



GLOBAL HEALTH

Newsletter of Global Health Ministries

Vol. 16 No. 1

Jan - Feb 2003

Education, training projects herald new era for GHM

Anthrax is a scary word. But for Winnie Letee, a Maasai girl in Tanzania, it changed her life. As a child Winnie contracted a serious anthrax infection through working with the family cows. Her father took her to a hospital in Arusha. It was her first time in a city and she was touched by the care she received. She began to dream of working in a hospital—an impossible dream for most Maasai children. Then she was given a scholarship to the Massai Girls Secondary School.

When her father visited the school he recognized the opportunity she had: the only one of his 8 children to attend a secondary school. He freed her from the marriage he had already arranged for her, giving up the bride price that he had been depending on. She qualified to attend a clinical officer training program sponsored by Selian Lutheran Hospital, supported by GHM. Selian is concerned to train local people to be health care workers. Winnie will be one of two Maasais in the program and now there is hope of finally having a female Maasai doctor in Tanzania. (picture on right)



Winnie (center) and her proud family are shown above.

'Medicine - a calling and a ministry.'

Last summer medical student Maren Olson received a GHM travel grant to go to Selian Lutheran Hospital in Tanzania. Here are excerpts from her report.

My time at Selian forever altered my perspective on how medicine can be practiced, and enriched my understanding of the ways in which medicine is a ministry to which I am called. I had expected to learn some tropical medicine, and I did—often at a staggering pace. Through the teaching of my colleagues I acquired a great deal of knowledge. However, some of my most important learning happened while standing at the bedside of a patient.

For the first time I felt the steady, challenging weight of responsibility on my shoulders. I tasted the thrill of making a tough diagnosis on my own, and the frustration of knowing that I had done my best and finding that only a miracle would have been enough. I discovered the subtleties of medicine's art and science—not confined to lab values and vital signs, but shaped by the feeling that says, "Something is very wrong here." I may not be able to identify the specific problem, but am beginning to understand when I should be worried about a patient and need to ask for help.

It was an incredible gift to practice medicine in a place where faith in God is the groundwork for the ministry of medicine. I loved starting my day with colleagues at the chapel. I was nourished by the weekly doctors' prayer meeting and heartened

by the pause at the beginning of each surgery in which we prayed for both the patients and for ourselves.

Serving and learning at Selian renewed my belief that medicine is a calling and a ministry, and solidified my desire to find opportunities to share my God-given gifts and skills in international settings once I am a practicing physician.

I gained a sudden sense of clarity of how the many aspects of the stories of medicine and faith meld into a common theme. While there is still so much to learn and discover, there is hope that all the work and study I've done hasn't been for naught. I have begun the journey from being a medical student to being a doctor, and I am eager to continue.

Clinic given award

The St. Mary's Duluth Clinic has been awarded the Benedictine Spirit Award on the basis of its relationship with hospitals of the Cameroon Lutheran Church. It has an exchange program that provides medical training and equipment with these hospitals. The award recognizes innovative efforts to achieve values such as respect, hospitality, stewardship and justice.



Direct Lines

from the
Director



During a recent meeting of Global Health Ministries' leaders, we began what will be a six-month process of making plans for our mission in the coming years. Whatever we do, our leaders concluded, it must proclaim the gospel by carrying on the healing ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ. We often think of the gospel as the words of good news that Jesus preached, but it is equally true that when Jesus extended his hand to heal the sick and disabled, this too was the gospel in a personal and life-changing form.

Do we not at times in the Western world neglect to consider the miracles associated with the health care we receive? What a humbling reminder it has been for me to witness the response of joy and wonder to healing by people in the developing world; they celebrate the event as a fresh and miraculous experience of the grace and love of God to liberate his people from our deathly enemies! I am all the more moved by this blessing to express our gratitude for your support of this ministry, and to continue to encourage you to "help the hands that heal."

