

# Music Missions Dominica

by Don Lowry



Luther Kosowan is the driving force behind Music Missions Dominica. After his retirement, he and his wife, Ruth, moved from Grande Prairie, Alberta to Dominica. Upon arriving in Dominica, they felt that there was a lot that could be accomplished in the way of education, commerce and lifestyle.

Dominica is perceived as a third-world country. Much of the population has no work and is not well educated. The Kosowan's volunteer their time and money to help the people achieve a better lifestyle, improved education and increased commerce. One of their initiatives is to help the future generation by putting structure, purpose and culture into their lives. That is what the Music Missions Dominica project is all about – the kids and their future.

Mike and Sharleen Townsend from Grande Prairie joined the Music Mission effort. Mike is a retired music educator and Sharleen has assisted her husband in his community musical endeavours. They saw the need and responded to it.

In 2009, the Townsends worked with the Music Lovers adult band and Cadets in Dominica. In 2010, the thrust of the program was to work with the young adults to teach band conducting. In 2011, they taught teachers how to introduce band instruction into schools. Luther and Mike also presented a blueprint for establishing band programs in schools to the Ministers of Education and Culture in Dominica.

There is a great need for upgrades in the education facilities – schools need paint, playgrounds, books, desks, and school supplies in general. Part of the Music Missions Dominica project is related to upgrading schools.

During 2011, Luther and Mike received donations of over 300 used band instruments. As these instruments needed to be shipped to Dominica, they asked Don Lowry, a long-time friend, for assistance. Don took their need to his Rotary Club of Sherwood Park. This resulted in the funding to ship the instruments along with other useful goods to Dominica, which arrived in January 2012. Don travelled to Dominica to help set up the instruments and form a relationship with the Rotary Club of Dominica. The goods were distributed and school bands were started in six secondary schools. The Cadet Band and Boy Scout Band received instruments as well.

The story does not stop here – in fact, it has only just begun. The need for more is great. The Rotary involvement has added a new dimension to future endeavours that will include help in the areas of education, medical needs and humanitarian needs in Dominica.

It is amazing the positive impact that one couple's vision and others' willingness to help has had on Dominica.



Leader of Men