

# ROTARY LEADER



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Virtual reality adds new dimension to polio fight

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Experience the refreshed Rotary.org



JOHN F. GERM

Next month will mark 112 years since the first Rotary club was formed in 1905. Since then, Rotary members have worked diligently to make a difference in both local and global communities. A major reason that Rotary continues to have such an impact is our ability to grow and adapt as an organization.

One of the ways we ensure this is through the Council on Legislation. The 2016 Council resulted in many new, forward-thinking decisions, including membership flexibility. This gives your clubs more freedom to decide how they run their business, while maintaining the classification system and our high ethical standards. Clubs can now determine how meetings are held, who is invited to join, and what defines engagement.

We know that if we want *Rotary Serving Humanity* to become even better in the years ahead, we'll need more willing hands, more caring hearts, and more bright minds to move our work forward. We'll need clubs that are flexible, so that Rotary service will be attractive to younger members, recent retirees, and working people. We'll need to seek out new partnerships, opening ourselves more to collaborative relationships with other organizations.

The Council also passed a dues increase that will help us provide the tools and resources you need to continue Doing Good in the World. The refresh of Rotary.org is one such resource. We listened to your feedback, and I'm pleased to announce that the newly improved Rotary.org is being launched this month.

Looking ahead, we also see a clear need to prioritize continuity in our leadership. As members of Rotary, we're all playing on the same team, working toward the same goals. If we want to reach those goals together, we all have to move in the same direction.

As Paul Harris said, and just about every RI president since has repeated, these are changing times, and we in Rotary must change with them.

We understand that some of the old rules don't make sense anymore. So we've changed them. Because Rotary isn't about the rules. It's about the service we do — as in *Rotary Serving Humanity*.

# VIRTUAL REALITY BRINGS NEW DIMENSION TO POLIO FIGHT

Rotary is using the power of virtual reality to build empathy and inspire action in our campaign to eradicate polio.

Rotary leaders are getting a look at two films, produced with support from the U.S. Fund for UNICEF, during the International Assembly in San Diego this month. There are plans to make them available to the public later in 2017.

The virtual reality films, which debuted at World Polio Day in October, tell the story of Alokita, a young adult paralyzed by polio as a child in India, which has been polio-free since 2011.

"When you open your eyes and see a different environment around you, you relate to the subject on a visceral, personal level," says

Vincent Vernet, director of digital and publishing with Rotary's communications team, who spearheaded the film project. "The final push to end polio requires significant resources and emotional investment. This type of innovative technology has the potential to inspire that."

Actress and Rotary polio ambassador Archie Panjabi introduces viewers to Alokita, part of the last generation of children to be affected by polio, and to the doctors working to provide corrective surgery to survivors like her. Viewers are transported to India as soon as they put on the virtual reality headset, which transmits a 360-degree mix of sights and sounds. In this interactive environment, viewers roam the streets of Delhi and the



World Polio Day attendees get immersed in a story about a young adult paralyzed by polio.

halls of St. Stephen's Hospital, home to India's only polio ward, where Alokita takes her first steps in 11 years.

UNICEF has worked with virtual reality since 2015, recognizing that immersive experience can be a powerful advocacy tool. The agency also produced a film, "You Are There: On the Road to Making Polio History," in this model. Actor and goodwill ambassador Ewan McGregor introduces and narrates

the five-minute film, which takes viewers to a Kenyan village to meet a nine-year-old boy infected with polio and a vaccinator working to spare other children.

- ➔ Watch the **streamed World Polio Day coverage** for a global update on the polio eradication campaign.
- ➔ **Learn more** about UNICEF's virtual reality projects.

