



Shriners Growing Membership In Central And South America

(NAPSA)—While Shriners of North America has had a presence in Europe for some time, impressive membership development initiatives are also under way in Central and South America.

Fraternity leadership visited Ecuador, the Republic of Panama and Costa Rica to celebrate the establishment of a new Shriners club, help initiate new members, visit with fellow Masons and increase awareness of the Shriners fraternity.

In Ecuador, Imperial Potentate (president and CEO) Nick Thomas, Shriners Hospitals for Children Board of Trustees Chairman Ralph Semb and Shriners Board Member Mike Severe helped celebrate the establishment of a new club associated with Abou Saad Shriners in Panama. They also visited Quito and Guayaquil, where they had the opportunity to initiate 10 new Shriners in each city.

“We are proud these men have joined our international fraternity and are helping us strengthen membership in Central and South America,” said Thomas. “These are men of strong character and devoted Masons—we couldn’t be more pleased they made the commitment to become Shriners.”

Among the new Shriners were the Masonic leaders, a noted Ecuadorian orthopaedic surgeon and an Argentine diplomat to Ecuador.

“The new Shriners in Ecuador are committed to not only the fellowship of the fraternity, but also to identifying patients like a child in Ecuador who was burned in the Tungurahua volcano eruption,” said Semb. “That child was sent to



Severe, Thomas and Semb (seated, center) celebrated the initiation of 10 new Shriners in Quito during their trip to Ecuador.

our Shriners Hospital in Boston and is now receiving treatment.”

In addition to the initiation of new Shriners, the visit to Ecuador included three press conferences, held at the U.S. Embassy, the University of Guayaquil’s Medical School and Simon Bolivar International Airport.

Thomas and Semb also had the opportunity to meet U.S. Ambassador to Ecuador Linda Jewell and Guayaquil’s mayor, as well as visit the first lady of Ecuador’s National Institute for Children and Family.

In Panama, Thomas and Semb visited the presidential palace and met with the president of the Republic of Panama, Martin Torrijos Espino. During the visit, they also met and dined with the Potentate (president) of Abou Saad Shriners, chapter officers and several other Shriners.

Traveling next to San Jose, Costa Rica, Thomas and Semb met with Shriner club members and Masonic leaders who were interested in learning how to increase membership and help with health care for children in their country.