



Communiqué

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Leaving for Lebanon



On 4 August 2020, a large amount of ammonium nitrate stored at the port of the city of Beirut, the capital of Lebanon, exploded, resulting in over 200 deaths, 6,500 injuries and leaving an estimated 300,000 people homeless. The blast is said to have caused nearly \$15 billion in property damage.

The explosion in Beirut was so large that the United States Geological Survey considers it one of the most powerful non-nuclear explosions in history, it was felt in Turkey, Syria, Israel, Palestine, and parts of Europe, and was also heard in Cyprus, which is 160 miles away.

Following this cataclysmic explosion in Beirut, Project C.U.R.E. launched an immediate response to aid the people in Lebanon and provide critical medical relief to the country,

“I remember my time at many of the hospitals in and around Beirut, meeting the doctors and nurses and visiting patients. To see what has happened is absolutely heartbreaking. And this on top of COVID-19, a very difficult economic situation, refugees and regional conflict. These friends really need our help right now. Project C.U.R.E. will do all we can to bring health and hope to Lebanon.”

- Dr. Douglas Jackson CEO & President of Project C.U.R.E.

Thanks to a small group of dedicated Chicago physicians working with the support of both Rush University Medical Center and Northwestern Medical Center, Project C.U.R.E. has been able to provide 20 pallets, that's over 600 boxes of medical supplies and equipment which will be received by Rafik Hariri University Medical Center, American University Medical Center Beirut, and Lebanon University Medical Center. Project C.U.R.E.'s shipment departed from their Houston facility and traveled with assistance of AIRLINK and Qatar Airlines.



Everyone at Project C.U.R.E.'s Houston distribution center pitched in when the container arrived, including their medical interns, most of which had never used a pallet jack before that day. Towards the end of the loading process, one of the interns said, "that was so fun, thanks for letting us do that!", which just goes to show the passion that each of our volunteers has for helping other and moving our mission forward.

The Partnership with Rush University, with the help of the Rush University Office of Community Engagement, was formed to send this container of medical supplies to Beirut. These medical supplies include everything from bed linens and towels, to gloves and sterile dressing, IV catheters, syringes, needles, gauze, diapers and more.

While the supplies being sent were procured by Project C.U.R.E., funds were still needed to ship the container. With the help from contributions made by the medical community and other outside donors, the container was secured to be airlifted to Lebanon.

The partnership with Rush University will continue as the donors work toward sending another larger container full of medical supplies and relief. Project C.U.R.E. has now reopened the donation webpage, where anyone can make contributions to deliver the new container to hospitals in Beirut.

With this catastrophe coinciding with the COVID-19 pandemic, it has left the country in crisis and in desperate need of help. After the explosion, Lebanon saw a huge spike

in Coronavirus infections. Since the Aug. 4 blast, the number of COVID-19 cases has increased by some 220%, according to an assessment by the International Rescue Committee. Project C.U.R.E. and Rush will continue its work to aid those in Beirut and are asking others to consider making a contribution as well.



Support Project C.U.R.E.'S efforts around the world





Meeting the Needs of Orphaned Children in Armenia

By Mary Jo Blackwood

Project C.U.R.E has always helped raise the effectiveness of clinics and medical care providers in developing countries. Many of the needs Project C.U.R.E meets are brought to our attention by organizations in those countries who then become our partners in getting those needs met. Sometimes, it only takes one or two caring people to highlight another way we can make the world kinder and safer. We now also have a special bond with orphans in Armenia.

In 2005, George S. Yacoubian, Jr. adopted Liliana from Armenia. During the adoption process, he and his wife visited several orphanages and saw the tremendous needs that weren't being met. That same year, George founded SOAR (Society for Orphaned Armenian Relief). Since then, it has grown to include 145 chapters worldwide. Dr. Yacoubian serves as the Chairman of SOAR's global operations.

In addition to being the sponsor for Project C.U.R.E shipments, SOAR has also sponsored other non-medical projects for the orphanages, including room renovations, building a computer lab, purchasing industrial size equipment such as washing machines and even sponsoring individual children, especially those with special needs.

One of the most vulnerable populations in Armenia is orphans, particularly those disabilities. Typically, the government only provides support for staff salaries, food and utilities at the state orphanages. All other items (furniture, clothes, toys, medical equipment and supplies etc.) come only through donations. Any renovation or capital projects are also funded by donors. The vast majority of donors to all the orphanages are from Armenian societies and SOAR chapters across Europe, Canada, Russia and the United States.



