



BE THE INSPIRATION

Since Rotary was founded 113 years ago, its role in the world and in the lives of its members has been in a state of continuous evolution. In its earliest days, Rotary offered its members a way to find fellowship and friendship and to build connections within their communities. Soon after, service found a place in Rotary, and as our organization expanded, so did its influence. In time, Rotary's service, supported by our Rotary Foundation, would change the lives of families and communities across the world. We formed partnerships and focused our service to increase our impact. We launched

the world's largest public-private health initiative, partnering with governments, international organizations, and countless local and regional health agencies to eradicate polio. More and more, our members came to us seeking not just friendship but a way to take action for good.

Rotary still is, and always will be, the organization Paul Harris envisioned: a place where people from every corner of the earth can come together to become something greater than themselves. Yet Rotary today offers something of singular and enduring value: the chance to be part of a global network of people who have the talent and the drive to change the world. We are men and women who believe in the power of community action to make a global impact — and together, we have the capacity and the resources to achieve almost anything.

Globally, Rotary is more relevant than ever before, and its potential for good is vast. Unfortunately, not enough people fully understand what Rotary is and does. Even within our clubs, many Rotarians don't know enough about Rotary to take full advantage of what Rotary membership offers.

Rotary service transforms lives and communities. To achieve even more of that truly transformational service, we need to think differently about our role in Rotary, and Rotary's role in the world. We need to put more emphasis on our public image, using social media to build our membership and attract the partners that can help us scale up our service. We need to focus on larger projects that have a more lasting impact, taking the time to research and plan work that spans Rotary years and terms of office. Most important of all, we need to *Be the Inspiration* for positive change, inspiring our clubs, our communities, and our organization to face today's challenges head on, with courage, optimism, and creativity.

As Paul Harris put it, "Rotary is a microcosm of a world at peace, a model which nations will do well to follow." To me, Rotary is not only a model but an inspiration. It shows us what is possible, inspires us to reach for it, and gives us a path to act — and to *Be the Inspiration* to our world.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Barry Rassin', written in a cursive style.

Barry Rassin

President, Rotary International, 2018-19