

Celebrates 2nd Anniversary

Miracles are happening on Kiritimati (Christmas) Island in the Republic of Kiribati through vision, planning, dedication and much cooperation. March 2009 observes the 2nd anniversary when the “Friends of Christmas Island” project’s first container arrived on S.V. Kwai, a single-mast sailing vessel, carrying basic medical equipment and supplies. As a result, this was the beginning of what has become a revered humanitarian project with flourishing partnerships.

Recap of Project

Early 2006, Rotarian George and Sharon Maybee investigated the island’s health and water needs; consequently the Commerce City Colorado Rotary Club’s World Community Service (WCS) “Friends of Christmas Island” project evolved from a wishful dream to an expanded reality. In actuality, the project expanded into five phases providing basic health care, safe drinking water, visiting doctor clinics, integrated cooking and assisting the education system that lead to shipping three generous containers of equipment and supplies; in conjunction with coordinating partnerships of several non-profit and governmental agencies to make **DREAMS REAL**.

CC Rotary Provides Equipment and Supplies . . .

Through the “Friends” project, Commerce City Rotary completed its commitment of Phase I by providing over \$200,000 worth of basic medical equipment and supplies to the island’s bare five-room hospital and three village clinics. A 20 foot container was loaded and sailed on Christmas Day 2006 and arrived March 2007 with much needed medical supplies and equipment such as thermometers, blood pressure machines, 6 hospital beds, 2 incubators, birthing table, X-Ray machine and numerous boxes of medical disposables.

On September 9, 2007 the WCS project received a great “helping hand” from one of our partners, NCAR when the non-profit provided military transportation of a C-17 Globemaster; touching down on the island with 13 fully loaded large wooden crates of equipment and supplies. This load partially completed Phase III by providing the equipment for the Visiting Doctor Clinic plus delivery of the first-ever 18,000 pound septic tank pumping truck to help with the sanitation conditions.

Update on Recent Delivery . . .

This month, Rotary delivered its third shipment, a 62 cubic meter load of equipment and supplies that will nearly complete Phases II, III, IV and V. Among distribution was one hundred-fifty ceramic water filters to families on highly polluted wells, lead-lining for walls of a newly built X-Ray building, several methods of integrated cooking projects and educational materials for schools.



The integrated cooking project will introduce the island residents to opportunities having more efficient and safer cooking methods. Various methods were delivered: Solar cookers, Rocket stoves, Hay Basket and the WAPI. This project is environmentally friendly, reduces disease and burns, provides safe drinking water and improves the quality of family life and health.



Water Filter & Stove Project



Nearly 20,000 pounds of curriculum and reading books plus school supplies to twelve pre-schools, three primaries, a middle school and two high schools were delivered to complete Phase V. Prior to this shipment, Rotary delivered 108 computers to the schools. In addition to the computers, books and supplies, members of the newly chartered Kiritimati Rotary Club assisted in distribution of dictionaries to every student and teacher in class four through high school.



Partnerships Bring Success

Numerous partnerships have been formed with the Commerce City Rotary's "Friends of Christmas Island" project. Not only has these partnerships been important for the completion of several phases but has accelerated the project's timeline.

The first group that believed that this 'dream could be reality' was the fishing industry. Through continued communications three US fishing booking agencies communicate to their clients - what is the "Friends" project - why it was important - what they can do to help. Many fly fishermen, mostly non-Rotarians, responded with accolades, some financial support and commitment to professional medical volunteerism. Next a partnership was formed with Project C.U.R.E., a Denver based non-profit, who provides medical equipment to third world countries. This contract partnership has been invaluable to "Friends" with each of the three loads; Project C.U.R.E. assist with obtaining selected used medical and dental equipment then assist with shipping to California and Hawaii once CC Rotary has the equipment and supplies computerized and boxed in wooden crates. In addition to Project C.U.R.E. numerous District 5450 Rotary Clubs assisted with financial help, equipment, books and volunteer support.

As stated prior, the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR) was a partner extraordinaire. NCAR was contracted to run an US Atmospheric study on Christmas; since they were dead-heading the C-17 to pick up their equipment after the study was complete, they agreed to take our shipment. This partnership helped to transport the equipment necessary for a future “Visiting Doctor Clinic” in the areas of dental, vision, pediatrics and OB/GYN general health.



Lead lining being installed



In the first shipment, Rotary provided the island with its first X-ray machine; however the hospital needed space for its use. The Japanese Government saw a need and provided funding for construction materials while the Ministry of Line & Phoenix Island Development (Linnix) provided personnel to construct the three-room X-ray building. The CC Rotary through a generous donation from a Denver Contractor provided \$10,000 worth of lead lining which George helped install this past month.

