

# POLIOPLUS HEADLINER KIT

Every day, we come closer to the goal of a polio-free world. As the global polio eradication team prepares to cross the threshold of victory, Rotarians can help call attention to the tremendous efforts that Rotary has contributed to this historic health drive. Heightening local media coverage is an effective means of delivering Rotary's message to the world.

The PolioPlus Headliner Kit is a public relations tool that can be tailored to give local media outlets a hometown news angle. Listed below are descriptions of the contents of the Headliner Kit and tips on how to distribute the items to local newspapers, journals, and trade magazines.

## DOs and DON'Ts

- Do** read the descriptions of each piece carefully to determine which item best achieves your particular goal. Are you responding to the absence of Rotary mention in a newspaper article, or are you seeking to inform your newspaper of the involvement of Rotary in the global eradication effort?
- Do** send a letter with the selected item introducing yourself and requesting the editor's attention.
- Do** send Headliner Kit items periodically during the year.
- Do not** send multiple items in the Headliner Kit to a single media outlet.
- Do not** send selected Sample items to media outlets without first inserting the local angle of the story.

## WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THE HEADLINER KIT

**#1 Sample Feature Story**

**#2 Sample Opinion Piece**

**#3 Sample Letter to the Editor**

**#4 Sample Press Releases (3)**

## ITEM DESCRIPTIONS

**#1 Sample Feature Story:** Newspapers and magazines are often interested in a story like global polio eradication; but due to time and staff constraints, they may be unable to assign a reporter. The **Sample Feature Story** is an ideal solution for this situation. Following are a few tips for submitting a **Feature Story** to your local newspaper/magazine for publication:

- Review the **Sample Feature Story** to familiarize yourself with the text.
- Re-type the **Sample Feature Story** or remove the “Sample Feature Story” banner from the top of the first page.
- Call the newspaper/magazine to retrieve the name and mailing address, fax, and/or e-mail address of the Features Editor.
- Mail, e-mail, or fax the **Feature Story** to the Features Editor. Include a brief introduction, requesting that the Features Editor review the attached article for consideration in the Feature Section of the newspaper/magazine.
- Follow up with the Feature Editor one day after faxing or e-mailing or 3-4 days after mailing the **Feature Story** to check on the status of your submission. (It is best to call newspaper/magazine editors early in the day -- avoid calling after 2:00 p.m.)

**#2 Sample Opinion Piece:** Opinion pieces are located in the back of the front section of any newspaper, usually opposite the editorial page. Opinion pieces provide an excellent forum for community members to air their views. Some of the best opinion pieces are submitted by citizens, dedicated to subjects like PolioPlus. Please note the following tips to help your **Opinion Piece** get printed in a local newspaper:

- Review the **Sample Opinion Piece** to familiarize yourself with the text.
- Re-type the **Sample Opinion Piece** on club or district letterhead.
- Call the newspaper/magazine to retrieve the name and mailing address, fax, and/or e-mail address of the Editor.
- Mail, e-mail, or fax the **Opinion Piece** to the Editor.
- Follow up with the Editor 1-2 days after faxing or e-mailing or 3-4 days after mailing to check on the status of your submission. (Remember; avoid calling newspapers/magazines after 2:00 p.m.)

**#3 Sample Letter to the Editor:** It is unfortunate that Rotary is not always mentioned in news articles pertaining to global polio eradication. Often this omission is the result of a lack of information -- editors are simply not aware of Rotary’s role in the polio eradication effort. A **Letter to the Editor** educating the community on Rotary’s role will remedy this situation. Please note the following tips to get your **Letter to the Editor** printed in your local newspaper/magazine:

- Review and fill in local examples in the **Sample Letter to the Editor**.
- Re-type the **Sample Letter to the Editor** on club or district letterhead.
- Call your local newspaper/magazine to retrieve the name and mailing address, fax, and/or e-mail address of the Editor.
- Mail, fax, or e-mail your **Letter to the Editor**.
- Follow up with the Editor 1-2 days after faxing or e-mailing and 3-4 days after mailing to check on the publishing status of the item. (Again, avoid calling after 2:00 p.m.)

**#4 Sample Press Releases:** Press releases are one of the most common tools of public relations. Newspapers welcome press releases and often print them verbatim. Two key factors in sending out effective press releases are timeliness and a local angle.