In planning for the future, we are taking into account the fact that the hands that heal are increasingly those of nationals local to each country. It is a time of transition not without its concerns, and we see a significant increase in projects involving training to improve the skills of these new servants of the Lord. In this edition of Global Health, we feature stories about the impressive number and variety of education and training projects that we currently support. Doctors and nurses, of course, receive training "on the job," in local or regional training facilities, and through programs of exchange visitations like the Saint Mary's Duluth Clinic's award-winning project with the Cameroon Lutheran health care system.

There are also specialty-training projects such as those with anesthetists, radiology and lab technicians, and medical instrument maintenance and repair specialists. Large numbers of outreach community health workers need training to bring education about HIV/AIDS,

malaria and TB prevention to remote areas. Increasingly, there are training and consultation projects to develop improved hospital administration skills of all kinds. Management with efficiency and effectiveness is needed to attain health care that is sustainable in each local setting. We are pleased, as well, to be able to scholarship American medical students for overseas service and learning. Such experiences plant the seed of global mission in the hearts of our future caregivers.

In the long history of Lutheran medical missionaries, this surge in training is a development worth celebrating as the harvest fruit of the thousands who faithfully "planted and watered" in the Lord's service; *it is the same gospel proclaimed now with new hands*. Who knows; one of you readers may feel called someday to contribute your professional gifts to meet these significant and varied training needs. Hardly a day passes without a call or visit from someone recently retired or taking a sabbatical and looking for mission. There's a world of opportunity awaiting you. In the meantime, your prayers and financial support continue to be appreciated. Thank you again for all that you have done and will do to help bring the gospel of Christ's healing to the nations! Rev. Tim Iverson



This sculpture represents the spirit of cooperation that exists between EPES, the health education program in Chile, and Trinity Lutheran Church in Owatonna, MN. It was presented to EPES on the occasion of the program's 20th anniversary. Trinity has supported this program during these years and sent a delegation to the anniversary celebration. In its presentation the congregation said, "You have helped to change us, and we hope that our connection with you through the past 20 years has benefited your ministry." A matching sculpture stands in Trinity church.

14,000 eye glasses?

What are we going to do with 14,000 eye glasses? That was the question that faced Pastor Anna-Kari Johnson of Chicago.

She and her pastor husband, Kristian, for years had assisted a mission outreach in El Salvador. On a recent trip there they discovered a need for eye glasses. So they asked the Lions organization, which collects used glasses throughout the nation, for a small quantity that they could take to El Salvador—perhaps a suitcase full.

The Lions were happy to oblige and forwarded 14,000! The Johnsons took some of them to El Salvador, but then the agency they had been working with disbanded. They heard about Global Health Ministries and asked if they could make use of the glasses. It happened that Cameroon had requested glasses earlier but GHM had none to send at that time. In the meantime a distributor had sent about 14,000 cases for glasses, which were in the warehouse. So the next shipment to Cameroon included thousands of glasses and cases. God works in a mysterious way to meet our needs!

Coupon challenge

The South Shore Trinity Lutheran Ladies Guild of White Bear Lake, MN, decided to support the Wells for Nigeria project. To raise funds they launched a 2-month "coupon challenge." They asked all grocery shoppers in the congregation to clip coupons and redeem them when they shopped, then donate their savings to the project.

Local Thrivent Financial branches agreed to provide matching funds. As a result \$1,253.92 was given to provide wells in Nigeria.

An energizing project

Rolling bandages for Global Health Ministries has provided an energizing project for members of First Lutheran Church in Trimont, MN, who "have reached an age where they are limited in what they can do."

Their activity was a front page story in a community newspaper. Josephine Holtz, Esther Simpson, Lois Schultz and Bev Anthony have prepared more than 5,000 bandages.

GLOBAL HEALTH, published 6 times a year, is a publication of Global Health Ministries. Subscriptions are free upon request. GHM, 7831 Hickory Street NE, Minneapolis, MN 55432 (763)586-9590. Rev. Tim Iverson, Executive Director; Rolf Aaseng, Editor; Dee Ingemansen, Production.

