into the face of this wise old man and reached over and touched his feet with the mark of respect, the way one does a patriarch in an Indian family. And then I couldn’t help myself: I grabbed this little white-haired man into my arms, pressed him against my chest, and with all my heart and soul, I loved him, I truly loved him. A perfect stranger, one night, way out in the Great Indian Desert. I will never forget him.

I saw him once —
He stood a moment there.
His eyes met mine —
And laid my spirit bare.
He held my hand —
Then passed beyond my ken —
But what I was —
I will never be again.

What was the miracle that caused his life to cross paths with mine, that made me the recipient of such a gift? The miracle was Rotary. He was a Rotarian, and lucky for me, so was I. The first man put me into Rotary. The second put Rotary into me!

Who touched you?

And so, this week, here, at this time and in this place, you begin the journey. And when the Rotary club presidents in your district wonder how you ever got selected, just remember the words of Bishop Fulton J. Sheen: “If they’re kicking you in the rear, you must be out in front!”

In the words of Past Rotary International President Richard L. Evans:

It sometimes seems that we live as if we wondered when life was going to begin. It isn’t always clear just what we are looking for, but some of us sometimes persist in waiting so long that life slips by — finding us still waiting for something that has been going on all the time. . . . There is no reason to doubt . . . good intentions — but when in the world are we going to begin to live as if we understood that this is it? This is life? This is our time, our day,
our generation . . . our one chance to do something for somebody else. This is the life in which the work of this life is to be done. . . . This is it, whether we are thrilled or disappointed, busy or bored! Givers or takers. This is life, it is all we've got — and it is passing.

What in the world are we waiting for?

John Adams said, “Only two kinds of people in this world ever really count: those who make commitments, and those who keep them.” Governors of Rotary International, you have made your commitment. Go now, and keep it!
New Generations

Sakuji Tanaka
RI President

Good morning!

I hope that you have all had a pleasant night, that you are recovering well from jet lag, and that you are ready for another day of this International Assembly.

One of the most wonderful things about an International Assembly is the opportunity it gives us to meet and talk with Rotarians from around the world. We all come from such different backgrounds, but here in San Diego, we are equal — united in our love for Rotary service and our hope for a better future.

As a child, I could never have imagined a day like today — or the way my life would one day be changed by Rotary service.

I grew up in a small village in Japan. I was very poor, one of eight children. The outside world hardly touched our village — and yet my dream was to travel around the globe. I was born in 1939, when world travel was very rare. It was more than an ambitious dream; it seemed impossible. I used to watch the ships go by and think perhaps one day I might become a navigator on one of those ships. But how? In a family like ours, there was no money for high school. I knew that my education would end when I was 14, as it did for nearly everyone else I knew.

But it did not. One of my teachers saw that I wanted to study further and had no way to do it. He took matters into his own hands. He arranged jobs for me and for two of my friends in a glass factory in Tokyo. We would work there during the day, live in the workers dormitory, and go to high school at night. When he spoke to me of this idea, it seemed like the answer to a dream. I obtained my parents’ permission and soon was on a train to Tokyo with my teacher and my friends, and with everything I owned packed in a small basket I carried on my arm.

The path of my life was altered forever. The compassion and generosity of my teacher helped me to realize my dream. This was a tremendous gift for me.

He saw the possibility to take our lives in his hands. He did not let the opportunity pass but instead reached out to seize it.

Everything that happened in my life was different because of this act. Like my teacher, through Rotary, I have been able to pass a life-changing gift on to many other people.

New Generations Service is the newest Avenue of Service in Rotary. It is reflective of the way we see our work — as something designed to last, to affect not only people today but also generations to come.

New Generations Service encompasses any service that benefits young people and families, as well as future generations. Whether it is through literacy or job training, through maternal health programs or nutrition for young children, through Rotaract and Interact or through Rotary Youth Exchange, we in Rotary are working to get young lives off to the best start possible.

For example, today in Nigeria, 1 in 18 women dies as a result of childbirth. Through our maternal health initiatives, Rotary is working to change that, to ensure that fewer children grow up without their mothers.
Rotary has protected 2 billion children from polio and helped take it from a global scourge to a disease on the brink of eradication. Soon, the world will be polio-free because of what we have done.

Rotarians give their time in their own communities to teach children to read, and their donations provide books to young people who might otherwise have none. What better way to kindle a dream? A book can be a window into another world.

Through Youth Exchange, we show new generations how wide the world can be. By giving young people the opportunity to experience other cultures — to gain perspective and make new connections — we foster peace and compassion. And in our Rotaract and Interact clubs, we cultivate a passion for service.

With each child we help, with each young person we mentor, we are changing a life, we are nurturing potential. Who knows what these children will grow up to do because of Rotary? Who knows how our gifts will echo into the future? We cannot know this. But we know that the things we do today will have a positive impact throughout their lives in the future.

Yes, New Generations Service is an integral part of Rotary. But just as future generations depend on Rotary, Rotary depends on them. We must continue to grow, to create new Rotarians. After all, it is the next generation of Rotarians that will continue our good work. And while we have much to offer — our commitment, our wisdom, our experience — there is much we can learn from them as well.

Many of the qualities we most need and value in Rotary are qualities associated with youth, like enthusiasm and a positive spirit. Young people have a natural optimism. They look for ways to accomplish things, not for excuses why they won’t work.

This is an attitude many Rotarians can relate to, for we aim high in Rotary. We did not merely decide to immunize a few children against polio; we committed to eradicating the disease entirely. I believe that setting our goals high only motivates us to work that much harder and reach that much farther.

Another quality of youth is flexibility, and in order to grow, Rotary must be flexible enough to change with a changing world. We must be open to new ideas and new perspectives. Ask your new members: What inspired you to join Rotary? What would you like to achieve? Ask everyone: What can we do better?

I have always said that it is important to invite feedback and to listen to criticism. It may be tempting to dismiss our critics, but often they can teach us something. As a businessman, I know that you do not achieve success by ignoring your customers! If someone is telling you about a problem in your club or district, this is something to take seriously.

If we demonstrate a willingness to listen and to engage with new members in our individual Rotary clubs, we can create a sense of shared ownership and shared responsibility for Rotary’s future.

We send thousands of young people on Youth Exchange programs every year. There are hundreds of thousands of alumni in our Rotary community. How can we turn those alumni into members?

We can host alumni events. We can harness the power of social media. We can start up new Interact and Rotaract clubs and cultivate connections between Interactors and Rotaractors. We can take the time to introduce a new generation to Service Above Self.
Growing our membership is the responsibility of all Rotarians — not merely to increase the numbers on an annual report but to share the gift of Rotary.

Just as my life changed when I set off from my village to work in a Tokyo glass factory, it changed again in 1975 when I was invited to join Rotary. I am grateful for the teacher who set me on a new path as a young man, and I am grateful to the man who set me on a path of service. I am sure that many of you feel similarly. I truly believe that the purpose of life, and what brings the greatest and most enduring happiness, is to be useful to others, and Rotary has brought me so much joy. I am honored to be able to pass that joy on to new generations.

You are a new generation of leaders within Rotary. As our newest district governors, you have a tremendous opportunity ahead of you. You have the power to create a brighter future through Rotary, and a brighter future for Rotary.

Through Rotary, we create a world where children can dream. We show new generations that they can do greater things than they imagine, and we inspire them to reach beyond what they believed was possible. This is how you will all Engage Rotary, Change Lives.

In Rotary, we give of ourselves, and through Rotary, that gift is multiplied, and its effects ripple on.

Thank you.
Rotaract and New Generations

Derek Osborn
Rotaract Club of Norman, Oklahoma, USA

Good morning. I want to thank President Tanaka and President-elect Burton for their invitation to address you today. I would also like to congratulate all of you who have been entrusted with the amazing opportunity and challenge of serving as district governors.

I believe that everything Rotary does is important. However, I also believe that nothing is more important to Rotary’s future than the programs of New Generations. Encompassed by New Generations are all of Rotary’s programs for people under the age of 30. Interact is for students 12 to 18, Youth Exchange is for those 15 to 19, Rotaract is for 18- to 30-year-olds, and RYLA — Rotary Youth Leadership Awards — is for anyone 14 to 30 years old.

I have been fortunate enough to have known about and participated in Rotary for about 15 years. I was in elementary school when I got to participate in my first Rotary community service project, and it had a profound influence on me. When I started high school, the most exciting part was joining Interact. Put basically, Interact is the high school version of a Rotary club. Members meet regularly, they have community service projects, and they participate in international projects. For me, Interact was my first chance, without parental oversight, to feel that I could make a difference in my community and in the world. The plan for Interact clubs encourages that. They work autonomously but partner with local Rotary clubs to do great things in the world.

My next adventure with Rotary was RYLA. Every district does it differently, so I can only talk about my experience. For me, it was an intensive week of leadership training. Through my local Rotary district, I was given the tools I would need to be an integral member of society. In today’s age focused on technology, which often limits human interaction, we desperately need programs that focus on human skills. That is what RYLA provides. For Rotary, this is the perfect opportunity to introduce young people to what Rotary is, what Rotary does. It is a chance to tell this captive audience of interested youth about the scholarships, the travel opportunities, and the ability to do good in the world that Rotary offers them.

Interact and RYLA were both great experiences and they taught me so much. I have to say, though, that the program that made the biggest difference in my life was and is Youth Exchange. In August 2005, I got on an airplane and, as an 18-year-old student, flew to Istanbul, Turkey. I did not know anyone. I did not speak the language. The culture was vastly different from mine. But it was the most amazing thing to ever happen to me. Rotary sent me to another country, to learn another way of life, and to have my eyes opened to the world around me. While there, I made friends not only with Turkish people but also with other Rotary exchange students from around the world.

Youth Exchange is one of the best tools, if not the best, for cultural understanding. Every day through this program, young people are gaining life experiences and world understanding that will be with them for the rest of their lives. I have been back from Turkey for almost six years, but not a day goes by that I do not think of Turkey and the lessons I learned there. This is the difference the clubs in your district will be making in the lives of young people every day when you encourage them to participate in all that Rotary offers.

The final program in New Generations is Rotaract. I helped form and served as president of the Rotaract Club of Norman on the University of Oklahoma campus. This program is different in every country. In the United States, Rotaract is generally based at a university, while elsewhere,
Rotaract clubs operate much like Rotary clubs but are open to professionals ages 18 to 30. Either format provides an opportunity for mature young people to contribute in a meaningful way to their community and to society as a whole. Over the last few years, my Rotaract club has done service work in my community and raised money for PolioPlus. With each service project, our members learned to identify needs and find ways to meet them. This is something that governments can’t always do. But Rotary finds a way.

The importance of all New Generations programs, but especially Rotaract, is that they serve as steppingstones to eventual membership in a Rotary club. As of this year, Rotary has more than 1.2 million members. New Generations has almost 600,000 participants. Imagine how great it would be if, in 10 years or so, more than half a million young people were standing in line, waiting to join Rotary. How wonderful it would be to literally have a new generation of Rotarians who know the greatness of Rotary because they grew up in it.

This new generation of Rotarians is possible, and they are ready. But they need your encouragement and your support. Without you, without your support, it is likely they will not come. Groups such as Rotary are not something that young people my age are gravitating toward. Many people my age do not realize they need Rotary. We look for something that can provide us with value, with opportunity, and with significance. Unless Rotary provides something relevant to our lives, it is not likely we will participate. It all depends on you. What value, what benefit, what relevance will you provide that will encourage my generation to join?

I am thankful to each of you and to Rotary International for the opportunities you have given me. Although I am the child of a Rotarian, that connection only allowed me to open the door. But how will young people without a connection to Rotary be able even to find that door? It was the encouragement of many Rotarians that allowed me to walk this path — a path that not only took me to a foreign land but opened my eyes to the needs of the world and to the friendships that could be made through service and fellowship. I am proud of all that I have been able to accomplish through Rotary. I am grateful for all that I have learned and experienced because of Rotary. I am excited to see what’s next for Rotary and what your incoming class of leaders will accomplish. Though it may sound a bit selfish, I am most excited envisioning the day that I can finally stand with pride and proclaim for all to hear that I am a Rotarian. Truly, that will be the culmination of a dream that started with a simple invitation to participate in a Rotary service project.

Good luck during your year of service. As you work to gain new Rotarians, remember to sow the seeds for the next generation. By doing so, you strengthen Rotary and strengthen a commitment to community and international service that can and will perpetuate Rotary.
The Family of Rotary

Jetta Burton
Spouse of RI President-elect

Good afternoon.

To Ron and me, Rotary is a family — a tremendous extended family that we are so lucky to be a part of. And the more we have embraced this family over the years, the more we have benefited.

In 1983, when Ron was the incoming president of his Rotary club, we decided to combine the RI convention with a family vacation, and we headed off to Toronto. Until then, our children had not seen much of the international side of Rotary. Then, one evening at dinner, we sat next to a group of Japanese Rotarians. One gentleman told our children about the Children’s Day celebration in Japan and gave them one of the carp windsocks that are traditionally hung on that day. We still have it, and it is a treasured souvenir of a wonderful evening. It was a moment when the internationality of the family of Rotary became real — because this man from Japan, before he left for Toronto, had packed his bag with gifts for the children of the family of Rotary that he knew he would meet. He is part of our family of Rotary to this day.

A few years later, we hosted a Group Study Exchange team from Australia, and Steve came into our lives. Steve was a sheep rancher from New South Wales. He talked so differently from us that at first the kids couldn’t understand him. But soon they understood him perfectly. Steve had a gift for playing the piano by ear. If you hummed a few bars of a song, he could play it. This fascinated all of us, and the children came up with song after song for Steve to play. Thank goodness he was a patient man who liked children! One night, the children came to me and said, about this man who was literally from the other side of the world, “He’s just like us!” What an amazing revelation!

Both children stood on the front porch and cried as he left. Steve and the many other GSE team members I’ve met are cherished members of my family of Rotary.

Then there is Nai. Nai is a young lady from Taiwan who had studied at the University of Oklahoma and was referred to Ron when she inquired about applying for a peace fellowship. The Rotary Club of Norman, Oklahoma, and our district agreed to sponsor her. We got to know Nai well while helping her get her application in order. We kept in touch during her studies at International Christian University in Tokyo, during her field experience in Africa, and afterward.

