



# International Inner Wheel

## News on the Web

### Issue 1 March 2008

Welcome to our first bi-monthly News on the Web. We will have our usual hard copy Newsletter published in May each year but in between we will post approximately five reports in alternate months, trying to forward information from a number of different countries each time on a variety of subjects.



The Inner Wheel Club of Mülheim a.d. Ruhr Schloss Broich (District 87, Germany), celebrating its 10<sup>th</sup> Charter Anniversary, decided to invite three English-speaking Gynaecologists from developing countries to Germany for advanced training and cultural exchange. In this project they cooperated with their feeder Rotary Clubs from Mülheim and Oberhausen, with help from four local hospitals and the Rotarian Action Group for Population and Development.

Dr Veronica Nkwenti from Cameroon, Dr Ebere Dorothy Anikwe from Nigeria and Dr Pattaya Hengrasmee from Thailand were invited to stay from April through June 2007 at the local hospitals as guest doctors. The goals of the project were the advanced medical training of the gynaecologists, cultural exchange, an increase in personal knowledge of the problems and needs of the respective countries, increased awareness of the population explosion, and international understanding and hospitality in the spirit of Rotary and Inner Wheel.

In an effort to make the guest doctors feel at home and alleviate homesickness the Inner Wheel Club and Rotary Clubs collaborated to provide an entertaining social programme at the weekends. Thus international friendships were forged and opportunities discovered to pursue further projects with the three Gynaecologists in their home countries.



The tsunami which devastated so much of the area around the Indian Ocean in December 2004 attracted enormous support from Inner Wheel Clubs around the world. The following account is simply an example of the assistance which our members have so generously given in Kosgoda and elsewhere.

The Old Kent Road is a well known thoroughfare in East London and features in a number of popular songs. Now there is a new Old Kent Road thousands of miles away from the original, thanks to the Inner Wheel Club of Maidstone (District 12, GB&I). The village of Kosgoda on the shores of southern Sri Lanka near Galle was destroyed by the tsunami, leaving over 60 dead and



many children orphaned. A Kentish couple, who know the area well, launched an appeal to provide the people of Kosgoda with a new village and a future. The charity they founded has now built a village including houses, four shops, a school and a medical centre. The village also needed six roads and by April 2007 one remained to be built. The Inner Wheel Club of Maidstone decided that this would be their special

project and gave the substantial sum of money required for the work. They have been well rewarded and will be remembered in the new village of Kosgoda as they named the road "The Old Kent Road". The road sign also says "Donated by the Inner Wheel Club of Maidstone, Kent". Maidstone Club Correspondent Audrey Hext Tells us that her club is proud to have helped the tsunami victims in such a positive way and expresses the hope that one day perhaps a group of Maidstone members may walk down the Old Kent Road in the village of Kosgoda.



The island of La Réunion (District 920, Indian Ocean) has a famous

sports event every year, known as the "Grand Raid". In October 2007 District 920 decided to help six youngsters aged from six to 17 years old and suffering from Muscular Dystrophy to participate in the "Semi-Raid", a 64km race across the island with the help of 30 volunteer racers who took turns carrying the children around. Mélissa, 6, led her team by leaving the starting line in Cilaos at 4am. Francis, El Khabir, Alexandre, Dalène and Kévin then each had their turn in the race.



Carried in a "joëlette", a wheelbarrow-type seat, their faces radiated joy at the sight of the breathtaking beauty of the landscape which they could never have discovered on their own. They were able to follow highly difficult tracks, reaching parts of the island that can only be reached on foot, arriving at the finish line at 3.30pm the next day to the applause of more than 100 spectators. This feat was a "first" and was made possible by the Inner Wheel Club paying the 30 volunteer racers' registration fees. District 920 also ensured that the team was supplied with refreshments at various points in the race.



Margaret Roberts from Bendigo (District A60, Australia), who was National President of Inner Wheel Australia in 1992-93, died from the effects of Motor Neurone Disease in 2005. In April 2006 the Rotary Club of Bendigo South, in co-operation with the Australian Rotary Health Research Fund, launched the Margaret Roberts Motor Neurone Disease Research Scholarship. The aim was to raise \$10,000 per year for three years to fund a \$30,000 scholarship. The target was reached in only one year and there will be sufficient funds to appoint a second scholar in January 2008. Many Inner Wheel Clubs around Australia supported the appeal and enormous help was received from Inner Wheel members who knew Margaret. The current PhD Scholar is working at the Howard Florey Institute at Melbourne University.



The week of 1<sup>st</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> August 2007 was "World Breastfeeding Week" and this received enthusiastic support from many Inner Wheel Clubs in India. They invited young women and their babies from their local communities to seminars conducted in some cases by members of Inner Wheel. Dr Republica, a member of the Inner Wheel Club of Madras East (District 323) explained to her audience the importance of breast milk to a baby, particularly in the first 48 hours of its life. The milk produced at that stage is called Colostrum, which contains fat, sugar, water, protein and antibodies for the child. Breast-feeding should continue ideally for the first six months. Working mothers could express their milk and store it in sterile bottles so that their babies could go on benefiting. She urged the mothers not to get carried away by the blandishments of the advertisers of supplementary food products.



The Inner Wheel Club of Madras Central Aaditya (District 323) gave the mothers they talked to packets of Sattu Mavu, a porridge mix specially made by a Self Help organisation called Tejo Maya. This had been found to give mothers nourishment which in turn helped their babies. The club is supplying mothers with one packet of mix each fortnightly for the first 6 months. The contribution of the many clubs who supported this project cannot be emphasised too highly as a major means of preventing neonatal mortality.



The members of the Inner Wheel Club of Charlotte, North Carolina (District 767, USA) filled four Christmas baskets with candy, cookies, coffee, tea, cheese, wine, Christmas plates, napkins, hand towels and other Christmas items to be auctioned at four local Rotary Clubs. They raised a substantial amount of money which is to be used for their various community projects and the Inner Wheel Foundation.

