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RISING TO NEW HEIGHTS FOR THE ELIMINATE PROJECT

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By Catherine van Gelder, Secretary of the Kiwanis Feminin Plurielles, division 921, France Monaco District

On March 21, 2015, in front of the City Hall of Troyes, four Kiwanis clubs marked the 100th anniversary of Kiwanis International with a balloon release to benefit The Eliminate Project. The idea originated with Kiwanis Feminin Plurielles. We wanted to find an activity in the spirit of our values and to celebrate our special year, "le Centenaire"! Kiwanis Feminin Plurielles proposed the idea of a balloon release. The Arcis Val d'Aube club already had knowledge of this type of event, and it was easy to ask the Chrétien de Troyes and Troyes clubs to join us. François, our Lieutenant Governor, became our "top manager."

We focused on The Eliminate Project to showcase our international mission to serve children around the world. That was easy! Obtaining the necessary authorizations proved to be the most difficult part of organizing the event. We wanted to hold the event in the middle of the town in front of the city hall. But as many know, when women have something in their head they can move mountains. After many conversations and permits, we successfully secured our location.

Individuals could buy a balloon for 2€. We also visited local shops and invited them to buy balloon lots. The final result of the sales was 1812€, which will help save or protect more than 1,000 women and their babies from maternal and neonatal tetanus.

The cold temperatures on March 21 didn't affect our mood and spirit. Spectators cheered as the gray sky gave way to the sun and a breeze swept away a few thousand balloons into the blue sky. It was wonderful to see the amazed eyes of children and parents.

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