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News from the Field

Mirtha is 29 years old with four children. Her husband abandoned the family. To support her family, Mirtha was left to sell small bags of oil at the marketplace near her little house in the Port au Prince slum area of Cite Soliel.



On Jan. 12, 2010 the earth shook and the earthquake that devastated Haiti taking 330,000 lives also took Mirtha's two legs as the iron gate near her house fell on her. With her legs broken, her family tried to free her. There was no hospital to go to, no police, only people trying to remove concrete blocks and pieces of iron from the injured. After one hour Mirtha was finally freed but her family was not able to locate a hospital for 24 hrs once Port au Prince General Hospital was open only for extreme emergencies. It took one week for Mirtha to have her broken, un-repairable legs amputated. First one, then the second leg two days later after severe infection set in.

Mirtha healed but how could she survive---how could she provide for her four children now with no legs? There were several companies that did have job openings but they would not hire her because she was unable to move around the company and work on an assembly line. After the earthquake, Orphan Grain Train sent dozens of 40-foot containers loaded with food, clothes, tarps, generators, and relief aid to Haiti. They also sent dozens of PETs. Mirtha now

has a PET, is employed at a regular job, and is able to care for her family needs. As a matter of fact, she could actually go many places regular wheel chairs could not go because of rubble and other obstacles.

This picture was taken at Kisto Kenya (a tiny remote area) where all these young children have mobility disorders, cerebral palsy, hydrocephalus, and convulsive disorders. They have all been abandoned. There is a similar school for older children with similar mobility issues not far away. PETs as well as medications to prevent seizures and worms, were delivered by American Friends of Kenya, one of PET's newest distribution partners.



About the time the Rainbow PETs we sent to South Sudan last October were scheduled to arrive, we received reports that a severe bombing campaign, conducted by the Sudan



government on its own people, had killed scores of citizens and displaced at least 200,000. Naturally, we wondered whether the PETs made it before the campaign started. Great news!! This is a letter from Stephen Ayul to Dr Jill Seaman, whom we have featured in our last two newsletters.

“Hi Dr. I did not find the boy I should give him PET, but I found somebody not him. I give it to Polino Obyel and this is he said. Polino Obyel he been sick for long time and he is not walking he been sitting down for 6 years he lost his legs, the day I give him PET he said this

is the good day I have from the day I lost my legs and I am not walking. Today I got the legs back. PET to go to the church and go to see friend. My thank to the peoples who made PET and thank to ASMP and everyone who help to get it to me. GOD will give them a good life and long live. Thank you Dr Jill and Peter Sunduk, you did something good is going to come back to you from God. Here are the Polino family talking they are sending their greeting to you. They said GOD from heaven will looked down to you and your family, they said we are so happy today to received PET from Stephen come from you thank you A lot. - - - Polino he is a man of God and he been working for the kingdom GOD before he lost his legs. Now Polino will work again he have wife and 4 kids.”



Could this be in the future for PET?



A mechanical engineer named Izhar Gafni who lives in Israel on a kibbutz (which makes him a kibbutznik, or if female, a kibbutznikiyot), decided he wanted to make an affordable, sturdy, waterproof, and fireproof bicycle. People told him it couldn't be done, but being an engineer, he decided to prove them wrong. Materials and manufacture of the resulting bicycle cost about \$9. His invention weighs only 20 pounds, can handle a 275 pound passenger, and is made from recycled cardboard, plastic, and rubber. Cardboard Technologies say the bike prototypes are only the beginning of this planned cardboard revolution. They have already made a cardboard wheelchair and a cardboard baby stroller. Now how about a

durable, waterproof, very low cost, cardboard PET?

A Very Fast “PET”

A good friend of mine who lives close to a hiking/jogging/bicycling trail says he quite often sees these 3-wheeled, hand cranked, vehicles racing past his house. (Even with volunteer labor, the cost would be considerably more than the \$250 our PETs cost to build and ship.) It is built for those who have lost use of their legs but still want the exercise, excitement, and speed this vehicle is able to provide.

