



World Polio Day

- 1950** 55,000 US children and 500,000 children worldwide contracted polio. 1955 Salk vaccine in use. 1957 Sabin oral vaccine in use.
- 1978** 1978-79 Polio eradicated in the US. Cliff Dochterman, Chairman of Rotary International's Health, Hunger and Humanity Committee, asked all Rotary countries, "What would you do with \$1 million?" 16 proposals were accepted. They chose the one from Philippines who said he would immunize all 6 million children for polio. Done.
- 1980** Smallpox eradicated, the first disease ever eradicated. Still 500,000 polio victims worldwide.
- 1985** PolioPlus National Immunization Days. 125 nations had 350,000 cases a year. Rotarians and other volunteers came by canoe, camel, elephant, and door to door in large geographic areas, one country at a time. Mexico first with 13 million doses. Central America next. Ethiopia 10 million children vaccinated. China first 2 days 100 million children vaccinated. India in one day 134 million children vaccinated.
- 1988** Global Polio Eradication Initiative: Rotary became full partners with WHO, UNICEF and CDC. Gates Foundation is now the 5th partner.
- 1993** At the Rotary World Convention Cliff Dochterman, then the RI President, asked Carlos Canseco to give 2 drops of vaccine to the 500 millionth child (who was from the Philippines where the polio campaign started).
- 1998** Sudan civil war cease fire was agreed to for 4 days. WHO asked Cliff Dochterman, then Chairman of the RI Foundation for \$400,000 to pay for 3-4 million children's doses of vaccine. Since the Foundation Chair could authorize up to \$500,000 for Humanitarian efforts Cliff said, "You'll have it in 15 minutes."
- 1999** Democratic Republic of Congo and Sierra Leone all children vaccinated.
- 2000** 17 West and Central African countries vaccinated 76 million children.
- 2019** Today 2.5 billion children have been immunized in 122 countries. It's 99.99% done. New Rotary goal to raise \$50 million for each of the next 3 years, matched 2-1 by the Gates Foundation.
- 2020** GPEI congratulates the national governments of the 47 countries in the WHO African Region as wild polio-free after four years without a case. With this historic milestone, five of the six WHO regions, representing over 90% of the world's population, are now free of the wild polio virus. Only two countries worldwide continue to see wild poliovirus transmission: Pakistan and Afghanistan.

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