

My most rewarding trip to East Africa

Our Board member, Wendeline Schaefer has just returned from Tanzania.

“Your prayers sustained us through some difficult times in October. Donations to our cause are always much appreciated. Checks should be made out to Kagondo St. Joseph Hospital Foundation and mailed to me at P O Box 6374 Incline Village, NV 89450. Do not mention of the Foundation on the envelope address.”

This five-week trip was the most rewarding of any trips that I have made to East Africa in the past 24 years. I had a wonderful team of three RN's, Ellen Murphy who did recovery work, Tom Marsh, circulating nurse, and Dave Schuurman, nurse anesthetist. In addition, Dr. John Felder, a plastic surgeon from Washington University in St. Louis, joined us for several days. Dave and Tom were both wounded in Viet Nam years ago, when they were



WEND MEETS AN OLD STUDENT DR RUTTA WHO IS NOW THE REGIONAL MEDICAL OFFICER

Navy corpsmen for the Marines. Their bond formed immediately because they served in Viet Nam and both were recipients of the “purple heart”.

Dr. Isidor Ngayomela, chief of orthopaedics at the Bugando Medical Centre in Mwanza also joined us for a few days.

We performed 56 major surgical procedures and 12 minor procedures in our 3 ½ weeks at Kagondo St. Joseph

Hospital. The most frequent operation was for infections in the bones of children. These infections come from blood borne pathogens that most often come from conditions like tonsillitis or middle ear infections. Once the infection of the bone sets in, the bone is rapidly destroyed and the bone dies. Our procedures were to remove the dead bone and leave the wounds to granulate in. These procedures are almost always effective.

Other common conditions were the procedures to correct severe bow legs and severe knock knee conditions. These conditions are easily correctable and are free of complications. Pictures will follow at a later date.

This letter will focus on the amputees and the amputee center. About seven

years ago, it was my good fortune to be present when Rotarian Don Short from England visited the Kagera region of Tanzania; his mission was to establish a Jaipur Amputee Center in the area. Of the many candidates, he chose Kagondo St. Joseph Hospital because of its long-term presence over 100 years. Initially the project was funded by another charity which can no longer fund the project. UNICEF also funded a onetime project to fit children with prosthetic devices. Unfortunately, today the only charity funding the Centre comes from our organization. The Jaipur foot prosthesis originated in Jaipur, India and is constructed with all in country materials. The prosthesis is usually unpadding and is of very low cost.

Our organization transferred \$13,000 to the hospital to pay for our surgeries and for artificial limbs. Each applicant was screened by our representative,



Josue Joseph, and most were able to contribute to the cost of their prosthesis. This policy helps the recipient to develop a sense of ownership and prevent the feeling of humility of being a charity case. In spite of the screening process our funds were exhausted and we now have nearly \$2,300 owed on our account.

Picture below is Margreth, a single peasant farmer, who tends the land.



She presented to me two years ago, requesting a prosthesis but we do not have heavy duty hooks that she would need to continue farming. I told her that I would seek the parts needed and return in a year. I forgot my promise but she returned, much to my embarrassment. This year I was able to obtain the necessary parts for Mr. Mgogwa, our prosthetist who is



pictured, to construct this AE prosthesis. You see Mr. Mgogwa teaching the patient how to use the prosthesis. We all were very happy to provide this prosthesis to this courageous woman.

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Best wishes to all in the upcoming holidays. May they bring us all peace, joy and holiness.

Wend Schaefer, M. D.