



GLOBAL CONNECTIONS

RETHINKING HUMANITARIAN AID



Serving & Learning

from the

orphaned, widowed, poor & oppressed

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THE "COINCIDENCE" OF GLOBAL CONNECTIONS

In the summer of 2005, 24 family members and friends visited Kenya for the first time. Though I am sure I was told otherwise, I had in my head that we were going to Kenya for safari. Though we did go on safari, I had no idea that we were going to serve the community of a small village in rural Kenya. Limuru and the surrounding area was different at that time. The Limuru Children's Centre was just one small school building and nine of the most desperate kids living there. Pat Dixon, Patrick Mungai and his family had a feeding program for needy kids. Today, if you walk through the village behind the children's centre, barely anyone pays you any attention. Our group walked through that village on our first trip and it seemed as though we were the first white people to have ever visited. Literally hundreds of kids followed us simply wanting to hold our hands.

Needless to say, the first trip opened our eyes and God touched us. Members of our family continued to travel to Kenya, sometimes every 6 months. Eventually I felt led to leave the safe, secure job and life I had in South Carolina and move to Kenya in order to learn more about how to effectively serve there. I also felt called to create an opportunity for others to serve and learn from the widowed, orphaned, poor, and oppressed. At first, Global Connections was created to provide a tax deduction for people who had heard about the work we were doing and who wanted to contribute financially. Now,



because of all the individuals who have participated and still contribute their time and money, Global is a body made of parts in U.S. and abroad, which, much like the Kingdom of God, thrives depending upon the calling and participation of individual people.

Our first trip to Kenya developed by "coincidence" when our family became friends with Bo Jeffares. Bo had heard that our family was interested in taking an international trip to serve less fortunate people. By coincidence, Bo's friend Kellie Burnham Berry was working in Kenya, and by coincidence, when members of my family prayed and began conversations with Kellie, it seemed as though the doors opened for us to travel to Kenya. Not to mention the coincidences that led Kellie to Kenya, those that led Patrick's family to serve the children of their village, and those that allowed for every member of our family and some friends to travel to Kenya.

Many of us feel like our lives have been planned out. Kids, careers, family, and many other things have us set in our routines. Though it can be

difficult, every now and then, God will provide us with a coincidence, which, if explored, may be an opportunity for us to experience more and help reinforce the Kingdom of God. Over the past 15 years, hundreds of people have explored the "coincidence" of Global Connections, and because of their open mindedness and their willingness, hundreds of lives in the U.S. and thousands of lives in Kenya have been transformed and the Kingdom of God has been strengthened.

A.B. PUCKETT

Founder of Global Connections and a member of the Global Connections Board



Global Connections representatives, Al and Anna Puckett and Jeff and Stacy Farnham, were invited to the ground breaking ceremony for a new wing of the Kijabe Hospital that will house 8 new operating theaters.

COVID-19

RESPONDING TO THE UNEXPECTED CRISIS OF THE UNEXPECTED VIRUS

Most of this newsletter was written before anyone had ever heard of Covid-19.

Yet, it is still relevant; These stories still matter; AND we are all cautiously walking through a new reality.

A reality that reminds us we are not separate...but terrifyingly connected. A reality that tempts us to hide - as if that were possible - from the needs of the "other". A reality that commands us to love one another in real and meaningful ways.

We've shut down our countries, some of us have given up our businesses and our illusions of self-sufficiency, we've home schooled our children, we've washed our hands until they are raw, we've even worn our masks...we've walked together - from at least six feet apart.

People have died from the virus and the answers are not simple or clear - regardless of what we wish...

Our GC family is responding to this new reality in which only one thing seems to hold our attention...Covid-19.

We are working with five of our trusted partners in Kenya to provide food for the hungry. In a nation that was suffering with 40% unemployment BEFORE this virus showed itself and its effect on the Global economy, we are blessed and thankful to know that

we can help to keep people from starving through the guidance and courageous work of our local partners.

Julius, the LCC, Duncan, Cornel and Pat's feeding program will not only continue, but expand in this time. Loving people here are committing to sharing their funds to feed a family in Kenya for \$30 - \$50 per month... or with one time donations to feed a multitude...one person or one community...one day at a time. The families in Kenya are sharing their spiritual wealth through prayer and love for us.

