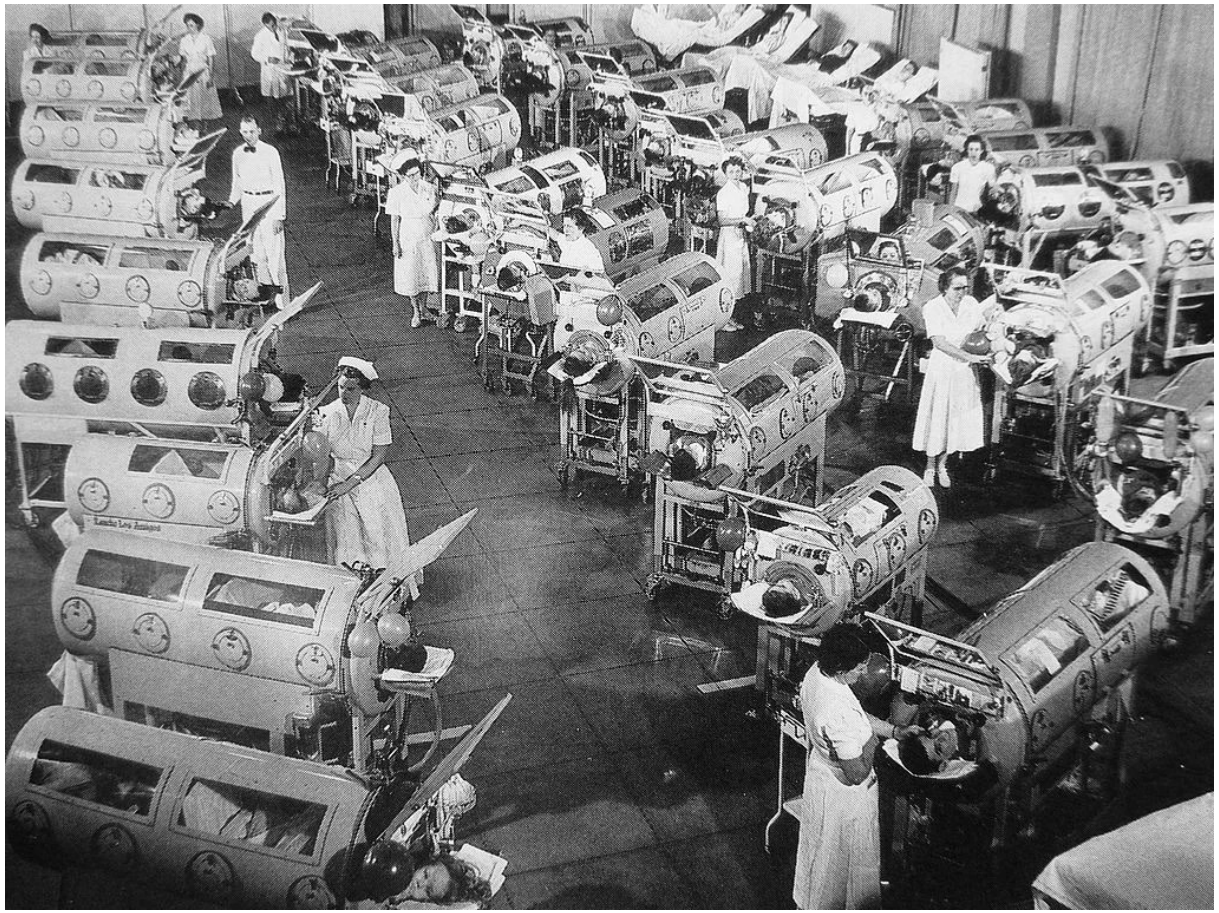
POLIO – THE LEGACY WE LEAVE THE CHILDREN OF THE WORLD

What is Polio?

