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Monday, October 27, 2008

Project HOPE's president honored

By Stephanie M. Mangino
The Winchester Star

Millwood — The president and CEO of the Millwood-based international humanitarian and health education organization Project HOPE has been honored as Serviam Magazine's person of the year.

John P. Howe III is the first recipient of the award from the 1-year-old magazine dedicated to covering the global stability sector.

Howe talked about the honor Friday as he prepared to fly east after discussing Project HOPE's work in China at Stanford University in Palo Alto, Calif., but he did not speak in individual terms.

"As the award comes to me, it really comes to the entire Project HOPE family," Howe said in the telephone interview.

Others considered for the Serviam distinction included William P. Magee Jr., CEO and co-founder of Operation Smile; Richard Solomon, president of the United States Institute of Peace; Gail J. McGovern, president and CEO of the American Red Cross; Suzanne Monaghan, president of Pearson Peacekeeping Centre; and Sam Worthington, president and CEO of InterAction.

The Washington, D.C.-based magazine chose Howe and Project HOPE because the organization can "advance the concept of a fully functional and integrated international charity-corporate-military humanitarian partnership," a Project HOPE press release on the honor states.

"For us, this is in keeping with our proud traditions, going back to the original S.S. HOPE," Howe said of the award.

Project HOPE's S.S. HOPE peacetime hospital ship was a U.S. Navy hospital ship pulled out of mothballs in 1958, Howe states in an interview in the September/October issue of Serviam. The move had the backing of then-President Dwight D. Eisenhower and the Navy, and it won congressional approval. A pharmaceutical company contributed medicines for the ship's voyages, and people volunteered their services as well, he states. The S.S. HOPE was retired in 1974.



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Today, the 50-year-old nonprofit's relationship with the Navy is just as strong, but different, as the ships used by Project HOPE are operated and maintained by the Navy, while Project HOPE provides volunteer medical personnel, Howe said Friday.

So far this year, four ships with Project HOPE personnel aboard have gone on medical missions, with the first helping people in the west African countries Ghana and Liberia in early spring, Howe said. In late spring, another ship visited Honduras, Guatemala, and Peru.

Throughout the summer, a ship assisted people in south Asian countries such as the Philippines, Vietnam, Papua New Guinea, East Timor, and Micronesia, he said. Currently, a ship is serving the people of Guyana as part of a trip that has also helped residents of Nicaragua, Colombia, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic.

"This award is a timely reflection of Project HOPE's partnership with the Navy," Howe said.

The organization, as it provides aid, also speaks to global stability, according to Howe's Q&A in Serviam's September/October issue.

"For the sake of our children and grandchildren it's so important that we recognize the importance of a stable world in terms of their health and their well being," Howe states in the magazine. "This is a need that transcends culture, country, ethnicity, and dialect. Project HOPE looks to the future. We intend to stay true to course. Our 50-year mission of health education and humanitarian aid will continue to lie at the heart of our people and programs. It's been demonstrated time and time again that what we do leads to an end ingredient of success in creating a stable world.

"Stability doesn't happen overnight. It takes time. We have had people on the ground in Indonesia since 1960. Peru since 1964. We've been in China 25 years. In Egypt for 33 years. We're not just in overnight and out the next day. We're there for working closely with the governments. We don't go in uninvited. There's a relationship of trust and respect. We go in as a counselor. HOPE can identify the long-term needs and what must be done to address them," Howe told Serviam.

Project HOPE's 700 staffers in 35 countries can take pride in Serviam's recognition, Howe said. But they aren't the only people working for Project HOPE.

In the past four years, nearly 600 volunteer health professionals have donated services to the organization, and more than 300,000 people in developing African, Latin American, and Southeast Asian nations have received care through Project HOPE, the organization's press release states.

In the course of 50 years, the organization "has distributed nearly \$2 billion of life-saving medicines and medical equipment, and trained more than 2 million health care professionals," Howe adds in the Serviam interview.

However, Project HOPE is not resting on its laurels. In the Serviam piece, Howe states the organization intends to expand into new areas like India and Brazil and western China.

"Project HOPE also will continue to be a leader in the development of hospitals and health care facilities," he states. "Early in 2009, the Basrah Children's Hospital in Iraq will open its doors and begin to care for children with cancer.... Project HOPE has facilitated the donation of more than \$30 million of medical equipment for the hospital and currently is training the medical and nursing staffs."

As for the present, Howe expressed appreciation for Serviam's recognition Friday: "It's a tremendous tribute to Project HOPE."

...www.serviammagazine.com
www.projecthope.org

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