



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Local Rotarians: Helping The World Eradicate Polio

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### Senator Ritchie's Weekly Column

Across the world, more than 1.2 million people have proudly joined their local chapter of Rotary International. These people are your neighbors, family, friends and perhaps yourself. The Rotary motto, "Service Above Self," is meant to inspire members to give to others and provide humanitarian service, promoting goodwill and peace in the world.

In our region of New York States, many different Rotary groups are working in their communities to spread acts of kindness. Whether it be helping at a local food pantry, lending

a hand to clean up a community park, providing students with college scholarships or even celebrating big events, your local Rotary members can be found volunteering their time and energy to support important causes.

Our local Rotaries also join forces with other Rotaries across the country to help with national and even worldwide needs. In 1985, Rotary launched a program called “PolioPlus” and three years later helped establish the “Global Polio Eradication Initiative,” which today includes the World Health Organization, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, UNICEF and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Together, they work to immunize children around the world against polio.

To date, Rotary International has contributed nearly \$2 billion and countless volunteer hours to protect more than 2.5 billion children in 122 countries. Since 1998, polio cases have dropped 99.9 percent and our Rotaries have a lot to do with that. Their efforts have provided much-needed operational support, medical staff, laboratory equipment and educational materials for health workers and parents. Rotary has also helped governments around the world to contribute more than \$8 billion to the effort.

Later this month, the Rotarians of District 7150, which includes Oswego County, will host their annual district conference, where they will continue to raise awareness and funds to eradicate this disease for good. I will be honoring this effort by providing an official New York State Senate Proclamation to commemorate ‘World Polio Day’.

This Rotary group and others across Central and Northern New York are critically important to not only ending Polio, but also a number of causes in our community. They are always looking for new, caring members to join in their efforts. For more information on how to become a Rotary member in your community, click [here](#).