

Rotary Club of Stevenage Grange

press release july 2008 (1 of 2)

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People in Stevenage view disaster relief tents sent in response to Cyclone Nargis and earthquakes in China

ShelterBox, a Rotary charity provides emergency shelter for disaster victims around the world. It was the first relief organisation to be allowed into Burma following Cyclone Nargis, which left 150,000 dead and over 2 million homeless.

Stevenage Grange Rotary Club's 'ShelterBox' exhibition was held last Friday at the Exhibition Area in Stevenage New Town. The Mayor of Stevenage, Councillor Mike Patston, one of many to visit told the Comet "When natural disasters strike its good to know that organisations such as Rotary International have the fast response capability and international credibility to make a huge difference for ten of thousands of displaced people."



Some 1,500 ShelterBoxes have been shipped to Burma. Other 'boxes' and 4,400 tents to China. Each provides a family of 10 with the basics for survival for 6 months following.

Stephen Sypula, the Club's International Committee Chairman commented. "International programmes such as ShelterBox, ROI, and our local community activities are only possible thanks to the generosity of the public who support us"

Those wishing to make a donation to are invited to send a cheque to the Club's Treasurer, Ray Turner, C/O The Cromwell Hotel, Stevenage. Cheques payable to Stevenage Grange Rotary Club. For further details contact stephen@sgrc.org.uk or visit their web sites www.sgrc.org.uk

press release july 2008 (2 of 2)

Rotary Club help make blindness history for many in developing countries



The Mayor of Stevenage, Councillor Mike Patston made an unscheduled visit last Friday to meet Mr Roger Armour, inventor of the pen-sized ophthalmoscope called the Optyse™.

Adopted by Stevenage Grange Rotary Club to support its *Make Blindness History* programme, the Optyse™ has been distributed to over 45 countries around the globe.

Mr Armour (Roger), a retired Surgeon at Lister Hospital was delighted that the Mayor took time out of his busy schedule to join him in at the Club's display by the Clock Tower. Councillor Patston was suitably impressed by the ease with which he could use the ophthalmoscope to get an immediate view of Roger's retina, which can show early signs of heart disease, diabetes, as well as eye disorders.



Commenting on the programme called the Rotarians Ophthalmic Initiative (ROI), Ian Begg, the Club's ROI Chairman said. "Some 2 million people go blind needlessly each year. A child who goes blind in a developing country is twice as likely to die by his or her 13th birthday. With the help of local people and businesses, other Clubs in the UK, Sightsavers International and other global eye-care charities, the Club seeks to provide both early eye-screening for people in poor and remote locations, fund cataract operations and other eye-care treatments. The programme has already provided funds to restore sight for over 550 people in Mumbai, India. Other projects in Afghanistan, Africa and the Philippines are being considered by the Club"

The Club's Initiative supports WHO and VISION 2020: The Right to Sight's aim to eradicate unnecessary blindness by the year 2020.