



SOUNDING BOARD

Newsletter of the North American Relief Sale Board

September 2008

Coordinators' Report

It has been almost seven years since we have assumed the position of Relief Sale Coordinators with MCC. It has been a very satisfying and interesting seven years but by the end of this year we feel it is time to move on. When we originally decided to interview for this position we were not certain that we were qualified since the sale we were involved with was only three years old and we did not have extensive experience with the broader sale network. However when we started working with the sales we found a very enthusiastic and supporting group of volunteers who were easy to get to know and were willing to help us during those first few months. We would like to take this opportunity to THANK each of you for all the love and support that we have felt during these past seven years.

If you have a strong interest and involvement in relief sales (and most of you reading this newsletter do indeed have this qualification) we would encourage you to consider the position of Relief Sale Coordinator. You can learn more about the position by contacting Barb Schrag bks@mcc.org or Phil Rush PhilRush@mcc.org.
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It is my privilege to bring you greetings on behalf of MCC! I am new to my role as the Resource Generation Network Director, having just begun full-time in June. I have been learning a lot during these past few months, and still have much more to learn. One of the things that was clear to me from the start of this work is that there are many, many dedicated people who come together to make possible the work of MCC around the world.

Relief Sales are a very important part of that circle of people. Your work benefits so many people in so many ways. While the money raised via Relief Sales is used by MCC to help many hurting and needy persons around the world, I believe there is value in the community-building aspects of Relief Sales as well. I have described Relief Sales as "Mennonite Festivals" at which we see old friends, meet new ones, and come together from many different backgrounds to share a common purpose (and eat good food, too, of course -- common aspect of many cultural celebrations around the world!).

The needs of the world continue to be great. MCC is responding in significant new ways to needs in the Sudan and Congo, and is also launching the first stage of major programming to address the growing needs related to food and hunger around the world.

In the
name of
CHRIST



**Mennonite
Central
Committee**

Thanks to you and your efforts, MCC can continue to help bring hope and peace to those in need "In the Name of Christ."

Phil Rush, Resource Gen. Network Director



2009 Relief Sale Biennial Workshops

Thursday & Friday

May 28 & 29, 2009

Iowa City, Iowa

This is the same week as the 2009 Iowa Mennonite Relief Sale to be held May 29 & 30, 2009 in Iowa City. Registration information and more details will be sent to the chairmen and posted on the web page www.mcc.org/reliefsales in January 2009.

There will be more than one dozen workshops covering many aspects of relief sale operation. Please pass the word on to your volunteers.

\$1 + \$1 =



You probably have one in your pocket right now. It wasn't that long ago that \$1 bought a gallon of gas. Sometimes we don't think to give in small amounts because we don't think it will be enough to make a difference. Giving a donation of \$1 to a cause seems almost a joke. Consider, however, an often-cited statistic in the discourse of international development and aid: "Half of the world's population lives on less than \$1 a day."

This fact turns that kind of thinking on its head. \$1 can mean life, education, food, water and health to millions of people around the world. And \$1 mobilized from each person in a community or network has the power to effect a great deal of change (pun intended.). That \$1 in your pocket may be worth more than you think.

Often cited is the fact that "every dollar helps," but have you considered asking for donations in the amount of \$1? Examples would be asking for donations of \$1 per day or per mile or per point in hike/bike/sports events. Ask people to donate \$1 for every glass of water they drank in a day or every time they consumed food in a day or week. \$1 will help build a house or clothe a child.

The Power of \$1 *\$1 provides:*

- Vegetable seeds for one family
- Rice, beans, oil, salt and instant noodles for a family of six for one day
- Two days of supplemental food and multivitamins for one AIDS patient
- Nine people giving \$1 can provide food for an orphan for a month.
- Emergency food for one person for three days
- Twenty people giving \$1 can build a canal to provide water for one family.
- Two people giving \$1 can buy enough supplies to help one child in Bangladesh attend school for one year.
- Fifteen people giving \$1 will irrigate a half-acre plot where one family can raise enough food to last for six months.

Go to www.mcc.org/reliefsales/resources to access a list of "Blurbs" (short phrases as above) to use in publicity or presentations) or ask the Bergs.

Would Wood? There is now a website up and running to help you select unique wood items that you can buy for auction at your sale. www.ohwood.embarqspace.com features the pictures and prices of over 100 wood items from the Ohio area. Twenty-five sales have already visited this website – has your sale been there?? (For additional information about this opportunity, see the March 2008 issue of the Sounding Board page 2).

High Tech Barn Raising of the Michiana Relief Sale The Michiana Mennonite Relief Sale is still working hard to pay for the damages exceeding the insured amounts that were incurred due to the 2007 fire in the food booths during their sale. If your sale would like to help, please contact Melba Nunemaker at pnune@aol.com or (574) 238-6616. (For additional information about this need see the June 2008 issue of the Sounding Board page 2). To date, \$5,000 has been raised. *Back issues of the "Sounding Board" and "Love, Joy, Piece" newsletters may be found on www.mcc.org/reliefsales web page.*

Donations Accepted on Auctions Continue

to Rise. Over 100 houses are being rebuilt for the cyclone victims in Bangladesh from donations

placed on the relief sale auctions - more will be built from funds upcoming this year. The traveling Homes for



Bangladesh quilts have served as a reminder of the need for shelter as audiences listen to the MCC story. Over \$9,000 has been raised for MCC Food Projects by displaying the model meat canner and over \$21,000 has been raised thus far for MCC projects to house, feed and educate street children. If your sale is interested in presenting any of the above projects, please let us know.

