

# ROTARY DISTRICT 6900



**First Six Months and Haiti Special Edition  
2010 - Issue 8 Roy Strickland, District Governor**

***Dream Big, Have Fun, & Serve Meaningfully***

## Report to the District – The First Six Months

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Rotarians and Family of Rotary,

It is a privilege to serve as your District Governor. Suzanne and I have completed the Official Visits and we have seen the energy in our clubs – and the incredible good works.

We have also found communities hurting from the economy – and towns where the banks have failed, the car dealers are gone, and clubs have lost some good Rotarians. We are sensitive to stresses of the economy and the strain on some clubs and individual Rotarians.

The economy is difficult– yet you have responded – with membership growth and financial support beyond expectations. This is a “wow” district. You continue to make me say, “wow” as you exhibit your Rotarian spirit. I am proud to be a Rotarian – and especially proud to be a District 6900 Rotarian.

I am pleased to share with you a partial recap of the first six months of the 2009-2010 Rotary year. We began the year with the economy in deep recession. Membership on July 1, was 4,585- lowest in a number of years. Our Conference site was in immediate jeopardy and, at District Assembly, the club presidents authorized me to move the Conference to new location.

Following a highly successful Projects Fair in August, in which many of our clubs partnered for international service, we were informed on September 1 that Matching Grants funding was fully committed for the year and there could be no consideration for new projects. Then, disaster struck the District with the floods on September 21. All in all, it has been a challenging first six months.

But, you know what? You recognized that *The Future of Rotary is in Your Hands* and because of that, we are doing just fine. You have taken the bold steps to ensure our District's service continues and that our leadership position remains intact.

It actually began at 2008 PETS, when our then presidents-nominee attended in such numbers that we overtaxed the facilities. These future club presidents were getting ready to lead. In January 2009, at International Assembly, John Kenny introduced our theme, *The Future of Rotary is in Your Hands*, and senior Rotary leaders encouraged me to champion our District's participation in the Foundation's Future Vision project. I am pleased that the District submitted for and was accepted as a pilot district. District 6900 will help shape the Rotary Foundation of the future.

At Leadership Training, our team came together with one of the best attended sessions in district history. At PETS, we were honored to hear from then President-Elect John Kenny and Director Eric Adamson. Our presidents-elect were charged to Dream Big, Have Fun, and Serve Meaningfully. They have done so. What a great start!

In the first days of the Rotary year, our clubs set a new international standard for Foundation giving- with an Annual Programs Fund gift from every club in D6900. Our fine Annual Giving Co-Chairs Carol and Hector Colon, traveled to Evanston to present your early gifts. It was our best-ever start in Foundation giving – and Rotary took notice! This first-ever achievement was featured on the front page of the Rotary International website, in Rotarian Magazine and in Rotary World. A few weeks later, our Projects Fair was also touted on the front page of the RI website and, as a result, the District received international interest – and participation – in its inaugural Projects Fair.

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The Official Visits began in July, with our first stop, the 92-year old Rotary Club of Albany. I met for the first time, PDG Charlie Heinemann, our district's first Paul Harris Fellow. At this time, early discussions were taking place for Atlanta's bid for the 2017 International Convention. Atlanta Rotarians Spurgeon Richardson and Dick Stormont guided our District's efforts and the bid team they assembled prepared an outstanding bid proposal for Rotary International.

Just before District Assembly, we learned that Chairman of the Trustees of The Rotary Foundation and Past Rotary International President Glenn Estess will be President John Kenny's Representative to the District 6900 SuperConference. We are so pleased - and honored - that Glenn and Mary will be here representing President John and June. 449 Rotarians attended District Assembly in Columbus, making ready for their leadership roles. 449 Rotarians pledged that day to bring in a new member this year. Dedicated club leaders traveled from around the District and filled the Columbus Iron Works on a day of tornadoes and heavy rain- and endured a leaky roof!

And the District Conference site? We will convene the 2010 SuperConference inside our District, for the first time, at the Cobb Galleria Centre. We anticipate record attendance and participation for the biggest and best Conference in all of Rotary. Our Foundation and Membership Seminars and Projects Fair drew record numbers of participants - as did the sold-out Foundation Dinner at the Waverly Hotel. At the dinner, PRIP Frank Devlyn reminded us of the good works of Our Rotary Foundation and recognized many new Paul Harris Society members and Major Donors. We are on pace to add more new PHF's and PHS and Major Donors than in any previous year.