She says that the opportunity to learn about conflict resolution was the best experience of her life. Nai joined Rotary when she returned to Taiwan. Today, she is completing her doctoral studies in strategic management at Texas A&M University. Her research concentrates on social networks and corporate social responsibility. I know that she will do great things, and I’m proud to have her in my Rotary family.

When Ron and I attended the annual peace seminar at the University of Queensland in Brisbane, Australia, in 2009, I met Kevin. His thesis concentrated on a different view of peace-building that mixes conflict resolution with social science. I remember his passion for this theory. Today, he is putting his theory into practice as he advises the NATO International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan on matters of counterinsurgency and peace-building. Because of him, more families will have hope for a peaceful future.

Nai, Kevin, and the other peace fellows I have met are now part of my family of Rotary.
I joined Rotary in 1997, and my family of Rotary immediately grew to include all of the members of my Rotary club and of the Interact club we sponsor. Together, when needed, we pack and deliver blizzard bags for Meals on Wheels. Blizzard bags are paper bags filled with nonperishable food for people to have on hand when bad weather prevents the drivers from making their regular deliveries. We Rotarians were satisfied with simply packing the bags, but not the Interactors: They thought we needed a more personal touch, and insisted that we decorate the bags as well.

So we all got into the spirit and decorated the bags before delivering them. Oh, the joy of working with kids! They took a task that might not have been too exciting and got every one of us laughing, and putting love into our work. As we delivered the bags, we took time to visit with the recipients.

One of the Interact students discovered that some of the people we served were sharing their meals with their dogs because they could not afford dog food. As a result, we began packing dog food to be delivered with the meals of the dog owners. I’m so proud of these kids, and proud to see them grow up as the next generation of our Rotary family.

When Ron and I were aides to Past President Bill Boyd and Lorna Boyd, they often talked about their friend Jenny, who was doing wonderful work for PolioPlus. I met Jenny when she spoke at the 2006 International Assembly, and I discovered that she had an Oklahoma connection. In 1971, she was a Youth Exchange student in my district in Frederick. On a return visit to Oklahoma, her Okie dad, Jim, told her about Rotary’s PolioPlus program. Later, as a Rotary member herself, Jenny went to India for a National Immunization Day. It was a very emotional experience, and soon polio eradication was consuming her life. She has worked tirelessly in India, Pakistan, Ethiopia, and Nigeria to eradicate polio. Jenny once said, “I wonder if, when my Okie dad shared his passion for PolioPlus with me, he realized just what an impact that would have on my life and the role I would later have alongside him and many others in reaching our goal of a polio-free world.” Jenny, a dear member of my Rotary family, is still working to eradicate polio.

Last October, Ron and I attended a Rotary institute in Invercargill, New Zealand. The theme of the event was “Make a Ripple,” and the image on the program was a pebble dropped into calm water, with the ripples expanding outward. It’s a wonderful metaphor for the work we do in Rotary, and it’s how I feel about my family of Rotary — that it’s like those ever-expanding ripples that just keep going.

My family of Rotary includes Rotarians; Youth Exchange students; Interactors; Rotaractors; GSE team members; peace fellows; district governor, training leader, Board of Director, and Trustee classmates; and all of their families. Just as I look at my own family’s accomplishments with pride, I look with pride on all of the Rotary service achieved by my family of Rotary. Every time I see these people, whether it’s been a few days or many years since we last met, I’m always glad to hear what they’ve been doing in their Rotary clubs and districts.

Today, all of you have joined my family of Rotary. I’m so glad to have you all as a part of the family. And I can’t wait to see what all of you do in the new Rotary year — as each one of you finds your own way to Engage Rotary, Change Lives, and send those ripples spreading ever outward, on and on.

Thank you.
The Family of Rotary

Jonathan B. Majiyagbe
Past RI President

Most of you are familiar with the general saying that a stranger is the friend you have not met. In Rotary, the development of acquaintance as an opportunity for service goes beyond ordinary friendship.

You may not have said hello to the person who stands cheek by jowl with you this morning, but I assure you that after your time here in San Diego, parting will be filled with such emotions as only members of a family experience. Such is the powerful spirit of Rotary, which binds us together and enables us to display the core values of our organization in service, fellowship, integrity, leadership, and diversity. And, as the late Rotary International President Hiroji Mukasa reminded us in his theme, Mankind Is One, we have different cultures, speak different languages, even wear different hats, but we all share the same Rotary emblem.

For more than 107 years, men and women who have embraced the idea of Paul Harris have conveyed the humanitarian spirit of Rotary through meaningful community and international service projects, today in more than 34,000 clubs. The Rotary idea, like a pebble tossed into a pool, has spread in ever-widening ripples from Chicago to the latest nation to join — Bhutan — resulting in a global reach of more than 200 countries and geographical regions and a numerical strength of over 1.2 million members.

The concept of the family of Rotary is not a new idea. It is an old practice — the interaction of Rotarians — that received its name as a result of the presidential emphasis in Rotary year 2003-04.

Rotary is more than just personal or professional advancement. All clubs strive to promote diversity in membership, but equally important is the need to encourage personal relationships similar to those of a functional family. Clubs should support members who are experiencing problems, respond to families in bereavement, follow up on members who stop attending meetings, and make new members feel part of the family. And to emphasize the importance of personal relationships, the Board in 2003 designated December as Family Month.

Some clubs hold fireside chats in the homes of Rotarians and invite new members for mentoring in a family environment. In my Rotary Club of Abuja Metro in Nigeria, a group has just been created on BlackBerry Messenger. We update club members about committee activities, plan individual events, and allow Rotarians to get information on social gatherings. The aim is to reach out to one another and to make Rotary family-friendly!

We belong to a large global family, and as we work together to solve common problems and assist those in less-privileged parts of the world, we get the satisfaction that we are improving the lives of members of our family.

When Rotary embarked on the eradication of polio in 1985, the entire world was involved in fighting a common enemy, and as country after country eradicated the disease, they did not sit back and pat themselves on the back. No, they joined forces with the remaining endemic countries to fight the disease, because as long as one member of the family is still not free of polio, the whole family is at risk. And so, we see Rotarians leaving their comfort zones and going into remote parts of the world to take part in National Immunization Days, giving of their time, resources, and expertise to support their Rotary family.
Rotarians will go out of their way to make you feel welcome and comfortable. What a family we belong to! We can call almost anywhere in the world home.

Let us remember that in reaching our goal of service, none of us can effectively do so alone; there are others who are just as committed and passionate as we are. We must help and rely on one another. This is the sense in which Rotary is like a family. This extended family includes not only Rotarians but their spouses and other family members and former Rotarians who provide critical support to Rotary’s service efforts.

Our partners in service — Rotaract, Interact, and Rotary Community Corps — are also part of this wide Rotary family dedicated to improving life in their communities and throughout the world. Like most families, the Rotary family provides a haven where we can gather the strength and encouragement to face the challenges of the world. The poet and writer Goethe said, “Treat people as if they were what they ought to be and you will help them to become what they are capable of being.” A club can always create supportive beneficial synergy with these extended family members.

And there are others, too, who can come under our umbrella of service. Each year, thousands of young men and women participate in Rotary’s educational and New Generations programs, which enable them to develop new skills, serve their communities, and foster international understanding. Very often, we do not employ the experience gained by these young people to its full potential. The experience does not have to end when the program is over. As alumni, they are part of an extended network of people who share a common bond. They will always belong to the family of Rotary, and it behooves us to keep them involved with the idea and resources of Rotarians and alumni. They should stay connected with Rotary, and the transition to becoming Rotarians should be an easy walk-through for these natural prospects.

During my visit to Brazil, a young Zimbabwean on a Youth Exchange program was our interpreter, using her recently acquired skills of translating Portuguese into English. My wife kept in contact with her, and we met again in London and were excited to learn of her interest in becoming a Rotarian. Rotary brought us together; Rotary is teaching her to serve.

And as we cast our net to find synergies with like-minded people, it is desirable that we cultivate new relationships with individuals and organizations such as Rotarian Action Groups and networking groups that share Rotary’s goals. In very significant ways, they complement the delivery efforts of Rotary service and are important fibers in the fabric of the Rotary tapestry.

Under the Future Vision Plan of the Rotary Foundation, new strategic partnerships are being developed. A strategic partnership is a relationship between The Rotary Foundation and another international organization that has a unique or specialized knowledge or expertise in one or more of the areas of focus. These relationships, too, will produce mutually beneficial project portfolios that fulfill the goals of the partners and enhance service opportunities for Rotarians. In time, these partners, too, may become members of the family of Rotary.

It is clear, then, that the concept of the family of Rotary, if properly harnessed, can be an effective tool for improving our membership drive. Everybody knows the now-familiar refrain of the need to bring younger people into Rotary. Throughout the Rotary world, our younger members tell us that they don’t like to feel that Rotary time competes with family time. If we support opportunities to include families in fellowship and service events, then there is no conflict, as the family member who is involved in Rotary will better understand why the club member makes time for Rotary.

In such an atmosphere of family and caring, the death of a Rotarian should not be the end of Rotary’s relationship with his or her family — certainly there are ample opportunities to include a deceased Rotarian’s family in Rotary-sponsored events. The late President Glenn Estess, discussing the subject of the family of Rotary in 2005, stated:
It is important to integrate our own families into the family of Rotary. Rotary should be something that brings families together — not a force that pulls them apart. Rotary clubs and districts can offer diverse service and social activities that appeal to all members. . . . I am from the South [of the United States], where family is the highest priority. I grew up in a Rotary family — five of my brothers were Rotarians, three served as club presidents, and our son is also a Rotarian.

In his 2007 speech to the International Assembly, Past President Wilf Wilkinson, referring to his predecessor in office, Past President Bill Boyd, said, “I also plan to continue [his] emphasis on the family of Rotary, because in caring for each other, we help assure that Rotary will be around to continue these good efforts for many years to come.”

May I also repeat what I said at the International Assembly in 2002? “It isn’t hard to walk away from a group in which you have no investment. It is very hard to leave the family.” People don’t leave organizations when they feel at home. This initiative highlights the need for that environment, which can have a serious impact on growth while reducing attrition.

And so, I invite you to join in an exercise of imagination. If every one of you asks his or her spouse or a friend to join Rotary, we will instantly have an increase of 538 members. If your child joins, the increase is doubled, and imagine then the impact of bringing alumni and organizations into the family of Rotary. We will have many more hands to serve humanity and make the world a better place.

It remains for me to thank the president-elect for inviting me to make this presentation, and you, as members of the family of Rotary, for your patient attention.
Polio Update

Bruce Aylward
Assistant Director-General
World Health Organization

Ladies and gentlemen, six months ago, President-elect Ron wrote to me with a tantalizing invitation. He asked, “Bruce, would you like to meet the Rotary leadership team that will finish polio eradication?”

So the first thing I need to know is, am I in the right place? Is this the team that will lead the completion of polio eradication?

Well Ron, that was a pretty tepid response, but I think I understand why.

Rotary did the easy part of polio eradication many years ago, and now you’ve just finished the hard part. The truth is, our incoming governors only have the nearly impossible part to finish!

So today I’m going to explain why you can now — finally — finish the nearly impossible part of polio eradication.

Let’s start with some proof that Rotarians are up to this task. Let’s start with 13 January.

Does anyone know why 13 January should be one of the most important dates in the Rotary calendar? (No, it’s not because that’s the day this assembly started.)

13 January 2011 was the date that this beautiful young girl, Rukhsar Khatoon, was the last child ever to be paralyzed by polio in India.

That was just 12 months after some “world experts” were quoted in leading newspapers as saying it’s impossible to eradicate polio from India.

So if you are still wondering whether Rotary can actually do the nearly impossible part of polio eradication this year, just ask the Rotary leadership in India and the over 100,000 other Indian Rotarians who helped make India polio free. They have proven that Rotarians are all about doing the impossible.

And as you head out to lead the nearly impossible part of polio eradication, you will not be alone.

Rotary’s persistence and perseverance in India had a profound effect on the world: Within just three months, the World Health Assembly declared that completing polio eradication was now an emergency for global public health, obligating the world’s leaders, and our organizations, to pull out all the stops to finish the job. WHO, UNICEF, and CDC activated our emergency operations centers to enhance our speed and coordination.

The last three endemic countries immediately began sharing and applying the lessons learned in India, and WHO and UNICEF deployed more than 5,000 additional polio workers to the toughest areas of Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Nigeria to help.

In September, the UN secretary-general himself called together the presidents of Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Nigeria, with the Rotary Foundation chairman and the leaders of our other partners, to ensure that all countries and partners were giving this emergency the resources and oversight needed to succeed.
The results have already been incredible: In 2012, the world saw the greatest advances in the last 10 years toward ending polio.

One year ago, over 600 children were still being paralyzed in 16 countries; today, we have the fewest number of polio cases, in the fewest number of countries ever. This is the first time ever that polio has been found in only five countries.

As a result, you — the Rotary leaders of 2013-14 — have a tremendous responsibility: You have been given the greatest opportunity in history to end this disease forever, and to seal the great legacy of your great organization, in perpetuity.

We are here because of Rotary — we can only finish with Rotary’s leadership.

Before we look at the challenges in front of us, let’s recognize the work of some Rotarians who have gotten us to this point.

In Nigeria, Rotarians have been trudging the tough streets of Kano to reach children with the polio vaccine. In Chad, which has now been polio-free for nearly six months, Rotarians have been vaccinating and motivating. In Afghanistan, Rotarians have been raising awareness to ensure that all elements of society help rid their country of this dreadful disease. And in Pakistan, which had the greatest progress of all last year, Rotarians have been mobilizing leaders like the captain of their revered cricket team to champion PolioPlus.

As important is the effort of Rotarians in polio-free countries, like in Germany, where they are raising awareness of the End Polio Now challenge, and in Australia, with a lighting of the Sydney Opera House to share the PolioPlus story with politicians and the public, helping the broader fundraising and advocacy effort.

In 2013-14, governors will need to mobilize every Rotarian for the nearly impossible part of the polio eradication battle. Every effort, every fundraiser, by every club is vital.

So now let’s talk about the nearly impossible part of polio eradication — finishing the job in Nigeria, Afghanistan, and especially Pakistan. Every Rotary governor must understand the real risks we face, and what we are doing about them.

