



DEAR FELLOW ROTARIANS,

In October 1914, Jonas Salk was born – a man who would change world history by inventing the first effective vaccine against polio. When the vaccine was introduced in the United States in the 1950s, polls indicated that polio was one of the nation's two greatest fears, second only to the fear of atomic war. And with good reason: In the 1952 U.S. polio epidemic, 58,000 cases were reported, with 3,145 deaths and 21,269 instances of permanent, disabling paralysis. Globally, polio paralyzed or killed up to half a million people every year.



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Gary C.K. Huang  
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Soon after the Salk vaccine was created, Albert Sabin developed an oral version, allowing tremendous numbers of children to be immunized quickly, safely, and inexpensively. In 1985, Rotary's PolioPlus program was born, with a simple goal: to immunize every child under age five against this crippling disease. Thanks in large part to the initial success of PolioPlus, in 1988 the 166 member states of the World Health Assembly unanimously set the goal of global polio eradication.

At the time, the idea was breathtakingly ambitious, and many called it impossible. Today, we are closer to this goal than ever before, with only a few hundred cases of polio reported per year, and just three remaining endemic countries. We are on track to achieve full eradication by 2018 – if we can keep up the momentum that has brought us this far.

And this month, we will mark World Polio Day on 24 October, and celebrate the 100th anniversary of Dr. Salk's birth.

I ask you all to *Light Up Rotary* this month by doing whatever you can to shine a spotlight on our efforts to eradicate polio. Call your government officials and let them know that polio eradication matters to you. Go to [endpolionow.org](http://endpolionow.org) for inspiring stories about Rotary's work, and share them on social media. And make the best investment you'll ever make, by donating to polio eradication right on the [endpolionow.org](http://endpolionow.org) website and earning a two-to-one match on your contribution from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

When we eradicate polio – and we will – we'll have brought the world into a better future, and Rotary into a better future as well. We will have proved ourselves, as an organization, capable of great things. And we will have given our children and grandchildren a gift that will endure forever: a polio-free world.

GARY C.K. HUANG  
PRESIDENT, ROTARY INTERNATIONAL