

## **PUBLIC INVITED TO LOCAL FORUM TO END POLIO NOW! Oscar-Nominated Documentary About Polio Eradication To Be Shown**

(Saratoga Springs, NY) – It wasn't too many years ago when polio was the number one health concern in the United States and the world. New outbreaks have brought this disease back into the news and highlight the importance of continuing eradication efforts. The public is invited to a Community Forum on Polio, Sunday, May 17, 2:00 to 4:00 at the Saratoga Springs United Methodist Church, 175 Fifth Avenue in Saratoga Springs. The Forum is sponsored by the Saratoga Springs Rotary Club.

The forum will feature a moving film as well as expert speakers on polio eradication and medicine. *The Final Inch*, nominated for an Academy Award in the best documentary short subject category, chronicles the challenges health organizations and governments face during the final stages of polio eradication. The keynote speaker for the forum is Maine-based Rotarian, Ann Lee Hussey, who has participated in 15 National Immunization Day events, immunizing children around the world against polio, and is herself a survivor of polio. In addition, a panel of speakers will feature Joyce Peabody, MD, Saratoga Hospital's Chief Medical Officer, Pediatrics and Neonatology; Mary DeRidder and Louise Rourke, local polio survivors; and Linda & Joel Dziengielewski and Anne Cargile, local volunteers who participated in Rotary immunization programs in Nigeria and India.

According to world health officials, more than 10 million of the world's children will be paralyzed in the next 40 years if the world fails to eradicate polio. "Thanks to immunizations, we don't think of polio in the United States, but most of today's adults know of someone who was afflicted or have memories of the immunization efforts in schools," commented Deborah Miles Czech, President of the Saratoga Springs Rotary Club. There are only four countries where the disease has never been eradicated: Pakistan, Afghanistan, India and Nigeria. Until it is eradicated in these countries, the disease threatens the future generations of children worldwide. Recent outbreaks of the disease have spread from Northern Nigeria and India across 15 African countries.

The Saratoga Springs Rotary Club is part of Rotary International's "PolioPlus" program, which seeks to totally rid the world of polio. The Saratoga Club's effort includes a fundraiser, Posies to End Polio. This program is part of a worldwide Rotary effort to raise funds to match \$355 Million in Challenge Grants from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Local residents can purchase bouquets of high-quality red roses at \$20 per dozen at the Forum, through a Rotarian, or from the Club's Web site at [www.saratogarotary.com](http://www.saratogarotary.com). The roses will be available for pick-up on June 3 at Longfellow's Restaurant from noon until 5:00 pm or will be delivered by Rotarians to addresses within the Saratoga Springs School District.