

## Google.org gives Rotary \$3.5 million to help end polio worldwide

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EVANSTON, Ill., U.S.A. (Feb. 18, 2008) -- Rotary International received \$3.5 million from The Google Foundation, a non-profit managed by Google.org, in support of Rotary's top philanthropic goal to eradicate polio, a crippling and sometimes fatal disease that still paralyzes children in parts of Africa, Asia and the Middle East and threatens children everywhere.

The humanitarian volunteer service organization will raise funds to match The Google Foundation grant, dollar-for-dollar, over one year. The grant will directly support polio immunization activities carried out by the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI), a partnership spearheaded by the World Health Organization (WHO), Rotary International, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and UNICEF.

Polio eradication has been Rotary's top priority since 1985. Since then, Rotary has contributed \$650 million to the eradication effort, a figure which will rise to more than \$850 million by the time the world is certified polio-free.

Tremendous progress has been made. To date, the number of polio cases has been reduced from 350,000 children annually in the mid 1980s to approximately 2,000 cases in 2006. Although the GPEI has succeeded in slashing the number of polio cases by 99 percent over the past two decades, the wild poliovirus still persists in four countries: Afghanistan, India, Nigeria and Pakistan.

"This grant comes at a crucial time for the initiative, as more funds are needed to reach children in the most challenging regions of the world," said Wilfrid Wilkinson, President of Rotary International. "We have the technical tools to beat polio, and we're almost there. All we need is for the rest of the world to follow The Google Foundation's lead in supporting the effort to eradicate this vaccine preventable disease once and for all."

Google.org is a hybrid philanthropy that uses a range of approaches to help advance solutions. They can operate in a traditional manner by supporting partners' work with targeted grants. But they can also invest in for-profit endeavors or lobby for policies that support their philanthropic goals. Additionally, Google.org can tap the company's innovative technology and, most importantly, its inspired workforce.

For more information visit: [www.rotary.org](http://www.rotary.org), [www.google.org](http://www.google.org) or [www.polioeradication.org](http://www.polioeradication.org)

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Founded in Chicago in 1905, Rotary is a worldwide organization of business and professional leaders who provide

humanitarian service and help to build goodwill and peace in the world. Rotary's global membership is approximately 1.2 million men and women who belong to more than 32,000 Rotary clubs in more than 200 countries and geographical areas.

[You can find this press release here](#)