**Global:** The *Sample Press Release/Global* can be used by Rotary clubs at any time, regardless of whether the club is located in a polio-free region or in an area still battling the disease. Remember to localize the release with club or district examples.

**National Immunization Days:** The *Sample Press Release/National Immunization Days* is applicable for Rotary members and/or clubs that are directly participating in a National Immunization Day (NID) in a polio-endemic country. The release will also help promote routine polio immunization activity.

**PolioPlus Partners:** The *Sample Press Release/PolioPlus Partners* is an ideal opportunity to localize international Rotary club assistance without losing the local angle. Many newspapers/magazines are willing to print articles written by local citizens providing service to communities other than their own.

Following are a few tips for submitting a **Press Release** to a local newspaper/magazine:  
(Note: Do not send more than one **Press Release** to a single news outlet.)

- Review and localize the **Sample Press Release** and be sure to put a club or district contact person on the top of the page.
- Re-type the **Sample Press Release** on club or district letterhead.
- Call the local newspaper/magazine to retrieve the name and mailing address, fax, and/or e-mail address of the Assignment Editor.
- Allow for proper mail/delivery time of at least 3-4 days before the launch of the NID.
- Mail, e-mail, or fax your **Press Release** to the Assignment Editor.
- Follow up with the Assignment Editor the following day after faxing or e-mailing or three days after mailing to check on the status of your submission. (Call before 2:00 p.m.)



# Sample Feature Story

1,200 words

## POLIO: THE FINAL CHAPTER

During the first half of the 20th century, poliomyelitis paralyzed half a million people a year. Today, the disease is on the verge of eradication.

The war against polio has been waged on many fronts for decades and never has victory been so close. It is a battle fought with two tiny drops of vaccine, sophisticated technology, and an army of dedicated volunteers who help scientists track an elusive foe.

The struggle to achieve global polio eradication is a public health story of epic proportions. Rotary International is the volunteer arm of a global partnership dedicated to eradicating polio. Public partners include the World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF, and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Rotary's role on this team has been labeled a model for public/private partnerships for years to come.

Rotary members are leading the charge by contributing nearly US\$633 million in private funds to provide polio vaccine, technical support, medical personnel, laboratory equipment, and educational materials for health workers and parents.

Of even greater significance, Rotary members offer their compassion, time, and expertise. During National Immunization Days (NIDs), members volunteer to help at immunization posts, deliver vaccine, transport health workers, recruit fellow volunteers and squeeze countless drops of the oral polio vaccine into the mouths of children.

The mass mobilization for NIDs, referred to as "social mobilization," involves election-style campaigning and innovative strategies to get the message to people who are cut off from the mainstream by conflict, geography, or poverty. Rotary volunteers prepare and distribute different types of mass communication tools including posters, TV spots, radio promotions, billboards, folk songs, and promotional messages that are placed on floats, trucks, rickshaws, and in local newspaper announcements.

The lengths to which they will go to get vaccine to children are heroic, traveling hundreds of kilometers on camel, by boat, by helicopter, on horseback, or on foot for days to reach every child.

The following are some examples of Rotary in action:

- Despite natural disasters, Rotarians took giant steps toward polio eradication in **Pakistan**, where more than 29 million children were vaccinated during NIDs in November 2005.
- In 2005, more than 2,000 Rotarians from 102 clubs joined in a massive effort to immunize 24.4 million children under the age of five in **Indonesia**. Campaigns lasted from the end of August through the end of September, Indonesia's largest mass immunization drive ever.
- In **India** over 100,000 Rotary members, their families, and friends joined the Indian government for five consecutive years in immunizing over 170 million children on one day -- signaling the largest public health event ever in the world. Rotary regularly convenes a gathering of Muslim religious leaders to help strengthen polio eradication at the community level.

- In **Nigeria**, Rotary members have been instrumental in educating religious and traditional leaders on the importance of protecting children from polio. As respected leaders in their communities, Rotary members play a key advocacy role to win people's confidence in the program.

