



ROTARY FOUNDATION KEYNOTE ADDRESS

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It's wonderful to be here with all of you in the city where it all began — the place where, 100 years ago, President Arch C. Klumph first proposed an endowment for “doing good in the world.” It was a modest proposal that had great consequences. It set in motion a far-reaching series of events that would transform not only Rotary, but also the lives of millions of men, women, and children in every part of the world.

With war raging in Europe, 1917 hardly seemed an auspicious time to start raising money. And the postwar climate proved even less favorable. All too soon, the market crashed, the world economy collapsed, and the Great Depression began. With a Second World War looming, it was all about to go from bad to worse.

So it is not surprising that Rotarians didn't rush to adopt Arch Klumph's grand idea. But this remarkable man was not easily discouraged. He absolutely refused to give up, because recent events had made one thing perfectly clear: The world desperately needed an organization dedicated to doing good.

It was said of Arch Klumph in 1917 that he was a dreamer of colossal proportions. But I believe that our Foundation can surpass even his most colossal dreams. How gratified he would be to learn his struggling creation had become a world-class humanitarian organization today. And perhaps he would be more than a little amazed to know that in its first 100 years, thanks to the generous support of Rotarians worldwide, The Rotary Foundation has provided \$3.7 billion for its vital projects and programs.

Let's not forget that The Rotary Foundation started with just \$26.50, which, even in 1917, was not a princely sum. It comes to around \$550 in today's dollars, just about enough to buy a smartphone, but hardly sufficient seed money for a foundation with the ambitious mission of doing good in the world.

The Foundation awarded its first grant in 1930 — for \$500, or about \$7,000 in 2017 dollars. Contrast that with some of our more recent figures. In the 2015-16 Rotary year alone, our Foundation awarded almost \$100 million in global and district grants, \$4 million for Rotary Peace Fellowships, and \$114.7 million for polio eradication.

These are all very impressive numbers. But there is one number we will never truly know — and that is the number of people whose lives have been improved, transformed, or saved through the work of our Foundation.

We could begin trying to count, with one number: 16 million. Sixteen million is the number of people walking today who would have been paralyzed by polio without our Global Polio Eradication Initiative. And then we could add another number: 1.5 million. That is the number of lives saved by the vitamin A that is given with the vaccine. And then we would need to add many more millions, to account for all those people who have received, and continue to receive, vaccines and treatment for other diseases throughout the polio vaccine-delivery infrastructure that we established with our partners.

Then there is another number: 268. That's how many patients received life-changing surgeries during a recent medical global grant project from India to Rwanda. But that figure doesn't count the local doctors and medical students who received training in new surgical techniques to save time. Nor does it count the hundreds of patients those Rwandan doctors will be able to treat more effectively.

Here's another number to consider: 423,795. That's how many people received free health care at Rotary Family Health Days in Ghana, India, Nigeria, South Africa, and Uganda in 2016 alone. In 2011, when this program started, only 38,000 people were treated in two countries. But that's how it is with so many successful Rotary Foundation projects: They grow and expand, affecting more and more people every year.

We know that The Rotary Foundation has sponsored 41,850 scholars over the past century. Our reason for starting this program was simple: We believed that time spent studying and living in another country would expand a young person's worldview and imbue them with the Rotary ideals of service and tolerance.

So how well has that worked? Well, we just heard from Sadako Ogata, one of our early scholars, who has dedicated her life to creating peace and helping the victims of war.

Mrs. Ogata is just one shining example. Former scholar Monica Kinyua is another. Monica is working to solve problems caused by tribal conflicts in her native Kenya. She and her twin sister decided that one solution was to begin with the children. With the support of a Foundation global grant, these enterprising sisters organized a peace camp, where they help children from opposing tribes build friendships and trust. The children are encouraged to continue these friendships after the camp ends and to share their new perspective with their parents too.

We know that peacebuilding and conflict resolution can indeed take many forms. Today, 1,067 graduates of Rotary Peace Centers programs are working for peace throughout the world as diplomats, as journalists, teachers, and even police officers.

D.F. Pace is a Philadelphia police officer who entered our program in Thailand with a clear purpose: He wanted to learn strategies for dispelling tension and building trust between law enforcement and local residents — a challenge that many U.S. cities are now trying to solve. But that was just the first part of Officer Pace's plan. He also wanted to share the knowledge and skills he gained in the program with his fellow officers so that an entire major city could benefit from his training.

So you can see that the effects of our Rotary Foundation's work are exponential. Every

grant project, every vocational training team, and every scholarship and peace fellowship sets off a ripple of good that we can neither predict nor measure. And so it is virtually impossible to quantify the full power of our Foundation.

And even if we could, numbers alone would never tell the whole story.

For example, the numbers don't tell us how this Liberian baby is healthy and thriving, despite the fact that his mother was HIV-positive during her pregnancy. Without a Foundation-supported vocational training team, he probably wouldn't be so lucky. The team taught local health care workers techniques for preventing mother-child transmission of the HIV virus, and this training is now giving many infants a chance for a healthy life.

