

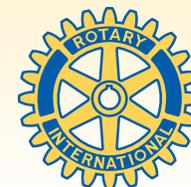
Rotarians enthusiastically adopted the motto **Service Above Self** in 1911 because it so aptly articulated the ideals that the fledgling organization was in the process of developing. For 95 years, this motto has served as the underlying motif of our efforts to carry out humanitarian service, promote high ethical standards, and work for international understanding and peace. As with anything that has become an innate part of our lives, it is easy to take this motto for granted. The coming year will offer all Rotarians an opportunity to reflect carefully on the true meaning of **Service Above Self**, as we renew our commitment to this timeless message of compassion and generosity of spirit.



Carl-Wilhelm Stenhammar
President, Rotary International, 2005-06



Rotary International
One Rotary Center
1560 Sherman Avenue
Evanston, IL 60201-3698 USA
www.rotary.org



SERVICE Above Self

ROTARY INTERNATIONAL THEME 2005-06



Dear fellow Rotarians:

In 2005-06, we will embark on our second century of Rotary service with a sturdy base on which to build, a past record of success to serve as our compass, and a rich history from which

to draw inspiration. And while we must never remain locked in the past, its lessons can surely fuel our steady movement forward.

With this in mind, I looked to the many wise words that Rotarians have written over the past century to select a theme that best expresses our vital mission. Of all the inspirational messages that have guided our thinking and motivated us to action, I found none that defined Rotary and the Rotarian spirit better than the three simple words of our motto, **Service Above Self.**

It is my privilege to serve as president of Rotary International during the year we will begin to write the first chapter of Rotary's second hundred years. Taking **Service Above Self** as the theme for this important year reflects my desire to use the best and most meaningful words to inspire Rotarians. But I also suggest this theme in an effort to keep our Rotary lives simple — an approach that requires maintaining continuity from previous years and setting a straightforward path for the future. I prefer, therefore, to focus on those areas in which we have demonstrated significant

strength in the past and that represent the most basic human needs.

One such area is literacy and education. From one-on-one tutoring efforts to large-scale literacy programs, Rotary clubs have developed an impressive array of projects designed to help people learn to read and write. We have equipped schools, educated teachers, and given children the clothing and books required to attend classes. And in communities throughout the world, Rotarians are taking the time to visit schools, reading to children and listening to them read in turn.

Despite our many successes, countless adults cannot read or write a simple sentence or are functionally illiterate — that is, they are unable to use reading, writing, and calculation to engage in most work and normal daily activities. Clearly, Rotary's considerable experience and continued commitment is needed in addressing this problem, which limits so many people in their efforts to care for themselves and their families.

In 2005-06, I also encourage Rotarians to continue their work on water management, another issue that Rotarians have effectively addressed in many parts of the world. Thanks to scores of Rotary club water projects, hundreds of thousands of people now have convenient access to water and enjoy the many health benefits associated with clean water and adequate sanitation.

But so much remains to be done. Far too many people have no access to a safe water

supply and lack adequate sanitation, resulting in needless deaths from preventable water-related diseases. Water management issues also affect the food supply, as it takes 2,000 to 5,000 liters of water to produce the daily food intake of one person. The United Nations calls the global water crisis "a threat to economic development, to poverty reduction, to the environment, and to peace and security." The continued action of Rotarians is desperately needed to alleviate hunger and improve the health and well-being of all those who are deprived of this essential resource.

While I believe that literacy and water management are two concerns that urgently need our attention, I know that Rotary clubs are also addressing many other equally critical issues. The beauty of Rotary is that it offers so many options for service. Clubs see a need in their community and then determine how to use their human and material resources to best meet it. That grassroots participation is a hallmark of Rotary's success, and I encourage all clubs to continue providing the service that is most beneficial to communities at home and abroad.

We cannot do it alone, however. Very often, we can accomplish more for our communities by working together with other organizations that share our ideals and goals. As you are planning your service agenda for the year, consider how your club's efforts might be multiplied by partnering with another organization.