The last several years have been pivotal in advancing the polio eradication effort, culminating in several major milestones. Among these are:

- Since 1988, some two billion children around the world have been immunized against polio thanks to the unprecedented cooperation of more than 200 countries and 20 million volunteers, backed by an international investment of \$ 5 billion.
- Since Rotary began its PolioPlus program in 1985, the number of polio-endemic countries has declined from over 125 countries to four in 2006. These are: Afghanistan, India, Nigeria, and Pakistan.
- In 2006, more than 375 million children were vaccinated in 36 countries using nearly 2.1 billion doses of oral polio vaccine.
- Since 1988, the number of polio cases has been reduced by 99 percent, from 350,000 to less than 2,000 in 2006. In 1988, 10 percent of the world's children lived in polio-free countries. Today, 70 percent are living in polio-free countries, and half of the world's population now lives in certified polio-free areas. The Americas were declared free from polio in 1994, as well as the Western Pacific region in 2000, and Europe in 2002.

Though great progress has been made, much work remains. In order to eradicate polio worldwide, every child must be reached. WHO recommends four key strategies to attain polio eradication:

1. Maintain high levels of routine immunization coverage; (parents need to bring children in on regular basis for immunizations throughout the year)
2. Conduct NIDs for children under age five;
3. Implement and maintain a rigorous reporting system and laboratory network; and
4. When cases are identified, implement mop-ups (aggressive immunization campaigns) to reach children where pockets of the disease remain.

Rotary members are doing everything in their power to ensure that polio does not make a comeback and derail the eradication goal. As one WHO official points out, "Unlike many diseases, we have the technology right now to eradicate polio. Never again will we be closer to our goal than we are today."

The world stands firmly on the threshold of victory thanks to the achievements of the last two decades. Two billion children have been immunized, five million spared disability and over 250,000 deaths have been averted due to the efforts of Rotary International and its global partners.

What finer gift can we give every child than a world without polio?

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# Sample Opinion Piece

350 words

## **GOOD-BYE, POLIO: THANKS, ROTARY**

The world is on the verge of eliminating one of the most dreaded diseases of the 20th century -- poliomyelitis. During the first half of the 20th century, polio crippled over a half a million people every year. Even today, children in some developing countries continue to fall victim to the disease. But thanks in large part to Rotary International and to the 1.2 million Rotary members worldwide, the disease will soon be all but a memory.

Before celebrating this public health milestone, the spread of the poliovirus must be interrupted in the poorest and most populous regions of the world, and surveillance must continue for several years to be sure the virus is completely wiped-out. This is no easy task. One of the greatest challenges to the effort is a funding shortage.

Much of the needed assistance will come from Rotary or from Rotary's advocacy work with national governments and the private sector. To date, Rotary has contributed US\$633 million to the protection of more than two billion children in 122 countries. Rotary reaches out to governments worldwide to obtain vital financial and technical support. Since 1995, donor governments have contributed in excess of \$3 billion to polio eradication, due in part to Rotary's advocacy efforts.

In addition to raising money for polio eradication, Rotary members offer their time and expertise in the field to fight polio by providing support at clinics, transporting vaccine, contributing medical supplies, and mobilizing their communities for immunization and other polio eradication activities. More than one million members of Rotary worldwide have contributed toward the success of the polio eradication effort to date, demonstrating the extraordinary impact civil society can have on a global public health initiative.

The PolioPlus program represents the largest private-sector support of a global health initiative. Rotary's role was recognized by former Secretary-General of the United Nations Kofi Annan as a model for public/private partnerships in the 21st century. Other spearheading partners on the global eradication team include the World Health Organization, UNICEF, and the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Once eradicated, polio will join smallpox as one of only two diseases ever eliminated. And, Rotary will continue serving as a leader in humanitarian programs, with the hope that its success will inspire other private entities to work in similar ways for the public good.

# Sample Letter to the Editor

when Rotary is not recognized in a news article

Dear Editor:

In a recent report on the global effort to eradicate polio (Title of article, date), a major player on the eradication team was not recognized: Rotary International.

A global network of 1.2 million women and men united in humanitarian service, Rotary was the first to have the vision of a polio-free world back in 1985. In fact, it was Rotary's foresight that sparked the Global Polio Eradication Initiative in 1988.

As the volunteer arm and lead private sector contributor to polio eradication, Rotary has given US\$633 million and countless volunteer hours to the protection of more than two billion children in 122 countries.

Rotary volunteers provide necessary assistance in the field where immunizations are taking place. During mass immunization drives, members routinely work from dawn to dusk, squeezing two precious drops of the oral polio vaccine into the mouths of millions of children. They also assist parents in getting their children to the vaccination clinics, and later go house-to-house to make sure no child was missed.