# FIVE REASONS TO CHECK OUT OUR REFRESHED WEBSITE

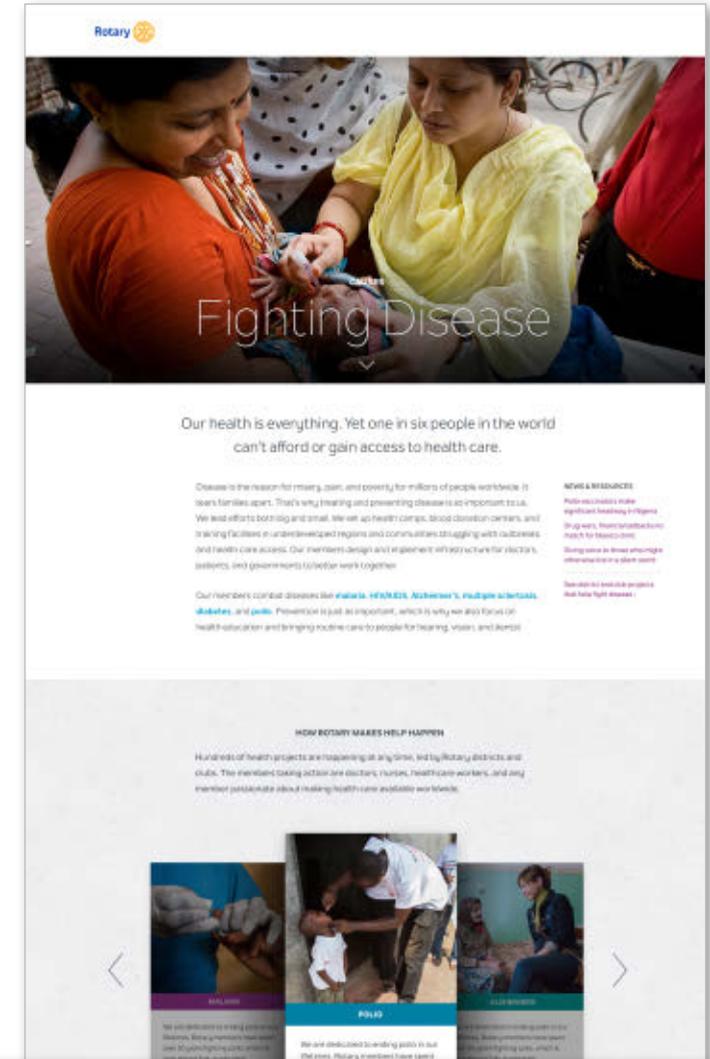
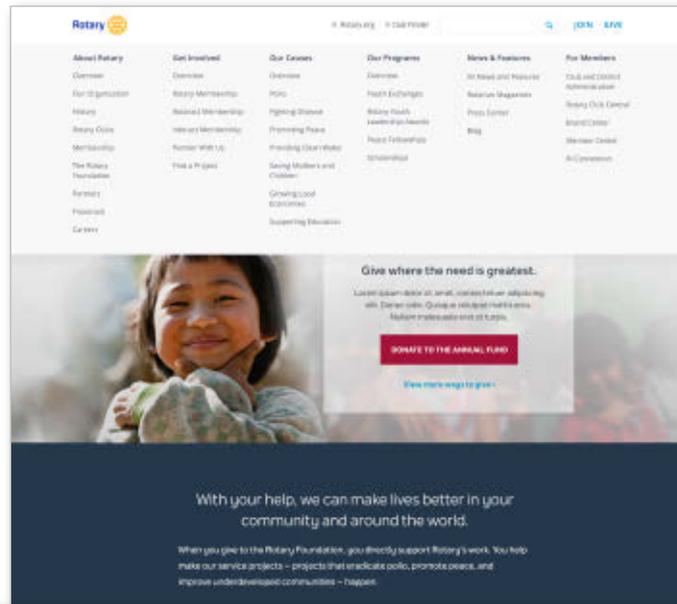
If you haven't visited Rotary.org recently, you're missing out!

Our public-facing site has a fresh, contemporary look that clearly answers the often-asked question: "What is Rotary?"

For many people, our website is their introduction to the impressive work that Rotary members do to improve lives around the world. It's meant to create an emotional connection that inspires potential members, donors, and partners to get involved. The latest changes to the public site do that, and more. (And work is underway to improve My Rotary as well.)

Here are five reasons that you'll appreciate our new public site. Visit Rotary.org to see all the improvements and share the news with your clubs and community.

