

# Volunteers to build health clinic in village

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been completely destroyed, she knew she had to do something to help.

That was three years ago. Since then, the 38-year resident of Canada has 'adopted' the village of Timushan made up of approximately 1,500 people - mostly children, and has seen the project grow by leaps and bounds.

Timushan's only public school was destroyed by the hurricane. There is no clean water source and the nearest medical facility is 10 kilometres away. Since 1998, malnutrition, poverty and disease have ravaged the community forgotten by its own government.

In 2001, Rossi's first mission to Timushan laid the groundwork for the upcoming trip.

One of the volunteers was Oakville resident Thelma Hooper who is also a member of the Halton and Peel Central America Relief Effort.

"It opened our eyes," she said. "We couldn't believe there were people in the world living in such impoverished conditions. You can't believe what it means to have nothing until you see it with your own eyes. I'm was thrilled to be able to help."

"To know that people believed in us is the most important thing," adds Rose DiBiase, a Mississauga resident, who has been Rossi's 'right hand lady' since almost the beginning. She taught the village women how to sew during the last trip. "I've never met anyone with as much drive and determination as Hilda. Together, we will achieve our goals."

Louis Gris, a lab technician at Oakville-Trafalgar Memorial Hospital, led crafts projects with the many children in the village last year.

"At first I questioned my own reasons for wanting to go on the trip," he admits. "I thought they were selfish reasons, but it was so rewarding. It affected me. There aren't too many days when I don't think about it."

Fundraising to help construct the houses and the Multi-Service Community Centre and Health Clinic began almost immediately upon their return to Canada.

Thanks to the generosity of several organizations, 22 schools in Acton, Brantford, Halton and Peel, social clubs and churches (especially Crossroads Ministries which donated \$10,000 toward the construction of the houses) and too many individuals to mention, the centre will soon open its doors.

Main donations totaling \$37,500 came from the Rotary Club of Mississauga Airport matched by the Canadian Rotary Committee for International Development (CRCID), the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), The Rotary Foundation and The Rotary Club of Guatemala.

## New name for West Oak Trails school

West Oak Public School was selected the new name of the Oakville elementary school opening in the West Oak Trails community on Fourth Line in Oakville in September 2002. The name was accepted unanimously despite worries from a few trustees that the abbreviation might be considered ethnically derogatory.

"Just don't come to me when people come to complain about the acronym," vice-chair Mary Chapin, an Oakville trustee, told her colleagues around the board table.

Chapin suggested changing the name to West Oak Trails P.S. but was told it could not be considered because it was not one of the short-listed names.

On that list was Trailside P.S. (one vote); West Oak P.S. (10); Royal Oak P.S. (2); Westwood P.S. (3); and Oakside P.S. (1).



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## HERITAGE TRAILS

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"We couldn't believe there were people in the world living in such impoverished conditions. You can't believe what it means to have nothing until you see it with your own eyes."

• Oakville volunteer  
Thelma Hooper

"The money will be used to purchase equipment and supplies to complete the construction," explains Carole Berry, a member of the Rotary Club of Mississauga Airport. Her husband Richard will be a part of the humanitarian mission in April.

"Because Timushan is an isolated area, it has been challenging to encourage people to contribute to this project," she admits. "My role is to negotiate the contracts and write the proposals - about four inches of files. Clean water and literacy are the things that forge long-term change. Such a small amount of money by North American standards goes a very long way down there. Hilda never gives up and her downright determination will reap profound results."

Others who have made a difference include Oakville's Halton Healthcare Services Chief Human Resources Officer Bonnie Harrow, who is a strong supporter of the project. Her Senior Administrative Assistant, Bonnie Fuller, raffled off tickets to Toronto Maple Leafs and Toronto Raptors games to raise money for the cause. Fuller also arranged for donations of first aid kits and other

medical supplies through the pharmacies at Oakville-Trafalgar Memorial Hospital (OTMH) and Milton District Hospital.

Four sewing machines were donated by Carole Daniels, OTMH Manager of Volunteer Services, and Joan Jeffery, President of the OTMH Volunteers' Auxiliary.

Credit should also go to Ana Paredes, President of the Hispanic Development Council's Board of Directors and a Halton and Peel Central America Relief Effort Board member, who has been instrumental in providing logistical support to the project. On April 27, she will join 26 Canadian volunteers including bricklayers and a nurse in Guatemala, along with six students from the University of Guelph and nine students from McMaster University.

Roman Krilavicius, also a member of the Rotary Club Mississauga Airport, agreed to store clothing, tools, medical supplies and other items in his warehouse that will be shipped by container to Guatemala on April 1.

"Many people have been a tremendous help," attests Rossi. "It's my fervent hope that the aid that we bring to the people of Timushan will be treasured and remembered always as we push toward a better future for the impoverished and the needy of Guatemala."

If you would like to support the cause, donate tools and equipment such as shovels, or if you're interested in attending the luncheon on April 7, call Hilda Rossi at (905) 849-8350, Cathyann Hoyle at (905) 631-8477, Rose DeBiase at (905) 273-5377, Ana Paredes at (416) 260-2279 or Louie Gris at (416) 766-2792.

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