



# GLOBAL HEALTH

Newsletter of Global Health Ministries

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## Malawi expands services of mobile clinic

Under the theme, "Walking together to provide healing and hope," the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malawi is launching a training program to upgrade the work of its health care professionals. The program will be carried out through the church's Mobil Medical Clinic which was begun last year by GHM through providing a vehicle and a container of supplies. Now in response to a proposal from the NW Wisconsin Synod of the ELCA, GHM is funding training for 3 nurses who will manage the program.

The clinic serves 33 communities. The 3 nurses will provide primary health care and train people to continue the work in the villages. This ministry will include preventative measures, pre and post natal care of mothers and children, health and nutritional education, food supplements and ministry to HIV/AIDS victims. The program will also distribute bed nets to prevent malaria through the church's Women of Prayer.

The board also approved a scholarship to train a nurse midwife in the Central African Republic.



Workers at the Lutheran Health Care: Bangladesh enthusiastically unload the contents of a container which arrived at the clinic in late summer.

## A record 14 shipments went overseas in 2004

Last year marked another record for Global Health Ministries with 14 shipments moving out from the Fridley warehouse, an increase of two over 2003. The increase in activity is the result of more requests from our overseas partners. Fourteen shipments are also planned for 2005. The regular Tuesday and Thursday volunteers continue to plow through donations, sorting medical supplies and repairing equipment. A new Wednesday group has been added,

## Ejeda Project Completed!

Thanks again to an unusually dedicated network of supporters throughout the United States, \$ 27,600 has been raised, and Ejeda Hospital will soon have a new vehicle. In the recent past, this same network has made possible the shipment of medical supplies and equipment, including a tractor, to this Lutheran hospital.

Located in a remote and impoverished region of southern Madagascar, the Ejeda Hospital serves as a referral center for surgical procedures, supervises primary health outreach services, and manages famine relief and well-digging projects. The vehicle will transport people and supplies for these regional programs, as well as serve as an ambulance.



but more volunteers are needed on this day to help in the warehouse.

Each shipment from Global Health Ministries is unique, and it is always exciting when a local congregation sponsors a shipment and becomes involved in the collection process. A recent example of this was a 20 foot container sent to Nyakahanga Lutheran Hospital on November 11.

The story begins several months earlier with a visit by Bishop Benson Bagonza of the Karagwe Diocese in Tanzania, to McFarland (WI) Lutheran Church. Bishop Bagonza shared with the congregation the needs of Nyakahanga Hospital which serves an area of 400,000 people in the Karagwe Diocese. The congregation responded by collecting medical and school supplies to fill a 14 foot truck. Pastor Jerry Pribbenow, (above) retired pastor from McFarland, drove the truck to the GHM warehouse, where the supplies were inventoried and prepared for shipment.



## Direct Lines



from the  
Director

We're always a little anxious around the office come December. We tend to watch the mail a little closer and pray that your incoming holiday donations will close the gap between the increased commitments we have made this year to support our partners overseas and the gifts we have received to date. It's a kind of annual test; one that reveals the patience of God with those of us of little faith, God's persistence in pursuing mission through his people, and the faithfulness of God, as the Bible puts it, "who by the power at work within us is able to do far more abundantly than all we can ask or think."

Now, as we move ahead to a new year of ministry, I can see that we will be facing a whole new test of faith. It has to do most concretely with a new, larger, warehouse and office for GHM, but more importantly, I think, it has to do with an expanding vision of who we are and why we are here. Since the board approved formation of a warehouse exploration committee in October, hardly a day goes by without someone asking with an edge of excitement, "How's things going with the new warehouse?" Clearly there's a lot of enthusiasm for the idea, especially among those most affected: the volunteers who work in the warehouse sorting and preparing supplies and equipment for shipment. They are experiencing first hand the increasing pressure to add shipments to our schedule, the inadequate space to process incoming and outbound supplies efficiently and safely. They know a new warehouse is needed!

