



GLOBAL CONNECTIONS

RETHINKING HUMANITARIAN AID



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Serving & Learning

from the

orphaned, widowed, poor & oppressed



DREAM BIG IF IT BE YOUR WILL

My kind, loving wife, Cindy, succumbed to my arm-twisting and accompanied me to Uganda in 2017. We served as members of a combined medical/dental team working in refugee camps in Northern Uganda. The trip was challenging. We went from one site to the next in various camps and small villages, living out of our backpacking tents. Drinking water was boiled and meals were of the freeze-dried variety. The community we served were displaced persons from war-torn countries. Many had only the clothes they were wearing, everything else lost or stolen from them. These challenges, the reward of serving others, and my poorly conceived introduction of medical missions to my bride made this trip all the more memorable. It was also during this trip that I began to think about how I might share the experience of medical missions with physicians in training. We had recently started an internal medicine residency at the hospital where I work.

Amidst the anxiety that was 2020, a bright spot for us was a group study of Bob Goff's book, *Dream Big*. I shared my dream of creating an opportunity for resident physicians in global health and medical missions. Global Connections team members, also participating in the study, asked, "Can that be done in Kenya?" There began a journey we are still traveling. Along the way we have been blessed with cherished new friendships, open doors, and the pleasure of saying to God, "if it be your will".

February 17 - March 5, 2023 marked our first trip to Kenya with resident physicians. This would not have occurred without the support of Global Connections and their partners. GC helped with grant writing, vetting Kenyan partners, packing list, friendship, guidance, love, and too much to list. Working with Kenyan physicians and healthcare professionals in hospitals and clinics gave us a lot to ponder about healthcare delivery in Kenya and in the United States. It was GC partners, though,

that made the most impact: Limuru Children's Center, the Baby Home, Cheshire Girls' Home, Pat Dixon's Feeding Program, Francis, Jane, and Julius Ngugi. Witnessing God's love being poured out as a shared experience is impactful.

Participants described this trip as transformational. We hope the experience will inform their practice of medicine as well as encourage the use of their talents towards the advancement of others, the Kingdom, and not themselves. We also hope to improve healthcare access within the communities Global Connections serves. Our team went into the community and examined people in their homes. Sometimes we simply tried to provide comfort and reassurance, other times we identified a need for further care.

The GC medical fund assisted with medications, bandages, x-rays, MRIs, and visits to the hospital. Samuel was one of the people that we met in their home. He was a victim of spinal trauma and subsequent quadriplegia. Samuel had not walked or transferred from bed independently in years. Upon examination, much to our surprise, his neurologic injury was healed. His current disability is from contractures that developed in his muscles. With physical therapy, supplied by GC donors, Samuel is making amazing progress. His therapist is confident that he will stand and walk.

By all measures, our inaugural global health trip was a great success. We have begun planning the next two trips for October 2023 and February 2024. Resident physicians in family medicine, internal medicine, general surgery and obstetrics/gynecology will apply to participate. I'm looking forward to seeing how far God takes this.

Dr. John Boswell



From left to right: Dr. Tarr, Dr. Rosenblatt, Dr. Thapa, Dr. Boswell



A MISFIT WITH A PURPOSE

FINDS BELONGING AND COMMUNITY

I was blessed to be chosen as one of two residents attending the global outreach elective in Limuru, Kenya with Dr. John Boswell, Africa EDU, and Global Connections. For some background, I am at the end of my third and final year of internal medicine residency at Baptist Golden Triangle. I took the scenic route to medical school and residency. I am not sure how many other misfits are reading this article, but I hope they can empathize when I say I repeatedly heard the phrase "she has a lot of potential if she just applied herself." A lot of this application time was spent traveling back home to Nepal and other developing countries looking for myself through service to others. Traveling creates a home for misfits because never belonging anywhere eventually helps you to belong everywhere. In Limuru, I found belonging and community.

