

Enablers

By Millie Malone Lill

Enablers have gotten a bad name. People think of them as those who enable drug addicts or alcoholics to continue their bad behavior and that is a bad thing. But what about the good enablers? I'm thinking of all the parents who helped us with those horrible exercises, enabling us to walk again. The nurses and doctors who enabled us to continue living after the polio virus grabbed us and shook the heck out of us were enablers, too.

I met a good enabler a few weeks ago. He works for NuMotion, a Durable Medical Equipment supplier. His name is Lonnie Shafer. He and a Physical Therapist (notice I did not refer to her as a Physical Terrorist, as I usually refer PT's) were so kind and so, well, enabling. I've worked with Lonnie when I got my current power chair six years ago. He understands PPS and is a dream to work with. It took a lot longer than I thought it would, but he and the PT were quite thorough. They will order the power chair that I need, enabling me to remain independent a while longer.

Think about it. The crutches, canes, wheelchairs that I've been trying to teach you to see as simple tools are enablers. They enable us to move from one place to another. My lift on the back of my van enables me to load my power chair into the van. The van enables me to go further than I could if I only drove my power chair. The power chair enables me to get my own groceries and take care of myself. It also enabled me to walk my dear little dog, Fiona



(AKABossypants), who recently passed over the Rainbow Bridge. She and I had great adventures as I rolled, and she strolled, along the sidewalks and streets of our small town in Iowa.

My new power chair will have all the bells and whistles. It will have an elevating seat! I can drive the chair while the seat is elevated, enabling me to reach stuff off the shelves in the grocery store, reach my cupboards and sink, maybe even cook again. If I choose, I can get a backup camera, at my own cost, of course! I know this sounds a bit fancy and far-fetched but are you aware of how many toes I've crunched when I back up? Most people do not actually see wheelchairs, even when a large chair with a purple polka dotted seat cover is parked directly in front of them. I cannot see behind me because the headrest blocks my view. Also, I tend to forget that I have eggs in the bags on the back of my chair when I get my groceries. Backing up too far in the elevator has resulted in a real mess of smashed eggs, let me tell you.

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Polio Vaccine Rollout and The Cutter Laboratory Incident

By Elaine Allen, Gleanings Editor

Early in the COVID vaccination rollout in the winter of 2020-21, "many polio survivors were terrified of getting COVID vaccine because they were afraid it was rushed like the polio vaccine," according to a Truro College professor and polio survivor.

Cutter Incident, continued on Page 2

Cutter Incident, *continued from Page 1*

Professor Michael Kossove met with NPSA members via Zoom during the October 3, 2021, “hybrid” Annual Reunion. In addition to polio survivors’ concerns, he said current “Anti-vaxxers” cite the Cutter incident when saying vaccines are not safe.

In the 1950s, the fear of polio was second only to the fear of the Atomic Bomb. The worst year of the polio epidemic in the U.S. was 1952, when 3500 people died and 21,000 were paralyzed. When large-scale polio vaccine trials began in 1954, “kids were lined up for miles to get the vaccine,” Kossove said, “1.8 million kids participated in the trials.” Those polio trials were minimal compared to rigorous clinical trials conducted today, he said.

After the trials proved Salk’s “killed” virus was effective, results of trials were announced in April 1955. One newspaper headline read: “Dr. Salk’s Polio Vaccine Works”. Six labs across the U.S. began manufacturing the vaccine. The Cutter Laboratory Incident occurred in April 1955, when a batch of polio vaccines produced in the Berkeley lab became contaminated with the “live” virus, rather than the inactive, or “killed” virus that had been developed by Dr. Jonas Salk.

The Cutter Lab sent a sample of the vaccine to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to be tested. NIH researcher Bernice Eddy began testing the sample and discovered test monkeys became infected with polio. But the discovery came too late. Meanwhile, 165,000 doses went out from the Cutter Lab and were injected into children. Many children were infected from the



contaminated vaccine produced at the Cutter Lab, and those children began infecting their families and neighbors. According to Kossove, at least 200,000 people became infected and ten people died, including a woman who got polio from her two children who were infected with the contaminated Cutter vaccine.

