

March 2023 Newsletter

But for Rotary... A Community Comes Together for Children with Downs Syndrome In Pelotas, Brazil

Rotary Education and Literacy projects change lives. BELRAG fans surely know this. **But** what of intellectually impaired kids who need help *to be able* to learn to read—who need a ‘key’ to unlock the magic? Well, it turns out that *Rotary does that too*.

The *Association of Parents For Down Syndrome Persons in Pelotas*, or “APADPEL” was organized in 2015 by a group of mothers of children with Downs Syndrome who were passionate about pursuing better education for their children. Since then, APADPEL has become a respected organization in Pelotas, a city of 340,000 in Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil.

In most cases, the brain of a Down Syndrome baby is born perfectly normal, but a problem looms: Downs babies have an extra gene on the 21st chromosome that renders parts of the brain ‘idle’ at birth. The miraculous jolt that occurs when a baby’s eyes first open produces a mis-firing across synapses for a Down Syndrome infant, causing progressive damage in the first years of life. Clinical experience has shown that therapies can minimize this damage, enabling a Down child to mentally develop at a significantly improved level. With no drugs or surgery, intensive treatment can radically improve life prospects for a Down child, therefore improving the lives of supporting families and the care system that will assist a Down person throughout life. With proper intervention, a productive life of personal responsibility and independence can be possible.



RC Alpharetta project team on site at land contributed by the city of Pelotas for the APADPEL training and education center.

Alpharetta (Georgia) Rotarian Bob Koncerak was introduced to the APADPEL organization in April 2021 while on a personal visit to Pelotas. Impressed by the enthusiasm and commitment of this group, Bob asked what could help the women do more to support their children. *“They weren’t shy about telling me—they knew what they needed to go further!. They wanted space and equipment to expand both their reach and their capabilities.”*

Bob reached out to local Rotarians to consider partnering opportunities. RC Pelotas-Oeste President Elaine Lopes was open and receptive. Club members spent significant time with APADPEL in the weeks that followed to consider how best they might assist, becoming optimistic with the possibilities.

Rotarians from Pelotas Oeste and Alpharetta, in collaboration with APADPEL proposed a substantial international project to include 1) training classes, 2) specialized equipment, and 3) a building for therapy services. The 50+ year Pelotas club had never before applied for a Global Grant, but they had undertaken major local projects. Partnership agreements were signed, and remarkable partnerships ensued:

- an architect from RC Pelotas-Oeste took charge of building plans.
- city officials were consulted, resulting in the Mayor and Council offering to deed a 2-acre parcel of land for the planned building
- noted child therapist, Dr. Juliana Azevedo, offered to develop and lead a training curriculum using “TEACCH” a highly effective method for teaching Downs and autistic children. The proposed curriculum will be delivered using volunteer graduate students from the local university (UFPel) and IEPSIS -- a renowned clinic based in Sao Paulo.



Koncerak with Pelotas Mayor Paula Mascarenhas, APADPEL president Luana Braga and Rotary Pelotas-Oeste 2021 club president Luiz Bernardi. May 2021.



APADPEL building site, 2022 with visiting Rotary team

In June 2021, Koncerak returned to Pelotas for discussion and planning. By then, the other 5 Pelotas clubs in D4680 had expressed a desire to participate—the first time such cooperation had ever occurred. In October 2021, as designs for a Rotary global grant education project took shape, Koncerak reached out to BELRAG who advised on how to best structure the project for a Global Grant. The support and coaching from BELRAG was invaluable, as this wasn't a typical "Basic Education and Literacy" grant request!

In November 2021, a team from Alpharetta traveled to Pelotas to meet with Rotary and city leaders. With them was Olga Narvaez, an Alpharetta club member with experience shepherding global grants—and in particular the all-important Community Assessment. Olga enthusiastically documented the strong support and broad reach of the project's partners. The city, UFPel,

IEPSIS and the Pelotas clubs demonstrated strong commitment—their embrace of the community was evident. "Sustainability", a key element to securing RI funding, was the proposal's greatest strength. A \$70,000 Global Grant was submitted to RI with the support of 15 Rotary clubs and three Rotary Districts. The grant was approved one month later, with much rejoicing by all involved!

