



# Rotarian Action Groups Update

April 2010

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*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](http://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.*

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## **Rotarians for Fighting AIDS: A Rotarian Action Group**

<http://www.rffa.org>

At the RFFA breakout session at the June 2010 RI Convention in Montreal, two outstanding Rotary International Scholars will talk movingly about living positively, with and without AIDS, and on their vision for an AIDS-free generation. Wilson "Kimeli" Naiyomah was awarded a RI World Peace Fellowship and will speak about the impact of HIV/AIDS on peace in Africa, as well as its impact on the children of Africa. "Kimeli" has become a well-known public figure because of his collaboration on the bestseller children's book, *14 Cows For America*.

Kristi Mattews was awarded a Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarship in 2003 and obtained her M.A. International (Political) Studies at the University of Leeds, England. She continued her studies at UCLA School of Law and obtained her J.D. in 2006. Kristi has been a sought after speaker for five years at multiple Rotary district conferences. She will share a moving and candid story about her life.

RFFA has recently launched a blog called Reagan's Pledge at [www.reaganspledge.org](http://www.reaganspledge.org), in coordination with The Coca Cola Africa Foundation. The purpose of this blog is to introduce the general public to the plight of the African orphans and vulnerable children and encourage them to write letters to RFFA and to the children, and to donate funds for their education through RFFA's Orphan Rescue and Kidz Club programs.

## **Rotarian Action Group for Diabetes**

<http://www.ragdiabetes.org>

Recent articles in *The Rotarian* and speaking engagements at Rotary institutes, district conferences, club meetings, the World Diabetes Congress, etc., have increased awareness of the worldwide diabetes epidemic. As the youngest of the RAGs, membership continues to grow. The first annual membership meeting will be held at the RI Convention in Montreal on Monday, 21 June 2010. The initial issue of our membership newsletter will be distributed to members of the RAGDiabetes shortly. The newsletter will highlight various diabetes related service programs that improve the health and quality of life of mankind, especially among children.

Please refer to the information at [www.ragdiabetes.org](http://www.ragdiabetes.org) and join us as we seek to increase the awareness of diabetes and provide Rotarians with the ability to provide service in diabetes-related programs.

### **Disaster Relief Rotarian Action Group**

<http://www.drrag.org>

Not surprisingly, Rotarians have risen to the enormous challenge of helping in the wake of the devastation in Haiti. President and CEO of DRRAG, Lee Malany is on the ground in Port-au-Prince working in a leadership coordinating capacity with the Red Cross. His reports can be seen at [www.drrag.org](http://www.drrag.org). In January, a delegation of Rotarians flew from Nassau to Pignon, Haiti. Our purpose was to meet with the Rotarian leaders who have been working tirelessly to bring relief. For a summary of the primary points made during our meeting, please visit our [website](#). DRRAG has agreed to be the agent for District 4060 and 7020 for the purpose of encouraging financial donations to assist in immediate response activities. [View information on this partnership](#).

The Rotary Foundation (Canada) established an account for the purpose of receiving funds to be matched by the Canadian International Development Agency (Government of Canada). Learn more at [www.trfcanada.org](http://www.trfcanada.org).

The Rotary club of Stratford shipped 900 Aquaboxes to Haiti, which have generated more than one million liters of potable water. The boxes also contain survival supplies including tools, hygiene items, and first aid kits. 7000 ShelterBoxes have also been shipped.

DRRAG is working closely with Rotarians around the world, providing a communications link and directing clubs and districts to the local DRRAG Disaster Coordinators. They in turn are working with the clubs. District 7020 consists of many Caribbean island countries and has raised over US \$1 million in support of immediately needed supplies.

DRRAG's annual meeting will take place at the RI Convention in Montreal on Saturday, 19 June 2010. Please plan to attend. All are welcome!

### **World Health Fairs, a Rotarian Action Group**

<http://www.worldhealthfairs.org>

Health fairs were held in the Merida, Cancun, Mexico region in late February 2010.

China Rotarians plan to hold health fairs in April 2010. Patricia Fiske from the Rotary Club of Denver Mile High and Frank Yih and Edwin Ngoi from the Rotary Club of Shanghai are planning a series of health fairs in Long Chuan District. Training was held last fall for leaders.