From where I sit, the evidence is clear that the number of requests from known partners in mission has now become greater than our capacity to satisfy their needs for annual shipments. In one country alone, Tanzania, we have added nine new hospital partners in the last two years. This coming Fall, I plan to visit the health programs of the Lutheran Churches in India. This is a system far larger than that of Tanzania, but one we have had relatively little to do with in recent years. I anticipate returning from this trip with many new opportunities for "helping the hands that heal."

## Most diseases due to poverty and ignorance

*Dr. Ron Eggert is in the midst of a two-year term as a volunteer at Selian Lutheran Hospital in Tanzania. Here are some of his observations.*

The overwhelming background to everything that takes place here is poverty. Tanzania ranks ninth from the last in the world in terms of per capita income. The Tanzania Ministry of Health budget this year is equal to \$2 per person.

Most of the diseases we see are not diseases of the tropics, but diseases of poverty, diseases of lack of education. The AIDS pandemic has reignited the TB epidemic. Our TB wards are full and more than half of these patients have both diseases.

Selian gets one million a year for five years for this program. Our budget says we will treat 2000 patients a year with anti-retroviral drugs. But Arusha has 200,000 people who are HIV positive. We are the only facility in Arusha treating AIDS. Those who receive treatment will benefit. For Selian the benefit is also clear. We upgrade our laboratories which benefits all our patients. Some of the funds will be for staff education and that is a lasting benefit. But only 10% of those who need treatment will get it.

Most of my work is teaching medical students and clinic staff. It has been rewarding to watch these young people grow. Selian has some very effective programs that are serving as models for other hospitals. They enable us to be optimistic. For me the bottom line is that good things are happening that will have long term positive benefits, despite the numbers.

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Will Global Health Ministries rise to challenge, or not? That is the real question of faith we face. If we don't do it, who will? The fact is, no one else in America shoulders our mission of supporting the health care programs of the Lutheran Churches in the developing world as we do. In the coming months, you will be touched by a capital campaign to finance the acquisition of expanded warehouse space. It is time that we take another large step in the direction of filling out the missional role that is ours, to the glory of God. I ask for your prayers, and when the time comes, your sacrificial gifts to help Global Health Ministries grow in faithfulness.

## The B-line



The "B-line" asked the Rev. Tim Iverson, "**What are GHM's most urgent needs for support?**"

Answer: "As of the end of 2004 we have many projects and the need is great but the most urgent need is funding for the **GHM HIV/AIDS initiative**. The current commitment is \$127,000.00 per year for the next two years – in addition to any new programs. The funds will help victims of AIDS, patients as well as their families, and support AIDS prevention programs overseas. Secondly, **mosquito bed nets** (to protect families and individuals from malaria) are in great demand. The cost per net is \$5.00- \$10.00. The money will be sent where it is needed and the nets bought locally as they are cheaper overseas."

### Videos and Displays

GHM has videos and displays that can be checked out and used for a short time in your church or organization. However, it is important that they be returned to GHM as soon as possible so that they can be used elsewhere. Handouts and educational materials are always available. Please check our website at <http://www.ghm.org> and click on "Free resources" for handouts that can easily be downloaded.

### Bandages

The response to the new "Knitted/Crocheted Bandages" has been overwhelming. **Thank you to everyone who has taken on this project.** We are looking forward to including these beautiful bandages in each shipment. The instructions are available on the GHM website where you will see "From the B-line mailbox (CALLING ALL KNITTERS)." In that paragraph, click on "knitted and crocheted bandages for tropical ulcer patients" (highlighted).

### Wednesday volunteers needed

A very small group of Wednesday volunteers are now working at the GHM warehouse, and more are needed! Are you interested in joining them for a rewarding and meaningful experience? Activities include sorting and packing medical supplies for overseas shipment. No experience is needed. *Bea will be there to show you the ropes!* In a few hours you will be making a difference by "Helping the Hands that Heal."

### Best wishes for a blessed mission-filled new year from the B-line.

Submit questions for the B-line to GHM, attention Bea Haagenon

## New collaboration advances mission

Earlier this year, Global Health Ministries received a request for partnership from Gonja Lutheran Hospital of the Pare Diocese in Tanzania. In the past two years, requests for support have increased from three to twelve of the twenty Tanzanian Lutheran Hospitals. Collaborations with ELCA Companion Synod programs around the country have made it possible for GHM to add these hospitals to the shipping schedule.

