

Rotary District 7780

Carolyn Johnson, District Governor

November 12, 2013

Update on District Project in Lac Megantic

It has been an interesting couple of weeks since the District made the proposal to help the residents of Lac Megantic. The generous spirit of Rotarians is abundant! District 7780 Rotarians have raised nearly \$15,000 to help with the food pantry, to give teddy bears to each child in the elementary school, and to provide holiday gifts for individual children.



We have worked with officials in Lac Megantic to clarify the need and ensure that our efforts will best support the people we intend to assist. As you might imagine, there are considerable challenges to identify the needs and clarify the best options for support. We learned last week that another organization may have stepped in to provide Christmas gifts for 700 children, many more than our efforts could help. We also were working our way through the logistics to ship the gifts across the border. Both Rotary and government officials are looking for ways for us to waive import taxes, given the humanitarian nature of this project.

The bottom line: the project is in flux. We are working with the Salvation Army, which has been a tremendous resource: They have people right in the area and the knowledge of how to address a situation as this. They have promised that we will soon know the project specifics for helping families in town. I will get this information to you by the end of this week.

This is an important outreach of help and caring for people still trying to rebuild their lives after an unbelievable event. The project has certainly emphasized that working in an emergency situation, even months after the event, is an extremely complex task. So:

- ◆ If you pledged to the food pantry or teddy bear fund, thank you! We will continue!
- ◆ If you offered to "adopt" a child for Christmas - thank you! Please be patient until we know how that project will look. Specifics will be provided by the end of this week.
- ◆ If you were planning to join the caravan to Lac Megantic on Dec 13 - keep the weekend on your calendar (and find your passport!), we're still going!

-- District Governor Carolyn Johnson

Feature Foundation story of the week: Another Community Grant at work!

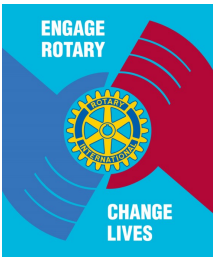
This one is interesting in how one of our clubs chose to interpret "Community." One of Brunswick Rotary's members, Dr. Sue Chadima, was already working as a veterinarian in Kabul, Afghanistan. Problem was, Sue's clinic was frequently without power, leading to operations done under flashlight. Supplies were—and remain—limited, and basic equipment frequently nonexistent.



Because "Community" is where a club chooses to define it, Brunswick wrote a community grant request, resulting in \$1500 of Foundation-funded clinic improvements in Kabul. Not only did the grant provide basic tools to train new vets, it is helping to make improvements to the clinic so students can learn and animals can be treated in appropriate surroundings. There's more: Dr. Sue is a charter member of the new Rotary Club of Kabul!

Foundation money is only available if we all make contributions. None of us know exactly how our contributions will be used, but it's immensely rewarding to see the results.

— District Foundation Chair Peter Johnson



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Typhoon Unleashes Total Devastation in Philippines

Typhoon Haiyan made direct landfall in Tacloban, a city near Cebu, where a Rotary Rotaplast mission was creating smiles just a few weeks ago. And indeed, this District has many ties to the Philippines, including two Group Study Exchange missions, one in 2002 when Peter Johnson was governor, and another in 2008 when Liz Cullen was governor. Marty Helman was the team leader in 2008, and the group that traveled with her visited shanty communities with as many as 100,000 people. Clearly, since substantial structures couldn't survive this typhoon, it's unimaginable to think of the plight of those who live in substandard housing.



Many of us remember Marty's Filipino counterpart, Joe Baradi, who led the GSE mission to our District. His club, the Rotary Club of Loyola Heights, 350 miles from Tacloban, has already sent a water tanker truck (purchased through a Matching Grant) to carry desperately needed water and supplies collected by his club members to Tacloban. We will be in touch with Loyola Heights as plans progress to see how we can help.

Shelter Box is already on the move. ShelterBox has a response team based in the Philippines, which will assess needs associated with this storm. The District is putting together a centralized collection point for financial donations to Shelter Box and Typhoon Haiyan; more information will be forthcoming as quickly as possible.



Friends Forever Visits MidCoast

Friends Forever teens from Belfast, Northern Ireland, visited Maine for two weeks in October. The group presented programs or were involved with activities hosted by Bath, Boothbay Harbor, Damariscotta-Newcastle, Brunswick, Brunswick Coastal, Portland and Falmouth Rotary clubs.

The Friends Forever program, which was started by our Portsmouth club, has expanded to other locations across the country and now has over 1600 graduates. It brings together Protestant and Catholic teens who are "enemies" at home but, during the program, are forced to rely on one another and learn they are really not so different after all. The teens continue their efforts at building peace for 18 months upon their return home.

Sebago Lake Packs 8000 Meals for Pantry Patrons



About 30 members and friends of Sebago Lake partnered with EndHunterNE to package more than 8000 meals for local food pantry patrons recently. The food boxes were later distributed to neighbors in need in the Windham area.

Boothbay Harbor Thanked at Veterans Event



Boothbay Harbor celebrates Veterans Day each year by inviting local veterans and actives to a special Appreciation Dinner. This year, Maine ANG Lt. Col. Tyler Blake turned the tables by thanking the club for remembering the veterans. He presented president Jen Osman with a certificate of thanks and a flag that flew with him on a mission over Afghanistan.