



International Inner Wheel

News on the Web

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International Inner Wheel Executive 2008-2009

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Dear Inner Wheel Friends

The wheel has turned and when you read these lines a new Inner Wheel year will have started. The start of a new year is like an unwritten book. It is a great challenge and we are all responsible for its content. It gives me great pleasure to thank all of you for the important work you are doing for communities nationally and internationally and I want to encourage you to keep the good work going. It is essential that we remember the possibilities and obligations we have as members of this worldwide organisation. People around the world need our help. I am aware that we cannot comprehend all global needs but we can do our best to

**Realise your Visions
and
Make a Difference**

I ask you to remember IIW's social project "Global Girls' Education" in liaison with UNICEF. You will find more details regarding the project on IIW's website. Education is the key to a better future for women and girls and a help to eliminate poverty.

Thank you so much for the many heartwarming letters I have received with good wishes for the year. I am sorry for not being able to thank all of you personally. I am glad and grateful that this year's theme has been so well received throughout our Inner Wheel world and because you have implemented it in your skills.

I look forward to meeting many of you during the year and to seeing some of the fantastic projects undertaken by Inner Wheel members worldwide. I hope many of you will join the 14th International Inner Wheel Convention in Malaysia and use this great opportunity for reunion with old friends and making new friendships.

I wish all of you a successful, inspiring and rewarding Inner Wheel year 2008/2009

Yours in Friendship
Suzanne Nielsen
International Inner Wheel President
2008/2009



INTERNATIONAL INNER WHEEL AND THE UNITED NATIONS



Six members are appointed to represent International Inner Wheel at the United Nations: two in New York, two in Geneva and two in Vienna. They work with dedication, cost our organisation very little and provide invaluable insights into the deliberations of the UN.

The Problem of Elder Abuse

In Vienna there was much discussion of the problem of Elder Abuse. By 2050 the European population aged 80+ is projected to rise from 18 million in 2004 to nearly 50 million. Most of the “over-80’s” are able to live autonomously but a large minority are likely to be dependent on help from others. Providing adequate care will be a major challenge as a result of smaller numbers of care providers available among relatives. The frail elderly of tomorrow will have fewer children who can look after them and these will probably live further away because of their professional careers. Public provision of care may face financial constraints owing to the need to ensure public finances.

The frail elderly are a highly vulnerable group of people and it is crucial to address the question of safeguarding their fundamental rights. Responsibility for protecting the fundamental rights of dependant elderly people remains with the Member States. The World Health Organisation defines the term “Elder Abuse” as follows. “Elder abuse is a single or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust which causes harm or distress to an older person” Elder abuse can take different forms: Physical abuse, psychological abuse, financial abuse, sexual harassment or abuse, neglect.

The circumstances in which elder abuse can occur are very diverse, as are the members of the group. Abuse may occur when an older person lives alone or with a relative, it may occur within residential or day-care settings, in hospitals, home support services and other places assumed to be safe. A wide range of people may abuse older people, including relatives, professional staff, volunteers, neighbours and friends. It appears however, that in only a minority of cases does the abuse of older people represent a deliberate attempt to harm or exploit the victims. Often it is a result of a lack of adequate knowledge, overburdening and stress on the part of professional and family carers alike. In family settings, it may also result from longstanding relational difficulties between care-givers and care-receivers.

There is at present a lack of data on the prevalence of elder abuse in the European Union, but some national studies give an idea of the potential scale of the problem. A national study was made in the U.K in 2006. 2.6% of respondents (aged 66 and over and living in private households) reported that they had experienced abuse or neglect by a family member, a close friend or a care-worker during the previous year. In the U.K this equates to about 277,000 people. However the 2.6% is likely to be an underestimate as the most vulnerable were unable to respond, owing to dementia or other severe health problems, and as those living in institutions were not included in the sample. The predominant types of mistreatment reported were neglect, followed by financial abuse, psychological and physical abuse and, least frequently, sexual abuse. Regarding professional care a study was made by a German health insurance company. This study showed that 40% of people cared for at home by professional care services did not receive sufficient attention to prevent pressure ulcers and almost 30% did not receive adequate food or drink. Around one third of those cared for in institutions were subjected to these forms of inadequate care. In the absence of determined policy efforts to tackle elder abuse, there is a serious risk that matters will worsen over coming decades.