- Polio is an ancient disease with drawings from Egypt over 3,500 years ago depicting a man with Polio
- It is a highly infectious viral disease that mainly affects children under 5.
- It doesn't discriminate by race, geography or gender
- Spread from person to person typically through contaminated food and water
- It affects the spinal cord
- Can cause; paralysis, lifelong disability and death
- There is no cure but prevention is possible with the Polio vaccine



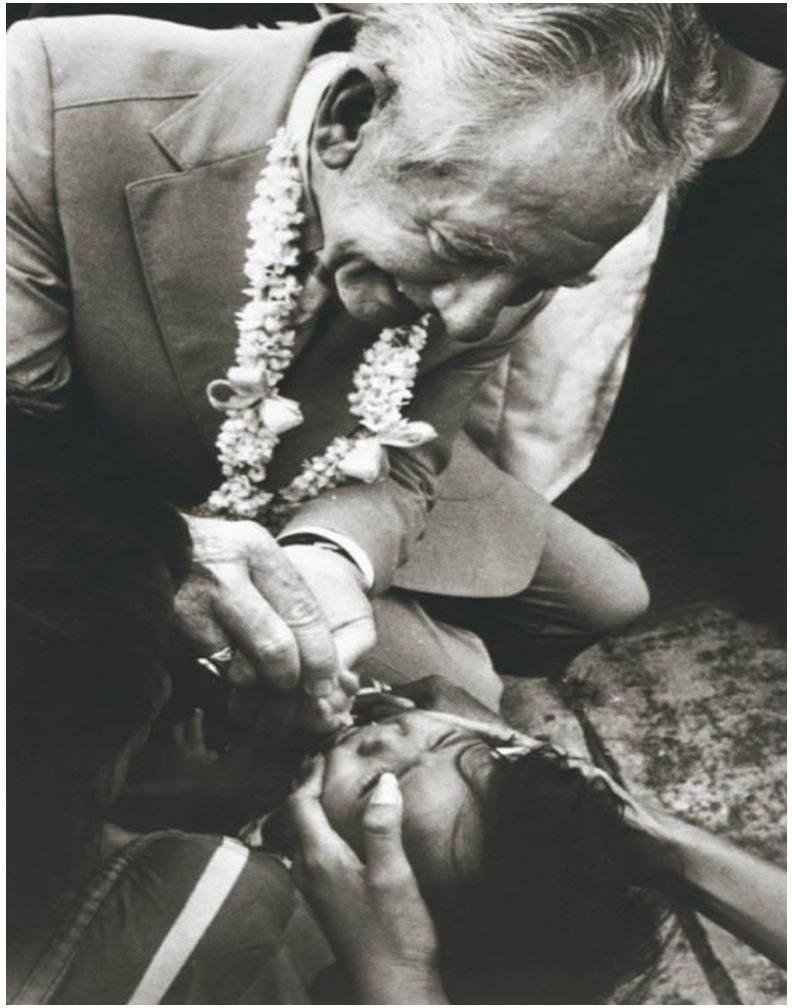
A cruel disease in a world without vaccines

- In the 1950's it is estimated there were approximately 600,000 people paralysed by Polio with many more undocumented
- In 1952 – 1953 and 1955 – 1956 NZ experienced polio epidemics with case-fatality rates varying between 2 – 10%
- In 1954 Dr Salk invented a polio vaccine which became widespread in the mid 1950's.

"Polio was one of the most feared diseases of the 20th Century"

Rotary steps in

- Rotary had a long history of helping dating back to 1937 when The Rotary Foundation gifted it's first donation to the International Society of Crippled Children ($500USD equivalent to approx $20K NZD today)
    - 1978 Rotary launched our 3H programme – to improve health, alleviate hunger and enhance human and social development
    - 1979 Rotarians wanted to immunize 6 million children in the Philippines – the world laughed
    - 1985 The Polio Plus Programme was launched – the world's largest internationally coordinated private-public health initiative
    - 1988 Rotary formally launches the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) alongside WHO, UNICEF and Centres for Disease Control and Prevention.
    - Polio cases hit 350,000 children in 125 countries.



A global partnership

- Rotary leads the way leading and collaborating across international partners including;
  - WHO
  - UNICEF
  - Centres for Disease Control and Prevention
  - Bill Gates Foundation – who have given more than $100billion USD
  - Governments
  - Millions of volunteers

The progress

- 99.9% reduction in cases – over 3 billion children vaccinated
- Wild Polio is down to 6 cases – 3 in Afghanistan and 3 in Pakistan. Security and access issues remain
- We are still seeing some outbreaks of vaccine-derived Polio and continued focus remains
- GPEI (Global Polio Eradication Initiative) faces a significant funding gap due to reduced aid from some countries including USA
- We are in the final phase, which is the hardest and most expensive

