

Operation Toothbrush

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"Sounds like Great advice...unless you happen to live in Cuba! In this country many families do something American families would not dare dream of doing. If a Cuban family is fortunate enough to get a toothbrush they share it among the whole family. Imagine the fun of asking your Junior High School son, "Son, can I borrow the toothbrush?" Ugh, I don't even want to think about it." (Pastor Eric Ball)



Reaching out above self / beyond borders became a goal of our club in 2017 in order to support Pastor Eric Ball, E3 Ministries, by providing 1,000 toothbrushes to Cuban families. Our club mission was to help E3 Ministries attain their goal by helping provide toothbrushes to Cuban individuals and families with no toothbrushes, or just one toothbrush to share with the entire family.



The initial conversation in January 2017 between Eric and Bruce Lysne at Park Avenue Baptist Church focused on Eric's recognized need for toothbrushes for Cuban families. Eric conducted a captivating and motivating presentation in February 2017 that energized our Titusville Sunrise Rotary Club into action. Soon thereafter, our efforts expanded to a second club in Texas- the Fair Oaks Ranch Club in San Antonio.



(Pastor Eric Ball and

Bruce Lysne)

Two brothers, Gil and Joe Garcia, members of Titusville Sunrise Rotary and Fair Oaks Ranch Rotary, respectfully, coined the phrase “Two Brothers, Two Clubs, One Mission”. Operation Toothbrush was born!



(L to R: Gil Garcia, Kevin Koufman (Florida Iron Order), Drs. Baker and Gulikson, Lt.Col. (Ret) Chaplain Joe and wife Leta Garcia, Eric Ball and Bruce Lysne)

Our efforts continued to expand within our community. In addition to our two Rotary clubs, local dentists Dr. Brian Baker and Dr. Greg Gulikson, the Florida Iron Order Motorcycle Club and many neighbors came together and provided over 4,700 toothbrushes and raised an additional \$250.00 to help support the goal of E3 Ministries.

The toothbrushes were shipped in containers to Cuba through the Western Baptist Convention in January/February 2018. Cuban customs is a bit tricky, but all the toothbrushes made it through customs without delay or confiscation. E3 Ministries finally returned to Cuba in May 2018 to complete the distribution of toothbrushes to Cuban families.

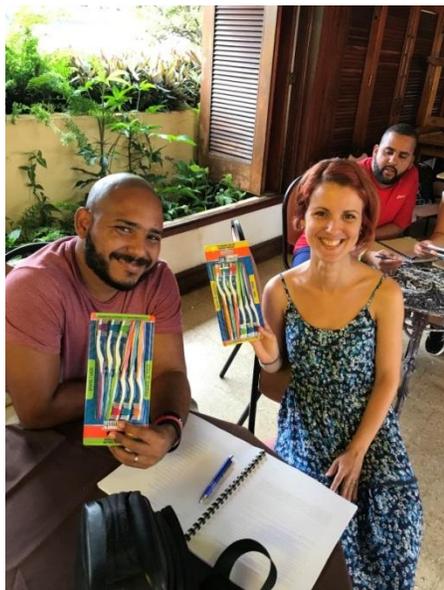


(L to R: Gil, Joe and Leta Garcia and Babs Angel and then club President Bill Heffron)

Eric shared the final chapter of Operation Toothbrush on June 12, 2018. E3 Ministries was overwhelmed with over 6,600 toothbrushes collected and distributed to Cuban families in the poorest of regions - Punta de Mais. E3 Ministries gained a reputation of not only ministry to Cubans, but following through by meeting a real need most people are unable to fully comprehend!

E3 Ministries headed back to Cuba at the end of July 2018 as part of their planned mission trips for the year.

(Cuban families receiving toothbrushes)



Rotarians from the Sunrise Club in Titusville, Florida and from the Fair Oaks Ranch Club in San Antonio, Texas joined together with local support from dentists, the Florida Iron Order Chapter and many neighbors in order to support E3 Ministries in Titusville, Florida by reaching out beyond an international border to Cuban families fulfilling our commitment to serve families in need.

This joint effort created comradery between two clubs in two states and provided service above self reaching beyond borders!

“Two Brothers, Two Clubs, One Mission”. Operation Toothbrush was a complete and resounding success!