

## **Rotarian Clark Merkley**



Clark Merkley first joined the Provo Rotary club in 2008. He joined it primarily for business networking and as the CEO of a company in Provo, he thought, that this would be a good way for him to get to know business leaders and civic leaders in the community. Quickly turned from that into community service as he got to understand what Rotary was all about. What makes him proud are the members of Rotary and the service that they do in the local community and also internationally. He had the opportunity to be the president of Rotary, and it would have been during the 2019 to 2020 year. They had to make a lot of adjustments to how to held meetings. They made it virtually made it easier to speak with people all over the country: Mitt Romney, John Curtis, who's the US Representative and now running for the US Senate. He attended the Rotary International Convention in Hamburg, Germany, and there were 25,000 Rotarians from all over the world. One of the things that's been Rotary's focus for about the last 20 years now has been the eradication of polio. See what's happened with the number of polio cases in that time. Before he came to Norway, he loved this story because it kind of gave him the model that he wanted to follow. Rotary International wanted to see if they could get the Bill and Blended Gains Foundation to participate in the eradication of polio. After running the Safe Foundation, they talked about what they've done over the last 15 years in regard to polio. And, as Bill and Melinda say, what do you think you need? And Rotarians said, "We think at this point we need about a \$50 million infusion into the efforts around the world to deliver lifesaving medicine." The staff that went out to Seattle and they got on the plane in Seattle, they're flying back to Chicago, where headquarters are. And as soon as they hit the ground, the president got an emergency call from the CFO. He said were you expecting a \$50 million payment to come in, and he said, "What do you mean?" In the last hour, Rotary International got a \$50 million wire transfer from the village, Melinda Gates Foundation. That was so successful. The key to it is that there were Rotarians all around the world who had the trust of the local community members and community leaders. The only places where polio still exists are Afghanistan and Pakistan. And as it known, a few cases will pop up. Nigeria or a few other places where, and usually it's because somebody traveled to Afghanistan or Pakistan and then ran back. So that was a pretty cool story.

*Interview by Nicholas Robinson, UVU student*