

# Rotary Mexico Mission Project

*Submitted by Dr. Marvin J. Ludwig*

A joint International Project with the Rotary Clubs of Celina, New Bremen/New Knoxville, St Marys and Wapakoneta, Ohio, USA and the Chihuahua Amigo Club Rotario, Chihuahua, CHIH, Mexico

ANNUAL REPORT; JUNE 2004

On May 10, 2003, a letter was sent to the Rotary Clubs of Celina, New Bremen/New Knoxville, St Marys and Wapakoneta requesting the formation of the Four club Rotary Mexico Mission Project (RMMP). By the start of the 2003/2004 Rotary year, all four clubs adopted the RMMP as their joint international project. This Annual Report outlines the accomplishments of the RMMP to date.

In February of 2003, eight Rotarians and one spouse from the four clubs departed on a study trip to the Sierra Madre mountains of northern Mexico to ascertain the needs of the Tarahumara Indian tribe and the Mexican people living in this region. They took with them an ambulance donated by MESA through the NB/NK club filled with medical equipment and supplies. Additional clothing supplies were purchased in November of 2003 and sent to the warehouse to await crossing.

The ambulance and supplies were left at a warehouse in El Paso Texas to be brought across the border at another time. This crossing would later prove to be the biggest challenge to the RMMP as paperwork and procedures in the Mexican Government caused delay after delay in crossing the equipment. In May of 2004 word was received that the equipment had finally found its destination in Creel Mexico at the Clinica Santa Teresita, the Tarahumara Hospital operated by Padre Luis Verplancken SJ. The ambulance now has been scheduled to arrive in the community of San Jaunito. It is being shipped along with several other ambulances under the control of local officials in Boycona, CHIH, Mexico

While on the initial study trip, the group met with a Rotary Club in Chihuahua Mexico and agreed to work in cooperation for the betterment of the Tarahumara and the people in the Creel area.

In December of 2003, and with the continuation of the 10-year drought in the area, a need surfaced for food supplies to help the Tarahumara people through the winter and spring of 2004. In cooperation with Hunger Plus Inc., and DGN Ted Holder of District 5730, a \$500.00 donation was made from the RMMP. This donation along with Hunger Plus, Inc. designated funds from District 6600 put over \$3,200.00 toward the purchase of corn and beans. This amounted to some 24,000 pounds of food supplies that went directly to assist the hungry.

A matching grant through RI, written in October of 2003 for the digging of seven to eight water wells in remote valleys was sidetracked by earlier reporting problems from a previous District Grant. This was promptly corrected and the Grant request resubmitted. With the assistance of Rotarians like PDG Bob Kuck II, PDG Chuck Stocking, PRIP Frank Devlyn and many others, the Grant was approved in April of 2004. The RMMP matched \$7000.00 with the District designated funds and RI's match for a total of \$24,500 toward the drilling project.

***OHIO to MEXICO - Preserving a culture and making lives better*** RMMP The Club Rotario Amigo in Chihuahua City have joined with our four clubs and now works as the Host club for our international endeavors in Mexico. During the past year the RMMP conducted a raffle that raised

\$6000.00 net profit and recently at the District assembly auctioned off some donated Tarahumara items that garnered another \$550.00.

A donation was made to DGE Ted Holder, District 5730 in Texas for a soil testing project that he is currently working on in the region with the hopes of suppling the proper fertilizers that will increase production of crops in the dry region of the Sierra Madres.

Plans are currently underway for a September trip to Mexico to review the well drilling project.

A second matching grant is also now being written for additional well drilling in the area for the next Rotary year.

In recapping the project, we find that the RMMP has been very successful due to the tremendous financial support of our four clubs, Districts 6600, District 4110, the Chihuahua Amigo Club, Fr. Luis Verplancken and staff, Hunger Plus, Inc., Rotarian's Ted Holder DGN and JB Roberts PDG from District 5730, Rotary International and the many fine and dedicated Rotarians who have helped us out.

### **HIGHLIGHTS:**

- Initial study trip to Mexico by eight Rotarians and one spouse.
- Ambulance with medical equipment driven to El Paso, Texas
- Group joined in agreement with Chihuahua Amigo Rotary Club to work as partners.
- Additional clothing supplies purchased and sent to El Paso
- Two fire trucks purchased for shipment in 2004/2005
- Matching Grant for water wells written
- 50/50 Raffle held
- Donation of \$500.00 for Corn and Bean purchase through Hunger plus
- Donation of office equipment received from DGN Dr. Abe Kuttathara
- Water Well Matching Grant approved, matching monies sent to RI
- Auction at assembly nets \$550.00
- Medical equipment arrives at the clinic in Creel
- Donation of \$1,000 toward soil testing project.
- Donation of additional \$500.00 for Corn and Bean purchase through Hunger plus
- Ambulance arrives in San Jaunito
- Planning begins for a September 2004 trip

### **Financial impact on the Tarahumara and the people in the Creel area**

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|---|----------|---|
| • | \$24,500 | Water Wells   |
| • | \$3,700  | Corn and beans  |
| • | \$500    | Clothing  |
| • | \$12,000 | Medial Equipment  |
| • | \$3,000  | Ambulance   |
| • | \$1,000  | Soil Testing  |
| • | \$44,700 | Total financial impact directed into this project area. |

This amount is equal to three ½ times the initial investment that the four clubs have made to the project.

This amount is equal to \$11,000 plus per club in financial impact.

No single club was likely to have had this kind of total impact but joined together we can be proud of what we have accomplished. The support of the 230 Rotarians of our four clubs has made this project a success.

WE are leading by example.

The RMMP has been recognized multiple times in the District newsletter, more than any other project in district 6600 with MESA being the only exception. It has been publicly recognized by the DG and PDG's at every district function. The RMMP was also recognized at the 2004 PETS as one of the outstanding and significant projects in the State of Ohio. It further has been recognized by Hunger Plus Inc., United Rotary Clubs of Mexico, and Past Rotary International President Frank Devlyn 2000/2001.

#### 2003/2004 Committee Members

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| Frank C Murray<br>Centennial President, St Marys RC<br>RMMP Club Coordinator | Julie Fleck<br>Past President, Celina RC<br>RMMP Chairperson   |
| Philip Schlenker<br>Past President, Wapakoneta RC<br>RMMP Vice Chairperson   | John Wale<br>Past President, St. Marys RC<br>RMMP Treasurer    |
| Dr. Paul Wilken<br>Past President, Celina RC<br>Committee Member             | Arnie Heitkamp<br>NB/NK RC<br>Committee Member                 |
| James J Harris<br>Past President, St. Marys RC<br>Committee Member           | Rick Bell<br>Wapakoneta RC<br>Committee Member                 |
| Janet White<br>Celina RC<br>Committee Member                                 | Myra Holzer<br>NB/NK RC<br>Committee Member                    |
| Jeffery P Squire<br>President, St. Marys RC 03/04<br>Committee Member        | Steve Smith<br>President NB/NK RC 03/04<br>Committee Member    |
| Kathy Keller<br>President, Wapakoneta RC 03/04<br>Committee Member           | Julie Miller<br>President, Celina RC 03/04<br>Committee Member |