

# We Were Built for This

[JOHN HEWKO · FRIDAY, MAY 29, 2020](#)

A note from Reverend Patrick J. Rooney, Rotary District Governor 7390

**“We were built for this.”** It was just a few words, cast upon a sea of words spoken that evening. It was a few words that could easily have been lost in the hustle and bustle of the “to do” list that everyone gathered there had to accomplish. It was just a few words...but it encapsulated for me everything that I believe Rotary to be about and what it means as it challenges us for the future. **“We were built for this.”** It was Jeffrey Cadorette, Rotary International Director and John Hewko, CEO of Rotary International who used those few words at a zoom gathering of District Governors and District Governors elect. Yes there was business to discuss; initiatives to be pushed; challenges to be laid down as we move toward the end of this Rotary year and prepare to begin a new one. But there were these few words which spoken above the blare of the evening’s business to offer us the most profound of visions for Rotary in the months and years to come as we move through this pandemic into the future which awaits us – **“We were built for this.”**

In my last article to the District, I spoke of the need to re-envision our future as Rotarians. I quoted RID Jeffrey to illustrate that if Rotary were founded today, it would probably look nothing like it does at present. And we showed how this pandemic has changed our very modus operandi from its structured and formalized process into something that is already more dynamic and flexible yet still meets the needs of our members. And in the past few weeks, RID Jeffrey has been charged with leading a Rotary International Board of Directors Task Force to help grasp this moment in time in which, with the challenges of the pandemic laid before us, Rotary can see how it needs to pivot both quickly and hard, to seize this moment and make the changes that are needed to move our organization into the future. **“We were built for this”** is both the theme and the thinking which underlies this Task Force and the challenge it lays before all of us for this organization which we love.

But now I realize that the challenge before us goes much deeper than just sustaining our clubs, our community outreach and our fundraising programs. Instead it stretches into the very heart of our communities, into the very being of our existence as members of those communities and as forces for change in the future. We are Rotarians, 1.2 million members strong. We are embedded deep into the life of our communities throughout the world. We represent all sectors, trades and businesses in our communities but more importantly we are leaders in our communities. In the coming months, governmental agencies and political groups will seek to rebuild our economy while other groups will help rebuild our healthcare system which has been stretched almost to breaking point. And in so many other ways, groups and individuals will help rebuild our shattered lives.

But for me the question is at once both simple and profound – who will help rebuild our local broken communities? Who will help heal the rifts and divisions which have been brought to the surface as a result of this pandemic? Who will

reach out across the divide and support those in need regardless of race or creed or gender? Who will help rebuild a sense of community, a unity of mind and spirit which says we can and will make a difference in the lives of those around us? Who will do these things? Rotary and Rotarians – for this is who we are and this is what we do; indeed you could say that “**We were built for this.**” We know our communities better than anyone else. We know the strengths and weaknesses, the good and the bad, the joys and the sorrows of our communities. We know, and in many cases, we love, our communities. We care about what happens in our communities. And we seek the very best for our communities. And as Rotarians we are best positioned as community leaders to help rebuild, reform and reshape our communities into those places where the very best of our Rotary values are expressed, supported and affirmed. Remembering that the first word of our Rotary International Vision Statement is “Together” we will come together across the political, ethnic and class gaps which so often divide our communities and be models of how we can truly build a community based on care and service one for the other.

So while some will help rebuild our infrastructure and our economies, including many who are already a part of Rotary, I believe that at the local level we Rotarians need to concentrate on helping to rebuild our communities. And no one is better placed to do that than Rotarians. Whether in clubs large or small, whether in e-clubs or passport clubs, whether we meet in person or digitally, whether we are Interactors, Rotaractors or Rotarians we are one in Rotary spirit, living and working in our communities and, with the strength of Rotary International behind us, we can help rebuild our broken and shattered communities. This is our time. This is our call. This is our work. Indeed “**We were built for this**” and we can and will do this because above all - we are Rotarians and we will not rest until our work is done. **Together** we can and will change the world.

Reverend Patrick J. Rooney      Rotary District Governor - 7390