

PRESS RELEASE:

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Photo by Al Johnson, Rotarian

Bath Rotarians Support 'End Polio Now' Campaign

During the month of October the Bath Rotary Club is sponsoring a Rotary Basket Auction, located near the Circulation Desk of the Dormann Library. The drawing for the winners of each basket will be made during the club's weekly, luncheon meeting on October 24, World Polio Day, and the winners will be notified. All the proceeds from this event will benefit Rotary's goal to eradicate polio worldwide.

Several Rotarians donated baskets for which the public can purchase tickets at the Circulation Desk of the library to put into the jars of the baskets which they would like to win. There is a wide variety of baskets, including amenities for a guest room, a lottery ticket tree, and a Steuben vase as well as baskets of liquor, wine, books, coffee/java, and items for dog lovers and those who enjoy outdoor fun.

Carol Berry, Past President of the local club and Director of the Dormann Library, and Debbi Tally, an Honorary Bath Rotarian, serve as the club's PolioPlus Co-Chairs. Berry, a polio survivor herself, remembers how her mother had massaged her legs when she was a child. She noted that it is vital to support Rotary's goal of eradicating polio worldwide and making certain that our community and our country does not ever suffer from this disease again.

Poliomyelitis (polio) is a crippling and potentially fatal disease that still threatens children in parts of the world. The poliovirus invades the nervous system and can cause paralysis, breathing problems, and even death. The virus, which is highly contagious, can strike at any age but mainly affects children under the age of five. There is no cure for polio, but for as little as about 60 cents worth of oral vaccine, a child can be protected from the disease for life.

In 1985 Rotary launched its PolioPlus program, the first initiative to tackle global, polio eradication. In 1988 Rotary helped launch the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) with the World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF, the U. S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and governments of the world. Since then, Rotary club members worldwide have contributed more than 1.2 billion dollars and countless volunteer hours to the polio eradication effort. Since 2013 every dollar Rotary commits to the WHO and UNICEF in direct support of polio immunization will be doubled by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Bill Gates, himself, has stated "Rotary continues to be the heart and soul of polio eradication."

Overall, the annual number of new polio cases has plummeted by more than 99 percent since the 1980's when polio infected about 350,000 children a year. More than 2 billion children have been immunized in 122 countries, preventing 5 million cases of paralysis and 250,000 deaths. Polio remains endemic in only three countries – Afghanistan, Nigeria, and Pakistan, although “imported” cases in previously polio-free areas will continue to occur until the virus is finally stopped in the endemic countries. The WHO is calling for all children in the affected countries to be vaccinated or revaccinated to prevent the disease from spreading farther, and anyone traveling from these countries should also be revaccinated and carry proof of vaccination with them. If the campaign isn't continued, experts say polio could rebound to 10 million cases in the next 40 years.

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. Rotary's focus is advocacy, fundraising, volunteer recruitment, and awareness-building. Once eradicated, polio will join smallpox as one of only two diseases ever eliminated, and the volunteers of Rotary will continue their humanitarian work, living up to their motto of “Service Above Self”.

Rotary is a global network of volunteer leaders dedicated to tackling the world's most pressing humanitarian challenges. Rotary's 1.2 million members in nearly 34,000 clubs hail from more than 200 countries and geographical areas. Their work improves lives at both the local and international levels, from helping families in need in their own communities to working toward a polio-free world.

In addition to the auction baskets the local Rotarians presented a check for \$500.00 for the PolioPlus program to Rotary District 7120 Governor, David Hannan, when he made his official visit to the club in August. During the month of October jars for the collection of additional contributions will be placed on the tables at the club's weekly, luncheon meetings.

The Bath Rotary Club meets every Thursday at 12:00 p.m. in the Empire Room of the Dormann Library.

(PLEASE FIND A PICTURE WITH CUTLINE ON THE NEXT PAGE.)



Bath Rotarians sponsor a Rotary Basket Auction near the Circulation Desk of the Dormann Library in order to raise funds to support the eradication of polio worldwide. Standing left to right are; Jane Russell, Bath Rotary Club President; Elaine Tears, Bath Rotary Club Public Relations Chair; Debbi Tally, Honorary Bath Rotarian and the club's PolioPlus Co-Chair. Absent from the photo is Carol Berry, Bath Rotary Club Past President, Director of the Dormann Library, and the club's PolioPlus Co-Chair.