In the public debates in almost every Member State, the issue of elder abuse and neglect has not yet received sufficient attention and appears to be taken less seriously than child abuse and violence against women, which are problems that governments have started to tackle in a determined manner over recent years. The UN International Plan of Action on Ageing 2002 strongly recommended that more emphasis be put on pre-

venting elder abuse. It called for changes in attitudes, policies and practices at all levels and in all sectors in order to ensure that persons everywhere are able to age with security and dignity as citizens with full rights. The member states are beginning to deploy a variety of measures to prevent and tackle the abuse and neglect of older persons including: systems for reporting and tackling cases of elder abuse, educational programmes or public awareness campaigns, support available to abused or neglected older people, systems for gathering information and data on the prevalence and incidence of elder abuse and neglect.

It needs to be emphasised that no single response will be sufficient to tackle the complex issue of elder abuse, and that a combination of these approaches is required. Most Member States have yet to come up with a comprehensive strategy that could offer effective protection to the population of frail elderly people. Some elements of such strategies have nevertheless begun to emerge.

The dignity and fundamental rights of frail elderly people have to be safeguarded at the local level. This must remain a responsibility of the authorities in the Member States at various levels (national, regional and local). The EU can nevertheless play a useful role in promoting the conditions whereby the dignity and fundamental rights of elderly people can be protected. This has also been underlined in the recent opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on Elder Abuse. Actions with a real added value could be taken at EU level in a number of cases: A better understanding of the risks and greater awareness of the problem, research to prevent dependency and promote mental health, better reconciliation of work and informal care, making use of the European Social Fund, the cross-border dimension in the fight against elder abuse and neglect – to mention some.

While millions of frail elderly Europeans are well cared for by loving relatives and dedicated professionals, there are also many in real danger of abuse and neglect. This danger increases with the seriousness of the older person's health impairments and the stress that is put on carers. The few national prevalence studies that exist suggest that the risk to older citizens is intolerably high. The growing percentage of older people, the increasing strains on their relatives, who more and more often need to reconcile work and private obligations, and the risk of lack of affordable professional care, could make the situation worse.

There will be more reports from the United Nations in the October issue of News on the Web.

REALISING YOUR VISIONS OF INTERNATIONAL UNDERSTANDING



Torino Europea (District 204, Italy) hosted representatives from clubs in Brindisi (District 212, Italy), Brugg-Wettingen (District 199, Switzerland) and Toulon (District 73, France, Andorra, Morocco & Tunisia) at a Gala Dinner to celebrate their common aims, cement their friendship and work together to realise their visions. Inner Wheel friendship makes it possible for women from many different countries to get together in service.

Members of District 211 (Italy) met fellow Inner Wheel members from Egypt at the Automobile Club in Cairo. Inner Wheel friendship was such that it felt like a family reunion.

Rosie Bolton of Nottingham in GB & I has told us about the special friendship she encountered in a visit to Australia in 2007. " In the summer of 2007 I was fortunate to be able to visit Australia and arranged to meet up with a fellow Inner Wheel lady who might be able to take me under her wing in the vast city of Sydney. June and I met for the first time at Sydney railway station and she guided me around many Sydney sights and became such a chum, like a mum. Over afternoon tea and cake in the Queen Victoria Building, resting our weary feet, we arranged to meet up again for another day. Taking a train, a bus and then a walk round Watson Headland we returned to the city by catamaran. Lunch was taken at a Sydney Harbour restaurant and then we walked over to Sydney Harbour Bridge for my pre-booked climb. There, she bought me a cap as a memento

of our wonderful time together. We continue to correspond and hope to meet again one day." Not long after her visit to Australia, Rosie's husband was tragically killed in a road accident. The true friendship of Inner Wheel members for each other must have been invaluable to her at that very sad time.

In May 19 members of the Inner Wheel Club of Lefkosa Sarayonu in northern Cyprus visited Kinderdijk Club in the Netherlands. There they exchanged ideas and experiences and discovered that no matter which nationalities meet together, if they are members of Inner Wheel they will become friends.



