



ROTARY INTERNATIONAL®

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*Look within yourselves,
to understand that all of
humanity has the same
dreams, similar hopes,
the same aspirations
and similar problems.*

Rotary International 2011-12 Theme



Reach Within to Embrace Humanity

President
Kalyan Banerjee



In 2011-12, I ask Rotarians to *Reach Within to Embrace Humanity*.

I ask you to look within yourselves, to understand that all of humanity has the same dreams, similar hopes, the same aspirations and similar

problems. Whoever we are and wherever we live, each of us yearns for the same peace and contentment and for the same fulfillment in our daily lives. What we work to bring to others, we must first find within ourselves because what we wish for ourselves is what others wish for themselves as well.

Before talking globally about peace, we need first to start with ourselves and then work outward. First, we find our own peace, and then work to establish peace in our homes and our families and our communities. We cannot work to build peace in the world without first building it in our own homes; if we are to create peace, friendship, and tolerance on a global scale, we must first practice it in our own neighborhoods. When we have peace in ourselves, we have peace in our home; when there is peace in our home, we have peace that we can share with others. As we find joy and satisfaction in being with the people we love and care about, we are able to care for others as well.

I believe that if you strengthen yourself, you strengthen those who share your life and your home. Once you have a strong family, you have

a strong base on which to build. Those who have that inner strength can work together better to serve humanity, and that is what we do in Rotary.

In the year ahead, we will have three emphases in our Rotary service: to strengthen our family, to continue what we do best, and to change whatever needs to be changed.

Our first emphasis in this Rotary year will be the *family*. The family is where everything begins: All our service, everything we wish to achieve in our world, begins here. The mother and the child are at the core of every family; when we begin there, we can carry our work forward through individual lives and throughout the community.

Our second emphasis will be on *continuity*, on finding the things that we do well and taking them to the next level. Each of us has found success in Rotary service, and we should build on those successes, expand on them, so that we can help even more people in the future. We must continue our work for cleaner and safer water, mitigating disease and illness, spreading literacy, working with and for the new generation, and striving for peace.

At the same time, we also know that there are things we could be doing better and things which we should be changing. We must have the courage to see these, to identify them, and to work to make the changes we need to make.

Mohandas Gandhi said, "You must be the change you wish to see in the world." In Rotary,

we endeavor to live ethically and honestly, to share friendship and goodwill, to see the true worth of every human being. We are not interested in the lowest common denominator, for Rotary is anything but common and Rotarians are uncommon people. That is why we work to elevate ourselves and, thereby, to elevate the world.

All of us in Rotary are looking to change the world, for why else would we be Rotarians? We believe that our world can be happier, healthier, and more peaceful. We believe that the future can and will be better than the past. We are idealists, and we bring our ideals to life through our Rotary service.

And so, our third emphasis in 2011-12 will be *change*, and we start by being the change we wish to see in the world. If we wish for peace, we start by living in peace ourselves, in our homes and in our communities. If we wish for an end to polio or to any other disease in the world, if we wish environmental degradation to stop, if we wish to reduce child mortality, to spread literacy or to prevent hunger, we must be the instrument of that change and recognize that it must start within each of us.

Let us *Reach Within to Embrace Humanity*. And in peace, harmony, and friendship, let us bring change and a more joyful future for us all.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kalyan Banerjee". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Kalyan Banerjee
President, Rotary International, 2011-12