That was only the beginning By April 2022, the state governor of Rio Grande do Sul posed with an APADPEL t-shirt, and in May, the 4680 District Governor and club leadership met with the State Ministry of Citizenship and Social Assistance for advice, support and funding. Apart from the Global Grant, companies and individual club members, raised more than \$80,000 for the APADPEL building phases 1 and 2. Rotary Pelotas and APADPEL continue to raise funds, and the city of Pelotas has committed to ongoing support. Public school teachers and child development specialists, as well as APADPEL moms, have applied for "train-the-trainer" curriculum that will ultimately offer certification in Downs Syndrome learning and independence.



APADPEL soccer group

APADPEL and its activities are now regular features in local media. The city's professional soccer team has 'adopted' the group and invites them to play demonstration games before their matches.

A second team of Rotarians visited Pelotas in November 2022 to learn about the curriculum and programs. Building construction was well underway, with completion anticipated by March 2023.

But for Rotary, it is hard to imagine that this story would have happened. Rotary BEL projects change lives...entire communities...and surely they "do good in the world".

Bob Koncerak

RC Alpharetta GA, USA

rdahkoncerak@yahoo.com

Get involved with BELRAG's outreach and impact. Opportunities to become involved include:

- **Newsletter:** identify great Rotary stories of impactful projects - local or international. An editor is needed to do design and layout
- **Website:** oversee our website so that it is current. No tech expertise is needed (we have a great webmaster to post the information) - help review the site, share new information.
- **Social media:** help develop and support BELRAG social media - share our good work!
- **Technical expertise:** join a topic-focused team to provide technical advice to project developers and share stories of best practice. Collaborate to promote early literacy/education, education technology, students with disabilities, adult literacy, mentoring youth, girls education, library support or development, professional development for teachers.

To get involved, contact Carolyn Johnson carolyn@belrag.org

Technology Transforms Access to Learning for Children with Spina Bifida in Colombia

As a consequence of Covid 19, the Mónica Uribe Por Amor Foundation found it necessary to transfer its activities to a virtual pedagogical model that would support access to education from a distance. This highlighted a deficit of technology tools among students and lack of training among teachers. Families who work in the informal economy became more economically fragile from the pandemic, making it difficult for them to access resources such as computers and internet access. An increase in school dropouts and a decrease in the participation of psychopedagogical activities in students increased the vulnerability of these students.

The Mónica Uribe Por Amor Foundation is the only institution in Colombia that works with people with Spina Bifida, many of whom live in marginalized communities. They embrace Community-Based Rehabilitation strategies.



RI President Jennifer Jones, Director Pat Meriweather, and Past Director Suzi Howe visit students benefiting from this technology education program supporting students with disabilities

Spina Bifida results from malformation of the Neural Tube (spinal column damage) that occurs during the first month of pregnancy, causing irreparable damage to the central nervous system. The condition impacts motor, neurological, renal and digestive functioning, making it difficult to perform daily activities and affecting quality of life. The intelligence of people with spina bifida varies. Affected individuals often have poor short-term memory and poor organizational skills. Many also suffer from hydrocephalus, causing damage to brain structure and impacting cognitive development.

Rotarians from Medellin Nuevo have long supported Mónica Uribe Por Amor Foundation and rallied around the need to improve access to education and therapies exacerbated by the pandemic. Rotarians developed a Global Grant to support teachers, beneficiaries and guardians on the use of Virtual Learning Environments and implement these environments to promote school inclusion. The equipment and supporting resources necessary for distance learning was acquired with a plan to support teachers, students and families in distance learning.

A challenge was encountered to ensure for connectivity from the students' homes, as many families live in challenging locations. This led to adaptations of training components resulting from teachers and therapists putting themselves in the shoes of the students and their families to fully understand their needs and the adaptations necessary for virtual learning. In the training process, student interests and abilities were considered, followed by evaluating academic, social and personal needs. Another important factor for success was consideration of motivation to learn, acknowledging that teachers working with students face-to-face class or as an online tutor must motivate and encourage students to participate fully in the experience of learning and exchanging knowledge.



