

Want to help MMA?

MMA Contacts



MMA Newsletter

Medical Mission Auxiliary Inc ACN A0042669K

MARCH 2010

I would like to:

- Change my address details
- Volunteer in the Op Shop
- Receive regular information
- Become a member of MMA

Please tick the relevant box and fill in your details:

Name
 Address
 State _____ Postcode _____
 Phone

I would like to make a donation (please circle one):

1. Cheque/money order payable to "MMA Inc" and mailed to Treasurer with contact details

Do you require a tax-deductible receipt?

Yes

Please cut out this form and send it to MMA.

2. Electronic transfer to one of MMA's accounts at Commonwealth Bank, Mitcham

• Tax-deductible donations to:

MMA Overseas Aid Fund

BSB 063 146, Account No 1023 0489

• Non-tax deductible donations to:

MMA Inc

BSB 063 146, Account No 1023 0470

Please enter your surname as "description/reference for recipient" then **mail** or **email** contact details to the Treasurer.

Donations may be designated for:

- General Funds
- Kagera AIDS Project, Tanzania
- Nepal Disabled Project
- Sponsorship of students for: Murgwanza Hospital, Tanzania
 Kilimatinde Hospital, Tanzania
 Hospitals/healthcare in Nepal

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MMA Op Shop
 Telephone: (03) 9853 0119
 Address: Holy Trinity Church, Kew
 Corner High and Pakington Streets
 (PO Box 514)
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 Hours: 10am to 4pm weekdays
 10am to 12pm Saturdays
 Manager: Margaret Penford
 Assistants: Honor Bradbeer
 Katya Schneider

A 90th birthday celebration!

Awaiting restoration

*I am not a child who plays
 Not a child who smiles
 My tears are few
 My cries unvoiced*

*All is laid bare before You
 You see my frail frame
 My fragile skin
 My wasted muscles
 Even my sunken eyes
 From You I cannot hide*

*You know the measure of my days
 The end from the beginning
 In the palm of Your hands, keep me
 Heal my broken heart
 Fill this hunger, this thirst
 Set me free, comfort me
 Attend quickly to my soundless cry*

90 years old and MMA is still praising God. Even after 90 years, people continue to care. The words above, written by Helen Nguyen while she was doing a medical elective at Murgwanza Hospital earlier this year, express it so poignantly.

How it all began

5 January 1920 was the date when the Branch Council of CMS Victoria formed the Medical Mission Auxiliary, a group that would seek practical ways of sharing God's love through:

- bringing faith and actions together
- empowering missionaries and national workers as they minister to people around the world.

Medical missionaries in Africa and Asia faced huge medical needs but had few resources to meet them. MMA began providing practical support by sending medical supplies, firstly to China in crates, then to other countries in 22-pound parcels, and finally, from about 1984, drums or specially made crates were sent in shipping containers. These were packed full of medical supplies, equipment, drugs, and donated goods including pencils and exercise books for schools and Bible colleges.

Across Victoria, people sewed, knitted, rolled bandages, bought goods at bargain prices, and sought outdated but functional medical equipment and nurses' uniforms. They were sorted and packed at the MMA Depot, while a group of faithful volunteers staffed MMA's Opportunity Shop.

Crisis time

However, by the late 1990s, appeals for assistance began to change.

Firstly a request came for a bridging loan to buy land for a clinic in the slums of Nairobi. The loan later became a donation to help build the clinic. Then came a request for money to renovate the maternity ward of a small rural hospital in Tanzania.

Until then the policy had been to send mostly goods, not money. But the world was changing. Many goods previously sent from Australia were now available locally. With freight costs increasing, ageing volunteers and notice to vacate the Depot and Opportunity Shop properties, in 2001 the decision was made to discontinue sending goods overseas. It seemed that the final nail had been hammered into the coffin.

Questioning began. Was MMA still relevant in today's world? What kind of practical help could MMA give to improve the lives of the poor and share God's love with them?

MMA was transformed in 2002 by becoming an organisation in its own right, and establishing an Overseas Aid Fund. **Funding projects replaced sending goods. A new era had begun.**

MMA today

MMA Inc now offers funding for medical and health-related activities in disadvantaged countries, in partnership with church and other organisations. Projects are currently being funded in Nepal, Tanzania and Kenya.

As we celebrate in this year of 2010 we hear again the call from Micah 6:8: *And what does the Lord require of you? In response we ask for strength To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with our God.*

Poem and photos by Helen Nguyen.



You are invited to a special party for MMA's 90th birthday!

Please join us as we celebrate at Autumnfest
Tuesday 13 April, 2010
St Mark's Church,
Cnr Canterbury and Burke Roads,
Camberwell

Morning tea at 10am followed by a time of reminiscing and sharing memories with Jill Wilson BYO lunch. Tea and coffee provided. Parking available off Canterbury Road.

Medical Mission Auxiliary Inc partners with the World Relief Overseas Aid Fund by acting as its agent for the delivery of aid and development projects.

World Relief Australia Inc.
Assisting people in need



CMS Medical Mission Auxiliary Inc Newsletter
 Print Post Approved PP331387/00018

PRINT POST
 PP 351177/0112

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 R Thompson
 St Andrew's Hall
 190 The Avenue, Parkville VIC 3052

A business in Nairobi

A business plan – everyone starting a new business must have one. But have you ever heard of a proposal to run an organisation at a loss of \$3000 per month?

No sensible person would make such a proposal, but this was the plan offered as midwifery was added to the program of Korogocho Clinic, in a slum area of Nairobi.

Nairobi – a city of 4 million people, about 60% of whom live in slums – desperately needs affordable medical care. Under the auspices of Nairobi Chapel and other churches, two clinics were established – one in Kibera (another slum) and one in Korogocho. In spite of a serious security problem that resulted in the death of a staff member and closure of the Korogocho clinic, the Kibera clinic continues to provide medical care to huge numbers of people.

