

# RGHF's Our Foundation Newsletter

... A Newsletter for Rotary Leaders

A monthly feature of the Rotary Global History Fellowship

Issue #162 August, 2015

## Nigeria is Now Polio Free !!!

Now, only Afghanistan & Pakistan are two countries in the world with active Polio cases, Once Eradicated World will finally be polio free



**Thanks  
for Life  
Thanks  
Rotary**



THIS NEWSLETTER IS PUBLISHED BY THE ROTARY GLOBAL HISTORY FELLOWSHIP.

THE COMMENTS AND STORIES IN THIS NEWSLETTER DO NOT REFLECT THE OPINIONS OF ROTARY INTERNATIONAL,  
THE ROTARY FOUNDATION OF ROTARY INTERNATIONAL OR ANY OTHER ROTARY RELATED ORGANIZATION.

## Nigeria sees no wild polio cases for one year



*Click image to watch video*

Despite historic milestone, country still faces hurdles before being declared polio-free.

Today (24th July) marks one year since Nigeria last reported a polio case caused by wild poliovirus, putting the country on the brink of eradicating the paralyzing disease.

The last case was reported on 24 July 2014 in the northern state of Kano. If no cases are reported in the coming weeks, the World Health Organization is expected to remove Nigeria from the list of countries where polio is endemic, leaving just two: Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Nigeria is the last polio-endemic country in Africa. The continent is poised to reach its own first full year without any illness from the virus on 11 August.

“Every Rotarian in the world should be proud of this achievement,” says Rotary International President K.R. Ravindran. “We made history. We have set Africa on course for a polio-free future. But we have not yet reached our goal of a polio-free world. Raising funds and awareness and advocating with your government are more crucial than ever.”

Progress in Nigeria has come from many measures, including strong domestic and international financing, the commitment of thousands of health workers, and new strategies that reached children who had not been immunized earlier because of a lack of security in the northern states.

*Continued ...*

“Rotary’s commitment has been the number one reason for the recent success in Nigeria,” says Dr. Tunji Funsho, chair of Rotary’s Nigeria PolioPlus Committee. “We have infected political leaders with this commitment. The government has demonstrated this with political support and financial and human resources. And that went down the line from the federal level, to the state, to the local governments.”

Nigeria has increased its domestic funding for polio eradication almost every year since 2012 and has allocated \$80 million for the effort this year.

Funsho also applauds religious leaders who championed the vaccination efforts to families in their communities.

Despite the historic gains in Nigeria, health experts are cautious about declaring victory. Funsho says the [Global Polio Eradication Initiative](#) partners must strengthen routine immunization especially in hard-to-reach areas, in addition to boosting sensitive surveillance to prevent resurgence of the disease. If no new cases are reported in the next two years, Nigeria, along with the entire Africa region, will be certified polio-free.

“The virus can be introduced from anywhere where it is still endemic, particularly now in Afghanistan and Pakistan, into areas that haven’t had polio in years,” Funsho says. “It is important we keep the immunity level in Nigeria to at least 90 percent.”

For instance, Syria experienced a sudden outbreak of the disease when 35 cases were reported in December 2013. None had been reported there since 1999. “Immunizations become imperative for history not to repeat itself in Nigeria,” says Funsho.

In June, Rotary announced \$19 million in grants for continued polio eradication activities in Africa, including almost \$10 million for Nigeria. Since 1985, when Rotary launched PolioPlus, the program that supports the organization’s polio eradication efforts, its worldwide monetary contributions to the cause have exceeded \$1.4 billion.

“We’ve come a long way and have never been so close to eradicating polio in Nigeria and around the world, but it’s not a time to fully celebrate,” says Funsho. “We have some grueling years ahead of us before WHO can certify Nigeria and Africa polio-free.”

By Ryan Hyland  
*Rotary News*  
24-Jul-2015

# Rotary International President K. R. Ravindran on Polio Eradication in Nigeria

Dear Fellow Rotarians,

We're delighted to report that [today] Nigeria has passed one year with no new cases of the wild poliovirus.

