

# Focus on Compassion

Enhancing Access to Palliative Care Worldwide

25<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY



## 25 Years of Compassion and Impact

In 2024, Global Partners in Care (GPIC) celebrates its 25th anniversary. Over the past 25 years, GPIC has been dedicated to enhancing access to compassionate care for individuals and families across the globe who face serious illness, death and grief. This silver anniversary is a milestone in the organization's history. Not only does it provide an occasion to reflect on the impact the organization has made, it's also an opportunity to consider future possibilities.



### Origins and Evolution

Global Partners in Care began as the Foundation for Hospices in Sub-Saharan Africa (FHSSA). During a professional tour to hospices in South Africa and Zimbabwe, U.S. hospice leaders witnessed the devastating impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic across the region. In 1999, HIV/AIDS was the number one cause of death in Sub-Saharan Africa. Countries in the region lacked sufficient hospice care to meet the burgeoning need; existing programs were overwhelmed. Recognizing the urgency, American hospice leaders established a non-profit organization that could assist their colleagues, officially founding FHSSA in 1999.

Despite progress over the next five years, FHSSA faced organizational challenges. In 2004, it became an affiliate of the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO), allowing direct connection with NHPCO's membership and expanding the scope of their work. The African Palliative Care Association (APCA) was founded in 2004, further strengthening FHSSA's partnerships and relationships. Over the next decade, FHSSA collaborated with advocates, donors and hospice organizations to enhance its mission and reach.

A milestone during the early years of FHSSA was the receipt of a President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) grant through USAID. As a recipient, FHSSA worked with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania (ELCT) as its implementing partner, along with APCA, to build palliative care capacity. This grant established palliative care programs within ELCT, provided training, facilitated partnerships and developed palliative care units at 13 rural hospitals. Since then, the ELCT palliative care programs have continued to grow. There are now 50 ELCT hospitals and health facilities across the country providing palliative care services.

### Expanding Horizons

In 2014, with input from hospice programs across the U.S., FHSSA rebranded as "Global Partners in Care." While maintaining a focus on relationships and partnerships in Africa, the successful partnership model could now extend to other regions where the need was great and resources were limited.



During a transition period at NHPCO, GPIC found a new home at Center for Hospice Care (CHC) in Indiana. One of the most-recognized GPIC partnerships was between CHC and the Palliative Care Association of Uganda. Due to the success of that partnership and CHC's collaboration with University of Notre Dame, Indiana University and other community partners, it became the new home for GPIC in 2017.



### Our Impact

Today, GPIC collaborates with hospices and international organizations to improve access in resource-constrained regions worldwide. Guided by principles of compassion, relationship development, trust, mutual respect, learning and support, GPIC continues to make a profound impact. Through cross-cultural partnerships, GPIC connects and supports hospice and palliative care organizations in the U.S. with those in low and low-middle income countries. Our partnership program has engaged more than 100 partnerships over the past 25 years. Collectively, more than \$8 million dollars has been sent to partners around the globe to improve access to palliative care in these communities.

GPIC also provides educational opportunities for practitioners and students and promotes research in global palliative care. Our African Palliative Care Education Scholarship Program – a collaboration with APCA – has awarded 73 palliative care education scholarships to healthcare professionals from 16 African countries over the past 13 years. The training supported by the scholarships has been at the certificate, diploma, bachelor's and master's level. Recipients have mostly been nurses and social workers, and the program is now expanding the reach to include other health professionals as palliative care becomes more established on the continent.



GPIC's student internship program has engaged 23 student learners from seven different universities since 2018. These 12 undergraduate and 11 graduate students came from 10 areas of study which underscores the interdisciplinary nature of palliative care. Their work has varied and includes strategic communications support, project evaluations and exploration of specific research questions with GPIC partners around the globe.

### Embracing Our Principles for the Future

Over the past 25 years, the organization's partnership model has expanded, leading to numerous programs and successful projects that have helped increase access to palliative care around the globe. GPIC staff and advisory council members express our immense gratitude to those people and organizations who have contributed to this impact. Their dedication inspires the work and propels GPIC as we look ahead.



As we challenge ourselves to consider our future direction, we must always be reminded that our greatest strength lies in the relationships that have been the hallmark of our success. Developing mutual respect through a shared cause has been both a means to an end and a driving force. Perhaps this truth was evident to those who mobilized 25 years ago, or perhaps it unfolded gradually, but there is no doubt it makes our work stronger. The late U.S. Senator J. William Fulbright, who established the U.S. government's flagship international educational exchange program, understood and promoted the importance of relationship building to enhance mutual understanding. He eloquently stated, "The essence of intercultural education is the acquisition of empathy — the ability to see the world as others see it, and to allow for the possibility that others may perceive something we have failed to see or may perceive it more accurately."



Though we come from different corners of the world, we remain united in a common cause to improve the quality of living and dying. It is through these relationships that we have persevered and achieved success. Collaboratively, we have exchanged knowledge, deepened our empathy and broadened our perspectives.



There is no better time than now to build on these principles. As we look toward the future, we are inspired by those who came before us and energized by those we work with today. They continue to motivate us in our quest to ensure the basic human right of compassionate, quality care for those experiencing serious illness, death and grief across the globe. It is to this end we remain committed to exploring opportunities that address the unique challenges of today to shape a compassionate and impactful future.

## Remembering Dr. Bernice Catherine Harper

***"Our skills, knowledge and resources can be shared around the world quicker than ever before. Our voices can be heard from miles away. Our love for each other can be felt across oceans. We are all neighbors, and we must look out for one another. We must stand up and fight to end human suffering, together."***

– Dr. Bernice Catherine Harper

Read more about Dr. Harper's life in this [tribute article](#) we wrote in 2022.

We are saddened by the death of Dr. Harper, but filled with gratitude for her life. She was not only a driving force who had a profound impact on the organization and the many lives we've touched – she was a close friend, confidant and advisor who will be greatly missed and forever appreciated.



## 25 Years of Compassion, Countless Lives Touched

GPIC's support for hospice and palliative care around the globe is only possible with the generosity of our donors. Imagine the impact of your donation. By giving up a casual meal for two, a movie night, a new book, or a few specialty coffees, you can contribute \$25 to Global Partners in Care. Your small sacrifice can make a huge difference in supporting our mission to provide compassionate care worldwide.

***Thank you for helping us celebrate this milestone anniversary!***



Support Global Partners in Care

**Our Contact Information**  
\*{{Organization Name}}\*  
\*{{Organization Address}}\*  
\*{{Organization Phone}}\*  
\*{{Organization Website}}\*



\*{{Unsubscribe}}\*