



Food for Thought



ROTARIAN ACTION GROUP FOR THE ALLEVIATION OF HUNGER & MALNUTRITION

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 1

SUMMER 2009

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Rotary Paapa Project Makes a Difference

by *Sudha Umashanker*
Area Coordinator, India

The Rotary Paapa project has been growing in strength – as have the 60 odd malnourished children in the age group 0-5 years who have been receiving supplemental nutrition in the form of Eggs, Bananas, Milk, Dates, Syrup and a Ready-to-cook Porridge mix made of different cereals.

Twice weekly, on Wednesdays and Sundays, the mothers and babies with their Rotary Paapa Identity badges line up at the home of a volunteer of Iniya Udaiyam Charitable Trust who are partnering with Rotary International District 3230's New Horizons Team in this project.

The supplements are distributed systematically. While some children are not too fond of the cooked porridge (it's usually mixed with milk and sugar after the mix is cooked in hot water) the dates syrup seems to be a big hit with the children who think it is some kind of jam.



A medical review was done late in February 2009, exactly six months after the project started and Dr S.Rajamurali, Paediatrician who has been monitoring the children from day one, had this to say: "After six months of nutritional supplements, anthropometric analysis (measurement of parts of the body - such as mid arm circumference, waist, hips and assessment of body composition ie fatty tissue plus height and weight readings) of the children showed that

- 62.5% had registered significant improvement in weight
- 35% did not show any improvement
- 2.5% were absent for the follow up analysis."

The time duration of six months he reckoned may have been insufficient for the 35% of the children who did not catch up. Sustained

nutrition he feels will do the trick.

Incidentally the earliest and most reliable indicator for acute change in nutritional status is weight. These findings were also corroborated with the growth chart. Other than weight, all other parameters one learns, take time to change.

Many mothers whom the Rotarians spoke to provided very positive feedback. One mother said that the child's skin looks much healthier, whereas others said the children had grown taller, are more active, complain less about aches and pains, and they have been falling ill less often — which was indeed very heartening.

It is proposed to continue the supplemental nutrition for another six months at least for these children.

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Paapa Project Makes a Difference *(continued)*



The cost to continue the program will be about US\$ 385 per month.

A review will be done once again and the mothers will be educated on age appropriate nutrition so that they can provide their children a cost-effective but nutritious diet - once the child is eventually weaned away from the Rotary supplements.

There are many more children in this community around Konambedu in Chennai in this age group who are in need of nutrition.

Sudha Umashaanker is District Chairman New Horizon RI District 3230 and Area Coordinator for India for our Rotarian Action Group for the Alleviation of Hunger & Malnutrition.

SEE IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT ABOUT THIS PROJECT ON NEXT PAGE

David Bobanick to serve as our new Action Group Project Coordinator

David was born and raised in a small coal mining town in rural Pennsylvania. After attending Penn State University (Communications), David moved to Brisbane, Australia to take a position with the United States Information Agency. He then moved to Seattle to serve as operations manager of the Goodwill Arts Festival's "Moscow Treasures and Traditions".

Shortly after moving to Seattle, David began volunteering at the Northwest Harvest Cherry Street Food Bank. His experience working directly with people in need at the food banks had a powerful impact that led to working full-time with the organization. David served as Northwest Harvest's resource development director for several years. Following an ill-advised career change to work with a spectacularly unsuccessful .com, David became Executive Director of Rotary First Harvest.

Since joining Rotary First Harvest: A Program of Rotary District 5030, David has increased the amount of produce that the program collects and distributes annually, as well as greatly enhancing the organization's strategic impact in the community. David has also been instrumental in developing Rotary-



based hunger relief programs in other states, including Oregon, Florida, California, and most recently in the greater New Orleans area. David also has been invited to serve in an advisory capacity on several Washington State committees dealing with hunger response initiatives.

An active member of Mercer Island Rotary Club, David currently serves on the Board of Directors, continues his role as the club's Membership Chair and is the club's President Nominee Designate. David serves on several

non-profit boards, currently serving as President of the Access to Healthy Foods Coalition. David was also chosen to participate in the inaugural Non-Profit Executive Leadership Institute at the University of Washington's Evans School of Public Affairs, and recently participated in an Executive Leadership Institute at Stanford University's School of Social Innovation.

David and his wife Carol have one child, Ethan, who, according to David, is blessed with his mother's intelligence and hairline.

Grant announced in support of Paapa Project



Upon reading the progress of the Rotary Paapa Project and its sustainability, the Board of Directors of the Rotarian Action Group for the Alleviation of Hunger & Malnutrition and the Directors of our partner organization, Hunger Plus, Inc., approved a total of US\$ 1,540 to be used for the supplemental nutrition program of Rotary Paapa.

Congratulations to Area Coordinator Sudha for all your work in improving the health of the children in this program!

AmpleHarvest.orgSM

"Sharing your garden bounty with Neighbors in Need"

One out of eight Americans needs food assistance, but can't get fresh produce from the local food pantry. At the same time, millions of American homeowners grow more food in their backyard gardens than they can possibly use. It doesn't have to be this way.

The AmpleHarvest.org campaign – a nationwide effort to address this dilemma by enabling millions of backyard gardeners find, and then connect with neighborhood food pantries eager for their bounty, needs your help.

If you know of a food pantry in your community, you can help diminish hunger by giving www.AmpleHarvest.org/pantry.pdf to the pantry manager and encouraging them to register the pantry.

If you are a backyard gardener, you can help diminish hunger in your community by going to www.AmpleHarvest.org, finding a local food pantry and donating part of your bounty.

If you find that no pantries in your area are registered yet, please check local houses of worship or other community

buildings to find one. Then you can both donate your crops to them while also encouraging them to register at www.AmpleHarvest.org.

AmpleHarvest.org campaign has the support of the Rotary First Harvest, The Rotarian Action Group for the Alleviation of Hunger and Malnutrition, USDA, Google Inc.,

many faith organizations, food banks and bloggers (www.ampleharvest.org/feedback.php), as well many people like you. Please view the online documents and visit the FAQ to learn more about the campaign.

America has a hunger problem – and a solution. Rotarians nationwide can help bring them together.

Update on the Coyote Canyon backpack project

We are pleased to report that the Bullhead City (AZ) Rotary Club was able to launch the WeekEnd Hunger Backpack Project in **two** schools this year, rather than the planned one.

The project, which sends "kid-friendly" food home every Friday in a backpack with needy children who are dependent on the school's nutrition program, was undertaken in partnership with Communities in Schools of Southern Nevada. Funding for the project came from a Rotary Foundation Matching Grant, partnering the Bullhead City club with the Valle de Cuernavaca Rotary Club in Cuernavaca, Mexico.

An average of 38 children each month were served at the Coyote Canyon and Desert Valley Elementary Schools.

School records have demonstrated that the children participating in this program WeekEND Hunger backpack program are healthier, happier and perform better in their school work.

This Rotary initiative, expanding the program to these two additional schools, has encouraged other individuals, businesses and organizations to become involved, and the program will continue and be expanded for the 2009-10 school year.