For example, in February 2006, more than 100,000 Rotary members and their families and friends joined health care workers in India to immunize 170 million children. And despite the obstacles created in South Asia by the natural disasters of 2004 and 2005, Rotarians took giant steps toward polio eradication. In Pakistan, more than 29 million children were targeted during NIDs in November 2005.

Members of Rotary, located in more than 200 countries and geographical areas, also help transport vaccine, equip laboratories that track the disease, and contribute medical supplies to support the global effort. (Insert local example here of Rotary volunteers immunizing, shipping, raising money for polio eradication, etc.)

Soon, the Earth will be free from the dreaded polio disease. When that day comes, polio will become only the second disease in the history of mankind ever to be eradicated. The final years will be the toughest yet. Rotary is up for the task and committed to seeing it through to the end.

Rotary's partners on the global team include the World Health Organization, UNICEF, and the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention -- all of which embrace Rotary's vital role on this historic health drive. Let's do all we can to teach the world that amazing things can happen when forces join together for a common good.

Signed,

# Sample Press Release

Global

*Edit to fit local circumstances  
and type on club or district letterhead.*

CONTACT: NAME  
ADDRESS  
TELEPHONE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
(Date mailed)

## **ROTARY LEADS VOLUNTEER FORCE IN GLOBAL POLIO ERADICATION**

(City, Country, Date) -- Rotary club members in more than 200 countries and geographical areas around the world are leading a global effort to eradicate polio worldwide. Rotary is the leading private partner on the global eradication team, having contributed US\$ 633 million.

Besides raising funds, over one million women and men of Rotary have donated their time and personal resources to help immunize nearly 2 billion children during National Immunization Days (NID) in over 122 countries. Rotary volunteers provide necessary assistance in the field where immunizations are taking place by promoting national immunization days through mass communications, transporting the vaccine to immunization posts, and by squeezing countless drops of the oral polio vaccine into the mouths of children.

Despite the obstacles created in South Asia by the natural disasters of 2004 and 2005, Rotarians took giant steps toward polio eradication. In Pakistan, more than 29 million children were targeted during NIDs in November 2005.

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Add one – Polio

In India, over 100,000 Rotary members and their families and friends joined the Indian government in February 2006 in immunizing over 170 million children on one day -- signaling the largest public health event ever in the world.

Rotary members in countries free from polio continue to extend their assistance to countries still battling the disease by providing a wide range of items necessary for mobilizing communities and promoting immunization activities. Rotary also provides vital assistance for the growing laboratory network that is necessary to track the last cases of the disease.

In addition, Rotary reaches out to governments worldwide to obtain vital financial and technical support. Since 1995, donor governments have contributed in excess of \$3 billion to polio eradication, due in part to Rotary's advocacy efforts. That amount, combined with direct funds from Rotary, is more than half the money needed for the entire global polio eradication program.

Rotary volunteer (Insert club or district spokesperson's name) views Rotary's involvement in global polio eradication as an integral collaboration of government and volunteer agencies working together to tackle large-scale initiatives. "No single agency can do this job alone. Rotary offers a nonpolitical, nonreligious voice to the partnership that addresses the needs of the community because we are part of the community."

Remarkable progress has been achieved in the fight against polio. Since 1988, the number of polio cases has been reduced from 350,000 to less than 2,000 in 2006. Today, 70 percent of the world's population now lives in polio-free countries. The Americas were declared free from polio in 1994, as well as the Western Pacific region in 2000, and Europe in 2002.

The Global Polio Eradication Initiative is spearheaded by the World Health Organization, Rotary International, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

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# Sample Press Release

National Immunization Days

*Edit to fit local circumstances  
and type on club or district letterhead.*

CONTACT: NAME  
ADDRESS  
TELEPHONE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
(Date mailed)

## **ROTARY ENCOURAGES PARENTS TO IMMUNIZE THEIR CHILDREN AGAINST POLIO**

(City, Country, Date) -- Members of the Rotary Club of (Name of club, city) are reaching out to the community this week to urge parents to bring their children to designated immunization posts to receive the oral polio vaccine during this year's National Immunization Days (NIDs) on (Dates of NID).

