

Direct Relief Official Receives Prestigious Humanitarian Award

Susan Fowler, Director of Programs for Direct Relief International, was honored with a 2003 Award of Excellence from the Diwaliben Charitable Trust of India. Previous recipients of this prestigious award have been Mother Teresa, Nelson Mandela, Albert Schweitzer, and the Dalai Lama XIV. The award recognizes outstanding individuals for "alleviating the suffering of the poor in developing countries."

The Diwaliben Trust supports health care institutions throughout India and has been a longtime partner of Direct Relief's in distributing humanitarian aid. As Direct Relief's principal liaison with Indian health organizations for 15 years, Fowler has worked closely with the Trust, overseeing tens of millions of dollars in aid to India, including emergency aid after a devastating earthquake in Gujarat, India in 2001. In January, Fowler returned to India to visit some of Direct Relief's partners and to accept her award from the Diwaliben Trust.

In talking about Fowler's award, Thomas Tighe, Direct Relief's President and CEO, said "Susan's chosen path in life has been to help lift others up, which she has done with a big heart and a terrifically sharp mind. In her leadership role at Direct Relief, she has embodied our organization's mission and approach—unfailing respect for the people we serve and focus on providing tools that enable people to help themselves."

This newsletter was written and designed by Direct Relief International staff.

Printed on recycled paper.



Susan Fowler accepts her award in India. Photo by Jay Farbman

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Direct Relief
INTERNATIONAL

Nonprofit "Shareholders" Meet for the First Time

Direct Relief International held its first-ever "Shareholders' Meeting and Symposium" on March 6th in Santa Barbara, California. "Shareholder" is a term usually reserved for the corporate world, but Direct Relief's President and CEO, Thomas Tighe, believes it should have a wider application. "Direct Relief considers every person who contributes money, material, or time to have made an investment in our work. They are our nonprofit version of a shareholder," explained Tighe.

The event was covered by *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*, which observed that the meeting "may have been the first such event in the nonprofit world." The *Chronicle* also pointed out that, "the issue of accountability is especially timely now, given the recent controversies over whether nonprofit groups are abiding by their donors' intent."



Direct Relief overseas partners Dr. Kuon, Dr. Kelkar, and Madame Oku with CEO Mr. Tighe

The audience of over 200 Direct Relief supporters included financial contributors, overseas partners, corporate donors, and community members. In his opening remarks, Tighe told the audience, "We know that our investors do not seek a personal return on investment in straight financial terms – their investment is to benefit others. However, we believe that they

expect and deserve to know the value of their investment in human terms – what services were provided, who ultimately benefited, and whether the work was done cost effectively."

To put a face on Direct Relief's work, three of the organization's overseas partners made presentations. Madame Vivian Oku, a nurse and midwife from Motoka Island, Ghana, Dr. Dhananjay Kelkar of Pune, India, and Dr. Ralph Kuon of the Peruvian American Medical Society each spoke about their work and how Direct Relief has made a difference in their efforts. To offer the perspective of one of Direct Relief's many corporate in-kind donors, Dean Paranicas, Vice President of Investor Relations and Public Affairs at BD (formerly Becton Dickinson), also spoke about BD's extensive charitable programs to enhance health care.

The event's keynote speaker was W. Randall Jones, editor-in-chief of *Worth* magazine. Jones annually devotes an issue of *Worth* to identify "America's 100 Best Charities", which named Direct Relief in the 2001/2002 edition. In his lively talk, entitled "From Punk Rock to Activist Philanthropy— How to Change the World in Three Easy Steps," Jones talked about his philosophy of "Dying Broke." He called for people to make their charitable contributions while living so they can see their money put to work. He noted that this is particularly important due to the projected massive inter-generational transfer of wealth to the baby boom generation that will occur in the next few years.

The full text of "The Chronicle of Philanthropy" article about the Shareholders' Meeting and Symposium can be found on our website at www.directrelief.org.

Healthy people. Better world.

THE BULLETIN

Spring, 2003

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Corporate Partners

From January 1st through March 31st of 2003, Direct Relief shipped medical products with a wholesale value of over \$8.8 million. The vast majority of these products were donated by American corporations. We would like to thank these corporate partners, without whom we would not be able to help so many people around the world.

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Industry Leaders Provide New Support



Pharmaceutical giant Merck & Co. recently included Direct Relief International in its Annual Product Allotment Program. This gift allows Direct Relief to choose specific pharmaceuticals from Merck's product line, not just accept excess inventory, and since it is newly manufactured, the product will have the maximum amount of shelf life before reaching its expiration date.

For 2003, Merck will fulfill Direct Relief's requests for product on a quarterly basis. The first request was for VIOXX, Merck's highly effective pain medication. VIOXX was originally developed to treat osteoarthritis, but it is also used for post-surgical and post-trauma pain control. Merck's commitment has the effect of dramatically increasing Direct Relief's budget for purchasing pharmaceuticals and will benefit thousands of people around the world.



