

SUPPLY LINES

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Greetings

This is the premier issue of the International H.O.P.E newsletter. IH has grown exponentially since its inception, expanding locally, nationally and internationally. We at IH would like to share with you the many exciting projects IH has undertaken and highlight the work of our cadre of very committed volunteers. We hope that you will find it interesting and informative. Any suggestions for future newsletters would be greatly appreciated.

Beginnings

IH was officially founded in 2001 by two nurses, Phyllis Reader and Sonia Michalyshen. Phyllis, an operating room nurse at St. Boniface Hospital, had participated in international medical missions to some of the most impoverished countries. Sonia had been volunteering for several years in Malawi, Africa. Both nurses were aware of the pressing need for medical supplies and equipment in third world countries. Their solution: to send outdated but useable supplies from Manitoba hospitals. Two churches: Holy Redeemer R.C. Parish and Westminster United Church have provided on-going support for the work of IH.

Spreading the Word

Phyllis and Sonia have been tireless in their efforts to promote the work of IH. They have presented to many organizations such as the Women's Inter-Church Foundation of Canada, Rotary and Knights of Columbus to name just a few. Both the local and national CBC radio networks have aired interviews with Phyllis and Sonia. Articles about the organization have appeared in newspapers large and small. Members of the executive have met with John Harvard, M.P. for Charleswood St. James-Assiniboia. Many have toured the warehouse: Burrows M.L.A. Doug Martindate, the Ukrainian Canadian Professional and Business Club.

Shipments

IH has sent medical equipment and supplies to many parts of the world. In the beginning the bulk of the shipments, over 21 hundred kilograms, were sent to Sonia and her husband Merv working in Rumphu, Malawi. Other boxes were being sent with Canadian Food for Children in Toronto along with their shipments of food and clothing at no cost to IH. CFFC has a wide pattern of delivery to many areas of Latin America and Africa. Thanks to the work of Dennis McVarish, director of transportation,

IH increased the number of boxes of medical supplies. This year IH sent over 400 boxes to CFFC for distribution. Malawi, Grenada, and Haiti have received supplies. Individuals traveling to impoverished countries often take supplies with them. Supplies have been sent with individuals to Peru, Haiti, Cuba, Surinam, Nicaragua, Zambia, St Vincent and Grenadines, Bosnia-Herzegovina and South Africa. A partnership was formed with the Mennonite Benevolent Society under the direction of Louie Sawatzky to ship a 40' container packed with beds, very high caliber lab equipment (many thanks to Val McIntyre) and basic medical supplies to Zaporizhzhya, Eastern Ukraine. Hospitals, a nursing home and a fledgling home care program were designated recipients. The Benevolent Society paid for the shipment while IH supplied the goods. After several weeks of frantic packing the container left Winnipeg on July 28th and arrived in Zaporizhzhya six weeks later only to be locked up for two months until clearance from Customs was received. The goods were finally cleared in December 2003 and distributed. Ann Goertzen, the nurse working in Zaporizhzhya, e-mailed a thank you to IH. Apparently everyone there has been ecstatic about the quality of the equipment.



Unloading in Zaporizhzhya

R.E.A.P Project

Rumphu Education AIDS Program

Sonia Michalyshen who was doing volunteer work in the area started this vital AIDS program in Northern Malawi. The goal of the program was to identify and train volunteers who then could teach the program, care for those already suffering with AIDS, and to identify orphans whom we could in turn help by providing a skills training program. A group of young people were also identified and trained to teach their peers in 27 schools in the area. The program is partially funded by CIDA, and

is now flourishing under local leadership. I.H. has been sending medical and educational supplies in support of the program and was successful in receiving a grant for them.



Rumphi volunteers & patients marching for World AIDS Day, Dec. 2000

Ukrainian Odyssey

Move over Ulysses! Seven volunteers from IH, led by Ron Reader, traveled to the Ukraine in September to check on the container in Zaporizhzhya and to assess the need for hospital supplies in other parts of the Ukraine. Undaunted by the customs delay, our intrepid travelers made their way around the Western Ukraine visiting seven hospitals and two orphanages. The group was sobered by Spartan conditions in many of the hospitals; damp dark corridors; a paucity of OR, lab and treatment equipment and supplies and few patients. Patients are required to pay for all medical services and supplies, which few can afford. However, valuable contacts were established at the time and have been continued from Canada. IH would like to secure funding from these contacts to send more containers and also a guarantee that patients will not have to pay for our supplies.



Five members (Ron, Don, Val, Judy & Elsie) of the group of seven (without paintbrushes) and a guest interpreter, Inna

Fundraising Activities

Several major fundraising events have been staged over the past two years. Steve Bell entertained audiences at Westminster Church in 2002. IH partnered with the Soroptimist International of

Winnipeg to launch the book "the Great White Bear of the North". Westminster was again the site of the wonderful sounds of the Sisters of the Holy Rock in 2003. Other fund - raising events are planned for the coming year.

Volunteers Welcome

Every Wednesday and Saturday the doors of the warehouse are opened and volunteers stream into the cavernous building on Yukon Road. Directing the unpacking, sorting, and repacking is the indomitable Roma Maconachie, director of volunteers. Injured or sound, Roma is there to supervise the volunteers and groups of student helpers; conduct tours and inventory any supplies taken from the warehouse. Roma embodies the spirit of volunteerism and makes working in the warehouse a most enjoyable experience. Warehouses are often cold, drafty and dusty. However, thanks to Bob Peeler, ours is warm clean, secure and loaded with shelf space. Our drivers: Victor Wazney and Ted Cuddy are a vital part of the organization. They pick up supplies from hospitals and nursing homes.

Anyone interested in participating in this delightful volunteer experience in any capacity should call either number listed below and leave a message. **Experience in health care is NOT necessary.**

Important Notice

IH will hold its Annual General Meeting on Thursday, March 18, 2004 at 7:30 p.m. at Westminster United Church. Everyone is welcome.

Contacts

Anyone wishing to contact members of International H.O.P.E. to ask questions, comment about the newsletter, volunteer or leave a donation please contact:

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or

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Winnipeg, Manitoba R2G 0W5
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or visit our website

www.westminsterchurchwinnipeg.ca/hope

Tax receipts are available for all donations