Here are highlights of the biggest risks in each of the last three endemic areas:

- **In Nigeria**, the minister of health has just launched a new Emergency Operations Center to lead an intensified push in that country and prevent any new international spread.
- **In Afghanistan**, we’ve just deployed a new surge of technical assistance to negotiate local access even more intensively with all sides in the conflict.
- **In Pakistan**, a multipronged approach has been launched in response to the violence we are seeing in the run-up to this year’s elections — violence that has already had a horrific impact, with nine polio workers killed in December.

This intensive approach combines short- and medium-term interventions to immediately improve the security and safety of vaccination teams in Pakistan, while aggressively tackling the conditions that contributed to these terrible attacks.

We already have new evidence that this approach is working: During your governor training over the past two days, vaccination teams in Pakistan — working in close coordination with police and with huge community support — have again successfully vaccinated in key districts that suffered some of the worst attacks just last month.
If some people still despair about the recent events in Pakistan, you must remind them that the polio program has faced — and overcome — such barbaric acts multiple times already.

Just two years ago, our UN premises were destroyed in a terrorist attack that claimed three of my staff, as well as UNICEF polio staff in Abuja. Five years ago, two of my staff were killed when a suicide bomber attacked their vehicle in southern Afghanistan.

These are not the only attacks the polio program has faced over the past 20 years, and unfortunately, I can’t assure you that they will be the last. But, I can assure you that just as we have regrouped and restrategized to overcome such tragedies in every other setting, we will continue do so in Pakistan.

Ladies and gentlemen, we have celebrated the great success of PolioPlus to date; we have seen Rotarians overcome impossible odds to conquer polio in India; we have seen that awful events like those in Pakistan are never the end of the eradication road, but rather very tragic bumps along this very tough road.

Now let’s look at the opportunity in front of you, the 2013-14 Rotary district governors.

Ladies and gentlemen, the governors before you have brought Rotary to the brink of history, with polio at its lowest level ever and in the least number of countries. But this is the most important slide I am going to show you, because it shows that Rotary has brought you even closer than you think.

This is a map of polio cases over the last four months, the last “high season” for polio. For the first time in history, cases have stayed at a very low level during this high season, and remained highly concentrated in just three “reservoir” areas.

Even more important, there was unprecedented improvement in the program in each of these areas in 2012:

- This graphic shows you that in Kano and the surrounding states of northern Nigeria, more children were reached than ever before. The red line shows that even in the worst-performing districts, coverage is now approaching the levels needed to stop polio.
- In northwestern Pakistan, you see exactly the same picture — a picture that has been largely sustained in the campaigns that are going on right now.
- And in south Afghanistan, although we can’t do the same kinds of studies, you can see that the number of “inaccessible” children has been steadily falling during the past year due to the new negotiations and tactics.

Ladies and gentlemen, I hate to add more pressure, but some really smart mathematical modelers have analyzed these data and concluded that if you can maintain this momentum, polio could stop globally in late 2013!

So your 2014 target should be easy!

In closing, I want to share with you one final, very big development that Rotary leaders must be aware of. Because of the PolioPlus progress over the past 12 months, and a range of new developments in polio vaccines and diagnostics, by April of this year, a new plan will be launched that maps out a firm timeline for the completion of PolioPlus. This plan, which will be scrutinized by the World Health Organization’s executive board next week, will require us to maintain our financial support at nearly US$1 billion a year through 2018. But, most important, it signals an incredible international confidence that the world — led by Rotary — can rapidly complete eradication in the last few reservoirs.
Ladies and gentlemen, I have mapped out an ambitious agenda for your term as governors. You are setting out to complete the nearly impossible part of eradication — but you are going into this battle with a great leader who has been in this eradication war from the beginning.

I would like to thank President-elect Ron immensely for his promise to lead the incoming governors into this battle.

And, on behalf of the entire Global Polio Eradication Initiative, I would like to thank President Tanaka for the wonderful job he has done championing PolioPlus, especially through his decision to make his first official trip as president to Nigeria.

As all of you set out this year to engage Rotary and change lives, I would urge the governors-elect to remember that if you really engage Rotary on completing polio eradication, you will not only change lives, you will also change the course of history, for every child and for Rotary, forever.

The last thing I have to do today is share a secret with you: As an assistant director-general of WHO, I’m not actually allowed to travel this week because of our own board meetings next week. I am only here because our director-general, Dr. Margaret Chan, puts our relationship with Rotary before everything. But she will ask me, “Bruce, when you looked out over that audience, did you really see the Rotary leaders who President-elect Ron promised would lead the completion of polio eradication?”

So, ladies and gentlemen, what do I tell the director-general of the World Health Organization? Are you the governors who will champion the completion of polio eradication with every single Rotary club in the world? Are you the governors who will ensure that every Rotary club everywhere contributes to this final push? Are you the governors who will deliver a polio-free world to future generations?

Ladies and gentlemen, Rotary leaders, it has been the greatest honor of my life to work alongside you for the last 20 years.

Let’s make this next one really count.
Good morning!

It’s great to be here today to address this incredible class of district governors-elect and to speak with you at a little more length than I have done so far. Because, as important as it is to know where the fire exits are and what time the buses are leaving, there is of course a larger reason why we’re here, and that is helping all of you lead your districts to the most successful year possible in 2013-14.

As district governors-elect, all of you are looking ahead to a year of hard work, ending in the satisfaction of a job well done. Your focus now is on preparing for that job: on doing everything you can do to make your year, and your district, the best it can be.

It’s natural that here in San Diego, your thoughts will be centered most on what will happen from July 1, 2013, to June 30, 2014.

But today, for the next 18 minutes, I’d like to ask all of you to join me in thinking beyond that — about how to ensure that the good you do as district governors endures long after your year is over and how you can profit from the experience of your fellow Rotarians, and the support of RI and the Secretariat, to keep your good work going for as long as possible.

Let me start off by saying something all of you already know, which is that Rotary International truly is an organization unlike any other. There are plenty of humanitarian organizations out there, plenty of other service clubs, lots of nonprofits and NGOs with great missions doing great work — but Rotary is the only one that gives talented and accomplished individuals, of any background and profession, the chance to step forward, to put their skills to work, to really make a difference themselves.

It’s an amazing platform for each of us, and my job as general secretary — and the job of everyone who works at Rotary International — is to help every Rotarian in the world, in every Rotary club in the world, to achieve as much as they possibly can, not just this year but in all the years to come. And that is why I would like to ask you, as Rotary leaders, to keep in mind two related concepts — two watchwords at RI that can be brought to bear on nearly everything you do as district governors.

They are continuity and sustainability.

Continuity is a word that we’ve been using in Rotary for many years. Every Rotarian, and every Rotary leader, is a link in a chain. Our success can’t ever be measured by our own strength. It will be measured by how well we link what was done before us to what can be done after us.

To this end, I’d like to encourage you to make and keep a strong connection, not just with the current governors in your districts, but with as many past district governors as possible — and with the governor-nominee as well. Learn from the experiences of past governors, and stay in touch with the governor who will follow you. Communication between generations of leaders means that fewer lessons will need to be relearned, and less will fall through the cracks. Effective communication, planning for each changeover, and developing district strategic plans that go three to four years out into the future means that it is less likely that the work of last year’s officers will be abandoned when a new class takes office.
At RI, we recognize that continuity in our strategic priorities ultimately leads to more effective service. And we recognize that applying this thinking not only to how we run our organization but how we serve our communities results in more effective service as well. That is why I would urge each of you to utilize Rotary Club Central, a new tool that RI rolled out this past summer, which is designed to help districts and clubs, on the one hand, to better understand and capture their past goals and achievements, and to plan strategically for several years into the future. It is a great tool and it has received extremely positive feedback from those district leaders who have used it so far. It’s on the rotary.org website under Member Access, and I encourage each of you to take a look, spend some time learning about it, . . . and then start using it, when you get back home.

Setting ambitious but realistic goals, and tracking our progress toward meeting them, is essential to keeping clubs and districts on track in their Rotary service.

The goal isn’t just doing good work — it’s doing the best work we can, work that will have the largest, and longest-lasting, positive impact.

And this brings me to the second concept I’d like to talk about today, which is sustainability.

Whereas continuity is a familiar word in Rotary, sustainability is something that we’ve started talking about only more recently. But it’s a word you’re going to hear a lot this week, and it’s a word that is going to be absolutely central as we move into a new chapter of our Rotary Foundation, with Future Vision.

Sustainability, at its core, means that the work you do will have a continued impact, without continued investment. The classic example is giving a man a fish, versus teaching him to fish. A helping hand that meets a need in the short term is never as efficient a use of our resources as an investment that will continue to meet that need over time. For example, we might look at a village without a source of clean water — a situation that you see so often in so many parts of the world. It’s tempting to look at this situation and say, you know, for a few thousand dollars, we could go in there and dig a well and put in a pump, and the villagers will have water.

And in fact, that’s what many people do, and have done, both in Rotary and in other organizations. And that is why many parts of the world are littered with broken pumps — pumps built by well-meaning people who did not think past that first gush of clean water, who perhaps did not plan for what would happen when a pump breaks, or needs a new part, or just needs to be cleaned and maintained to keep the water drinkable.

And so that’s why we’re talking about sustainability, and why sustainability is going to be so key to the success of Future Vision. Because when your mindset is on sustainable projects, you realize that fixing the problem of that village without water is going to take a little more effort, a little more involvement. If you really want to fix the problem, and do it right, it might not be the work of a few weeks and a few thousand dollars.

If you’re committed to doing it right, you’ll involve the community. You’ll work with local stakeholders to determine exactly what’s needed and what the challenges are. You’ll make sure mechanisms are in place to provide a reserve fund for maintenance, and that there are people — not just one person, but multiple people — who are responsible for that pump, who know how to fix it, who can get spare parts and install them, who are invested in seeing to it that the pump keeps working, not just for a few days or months, but for many years, and that when the pump needs to be replaced, it will be.

Because clean water that lasts for only a few months isn’t going to change anyone’s life. But clean water that is reliably available means families who are healthier, children who go to school, mothers whose days are not consumed by meeting their families’ most basic needs. And all of this good impact will continue on — after the last hand is shaken, the last bag is packed, and the last Rotary dollar is spent on that particular project.
When we talk about sustainability in Rotary, we’re not just talking about making sure our service lasts: We want to make sure that Rotary lasts. And that means making sure that our clubs are sustainable — that they’re going to keep going strong long after we ourselves have left them.

That means, of course, not just bringing in new members, but mentoring them and making sure that they become active and engaged Rotarians. It means adapting to the needs of younger members, so that Rotary clubs are friendly to younger working professionals. It means finding better ways to bring past Interactors, Rotaractors, and RYLA participants into our clubs as Rotarians, so that no former Rotaractor ever says, “I would have loved to join Rotary, but no one ever asked me.”

And making sure that Rotary is sustainable means making sure that every club has a presence on the Internet, so that the younger members that Rotary needs can find us when they look for us.

The Internet is the easiest way for a potential new member to get information about a club — and one of the easiest and best ways for a club to show what membership has to offer. The best club websites give a window into the life of a club, with details on projects and speakers, the club’s calendar of meetings, and its schedule of events. It’s the best way to show people who might not know much about Rotary what it’s like to be a Rotarian.

I also encourage you to think of the Internet as part of your public image toolbox. Use social media, use Facebook and Twitter, to get the word out about what your district and clubs are doing. Not only does this help Rotary reach new members, but it helps Rotarians reach each other — with ideas and inspiration, and the potential for new partnerships.

In your year as governor, you’ll see a redesigned RI website that will enable Rotarians to connect with each other even more easily. In the meantime, we’ve added some features that you can benefit from now. Just last week we launched a microsite that allows you to apply online for Foundation grants under Future Vision. In addition, at the Bangkok convention we introduced Showcase as a resource to highlight the great work that Rotarians do around the world, and I would urge each of you to encourage the Rotarians in your district to post their projects on Showcase, so that we can use the power of social media to show the world the fantastic things that Rotary does.

As your general secretary, one of my goals has been to ensure that Rotary’s work is recognized — especially our role in the eradication of polio. In the past year, Rotary has been the subject of feature stories on the BBC and in The Economist magazine and in many other media outlets around the world. This month, Time magazine’s international edition ran a cover story on polio eradication, with Rotary prominently featured as a leader in the eradication effort. It’s great to see. It builds morale and enthusiasm among Rotarians and shows the world what an organization such as Rotary can accomplish. But, even more important, it helps build support worldwide for polio eradication so that we get the resources we need to finish the job once and for all.

Now, I’d like to close by quoting something I once heard President-elect Ron say, which was that, as much as he’s done for Rotary, he could never pay Rotary back for everything Rotary has done for him. I think he speaks for all of us. And I believe that the best thing that each one of us here can do for Rotary is not to try to pay it back — but instead, to pay it forward. The best thing we can do for Rotary is to make sure that Rotary continues to grow, continues to go from strength to strength — not just this year or next year, but for many years and many generations of Rotarians to come.

I wish you all a wonderful day of learning and preparing, and an incredible year of service and leadership — in which you will all engage Rotary, and change lives.

Thank you.
Peace Through Knowledge

Zewdineh Beyene Haile
Former Rotary Peace Fellow

Distinguished participants of the 2013 International Assembly, it’s indeed a great honor and pleasure to stand before you and speak at this grand event. Please permit me to sincerely thank the organizers for having me here.

It is appropriate to begin with a quick snapshot of my background and my association with Rotary International. I am an Ethiopian, privileged to study in different countries, including the United States of America. It was the Rotary Peace Fellowship program that brought me to the University of California, Berkeley, in 2002 as one of the first 70 Rotary Peace Fellows.

Please let me briefly walk you through my personal experience as a Rotary Peace Fellow and how it changed my life.

Before leaving the Rotary Peace Center at UC-Berkeley, I was able to convince Berkeley professors and influential African diaspora representatives residing in the Bay Area to join me in the establishment of a not-for-profit organization that would contribute to the African continent through a sharing of knowledge and capacity-building in alternative dispute settlement and conflict resolution. The African Institute for Arbitration, Mediation, Conciliation and Research was created and began working in the Rotary Peace Center at UC-Berkeley back in 2004.

