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LIONS CLUBS INTERNATIONAL

District 105A

Lion Wesley de Mendonca – District Governor 2009 – 2010

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Gift for Living - Project Review

This project began after the conclusion of the war in Yugoslavia with the Dayton peace accord of 1995.

Then Bosnia was divided, administratively, into separate parts each with its own budget. Being geographically separate from the rest of Bosnia, the University town of Banja Luka has to provide an independent medical service for all, whilst supporting a birth rate in excess of 5000 per annum.

The state of the Hospital and Paediatric Department mirrored the devastation caused by the war; whilst most of the buildings are now sound, the equipment was woeful. The surviving neonatal ventilator was 20 years old, the Oxygen Flow Meters no longer functioned, Resuscitation equipment was basic and the supply of medicines meagre at best. Before the war, the work of the Paediatric Department was comparable to standards in Western Europe. Highly trained staff provided specialised intensive care to children and new born infants.

A Partnership between the **Child Advocacy International (CAI)** and the **Lions of MD 105** formed the registered Charity -**A Gift for Living-** with **PID Phil Nathan** taking the lead role as **Chairman**. As far as MD105 is concerned, this has functioned well over the years providing replacement medical equipment for the immediate need; however as time progresses the project will need more funding to be able to supply the latest equipment. We, as members of 105A, have provided support in the past and we are again being requested to help.

This project still moves forward. The next step will be to upgrade the training facilities within the Banja Luka area so that they achieve the same standards of care to newborn and critically ill infants as in other areas of Bosnia.

The partnership has also supported the funding of the units at the Kosevo University Hospital, as well as in Mostar, Bihac and Gorazde. They all now offer a higher class of care within their paediatric units.

We have been able to supply most of the equipment mentioned above but there is still so much more that we can achieve

There is a need to train medical staff using the Advanced Paediatric Life Support (APLS). This course, which has been fully licensed and established in Bosnia Herzegovina by joint

Conservation through co-operation and service



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co-operation with CAI and our MD105, has so far trained 200 medical staff including high-level specialist paediatricians, anaesthesiologists, nurses and technical staff.

This training cuts across ethnic boundaries, with eighty percent of the medical staff who attended these courses coming from outside Sarajevo.

The interest is immense and growing. The current plan is to train another 300 medical professionals over the next five years. In a climate dominated by ethno-politics, local politicians have failed to support this venture but the local newspapers are more appreciative and are reporting every course.

Its success and sustainability is due to the fact that the APLS course is run by local trainers with local funding. This is supported by volunteer experts from the UK, at the behest of the local trainers, monitoring the programme to provide quality assurance.

A leading Doctor for APLS, Doctor Ismeta Kalkan, suffered a devastating Stroke. It is believed that this was brought about as a result of unremitting wartime hardship.

After a successful operation she was expected to recover quickly, but complications abounded and she lost consciousness while being transferred to a Sarajevo Hospital. She was received in Hospital by Doctor Amra, our APLS Instructor, who used his APLS knowledge and our equipment. After another operation to drain a burst artery she made a full recovery.....APLS was primarily for children, not now!!!

The **“Challenge”** now is the sustainability of the costly training equipment which is only produced in the European Union and needs replacing year to year. Local funds are insufficient, and increasing course costs to include provision for these items will deter the many poorer Hospitals outside the major cities from sending their candidates.

The immediate need is for 2 x Infant Management Trainers along with 2 x Baby Annes. Both products are available through Laerdal. These items cover realistic airway management on the anatomy of a three-month-old infant and another realistic manikin to provide effective CPR Training.

How do you put a price on life? All that is asked is that due consideration is given at your next Club meeting. All donations will be greatly appreciated - please send cheques to the District Treasurer marked on the reverse **“Gift for Living”**

Andrew Allen

Gift for Living Officer District 105A

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