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**ROTARY COMMUNITY FIRST RESPONDERS – A NEW PARTNERSHIP
WITH LIFESAVERS - THE ROYAL LIFESAVING SOCIETY UK -
BRINGING HOPE TO OUR COMMUNITIES**

Rotary International in Great Britain and Ireland launches today a partnership with *Lifesavers* – The Royal Lifesaving Society UK to help save lives. This aims to raise public awareness of the issues surrounding cardiac arrest and the fact that many lives could be saved if those who suffer from a heart attack are given early treatment.

162,000 people die each year within Great Britain and Ireland from heart attack – this figure can be reduced dramatically if emergency treatment is given prior to the arrival of an ambulance. The initiative will engage Rotary Clubs to facilitate the establishment of a network of Community First Responders groups who will be drawn from volunteers in local communities. The volunteers will learn how to do resuscitation using defibrillators that could be acquired through a contribution from a local Rotary Club.

Community First Responders are all volunteers who work in teams on a rota basis and are activated by the ambulance service. They bridge the gap between the 999 call and the arrival of the paramedics and are part of the co-ordinated approach to saving lives. There are 300,000 heart attacks every year and 160,000 people die of coronary heart disease before reaching the age of 65. It is the largest cause of early deaths in Great Britain and Ireland. Currently, only 5% will survive although 85% have the potential to survive when defibrillation is employed. The chances of survival reduces by 10% for every minute defibrillation is delayed.

Gordon McNally President Rotary International in Great Britain and Ireland said ‘Sudden heart attack is one of the commonest causes of death among the 45 – 65 age bracket. My own father died in 1985, aged 56, from a sudden heart attack - only 48 hours earlier he had passed a routine company medical with flying colours. This condition really can strike at a moment’s notice. Rotary Community First Responders aims to raise public awareness of issues such as Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation and hopes to help form new Community First Responder Groups who are trained in the

use of Automatic Emergency Defibrillators. Rotary is celebrating one hundred years of community service this year and we shall work hard to ensure that every community has access to this life-saving facility.’

For more information please contact Judith Diment on 01628 672965 or 07860 162313 or judithdiment@aol.com

INTERVIEWS WITH GORDON MCINALLY AND PHOTOGRAPHS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

Notes for Editors

1. As a volunteer organization with over 31,000 clubs in more than 165 countries, Rotary initiates humanitarian programs that address today's challenging issues, such as hunger, poverty, and illiteracy. In Great Britain and Ireland there are 1830 clubs with 58,000 members.

Rotary club members represent a cross-section of business and professional leaders worldwide. These 1.2 million men and women donate their expertise, time, and money to support local and international projects that help people in need and promote understanding among cultures.

Rotary's flagship program is its effort to protect children against the polio, with the goal of ending the disease throughout the world.

For general information on Rotary in your area, contact the local Rotary Club President, details from Robin Freeman, Secretary Rotary International in Great Britain & Ireland: 01789 765411, www.rotary-ribi.org

2. *Lifesavers* –The Royal Life Saving Society UK, is a registered charity, formed in 1891, granted a Royal Charter by King George V in 1924, a supplementary Charter granted by Queen Elizabeth II in 1959. Today Lifesavers is the country's leading provider of education and training in water safety, rescue, and life support. It has 50 branches covering the UK and Ireland with over 1600 active lifesaving and lifeguarding clubs. Building on our exceptional experience we are working to reduce the number of needless deaths caused by heart attacks. *Lifesavers* are working with all voluntary aid and statutory organisations throughout the UK and Ireland, our common objective- to save lives. We are the people who convert bystanders into lifesavers.

For more information on Lifesavers, The Royal Life Saving Society UK, contact Nikki Newall at The Bridge Group on 024 7630 6666, or email n.newall@bridge-group.co.uk