May 9, 2014
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Kiwanis International highlights importance of accessible immunizations


Randy DeLay, chairman of The Eliminate Project for Kiwanis International, told the attendees about the importance of all women of childbearing age having access to the tetanus toxoid vaccine and education on safe birthing practices in order to eliminate maternal and neonatal tetanus, a preventable disease that kills one baby every nine minutes and a significant number of women each year.

“By funding tetanus immunizations for these women, we’re protecting the connection between mothers and babies,” DeLay said. “Kiwanis International is hard at work raising funds to eliminate maternal and neonatal tetanus in the 25 countries where MNT remains a threat.”

In 2010, Kiwanis International joined UNICEF and other partners in the fight against MNT. Since then, 14 countries have eliminated the disease.

“Each and every day our clubs continue to step up by hosting fundraisers and making individual gifts to The Eliminate Project,” said Kiwanis International Foundation President Lance Incitti. “Kiwanians are making a difference by helping those most vulnerable and protecting mothers and babies from the ravages of tetanus.”
Tetanus can infect newborns, spreading quickly, causing excruciating pain and killing within days. It is mainly caused by a lack of access to sanitary birthing conditions, unclean instruments used to cut the umbilical cord and unclean post-partum cord care. Neonatal tetanus is a terrible disease, preventing even the comfort of a mother’s touch.

MNT is easily prevented by giving women of childbearing age a series of three vaccine doses, which costs roughly US$1.80. This cost includes vaccinations, syringes, safe storage, transportation and more.

Kiwanis International is aiming to raise US$110 million by 2015 to protect at least 61 million women and their future babies, and has nearly reached the halfway point, raising US$52 million in cash and pledges to date. The Eliminate Project will do more than protect women and babies from tetanus—it will also create a path for other services, such as health education, clean water, nutrition and other vaccines.

About Kiwanis
Founded in 1915, Kiwanis International is a global organization of clubs and members dedicated to serving the children of the world. Kiwanis and its family of clubs, including Circle K International for university students, Key Club for students age 14–18, Builders Club for students age 11–14, Kiwanis Kids for students age 6–12 and Aktion Club for adults living with disabilities, dedicate annually more than 18 million service hours to strengthen communities and serve children. The Kiwanis International family comprises nearly 600,000 adult and youth members in 80 countries and geographic areas. For more information about Kiwanis International, please visit www.kiwanis.org.

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