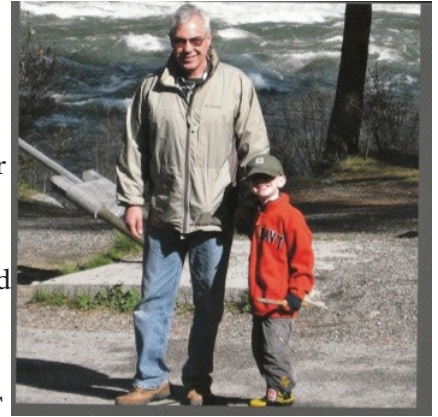


“To the world you may be one person, but to one person you may be the world.” Mel West

Living for all you can get is a poor way to live; living to give all you can give will make you rich in things that count.

Our Spotlighthted Volunteer: Thomas Crow, son of a German mother and a Hungarian father, was born in Nurtigen, Germany. His mother, Sonja, was a remarkable linguist and was recruited as an interpreter for the US Army base in Stuttgart, Germany. It was there that she met John Crow, an officer in the U.S. Army occupation forces, and married when Tom was 5 years old. He and his mother came to America by steam ship and went through Ellis Island in New York. His step father was in the Special Forces and after a stint at Ft. Bragg, NC, they rotated back to Germany for another 3½ years. He lived in Germany a total of 8½ years. Tom graduated from high school in Monrovia, CA and after attending colleges in the LA area, transferred to Whitworth College. While attending Whitworth, he met Marlene, his first love and best friend and was married in her home town of Moscow, Idaho. His life had brought him from Germany to North Carolina, Los Angeles then finally Spokane to meet and marry a farm girl from Idaho. Tom served in the Army as a drill sergeant during the Viet Nam era.

Tom and Marlene have two children, Leslie and Jason. Because of Marlene's previous Romanian mission trips with Northwest Medical Teams, Tom got involved with Romanian orphanage mission work and together they went on 5 mission trips. They met and fell in love with a young Romanian girl and unofficially adopted her. Both Leslie and Jason have likewise accepted Lumi as their sister and the relationship continues today. Tom and Marlene flew to Romania in 2010 as her god parents and gave her away during a wonderful Orthodox ceremony in a little village in Transylvania. They plan on visiting Luminita and Adrian next fall in Germany and revisit Tom's motherland.



After a couple of career changes, Tom eventually went to work for Procter & Gamble as an Area Manager and retired after 21 years. He has now been a PET volunteer painter since the summer of 2007.

He has always been an outdoor enthusiast, naturalist and advocate for environmental efforts. From his beach bum days in California to his mountain backpacking experiences in the Pacific Northwest, Tom has always been comfortable in nature. Even at the age of 66 he still managed a couple mountain hiking trips this past summer.

Since his daughter, son-in-law and 6½ year old very active grandson now reside in Hawaii, Tom is now compelled to yearly satisfy his "tropical fix" and continue his joy of swimming with the fish and turtles. It's the perfect retirement scenario; warm weather, the beach and family.



In Mid-December Vic & Cindy Perger joined a group from PET Memphis on a distribution trip to the Dominican Republic. 180 boxed PETs were waiting for them when they arrived. Over the next 3 ½ days they assembled and distributed PETs to disabled adults and children who had been referred by their doctors, their pastors, and by word of mouth. One young man, especially, stands out. Elian had received a child PET a few years ago and came back because he had outgrown his first PET. Elian is now 12 and from birth, he has been unable to stand straight, his body is fixed in a 90 degree angle at his hips, and his knees do not bend. His PET truly has lifted him out of the dirt and into a life of dignity, being able to look people in the eye. Elian is quite shy and doesn't like to smile for the camera.



The in-country host was Foundation for Peace, a Christian non-profit that coordinates medical-related mission trips to the DR throughout the year. They made the team very welcome and comfortable, providing us with lodging, meals, transportation, and security. Vic and Cindy say the trip was a real blessing and encourage others to try a distribution trip. We'll have more of their adventures in a future newsletter.