Direct Relief has recently received the largest single donation of surgical instruments in its history from Miltex, Inc., the world's leading provider of surgical instruments. Scalpels, scissors, and forceps are among the instruments included in this multi-million dollar gift, which will dramatically improve Direct Relief's ability to supply its partner hospitals and clinics.

This gift became a reality due to the efforts of former Direct Relief Board Member Jim Eiting. Mr. Eiting is the Chairman of Midmark Corporation, a longtime supporter of Direct Relief, and he also sits on the Board of Miltex. We are deeply grateful to Mr. Eiting and Miltex for this enormously important donation.

Iraq Update

In response to unfolding events in Iraq, Direct Relief has sent an initial shipment of medicines and supplies and is coordinating with other groups for future assistance. On Friday, March 21, 2003, Direct Relief provided 120 pounds of medical materials, valued at over \$13,000, including basic antibiotics, analgesics, and first-aid items that are recommended by the World Health Organization for use in emergencies. As needs assessments are completed and logistics channels cleared, Direct Relief will provide targeted assistance for humanitarian purposes. For up to the minute information on our work in Iraq, please visit our website at www.directrelief.org.

Please Remember Direct Relief in your will and estate plans.

Rick Closson



Volunteer Rick Closson

Whether it's sorting in the pharmacy, packing in the warehouse, organizing fundraising events, preparing mailings, or helping to put on our monthly luncheons, Direct Relief depends on the efforts of many volunteers to be the effective and efficient organization our donors expect. Without the 400 volunteers who help out in some capacity every year, our professional staff of 29 simply would not be able to do all that they do.

Rick Closson has been helping Direct Relief turn hospital excess into humanitarian gold for the past seven years. As an Operating Room Pharmacist at St. John's Regional Medical Center in Oxnard, California, Rick saw that a lot of supplies were discarded, and he knew there had to be a better place for them than a landfill. He contacted Direct Relief and found that some of the hospital's excess materials could be put to good use in other countries.

isfaction he receives in his work as a health care professional.

Rick and his wife Cathy live in Santa Barbara where they have raised two children—Caren, who is completing a Ph.D. in Marine Biology at Stanford, and Derek, who is studying Computer Science at Cuesta College in San Luis Obispo. Rick is a graduate of the School of Pharmacy at U.C. San Francisco where he has also been an instructor.

Twice a month, Rick loads up his car with forceps, scissors, I.V. sets, and other operating room supplies from St. John's Hospital and brings them to Direct Relief. The supplies are sorted, packed, and then shipped out around the world in response to specific requests. Rick believes that the personal satisfaction he realizes from volunteering for Direct Relief is an extension of the personal and professional sat-

Rick and Cathy have an interest in architecture and historic preservation and contribute a significant amount of their time to the Pearl Chase Society, an organization that celebrates Santa Barbara's architecture. Rick edits the Society's monthly newsletter, and Cathy is the coordinator of this year's Historic Homes Walking Tour. Direct Relief is honored and enhanced as an organization by the commitment of Rick Closson.

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE ...

1,000 pairs of glasses donated by Rick Feldman of The Eyeglass Factory in Santa Barbara. For clinic staff, we left behind a focometer (a stubby spyglass-looking tool used to determine correction for distance vision), along with the dental puppets, eye charts, and diabetes posters.

"I am so grateful," Dr. Laura said the morning we left, "for your creativity, your goodwill, and your *ability*." She had us at *¡Hola!* At the lunch break that first clinic day, we were already making plans for what we could do on our next trip.

Volunteer Pamela LaVigne traveled to Mexico in March with Women for Direct Relief. The trip was the group's first on-site visit to one of Direct Relief's partners overseas.



Nancy Koppelman, chair of the women's group, takes the blood pressure of a clinic patient.

Women's Group Serves Clinic in Mexico

by Pamela LaVigne

By any measure — lovely setting, genial host, tasty food, full and satisfying days — the Women for Direct Relief's trip to Mexico was a memorable vacation. That it was also a working visit to one of Direct Relief's long-time local partners...well, that was a bonus.

Fifteen women, including four Direct Relief staff members, made the five day trip in early March to see—and be—Direct Relief's support for the work of Dr. Laura del Valle and her clinic, La Casa Clinica Convivencia Campesina, in Las Varas, Mexico.

Our base was Mar de Jade, a resort about one and a half hours by car north of Puerto Vallarta, which is owned by Dr. Laura. Revenue from the resort provides for approximately half the costs of la Clinica. We met Dr. Laura on the open-air dining porch, overlooking a bay with impressive surf. A lively woman quick to laugh, she pointed out damage from the November hurricane, notably black boulders ringing the beach like rough bleachers. Things were slowly returning to normal since the hurricane, and Dr. Laura was proud to be celebrating 20 years in business.

