

EVERY DARK CLOUD HAS A SILVER LINING

On December 26, 2004, South Asia was struck by the largest tsunami in World history. “Tsunami” is a Japanese word which means “harbor wave,” and was given that name because of the speed at which the wave travels unnoticed across the ocean, arising suddenly in shallow harbors. A tsunami is usually triggered by volcanic eruptions, landslides and earthquakes and can reach speeds up to 500 mph.¹

The countries most severely impacted by the natural disaster were: India, Myanmar, Thailand, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Maldives and Indonesia (which took the brunt of the wave resulting in more than 114,000 deaths). As of January 20, 2005, the tsunami affected millions of people and the death toll had risen to more than 220,000 people.² That number is expected to increase significantly as there are thousands still declared “missing” and death is potentially imminent for thousands due to the threat of disease and unsanitary conditions.

To put the gravity of the recent tsunami into perspective, the second most deadly tsunami in recorded history occurred in 1883 after the eruption of Krakatoa off the coast of Indonesia, killing more than 35,000 people.³

Countries around the globe have pledged billions of dollars for relief funds to aid victims of the tsunami. The United States has pledged \$350 million dollars, and ranks fourth behind Australia (\$819,900,000), Germany (\$653 million) and Japan (\$500 million).⁴ Of the \$350 million dollars promised by the United States, \$297.4 million has been pledged to the American Red Cross. The American Red Cross has provided aid by supplying food and safe water, immediate family supplies, mental health counseling, healthcare and disease prevention and disaster preparedness and prevention measures. The American Red Cross, along with the International Federation of Red Cross, have acquired sufficient funds to meet the needs of tsunami victims, and as of January 26, 2005, discontinued fundraising activities.

After much debate amongst the YLS Board concerning our desire to help the tsunami victims, we joined the bandwagon to help raise money for the American Red Cross. The debate centered around the source of the money as well as whether our small contribution would be significant enough to bother donating.

The YLS participated in a fundraiser put on by the Young Lawyers Division of the State Bar of Michigan. The event took place at Cinq in Bastone in Royal Oak and was attended by young lawyers in the (Tri-County) area taking advantage of an opportunity to socialize as well as contribute money to the American Red Cross for aid in South Asia. All together, the event raised over \$5,200.00.

There was a collaborative effort amongst the YLS Board to solicit donations to reach a goal of \$1,000.00. Spear-headed by YLS Past Chair, Dana Warnez, we raised over \$1200.00 in donations for tsunami victims. That was enough money to supply seven waterproof tents large

¹ Young People’s Trust for the Environment

² 1995-2005 Star Publications (Malaysia) Bhd (Co No 10894-D)

³ Young People’s Trust for the Environment

⁴ NationMaster.com 2003-2005

enough to sleep a family of five. Certainly, that resolved our debate as to whether our contribution was significant!

A special thank-you to all of the young lawyers who attended the event and gave cash donations: Jeannie Femminineo, Karen Trickey, Dana Warnez, Julie Gatti, Andrew Canu, Elise Iafrate, Brian Bourbeau, Yasmine Isshak, Jason Malkiewicz, Mark Sesi, Trevor Stratton, Nicholas Bachand, and Norma Warah; or made contributions, but were unable to attend: David and Katheryn Viviano, Matt Licata, Gail Pamukov, Annette Gattari Ross, Mark Pellecchia and Dena Keller.

The December 2004 tsunami reeked havoc among the lives of millions and it will take years and billions of dollars to recover from the damage. However, the cooperative effort of people globally who have volunteered time and donated money and other resources has helped provide solace not only to the tsunami victims, but also to people worldwide experiencing the effects of such a horrific disaster. Macomb County lawyers should take pride in knowing that we have helped contribute to the relief effort in South Asia by providing financial support and consolation universally to those affected by the tsunami.