In September, Chairman Glenn Estess urged us to fund our international projects this year with District Designated Funds and with cash. He told us The Foundation match will be missing this year. We have done just that, and more clubs are participating in more projects than ever before - with many of our clubs partnering in service!

You responded generously and compassionately and made disaster relief funds available to the clubs in the communities affected by the flood - and you donated your time and labor to help the victims. We are indeed, a Family of Rotary.

All the while, you have served your local communities and the worldwide community. Our efforts in literacy, health and hunger, clean water and sanitation are significant.

We have delivered a new membership message this year. Making use of this message many of you are adding new members to your rosters. I am pleased to report that we are leading Zones 33 and 34 in growth with a net gain of 82 members. We welcome a new club this year, Emory-Druid Hills. Organization of yet another new club is in its infancy.

Our clubs are having a good year. Many have notable accomplishments. Smyrna Rotary began the year with a first day gift to TRF of more than \$71,000 - and the club repeated as a 100% Paul Harris Fellow Club. Smyrna is currently *Number Four in the World* in per capita giving to TRF. Did I mention how proud I am of my club?

The District's Annual Giving is on pace and total giving is ahead of last year at this time. I ask you to continue your generous support of Our Rotary Foundation.

To address the needs of Rotarians in our district we have introduced Career Networking resources. We have partnered with Georgia Libraries and are eager to see that partnership work to address literacy needs in Southwest Georgia.

Our Ethics message is being presented across the District and it is a message well received. Has PDG Claudia Mertl, District Ethics Chair, been to your club? In a time that many of our leaders in business and government are making bad choices and consciously doing wrong, we are reminded that more is expected from Rotarians.

We have worked to conserve the district's resources and protect its assets with conservative spending and reduction of expense where possible - with monies saved going to service. We will continue to serve. By combining our seminars we have introduced economies of scale and have required less travel and accommodations expense for our clubs.

I asked the Long Range Planning Committee this year to consider our district governance and make sure it reflects the will of the clubs and the Rotarians in the clubs and to ensure that it is consistent with the Manual of Procedure and Rotary's Code of Policies. I asked that same committee to consider our future positions respective to RLI and GRSP and how we can improve communications and implement a Strategic Leadership Plan.

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There are exciting happenings. Rotary International has informed us they intend to pursue Atlanta's bid for the 2017 International Convention and the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of The Rotary Foundation. D6900 Rotarians were at the forefront in attracting the International Convention.

We are organizing a Young Rotarians Group that will meet at the SuperConference in April. It is my hope that we will create new fellowship opportunities, identify emerging leaders and engage them in District service. For the first time, we will partner our clubs for fellowship at the District SuperConference – and we will introduce the District 6900 Choir, under the direction of Marietta Rotarian, Larry Freeman.

Now, we are at the halfway point of the 2009-2010 Rotary year. I ask that you help us close this year in a manner befitting this wonderful Rotary district – and I ask that we all celebrate a year of accomplishment at the SuperConference in April.

I asked our presidents to Dream Big. It is great to realize so many of the Big Dreams of our club presidents and their clubs. I encouraged you to Have Fun. Our service together and Family of Rotary has been special and the fun is just beginning - wait for the SuperConference! I asked you to Serve Meaningfully. You have done so beyond belief. You truly have made a difference for others. You continue to deliver Service Above Self and you astound me as I consider your good works and reflect upon the Goodness of Rotary.

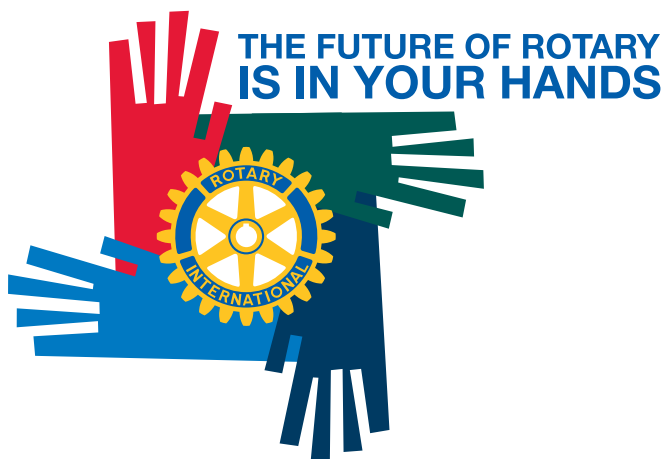
*Now, in the remaining months of the 2009-2010 Rotary year, I ask that each of you (1) Bring in a new member; (2) Make a special gift to the Annual Programs Fund; and (3) Register for and attend the District SuperConference.*

Those of you who can, please become a Paul Harris Society member or a Major Donor. The Foundation's works must continue and we enable the good works through our gifts.

