

Focus on Compassion

Enhancing Access to Palliative Care Worldwide

A Letter from Global Partners in Care



I'm an experiential learner. I think that's why traveling is such an important part of my life – and one of many reasons why 2020 was difficult for me. Last year, my personal growth was focused on a small stage rather than the large one I've been so fortunate to experience through Global Partners in Care.

Part of the growth came from the opportunity to meet many of our partners and collaborators on my two trips to Africa. We have learned together at conferences, talked about how we can help others understand the importance of palliative care and laughed together. You have shared your wisdom, your knowledge, your experiences, and your work with us. While it has not been quite the same experience, we are grateful to have the opportunity to stay connected with you virtually. And we still have learned and laughed together over Zoom! As strange as it may sound, it feels like the physical distance brought us closer in many ways. Perhaps it broke down some of the barriers of formality and allowed open communication – which I think has fostered greater compassion and trust in our relationships.

And as the US has struggled with COVID-19 and civil unrest, you have stood with us in solidarity. The palliative care fraternity may be small in number, but it is mighty in heart. Thank you for all you have done, individually and collectively, to keep the spirit of palliative care alive and well.

As we begin the new year, we still face uncertainties. We remain hopeful that we will see some of you in person soon, yet we also know that this may not be possible in 2021. As COVID-19 vaccines begin rolling out, we are mindful of the warning from WHO chief, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, that “even as vaccines bring hope to some, they become another brick in the wall of inequality.” When he gave this address on January 18th, he noted that 39 million doses of vaccine had been given in high-income countries and just 25 doses had been given in one lowest income country. **“Not 25 million; not 25 thousand; just 25.”**

While we can't necessarily change this problem, we will do all we can – working together with our partners across the globe – to ensure equity in access to palliative care for all in need. Thank you for the wonderful work you do daily toward this goal. Please continue to share your successes and challenges with us so that we may walk these next steps of the journey together.

Cyndy Searfoss
Director of Partnerships



Nkhoma Mission Hospital
Serving with love and care

Patient stories from Nkhoma Mission Hospital

[Nkhoma Mission Hospital](#), located in Malawi, shared several patient success stories with us! They partner with [Hospice of the North Coast](#) in California. Here are the stories in the staff's own words.

9-year-old boy: started coughing at 7 years old. It became so severe that his mother brought him to the hospital in Lilongwe. There he got scanned and doctors concluded he had heart failure. Because his mother did not have enough money for medication, she went back home. She thought it would be good to take the boy to Nkhoma Mission Hospital.

At first, Nkhoma provided social care. The mother, boy, and his brother moved to a newly built house to have more space. The relation between mother and sons became better as well. His mother feels that she is not alone, and through the home visits she feels being looked after. After a short while, the team noticed that only social care was not enough and started the child on monthly medication which has improved his condition.

With not enough money for the treatment in Lilongwe, it was hard for the mother as caregiver and breadwinner to have enough food to provide the three of them. "Before the palliative care came in, I did not know about nutrition nor gardening, something that is very valuable." The palliative care team taught her about gardening and so the mother bought seeds to start her garden. "At first, if we did not have anything to eat we couldn't eat. Now I can take food from the garden if I have no sufficient amount of money to buy food."

The situation now is better than it was a year ago. With her own garden, a few pigs and some goats the mother struggles less. Spiritually she was helped by the chaplains. "God is the centre of all, I need to trust him more."

At the home visit, the boy greets visitors in both English and Chichewa. He can write his name on the form - all of that for a boy who is in first grade!

[Read more stories on our website](#)

Note of Gratitude
from a South African Partner -
[Bethesda Medical and Relief Services NPC](#)



"To our dearest Partners and Friends,

We here at Bethesda would like to express our gratitude for the wonderful and much needed donation received on 24 December 2020. Thank you doesn't feel like enough, but believe us when we say that we truly appreciate all your support. Each contribution ensures that we can realize our vision of providing holistic, compassionate and sustainable care that improves quality of life.

We hope you are all well and please keep safe and healthy."



“Before he died this boy knew that people half the world away cared about him and knew his life mattered”

[Gilchrist](#), located in Maryland, partners with [Nkoaranga Lutheran Hospital](#)'s Hospice and Palliative Care program in Tanzania. The hospice team in Tanzania shared this recent story of a 14-year-old boy named Goodluck. Though he sadly passed away, the team at Nkoaranga was able to make his last weeks very special, thanks to the support that Gilchrist provides.



“Goodluck was fourteen when he fell from a tree and injured his spinal cord. Paralyzed from the waist down, his mother left him to die on the floor of their hut. When the Nkoaranga hospice team found him, he had bedsores down to the bones of his hips, back and knees. Thanks to the generous support of our donors, the Nkoaranga hospice staff was able to admit him to the village hospital for care, and a team from Gilchrist traveling to Tanzania brought wound care supplies and dressings.

Sadly, a few weeks later Goodluck developed sepsis and died from his wounds.

The hospice team in Tanzania said:

“While we are saddened by Goodluck’s death, before he died this boy knew that people half the world away cared about him and knew his life mattered.”

Support Palliative Care Training in Africa

Without nurses trained in palliative care, those in low-resource settings who suffer from life-limiting conditions will continue to struggle with pain and symptom management. This is why Global Partners in Care (GPIC), together with the African Palliative Care Association (APCA), created the [African Palliative Care Education Scholarship Fund for Nurses and Social Workers](#). Scholarships range from \$1,000 – \$2,500 (depending on the course), but **every donation, no matter the size, allows us to support various levels of training so that palliative care can be made available to all in need!**

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