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Rotary International 2001-2002

Avoidable Blindness

"Next to life itself, God's most precious gift is sight - Protect it, Save it, Restore it." **Task Force**

Message from the Chairman

Dear Task Force Members:

Many things are happening of which all of us should be made aware. Like most of you, I am promoting Avoidable Blindness Projects in all my talks which have been many. Since leaving the presidency of R.I. I have only been home for two weekends. Besides talking at Rotary District Events & Interclub reunions promoting the work of Rotary & the Rotary Foundation the following outside events will also help our Avoidable Blindness Efforts.

On June 29th. I spoke to the House of Delegates of the American Optometric Association & told them of the work of our Task Force. I suggested that these representatives of each of the 50 states tell Optometrists to make contact with the Rotary Clubs in their communities & tell them of projects in which they might join hands. I also encouraged them to join Rotary.

In July, President Rick King who gives all his support to our Task Force sent me to Buenos Aires, Argentina to make contact with all the key Ophthalmologists attending the Pan American Congress of Ophthalmology. This was a unique opportunity to talk to the key persons with which we want to partner. We found that many of them are Rotarians or great friends of Rotary. All of the heads of the different Associations of all the Pan American Countries know of our Task Force. They were also requested to contact their members & tell them that Rotary is involved in Avoidable Blindness.

They were also encouraged to join Rotary. With all sincerity, Rotary was given more credit than other groups. They even requested that the Lions work with us which is not a bad idea. Like Doyle Dannenberg & others have mentioned . . . Even if all of us join hands we are only beginning to scratch the surface of so much work that has to be done.

In August I was able to speak to all the district governors of the Lions Clubs in Mexico with their National President & a incoming world director/vice president & they were happy to join hands with Rotary. I am still trying to get to the President & others of Lions Intl. We have made a good start with the help we are giving them in Mexico.

Just a few days ago I was invited by the American Academy of Ophthalmology to their annual convention which is the largest in the world in the City of New Orleans with about 24,000 attending. It was like a Rotary Convention. About 8000 were from outside the USA. I was able to speak at different key meetings with the head of this organization as well as representatives of other eye care groups. Our member-at-large Dr. Ken D. Tuck who was their president last year as well as Rotarian Brad Wong who is the secretary of the American Academy of Ophthalmology Foundation were key persons in setting up different important meetings.

At the Academys Foundation reception Rotary was honored for the work of our Avoidable Blindness Task Force.

“I am enthusiastic about partnering with other organizations because, often times they are able to provide some skill expertise or networking to make the project more successful.”



They were especially grateful for the partnership with clubs & districts that were responsible for 12 young ophthalmologist attending who had stayed in homes of Rotarians for 2 weeks & worked with ophthalmologists of the Academy in different cities of the USA. We have their complete support.

Now back to Rotary . . . Unfortunately, the Rotary Foundation is not able at this time to set up a partnership with the CBMI Group that was offering us one million dollars to work with their projects. We have to understand that anything that goes through the Rotary Foundation has to go the normal Matching Grant Route. Some will be approved & others will not. Tell clubs to work as they would any regular matching grant.

Now the good news . . . CBMI is willing to match with local Rotary Clubs & Districts on a individual basis. They have many proposed projects that we

should be aware of. They will also take on new projects. We have to talk with Allan Harkey who is a Rotarian who wants to help. This group is highly recommended by the different eye care organizations as well as the WHO.

Operation Universal Eyesight of Calgary is in exactly the same situation. They will match funds from Rotary Clubs & Districts if we join in their many proposed projects. The world of Rotary is catching on to the work of our Task Force, we have to Create Awareness for them to Take Action as Mankind Is Our Business.

I will send all of you more information about the above & also about the different companies that will help like Alcon, Merck, etc. Keep up the good work . . . All of you are helping make things happen.

All the best,

FRANK DEVLYN

Athani Looking for International Sponsor

Our club has a project under ABTF to provide intraocular lenses free of cost to 125 deserving patients. Total project cost is US \$4500 which includes preoperative examination, intra-operational expenses, hospital expenses, post operative medicines and provision of spectacles where required. We need an international sponsor

to provide US \$2250 as a contribution for a matching Grant Project. Please send us details of an international sponsor.

Thank you.

Dr. P S Kulkarni
President RC Athani.
Dist 3170

parameswaran@rotarymail.net

Partnering with Lions International

I would like to comment on your issue about partnering with Lions International. I have partnered with our local Lions Club in missions to Nicaragua and other countries with eyeglasses, as well as financial support.