Training the hands to heal

When people think of Global Health Ministries it's natural to think first of surplus equipment being put to good use, enabling health workers to do better work and reach more remote areas—helping the hands that heal.

Another aspect of our ministry may not sound as dramatic, but in the long run may be even more valuable. It is the training of people in various countries to deal with their own health needs. This ranges from enabling doctors to learn new specialties to teaching nutrition and hygiene to new mothers far from hospitals. The training includes not only instruction in medical procedures such as radiology and anesthetics, but also mechanical and administrative skills.

Training nurses was one of the first educational efforts. For several years GHM has supported a nursing school in Madagascar. This is a 3-year program with about 25 students in each class. GHM also provides scholarships for students at a nursing school in Nigeria.

Help for nurses is provided in several ways. Textbooks and other literature has been provided for nurses in Ethiopia, Liberia, Tanzania, and Cameroon. Treated bed nets were given to protect nurses in Haydom, Tanzania, from malaria. Bedding and other furnishings have been given for the nurses' dormitory in Ethiopia.

Furthering the education of doctors continues to be a significant program, usually in a local rather than a U.S. based institution. Short term classes are provided in Zimbabwe, Senegal and elsewhere. Courses have included anesthetics, radiology, and surgery.

Dr. R. S. Harison recently completed a 4-year course in surgery at the Pan-African College of Christian Surgeons in Gabon. Although he was offered positions at four hospitals and a college in Africa, he returned to his position at Antsirabe, Madagascar where he is certain God has called him. He writes, "Words cannot express my gratitude to our almighty God for the contribution made by ELCA-DGM-GHM to my training in Gabon. Without your prayers and financial help this could never be realized. I promise that I will give my best to glorify Christ in my ministry."

Other programs complement medical training by providing hands on experience, similar to a residency, in Madagascar and Romania. Kilimanjaro Christian Medical Center in Tanzania has actually begun an accredited medical school which recently graduated its first class. A school of radiology established by volunteer doctors Helmut and Rot trout Diefenthal operates there also.

Scholarships have been provided in various fields, including hospital administration, financial management including the use of computers, lab technology and bio medical techniques. Milo Hoiland travels to Africa every year to help teach the latter. Through a 3-year course Africans are trained to maintain and repair almost all the equipment available to them, from microscopes to ultra sound.

An important program trains local volunteers to take leadership for health care in their villages. A noteworthy



Student nurses in Madagascar

example is Educacion Popular en Salad' in Chile. Their program has been copied in other countries. These community leaders, with clinic personnel, train people, especially mothers, in nutrition and hygiene. A similar program is carried out in Nepal.

AIDS awareness education is conducted in India and also carried out in Central African Republic. A related program has sent persons to an international conference on AIDS in South Africa.

Equally effective has been awarding travel funds to enable medical students to work for a period in an overseas hospital, to acquaint them with what is done overseas and to broaden their understanding of the medical ministry. Selian Hospital has begun the first hospice program in East Africa and has provided training for persons from other countries to establish similar ministries.

Please pray with us

During January: Ask for blessings on the nurses training in Madagascar, Nigeria, Tanzania and Ethiopia.

During February: Pray for the AIDS awareness and education efforts in India and the Central African Republic.



Five new radiologists receive their diplomas in Tanzania



GLOBAL HEALTH

Jan - Feb 2003

What is Global Health Ministries? GHM provides a gift of life -- physical and spiritual -- through Lutheran health care work across the world by providing project financial support, locating and shipping urgently needed medical supplies, recruiting health care personnel, and funding the training of national health care givers.

email: ghmoffice@cs.com • Internet: <http://www.ghm.org>
763/586-9590 • 763/586-9591 (FAX)

GLOBAL HEALTH MINISTRIES

7831 Hickory Street NE
Minneapolis, MN 55432-2500

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Minneapolis, MN
PERMIT #4872

Jan - Feb 2003



Page 4

In this issue -

Education - a new era for GHM

Page 1

Medicine - calling and ministry

Page 1

14,000 eyeglasses

Page 2

Training the hands to heal

Page 3

