

“OPERATION GOLDEN HOUR”

In 2004, the United Nations and the World Health Organization declared a “global road safety crisis”. Annually, 1,260,000 die as a result of injuries received in road crashes. Another 30 to 50 million are injured. The UN estimates the loss to society is 500 billion US Dollars in lost productivity and health care costs.

A majority of these deaths and injuries occur in developing nations. A large percentage of these deaths are as a result of the victim not receiving first aid or emergency medical treatment within the first hour. That first hour after an injury or serious illness strike, is known to medical practitioners and first responders as “THE GOLDEN HOUR”.

In many developing nations, police do not have the tools or training to prevent collisions, investigate them or to treat victims. Numerous jurisdictions do not have ambulances or the trained staff and equipment to fill them. Emergency rooms are little more than a wooden table and a nearly empty first aid case. Surgeons are few, and because of conditions, surgeries are not carried out promptly.

In the developed world, there are standards for the timely arrival of emergency responders, at scene treatment and victim removal to an emergency facility that is fully equipped and staffed. Survival rates are disproportionately high compared to developing nations due to the fact that treatment is received in “THE GOLDEN HOUR”.

Police, Fire, Ambulance services and Medical institutions routinely discard used equipment that is serviceable and salvageable merely because newer and more advanced equipment is available. The used equipment is often sold or auctioned at next to nothing prices. Ambulances become service vehicles for independent repair services or gardeners, police vehicles become taxi cabs. Hospital equipment may be used by independent clinics. Radar speed measuring equipment becomes?

In today’s society, where municipal, provincial/state and federal governments have multi-billion dollar budgets, surely the few pennies they receive from these auctions and sales do little to offset the budget. This equipment, if donated and distributed to these developing nations, along with proper training, would go a long way to making treatment in “THE GOLDEN HOUR” a global reality.

Road safety educational materials, speed enforcement equipment, proper road signs and driver education programs will also help in preventing crashes and thereby reducing deaths and injuries. “OPERATION GOLDEN HOUR” has the potential to save many lives around the world.

In order for “OPERATION GOLDEN HOUR” to work, the cooperation of all levels of government, the private sector and all institutions is needed. Organizations that have something to give, whether it be hard goods like equipment, soft goods such as training

or transport services like airlines and shipping companies need to step forward and be counted.

For more information about “OPERATION GOLDEN HOUR” or if you want to help, contact Ted Holtzheuser at 416-239-0070 or info@roadsafetynetwork.com.

On Monday, May 16th 2005, “Canada, Road Safety Week” begins. Canada has made many advances in road safety. Canadians can share that experience with those less fortunate nations that account for a majority of road fatalities. Ted Holtzheuser will leave for Istanbul, Turkey on this day to attend an International road safety conference that will focus on saving lives through collision prevention and first response treatment. Please donate used traffic safety and emergency response equipment.