Vaccine distribution was halted until the cause of the outbreak was determined. Vaccine distribution and administration resumed in May 1955. As a result of the Cutter Lab incident, tighter government restrictions on vaccine production were applied. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) was created several years later.

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Lonnie The Enabler also gave me the contact information for a company that is nationwide and deals with used accessible vans! I spoke to someone there and she told me that if I decide I need a van that I can drive my chair into, she could set me up with a used van that I can trade in for my current van.

I've looked at used mobility vans and the cost made my eyes cross so hard they switched sockets, but she told me about one that is a 2010 and would sell for \$21,000, not counting whatever my current van's trade in value is. I don't know the exact details of this van, but with the condition my back and hips are in, I can easily see that I will need something that does not require my walking from driver's seat to the back lift and I'm going to need it sooner rather than later.

So, here's a shout out to all the Good Enablers out there. Thanks for enabling me and my fellow polio survivors to live our best lives.

Rotary Polio Plus Member: “We’re So Close” to Global Polio Eradication

By Elaine Allen, Gleanings Editor

"Never have we come this close in 3400 years to eradicate polio in the world," polio survivor and Rotary member John Nanni told NPSA members during their September 12th Zoom meeting.

Nanni explained to the group that only two cases of wild polio have been detected in the world as of September: one in Pakistan and one in Afghanistan. He described the success of Rotary International's Polio Plus efforts to eradicate polio and other childhood diseases.

Nanni stressed the importance of "herd immunity," "The term has been politicized but it's based on science. Vaccines protect people who can't be vaccinated," especially babies and people who have compromised immune systems. In addition to herd immunity "for every dollar spent on childhood immunizations, you get \$44 in economic benefits," he said.

When vaccinating for polio year in developing countries, the vaccine also includes the measles vaccine. About 450 million kids are vaccinated every.

Rotary's infrastructure of local volunteers meant that polio eradication campaign didn't stop during the coronavirus pandemic. Polio workers are combatting coronavirus like the effort to contain Ebola outbreaks in Africa, particularly by surveillance and contact tracing/mapping.

In Islamic societies, women are allowed to continue polio and measles vaccination efforts because they are allowed into homes when men are not present. Rotarians have helped fund a Nigerian tricycle manufacturing plant to help polio survivors with jobs and transportation

Rotary's End Polio Now! campaign raised \$50 million and with a \$100 million Gates match, a total of \$150 million was raised to eradicate polio.

The World's Greatest Meal to Help End Polio is the Rotary effort that Nanni has been recently involved in. This campaign asks people to donate the amount they would spend eating a meal in a restaurant.

Nanni talked about his own polio experience. He was infected in 1953 at age of 10 months. He was placed in iron lung only one day.

He said his story is similar but different from other polio survivors. His mother was afraid to photograph him in braces. His aunt was a nun who arranged for him to have Sister Kenny treatments. He walked a year later. In school, he played sports, but he was accused of being lazy. At 40, he began to experience fatigue and muscle weakness. He now uses a power chair. As he praised Rotary's End Polio Now campaign, he reminded those who attended the Zoom meeting: *"For every child we save with the polio vaccine, we save them from post-polio later."*

Unvaccinated in Brazil: A Personal Testimony

Submitted by Kathryn Barrett, NPSA Member

I was born in 1961 in Brazil, where my father was a Lutheran missionary. The Salk vaccine eliminated the polio epidemic in the USA and my 5 older siblings were vaccinated while our family lived in the USA and Canada.

Rather than getting me vaccinated in a 3rd world country, my father chose to preach at a small village in Southern Brazil. He wanted his wife to go along with him and, because I was being breast fed at that time, I went with them.

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One night while traveling, they needed to spend the night. I was placed in a crib with another infant my age. She was sick with the active polio virus. Within days, I was running a fever and irritable, crying and not feeding well.

