# NEWS RELEASE

**Rotary clubs worldwide mobilize in support of typhoon-ravaged Philippines**

**EVANSTON, Ill., USA (Nov. 18, 2013) —** Rotary International President Ron D. Burton is urging the humanitarian organization’s 1.2 million members of its 34,000 Rotary clubs worldwide to assist victims of killer Typhoon Haiyan in any way possible, including contributing to [ShelterBox,](http://www.shelterboxusa.org/about.php?page=112) the international disaster response charity that is Rotary’s project partner for disaster relief.

“This disaster is exactly why we entered into our partnership with ShelterBox,” said Burton. “It gives concerned Rotary members the opportunity to respond immediately and in a very meaningful way to the life-threatening conditions faced by the people of the Philippines.”

"It has been astounding to see Rotary clubs and Rotarians around the world mobilizing so quickly to support the people of the Philippines,” said Becky Maynard, ShelterBox Director of Fundraising and Communications. "This overwhelming generosity is allowing ShelterBox to commit more life-saving shelter each day but the need remains huge. We are working directly with Rotarians in the Philippines and we have Rotarian Response Team members on the ground. The partnership between ShelterBox and the global Rotary family really demonstrates how, through service and support, we can make a real difference to people in their greatest hour of need."

A donation of approximately US$1000 will allow ShelterBox to deliver emergency shelter and other lifesaving equipment to a family that has lost everything following a disaster.

Burton continued: “Of course, clubs may also pursue other avenues: local fund-raisers, food and supply drives, or giving to other established relief agencies, such as [Red Cross/Red Crescent](http://www.ifrc.org/) and [World Food Programme](http://www.wfp.org/). The important thing is that they do something – however big or small – to help the people of the Philippines come through this disaster. To members of the public not affiliated with Rotary, I invite you to engage with Rotary and changes lives by supporting whatever your local Rotary clubs are doing. We need all the support we can muster.”

As news of the killer typhoon spread, thousands of Rotary clubs in Asia, Africa, Europe, and the Americas quickly set up special funds and began collecting donations and supplies. Among the first were established by Rotary districts in [the Philippines and Australia](http://www.rotarydistrict9685.org.au/Page/typhoon-haiyan-november-2013).

Looking ahead, Rotary will focus on intermediate and long-term recovery and rebuilding efforts. The experience and knowledge of Rotary members in the Philippines will be essential in ensuring that resources are used for projects and programs that address true community needs.

**Rotary in the Philippines**

Rotary has a long tradition in the Philippines, beginning with the Rotary Club of Manila, chartered as Rotary’s first club in Asia in 1919, just 14 years after Rotary was founded in Chicago, Ill., USA. Today the Philippine Islands are home to 830 Rotary clubs with a total membership of nearly 22,000 men and women. The country has produced one president of Rotary International, M.A.T. Caparas, who served 1986-87.

Rotary clubs in the Philippines carry out a wide array of successful humanitarian initiatives – often in partnership with clubs in other countries -- including water and sanitation projects, medical/dental missions, adopt-a-school programs, and reforestation plantings. Rotary clubs also launched many relief operations in the wake of the 7.1 magnitude earthquake that struck central Philippines in September 2013.

Rotary’s top priority is the global eradication of polio, an effort that Rotary began in the Philippines in 1979, when it funded the immunization of six million children with the oral polio vaccine. Based largely on Rotary’s success in the Philippines and several other countries with high polio rates, the World Health Assembly in 1988 authorized the [Global Polio Eradication Initiative](http://www.polioeradication.org/) in which Rotary is a spearheading partner. Since then, world polio rates have dropped by more than 99 percent, and polio today is on the verge of eradication.

**About Rotary**

[Rotary](http://www.rotary.org/) is a global network of volunteer leaders dedicated to tackling the world’s most pressing humanitarian challenges. Rotary’s 1.2 million members hail from more than 200 countries and geographical areas. Their work improves lives at both the local and international levels, from helping families in need in their own communities to working toward a polio-free world. For more information, visit [rotary.org](https://www.rotary.org/) and [endpolionow.org](http://www.endpolio.org/).

**About ShelterBox**

Based in Cornwall, United Kingdom, with 21 international affiliates, ShelterBox is an international disaster relief charity that delivers emergency shelter, warmth, and dignity to people made homeless by disasters worldwide. The agreement with Rotary broadens the charity’s volunteer base, enhancing its capacity to respond instantly to disasters while keeping costs low. For more information, visit shelterbox.org

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