

Easy to read, clear and concise – the ultimate lay-persons overview of The Rotary Foundation

Some find understanding The Rotary Foundation confusing.  No longer – while there is much detail that can be drilled down into, the following explanation by Mike Webb, a Trustee of The Rotary Foundation, is well worth the quick read and can be shared.

This year we celebrated 100 years of the Rotary Foundation, our charity

Our Foundation has very special qualities as it is an enabling Foundation, it asks us to donate or contribute like so many other charities but it also asks us to get involved and utilise the funds. We give but we also receive. Our Foundation is able to achieve its mission through the generous contributions and active participation of Rotarians and friends of Rotary

 The main recipient of donations to TRF is the annual fund. When we donate, half our contributions are directed to the District Fund and the other half makes its way to the World Fund. Both help support and enable Rotary projects to become reality through grants.

 It was in 1917 that the RI President Arch Klumpf said “It seems eminently proper that we should accept endowments for the purpose of doing good in the world, in charitable, educational or other avenues of community progress” and so “doing good in the world” has become the TRF motto

In 1917 the RC of Kansas City made the first contribution $26.50 to the endowment fund suggested by Arch Klumph. But for almost a decade the endowment went largely unknown and received few contributions.

In 1930 the Foundation made its first grant $500 to the International Society for Crippled Children

Scholarships were the first big programme of TRF set up in 1947 following the death of Paul Harris. It is essentially a tribute to the founder of Rotary.

 Today Rotary Scholars pursuing graduate degrees receive Foundation support through global grants and district grants and Rotary Peace Fellows study at six Rotary Peace centres. Like participants of past scholarship programmes todays Rotary Scholars and Peace Fellows gain knowledge and skills that help them to further the Foundations humanitarian and peace building mission

The Foundation launched the Rotary Centres for International Studies in 1999 in cooperation with several leading universities throughout the world. These Rotary Peace Centres welcomed the inaugural class of peace fellows in the Autumn of 2002. This is the Foundations number one educational priority. Through academic training, study and practice the Rotary Peace Centres programme develops leaders who became catalysts for peace and conflict resolution and prevention in their communities and around the globe

 Each year 60 Rotary Peace Fellows are chosen to participate in a master’s degree or certificate programme at one of our six centres. Graduates of the programme are reintegrating refugees in Sudan, creating jobs for disadvantaged women in India and supporting reconstruction in devastated regions of the world. After the 2010 earthquake that destroyed much of Haiti, Peace fellow Louisa Dow worked for Habitat for Humanity helping displaced families find safe permanent housing

District grants fund small scale, short term activities that address needs in local communities and communities abroad. Each district chooses which activities it will fund with these grants. Some districts choose to allocate smaller grants to support several club projects

Global grants support large-scale international activities with sustainable, measurable outcomes in one or more of Rotary’s six areas of focus. Grant sponsors form international partnerships and work together to develop projects that respond to real community needs.

Global grants can fund:

* Humanitarian projects
* Scholarships for graduate-level academic studies
* Vocational training teams

The 1980 Council on Legislation endorsed a proposal from the RI Board to “eliminate polio through immunization.”

In 1984, the RI Board made a series of decisions that resulted in what we now know as the PolioPlus program and established a fund to support it Rotary leaders announced these ambitious plans in early 1985, and later that year, they introduced the program’s new name: PolioPlus. The “Plus” initially referred to the additional vaccines that were administered along with polio vaccine.

 Today, one of the greatest benefits is that it also reflects the idea that the infrastructure, fundraising, and advocacy methods implemented by the polio eradication effort will support future battles against infectious disease.

As you may know there have been only ten identified cases of the wild polio virus in this calendar year.

In the mid-1980s, Rotary began a three-year fundraising campaign with a goal of raising $120 million. The campaign focused on educating club members about the need to eradicate polio and the many benefits of a polio-free world. Rotary leaders met with other nongovernmental organizations and government officials to convince them of the feasibility of their goal and gain their support.

The campaign raised $247 million, more than double the goal.

The Foundation’s Trustees provide scrupulous oversight, and the global network of volunteers and technical experts known as the Cadre who carry out and monitor Foundation grant projects practice the highest ethical standards, ensuring that volunteers’ and contributors’ investments of time and money are put to good use. This excellent stewardship is recognized by organizations that rate charities; they regularly give The Rotary Foundation high marks for its efficient use of contributions.

Currently the Foundation has been awarded the highest 4 star award by Charity Navigator a standard achieved by only 1% of charities for prudent care of donors money, satisfying community need and fiscal responsibility.

From its first contribution of $26.50, the Foundation’s assets have grown to approximately $1 billion, and more than $3 billion have been spent on programs and projects, transforming millions of lives across the globe.

* 2.5 billion children have been immunized against polio, reducing cases of the disease by 99.9 percent.
* More than 1100 Rotary Peace Fellows have been trained to resolve conflict, deal with the aftermath of war, and promote peace.
* Hundreds of thousands of people now enjoy access to clean water, heath care, and education, thanks to Foundation humanitarian projects.

Through the Foundation, Rotary members find satisfaction in serving others. The Foundation offers countless opportunities for all members, alumni, and their friends to do good in their communities and in the world — and to make a real, life-changing difference for people in need.

And because of the Foundation, people around the world recognize Rotary as an agent of positive change in the world.

There are many ways that you can improve lives today and build a better future though Rotary:

* Work with an international partner club to develop a project in one of Rotary’s six areas of focus and apply for a global grant
* Participate in or support your club or district’s grant projects
* Contribute to the Foundation to ensure it can continue to do good in the world for many years to come