

Rotary Club of Palgrave?s Weekly Rotary Minute

By Marie Jay

I always look forward to our weekly meetings with amazing dedicated Rotarians.

Here we socialize and learn of so many wonderful volunteers who help support families in our community as well as worldwide.

Many interesting speakers have fascinating stories to inform us of the work they are doing.

We read and see on TV of the many people struggling with poverty, suffering with medical issues, being persecuted or dealing with disasters. I want to help, but how much can one person do? It is a good feeling to know we can help many people through Rotary programs. The assistance is given directly to the people in need by fellow Rotarians or through local Rotary clubs who know their needs. By giving directly, we eliminate going through different countries' politicians, who sometimes reap the benefits of their suffering people.

Two of many examples of Rotary programs:

1) Sleeping Children around the World, started by Murray and Margaret Dryden in 1970. All of the money goes for bed kits. Volunteers who distribute and meet the children pay for their own flights. Rotarians have delivered more than 1.4 million bed kits in 34 countries. Bed kits may consist of mattress, blanket, mosquito net, school supplies, hygiene products etc., depending on the needs in the district for children five to 12 years of age. Products are manufactured in the distribution country, which helps stimulate their economy as well.

2) In 1985, Rotary launched Polio Plus program, the first initiative to tackle global polio eradication through mass vaccination of children. In 2015, less than 75 polio cases were confirmed worldwide, down 99.9 per cent since 1980s, when the world saw approximately 1,000 cases a day.

Now every dollar Rotary donates is matched by Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation two-to-one up to \$35 million a year through 2018. More than a million Rotarians have donated their time and personal resources to end polio, assisting health care workers to vaccinate children in polio affected countries. Polio is incurable, but completely vaccine preventable.

For more information on how to attend your first meeting or for information on becoming a member, please visit www.rotaryclubofpalgrave.com anytime.