Press Release

STUDENTS FROM LOCAL SCHOOLS JOIN FIGHT AGAINST POLIO

100 students from five schools in South Shropshire and North Herefordshire took part in a special fundraising concert last Friday (1 March).

Youth Makes Music was the name given to the concert arranged by Ludlow Rotary Club and held at the Ludlow Assembly Rooms to make it possible for the young people of the district to support the effort to eradicate polio world-wide.

In front of a capacity audience, students from Clee Hill Community Academy, Bishop's Castle Community College, Weobley High School, Earl Mortimer College and Wigmore High School put heart and soul into a concert which featured a wide range of styles including music from the shows, rock and roll and classical.

In doing so, they raised around £1,000 towards Rotary International's 'End Polio Now' initiative. Together with match funding provided by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, this makes it possible for 15,000 children to be vaccinated against the disease.

Speaking after the concert, organiser Tom Hunt of Ludlow Rotary Club said "It was wonderful that these young people wanted to help end polio by performing this concert, for until polio is totally eradicated every child is at risk of this highly infectious, potentially life-threatening and paralysing disease."

He added "There is no cure for polio but there is a safe and effective vaccine which we need to continue to roll out until there are no more cases. Rotary is in the vanguard of efforts to bring polio to an end. Since its involvement the number of cases world-wide has reduced from 350,000 in 1985 to just 12 in 2023, and the world could be polio free in 2024. When the world is finally confirmed to be polio free, it will be just the second human disease ever to be eradicated after smallpox."

Donations can still be made in support through the Ludlow Rotary Club's fundraising page: www.peoplesfundraising.com/fundraising/end-polio-now.

NOTES FOR EDITORS

1.   Photos - jpegs attached - (approved by the school)

Pupils from Clee Hill Community Academy in rehearsal for the concert

2.   More about polio

Polio is the world's forgotten disease and something that should have been made history a long time ago.

Some 40 years ago, Rotary spearheaded the campaign to bring it to an end at a time when there were over 1,000 polio cases a day in 125 countries, paralysing and killing children. Today, the number of cases is down by 99.9%.

Inspired in part by Rotary's volunteer commitment and fundraising success, the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) was launched in 1988. This remarkable partnership includes Rotary, the World Health Organization, UNICEF, the US Center for Disease Control & Prevention and, more recently, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and GAVI the Vaccine Alliance. These organisations work alongside governments of the world to end polio.

Because of the efforts of Rotary and its partners, nearly 19 million people who would otherwise have been paralysed are walking, and more than 1.5 million people are alive who would otherwise have died.

Despite there only being a handful of cases left in the world, continued campaigning, health worker training and vaccination programmes are essential to stop the disease returning and ensuring the world is certified polio-free. Over 400 million children still have to receive their polio vaccinations by the GPEI partners multiple times every single year in more than 50 countries.

Failure to eradicate polio could result in as many as 200,000 new cases worldwide every year within a decade.

Rotary members continue to be key players in many aspects of the polio programme including on the ground in a number of countries as well as fundraising and advocacy.

3. For Further information

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