



Livelihood Infrastructure Food Education For Health

Newsletter - Spring 2010

Project Updates



Runyange Pasteur

Supporting education in Rwanda and Bohol

Runyange Pasteur was nine years old when the Rwandan genocide began. On April 15, 1994, the interahamwe invaded his village. Hiding with different Hutu neighbours and in banana plantations, witnessing multiple massacres, Runyange survived thanks to his small size that helped him hide and a few precious people willing to bribe and fight for his life. After the genocide, Runyange was reunited with his surviving brothers and mother. He had lost his father, siblings and their home. It was a struggle to live alongside neighbours responsible for killing family and friends, and Runyange's testimonies at a local gacaca traditional court against killers made life even more difficult.

As a survivor of the genocide, Runyange qualified for Rwandan government funding to complete Senior Six at school. After that, he managed to get support from a non-governmental organization to attend university. L.I.F.E. For Health is funding Runyange's final year studying Information Technology. A new chapter of his life has begun.

A quarter of the way around the world on the small island of Bohol in the Philippines, three young, poor scholars are attending post-secondary school thanks to the Dr. Honorata Migriño-Stephenson Scholarship. Cerilmae Furog, an 18 year old young woman who lives on a remote island barangay, travelled several hours and slept in a stranger's house in order to apply for the scholarship. Romnie, 19 years old, had to stop school and work for three years to support his family. Only after receiving our scholarship was he able to return to his Bachelor of Science in Marine Engineering.

Farmers' micro-credit and women's banana chip businesses

In Bohol, farmers are struggling with not enough equipment to share between them, with most only growing enough rice to feed their families. Their wives are often unemployed due to lack of education, distance, child and family care.

L.I.F.E. For Health is helping 15 women in Dagahoy, Pilar and Sierra Bullones, Bohol through training in banana-chip production, a growing domestic and international market. The women will become trainers of other women, benefitting more of the community over time.

Meanwhile, 125 farmers in Sikatuna and Dagahoy will receive micro-loans to purchase new equipment that improves their farming and irrigation systems. The increased rice yields will mean more farmers not only able to feed their families, but also bringing produce to market.



Women in Bohol during their banana-chip production training. These women will go on to train others.

Dry clothes and a lift: Sunshine Home, Bohol

Sunshine Home is a home for orphaned children or those abandoned by parents too poor to care for them. During the rainy season, the children have nowhere to dry their clothes and lack a vehicle to take them to and from school, to medical appointments or out on group excursions. Soaking wet is no way for kids to remain healthy. Thanks to support from Rogers Communications, Sunshine Home is building a laundry overhang and purchasing a vehicle to transport the children.

Post-operative support for the poor of Iligan City, Mindanao

Ten impoverished men and women living in cramped, one-room huts in Iligan City, Mindanao – unemployed, tricycle drivers, fish ball vendors, vegetable vendors – underwent emergency surgeries. They were treated for a range of conditions, including broken bones, infected growths, intracranial growth, and pregnancy-induced hypertension requiring a caesarean section. L.I.F.E. For Health provided the post-operative medications they required but could not afford.



Rogers visits the Sunshine Home in Bohol

Dedicated to L.I.F.E. : Rogers Communications

We asked Christa Dickenson, Managing Director, International Client Relations & Events for Rogers Communications, to comment on the importance of corporate community support and their partnership with L.I.F.E. For Health:



Christa Dickenson hands out backpacks and bed sheets to the children at Sunshine Home

Ted Rogers wrote in his memoir...

"Loretta [his wife] and I both believe strongly in the need to give back to the community. We have been fortunate in life and think it is our obligation to help others."

It is therefore entirely in accordance with Ted's beliefs and actions that Rogers should support community-related charity work.

Rogers has consistently played an active role within its local communities via Rogers Television as well as initiatives such as Pumpkin Patrol, the Jolly Trolley and Jays Care. Rogers is a proud sponsor of educational institutions, hospital programs and charities such as ChildFind, ONEXONE and The United Way. It is in the very essence of the company to give back.

Planning to attend the Asian Carriers Conference in Cebu, Philippines in September 2009, Rogers Business Solutions looked to give back to a neighboring community. In lieu of corporate gifting at the conference, Rogers wished to direct funds to the community. To do so, Rogers approached L.I.F.E. For Health, aware of their history of development work in the region. L.I.F.E. arranged Rogers' funding of a project for The Sunshine Home, an orphanage in the nearby province of Bohol.

