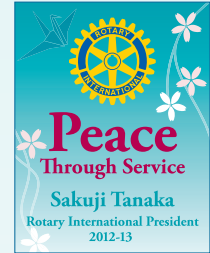




PRESIDENT'S VIEW



Dear Fellow Rotarians,

There are many ways to describe our Rotary Foundation. But I think of our Foundation literally — as the foundation for all of Rotary. We do not often think about the ground beneath our feet. We do not often think about the walls that are holding up our house. We take them for granted. We only think about them when they are not there.

Not long ago in Japan, the ground fell out from under our feet. On Friday, March 11, 2011, a magnitude 9 earthquake shook Japan to its very core. More than 15,000 people died, nearly 6,000 were injured and another 4,000 are still missing. The total losses of the disaster are estimated at over US \$300 billion.

In a matter of hours, half a million people in one of the world's wealthiest and most developed countries lost everything. They went from living in comfort and security to facing an uncertain future in school gymnasiums, tents and ruined buildings.

In Japan, we are used to earthquakes. We thought we were ready for anything. But no one ever expected anything like this.

What happened on that day changed Japan, and everyone who lives there. It has made us realise how fragile our lives are. And it has made me realise how little separates me from the people I help through Rotary.

It is easy to look at the people we help through our Foundation as somehow different from ourselves. They live far away. We do not know their language or their culture. We do not know what it is like to have no running water, no sanitation, no health care, no education. We look at pictures, and we read stories in the news about poverty, wars and disasters. We see, from so far away, the people who are living through such terrible times. But it is hard to put ourselves in their place.

Today, I tell you that there is nothing at all separating us from the people we help. We are all the same. Only the circumstances surrounding us are different.

Through our Foundation, we have the power to live the words of our Foundation's motto: Doing Good in the World. Through it, we can do so much more good than we could ever do alone.

And it matters so much — to people just like us.

*Sakuji Tanaka
President, Rotary International*

