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RFFA on the Roof of Africa: Kili Climb



Australian Rotarians Peter Sparks, R.C. of Griffith Avanti, Mark Horton, R.C. of Dubbo, and Craig Corrigan, R.C. of Coolamon, display the RFFA banner on the summit of Mt. Kilimanjaro on 28 August 2007.

“Just a very quick note from the New Arusha Hotel. We are ALL back off the mountain safe and sound – well, maybe not so sound! It was without question or argument the toughest thing any of us have ever done in our lives.”
 (E-mail from John Glassford to friends on Thursday, 30 August, 2007.)

By John Glassford, Rotary Club of Coolamon, Australia

It was a programme on our SBS Television where I first saw Stephen Lewis and it was mandatory viewing for me, a Kenyan/Aussie. The show was called “Race Against Time” and it affected me to my soul.

Having been born and raised in Kenya, I was not prepared for what I witnessed. I had to do something for the orphans. So with Stephen as our inspiration, the impetus for climbing Mt. Kilimanjaro began. Our hope was to raise \$100,000 to benefit AIDS orphans. To date, we are two-thirds of the way to our goal. Our team of climbers numbered 16 members – Rotarians and non-

Rotarians, male and female, young and not-so-young.

All of us had very personal reasons for wanting to make this climb, but we also shared the common desire to raise funds for three charities: RFFA Orphan Rescue (Nairobi, Kenya), The School of St. Jude (Moshono, Tanzania) and Operation Medical Hope (Hout Bay, South Africa).

Our many long months of equipping, preparing and training culminated with three days of altitude training on Mt. Kenya.

We started our Kilimanjaro climb on the 23rd of August and completed the journey on August 29th. Ten of the team members made it to Uhuru Peak, the highest point in Africa at 5898 meters or 19,340 feet above sea level; another four to Stella Point at 5,756 meters or 18,884 feet.

One of our climbers had to be rescued off the mountain due to altitude sickness and three others were rescued on the day we climbed to the summit. Still, we were lucky. Four climbers had died the week prior to our climb on Kilimanjaro, trying to do what we did.

We walked many steps as a team, up and down Mt. Kilimanjaro, and each step we took was for a purpose. For me, each step was for an orphan in Africa. I mean to make every step we took as a team count in some way for these children.

We have so much to do in Africa! Please visit our website at <http://www.coolamonrotary.com/kili> and join me in the quest to improve the lives of Africa’s children. ♦

Kili Team Visits ANCHOR Site in Nairobi

By John Glassford, Rotary Club of Coolamon, Australia

Kenya has changed somewhat since I left as a young man in 1964, just married. Forty-three years is a long time between visits. My mother always told me never to go back. Mothers are always right, I suppose; however, I should have gone back many times. Kenya is still a wonderful country with wonderful people.

Prior to leaving for altitude training in Mt. Kenya, our team of climbers visited the Mathare slums on the outskirts of Nairobi. There we were shown round by HOPE worldwide and RFFA's Orphan Rescue team in Nairobi.

In the Mathare slums, 600,000 people exist. Here, where any semblance of humanity is all but gone, Rotary is working hard at saving orphans and giving them a chance in life.



Amongst the worst living conditions imaginable, here was Rotary, picking up kids and giving them clothing, food and shelter.

None of the team left Mathare without being deeply moved. Some of us were in tears during the visit and I am sure that this visit alone has changed everyone in the team.

The whole trip came into total focus for me during, after, and since we visited

Renowned HIV/AIDS Expert Joins HOPE worldwide's Headquarters Operations

Wayne, Pennsylvania--HOPE worldwide is pleased to announce the addition of Dr. Mark Ottenweller to its Corporate Office in Wayne, Pennsylvania where he will serve as the Global HIV/AIDS Coordinator. "Mark's passion for the vulnerable in Africa—especially those orphaned by HIV/AIDS—can be clearly felt by all who know him. He brings tremendous field experience and strengths in policy making, strategic planning and networking" said Dr. Gary Jacques, Global Program Director for HOPE worldwide. "Mark's relocation to Wayne gives a fantastic boost to our efforts to serve those with HIV/AIDS around the world. His experience and talents will be a great resource to our Country Directors seeking to expand their service to the poor and needy."

Dr. Ottenweller first moved with his family to Abidjan, Ivory Coast in 1989 where he pioneered one of the nation's first HIV/AIDS clinics. He moved to Johannesburg, South Africa in 1993 and began working in Soweto. During his 18 year tenure in Africa, Mark has seen the work grow to involve hundreds of communities within South Africa and 5 other African countries touching over one million lives. A number of the programs that he helped develop have been cited as "Best Practice Models" by the United Nations and other agencies.

In 2003 Dr. Ottenweller co-founded the ANCHOR Partnership, which involves Rotarians for Fighting AIDS, Emory School of Public Health, Coca Cola Africa, and HOPE worldwide with Marion Bunch. The ANCHOR Partnership will provide care and support to 145,000 orphans over 5 years in South Africa, Kenya, Ivory Coast, Botswana, Nigeria, and Zambia with \$8,100,000 from the U.S. government. Dr. Ottenweller has also served on the South African National AIDS Council and the U.N. Economic Commission for Africa.

