



OPERATION: NETS FOR LIFE



Rotarians Launch Operation: Nets for Life & Other Humanitarian Projects in Ghana, West Africa

If you could save a child's life would you? One group of Rotarians has pondered that question and has responded to that call by launching a unique grassroots project to raise funds for mosquito nets to prevent more than 1,000 pregnant and nursing mothers and their children in Ghana, West Africa from contracting malaria, which for African children is often a fatal disease. A team of 15 Rotarians and other volunteers will travel this fall to Ghana to undertake several humanitarian projects and personally deliver the nets and other aid to families living in desperate and impoverished conditions.

"When I learned that every 30 seconds a child in Africa dies from malaria I was horrified. Here in Canada we put our children to bed without a second thought about their safety, but in Africa most mothers can only pray that their child will not be bitten by a malaria infected mosquito and succumb to that dreaded disease," explains Kim Spirou, local Rotarian and organizer of the "Operation: Nets for Life" element for the 2012 Ghana project team.

According to the African Medical & Research Foundation, Africa's leading health development organization, malaria, an easily preventable and treatable disease, causes more than 200 million illnesses each year and kills over a million people around the world, most of them children. In the poorest parts of the world, window screens are lacking, anti-malarial drugs are expensive, and so far an effective malaria vaccine does not exist.

Spirou says, "Simply put, malaria

is a "virulent killer" but we can stop it in its tracks with a simple, inexpensive device called a mosquito net. Bed nets use a simple but effective prevention approach: eliminate contact with mosquitoes, eliminate malaria. Insecticide-treated bed mosquito nets are arguably the most cost-effective way to prevent malaria transmission and save lives."

The goal of Operation: Nets for Life is to raise \$5,000 to purchase 1,000 mosquito nets for children in Ghana, West Africa. Spirou explains, each net costs roughly \$5.00 and the funds raised will allow the 2012 Rotarian Ghana team members to distribute these 1,000 nets to mothers and their children living at risk. "Imagine being able to save a life for just \$5.00," adds Spirou.

Although, this campaign only kicked off a few days ago Spirou has already raised \$1,500. "Appealing for \$5.00 from people to save a child's life is a relatively easy ask to make in our community," explains Spirou. "Windsor-Essex is an extraordinarily generous community and when presented with an opportunity to have such a profound impact and prevent malaria related deaths, we expect that our area residents will respond eagerly and answer the call."

Rotarians from Windsor Essex have been travelling to various parts of Ghana, West Africa for 17 years. This year the Rotarian team is heading (at their own expense) to the village of Assin Bereku, in the Central Region of the country which is a rainforest area. While there, the team will help to complete the construction of a three room school for grades 1, 2 & 3. Their school was destroyed

in a storm and Rotarians need to raise the \$18,500 CDN necessary to replace it.

The team will also paint and repair classrooms for other grades, and will distribute school supplies, student desks, and library materials as well as clothing and other basic hygienic supplies on this mission.

As well, the Rotarian team will conduct eye clinics and provide reading glasses for those in need. Medical members of the team will examine children for eye disease (trachoma), dispense eye ointment to help prevent blindness, and will volunteer at the local health clinics and hospital.

One of the more significant

projects the team will undertake is to identify the best location for the drilling of a well to provide a local community with access to a clean source of water. Access to clean water eliminates a host of water-borne illnesses and prevents further fatalities. A well costs about \$5,500 if anyone wishes to donate funds to such a wonderful gift.

People interested in donating to Operation: Nets for Life can call Kim Spirou at 519.551.3747 or go to www.operationnetsforlife.com and donate on line. For tax deductible donations of \$20 or more to any of the 2012 Ghana projects including the nets, please contact Ron Arkell, 2012 Team Leader at 519.973.4052.



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