London charity walk
Negar Monemi reports on fundraising for the Musoma Regional Hospital in Tanzania

Earlier this year, a group of London vocational training advisors (VTs) recently combined education with exercise to raise vital funds for a Tanzanian hospital. Before the group put on their walking shoes, they enjoyed a morning of presentations to learn more about their worthy cause. First, Professor Eddie Lynch gave the group a clinical talk, donating his lecture fee to Children in Need, before Manny Vasant MBE, regional VT advisor, gave a short presentation on the plight of residents of Musoma, Tanzania. Among other things, he highlighted the lack of essential items at the main regional hospital in Tanzania, such as a supply of oxygen. The Tanzanian High Commissioner and Deputy High Commissioner listened, along with Lizzie Cameron, a dedicated charity worker in Musoma. Also present was a VT who took part in last year’s event, Karen Blake, who won a digital camera for the best key skills project at the Central London Study Group and kindly chose to donate her prize to another cause in Musoma – the Lake Victoria Disabled Centre.

Made for walking
The six mile charity walk along the River Thames started in the afternoon from St Mary’s Church in south-west London, stopping at Barnes for a well-deserved rest and refreshments at the Bull’s Head pub. From here, the walk continued to the final assembly point – All Saints Church on Putney Common – where there was a welcome barbecue (courtesy of the DPL) and gospel singing arranged by Arif Lalani, VT for Kingston.

The six mile walk along the Thames is part of the charity’s series of fundraising events held each year. In 2006 and 2007, the charity had raised around £2,500, which has been used to build a resuscitation unit with three additional beds with oxygen concentrators and suction units (originally the hospital only had two). It also provided a defibrillator, electricity generator and an air-conditioning unit. With the additional £8,000 raised during this walk, further essential equipment will be provided. Fundraising doesn’t stop here. Later this year, Manny Vasant will lead a delegation of volunteers to provide medical/dental, building and other community services in Musoma.

Funds are channelled through the Tanzania Development Trust, a UK registered charity, and 100 per cent of the money raised goes to fund the charity. To this date, no one has been paid any reimbursements. Any travel is paid for by the volunteers themselves. The idea for the charity came from a visit Manny made to Musoma, to oversee some school projects and to refurbish a dental unit in the same hospital (funded by Southern Counties BDA). During his visit, he was approached by a father of a nine-month-old baby who had just died due to the lack of an oxygen machine. On his return, Manny and Arif Lalani, both Vocational Training Advisers to the London Deanery, with the encouragement of the Dean, Elizabeth Jones, planned this educational/charity where London VTs try to help these unfortunate people in Musoma.

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