First Dentist on Island . . .

A year ago no one on the island had ever been to a dentist. That has changed due to the dental equipment and supplies provided by “Friends of Christmas Island” project and the dental assistance from the Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar to serve the Kiribati Protestant Church on Christmas Island. Dr. Parfaite anticipates that she and her husband will be on the island for two more years the skills of missionary dentist Dr. Parfaite Ramboanjanahary increased the number of teeth being saved rather than extracted at the London Village Hospital. Dr. Parfaite also teaches monthly in the 6 island schools and demonstrates correct toothbrush techniques while giving out the Rotary’s 3,500 donated brushes and paste. The “Friends” project has also provided several visiting dentists that were fishing for a week to assist Dr. Parfaite with dentistry and oral surgical procedures.



Equipment & Volunteers



Miracles Continue to Happen . . .

It takes many people and partnerships to make things happen. For several years as Rotary “Friends” project has done, Carlton Smith, President of Pacific Islands Medical Aid (PIMA) explored three islands of Kiribati identifying prevalent heart and eye problems that needed medical attention. Early in 2009, Carlton and the PIMA medical teams began to make dreams come true with two tours to the island. The first PIMA team was heart specialists from Baylor University Hospital in Texas. With the help of Rotary “Friends” equipment and use of the new X-ray facilities the specialists were able to check over 125 patients in a week. From Ultra-sound and EKG’s to bicycle stress test, this team examined patients young and old. Some received a clean bill of health while others were prescribed heart

medications that will be provided by PIMA. It was determined that twelve young island children will need surgery to survive. PIMA is arranging for the surgeries to be performed in the United States in April. Cardiologist Dr. Alistair Fyfe and Nurse Rhonda Drew prepare to examine a Christmas Island girl which will require heart surgery to survive.



In February, Carlton returned with an eye team, headed by Ophthalmologist Dr. Jeffrey Rutgard who examined over 400 patients. Nearly 100 patients from the three isolated Line Islands had their vision restored; these patients received operations for cataracts and pterygium. Prior to the operations, many of these patients were not able to see for over a decade. The “Friends” project was able to bring over 1000 pairs of prescription glasses and vision equipment to assist the PIMA team. Our partnership supports their efforts and continuation of this program. If you are a medical professional and would like to donate your time or would like to make a tax-deductible donation please contact Carlton Smith at Pacific Islands Medical Aid, Inc. You may contact Carlton at PacificMedAid@aol.com.



“I can see again!!”

Here, patients whose operations for cataracts and pterygium were performed the day before, prepare to have their bandages removed...and to see again!

Update on Kiritimati Rotary Club

The first Rotary Club of Kiribati was chartered on Christmas on August 23, 2008. The Club assisted “Friends” in delivery of all dictionaries, hygiene kits, book bags and huge amounts of books to the six schools and 12 pre-schools.



In addition, the new Kiritimati Island Rotary Club has selected several Community Service projects including making shelter mats for the hospital maneaba, remodeling the Banana Medical Clinic and constructing school toilets and hand washing stations.

Future Needs

Visiting Doctor Clinic - A CRITICAL NEED is for a new clinic to be built in which to provide the medical services. The 1,800 square foot clinic has been designed and cost estimates will require \$85,000 in materials and \$30,000 in labor to construct. The Linnix Government has volunteered to provide the construction labor and all we need now are funds to purchase the materials. The new clinic will be adjacent to the current over-crowded five room hospital and available for use by the resident medical staff and visiting medical professionals of which are now using the X-Ray building to perform services.

Pharmaceuticals - In the past, we were limited in obtaining pharmaceuticals for the hospital; therefore many children had major illnesses due to lack of everyday medicines such as penicillin and diarrhea meds. This past year, Brighton Early Rotarian, Tray Beattie has assisted us by providing a box of medicines each time we have gone to the island. For instance the March donation consisted of 14,000 antibiotics, penicillin and pain tablets. This child was saved recently due to this valuable contribution.



Thanks to Tray meds are helping



Changing Lives Forever: At first blush one would think that the phrase is about the many containers of equipment and supplies that Rotary's "Friends" project provided Christmas Island these past 2 years. Then again, maybe it is the many medical volunteers working to save a child or operating on an adult to see again. It could be the introduction of Rotary to the island and what long term affect it will have on so many lives for a healthier, improved enhanced lifestyle. However, the truth goes much deeper – in actuality – it is how Kiritimati (Christmas) island and our new island friends have had an impact on us – truly our lives are changed forever and for the better. For more information on the Rotary's WCS "Friends of Christmas Island" project, please contact George or Sharon Maybee at 303-655-9831 or email: gkmaybe@aol.com.