That night we met four medical students who were wrapping up a three-week rotation at

the clinic that combined Spanish classes at Mar de Jade with clinic work in Las Varas. Each student stressed that the lack of access to sophisticated tests and medical specialties provided valuable practice in physical diagnosis that was less emphasized in their med school training.

scoliosis, head lice, and ear/nose/throat problems.

We also showed groups of kids how to brush and floss their teeth using two plush animal puppets with big choppers (and a hidden squirt bottle). Before and after their exams,



Women's group member Judy Anticouni administers eye test.

Our short stay in Mexico gave us two days of hands-on work in the clinic, with a day off between for R&R. Each clinic day we saw 100 people, *mas o menos*, with 50 kids in the morning and 50 adults, mostly women, in the afternoon.

We set up in the clinic's multipurpose patio, arranging tables, pacing off distance for the eye charts, and pulling chairs and benches out of the sun. We had various stations: to measure height, weight, and blood pressure; to test vision; and for the kids, to check for

kids played with supplies we had brought, blowing soap bubbles, drawing pictures, and having their faces painted with stars and glitter—all big hits.

We used every word of Spanish we had, and what we couldn't say, we showed with welcoming smiles, an arm around the shoulder, a thumbs-up, and pat on the back.

Almost every adult we saw required corrective lenses, which we dispensed from the

Support for Maternal and Child Health in Northern Laos

by Kelly Darnell, Program Officer

Located in the mountains of Northern Laos, the Nale district consists of 83 villages and is home to over 35,000 people. The people of Nale had no access to medical care until the Nale Hospital was built in 1995 to provide services such as prenatal care, deliveries, and well baby exams. The hospital is run by Dr. Welcome, who volunteered to be assigned to Nale and is one of a handful of highly sought-after Laotian physicians who had the opportunity to do their medical training in Vietnam. Staffing at the hospital also includes nine nurses, an assistant physician, a nurse midwife, and a lab technician.

During my visit we took a boat up river to visit Ban Hadma. This village is one of 30 villages with a health post staffed by a village member who has been trained and equipped by Nale Hospital. Each health worker serves as a vital link between the hospital and the village by providing early treatment for health problems such as malaria and dehydration and identifying villagers who need to be referred to the hospital.

Many villages like Ban Hadma moved down from higher mountain elevations in recent years to be closer to medical care after being hit by several epidemics. The chief of Ban

Hadma said that although the move was very hard on his village, he knew his people's health and survival depended on it.

Direct Relief's first donation to the Nale Hospital arrived at the port shortly after my visit. With virtually no operating budget of its own, the Laotian Ministry of Health was eager to assist in getting supplies to one of its most remote hospitals. The Ministry worked hard to obtain all necessary customs clearance paperwork and escorted the shipment along the 30 hours of road it takes to reach Nale from Vientiane.

Out of gratitude for Direct Relief's assistance, Nale Hospital staff and community members held a Basi ceremony which included a feast of local foods and a small altar of their most precious offerings. In the end, community



Kelly Darnell at Nale Hospital Photo by Bryan Watt

leaders took turns tying dozens of small strings around my wrist to protect me from harm and bring me a safe journey home.

Kelly Darnell has been a Program Officer at Direct Relief for four years. On her recent trip to Southeast Asia she visited several facilities in Laos and Cambodia, including facilities referred to Direct Relief by our partner organization, Health Volunteers Overseas. She previously served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Ivory Coast, West Africa.



Young girl from the village of Ban Hadma Photo by Bryan Watt

Health Volunteers Overseas

HVO is dedicated to improving the availability and quality of health care in developing countries through the training and education of indigenous medical professionals. Each year, HVO sends U.S. healthcare professionals to over 25 countries to train local health care providers. If you would like to know more about becoming an HVO volunteer, please visit their website at www.hvousoa.org.

¡GRACIAS!

Thank you to Rick Feldman of The Eyeglass Factory in Santa Barbara. His donation of 1,000 new eyeglasses was hand-carried to La Casa Clinica Convivencia Campesina on the women's group's recent trip. His generosity has had a profound impact on the people of Las Varas, Mexico.

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Direct Relief International gratefully acknowledges the people who make our work possible.

(January 1, through March 31, 2003)

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Charles H. Bell (1907 - 2003)

Direct Relief International mourns the passing of Charles H. Bell. A stalwart supporter of Direct Relief, Mr. Bell died in Santa Barbara, California, on April 12th at the age of 95. Mr. Bell was the former President and Chairman of General Mills. He retired in 1969 after 47 years with the company. Direct Relief was fortunate to be among the many nonprofit organizations that benefited from his support. Mr. Bell was also active in conservation and the arts, and he founded Belwin, an outdoor educational laboratory in Minnesota. His family has asked that memorials be made in his name to Belwin and Direct Relief.

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