These website upgrades were made possible by the dues increase implemented by the 2016 Council on Legislation, enabling Rotary to provide additional support to clubs and districts.



## 1

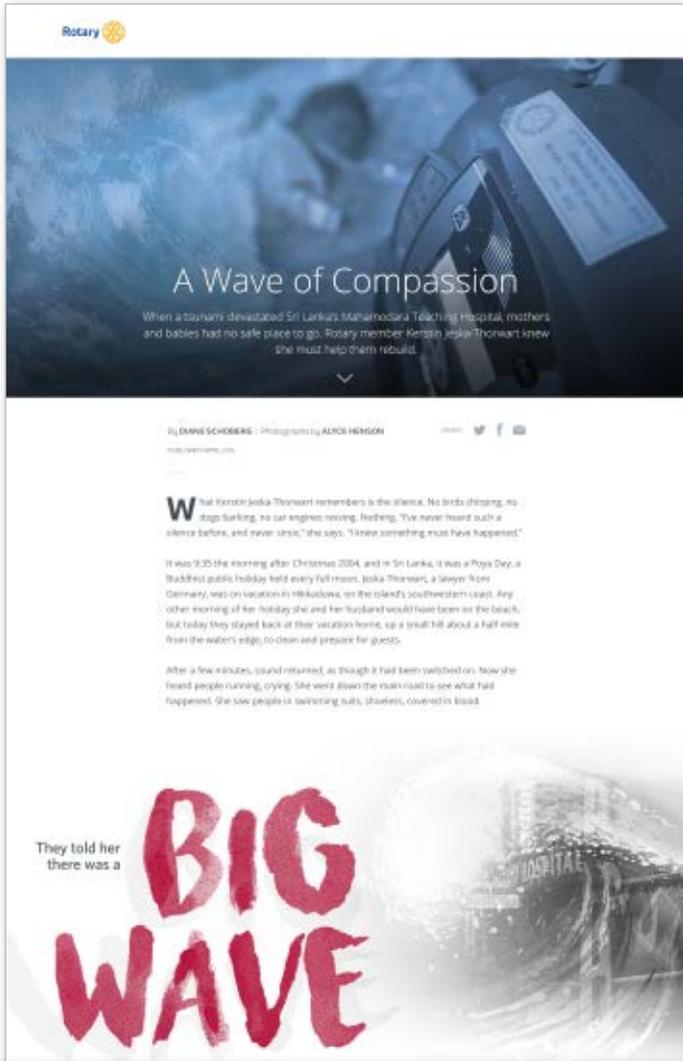
### BETTER ORGANIZATION

In addition to **organizing the content** so you can find what you need more easily, we've improved our search function so you get results quickly.