This is the longest the country has ever gone without a case of polio and a critical step on the path toward a polio-free Africa. We've come a long way since the bleak years when the virus reached its peak. It was only a decade ago that polio struck 12,631 people in Africa- three quarters of all cases in the world.

We congratulate Rotarians who have donated \$688.5 million to fight polio throughout Africa, including more than \$200 million to Nigeria. We congratulate Rotarians from Africa and around the world who have also devoted countless hours to immunize the children who now have the opportunity for healthier, happier lives.

With the ambitious scope of Rotary's PolioPlus program, our efforts are having a far-reaching, transformative impact beyond the eradication of polio.

With the infrastructure put in place by the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI), Nigeria not only reduced its polio caseload by 90% in 2014, but it also successfully thwarted the world's most lethal Ebola outbreak to date, in only 90 days, a response faster than even the U.S., and rightly praised by the World Health Organization as 'world-class'.

In Nigeria and elsewhere, the Initiative provides a blueprint to reach all children with a package of lifesaving vaccines and health interventions. This is a vital step on the path to human development, as we know that with improved public health, more resources can be channeled towards education and economic growth.

If the stringent World Health Organization testing criteria are met, then Nigeria could be removed from the list of polio-endemic countries in September of this year.

**However, our work is not done.** We know that polio can easily return, with devastating consequences, if we don't stamp it out now.

We must act, as Rotarians do, to build on the progress made and stop polio once and for all. We have a narrow window of opportunity to achieve this, and if we fail, we could witness up to 200,000 cases a year in the near future.

So how can we finally make history and end polio now?

Today, we must protect the progress made in Nigeria, and support Pakistan and Afghanistan, the other two remaining polio-endemic countries.

*Continued ...*



Protecting progress means enhancing surveillance, routine immunization, and community engagement in Nigeria and other countries where transmission has been stopped.

Supporting Pakistan and Afghanistan means full political and financial commitment to eradicating polio; vaccination of all children in these countries; high quality surveillance, and the accomplishment of all the expert recommendations as part of the GPEI's Polio Eradication and Endgame Strategic Plan.

Visit [endpolio.org](http://endpolio.org) to download a toolkit of materials to help you share this progress – and the need for continued commitment in the coming years – with your Rotary club, your communities and your elected officials.

This all requires time, energy and investment. Pakistan's budget requirements for polio eradication activities from 2016-2018 amounts to \$305.7 million, and if we can raise this sum now, a polio-free world will reap financial savings of US\$50 billion over the next 20 years and prove what's possible when the global community comes together to improve children's lives.

[Your donation to PolioPlus](#) will be matched 2 to 1 by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, tripling your contribution.

Thirty years ago we told the world what Rotary believes: that we can achieve the eradication of only the second human disease in history. Our belief is becoming reality. For every child, let's make sure that reality is a bright one.

Warm Regards,

**Rotary International President K.R. "Ravi" Ravindran and Rotary Foundation Chair Ray Klinginsmith**



On 24 July, Ravindran congratulates the African nation on going one full year without a case of wild-polio virus

*Click image to watch video*



# ON THE ROAD TO A POLIO-FREE NIGERIA

It's been one year since Nigeria's last reported case of polio.  
Where are we on the road to a polio-free Nigeria?

ROTARY HAS DONATED OVER  
**\$207M** TO END POLIO  
IN NIGERIA.

**1988**

The Global Polio Eradication Initiative launches. Nigeria hits the road with some **30,000** cases of wild poliovirus.

**2014**

Nigeria records its last polio case for the year on 24 July.

Over **200,000** health workers immunize **230 million** children in Africa.

**2015**

The World Health Organization may remove Nigeria from its list of polio-endemic countries this year.

**2017**

Arrive at a certified polio-free Africa?

**NO STOPPING**  
Nigeria must go **2 more years** without a new polio case.

NIGERIA

JOIN US IN THE FIGHT TO END POLIO  
AT [ENDPOLIO.ORG](http://ENDPOLIO.ORG)







## A milestone for polio eradication in Nigeria

*By Michael McGovern, chair of Rotary's International PolioPlus Committee*

Today is a special milestone for global health and for every Rotary member. Today, Nigeria has gone one year with no new cases of wild poliovirus.