Returning to my home country of Ethiopia in 2005, I decided to establish a management consulting firm called Emahizee Global Consulting. It advises countries in transition on their peace-building and development efforts and strengthens their democratic bodies, such as human rights commissions, ombudsman offices, election commissions, parliaments, and justice-sector institutions including the judiciary, the prosecutors, prison administration, and the police.

As part of my volunteer service, I advised the Ethiopian Elders Network, which brokered a historic and exemplary peace between the ruling party and opposition parties after a 2005 election dispute that resulted in much bloodshed. While the international community and donor agencies were not able to settle the dispute, which led to hundreds of civilians and politicians being imprisoned or killed, the Ethiopian Elders, made up of notable academics, members of the Ethiopian diaspora, religious leaders, and civil society organizations, persuaded the government and opposition leaders to settle their differences in a peaceful manner. I can boldly say that Rotarians, by investing in the Rotary Peace Fellowship, indirectly participated in brokering this peace deal through the advisory role their peace fellow played.

I must tell you, dearest Rotarians, your investment in the Rotary Peace Fellowship is not in vain. Peace fellows are contributing daily to global peace in the most diversified way. Some teach peace, others consult on peace, and many lead governmental and nongovernmental organizations that work for durable, lasting, and sustainable peace in our world. I teach conflict resolution courses, conduct workshops, and perform mediation, conciliation, and arbitration work across the African continent.

Currently, I am working with dedicated volunteers on a new project to establish community-based dispute resolution centers for religious institutions and public higher education institutions in Ethiopia. We have almost finalized production of manuals for tailor-made training at the centers.

These achievements cannot be imagined without the knowledge I gained at the Rotary Peace Center at UC-Berkeley.
You may ask what differences the Rotary Peace Fellowship program is making and the potential it has for the future.

It is not controversial today that education is a key tool for accelerating development, and the correlation between justice, peace, and development has been widely accepted. The sheer scale of the devastating effects that violence and large-scale conflict have on development was recently emphasized by the World Bank in its landmark 2011 World Development Report. According to this report, a civil war costs, on average, as much as three decades of GDP growth in a medium-size developing economy. Two decades are usually needed to restore trade levels after major outbreaks of violence.

Conflict has a devastating impact on the world. It is estimated that 1 billion people, including about 340 million of the world’s extreme poor, live in fragile states, in extreme poverty, and without reliable and stable basic governance and security.

Without proper and timely handling, conflict can easily destabilize an entire region. Its global impacts are quickly seen, thanks to information technology and globalization. There is an ongoing need for intervention, mitigation, transformation, and resolution plans that are well thought-out and coordinated. I believe that the resolve of Rotarians to establish research and education centers at leading academic institutions across the globe is truly an innovative response to the global need.

These centers are unique in many ways: They are different in their academic culture, method of instruction, geographic location, and diverse excellence. Despite their differences, all serve one purpose: serving humanity to cherish peace through knowledge. In other words, all centers, having admitted interested and competent applicants from all over the world through a rigorous competitive process, train and equip them with tools for conflict prevention, management, transformation, and resolution. More so, these graduates of the Rotary Peace Fellowship are functioning and collaborating with one another, either in well-organized or informal ways, through their global networks.

Peace fellows come to the centers with rich experience in the field and an extensive knowledge base to be shared with the scholars and students of the university community. Their exposure to global culture and the experiences of their colleagues is supplemented by lectures, readings, conflict analysis tools, deep and complex theoretical frameworks, campuswide and off-campus seminars, and various other RI-led global and regional functions. I cannot think of any other program in this field that parallels the Rotary Peace Centers experience.

By drawing on my personal experience, I can note here some of the valuable contributions of the Rotary Peace Centers:

1. My Rotary Peace Fellowship at Berkeley exposed me to an unforgettable global culture of peace, tolerance, mutualism, and respect for diversity.
2. This fellowship helped me become an independent thinker who can develop innovative solutions to conflict.
3. The fellowship gave me an opportunity to reach out to amazing global networks of peace.
4. My association with a leading research university and Rotary Peace Center earned me immediate recognition as a scholar, practitioner, and executive coach in the field of conflict resolution. To mention just one example, I was nominated to join the World Economic Forum’s Global Agenda Council on the Rule of Law thanks to recognition of the Rotary center at Berkeley.
5. Rotary Peace Centers established for the world’s benefit one common roster of peace fellows who are linked in spirit and action to the ideals of Rotary International. Scholars and graduates of these centers are highly respected because they are known to have been trained at prestigious universities.
6. Last but not least, the Rotary Peace Fellowship offers those of us from unrepresented parts of the world, such as Africa, opportunities that we would never have otherwise.
This now brings me to the question each one of you could raise at this very moment: Why should Rotarians support the Rotary Peace Centers?

Our world today is in desperate need of vision to address issues of global instability. Even a casual look at the prevailing conditions in our 21st-century world is enough to produce fear, hopelessness, uncertainty, insecurity, emotional and social trauma, depression, disillusionment, discouragement, and despair. The threat of economic collapse, social disintegration, moral decay, religious conflict, political instability, health epidemics, ethnic cleansing, and the clash of civilizations demands leadership that can see beyond now into a better future and that has the skill to transform that vision into reality and the courage to inspire us to go there.

Research shows that prevention is much cheaper than conflict management, transformation, or resolution. Every dollar spent on preventing violent conflict saves the international community four dollars it would otherwise spend on dealing with that conflict later. The Rotary Peace Fellowship is an instrument in the global conflict-prevention campaign.

Rotarians have taken a leadership role in preventing disputes from breaking into conflict, as well as bringing conflicts to a rapid end and helping societies make the transition to a sustainable peace.

Above all, peace fellows create a demonstrable improvement in people’s lives and show them that only peace will bring about good governance, a sustainable economy, an effective health service, and education for their children.

And we all know that knowledge and learning are essential if we are to empower those who are farthest behind. So access to peace education is central to reducing global inequalities, resolving conflicts, and building a better world for the 21st century.

I have a moral obligation to tell participants of this annual event that there is no other well-structured program in the world that is capable of making a roster of peace fellows and strong global network of experts on international peace studies and conflict resolution.

As the Rotary Peace Fellowship program enters its second decade, it is more important than ever that we continue to let the world know about this important opportunity. Although we’ve graduated 711 peace-builders over a decade, applications for this program are declining. How can this be, when it’s such an important and generous fellowship?

Incoming district governors, we need you to spread the word about this important and unique fellowship. There are many ways that you can be involved in the program, but the most important way is to recruit new applicants each year. Encourage Rotarians in your district to identify qualified applicants and to support this vitally important program. I encourage you to visit the resource center here at the assembly to pick up a flier to help in your recruitment of new peacemakers.

There is no contribution that could make Rotarians more proud than providing generous support to a program that has proved to be so effective in shaping a world that desperately needs our help.

Thank you!
Hello.

During the past few days, I am sure that you have enjoyed some delicious Häagen-Dazs ice cream. Have you ever wondered where the name Häagen-Dazs comes from? At first, the explanation seems fairly logical: Two business partners, Mr. Häagen and Mr. Dazs, got together to make some ice cream and conquer the world. In a way, they were the Old World’s Ben and Jerry.

If you believe this explanation, you are seriously mistaken.

I made up the names of these two people. The two individuals who started the company were indeed ice cream makers, but they were from New York and their names were Reuben and Rose Mattus. When they chose the name Häagen-Dazs in the 1960s, these Polish immigrants tried to ride the wave of Danish products that were then enjoying a great reputation in the United States and to take advantage of the positive image associated with European craftsmanship.

I chose this example — from among many others — to show you that when it comes to communication, you must first have a strategy.

There is no communication without a communication strategy.

A communication strategy must include some references to the entity’s history, identity, values, and purpose. It must show a direction. It must carry a meaning, which is the main objective of a communication process.

A common mistake is to start with the means rather than the end.

With a communication strategy, you move from a passive to an active role. This strategy should also be developed parallel to the strategic plan of the organization. With planned communication, we can help prevent inconsistency in our operations.

An audit should be the first step of the plan. It is often ignored because the focus is on the final goal, and the current situation can be easily, if not intuitively, grasped.

Such a review is nevertheless essential.

You might ask yourselves: Why should we communicate? After all, we are not a corporation, even though we are all professionals. In Rotary, we are volunteers; we are the stewards of core values. And many worry that opinion-making is taking precedence over civil society.

A corporation sells goods and services in order to compensate its shareholders. Its communication aims at convincing customers to buy its products. In our case, the goal is to connect our members and the stakeholders around us. Our communication is based on connections. This is a crucial difference.

A social communication can drive opinion-making to create awareness of a cause or an issue and can encourage people to give money or time to support our projects.

Moreover, our movement is driven by recognition. For a corporation, the main engine is profits, even though recognition plays a part.
This recognition stems from the trust our friends place in us, and it is those friends who support many of our projects through donations and other means. Further, our volunteers contribute countless hours to our projects and need to receive some form of recognition as a token of appreciation.

People are the assets of our movement. And since our purpose is to create and maintain social relations, internal communication becomes vital.

But we do not operate in a vacuum. Around us, we have many important stakeholders. We need to identify our audiences and develop a communication policy for each one. We need to reflect on the ways we communicate with each group and the tools we use to reach each audience. For several years, Rotary has been offering grants to help districts develop communication strategies and improve the name recognition of our organization. This financial support helps develop an awareness campaign. You will learn more about these grants during the breakout session following this plenary session.

In order to ensure the future of our movement, we need a development strategy that includes a vital piece, a communication strategy.

Our development relies on how well we communicate with youth, so we need to adapt our communication to this audience. Social media are part of it. They have enjoyed a formidable expansion since 2005, and they are in constant evolution. Corporations understand the importance of social media; in 2011, 84 of the top 100 corporations in the world had a presence on at least one social network, and 25 were on four of them. But having a presence on social media is not a goal in itself. We need to know what we are going to say and then decide what impact we are going to have through each network.

We have websites. We also have blogs that we can control. This control becomes more difficult with Facebook and is impossible with Twitter.

At first, corporations used these networks as a loudspeaker, but today they understand that it is necessary to actively engage in a dialogue. These networks now constitute a large marketing outlet that has the advantages of being free and being immediate. But how can an organization like ours use these tools? How do we decide whether we should take part or not? Which one to choose? According to a recent study conducted by Havas Media, we are witnessing a digital transformation of our society. The mode of communication between a brand and its audience has changed. Today, interaction prevails; the public wants to share and exchange rather than to simply get information. Mass media, including social media, are playing an increasingly significant role. Ignoring social media can be costly. Today, the goal is to increase visibility and manage one’s e-reputation.

Steering clear of social media is not a viable strategy.

Internet users are on the lookout for news. They like to participate, to express their opinions, to follow, and to be involved. They hold the power as far as communication is concerned. It is a revolution, and it presents an opportunity for us, because exchanging, sharing, and community building are part of our DNA. In fact, Rotary operates like a social network.

With social media, we can increase our visibility and be better known among the public, organizations, and partners. We can create and organize events, and find partners.

Partners and sponsors are key to our projects.

Please allow me to illustrate this topic with a story — a beautiful and true story.

In France, since 2005, we have established a partnership with movie theater operators. Those past four years, we have reinforced this partnership with the Walt Disney Company.
Each year, on the same day, at the same time, in more than 400 movie theaters, about 100,000 people answer the call of Rotarians and attend the sneak preview of a blockbuster. At the end of the evening, we talk about Rotary and show a video on our organization’s projects.

Our partner Disney provides a significant contribution for promoting the event: news releases, newsletters, the inclusion of French Rotarians in the movie promotional campaign, display of the Rotary logo on promotional posters and other media, development and funding of 120,000 brochures, and previews in movie theaters.

This remarkable project raises more than US$1 million during a single evening and is covered in more than 600 articles in the print media.

This year, the event will take place on 26 March as part of Zone 11’s communication week, which will involve national television, regional digital press, and social media. And clubs will publicize this event locally.

Oh! I almost forgot the one thing that makes this story beautiful:

When I sought to meet the president of the powerful French Movie Theaters Federation, I presented the idea to his assistant. She listened to me carefully and then told me, “I am going to arrange a meeting with the president, not only because I believe that you have a great project but because I also owe a debt to Rotary. I was an Ambassadorial Scholar, and Rotary changed my life. I will definitely do my utmost to assist you.”

We change other people’s lives and it changes ours.

Isn’t it a beautiful story?

Thank you.
Strengthening Rotary’s Brand

William B. Boyd
Past RI President

In 2006 and in 2010, Rotary conducted surveys that told us something that you and I probably knew: Many people had never heard of Rotary, and of those who had, very few knew what we did.

We spend large amounts of money on Public Relations Grants, yet our membership has not grown and we have not attracted large donors to support our work. The RI Board recognized that if we continued to do what we were doing, we would continue to get the same results, and it decided to employ branding experts to help us develop the tools we need. After a rigorous selection process, the Board contracted Siegel+Gale, an international consultancy, and formed a committee of directors and trustees to work with them.

What is branding? Our brand explains simply and clearly who we are, what we do, and why it matters. Unfortunately, we had allowed our wonderful Rotary brand to become complicated and confused, and it was time to look for ways to strengthen it. This was not about reinvention or creating a new brand but about bringing focus to it.

Siegel+Gale began the assignment by conducting wide-ranging research both inside and outside Rotary, and this research brought out some clear directions for us to take. They learned that Rotarians sometimes find it difficult to express who or what we are, and that we need to understand ourselves before we can successfully educate the general public.

This independent review by outside consultants brought out some interesting viewpoints as well as identifying what it is that makes us what we are. They found that we speak our own language to one another, using words that are not used generally. For example, use the phrase “sergeant-at-arms” with strangers and you will find yourself in a lengthy discussion! And we use a different language in our written materials. The style is stilted and formal.

We have too many mission statements, and Siegel+Gale identified well in excess of a hundred logos, many of which have no obvious connection to Rotary. Our publications focus on the how-to rather than the why when most people today are much more interested in outcomes. While we are proud of what we call our international service, we talk about it incessantly and miss out on promoting other strengths.

Whenever Siegel+Gale talked to Rotarians, they found that the words “leaders” and “leadership” always came into the conversation, yet they were missing from all our publicity materials.

The perception gap between internal and external audiences is huge.

As the consultants looked at the positives, they found many strengths that we take for granted. We connect very well among our club members, among clubs, with our communities, and with those who can help us in what we do.

