

NEWSLETTER APRIL 2009

The Life-Saving Gift of Emergency Transport

Some very generous friends of GHP donated funds that were used to purchase a van in Kenya for emergency transport and other important medical services. One of the first patients in need of the van was a woman with a ruptured ectopic (tubal) pregnancy who was transported to the nearest hospital for a blood transfusion and emergency surgery. She was brought to Kisesini clinic by a relative on a bicycle, and likely would have died if emergency transport was not available. Another important use of the vehicle is to transport AIDS patients for services that are not available at Kisesini, such as CD4 testing and anti-retroviral drugs. These services are provided free by the Ministry of Health for patients who can access them, but the poorest often miss out on these vital services because of the lack of transportation.



The Van delivering AIDS patients to Katangi Health Center for lab testing and medications.

Child Hunger in Kenya

Drought causes crop failure and increased hunger

The chief complaint:

“My child is losing weight. . .”

Wambua Kangaa was brought to Kisesini Clinic by her mother because of weight loss. At 11 months of age, Wambua weighs only 12 lbs. Her mother walked a long distance from her village to bring her to the Kisesini Clinic in the hope of a cure for her illness – the illness of hunger. The GHP medical team prescribed and dispensed the indicated “medicine”: Food.



Wambua Kangaa with her mother in Kisesini Clinic.

Child Malnutrition

The problem of hunger and malnutrition is not new to Kenya. As in other countries of Africa, childhood malnutrition is a major underlying or contributing cause of death for the large number of children who die before reaching 5 years of age.

Child Malnutrition in Kamba Land

The unfortunate news from the most recent GHP trip to Kenya in March is that a drought has worsened the already tenuous food security situation, resulting in an increase in hunger and malnutrition. A survey of the villages by a group of medical students (see below) found that over 30% of the children under age 5 years had moderate-severe malnutrition.

The “Plumpy’Nut” Cure

An effective proven treatment, especially for the children with severe malnutrition, is the one that is used by Doctors Without Borders in their therapeutic feeding centers: a ready-to-use food, or RUF (a brand is called Plumpy’Nut). GHP has found a source of Plumpy’Nut in Kenya and will launch a nutrition program for the children. Funds for this program are urgently needed for the food rations and supplements. The cost for each child is only about \$20 per month.

Medical Students Survey the Villages



The UNM research team. From left to right: Katy Flynn-O’Brien, Maria Hamilton, Megan Krispinsky, Hannah Dunn, Clare Buckingham, LeRoy Danielson

A team of six UNM medical students conducted a survey of 9 villages in the area of the Kisesini Community Health Project to assess the efforts of the community health workers (CHWs) in their outreach program, and to assess childhood malnutrition and food availability. The full results of their survey are not yet available, but the preliminary data show an alarmingly high rate of childhood malnutrition and lack of adequate food in many of the households. Information from their survey is being used to address the malnutrition problem and to find ways to improve outreach

work of the CHWs. These energetic and committed medical students also assisted with health care and transport of patients who came to the Kisesini clinic.

Arua, Uganda PMTCT Life Stitches

The Life Stitches project empowers AIDS women with children in Uganda to become financially self-sufficient through the sale of beautiful cotton table products which the women stitch in a sewing co-op business. Construction of a sewing workshop for the women began in June 2008, and the building is $\frac{3}{4}$ finished! The PMTCT mothers will set aside income from their napkin sales in a building fund which GHP will then match dollar for dollar to finish the construction. In September 2008 Life Stitches founder and GHP Board member Dr. Gnauck spent three weeks teaching mothers to make two styles of napkins.



This Spring, Life Stitches will host a fundraiser to raise \$6000 to finish the building and move the 10 sewing machines in so that the women can work full capacity and then the project will become self sufficient financially.

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