Exciting news from Kursk, Russia: the Kursk Regional Administration has made a decision to open four governmental health centers modeled after the very successful center started by Rotarians Dr. Sergey Shevchenko and Tatyana Tsyrlina and local Rotaractors. A 3H Grant provided development costs for this program of health prevention. Health fair centers are operating in 17 Russian cities.

News from Thailand: a dental health fair is planned for a rural northern area.

Join us at the RI Convention in Montreal:

- \* Visit our booth in the House of Friendship.
- \* Take part in a Health Fair Exchange, facilitated by PDG Steve Yoshida, on Sunday, 20 June from 12:30 - 1:30 in Room 519.
- \* The annual meeting of World Health Fairs - A Rotarian Action Group will be held on Tuesday, 22 June from 13:30 -15:30 in Room 522.

### **Rotarians for Hearing Regeneration, a Rotarian Action Group**

<http://www.hearingregeneration.org>

Rotarians for Hearing Regeneration (RfHR) is in the process of planning a fundraiser breakfast for the benefit of the University of Washington's Virginia Merrill Bloedel Hearing Research Center (VMBHRC). RfHR will cooperate with the Washington State Hearing Loss Association and target local assisted living care organizations, fire and police departments, and other employers where hearing loss is a problem. Main speakers for the event will be Kathy Buckley ([www.kathybuckley.com](http://www.kathybuckley.com)) a popular and well known hearing impaired comedian and Dr. Edwin Rubel, lead scientist at the VMBHRC.

Billed as "America's First Hearing Impaired Comedienne", Kathy Buckley is a five-time American Comedy Award Nominee as Best Stand-Up Female Comedienne, and the winner of countless other awards for her work.

Dr. Rubel is credited with discovering that birds regenerate their hearing in less than 30 days after damage. With a substantial contribution 20 years ago by Prentiss Bloedel, to honor his hearing impaired wife, Virginia Merrill Bloedel, the VMBHRC was established and Dr. Rubel and more than 60 associates have become leaders in hair cell regeneration research.

The anticipated publicity generated by Rotarians for Hearing Regeneration in developing the breakfast fundraiser is expected to create more awareness of the disability of hearing loss and perhaps garner additional supporters for this research.

#### **Rotarian Action Group for the Alleviation of Hunger & Malnutrition**

<http://www.alleviatehunger.org>

Hunger issues are not new to Rotarians. We have been feeding the hungry for a very long time because we know that in order to break the cycle of poverty, we must first make minds and bodies strong.

The Rotarian Action Group for the Alleviation of Hunger and Malnutrition provides the opportunity for Rotarians from every corner of the world to form a network of individuals working to alleviate hunger and malnutrition. We share our experiences, projects, successes, challenges and needs with one another to create a pool of information and partnerships in service. Our Rotarian Action Group works toward the alleviation of hunger by meeting the short-term needs of immediate food supply where appropriate, while working to develop the necessary infrastructure that will enable communities to become self-reliant in either developing or being able to purchase their necessary nutritional needs. By partnering and coordinating our efforts with other groups and organizations working in the field, we are able to stretch our dollars and avoid duplication. Instead of random, separate hunger and malnutrition projects, the action group can connect us and strengthen our efforts to make our Rotary projects and programs effective. Visit us at [www.alleviatehunger.org](http://www.alleviatehunger.org) for more project and membership information.

#### **Rotarian Action Group for Multiple Sclerosis Awareness**

<http://www.rotary-rfmsa.org>

World MS Day was established by the Multiple Sclerosis International Federation (MSIF) and its member MS societies in 2009. The day is to be held on the last Wednesday of May every year. MS is a global issue and through World MS Day, MSIF wants to unite people internationally to demonstrate support and solidarity with people affected by MS. The focus for World MS Day 2010 is employment. For further information about the day and to find out how MS organizations in your country are involved visit: [http://www.msif.org/en/get\\_involved/world\\_ms\\_day\\_2010/index.html](http://www.msif.org/en/get_involved/world_ms_day_2010/index.html).

