

## August Newsletter

There has been a lot of dialogue in the last few weeks about what to do when faced with an International Disaster; therefore I thought it would be prudent to outline the general actions recommended.

The first thing to remember is that we in the UK are not first responders for an International Disaster. Our first advice in an International disaster is to support the box suppliers who are either first responders or have regular relationships to supply to first responders. Details of the box suppliers and where in the Disaster cycle they are appropriate can be found at

<https://www.rotarygbi.org/media/2016/01/Disaster-Aid-Timeline-2016.pdf>.

Clearly the nature of a disaster will define whether the box suppliers are a sensible option or not. For instance in extreme famine or a war Zone the box suppliers are unlikely to be the obvious route for us to channel our support, here the International Aid Agencies or if a UK wide appeal is announced the DEC.

When a disaster occurs we try to get information on recommended approach as soon as possible after becoming aware of the disaster. Details can be found in the members' area on the web site at <https://www.rotarygbi.org/members/humanitarian-service-programmes/international/disaster-updates/>

And in future on the public part of [www.rotarygbi.org](http://www.rotarygbi.org) under news story and on rotary GBI social media channels (Facebook and twitter).

We often get asked about the role of the RIBI Donations Trust in disasters. The Trust is very specifically for post disaster reconstruction and is for Rotary projects, where a Rotary club is involved at both ends. An appeal through the Trust can only be called by the RIBI President and where it is clear there are good Rotary contacts with the affected country.

## Disaster Update

Donations are coming in for the Yemen appeal with UNICEF and there is an on-going need.

In Nepal, Sierra Leone and Bangladesh there are disastrous after effects of very heavy rainfalls. ShelterBox, AquaBox and Water Survival Box are all active in these areas.

## Mary's Meals

This coming October Mary's Meals is teaming with Stoats to invite you to reach out to children living in poverty to support the Porridge Smiles campaign. A flyer describing this campaign in detail is attached to this Newsletter

## Mercy Ships

DG 1240 Nick Sillitoe and a party of 7 Rotarians from his District visited the Mercy Ship Africa on 29 July during its refit in Las Palmas, Gran Canaria, prior to its sailing to Cameroon in August to begin a ten month tour of duty. Below is his report on the visit:

We were welcomed on board together with 60 other visitors, and were given an informative talk from the CEO of Mercy Ships about the work and scale of operations that the crew perform. In the time they will spend in Cameroon, they expect to perform at least 5000 operations, ranging from cataract operations, hair lip and club foot operations, removal of growths and goitres, and over 4500 dental examinations! In addition, various of the medical team will go inland from the harbour port to teach local doctors and nurses how to perform the types of operation that are carried out on the ship. This will then provide a meaningful legacy from when the ship leaves the country.

Everyone on board, from the captain, medical staff, engineers and cleaners all give their time voluntarily, sometimes for periods of up to three years. Many are sponsored by their employers and benefactors, and the crew is truly international, although English is the common language.

We were then given an extensive tour of the ship, including the hospital areas, living quarters, kitchens, laundry room, engine room and bridge, with a chance to talk to various crew members about life on board. We were surprised to discover that there is even a school on board,

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as many crew bring their families with them , especially those on a two or three year stint of duty.

The feeling of positivity from everyone we met was palpable, and the spirit of cooperation and friendship was infectious. There is a strong Christian faith ethic among most of the crew, but other religious beliefs are welcomed too. We joined the crew for supper in the canteen, which was a noisy but fun affair, and once again we were made to feel very welcome. Our visit ended with a photo shoot on the jetty.

In summary, we left the ship with a much clearer idea of the tremendous work that this charity does, really changing the lives of those men, women and children it operates on. The genuine fellowship of everyone on board was a delight to see, and if any Rotary clubs are looking for an international project to support, I can heartily recommend Mercy Ships!

The above is attributable to Nick, but I thought Rotarians might be interested.

If you need any help or advice, please contact Ron Daniels  
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