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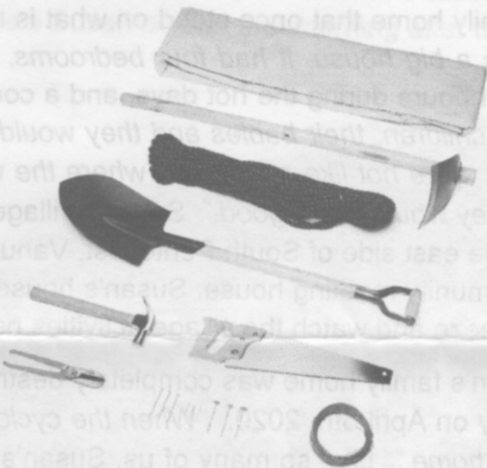
The Rotary Club of North Ryde Inc
PO Box 6171
NORTH RYDE NSW 2113

Dear Rotary Club of North Ryde

I wanted to thank you for your kind donation last year. Your generosity has made a real difference in the lives of those affected by disaster. One of the reasons we're able to react so quickly when disaster strikes is that our aid is pre-funded by donors like you. This means we are not delayed by lengthy assessments, budget approvals, procurement and logistics.

The COVID-19 pandemic caused us to adapt the way we work around the world as countries closed their borders and our Response Teams were unable to deploy. That did not stop us. Our experience of working with remote in-teams in places like Syria and the Lake Chad Basin meant we had a model for continuing to respond to disasters and displacement by conflict.

On April 6th Cyclone Harold made landfall in Vanuatu as a Category 5 cyclone, bringing devastation to the northern provinces. The provinces of Sanma, Malampa, Torba and Penama are most affected. It is estimated that up to 90% of buildings and houses in Sanma are either damaged or destroyed.



Below you will read how our Shelter Kits (pictured above) and essential items like solar lights and mosquito nets enable families to recover from disaster.

Vanuatu was mercifully COVID19-free and the local government wanted to keep it that way. By partnering with CARE Australia (who have a long-term presence on the islands) over a period of several months we were able to send in aid to be distributed to affected populations on remote islands. In total, ShelterBox and its supporters helped 2,000 families. Below you will read the story of one such family.

ShelterBox Australia, PO Box 254, Parramatta, NSW, 2124

ABN 21 143 129 220

www.shelterboxaustralia.org.au

ShelterBox Australia is a registered charity, independent of Rotary International and the Rotary Foundation

Susan's Story



Susan on the concrete slab where her house used to stand

"Oh, my house was so good," reminisces Susan of her family home that once stood on what is now a bare concrete slab. "We lived so good there. Our house was a big house, it had four bedrooms, one sitting room and a veranda." It was the hub of respite for the neighbours during the hot days, and a cool place for her family to rest at night. "The mothers would take their children, their babies and they would come and sleep on my veranda," said Susan proudly. "Their houses were not like my house, where the wind would blow on to my veranda. Here their babies would not cry, they would sleep good." Susan's village of Vatsari sweeps across the side of the hill overlooking the bay on the east side of South Pentecost, Vanuatu. At the base of the hill is the village school and nakamal - the community meeting house. Susan's house sat higher up on the hill side, providing a perfect place to catch the breeze and watch the village activities below.

Unfortunately, like so many others across Pentecost, Susan's family home was completely destroyed when category 5 Tropical Cyclone Harold tore across the country on April 6th, 2020. "When the cyclone came, I was inside, I didn't want to leave my house. I just stayed home." Like so many of us, Susan's home was her safe place, a place of respite, a place to care for her family. "When the wind became strong, we were there, we were inside. My son came and said to me, 'Mama what will happen, will we die or what?' Then he came and hugged me, and I held him, and said, 'no we won't die, we are in our house'." But as the cyclone intensified and the strength of the wind increased Susan realised her family were no longer safe. "[The wind] pulled out one of the bamboo walls on the side and so we ran down to the safe house and stayed there."



Susan with tools provided by ShelterBox that will allow her to get back to work in her garden

Susan stayed with her family and others in the safe house until daylight, emerging to survey the damage. "Oh, when I came out in the morning and I saw my house I felt terrible, I was devastated because my house fell down, but I said thank you to God because no one in my community lost their life. I just came and stood there," said Susan on that first morning after the cyclone passed.



Susan with her husband Rene and their youngest child, Tago outside their temporary shelter

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While Susan mourns the loss of her personal items, she is also incredibly thankful for the assistance and donations they have received, particularly the donation of tool kits donated by ShelterBox and distributed with the help of CARE on the ground in Vanuatu. "It was a *BIG* help for us, in our work in the garden and on the house," said Susan. "When [the tool kits] came, we shared them with individual families, they took them and went and rebuilt their kitchens and their houses, when they had finished with their houses, I said, 'now our houses are finished we must go to our gardens and work'. They were so happy, they told me to pass on a huge **THANK YOU!**"

As CEO here in Australia, I'm privileged to witness firsthand the generous support we get from our donors, transformed into tangible aid that enables communities to recover from disaster.

Our response in Vanuatu was a huge logistical challenge but ultimately very successful. None of it would have been possible without the support of donors like you.

To find out more about ShelterBox, please visit: www.shelterboxaustralia.org.au.

Thanks for making a difference!

All the best

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