



Because all people should have access to a healthy life.
Photo, Street Mural, Juba, South Sudan

Global Health Ministries Newsletter

Enduring Partnerships



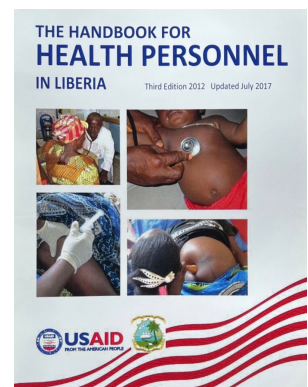
Dr. Paul Mertens, Curran Lutheran Hospital

Shortages in the health workforce are a global phenomenon, but the effect is disproportionately felt in low- and middle-income countries. GHM supports training and

education for all levels, from community health workers to nurses and midwives, doctors and specialists. The role of teaching has real impact, which endures far beyond the lifetime of any teacher. It's a particularly poignant truth as we see more long-term mission health professionals completing their service.

A jack-of-all-trades, Dr. Paul Mertens will be remembered by countless Liberians and expats for how he served, healed, or taught them. His service ranged from Medical Director at Curran Lutheran Hospital, to performing brain surgery to repairing an autoclave and countless other pieces

~ continued page 2



Dr. Paul served as editor for the 400-page *Handbook for Health Personnel in Liberia*, first funded by USAID and reprinted twice with grants from GHM. Written for the Liberian context and covering everything from Ebola to epilepsy, snakebites, mental health, maternal health, and more, it serves as a guide for diagnosis, proper treatment and, especially, prevention.

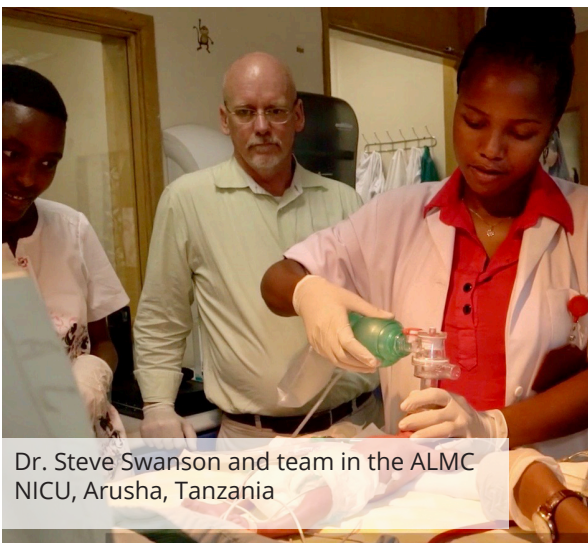
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Dr. Andrew Browning with colleagues at the March Fistula Camp, Juba, South Sudan

of equipment. Above all was his passion for teaching. Dr. Paul trained healthcare workers in Liberia, supervised medical interns, taught Peace Corps Volunteers and nursing students. Even as we grieve his death on March 19th of this year, his teaching continues through his comprehensive *Handbook for Health Personnel in Liberia*, still being used across the country. GHM has also counted it a blessing to partner with Dr. Paul and his wife Donna throughout our history, offering material support for the health work in Liberia and benefiting as Dr. Paul shared wisdom as a volunteer in GHM's warehouse and committees.

Earlier this year, GHM/GHAP's partnership with the Annual Ilula-Minnesota International Healthcare Conference in Tanzania helped empower Dr. Amon Marti to team-teach Tanzanian administrators how to engage communities to improve health. GHM has provided support for this Conference since its inception 8 years ago, a demonstration of our commitment to the role of teaching and learning for long-term impact on health.



Dr. Steve Swanson and team in the ALMC NICU, Arusha, Tanzania

In a recent journey to South Sudan, GHM's Director of Operations, Scott Lien, observed fistula surgeon Dr. Andrew Browning in action. Many describe his skill in surgery as that of an artist or musician, noting the gentle precision and flow of his hands. GHM began collaborating with Dr. Browning several years ago, in partnership with the ELCA and the Fistula Foundation. Not only a remarkable physician, he is a world class instructor, patiently teaching these techniques to South Sudanese surgeons. Learning like this has happened in Madagascar as well. Fistula Foundation has also partnered with SALFA, and SALFA surgeon/teacher Dr. Randria has helped share fistula repair techniques with other SALFA surgeons across the island. Today, Lutheran hospitals across Madagascar are able to perform this life-changing surgery.

For almost a decade GHM has also partnered with Dr. Steve and Jodi Swanson as they established a profoundly effective teaching environment for bringing life to at-risk newborns in Tanzania. The neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) at ALMC is a learning environment where skills, knowledge, and mutual respect are shared and nurses, doctors, and specialists alike develop life-giving skills that last. Sharing what they've learned with other hospitals in Tanzania and beyond is an important goal.

