

January 2011

Dear Governor

RI General Secretary Ed Futa recently sent you a message from President Ray Klinginsmith regarding Rotarian Action Groups (RAGs). It gives rise to the action asked for in this letter.

I am a Past Governor and Past Director of Rotary International. I am President of one of the 14 RAGs assisting and supporting clubs, districts, and multidistrict groups in planning humanitarian service in the area of Disaster Relief. **Disaster Relief – Rotarian Action Group (DRRAG)** is the Rotarian disaster agency that provides leadership and congruent planning, response, recovery and community building following a natural disaster. Like other RAGs, we are evolving as a global Rotary entity in which the clubs become the central focus under the guidance of the DG in a district.

As **President Ray** said in his letter to RAGs: “We hope this message will help facilitate your work as you initiate dialogue with districts around the world.” Rotary has been providing disaster relief in one form or another since 1913. We continue to support the notion of *“Building Communities – Bridging Continents”*! We hope you will continue to support your clubs in this area of service.

Firstly, it would be a demonstration of leadership for you to join DRRAG. You can do that by completing the attached application form.

As a grassroots organization, most of our humanitarian efforts are carried out at the club level. The DRRAG district and international structure is designed to support the clubs and help them enhance their service efforts in their communities and abroad. Most recently, with the financial support and help of Rotarians around the world, many DRRAG Rotarian members from district 7020 (Haiti) and 4060 (Dominican Republic) have worked tirelessly following the Haitian earthquake. The Chair of the DRRAG Advisory Board has been in Haiti almost continuously since the disaster.

It will be important for your clubs to understand how DRRAG works. Many Districts around the world have “Disaster Committees” at the Club and District level. Future communication from DRRAG will set out how your Clubs can form “emergency measures” committees ready to participate, as community service projects, with others in disaster management.

Secondly: Would you kindly forward this information to your club Presidents, newsletter editors and web-masters. The hope is that at least one member from each club will become a member of DRRAG so as to be part of the Rotary International Network of Disaster management. Ask your Club Presidents to join –or ask an interested member to join!

Many of our RAG member Clubs and Districts produce excellent electronic newsletters. We have been asked by President Ray to encourage you to invite Rotarians in your District to sign up and stay informed about the work DRRAG is doing. In addition, my colleagues and I invite you to share with us information about any newsworthy projects or events related to disaster resilience, preparation, training, response, recovery or community development following a disaster that will be of interest to the rest of the Rotary world. We will be happy to receive and post this information and pass it along to Rotary International.

DRRAG supports the RI strategic plan. It is our objective to support and strengthen clubs, focus and increase humanitarian service, and enhance public image and awareness. By providing a coordinated response to disasters through DRRAG, Rotary will be immeasurably strengthened and our public image will be heightened!

From time to time disasters with global scope have resulted in Rotarians wanting to contribute money to immediate relief. Rotarian Action Groups may solicit funds from individuals and/or organizations, so long as donations are made directly to an implementing organization working with Rotary clubs on a project

DRRAG provides immediate disaster response services through its “implementing” organization: **Disaster Aid International**. Through this “partnership”, DRRAG has the capacity to offer immediate response in the wake of a natural disaster. DRRAG is now able to fulfill its RI Board sanctioned mandate by expanding the Rotary International Network for disaster response.



Disaster Aid International is a Rotary Club supported Rotarian disaster agency in all countries where it has partners. DAI is comprised of four partner countries (to date)

Canada, where it is a club project of the Rotary Club of Royal Oak Centennial in Victoria BC

Australia, where it is a club project of the Rotary Club of Endeavour Hills.

England, where it is a club project of the Rotary Club of Denton & Audenshaw

USA, where it is a club project of the Rotary Club of Sulphur Sunrise in Louisiana and the Rotary Club of Bladensburg, Maryland

All four country Disaster Aid organizations are the fundraising entities and together are equal Rotary partners in Disaster Aid International, whose purpose is to source, deliver and deploy all aid provided. They will do this in collaboration with your Rotary Clubs.

DAI provides shelter kits in aid boxes known as **Family Survival Packs**. Disaster Aid Response Teams provide assessment and initial humanitarian aid. These Packs can be funded through the hundreds of Club DAI Ambassadors that you will hear more about in future communications.

In the meantime if you would like more information about becoming an Ambassador or a DART (Disaster Aid Response Team) member, you can contact DAI Executive Director Don Ohlgren at don@disasteraidinternational.com



In summary:

- Thank you for learning more about RAGs and Disaster Relief – Rotarian Action Group
- Please join DRRAG
- Thank you for circulating this email to your Clubs
- Please invite a member from each of your clubs to have a member join DRRAG
- Kindly let us know if we have your permission to communicate directly with your clubs:
 - Monthly newsletters
 - News from DAI
 - News on current Disasters
 - News from RI on disaster initiatives.
 - Up-dates on Disasters and hot-buttons to the DRRAG web site

· Visit our web sites: www.DRRAG.org and www.disasteraidinternational.com

Future Communications will include:

- The anatomy of a disaster and how Rotarians have helped
- How RAGs work with Clubs in this area of service
- How deployment of Family Survival Packs works
- What are the funding models that support disaster relief
- How do DRRAG and DAI support the internationally recognized SPHERE standards for disaster relief
- What is the role of a C-DRC (Club – Disaster Relief Coordinator)
- How to organize a Club (and District) Disaster Relief Committee
- And many more topics of interest to Clubs and Districts

Thank you for joining the pursuit of peace through the provision of aid to the needy in times of disasters.

John Eberhard
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Director, Rotary International 2003-2005
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