

Rotarians against Child Slavery

(A Newsletter for the [newest](http://www.racsrag.org) Rotarian Action Group – See website www.racsrag.org)

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“To deprive a man of his natural liberty and to deny him the ordinary amenities of life is worse than starving the body; it is starvation of the soul, the dweller in the body” (Gandhi)



Breaking News...RI recognizes Action Group

Last November our Action Group of Rotarians against Child Slavery submitted an application for RAG status to Rotary International. The application was first scrutinised by the RI RAG Committee and then forwarded to the RI Board with the RAG Committee's

full support. Last night, the Action Group received the message from RI headquarters which some of us have been waiting for... for a long time, ie

Directors has decided to officially recognize the Rotarian Action Group Against Child Slavery".

"Congratulations! I am pleased to inform you that the RI Board of



28 Jan 2013: Action Day for RACS Members

(By Stephen Sypula, RC of Stevenage Grange, D 1260: RAG Treasurer)

The world will rightly applaud the RI Board of Directors who, on 28th January demonstrated its vision to light a beacon of hope for enslaved children by recognising RACS as a formal Rotarian Action Group.

As one of the team that has engaged with the Board over many years on this issue, I recognise their decision as a milestone in Rotary's distinguished history of leading on humanitarian issues. Formal acknowledgement of the plight of so

many young people, held hostage and abused, deprived of basic rights, of education and freedom to develop as our children have, should make Rotarians feel rightly proud.

With the Board's vision, President's Obama's keynote speech on slavery just months back, and Hilary Clinton's recent endorsement of the RACS adopted Shakti Samuha", Kathmandu, Nepal project, CNN's Freedom Project, and Google's \$11m funding, I suggest with some confidence now that the

timing is right for Rotarians to make a difference. Please encourage every Rotarian to do everything possible to help Rotary help make child slavery history.

Congratulations to all for getting RACS to this position. Now let's make that difference.



“It is not easy to crush a human mind, but with enough brutality, time and indifference to suffering, it can be done. Around the world, it IS being done” (Kevin Bales)



Editorial



“So many of our dreams at first seem impossible, then they seem improbable, and then, when we summon the will, they soon become inevitable.”

(Christopher Reeve)

Ring out the bells, sound the trumpets, bring out the bunting and raise the flags, why ?..... because from today Rotary International has **officially** joined the fight to combat child slavery, because enslaved children will henceforth have a greater chance of being rescued, rehabilitated and reintegrated back into their homes and because anti-slavery organizations will now have the backing of a significant ally, ie Rotary International in their unequal struggle against corrupt officials and slave owners.

As Steven writes above *“we have reached a truly momentous milestone in Rotary’s distinguished history of leading on humanitarian issues.*

Now begins the hard work of knocking this fledgling Action Group into shape so that it can effectively achieve its twin objectives which are

1. Create Awareness. ie tell Rotarians and the wider public that millions of children are held captive for commercial gain.

2. Take action. ie support and promote anti-slavery groups worldwide with programmes, campaigns and projects that help to protect children from slavery and its consequences.

The struggle against child slavery demands that we choose sides.... not between

black and white, not between rich or poor, not between Muslims or Christians or any other faith. It’s a harder choice than that. It’s a choice between commitment and indifference, between dignity and servitude, between right and wrong, between fairness and injustice.

These choices are based upon Rotarians’ ethical responsibilities which are inherent in RI’s Code of Policies in relation to the preservation of the liberty of the individual and upholding the principles of justice for humankind. (See Article 8.050.3). We must not shirk our responsibilities on this issue.



Please pass on this Newsletter and also encourage fellow Rotarians to visit our website and sign on as a member. The website is www.racsrag.org. The webmaster is Stephen Sypula, RC of Stevenage Grange

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