City of Melbourne

Shoulders the Tsunami Rebuilding Efforts in Sri Lanka

The City of Melbourne has identified Sri Lanka as the country it wants to assist in the aftermath of the devastation caused by the South Asian tsunami.
The City has selected five projects to support in Sri Lanka's rebuilding efforts.

The City of Melbourne's relief effort is a collaborative venture with Architects Without Frontiers, Australia/Sri Lanka Business Council, HELP, Lord Mayor's Fund, Athenium Library, Rotary, MCG and VCA, coordinated by the City of Melbourne under the Lord Mayor's tsunami working group.

After meeting with regional and associated local government agencies, the group identified a specific need for the provision of education and training facilities for children and teenagers in damaged coastal areas.

Many facilities were destroyed in the tsunami. Existing facilities such as libraries and community centres in many towns such as Galle, Matara and Hambantota were out of reach for many children.

The Melbourne relief effort is now committed to five major projects:

GALLE MOBILE LIBRARY

Galle was badly affected by the tsunami disaster with considerable loss of lives, housing, commercial and public facilities. In coordination with the Municipality of Galle, the City of Melbourne has undertaken the provision of a mobile library for children unable to reach the Galle Central Library.

The Lanka Leyland bus has been purchased and is being retrofitted to become a mobile library. The Mobile Library Service will operate in areas not directly served by a branch library, as well as visiting outlying schools and residential camps. There will be a regular route, with designated stops at specified times.

Handing over of hospital beds, wheel chairs, patient lifting equipment and walking frames to City of Melbourne for shipment at Seafreight Transport warehouse in Laverton. From left, President, Lions Club South East Business Daya Fernando, Derrick Jay and Acting Lord Mayor Gary Singer.

MATARA (NORTH DICKWELLA) HIGH SCHOOL

The tsunami destroyed a number of schools along the coast in southern districts of Sri Lanka. Schools lost buildings, furniture, libraries, science laboratories and records. North Dickwella High or Matara School is located in close proximity to the coast, at Walasmulla. Much damage was done to the school although the building is still in tact. Demand for places in this school increased significantly after other schools in the area were destroyed. The City of Melbourne's Tsunami fund will contribute to the upgrade of the school, which will involve the design and construction of buildings and provisions of equipment.

CRICKET-ASSISTANCE TO YOUNG PEOPLE IN TSUNAMI AFFECTED AREAS IN SOUTHERN SRI LANKA

Cricket is the unofficial national sport of Sri Lanka. All young people in Sri Lanka are keen to play and watch cricket any opportunity they get. The South Galle International Cricket Stadium was badly damaged during the tsunami and this has created a permanent dent in the minds of the cricket fans in the South of Sri Lanka. Until the damaged cricket ground is restored, the Melbourne relief effort provided cricket kits to the young people in the area.

GALLE HOSPITAL BEDS

Hospitals and medical services in the Southern province of Sri Lanka were greatly affected by the tsunami disaster. Significant needs in this area will take many years to address. In the short to medium term, the Melbourne relief effort identified that the provision of basic hospital beds would have a significant benefit in rebuilding the capacity of hospitals damaged by the tsunami. Local Sri Lankan business contacts have already sourced around 600 beds that have been shipped to Galle Hospital. Additional hospital beds, wheel chairs, patient lifting machines and walking frames are currently being sourced. The City of Melbourne funded the shipment of these items to Balapitiya Base Hospital, Gonagahahena Rural Hospital and Kalugala Rural Hopsital.

TANGALLE ORPHANAGE

Part of the City of Melbourne's response to the tsunami was to offer use of the Town Hall for local community groups to raise further donations to assist communities in tsunami affected countries. Nelu Jayawardena, representing youth on the committee for Sri Lanka, organised the 'Journey of hope' music and dance spectacular. This event generated funds

Putting all their worries behind and thanking the City of Melbourne and associated organisations for giving them hope. A traditional dance by the Students of North Dickwella High School.

$19,000 for the tsunami appeal. The Committee for Sri Lanka has negotiated agreements with the Holy Angel Order of sisters in Kalutara to care for five orphaned girls. The funds of $19,000 will provide care and some pocket money to the girls until they are 18 years old.

Source: Media Release by the City of Melbourne.

Vijaya Karunasena

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Sri Lankan Doctors visit Australia

From left, Dr Marius De Almeida, Daya Fernando & Dr Ananda Gunasekera

Dr Marius De Almeida of the Colombo Lady Ridgeway Hospital and Dr Ananda Gunasekera, Director of the Kurunegala Base Hospital attended the annual General Meeting of the Lions Club South East Business held at Springvale Town Hall on June 30. They were invited to the meeting by the President of the Lions Club South East Business Daya Fernando. Lady Ridgeway Hospital and Kurunegala Base Hospital are among the many hospitals which are the recipients of hospital beds and medical equipment donated by the Lions Club.

Vijaya Karunasena