This has worked very well. I am enthusiastic about partnering with other organizations because, often times they are able to provide some skill expertise or networking to make the project more successful. In the past, we have also partnered with Catholic Relief Service, and frequently with the Peace Corp utilizing Peace Corp volunteers

If I am not mistaken, our leader Frank

Devlyn is also enthusiastic about partnering with other organizations. At the last Rotary International Convention, several organizations appeared with Frank at a plenary session discussing services they provide, and how we as rotarians would be able to partner with them to increase the scope of our endeavors.

I hope these observations are helpful to you. Please let me know if I can assist any other way.

With warm regards,

ALBERT ALLEY, M.D.
Area J Coordinator

Avoidable Blindness Task Force

A Healthy, Glowing Christmas for Filipino Children

An Update on TRF 3H Grant 98-20 “Vitamin A in the Philippines”

Christmas looms bright and meaningful for the beneficiaries of Philippine Rotary Vitamin A project. A total of 1.9 million Filipino children have been supplemented with Vitamin A capsules since the project was piloted. During the first semester 2001, a total of one million two hundred seventy thousand seven hundred (1,270,700) capsules were distributed to the ten districts of Philippine Rotary.

In the on-going second semester, some 567,489 capsules for an equivalent number of pupils have been delivered. More deliveries are expected to be made as requests continue to come in from Rotarians looking for a meaningful Christmas project.

In the midst of these supplementation activities, the educational phase of the project is being initiated. The project has established linkage with the Nutrition Council of the Philippines and the Dept. of Health as part of their Nutrition Program, such as the “Sangkap Pinoy (Filipino ingredients)” campaign.

A cooking demonstration on Vitamin A-rich foods is scheduled to go into production at the Nestle Kitchen Laboratory with technical assistance and equipment from the Dept. of Health. The video will be distributed to ten District Governors, interested Rotary Clubs, and Home Economics classes in schools nationwide, as well as the 700 cable operators in the country.

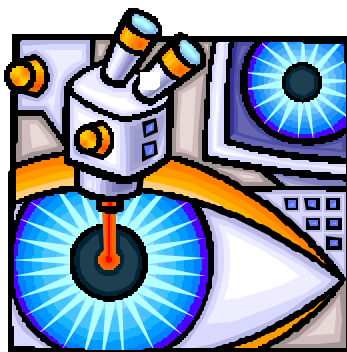
This same educational material will be given a 30-minute airing over the TV program, Health TV (HTV) [Channel 9, 10:30am, Saturdays] broadcast nationwide for a modest amount of P15,000 (\$300) only, an amount to be sponsored by Rotarians from Manila, Angeles City and Mabalacat.

Back in the public schools the educational component of the project continues as Rotarians and their spouses, as well as Lady-Rotarians, actively espouse school-yard gardening and home backyard gardening to the teachers, parents and community. Clubs maintain their relationship

in the schools they have become involved with through sponsorship of educational activities using poems, music, poster-making, quiz contests, campus bulletin boards, puppet shows and skits that inform children, and their parents, on the importance of Vitamin A.

Advocacy activities of the project continue to move forward. Rotarians have advocated support for Republic Act 8976, also known as the Philippine Fortification Act of 2000, a law that requires manufacturers of flour, sugar and cooking oil to fortify their products with Vitamin A. Similar themes on Vitamin A, other micro-nutrients, and children’s nutrition are being promoted by Rotarians in gatherings with schools, barangays (village), municipalities, youth and mothers’ clubs. Participation of the business sector and media have produced billboards, posters, public-service ads, news, and even more cooking demonstrations on Vitamin A underscoring the importance of this inexpensive, and commonly available, nutrient

Through this project and its objective, “to prevent & control Vitamin A Deficiency in the Philippines,” Rotary has found itself in the forefront of the fight against malnutrition in the country which rages over 35% of Filipino children. Led by PRID Rafael Paing Hechanova and PRID Sabino Benny Santos with PDG Ben Henson and New York Rotarian PDG Charles Katze, the project is supported by Rotary Foundation 3H Grant #98-20 and sponsored by RI D-3810 and D-3790 (Philippines) and D-7230 (New York) as foreign counterpart.



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Important Lessons to Remember

Dear Loved Ones and Friends:

This message from my good friend, Patrick Devlyn, and brother of Past Rotary International President Frank Devlyn, who is now Chairman of our Avoidable Blindness Task Force. Was so good, we wanted to share it with others.

Doyle and June

During my second month of college, our professor gave us a pop quiz. I was a conscientious student and had breezed through the questions, until I read the last one:

"What is the first name of the woman who cleans the school?" Surely this was some kind of joke. I had seen the cleaning woman several times. She was tall, dark-haired and in her 50s, but how would I know her name? I handed in my paper, leaving the last question blank.