The orphanages house true orphans with no family to care for them, along with children who have parents who do not have the physical, financial or other resources to care for the child at home. Dedicated staff provide an integrated range of services including services of medical doctors, physical therapists, speech therapists, social workers, dieticians, psychologists and massage therapists. Beyond what is needed by these workers, there is an overall lack of specialized equipment and supplies for children and adults with special needs.

We are very proud to partner with SOAR and see a long relationship with them. Since 2014, we have shipped 15 containers with a gift-in-kind value over \$3.1M. In August we prepared to send our 16th. Recent items shipped include home health beds, standing aids, treatment tables, pediatric and special needs wheelchairs, dental equipment and supplies, ophthalmology equipment and supplies, exam tables, and exercise bikes. Currently we supply equipment to the original six orphanages, and more recently, other special-needs orphanages and Our Lady of Armenia Summer Camp for orphans. We talked with Dr. Yacoubian about their relationship with Project C.U.R.E.

“This organization is so responsive and willing to always identify products that are needed by SOAR’s specific population. They are always willing to go out of their way to fulfill our needs.”

He says the shipments arranged to date have been for various facilities, based on need and the Project C.U.R.E inventory. Having shipments two to three times a year is ideal for them and they hope to continue them in the future. We also look forward to our continued association with this caring group.

If you would like to help Project C.U.R.E in this effort, your donations would be gratefully accepted. To get involved with this worthy cause, go to the Donate page on the website to fill out your donation information. Then scroll down to Leave a Message and type in that you want to earmark the donation for project A-14-005.

Response: Nagorno-Karabakh

During the COVID pandemic in September 2020, heavy fighting broke out along the border of Nagorno-Karabakh, the autonomous region claimed by both Armenia and Azerbaijan. Many have been killed and thousands more are wounded. Project C.U.R.E. is providing relief to those impacted. In partnership with Armenian Healthcare Association of the Bay Area (AHABA), Armenian Women’s Healthcare Association and the Armenian American Medical Association, Project C.U.R.E. delivered 25 pallets of donated medical equipment and supplies to victims of the war. More medical relief will be delivered with your help.

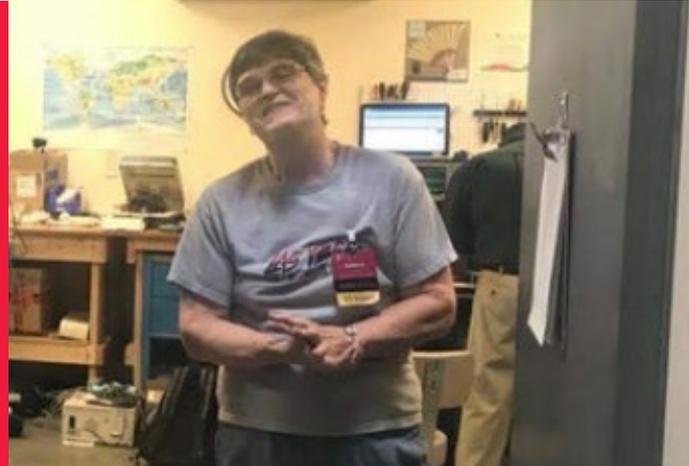


Donate to Project C.U.R.E.

100% of your charitable giving is tax-deductible in 2020



A Legacy with Project C.U.R.E.



Volunteers are the key to Project C.U.R.E.'s success. Last year, more than 25,000 volunteers spent more than 146,000 hours collecting, sorting and delivering medical donations. But this isn't a story about volunteerism in general. This is a story about one volunteer in particular: Barbara Youngberg and her commitment to Project C.U.R.E. for the last 20 years.

When you step into the vast space of Project C.U.R.E.'s Denver distribution warehouse, you will see the towering rows of medical equipment and supplies carefully prepared for shipment to people in need around the world. You will watch as volunteers sort supplies into meticulously organized bins, and witness them packing contents into boxes that will be loaded on semi-truck sized shipping containers and delivered to people in over 130 under-resourced countries around the world.

What might not be obvious is the result of Barb's work for more than two decades, and the fact that most of the sorting system and much of the biomedical certification process was created and refined by Barb in her 20 plus years of working with Project C.U.R.E. as a volunteer.

