

Rotary World Help Story

Founder's story

In 1992 a group from the Rotary Club of Vancouver Club were in Kiev, Ukraine, helping to set up a club charter.

While there, this group from Vancouver was invited by the incoming president to visit one of the local hospitals – the Chernobyl Children's Hospital -- just to see the conditions and to see if the international community could help. This hospital was initially set up to handle the children that were impacted by the Chernobyl incident.

What our Rotarians saw in that hospital in Kiev horrified them – the conditions were appalling, the doctors and nurses were well trained, but they had very little in the way of equipment and supplies to work with.

Basically, after the break-up of the Soviet Union, the infrastructure of the country had broken down. Very little proper bedding on the beds – some had no sheets or pillows cases.

Eight doctors had to share one stethoscope.

They were doing open-heart surgery but with no heart monitors or ventilators, but they were doing their best.

Our visiting Rotarians from Vancouver were invited to sit in an operating theatre and view an operation in progress. This was an open-heart operation on a child. The doctor was using surgical gloves that had been autoclaved so often they were dark brown rather than white and there were too

big for him. In our hospitals, we discard gloves after each operation.

When our members came back to Vancouver, they, through various contacts, found out that our hospitals often have discarded used equipment and supplies that could be sent to Kiev.

First Container to Ukraine

In 1993, the late Ted Segodnia together with fellow Vancouver club Rotarians, Bill Richwa and Ralph Towsley, organized the first shipment of medical supplies and equipment to Kiev.

Bill, Ted and their wives went to Kiev to oversee the distribution of the supplies.

The shipment consisted of medical supplies, medical equipment, food (rice, flour) and clothing. The medical material went to the hospital and the food and clothing went to a local orphanage.

When they returned home, they found more supplies waiting for them, so they convinced the Vancouver club to carry on the project as an international service project.

RI Sanctioned

RWH is a network of Rotary Clubs located in British Columbia and is Rotary International sanctioned.

What we are

Rotary World Help is a non-religious, non-political, registered not for profit charitable organization. It is a wholly volunteer operated society with no paid employees and is in receipt of no government funding.

What we do

RWH collects, stores, and ships in 40 FT containers, medical equipment and supplies, dental and optical equipment and supplies, educational equipment, and supplies, including computers to international recipients in need, at no cost to them.

Where our donated goods come from

The goods for shipping are picked up by our volunteers from B.C. hospitals, medical and other clinics, nursing and senior's homes, dental and physiotherapy facilities as well as schools and universities throughout the area. Many of these goods and supplies are in fact diverted from the British Columbia waste stream and are effectively and safely used abroad. Other goods, some new, and many very expensive, are generously donated by individuals and corporate supporters.

Loading containers

Local Rotarians inventory, load, and seal the containers for shipping.

Containers are loaded as full as possible to avoid shifting of goods during transport and to get in as much as we can. Each container is sealed and only opened by the receiver of the goods in the receiving country.

Shipments are sent by Rotarians (through the RWH) and distributed by the local Rotary club.

Hospitals get equipment that is a vast improvement over previous equipment.