



International Medical Health Organization—IMHO Canada



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IMHO to help Build permanent Toilets to Resettled IDPs

With the displacement and subsequent resettlement of hundreds of thousands of persons in Northern Sri Lanka, many of whom still need to be resettled or are unable to return home at this point, many of these Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) find themselves living in often overcrowded and unsanitary conditions. Proper sanitation is a major need for these vulnerable people. With several families often sharing one toilet or makeshift latrine, the need for satisfactory, permanent toilets is high. IMHO Canada, in partnership with the Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies (CHA), an esteemed Colombo-based relief & development agency, has agreed to sponsor the construction of 50 toilets to the benefit of many IDP families in Jaffna. A total commitment of \$36,000 has been made, with the first installment of \$18,000 already being sent. This effort will no doubt improve the well being and overall health of all who benefit

Formation of High School Youth Group

By Arany Kandeepan

I was very excited when I was informed by the IMHO Canadian Branch that a volunteer youth group consisting of secondary school students coordinated by two undergraduate students, of which I was one, was to be formed. I was pleased that I was able to persuade my friend and fellow McMaster undergraduate Sinthura to take on the role of the second coordinator. Due to the involvement of my family, I have been aware for sometime of the amazing work that IMHO has performed in the war-torn North and East of Sri Lanka both during and after the civil war.

Both Sinthura and I follow the Sri Lankan news and we are both well aware of the mental and physical impact the war has had on the residents of this parts of the island and the overwhelming need for medical care, including equipment, personnel and facilities. Sinthura and I were quite grateful for an opportunity to contribute even in a small way to meeting IMHO's objectives.

Given that participation in the volunteer youth group will accumulate time towards the 40 community service hours that is required from all Ontario secondary school students Sinthura and I anticipated considerable uptake from the community. We were not disappointed; the first meeting was attended by around 25 students all eager to do their part. Prior to the meeting, Sinthura and I had mapped out a plan and a series of activities that would allow the volunteers to positively contribute, as well as exercise a degree of individual initiative.

The first project required each volunteer to make a presentation to a minimum of 10 adults from their circle of family and friends aimed at providing the audience with an introduction to IMHO and requesting them to assist in any way, including financial donations.

Other interesting projects included making a similar presentation at their schools to both teachers and students, organizing fundraising events, and developing a greater awareness of the medical needs of the North and the East of Sri Lanka, as well as the work that IMHO is doing to meet this need. We are aware of a number of South Asian event that are scheduled for Spring and Summer and plan to open IMHO booths staffed by these volunteers aimed at educating not only the Tamil community but also other ethnic communities and the

mainstream with regard to the urgent need for medical services in the North and East of Sri Lanka.

In addition to meeting all of the above objectives, Sinthura and I have a vision in terms of the skills that both we and the members of the youth group would acquire as result of our participation. In addition to the obvious skills such as teamwork, networking, and the opportunity to interact and work closely with medical and other professionals, we believe that membership in the youth group is a good training ground for more significant roles in IMHO. We would like to think that some, if not all of us, will at one time in the not too distant future will be part of the IMHO Board of Directors.

Both Sinthura and I look forward to working with this team of keen and dedicated volunteers and doing our little bit towards assisting IMHO in meeting its immediate goals.

IMHO Supports Amputee Rehab Efforts by Jaffna Jaipur Centre for Disability Rehabilitation



In the wake of the cessation of hostilities in Sri Lanka's devastating civil war, there are a large number of people across the Northeast that suffered limb loss and are in need of urgent help. Many thousands had limbs amputated in 2009 as the war came to a violent end. There is now a massive need to improve the facilities for rehabilitation of amputees and others with long-term disabilities in all parts of Sri Lanka

According to recent government statistics there are at least 4,200 confirmed amputees in need of prosthesis and physical rehabilitation, although some INGOs at the IDP camps in Vavuniya have estimated the figure might be as high as 25,000-30,000 total, or more. The vast majority of these amputees are between the ages of 20-45 years of age, thus affecting a very crucial part of the workforce. Urgent physical, vocational, and psychosocial rehabilitation will enable all of these disabled persons to lead independent, productive lives. For this purpose IMHO is lending its support to a project with the Jaffna Jaipur Centre for Disability Rehabilitation (JJCDR) to provide mobility devices, such as wheelchairs, tricycles, walkers, crutches, and walking aids to help the disabled (especially the recently displaced persons) to move independently and comfortably again.

To-date IMHO has transferred \$12,000 to the Jaffna Jaipur Centre for Disability Rehabilitation in order to purchase outdoor, all-terrain wheelchairs and mobility devices, and to support physical rehabilitation programs. However, this is just the first of 3 installments. In total, IMHO has approved \$36,000 towards this project, which will undoubtedly reshape many

lives and give hope to patients and their families. The Texas Chapter of IMHO has been instrumental in providing support for this effort through their February fundraiser

Update on Other Recent IMHO Efforts

1) Diabetes Awareness Program: The "*Neerilivai Vetti Kolvom*" awareness program for diabetes commenced last month with a cultural program in Jaffna and a large number of persons in attendance. The Jaffna Teaching Hospital Diabetic Center is conducting this program in collaboration with the hospital's Faculty of Medicine and the Hospital Development Association. The idea is to raise awareness about the disease, what signs to look for, how to get treatment and care for those with the disease, and how to live a healthy life after diagnosis. Such community education programs are all too important.

2) Pediatric Unit, Batticaloa Teaching Hospital: Support (\$1,000) for the Pediatric Unit at the Batticaloa Teaching Hospital was given for both ongoing speech therapy services and to provide logistical support with continuing phone services for parents of patients to use the phone.

