



Rotarian Action Groups Update

October 2009

Rotarian Action Groups conduct hands-on, international service projects that advance the Object of Rotary. They're organized by committed Rotarians, Rotarian spouses, and Rotaractors who have expertise and a passion for a particular type of service. Rotarian Action Groups are recognized by Rotary International and operate in accordance with Rotary policy, but they are not controlled by Rotary International. To learn more about Rotarian Action Groups, visit www.rotary.org/actiongroups.

The Rotarian Action Groups Update is a quarterly communication distributed to active Rotary district chairs. The contents of this publication are provided by the individual Rotarian Action Groups.

Rotarians for Fighting AIDS: A Rotarian Action Group

Founded by Marion Bunch, a Rotarian who lost her child to AIDS, Rotarians For Fighting AIDS, Inc. (RFFA) embraces a Mission that commands members to "Mobilize Rotarians in the fight against HIV/AIDS." They provide the following services for Rotarians, clubs, and districts:

1. On Site "Discovery of Needs" with recommended actions.
2. Links from available resources, funds and program experts to Rotarians in global communities implementing HIV/AIDS programs.
3. Partnerships formed between Rotary and other charitable organizations to secure support for designated AIDS projects.
4. Proven, sustainable, Rotary programs helping Orphans and Vulnerable Children in Africa through three initiatives - Orphan Rescue, Kidz Clubs and HIV Free Generation.

The ANCHOR Partnership includes RFFA, HOPE Worldwide, The Coca-Cola Africa Foundation and Emory University. In four years, ANCHOR has provided care and support for 102,000 children across seven African countries, many of whom have had their school fees paid by RFFA's "Orphan Rescue" and "Kidz Clubs" programs.

In 2008, RFFA joined business and entertainment industry giants in a bold initiative sending visions of hope for creating an AIDS free world. The "HIV Free Generation" pilot project launched in Nairobi, Kenya, promoting behavior changes that are "cool" and prevent the transmission of HIV among youth.

Before the launch in Kenya, RFFA, Rotary clubs and districts in Kenya and USA conducted the largest Medical Mission in Rotary history. Seventy-two professionals and volunteers treated more than 10,000 children in one ten-day period.

To learn more and find out how you can help, visit www.rffa.org.

Rotarian Action Group for Diabetes

As a new RAG, the Rotarian Action Group for Diabetes (RAGDiabetes) is off to a very successful start as we facilitate the opportunity for Rotarians to get involved in Rotary service for diabetes. The booth hosted by the RAGDiabetes in the House of Friendship at the recent RI Convention was very active with Rotarians seeking information. Also, a breakout

session featuring International Diabetes Federation and Rotary presentations on the current state of the diabetes worldwide epidemic and Rotary programs was overwhelmingly received by an overflow audience. RAGDiabetes has been involved in the recent initiation of six clinics in Cameroon for the treatment of children with diabetes sponsored by Rotarians in Italy and Cameroon and the expansion of the Caribbean foot care program for diabetics led by the Rotary Club of Ledbury and Caribbean Rotarians. Information on these programs and other diabetes service opportunities are featured on our web site www.ragdiabetes.org with information on becoming a member of RAGDiabetes.

Fellow Rotarians are encouraged to join us to create a creative, strong force for Rotary service in diabetes related areas. Go to www.ragdiabetes.org for information.

Disaster Relief Rotarian Action Group

DRRAG has worked hard over the past year to create a communication tool that will allow Rotarians across the globe communicate easily and efficiently. This networking tool was created to assist Rotarians in Disaster Relief and bring together those in need of relief, with those who want to offer relief.

DRRAG's focus is Preparedness, Response, Recovery, and Rebuilding. We have now 347 members and have only been open for membership for less than one year!

DRRAG will cosponsor a Global Disaster Relief conference again this year. It is scheduled for Houston, Texas, February 5-6, 2010. Register online: www.DRRAG.org.

