

MISAOTRA

"Thanks to you!"

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SEEDS Project helps bridge food insecurity: One thousand families and 30 schools will benefit

The problem of food insecurity – not enough food and no reliable source of food – threatens the well-being of many of Madagascar's poor. Due to the generosity of the Watson Children's Foundation that problem will be eased for a thousand families in the Toamasina region this summer. They will participate in the Watson Foundation's Seeds Project. The foundation has sponsored this project for the last three years in partnership with Seed Programs, Inc. Families in at least half a dozen developing nations have already benefited from the opportunity to produce vegetables and fruits in home gardens. This spring, Caring Response Madagascar Foundation was invited to join this effort to bring nutrition and better health to children and their families.

The program has operated successfully in Liberia, Haiti, the Ivory Coast, the Democratic Republic of Congo and elsewhere. Each family who is enrolled in the program receives six packets of different kinds of fruit or vegetable seeds. Since its inception, the program has put hundreds of thousands of packets of seeds into the hands of needy families. The seed packets yield an estimated 180 pounds of vegetables for a family.

CRMF director Ginny Wiltse described the Watson Foundation's invitation to participate in the seeds project

as "moment of grace" that could not have come at a better time for the people of Toamasina. "The political unrest in Madagascar has had a devastating impact on jobs, income and the ability of families to purchase food and the poor, in particular, have suffered," she said. Brother Edwin Joseph commended the effort to encourage families to produce nutritious fruits and vegetables locally and added his "heartfelt thanks for this great initiative."

The Watson Children's Foundation, based in Texas, was founded by Dick Watson and his late wife Luress. Its focus is on programs that address the needs of the world's poorest children. The Watson Foundation will provide packets of green beans and squash, beets, broccoli, cabbage and watermelon for one thousand Toamasina families and for thirty local schools. Watch for photos of the successful gardens on-line and in a future newsletter!

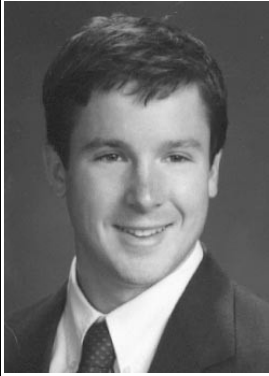


Luress and Dick Watson



The Watson Foundation Seeds Project has had excellent results in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Above left, families receive their six packets of vegetable seeds. Above right, happy villagers display the cabbages they have grown in their gardens.

From the President's desk



Ten years ago – in the summer of 2000 – I made my first trip to Madagascar. I taught in a rural village school, worked in the Dispensary Antsiramandroso with the Sisters, and walked in the slums of urban Toamasina with Brother Edwin Joseph. Today I look back and marvel at the events that were triggered by that visit: bonds of

friendship that cross thousands of miles, the birth of Caring Response Madagascar Foundation, and resulting partnerships that have benefited the poor of Toamasina through advances in literacy, healthcare, sanitation and more. We have been blessed.

Our successes have been the result of a spirit of collaborative teamwork. On one side of the world, in Toamasina, Madagascar, we have benefited from the exceptional leadership of Brother Edwin Joseph and the ONG St. Gabriel team. On the other side of the world, in the United States, we have benefited from the abundant generosity of our donors and benefactors. This year CRMF will pass the \$1 million mark in donated goods, services, and program funding that has reached the people of Toamasina. What an awesome legacy. I could not have imagined this in 2000 but to all of you who have made it possible, I extend a heartfelt thank-you today!



Playing soccer with village children in 2000



Awarding diplomas to literacy graduates in 2008

MISAOTRA

is produced by Caring Response Madagascar Fdn

MISSION

Caring Response Madagascar Foundation is a public charity. Its mission is to respond to the needs of the poor of Madagascar, particularly in the area of Toamasina/Tamatave.

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Literacy Centers cross milestone

We've come a long way since our first literacy center opened in urban Toamasina in 2001!

Our literacy project now boasts 3500 graduates — women, men and teenagers from the urban and rural areas of Toamasina who have received certificates for completing our basic literacy programs.

Our literacy centers have grown from one to fifteen and we also fund two popular computer literacy centers.

Congratulations CRMF literacy teachers and learners!