One startling area of need stood out. Maternal and infant statistics showed that 1 in 12 babies (8.5%) born to mothers living in Korogocho died at birth or soon afterwards. And at least 1 in 100 mothers died during or after childbirth.

A new business begins

With the above situation in mind, a maternity clinic opened in Korogocho in January 2009 under the leadership of CMS-NSW missionary Dr Joe Radkovic. The clinic's business plan included:

- Making a loss
- Targeting the poorest girls and mothers in slum areas of Nairobi
- Charging only \$10 for each delivery even though the total cost is \$50 (this charge includes pre-delivery pathology tests and ultrasound, delivery, postnatal care and immunisations for the baby)
- Sustainability through generation of income from rental properties that would be constructed with an endowment fund.

Above right: Joe Radkovic with a patient.

Below right: a beaming mother holds her newborn baby.

Generous donors gave \$100,000, enough to build half of the rental rooms and cover some of the loss during the building period. Income from this rental property will soon begin, but another \$100,000 is needed to complete the endowment fund and pay for the rest of the building program. This will ensure that the maternity clinic will be sustainable, and more importantly, it will also ensure a safe delivery for young mothers and babies who are desperately poor.

MMA has only recently become involved in this work in Kenya. One of the committee members wrote that she was crying as she read an email from Joe Radkovic in which he said that the maternity clinic had been without electricity for three days and their generator had been in for repairs for three months, leaving them with no cover for blackouts. *Delivering babies by kero lamp is very difficult, Joe wrote. If there are problems with the mother or baby it is scary.*

MMA has already sent money to buy a new generator and a refrigerator to hold immunisations, but other needs include water tanks with plumbing and a computer.

The results speak for themselves

The opening of the clinic has made an immediate dramatic difference. In its first year of operation, the neonatal mortality rate in Korogocho dropped from 8.5% to 1.1%. There were no maternal deaths and only 5% of women were referred for caesarean section. Put another way, we could say that 61 babies and at least 7 mothers were saved during this first year.

So how did they achieve such results in only 12 months? Each day, cases are reviewed, complications discussed and teaching given, all leading to great results and good staff morale. But these will only continue if the whole project is sustainable. MMA is proud to be offering ongoing support to help the clinic reduce mortality rates among some of the poorest women in Kenya.



Update on St Philip's Clinic, Tabora

"Before they call, I will answer" (Isaiah 65:24)

Encouraging news has come of work at Tabora Clinic (featured in our last issue). They have three growth areas:

1. Home-based care services, particularly for people living with HIV/AIDS
2. Stabilisation of the Familia Moja (One Family) holistic outreach project
3. Extension of clinic work.

The head of the clinic, Dr Ruth Hulser, has sent a report of the building work funded by MMA's Bequest Fund: *The main new building is for our new HIV clinic/service, which has its first birthday this week. Thanks to MMA we have been able to build a set of rooms that will serve that clinic. The roof is already up, and considering that last year we had no idea where we could see these patients, this is an amazing and unforeseen answer to prayer.*

The picture below shows the foundations of the new HIV clinic building.



Procrastination may be profitable!

Way back in the 1990s, when MMA was still sending goods to Tanzania, our medical department was given a dozen or so artificial hips and knees. Tanzania was unable to use them, so Jo in the medical department thought they might have some value as scrap metal.

A friend, Martyn, offered to sell them. He was a collector of bits of metal (mostly cans), which he sold for the Church. While he pondered where he could get the best price, he put them in a drawer in his garage ...

Clearing out the garage in late 2008, he came across the hips and knees! Mentioning them to a friend, Denys, who had some useful connections, resulted in \$778 for MMA. **They had now become medical curios!**

Thank you, Martyn, and thank you, Denys!



From^{the} President

Dear friends,

As our cover article reveals, this is the year in which MMA celebrates its 90th birthday! None of us goes back to the beginning in 1920, but so many of us have been supporters, workers, donors and recipients over the years and have many memories.

MMA has tried to encapsulate some of these into the DVD that will be shown at Autumnfest on Tuesday, 13 April. Please join us if at all possible. Jill Wilson will be the speaker, and she has memories going back more years than I realised!

The other feature in this newsletter is about a maternity clinic in Nairobi. It illustrates how God's people sometimes persevere under extreme conditions without any accolades and without shouting to the world about it. Praise God that he has blessed us with extra money in the form of bequests, and that we can be part of this amazing work!

The MMA Committee now has five new members, most of them quite young. It is such a delight to see their enthusiasm and commitment. Please pray that they will quickly understand all we are trying to do and that we have wisdom from God.

Sincerely yours,

Ruth Judd

MMA's gift cards

MMA's 'Helping Hand' gift cards are still available for those who want to escape our consumer society. They are a way of saying, "I love you and I've given a gift on your behalf to MMA. As you celebrate you can be sure that your gift is like a helping hand reaching out to the poor and needy in today's world."

Why not keep some in stock? They are free.

Available from Ruth Judd – phone (03) 9898 2982.

Stamps & corks needed



A number of people responded to our last appeal for donated stamps but sales continue to be brisk. Some people trim before sending, though Donald, a CMS volunteer, also does a great job on the untrimmed ones. So please keep them coming.

Corks are still a good fundraiser, but they need to be real cork, not the plastic kind.

Both corks and stamps can be dropped off at the CMS Victoria office (9-13 Queen Street Blackburn), or the MMA Op Shop (see page 4). It is not cost effective to send them by mail.

Free rail service is no longer available for country supporters. Some supporters have found carriers who are willing to provide free carriage. In this case the best address to use is the Op Shop.