I am proud to serve the *Best Rotary District* in the world! I am proud to serve with you. Thanks for all you do!

*The Future of Rotary is in Your Hands*

Best Rotary Regards, DG Roy



My Fellow D6900 Rotarians:

I am appealing to you for your generous support of the District's Charitable Fund to aid the people of Haiti. I have been in contact with DG Errol Alberga, my classmate from District 7020, and have assured him that we will respond in a manner befitting this great District. I am told the needs are overwhelming. A Rotarian in Haiti told us he has a hundred victims in his yard that he is taking care of. He has turned his home into a shelter but he is running out of supplies. This is the story across the country. The people are suffering. There are many dead in the streets. Our efforts today will save lives.

District 6900 Rotarian Wayne Robinson (R/C Alpharetta-Office Furniture) is on the way to Haiti with the ShelterBox team. Today, the District ordered ShelterBox kits for delivery to Haiti. We understand a first shipment of kits is moving today and more kits are being assembled at this time. Gifts made now will enable us to provide additional life sustaining kits.

DG Roy



January 15

There is an outpouring from Rotarians in the District following our appeal last evening. While there are many ways to help, to respond, we are focusing on ShelterBox kits.

We have a D6900 Rotarian in Haiti now as part of the ShelterBox Response Team. The Team is at work distributing the kits, working closely with local organizations, international aid agencies and Rotary clubs worldwide.

Rotarians are responding with generous gifts to the District 6900 Charitable Fund. We are sending those gifts immediately to fund ShelterBox kits.

Please let every Rotarian know about our efforts.

Checks made payable to:

Rotary District 6900 Charitable Fund, Inc



Haiti Update from Rotarian Wayne Robinson

January 18

Everything is well with me and my team. That's more than I can say for the Haitians. Every park/public area is just over run with people living in substandard conditions with food and water scarce. ShelterBox is responding in a big way but our boxes are not here yet but should be starting today/tomorrow. US military running airport and security.

Hospitals are well beyond capacity, numerous people awaiting medical attention in beds in the streets. I've seen numerous dead awaiting to be hauled off. We're working on logistics/security issues but it's slow and not unusual for the magnitude of this. Have as many as 2500 SB's in transit number changes each day. Plz. Pass along. Working with Rotary and UN

Wayne Robinson

January 22

Rotarians and Family of Rotary,

The outpouring from D6900 Rotarians in support of disaster relief has been incredible- and your gifts have gone right to work!

ShelterBox kits have arrived in Haiti and Rotarians there are delivering the kits to victims. Additional kits are being assembled non-stop and will soon be on the way. Despite what you have heard about aid not getting to the victims, we are assured that the ShelterBox kits are moving to those in need. Rotarians are there and seeing to the distribution. You can be very proud of our ShelterBox response.

I have been in touch with RI Director Eric Adamson and with Past RI Director Barry Rassin, of Nassau, Bahamas, who is doing much to coordinate Rotary's relief efforts in Haiti. Both are encouraging us now to support the Donor Advised Fund at The Rotary Foundation.

"Rotarians are working hard and fast to get help to those in Haiti," says Rassin, "We're at the same time working on long-term efforts."

Barry e-mailed me today, "Our big need will come down the road to rebuild the city and so we are strongly urging support through the Donor Advised Fund at TRF which will be a major source of our rebuilding efforts."

The Haiti Earthquake Relief Fund , a donor advised fund within The Rotary Foundation, has been established to streamline the flow of contributions from Rotarians looking to assist victims of the earthquake in Haiti. The fund will be directed by Rotarian account holders. The account holders will work with local Rotary clubs and districts, as well as emergency relief agencies, to meet the most pressing needs of people in affected areas. Account holders will make grant recommendations after consulting with District 7020 Governor Errol Alberga or his designee. Funds will be used in the relief effort and for projects providing longer-term support and development (e.g. funding for Rotary Foundation Matching Grant projects).



