

THE NORTHERN MINER

THE GLOBAL
MINING
NEWSPAPER

www.northernminer.com

SEPTEMBER 5-11, 2011 • VOL. 97, NO. 29 • SINCE 1915

Red Cross lauds Canadian miners for Haiti help

BY SALMA TARIKH

The Canadian Red Cross has commemorated members of the mining industry for raising \$900,000 following the devastating earthquake that rattled Haiti in January 2010, leaving 230,000 dead, 1.3 million homeless and 3 million affected.

"It's been said one person can make a difference, and today we are here to celebrate what can be accomplished by a group of people such as the Canadian Mining Hall of Fame and the Prospectors & Developers Association of Canada," Ron Kelusky, the Canadian Red Cross' director general, said at the Canadian Red Cross Partners in Humanity Award Luncheon at Toronto's Albany Club on Aug. 19. "They both came together for a good cause."

The cause was championed by PDAC's former communications director, Saley Lawton, and current chair of the PDAC awards committee, Ed Thompson.

Struck by the magnitude of the disaster and graphic images they saw in the media following the Jan. 12 earthquake, they wanted to help.

Two days later, during the 2010 Canadian Mining Hall of Fame induction ceremony, they put together a call for donations.

Thompson collected \$150,000 during a pre-dinner reception, and later he and Lawton, with the help of emcee Pierre Lassonde, the chairman of Franco-Nevada, cajoled the nearly 800 attendees to open their wallets.

"Between soup and dessert that night, we raised \$900,000," said Thompson as he and Lawton accepted the Partners in Humanity award. He added that there had been no advanced planning.

"Sometimes simple is best," commented Lawton during her acceptance speech. "Ed and I did this definitely the simple way."

She described how Lassonde in his "firm but gentle way" rallied the crowd that night to persuade them to donate, and how she and Ed and a few volunteers went to every table to collect pledges, which "consisted of dollar amounts scratched and scribbled on the back of business cards."

"I said I would follow up in the following days," recalls Lawton. "Everyone came through with the money that had been promised. No one hung up on me."

Some of the attendees also donated shares, said Thompson, noting that the Canadian government matched the personal donations for a grand total of \$1.6 million.

Kelusky commented that this was the "largest single Haiti fundraising initiative in Ontario."

John Saunders, provincial director of the Canadian Red Cross, said in an interview that all the donations collected by the Red Cross for Haiti during the first few months went towards treating the injured.

"Over a million people were injured after the earthquake, so we had field hospitals set up everywhere to treat those injuries. A lot of the money went to medical treatment, food and water, which was really the main focus for the first six months. Then it was providing tents and temporary shelters."