Subsequently, when a typhoon ravaged the Philippines just a month after the conference, Rogers worked closely with its local business partner (PLDT Smart) to provide further financial assistance.

L.I.F.E. For Health's support of The Sunshine Home is an excellent example of a non-profit that makes the most effective use of its assets. L.I.F.E. has improved the situation of many deserving children. We hope that Rogers' support of L.I.F.E. encourages other businesses to do likewise and to have a positive impact on the lives of youth in need of care, education and loving support.



proudly presents a

Celebration of L.I.F.E.

20th Anniversary Dinner & Dance Gala in support of L.I.F.E. For Health

Saturday, May 29, 2010 ~ 6:00 pm Reception ~ 7:30 pm Dinner

St. Clement of Ohrid, Clement Room, 76 Overlea Boulevard

Tickets: \$40 members, \$45 non-members, \$500 corporate table of 8 (includes logo on table)

Keynote Speaker, George Smitherman, Former Deputy Premier of Ontario

Host, Michael Serapio, Filipino-Canadian Television Personality

Cultural Performances, Silent Auction, 50/50 Raffle, Door Prizes

To buy tickets or tables, contact (416) 422-0114 or LIFEforHealth@gmail.com

Elegant Attire

A Promise Not Forgotten

The History of L.I.F.E. For Health

Dr. Honorata Migriño-Stephenson was born in 1938 in the province of Bohol, Philippines, into a family of 13 siblings. Affectionately nicknamed “Baby” (she was number 10), Nora was forced to grow up fast in a large family with limited resources. Her mission to become a doctor began at the age of four when she witnessed the death of her baby brother en route to distant medical care. By the age of seven, she was selling rice in the market to help earn money for the family.

Despite much adversity, Nora managed to graduate medical school at the top of her class. Eager to use her new skills to help alleviate the poor health of the communities in which she grew up, Dr. Stephenson was dismayed to realize that her hands were still tied. Her patients couldn’t afford their medications or even nutritious food. Nora made a promise to help her countrymen and women break free from the cycle of poverty, but to do so she knew she had to go overseas.

By 1989, Dr. Stephenson was a successful pediatrician and allergist living in Toronto with her Canadian husband and two young children. In September of that year, Nora received the devastating news that she had a life-threatening brain tumour. The tumour was non-cancerous and she survived the 13-hour surgery to remove it. This life-changing experience was a wake up call: “Life is short”, Nora thought, “I have been given more time on earth and I must fulfill my promise now.” And so L.I.F.E. For Health was born.

Founded in 1990 under its original name, LIFE Philippines Foundation, the organization was made up of Nora’s friends and family, all volunteers. Many were Filipinos living in Toronto, wanting to help alleviate the poverty of their fellow countrymen and women. As a doctor with access to pharmaceutical companies, Dr. Stephenson requested medicine and equipment donations. She partnered with the Home Reach Foundation to co-organize volunteer medical missions in rural Bohol, including one treating 8000 people. L.I.F.E. For Health began a fundraising dinner and dance in Toronto to build artesian water wells in rural areas of the Philippines that had no nearby water access. In 2002, L.I.F.E. For Health partnered with the Rotary Club’s Gift of Life program and the Herbie Fund to bring children with congenital heart defects from the Philippines to Toronto for life-saving surgeries that could not be performed at home. Over the next four years, five children were successfully treated.

Recognizing the needs in many parts of Africa, towards the end of her life Dr. Stephenson expressed interest in bringing support to that part of the world. Around the same time, her eldest daughter, Leah, began travelling to Rwanda for work. Through this serendipity, L.I.F.E. For Health was able to assess the needs on the ground and find an appropriate local partner agency for its first project in Rwanda.



Dr. Stephenson with Maria Christina Tongco, the first child brought to Toronto for life-saving heart surgery.

Dr. Stephenson passed away in April 2008, after a courageous five-year battle with cancer. Her vision of alleviating poverty and increasing the health of individuals and communities by addressing their livelihoods, infrastructure, access to food and education thrives to this day. L.I.F.E. For Health continues to grow with an evolving mandate of supporting sustainable projects that have a long-lasting impact on creating happier and healthier communities.



Please feel free to circulate our newsletter to others who may be interested in our projects and organization. For further information or to become a member, please contact us at:

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