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The Division 8 maintenance team collected enough relief supplies for tsunami victims to require a forklift to carry it. *Photo by Fabio Restrepo.*



Valley Divisions Helping To Provide Relief For Tsunami Victims

By Eric Rapp

(Feb. 4, 2005) After a deadly tsunami struck South Asia last month, pictures and video of the devastation began flowing to the rest of the world. Watching these pictures, West Valley Division 8 Equipment Maintenance Supervisor Jagath Wijegunawardena's first thought was how he could help.

He immediately contacted Ike Alison, another equipment maintenance supervisor at Division 8. Together, they put together a plan.

Wijegunawardena spoke to several Buddhist temples in the Los Angeles area to find out what items were needed and what efforts were ongoing. Management at Division 8 and East Valley Division 15 helped get the word out, putting up flyers at both divisions and helping collect items.

Employees at the divisions also got involved in the effort, donating food and clothing, bagging items, and cutting drums to store and ship the donations.

Worked long and hard



Division 15 maintenance crew displays barrels with some of the tsunami supplies they collected from co-workers.

Photo by Brent Devol.

Division 8's Mark Lacanilao, Scott Lanski, Larry Ramata, Bill Heiller, Chris Kane, and Mike Benton; and Division 15's Pat Kato, Andy Gonzalez, Mark Calinog, Cuauhte Martinez, and Dave Rakistis, all worked long and hard to secure, pack, and load the huge number of items donated by employees.

"I really appreciate the generosity of the employees at both divisions for their donations to help these victims," says Alison. "God bless them all."

Wijegunawardena also donated the use of his RV and trailer to transport the items to a Buddhist temple in North Hollywood, which was organizing relief shipments. Two loads of about 2,000 pounds each of donated goods were delivered to the temple.

Not content to stop there, Alison and Wijegunawardena are also collecting funds to help victims of the tsunami. To date, more than \$1,000 has been collected through the caring donations of employees at the San Fernando Valley divisions.

"Ike and Jag worked incredibly hard on this," says Pat Orr, Division 8 maintenance manager. "Out of the goodness of their hearts, they've accomplished an amazing feat of charity."

General Manager Richard Hunt agrees. "I'm glad we can do so much to help the people who have been so devastated by this natural disaster. This couldn't have happened without the generosity of all our employees."

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