

2011 Tacoma Peace Prize
Dr. Donald Mott of China Partners Network

What a privilege it is to be part of this special occasion. On behalf of Dr. Loren and MaryAnn Anderson I want you to know how disappointed they are not to be able to be here with you this evening. As you can imagine, with this being commencement weekend, they have not a moment free. In fact, as we are gathered here this evening they are probably saying farewell to the last of hundreds of graduating student, their families and guests, who were at Gonyea House this afternoon. Still, they want you to know that they are here in spirit, and send their very best wishes to all of you, and especially you Don (and Beryl) and all your colleagues who have been and are part of China Partners.

So, who is Dr. Don Mott? What is this group called China Partners? And why are we here?

If you are like me, you know there is tremendous need across our globe to assist people, especially children, who are much less fortunate than some of even the worst off in our own country. And you get lots of solicitations in the mail asking for you to help this organization and that—and many of these do very good work indeed, but you are never quite sure what they are really accomplishing. You might also wonder, who is deciding what the need is? — the outside organization or the actual people in the country where the need is? Again, if you are like me, you often wish you had skills that you could take to country X, or Y or Z, but you don't have the skills needed. Dr. Don Mott, on the other hand, has skills that are in demand, and he has found local partners to help determine the real need, and with that, he has stepped into action.

In China, there are at least 15 million children diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy (CP) who receive minimal or no treatment and suffer from neglect. (That is more than twice the entire population of the state of Washington!) The China Ministry of Health and the China Association of Rehabilitation Medicine is committed to improving the lives of these children by training Chinese pediatric therapists in more advanced treatment techniques, and since 2002 they have found an active partner in Dr. Donald Mott and China Partners Network (CPN). For enhancing the lives of children in China and for pioneering a sustainable training program for healthcare professionals in China to work more effectively with children with cerebral palsy (CP) and other neuromuscular disorders, President Anderson and I nominated Dr. Donald Mott, founder and leader of China Partners Network (CPN) for the 2011 Tacoma Peace Prize. CPN has brought together, and continues to bring together hospitals, churches and universities in the Tacoma region around a global need, and provides opportunities for Tacoma area citizens not only to understand one of the global health challenges China faces, but provides an opportunity to contribute to their solution.

Dr. Mott is a now retired pediatric-orthopedic surgeon who leads CPN, an extraordinary group of physicians and physical therapists dedicated to improving the quality and meaning of the lives of children with CP and other neuromuscular disorders living in underserved regions of China. What Don has done is draw from the Children's Therapy Unit of Good Samaritan Hospital in Puyallup, and with this core group of professionals,

he uses his and their talents, skills and free time to plan hands-on rehabilitation training courses for healthcare professionals, and then to bring it to reality, they use their own vacation time to travel to China to implement these programs. As Dr. Li Jianan, Vice Chairman of Chinese Association of Rehabilitation Medicine (CARM) states, “China Partners Network’s unique team approach to therapy is the solution...to this crisis that has reached epidemic size.”

Since 2002, Don and CPN have conducted nine training courses in seven Chinese cities attracting more than 400 medical persons from hospitals, medical universities, children’s homes, special education schools, as well as parents of CP children from 23 provinces and autonomous regions. As a result, to date, 12,000 local children with CP have received improved treatment and services. In addition, Dr. Mott and CPN have brought Chinese healthcare workers to Tacoma to see firsthand children’s rehabilitation programs in action.

Now that Don has retired, is this program drawing to a close? Hardly! The China Professional Committee of Pediatric Rehabilitation has now requested CPN to assist them in establishing five model rehabilitation centers to train groups of Chinese professionals who will then continue the program of training healthcare workers from across China. Again as Li Jianan says, CPN has conducted the research, designed a comprehensive training program, and galvanized local support. In CPN “We have the solution... to bring hope, mobility and a life of independence to 15 million neglected Chinese children.”

For increasing the understanding of China in Tacoma and across the South Puget Sound region, for bringing people of China and our region together through programs that enhance the lives of children in China, as well as educate and train China health professional pioneers who work with children with cerebral palsy and other neuromuscular disorders, Loren and MaryAnn Anderson, my wife Liz and I, and so very many others in this room, are thrilled to be part of Dr. Don Mott of China Partners Network being recognized this evening with the 2011 Greater Tacoma Peace Prize.

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