Visit the RAGMSA exhibition booth and attend our annual general meeting at the RI Convention in Montreal.

**Rotarian Action Group for Polio Survivors & Associates**

<http://www.rotarypoliosurvivors.com>

\$120,000 fund wheelchairs for polio survivors in the northern polio endemic state of Nigeria

Ayuba Gufwan, is a Rotarian in Jos, Nigeria, and a polio survivor. With no prior schooling, at age 18 his uncle gave him a bicycle wheelchair to enable him to attend school. Later he earned a law degree. Upon completion of school, he decided to serve polio survivors in his region. This led him to the establishment of the Handicapped Rehabilitation and Advocacy Center. The aim was to supply free bicycle wheelchairs, with the condition that beneficiaries attend school or vocational training. Contributions from over 25 Rotary clubs in seven districts on three continents, the Polio Survivors & Associates DAF, and two TRF Matching Grants totalling almost US\$120,000 are currently supporting this project. Wheelchairs will provide survivors the independence to go to school, or learn a trade. The Handicapped Advocacy and Rehabilitation Center has agreed to donate the labor needed for this project. The funds will provide for 1,200 wheelchairs and will create a sustainable project by bringing the tools to make wheelchairs to the community.

We share this story to show how the dream of one can become the dream of many and to demonstrate how Rotarians from many cultures work together with our Rotary Foundation to improve the lives of others.

Most importantly, you do not need to be a polio survivor to be a member of our RAG! Anyone is welcome to join.

We will have a booth in the House of Friendship at the Montreal Convention. Please stop by and visit. Volunteers to help man the booth are welcome!

**Rotarian Action Group for Population Growth & Sustainable Development**

<http://www.rifpd.org>

In Latin America, RFPD is focused on education, strengthening the role of women, the prevention of infant and maternal mortality, adolescent pregnancies (15% of all pregnancies) and sexually transmitted diseases (including HIV/AIDS) as well as the diagnosis and treatment of these diseases.

The Rotary Club of Barquisimeto Nueva Segovia is undertaking, by means of a Matching Grant with District 7170 in the USA, a comprehensive project that educates adolescents in the schools and invites students to take voluntary tests, with the permission of their parents, using the hospital of the Rotary Club of Barquisimeto Nueva Segovia. Students are referred to the state and federal government health services for the confirmatory tests and treatment if the student is diagnosed positive for HIV.

By means of early diagnosis, deaths from uterine cancer can be prevented and it will be possible to prolong the usefulness and quality of life of those who are unapparent carriers of HIV (they will also learn how to prevent transmitting their disease to others).

HIV positive fathers and mothers can be treated for their disease and live long enough to see their children grow to be adults, thereby diminishing the number of HIV/AIDS orphans. If we work with HIV positive pregnant adolescents, they can be treated to prevent the HIV transmission from mother to child, permitting the baby to be disease free.

**Water and Sanitation Rotarian Action Group**

<http://www.wasrag.org>

Rotarians are very busy in the water & sanitation sector! Many clubs are participating in the global Live Earth Run for Water on 18 April 2010 - a great opportunity to raise awareness and funds for Rotary WASH (water, sanitation & hygiene) projects. For more information see: [www.liveearth.org](http://www.liveearth.org), [www.wasragfoundation.org](http://www.wasragfoundation.org), and [www.crwfoundation.org](http://www.crwfoundation.org).

Wasrag is also working with the Millennium Water Alliance on the Ambassadors' School WASH program, supported by the US Department of State. U.S. Embassies in Bolivia, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Belize, Ghana, Mauretania, Nigeria, Rwanda, Tanzania and Timor Leste have expressed interest in helping provide access to water and sanitation services and hygiene awareness in schools. Wasrag is identifying suitable sites for the ambassadors' consideration. For more information, contact [info@wasrag.org](mailto:info@wasrag.org) with brief details (location, community and school size, project summary and names of local partners). Please put the word "AWASH" in the subject line of your email.

And finally: World Water Summit III: 19 June 2010 in Montreal. There is a wonderful line-up of world class experts in WASH.