DRRAG's networking is creating a web of contacts, including grass root Rotary organizations like Aquabox, Shelterbox, Water Survival Box, R.E.D.I., and organizations with whom Rotary has traditionally worked: Red Cross, UNICEF etc. The umbrella organization for all of the large International NGOs is SPHERE. DRRAG is beginning to work cooperatively with that organization. We are happy that the organization is growing and hope to soon have members in every corner of the globe, creating an effective web of Rotarians ready to respond locally and globally. This past year, DRRAG has provided:

Support to 8 Natural Disasters

- China Earthquake
- Pakistan Earthquake
- Fiji Floods
- Haiti Storms
- Myanmar Cyclone Nargis
- India Bihar Flood
- USA Hurricane Ike
- Italy Earthquake

Learn more: www.drrag.org

Rotarians for Hearing Regeneration: A Rotarian Action Group

Can a tiny fish save your ears? That's the headline of an Aug. 4, 2009 Wall Street Journal article by Shirley S. Wang. <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970204563304574320823841860910.html>

For several years, Rotarians for Hearing Regeneration (RfHR) have cooperated with the University of Washington's Virginia Merrill Bloedel Hearing Research Center (VMBHRC), producing a DVD, "Hope for hearing Loss," explaining how hearing loss happens and the possibility of regeneration.

Rotarians for Hearing Regeneration has distributed the DVD at RI and district conventions and doing Rotary club

presentations. The DVD has been distributed to over 200 US foundations, news and media services.

Currently RfHR is raising funds for a video update to include recent research with Zebrafish. This video will again be distributed widely and at the Montreal convention. We hope Rotarians at Montreal in 2010 will pick up a free DVD at the RfHR exhibit. It is an excellent club program. The present video is available on the RfHR website. Join RfHR and receive a copy by mail.

RfHR encourages Rotarians with hearing loss, as well as those with just an interest in this research, to become involved as members. There are many ways members can help.

Learn more: www.hearingregeneration.org

Rotarian Action Group for Microcredit

The Rotarian Action Group for Microcredit (RAGM) is about enterprise and entrepreneurship -- ending poverty one small loan at a time.

RAGM directs its energy worldwide towards the 1.1 billion poor living in extreme poverty.

RAGM advances the Object of Rotary by creating dynamic global partnerships between Rotarians and others to enhance the impact of Rotary microcredit projects. Rotarians can get involved in three ways through 'Microcredit Made Easier'.

RAGM is here to help you, leading the way with innovative approaches for poverty elimination. Here's how you start:

- 1. Educate Yourself and Become an Advocate for Microcredit --**
It's time! It's where you can start! The impoverished people of the world need YOU as their well-informed advocate.
- 2. Fund a Rotarian Microbank --**
You choose where. We can show you how.
- 3. Start a Rotarian Microbank or Participate in a Rotarian Microbank --**
Directly participate to the degree that you like -- whether that's funding the project, assisting in the TRF grant process, meeting NGO partners operating Microbanks, even visiting the borrowers to see the results of your good work.

The RAGM network is prepared to help with best practice guidelines, introductions to clubs and NGO partners, and assistance from experienced RAGM members.

Tell a Friend and Join now at www.rotarianmicrocredit.org

Rotarian Action Group of Multiple Sclerosis Awareness

On 24 June 2009, Martin Taurins, RAGMSA Chair, and Zoe Burr, MSIF International Development Manager, presented at a breakout session at the RI Convention in Birmingham.

RAGMSA was established to promote MS awareness; encourage Rotarians and national MS societies to work together and to contribute, through fundraising activities, to MS research; and improving the support available for people with MS. RAGMSA's Wednesday breakout session was attended by over 50 Rotarians with an interest in MS and the presentations were followed by a lively Q&A session.

Martin Taurins provided an overview of the work being carried out by RAGMSA and the national and international

projects and programmes they continue to support through their fundraising efforts. Zoe Burr encouraged those in attendance to contact their national MS society and get their club or district involved in the MS movement. Martin followed by emphasising the importance of strengthening RAGMSA and raising the profile of the disease within Rotary.