My mother took me to the small-town doctor. He told my mother that I was not tolerating her breast milk. The doctor's nurse noted that I was not lifting my right leg. She said that I acquired polio. She performed warm leg soaks and range of motion exercises.

Brazil had a different variant of the polio virus. It only affected the limbs, not the lungs. My mother kept giving me warm soaks every night and range of motion exercises. My right leg was skinny and weak. I didn't start to walk until I was 16 months old, and I walked with a limp.

I still did all the fun kid things, like running around and playing outdoors with my friends. I needed to wear a metal brace and ugly brown boots. I soon noted that I was different around 6 years of age. My sisters could wear sandals, but I couldn't.

My ankle started to turn in, like a club foot. I had surgery to straighten my foot and lessen the foot drop. A metal pin placed in my ankle. After that, no more brace. I was so happy. However, my right leg was 2-3 inches shorter than my healthy left leg. At 12 years old, my parents preferred that I have a leg-lengthening osteotomy, traction distraction rather than cutting the growth plate of my healthy leg. I was already so short. This surgery was painful and disabled me for 2-3 months during summer break. I remember crying every night with pain. No strong medications were given to me. I needed to turn the traction dial a 1/5th of a centimeter every night to stretch my leg, up until 3 centimeters. Bone growth

Online Resources

Post-Polio Health International's Post-Polio Directory: Available as a PDF download or for purchase: <https://post-polio.org/education/publications/>

Wikipedia link to Cutter Lab Incident:
https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Cutter_Laboratories&oldid=1046471186

YouTube Video: "Conquering Polio in America: The Cutter Incident and Beyond:"
<https://youtu.be/aLf63ylEquo>

Rotary Polio Plus Resources:
<https://www.endpolio.org/resource-center>

would fill in the empty spot. I feared doctors and panicked every time I needed to have an appointment. I had 4 large pins in my Tibia. Once done with the lengthening, my doctor just yanked out the pins and applied a cast at the office. I cried in pain. The doctor told me to be quiet and not scream. I hated him!

Polio affected my enthusiasm and personality. I became quiet and shy. I finished high school and because of my pain, I wanted to become a nurse to help other patients in pain and support them. I graduated from Midland Lutheran College with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing. I have been working full time since 1983. I married but now I'm widowed and have two beautiful girls. During my career, I have seen worse things than polio. I am fortunate to work this long and to help others. I have a few more years before my retirement. My legs keep getting weaker with pain every day. I suffer anxiety these days. It is difficult for me to go out.

ZOOM with NPSA!

We continue to meet on Zoom. With Zoom telephone/video conferences, all our members can attend safely from anywhere. As a Gleanings subscriber, you are invited to attend our Zoom meetings, no matter where you live. We regularly have people from as far away as Germany, Montreal, New York, and Florida attend!

You have two options to participate in our Zoom meetings:

Call in via one of the phone numbers listed below.

Or, to join via video, download the Zoom app onto your mobile device or computer.

In addition, we plan to meet in person for those who are in the Omaha area from March – November, unless COVID restrictions prevent us from meeting in our regular location.

We meet from 2:00 – 4:00 Central (U.S.) time on the following Sunday afternoons with topics to be announced via email and on our Facebook page at least one week in advance.

Zoom Dates	Zoom Meeting Details
Nov. 7th Dec. 5th	Zoom web address: https://us02web.zoom.us/
2022 Dates: Jan. 9th Feb. 6th	Meeting ID: 825 6010 0877 Meeting Passcode: 661946
Mar. 6th Apr. 3rd May 1st	Call-in phone numbers (use the same Meeting ID and passcode):
June 5th July 10 th Aug. 7th	+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston) +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

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NPSA Mission Statement

The mission of the Nebraska Polio Survivors Association is to educate the public and the health care community concerning polio and post-polio syndrome and to respond to the needs of individuals who suffer from the syndrome through group meetings, educational programming and newsletters, financial and other support of research concerning the syndrome and the circulation of research results.

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