Project implementation began in 2022 and is showing great results! The Foundation, along with Rotarians, carried out home visits to assess the needs of the beneficiaries and determine the type of equipment required according to their age and local conditions. Virtual training models were as chosen to meet individual needs. Teachers and Rotarians, in a special meeting of the Club, delivered the equipment to many of the beneficiaries. Other equipment was delivered directly to the beneficiaries homes. Students are putting their new learning tools to use in a variety of ways. Accessing academic support, receiving therapeutic coaching, and learning life skills to function more fully in daily living are examples of how personalized access to learning is achieved and improved. [Learn more about the project](#)

Ana Cardona
RC Medellin Nuevo
ana.cardona11@gmail.com

Sonia Uribe
RC Medellin Nuevo
sonuribe@gmail.com

Hearing Healthcare Service in Rural Guatemala: A Story of Lasting Impact

In November 2003, a group of twenty ENT surgical team members gathered in Guatemala City to help children with ear, nose, and throat surgeries. They brought along two audiologists to provide diagnostic services and hearing aids to children in need. During that surgical week, one of the volunteer team interpreters brought her father, a Guatemala Este Rotary Club member, to witness the miracle of a child hearing their mother's voice for the first time with the use of hearing aids. He was so moved by the experience, he went back to his club and convinced them to purchase 100 hearing aids and bring the audiologists back the next year to the Peten, a region of Guatemala that has many children with hearing problems.



The team returned in 2004 to San Benitez, Peten. They evaluated more than 500 children and fit 130 hearing aids on children. Due to the great number of children in need only one hearing aid was given to each child. Realizing the need for ongoing follow up care, the team recruited a Kindergarten teacher and her husband to help provide care to those children fit with hearing aids.



Now, nearly 20 years later, there are twenty Guatemalans trained as hearing healthcare providers serving children in eight different rural locations. The senior service providers are now providing education and training to junior service providers, and they are all cooperatively serving their communities.

Through the leadership of a Rotarian from Pleasant Valley Rotary, funding for newborn hearing screening is spreading throughout Guatemala. This screening helps to identify children with hearing loss at a very early age. This early access to sound allows these children to attend school and puts them on a path to reach their full potential as a contributing member of their communities. Twenty years ago, without access to hearing aid services, these children were not able to attend school, and they had a very limited range of employment opportunities.

Today the future is bright with Guatemalans serving Guatemalan children thanks to the generosity of Rotarians working together in service to others.

Join BELRAG in Melbourne!

BELRAG will host a break out session at the RI Convention in Melbourne. Wednesday, 31 May 10:00

Visit the BELRAG booth in the House of Friendship. Showcase your club's BEL project. For more information or to volunteer at the BELRAG booth [Contact Us!](#)

BELRAG Breakout Session

The ABC's of Effective BEL Programs

Rotarians can serve a critical role to strengthen the capacity of communities to provide basic education and literacy. Speakers will use examples and experiences to illustrate the essentials - the ABC's - of effective BEL programs.

Mark your calendar
27-31 May 2023
Melbourne, Australia

Presented by


Regina Fuller
BEL Area of Focus
Manager, TRF


David Alexander,
Cadre, Rotary Club
of Manningham


Shirley Pat
Chamberlain, Rotary
Club of Steveston


Carolyn Johnson,
BELRAG Chair, Rotary
Club of Yarmouth


Manon Mitchell,
Rotary Club of
Calgary

Panel



Hetauda Community Eye Hospital

Good news received in mid-December 2021 from Rotary contacts in Nepal was, as community Covid 19 infections were then much in decline, the Hetauda Community Eye Hospital was preparing to resume outreach eye-camps in Nepal's remote regions. Due to Covid, there had been a lapse of approximately 2 years since the Tasmania-sponsored eye screening and surgery program had last operated.

Rotary Tasmania therefore rose to the occasion to arrange transfer of funds already in hand with RAWCS, to enable the revived eye-camp program to commence. This also served to renew the special relationship which has grown over the past 12-plus years between Rotarians in Nepal and Tasmania and thereby enabled the 20th eye-camp program funded by our 9830 District to proceed.

It is a pleasure to report that this latest eye-camp was subsequently held over 3 days late December 2021 in 3 remote locations, successfully screening and treating 875 sight-affected people and performing 122 cataract-correction surgeries.

Accordingly, summing-up over this time, our Rotary District has now enabled close to 18,000 disadvantaged Nepalese people to have eye-checks, with many being treated for general infections and well over 2,600 blind and sight-impaired to have their sight restored through free cataract surgeries, thereby positively changing lives, family relationships and employment potentials.



What were just blurred shapes and colours became clear after many years. Adults and children all gained benefit of sight from these Rotary Eye Camps in Nepal.