The people we met, and their stories gave this trip meaning and purpose. A review of my journal entries shows 50+ names to share, but

for the sake of brevity, I will only highlight a few. Our Limuru family backbone were the Puckett's who took us in and opened their home and community to us. The universal parents that provided guidance and support throughout. We were accompanied through our journey by Esther, coordinator and fashionista with a heart of gold. George served as a driver and Swahili teacher. He tirelessly reminded us to "chunga kichwa" (watch your head) through all our travels. Maina was the groundskeeper and spiritual guide. He imparted knowledge about plants and nature and somehow related these lessons to life and purpose. We met Francis and Jane who are involved in the Limuru Children's Center as well as services to the homebound. Julius is a church and community leader who reaches out to at-risk youth and families in the community. We met the mothers at Limuru Children's Center who provide warmth and nurturing and make all the difference in outcomes for the children at risk. We met Jabali, an 11-year-old boy with cerebral palsy who is the spokesperson and PR department at LCC.

His humor and charm and personality wins over everyone who has the pleasure of meeting him. We also met a man in his early 20s, Patrick, who was taken in and helped by the LCC and now gives back to others like him. He carries himself with maturity and wisdom far exceeding his years. We visited Kenneth, a man in his 30s, who was paralyzed after an accident while in college. He has every reason to be angry at the world, but he met us with grace and humor and the biggest smile as he recounted all his blessings. We met Sister Consolata who creates miracles with what she does with the little resources she has to provide for disabled women and girls at the Cheshire home.

I encourage anyone who can make this trip to do so. To survive in resource poor conditions is one thing, but to thrive and live with such grace is awe-inspiring. They took in this misfit and reminded her of her purpose again.

Dr. Angelica Thapa



George



Jabali



Esther



Maina



Patrick



Sister Consolata

RIGG'S AFRICAN ADVENTURE

KENYA THROUGH THE EYES OF AN 11 YEAR OLD

Day 1 After 16 hours, we finally made it to Nairobi, Kenya. It's 10:40 p.m. when we landed and our friends just picked us up at the airport. I can't wait to take a shower and go to sleep. We are staying tonight with my parents' good friend, Dunstone, at his hotel called Acacia Tree. I'm starving. I hope they have us a snack. The flights were long. I watched five movies and I don't like vegetarian meals. The French give you cheese and bread to eat at every meal!



trying to get some teenage girls enrolled in school. While we were there, we saw zebras, gazelles, sheep, dogs, and camels. There were a lot of animals. So the main water source that they have is all dried up to the brim. It is so dry here where we are right now. They haven't had rain in three months.

We had a cool driver today named John. I liked talking to him. We got to have pizza for dinner. I am so tired. It's hard to sleep all night since we are nine hours ahead of the time at home.



Day 2 Today was a great day.

We woke up at Acacia Tree Hotel and we went to get some breakfast from the chef at the place we are staying. We got our driver John to go take us to the grocery store to get some groceries. After grocery shopping, we came to our house at Brackenhurst where we are staying in Limuru. It is very loud at our house because there is a school next to us having recess. Also, they're building a new room for the school and it sounds like they are playing drums next door.



By the way, the drought is a big deal here in Limuru and there's no water for our shower. At least we had a good one this morning. I got to play Uno with Anna and we are having fun.

Day 3 I woke up and I toasted some bread and I got ready to go on a 2 1/2 hour drive to this village. At the village, they greeted us with a big song. It was very interesting to watch them dance. The reason why we went there was because they don't have water because of the drought. Like they don't have any water at all. A lot of the animals were dying because of no water. My mom and Mrs. Anna are trying to help them get a well drilled for water and also



Day 4 Today was another great day. I got up and finally slept all night.

Mom and I did a devotion and our driver John came to pick us up to go run some errands. I told John all about deer hunting. He wants to come and hunt. Then we came back to our house and got ready to go to my birthday party at LCC which stands for the Limuru Children's Center. I shared my birthday party with Mrs. Lilian, she runs the LCC. I had a great time. It was very fun. Then after that we went to Margaret's house. Margaret is my mom's Godchild from the LCC and practically like a sister to me. She had a new room built so we went to see it and it had electricity! We also visited Camaro's house. He works at LCC and has 5 daughters. He was so excited for us to go to his house. You know we have really big houses in the USA with running water and lights. But wow, there seems to be more of God in Kenya where there are small houses and no lights.





