



### **Rotarian Profile: Joey Vernon**

Joey Vernon decided to join Rotary soon after he took a position with CTS Telecom. His boss at the time, Marty Feilen, was in the Climax Rotary Club. Marty talked about the great things that Rotarians do around the community and the world.

A member since May 2013, Joey encourages all young business people to join Rotary sharing, “Every day I’m proud to be a Rotarian and I am excited for the next community service opportunity. The club helps to change our community for the better. Service organizations, such as Rotary, are the drivers for many community improvement projects, and businesses are the motors that fuel the efforts with financial backing and supporters. It’s exciting to see a community support a business and in turn for that business to invest in its community. It’s great synergy.”

Joey recalls one of his first Rotary meetings. There was a presentation about the polio epidemic. “I was fortunate to have been born after the largest outbreak of this terrible disease. I had no idea of its disastrous impact.” According to the Rotary International website, “In 1985, Rotary launched its PolioPlus program, the first initiative to tackle global polio eradication through the mass vaccination of children. Rotary has contributed more than \$1.3 billion and countless volunteer hours to immunize more than 2.5 billion children in 122 countries.” There were only three countries that have never stopped transmission of the wild poliovirus: Afghanistan, Nigeria, and Pakistan. Rotary is pleased to report that this year there have only been 36 cases — 7 in Afghanistan and 29 in Pakistan. The last reported case in Nigeria was in July 2014. Each year, members of the Rotary Club of Battle Creek support the ongoing fight against polio through personal contributions.

Through Rotary, members also have the opportunity to support many local service projects. Joey volunteers for the annual river clean-up, handicap ramp building projects and packing back packs at the Food Bank of South Central Michigan. These activities are his favorite part of Rotary. “Talking about change is one thing, but getting out and making it happen is what our community needs.”

Joey sums up his experience with this thought; “Being involved in Rotary with so many effective leaders is truly a gift. I feel more confident and know that if I ever have a leadership challenge, I can turn to fellow Rotarians for advice. As I grow throughout my career, having this resource for wisdom and insight will be invaluable. I’m so excited that I joined Rotary as young as I did. I’m looking to being a member for the next 35 to 40 years! I’ll say this...I haven’t met a Rotarian who hasn’t inspired me.”