



NEWS RELEASE

RI District 3310 in Singapore will mark historic progress toward a polio-free world, while urging community support to end the paralyzing disease

Singapore, 16 October 2017 – Rotary members in Singapore are among millions reaching out on World Polio Day to raise awareness, funds and support to end polio – a vaccine preventable disease that still threatens children in parts of the world today.

World Polio Day was established by Rotary International to commemorate the birth of Jonas Salk, who led the first team to develop a vaccine against poliomyelitis. Use of this inactivated poliovirus vaccine and subsequent widespread use of the oral poliovirus, developed by Albert Sabin, led to the establishment of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) in 1988.

- WHAT:** **WORLD POLIO DAY 2017 (Singapore)**
- WHO:** **Jointly organised by Rotary Club of Singapore Heartlands, Rotary Club of Tanjong Pagar & Rotary Eclub of 3310**
- WHEN:** **Tuesday, 24 October 2017 (From 7.00pm to 10.00pm)**
- WHERE:** **Kampong Cafe @BM, Inside Sports Lifestyle Center, 3500A Bukit Merah Central, Singapore 159838**

Since Rotary and its partners launched GPEI nearly 30 years ago, the incidence of polio has plummeted by more than 99.9 percent, from about 350,000 cases a year to just 37 cases in 2016. Only 11 new cases of polio caused by wild poliovirus have been reported this year, all in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

To sustain this progress, and protect all children from polio, Rotary has committed to

raising US\$50 million per year over the next three years in support of global polio eradication efforts. The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation will match Rotary's commitment 2:1. Without full funding and political commitment, this paralyzing disease could return to previously polio-free countries, putting children everywhere at risk.

“Rotary's mission is the eradication of polio, a highly infectious disease, that leads to paralysis and most commonly affects children under the age of 5. Together with our partners, Rotary has immunized over 2.5 billion children worldwide.” – President Richard Ong, Rotary Eclub of 3310.

Polio is a crippling and potentially fatal infectious disease. There is no cure, but there are safe and effective vaccines. Polio can be prevented through immunization. Polio vaccine, given multiple times, almost always protects a child for life. The strategy to eradicate polio is therefore based on preventing infection by immunizing every child until transmission stops and the world is polio-free.

Rotary has contributed more than US\$1.7 billion to ending polio since 1985. Rotary continues to take a strong leadership role in the effort to eradicate polio. Rotarians and guests can make a donation to fund continued immunizations and surveillance efforts.

“The World Polio Day, an important event in the calendar of The Rotary Foundation, is celebrated to mark and remember the initiatives, efforts, challenges as well as the success of The Rotary Foundation in enhancing the awareness and in raising funds toward the eventual eradication of this deadly disease Polio.” – PDG Zainie Abdul Aucasa, Chairman, District Rotary Foundation Committee.

The highlight of World Polio Day 2017 held in Singapore is the invitation of an extraordinary guest speaker, PP John Soe, from Jakarta, Indonesia. He is myself a polio victim. In spite of adversity and challenges, he is today a highly successful architect and interior designer. Come, listen and be inspired by his story.

“I have been fighting relentlessly to raise awareness of polio – the sickness that so deeply influenced my own life and can't be cured, only prevented. Rotary has done so much for me, and this way, I can give something back. Getting polio is mostly a thing of the past, thank goodness, but we who had polio are alive and have been here all this time! We are with you! The eradication effort continues and must be brought to a successful conclusion. In the end, every single child deserves a childhood free from the threat of diseases that we know how to prevent. Together we are proving that we can make that happen.” – PP John Soe, RI D3410 District Administration Director.

This Singapore event is among thousands of similarly held events by Rotary across the globe to create awareness of polio on World Polio Day – 24 October 2017.

About Rotary

Rotary brings together a global network of volunteer leaders dedicated to tackling the world's most pressing humanitarian challenges. Rotary connects 1.2 million members of more than 35,000 Rotary clubs in over 200 countries and geographical areas. Their work improves lives at both the local and international levels, from helping families in need in their own communities to working toward a polio-free world. Visit www.endpolio.org for more about Rotary and its efforts to eradicate polio.

About RI District 3310

Rotary International District 3310 comprises of Brunei, Singapore and parts of Malaysia (Johor, Malacca, Sarawak, Labuan FT and Sabah). We have a total of 67 Rotary clubs in the District. There are 2 clubs in Brunei, 22 clubs in Singapore, 3 clubs in Malacca, 1 club in Labuan FT, 10 clubs in Sarawak, 13 clubs in Sabah and 16 clubs in Johor. The oldest club in District 3310 is the Rotary Club of Singapore (chartered on 11 August 1930) followed closely by the Rotary Club of Malacca (chartered on 1 September 1930). With a very few exceptions, all Rotary Clubs conduct their meetings in English. A few clubs in District 3310 are bi-lingual (Mandarin/English or Malay/English).

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