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I am an ordinary person that has been given an extraordinary opportunity to do more with my life than I ever dreamed possible through the membership of the Rotary Club of Ashmore.

This membership has been shared with my husband Ian, as we both have a passion for Rotary service. Ian was invited into Rotary in 1975. I was inducted into Rotary in 1990 and that was the start of my Rotary service as a Rotarian where I could make a difference in our local, national and International communities. What a vast ocean of possibilities and opportunities.

The spirit of Rotary is Service.

Rotary cares for people of the world and the family of Rotary, members and partners, Probus, Interact, Rotaract, Innerwheel, Youth exchange, a diverse number of youth programs our Alumni of the Rotary Foundation in both educational and humanitarian programs, our community programs and vocational excellence programs.

Rotary's greatest gift to the world is Polio Eradication. Since 1985 more than 2 billion children have received the oral polio vaccine. 5 million children are walking today and enjoying life because of global immunization. Reported polio cases have dropped from 350,000 a year in 1985 to 1256 cases in 2009. Only four countries, Afghanistan, India, Nigeria and Pakistan –remain endemic. We had 348 cases in non endemic countries last year.

Rotarians have raised over 850 million dollars. Just recently we as Rotarians have been challenged again and we have raised 127 million of the 200million challenge to match 355 million in grants received from Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. This 553 million will directly support immunization campaigns in developing countries where Polio continues to infect and paralyze children. We will end polio. It has been a great privilege to on 3 occasions have given polio drops to children. In Delhi and Salem, India and once in Thailand. We have worked and lived personally beside Rotarians in those countries who are involved long-term with the program. It is an emotional experience to place 2 drops of vaccine on the tongue of a child, having their eyes intensely focused on you as you improve their chance of walking tall in life.

In Rotary we are guided by the 3 simple words of our motto, Service above Self.

My life has been richer and better in so many ways.

I have seen and done so much more because of my membership of Rotary, I am now part of a global network of volunteers and together we are changing the world for the better.

What makes a difference for me is Attitude. This is the most important thing to me and it sums up my feelings.

The longer I live the more I realize the impact of attitude is more important than facts. It is more important than the past, than money, than circumstances, than failures, than successes, than what other people think or say or do. The remarkable thing is we have a choice, yes we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day. We cannot change the past. We cannot change the fact that people will act a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is

play on the one string we have and that is our attitude. I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me and 90% how I react to it.

One of my greatest achievements in Rotary was in 2000 -2001, when I served as District governor of District 9640. It was here that I empowered our 54 local clubs to be involved in humanitarian programs of their choice, in any Rotary Country of their choice and with a matching grant with our charity The Rotary Foundation of Rotary International.

Each club was assigned \$200 and asked to match it or more. Every club participated, some jointly with other clubs locally and Nationally and other clubs went it alone. I linked clubs with other International Clubs from USA, Japan, Denmark, UK, Indonesia, PNG, Canada, Nepal, Bangladesh, Argentina, Peru, Thailand and Fiji. The total value of the projects was A\$386,400 but the total value to the beneficiaries is immeasurable.

This is what was achieved

Cambodia –	Fred Hollows cataracts	\$6,800
Indonesia –	Avoidable Blindness	\$16,000
	Environment Park Management	\$12,000
Thailand -	Agriculture	\$12,000
Vanuatu -	Literacy	\$ 27,200
East Timor –	Wheelchairs, Literacy, Garden Tools and Boats.	\$48,000
Fiji-	Seed production and Hearing Aids	\$7600
PNG-	Artificial Legs	\$56,000
Bangladesh-	Family planning	\$3,200
Argentina –	Biodigester	\$5,200
Nepal-	Blindness	\$73,000
Nepal-	Artificial Lsgs	\$68,000
Nepal –	Blindness Fred Hollows	\$28,400
Peru-	Bakery	\$22,000
India-	Low cost Shelters	\$1000

What an outcome and what an experience we all shared to make a difference to so many people we will never meet. To save the world is like anything, it's one person at a time, one village at a time and one community at a time.

We are not 'one topic' Rotarians, or district Rotarians but Global Rotarians.

I say we as Ian and I share our Rotary together. Yes I initiate the projects and we inspire others carry out the projects with us. We become the catalyst. A good example is the Malaria trial in 1995 on KarKar Island PNG we carried out. That enhanced the Australia wide 'Rotarians Against Malaria' today. Without the ongoing commitment of Rotarian Ron Seddon in PNG we would not have this project. We made it happen through our Rotary Volunteer grant, and later a grant from AusAid for \$800,000 for Malaria bednets for PNG administered by Ron.

Ian and I provided the information, research, stimulus, platform and the connecting opportunities and benefits for lots of clubs and members far beyond our home town.

I become overwhelmed with emotion and sheer joy of knowing that one spot on earth is better off today than it was yesterday because of the work of so many people in our global network. If you love what you do and are surrounded by good friends and family you can achieve anything. Its attitude.

Yes there are tradeoffs but there always will be in life.

Yes we work insane hours to keep up with our helping of others. We would not take off much time each day, not even an hour to watch T/V or listen to music. We have both devoted our lives to service. Our family has not seen us as much of us as they would have liked but time spent with them is special and the 6 grand daughters have all been to Rotary meetings and even 3 year old Lily announces Rotary signs on the roads. It was always Rotary Service. There is little personal or private time to enjoy, but we enjoy working together empowering others. Just as well we share all our experiences together as our relationship is very special. Yes a few have tried to separate this beautiful relationship which is so unique. How sad.

I wake up eager to jump up out of bed at the first light excited to make a difference today to someone. Neither of us could ever complain to the other about his or her heavy burden because we are both doing it. We love being a team and we love being together. It's lovely to have someone who shares your passion and my priorities. My passion is Rotary Service, it is my hobby and my interest. If I can take my passion and make it happen, Rotary lives. The magic of Rotary is well and alive.

The Gold Coast City Junior Council was established in 1993 by myself and Ian. This partnership with the Rotary Club of Ashmore and the City Council became a reality with high schools across the Gold Coast. It gives students a wonderful opportunity to develop an understanding of the operations of local government and to provide their views about the future of our city. This proved to be the right idea at the right time for it involves most Gold Coast High Schools and now has permanent staff administration at the council. Likewise we brought Model United Nations Assembly to the Gold Coast and it is now an annual Rotary District program which many school students look forward to attending to debate world affairs. Another great pleasure was to lead a team of Interact students from Gold Coast Academy for Health Sciences to Vanuatu where we worked in the Villa General Hospital including painting sections of wards. I have led 10 volunteer teams over the years to PNG, Vanuatu, Fiji, Solomon Islands, Indonesia and Thailand. My current most active focus is the reconstruction of a village in Cambodia, but we are also completing work on birthing kits into Ethiopia, schools in another part of Cambodia as well as general promotion of healthy food supplements to the Asia Pacific region with a program called 'Learn Grow'.

I have been given the opportunity and privilege of observing at firsthand how our services touch the lives of so many others and how great the needs are. It is one thing to see photographs of the poverty and hunger in Cambodia but it is another thing to walk amongst the children holding their hands, seeing their families, their housing or should I say where they live, no clean water, no sanitation, no health clinics, no school, to understand their culture and living conditions.

As I stated at the beginning – “I am an ordinary person that has been given an extraordinary opportunity to do more with my life than I ever dreamed possible through the membership of the Rotary Club of Ashmore”.

Ian and I are known by many as 'Team Yarker' and for even longer I have been known as 'Hurricane Heather' but I like to think I am a nice hurricane!