

Volunteers Saved Us \$358,000 Last Year

by Pierre Barbeau
 Executive Director

We haven't sufficiently publicized how much our volunteers are involved with our shipments of donated materials to countries such as Haiti, Congo and Kenya. We thought you would be interested to learn more about all of the hard work that goes on behind the scenes. This pamphlet describes who provides our donated supplies and how they are prepared and shipped. The two dedicated groups of volunteers in North Gower Ontario and Mont Laurier, Quebec profiled in this newsletter reflect what an important role volunteers occupy at Help the Aged.

MONT LAURIER, PQ

Packing 3,000 Pairs of New Shoes was Just the Beginning

Just a few weeks ago, a 40 foot container was shipped to Bombardopolis, one of the poorest areas of Haiti by 23 Mont Laurier area volunteers. They got together one rainy day to load donated supplies as varied as tools, lumber, 3,000 pairs of new shoes, wheelchairs, crutches, walkers and clothing to help destitute seniors.

The entire operation was directed by volunteer Marguerite Saint Louis who has been closely involved with the Bombardopolis program for the last three years. When she originally volunteered to assist us in this region, she was struck by the misery, starvation and desperation that she witnessed. Marguerite felt inspired to "adopt" this community which became

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Here are 19 of the 23 Mont Laurier area volunteers who got together one rainy day to pack 610 boxes of donated materials for destitute seniors in Haiti.

NORTH GOWER, ON

\$325,000 in Medical Supplies Shipped to Our Projects in Kenya and Congo

For the last several years, we have greatly benefited with our partnership

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Volunteer Dave Williams preparing one of the 20 suitcases personally delivered by Help the Aged program manager Sheldon Gilmer to our projects in the Congo.



Most of our donated medical supplies are generously provided by Health Partners International of Canada. This photo of Prime Minister Stephen Harper was taken at the Health Partners headquarters in Montreal during the launch of their Afghanistan medical aid program. Honourable Jake Epp (far right) is the Chairman of HPIC.

Packing 3,000 Pairs of New Shoes ... (continued from page 1)

a new mission in her life. Her husband, Roger Constantineau had passed away in 1991 when a large tree he was cutting on their farm property near Mont Laurier toppled on top of him. She now dedicates the time, energy and money she spends on Bombardopolis to his memory.

When we agreed to ship a container to Haiti, Marguerite contacted Father Augustin Chôlet in Bombardopolis and they agreed on what was most urgently required. She started knocking on doors in her area and was able to convince residents, shop-keepers and business owners to contribute a wide range of products. For example she convinced Roger Girouard, owner of Uniboard in Mont Laurier to donate a substantial amount of plywood to build shelving units for our new home for abandoned seniors which is now under construction. She convinced Serge Dufour at Giant Tiger to donate 1,500 of the 3,000 new pairs of shoes and she talked Claude Forget into donating the use of a large truck from his fleet at Performance Laurentide to pick up wheelchairs, walkers, crutches and canes at our warehouse in Ottawa.

Marguerite knew that the container would have to be loaded quickly because there is an hourly rental fee after the first two hours so she recruited 23



On the road again... to Haiti that is. Marguerite will be travelling to Haiti in September with nurses Francine and Micheline Courtemanche to provide direct support to the elderly poor we assist in the Bombardopolis area. Volunteer Joseph Lambert has travelled to Haiti every year since 1989 and is planning his next trip in November with Help the Aged director Pierre Barbeau. Names of some of the sponsors are taped to the side of the container. From left to right, Francine, Micheline, Marguerite and Joseph.

volunteers to show up at her farm on the big day (April 30th). Despite the rain, they formed a human chain to load the 40 foot container in three hours. A tired but happy group of volunteers were then invited for dinner at Marguerite's house and rewarded with bottles of her home made maple syrup. The volunteers had loaded 610 boxes on the container in addition to the wheelchairs, lumber, etc. Every square foot had been fully utilized.

