

Rotary clubs mobilize in response to tsunami disaster in Asia

CONTACT:

[Wayne Hearn](#) at (847) 866-3386

Evanston, Ill. — Rotary clubs worldwide responded quickly and continue to work aggressively to assist communities affected by the earthquake and tsunami that devastated south Asia's coastal regions on December 26.

As a community-based organization of business and professional leaders, Rotary works through its volunteer service clubs at the grassroots level to provide aid and assistance to those impacted by disaster. Based in Evanston, Ill., Rotary has hundreds of clubs and thousands of members in the affected countries, including 57 clubs and 1,600 members in Sri Lanka, 90 clubs and 1,750 members in Indonesia, 362 clubs and 8,900 members in Thailand, and 2,511 clubs and 89,000 members in India.

Rotary has set up a special fund, Solidarity in South Asia, to accept relief donations. Checks payable to The Rotary Foundation/Solidarity in South Asia should be sent to The Rotary Foundation, P.O. Box 75133, Chicago, IL 60675-5133.

The money will provide transitional and long-term assistance to affected communities as they rebuild in the wake of the disaster. Rotary clubs are also working with international relief agencies, such as UNICEF and the Red Cross, to help provide immediate assistance. Information about Rotary relief initiatives will be continuously updated on the Rotary Web site (www.rotary.org). Examples of Rotary efforts include:

- A fund drive by Rotary clubs in Great Britain and Ireland that by Jan. 3 had exceeded \$1.9 million. About half of that total funded the purchase and delivery of 800 Aquaboxes and 500 Shelterboxes to communities in Sri Lanka and India. Each Aquabox can supply a family of four with pure water for three months, and each Shelterbox includes a tent and basic necessities for up to 10 people.
- A relief center and Web site (www.relieforsrilanka.blogspot.com) set up by the Rotary Club of Colombo Regency, Sri Lanka. The club has dispatched teams transporting food, clothing, candles, and basic medicines to many of the hardest hit areas."
- The establishment of relief centers and medical camps in the hardest hit areas of southern India.
- Formation of a Disaster Relief Task Force in Indonesia to collect and distribute medicine, food, water, clothes and other essentials
- A truck caravan that is delivering relief essentials to devastated coastal communities in Thailand.

Founded in 1905 in Chicago, Rotary is a volunteer service organization with a worldwide membership of 1.2 million in 32,000 clubs in 166 countries.

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