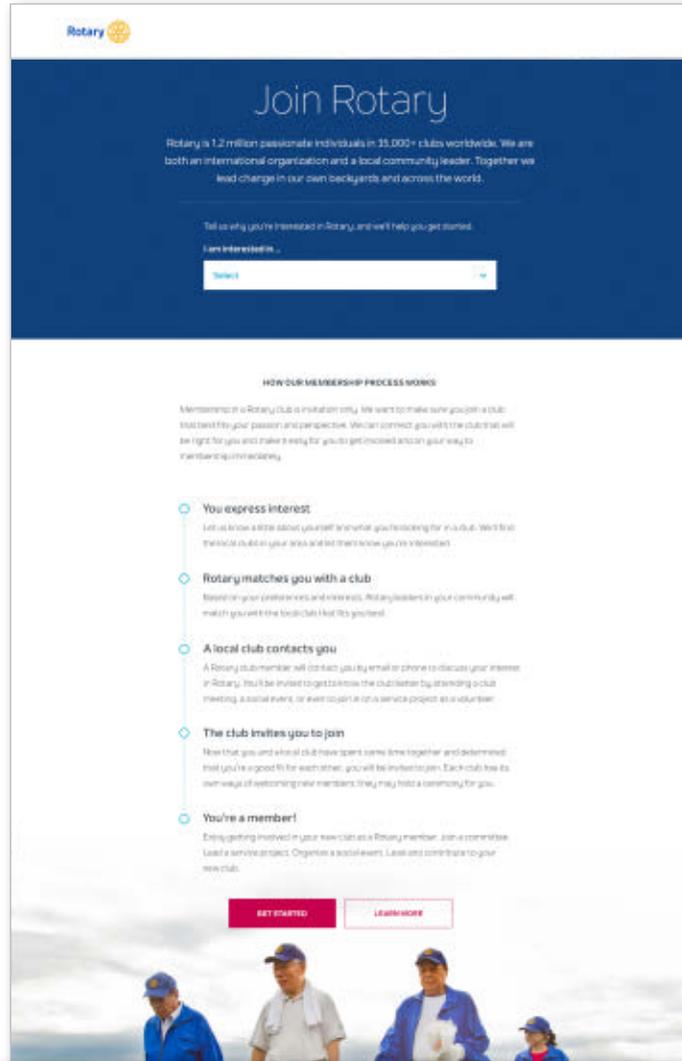
## 2

### IMPROVED READABILITY

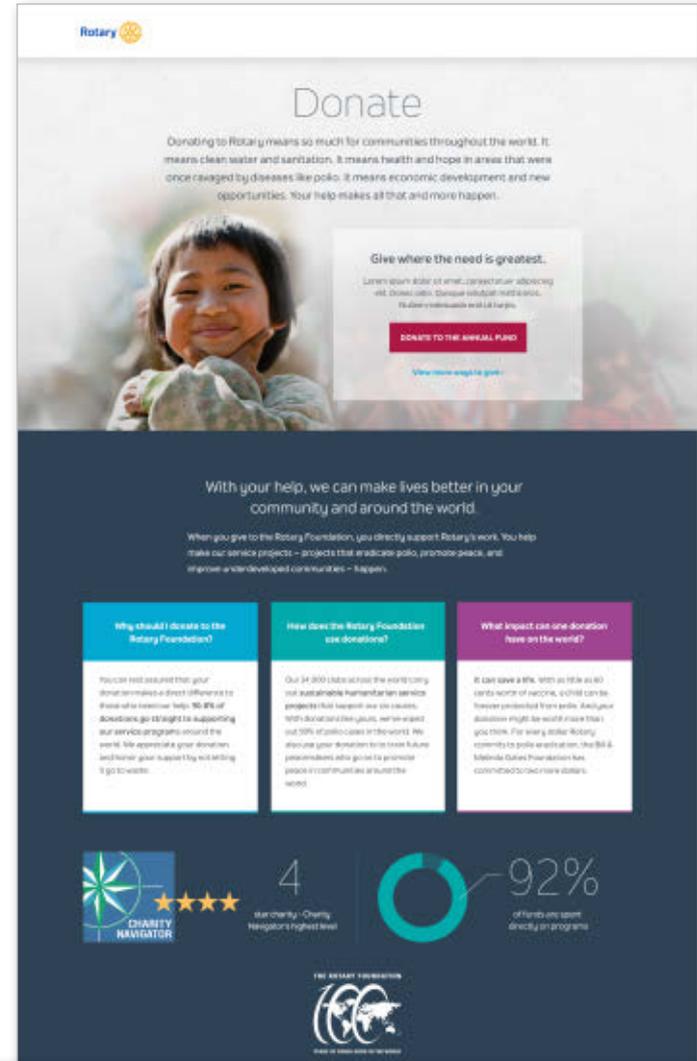
Speaking of speed, technical improvements reduce the time it takes a page to load. And by **enlarging type sizes** throughout the site, we've also made our content easier to read.



**3 COMPELLING STORYTELLING**  
 Powerful photography and video, engaging writing, and **dynamic graphics** elevate Rotary's work through storytelling, and build an emotional connection with our readers.



**4 PROMINENT CALLS TO ACTION**  
 Throughout the site, you'll find **calls to join or donate**, making it easier than ever for potential members to connect with their local club, and to give.



