

# *The Kiwanis Club of Abilene* **KIWANIGRAM**



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*We give thanks  
for all our blessings*



The Kiwanis Club of Abilene will not meet Thanksgiving week.

# Fact Sheet: Kiwanis International and The Eliminate Project

## The Eliminate Project

The Eliminate Project: Kiwanis eliminating maternal and neonatal tetanus (MNT) is a global campaign that will save and protect millions of mothers and babies. Tetanus infects newborns, spreading quickly, causing terrible pain and killing within days. It's a terrible disease, preventing even the comfort of a mother's touch but it's highly preventable. By targeting some of the poorest, most underserved women and children in the world, The Eliminate Project also will pave the way for other interventions that will boost maternal health and child survival.

- MNT is easily prevented by a series of three vaccine doses to women of childbearing age, costing roughly US\$1.80.
- Kiwanis International will raise US\$110 million by 2015, making Kiwanis the world's largest single donor.
- To achieve elimination, more than 100 million mothers must be immunized in the 38 countries where the disease is still a public health problem.
- Using the US\$1.80 average, Kiwanis will ultimately protect at least 61 million women and their future babies.

## About maternal and neonatal tetanus

One newborn dies every nine minutes from tetanus. That is equivalent to 160 newborns each day. The leading causes of MNT deaths are:

- Lack of or limited access to immunization and pre and post-natal care services;
- Limited or absent clean delivery services; and
- Improper post-partum cord care.

Once the disease is contracted, the fatality rate can be as high as 100 percent in areas without access to adequate health care. Most mothers and newborns who die of tetanus live in areas of Africa, and South and East Asia, where many women are poor, have little access to health care, have limited information about safe delivery practices and continue harmful cord care practices.

## Kiwanis International

Kiwanis International is a global organization of nearly 600,000 members dedicated to serving the children the world. Kiwanis and its family of clubs—including Circle K International for university students, Key C for students age 14–18, Builders Club for students age 11–14, Kiwanis Kids for students age 6–12 and Aktio Club for adults living with disabilities—annually raise more than US\$107 million and dedicate more than 1 million volunteer hours to strengthen communities and serve children.

Fundraising for The Eliminate Project will support UNICEF and its partners, which have already eliminated MNT in 20 countries. Kiwanis' global volunteer network and strength in reaching communities and leaders along with UNICEF's field staff, technical expertise and unbeatable supply chain, will help eliminate this centuries-old disease and pave the way for other interventions.

# Heading to Sierra Leone

*Sophia Bird is the daughter of South Central Indiana Kiwanian Loni Dishong. After serving as president of the Jackson Creek Middle School Builders Club, she moved on to high school and was elected president this year for the Bloomington, Indiana, Key Club. Sophia will be travelling to Sierra Leone this month with her grandparents Jerry and Linda Christiano.*



## By Sophia Bird

I first learned about The Eliminate Project: Kiwanis eliminating maternal and neonatal tetanus while in Geneva, Switzerland with my grandparents this previous summer for the international convention. After learning that one baby dies every nine minutes from neonatal tetanus, I was immediately inspired to participate.

I am honored to be traveling with a Kiwanis International delegation to Sierra Leone next week. We'll be witnessing a historic event: the last round of planned vaccination activities moving toward achieving elimination of maternal and neonatal tetanus in that West African nation.

Travelers must receive a yellow fever vaccination in order to enter Sierra Leone. For someone like me, who has always been afraid of getting shots simply because

I'm afraid of needles, this was one instance in which I was willing to embrace a shot because of the opportunity to travel with Kiwanis and UNICEF and witness elimination efforts firsthand.

In preparation, I've gotten that yellow fever shot as well as a few others, and I've talked to a nurse about the malaria pills I'll be taking. I've researched Sierra Leone and the surrounding areas, and every

little bit I learn only makes me more excited for my visit. Sierra Leone was devastated by a brutal 10-year civil war during the 1990s, which was fueled by conflict diamonds. Now the country is rebuilding. Kiwanis has a chance to play a small part in those rebuilding efforts by helping to fund tetanus elimination activities in Sierra Leone and other similar countries impacted by violence.

I find myself impatient to go on another adventure with Kiwanis, and I know that I can make a difference in this world.

That's one of the many beautiful things about Kiwanis—those of all ages are welcomed with open arms and invited to join. Kiwanis, as I feel I've said thousands of times these past few months, is a family. I am nervous and thrilled to be taking another step into that family to meet new people and collect more memories through impactful experiences.

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## KIWANIS CLUB OF ABILENE

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**Kiwanis is a global organization of volunteers, dedicated to changing the world, one child and one community at a time. Walk the Talk!**

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