

For Immediate Release

January 5, 2010

Hebrew Rehabilitation Center Donates Beds to Hospitals in Africa and Haiti

BOSTON - On December 23, three organizations came together to create something wonderful. Volunteers from Afya and Partners in Health, worked with a group of staff and volunteers at Hebrew Rehabilitation Center in Roslindale to load 120 hospital beds into three container trucks for shipment to Africa and Haiti. The work to load the beds began with a phone call to Yonkers.

Robert Schreiber, Physician-in-Chief at Hebrew SeniorLife, placed a call to a former colleague, Danielle Butin, co-founder and executive director of the Afya Foundation, a Yonkers-based organization that works with hospitals throughout the United States wishing to donate unwanted medical supplies and equipment. Afya then ships the donations to medical facilities in Africa.

“When NewBridge on the Charles, our campus in Dedham was completed, we entered into the moving-in phase and found ourselves with about 120 hospital beds we could no longer use,” said Dr. Schreiber. “I was able to facilitate offering the beds to Danielle, and I knew she would know where the need would be greatest and they’d have a life all over again.”

“There is a Hebrew phrase ‘tikkum olam,’ that means to heal the world, or repair the world. I believe that when organizations assist others by donating what they no longer need, we are healing the world and also making it a much greener place to live.”

One container of beds is going to the Abayudayah Tribe in Eastern Uganda, a tribe of 1000 Jews.

Also playing an important role in the shipment of beds was Boston’s Partners in Health, which was founded in the late 1980’s by Dr. Paul Farmer, Dr. Jim Kim and Ophelia Dahl. Jonathan Lascher, procurement manager with PIH, said, “The beds are going to St. Mark’s Hospital in Haiti, which provides health care for Haiti’s central plateau.”

-more-



Sara Schuyler, Afya's domestic resources and international capabilities manager, said, "Hospital beds that must be adjusted manually aren't in high demand in the U.S., but in Haiti where electricity is at a premium and is best reserved for use in operating rooms, these hospital beds will be a perfect fit."

According to Ms. Butin, "This is an extraordinary way to build capacity in developing nations. By partnering with Afya, Hebrew Senior Life is choosing to change the lives of thousands of people in need, by donating supplies that they are getting ready to replace. They are to be commended for finding a "green" way to build capacity, as opposed to building up our waste, during this time of renovation and construction. These beds will make an enormous difference in clinics and hospital wards in Haiti and Uganda."

- Hebrew SeniorLife, an affiliate of Harvard Medical School, is a 106-year-old organization committed to maximizing the quality of life of seniors through an integrated network of research and teaching, housing and health care, serving more than 5,000 seniors annually in the Greater Boston area. For more information: www.hebrewseniorlife.org.
- Afya (which means "health" in Swahili) connects the local with the global by procuring and sending supplies necessary to support medical and surgical initiatives in Africa. In order to accomplish this mission, supplies are donated and gathered from hospitals, surgical centers and corporations. The goal is to serve as a donation-based clearinghouse of vital supplies that are made available to the international health community. For more information: www.afyafoundation.org.
- Partners In Health, a Boston-based organization, brings modern medical care to destitute communities around the world. The work of PIH has three goals: to care for our patients, to alleviate the root causes of disease in their communities, and to share lessons learned around the world. For more information: www.pih.org.

###



Affiliated with
Harvard Medical School