As those who have been involved with the PET project for any length of time already know, one of the reasons people have lost use of their legs is due to polio. Polio is an extremely horrible, but now preventable, disease. In this issue of PET-Kin Pathways we want to take a closer look at several aspects of the disease.

Polio mainly affects young children and, fortunately, only a minority of those infected lead to irreversible paralysis. It is a highly infectious disease caused by a virus which invades the nervous system. The virus enters the body through the mouth then multiplies in the throat and intestines. It then enters the bloodstream and is carried to the central nervous system where it replicates and destroys motor neuron cells which control muscles for different body functions. It acts very quickly first causing symptoms of fever, fatigue, headache, vomiting, stiffness in the neck, pain in the limbs, and finally, paralysis.

The two main types of polio are “Bulbar”, which attacks the brainstem, paralyzing involuntary functions (respiration, heart rate, swallowing, and circulation) and “Spinal” which affects voluntary body functions (movement of arms, legs, back, and other visible movements.)

Apparently the disease is quite old, as Egyptian mummies have shown evidence of a debilitating disease similar to polio. The first clinical description of polio was published in England in 1789. It was known as Heine-Medin disease, then later as infantile paralysis based on its propensity to affect children. It seemed to spread to the US around 1900 and reached pandemic proportions in Europe, North America, Australia, and New Zealand early in the 20th century. By 1952 the polio epidemic became the worst outbreak in US history. Of the 58,000 reported cases (probably a low estimate), 3,145 died and 21,269 were left with mild to disabling paralysis.



There is no known cure for polio, but it can be prevented. In 1955, Dr. Jonas Salk developed the first safe and effective vaccine. In less than 10 years, the average number of polio cases in the US dropped from over 45,000 to 910 – definitely a modern miracle.

In 1988 the World Health Assembly adopted a resolution for the worldwide eradication of polio and since then the number of cases has fallen by over 99%. In 2013, only three countries in the world remain polio-endemic: Nigeria, Pakistan, and Afghanistan, although it is still present in a few other countries. The strategies for eradication do work when they are fully implemented as

was demonstrated by India’s success in stopping polio in January 2011 (now 3 years later they are still polio free).

As reported last October in USA Today (as well as other published articles on world health concerns) polio was on the verge of eradication worldwide when Ibrahim Datti Ahmed (a physician), president of the Supreme Council for Sharia in Nigeria suggested that the vaccination program in his country was part of a Western conspiracy to render Muslim children (primarily girls) infertile and give them AIDS. Dr. Ahmed’s call to end the immunization campaign touched a nerve and spread to other Muslim religions leaders, causing the vaccination process to slow down and incidences of the disease to pick up. So closely connected have Islam and polio become



that the Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca has become a major mechanism of transmitting the disease to other African and Asian countries. It has even been reported that those who deliver polio vaccine in Pakistan have been shot and killed.

Unfortunately polio leaves lasting effects, and by “lasting” we mean for one’s entire life. Exercise and physical therapy will help regain some ability to function more normally, but as one ages (usually 20 – 40 years later) symptoms of another terrible malady begin to take over. Called PPS, Post Polio Syndrome, a condition in some cases as severe as the original polio, only more pervasive this time. Polio isn’t anything like measles or chicken pox where a person gets sick and then recovers in a few weeks, polio lasts a lifetime. In talking to those who have gone

through it, you DO NOT want anyone else to have to go through that lifetime experience. Since prevention is so readily available, anyone who has not been vaccinated should get that relatively inexpensive vaccination (from a few cents for children to about \$50 for an adult booster).

A Medical Mission Group working high in the mountains of Honduras was conducting a clinic in a small village on the side of a mountain. Among the people who traveled a considerable distance to the clinic was a man on his PET. The man, in his 30s, had come to need a PET after a back injury had left him unable to walk four years earlier. He was still active, working for a living, and had a family. He indicated that the PET served him well in the local area in spite of the ruggedness of the terrain.

