

MEDIA RELEASE

Keep the glasses coming to help the people of PNG 'see a brighter future'!

5th July, 2018

FAR Northerners are answering the call for the YWAM Glasses Drive with more than 2200 pairs already donated, says Cairns Community Ambassador for YWAM Medical Ships, Yolonde Entsch.

"It's been fantastic to see the response so far – we knew that many people had pairs of prescription glasses and sunglasses lying around the house, not being used, but we could only hope that the response would be so positive at this point in the campaign," Mrs Entsch said today.

"I've got no doubt that if this momentum continues we'll hit our target of 5000 pairs by July 18th, which will make an incredible gift for patients in rural and remote areas of Papua New Guinea who struggle with their eyesight."

Mrs Entsch has also put the call out to Mareeba Shire, Tablelands and Douglas Shire residents, who can drop their unwanted pairs of glasses at the following locations:

Atherton: Atherton Library, 16 Robert Road, Atherton.

Mareeba: Mareeba Shire Library, 221 Byrnes Street, Mareeba.

Kuranda: Kuranda Community Precinct, 18-22 Arara Street, Kuranda.

Port Douglas: Office of Pink Company Real Estate, 1/32 Macrossan St, Port Douglas (entry on upper Grant Street).

Mossman: Mossman Public Library, 14 Mill Street, Mossman.

"I'd like to say a huge Thank You to the people of Cairns, and further afield, who have embraced this campaign, along with the Mareeba Shire Council, Pink Company Real Estate, Tablelands Regional Council and Douglas Shire Council for participating as new collection points."

Local Cairns State High School student Morgan Elliston, who is the YWAM Youth Ambassador in Cairns, has this week collected boxes of glasses from all the Cairns Libraries branches and a number of local businesses and said she was "overwhelmed" at the response.

"I'd really like to thank all the members of the public who have donated glasses at Cairns Libraries, the Shangri-La Hotel whose staff members held a bake sale so they could buy more pairs of glasses,

local Rotary Clubs for putting the word out to their members, and the Cairns Colonial Club and the Palm Royale for donations from their staff members and lost property.

“I’m really enjoying being part of the campaign because I’m getting such positive feedback,” she said. “It’s inspired me to apply as a volunteer onboard the YWAM medical ship when it visits PNG in November this year, which would be an amazing experience if it happens.”

The donated glasses will be handed over to the optometry team onboard the MV YWAM PNG when it docks in Cairns later this month on its way to PNG, so they can be distributed to patients.

On the ground, the optometry team educates the Papuan people about the dangers of staring into the sun and by providing sunglasses, it means they can do daily activities without squinting and reduces the risk of pterygiums (growths on the eye).

Regaining their sight means that children can start or resume education, while for older patients something as simple as being able to read their Bible again means a great deal to them.

The YWAM Glasses Drive is running until Wednesday 18th July; collection points can be found in all of Cairns Libraries’ eight branches at Cairns City, Babinda, Edmonton, Gordonvale, Earlville, Manunda, Stratford and Smithfield, as well as at the regional centres listed above.

Glasses can also be posted to: C/- PO Box 14, Bungalow QLD 4870.

Media contact: Heather Law (0409 638 943) or email playonwordsconsulting@outlook.com

Information on YWAM (Youth With a Mission) Medical Ships:

YWAM Medical Ships operates a training and medical ship, the MV YWAM PNG, in remote communities of Papua New Guinea (PNG) in collaboration with PNG's National Department of Health and provincial health teams. The vessel is equipped with an onboard dentistry clinic, day procedure unit and laboratory. In addition to the services provided onboard, YWAM Medical Ships deploys teams ashore to set up primary health care, health education, and optometry clinics.

Eye care is very limited in the rural areas of Papua New Guinea. In addition to providing patients with glasses, patients that are identified with cataracts and pterygiums (growth on the eye) are sent to YWAM’s surgical team aboard the MV YWAM PNG for surgery, which in many cases, restores the patient's sight.

YWAM Medical Ships has a strong focus on education and prevention. The distribution of sunglasses can make a significant difference in protecting eyesight and reducing the risk of pterygiums.

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