In the case of Gonja, Bishop Philip Hougen of the SE Iowa Synod invited GHM to provide orientation about medical mission opportunities to Dr. Tom Gellhaus, member of St. Paul Lutheran Church in Davenport, before he visited the Pare Diocese last summer. When Dr. Gellhaus returned, the bishop arranged a debriefing meeting with him and GHM director Rev. Tim Iverson, and opened conversations at Iowa Lutheran Hospital with David Stark, vice president of Iowa Health Systems, to plan next steps in developing support for Gonja Hospital.

Meanwhile, GHM Operations Manager, Scott Lien, completed work with Gonja's medical director, Dr. Mary Msemo, in identifying the supplies and equipment needs of the hospital. The Rev. Kathy Gerking, assistant to Bishop Hougen, has begun formation of a medical mission committee to plan future visitations to Gonja, and develop a network of medical professionals and health program administrators to procure needed supplies and equipment for a GHM shipment now scheduled for 2005. A March 12, 2005, synod global mission assembly at First Lutheran in Cedar Rapids will feature presentations on the new medical missions initiative.

### Positions Open at GHM

As previously announced, Global Health Ministries is searching for a new volunteer editor for this newsletter. "Global Health" is published six times/year, and is the primary means of communication with supporters about Global Health mission issues, accomplishments and opportunities. Paid part-time positions are open for 1) development of collaborations between overseas partner Churches and stateside health mission interest groups and management of resulting projects, and 3) development of foundation and corporate grants proposals for capital funds and HIV/AIDS and Malaria prevention initiatives. Interested persons should contact Rev. Tim Iverson at [timiversonghm@cs.com](mailto:timiversonghm@cs.com)

## Sunday school children are learning to knit



Some of the baby caps sent in from a Phoenix Sunday school

Sunday school children in Faith Lutheran Church, Phoenix, AZ, are learning how to knit so they can welcome babies who are born in many parts of the world. They make baby caps during Sunday school and when the caps are finished

they pray for the children who will wear them and their mothers. They recently sent 34 caps (with some help from mothers) to GHM. Their teacher is Lynn Nau. Instructions for making the caps are on our web site: [www.ghm.org](http://www.ghm.org)

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**The History of Global Health Ministries**  
An updated booklet is now available for those who have a special interest in the history of GHM.

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The operating theatre at Gonja Hospital is large and spacious; however, many of the important instruments and equipment required for surgery are either non-functional or non-existent. A spot light is used to illuminate the operative field because a bulb for the large unit can not be found. The only small refrigerator is no longer functional and drugs and medications, requiring refrigeration to maintain their potency, are sitting on shelves at room temperature. Very basic supplies, monitoring instruments, and equipment would convert this operating suite into a much safer and better functioning facility. (Comments by Dr. Tom Gellhaus, recent SE Iowa Synod visitor to Gonja.)



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## GHM funds successful continuing education



Dr. Soderdahl with other trainers and staff.



Graduates of a training course for nurse aides.

Following a successful GHM financed 3-week training program for dental health personnel (see last issue of newsletter), the Malagasy Lutheran Church has completed another training session. Using specialized equipment purchased for the project by GHM, Dr. Douglas Soderdahl, a university professor from Atlanta, trained surgeons of SALFA, the Malagasy healthcare system, in advanced techniques of vaporization of the prostate and uterus. The technique was shown on Malagasy TV, bringing reactions of "A miracle."

The technique, using laser, is uniquely adapted to conditions in the developing world, nearly eliminating complications, especially

infections, with return to full activity in 1-3 days compared with 4-6 weeks. The training, conducted at Andranamadio Hospital in Antsirabe, has established SALFA as the unrivaled leader in Madagascar in the use of this technique. To date, Dr. Soderdahl has conducted such trainings as his mission specialty in 63 countries.

Concurrently, as part of a comprehensive, nation-wide training project supported by GHM, the Malagasy Church's health department has carried on training for health workers from throughout the system, including traumatology technique, ultrasound, and courses for anesthetists and nurses aides.