This is the longest the country has ever gone without a case of polio and a critical step on the path toward a polio-free Africa. We've come a long way; it was only a decade ago that polio struck 12,631 people in Africa – three-quarters of all cases in the world.

Last year, thanks to its extensive polio eradication infrastructure, Africa's most populous nation was able to reduce polio cases by 90 percent and thwart the deadly Ebola virus with a swift, "[world-class](#)" response.



A vaccinator looks for children that were missed during the mop up phase of a polio immunization drive in Maiduguri, Nigeria.

*Photo by Diego Ibarra Sánchez*

I had the privilege of speaking earlier this year at the UN Economic and Social Council about Rotary's work as part of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative. The UN wanted to hear from the most successful partnerships in the world of human development, and it was a great honor to talk about the achievements in which you have all played a part.

Rotary members have led the way when it comes to fundraising, advocacy, raising awareness, and generating volunteer support to tackle polio. We've partnered with the best in the world to get the job done – the World Health Organization, UNICEF, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Our role as constituents in both the polio-affected countries and the countries whose governments help fund the effort has ensured that all partners in the initiative have maintained their political commitment and financial backing for the drive to eradicate polio from the human experience.

Rotary members have also been extremely generous, donating \$688.5 million to fight polio throughout Africa, including more than \$200 million to Nigeria.

However, if we stop now, all our work could be easily undone. We must do all we can to protect the progress made in Nigeria. The World Health Organization demands three years of no new polio cases before we can safely say that Nigeria and the African region are free of polio.

*Continued ...*



We must also do all we can to support Pakistan and Afghanistan, the other two remaining polio-endemic countries.

Protecting progress means enhancing surveillance, routine immunization, and community engagement, while eradicating polio in endemic countries requires all this and more. If we are to make history, we need to ensure every child is vaccinated without fail.

Visit [endpolio.org](http://endpolio.org) to download a [tool kit of materials](#) to help you share this progress – and the need for continued commitment in the coming years – with your Rotary club, your communities, and your elected officials.

The final push also requires substantial investment. Your donation to PolioPlus will be matched 2-to-1 by the Gates Foundation, tripling your contribution.

We are on the verge of eradicating a human disease for only the second time in history, after smallpox. Three decades ago, Rotary shared its vision for a polio-free world. Let's make that vision come to life, today.

*Source : Rotary Voices*



# The unsung heroes of Nigeria's vaccination efforts

*Stella Roy, a Rotary club leader in Nova Scotia, Canada*

*This post is part of the #ProtectingKids blog series. Read the whole series [here](#).*

In 2013, I was fortunate enough to go to Nigeria with a team of 10 Rotary members led by Ann Lee Hussey, a polio survivor and advocate for polio eradication efforts. We spent most of our week visiting small medical centers in the Kaduna State.

The purpose of our visit was to learn about the strides Nigeria was making to become the next endemic country to be declared polio-free. We experienced “a day in the life of a healthcare worker” and as such, we were on the road at 6:30 a.m. every morning (often with no power in the hotels so flash lights were essential).

For the monthly immunization clinics, vaccines (not just for polio) are delivered to the health stations very early and are distributed into small coolers to be picked up by the health care workers by 7 a.m. Many of the healthcare workers are young mothers who carry their own babies on their backs to help dispel the myth of vaccine poisoning. We would leave together, sometimes by foot, to rural areas that were sometimes more than an hour away.

The vaccination site was anything from an old vegetable cart or an empty shack, but when we arrived we would go out with the loud speaker to announce that we were on-site. The healthcare workers would line up the children as they arrived, and we would give the polio drops to any children who were five years and younger. We would record the number of vaccinated children each day.

We delivered vaccines to children but I felt as though our main job was to give thanks to the mothers for vaccinating their children, to healthcare workers for their dedication and to the religious and community leaders for supporting immunizations in their village.

