

Rotary helps Krabachers expand mission in Haiti

By Scott Condon

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Susie and Joe Krabacher's efforts to open a new clinic to help assure the health of new mothers and babies in Haiti received a big boost this month from three Rotary clubs in the Roaring Fork Valley.

The Rotary Club of Aspen and two chapters in Glenwood Springs combined with district offices in New York and Washington, D.C., as well as Rotary International to give a \$29,500 grant to the Krabacher's Mercy and Sharing Foundation.

The money will be used to buy medical equipment the foundation needs at a new clinic that will help mothers before, during and after the birth of their children.

"It's such a huge gift for us. For \$29,500 we can pretty much get all the equipment we need to open the facility," said Susie Krabacher.

The Krabachers, who live in Aspen, started the foundation about a decade ago when Susie learned how Haitians were living in such hopeless poverty so close to American borders. The foundation has focused on running orphanages and schools for kids. Now it is building a "para-natal" clinic to help avoid some of the problems so many children in Haiti encounter.

Krabacher said the clinic will likely open within the next two months. Social workers are canvassing within the Delmas area of Port-au-Prince, which has a population of 600,000, to inform women about the clinic and get a feel for the type of services that will be in demand. The type of care that the clinic will offer is so rare in Haiti that even women who aren't destitute will seek service, Krabacher said. Free care will be given to those in greatest need; others will pay on a sliding scale based on their ability.

The clinic will employ about 20 people. The Mercy and Sharing Foundation already employs 154 Haitians.

The \$29,500 check was presented to Krabacher on Sept. 16 by Susan O'Neal, a member of the Washington, D.C., Rotary and a part-time Aspen resident. She helped coordinate contributions from the Aspen and Glenwood Springs chapters with district offices in New York and D.C. The Rotary International Foundation matched funds donated by



A crew working for the Aspen-based Mercy and Sharing Foundation in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, builds a clinic the old-fashioned way with manpower hauling concrete up a ladder. Photo courtesy Susie Krabacher.

the Rotary clubs and districts.

For information about the humanitarian work that Rotary International does, visit www.rotary.org.

For more about the Mercy and Sharing Foundation or to make a donation, visit www.haitichildren.com.

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