

Good morning!

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I am here representing Rotary International. Rotary has been part of my life for many years. I became a Rotarian before any of you were born, and maybe even before some of your parents were born. Rotary is an organization of 1.2 million men and women, all over the world. Rotarians meet every week in local clubs to enjoy friendship, and to work together to help others.

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In life, the most rewarding thing is not money. Being useful, being helpful, being able to make other people happy—this is what makes us happy people. In Rotary, Service Above Self means that we look at the community before we look at ourselves. We put the needs of the community above our own needs.

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Why? Because water is a universal need. Everyone needs water. And we need it for everything. Here in Japan, we are the fourth heaviest users of water per capita in the world. The average person in Japan uses 374 liters of water every single day. In the

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United States, they use 575 liters per day. Where it is the water you use in the bathroom, for washing plants. It is also the water used for agriculture, we need more water. Every year, there is less clean

water going? It is not only the water for drinking, cooking, and bathing. It is for our clothes, and for watering your plants in industry, and in healthcare. Every year, water goes around.

In the poorest countries, there is not enough water. In Bangladesh, the average person uses 49 liters of water a day. In Mozambique, the average person

uses only 4 liters of water a day.

It is important to understand why and how people in these very poor countries are using their water. It is also important to understand how this affects their daily lives.

In the poorest developing countries, people do not have modern bathrooms. Sewage goes into the ground, and contaminates the water. Often, industrial waste goes into drinking water as well. Most people do not have running water inside their homes, and have to walk great distances to find water. When you have to carry all of your water by hand, you must use the water that is close to you, even if it is not safe.

There are many terrible consequences to this. Waterborne illness is one of the major contributors to child mortality around the world. No one has access to safe water. More than 80% of the world's population lives with unsafe water.

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Not only that, but where there is no safe water, mothers and children spend too much time seeking water to learn well. Money that could go towards schooling instead goes toward basic survival.

There is often very little education. Children spend too much time looking for water. Children spend too much time looking for water. Children spend too much time looking for water.

I just explained to you that in Rotary, we believe in Rotary, we see the water crisis as a very important part of the world, Rotarians are involved in water projects

in being useful to our communities. So in being useful to our communities. So in being useful to our communities.

Water projects come in many forms. Some are very simple. For example, the Life Straw is a device that costs about 450 yen. It is 31 centimeters long and weighs almost nothing. But you can put one end of it into very contaminated water, and the other end in your mouth, and drink through it—and it will filter out almost all of the bacteria and viruses that cause illness.

It is a wonderful invention, and one that has saved many lives. It is extremely helpful in situations of crisis and places of great need. But it is a temporary solution to a long-term problem.

When you are trying to be useful to others, the best way to be useful is to truly understand their problems and their perspective. You must also look at a problem from the long point of view. If you help someone in a way that depends on you, they are only

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being helped as long as you are there. If you help someone in a way that allows them to depend on themselves, they can help themselves always.

This is taking a long view. This is the Rotary approach.

In Rotary, when we see a long-term problem, we look for long-term solutions. We look at the problem from the beginning to the end. Where does the problem begin, and how far does it reach? Where is the best point to reach in to help?

There is no single solution for the water crisis. But there is a great deal of knowledge that can be applied to many different situations. For example, the question of safe water cannot be independent of the question of sanitation. It does not help to clean water if the water is constantly being polluted. Every water crisis has a context, and that context must be understood for the crisis to be dealt with effectively.

If there is one word we must always remember when we talk about water projects, it is sustainability. Every project has a budget, and the goal is to use that budget to make the biggest difference, to the most people, over the longest period of time. That sounds simple, but the decisions that we make today will affect the decisions that we make tomorrow. They will affect all of you, and also your children, and their children as well.

You are young, but you are capable. You have the heart and the motivation to make the changes that will make all of our communities better.

The future of our planet is not in my hands, or in the hands of my generation. It is in yours.

My friends, I am heartened by this event and by your presence here today. I know that you will leave here with not only more knowledge, but also more motivation to make a positive change. And I hope that in the years that come, you too will discover the joy of Service Above Self.

Thank you.