When asked about distance, he mentioned travels to and from the town of San Nicolas a distance of about 9 miles on a road of steep ups and downs with creek crossings and no bridges. He explained that his wife pushed him and the PET up the slopes if he could not manage them himself. On the down slopes his wife stood in the rear cargo compartment, hands on his shoulders, and hung on for dear life. Each trip took six hours each way.

Mel West writes: I am always interested in what persons in other lands think of us in the USA. A great opportunity came when a friend of mine brought a Chinese journalism student to tour the PET shop and interview me. He went back to China and wrote a long article about us. Here is just a small part of that translation: “When I was in America I lived in a small town of 100,000 people. It was said that there were over 100 churches in town. All the Americans we knew were Christians and loved to help others. When we ran into trouble we always sought help from people we knew in churches.” “Once I left my wallet, with checks, credit cards, driver’s license and some cash in it in a restroom. Before I knew it was lost, someone had brought it to my classroom and delivered it to me.”

“Americans volunteer at home and abroad. Personal Energy Transportation (PET), a charity in Columbia, specializes in making simplified wheelchairs for people everywhere in the world unable to walk, free of charge. I asked Mr. West why they did it. The old man who used to be a minister brought forward three reasons. First, Jesus Christ says in the Bible that we should help those who suffer. Second, as human beings we should help each other. Third, I was once a farmer and we always took very good care of sick cattle---why can’t we lend a helping hand to the handicapped if we can treat our cattle so well?” I asked then, “Do you help Christians only?” “No, we help anyone regardless of the racial or religious background. We provide wheelchairs to the handicapped anywhere in the world except in this country. In the USA people can receive free wheelchairs from the government. “For me, the cross on a church building is more than a symbol. It is a way of life. Work hard, do your best, live a simple life, save as much as you can and give it to those in need.”

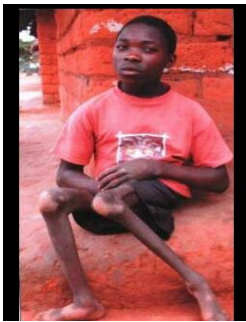
I am proud that this young man took such a positive story back to China.

Mel West, Director Emeritus and Pet Founder

For those not directly associated with the medical field the word “triage” may not be familiar term in your common every-day vocabulary. Actually it is an old word,



probably originating during the Napoleonic Wars. It is the process of determining the priority of patient treatment based on the severity of their condition and is used when resources are insufficient for all to be treated immediately. Why are we discussing triage in a PET newsletter? Actually triage can be used in many situations other than medical when critical decisions must be made – and that certainly applies to the distribution of PETs.



More often than not, when a load of PETs is delivered to a location for distribution, there is a discrepancy between the number of PETs available and the number of disabled needing them. In this situation triage boils down to: “who doesn’t get one?” Imagine the pain of rejection when your expectations of being able to raise from the dirt are dashed. The ability to work, go to school, or worst of all, to have to crawl back into the closet to hide the shame society places on you because you are not “normal”.

The challenge, and burden, lies on us who fund, build, ship, and distribute PETs to see that all who need a PET can be accommodated. Let’s hope, that one day, nobody will ever again have to perform a triage to tell a disabled person “you can’t have one”.

A Call from a Young Girl

Where are you?

You who are fortunate enough to know what it means to walk.
Who are washed in the shame of our culture’s disrepute.
Can’t you see that we are in agony?
Didn’t Christ command you to come to us?

Where are you?

The world is perishing in its uncaring darkness.
Thousands, millions are crawling with the pain of Hell!
Have mercy and come to us.
We beseech you to come!

Where are you?

We are clothed in the rags of ruin.
Totally bankrupt.
Only God can help us now.
But will we also have a chance to hear His voice: His hope of mobility?

Where are you?

The bearers of wheels and dignity?
We call out to you, but there is no answer.
Have you perhaps fallen asleep?

