

May 14, 2014

## WGP celebrates five years of giving

The Workplace Giving Program, which currently supports the work of the Barbara May Foundation, is celebrating its fifth birthday this month.

More than 2,500 Sydney Local Health District employees donate a \$1 a week through the program, providing financial support for a fully-equipped, 20-bed maternity hospital in Mille, Ethiopia.

The hospital, managed by the Barbara May Foundation, provides access to safe and effective obstetric care to the local nomadic Afar people. The foundation has also trained and equipped birth attendants in surrounding villages to manage women in their pregnancies and deliver low risk cases. The hospital has been so successful that the maternal death rates have dropped dramatically from one in 12 women to just one in 120.

The foundation was established in 2009, with the goal to reduce the high incidence of women and babies who die or are injured during childbirth. It supports the work of Australian nurse and midwife Valerie Browning AM and her nephew Dr Andrew Browning in Africa.

Valerie Browning has dedicated the last 20 years of her life to improving the health and welfare of the Afar people. She was awarded an Order of Australia for services to International Humanitarian Aid and recently won a prestigious Rotary International Humanitarian award.

The WGP, which boasts a total membership of 5,000 staff donors from Sydney and South Western Sydney Local Health Districts, donates \$17,000 every month to the foundation and has also made a number of once-off larger donations.

“The current level of donations allows us to fully fund the Mille hospital, with enough left over to contribute to a new hospital now being built in Barhirdar in northern Ethiopia,” said Customer Service Manager John O’Grady.



Dr Marjolien teaching at Barbara May hospital at Mille.



The Mille maternity hospital funded by WGP.

“The generosity of our staff helps make the Workplace Giving Program a success, and makes a real difference to those less fortunate.”

Staff who participate in the program donate \$1 a week through the payroll system, which is deducted from their pre-tax salary. If you wish to become part of the program, fill in the online form at <http://intranet.sswahs.nsw.gov.au/sswahs/wgp/join.html>