We are an organization of responsible leaders, both socially and ethically. We gain strength from our classification system, which brings so many vocations together. Our diversity of membership is a plus because it helps us see and think differently from any other organization.

They found that Rotarians join clubs to make a positive impact in their communities and for friendship, and they stay for the same reasons.
The research showed that

- Rotary has the strengths necessary to succeed.
- Audiences want what Rotary offers; we just need to help them understand what we do.
- There is a strong desire by Rotarians for change within Rotary; 60 percent of us say the rate of change is too slow.

The challenges are not simply communication issues. What we are looking for, and what we need, are clarity of purpose, a new filter for decision making, a motivator for current members and staff, and more efficient communications. For non-Rotarians, we are looking to provide recognition of what we do; differentiation from our peers; the recruitment of members, donors, and volunteers; engagement with our communities; and appeal to strategic partners.

The new gold standard for an organization like ours is a clear focus, accountability, and proven impact. We can do all of this.

Siegel+Gale looked at where we are positioned and realized that if we promote ourselves as a service organization, we are similar to Lions Clubs International and Kiwanis International. If we see ourselves as a humanitarian organization, we compete with what are believed to be over 2 million humanitarian organizations around the world. But we are more than a service organization or a humanitarian organization.

We are in a category of one.

We see things differently. Because of the way we build our membership, we have a multidisciplinary perspective that allows us to see challenges and opportunities in ways that others can’t. We use our vocational skills for service to humanity.

We act differently. We are responsible leaders in our businesses, professions, and communities, and this means that we apply best-in-business thinking to social issues.

We have passion and perseverance. Siegel+Gale tell us that whenever they talk to Rotarians, the passion shines through, yet the way we communicate to others has meant that this passion is not seen. For an example of perseverance we need only to consider our battle against polio. We established our partnership with the World Health Organization, UNICEF and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in 1985, and we have almost achieved our goal. We remain as committed as ever to finishing the task.

We make a global impact one community at a time. While we often talk about international and community service, in fact we impact communities on a global scale, and this also makes us unique.

Over the past few weeks, we have tested words and phrases and concepts on non-Rotarians in order to identify what appeals. We have been working through how we organize and present ourselves so that our message is clear. We have been developing a consistent visual image that we can use, while recognizing that Rotary presents many opportunities for creativity.

We have done this while recognizing that we have many cultures within Rotary and that our branding needs to respect all of these.

We have talked to other not-for-profits that have been through branding programs, such as the YMCA, the American Red Cross, CARE International, and Heifer International, and they have told us that the results have been “transformative.” Heifer International told us that it has lifted itself from being almost bankrupt and with zero name recognition to being named last year as one of the top 10 most trusted charities. Heifer told us that this was not all through branding but that it could not have achieved the results without the branding initiative.
What do we ask of you? We need you to join with your committee in embracing this important initiative. We ask you to share what we are doing with your fellow Rotarians. We need you to live the brand. Talk to non-Rotarians about why you became a Rotarian and what it has meant to you. Be a Rotary champion. Tell them how good it makes you feel to give something to your community. And ask them to join with you, because one Rotarian can change a community, and when we connect more than a million Rotarians, we can change the world.
Our Core Values

Kalyan Banerjee
Past RI President

Good morning and namashkar. I am delighted to be here with all of you this morning, our Rotary leaders of the future.

I know that many of you have come here after very long trips, and though you have been here for about four days, I am sure that the excitement of these days is helping you overcome whatever jet lag is still keeping you awake at nights, because you are already well into a very, very busy week here in San Diego. Believe me, you have my sympathies, because coming from where I do, I know what it is like to get off a flight from the other side of the world and go straight into business. The clock on the wall says one thing, your watch says another, you are trying to work out what the clock at home is saying, and your body clock says, “I give up.” But somehow, we all live through it and love it, too. And as one who has gone through quite a few events like this one, I am going to tell you one thing that you will do well to remember: You aren’t going to be getting much time to sleep while you are here.

But you are going to get motivated. And perhaps just a bit awestruck at what you are experiencing here.

Indeed, how could you not be awestruck, just looking around you today? Because what we have in this room is nothing short of amazing — 530 men and women from every corner of the world, from more than 200 countries. And as you all crowd into the hotel’s elevators, you are seeing people in dress that you have never seen before and hearing languages that you have never heard. And the really amazing thing is that it makes us all stop and wonder at the miracle of Rotary, for we are all here for the same reasons. We are here because we love Rotary. We are here because of what we can do because of Rotary, and because we want to do more of it.

But more than anything else, what really strikes us most here — the one aspect that we don’t always think about — is the incredible diversity of Rotary and the opportunity to make friends and be friendly ourselves, starting from right down at our own club and district levels, from where each one of us comes.

You know, I have often wondered at the genius of our founder, Paul Harris — at this incredibly simple idea of good people, honest people, getting together in friendship, bonhomie, and goodwill. And when these folks come from different backgrounds and have lived their lives doing different tasks, would not the effect and the impact of their coming together be more joyous and more vibrant and help get all of them closer together because of the very excitement of the diversity? It was Paul who also said that Rotary must be revolutionary some of the time and evolutionary all of the time. And so it is perhaps natural that while coming together was a great beginning, the point of getting together had to be the work we do together, the service we perform, the difference we make in our communities. Indeed, fellowship in our clubs often creates the environment in which we serve better and more. And this I have seen: You always get a club with lively fellowship when you have a mix of experienced and newer members. And then they all get together to do more.

Indeed, when someone asks what Rotary is, and we are somewhat uncertain about our answer, I believe we need to tell them simply about those things that have kept Rotary strong even after more than 100 years: service, fellowship, diversity, integrity, and an obvious corollary, leadership.
We have always lived by our core values, the roots of the Rotary tree that make its branches spread far and wide and strong, through its more than 34,000 clubs. It is a big tree and growing bigger.

Let me change gears a bit. While fellowship and diversity are our strengths, what really characterizes Rotarians is our focus on integrity, our commitment to high ethical standards in our businesses and professions, the morality and the values we uphold. I believe we do this better than any other organization, through our Avenue of Vocational Service. No other organization highlights this more than we do. I believe it is important that Rotarians serve as role models in our communities, and that must start with each one of us here in this room. The high standards we set — and the level to which we follow them — determine our credibility.

I have often cited Gandhi’s story about the time he was in jail in the city of Nagpur in India. His wife, Kasturba, was allowed to see him once a week for one hour, when he would be brought out of his cell and allowed to meet her in a demarcated area. On one occasion, a new jail warden, out of respect for Gandhi’s privacy, left the two of them alone so that they could talk. But when he returned, there was Gandhi, holding his wife’s hand but not uttering a word. The jailer was perplexed. “Is anything wrong, Mr. Gandhi?” he asked. “Are you OK?” Gandhi smiled and said, “My dear man, you know the jail rules better than I. Prisoners are not supposed to talk to another person unless an official is present. How do you expect me to break the rules?”

Was Gandhi being foolish? Impractical? Maybe. Following the righteous path may sometimes look foolish and impractical, particularly in the short term. But we all know that, in the long run, we can only weaken our society if we compromise on principles and values, whether legal or moral. And make ourselves very vulnerable, too.

At a recent graduation ceremony at the Indian School of Business in Bangalore, the speaker urged the graduates to remember: Ethical behavior may seem difficult at times, even foolish, but if you compromise on ethics and integrity and doing what is right, I assure you that you will not go too far in your careers. The best way forward is to apply the highest standard of morality to your lives, and if you sometimes face a challenge, don’t change the standards but try to change your lives.

Well, that speaker was certainly a Rotarian in spirit. We need to be always promoting the best practices in business as Rotarians, and be seen to be doing so, and it has to start with all of us here, in this room this morning.

Integrity in life and in business is what started us in the first place. And fellowship and diversity are what bond us all together. But the main thing, the point of why we are here, why we all stay together in our clubs and in Rotary, has to be our work. It has to be the service, the difference we are making, whether we are working locally in our own communities or are engaged in bringing the whole world together — clubs and districts and governments and nongovernmental organizations and UN agencies and everyone else — to eradicate a disease from the earth, for example.

Over the past few minutes, I have been talking about our core values and about service, because everything we do in Rotary as Rotarians and as the leaders that you are has to be based on these, and has to be based on trust. If you take all the qualities of a great leader and you sum them up in one word, that’s what that word would be: trust.

You know that whatever happens, great leaders are not going to take more than their share of the credit or less than their share of the blame.

If you go to them with a problem, they’ll be ready — and willing — to help. They’re not there to judge or criticize, they’re there to help you see the problem more clearly so that you can see it through.
A great leader is someone you can trust not necessarily to have all the answers but to be able to find them. And it’s someone who will listen, who will not dismiss your concerns, who will take the time to take you seriously.

What’s the gold standard of great leadership? In Rotary, I think it’s very simple. It’s being the kind of leader about whom every Rotarian in your district says, “You know, if I am ever a district governor, I’d want to be a district governor just like him or just like her.”

That’s because, in Rotary, part of leadership is being a role model. Leading in Rotary isn’t like leading anywhere else. You are leading equals — even betters. You are not there to give orders. You are there to give support.

And it’s only for a year, so there’s not much time to get a big head — but also not much time to get things done, so you’ve got to keep moving. And of course, once you’ve finished being the leader, which happens quite quickly, you know exactly where you’re going — right back to your old seat in your own club, as someone else takes the office you’ve just left.

Though our office is only for one year — just one — it’s natural that each of us wants to make our mark. But I can tell you right now that if you try to start from scratch and achieve something monumental with your name on it in just one year, you are bound for failure. To really succeed, you have to look beyond yourself, past your year, and into the long term, at the health of your clubs, your community, and our organization.

So when you start the 2013-14 Rotary year, remember that the best thing you can do for your district is to leave it stronger than you found it. The question is not, “What can you do in just one year?” but “How far can you bring your district in just one year?” — what can you build on, what can you begin, what can you do for your clubs that will still be going, still be moving, still be changing lives for the better long after you’ve left office?

And we each have to remember that, in the end, it doesn’t matter who thought of it or who gets the credit. Indira Gandhi, the late prime minister of India, once said there are two kinds of people in our world: those who do the work and those who take the credit. Try always to belong to the first group. There is much less competition there.

My brothers and sisters, it is not about us. It’s not even about the work we do. It’s about the work that gets done.

Good luck. God bless.
The Power of Sharing Your Rotary Moment

Monty J. Audenart
Aide to the RI President-elect

Twenty-four years ago, I left Canada with my skills in one hand and my heart in the other to serve as a Rotary dental volunteer to a 3-H — Health, Hunger and Humanity — project in Jamaica. I have to admit to you that the closer I got to leaving home, the more anxiety I had. In fact, just days before I was due to depart, my wife, Liz, and I were driving down the road in our car, and I suggested to her, “You know, I have a busy dental practice, we still have five young children at home, we’re busy in our community and with our church, and perhaps this just isn’t the right time to go?” Without hesitation, Liz turned to me and said, “Well, you know Monty, there never will be a right time.” And so I went.

I had an early-morning flight, and the night before I left, I slipped into each of my children’s bedrooms and hugged and kissed them goodbye, telling each that I would be back in a month, that I needed to go and help some children whom I had never met, who perhaps had never had the chance to see a dentist, and that while I was away, they would be in the kind care and keeping of their mother.

My youngest son, Ryan, was only eight years old at the time. After I had been gone two or three weeks, I got a letter from him. It read, “Hi Dad its Ryan again. I hope you get home safely. You are my best dad, and if I ever had another dad, you would still be my BEST dad.”

I don’t know what was going on at home, but I didn’t stay away too long.

To make things even more challenging, a few weeks before I arrived, the Rotary clinic was destroyed in Hurricane Gilbert, in winds strong enough to take the tops off all the trees, and the dental work was shifted to government clinics. Each morning when I arrived at a clinic, a sea of people would be waiting. I would greet them, and in unison, they would respond, “Good morning, Doctor!”

All of them had toothaches and needed extractions. There were so many patients that came, many dressed in their very best just to see the dentist. The work was hot and strenuous. The clinic had no X-ray, no dental drill, no suction, only a pail to spit in on the floor. Frequently the power went off, and when it did, the nurse would help by shining a flashlight in the patient’s mouth. Other times, in the 90-degree heat, she would wipe my brow so my sweat would not drip onto the patient’s face. But I’ll never forget that late morning when a young Jamaican mother brought her little four- or five-year-old girl around to the outside of the clinic and held her up to the louvered windows where we were working. I can still hear her voice. “Doctor,” she said, “my daughter has a terrible toothache. We have walked all night to get here. Won’t you please see my little girl?”

We never turned anyone away. And ever so slowly, I began to love the people. A few weeks later, I called home and asked Liz to come down, because I wanted her to see what Rotary was doing and to share the experience of service with me, and of course I missed her. And so, for the last week, she assisted in the clinic, and many people, after having extractions, got up out of that chair and shook our hands and thanked Rotary for coming.

Some 800 extractions later, my wife and I sat in that airplane on the tarmac in Montego Bay, ready to come home, and as I looked out the window that morning and watched the mist settle gently down over the distant hills, I thought of all that I had been able to do during the past month, and then I thought of all that I was not able to do — and I wept like a little child. It’s the day I went from being a member of a Rotary club to becoming a Rotarian. It’s the day The Rotary
Foundation really meant something to me, and I promised myself then, just as many of you have, that I would not only support our Foundation financially, but when I could, I would go and serve the less fortunate in other parts of our world. This is my Rotary moment.

My friends, you are not here by accident. As you have lived Rotary, Rotary has lived in you. Each of you has an experience, an adventure, a moment or moments in time that have framed your life and fastened you to Rotary like barnacles to a ship. You can share these moments because they are your own, and your friends, in and out of Rotary, will recognize the humanity in your moment that proves there is a real you behind the story. People need more from you as a leader, and I am convinced they will be motivated to action when they see what Rotary is doing through you and to you.

Each time that I have been privileged to sit in this audience of governors-elect and spouses and hear leaders at this podium recount their own Rotary moments, my mind has whispered, “Oh, I wish that every one of my club members could be here at this moment to see what I am seeing, to hear what I am hearing, and to feel what I am feeling.” At times I have struggled to hold back a tear as a speaker’s heart has spoken directly to mine. And therein perhaps lies the simple secret to sharing your own Rotary moment.

