



NOMMS NEWS

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Warehouse Hours

Our warehouse in Elmwood Industrial Park is staffed from 9 AM until 1 PM every Wednesday and Saturday, except for holidays. We accept medical supplies from anyone. Medicines must be in a sealed container. We offer medical equipment, such as crutches or walkers to anyone.

Volunteer Profile

NOMMS is a volunteer organization, so it makes sense that we, from time to time, feature some of our dedicated supporters. This will be a feature in this and future Newsletters. Our first volunteer is **Lois Noble**. Lois has been serving NOMMS since 2014, and has been on at least 12 missions over the years.



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NOMMS History - PART ONE

I became a volunteer a year ago, and went on the spring mission to Puerto Plata. What a remarkable organization. People giving their skills and efforts to provide medical service to so many in disadvantaged communities. I wanted to know more - who started NOMMS? What were the early days like? I was put in touch with those who were there. This is their story. Editor

THE BEGINNING It is 2000. Dan Jacob, M.D. decided to participate in a medical mission to Central America. The mission was organized by a group in Texas. Dan called upon his friend, Fred Mikill, to help get some medical supplies shipped to Central America. Fred, recently retired, was an executive with Pan American Life Insurance. Pan American Life does significant business in Latin America. Fred had lots of experience and many contacts there. He managed a two-week shipment of medical supplies to the destination. It usually takes considerably longer to ship supplies out of the country, but Fred knew who to contact!

Dan's experience on the mission was not as satisfying as he hoped. At the same time, Fred's experience in Latin America, through Pan American Life, had shown him how much poverty exists in that region. Each had a desire to help people, Dan through his medical skills and Fred knowing the humanitarian need in Central and South America. Upon telling his friend of his experience on the mission, Fred asked,

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Volunteer Profile

Lois, born and raised in New Orleans, spent her professional life in real estate management, having worked for several of our well-known Realtors. Upon retirement, while listening to her church deacon encouraging his parishioners to volunteer at the New Orleans Medical Mission Services, Lois answered the call. When she arrived, NOMMS had just moved into our warehouse in Elmwood Industrial Park, which she notes had hardly any



of the organization and shelving it now has. Working with one of our few paid employees, Billy Spencer, the warehouse slowly took shape.

Lois is mainly responsible for receiving donations of medical supplies and equipment. That's a very long list of donations that come from individuals, clinics, and hospitals. The equipment includes such things as portable dialysis machines, gurneys, hospital beds, and more. She inspects the donations, and logs them in our database. That's all the incoming. For outgoing, Lois manages what we send out

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Donor Profile

It is a joy when we make a connection with a donor - someone who appreciates what we do on our mission to bring medical service to the disadvantaged. Bill and Renate of Michigan are donors we've known for a few years, and they have a remarkable story. They agreed to share it in our newsletter.

Renate's grandfather was involved in the art world in Germany during the rise of the Nazi party. The Nazi party was passionate about and often obtained art through force and at "fire sale" prices. Much of the art was owned by Jewish individuals, who had no choice but to relinquish the art. A substantial amount of the art was termed *degenerative art*, what today we would call modern art. The Nazi party felt this art was not compatible with their vision of the nation, so it was collected and stored.



The Watzmann by Casper David Friedrich

Some years ago Renate was contacted by a lawyer named David Rowland. David J. Rowland was a co-founder and managing partner of Rowland & Petroff. Mr. Rowland specialized in international transactions. The recovery of art became his passion. The process of returning art to its rightful owner is

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NOMMS History

“Why don’t we start our own mission?” After months of contemplation, Dan started to enlist the help of his medical friends, including Tom Kennedy, Jack Montz and Bobby Norman. In 2001 the New Orleans Medical Mission Services, Inc. was formed as a non-profit 501(c)(3). These doctors and volunteers were able to collect supplies from medical sales reps, and retiring M.D.s who were closing their practice. Often, if a medical pack isn’t used in a procedure, it is discarded. NOMMS was the happy recipient.