Revealing the Kingdom of God on this earth by connecting God's riches and God's people's needs

We sit ready to help make connections domestically as the needs here show themselves and we can provide the necessary oversight to make sure 100% of the donations are going directly to the designated need.

We've been reaching out to healthcare workers both here in the US and in Kenya.

Most importantly, together, we are fulfilling our mission of revealing the Kingdom of God on this earth by connecting God's riches and God's people's needs.

****Please note you will not be receiving a printed copy of this newsletter - we are convicted, in this new reality, this money is better spent sharing the Love of God through meaningful acts of service.**

ST. JAMES CATHOLIC SCHOOL

A SCHOOL COMMUNITY COMING TOGETHER FOR OTHERS

St. James Catholic School in Gulfport, MS is over 8,000 miles from Limuru, Kenya. However, this school family has helped make precious memories a reality for the children at Limuru Children's Centre.

Each year, every class at St. James selects a charity to champion for that school year. For the 2018 -2019 school year, librarian, Connie Favret, decided to select Global Connections for the Library's charity. Ms. Favret teaches a unit every year on the continent of Africa and she had heard Linda Holden give a presentation on the LCC. That school year, the library classes were able to raise more than \$600 in cash and collected 19 pillowcases full of gently used clothing for Global Connection's mission at the Limuru Children's Centre.

For this school year, when Ms. Favret had to sign up for a charitable project, she again signed up for Global Connections. "Our goal this year was to raise \$1,000. I wanted \$500 to go towards the LCC birthday party in the summer and \$500 to go to the school, the LCC library in particular since we are a library, too", said Ms. Favret. This year, however, her classes did their fundraising differently. "This year I started by introducing Global Connections & the Limuru Children's Centre and setting our goal, but I told each and every class they were not allowed to ask their

parents for one penny, that all the money had to come from them." Ms. Favret then led her classes in selfless giving. Every Friday at St. James is "Ice Cream Friday" and students are allowed to bring in 50 cents or \$1 to purchase ice cream. Ms. Favret instructed her students that one way they could make a pure donation is to give up their ice cream money. Ms. Favret explains that she wanted her students to learn three things: (1) giving is not always easy and requires a genuine commitment, (2) if you give, but don't feel it, then you haven't given enough, and (3) put yourself in someone else's shoes and know that not every child is as fortunate as you are.



was donated to Limuru. We had 24 children and two adult artists make things such as beaded bracelets, money pouches, painted wall decorations, you name it." The library also teamed up with Terese Evans, director of St. James Catholic School's award-winning Theatre Department, and Clifford Smith, the school's volunteer from the Armed Services Retirement Home, for some additional fundraising excitement. Ms. Terese volunteered to donate many of the costumes from the prior year's musicals to sell to generate additional proceeds for the children of Limuru. In addition, Mr. Smith agreed to contribute the profits from the sale of artwork donated by veterans from AFRH to benefit the children of Limuru. Ms. Favret then had over 25 volunteers who contributed items to sell. Every week students and parents would shop in the little library store and make purchases. Each dollar represents not just a dollar out of pocket, but it represents either a tightening up of self-discipline or the donation of an artist to put their skills to good use.

The library classes at St. James did meet their goal of raising \$1,000 for Limuru Children's Center. Marimac Pannell, representative from Global Connections, recently visited St. James to pick up donations and stated "Great changes are made by children, for children." This school community showed that giving not only affects the people we are giving to, but many times, it affects the givers even more. Thank you for all of your efforts to help others.

GREAT CHANGES ARE MADE BY CHILDREN, FOR CHILDREN.

Ms. Favret's classes also came up with creative ways to raise money. As Ms. Favret explains, "I had children and adult library volunteers offer to make craft items to sell. All the money



THE FACE OF HUNGER

GIFT OF FOOD

I knew going to Kenya would open my eyes to so many things; a different culture, traditions, languages, etc. I knew that God would show me things that would bring me to my knees. I experienced kindness and love from complete strangers and positive attitudes in dire situations. However, one need literally changed everything for me. What I did not expect to experience was the way I would react to seeing hunger. True hunger.

