



Manna from India

From Jenny Horton of Kenmore Club
on the Polio Eradication Trail



"Jenny Horton" <yen283@bigpond.com>

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Greetings from India

India you say...and rightly so, having had a health enforced stay in Australia for a few months. My spirit was getting a little scratchy and with India holding a special place in my heart I headed out. Since my last visit to Calcutta, I wanted to spend time working in the Mother Teresa Home of Khalighat, her favourite home for the dying. So that is where I am now.



Mother Teresa Home & her message to Rotarians



It is very humbling to be able to serve these few destitute and dying in this way, if only for a short time. (Says she who is already thinking about when she can return!) But soon I will head to Uttar Pradesh (north of Delhi) for their Sub National Immunization Activities, where Rotarians have put together a great program for me. How else should a Rotarian spend their leave?

Global 2007 Milestones

1. 2007 saw an overall reduction in polio infected districts by 24%, being a 59% reduction in the number of districts infected with P1 virus and a 37% increase in districts infected with P3 virus.
2. By the end of 2007, 2 of the 4 endemic countries had achieved immunity parity between their infected zones and their polio free zones. Of this, 5 of the 9 transmission zones within the countries had achieved population immunity equal to or greater than their polio free zones.
3. Outbreaks were stopped in 11 of the 13 countries with imported circulating virus in 2006.
4. At the end of 2007, there remained a funding gap of US\$135M for 2008 activities.

The goal for 2008 is to stop transmission of Type 1 polio virus, while in 2009, stopping the transmission of Type 3 polio virus. The intensified efforts in India in 2008 in curtailing the outbreak of P3 virus and only having 7 cases of P1 virus are looking promising.

The greatest obstacle to the program now is the funding gap. So if anyone knows someone wanting to make a tax deductible donation, please share the

polio story with them. Even with the great donation of \$100m from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Rotary matching it, there is still a deficit.

Global Situation

Late 2007, India had a major outbreak of P3 in its northern states of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar but has since made great inroads to breaking the circulation of virus. While in 2008, Nigeria has increased its cases, reporting 389 P1 cases and 35 P3 viruses. There is now a concentrated effort in Nigeria with the government and all partners to stop this outbreak and ensure high quality campaigns reaching all children under 5 in the target areas.

Total Cases	Year to date 2008*	Year to date 2007*	Total in 2007
Globally	792	294	1315
Pakistan	15	10	32
India	298	103	873
Afghanistan	10	4	17
Nigeria	424	122	285
Niger	11	4	11
Chad	4	2	21
DRC	2	23	41
Sudan	1	0	1
Angola	19	6	8
Ethiopia	2	0	0
CAR	1	0	0
Benin	1	0	0
Nepal	4	0	5

*data as of 15 July 08

Dr Margaret Chan, Director-General WHO, has personally visited all 4 endemic countries, meeting leaders as well as visiting some field activities. She has made polio eradication her priority and is certainly "Making Dreams Real".

February Visit to Tamil Nadu

I was really happy to revisit my friends and colleagues in Rotary District 2980 and 3230 along with 3 Rotarians from Queensland. It was a great reunion for me as back in 2000 on my first ever polio trip, I met the then National Polio Plus Chair for India PDG Purushotaman. It was Puru who encouraged and nurtured me all those years ago, with me spending time with him on 3 separate trips. Puru and his wife, Jothi, are my Indian family and very precious to me.

Together with Ross and Joe Forgionie, and Heather Yarker, we spent 10 days visiting polio eradication activities and many TRF projects including several sponsored in matching grants from D9630. We saw many literacy projects (school desks, computer centres, and science labs), toilet blocks, centres for



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the physically and mentally challenged, a tissue culture banana plantation and some water projects.



**My friend,
PDG Puru**

Joe and those drops

But the project that stole our hearts was 8 low cost shelters that were built 8 years ago and have truly now become a community for workers on a remote plantation. The shelters were immaculately maintained and the place was spotless, with gardens to supply the vegetables and animals for meat. For me, The Rotary Foundation truly comes to life when I visit these areas. Not only to see the results of the projects but to meet those who work tirelessly to make a community better for so many.

Interestingly, we visited 2 schools in Tiruchengode where in a large girls' school, the girls voted that they wanted a computer centre instead of a toilet block. The boys' school voted for the toilet block. Still now in that girls' school there are over 3000 girls with no adequate toilet facilities. A project that is waiting for a Club. It was there we met a young lady who was afflicted with polio. Her disability was terrible but she managed the stairs along with the able-bodied students. India never ceases to amaze me. Truly, I thank PDG Puru for all he and Jothi have done for so many both in his country and for the many internationals he has touched. A truly remarkable and inspiring Rotarian!

Paul Harris Birthday

At the invitation of DG Kerry Brandt-Wilson in D9500, I spoke at his District Conference. It was a wonderful conference and I really enjoyed the all-rotary content which was fabulous. Kerry never takes no for an answer and invited PRIP Sir Clem Renouf to be a special guest which was wonderful as Clem and Firth were able to attend and add much to the event. While there we were all able to celebrate the birthday of PRIP Sir Clem and had a surprise guest in "Paul Harris", who joined Clem in cutting the birthday cake. It really sealed what was a wonderful time. Congratulations to Reg Hutchinson and his team for a great conference.

Pakistan

My time in Pakistan was incredible as I look back. Three years passed so quickly as I was privileged to

share so much time with so many there and work on this program that I love so dearly. I must comment on the National Polio Plus Chair, Abdul Haiy Khan, for his tireless work with all matters related to polio and immunization of the children. A truly remarkable man who never stops giving! He supported my ideas and helped me push through plans that with the assistance of many are still paying dividends.



PRIP Clem & "Paul"



**Two Drs &
Two PHFs**

It was so great just last month to read of the involvement of the Rotaractors on a large scale with the delivery and monitoring of the polio activities in Karachi. One special moment for me was to see RIP Wilf Wilkinson present my two international colleagues with PHFs in recognition of their efforts with the polio program in Pakistan. These were Dr Mohammad Azmoudeh from Iran and Dr Medhat Attia from Egypt. We, along with Dr Azmoudeh's wife, supported each other and remain good friends.

What Next?

I have volunteered with Polio Eradication Initiative through WHO and CDC for another placement from September to December and have been reassigned to Ethiopia. This is great news to me as it is a country that is always under threat of virus spread due to the poor health infrastructure and the great mobility of people. I also have several friends there from my last assignment there in 2003. The challenges will be different from Pakistan and other countries but the goal is the same.

Life is one incredible adventure and being part of achieving this goal is something I really am passionate about. So I am thankful for the opportunities that I have to work alongside so many around the world in trying to achieve this. The program is team work and every person is important, from those raising funds to support to the teams knocking on every door to deliver the drops. I know when we do win this "war", we will truly celebrate!

Thanks to all

Jenny, somewhere in India