**5 ENHANCED METRICS**  
 A new metrics-gathering system will help us measure traffic to our site and see the impact our stories have on readers, whether by motivating them to share a story on social media or to **donate to a cause**.

# LOCATION IS EVERYTHING

When it comes to service projects, it's good to locate some in the middle of town.

A visible service project in the center of town and a well-placed sign helped the Rotary Club of Luanshya, Zambia, grow its membership from a historic low of three members to double digits in less than a year.

Patrick Coleman was new to Luanshya — a city of about 100,000 people — and a relatively new member of the club in the 1990s when one day he saw a man in a wheelchair trying to negotiate a flight of steps to enter the city's civic center. At that time, access ramps couldn't be found anywhere in Zambia.

"He got out of the chair and crawled up the steps on his rear, one step at a time, and asked passersby to lift his chair to the top," says Coleman. "I thought, what a horrible thing for this man, to have such a lack of dignity."

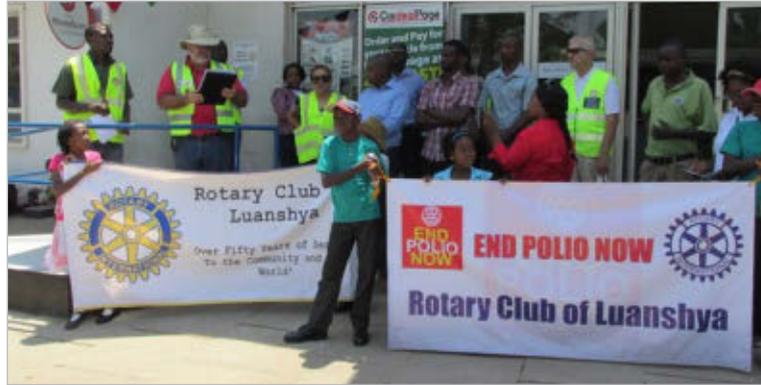
Coleman decided to approach the town council for permission

to build a ramp, partnering with the Christian Resource Center for supplies and persuading a few contractors to do the work pro bono. Once the ramp was completed, he placed a big sign with the Rotary emblem on it, advertising the work of the club and the partner organization.

"People saw it because it was in the middle of town, and everyone goes to the civic center at least four times a year," Coleman says. "People began to ask, 'Where does this Rotary club meet, and what is Rotary all about? Why did these people build a wheelchair ramp?'"

The project's success was greatly magnified soon after, when the president of Zambia visited and was so impressed with the ramp that he declared the country needed more of them. The story of his visit and an accompanying photo showing the Rotary sign in the background made the front page of the newspapers.

"Within six months, our club had grown fourfold. We brought in



The Rotary Club of Luanshya, Zambia, dedicates a ramp in front of the post office.

13 members on a single day," Coleman says.

Coleman, who's now a regional Rotary Foundation coordinator, says the club learned a couple of valuable lessons that are applicable to any club:

Locate a few of your projects in urban areas where they will be seen, and used, by potential members.

"We tend to do many of our projects in rural areas, and that's where we put the signs," Coleman says. "But the people in the villages aren't going to join Rotary; they don't have the money. And the people in our urban areas don't know what Rotary is doing because they don't go to that village for water, or send their kids to that school."

Always look for ways to meet concrete needs in your community to keep members involved. New members are particularly good at spotting needs (like the absence of a wheelchair ramp) that others may be overlooking.

"They bring a fresh set of eyes," Coleman says.

Coleman's club is awaiting approval for another highly visible project, this one in honor of The Rotary Foundation's centennial. Fittingly, it involves fixing a public latrine in the center of town. More than a century ago, one of the first Rotary service projects was the construction of public toilets in downtown Chicago.



Choose from more than 90 breakout sessions at the 2017 Rotary Convention in Atlanta. The sessions will be held Monday through Wednesday, 12-14 June, covering topics such as Staying Healthy While Volunteering, New Club Flexibility Options, The End of Polio, and The Future of Rotary. Check out a [preliminary schedule of sessions](#).

Registration is still open for the Presidential Peace Conference, 9-10 June, preceding the Rotary Convention in Atlanta. Explore Rotary's impact on peace and conflict resolution.

