

CLARKE RESIDENT HELPING PROJECT HOPE RAISE MONEY FOR CLINIC

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MILLWOOD — On Oct. 31, women and children in the town of Haina in the Dominican Republic witnessed the groundbreaking for a new community medical clinic, sponsored by Project HOPE and its partner, the nonprofit Dominican Association of the Order of Malta (ADOM).

This is the third clinic for women and children that Project HOPE has sponsored in the Dominican Republic.

Founded in 1958, the Millwood-based nonprofit organization is dedicated to improving the health of people around the world through education, humanitarian assistance, donated medicines and medical supplies and volunteer medical help.

Project HOPE spokeswoman Alison Brandt said ADOM purchased land for the new clinic and will build it. Over the next three years, Project HOPE will supply \$15 million in medical supplies and equipment and bring in volunteers for 30 days each year to support the clinic and its staff.

Clarke County resident Richard Farland is helping raise funds for the Haina clinic.

Farland has connections to Project HOPE and the Dominican Republic. His father, Joseph Farland, was a member of the Project HOPE board and was U.S. ambassador to the Dominican Republic from 1957 to 1960.

"I grew up there for three years," Farland said, from age 6 to 9. He attended classes in a Dominican school where everything was taught in Spanish except one 30-minute class in the English language.

"I can't tell you how excited I am to be involved with it," said Farland, who is chairman of a steering committee that plans to raise \$1.35 million to provide working capital for the clinic during its first three years.

Farland visited the Dominican Republic in August and inspected one of the other two clinics, this one in Herrera.

"I was tremendously impressed," Farland said, not only with the help it is giving to women and children, but also by the fact that after three years, the Herrera clinic is self-sustaining.

“This is the model we hope to complete with the third one,” he said.

Farland, who has done fund-raising for a number of local charities, said this is the first time he has worked on an international project.

He and his committee members will be developing a contact list of individuals and companies who have an interest in the Dominican Republic or medical and philanthropic causes.

Farland said he wasn't daunted by the amount of money to be raised.

“It's always a big number as you are starting out,” he said, but he's inspired by the \$15 million in support that Project HOPE itself has pledged.

Scheduled to open in 16 months, the clinic will boost primary care for women and children. It will be staffed by 40 health providers offering pediatric, obstetric, gynecological and maternal health care, vaccinations and general medicine, and a pharmacy and lab services for the entire province of San Cristobal.

Prior to the groundbreaking ceremony, Project HOPE's president, Dr. John Howe III, also toured the Herrera clinic.

Howe said he met five women there who thanked Project HOPE for its help because their mothers had received care at the clinic and now they were bringing their own children to it.

“Our partnership with the Order of Malta makes this all possible,” Howe said.

The mayor of Haina, Dr. Rafael Schiffino, said Project HOPE and ADOM “are helping us to achieve our vision of reducing maternal and infant mortality.”

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