

Focus on Compassion

Enhancing Access to Palliative Care Worldwide

In upcoming newsletters, we'll share reflections from our student interns. The GPIC internship program offers non-clinical learning experiences in palliative care for university students from diverse fields. Working with our team and partners worldwide, interns gain insight into global palliative care, the value of partnerships and the operations of small NGOs. While doing this, they bring fresh ideas and energy to our work.

In this edition, you'll hear from Noah, Lauren and Ethan – our longest-serving intern, who has been with GPIC through most of his university career. Ethan now begins his next chapter as a Fulbright-Nehru scholar in India, continuing his work with the palliative care community.

Just the Beginning: My Gratitude to the Global Palliative Care Community

A Reflection from Ethan Harned

Dear colleagues and members of the Global Partners in Care network,

As the sun sets on my time as an intern with Global Partners in Care (GPIC), I find myself reflecting upon the journey we have shared. It is truly bittersweet as I think back on the memories shared, progress made, relationships built and the growth I experienced.

Since 2022, I have worked in the GPIC office to support operations and collaborations. Lacey Ahern, executive director of GPIC, also served as my faculty advisor at the University of Notre Dame. This allowed me to combine my academic pursuits and work with GPIC, fostering my growth as a scholar and professional. As part of this, I have been fortunate enough to travel to Uganda and South Africa through both an experiential learning internship and a formal academic research project.



What began with the goal of doing work to support GPIC through a short-term summer internship quickly evolved into a long-term engagement. Through my internship, I came to realize how powerful the work of palliative care is and how vital a force it can be to communities across the globe. This inspired me, and I became encouraged to grow through this work, learning to become a better collaborator, professional and advocate along the way.



Above all else, I am grateful to all of you in the GPIC network for mentoring and teaching me along the way. To the teams I worked with during my academic projects, Palliative Care for Children South Africa, Palliative Care Association of Uganda and Sunflower Children's Hospice, you will always hold a special place in my heart. Thank you for your friendship and willingness to support my growth. I would not be where I am today without you!

[Read more of Ethan's reflection](#)

Prepare for This Year's World Hospice and Palliative Care Day and HatsOn4CPC Campaigns

World Hospice and Palliative Care Day is Saturday, October 11th, 2025. This year's theme, "Achieving the Promise: Universal Access to Palliative Care," aims to strengthen palliative care globally through integration into health systems. Be sure to download this year's toolkit [here](#).



The **HatsOn4CPC** campaign takes place on Friday, October 10th. It is a simple and creative way to show support for children's palliative care worldwide. [Click here](#) to access the campaign toolkit and resources and begin planning your event today.



In the Face of Death, Compassion Endures

A Reflection from Noah Lim, GPIC Intern

"I didn't know it would be this hard." The late Dr. Anne Merriman whispered this phrase as she lay surrounded by loved ones, death looming near. Chris Merriman, her cousin, repeated these words at her burial service, thanking the larger palliative care fraternity for their gift of healing and the peace they provided. After many joyful stories and heartwarming patient testimonies, I knew I would be in for the experience of a lifetime.



This summer, I spent seven weeks completing an internship with the Palliative Care Association of Uganda (PCAU) and Global Partners in Care (GPIC). Primarily focusing on PCAU's new spiritual care assessment tool (SCAT), I also supported PCAU in their School Compassionate Communities Program (SCCoP). Studying theology on the pre-medical track at Notre Dame, this internship was not only the perfect opportunity to learn about true, holistic, compassionate care, but also to explore the intersection of my two interests: spirituality and medicine.

I arrived in Uganda to start my internship just in time to attend the vigil and burial ceremony of Dr. Merriman.

[Read more of Noah's reflection](#)

Advocating for Those Who Suffer in Silence

A Reflection from Lauren Johns, GPIC Intern

It was tender where the nurse gently pressed with gloved hands and the woman winced at each careful touch along her abdomen. "There is a smell," noted Dr. Margrethe, a volunteer doctor and program advisor at Rays of Hope Hospice Jinja (RHHJ). Cervical cancer – you can recognize it even before you say 'Hello.'

I understood what she meant the moment we stepped into the small, crowded home with the RHHJ clinical team. The woman sat on the floor, legs tucked beneath her, while we took our places on the couch. She had been under the hospice team's palliative care for some time, living with cervical cancer, and now, an infection that worsened her condition. She described her pain in a quiet, deliberate voice, each word carrying the weight of her suffering. As we listened and the team took notes, the woman explained how she developed cervical cancer. Speaking in her mother tongue at first, I did not understand what she was saying, but as her story was translated, I pieced it together – she had acquired cervical cancer through past violent experiences.



[Read more of Lauren's reflection](#)

Engage with GPIC at the 8th International African Palliative Care and Allied Services Conference

Join the GPIC team at the African Palliative Care Association's upcoming conference in Gaborone, Botswana. If you are attending, be sure to let us know! We would love to connect with you while we are there.



New Study on Opportunities for Innovation in Children's Palliative Care

A recent study from Imperial College London, Global Treehouse Foundation and the International Children's Palliative Care Network highlights key global perspectives on advancing access and quality in children's palliative care through innovation.

[Read the full article here](#) to explore their insights and recommendations.

Register for the 4th ICPN Conference in Manila



From November 12-15, the International Children's Palliative Care Network (ICPN), in partnership with the Ruth Foundation, will host the 4th ICPN Conference in Manila. The event offers space for collaboration and learning across the field of children's palliative care. *Early bird registration ends on August 31st.* Visit the [conference website](#).

2026 Global Palliative Care Conferences

Mark your calendars for 2026 conferences:

- [33rd Annual International Conference of the Indian Association of Palliative Care](#) | 13-15 February | Hyderabad, India
- [7th KEHPCA National Palliative Care Conference](#) | 25-27 February | Nairobi, Kenya
- [12th Latin American Palliative Care Congress](#) | 11-14 March | Sao Pao, Brazil
- [20th EAPC World Congress](#) | 14-16 May | Prague, Czech Republic

Help us spread the word! Follow us on social media and share our story with your networks.



Support GPIC by Giving Through Your Workplace!

Global Partners in Care (GPIC) participates in federal, state, local and private workplace giving campaigns in the US, including the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC). If you or someone you know is part of a workplace giving program, we encourage you to support the important work of GPIC in this way. Together, we can increase access to palliative care across the globe. Our CFC ID is **11018**.



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