



Project Congo
Bringing Health and Hope to victims of Conflict in the Congo

Nov 24, 2011

Dear High Impact Projects/Project Congo supporters,

As another year draws to a close, I would like to thank you for helping High Impact Projects and Project Congo in our mission to bring health and hope to central Africa.

This year, for the first time, we had medical students from Ohio University and Wright State University travel to the Congo and Uganda to do medical mission work. In June, we opened a new hospital, Project Congo/ Health Alliance Goma, in the Congo. This hospital serves as a reference hospital to our partner medical facilities and clinics. We continue to collect and recycle medical supplies here in the US for our facilities in Africa. We have expanded our Women's Pig Cooperative and agricultural projects to help women achieve financial independence. We are continuing our sponsorship of the Simbas girls soccer team in Goma DRC and this year added a second team, the "Kabashas". Both of these programs combine sports training with vocational training to help build futures for young women. This summer our mediation team traveled to Rwanda, Burundi and Tanzania to teach non violent conflict resolution and reconciliation. In Dayton, Ohio, we are helping African refugees revitalize inner city neighborhoods, through an urban agriculture program that transforms vacant lots into productive gardens.

Next year we will partner with St Vincent Hospital in Bukavu, DRC. This hospital is providing medical care and reconstructive surgery to rape victims. We would like to upgrade their facility with a laboratory and simple X-ray machine and ultrasound. We would also like to sponsor individual cases for reconstructive surgery at a cost of \$150 per surgery. With the help of the Footprint Foundation, we will begin a midwife training program at both St Vincent and Health Alliance Goma. These midwives will serve women in remote villages and city slums. They will be equipped with cell phones to call and refer their emergency cases to our hospitals in Goma and Bukavu. We are currently trying to raise funding for two ambulances to provide transport for such emergencies. At Health Alliance Goma, we hope to initiate a pediatric ICU with equipment from the US and incubators designed by the engineering students at Wright State University.

We endeavor to create projects that are "high impact" and often very low cost, considering the benefits they bring. We seek not only to bring health and hope but to initiate projects which change lives and build a sustainable future. We are proving that a small grass roots organization can make a difference in the world. All of these things would never have been possible without the support of our donors and volunteers.

2011 has been a difficult year for Americans, with the economic downturn. Still as I write this letter on Thanksgiving Day, I reflect that we have many things which we often take for granted to be thankful for. We have access to clean water, abundant food, free public education, police and fire protection, paved roads, intact government and infrastructure along with personal freedoms that are the envy of the world.

Let us pray that 2011 brings peace and stability to central Africa and a brighter future for its people. In the mean time, with your support, we will continue to reach out to the suffering populations of these nations.

Happy Holidays

Dr Sylvia A. Esser-Gleason D.O.

Impact 2011

A brief recap of our activities this year

Democratic Republic of Congo

Project Congo Health Alliance Goma

On June 20th, we open our new hospital “Project Congo/ Health Alliance Goma” along the shores of Lake Kivu in southern Goma. This dream was made possible through the generosity of a single donor. A Project Congo medical mission team of medical students from the US was present for the opening day. The team consisted of Dr Sylvia Esser-Gleason, medical students Paul Blair, Bradon Kohrs and John Adame and premedical student Elizabeth Gleason. The team helped equip the hospital and assisted with patient care and the first surgery. Health Alliance Goma will be run by Project Congo /Africa doctors; Dr Joseph Muyumba and Dr Alfred Mwenebatende. The facility is intended to be primarily a women’s and children’s hospital and will focus on providing skilled and compassion care to these populations. The hospital has thirty inpatient beds, general surgery and obstetrics. With the help of World Wide Laboratories in Michigan, we were able to set up a full service laboratory. Garry Thompson, a World Wide Laboratories volunteer with extensive laboratory and third world experience, traveled to Goma to do the laboratory set up and training. Project Congo/ Health Alliance Goma will serve as a receiving hospital for eight outlying clinics and medical centers.

Don Bosco Ngangi Medical Center

Don Bosco Ngangi Center was our first partner facility in the Congo. Ngangi is a Salesian run center that consists of a school, orphanage, nutritional center and medical center. The medical center provides medical care to the children of the Ushindi orphanage, students of Don Bosco Ngangi School and the surrounding local population of resettled refugees. The nutritional center provides intensive nutritional support for pediatric malnutrition cases. This year the Project Congo medical mission team lodged at Ngangi during their stay in Goma and assisted with patient care. Medical students Brandon, Paul and John spent a lot of time setting up the dark room and X-ray machine which Project Congo donated, as well as, trouble shooting equipment. They learned “hands on” how to take and develop x-rays along with Nurse Emmanuel, who will become the X-ray technician for the center. The students also did Tuberculosis screening on 100 children from Ushindi and Maison Margarite. Last year Project Congo sent a container of medical equipment to Ngangi. With this they have been able to expand the types of care and services they give. They do not, however, have surgical or obstetric care, so these cases will now be referred to Project Congo/health Alliance Goma.

