



GREETINGS, MY DEAR CHANGEMAKERS,

A quarter of the Rotary year is now behind us. I am sure you are helping Rotary to grow more and do more. And I hope you have already done your part for the Each One, Bring One initiative by introducing one person to Rotary.

Do you ever think about your earliest days as a Rotarian? I often do — because those first moments of discovering the power of service shaped who I am today. When I joined my Rotary club, our efforts focused on India's rural communities, where people were living without toilets, getting their drinking water from the same pond they bathed in, and sending their children to outdoor classrooms set up under a tree. The nearest health care provider often was miles away — and the services were inadequate. But after Rotary clubs carried out some service projects, the villages had toilets, clean drinking water, a classroom for early learning, and a nearby health center.

The spark that Rotary kindled within me forced me to look beyond myself and embrace humanity. It made service a way of life and led me to a guiding principle I still stand by: Service is the rent I pay for the space I occupy on Earth.

If you feel the need to reignite the spark of service in yourself or your club, October — Community Economic Development Month — is a great time to do so. When we work to improve the lives of people in underserved communities — through, for example, projects that provide vocational training and access to financial resources — we help build and sustain local economic growth.

The need is great. According to the United Nations, 9 percent of the world's population — that's 700 million

people, a majority of them in sub-Saharan Africa — live on less than \$1.90 a day. By supporting strong community development as well as entrepreneurs, we can help improve conditions for people in that region and others.

Your club can also promote economic development in your own community by expanding vocational training opportunities through local schools and community colleges, partnering with lenders to improve access to financial services, or working with a nonprofit that provides resources to entrepreneurs and connects them with the business community.

Of course, developing strong communities is impossible without strong public health. On 24 October, World Polio Day, we'll celebrate our tremendous progress in the effort to eradicate polio. But we also know the fight is not over. We still need your help raising funds and awareness to ensure that all children are immunized against polio. Please don't forget to activate your clubs on that important day and encourage them to donate here: endpolio.org/world-polio-day.

Service has been rewarding for me throughout my life. I know the same is true for many of you. Join me this month in becoming a good tenant of our planet by helping others to better themselves and their communities. Together, we can Serve to Change Lives.

Shekhar Mehta

President, Rotary International