



## PRESS RELEASE

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### IVORY COAST MEDICAL RELIEF TEAM

A Seattle-area grassroots organization raised over \$13,000- enough to send \$1,147,500 worth of medical supplies to refugees and AIDS victims in the Ivory Coast. "Imagine Saving Lives" was the theme of the community event held this weekend that was sponsored by a group of local Ivoirians with family and friends caught in cities and villages in the current civil war. The Ivory Coast Medical Relief Team (ICMRT) was founded 18 months ago out of a desperate need to help. Since the fragile community health care system has been completely disrupted by the conflict, health care became an obvious need.

Until the civil war broke out in 2002, the Ivory Coast (Côte d'Ivoire) has been the most stable and prosperous country in West Africa. The current population of 16 million people includes 25-40% immigrants, some who have fled civil wars in neighboring countries. To date, the war in the Ivory Coast has cost the lives of thousands and created a flood of refugees and displaced people. Health care staff has fled from fighting in the west and the rebel-held north leaving a war ravaged population with no basic health care.

ICMRT is a small, non-profit, all volunteer organization that, in just 18 months, has:

- Distributed 3 containers of medicine and supplies, valued at more than \$2,000,000
- Served more than 60 refugee camps and medical facilities
- Helped provide care to more than 600,000 refugees and Internally Displaced Peoples (IDP's)
- Strengthened and promoted healthy communities by donations to teaching hospitals

ICMRT's partners include the Northwest Medical Teams (medicine and medical supply provider), Mercy Corps (school and hygiene kit supplier) both from Portland, Oregon, and the Medical Assistance Program Côte d'Ivoire who organize the distribution of supplies.

Immediate goals include providing anti-retroviral (ARV) drugs to HIV/AIDS infected pregnant mothers and others and partnering with local organizations working to support AIDS patients. Currently there are over 84,000 children under age 15 living with AIDS, which is the leading cause of death among adults 15-49 in the Ivory Coast. Long-term goals include supporting Côte d'Ivoire Health and AIDS ministry and developing and rebuilding community health care programs in the Ivory Coast.

Event promoters can be proud of their efforts. \$1,147,500 in medical supplies will go a long way to alleviate suffering and send the message that the people of Seattle believe the pain inflicted on innocent people on the other side of the planet is a community issue.

ICMRT is committed to helping rebuild and expand the community health care system in the Ivory Coast and focus international attention on the current crisis.

**Please contact us and make a donation**

*To make a financial gift call (206) 622-0549, or mail gifts to:*

Ivory Coast Medical Relief Team  
14817 Linden Ave. North

Shoreline, WA 98133-6514