Thanks to our donors and the fund raising efforts of Pedro Serka and his clown troop “Late Adventure Projects” in New York, we were able give financial support to the Ngangi for continued pediatric medical and nutritional care. The Late Adventure clowns also sent balloons, toys and clown noses for a special “clown party” for the children at Ushindi.

Don Bosco Lac

Don Bosco Lac is a Salesian facility catering to poor and displaced persons south of Goma. This year we continued our simple water chlorination of the water from Lake Kivu. People in the region depend on water filled directly into Gerry cans from the lake. We have a chlorination station, where people bring their Gerry cans of water and a syringe full of chlorine is added to make it potable. This inexpensive project has the potential to save hundreds of lives. We also brought a microscope, medicines and medical supplies to help equip a small clinic for the local population. The clinic will refer emergency and complicated cases to Project Congo/ Health Alliance Goma

Girl’s Soccer

Last year we began supporting the Simbas, a girl’s soccer team. The team is made up of girls from the streets with little formal education. Many have been victims of sexual violence and are young mothers. Through their athletic training with the Simbas, they are reclaiming their self esteem and health. With help from American journalist Nicole Dreon, we have also begun sponsoring girl’s for either vocational training or high school tuition so they can begin to build new lives for themselves. The program has been so successful that we will begin supporting a second girl’s soccer team, the “Kabashas”, in 2012.

Rwanda

In Rwanda we have focused on social and educational projects. We completed a second house in Musha for a family of orphans with help from the students of George P. Varnier School in Chatham Ontario. We supplied them with rabbits, chickens and gardening tools, to allow them to raise their own food. We also provided them with tuition assistance, so they could attend school.

We were also able to expand “the Women’s Pig Raising Project.” from Muhondo to Musha parish. Last year we purchased a breeding boar and native sows from which we bred piglets to be distributed to widows and women heads of household in Muhondo parish. The women selected to participate in the inaugural phase of the project were given classes on pig husbandry and taught to build pens and

shelters, complete with a compost pit to recycle waste as fertilizer. In June of 2011, we distributed 50 piglets from Muhondo to the women of Musha Parish. These will be bred and the women will in turn give a piglet from each litter to back to their cooperative, thereby allowing the program to continue indefinitely. Phase two of the project will be the building of a granary and mill to produce and sell pig feed. Women will not only be able to provide feed for their pigs, but have a prime market for the grain they produce in their small fields. Eventually we envision phase three, which would be a meat packing and processing facility which would provide employment to local women and allow them to market the meat in urban areas.

Uganda

After doing medical work in Goma, medical students Paul Blair and John Adame, continued on to Uganda where they spent an additional two weeks working with Sister Saleth Mary and the nuns of Don Bosco Bombo Medical Clinic. Paul and John brought laboratory equipment, medications and medical supplies from Project Congo to help stock the facility. Next year we would like to help with a solar electrical backup system so the hospital is never without power.

Dayton, Ohio

In Dayton, Ohio, we expanded our Urban Gardening Project for African refugees. A total of six inner city lots were turned into vegetable gardens to provide food and work for newly arrived refugee families. We also added a large plot in Jefferson Township. The Mantis Foundation provided us with a new rototiller and we received tools and a composting bin from The Mohammed Ali Foundation. We owe thanks to Grandview Hospital for making available several lots on Neal Avenue, as well as, to Five Rive Metro Park for their ongoing support of urban agriculture projects in Dayton. Next year we will begin a new project "the Abantu Café" organized by Colleen Saxen. This project will bring African refugee women and American women together for cooking and cultural exchanges to help refugee women better adapt to life in America, while retaining their cultural identity.

Mediation

This summer, George Brose, his daughter and granddaughter all traveled to Central and East Africa to train community mediators. This was George's fourth mediation trip to Africa. The goal of this project is to establish a process of conflict resolution in areas where people have little or no access to the legal system. Trainings are done through the assistance of the African Great Lakes Initiative and Change Agents for Peace International, both Quaker NGO's. Trainings this year were done in Bujumbura, Burundi, Kigali and Muhondo, Rwanda, and Chake Chake, Tanzania.

The courses are taught to groups of 15-30 participants for a period of 16 hours. Usually local participants have some standing as leaders in their communities or parishes. Types of cases that have been mediated by these participants have dealt with property disputes, domestic violence, divorce, inheritance, dowry, even in extreme cases, homicides and rape.

George has trained approximately 400 mediators, but they in turn have trained another 1600 mediators who are currently practicing in Rwanda, Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya and Tanzania. This past summer a course was taught in Tanzania on the island of Pemba to Sharia Court judges and Imams from the local mosques, as well as, social workers. Funding has come through donations to the Quakers and to Project Congo.

The Year in Pictures



Opening Day! Project Congo/Health Alliance Goma



Patient Rooms



John sorts supplies



Garry training lab techs



First surgery at Health Alliance



Brandon and Liz unpack supplies



Paul organizes the Pharmacy



TB testing Ngangi



Patient care Ngangi



Taking X-ray Ngangi



Taking some time with young orphans Ngangi



A donated Med Neb machine from the US bring relief



Clown Party



The Simbas



The Kabashas scrimmage against a boy's team



Distributing pigs in Musha



New rotor tiller Dayton Urban Gardens