

# Bill Gates announces \$255 million challenge grant to end polio

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On January 21<sup>st</sup> the Bill & Melinda Gates foundation awarded Rotary International \$255 million to aid in the effort to eradicate polio. This donation brings the total committed by Rotary and the Gates Foundation to over one half billion dollars.

At the International Assembly in San Diego, California **Bill Gates** said, "...complete elimination of the polio virus is difficult and will continue to be difficult for a number of years. Rotary in particular has inspired my own personal commitment to get deeply involved in achieving eradication."

In November of 2007 Gates donated \$100 million in matching funds to Rotary International. This new donation brings the Gates Foundation donations to Rotary to \$355 million. \$73 million has been raised towards the \$100 million matching goal for the 2007 donation. Gates has challenged Rotary to match an additional \$100 million with his second gift.

All told, Gates Foundation donations and Rotary matching funds will total \$555 million.

When speaking to Gates about polio, RI President-elect **John Kenny** said, "We don't know exactly when the last child will be affected. But we do have the vaccines to wipe it out."

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Bill Gates at the 2009 International Assembly in San Diego. Photo by Monika Lozinska-Lee/Rotary Images