 **Rotary International®**
One Rotary Center
1560 Sherman Avenue
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Rotary International Theme
2002-03

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Sow the Seeds of Love

Dear fellow Rotarians,

To each of us, Rotary has a different and special meaning. Some of us cherish the warm fellowship our clubs offer, while others especially appreciate the opportunities to serve and help those in need. Many of us value Rotary for its international spirit, which so efficiently binds us together in service from every part of the world.

There are thousands of activities going on at this moment in the name of Rotary. Whatever we do, one element remains constant: The best Rotary fellowship and service always comes from the heart. When love is infused into our actions, we do not stop to question the time or money we are sacrificing. We are inspired to do more, to give more. Love is the motivating force behind all of Rotary's best work.

As Mother Teresa once said: "*It's not how much we give but how much love we put into giving.*" When we perform an act with love, it will inherently be more effective and will penetrate more deeply into the hearts and minds of those we serve.

We Rotarians already have so much love within ourselves, but with the ambitious goals that we have set before us, we need more people to share our beliefs and commitments. The best way we can ensure the continuity of our organization is by *Sowing the Seeds of Love* in as many hearts as possible.

And that is what I will be urging all Rotarians to do in the year 2002-03: ***Sow the Seeds of Love*** — in your clubs, in your vocations, in your communities, and everywhere in our world.

Rotary offers us countless ways to *Sow the Seeds of Love*.

Through the programs of Rotary International and its Foundation — and I urge you *through your own inspiration and initiative, working not from the top down but from the grassroots level up* — we can volunteer our professional talents where they are most needed; help young people overcome today's constraints and become tomorrow's leaders; develop service partnerships across national borders; and fulfill our commitment of worldwide polio eradication.

Within our clubs and districts, we also have many resources that enable us to improve our local communities and make vital contributions to the global community.

We do not need to create new programs and projects; we can begin right away by participating more and putting our personal touch on the existing ones. When service comes from our heart and is inspired by our own experiences, we do not simply write a check; we write Rotary into our lives.

My wish is to have 2002-03 become the year that every Rotarian experiences firsthand the joy of true Rotary service.

That joy may come from the excitement of a child who is just learning to read because you are teaching him. It may come from witnessing the happiness of a mother who can afford to feed her children as a result of a microcredit program that your district developed. Or perhaps it may come from the pride exuded by men and women who have found productive work, thanks to a vocational training project spearheaded by your club.

There are so many ways to realize the ultimate joy of service, and they all require the full commitment of our time and our talents. I am certain that you will not regret making this investment in Rotary. Once you experience the opportunity to change another person's life, to give them hope and take away despair, or to infuse love into a climate of indifference, you will fully appreciate what it means to be a Rotarian.

In 2002-03, I will be encouraging Rotarians to keep Rotary simple.

Rotary's ideal of service can, in fact, be interpreted in a rich variety of ways through our programs and resources. There is no need to make it more complex. Rotary offers the opportunity of fellowship through service to others, and this simple appeal to the heart moves men and women to great endeavor.

After we ***Sow the Seeds of Love***, some of them may begin to sprout almost immediately. And like wildflowers, they can go on to seed themselves, spreading love through the air. Other seeds will require more time and nurturing, but by saturating them with love, commitment, and Rotarian action, I can assure you that we will reap a bountiful harvest of humanitarian service.

Where can we start Sowing the Seeds of Love? And how best can we do that?

Opportunities are everywhere around you.

You can start by Sowing the Seeds of Love in your club.

Good club fellowship is based on the love and concern that members show for one another. How well do you know your fellow Rotarians? Try to get to know them even better. Learn more about their families, their businesses, their hopes and dreams. A warm and welcoming atmosphere in your club will draw in new professional and business leaders and keep current members involved and active. Let us go back to the basics by revitalizing the fundamental principle of Rotary — *strong club service*.

You can Sow the Seeds of Love in your vocation.


Today's global marketplace is becoming increasingly anonymous. People need to form cooperative and supportive professional connections — which, of course, are the hallmark of Rotary's ideals. If you ***Sow the Seeds of Love*** among your employees, your customers and your competitors, you will help eliminate destructive competitive behavior and uphold the high ethical standards that Rotary espouses.

You can Sow the Seeds of Love in your community.

This can be done by developing ambitious service projects that will make fuller use of your members' knowledge, skills, and personal interests. Through such meaningful projects, Rotarians can put their own personal stamp of love on the club's activities and realize the full value of Rotary service. *As the love we sow starts to grow in our community, others will want to join in our efforts — and Rotary will also grow.*

And finally, you can Sow the Seeds of Love in the world.

Without love, we cannot hope to achieve peace in this troubled world. As Rotarians, we can ***Sow the Seeds of Love*** through our Ambassadorial Scholars, Group Study Exchange teams, and Rotary Volunteers. We can spread our love across oceans and national borders by feeding the hungry, treating the sick, and sheltering the homeless. Through Rotary, our love can manifest itself in clean drinking water, accessible health care, education for more of the world's children, and the fulfillment of basic needs for all humanity.



Bhichai Rattakul
2002-03 President, RI