

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: The Rotary Club of Lake Arrowhead

# Press Release

## **Rotarians Save Thousands in 3<sup>rd</sup> World Countries**

Lake Arrowhead - The Rotary Club of Lake Arrowhead working with the International Rotary Club to build peanut butter factories in 3<sup>rd</sup> world countries. Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) is a condition that results from severe malnutrition. Although the condition affects people of any age, the most common victims are children between one and three years of age.

### **SAMS Severe Acute Malnutrition**

SAM is a critical, global health problem. At the very least, it can stunt the growth of millions of at-risk children and can cause permanent cognitive and physical impairment. Tragically, however, SAM kills more than 2 million children worldwide each year. More children die of SAM each year than of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria combined. But, on the brighter side, a global solution to SAM has been found. It is as simple as a jar of specially developed peanut butter known as "Ready-to-use Therapeutic Food" (RUTF).

Of all the children who reach the stage of being diagnosed as severely malnourished, 65% of them will die within 1 month. The remaining 35% will incur such severe mental and physical damage that they will never reach full recovery. World health professionals are witnessing this on a global scale. Some countries are especially afflicted with over 80% of their severely malnourished children dying of SAM each year. The statistics are even more extreme in these countries because of the added factors of ongoing political unrest and severe drought conditions. SAM occurs most frequently in areas where there is chronic poverty, such as in many parts of rural Africa. Also there are pockets in India, Nepal and in Asia the Asian Island chains. Prior to 2001, the treatment for this condition was wholly ineffective (producing only a 25% recovery rate). The early treatment involved keeping the children in a hospital.

### **Project Peanut Butter (PPB)**

Dr. Mark Manary, the founder of Project Peanut Butter (PPB), used to practice this treatment himself in his early days of medicine. In 1999, Manary moved to Malawi, a hot spot for Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM), for 10 weeks. He used this time to zero in on the requirements for a successful home-based therapy program. The food had to be something that didn't spoil, didn't need to be cooked, was energy dense, could be given in small amounts and could get the job done.

Together with colleagues Michele Lescane and Dr. Andre' Briend, Dr. Manary began experimenting with various ingredients until they developed the perfect blend to treat

malnourished children: peanut butter, powdered milk, vegetable oil, vitamins, minerals, and sugar. Previous treatments had 25-40% recovery rates, but with RUTF they jumped to 95%! In 2007, RUTF with home-based therapy was recognized as the standard of care for malnourished children by the United Nations, World Health Organization and World Food Programme.

## **Rotary International**

Dennis Spurgin, DC chaired a committee within Rotary and is introducing Project Peanut Butter to the Rotary world. Since then he has recruited hundreds of Rotarians worldwide to support programs in many countries. The Rotary Club of Lake Arrowhead along with the host country's Rotarians has pledged its support to make the promise come true in Ghana, Sierra Leone and Malawi.

For example, the Project Peanut Butter plant in **Sierra Leone** prior to the TRF (International Rotary Fund) Global Grant was only large enough to furnish RUTF for half the country. The Global Grant came in with perfect timing to prove the necessity for production inside the country. When the Borders closed during to the Ebola crisis, RUTF was not able to come into the country to meet the need increase. However, with TRF Global Grant, Project Peanut Butter was able to increase production and meet the increased need. Therefore, saving thousands of children who would have died.

**Pujehun District** in southern Sierra Leone is a forgotten, undeveloped place. With a population of 325,000, this isolated area has no paved roads and not one electric line; progress as defined by the twentieth century has yet to arrive in Pujehun. Health care is non-existent. And that means 8% of all children will die of malnutrition there.

Now Project Peanut Butter (PPB), with the support of a Rotary International Global Grant, strengthened its production capacity in 2015. This has enabled PPB to initiate a Pujehun project, a plan to deliver treatment for severe and moderate malnutrition district wide in 2016. Twenty-eight clinics will be opened for malnourished children, and feeding will start in October 2016. It is anticipated that 10,000 children will be treated in the first 14 months.

Project Peanut Butter forms a not for Profit organization within each country that then becomes fully sustainable

## **Sustainability**

For a program to be sustainable it needs to be vertically and horizontally integrated within the local community. What does that mean? The programs that bring assistance from outside the community, without first establishing a structure inside the community, provide an effective short term service, however the needs will be unending. What needs to happen is for experts in every field of endeavor to educate and train locals and eventually have them develop the skills to become the local trainers.

Vertical integration: For the program to be sustainable it must involve multiple aspects of the community: Economic and Community Development, Education and Literacy, Disease Prevention and treatment.

Horizontal integration: For a program to be sustainable it needs to be developed along with other programs that are working to meet the needs of the community. Programs need to be integrated to become sustainable.

With more support, thousands more can be saved.

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