## Disaster relief: Haiti

After a devastating earthquake struck Haiti on 12 January in the area around the capital, Port-au-Prince, the Haiti Earthquake Relief Fund, a donor advised fund, was established through The Rotary Foundation to streamline contributions to recovery projects. Long-term projects will be listed on [ProjectLINK](#) in the coming months. [Learn more](#) about the Rotarian response and how to

*Victims of Haiti's recent earthquake seek shelter.*

*Photo by Mark Pearson/ShelterBox*



## Haiti Earthquake Relief Efforts Summary

### District 7020

### January 27, 2010



On Wednesday January 27, 2010 a delegation of Rotarians (PRID Barry Rassin, RIDE John Smarge, PDG Richard McCombe and PP Carla McCombe, DGE Diana White) along with one Orthopedic Surgeon (Dr. Patrick McGrath) who would stay, and ZNS News Anchor Jerome Pyfrom and Videographer Burton Wallace flew from Nassau to Pignon, Haiti. Our purpose was not to visit the epicenter but to meet with the Rotarian Leaders who have working tirelessly to bring relief to all they can.

We met at the Hôpital de Bienfaisance de Pignon which is run by DGN Dr. Guy Theodore. Dr. Theodore, AG Caleb Lucien and Adele Noel-Romelus from Pignon met us at the airport and transported us to the Hospital. AG Dr. Claude Surena, PP George Nicolas and Jean-Baptiste Brown flew to Pignon from Port-au-Prince to join us and ensure that we understand the present conditions and anticipated short term future needs of the most affected areas. Dr. Surena is our Rotary Disaster Chair for Haiti and also the President of the Haitian Medical Association and was appointed by President Preval to coordinate the receipt and distribution of all medical relief. His complete involvement into the relief efforts of the country is a great help for us to understand what is happening and what we need to do to assist. The Rotarians from Pignon have been coordinating the delivery of items sent in by Rotary to ensure they get to the appropriate people.

We only had a few hours as Dr. Surena had to return to meet with President Preval. When the meeting concluded we toured the Hospital which is overloaded with victims from the earthquake. We also toured the Hosean Mission and saw the housing for visiting physicians.

Below I have summarized the primary points made during our meeting:

1. The Government of Haiti immediately called a State of Emergency for three months which will enable an easier and more efficient entry of goods and medical personnel into the country. This could be extended to six months.
2. The acute relief efforts are coming to an end over the next couple days.
3. The next phase will be on fixed clinics and then hospitals as the medical care becomes much more focused.
4. They are working closely with WHO to get the supplies and equipment needed for patient care.
5. Orthopedic supplies and strong antibiotics (Bactrim, Cipro and Keflex) are still the most urgently needed in the medical area and will be for some time.
6. The Hospitals have been treating and the patients are recovering to go home but they have no home to go to. The plan is to put tents up next to the Hospitals in order to provide a step down situation for the patients out of the hospital.
7. They estimate a need of 200,000 tents to house those who lost their homes. Not necessarily full blown shelter boxes but just the tents.
8. Dr. Surena suggested that one possible Rotary project, in partnership with other agencies, would be to establish a Rehabilitation Center for all those who need Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy and Psychosocial Counseling. In conjunction with the facility we need to establish a workshop for artificial limbs (DGE Diana White has begun discussions with the Rotary Jaipur Limb project to plan for establishing locally the necessary workshops). There have been a substantial number of persons with crushed limbs resulting in amputations.
9. The School System in Port-au-Prince has been shut down. Those migrating to unaffected areas of the country are now causing an overflow situation in all schools that are available to continue. Many children have no school to attend.
10. The Government is now setting up a committee to handle the airport landing priorities as the Port-au-Prince airport has been overwhelmed.
11. Significant Rotary manpower will be needed but not yet.
12. They are in great need for psychological counselor who speaks Creole.
13. There is probably no more need for Rotary to supply medical teams as other organizations have now geared up and are providing appropriate manpower in the medical arena.
14. There is an urgent need for Food and water and that will continue for some time. While fixed and pre-prepared foods are good they would like to see more of a focus on staple goods like Rice and Beans. They will need to provide about 150,000 meals per day for many months to come. They are able to buy some of the basic food items locally for distribution if they could receive cash donations to do so. That would also help the economy.

