

Packing with Care

“Compassionate Warehouse prepares for 200th shipment overseas.”

By Amy Dove, Saanich News

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Volunteers with the Compassionate Resource Warehouse are sending everything but the kitchen sink overseas with their 200th shipment. That said, a few bathroom sinks will be crammed into the 40-foot shipping container being packed today, Aug 24, at the group's Colwood warehouse.

“This has been a lot of work for people’ said warehouse coordinator Dell Marie Wergeland. The specific nature of the project has made collecting materials a little trickier than past shipments. The supplies are for an orphanage for children living with disabilities. Located just outside Naga City in the Philippines, more than 60 children under the age of four are expected to live there. At the moment, there is no furniture in the building. That will change when 30 cribs, a smattering of mattresses, donated La-Z boy furniture and everything else a child's home would need are delivered in September.

The collection started in May and the response has been incredible. Dell Marie said as she directed volunteers hauling the latest load of donations. ‘You can just pop that right here – it's going to the Philippines,” Dell Marie said to one of the 100 volunteers working on the project.

Local health organizations have donated beds, wheelchairs and physiotherapy equipment for the project. The items fill the Colwood warehouse, with a pile of children's toys towering on top of it all. Based in Esquimalt, the Compassionate Resource Warehouse opened in 2000. The volunteer group collects and ships containers to countries such as Bolivia, Honduras, Cambodia, Guatemala, Russia and several countries in Africa.

The cost to send one container by sea ranges from \$10,000 to \$12,000. Outside sponsors pick up the tab so the organization can focus on gathering supplies, not fundraising, explained Leif Wergeland, Saanich councillor and CRW co-founder.

“The growth of the warehouse has been a small miracle” he said. Hospitals, schools and organizations donate regularly now, and the group is becoming known beyond these parts.

On Aug 21, a truck load of medical equipment arrived from Alberta. A retired doctor donated her entire office, from the exam tables to garbage cans – to the organization. But corporate donations don't negate the need for smaller contributions from people, Wergeland said. "Not everyone has \$10, but everyone has a T-shirt (they can give)," Dell Marie added.

Starting in Sept, donations of clean, quality clothes and school supplies and other items can be dropped off Wednesday and Friday between 0930a, and 4pm. The warehouse's address is provided when people call, Leif said. They don't disclose the location online to avoid problems with other organization encounter with unusable materials being dropped off.

For more information on the Compassionate Resource Warehouse, go to www.crwarehouse.ca or call 381-4483.