The next stage for Marguerite is her September trip to Haiti with two Mont Laurier nurses, Francine and Micheline Courtemanche. They will accompany her to Bombardopolis and treat patients while Marguerite is preparing 64 Adopt-A-Gran updates and working on our centre for abandoned seniors. We shipped over \$70,000 worth of donated medical supplies to Bombardopolis so everyone will be very busy.

On behalf of our donors and the elderly poor who will benefit from this great act of generosity, we thank Marguerite, Micheline, Francine as well as the local volunteers and sponsors who sacrificed their time, energy and money to help.



We wish to thank Uniboard in Mont Laurier for donating this plywood which is part of our container shipment to Haiti. The wood will be used to construct shelves for our new shelter for abandoned seniors and for our medical clinic. Marguerite Saint Louis (photo) is one of the Canadian volunteers assigned to Bombardopolis in order to coordinate this project with local volunteers.

\$325,000 in Medical Supplies ... (continued from page 1)

with another Canadian charitable organization, Health Partners International of Canada. They have provided us with essential medical supplies such as antibiotics and pain killers which they receive free of charge from Canadian pharmaceutical companies. Through our own volunteer network, we prepare and ship these supplies to our projects in Kenya, Congo and Haiti. Our shipments to Kenya and Congo have been prepared by volunteers from the Cornerstone Wesleyan Church in North Gower, Ontario. We thank them all for their great enthusiasm and dedication.



Volunteers from the Cornerstone Wesleyan Church in North Gower, Ontario, filled 20 suitcases with medical supplies valued at \$158,000 which were donated to Help the Aged by Health Partners International. All of the suitcases were personally delivered to our projects in the Congo by Sheldon Gilmer (photo page 4). Another set of suitcases worth \$167,000 was also prepared by Cornerstone volunteers and delivered by Sheldon to Kenya to assist our projects.



We wish to thank the 24 Cornerstone Wesleyan Church volunteers involved including Pastor Craig Peters (far right) and youth and missions Pastor Dan Wallace (seated at the front). The boxes of medical supplies at the back of this photo weighed 2000 pounds. Once they were sorted and loaded into 20 suitcases, the weight was only 1,100 pounds, resulting in substantial shipping cost savings.

Medications shipped overseas are normally distributed by local nurses hired through our projects. In countries like Haiti the average full time salary for a registered nurse working in rural areas is \$2,500 a year. Our nurse, at left in this photo, is distributing medications to a destitute elderly person in the Equateur province of the Congo.



Those of you who have been supporting us for several years are familiar with the very important role of our volunteers at all levels of our administration and project management. Last year, the value of their contributions was conservatively estimated at \$358,000. This represents huge savings in staff time and results in a much higher percentage of your donations being used to support the poor. Mostly because of our volunteers, our administration costs were only 5.4% and fundraising expenses 4.4% last year.



Donated medical supplies shipped to the Congo are distributed to local clinics and hospitals as well as through our mobile medical clinic. The vehicle in this photo was purchased by Help the Aged and travels to remote villages where local clinics are not available. Sheldon is in the photo (centre) as well as Dr. Ngosse (second from left), our local project coordinator.

What Your Support is All About!

One of the beneficiaries of the medical supply program in Kenya is grandmother Petranala Amoluanam and her nine grandchildren. Petranala (far left) lost two of her sons and one daughter to HIV/AIDS and is now completely responsible for nine grandchildren. Help the Aged's Sheldon Gilmer who is also in this photo, informed us that this is one of the many families struck by HIV/AIDS to benefit from our medical programs in the Matangwe region.



Thank you again for your generosity!
Your donations will be tripled by CIDA and the Alberta Wild Rose Foundation and will be used to support our medical programs in Kenya, Congo and Haiti.



We have just received a \$25,000 grant from the Alberta Wild Rose Foundation to support our medical program in the Congo. This generous grant and the financial support provided by CIDA translates into each dollar that you donate being tripled. Thanks a million to you, CIDA, and the Wild Rose Foundation!



Air Canada has provided us six complimentary tickets every year since 1988 to support our programs. We are very appreciative of the substantial savings resulting from these generous donations. The end result is that we are able to provide more direct support to the elderly poor.

Help the Aged (Canada)

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