The system in Nigeria is working because of the dedication of the healthcare workers – the unsung heroes of the system. These people go out despite the danger, because they are passionate about stopping vaccine-preventable diseases from affecting more children.

The good news is that the groundwork in place for the polio immunizations are not just helping with polio eradication efforts, but also for administering other essential vaccines and healthcare. Nigeria has not had a new case of polio since July 2014. While this has been a lengthy process (since 1985), I find great joy in seeing that the immunization strategies will continue to do much more good for disease prevention, even after Nigeria is polio-free.



## Rotary's efforts target polio

*By Markian Hawryluk, Reporter, Houston Chronicle*

For the past eight years, Houston businessman Terry Ziegler has dutifully tracked the number of polio cases around the world, feeling elated as the numbers declined and dismayed when cases spiked.

But last week's report of no new cases - a rare occurrence in any year - had special meaning to Ziegler and the millions of Rotarians like him. It leaves Africa's most populous country poised for removal from the quickly shrinking list of countries where polio invades people's brains and spinal cords, causing paralysis. If no new cases are identified in the next four to six weeks, the World Health Organization could cross Nigeria off the polio-endemic list.

That brings the Rotary - a worldwide service organization - and its partners tantalizingly close to achieving a goal set decades ago. In 1978, the group took on the challenge of vaccinating some 6 million children to eradicate polio from the Philippines. They went on to tackle the ambitious goal of eradicating the disease worldwide.

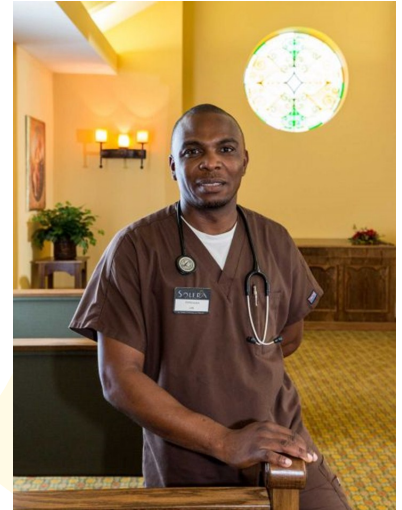
"The gains in global polio eradication have been impressive," said Dr. Peter Hotez, an infectious disease specialist at Baylor College of Medicine and Texas Children's Hospital. "Rotary's efforts to take on Nigeria are absolutely essential. The milestone of a year free of polio in Nigeria is a huge one towards meeting global eradication targets."

Since the 1980s, Rotary has used its massive international infrastructure to raise more than \$1.3 billion to eradicate polio and has immunized more than 2.5 billion children in 122 countries. In the greater Houston area alone, Rotary District 5890 has contributed more than \$2.3 million toward the polio campaign.

"Rotary has been in it at the ground level," said Dr. Steve Cochi, senior adviser for polio at the CDC. "They are considered the heart and soul of the global polio eradication initiative and in Nigeria they have played a major role."

In 1988, WHO estimated an annual 350,000 cases of polio occurred across 125 countries. By 2013, that number dropped to 400 cases and in 2015, a record-low 33 cases have occurred. Only three countries - Afghanistan, Pakistan and Nigeria - remain on the endemic list.

While on the brink of being removed from that list, Nigeria and the rest of Africa must avoid any polio cases for two more years to be certified polio-free by 2017.



*Photo: Craig Hartley, Freelance*

Chris Ajayi, who works as a nurse in Katy, has helped in the effort to combat polio in his native Nigeria.



### ***Native happy to help***

Chris Ajayi has been involved in the efforts that have drastically reduced cases in his native Nigeria since he joined Rotoracts, the youth arm of Rotary, in 1995.

He had seen rates decline before, only to rise again after scandals over clinical trials in Nigeria and the emergence of the Boko Haram threat frightened the population away from vaccination campaigns. He believes the country would not have met this milestone without the Rotary efforts. Local members worked side by side with international volunteers, going door to door to immunize children in remote villages. Other Nigerian Rotarians donated funds or goods such as cookies and candy for the children. One effort involved handing out bars of soap to families who vaccinated their children.

Ajayi said eradicating the crippling disease has been his long elusive dream.