See the moment, feel the moment, then tell the story.

I urge you, amid the busyness of your lives, to take some time to quietly ponder how a Rotary experience has changed your life, motivating you to action. Replay the images in your mind. Reach deep within yourself and feel the excitement of the adventure, and then deliver your moment with the passion you felt then and now.

Bring your moment to them through a story that is so vivid, it feels as if others were actually there.

A few years back I met Governor-elect Marwan Fattal from District 9100 in Africa. He and I were in Tanzania, and one evening while we were sharing the benefits of belonging to Rotary, he told me his Rotary moment. He said his vocation was in the lumber industry and his business required him to fly to different countries in Africa to purchase wood. He had his own airplane, and, eager to upgrade to his commercial license, came here to San Diego to an aviation flight center for training. There, he was smartly outfitted with a student flight uniform, and instruction began. A short time later he was asked by the instructor to leave the course. Marwan, it seemed, asked too many questions, needed clarification on some of the English terms, and the instructor felt he was disrupting the class. He was informed that he was not ready for the license and that it would be better for him to return another year, and then instructed to turn in his uniform and books to the chief flight officer the next morning. Discouraged and despairing over what his colleagues would think of him back in Sierra Leone for having failed the task, the next morning he made his way slowly to the executive office, with uniform neatly folded in his arms. As he leaned over the desk to hand back the uniform, the flight officer noticed the Rotary emblem pinned proudly on Marwan’s shirt collar.

“Oh, I see you are a Rotarian,” he remarked. “Yes,” replied Marwan. Then the flight officer pointed to his own Rotary pin on his lapel. “I am too!” He then asked Marwan why it was so important that he receive his upgraded license, and following his heartfelt reply, the flight officer picked up the phone and summoned another one of his instructors into the room. When the new instructor arrived, the flight officer told him that, above all else, this man from Africa needed his commercial pilot’s license, that he was assigning him as Marwan’s personal instructor for the next few weeks, and that he was to work diligently with him, one on one, so that Marwan would be able to successfully complete his license with the rest of the group. And they went away and they did just that. Marwan, an experienced pilot, has served more than a decade as the only inspector for western Africa representing the Federal Aviation Administration from the United States. And all this because of a Rotary pin. That was his Rotary moment.
I was not in San Diego with Marwan when he completed his training, but I was really there with him in his story.

Do not believe for a moment that you and I cannot be good storytellers. If you are breathing, you are a storyteller.

Now imagine what it would be like if every Rotarian in every club is given the opportunity to seek and share their Rotary moments.

Imagine the impact that it could have on attracting new and engaging existing members and changing lives. Imagine the impact that you as a governor can have in enabling and empowering others to share their own Rotary moments. One governor confided in me that before her official address to each club, she requested that a club member share his or her Rotary moment. She told me it perfectly set the tone for the meeting and her speech to follow.

My Rotary friends, our world yearns for moments of peace and understanding, for moments of courage and sacrifice, for moments of integrity and leadership, for moments of humanity in service, and for moments of hope that only you and others can share.

Go now and tell your story!
Public Speaking

Mark Kriebel
RI Training Leader and Rotary Public Image Coordinator

The International Assembly brings together many of the best speakers in the Rotary world. We’ve been informed, motivated, and inspired this week, and it is our duty as Rotary leaders to return to our districts and inform, motivate, and inspire our Rotarians. We have heard some great speeches this week, don’t you agree?

I have been asked to speak today about public speaking. Research has repeatedly shown that the fear of public speaking ranks higher than the fear of heights, fear of death, and fear of snakes. One of the most important tasks of district governors is public speaking. You’ll be addressing all of your clubs — motivating, praising, and creating connections with each one. Because you’re the officer of Rotary International in your district, furthering the Object of Rotary through public relations efforts with the media and a wide variety of community groups is also one of your primary responsibilities. All of these opportunities should be enjoyable, not a struggle. You need to effectively communicate your message, and I’d like to offer a few tips to help you.

It’s critical to your success when speaking in public to know a number of things in advance, including the size and makeup of your audience, the audiovisuals, and your allotted time. Often you can’t control the audience size or the venue, but you can make sure your message is delivered in the time given. Make every word count, and that means preparing in advance, including rehearsals. I suggest brevity, as fewer words are usually more memorable. Remember the phrases “The capacity of the mind to absorb is limited to what the seat can endure”; “The simpler, the better”; and “Everyone has a photographic memory — some people just don’t have any film!”

As a college student, I had the opportunity to hone my speaking and storytelling skills while studying television and radio broadcasting at Ithaca College in New York. The lessons I learned 40 years ago still apply today. One of my professors in a writing class told me, “Coming up with ideas is the easiest thing on earth. Putting them down is the hardest. You have to work to make a speech or story great. It doesn’t just happen. And let your personality come through: Being like everybody is the same as being nobody.” This professor was one of the greatest storytellers of the modern era and taught college students while crafting science fiction stories that were really about the need for social justice. He was Rod Serling, creator of the television series The Twilight Zone. He often mentioned Rotary in his stories.

I still remember his insistence on practice, and on calling on friends and colleagues to evaluate one’s performance. Public speaking is performing, and rehearsal with a mentor or friend who can give an honest evaluation and make suggestions for improvement is invaluable. Great public speakers work hard to sound spontaneous.

Three simple tips will help you when you are called on to address a group, whether presenting a Paul Harris Fellowship at a club, giving the keynote address at a large community function, or making your official club visit: Be enthusiastic, be sincere, and tell a story.

Enthusiasm for your subject is infectious. When listeners experience your passion through your voice and body language, they will give you feedback. Are they giving you their full attention with eye contact, or are they texting and emailing? It’s up to you to pay attention to your audience so you’ll know whether they are engaged in your message. If they’re not, you can modify your presentation.
As DGE, you’ll soon need to share RIPE Burton’s goals with your PEs and AGs, with the help of the RID, PDGs, RCs, RRFCs, and RPICS. One of the most deadly speaking habits we have as Rotarians is the use of acronyms. You don’t want people who don’t know the language of Rotary to think that PETS is a gathering of domesticated animals. Call it what it is — presidents-elect training seminar — and avoid the other Rotaryisms.

There is power in personal sincerity. If you are yourself, your audience will recognize that and believe you. Successful public speaking is really a conversation with many that seems to be one-on-one with each individual in an audience. A podium can sometimes create a barrier between you and your audience. If you can get out from behind the podium and use the open stage, or use a stool, you can create an illusion of up-close-and-personal with each member of the audience.

Finally, tell a story. There is nothing more powerful than painting a picture with words and taking your audience with you on a journey. All this week we’ve heard magnificent Rotary stories, and every one of you has a story to share from your own experiences, or a great story you’ve heard. Rotary moments are particularly compelling.

I joined Rotary in 1977. I’ve always enjoyed the fellowship and service of Rotary, but I didn’t become a true Rotarian until 1999. That June, my club sent two boys from our community, Jason and Daniel, to RYLA. When they returned, I saw firsthand how Rotary had changed their lives. Their interaction with like-minded students interested in leadership and service was inspiring.

Daniel met a girl at RYLA who was planning to become a Rotary Youth Exchange student. He thought that would be a great opportunity, and they both ended up in France the following year, in adjacent districts. Daniel found he had a gift for the French language, and he gave the keynote address at his host district’s conference that year. In France, he met a Youth Exchange girl from Argentina, and after his freshman year of college, he spent the summer with her family learning Spanish. Daniel had always been a math and science student, but Rotary opened the door to languages for him. He has lived in China as the South American export manager for a Chinese glass manufacturer. Now fluent in seven languages, he has taught multiple languages at a private boarding school, with a few of his students becoming outbound Rotary Exchange students. Teaching allowed him to volunteer his summers rebuilding schools and working at AIDS orphanages in Africa, India, and Haiti, and he has visited or lived in more than 100 countries.

I saw Daniel last month, and he gave me this as thanks to Rotary for giving him a world perspective. He is now the principal of the American International School in Lesotho, Africa, and today he is a Rotarian! And he is my son!

Rotary not only changes lives in developing countries, it changed my son’s life, and mine. I will always be a Rotarian, and I know you’ve found your moment and will tell your story with enthusiasm and sincerity.

Walt Disney said, “All our dreams can come true, if we have the courage to pursue them.” If you want to increase membership, giving to our Rotary Foundation, and public awareness of Rotary and our good works, it’s up to you to inform, motivate, and inspire Rotarians and the general public. And, as governor, you will turn your Rotary dreams into reality.
Leadership

Clifford L. Dochterman
Past RI President

What kind of leadership will you give to the club presidents, secretaries, and district committees in your district next year?

Google lists over 4 million entries on leadership. But I don’t believe there is one on the leadership of a Rotary district governor. There are so many different styles of leadership. However, your leadership job is unique because you are leading a group of Rotarian volunteers. What is the leadership style of a successful district governor?

A district governor won’t survive very long using the leadership style of a top sergeant — I don’t think those club presidents will line up for marching orders.

A district governor will not be effective using the leadership skills of an animal trainer, whose tools are a whip and a chair.

A district governor will not find much success using the techniques of a football coach yelling instructions to players in a championship game.

The skills of a successful district governor working with volunteer Rotarians require some special consideration. You can be sure there is no chance to fire them and hire a new group.

Over the years, I have observed that some of the most effective Rotary leaders are those who exhibit the leadership skills and temperament of a symphony orchestra conductor. Just as your district leaders and club presidents are composed of a wide variety of men and women with unusual abilities, special interests, and many experiences, a symphony orchestra is made up of many separate instruments and individual artists.

First is the string section, with violins and cellos. I would compare them to those Rotarians who are so important to your district but are often rather high-strung and frequently need to be tuned in to the issues at hand.

Over here is the woodwind section of clarinets, oboes, and bassoons, which have to cover a wide range in the musical score. In Rotary, the woodwinds might be the quiet members of your leadership team, who are perfectly willing to repeat the theme of the year. Once in a while, you might hear a squeak or two from that section.

Then over here is the orchestra’s brass section — the trumpets, trombones, and tubas. These are similar to the Rotarians you can always hear, loud and clear. When they toot their horns, you know they have an opinion — clearly expressed. Then occasionally, if it’s the tuba guy, the only sound may be an “oomph.”

In the back of our orchestra is the percussion section, with drums, cymbals, and all the bells and whistles. There may be big timpani, or kettledrums, which you only hear once or twice. I suspect every Rotary club has a percussion section, whose members beat the drum for their pet projects or use a drumroll to announce their arrival. You can’t miss the percussion section in any club.

In every orchestra there are those who are behind the scenes — the stagehands. They build the risers, set the chairs, and handle the lighting and sound effects. In your Rotary district, they are the faithful members you can always count on being there and doing the routine tasks. They are
always ready and seldom complain. These Rotarians seem to know how to do everything. They are often appointed sergeants-at-arms or aides to the RI president.

Frequently, there is another group attending the symphony — the music critics. They have opinions and observations on every performance. In Rotary, these critics are frequently identified as past district governors.

Just as the symphony orchestra is made up of many different instruments and players, you find the same differences among the club leaders in your districts. Your job is the same as that of the symphony maestro, who uses leadership skills to bring together the strings and woodwinds and brass and percussion units into a symphony of beautiful music.

How will you do it? What kind of leadership will you need to blend and harmonize the Rotarians in your district to create the concert you will direct during 2013-14?

Let’s look at the leadership skills of the symphony conductor, who

1. *Is prepared.* The conductor knows the music being performed. We say she “knows the score.” The conductor continues to learn and practices every day to be a better leader. The conductor is aware of all the notes, symbols, and marks that bring out the best in each performer. Yes, the conductor is prepared and prepares her musicians for their best performance.

2. *Listens.* The maestro listens all the time. He hears the slightest tunes that are off-key. He listens to unique combinations of sounds and seeks the best. Yes, the conductor is a listener — and then reacts!

3. *Shares.* The symphony leader is constantly sharing her experiences and giving instruction based upon her knowledge and training. She sets the tempo, the volume, and a creative feeling to the music. Yes, every conductor must be a sharing person.

4. *Encourages.* The great symphony maestro encourages each musician and recognizes the exceptional performances in each musical selection. He brings this group up and tones that section down as they interpret the entire composition. At every performance, the conductor may take a bow — but he always recognizes the entire orchestra and always pays tribute to the soloists. Yes, the successful conductor encourages and recognizes all the players.

5. *Develops.* Symphony musicians are seated by level of performance, and the conductor is constantly developing the musicians to move up to the first chair. As you know, the first violin player is the concertmaster and sits in the chair nearest the conductor. In each section, the maestro is developing players, to enhance their musical talents and move them to higher levels of performance.

The interesting thing is that these five leadership skills of the symphony conductor are almost identical to the leadership skills of successful Rotary district governors.

*The successful district governor is carefully prepared.*

In your district, the governor is the one who is aware of the plans and goals of the Rotary International president. The governor is knowledgeable about the policies, bylaws, and customs of Rotary, and those within his or her district. The governor is prepared to give a year of committed leadership to help the clubs and district reach their established goals.

*The successful district governor is an excellent listener.*

Governors who do more listening than talking will usually be the better leaders. As you listen, you will become aware of the strengths and weaknesses that should be utilized and addressed. It is amazing what you can learn when you just listen. The governor who is aware of the issues within the clubs will always be better prepared for effective action.
The successful district governor shares experiences and knowledge.

Most governors have experience in service projects, club activities, The Rotary Foundation, and youth programs that can be shared with presidents, secretaries, and district committees. Throughout this week you have had many discussions and picked up ideas that can be shared with your district leaders. An effective governor will share thoughtful and friendly advice with all of the club and district workers.

A successful district governor gives encouragement and recognizes good work.

Well-deserved recognition is one of the most effective forms of motivation. A public word of appreciation or a short note of thanks is a vital part of a governor’s leadership skills. Be generous with your encouragement and be sincere with your praise, and I assure you that you will have the strongest team your district has ever seen. Recognition is a public form of a governor’s thoughtfulness.

A successful district governor will develop new leaders to build a stronger district for the future.

