

NEIGHBORHOOD

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EXTRA



South Rotary donation helps Georgia poor

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for the Neighborhood Extra

Life in the rural areas of the country of Georgia is difficult. But with the pandemic, it became dire.

With socialization shut down, any means for side businesses such as selling fruit no longer existed. Economic conditions have forced young people to emigrate or move to the cities for employment. Although they send money home to their relatives as they are able, it has left elderly, especially the homebound, struggling and alone.

Residents in the rural areas, primarily older individuals, live in poverty. Many have little or no family support. They receive a pension from the state amounting to \$70 to \$86 (USD) per month depending on their age and the region they live in. They are virtually destitute.

The organization "Together for Real Changes" (TRC) was developed to support the needy with home visits, food and hygiene supplies. TRC, working closely with the local social service agencies, learned of the most critical situations in the Borjomi, Mestia and Racha regions of Georgia.

Ruta Casabianca, a member of the Rustavi International Rotary Club, connected with Lincoln South Rotary Club through member Tom Cardwell, past



A TRC volunteer checks the blood oxygen level of a rural resident in the country of Georgia.

president and past District 5650 governor, and shared the need and stories.

The TRC volunteers do what they can to not only take care of the individuals in these remote areas, but also give them hope. The visits are scheduled every two weeks. An important aspect of the visit is to ensure that the individuals know they are not forgotten.

During the visits, they do routine screenings for diabetes, oxygen level, blood pressure and

temperature. They have an oxygen tank with them in case they need to transport someone to the hospital. They provide cleaning supplies and food including rice, wheat, cooking oil, beans, sugar, tea and cookies.

Though the program focuses on the elderly, it is for anyone in need. There is one adult child who has been disabled with a brain injury since birth. She was very surprised with their visit because no one has been interested in her. She has little family

support, so mostly she is taken care of by neighbors who feed her and take her for walks. She showed her delight in having the opportunity to tell someone her story.

TRC members are stretching their funds as much as possible, but they are not able to visit as often as they would like. Prices of food and gas have been rising, adding to the challenges they face. Unfortunately, several of the initial beneficiaries have died, but there is a waiting list.

Lincoln South Rotary Club was able to provide \$2,000 in much-needed funds to help support these efforts. Bellevue Washington Rotary Club made a \$3,000 donation, and the Denver Southeast Rotary Club recently donated \$2,000. But Rotarian Casabianca is working with other Rotary clubs for support to prevent starvation among these remote residents.

The TRC organization, with the support of Rotarians around the world, is fulfilling the Rotary 2021-22 theme "Serve to Change Lives."

For information about Lincoln South Rotary, visit www.lincolnsouthrotary.org. From www.rotary.org, "No challenge is too big for Rotary. For more than 110 years, we've bridged cultures and connected continents to champion peace, fight illiteracy and poverty, promote clean water and sanitation, and fight disease."