Day 5 Today was another infamous day. I started off the day by making myself a bowl of cereal. Then I went to my moms meetings and sat and watched my iPad. After that I ate lunch. We were going to go zip lining, but the place was closed. So we just chilled for the rest of the afternoon. Then we went to visit Sho Sho. I think that's Swahili for grandmother. Evidently she's a big deal because everyone acts like it. I thought she was nice. She started the LCC a long time ago. Now we're going to a friend's house to eat dinner.



Also, Anna Puckett rocks. Our porch light has been shining in my eyes for 4 nights. She found a hidden switch to cut it off. I also got my first hot shower in four days and it was great. In case you haven't heard, there's a drought in Africa. It's a big deal. Sho Sho prayed today, "Why isn't God answering the prayer to bring rain?" She seems to love God a lot, but might be mad about no rain. I get that, I think God probably does too. Goodnight.

Day 6 Today I woke up at 5:30 AM. I ate some cereal and then our driver picked us up to go on a safari game drive. The first animal I saw was the impala, but it wasn't even light yet. Then I saw a lion and then there were four lions who had just killed 2 Cape buffalo . Next, I saw 12 rhinos, not in one herd, but throughout the day. I saw a lot of Impalas and wildebeest and cape buffalo. Then we got to go see baby elephants. I got to touch one of the baby elephants and its skin was kind of a rough feeling. And then we had to get back so my mom could go to a meeting at the LCC and eat dinner with a friend of mom's. Then I walked back from this restaurant, which is really close to our house, so yeah it was an awesome day. There are lots of special people here in Kenya. There is a lot of love for us here.



Day 7 Today our driver John took us to some schools for kids with disabilities. The first place was named Ubuntu and was in a town called Mahi Mahuu. It was soooo cool. A guy from Austin, Texas helped a Kenyan guy start it. On the way I saw some monkeys and baboons. We drove on the side of a cliff edge called the Rift Valley. It was beautiful. I saw a lot of kids at the school with a lot of disabilities and they were all so happy. That was pretty cool. They just got a new big yellow bus that takes them to school each day. They also make bracelets and bags and shoes. I got a new pair of shoes. My mom loved that place. Bet dad doesn't want to see that receipt. She bought a lot of stuff and our driver John had to carry it. She said to tell dad it is for a good cause.



After that we went to another school for kids with disabilities. It was run by nuns. There were a lot of other cool kids there too and they were just as happy. It was called Kisimi (The Well). One of them started singing to me and it was really cool. They also baked and gave me a fresh doughnut. After that there was another place for all people with disabilities that were grown ups. They were happy too doing beadwork. I think my mom, Mrs. Anna, and Mrs. Caren were trying to learn about these schools because the LCC has several students with disabilities. It's hard to find a place that loves these kids in Kenya. After that, we drove back to our house. And then we had supper. God makes everyone special in some way. Here is where we went: Ubuntu Life Foundation <https://ubuntulife.foundation/>. They have beautiful things they make too:

Ubuntu Life <https://www.ubuntu.life/>

Day 8 Today we packed up and left Brackenhurst in Limuru. We said goodbye to all of our friends. Everyone is so nice here. Then we went by and picked up my sister Margaret and my mom's friend Nila. Mrs. Beth and my mom helped this girl named Lucy get away from a bad situation. She is very smart. She is in a good school now and we stopped by to say hello and check on her. The school was very strict . They only let us visit for 10 minutes, but she is very happy. She wants to be a journalist. She says she will help the other Masai girls. Now we have checked in at the airport. I had a wonderful trip. Thanks for going along with me!



MORE THAN A FEEDING PROGRAM

EMPOWER TO TRANSFORM FEEDING PROGRAM

The Empower to Transform Feeding Program continues to feed over 100 families a month. Through the leadership of the director, Julius, they are being fed not only physically, but spiritually and emotionally. Julius has made it his mission to truly serve these families in the best way that he possibly can and to meet their needs.

Last month, Julius had been made aware of an unsafe living situation with one of the families in the program. God provided the funds needed to be able to build a new house for this precious family. Thank you to all of our sponsors who are investing in these families and providing hope to so many.