A global grant project gave these Nepalese teachers and their counterparts in Guatemala a shot of much-needed knowledge and confidence. At the outset of this training project, one of the Guatemalan first-grade teachers confessed that she was convinced her students could not possibly learn to read. Can you imagine the anguish of trying to do a job you felt was simply hopeless? Fortunately, the training program changed her mind, along with her teaching methods, and she was able to help her students successfully move on to the next grade.

Let me now introduce you to some Honduran women who have started small businesses with help from a Foundation-supported microcredit project.

This is Remigia Dominguez, who heads a weaving cooperative.

Doña Santiago runs a small store.

And Doña Ninfa sells vegetables at a local market.

Each of these women can now provide food and clothing for their families. They can also afford to buy school uniforms and supplies so their children can be educated. And they can contribute to the local economy and strengthen their community as well. There can be no doubt that The Rotary Foundation significantly improved their lives and the lives of their families.

Providing hope and confidence in the future is what our Foundation does best. It comes in the form of multiple doses of polio vaccine, or nourishing soy milk that makes learning easier, or providing clean, accessible water, or simply having a small new home through global grants.

I remember way back in January 2001, on a day when India had been celebrating its Republic Day and children were participating in ceremonial march-pasts in their schools, all of a sudden an earthquake struck Kutch in northwest India with a severity exceeding 7 on the Richter scale.

I rushed to Kutch from Mumbai in the next 24 hours and found utter devastation and death and despair everywhere. So, the local Rotarians and I got together to plan a program for rehabilitation and rebuilding. And as we were thus engaged, I walked a grandmotherly woman holding a small bag in her hands. "My name is Fatima Begum,"

she said, “and I have lived here all my life with my family. Five years ago, my only son, who drove local buses, and his wife, they had a road accident and both died, and I was left alone with Munni, my 8-year-old granddaughter. And then on January 26th, two days ago, Munni happily dashed off to school in the morning to take part in the march-past there. Fifteen minutes later, the whole world fell apart.

“Well, today I have no one left to live for. I had planned to go to Mecca for hajj, but now, I don’t think I can go. But I hear you Rotarians are going to build some homes and a school here. Well, here is some money I had saved to travel, but I want you to use it to help rebuild our lives.” And then she handed us the little bag she had carried and left. One of the Rotarians counted the money in the bag and found about 85,000 rupees, very close to \$1,500 in today’s money.

Well, we got going, and four months later, we had built about 40 low-cost shelters and repaired the school with funds flowing in from Rotarians from all over the world who had pitched in also to help. On dedication day, we arranged an event to draw lots and allot the homes to the lucky ones. There was a crowd of about a thousand people — getting people together in India is never really a problem — and assorted local politicians ready to make their pitch.

Just as we were about to start, from the assembled audience, the woman who had given us the 85,000 rupees walks up to the stage and tells us she wants to say something. Now, this was unplanned and unscheduled, but something made us tell her, “OK, just one minute, no more.” So she takes the microphone in her hand and speaks to the audience in Kutchi, the local language, and says, “My brothers and sisters, 4 1/2 months ago, we all went through the most difficult time in our lives, and I too lost everything and everyone I had. I was to go on hajj, but I just could not get going, and so I gave the little I had saved to these Rotarians to help us renew our lives. Today, for the first time since that terrible day, I am happy and my mind is at peace again. Yes, I could not go to Mecca, but my Mecca is right here.” And then she sat down on her haunches on the stage and wept, and so, I confess, did most of us present there that day.

As our Foundation enters its second century, it is these success stories that will inspire us to take on new and even bigger challenges. And the example of Arch Klumph, that inveterate dreamer of colossal proportions, will always be there to urge us on.

Arch Klumph never said exactly how our Foundation should do good. He trusted Rotarians to work that out for themselves. But he was very clear about what The Rotary Foundation should never do — and that is to build monuments of brick and stone. Instead, he envisioned his creation as a living, breathing entity, one that would, in his words, “work upon immortal minds ... engraving something that will brighten all eternity.”

His words inspired the early Rotarians who built our Foundation from the ground up — not in brick and stone, but in lives, in health, in hope. And his legacy lives on today in every Rotarian who has ever carried out a grant project, hosted a scholar, immunized a child against polio, or made a contribution to our Foundation. And it lives on in the many millions who have benefited both directly and indirectly from the good that we have done in the world today.

Let me leave you with one final number — \$300 million. That’s our fundraising goal for total contributions this centennial year. It’s the highest goal we have ever set, but I’m happy to report that we are well on our way to meeting it. In fact, as of today, we have almost reached the \$270 million mark, thanks to the generosity of Rotarians and the fundraising efforts of our clubs and districts.

There are so many people to recognize and thank, but let me give you one shining example among many: Mu-Tu “Concrete” Hsieh, governor of Taiwan District 3490, whose fundraising efforts and grant participation exemplify the Rotarian leadership that has made our Foundation so great.

We still have two weeks left to meet and even exceed our goal — which is something I believe we can do if every one of you carries an important message back to your club. Tell your fellow Rotarians what you have seen and heard this week. Make sure they know about the incredible good that our Foundation is doing in every part of our world.

Every contribution made this year will give us the resources needed to begin our second century ready to make our Foundation even stronger and even more effective. Together, we will transform even more lives, and we will fully realize Arch Klumph’s dream of a Rotary Foundation that will brighten all eternity.