



POST-POLIO HEALTH INTERNATIONAL
INCLUDING INTERNATIONAL VENTILATOR USERS NETWORK

Ann Lee Hussey, Chairman of the Rotary Action Group - Polio Survivors and Associates (PSA), and Joan L. Headley, Executive Director of Post-Polio Health International (PHI), have announced a joint effort to promote greater public awareness of polio in present times. The program will include the ongoing Rotary fund drive to raise funds for the polio eradication program, the urgent need for assistance and rehabilitation for recent survivors of polio, and an awareness of post-polio syndrome occurring in the lives of many polio survivors long after recovery from the initial attack of polio.

Because of the success of the eradication effort, the total number of survivors worldwide has dropped considerably. The exact number is unknown, but polio survivors throughout the world are in need of programs that will provide rehabilitation and re-rehabilitation, which is the key to participating in society.

The 32,000 Rotary clubs all over the world are committed to matching the \$100 million grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation now being used in inoculation programs in Africa, India, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

“We are suggesting to Rotary clubs that they conduct a polio awareness program in their communities to locate polio survivors and assist them by supplying health information, organizing post-polio support networks and, if needed, providing assistive devices,” said Hussey. “Another suggestion is to enlist school children to ask their parents and grandparents about the polio epidemics of the ‘40s and ‘50s and record the stories.”

“Post-Polio Health International (PHI), through its WE’RE STILL HERE! campaign, is encouraging post-polio support organizations and its individual members to contact their local Rotary Clubs with an offer to present programs at their weekly club meetings. This will give Rotarians a better understanding of the initial effect of having polio as well as the long-term after effects,” adds Headley. Headley continues, “Rotary International’s commitment to eradicating the poliovirus from the world is unyielding. PHI and the extensive post-polio network carry on from there, assisting those for whom the vaccine was too late.”

Both organizations believe this interchange of experiences and information will increase public awareness of the current Rotary fund drives to eradicate polio worldwide as well as the need to create rehabilitation programs to provide a healthy and productive life for individuals with physical disabilities.

Ann Lee Hussey, Chairperson of PSA, notes, “As Rotarians, who are also polio survivors, we know personally the significant difference rehabilitation made in our lives and how it contributed to our success in life. Our specific goal is to ensure younger polio survivors have the same opportunity.”

Focusing on PHI’s mission, Headley advises, “We want to encourage Rotary’s eradication effort and at the same time encourage them to remember on behalf of those among the world’s survivors who are in need of rehabilitation – WE’RE STILL HERE!”

For more information about these organizations and the WE’RE STILL HERE! campaign, visit their websites: www.post-polio.org or www.rotarypoliosurvivors.com. Additional sources of information about current polio eradication programs are www.rotary.org, www.who.int, www.cdc.gov, www.unicef.org. Contact Post-Polio Health International at director@post-polio.org and Polio Survivors and Associates Secretary at raytaylor@mindspring.org.