As Julius says,

**“EVERY MORNING,
WE SHOULD WAKE UP
AND ASK OURSELVES,
HOW CAN I BE AN
ANSWER TO SOMEONE’S
PRAYER THROUGH THE
SERVICE I AM GOING TO
RENDER?”**



SEE A NEED, FILL A NEED

THE HOMEBOUND ELDERLY PROGRAM



The Homebound Elderly Program has become a lifeline for so many people who otherwise would have been forgotten. The program began a couple of years ago when GC's partner, Francis, saw the needs of a vulnerable community that was not being met. With his faith and guidance from God, the Homebound Elderly Program is now feeding over 100 homebound participants a month. Francis and his team are personally visiting and seeing the needs of each person and praying for God to show him how to fill that need. He currently has signed up 25 members for NHIF, the national health insurance program.

Francis makes it his personal mission to fill the needs of this precious community. Through witnessing during a visit or a phone call from a neighbor or family member about a particular situation, Francis works hard to fill that need. To date, Francis and his team have worked hard to make sure all participants have bedding, medical care, and even a safe place to live. One such need arose with one of our homebound elderly participants recently. Due to the drought, the soil around her home has become extremely hard and when the rain finally came, it caused major flooding to her home. With her sponsor's help, Francis has worked hard to take care of her by reconstructing her home and making sure she had everything needed to be safe. **We praise God for all the people He has put in place to help this precious lady and many more in this community.**



"It is my prayer that the program is going to help elderly people in the society and bring up a healthy generation of the aged. I also pray for the sponsors from GC for the good work that they do. May the Lord bless them and give them favor wherever they go. And as they come to see the program, I pray that they are going to be proud of how the program has impacted this community"

Francis,
Director of Homebound Elderly Program



GRACE IN THE TEA FIELDS



Even in this marathon heat wave, I adore hot beverages, especially tea. My favorites include Scottish breakfast, chamomile, Twining's' Irish and ginger sweet peach. This summer I added Kenyan black tea. Tea plants grow best in higher altitudes in subtropical climates. The Kenyan Highlands north of capital city Nairobi is such a climate. A group of 28, including local folks you may know, spent time in Kenya this summer. While this was my first visit, several members of our Global Connections team have visited the beautiful country many times. However, we did not fly 16+ hours to check out the tea. For some 17 years, Global Connections has been establishing relationships and assisting local Kenyans in the community with relief efforts. Providing clean water, feeding the hungry, educating children, and promoting health and hygiene for girls are some ways Global Connections is assisting.

My two-week schedule was lying on the dresser in my room when I arrived in Limuru in the middle of the night. Our team spent time with the Limuru Children's Center kids who are orphans or abandoned by parents who could not feed them. Our luggage included requested supplies for these precious kids. Other activities included accompanying Julius as he made his rounds dropping off food supplies to those who currently depend on this sustenance, and traveling with Francis who regularly encourages and prays with the elderly. We brought supplies to girls' schools. Misinformation and cultural bias regarding hygiene and reproduction is challenging in Kenya; we were able to teach in several schools.

While all activities were fruitful and rewarding, visiting the tea fields very near our lodging made a particular impression on me. Tea field workers live on the tea plantation in a subsistence fashion. On a glorious Thursday afternoon, our team brought sacks of meal, beans and rice along with care bags for the women. We also had clothing for men and women. We arrived during the workers' lunch of beans and rice. Soon enough, our audience settled down to hear our very capable retired obstetrician explain family planning. Our captive audience listened

with occasional gasps, nervous squirming and a few questions. Our unflappable teacher rested all concerns. Heads of families then lined up to receive one bag of food supplies. Next, we distributed the care bags for women. Finally, as the workers were still in line, we began handing out one clothing item at a time. At some point, I noticed the front of the line much closer to me as I continued reaching into the large sack handing out items. Presently, I realized there was no line and tea workers surrounded me with perhaps twelve inches to spare. Looking up from my large sack, I gazed into the frantic eyes of a mother who felt compelled to snatch an item from my hand. Her neighbor tucked an item into her shirt and jockeyed for another item, not returning to the end of the line. It dawned on me that the supplies we brought were running low. The angst on the faces so near me spoke of need and desperation. As I steadied my gaze into her eyes, the tsunami of understanding dazed me.