"Barb has been a mainstay in the PC organization for more than 20 years, faithfully serving even when she was still working as a charge nurse in the operating room at the VA Hospital. I started volunteering soon after and quickly learned that she was the go-to person to help me with my many questions. I would even call the OR and ask if she was available to talk. She always gave me the answers to go forward with the needs of the organization." said Millie Truitt, another nurse who has volunteered at Project C.U.R.E. for more than two decades.

When Barb first started at Project C.U.R.E., the year was 1999. Cher's famous song, "Believe" was number one on the Billboard charts, and Barb was working with the nursing organization, AORN. Project C.U.R.E. was in a much different place.

In 1999, Project C.U.R.E. was operating in donated space in the former Continental Airlines hangar at the recently closed Stapleton airport. It was a cavernous building. There was a rudimentary sorting effort to categorize the supplies, and those efforts were located in a dingy space where mechanics used to repair jet engines.

Barb reflected, "I don't even remember how we separated the supplies. I do remember there were these round kitchen-type tables that had some surgical instruments just piled on them." Back then, Barb and her organization volunteered one night a month for a two hours stint.

For several years, Project C.U.R.E. operated in the huge airplane hanger space. With over 200,000 square feet, the organization continued to collect medical donations and supplies, and the impact grew to more than 50 countries around the world.

At some point, the City of Denver decided to redevelop the former airport property, and Project C.U.R.E. was forced to move North to the old Kuners warehouse in Brighton,



Colorado. Barb followed Project C.U.R.E. there, too. But her story took an unexpected turn that wasn't easy. "Barb came up to Brighton one day to help me pull a load and I noticed she was short of breath, I kept telling her she needed to see a doctor! She wouldn't stop working. A few days later she had open heart surgery and ended up with a pacemaker and an implanted auto defibrillator. Now that's dedication!" said Millie Truitt.

When Barb left the hospital, her commitment of two hours a month gradually evolved into a much more dedicated commitment of time to Project C.U.R.E., and so did Barb's responsibilities. She eventually became a Sort Team Leader, guiding groups of volunteers in the sorting process that she had helped design. Barb said, "After Michael Young, who was in charge of Biomed, adopted a child from China, I moved into Biomed because I could name most machines and equipment that came in; and it seemed that I could do whatever I wanted. There was no one to tell me otherwise!"

Indeed, one of the hallmarks of Project C.U.R.E.'s volunteer program is the amount of responsibility and authority that the organization places on its volunteers. The result is remarkable. "It has been a pleasure to work with Barb all these many years," said Dave Truitt. "Because of her loyalty to the cause of Project C.U.R.E., thousands of people all over the world have received biomedical equipment on hundreds of shipments – saving untold numbers of lives."

After giving so much of her life to helping others, Barb who is a Lieutenant Colonel, and a Registered Nurse with the U.S. military for 20 years before volunteering, she reflected as to why she gave so much of her time to Project C.U.R.E. over the years. Barb explained, "It was fun when I first started, and satisfying when I cleaned a machine and got it ready for shipping. I also like sorting different supplies. I think I wanted to be a purchasing agent in my last life."

To answer the questions as to why she has remained a leader with Project C.U.R.E., Barb said, "It turned into a matter of necessity. There was no one else in the warehouse who had my expertise; and I knew that if I didn't get the machines ready, no one else would."



The fruits of Barb Youngberg's labor have changed the world for people who would otherwise have no hope. Barb has worked to fill 874 semi-truck sized shipping containers of medical supplies and equipment. These have contained nearly 23,000 pieces of donated medical equipment. The huge majority of those donations have gone to communities where people work for more than 12 hours a day and are paid less than \$5. At that rate, they can't afford healthcare, and the supplies and equipment needed to save their lives simply aren't available.

"The fact that an individual would share the gift of their life with others even for a year or two is remarkable. The fact that Barb has dedicated over two decades of her life to the service of others is legendary," said Dr. Douglas Jackson, President of Project C.U.R.E. "My prayer for Barb is that she can reflect on the difference she has made and know that the investment of her life at Project C.U.R.E. has saved the lives of stadiums full of people around the world. On behalf of all of those people who will never know the name of Barb Youngberg, I want to say, 'Thank You' for the investment of your hard work to change the world."

Barb's legacy at Project C.U.R.E. has improved and saved countless lives while training new volunteers to continue her legacy. While Barb is stepping down as the leader of the Project C.U.R.E. biomedical area, she will always have a place in the organization and we will count on seeing her in the warehouse for many more years to come.



Interested in getting involved like Barb?
Volunteer with us



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