

Rotary Club of Palgrave's Weekly Rotary Minute

By Janet Gray

Oct. 24 marked World Polio Day, when the World Health Organization and Rotary International seek to raise awareness of continued existence of polio in the world and the importance of continuing the efforts to eradicate it from the face of the earth. Polio is a highly infectious disease that most commonly affects children under the age of five. The virus is spread person to person, typically through contaminated water. It can attack the nervous system, and in some instances, lead to paralysis. Although there is no cure, there is a safe and effective vaccine – one which Rotary and its partners have used to immunize more than 2.5 billion children worldwide.

You have read in this column that we are "this close" to eradicating polio from the world. When Rotary started its Polio Plus Campaign in 1985, it raised \$120 million (U.S.) to help with the vaccination programs around the world. That generosity came from people like you. In 1988, when the World Health Organization joined with Rotary to recognize the importance of eradicating polio, there were 350,000 cases in 120 countries around the world. In 2003, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation pledged to match every dollar raised by Rotary in its Polio Plus Campaigns. As of 2016 there are only 37 cases in three countries. While cases have been reduced by 99.9 per cent, until the disease is eradicated completely, every child is still at risk.

If we stop now, experts predict that within 10 years we could see as many as 200,000 new cases each year, all over the world. The Rotary Club of Palgrave makes a weekly donation to Polio Plus, made up of member donations as well as a donation on behalf of the speaker to thank that individual for their speech.

To learn more about how you can help Rotary's Polio Plus program, please visit Rotary.org

To learn more about Rotary Club of Palgrave raises funds for Polio Plus, or how to become a member, please visit our website at www.rotaryclubofpalgrave.com