Bob Gempel, CEO of HOPE worldwide, recalls two key milestones in 1995. "I remember being joined by Mark as HOPE worldwide presented the HOPE Unity Award to Nelson Mandela in honor of his life long efforts to unite the people of South Africa. Shortly after that Mark himself was recognized by ABC as their Person of the Week on World AIDS Day. The entire organization rejoiced with Mark for that well-deserved honor."

Mark, a graduate of LSU School of Medicine in 1977, will be joined in Pennsylvania by his wife Diane, who will work with HOPE worldwide's volunteer programs. He is the father of 3 children Matthew, Leslie and Jennifer.

the slums of Mathare. If ever there was an example of what Rotary is doing to help the poorest people on the planet, it is this project in Mathare. Words cannot describe the feelings we all had. I was overcome and unable to say anything when I was asked to thank the orphans for their welcome.

The RFFA/Orphan Rescue banner supplied by the Rotary Club of Nairobi, was taken to Uhuru Point by three Rotarians and one future Rotarian.

Personally, I have become more determined than ever that RFFA should

receive my full attention from now on and I am more focused than ever on getting RFFA (Australia) into action.

So we plan our next venture into Africa and to raise funds – much needed funds – for so many projects. If you think you are having a tough time, come with me to Africa and I will show you what tough is.

Please encourage your club members and friends who can make a difference to get involved. Together let us harness the power of Rotary, RFFA and the Internet for the children of Africa. ♦

Soul of Africa: A Partnership for Prosperity

By PDG Reg Ling, Rotary Club of
Chandlers Ford and Itchen Valley

The moccasin shoe project by Soul of Africa is well known, but the background of the initiative is not. In the wake of the increasing number of HIV infections came the number of HIV/AIDS orphans that were beyond the scope of traditional extended African families to care for. Today there are nearly 6 million South Africans living with HIV and the number of AIDS orphans is over 1.2 million – one for every Rotarian in the world?

The worst affected Province in South Africa is KwaZulu-Natal and it is here that the story begins. Many organisations helped where they could. faith-based organisations, community-based organisations, NGOs, etc. It was in this context that Rotary Clubs became involved with schemes to assist orphanages, to extend orphanages and link them with the community, but the rate of increase of orphans was more than could be addressed economically.

The focus shifted to pre-school care centres in the communities to assist the extended families. To provide the children with food and medical care, to give some respite to the carers, to give them chances to do more than look after children and better the conditions at “home”.

Now it is commonplace to use shipping containers to provide centres from which to work. The greatest need was more permanent centres with more facilities; however, Rotary Foundation grants could not be used for buildings.

Soul of Africa is Born

Then in 2004 a miraculous chain of events fell into place:

- Sarah Gedye and her husband trained women in their shoe manufacturing company to hand stitch shoes as a means of

sustainable employment to enable them to feed their families and work with dignity.

- Lance Clark developed a moccasin design that lent itself to the scheme.
- Rotarians in District 9270 adopted this as part of their strategy to support the efforts to combat problems brought from the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

Soul of Africa was born with marketing arrangements in South Africa, England, USA, etc. to sell the moccasins in high street stores with the profits being used to fund buildings. These, in turn, would be the focus for Rotary Foundation matching grants to equip and support and so allow Rotarians from all over the world to help make a difference.

This initiative has been given good coverage in the “Rotarian” magazine and also in “Rotary World”.

The moccasin project is expanding to other Provinces in South Africa and neighbouring countries. It was then recognised that the leather working skills had another application: footballs, or soccer balls. Here was an opportunity to create other self-sustainable projects and create employment and funding aimed at helping orphans affected by AIDS.



Football is very popular and in 2010 the FIFA World Cup will be in South Africa. Many deprived children play with balls made from plastic bags filled with rubbish and tied up with string. Cheap imported balls may be used but these puncture easily and cannot be repaired making them more useless than the plastic bags.

A New Project Evolves

Soul of Africa now has extended its repertoire to provide workshops where

footballs are hand stitched from leather panels. They are made to FIFA standards and are polyurethane coated to provide an abrasion resistant surface. If punctured they can be repaired or a leather panel can easily be replaced.



Rotary again is involved with campaigns to sponsor the balls then distribute them to schools or villages. The balls carry health slogans plus a special logo “Kick AIDS out of Africa.” The distributions will be used as opportunities to promote HIV/AIDS awareness and provide relevant education.

One of the ladies who stitches for Soul of Africa had been looking after 6 orphans whose parents had died from AIDS. Three of the orphans were infected with AIDS and have died since Christmas. Ntokusa did not have the money to feed them properly or take them to hospital when they were ill. Now with the money she is earning from the stitching work, she can feed the remaining orphans properly, clothe them and provide medical care. Soul of Africa is helping many people like Ntokusa.