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15. They need clothes including shoes as they lost all of their possessions. They ask for separated and sorted clothes.
16. They understand the need for an overall plan for relief and will begin on that task as they can; however they must do all they can to sustain life and develop an ability for the population to become self sufficient in the short term.
17. They have begun a concerted effort to locate Rotarians from all of the five Rotary Clubs that were affected. We will develop a report from each of the five Rotary Clubs so that we can also support them and assist them as individuals as they are also victims of the disaster. They have lost everything and need our help.
18. We are considering the purchase of a truck for Rotary in Haiti in order to help them move the high volume of supplies from the ports or the airports to those that have been targeted for distribution and assistance. What Rotary sends in aid is received by Rotarians and distributed to those in need.
19. All of these priorities listed does not mean that there are not other needs like x-ray machines, autoclaves, or specific supplies, but these listed are considered the top priorities for Rotary to pursue.
20. We in Nassau are now organizing a cargo ship to take into Port-au-Prince all the collected supplies from Rotary in The Bahamas, The Red Cross and the Methodist Conference. We are able to fill about 12 containers or more and so it will be much more effective to spend about \$40,000 for the ship to transport the goods. We will ship when the Port is ready to accept which is expected in two weeks. We will need the cash to pay for the ship but the containers are being lent to us at no charge. Again our Rotarians will meet and unload and distribute.
21. The Rotarians in Haiti greatly appreciate the outpouring of support from Rotary in The Bahamas and the District 7020 but also from all the neighboring districts and around the world. They are strong and positive and will continue to work to bring their country to the healthy, vibrant and productive country that it needs to be.
22. They specially thanked PDG Richard (Dick) McCombe for his incredible support and assistance from the first moment of the disaster. They also thanked RIDE John Smarge and DGE Diana White for our District 7020 for taking the time to fly in for this visit. They also appreciate the hard work being done by Rotarians within our District led by our excellent District Governor Errol Alberga.

We ask Rotary Clubs and Rotary Districts to consider the above and work with us to focus on their needs for today. However, please keep in mind that this is a long term relief effort and we will be part of the rebuilding and will need significant cash to participate in meaningful projects as time goes by and we have a plan in place for us to help implement.

I am proud to be a Rotarian and know that Rotary around the world will work side by side with our Rotarians in Haiti to bring them to a new and positive era for their country.

Please stay current with the needs as the transitioning of relief efforts will continue.

Barry Rassin  
PRID 2006-2008



## A MESSAGE FROM RI PRESIDENT JOHN KENNY

Almost two months after a powerful earthquake shook Haiti, signs of devastation are everywhere, underscoring the long road to recovery that lies ahead.

RI President John Kenny, who visited Haiti in late February, urged Rotarians to work with [District 7020](#)'s Haiti earthquake relief team coordinating aid to the nation.

"What they are basically saying is, 'What we need is money,' so they can buy locally the implements that are needed to help the reconstruction," Kenny said.

More than 250,000 people are estimated to have died in the 12 January earthquake and aftershocks in Port-au-Prince, with another million homeless.

Kenny said he felt it was important to visit Haiti "to show that Rotarians worldwide care about the plight of their fellow human beings, many of whom have lost everything."

He found that the destruction was even greater than he had expected.

"When you see it on television, it's one thing," he said. "But to actually be there and see some of these buildings the way they are and to know that there are people underneath that rubble -- the sheer magnitude you can't quite capture in film."

Accompanying Kenny on his 23 February trip were Past RI Vice President Roberto Valentín; Rotarian Charles Adams, who is coordinating a disaster relief committee in the neighboring Dominican Republic; and Ramiro Sánchez Melo, governor of District 4060 (Dominican Republic).

Past RI Director Barry Rassin and Past District Governor Richard McCombe also made a trip to Port-au-Prince earlier in the month to meet with Rotary leaders involved in relief work. Both are involved with organizing the aid effort in District 7020, which covers Haiti along with 10 other Caribbean nations and areas.

In addition to money, the district is asking for large tents that can serve as classrooms, recreation areas, community centers, or therapy shelters. Nearly all of the schools in the capital were destroyed by the earthquake.

Medical supplies and equipment, classroom materials, and agricultural tools are also needed. While food, water, and temporary shelter remain important, a report by District 7020 leaders notes that work needs to begin on sustainable housing to provide jobs, shelter, and an infrastructure to support residents. Relief workers are also being cautious about handing out free food and water because a substantial part of the economy is based on small farms and businesses, and street vendors who sell produce and other staples. Too many free items can put single-family businesses in trouble and trigger a downward economic spiral.

"The best form of aid that Rotarians can now give is cash to the Rotarians in District 7020 so that it can be used to purchase supplies of food and materials locally, protecting the local economy," Kenny said.

The RI president added that Rotarians must now help in the medium- and long-term recovery, which Rotary is set up to do well.

Rotarian Claude Surena, head of the Haiti Task Force and president of the Haitian Medical Association, is representing District 7020 on the government's Post Disaster National Assistance Committee, focused on long-term recovery.

"The road to reconstruction will be a long one," Kenny said. "But I know that Rotarians will continue to play an effective part all the way."