3) Medical Education: Three Medical Officers in Psychiatry from Sri Lanka are being given the opportunity to participate in a 6-week summer course in psychiatry at the University of Montreal in Canada, thanks in part to support from IMHO. IMHO has contributed \$3,000 total (or \$1,000 per physician) to help cover all of their roundtrip airfare. The visiting physicians, Dr. Judy Jeyakumar from Batticaloa, Dr. Suthakaran from Vavuniya, and Dr. Dan Soundararajah from Valaichenai, were all given admission to attend the course, with the university agreeing to waive all course fees for the doctors. IMHO is proud to support the ongoing education of these doctors on the ground, who play a crucial role in offering mental health services to patients in need.

4) School Nutrition Program in Point Pedro: \$4,000 was transferred to the Sri Ramakrishna Saradha Sevashramam in Point Pedro to continue with their nutrition project for poor school children.

5) IMHO Secretary Heads to Haiti on Relief Mission:



IMHO Secretary, Dr. Thavam Thambipillai, recently volunteered his time on a relief trip to Haiti as part of a volunteer medical group led by the Interfaith Medical Center, an Episcopal Hospital based in New York. The team traveled to Petit-Goave, just outside Port-au-Prince, where they attended to the ongoing medical needs of the massive numbers of persons left displaced, homeless, injured, and sick in the wake of the devastating earthquake that rocked Haiti earlier this year. Dr. Thambipillai, who is a transplant surgeon from Dayton, Ohio, has volunteered on medical relief trips before, but described the situation in Haiti as being tremendously dire and beyond anything else he had ever experienced. IMHO initially responded to the crisis in Haiti by donating \$5,000 to Partners in Health, an organization which got its start serving impoverished communities in Haiti and has since become a leader there.

Upcoming Events

*****7th Annual IMHO Convention in Boston, MA*****

WHEN: Friday, April 30th & Saturday, May 1st, 2010

WHERE: Hilton Boston/Woburn, 2 Forbes Road, Woburn, MA, 01801

WHAT: 7th Annual IMHO Convention with guests from Sri Lanka, UK, and US, with a focus on mental health and physical rehab in Sri Lanka

This year we are welcoming several of our esteemed colleagues and partners from Sri Lanka and elsewhere. The focus of this year's convention will be on mental health & psychosocial rehabilitation for IDPs and resettled IDPs, as well as physical rehabilitation for amputees and others left injured by the war. Our scheduled agenda is as follows:

Friday, April 30th

6:00-7:00pm: Welcome Dinner

7:00-9:00pm: CME Activities

8:00-10:00pm: Youth Forum & Women's Forum

Saturday, May 1st

8:00am-12:00pm: Workshops on mental health and physical rehabilitation, featuring several speakers visiting from Sri Lanka and representatives from other NGOs

12:00pm-1:30pm: Lunch

1:30-5:00pm: Afternoon Break

5:00-9:30pm: Keynote Speaker, IMHO Presentations, Chief Guest, Annual Boston Saree Auction, and Dinner

You can view and download the event flyer and Youth Forum flyer from the website: <http://www.theimho.org/events/upcoming-events/details/28-7th-agm>. You can also view the **official Boston Convention website:** <http://www.bostonimhoconvention.org/>

Hotel rooms are now available for booking by phone at 781.932.0999. For reservations by phone, group nightly rates are \$129/night, which includes continental breakfast. Please ask for the group rate for the International Medical Health Organization (IMHO). For those who will be flying in, we recommend flying in & out of Boston Logan Intl. Airport.

Please RSVP to the IMHO Programs Coordinator at IMHOConvention@gmail.com to confirm your space, and notify us if you have a particular preference for vegetarian or non-vegetarian meals. We look forward to seeing you this spring in Boston!

*****2nd Annual IMHO Ohio Golf Tournament*****

WHEN: Monday, May 17th, 2010 at 12:30pm

WHERE: New Albany Country Club, 1 Club Lane, New Albany, OH, 43054

WHAT: 18-hole scramble at the Jack Nicklaus Championship Golf Course

HOW MUCH: \$300/player or \$1,000/team of 4

Please register yourself or your team early to ensure your spot in the tournament. You will have the chance to win a car at the hole-in-one hole sponsored by Liberty--Dodge, Chrysler, and Jeep. For more information or to view the event flyer, please visit website for more details <http://www.theimho.org/events/upcoming-events/details/27-ohio-2nd-golf-tourney>

*****Nalam Kaappom (Save Lives) 2010: Toronto*****

WHEN: Saturday, June 5, 2010 from 6:00-9:00pm

WHERE: Canada Sri Ayyappan Temple, 635 Middlefield Road, Scarborough, ON M1V 5B8

CONTACT: contact@imhocanada.org; 416.321.9555

Please join IMHO Canada for this annual event to learn about the most current and pressing needs of the people in Sri Lanka, including firsthand accounts from three visiting physicians from Sri Lanka. This event is also the annual fundraising event for IMHO Canada, so please come out and show your support, and make a donation to the important work we do to help those in great need in Sri Lanka.

**Be the
Difference.
Save a Life
with just
\$10/month.
DONATE
TODAY!**

During this crucial time in Sri Lanka and around the world, as we face monumental challenges in providing better access to quality medical and health care for those most at-risk populations, we need YOUR HELP now more than ever. With **just \$15/month** you can make a huge difference in the quality of life for those in need. Please consider making a donation to IMHO Canada today. You can **donate online via PayPal as a one-time or recurring donation** (the amount & frequency of which are up to you).

You can also **donate via mail** by sending a check made out to "IMHO Canada" to the following address:

**IMHO Canada Treasurer
Unit #7-5637 Finch Ave. East
Toronto, ON M1B 2T9
Canada**

IMHO Canada is a registered not-for-profit organization in Canada.