The beautiful island of Martinique in the French West Indies was the setting for a gathering of Inner Wheel members from around the world hosted by the non-districted Inner Wheel Club of Fort de France, which was celebrating its 25th Charter Anniversary.

A new relationship between the young District 248 (Bulgaria) and longstanding District 45 (Denmark) was cemented when Bulgarian members were invited to attend District 45's Changeover Ceremony. They learnt a lot from their Danish "sisters" about Inner Wheel friendship and projects and signed a memorandum making them Sister Districts. So inspired was Nelly Bratoeva, Immediate Past Chairman of District 248, by the occasion that she resolved to attend the International Convention in 2009 to enjoy even more Inner Wheel friendship.



The non-districted Inner Wheel Club of Skopje (The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) celebrated the third anniversary of its Charter in May and invited the members of all the Turkish Inner Wheel Clubs to join them. Hülya Dagli, General Secretary of District 242 (Turkey) attended with her husband and once again found the warmth and generous hospitality which is typical of Inner Wheel friendship around the world.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE TO CHILDREN

The members of the non-districted club of Mombasa, Kenya visited a children's home housing 62 orphans ranging in age from two months to 18 years. Their gifts included foodstuffs, toiletries, detergents, babies' nappies, medicines and mosquito nets.



Lefkosa Sarayonu is a non-districted club in northern Cyprus and the members there have found that as people at large have become aware of their activities they no longer have had to look for projects but have received direct approaches from the public. They were told about some children in local authority care who either had no parents or could not be cared for at home because of their special physical needs or their parents' inadequacy. The club held a charity lunch to raise money and the proceeds, together with some of the club's own funds, were used to buy electronic equipment, DVDs and special toys for the disabled. They visited the children, taking them cookies and juices. The children responded happily with lots of hugs and kisses.

REALISING YOUR VISIONS FOR EDUCATION

Following a visit with local club members to a girls' school in a small village near Hyderabad, which they found to be in a very poor state of repair with no books, stationery or facilities, District Chairman Mrs Nabila Sohail of District 327 (India) vowed to take up the case of the school with the Secretary for Education and other ministers. So it is not just by raising and donating money that members of Inner Wheel can make a difference. We are intelligent, resourceful women who can exercise a great deal of influence for good.

The non-districted club of Stamford Hobart (New York State, USA) aims to provide dictionaries for every third grade pupil at a local school. To raise funds for this they recently ran an Ice Cream Sundae stall at the annual Classic Car Show, sponsored by Stamford Rotary Club.



MAKING A DIFFERENCE TO THE POSITION OF WOMEN IN SOCIETY

The members of the Inner Wheel Club of Madras East (District 323, India) have donated ten bicycles and hygiene kits to the girls at a local juvenile home and also conducted a personality awareness workshop for the girls. Fifteen women were given training in bicycle maintenance and repair.

At Trento (District 206, Italy), as part of International Women's Day, members heard about the role of women in Armenia. The gathering was attended by Vartui Karakhanian, Assistant to the Ambassador of the Armenian Republic in Rome. She showed slides and videos of life in Armenia today and conveyed the club's contributions to the Midwifery Department of the Redemptoris Mater Hospital in Ashotsk.

REALISING YOUR VISIONS OF BETTER HEALTH FOR ALL

Clubs in Italy devote much of their fundraising efforts to supporting the work of maxillo-facial surgeons who correct jaw and facial malformations in disadvantaged people throughout the world. At the end of 2007 the club of Torre Canadese raised money for the cause from a limited edition aquatint by a well-known artist. The picture to which the members look forward is that of the smile on the face of someone who has, until their intervention, been unable to smile. Then they will know that they have truly made a difference.



The 21st birthday of the Inner Wheel Club of Secunderabad (District 315, India) was celebrated by the donation of 21 blankets to the visually handicapped, 21 shawls to the residents of an Old People's Home, 21 artificial limbs and 21 callipers to disabled people. They also gave equipment to the Obstetrics and Paediatric departments at the Gandhi Hospital.