Just before class ended, one student asked if the last question would count toward our quiz grade. "Absolutely," said the professor. "In your careers, you will meet many people. All are significant. They deserve your attention and care, even if all you do is smile and say 'hello'."

I've never forgotten that lesson. I also learned her name was Dorothy.

Second Important Lesson - Pickup in the Rain

One night, at 11:30 p.m., an older African American woman was standing on the side of an Alabama highway trying to endure a lashing rain storm. Her car had broken down and she desperately needed a ride. Soaking wet, she decided to flag down the next car. A young white man stopped to help her, generally unheard of in those conflict-filled 1960s. The man took her to safety, helped her get assistance and put her into a taxicab. She seemed to be in a big hurry, but wrote down his address and thanked him. Seven days went by and a knock came on the man's door. To his surprise, a giant console color TV was delivered to his home. A special note was attached.

It read: "Thank you so much for assisting me on the highway the other night. The rain drenched not only my clothes,

but also my spirits. Then you came along. Because of you, I was able to make it to my dying husband's bedside just before he passed away. God bless you for helping me and unselfishly serving others."

Sincerely,

Mrs. Nat King Cole.

Third Important Lesson

Always remember those who serve. In the days when an ice cream sundae cost much less, a 10-year-old boy entered a hotel coffee shop and sat at a table. A waitress put a glass of water in front of him. "How much is an ice cream sundae?" he asked. "Fifty cents," replied the waitress. The little boy pulled his hand out of his pocket and studied the coins in it. "Well, how much is a plain dish of ice cream?" he inquired.

By now more people were waiting for a table and the waitress was growing impatient. "Thirty-five cents," she brusquely replied. The little boy again counted his coins. "I'll have the plain ice cream," he said.

The waitress brought the ice cream, put the bill on the table and walked away. The boy finished the ice cream, paid the cashier and left. When the waitress came back, she began to cry as she wiped down the table. There, placed neatly beside the empty dish, were two nickels and five pennies. You see, he couldn't have the sundae, because he had to have enough left to leave her a tip.

Fourth Important Lesson - The Obstacle in Our Path

In ancient times, a King had a boulder placed on a roadway. Then he hid himself and watched to see if anyone would remove the huge rock. Some of the king's wealthiest merchants and courtiers came by and simply walked around it. Many loudly blamed the King for not keeping the roads clear, but none did anything about getting the stone out of the way.

Then a peasant came along carrying a load of vegetables. Upon approaching the boulder, the peasant laid down his burden and tried to move the stone to the side of the road. After much pushing and strain

(Continued on page 6)

What \$4,000 Can Accomplish!!

For a \$4,000 gift sent to CBMI-USA, any of the following could be done;

- 138 adult cataract surgeries
- 20 cataract surgeries for children
- 160 lid rotation surgeries for trachoma
- Nearly 7,000 patients, mostly children, could receive sight saving Vitamin A
- 800 families could receive Tetracycline for trachoma
- 8000 patients could receive Mectizan to protect their sight from River Blindness

A Call to Action

SEASONAL GREETINGS AND A GREAT NEW YEAR

**To:- Zone Co-ordinators Area D
(Zones 11, 13, 17, 18)
Avoidable Blindness Task Force**

If you can read the above message you are a lot better off than some people who cannot read it, no matter how large it is printed!

This is the season of giving and receiving, so please do not forget to bring to everyone's attention the continuing need of our Task Force.

Yes, I do know that there are other pressing priorities; that there are so many good causes we are almost "punch drunk" with requests for support; that some requests just need answering now; that the Avoidable Blindness project has been going for some time and may have been overtaken, but -

**THE BLIND WILL NOT GO AWAY
AND THEY STILL NEED OUR
HELP.**

I was surprised to find that there have not been many takers for the Matching Grant Challenge of Operation Eyesight Universal, at least I do not know of many! This is strange as such small sums of money are involved - from only \$500 up to a maximum of \$1,500 which would be matched by the scheme. That size of donation will hardly break the bank! To download a copy of the brochure which

includes an application form, go to the Downloads section of the ABTF website.

There is a great project getting underway in District 9920 where the small Samoa Island needs refraction and cataract services. PDG Dr Umesh Megur is to serve as a volunteer to do the work and also teach the local doctors in a vocational and serving project. The project cost is just US\$14,000 but the local Rotary Club is not in a position to contribute. Some of their DDF funds may be available, but they urgently need support.

Surely we can raise \$14,000 in our Area?