Each year, new Rotarians need to grow and blossom into leaders. A district governor is in the ideal position to observe, discover, and develop future district leaders. So many Rotarians have latent skills, unknown talents, hidden abilities — and these must be nurtured and given opportunities to be used for the Rotary of the future. Governors have been given a chance to serve Rotary, so it is our task to develop our future leadership and teach the skills needed on the path to service.

In the next few weeks, you will be training and rehearsing your club presidents and district committee members to be ready for a new performance on 1 July. You will talk about goals for the year. You will share plans for your official visits. You will analyze your support and decisions about using Rotary Foundation resources. You will have committees working on a district conference, membership promotion, and New Generations programs.

The amazing thing is that on 1 July, each one of you will step up to the music lectern, pick up the maestro’s baton — and your symphony will begin.

Do you hear that soloist? That is you, beginning your visits to the clubs of your district. The music in the background comes from your committees. Then bring in the Interactors and Rotaractors. And over here, the Youth Exchange students, and we add them into the theme.

The whole time, you see the district committee considering Rotary Foundation grants. That quiet group over there is preparing for the district conference. You feel the harmony as each group performs its mission.

You are still making your club visits. Don’t overlook that Foundation fundraiser. Bring up the tones of the public relations committee. You are ready to hear the RYLA group.

You are still making your club visits. The emails never stop — on and on and on. The district conference planning is underway. You hear the promotion for the Rotary International Convention in Sydney. Your assistant governors give you more reports.

Your club visits are almost finished. You still prepare materials for the monthly district newsletter. You are ready to introduce a vocational training team from your partner district. You look over to see if a new club is prepared for its charter. Each section adds more to the musical theme.

You can feel that crescendo in all of the activities — special visits, more committee meetings, notes of appreciation, Paul Harris Fellow recognitions to be presented, district conference details. Then come reports on PolioPlus, and more coordination with the governor-elect and governor-nominee.
You can feel the pulse of the music in your entire body! And then it comes to a beautiful
climax . . . and your symphony is over.

Amid the applause, you take a bow but give the real recognition to the entire orchestra.
You acknowledge the soloists. And even the orchestra is applauding your leadership skills!

Then comes your greatest moment: You pass the baton to the governor-elect to lead the next
symphony on the concert program.

That’s the cycle of Rotary. That is the task of leading a Rotary district. You have brought together
all the divergent parts of your district committees and the club presidents into the district’s great-
est performance — because you had the leadership skills of a superior maestro.

And as the music of the year still fills the air, you can say, “We did it!” But your district Rotarians
will know that they were led by an amazing governor.

That, my friends, is great Rotary leadership.

So, go to it!
Foundation Goals for 2013-14

Dong Kurn Lee
Rotary Foundation Chair-elect

Good morning!

It is a great pleasure to be here at this Rotary International Assembly.

Every International Assembly is wonderful. But this is an assembly unlike any other, because in a few months, we will embark together on a new adventure: the full rollout of Future Vision. It is a new grant model, and a new way of thinking about our Rotary service. It will be a new era for Rotary — and a time of transition that will require unprecedented levels of involvement and cooperation by and among Rotary leaders, at the club, district, and international level.

For the first time, we have with us at this International Assembly not only the district governors-elect but the district Rotary Foundation chairs and chairs-elect as well. We have taken this unprecedented step to emphasize how very important it will be that district governors and district Foundation chairs begin this year with a shared understanding and shared priorities for their districts.

While our district governors-elect are preparing to enter a new office, many of our district Foundation chairs are beginning their second or third year of service. Many of you are also from pilot districts. All of you have received training on our Rotary Foundation and Future Vision. Many of you are already very knowledgeable, and all of you will learn much more before July 1. But as we say in Korean, 아는 길도 물어가라: Even if you know the way, ask again.

There is so much to learn, and there are so many changes. When you return to your districts, your Rotarians will come to you with many questions about our Foundation. I ask you to answer every one honestly — even when the honest answer is, “I don’t know.” And whenever this is your response, it should be followed with, “But I’ll find out the answer for you.” This is the best way to build trust and a district that has confidence in your leadership.

Here in San Diego, I hope many of your own questions will be answered. But most important is learning how to find the answers to the questions you will face after you leave: learning about the resources that will be available to you, and to your districts, so that you can do the most possible with Future Vision.

This year, you and I and the Rotarians in your districts will work together to Engage Rotary, Change Lives. And we will work together toward the four goals of our Rotary Foundation, which I am here to tell you about today.

The first goal will be no surprise to anyone: It is the complete eradication of polio. This is our No. 1 goal as an organization and will remain so until it is met.

In the years since PolioPlus was launched, we have immunized over 2 billion children and have seen a more than 99 percent decrease in cases of polio. These last few years, we have made enormous progress. But we have not yet reached our goal of a polio-free world.

Until the wonderful moment when the world is declared polio-free, we must continue the fight with everything we have. We have to keep up the momentum, keep up the energy, and keep up the awareness. Every Rotarian needs to understand what polio is and why we are committed totally to its eradication. Without this understanding, one might easily wonder why we are not
devoting these resources to malaria or HIV or poor sanitation or other public health problems that at the moment are costing far more lives. The answer is simple: If we were to stop our fight against polio now, we would lose everything we have worked for over all these years. Very soon, we would see a resurgence of polio to the levels some of us remember from 30 years ago, when more than a thousand children were paralyzed every day. Polio would again be epidemic — and we would have lost the opportunity of a lifetime.

This is something that we cannot and will not consider. We are in the fight until the end — and, my friends, the end is truly “this close.” Polio is a global health emergency not because the end is so distant, but because it is almost in sight.

Our second goal is the reason that our audience today is twice the size it usually is, with district Rotary Foundation chairs joining us for this day of the International Assembly. And it will be the focus of much of your Foundation training here in San Diego. That goal, of course, is the successful launch of Future Vision. After three years of partial rollout in pilot districts, of carefully refining and fine-tuning details, we have been extremely pleased and excited to hear overwhelmingly positive feedback. The simplified grant structure has made it easier than ever for clubs to apply for Foundation grants, and we have already seen the benefits of focusing our monetary efforts on sustainable projects that address our six areas of focus.

We have adopted this new grant model after a great deal of thought and planning, and with the input of many thousands of Rotarians. Many considerations were involved in every decision. But underlying all of them is one idea: that we in Rotary can, and should, be doing more with the resources we have. The motto of our Rotary Foundation is simple: Doing Good in the World. And the reason for Future Vision is equally simple, because by using this new model, we will be able to do more good, for more people, with a longer-lasting impact. We will be motivated and challenged to take each of our projects a step further, to engage Rotary that much more — so that we can change more lives for the better.

Between now and 1 July, you will have a great deal to do, in cooperation with current district officers, to prepare your district for this transition. Much of this preparation will be administrative, but some of it will also be very personal. The Future Vision grant model is a tremendous change to adjust to, and for some Rotarians, the adjustment will be difficult. The best thing you can do to ease the transition is to make sure that everyone in your district understands exactly what Future Vision is changing, what it is not changing, and how the changes will affect Rotary service.

One of the most common concerns voiced about Future Vision is the perceived loss of the Group Study Exchange program. As you know, GSEs were a wonderful part of our old grant structure and fostered relationships — professional and social — with other Rotarians. But everything that we achieved through GSEs can be achieved with Future Vision, through the new vocational training teams. And if a district is set on running a GSE in the traditional way, this is still possible through the use of district grants. Nothing has been lost — and a great deal has been gained.

The concept that by working together we can achieve more is absolutely fundamental in Rotary. Through PolioPlus and other partnerships, we have seen how much more Rotary can do when we join forces with other organizations — and how such cooperation can build bridges to better understanding. This is why our third goal for the coming Rotary year is to engage in innovative projects and creative partnerships that build a more just and peaceful world — as we are doing this year through our theme of Peace Through Service.

So much of what we achieve in Rotary we achieve with the support of our Rotary Foundation. But awareness of our Foundation’s role is not what it should be, even among Rotarians. This is why our fourth goal for 2013-14 is building ownership and pride in our Foundation. The success of PolioPlus is a direct result of the generosity of Rotarians all over the world who believe that the
best way to invest their money is in a polio-free future. They know that when they give to their Foundation, their charitable contribution does just what we aim for as Rotarians — it does the most good it can.

But many Rotarians don’t have the same understanding when it comes to the Foundation’s Permanent Fund and Annual Fund. We are still falling far short of our goal of Every Rotarian, Every Year. This isn’t happening because our Foundation isn’t doing enough good work; it’s happening because not enough people know about the good work that we do.

As district governors and district Foundation chairs, it’s your job to change this. Make sure that Rotarians in your district know what their gifts to the Permanent Fund and the Annual Fund do — and why it is so very important to keep both those funds strong.

In Rotary, every job is valuable. Every job is important. But in the year ahead, all of you here today will have a special role to play in determining Rotary’s success — and not just in 2013-14 but in all the years to follow. It is a tremendous responsibility, and I know that you will rise to this challenge.

My friends, I wish you all a wonderful day of hard work and broadening vision, and a wonderful year of Rotary service — helping Rotarians to Engage Rotary, Change Lives through our Rotary Foundation.

Thank you.
Ladies and gentlemen:

We are at an unprecedented time in the history of our Rotary Foundation. We are about to begin our greatest transformation yet. In recent years, the success of The Rotary Foundation has been the subject of profound analysis, studies, projects, and decisions made with great courage and vision.

As the Future Vision Committee began the planning process, we studied Jim Collins’s best-selling book *Good to Great*, and we asked ourselves, “How could The Rotary Foundation go from Doing Good in the World to Doing Great in the World?” It was the beginning of the Future Vision Plan, and with it, our Foundation has initiated an unprecedented process of change and adaptation in which thousands of Rotarians are participating.

The Future Vision Plan provides us with an opportunity to be a truly cutting-edge organization, on the same level as many other successful philanthropic organizations, like the Gates Foundation.

To ensure the future of Rotary, we need a Foundation that is strong, vigorous, organized, agile, competent, international, and ready to meet the challenges and demands that society, Rotarians, and clubs present to us. This is the kind of Foundation we need in order to change the world — and I’m certain that we will. Don’t you agree?

Through Future Vision, the Rotary Foundation Trustees have sought to strengthen clubs and districts by providing grants that can help them be more proactive in addressing priority world needs. The new model gives Rotarians the ability to allocate funding based on needs locally and globally. The Foundation will help clubs and districts have greater impact in the future and help them measure their success. Through club and district qualification, the Foundation can maintain high levels of stewardship to ensure that we continue to be recognized as a credible charitable organization. Through PolioPlus, we have learned the value of strategically partnering with other organizations to have a lasting impact. The Future Vision Plan will help expand opportunities to leverage the expertise, resources, and funding of new partners to advance the work of Rotarians.

Now you are probably wondering how this change is going to help us and what the Future Vision Plan means for Rotarians.

The Future Vision Plan will help modernize the Foundation so that it is in touch with the times but also help Rotarians to have a long-lasting impact on the communities they serve. The new grant model is more streamlined, with three grant types that fund a variety of activities with fewer requirements, making it more accessible for Rotarians. An online system has been developed to make the project planning and application submission process more efficient. A new district committee structure helps provide greater flexibility in administering Foundation activities. Last, to ensure the sustainability and impact of grants funded in the future, the Foundation is concentrating its efforts in the six areas of focus, which allows us to measure the global efforts of Rotarians working together.

Now I would also like to talk about a somewhat misunderstood concept — the concept of sustainability. For years we’ve spent millions of dollars without knowing if the funds were being allocated to meet the most urgent needs of the benefiting communities. We have lost contact with the thousands of scholars we’ve supported, unsure of what our return on investment in their
education has been. We asked for an independent assessment of our grants, to determine whether they were designed to have a long-term and sustainable impact on the beneficiaries. We found that there were opportunities to improve the design of grant projects and to hold ourselves and our project partners accountable for not just delivering goods and services but ensuring that the benefits of our grants impact the community years after the funding ends. The Foundation will help provide support to Rotarians to include in their project planning and grant applications the appropriate elements that can help ensure a sustainable outcome for the project beneficiaries.

In Brazil, one of the largest banks in the world placed a two-page ad in a well-known magazine — reinforcing the value of sustainability — that read, “From now on, we will only conduct business with sustainable companies because they stimulate and benefit the economy. These funds create better businesses and lead to prosperity in our communities, which in turn generates greater investment and, by extension, a better country, and that is what we seek.”

Applied to Rotary, this concept means that sustainable projects invest in building the capacity of communities to meet their own needs long term with more beneficiaries that are capable of creating more prosperous communities and a better world, with millions of people enjoying a better quality of life.

Family of Rotary, today, people are more selective with their donations. They only donate to people they trust, because they are tired of their contributions being misallocated and falling into the hands of bureaucrats and opportunists.

Our Foundation is trustworthy and offers our donors international reach, projects with focused scope, excellent administration, stewardship transparency, and, above all, credibility.

We are all responsible for preparing our Foundation for the future and committing ourselves to these changes if we want a Foundation that continues to rank among the best charities in the world — or perhaps even be considered the very best. With the Future Vision Plan, we can concentrate the tremendous efforts of Rotarians on the most urgent world needs and demonstrate what we can achieve together, which will help improve our public image and attract donors and members to our efforts.

Three years ago, I mentioned that a train arrived to carry the leaders of 100 districts on a pilot experience that would allow us to delineate the final version of the Future Vision Plan.

I appreciate all the feedback these districts have provided throughout the pilot period. Their concerns and ideas have been carefully considered by the Future Vision Committee and Trustees to improve upon the plan for global launch. I also want to sincerely thank all of the donors to our Foundation who have so enthusiastically chosen to invest in our new vision for the future. We have seen significant increases in giving during the pilot, thanks to their generosity. We also congratulate districts 2080 (Italy) and 4590 (Brazil) for being the first to complete the 2013-14 qualification process, which helps ensure good stewardship.

There have been many milestones to celebrate throughout the pilot, and we have learned a lot along the way. I often think that the ambitious work that went into the development of the Future Vision Plan is like another project that began several years ago: construction of an International Space Station, which is in constant orbit of the earth.

Astronauts play a vital role in the space station’s operations. They must be patient, steady, imaginative, and visionary. On each trip, astronauts work to complete construction of the International Space Station, and they conduct scientific research that has tremendous benefits for humanity. Their plan is precise, coordinated, and carried out with great enthusiasm. It is a dream, a reality, a future in constant motion.