The newly formed Inner Wheel Club of Gaziemir (District 242, Turkey) is devoting itself to a project aimed at eradicating Spina Bifida, a very severe birth defect of which there are 5000 new cases per year in Turkey. The defect leaves the sufferers with devastating handicaps and can be life threatening. In conjunction with Gaziemir Rotary Club and the Spina Bifida Association Inner Wheel members are working to increase training for target groups in the city of Izmir, increasing awareness of the risks in pregnancy and bringing pressure to bear on the Government to make the taking of Folic Acid (the only known preventative) mandatory in pregnancy.

In Morocco the Inner Wheel Club of Casablanca Californie (District 73, France, Andorra, Morocco & Tunisia) has been assisting the sick on a large scale. They gave ten electronic beds and wheelchairs as well as medical materials and baby toys to Casablanca Hay Hassani District Hospital, and to another hospital in the district of Sidi Othman they donated 40 electrical hospital beds, 17 wheelchairs and breathing equipment. To both hospitals they gave premature infant care cots. They received the thanks of the Moroccan authorities for the difference they had made.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN AREAS OF NATURAL DISASTER

In the May 2008 Newsletter we reported on the work done by the Inner Wheel Club of Wattala (District 322) for the victims of the 2004 tsunami in Palliawatta. Readers more familiar than I with the geography of the area will have realised that Wattala is of course in Sri Lanka and not India as stated in the Newsletter. My sincere apologies to the members of Wattala Club. I will do better in future! (Editor).

The Inner Wheel Club of Kuala Lumpur (District 330, Malaysia & Singapore) was keen to help the victims of the cyclone in Myanmar (Burma) and through their local daily newspaper sent a large amount of money to the Myanmar Cyclone Relief Fund.



People everywhere watched with horror on television the dreadful fires which raged earlier in the year in mainland Greece. Members from District 96 (Cyprus) felt a deep personal concern for the victims and visited the village of Kerynia in Achaia in the Peloponnese to express their sympathy and make a donation to those people who had suffered so tragically in the fire. The photograph shows the members with the local Mayor who thanked them for their concern and generosity.

REALISING YOUR VISIONS OF A BETTER LIFE FOR THE DISABLED

In New Caledonia (District NZ291, New Zealand) the Inner Wheel Club of Noumea-Plaisance supports two young girls from Sikkim as well as cooperating with local Rotary Clubs to furnish a special apartment for local homeless people in great distress to live in. They have also supplied a special two-person bicycle which can be used by a blind person accompanied by a sighted fellow cyclist.

Members of the non-districted club of Nairobi, Kenya visited the Kambui School for the Hearing Impaired and gave them sewing machines and bales of cloth for their uniforms which the students sew and sell to fellow students at cost price. They also donated bales of wool as the school has knitting machines and the students knit garments to sell. So Inner Wheel helped the youngsters at this very well run school to make some money and learn skills which would benefit them in the future.



Children from Kambui School for the Hearing Impaired with members of the Inner Wheel Club of Nairobi.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE TO THE ENVIRONMENT



When she visited Australia during her Presidential year Immediate Past IIW President Kamala Ramakrishnan planted a tree at an environmental centre in the City of Melville, Western Australia. This is an example of the many efforts members of Inner Wheel worldwide are making to combat global warming and make our environment greener.

IN CONCLUSION



This message from Editor Bharathi Ramadas in the Bangalore (District 319, India) monthly newsletter sums up clearly the responsibilities and possibilities for all of us working at the Inner Wheel “coal face”. “In the changing world scenario Inner Wheel’s role (also) needs redefining in a manner that will ensure its usefulness to society for many years to come. We are officially the largest Club in the world and this no doubt makes our hearts swell with pride. The flipside however, is that a large section of members still remains outside the mainstream of our activities. There is an enormous storehouse of talent waiting to be discovered. Each member has something to offer by way of time, talent or resources. Skilfully drawing upon these I feel will be the challenge for every President. July is a happening month. New teams are taking charge of their respective clubs throughout the Inner Wheel world. Our warm greetings to all of them. We wish them success in their efforts to act as beacons of hope to those hapless ones who are denied access to even the basic prerequisites of a decent living.”

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