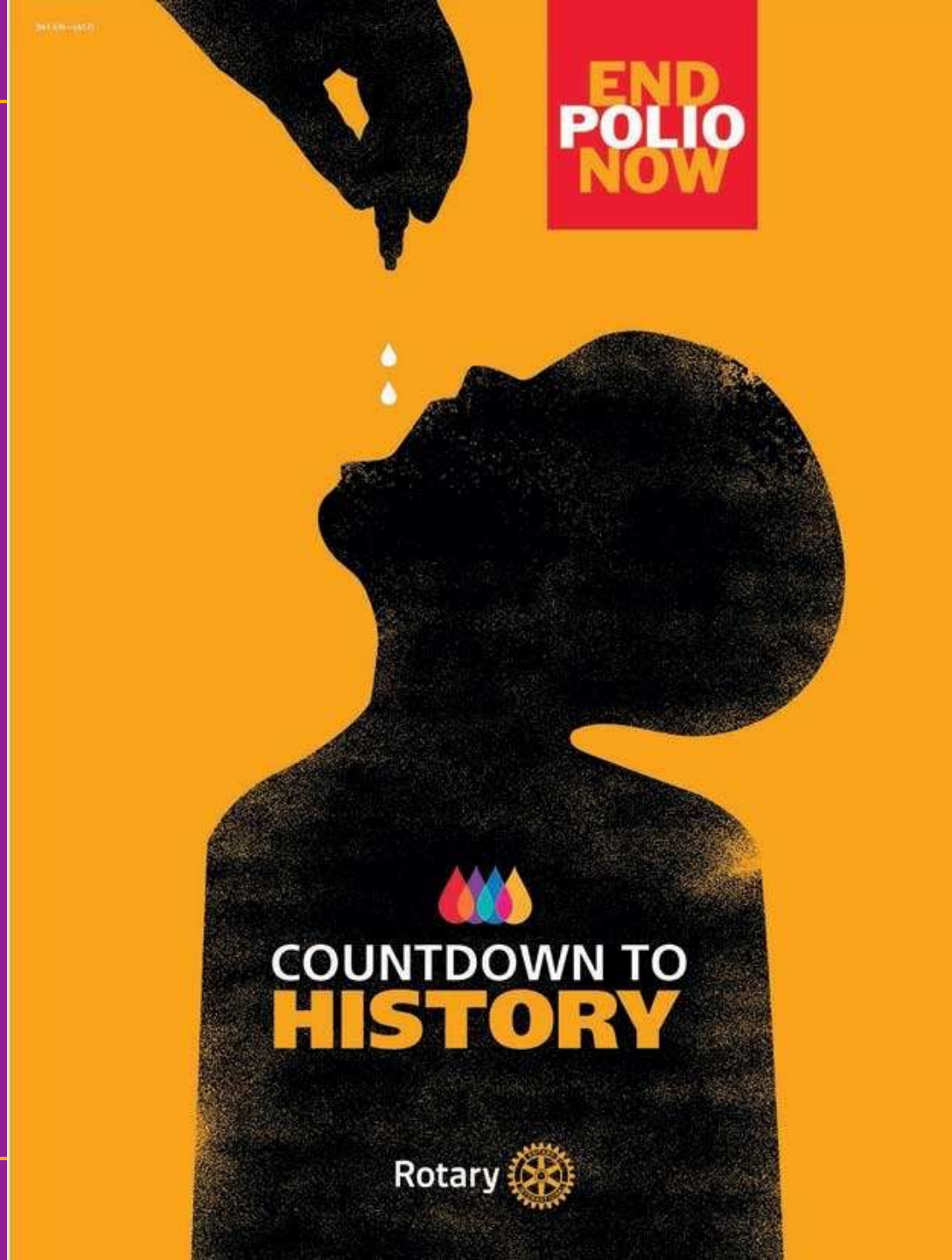
Source	Wild virus type 1 confirmed cases									
Period	Full year total							01-Jan - 12-May[1]		Date of most
Year	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2025	2026	recent virus
Afghanistan	29	56	4	2	6	25	21	2	3	17-Feb-2026
Pakistan	147	84	1	20	6	74	31	11	3	07-Apr-2026

The Rotary Foundation

Why it still matters

- Polio is just a plane flight away
- Conflict, misinformation and weak health care systems create vulnerabilities
- As long as Polio exists anywhere, children everywhere remain at risk

WHAT IF WE STOPPED NOW?



