

Community Comment
Tuesday, October 27, 2015

This is Erin Dunn from the Fortuna Chamber of Commerce with a Community Comment.

This past Saturday was World Polio Day. And we have a lot to celebrate.

In 1985, Rotary International decided to undertake the unthinkable—to eradicate Polio in the world. Imagine the audacity to think that would happen! There were more than 350,000 cases in the world at that time.

Events in the last few months are bringing that goal closer to a reality.

At the beginning of 2015, three countries were considered to have the Polio virus. Nigeria, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. Today, there have been 51 cases of Polio reported in the world. In two countries.

In August, Nigeria marked one year without a case of Polio. In September it was declared endemic free. It is not yet considered Polio free—it will take about two more years for that declaration because the virus may be unreported in the rural areas. But no Polio found on the continent of Africa for more than a year. Wow.

There are lots of partners making this possible. The list is long--The World Health Organization, The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and many more.

The Gates Foundation has made a miraculous offer to Rotary—they have been matching donations to Polio eradication 2 to 1 for the past several years and will continue to do so through 2017. That means if you donated \$25 to Rotary to end Polio, it turned into \$75.

Bill Gates was asked about his long-term dedication to eradicating Polio and why he was continued to be part of this seemingly endless fight. He replied “You don’t let children die because it’s fatiguing to save them.”

I'm part of a Rotary District that includes Humboldt, Del Norte, Lake, Mendocino, Sonoma and Napa Counties. Humboldt has the lowest vaccination rate of those six counties. Here's the truth—as long as Polio exists anywhere the threat is everywhere. It's only a plane ride away.

You have probably seen the End Polio Now campaign that states “we are THIS close” to eradicating Polio. Now, we're even closer than that. We can't stop now. Support Rotary's fight to end Polio in the world.

On another note, I want to congratulate Second District Supervisor Estelle Fennel on being honored as this year's Woman of Distinction by the Fortuna Kiwanis during Women in Business Week.

No Supervisor works harder and spends more time listening and responding to constituents and their needs than Estelle.

She cares about her District and for the County. Congratulations Estelle, the honor was richly deserved. Congratulations Kiwanis on another wonderful afternoon of celebrating our community.

This has been Erin Dunn with a Community Comment.