There are many other worthwhile projects that are being supported by donations on the auction. Over \$125,000 has been raised so far for these special projects this year. Not only do donations accepted on the auction provide the opportunity to highlight the MCC story but it also gives those who do not need the sale items for themselves or for a gift to also contribute to others.

Donors do not need a bidder number. They can be directed to make a donation during the day at the cashier's table (be sure to set up a project name and number with the clerks prior to the sale.)

Chinese churches carry out unprecedented relief response.

On May 12 an earthquake struck China's Sichuan province, killing over 100,000 people and leaving millions homeless. While Christians make up only 1 to 2 percent of the population of Sichuan, local congregations undertook an unprecedented relief effort in the aftermath of the earthquake, providing aid to thousands of people. "For Christians, this is a good chance to show God's love," Peter, a Chinese pastor said. Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and Mennonite Partners in China (MPC) jointly provided funds to support the relief work of

churches in Sichuan. Within a few days of the earthquake, three Protestant churches in Sichuan became distribution points for supplies and staging grounds for relief convoys.

Each church purchased rice, medicine and other supplies, such as blankets, bottled water and plastic sheets, and distributed these items to church and community members on the basis of need. To reach some areas, the church volunteers used trucks or motorized tricycles.

Peter reported that one community leader admitted that she had been opposed to Christianity until a group of church volunteers arrived with rice following the earthquake. "She was educated to be an atheist and thought Christians were weak and



superstitious," Peter said. "She said she had drastically changed her idea of Christianity. I asked her why. She said 'These are wonderful people. They show real love, and I want to know how God can change their lives like this.'" *Tim Shenk is a writer for Mennonite Central Committee.*

Resources Available: *Brochures* - "Action Against Hunger"; "Enough Food"; "MCC Fact Sheet 2008"; "Make a dream come true"- Global Family; "Daily terror: walking in war's aftermath"- Regarding campaign to ban cluster bombs. *Free from MCC Offices or order online at the MCC Store* <http://secure.mcc.org/mccstore/>

DVDs/Videos - "In the Name of Christ"- Stories of MCC giving; "A Season of Hope"- How does MCC find creative ways to share limited food and water resources. *Borrow from MCC Offices, MCC Store or purchase.*

There are also many web-based resources, slide shows and podcasts that may be downloaded and used in presentations. Go to a topic that interests you on www.mcc.org to find photos, slide shows and podcasts or ask an MCC representative or the Bergs for locations.

What is Happening at Relief Sales?

Southern California - Volunteers monitor yard sales year-round for antiques to sell on the antique tables.

Idaho - Penny Power benefitted from a new "Sound-Off Wall". The kids were able to make a lot of noise as they donated the pennies that they had saved during the year and this made giving just that much more fun.

Black Creek, BC - A Cajun food booth complete with music and fun sign resulted in a lot of enjoyment and was delicious as well.

Iowa - Dinners were offered on the auction for groups of 4 -

11 as well as homemade ice cream to be delivered and a garden tea. Also you could purchase a massage, a Greek meal, lamb with all

of the trimmings, Mexican meal, steak meal, Middle Eastern meals, BBQ ostrich burger picnic, turkey steak, Amish meal, German Sunday dinner, surf and turf, plus a variety of other meals. In addition, a walk in the woods topped off with burgers on an outdoor firepit along with singing around the fire.

New Hamburg - A Run for Relief, organized by a young couple, was held on Saturday morning of the sale and over 200 runners helped raise \$10,000.

Leamington - The children enjoyed the day riding in a train pulled by a lawn tractor and riding on the ponies.

Saskatoon - Various churches conducted programs and events and donors contributed to raise enough funds to cover all of the expenses prior to the sale.

Winnipeg - The children's coordinator had a worker from Uganda showing the kids how to make toys out of cast-off junk and met with a wonderful response.



Black Swamp - Mud volleyball continues to grow and brings more people in to the benefit. Forty teams consisting of 5-6 members on a team were registered with a fee of \$60 per team. Sponsors increased the funds generated.

Aylmer - The Radio Station was used extensively to promote the event. When the word was sent on the radio that there was extra pork chops for sale, it did not take long for those to be sold out as well.

So. Valley Foodgrains Bank - met with a record sale. More cattle were donated as well as machinery and a combine.

Alberta - The executive committee is working on gathering reports, site plans, budget information and other information to place on a disk to be available to future committee heads. Hopefully this will save time in future planning. \$23,000 of donations was raised for projects on the auction!

Brandon - raised over \$17,000 with a cycle event.

TriState - When bidders applied for their bidder numbers, the clerks asked how they heard about the event. The answer was placed in the bidder data base, giving helpful clues to know what works best in advertising. A nature walk led by a botanist was auctioned.

Minn-Kota - Their quilt feature this year was offering a color challenge. Packets of fabric were prepared by the quilt committee for people to make items using these colors. The items were displayed and attendees were invited to vote on their favorite item. The People's Choice winner sold for \$2,350.

No. Michigan- web site includes information to answer about every question including lodging, press release, downloadable brochure and more. www.reliefsale.org

Ohio (Kidron) MCC alumni told stories of their work during the auction and prior to the children's auction. The emphasis of the end results of fund raising for MCC made an impact.

Gap (Quarryville, PA) Celebrated their 60th anniversary. Leon Summers, owner of the farm where the first relief sale was held, has attended every sale!