The final steps are the hardest

- We must continue the fight
- Challenges remain including;
  - Conflict zones
  - Political instability
  - Vaccine misinformation
  - Population displacement
  - Health worker safety nets
  - Cost
  - Geography

Our role remains critical

- Government’s change priorities. Rotary has stayed committed for over 40 years.
- Rotarians provide:
  - Advocacy
  - Fundraising
  - Volunteers
  - Community trust
  - Public awareness
  - Political influence

The financial reality

- We can’t afford to stop
- The cost of eradication is far less than the cost
- Every year Rotarians must donate $50million USD to Polio to get the full impact of the Gates partnership (2:1)

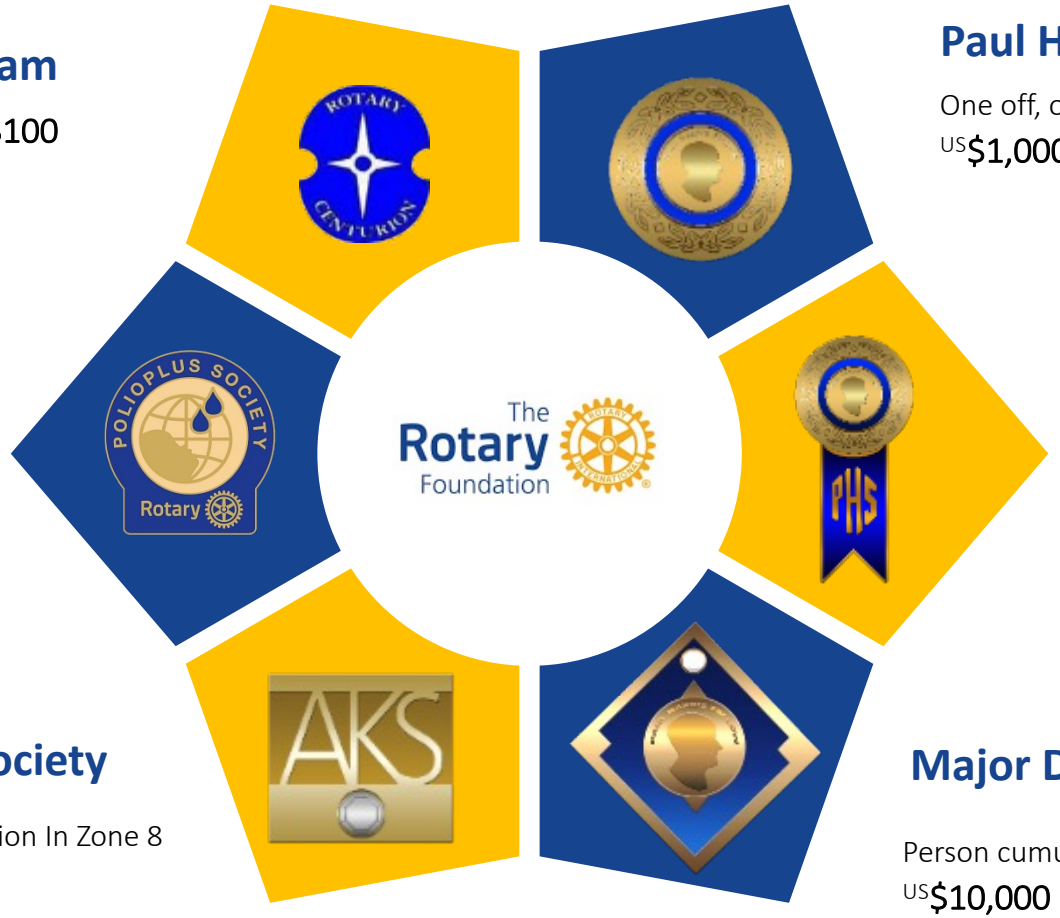
Personal Giving

Centurion Program

Annual contribution of $100

Paul Harris Fellow

One off, or cumulative contributions to US$1,000



Polio Plus Society

Annual contribution commitment of US$100 until Polio is eradicated

Paul Harris Society

Annual contribution commitment of US$1,000.

Arch Klumph Society

Highest level of recognition In Zone 8 with 25 members.