"It is a thing of joy. I'm so elated," said Ajayi, who emigrated to the U.S. three years ago and works as nurse in Katy. "We've had some close shaves where we were going nine months (with no new cases) and then a case comes up and we go back to square one. But this? No, I wish I were back home in Nigeria to celebrate it."

Rotary's efforts on polio have also had major impacts on other vaccine-preventable diseases and health problems, and should pay dividends in the future for disease surveillance and public health interventions, experts said. The polio infrastructure in Nigeria is widely credited for reducing the spread of Ebola in the latest outbreak.

### ***Concerted effort***

Ziegler, who owns Big Z Lumber Company in Houston and chairs the district's Rotary Foundation Committee, started publishing a newsletter with polio statistics from WHO for the district in 2007. But more and more districts began asking for it, and now the weekly Polio Plus newsletter circulates worldwide. Many other Houstonians have been instrumental in polio fundraising efforts and some have helped with immunization campaigns in Nigeria and other countries.

"It's an accomplishment that some scientists told us would never happen, but it's great to prove them wrong," Ziegler said. "The fact that Rotary has stuck in there this long - we didn't think it would take this long or cost this much - is a real testament to the things we can do and the things we will be able to do in the future."

Source : Houston Chronicle

<http://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/houston-texas/houston/article/Rotary-s-efforts-target-polio-6406861.php?t=d50d628732438d9cbb&cmpid=twitter-premium>

Terry Zeigler is RGHF member and contributor to RGHF's Our Foundation Newsletter. He is RID 5890 Rotary Foundation Committee Chair and can be reached at [bigzlumber@aol.com](mailto:bigzlumber@aol.com)



The Global Polio  
Eradication Initiative  
thanks the health workers  
who have immunized more  
than **230 million children**  
across Africa.

[endpolio.org](http://endpolio.org)



## **In the media - Nigeria's One-Year Milestone**

*A compilation of recent reports in the media on Nigeria's polio-eradication efforts.*

*Click on the headline links to read full article.*

[Nigeria: Rotary Urges for More to Make Nigeria Polio Free](#)

[Nigeria marks one year without recorded polio case](#)

[This Is How Nigeria Beat Polio](#)

[The world's poorest countries could finally wipe out polio—as long as the richest ones don't bring it back](#)

[Nigeria celebrates one year with no reported cases of polio](#)

[Nigeria Has Been Free of Polio for A Year](#)

[Saraki Celebrates Polio-free Nigeria](#)

[Saraki Congratulates Nigeria On 365 Days Without A Case Of Polio](#)

[PMB Promises Polio-free Nigeria, Vaccinates Grandchild](#)

[Senate hails Nigerians for eliminating polio](#)

[Nigeria Marks 365days Polio Free Backed By Gates' Billions Campaign](#)





EN-(715)



## Thank You!

Rotary launched the first effort to immunize all children against polio in 1985. Since then, Rotary members have been unflagging in their leadership to end this disease, donating their time and personal resources to protect children everywhere.

The leadership of Rotarians has been critical to helping the world see this remarkable progress: Africa going its longest period to date without a case of polio.

Rotary members will continue to play a crucial role as we now take the final steps to end this disease.

*Play a part in making history. Visit [endpolio.org](http://endpolio.org) to donate and learn more.*

#endpolio | [endpolio.org](http://endpolio.org)



# **RGHF's OUR FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER**

**AUGUST 2015, #162**

**Jeetendra Sharma  
Editor in Chief**

[Jeeturotary@gmail.com](mailto:Jeeturotary@gmail.com)

**William "Bill" Pollard  
Associate Editor**

[bebowp@gmail.com](mailto:bebowp@gmail.com)

**Edward "Eddie" Blender  
Publisher**

[EBlender@aol.com](mailto:EBlender@aol.com)

**Rotary**



Rotary Global History  
Fellowship



**A monthly feature of the Rotary Global History Fellowship (RGHF)**

Sign up for our free RGHF newsletters at <http://www.historyfeatures.org> and use <http://www.historysearch.org> to find Rotary's Global History