Another charity “Kick 4 Life” is sending volunteers to Lesotho, a small landlocked country with high HIV prevalence and where life expectancy at birth is now 39 years! “Kick 4 Life” is tackling HIV/AIDS there by developing a network of trainers to deliver a “Good Health Through Sports” curriculum to young people.

Just as Soul of Africa was born through a partnership, so other partnerships may be the key to providing effective support for communities everywhere affected by HIV/AIDS. ♦

News Flash #1

TRF Approves First MG for Orphan Rescue

The very first Matching Grant for Orphan Rescue recently was approved by The Rotary Foundation.

The project is being undertaken by the Rotary Clubs of Maluba, Zambia (D-9210) and Covington, KY (D-6740), in cooperation with Hope worldwide. Funding will provide school fees, supplies, uniforms and shoes, as well as nutritional support to needy children in Lusaka, Zambia. The total project cost is approx. US\$62,000.

Driving forces behind this innovative project are Patricia Miller (R.C. of Covington, KY) and Priscilla Banda (R.C. of Maluba, Zambia). Ladies, RFFA salutes you!

News Flash #2

\$15 Million Granted to GeoVax for HIV/AIDS Vaccine Program

Atlanta-based GeoVax Labs, Inc. has announced receipt of a US\$15 million grant to further its HIV/AIDS vaccine program.

GeoVax will use this funding to advance its HIV/AIDS vaccine development, optimization, production and human clinical trial testing, including Phase 2 human clinical trials in 2008.

Funding of the grant begins in October 2007. Dr. Harriet Robinson, a personal friend of RFFA Chair Marion Bunch, guided development of the grant proposal and will lead a major part of its related studies.

ShelterBox Aid Arrives in Swaziland!

Over the past six years, volunteers from ShelterBox have delivered emergency help to victims of earthquakes, floods, hurricanes and volcanoes in dozens of countries.

Now a recent deployment to Swaziland has seen the charity tackling a new kind of disaster – a tragedy where children living in one of the world’s poorest countries are the innocent victims.

Swaziland now has the highest incidence of AIDS/HIV infection in the world – an estimated 40% of the population are infected and average life expectancy has declined from 55 in the 1980s to just 39 today.

Huge numbers of children have been orphaned – left to fend for themselves in a country where severe poverty has been exacerbated by the loss of a large chunk of the working population.

Working with NERCHA, an initiative set up by the Swaziland government, and the Rotary Club of Mbabane, the ShelterBox team delivered a large consignment of aid to the kingdom, containing everything from tents to stoves, blankets and blow-up footballs.

One member of the team was Raul Fernandez, a plumber from Falmouth, UK. On arrival he asked NERCHA which areas of Swaziland were worst affected and got a grim answer: *“As far as HIV is concerned, it’s anywhere you look. It’s so widespread that everyone has lost a family member: a huge chunk of the population has been wiped out and even if AIDS was eradicated tomorrow, there would still be thousands of orphans in desperate need of help.”*

The ShelterBox aid was sent by sea to Durban, South Africa, and then by rail to Swaziland, where it was distributed to previously identified homesteads around Piggs Peak and two towns in the Low Veldt.

As well as practical equipment like tents, stoves and water purification tablets, the ShelterBox team also delivered hundreds of packs containing basic school equipment and various toys including footballs. *“The footballs were like gold dust!”* said Raul.

While he was there, volunteer Larry Agee from Lake Charles, LA, USA, was given the Swazi name ‘Sipho’, which means gift. He said: *“Swaziland is a slow moving disaster. It doesn’t make the headlines, but it is killing people daily.”*



Questions & Answers about Project Match

Q: What is Project Match?

A: The goal of RFFA Project Match is to assist clubs in combining their efforts and resources in order to undertake successful Matching Grants (MG) projects that address the issues surrounding HIV/AIDS.

Q: How does it work?

A: (1) If you're looking for project partners, register your project in the RFFA website project database at <http://www.rffa.org/match>.

(2) To find a project for your club, check out the Project listings at <http://www.rffa.org/match>.

(3) For help with your Matching Grant application, e-mail the RFFA Grants Director at grants@rffa.org for review and suggestions.

(4) Use the Discussion area on the RFFA website to talk about your project.

Q: Who can participate?

A: Any Rotary club or district that wishes to be involved with a project concerning HIV/AIDS.

Q: What's the cost?

A: Projects are available in a variety of sizes. As a project partner, no individual club is expected to fund the cost of an entire project, unless you wish to do so. Whatever your club can contribute will be welcome!

Q: Where are projects located?

A: Several HIV/AIDS projects are being planned in Africa (Zambia, Zimbabwe, South Africa, etc.). Other current project locations are in the Ukraine, India, and Pakistan.

Q: What kinds of projects are available?

A: Project types include HIV/AIDS awareness and testing; equipping and furnishing orphanages, clinics and schools; establishing job training centers, and the like.

Q: How else can I help?

A: Spread the word! Increase awareness in your own club about the fight against HIV/AIDS. Encourage your club to become a partner in a listed project. Tell other clubs in your district about RFFA Project Match.

Through RFFA's Project Match, we can bring hope to millions of children.

**Rotarians for Fighting
AIDS, Inc.**

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