Where are you?

Anon

When the folks with ACTS (A Call to Serve in Columbia, MO) in The Republic of Georgia provide a PET for a person they want to know for sure that they will be able to use it. This report came: "Mirza Tsirikadze, 31, suffers from infantile cerebral palsy. We saw how difficult it was for him to drive a PET, but he stubbornly kept trying. For an hour we watched his efforts and at last he managed to drive 100 meters (a bit more than the length of a football field) without stopping. He won. He now has his own well deserved PET."



A New Addition for Each PET

Each new PET built in our Spokane shop will include an identification to let people know where it was built. The idea was copied from the Memphis PET shop. It will also give our e-mail address for sending pictures and articles from recipients. The e-mail address is also stenciled on each shipping box, but hopefully the boxes won't be around as long as the PET will.



In the last issue of PET-Kin Pathways, we discussed Peninsula Truck Lines and how they have been such a great asset to the Inland North-West PET Project. Peninsula came along side us to move lumber from Canada to Western Washington, and then the completed wood parts on to Spokane. They were also the trucking company who transported the completed PETs to the Seattle area where they were taken to South Sudan via a new Boeing 777-300 delivery flight. If they have a depot where we need to send parts, or completed PETs, they will come along side us with much graciousness and a generous attitude. Soooo - - - when someone else recognizes this, we want to let you know.



Each year Logistics Management magazine awards a prestigious "Quest for Quality" award to the transportation service provider who their readers (buyers of transportation services) deem best in five key areas dealing with things like on-time performance, customer service, equipment, and overall value. We are very happy to report that, for the second year in a row, Peninsula Truck Lines has won this award.

In addition, Mastio & Company (a research-consulting firm) also awarded Peninsula the best overall LTL (less-than-truckload) quality award. This study was based on customer satisfaction, value, on-time performance, and deliveries with no damage or shortages.

We want to congratulate Peninsula, their employees, executives, and the company for these achievements. A great company to have as part of our PET team.

This elderly gentleman had been using a pump action tricycle-type cart. Unfortunately, especially when he was not near his house where he could call for help, it kept tipping over as well as developing flat tires. His upper body strength is normal but his legs no longer offer reliable support. He was most grateful for his PET where he felt both comfortable and secure. The PET was distributed by the foundation "To Encourage Potential Of Disabled Persons" in Thailand.



In the early '90s when Mel West found out about the need for a sturdy 3-wheeled vehicle for those without use of their legs, he called Earl Miner and told him of the need. Earl was the one who actually designed the PET. He is a product designer with a huge heart and a stress on simplicity. Unfortunately Earl has just been moved to a nursing home because he has Alzheimer's. PET would not exist had Earl not designed it.

PET will soon celebrate building and shipping 50,000 of the PETs Earl designed. Few people in this world have had the impact on the lives of the "least of these" that Earl has had. He and his wife, Leona, raised a wonderful family of their own, and also took in a number of foster children. The Miners are big hearted people.

Let's honor Earl with a huge shower of cards, letters, and notes. Thank him. Tell about your relationship to PET. Tell a story about a PET. His address is: Earl Miner, c/o Strafford Care Center. 505 West Evergreen, Strafford, MO 65757-8625.



PET Connection – Contact and Newsletter Information



For volunteer opportunities, visits to the PET shop, or to request a presentation, please call Dick Carpenter at (509)466-3425 or send him an e-mail at bebold@comcast.net. For address changes or comments about this newsletter, send to petnwnewsletter@onemain.com. For information about PET International, visit www.petinternational.org. Tax-deductible donations may be sent to WCPC-PET Project, 15123 Little Spokane Dr., Spokane, WA 99208. NOTE: an additional method of helping with our limited funds is to PLEASE let us know when your address changes. Even an apartment number change will usually get your newsletter returned to us.

The next PET distribution trip to Guatemala is scheduled for April 5-12, 2014. Please contact PET@PETInternational.org.