While NOMMS now had a name, the mechanics were evolving. Initially, medical supplies were collected into car trunks. The first NOMMS office was a room in the back of a Vietnamese grocery in Fat City, Metairie! Four nurses volunteered: Holly Pritchard, Kristie McConnell, Mary Morvant and Bonnie McAskill. The Mission would need money as well. The first Gala, to raise that money, was held at the Wax Museum in the New Orleans Vieux Carré. NOMMS encountered Simone Bruni, an event planner who helped move the Gala to Generations Hall downtown, and that has proven to be an excellent venue. The annual Gala has become a major fund-raiser for the mission.

The first mission was to Ecuador. The missions are typically a week long, from Saturday to Saturday. NOMMS missions are

NOMMS History

completely self-contained. The doctors will assemble their surgical packs, and supplies and equipment that are then shipped to the destination hospital prior to the mission.

NOMMS became Fred’s life’s mission. His wife, Pam, recalls how much time Fred put into NOMMS. He worked the warehouse, packing supplies, built shelving, drove a forklift, and did administrative tasks with spreadsheets, word processing, image editing, and desktop publishing. He was the Mission’s accountant, bookkeeper, secretary and its President. Fred was the editor of NOMMS first newsletter. His two daughters, Allyson and Lisa, have attended numerous missions, often working in the eye clinic. His wife, Pam attended many missions working the store room and organizing and accounting supplies and equipment.

Following the Vietnamese grocery, NOMMS moved to a small 1,200 square foot warehouse under the Huey Long bridge. From that location they managed missions to Guayaquil. Slowly donations, both monetary and medical supplies and equipment, began accruing. NOMMS managed one or two missions a year, which visited Ecuador for the next several years. Following those visits, the destination was changed to Nicaragua, going to three cities; Leon, Chinandega and Matagalpa.

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Donor Profile

laborious, and can take years. Mr. Rowland represented claimants in several high profile art restitution cases, including the recovery of the “Watzmann” by Caspar David Friedrich and the restitution of the “Berlin Street Scene” by Ernst Ludwig Kirchner. In addition, Mr. Rowland worked in the area of German property restitution since 1990. Renate’s family once had an extensive collection of art all of which was confiscated in the 20s and 30s by the Nazis. Renate’s grandfather’s third wife was first married to the curator of the Berlin Museum of Art. He was also a collector and had an extensive collection.

Bill and Renate along with Renate’s extended family has benefited from the recovered art, but they always felt that those proceeds should go to other worthy causes. They now support a number of charities through the Brenneke Family Fund. Their daughter, a nurse, became involved in NOMMS and has worked with Tom Kennedy and participated in missions. She told her parents about NOMMS and they decided to include NOMMS in their giving. We are so grateful for their generous donations over a several-year period. We thank our many donors whose support allows us to bring health care to the disadvantaged.

NOMMS History

NOMMS made a couple of moves before landing in our current location at 625 Distributor’s Row.

We will continue the story in Part Two, next newsletter.

Volunteer Profile

by creating shipping manifests for the containers we send to needy communities, and the pallets of equipment and supplies we send in advance of our missions. During the missions, Lois will work the hospital storerooms, organizing and tracking the equipment and supplies. Our Lois remarked at the conclusion of our interview, that she is also the oldest volunteer at NOMMS! She is a remarkable *nonagenarian*.

Our warehouse is staffed on Wednesdays and Saturdays, and Lois is nearly always one of the first to arrive. NOMMS does an exceptional job of serving the poor communities in Central and South America, Africa, and the Caribbean. We also serve the needy right here in the Crescent City. Our success can be directly attributed to dedicated volunteers like Lois. Thank you!



Fred Mikill Memorial Golf Tournament

Our 17th Annual Fred Mikill Memorial Golf Tournament will be held on Friday, April 5, 2024 at Lakewood Golf Club sponsored by BankPlus. 80 golfers will have a great time, enjoying delicious food and some very cool prizes.



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