

Protecting new mothers internationally ? Zonta Clubs to assemble 1,000 birthing kits

The Zonta Clubs of Brampton-Caledon and Mississauga are working to assemble 1,000 birthing kits May 4.

The Mennonite Central Committee will be ship them free of charge for distribution in Haiti through their established service networks.

Safe birthing kits include a plastic sheet, a piece of soap, two gloves, gauze squares, cord ties and a razor blade in a plastic zip lock bag. They are crucial for midwives who struggle daily to deliver babies in non-sterile conditions. These few simple items, costing less than \$2 apiece, can save three lives ? the mother, baby and the birth attendant.

UNICEF estimates that each day about 1,000 women die worldwide because of complications related to pregnancy and childbirth. Developing countries account for 99 per cent of the deaths.

?We are really excited about our Mississauga and Brampton-Caledon Zonta Club's second safe birthing kits assembly day,? commented Club President Doreen Thompson. ?We assembled 1,000 in October 2010. Members of Zonta International are committed to ?advancing the status of women worldwide.'?

?We are following in the footsteps of other Zonta Clubs from around the world who have donated time and supplies to help women in developing countries to have a safe delivery,? she added. ?This is something we take for granted in our home community.?

Donations of rubber gloves, plastic sheeting, umbilical cord, hard soap, gauze, zip lock bags or razor blades would be appreciated, as the scale of the problem is large. Those interested in donating those items are asked to contact Ellen at eblahitka@hotmail.com

The Clubs value this very worthwhile initiative. Secondary school students who are members of local Z-Club (sort of junior Zonta clubs) will be among the volunteers. ?