It would be impossible without advanced technical skills, determination, knowledge, teamwork, and firm beliefs.
The same applies to our Rotary Foundation. It is like a space station. Like the astronauts, each of us has helped to build it, to make it grow, to move continuously, and to progress. Each of you is a pilot, a researcher, a team leader, the reason behind our Foundation’s destiny, and the architect of its future. Through it we can do greater good in the world, we can help, we can improve the quality of people’s lives, and we can create a world of peace and harmony.

As Rotarians and the leaders of your districts in the coming year, you are responsible for motivating Rotarians to make the contributions needed to sustain the growth of our Foundation. You are like astronauts who will make our Foundation soar ever higher and fulfill its ongoing mission to do good in the world.

So, my friends, to celebrate the Future Vision Plan, I invite you to step inside the rocket that will carry you to the “International Space Station” that is our Rotary Foundation.

You will feel the roar of the rockets. Are you ready for launch?

Countdown: 3 . . . 2 . . . 1 . . . ignition . . . LIFTOFF!

My dear friends: As Rotarians, we can use our new Foundation to do greater good in the world.

We celebrate the launching of our Future Vision Plan, with each of us contributing our effort, work, and commitment to ensure the continued progress of Rotary, its Foundation, and all mankind.

I am confident you all will succeed.
President’s Closing Remarks

Sakuji Tanaka
RI President

Good evening!

It has been a wonderful week. I have enjoyed very much seeing a new class of district governors prepare for their year in office.

Every class of Rotary officers is a link in a chain that stretches back to the beginnings of RI. Here in San Diego, I have seen a new link forged. I have seen that it is strong, and I am confident that 2013-14 will be a wonderful year of great Rotary service.

This week, we have learned about our theme for next year: Engage Rotary, Change Lives. Each one of us here understands that theme. We have all made the choice to engage Rotary. We understand how our service can change lives.

This is something I also understood when I became president of Rotary International. I knew that Rotary service could change lives. But at that time, I had not seen it for myself. Rotary service was an idea I believed in very deeply. But it was not a reality I had seen and experienced.

In this Rotary year, all of that has changed. For the first time, I traveled through Africa and many other parts of the developing world. For the first time, I saw extreme poverty, and what it means to live with it. I saw children who are hungry every day. I saw so many people who have no water to drink, nowhere to live, no medicine when they are sick.

Of course, I knew that such poverty existed. But there is a difference between knowing something because you have heard it and seeing it for yourself. When you walk through a slum, when you see children without parents, little children who are eating garbage, it changes everything.

The need is not abstract. It is urgent, and it is real. It makes you want to do everything you can to help these people who are suffering. To walk away feels less than human.

Through Rotary, we do not have to walk away. We can put out our hands and help. And we can help the people we will never see as well as the people in our own communities.

We help because our help is needed, and because helping gives us joy.

And we help because we know that we are all human. We all rely on each other. We give what we can to those who are in need — whoever, and wherever, they are.

In Japan, Rotary is very strong. We are glad to help others. But we never expected that one day, Rotarians around the world would come together to help us. This is what happened almost two years ago, when an earthquake that measured 9.0 on the Richter scale shook Japan to its very core.

I know that I do not need to tell you the details of what followed: the horror of the tsunami and then the nuclear disaster at Fukushima. Waves of up to 40 meters, and water that traveled as much as 10 kilometers inland.

More than 15,000 people died, nearly 6,000 were injured, and almost 3,000 are still missing. The total losses are estimated at over US$300 billion.
These are the numbers that we use to measure the disaster. But there are no numbers to measure what happened to so many lives. In a matter of hours, half a million people in one of the world’s wealthiest and most developed countries lost everything. They went from comfort and security to an uncertain future in school gyms, tents, and ruined buildings.

All over the world, people sent help. Rotarians contributed to a disaster fund. Individuals and governments sent teams for search and rescue and helped to meet the needs of survivors.

The entire nation was in shock from the catastrophe. And the warmth we felt from friends around the world helped us to recover, and move forward.

For the first time in almost 70 years, we were not sending aid. We were receiving it. It was something we never thought would happen. But it was a reminder to all of us how fragile our lives really are — and how little separates us from those we help.

In Japan, we are used to earthquakes. We are always preparing for earthquakes and tsunamis. Our building standards are the highest in the world. We thought we were ready for anything. But no one ever expected anything like this.

The 東日本大震災, as we call it in Japanese — the Eastern Japan Great Earthquake Disaster — changed Japan. Japan changed us all. And it changed the way Japanese Rotarians see Rotary. Because humanitarian service looks very different once you have been on the receiving end.

It is easy to look at the people we help through our Rotary service as somehow different from ourselves. Often, they live far away. We do not know their language or their culture. We do not know what it is like to have no running water, no sanitation, no health care, no education. We look at pictures, we read stories in the news about poverty, wars, and disasters. We see, from so far away, the people who are living through such terrible times. But it is hard sometimes to put ourselves in their place. We cannot imagine such things happening to us.

Today, I tell you that they can.

I tell you that there is nothing at all separating us from the people we help. We are all the same. Only the circumstances surrounding us are different.

Do not think that homelessness or hunger or sickness or poverty is any easier for others to bear than it would be for you. It is not.

This is why I tell you today that our Rotary service is more important than you can possibly imagine.

If we take the time and the care to do what is needed, not what is easy for us.

If we have the wisdom and the perspective to understand how important our work is.

If we have the vision to support our Rotary Foundation — so that it can be there to support the people who need us most.

When we serve through Rotary, we share the best part of ourselves. We build connections to other people, who may seem so different from us. And by doing this, we create a world of greater peace.

There are so many ways to build Peace Through Service. This year, I have seen how Rotary service brings us all closer together. It allows us to reach out to those in need and to work together for common goals. It allows us to help meet the great needs of people we may never meet. And it gives each of us the happiness that comes from helping someone when they need it most.

My friends, I wish you the best in this Rotary year of Peace Through Service. And I wish you all the success possible as district governors as you Engage Rotary, Change Lives.

Thank you.
President-elect’s Closing Remarks

Ron D. Burton
RI President-elect

Good evening.

The Go Forth to Serve banquet is, indeed, a very special occasion. It’s probably the last time we will all be together as a group in the same room.

At the beginning of this week, we entered to learn. Now, it is time for us to go forth to serve.

You now know that the International Assembly is something very special. Not many people ever get this incredible experience. And it’s something that changes your life forever. For a few incredible days, you experience a time unlike any other — of seeing the world as it could be, with men and women of every color and culture coming together under the banner of Service Above Self. You see just how big Rotary really is, how international, how uniquely capable it is of changing the world. You see how much Rotarians are capable of doing. And you come away in awe — in awe of how much more Rotary could do if every single one of our 1.2 million Rotarians felt the same love for Rotary, the same ambition in Rotary service, and the same belief in the power of Rotary service that every one of us feels tonight.

And that’s why I’m challenging you with our theme: Engage Rotary, Change Lives.

Our goal in 2013-14 is to turn that potential, the potential we all saw this week, into reality. We’re going to do it by engaging Rotarians — getting them involved, getting them inspired — and making sure that every Rotarian knows just what a gift they have in Rotary.

We’re going to make sure that the work we do in Rotary is work that will last: work that is solid, effective, and sustainable. And we’re going to make sure that Rotary itself will last — by committing to our goal of 1.3 million Rotarians by 2015.

Our goal isn’t just bringing in new members. Our goal is growing Rotary — making Rotary bigger, not just with more members, but with more involved, engaged, motivated members who will lead us into our postpolio future, and everything that is to come in Rotary.

And the big question, of course, is, How are we going to do this?

Well, that is a question with a lot of answers. And the first answer is what I said the very first morning we were together — that each one of us needs to ask. We have to ask people to join Rotary. But that’s not enough.

Everyone in Rotary comes to Rotary for their own reason. But I think that most who decide to join a Rotary club do it because they want to make a difference. They want to achieve something. Whether it’s international service or community service or vocational service, whatever it is that interests them, they want to be doing something meaningful. And that is absolutely essential for us to remember when we talk about membership.

Because we’re not asking just anyone to join Rotary — we’re looking to attract busy, successful people. We’re asking them to take their valuable time and give it to Rotary. So if they say yes and join our club, then we need to make sure that their time in Rotary is well spent.

So what’s the answer? The answer is making sure that every Rotarian has a job: a meaningful job, a job that actually makes a difference to the life of the club and to the community, a job that
you can’t just let slide. Because someone’s counting on you to do it, whether it’s booking the
venue for the meetings or ordering the books for the dictionary project or getting the financials
together to apply for a Foundation grant.

When you have a job, you have a commitment.

When you’re doing something meaningful in Rotary, Rotary is meaningful to you.

So the first part is asking people to join. The second part is giving them a reason to stay. And
there’s one more thing that I think we need to be doing — and that’s taking a clear look, with an
open mind, about what we can do to make all of our members more welcome.

We talk so much about attracting members to Rotary, but we don’t talk enough about keeping
them there. And we need to be doing that — talking about understanding the real obstacles
to Rotary membership and about what we can do to make being a Rotarian a viable choice for
people of all ages.

I think it’s fair to say that most of us here are past that stage — we’re Rotarians, we’ve made the
commitment. We’re established in our careers, or we’re retired. Our kids may be grown; many of
us have grandkids. And we love Rotary just the way it is.

But Rotary isn’t just about us. If we believe in Rotary, if we really believe that the world is better
off with Rotary in it, then we have a responsibility to make sure that Rotary stays around long
after we’re gone. If we don’t want Rotary to end with us, we can’t act like it already does.

There are plenty of young people, some of them former Rotaractors, who join Rotary. But when
they start having families, many of them leave, because if you’re talking about young profession-
als with families, you’re talking about mothers and fathers who are already spending a lot of time
away from their kids. And even if they really love Rotary, they are not going to prioritize Rotary
over their families — nor should that be the expectation.

When we talk about the family of Rotary, it can’t just be lip service. We need to find ways to
really, genuinely welcome families into Rotary. And there are so many ways — real, practical
ways — that we can do this.

There are clubs that actually encourage members with small children to bring them along, and
they do it very well. The Rotary Club of Fremont in Seattle has a room set aside every week for
the kids. The members who bring kids pay $5 each, there’s a babysitter there, the kids start the
meeting, they leave while the meeting’s running, and they come back in at the end to ring the
bell. Once a month, there’s a service project that welcomes kids.

When you welcome families into Rotary, your family is not an obstacle to your Rotary service.
The family of Rotary is real. The children in those families will grow up seeing their parents in-
volved in community service, they’ll grow up involved in service themselves, and I think that is
a win-win situation. And you know what else? I think it’s a pretty good bet that 20 or 30 years
down the road, there’s going to be a new generation of Rotarians in that club.

No, children can’t come along to everything, and everyone knows that. And every Rotary club
must make its own decisions. Not every Rotary club is going to want to have babysitting, not
every Rotary club is OK with members bringing kids along. But maybe that means it might be
time to start a new club, so that people can bring Rotary into their lives the way it works for
them, at their stage in life.

Bringing kids along to Rotary isn’t new. It’s not some revolutionary idea that just started. When I
was district governor, and you already know how long ago that was, I didn’t just bring Jetta along
on club visits; we brought our kids. Ronna and Josh were 14 and 10 years old at the time. We
always asked if they were welcome, and we always offered to pay for their meals. It was never
once a problem. The clubs loved it, and the kids loved it, and they loved it even more when we took them along to district conferences and the RI convention. We took them to Toronto, Munich, Portland, Orlando, and Indianapolis — we took them anywhere we could in Rotary. They met our district’s Youth Exchange students and our Group Study Exchange teams. They got to know people who were so completely different from anyone they knew in Norman, Oklahoma. It opened their eyes, their minds, and their hearts.

And I think that’s a big part of why, when they became adults, they both became Rotarians. They became Rotarians because they were already part of the family of Rotary. They knew Rotary, they loved Rotary, and they wanted Rotary in their lives.

Unfortunately, once Ronna started a family, Rotary started taking more time than she could spare. She had to make a choice between being the kind of Rotarian she wanted to be and being the kind of mom she wanted to be. And so she terminated her membership. That’s how we lost one young member who was a great Rotarian.

And isn’t that a shame? Hopefully, we can get her back one of these days.

It’s time to start being proactive instead of reactive. It’s time to say, “Let’s try something new,” instead of, “We don’t do that in Rotary.” Because keeping our minds open is going to get us stronger clubs today — and a stronger organization tomorrow.

When Paul Harris founded Rotary, his idea was for a club for like-minded people. Like-minded in that they cared about the same things, they valued the same things, they had similar goals and ideas. But there’s nothing in Rotary that says we all have to be the same. In fact, just about everything about Rotary embraces how different we all are. Just look around you. How many countries, how many languages, how many professions, how many religions, how many backgrounds, how many Rotary stories are in this room tonight?

Rotary is big enough for us all. We all have something to give. At every stage of our lives and our careers, Rotary has a way to let us do more, be more, and give more — a way for us to make our lives mean more. That’s what Rotary does for us.

We have learned so much this week, about so many things. We’ve talked about public image, about social media, about Future Vision, about polio, about New Generations, about so much of the good work that means so much to Rotary. And all of it is important. All of it matters.

But none of it would matter — not one of us would be sitting here today — if it weren’t for the Rotarians in our clubs.

Every single thing that’s ever moved you about Rotary — every project, every program, every smile on some child’s face — they all began in a Rotary club.

And the good work that gets done in Rotary next year, and the year after, and the year after that — in the end, it will depend on our clubs. On how ambitious they are. On how well they adapt to Future Vision. On how well they choose their projects. On how committed they are to making a difference. On how open they are to changing what they need to change — and holding tight to the things that matter.

It all comes down to the clubs. And those clubs, next year, are going to be depending on you.

Tomorrow morning, you’re all going to leave San Diego. You’re going to leave with your briefcase full of training materials, your mind full of ideas, and your hearts full of hope. You’ll go back to your districts knowing and understanding just what Rotary really is — and how much more Rotary can be.
What you do with what you learned this week is now up to you. The time, the privilege, the responsibility — all of them are yours.

Your job is to inspire Rotarians!

Your job is to *Engage Rotary, Change Lives.*