NIDs are part of a global health strategy to eradicate polio worldwide. Rotary International is the leading private partner on the global eradication team contributing US\$633 million to this effort. In addition, Rotary volunteers provide necessary assistance in the field where immunizations are taking place. In (Name of country), a total of (Number of Rotarians in country) are dedicating their time and energy to this historic health drive. (Insert club activities for supporting NID)

Members of Rotary, located in more than 200 countries and geographical areas, assist health care teams during NIDs, transport the vaccine and health care workers to immunization posts, administer the vaccine to children, and equip laboratories that track the disease. Rotary members also contribute medical supplies to support the global effort.

*continued >>>*

Add one -- NIDs

Rotary volunteer (Insert club or district spokesperson's name) views the NID as a successful collaboration of government and volunteer agencies. "No single agency can do this job alone. Rotary clubs are part of the community, and members serve their community. We find this link helpful in reaching out and educating parents and siblings on the importance of immunizing children."

Rotary's partners on the global eradication team include the World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF, and the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

According to WHO, other key strategies for polio eradication, in addition to NIDs, include maintaining high levels of routine immunization coverage (parents need to bring children in on regular basis for immunizations throughout the year); implementing a rigorous reporting system and laboratory network to identify possible cases of polio; and, when cases are identified, adopting aggressive immunization campaigns to reach children where pockets of the disease remain.

Remarkable progress has been achieved in the fight against polio. Since 1988, some two billion children around the world have been immunized against polio thanks to the unprecedented cooperation of more than 200 countries and 20 million volunteers, backed by an international investment of \$5 billion. Since 1988, the number of polio cases has been reduced from 350,000 to less than 2,000 in 2006. Today, 70 percent of the world's population now lives in polio-free countries. The Americas were declared free from polio in 1994, as well as the Western Pacific region in 2000, and Europe in 2002.

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# Sample Press Release

PolioPlus Partners

*Edit to fit local circumstances  
and type on club or district letterhead.*

CONTACT: NAME

ADDRESS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TELEPHONE

(Date mailed)

## **ROTARY MEMBERS SUPPORT POLIO ERADICATION EFFORTS IN (NAME OF COUNTRY)**

(City, Country, Date) The Rotary club of (Name of city) donated US\$ (Insert amount of PolioPlus Partner contribution) to purchase (List items purchased by Partners) to support polio immunization efforts in (Name of country).

A highly infectious disease, polio still strikes children mainly under the age of five in countries located in Asia and Africa. Polio can cause paralysis and sometimes death. As there is no cure for polio, the best protection is prevention. For as little as .60 cents worth of vaccine, a child can be protected against this crippling disease for life.

As global polio eradication is Rotary's top philanthropic goal, members of Rotary clubs in polio-free regions are providing direct support and financial assistance to polio endemic countries through an innovative program called PolioPlus Partners. Since its inception in 1995, PolioPlus Partners has provided \$39.4 million to support social mobilization, laboratory, surveillance, and other polio eradication projects.

Through PolioPlus Partners, a section of Rotary's PolioPlus program, Rotary members provide the tools of immunization. These include promotional items that will bring children to the immunization sites such as posters, radio and television advertisements and T-shirts to identify the health care workers and volunteers.

*continued>>>*

Add one - partners

Rotary member (Insert club or district spokesperson's name) views the Partners project as an opportunity to provide assistance where it is needed most. "Our club/district selected the exact items that our Partners grant would purchase. We gained a sense of fulfillment in providing these items to (Name of country which receiving Partners' grant). With these new items, our fellow Rotary members in (Name of country) and health authorities will be better equipped to immunize children against this preventable disease."

Remarkable progress has been achieved in the fight against polio. Since 1988, some two billion children around the world have been immunized against polio thanks to the unprecedented cooperation of more than 200 countries and 20 million volunteers, backed by an international investment of \$5 billion. When Rotary began its polio immunization efforts in the mid 1980s, approximately 1,000 children were infected by this crippling disease every day. In 2006, less than 2,000 cases were reported all year. The Americas were declared free from polio in 1994, as well as the Western Pacific region in 2000, and Europe in 2002. Once eradicated, polio will be the second disease after smallpox ever to be eliminated worldwide.

In 1985, Rotary International created PolioPlus – a program to immunize all the world's children against polio. Since then, Rotary has contributed nearly US\$633 million – representing the largest private-sector support of a global health initiative ever. In addition, over one million women and men of Rotary have volunteered their time and personal resources to help immunize more than two billion children in 122 countries.

The Global Polio Eradication Initiative is spearheaded by the World Health Organization, Rotary International, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

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