For several of these past years, we are very grateful that a local Tasmanian businessman has generously contributed to funding of the eye-camps and this arrangement is continuing. Also during this time, for over 10 years, groups of Tasmanian Rotarians and friends have visited Nepal to experience the eye-camps, sight restorations, stunning countryside and generous hospitality and friendship of the Nepalese people.

Resulting from these visits, many extra humanitarian projects have been enabled and supported, including 5 schools, a village water and sanitation project, 10 school toilet blocks, a school drinking fountain and assistance to a school for blind students, with the most recent being the current sponsorship by several Rotary Clubs, members, generous groups and individuals, of musical instruments and a tutored music program for the

blind students. New projects in conjunction with the RC of Hetauda can also now be reconsidered for future involvement and development.

When the massive long-lasting and life-changing benefits resulting for the Nepalese people and relationships with Nepal Rotary from these Nepal assistance programs are considered, Rotary Tasmania and our many caring sponsors are to be greatly thanked and congratulated. A general call for Expressions of Interest for a repeat Tas Rotary group visit to Nepal, tentatively planned for February 2023. For further details or to get involved with this life changing project - or the "next steps" projects that are developing - contact:

**PP Winston Quaile,
RC of Launceston West**

wquaile@gmail.com
+61 418 125 245

BELRAG Seeks Support for Global Grant to Assist Education in Ukraine

BELRAG is collaborating with Rotarians from RC Dnipro Novyi to develop a Global Grant to support education for children in Ukraine who can no longer attend school, as a result of the ongoing hostilities.

Since the start of hostilities in Ukraine, more than 13 million people have been forced to leave Ukraine, many of them are internally displaced persons, most of them are families with children. Currently, the education and future of children is completely uncertain, and the efforts of the Ministry of Science and Education of Ukraine to ensure educational processes are not guaranteed.

Many children have not received proper education since February 24, 2022 due to the lack of access to schools, for various reasons. Parents have not been able to provide online education services due to the lack of technical devices, and many have been deprived of the proper opportunity due to the lack of digital education online.

Obtaining appropriate educational services is a global problem for all Ukrainian schoolchildren, both those who remained in Ukraine and those who left its borders. For children, this is a difficult test, and therefore this project is designed to provide basic knowledge and is aimed at high school children. The goal of the program: provide of online educational services to continue the education of Ukrainian students. The goal is to provide adequate opportunities for children to receive a hybrid form of education, both offline and online, to expand the informational knowledge of both children and parents regarding online learning opportunities. The grant will provide training for teachers in effective on-line teaching strategies, provide technology to students so they can access on-line learning, create safe spaces for students to gather and study in small groups with their teachers. The project will be implemented in the territory of the Dnipropetrovsk region. This Global Grant budget is estimated to be \$45,000 (USD) but could be expanded to include more students with additional funding.

If you or your club is interested in supporting this project, please contact the host or international partner (contact information below) We welcome club or individual contributions toward the grant, and are seeking DDF so that our funding goal can be reached quickly. We would like to submit the grant in April, 2023.

Iryna Odyntsova, President-elect
Dnipro Novyi Rotary, Ukraine
[*illy2011@i.ua*](mailto:illy2011@i.ua)

Carolyn Johnson
Yarmouth Rotary, Maine USA
[*cj2@icloud.com*](mailto:cj2@icloud.com)

Why Emphasize Education for Children With Disabilities?

Children with disabilities are more likely to miss out on school than other children. Even if they go to school, they are more likely to leave before finishing their primary education. For children who are already marginalised, such as girls and children living in rural areas, a disability creates an additional barrier to accessing education.

- Worldwide, 93 million to 150 million children live with a disability. The World Health Organization and the World Bank estimate that in some countries “being disabled more than doubles the chance of never enrolling in school”. An estimated one in three out-of-school children have a disability.
- Throughout Africa, less than 10% of children with a disability are in primary education. In some countries only 13% receive any form of education.
- In Bangladesh, 30% of people with disabilities have completed primary school, compared to 48% of those without disabilities. In Zambia it is 43% compared to 57% and in Paraguay 56% to 72%.
- According to one estimate, 75% of children with disabilities in Afghanistan are out of school. Many have been injured by land mines.

In developing countries, people with disabilities tend to be poorer than other adults. Missing out on education not only affects the quality of life for individuals and their families, it also has a negative economic impact for countries. Education can help people with disabilities get increased access to employment, health and other services, and develop a better awareness of their rights.

