

**Comments at the Opening Ceremony for the
Sheldon & Marion Davis Pacemaker Recycling Center**

By Kim A. Eagle, M.D.

June 9, 2018

Dear Friends:

Today we celebrate an important moment, the opening of the Sheldon and Marion Davis Pacemaker Recycling Center at World Medical Relief. It is a moment for us to look back, consider how far we've come, and to look forward. In looking back, we can't help but reflect on the vision of a single woman, Irene Auberlin who in 1953 made a fundamental decision to help a number of poor Korean orphans. Consider the power of that one woman, who would overcome remarkable odds to cajole friends, neighbors, politicians, business people toward a movement that would become World Medical Relief. In that moment, a life time decision was made and as a result literally tens of thousands of lives have been helped because of the generosity of spirit of one woman and a fire that was created among the hearts of so many more including you and me. So first and foremost today we celebrate Irene Auberlin and the founding mothers and fathers of this amazing organization, World Medical Relief.

We can also look back to that moment a few years ago when a man brought his wife's previously used pacemaker to one of our Cardiology Fellows and asked if we might try to find a person somewhere in the world who needed a pacemaker but couldn't afford one. Project My Heart Your Heart was spawned, like Irene Auberlin, from the single gesture of a man who wanted to help someone in memory of his deceased wife. World Medical had been toying with this idea for some time and through its leaders and several physicians had already tested the notation of recycling pacemakers. This was not my idea. But together it became a much grander idea. The notation that if we carefully studied the proper acquisition, analysis, refurbishment,

sterilization, repackaging and delivery that we could make pacemaker recycling not just a “one off” with few dozen pacemakers delivered in a suitcase but rather potentially a global reality, something in the light of the world that would be embraced by the world, this could lead to potentially far far more beneficiaries of this life saving treatment.

Over the past nine years we have had a remarkable journey together. You remember that African proverb that says “If you want to go fast, go alone, but if you want to go far, go with others”. Well with others we have been on this journey for a while. We worked with numerous members of the World Medical Relief Board, leadership and volunteers. In the beginning there was Dr. Timir Baman who led the project for our team and then Dr. Thomas Crawford who has carried the baton to bring us to this point. Under Tom’s leadership we’ve had a national partnership with Implant Recycling and have received nearly 30,000 pacemakers! Thomas has developed an international partnership with the Pan African Cardiac Society that trains African pacemaker implanters in South Africa who then go home to their native countries and do their work. Our team has worked with the FDA to obtain approval to perform a randomized trial comparing our refurbished pacemakers to new ones. We’ve worked with World Medical Relief to carefully and thoughtfully create a place where we can do our work. We’ve worked with doctors, hospital staff, and nurses in Haiti, the Philippines, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Ghana, Bolivia, Viet Nam and others. More recently Sierra Leone and Kenya. We’ve provided “compassionate use” refurbished devices to needy patients in many countries.

Our M CORRP team has created a database that will allow us to track the devices that we implant. We’ve worked with Infectious Disease experts, legal experts, ethical experts, health systems, engineers, pacemaker companies, funeral homes and crematories. If you want to go far, you go with others. It’s amazing we’ve come so far. I’m so thankful for George Samson and the

Board who have welcomed us into “World Medical”. I’m thankful for our entire team who have helped to shape this recycling center and am deeply grateful for those who have supported the effort along the way. I believe that all of us have discovered truth of the words from Mahatma Gandhi, “The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.”

We’ve received grants from many places starting with the University of Michigan Cardiovascular Center. Along the way, there has been one couple that has been steadfast from beginning until now. You can’t do things without resources. We are blessed to have a myriad of human resources. However, without financial resources programs can’t go very far and today we are so grateful to honor Sheldon and Marion Davis who through their generosity and vision have helped us create the world’s first visible Pacemaker Recycling Center. How fitting it is that their name would be on a structure that they have helped create through their resources, generosity and teamsmanship with such a large group of individuals. For me, there is no greater gift than the opportunity to give back. For Sheldon and Marion Davis, they have exhibited that throughout their lives and through this project.

Imagine today there is a bucket of used pacemakers sitting in a crematory somewhere in these United States. From time to time, the devices make a little beep related to battery life or activity. If you listen carefully, they are really calling out to you and me, looking for a home... to connect to a human heart. Imagine for a second a low income hospital in Africa. Patients in a crowded clinic, silently waiting, hoping for a voice...a promise...a solution. This is our work, enabling that transfer of health...one country’s waste, is another’s treasure. Here, now, we commit to bridging this gap of hope to relieve human suffering around the world. It is my fervent belief that together we are bringing pacemaker recycling into the light of the world, where ultimately tens of thousands of lives will be saved each and every year. This dream comes

true starting here, today, you, and me...Nobel Peace prize winning physician Albert Schweitzer said it this way "I don't know what your destiny will be, but one thing I know: the only ones among you who will be truly happy are those who have sought and found how to serve." This is our time to serve.

Ladies and Gentleman, it is absolutely the greatest joy for me to stand here today and celebrate with you this remarkable facility and this amazing team supported by these two amazing people Sheldon and Marion Davis. This place of hope will now bear their name in perpetuity.