Grace can be defined as unearned gifts. We are all the recipients of grace. Large and small acts of kindness are grace. Our Global Connections team brought grace to the tea field. The recipients were deeply grateful. The problem was our limited grace was running out. We stepped back to defer the distribution to local Kenyans escorting us. The dwellings of the tea workers were in a small gorge; from my view, the shelters looked like hodge-podge tin. To the side of the chaos of adults, I saw tatter-clothed small children with a mixture of white rice and flies on their faces. The foreground seemed to contrast violently with the beauty of endless rolling fields of green tea plants in the distance. We had come to bless, assist and spread hope. We brought limited grace with a short shelf life. Yet, the mother with frantic eyes gave me a far more lasting gift. She reminded me of my need for His unlimited Grace. Indeed, we are all desperados in dire need of a Gift we cannot earn. I remember, **"It is better to give than to receive."** We left bags of grace in the tea fields but walked away with humbled hearts filled with the reminder of His matchless Grace.

Desiree Wilson

BEST FRIENDS REUNITED

Geoffrey and I met in 2005 when we were both young kids while I was visiting the LCC on a trip with my family. As soon as I got to LCC, Geoffrey and I instantly became best friends. We both loved soccer which was a bridge for us to communicate and interact. I was able to go back and visit the next two years and continue to grow our friendship. This relationship would provide me with a best friend for life.

Let's fast forward from 2007 to 2022 when I get to return to Kenya. Geoffrey and I are both adults and have a lot to catch up on over the past 15 years. Our 2nd day we spent with the LCC teens which included a soccer match where Geoffrey shows up too. This is the very sport that connected us the first time and it will reconnect us again. As soon as I got to hug him I could feel the love reconnect. This is also when my wife, Kamaran, got to meet the man that I have talked about for so many years.

From that point on for the rest of the trip, Geoffrey and I spent every minute possible with each other catching up. Just a couple of highlights was getting to play with his four year old son, Maverick, playing a soccer match with him again, visiting his home, riding his piki piki with him around town, so he could show me his most frequented spots. We also set up the local handicapped LCC child named Jabali to ride a piki piki with Geoffrey (his biggest dream).

Now looking back, I think one of the main reasons I returned on this trip was to discuss Geoffrey's career and future. I did not know what I wanted to discuss with Geoffrey, but I felt God pulling me to go and talk to him about his career. So currently, Geoffrey works at BATA (a local shoe factory) which he gets laid off from every couple months. This makes it very difficult for him to pay his rent and bills. He also spends his time volunteering with Francis delivering food to the local disabled elderly. One of the main lessons I learned on this trip was from Geoffrey. It was that he was not worried about how he would get his next meal or afford his rent. He was worried about how everyone else would get their next meal and that they were taken care of before him. This really opened my eyes because in American culture it is all about yourself first.

There are many awesome stories I could tell about my trip, but the story that was on my heart during that trip was I knew I wanted to help Geoffrey find a stable career, but I wasn't sure if I had the best solution yet. At that moment God stepped in and took control. Anna and Duncan are close friends who were with me after a debrief we had with the team. I told them my desire to help and they guided me on the best way to help Geoffrey. Duncan is a local business man that is a great mentor to young people and helps direct them in the right direction. Since then Geoffrey and Duncan have had a couple of meetings about a path that best fits Geoffrey. Geoffrey is currently researching a career path that Duncan recommended and Duncan is mentoring him through that process. You never know how God will use you or use someone to open your eyes. I am so thankful for the relationship God blessed me with fifteen years ago and it continues to bless me today.

