

Doctors tell of tsunami's devastation



DAVID CRENSHAW / Tulsa World

Dr. Mitchell Duinick speaks at a news conference Friday about his experience in tsunami-ravaged Banda Aceh, Indonesia. An image from the medical relief mission can be seen in the background.

The team of local physicians returns after providing medical care to disaster victims.

By NICOLE NASCENZI
World Staff Writer

For Dr. Sanjay Thomas, a copper ring from a thankful patient is the souvenir of a lifetime.

Topped with an unidentified white stone, the small ring is almost weightless, but packed with emotion. The patient, who lost most of his possessions in the tsunami, gave Thomas the ring to thank him for saving his life.

SEE RELIEF A-6



Thomas



Ross

Saturday, Jan. 29, 2005

TULSA WORLD

Upcoming event

In His Image will host an event at 7 p.m. Thursday at the Renaissance Hotel, 6808 S. 107th East Ave. The event is open to the public and is organized so Tulsans can learn more about the recent mission to Indonesia. In His Image is continuing to accept monetary donations to help with the relief work. All donations are tax-deductible. Donations can be mailed to Tsunami Relief Effort, 7600 S. Lewis Ave., Tulsa, OK 74136. More information is also available by calling 493-7816, Ext. 8 or by visiting jimweems.com/duinick/duinick-1.html.

RELIEF:

After all expenses for the relief team are paid, remaining funds will be donated to World Harvest.

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Thomas said he tried to refuse the gift, but the man insisted he take the family heirloom.

"I told him that anytime I see the ring I will say a prayer for him," he said.

Thomas is one of nine Tulsa doctors who recently returned from a medical relief mission to tsunami-ravaged Indonesia.

The Tulsa doctors volunteered at hospitals and refugee camps in the Banda Aceh region of Sumatra, Indonesia, in one of the areas hardest hit by the Dec. 26 tsunami waves.

The group returned to Tulsa on Thursday and shared their experiences Friday at a press conference.

Six of the doctors, including Thomas, are residents training through a Tulsa-based program called In His Image. The program trains doctors in Christian family

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Children suffering because of inadequate tsunami relief-14

practice and is affiliated with Hillcrest Medical Center. Three of the doctors are faculty members at In His Image.

"We wrestled with some bugs and some heat, but we were well taken care of," said Dr. Mitchell Duinick. Duinick, director of the residency program, led the group during its medical relief mission.

The doctors slept on the floor of two rented houses and worked closely with translators while treating patients.

The Tulsans treated many cases of infections, including tetanus, and mended many broken bones.

"It has definitely been a life-changing experience for all of us," said Dr. James Ross, a member of the In His Image faculty.

Ross said he vividly remembers the smell of decay and the image of destruction. Villages as far as he could see were destroyed by the tidal wave.

Although medical care was necessary, more than anything the tsunami

mi victims needed someone to listen, Ross said. Everyone had a story of loss and survival.

"The wounds that run deep within the soul and the spirit take time to heal," he said.

The doctors were joined by two alumni from the In His Image program and a team of 10 doctors and nurses from the East Coast. The doctors worked under the auspices of an Indonesian-based relief program called World Harvest.

Duinick said the trip was made possible by countless contributions from the community and the support of the doctors' families, friends and colleagues.

To date, In His Image has raised more than \$70,000 for the medical relief effort.

After all expenses for the relief team are paid, remaining funds will be donated to World Harvest, said John McVay, administrator of In His Image.

There will be a continuing need for medical care in the areas devastated by the tsunami, McVay said. The group has not decided if it will send another team of doctors to Indonesia.

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