

# Focus on Compassion

*Enhancing Access to Palliative Care Worldwide*

Winter 2019



## The Importance of Presence

Despite the physical distance between Michigan and Kenya, these hospice colleagues find ways to communicate regularly. [Caring Circle, Hospice at Home](#), which is located in southwest Michigan, was partnered with Our Lady's Hospice in Thigio, Kenya in June of 2017. Teams from the two organizations participate in monthly Skype calls to collaborate on objectives and goals for the partnership. Despite challenges with internet and phone connections in Thigio, the teams have already begun to build a strong relationship. In the first year of partnership, both organizations have hosted a partner visit. Another team from Kenya is planning a visit to Michigan in the spring of 2019.

## Become a GPIC Champion

While our Partnership Program provides many opportunities for organizations to support access to palliative care worldwide, the [Global Partners in Care Champion Program](#) allows any individual or organization to make an impact on the delivery of palliative care by supporting a project, exchange visit or educational opportunity.

If you are involved with any community, faith-based, academic or other organization, the Champion Fund provides a unique opportunity to address the global need for increasing palliative care. As an ancillary to our Partnership Program, the Champion Program gives supporters the ability to dive deeper into the global palliative care community to provide more access to education for nursing students, travel for international practitioners, or much-needed projects that could be life-changing for those in low resources settings.

Read more about how you can support our [Scholarship Fund](#), [Travel Support Fund](#), and [Special Project Fund](#). As individuals we can all become part of a global movement to educate, empower and enhance.

## Joint Internship with the African Palliative Care Association

As part of our mission at Global Partners in Care, we seek to educate US students, partners and potential stakeholders as advocates for palliative care – in their own community, but especially in areas of the world



Through the planning that took place via Skype, the partners determined the visit of an interdisciplinary team from Caring Circle was a necessary start for the partnership. In the spring of 2018, a social worker, nurse, chaplain and aide from Caring Circle visited Thigio. During this visit, the team had daily meetings with various staff at Our Lady's Hospice, provided educational in-services, shadowed clinical staff on patient visits, and explored local community resources. After their return, the traveling staff shared their experience with the community in St. Joseph, MI at an event that included a slideshow, reception and silent auction fundraiser.



Then in September, Caring Circle hosted Sr. Deborah Mallot, Director of Our Lady's Hospice, for a brief visit. During her stay, Sr. Deborah gave a presentation in the community and visited several locations of Caring Circle's work to interact with the palliative care team and share information and knowledge.



Donations from Caring Circle are already helping Our Lady's Hospice build a prayer room for patients and families and create an indigent care fund for patients who cannot pay. But in addition to the financial support, Sr. Deborah feels that their staff are connecting very well and is amazed at the support and engagement of Caring Circle. **“This partnership adds a great element to a work day – it provides a different opportunity to exercise our skills and it broadens your perspective of the world.”**

## 22nd International Congress on Palliative Care

The 22nd International Congress on Palliative Care, hosted by Palliative Care McGill (at McGill University) was held in Montreal October 2-5, 2018. Global Partners in Care (GPIC) was represented by Mike Wargo, COO, Cyndy Searfoss, Director of Partnerships, and Lacey Ahern, Program Director. There were 1,800 in attendance, with 67 countries represented. McGill gave GPIC the opportunity to support a travel scholarship, which was awarded to our partner Ephrem Abathun of Hospice Ethiopia.



During the conference, Lacey Ahern presented *Enhancing Access to Palliative Care Globally: 19 Years of Global Partnerships* as a high-level overview of GPIC's work. In addition, four of our GPIC partners were highlighted through oral or poster presentations.

- Ephrem Abathun, Hospice Ethiopia (poster): *Breaking Bad News in Culturally Sensitive Way: Who Should Be the Recipient? Patient or Family?*
- Beverley Sebastian, Island Hospice and Healthcare (oral): *Palliative Care During a Coup – Lessons from Zimbabwe*
- Eva Hutt on behalf partner Esther Taaka (who was unable to attend the conference), Mbale RRH (oral): *Disease and Symptom Characteristics of Inpatient Older Persons in a Regional Referral Hospital in Uganda*
- Lacey Ahern/Cyndy Searfoss/Mike Wargo, Center for Hospice Care: *Palliative Care Surveillance in Uganda: Lessons Learned from Using Mobile Phones to Collect, Analyze, and Utilize Palliative Care Data in Uganda*

“We think it's important to invest in these opportunities to interact on a global level. Meeting potential

where resources are limited and need is great. We work closely with the African Palliative Care Association (APCA) to facilitate the training and education of the next generation of palliative care leaders in Africa through the African Palliative Care Education Fund.



We also work with APCA to host internships for students from across the globe to learn more about and contribute to the field of palliative care. In the summer of 2018, APCA hosted Michelle Sorenson, an MBA student from University of Alberta. Michelle's project focused on conducting an organizational assessment of the Ghana Palliative Care Association (GPCA) as it seeks to restart its activities this year. Michelle worked closely with APCA, spending time at their offices in Uganda discussing her findings and helping them chart a way forward.

## Global Partners in Care Advisory Council

Global Partners in Care is committed to working collaboratively with our partnership organizations, national associations and the many important international organizations enhancing access to hospice and palliative care around the world. With a key focus on global collaborations, GPIC is dedicated to accessing the most current and relevant worldview on hospice and palliative care.

One example of this is our Advisory Council which brings together key leaders and voices in global palliative care to advise and advocate on our behalf. We continue to be impressed by the leadership and knowledge of this body of experts and what they bring to GPIC and our partnership organizations.

To see who is on our Advisory Council and their bios, [visit our website](#).



partners, finding resources for our partnerships and meeting one-on-one with our international partners was invaluable,” said Cyndy Searfoss.