Being faced with the reality of hunger will jar you. As Americans, the majority of us have no concept of true hunger. As much as 40% of food in America goes uneaten every year so, the stark reality of hunger is not felt by the majority of us. During our trip, we worked with Julius, one of our partner's in Kenya, and made home visits to several families. During these home visits, we brought food that would last a family for several weeks. It was on one of those visits, that Julius started explaining to me why some of these school children were not at school. He began to explain to me how long school days are in Kenya and how children go as long as they can, but eventually they quit school because they can't handle not eating from 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Let that sink in for a second. Can you imagine going nine hours without food while others in your class ate because they actually could afford it? Can you imagine working on school work all day without any nourishment and then having to walk all the way home? I cannot. And this is when an issue started having a face. Hunger looked like precious sisters who wanted to go to school, but couldn't handle being hungry all day. Hunger took the shape of a teenage boy who desperately needs a high school education to have any hope of a decent lifestyle in Kenya, but can't afford to eat.

It was at this point, I knew that I had to do whatever it took to pay for as many children as I could to be able to eat at school. As I started crunching numbers, I asked Julius what would it take to pay for one child to eat at school for one year. His reply, "\$60". I wish there was a way to express the look on my face at that time. \$60. That's it? I started thinking about the last time I spent \$60. I easily spend \$60 for one meal with my family and this is the amount that could feed one child all year at school. I knew at the point this is an issue where we could make a major difference.

This fall, Global Connections reached out to our donors in hopes to help fund as many school meals for children in Limuru as we could. I am so excited to report that starting at the beginning of the school year in January, 29 students have been sponsored to receive meals at school. This could not have been possible without our wonderful Global Connection donors and the hard work of Julius. My prayer is that we add to this number every year. Thank you to everyone who helped change the lives of these 29 children.

If you would like to give towards this issue, please go to globalconnections.org and donate to "Gift of Food". This fund is set up to help all our feeding programs and to help address the issue of hunger. As I travel back to Kenya this summer, I pray that God continues to open my eyes to ways I can help. I pray that one day hunger doesn't have a face.

April Barlow

Director of Operations for Global Connections



WATCHING LOVE GROW

THROUGH THE YEARS

On our first trip to Kenya, we didn't expect to expand our family. Adding a pre-teen girl to our mix was not originally in our plan. After meeting sweet, shy Margaret though, we knew God was calling us to a new family normal.

Margaret is somewhat of a hybrid. She was one of the original three to enter the first LCC feeding program. Margaret has loving parents who we have grown to know and love as well. Co-parenting such a wonderful girl has extended our family even more. We've been able to stand in a gap for education and enrichment while walking alongside her Mom and Dad in a really organic and cohesive relationship. We were never placed in her life to replace them, only to walk beside them. We are incredibly grateful for the way they have loved us and allowed us to love her.

We've been able to walk alongside Margaret through high school and now college. Before Margaret chose Utali College, I had the privilege of visiting and viewing colleges with her and our friends at LCC. It was such a fun

"You don't choose your family. They are God's gift to you, as you are to them."

—Desmond Tutu

experience. I was the only one that could get away in our family, so it was a special time we were able to spend together. Having two younger children, I had not yet had the blessing of touring colleges with my children. Being involved in such life changing decisions has been such a blessing for our family. Watching Margaret grow and become such a force for good has been amazing. Visiting with her parents and accounting for her accolades and achievements while watching them thank God for her success, has been life changing for us as a family. Just this past month, she's chosen and moved into her own apartment in Nairobi. She was awarded an awesome internship in her field and is enjoying learning the skills of her industry. It's so fun to get texts with first apartment pictures and big smiles.

We are forever grateful for the LCC for providing us this opportunity to be a part of Margaret's life. So many at LCC have supported her, counseled her, shopped for her, and helped her make grown up life decisions. Lots of prayer has covered her and we are grateful for everyone that walked with us. Now, she's almost grown. Lord willing, we will get to attend her college graduation this fall and see her new apartment. We are thankful she chose us, that her family became our family, and that God has blessed us all in the process.

I love hearing the WhatsApp ding on my phone at 4:30 am most mornings sending us an update on how life is going and asking how her brothers are doing. We couldn't be prouder of the person, student, daughter, sister, and friend that Margaret is to all who meet her.