Nepal Blind School

The Hetauda Blind School Support Project is a humanitarian response to needs identified during a visit to Nepal by a Rotary Tasmania group, visiting there for observation of the February 2016 “Gift of Sight” (a separate Rotary program sponsored by D9830)eye screening and cataract surgical program. Good-will visits by such groups had been made for over 10 years, hosted in Nepal by the RC of Hetauda, thereby developing valuable relationships and enabling several social and humanitarian projects to be sponsored and jointly developed by District 9830 and RC of Hetauda, Nepal.

The 2016 visitors witnessed the sad sight of a school playground which was basically a muddy, putrid cesspool which needed very urgent re-drainage and concreting. This subsequently became a project, funded via RAWCS (Rotary Australia World Community Service; a country specific method of Rotary fundraising and expenditure on worthy projects. It allows for tax deductibility for donors) by the RC of Launceston West and managed by the RC of Hetauda. This very neglected area of the Baljyoti Secondary School also turned out to be the playground of the “impaired vision” section of the school, now known, for short, as the “Blind School”.



The following year 2017, a February Tas* Rotary (Tasmania, state in f Australia, District 9830) visit was again made, where the visitors viewed the newly concreted, clean, playing surface and also met several of the blind and sight-impaired students. Viewing of their very basic live-in hostel on the site was also available, resulting in concerns being subsequently raised by some Rotarians that these disabled children sadly had no access to the sensory stimulation or tactile equipment which is normally so important for the blind. Although living in a daily educational environment they also appeared to be very subdued and noticeably lacking in stimulation and social involvement. A heartening event did occur however, when one young boy was invited to sing and play an old guitar. He was obviously self-taught and somehow held the guitar upside-down, the strings installed the opposite way to conventional practice.



This was a light-bulb moment which literally struck a chord with the Rotarians, who thereafter ached to help these kids in some urgent manner. In following weeks, discussions occurred in concert with the RC of Hetauda and some interested Tas Rotary Clubs and as a start to hopefully improve the lot of the students. The RC of Devonport generously funded a selection of new musical instruments, to be purchased in Nepal and presented to the students. According to RC of Hetauda feedback, these were received with much appreciation and happiness amongst the students. Subsequent Tas Rotary visits to Nepal in 2018 and 2019 to view the “Gift of Sight” programs also included visits to the Blind School, where Rotary members presented appropriate donated tactile and sensory toys to the children, which were obviously greatly appreciated.



It was during the November 2019 visit that the Hetauda Rotarians brought to our attention that as the musical instruments were now very popular amongst the blind children, it was considered that a formal music learning program by a dedicated music teacher would be of great benefit to the blind children, particularly for their personal enjoyment and self-worth development and possibly even future employment opportunities. This suggestion also received much enthusiasm from the visiting Rotarians and Friends of Rotary which resulted in extension of the Hetauda Support Project being arranged with RAWCS and a monthly teacher-funding sponsorship program was established at a cost of just A\$260.00 per month, budgeted initially for a two-year trial pilot. The program was launched on 14 Feb 2021 by then DG of Nepal & Bhutan District 3292, Rotarian Rajiv Pokhrel, who presented a nice new guitar to the students.

Something also of interest at the time of meeting the children was a general observation that the Hetauda Rotarians themselves obviously did not understand our (the Tas Rotary Group’s) concerns and demonstrated wish to especially



care for the welfare of the blind children. This was later discussed with a doctor friend (Dr Sanjita) at the Tilganga Institute of Ophthalmology, Kathmandu (established some years ago by Dr Fred Hollows and Dr Sanduk Ruit), who explained that it is a long-held Nepalese cultural expectation which is now thankfully changing, that blind children have no value and will have no value in the community, so why bother very much about them? It is now heartening and very pleasing to have observed since our joint involvement with the Blind School children and the Hetauda Rotarians, that this attitude of the Rotarians seems to be changing and in this musical endeavour, are finding association with the blind children to be enjoyable and rewarding.



There are approx 16 children now studying at the Blind School, reduced from 18 due to Covid lock-down. The Music Teacher program has recently been extended to Year 3 and possibly onwards, by RC Nepal request, most sponsorships have already been provided by our generous benefactors.



