

Manna from India

**From Jenny Horton of Kenmore Club
 on the Polio Eradication Trail**

"Jenny Horton" yen283@gmail.com

10 December 2010

Greetings from Uttar Pradesh,

Winter has come and my only sweater is getting a good work out, and I have added socks to my sandals, a look not seen much in Australia but needed to keep my feet warm. The other morning I was walking to work and it was 8 degrees, and there was a real chill in the air. We have also had unseasonal rain

Time just flies when one is totally consumed in pursuing what they feel passionate about, it is hard to believe it is December already. The festivals have come and gone. Diwali - the festival of light - a time of thanksgiving for the harvest and having many traditions from India's mythology. At the office we lit lamps around a flower rangola (colourful mosaic on the floor)) then all joined for a meal together. The light of the lamp symbolising peace and harmony. The festival was an incredible experience, we had several nights of fireworks, shopping and celebrating with family.



Lights around a rangola in the office

It was nice to be home briefly in Sept to see my mom and to share our polio story at the UN Dept Public Information NGO Summit on Advancing Global Health in Melbourne. At this summit Rotary's workshop was titled "Coordination of a Public-Private Health Campaign- The Polio Eradication Initiative". The Summit gave us the opportunity to meet many other NGOs who are working to improve the lives of many around the globe and share ideas. It is always a privilege to share stories of the field battle towards polio eradication, it is an amazing program achieving much more than just our polio focus.



The Polio Eradication team from the UN Summit

Since returning to India I have been working mostly in Malegaon in Maharashtra state. This state has had 5 polio virus cases this year and is needing extra support from all partners to assist the government in their program to stop this circulation.

Malegaon is in Nasik district which is well known for its vineyards, orchards and produce. Driving through Nasik the roads are clogged with agricultural vehicles or those bringing the produce to market. Malegaon is approx 280kms northeast of Mumbai, and is home to many educational facilities. The spoken

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languages are Marathi, Urdu, Hindi and to a lesser degree English. The city has grown around its textile industry and is famous for its power looms. The noise of these looms is deafening, but they are the character of Malegaon, as is the lack of infrastructure to support the population. Many areas lack the basics of drinking water and sanitation; this contributing to the persistence of polio virus in the area. I was truly happy to be posted here.



Immunizing in a power loom

Global Polio Situation.

The data speaks for itself, tremendous progress has been made in Nigeria and India. We have just finished high season in India and everyone is feeling

encouraged by the results, although we still have problematic areas especially in West Bengal.

The focus in Africa is in Angola and R Congo and DR Congo where there is an explosive outbreak of polio with a very high mortality (approx 50%) especially among the 15-19 year olds. This is a constant reminder of what can happen if countries not currently infected do not maintain high immunization levels. The major issue for polio eradication now is the budget deficit which is \$US804 million for the 2010-2012 period. The budget of US\$2.6 billion for this period is based on the strategic plan which is great reading and can be found on the www.polioeradication.org website. The website is certainly worth exploring.



Kids playing



Some of the Malegaon team.

Wild Polio Virus Total Cases *data as of 7 Dec 2010 per WHO	2009 Total	Jan 01-7 Dec 2009*	Jan 01-7 Dec 2010*
Globally	1606	1483	841
Pakistan	89	82	126
Afghanistan	38	31	22
India	741	659	41
Nigeria	388	386	13
No of countries with virus.	23	23	20

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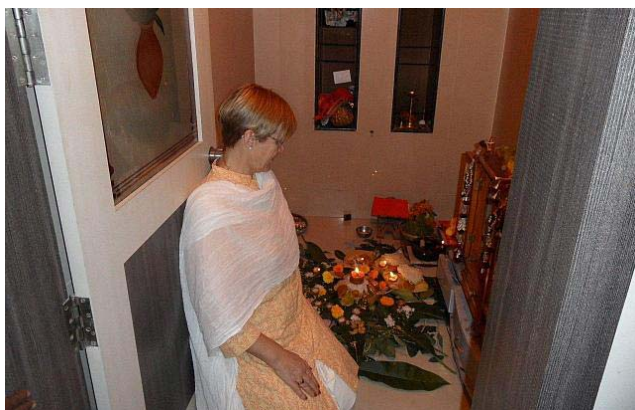
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Life in India.

Since my return, we have been full on into preparations and implementation of campaigns, so days have been long and I usually crash before dinner at 2200 hours. My home in Malegaon is great, a small hotel where our entire team stay. They have a veg restaurant and really cater to our needs (early mornings and late nights). They know I love spices so my food is usually packed with chilli. The President of Rotary Club of Malegaon Mid Town invited me to join their meeting for the DGs visit which was nice. The meeting was in Marathi (language), - it is really interesting to be introduced prior to speaking and not understand one word that was being said!



Sharing dinner & Durga Puja RC Malegaon Midtown



The RC Malegaon also invited me to the felicitation of some community members which was an honour. I actually spend far more time at some rotary clubs here than in my own district.



Vaccinating a newborn in my RDU cap

In Oct I had the opportunity to participate in a surveillance review in Kolkata as part of an international/ national team which allowed me visit a different area and to meet some Rotarians from West Bengal. Surveillance reviews are carried out to assess the strength (or weakness) of the area to notify all cases of Acute Flaccid Paralysis which is the presenting symptom in many diseases- one being polio. Reviews also assess the quality of the documentation and collection and delivery of specimens to the lab.



Convincing Refusals



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I have also been working in northern West Bengal where we have many problems and circulating virus. I celebrated EID Adhara in West Bengal which was good, to share the commitment to a faith, reaching out to others surrounded by friends. Right now I am in Uttar Pradesh working with 2 others to develop a tool for an in-depth review of supplementary immunization activities. Another challenge!

It is truly a honour to be serving with polio eradication, to walk alongside so many in this program, to live in another culture, to and to meet those most needy in our community.



Transport to town



Training supervisors in Malegaon

Thank you

While home last time I missed seeing many, and for that I apologize, I used to be the one who always maintained relationships, now I am failing at that. I appreciate so much those who do stay in touch.

My US mom and dad Jim and Nieta Loftis were honoured with a Service Above Self night which is well deserved. Two truly incredible people. Congratulations!

And to PRID Brian Knowles who celebrated his 50th year of Rotary service...again Brian has supported my work over the years and was instrumental in my finding my feet when I was new to Polio Plus. Thanks for your huge commitment to humanity Brian, especially to Polio Plus



As Christmas approaches I send Christmas wishes to all, I send my sincere thanks to all who have taken time to write, I send best wishes for a safe and fulfilling festive season and for 2011, lets pray it is the year we interrupt polio virus circulation around the globe.

Gods blessings Jenny