

Helping Hands Around the Globe

It's a busy life, working in our missions around the world—but our staff still find time to express their best through charitable work, doing generous deeds in a spirit of fun.

At the Embassy of Canada in Washington, D.C., there was a lot of fun in the air in early November when the embassy's hockey team went up against the FBI crew at the Kettler Capitals Iceplex, the practice centre of the NHL's Washington Capitals. The score? Seven to five in favour of the FBI—a pill that was easier to swallow thanks to the \$1,400 in charitable funds raised for the United Way through admission, a 50/50 draw and merchandise sales.

The embassy had a lot of other United Way events. Three senior embassy staff and the head of chancery took on four stalwart interns in an Are You Smarter than an Intern? competition. Fielding questions about Canadian history, pop culture and current events, the interns took an early lead but were finally

edged by the brass. There was also a Funniest YouTube Video competition in which staff voted on clips submitted by their colleagues. The winner was "Funny Talking Animals." With more than a dozen activities in all, the embassy raised more than \$67,000.

In Amman, an ocean and a continent away, they held an authentic Canada Day celebration with a distinct Jordanian twist. With artists painting Canadian flags on children's faces, teams competing in tugs-of-war and three-legged races, and chefs serving up poutine, the celebration was certifiably Canadian. But there were plenty of Jordanian touches: donkey rides for the kids, vendors selling honey and olive oil, respite from the sun on Bedouin carpets inside woolen Bedouin tents. Through ticket sales and sponsorships, the embassy raised enough to donate \$5,500 to Jewels, an organization that helps Jordanian women pursue graduate studies in Canada, and \$14,000 to the Royal Botanical Gardens north of Amman, where the celebrations took place.

India may have had its first Movember at the high commission in New Delhi last fall. Nine courageous men grew moustaches to raise awareness of cancer and men's health and to raise funds for the Government of Canada Workplace Charitable Campaign. On November 23, their colleagues bid for the chance to redesign the new moustaches—and the "moustacheers" agreed to sport the new creations for at least 24 hours. Gideon Lundholm, Second Secretary (Political and Economic Affairs), said growing a moustache was "easy in this country—which is in love with upper lip hair—and we were gratified to raise \$3,700 for charity and set a new benchmark for men's facial fashion."

In Paris, embassy employees invited their colleagues at the Canadian missions to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and UNESCO to join in raising money and choosing a charity to support. They sold used items, held bake sales and draws, had wine tastings, showed a film—all traditional activities in support of an unusual cause. *Le Rire Médecin*, which received a cheque for \$13,353 from Ambassador Marc Lortie, trains clowns to entertain children in hospitals, reminding them they can have laughter and fantasy even when ill and away from home.

When employees at the high commission in Canberra wanted to help a staffer go off to Vanuatu on an Australian youth volunteer program, they knew what to do. They'd have an evening of auto racing at the Parkway Hills Raceway—and thus was born the Canadian High Commission Classic.

You won't read about the Classic in *Autosport* magazine. The Parkway Hills Raceway is a 20-metre course set up in the garage of Bruce Ferguson, the high commission's handyman. The racers are electric model race cars that Ferguson, a 40-year veteran of the sport, has made himself, with NASCAR-style stock cars nudging lanes with muscle cars and other models. It was a classy event, with fines for reckless driving and swearing. And, with racers and spectators both paying admission, two hours of track-hugging laps brought in \$850 to help administrative assistant Georgina Heyward pay for her trip to Vanuatu,



A Canada Day donkey ride in Jordan
photo: DFAIT