I quote here the recent emailed request received, as follows: *“Dear Winston, As school new year session has started, I would request you to extend the music program this year and next year too. As the students have made progress and are always looking forward in learning more. I have been personally looking into the progress of the students. It’s given them a new purpose in life and are very happy. I have taken some pictures yesterday please see in the attachment. Kind regards, Dhiraj Karki “*

Winston Quaile
Rotary Club of Launceston West
wquaile@gmail.com

INCREASING OUR IMPACT Through Effective Projects: A Webinar Series

This five-part series is designed to support you as you cultivate effective projects that will create a sustainable impact in your community and around the world. These webinars offer tools and strategies to help you plan, find resources for, implement, and evaluate your projects.

Promoting Projects: Tell Your Story

Date: Thursday, 23 March
Time: 10:00 Chicago time (UTC-5)
Register

Planning a Project: Design for Results

Date: Thursday, 6 April
Time: 10:00 Chicago time (UTC-5)
Register

Finding Project Partners and Resources: Build an Effective Team

Date: Thursday, 20 April
Time: 10:00 Chicago time (UTC-5)
Register

Measuring Results: Demonstrate Your Impact

Date: Thursday, 4 May
Time: 18:00 Chicago time (UTC-5)
Register

Youth Service: Doubling Your Impact A conversation with the members of the Interact and Youth Advisory Councils

Date: Thursday, 18 May
Time: 18:00 Chicago time (UTC-5)
Register

Supporting Children on the Autism Spectrum in Conflict Affected Communities

A Global Voice for Autism equips refugee and conflict-affected communities to support and include children on the autism spectrum. We are often communities' only source of autism and inclusive education support. Our holistic, programs are lifelines for families, and our programs are customized for each community's context and needs. Our programs are varied and include:

- **Parent and teacher Training Cooperatives** Parent and teacher training cooperatives bring together parents of children on the autism spectrum and educators interested in inclusive education to learn evidence-based strategies for autism support and inclusive education.
- **Support and Self Development:** For many parents, teachers and siblings that join our programs, community is one of their greatest needs. Peer groups of parents, teachers, and siblings engage in community-based programs that improve participant self-confidence, teaches strategies for self-care, and facilitates meaningful connections between peers to better equip them to better support loved ones and each other.
- **Community Awareness and Inclusion Events:** Cultivating communities that value inclusion is vital in creating environments where individuals can thrive. Our community inclusion and awareness events bring together community members of all ages and abilities to learn about autism, build relationships, and bring inclusion to life.
- **Inclusive Play Groups** Children on the autism spectrum are often tasked with learning how to play in the ways other children play, but children without autism can learn many things from children on the autism spectrum. Inclusive play groups provide stimulating, equitable and creative environments for all children to play together.
- **Inclusive Teacher Education Training:** Teachers want to support all learners, but often lack the training and support to do so. Our teacher trainings supplement equip teachers with strategies for classroom-based inclusive education and classroom management. 93% of participants go on to train other teachers in their schools and advocate for the inclusion of children on the autism spectrum.



Response to the Earthquakes in Turkey and Syria

The A Global Voice for Autism community tragically lost 22 community members, including 17 children in the February 6th earthquakes. Risks to people with disabilities will continue to grow as the secondary impacts of the disaster take hold. The care systems that provide critical services and protection have been devastated in impacted areas. The lack of protection services, limited health care access, and lack of adequate shelter pose unique risks to people with disabilities.

It is easy for organizations to say that #AllChildrenMatter, but policy and practice need to address this by accounting for and addressing the needs of children with disabilities. Disasters acutely impact people with disabilities. People with disabilities accounted for more than 70% of fatalities from Hurricane Katrina in the United States and 25% of disaster-related deaths in the 2011 earthquake in Fukushima, Japan. A Global Voice for Autism calls on the international humanitarian community to:

- Prioritize access to medication and safe food for individuals with medical needs
- Stop accepting “We don’t do (fill in the disability here) as a response from implementing partner and funders involve in humanitarian response.
- Address disability stigma through active messaging about how disability including bents enter societies

A Global Voice for Autism is working closely with partners in Turkey to address the urgent needs of children with developmental disabilities and their families, including medications, safe food, and basic survival needs, supplies to support those with sensory sensitivities in temporary shelter environments, and psychological support. We appreciate your contributions of our Earthquake Emergency Response Fund to ensure children with disabilities are not left behind. 100% of donations directly support the emergency needs of those impacted by the earthquakes. [Donate now](#)

Melissa Diamond, Rotary Peace Scholar
 Founder & Executive Director
melissa@aglobalvoiceforautism.org