The role of district international service chair has been updated to help clubs plan service projects that are impactful, sustainable, and backed by a high-quality global grant. These chairs are now responsible for working with district leaders to establish a network of Rotarians, program participants, and alumni with professional expertise in our areas of focus and in community project planning, and to connect clubs to these experts.

As part of The Rotary Foundation's centennial celebration, we're recognizing the tremendous work that Rotary clubs and districts accomplish through Foundation grants. You can help by awarding the [certificate of recognition](#) to clubs in your district that completed an outstanding district grant-funded activity in 2015-16.

As the result of action taken by the 2016 Council on Legislation, clubs now have more flexibility than they've ever had — to decide how and when to meet, whom they invite to become members, and what member engagement means. Find five ideas for [using the new flexible options](#) in your club and answers to frequently asked questions about the policy changes.

Celebrate World Rotaract Week 13-19 March. Partner with Rotaractors to take action together and demonstrate how Rotaract clubs improve communities locally and globally.

# WHAT'S NEW IN THE BRAND CENTER

Create your own customized cards to promote Rotary's programs for young leaders through the Rotary Brand Center.

These colorful new double-sided cards are an easy, yet powerful way to:

- + Show how you take action with Interact and Rotaract
- + Support leadership development through Rotary Youth Leadership Awards and New Generations Service Exchange
- + Connect with students and host families interested in Rotary Youth Exchange

Pair the promotional cards with the **Prospective Member Brochure** to show potential members the ways they can get involved through Rotary.

Cards are available in six templates and eight languages, in two sizes, and with a selection of over 20 high-quality images. Export them as a PDF for easy printing.

Make your customized cards in the **Brand Center**.

CONNECT.

SERVICE. LEADERSHIP. ACTION.



Join the global movement of young leaders taking action to build a better world. Exchange ideas with leaders in your community and mobilize your friends to develop innovative solutions to the world's most pressing common challenges.

**Rotaract**  
Rotary Club Partner

SERVICE. FRIENDSHIP. FUN.



Take action, build international understanding, and make new friends around the world. Develop your leadership skills while you discover the power of Service Above Self and find out how serious leadership can be seriously fun!

**Interact**  
Rotary Sponsored Club

TRAVEL. LEARN. SERVE.



**NEW GENERATIONS SERVICE EXCHANGE**  
Professional development with a purpose: University students and young professionals learn new skills, learn a language, and take action through humanitarian service during short-term, customizable exchanges.

**Rotary**

CREATE. SHARE.

CONNECT.

LEADERSHIP. INSPIRATION. FUN.



Discover a world outside the classroom through an intensive leadership experience that builds communication skills, teaches creative problem-solving, and challenges you to charge not only yourself but the world.

**Rotary** | **RYLA**

TRAVEL. DISCOVERY. FUN.



**ROTARY YOUTH EXCHANGE SHORT-TERM**  
Short-term exchanges immerse young people in another culture. Some live with host families for up to three months, while others embark on a tour or go to camp for a few weeks. Go on an adventure in one of more than 100 countries.

**Rotary** | **rotary youth exchange**

TRAVEL. LEARN. GROW.



**ROTARY YOUTH EXCHANGE LONG-TERM**  
Long-term exchanges build peace one young person at a time. Students learn a new language, discover another culture, and live with host families for a full academic year. Become a global citizen. Start in one of more than 100 countries.

**Rotary** | **rotary youth exchange**

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**Submit** story suggestions to Rotary Leader at [rotary.leader@rotary.org](mailto:rotary.leader@rotary.org). We accept article ideas about club and district successes, including fundraisers, publicity efforts, service projects, and membership drives. Please include descriptions, high-resolution photos, and contact information in your email. Due to the high volume of submissions, we cannot promise to feature your story.

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# CELEBRATE WITH US IN ATLANTA

Join us in the birthplace of The Rotary Foundation,  
as we toast **100 years** of Doing Good in the World.

**REGISTER BY 31 MARCH FOR  
PREREGISTRATION SAVINGS**