Please send any donations to Dr. Umesh direct but please do not send ordinary bank Euro or Sterling cheques - use bank drafts or similar. Contact Dr. Megur on umegur@rediffmail.com or simply send him a donation at K E B Road, Bidar, Kamataka, India 585401. **PLEASE!!**

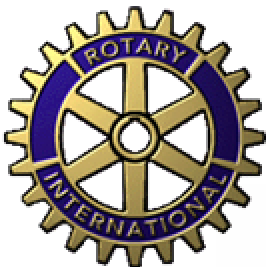
**So, have a Very Merry Christmas.
Go see all your friends and relatives.
Think, just occasionally, of those who cannot.**

Please pass these messages to your Districts and get the message to your Clubs.

PDG NORMAN COOPER
Area Co-ordinator
Avoidable Blindness Task Force

"This is the season of giving and receiving, so please do not forget to bring to everyone's attention the continuing need of our Task Force."

OPERATION EYESIGHT UNIVERSAL



& ROTARY CLUBS

together bringing the

Gift Of Sight®

As we approach the Christmas season, because MANKIND IS OUR BUSINESS we want to reach out to our Rotary friends around the world with best wishes for a HAPPY HOLIDAY. Our prayer is that the coming year will see peace restored to our troubled world since the events of September 11th!

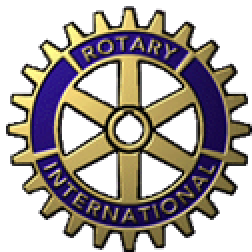
MANKIND IS OUR BUSINESS; the challenging theme presented to us by President Richard King is most appropriate for all Rotarians as we seek to serve needy people in every part of the world. President King has told us that never before has there been such a need for the help that Rotarians and Rotary Clubs can give through service.

Know that we are asked to extend compassion and practical aid to all of humanity whose lives have been afflicted by poverty, disease, ignorance, and natural disaster. In "My Road to Rotary" Paul Harris quoted Charles Steinmetz: "the greatest promise for humanity was not in any coming inventions, but in spiritual forces. What might spiritual forces accomplish? They might find a way to avert war." Fellow Rotarians, Our donations to the Rotary Foundation help to fund our new Rotary Centers for International Studies in peace and conflict resolution. The first class of 70 World Peace Scholars is fully funded and they will begin studies in 2002-2004. Since the tragedy of 11 September has produced a new war on terrorism, as Rotarians our continuing support of the Rotary Foundation is vital to support future "Peace Scholars" at our eight selected universities. I believe our founder Paul Harris would be proud of our Foundation and the new opportunities Rotarians and Rotary Clubs now have to advance international understanding, peace, and goodwill around our globe.

Because MANKIND IS OUR BUSINESS we seek to follow President Rick's theme to promote Understanding where there is disharmony, food security where there is hunger, education where there is illiteracy, health care where there is now disease, conservation where there is environmental degradation, sustainable economic development where there is poverty, and a shared vision of peace for all mankind through the power of love, the love that we should have for our fellow human beings, the love which our Creator has for us and which we should have for Him. May God's richest blessings be with each of you as we celebrate "Happy Birthday Jesus" at Christmas time!

O. DOYLE DANNENBERG, O.D.

Asst. Gen. Chairman Avoidable Blindness Task Force



Missing Link?

Update: As previously promised in November's newsletter, an OEU/Rotary brochure with Matching Grant application IS now available on the downloads page of the task force website, at . . .

www.rotarytaskforces.org/avoidable_blindness

Important Lessons (*continued*)

ing, he finally succeeded. After the peasant picked up his load of vegetables, he noticed a purse lying in the road where the boulder had been. The purse contained many gold coins and a note from the King indicating that the gold was for the person who removed the boulder from the roadway. The peasant learned what many of us never understand.

Every obstacle presents an opportunity to improve our condition.

Fifth Important Lesson - Giving When it Counts

Many years ago, when I worked as a volunteer at a hospital, I got to know a little girl named Liz who was suffering from a rare and serious disease. Her only chance of recovery appeared to be a blood transfusion from her 5-year old brother, who had miraculously survived the same disease and had developed the antibodies needed to combat the illness.

The doctor explained the situation to

her little brother, and asked the little boy if he would be willing to give his blood to his sister. I saw him hesitate for only a moment before taking a deep breath and saying, "Yes, I'll do it if it will save her." As the transfusion progressed, he lay in bed next to his sister and smiled, as we all did, seeing the color returning to her cheek. Then his face grew pale and his smile faded. He looked up at the doctor and asked with a trembling voice, "Will I start to die right away?" Being young, the little boy had misunderstood the doctor; he thought he was going to have to give his sister all of his blood in order to save her. You see, after all, understanding and attitude, are everything.

"Work like you don't need the money, love like you've never been hurt, and dance like you do when nobody's watching."