

## 'End polio Trans-Sabah Walk and Climb' next month

### Mary Chin

KOTA KINABALU: This year marks the final year of Rotary International's US\$200 Million Challenge.

Rotary Clubs all over the world are doing their part to meet this challenge in conjunction with World Polio Day (October 24).

Sabah is no exception as we have the "End Polio Trans-Sabah Walk and Climb".

Event Organising Chairman Wong Chu Lai said it is a District 3310 Project that everyone can participate in.

He said Rotarians of all ages, Rotaractors, Interactors and friends of Rotary can play a part in ending polio.

"The End Polio Trans-Sabah Walk and Climb will start from Sandakan on Nov 7 (Monday), departing King Park Hotel via Telupid to reach Sabah Tea Garden on Nov 11.

"Participants will climb Mt Kinabalu on Nov 15 and reach the Likas Sports Complex at 7.30am on Nov 18. From here, they are expected to get to Jesselton Point by 8.30am before proceeding to the Rotary District 3310 Conference which is held at Pacific Sutera Hotel. By 10am, they should reach their destination to join all delegates of the District Conference," Wong, a Past President of the Rotary Club of Likas Bay, said.

According to him, 15,000 contribution cards have been printed and distributed to all Rotary Clubs in District 3310 to bring in US\$200,000. "That is the target set for District 3310."

Asked how Rotary's US\$200 Million Challenge came about, the Organising Chairman said earlier, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation had awarded two grants totalling US\$355 million to Rotary in support of its work in eradicat-

ing polio.

"Rotary then responded with Rotary's US\$200 Million Challenge. To date, Rotarians around the world have raised over US\$175 million for the challenge," Wong said.

Gates (who is Co-Chairman of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation) reportedly commended Rotary for its success in reducing the incidence of polio by more than 99% worldwide since 1988.

While praising Rotary for its continued success in efforts to eradicate polio, Gates cautioned that ending polio would entail renewed resolve and redoubling of efforts to keep the disease from spreading and threatening hundreds of thousands of children.

"If we fail, the disease will not stay at its current level. It will spread back into countries where it has been eliminated and will kill and paralyse hundreds of thousands of children who used to be safe," he was quoted as saying.

Polio eradication has been the Foundation's top priority, and it has been their single biggest investment in recent years.

Saying the last 1% will be the longest and hardest 1 per cent, Gates said it will require more work and commitment than ever before.

"I am so proud to be a partner in the work that Rotary has been doing to eliminate polio. None of this would have been achievable had it not been for Rotary.

"But now without the redoubled effort of every Rotarian worldwide, we will not succeed. Redoubling is crucial to ending the disease," he had said at the third plenary session of the 2011 Rotary International Convention in New Orleans, Louisiana, USA.