



## FOCUS FOR THE YEAR

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Good morning, my fellow Rotary leaders! Welcome to San Diego!

Our time together is one of sharing ideas, building new friendships, and experiencing our global network in the final training for our coming year as Rotary leaders.

Like you, I have a new job. While mine will be to serve as chair of The Rotary Foundation, we have much in common in our preparations to serve Rotary.

How many of you flew into San Diego International?

For many years the airport was known as “Lindbergh Field,” after aviator Charles Lindbergh. Allow me to tell the Lindbergh story. It is one of vision, talent, and amazing courage.

It all started in 1919, when a man named Raymond Orteig, a New York hotel owner, born in France, offered a \$25,000 prize to the first person to fly between New York and Paris in either direction.

Lindbergh, like you and I, believed he could succeed in the challenge. All he needed was the money to build the airplane. He presented his idea to a group of businessmen in St. Louis. The head of the chamber of commerce was Harold Bixby. He put together investors to fund Lindbergh’s dream. This is how the plane became known as the Spirit of St. Louis.

Here in San Diego, Lindbergh found an airplane designer at Ryan Aircraft. Donald Hall had only been on the job a few days when he was told about this crazy flyboy from Missouri who needed a plane to fly nonstop from New York to Paris. And! — And it had to be ready in *three* months.

Hall said, “Sure!” He designed a single-engine, single-wing little plane that “the experts” said would never make it. And he completed the challenge in *two* months.

Eight years to the day after the prize money was offered, Charles Lindbergh landed in Paris. Lindbergh Field here in San Diego is actually where the flight started on its way to New York and into history.

The real story is about those individuals who made this happen. Where would Harold Bixby, Donald Hall, or even Charles Lindbergh have been without Raymond Orteig, whose idea and money made all their accomplishments possible?

And that story — the power of *one* individual, with *one* idea, is also the story of *our* Rotary Foundation.

Raymond Orteig had an idea! Much as Arch Klumph had when he proposed the idea of TRF.

And I am certain you have an idea. You have a passion! And, if you believe, you can achieve your goals!

*Our* Foundation is what gives *every* Rotarian the opportunity to be part of Rotary's achievements of the past, present, and into the future. It gives *every* Rotarian, in every Rotary club, the chance to exercise the power of an *idea*.

As leaders in Rotary, we are responsible for strengthening our clubs, enhancing our public image, and increasing our humanitarian service. The Rotary Foundation is the vehicle to accomplish all three of these!

*Our* Foundation has supported thousands of ideas over the course of 100 years. We have raised and invested more than \$4.1 billion for programs that have prevented disease, improved health, provided education, community development, water and sanitation, and have fostered peace around the world.

And our Foundation continually evolves. I hope you have seen the new online grant application tool. This reflects the work of the Trustees and staff in response to *your* ideas and input.

Now, let's look at our Foundation's priority goals for 2017-18.

First, The Rotary Foundation will have a comprehensive fundraising target of \$315 million. The Annual Fund goal will be \$135 million to continue funding many of our life-changing programs.

Four of every five Rotary clubs worldwide give to the Annual Fund. And Every Rotarian, Every Year giving of at least \$100 U.S. to our Annual Fund remains a high priority. Just over 35 percent of our members worldwide give directly to TRF. We can do better! So I ask, will you help grow the number of Rotarians giving?

As leaders we need to do a better job of increasing our members' knowledge of the Foundation. Being a Rotarian allows each of us to become a philanthropist. True philanthropy is not measured by the size of one's gift — rather by the gift in relation to one's financial ability.

Just imagine a network of 1.2 million philanthropists!

Think of how close we are to ending polio now and forever! Polio remains our No. 1 priority. Our polio fundraising goal remains at \$35 million per year. And with the Gates Foundation 2-to-1 match, this will produce \$105 million in 2017-18.

Our effort to end polio is like running a marathon. Right now, we are in the final leg. It might be the hardest — but the finish line is so close we can see it. *We must and we will finish!*

Even after we stop transmission of the virus, we must remember that “zero isn’t done.” We will need 36 consecutive months with *no* new cases of polio before the world can be certified polio-free. This final leg will require the same unwavering commitment of our resources, funding attention, and support.

As the recent reappearance of polio in Nigeria showed us, vigilance and surveillance are essential to achieving our goal. *We must and we will finish!*

We will continue working with our core partners. And thanks to matching funds from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Rotary has already contributed \$1.6 billion to the cause. *We must and we will finish!*

Another priority is to encourage Rotarians to make gifts to our Foundation’s Endowment Fund. This is a great way for all Rotarians to perpetuate their values and provide resources for future generations. 2017-18 will be the first full year of our building TRF endowment: 2,025 by 2025. We are aiming high, to build an endowment of \$2,025,000,000 by the year 2025. A strong endowment will ensure the long-term financial stability of our Foundation and provide essential resources well into the future.