Major Donor

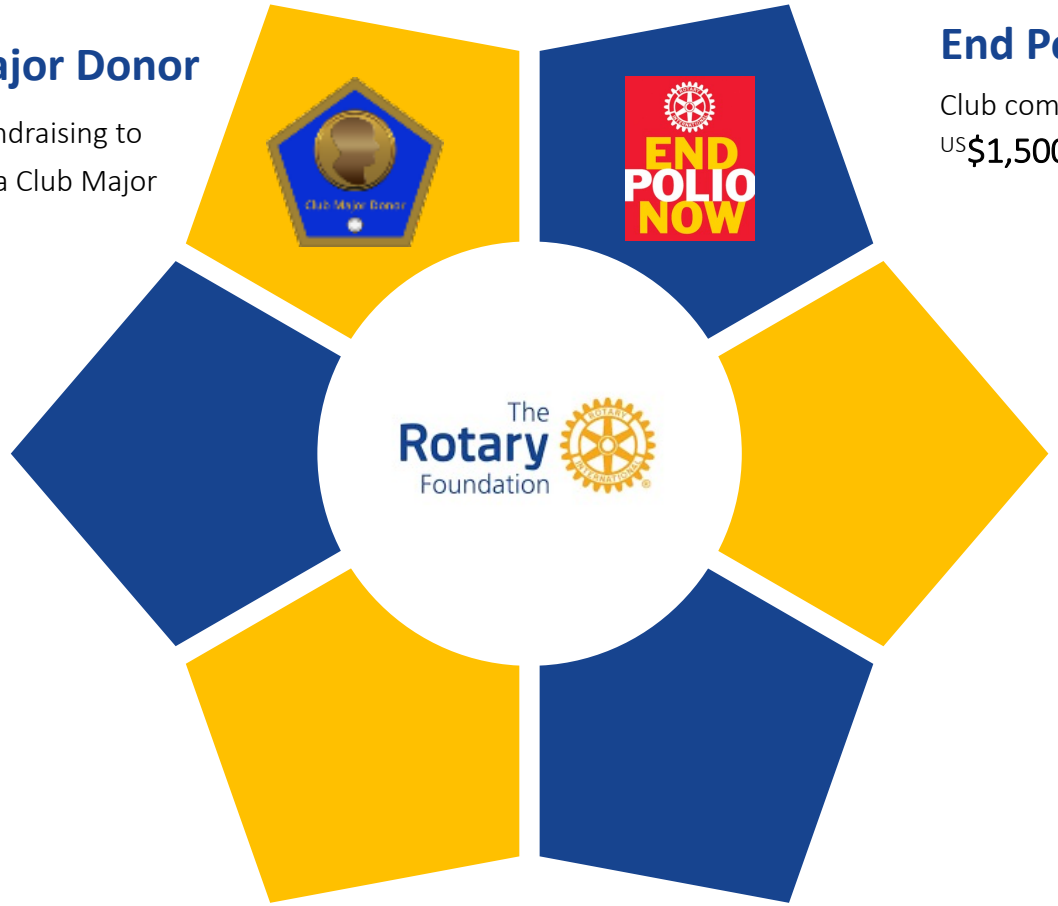
Person cumulative contributions of US$10,000

The Rotary Foundation

Club Giving

Annual Fund Major Donor

Commit 15% of total fundraising to annual fund & become a Club Major Donor



End Polio Now

Club commitment to contribute US$1,500 annually

How Clubs can continue the fight

- Continue to raise awareness by holding an End Polio Now event
- Clubs are encouraged to set a club fundraising target of $50NZD per member to help End Polio Now
- Encourage members to join the Polio Plus Society
- All funds are matched 2:1 by the Gates Foundation
- Register your Club's action at: https://www.endpolio.org/register-your-event

Key Dates

Follow Up Zoom Session – Focus on Polio	3rd June (7.30pm)
Follow up Zoom Session – District Grants	8th July (7.30pm)
Enter Club goals in Club Central	15th September 2026
District Grant Qualification Due	30th September 2026
World Polio Day	24th October
End Polio All Transit Day	November 2026 – Date TBC
Rotary Foundation Month	November
Rotary Anniversary	23rd February
World Immunisation Week	24th – 30th April 2027

Resources

- End Polio Now: https://www.endpolio.org/resource-center#education

- Rotary Brand Centre: https://brandcenter.rotary.org

- Global Polio Eradication Initiative: https://polioeradication.org/

- RDU Merchandise: https://rdusupplies.com.au/end-polio-now/

QUESTIONS?

ENDING POLIO WILL BE OUR LEGACY…

HOW WILL YOU CONTRIBUTE?