At the RI conventions it is evident that many Rotarians with empathy for people with MS currently participate in MS Society fund raising events globally. RAGMSA's aim is for Rotarians to increase that involvement not only as individuals but as Rotarians by documenting achievements as Rotary club projects to promote and increase MS Awareness within Rotary and the general community to help prevent and find a cure for MS.

For more information visit: www.rotary-rfmsa.org

Rotarian Action Group for Population Growth & Sustainable Development

RFPD with Model for Maternal Health

The RFPD supported project "Improvement of Maternal Health – Prevention and Treatment of Obstetric Fistula" in Northern Nigeria has become a talking point beyond Rotary. The Nigerian Health Minister announced their office would evaluate and use the project as a basis to move forward with reduction of maternal health. In 2007 and 2008, the project was presented at several international conferences.

The project has been running since 2005 and has reduced maternal mortality up to 50 % in select hospitals. This is a comprehensive approach including quality assurance in close cooperation with government and collaboration with stakeholders. The original project amount of one million Euros has been doubled.

Maternal Health is the most important Millennium Development Goal 5 with which the world community is most off track. Without fulfilling this goal, other MDGs cannot be achieved. MDG 4 Child Mortality is closely linked with MDG 5.

Hundreds of German and Austrian Rotary, Rotaract and Inner Wheel clubs sponsored this joint project with D 9125 in Nigeria. With the expertise of Action Groups, Rotary can implement professional projects and further improve its reputation. This replicable model project leads the way for a program of emphasis of the Future Vision Plan of The Rotary Foundation.

Additional information: www.rifpd.org & www.muettergesundheit.eu

Water and Sanitation Rotarian Action Group

Wasrag (the Water & Sanitation Rotarian Action Group) marked its second full year of operation at its AGM in Birmingham on June 20th. With over 1000 registered members and with staunch support from the Water Resource Group, **Wasrag's** profile is growing rapidly.

A wonderful opportunity for Rotary clubs to support water projects and enhance Rotary's image on the world stage is Live Earth's Global Water Event scheduled for April 18, 2010. Plans call for a series of major concerts in 25 cities around the world, along with 6 km. runs or walks (that's the average distance women have to walk to get water in Africa). And, there will be lots of related events for those who would rather participate in something less demanding! Contact us at info@wasrag.org to get more information.

Fund raising for water and sanitation projects is a key goal for **Wasrag**. Even in these difficult economic times, **Wasrag** recently reached agreement with the founder of "Water for Life" for \$1 million over the next three years. The Aall Foundation has committed \$250,000 and the Millennium Water Alliance \$148,000. And a further \$5 million, negotiated with the PepsiCo Foundation has been approved but is in hold for 2010.

World Health Fairs - A Rotarian Action Group

Health Fairs are planned this fall in Russia in the sixteen Centers. Mobile Health Fairs are planned to rural areas. Dubna Held a fair in July, and plans one for August. The Vladivostok Health Fair Center conducted two mobile Health Fairs in July and one in Vladivostok for college students. Blagoveschensk will have a week of Health Fair activities in August. They will begin in Blago and move to different local communities.

Merida and Villahermosa, Mexico, celebrated health fairs in January and February 2009.

PDG Steve Yoshida, Co-Chair of World Health Fairs will travel in October for the first-ever fairs in China. Special thanks to the Shanghai and Denver Mile High Rotary Clubs for their support. PDG Yoshida will then visit Mongolia to oversee another Health Fair in Ulanbataar. Additional stops will include Chita, Ulan Ude, Angarsk and Irkutsk, Russia.

Through our health fair network one of our members was able to locate and assist the Alliance for Smiles team obtain two Anesthesiologists to assist with surgeries planned in China during September.

Homer Kachemak Bay Alaska USA Rotarians will hold their 26th annual Health Fair on 14 November in conjunction with the visit of an Open World Team from Russia.

Visit our website at www.worldhealthfairs.org for more information or to join World Health Fairs - A Rotarian Action Group.