A key to achieving these and other goals during 2017-18 and beyond is our ability to increase the understanding of *what* Rotary is and *what* Rotary does. Simply said: It is time for us to do a better job of telling our story and sharing our proven impact — not only to Rotarians and prospective Rotarians, but to the world.

Rotary is an active, vibrant organization addressing the problems of today while preparing for tomorrow. Rotarians have an incredible track record of success which is recognized by external experts.

For example, this past year, CNBC, a leading global media outlet, ranked The Rotary Foundation as No. 3 on its list of Top 10 Charities Changing the World. Our tremendous work in eradicating polio was highlighted.

Again this year, for the ninth time, our Foundation received a 4-star rating from Charity Navigator, a leading evaluator of charities. This rating recognizes our strong financial health and a commitment to accountability and transparency. Only 1 percent out of thousands of charities being rated have received this distinction.

So it is clear that we need to increase public awareness of our accomplishments. Increasing awareness also means tooting our own horn.

It is not always comfortable for us as Rotarians to toot our own horn. But the time has come for us to tell our story.

Rotary is an incredible worldwide network of people! Rotarians like *you* are making a difference in our communities and around the world. I thank each of you for your commitment of time, talent, and treasure.

My fellow Rotary leaders, 2017-18 will be the first year of our Foundation's second century. What an amazing time for us to be leaders in Rotary. The finish line for polio is within sight. And when it is crossed, what is next? What will take us into the next 10, 25, 50, or 100 years?

The time to answer that question is at hand! A strong Rotary Foundation will encourage us to Think Big! In my view thinking anything *less* than big would be a waste of our potential.

Let me close by telling you a story of the difference each of us can make through our Rotary Foundation.

When I was district governor, I led a team of Rotarians who traveled to India to provide polio survivors with corrective surgeries. Because this project was funded through a grant from our Foundation, this is as much *your* story as it is mine.

The program was a great success. More than 750 children were given a chance to have long, productive lives.

While I was in one village, I met a nine-year-old boy named Pareek, a polio survivor, who was on his way for corrective surgery. I might mention that is only a 20- to 30-minute procedure on certain tendons. I was standing near a doorway and watched as he navigated a dirt path on his hands and knees. Soon, I saw his mother and father coming my way, as well.

It was Pareek who reached me first. I wasn't dressed like a doctor, but he must have known that I was part of this group of outsiders who had come to help. Because when he had crawled all the way over to me, he did something that utterly astonished me. He bent his head down and kissed the top of my shoe.

Time for me virtually stopped! All I could feel were chills going up and down my spine.

And then his mother came over to me. And she knelt down and did the same.

Next, Pareek's father approached, and he also knelt down and kissed my shoe.

I was speechless! I just stood there until a local Rotarian came over and whispered in my ear. He said, "This is their way of saying thank you for changing their son's and *their* lives forever ... and for giving him back his life."

Pareek and his family, and all of the families who have been spared from this disease,

are thanking you. Thanking *you* for supporting The Rotary Foundation. Thanking *you* for making the plans that improve lives all around the world. Your contributions, both financial and in service, make this possible.

We all have a part to play, and you, as district governors-elect, have a critical role in bringing our ideas to fruition.

Perhaps some of you will be like Raymond Orteig, setting the goals that we all aspire to reach.

Some of you will find Harold Bixby in yourselves, drumming up financial support and recruiting more people to expand our efforts.

Others may feel more like Donald Hall, planning and building our initiatives for the next year and beyond.

Or perhaps *you* will be our Charles Lindbergh, carrying out our well-made plans and serving as the public face of Rotary to our members and our communities.

And in whatever capacity we find ourselves, we all serve in a spirit that says, We do this *not* because we want the credit but because we want the result.

I embrace that spirit. Charles Lindbergh called his the Spirit of St. Louis. Let us call ours the Spirit of Rotary. Each of us wants to make a difference through our Rotary service.

I am so excited to join *you* on this journey, into the second century of our Rotary Foundation, Doing Good in the World.

You, like Lindbergh, are starting your journey in San Diego! You, like Lindbergh, will fly from here perhaps into history!

You *will* reach *your* goals!

Your communities and the world are waiting!

What an incredible time to be a Rotarian! What an incredible time to be called upon to be a leader in Rotary!