- HOUSTON WALKER



ADOPTIONS

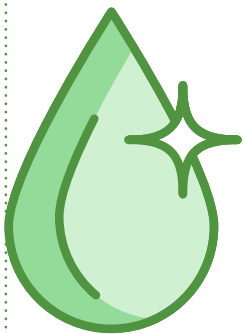
AND THE SEARCH FOR KISIMA

THE SEARCH FOR KISIMA

We had just returned from whirlwind trip from Kenya. We achieved a lot in prepping for the summer team and our work with Kajiado – especially concerning water and the plight of the girl child. The drought is of epic proportions, and I was especially aware of conserving our drinking water and food.

the spiritual gift Kenya has to offer the world. Furthermore, I am extra conscious of how Kenyans are lacking physical water while many people in the United States are also going through this struggle with a real search for spiritual water.

guidance through life's challenges. While living water may quench our thirst temporarily, spiritual water provides us with eternal fulfillment that cannot be found anywhere else. I'm looking forward to witnessing how God uses us all judiciously as we look for a Kisima (a well) in all aspects of our lives. As always, I am deeply moved that we traveled responsibly and strived to live according to God's plan, bringing us much joy and peace throughout it all. Can't wait to see what lies ahead!



This experience reminded me to be good stewards of resources when we lead teams this year too. God is working tirelessly at gathering new partners both here and in Kenya, bringing awareness to

Living water is a term used to describe the physical water that we drink and use for everyday purposes. However, in a spiritual sense, it represents something much deeper and more meaningful - spiritual water. This type of water is not tangible or visible, but rather a source of nourishment for our souls. It provides us with strength, comfort, and

Katie McCrary

We are so thankful that we get to be a part of helping these precious children find their new families! Thank you to all the staff at the Baby Home and the LCC who love, pray, and take care of them until that day comes.



LCC UPDATE

Dear friends and family of the LCC,

Once again, we would like to thank you so much for your faithful support towards the LCC program. We are amazed to see God transform the lives of vulnerable children over and over again.

At the main branch of the LCC, the children have continued to excel both in their academic and extracurricular activities, from football, dancing, acrobatics, to golfing and some are also passionate about kickboxing. Here are some more updates from LCC Main:

- Five of our L.C.C teens did their Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (Margaret, Boniface, Belinda, Eric and Stephen). They performed well. They all were able to get into good performing high schools. We also had five children, ((Kelvin, Geoffrey, Eliud, Beatrice and Racheal) join junior high school in their local primary schools.
- 39 new admissions in the preschool at K-branch and LCC main.
- George Kimani sat for his high school exam. He is currently being trained as a mechanic. This course will take three years to complete.
- We are happy to announce that Dickson, Esther, Becky, Simon K., Derrick and Susan finished their college studies.
- John Kahera and Gladys Wangeci joined college. John is studying Information Communication Technology (ICT) and Gladys is pursuing a degree in Hospitality.

SCHOLARSHIP

- The LCC Scholarship Program has continued to offer scholarships to high school and college age children from very needy backgrounds in the local community.
- Two of our scholarship boys finished their high school and performed very well; Kevin Mutore had B- and Thomas Kiarie had a B. They are both waiting to join the university.
- We are grateful to the GC team for supporting this program and this year we had two local well-wishers who offered to sponsor two high schoolers. Joseph Ndungu and Zipporah Nyambura through high school education.

Thanks again to the GC family for all of your prayers and support.

- Lilian





GLOBAL CONNECTIONS

RETHINKING HUMANITARIAN AID

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OUR WEBSITE:**

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BECAUSE OF YOU, WE WERE ABLE TO SUPPORT:

12

LCC COLLEGE
STUDENTS

20

LCC BABY HOME
BABIES

40

LCC BOARDERS

42

LCC COMBINED
STAFF

LCC SCHOLARSHIPS

4 COLLEGE
STUDENT

13 HIGH SCHOOL
STUDENTS

80

ATTEND K-BRANCH
AND LCC PRESCHOOL

> 900

TOTAL FAMILIES FEED BY
PARTNERING FEEDING
PROGRAMS PER MONTH

90

CHILDREN DAILY
SERVED BY LCC
FEEDING PROGRAM

> 900

TOTAL ELDERLY AND
HOMEBOUND FEED
PER MONTH



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Thank you for your consideration of partnership with the ongoing service efforts of Global Connections!

All donations are tax-deductable and 100% of the funds are used for the program YOU designate. There is no deduction for administrative costs.