CRMF explores options for Mother-Baby Health Project

When CRMF Director Ginny Wiltse and her husband, Dr. David Wiltse, visited the Dominican Republic last March, they hoped to gather ideas that could be adapted to improve healthcare for mothers and babies in Toamasina. They were elated with what they found at Villa Fundacion, a small village hospital on the outskirts of Santo Domingo. There the organization World-Connect has remodeled a public health clinic to include modern maternal and neonatal services for poor village women. A modest but comfortable family-friendly birthing center bears powerful testimony to the concept that “humanized” birth should take place under conditions that are safe and sanitary and respectful. “I would love to see that idea blossom in Toamasina!” said Ginny.

It should come as no surprise that childbirth in Madagascar is filled with risks for both the mother and her child. In fact, eight women die each day due to childbirth-related complications. The infant mortality rate (the probability of a child dying before her first birthday per 1,000 live births) is ten times that of the United States. More than two-thirds of all deliveries in Madagascar occur at home, often in unsanitary conditions. Each of these problems is observable in the region around Toamasina.

At the request of a group of doctors in Toamasina, CRMF and its collaborating partner, the medical mission group By the Holy Spirit, have been working on a plan that would help reduce the sad statistics cited above. The proposed project will include education for poor women through the CRMF literacy centers, improved training for local medical personnel, and the development of a model clinic for the delivery of maternal and neonatal services.



The family-friendly birthing center at Villa Fundacion.

Officials applaud CRMF efforts

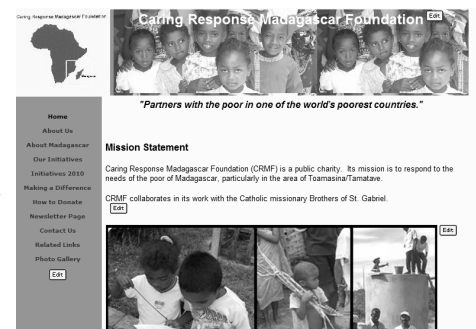
Letter cites benefits at individual, regional and national level

Leaders in Toamasina have recognized and praised the work of CRMF. The Minister of Agriculture visited our projects at Analamalotra and Antsiraman-droso in February and noted how the advances in agriculture, facilitated by CRMF funding, have become a source of revenue for the region. After that visit, CRMF received a formal letter of thanks. Officials also expressed appreciation for CRMF’s computer literacy centers and the opportunity they afford to the poor to learn technical skills. CRMF received compliments for its hygiene initiatives and the SANTIET project which benefit both the region and the country. Finally, the letter expressed thanks for the emergency relief CRMF provided to Foulepointe after the devastating fire last year. The letter concluded: “We thank you infinitely for your intervention.” We pass along this thanks to all our donors as well.

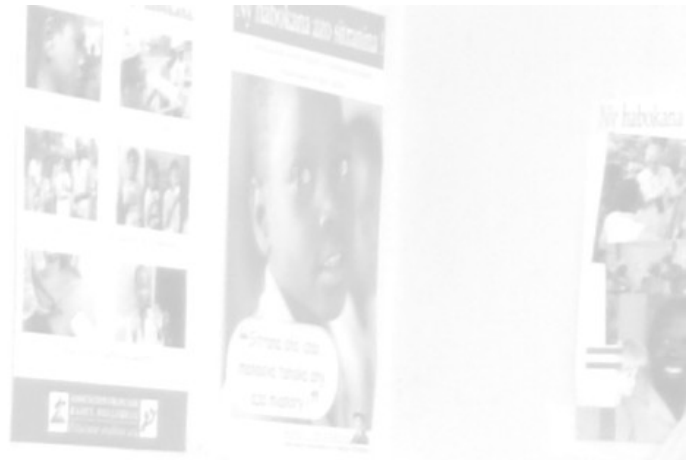
Spreading the word about CRMF

We have updated and expanded our web presence. Our redesigned website now includes more project details and pictures. You can read the newsletter on-line too. For regular updates and to show your support, join us on **Facebook**. Just search for Caring Response Madagascar.

We are always looking for new ways to interest and educate people about the needs in Madagascar. In May, Director Ginny Wiltse shared CRMF’s story with the Developing and Emerging Nations Club at the University of Cincinnati. Do you know someone who would like to hear about the work of CRMF? Contact us at crmf@fuse.net.



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