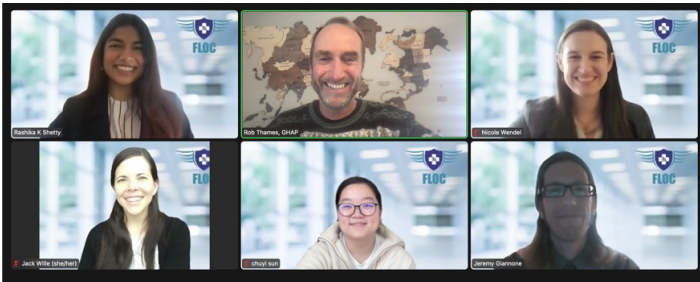


Mme. Arlette, an instructor at SEFAM, the Lutheran School of Nursing in Madagascar

GHM supports Ethiopian, Tanzanian, Liberian, and Malagasy instructors at nursing schools in their own countries, along with training for midwives and lab technicians. Thank you for the support you share, which creates a legacy of learning and helps empower health leaders whose service stretches far beyond the lives of any one of us.

Rev. Doug Cox, Executive Director

Double GHAP Miraculous



UMN Global Health Case Competition Team, 2023 - Second Place!

It's a pleasure to share a double dose of miraculous GHAP blessings! In early February, I was blessed to again coach a team of wonderful University of Minnesota (UMN) students who volunteered to compete in the annual Global Health Case Competition. This international competition, organized by Emory University/Atlanta, brings together teams from universities all around the globe. The University of Minnesota holds its own competition to determine which team will represent the UMN.

With the support of GHAP consultants who served as a mock (practice) panel, this team qualified for the finals and was selected as runner-up as the UMN representative. Following cases from the past two years based in India and Ethiopia, this fascinating case involved an H5N1 flu outbreak from turkey farms in central Minnesota - very real and very challenging!



Shangwe, her mom and the LTD team in Sumbawanga, TZ

In March, Shangwe Kiliaki, APRN, CNP, DNP, Hospitalist at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN and Tanzanian native, visited the Lake Tanganyika Diocese, Tanzania. LTD was conducting their 5th Community Health Educator (CHE) initiative training, which has been supported by a GHAP team including Shangwe since just before the pandemic started. What a blessing she could be there at just that moment!

I am very proud of the work of the LTD team. And proud of the undergraduate, graduate and medical students who chose to endure an intense week of teamwork for the UMN - and likely little sleep - on top of their regular load!

Thank you for your support of GHAP to help strengthen health leadership capacity in our partner countries today and our health leaders of tomorrow.

Rob Thames, FACHE, FHFMA, Dir. of GHAP



Mama Rita and her new birthing bed!

Please pray for the extraordinary work of the Evangelical Lutheran Church Africa Mission in South Sudan (ELCAMSS) and the staff at Lutheran Reconciliation Medical Centre. They work hard and provide hope and healing to so many!

Delayed Miracles

Five years ago, GHM shipped two 40' containers of medical equipment, furnishings, and supplies to Juba, South Sudan to equip the new Lutheran Reconciliation Medical Centre. In 2020, a third 40' container arrived, with more equipment and furnishings for the maternity ward expansion. Last month I traveled to Juba with a team from the ELCA and saw firsthand the surgical table, surgical lights, patient monitors, anesthesia gas machine, steam autoclaves, surgical instruments, IV poles, so much more ... nearly everything there came on these three containers! All from GHM, being used by staff to care for patients. Praise God!

And yet ... I remembered a new maternity table included on the last container. A brand new, stainless steel, birthing table. Where was it? All week long, Mama Rita and Linda, nurse midwives, had been lifting up the need to replace the exam tables in maternity with something specifically designed for deliveries. It was their top priority! Our last day in Juba we unloaded boxes from the back of the last container and discovered a wooden crate. With staff turnover, Samuel, the new administrator, wasn't aware of the balance of items in the container. Yes! The new maternity table! Staff dragged the crate out, removed the wood panels and with cries of joy, wheeled the table into the delivery room. Less than 5 minutes later, Mama Rita yelled, "clear the room!" and escorted a very pregnant woman onto the table. By the time the room was clear, door closed, a beautiful baby girl was born on the brand new maternity table. Mama Rita is going to keep the exam tables, too, so they can deliver three babies at once!

Scott Lien, Dir. of Operations

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*Midland Hills Country Club
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Meet Suzan

Suzan lives in Yirol, South Sudan, about 200 miles from Juba. Her first daughter's delivery went well but childbirth was more difficult with her second daughter and she developed an obstetric fistula, leaving her incontinent. Unlike many women in her situation, Suzan had the support of her family, and her husband eventually agreed to sell a cow so she could go to Juba to find a cure. The cow sold for more money than most people earn in an entire year in South Sudan, and she spent all of it and more on the surgery she hoped would cure her. But

the operation failed. Suzan was given another chance through the Fistula Camps at Reconciliation Lutheran Clinic. She returned to Juba and now, after two more surgeries, she is healing well and looking forward to the future. She dreams of giving her husband more children - she longs for a son who will take care of her when she's old. Suzan's smile says it all! "Thank you for what you are doing in South Sudan. You love people like the way God loves human beings."