Katie McBrary

Katie is a member of the Global Connections Management Team and has been Margaret's Godparent for 5 years.



TOGETHER WE CAN

TOGETHER 365

How many times do we try to face things on our own and disregard the possibility that with a team or a partner, we could reach our goals faster?

How many times do we trust ourselves, when the Lord is there - ready and able - to be the strength we need when things are dark?

What if we had it all? What if we chose the strength and guidance of the Lord, to bring us the partner, the teammates, the resources, to help us do more?

Global Connections has graciously partnered with Together 365 understanding fully that we share in this mission and that working TOGETHER we will reach more. Together 365 is committed to the well-being of vulnerable children in the United States. This organization stresses that TOGETHER we can do more and that TOGETHER we can positively impact the lives of at-risk children.

Together 365 is committed to providing solutions that positively impact children at risk and improves their overall well-being. They partner with individuals and like-minded organizations to provide programs, data, and insights to create innovative solutions that help vulnerable children and youth throughout the United States.

ZeroChild, the first program of Together 365, was created in direct response to the growing number of children that have experienced abuse, neglect, or trafficking and are in need of care that will facilitate positive support and opportunities for a successful transition to independence.

WHERE DO THEY GO?

Jessie* and Donovan*, 7 and 2 years old, moved around a lot. Jessie helped take care of Donovan, but many nights the children were not allowed to be loud or be seen. These children found themselves living in different hotel rooms, eating meals from vending machines when they could, and some nights they slept in their mom's car, when there was no money for a hotel room.

Jessie and Donovan didn't know better. They were quiet when they were told to be - they would get in big trouble if they weren't. If they were seen or heard, their mother wouldn't get paid for her work, and they would not be able to eat the next day. They learned to stay in the bathroom while mommy was working. They knew their mom did not like her job, but she had to do it so she wouldn't get in trouble with her boss. The boss would give her bruises if she didn't do a good job.

One cold winter day, their mom found hope. She was taken in by an organization that helps

women who are being sold for sex. They offered her shelter, therapy, and life skills training that would help her be successful in the world outside of pornography, drugs, and sex slavery.

BUT WHAT ABOUT HER CHILDREN?

ZeroChild stepped in, worked closely with the mother, and helped Jessie and Donovan find a safe place to live and heal while their mom recovered. Today these children are thriving emotionally, educationally and physically. Jessie and Donovan have been able to maintain close contact with their mother and their families' beautiful story of healing continues to unfold. There has never been a greater need to provide vulnerable children with an environment that puts them on the path to safety and healing. Together, we can make a difference.

**not their real names*

If you would like to learn more about Together365 and ZeroChild, please visit our website at globalconnectionsonline.org/domestic-partners.

TOGETHER
we can change the outcomes.

TOGETHER
we can do more.

ZERO
CHILD

TOGETHER 365™



GLOBAL CONNECTIONS

RETHINKING HUMANITARIAN AID

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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**CHECK OUT
OUR WEBSITE:**

GlobalConnectionsOnline.org

LIMURU CHILDREN'S CENTRE

8

LCC COLLEGE
STUDENTS

19

LCC BABY HOME
BABIES

39

PRESCHOOLERS
AT K-BRANCH

41

LCC STAFF

10

SCHOLARSHIP
STUDENTS

24

PRESCHOOLERS
AT LCC

54

LCC BOARDERS

97

CHILDREN PART
OF LCC
FEEDING PROGRAM

PRAYER REQUESTS

- Ongoing prayer for the Covid-19 situation as it expands here and into Kenya - especially for AIDS victims, our immunocompromised kids and the older population
- Prayer for the LCC staff as they must stay on campus for a week
- Prayers for the children at LCC as they try to understand all that is going on during this difficult time
- Prayers and praises for provisions for feeding over 50 families during the pandemic

CELEBRATIONS

- Praise God for seven new Godparents in 2019.
- Praise God for the leaders and staff of LCC

LCC NEEDS LIST

- Refurbished Laptops: we are blessed to see the LCC children beginning to transition into secondary school and college. Many of their programs are requiring laptops. If you or anyone you know would be willing to donate a refurbished laptop, please contact us at info@globalconnectionsonline.org.