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Rotary projects reap benefits

By Fai CHIVELL

Early last year the Rotary Club of Whyalla contributed \$1000 to help support the Kupu Kupu Foundation in Ubud, Bali, Indonesia that cares for disabled children and adults.

The club was delighted to receive news that its contribution has made life more enjoyable for Erni and her family who reside at the foundation.

Erni is a disabled woman who supports both her father who is wheelchair bound, and her mother who requires crutches to walk.

This initial contribution from the Rotary Club of Whyalla enabled Erni to modify her motorbike so the family could have more independence.

The bike can now be used to carry the family to and from the market, visit friends and to purchase materials so her father can continue to make his handicrafts.

The Kupu Kupu Foundation recently opened another centre in Bangli, north of Bali but neither of the centres receive financial assistance from the Indonesian Government as the disabled are ignored in that country.

The two centres survive on donations, a few small grants and the dedicated work of volunteers.

The Rotary Club of Whyalla has committed to supporting the centres in the long-term as projects for their international committee.

In the past few years the Rotary Club of Whyalla undertook a long-term project to raise sufficient funds to sponsor a PhD scholarship for research into



Wayan, Erni and Agus with the modified motorbike that they were able to purchase after a donation from the Rotary Club of Whyalla.

Multiple Sclerosis, after learning that this disease affects an estimated 18,000 Australians and the numbers are growing.

Multiple Sclerosis is a puzzle that has perplexed medical science since it was first described by the French neurologist Charcot in 1868.

The disease affects the central nervous system and can, to varying degrees, interfere with the transmission of nerve impulses throughout the brain, spinal cord and optic nerves.

The club, in association with Australian Rotary Health, awarded the scholarship grant to Jo Anne Schinke Stratton who grew up in Vancouver, Canada then moved to Melbourne, Victoria to complete her science degree.

Jo Anne has a personal passion for undertaking Multiple

Sclerosis research as her father was diagnosed with the disease in 1996.

Jo Anne commenced her PhD with the Multiple Sclerosis Division at the Florey Neuroscience Institutes on February 23, 2009 under the supervision of Dr Tobias D Merson and Professor Trevor Kilpatrick.

Her work is progressing very well according to her supervisors who believe the outcome of her research will represent a major advance in the field and place her in a good position for producing a high quality PhD thesis.

Jo Anne will be a guest speaker at one of the Rotary Club of Whyalla's dinner meetings during 2010 where members will get to meet her personally and hear about her research first hand.