

Why Curamericas Global?

The tsunami in the world of international health today is the growing recognition that sustainable change requires communities to become empowered and invested in the future of their health. Curamericas Global's signature Community-Based, Impact-Oriented methodology does just that. Curamericas Global's projects engage communities so that they take ownership of the projects, marshalling in resources (both locally and at the national level) so that the projects can continue once major funding from US grants ends.

Through the implementation of Care Groups, the cost of providing community health (which for decades had been its primary criticism) has fallen dramatically. Simple inexpensive health interventions such as education on breast feeding, vaccinations, water quality and hand hygiene can be taught by community volunteers.



For years, health care in developing nations has been "vertical" in that resources are focused on isolated issues such as malaria, HIV or polio. The problem with this approach is that it is not the most impactful or cost-effective way to help communities. A comprehensive approach that addresses issues of maternal and child health specific to that community builds the abilities of mothers to take care of their families, and

the capacity of communities to identify and treat health problems.

On my first trip to Guatemala, I will never forget seeing a poster prominently displayed just outside the mayor's office showing the infant and maternal death rates of the area. Curamericas Global involves communities from day one and shares all the data gathered throughout the project so that they can see the improvements that have been made over the course of the project, where they are today, and where they are headed.

As small an organization as Curamericas Global is, we have made a giant impact on the future of international health care.

Thank all of you for your continued support of Curamericas Global!

Dr. Wes Jones
Board of Directors



Curamericas Global
HOPE THROUGH HEALTH

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Curamericas Global partners with underserved communities to make measurable and sustainable improvements in their health and well-being.

Your gifts make a lasting impact on the health of communities around the world. Thank you for your support!

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Curamericas Global

GRASSROOTS

HOPE THROUGH HEALTH

Fall 2015

SIERRA LEONE

Kuimei Project brings sustainable health care to Sierra Leone

GREETINGS FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



This year I have made it a priority to visit you and share our story. Using donated air miles, I traveled to 16 states and got to know many of Curamericas Global's committed supporters. Together, we save the lives of women and children in the most difficult places. And we wouldn't be able to do it without you!

We need your help to continue our lifesaving work. Spread the word in your community by inviting us to speak to your friends, church or civic group or by making a donation to support our projects. **Every dollar you give is leveraged to create \$7 of funding for our programs that directly benefit mothers and children** — that is a heck of a return on your investment!

Thank you for your commitment to Curamericas Global and to a world free of preventable suffering.

Sincerely,
Andrew Herrera
andrew@curamericas.org
919-510-8787

In July, Curamericas Global began a new partnership in Bo District, Sierra Leone. *Kuimei*, as the project is known, is a word from the indigenous language Mende that translates to 'mother' and is symbolic of a provider or caretaker in the community. **Sierra Leone currently has the 2nd highest child mortality rate in the world** and women face a 1 in 23 chance of dying from causes related to pregnancy and childbirth (UNICEF Statistics at a Glance: Sierra Leone. (2013)). Furthermore, 71% of the population is living in extreme poverty with limited access to basic health care (Demographic and Health Survey. (2013)). The Kuimei Project will reduce maternal and child mortality in eight different communities **by reaching over 24,000 people with vital health services and education.**

In partnership with the General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM), the Sierra Leone Annual Conference (SLAC), Helping Children Worldwide and Mercy Hospital, the project will:

- Expand Antenatal Care Services to reach 95% of women
 - Ensure 80% of children are fully immunized by age two
 - Increase the amount of skilled birth attendants who practice clean, safe birthing practices and proper newborn care to 85%
- The project will utilize



A young mother and her infant attend a community event to celebrate the commencement of the Kuimei Project.

Curamericas Global's unique combination of the Community-Based Impact-Oriented and Care Group methodologies to maximize impact. Through the Kuimei Project, Curamericas Global will empower communities

to take control of their own health by training local health teams and Community Health Volunteers. This approach will help the people of Bo District create sustainable change and improve maternal and child health in their communities.

Donor Spotlight: Bob & Susan Knowles

Bob and Susan have supported Curamericas Global since 1999. Their passion for Curamericas Global stems from the life and work of Bob's grandfather, Frank S. Beck. Dr. Beck was one of the first missionaries to Bolivia in 1912 and worked alongside some of Curamericas Global's founding members to build a hospital and nursing school to provide healthcare to Bolivians when there were no other options. Today, Bob and Susan Knowles continue to support the health of mothers and children in need as Curamericas Sustainers.

"We were first drawn to Curamericas Global when it was Andean Rural Health Care due to its support of the clinics in Bolivia. Curamericas Global is doing the work that we want done, it is not wasting money on high administrative or fundraising costs. Our donation is put to use providing for those in need.

It is our good fortune in life to be able to share with those in need, and we believe that Curamericas Global is the best way to do it. We are frugal people and know that Curamericas Global makes the most from every dollar we donate. We chose to sign up for recurring donations because it is an easy way for us to spread out our annual donation goal and it helps Curamericas Global to have a steady stream of income. We would not hesitate



to recommend Curamericas Global as a charitable organization. Our dollars help support those who can extend a helping hand to provide healthcare and teach others how to care for themselves."

We are so grateful for the support and dedication of Curamericas Global Sustainers like Bob and Susan. Thank you for your support over the last 16 years and your lifetime commitment to helping those in need. To read the full interview with Bob and Susan, please visit our blog at www.curamericas.org/our-blog/

YOUR DONATION TO CURAMERICAS GLOBAL



\$20

Buys 2 solar phone chargers for health workers



\$50

Buys 2 Safe Delivery Kits



\$100

Helps 80 kids fight malnutrition



VOLUNTEER

Your time is just as valuable

Kenya (cont.)

Care Group Volunteers (CGVs) also help to monitor the health status of women and children in the community. Amongst many duties, CGVs conduct post-delivery follow-up home visits, where they visit new mothers to check on issues including post-partum hemorrhage (excessive bleeding after birth), a major cause of maternal mortality. During one such visit, Maryanne, a CHV, encountered a mother with a newborn who informed her that she was experiencing some bleeding. This being a danger sign for post-partum women, Maryanne immediately referred her to the Tabitha clinic. Maryanne also accompanied her to ensure she received much needed care.

Because CGVs are in constant contact with community members, they are able to identify health emergencies and ensure appropriate care is received in a timely manner. Without a visit from Maryanne, this new mother likely would not have pursued the vital health care that she needed and that ultimately saved her life. CGVs like Maryanne who conduct regular home visits help connect community members to necessary health services and help save lives.



Jessie Keener, of Fayetteville Academy, volunteered in Guatemala in 2015. "I have the capacity to help a great deal. I can bring joy, money, medication, toys and hope with a small sacrifice. The gains extremely outweigh any cost."

Liberia (cont.)

advance the following points as a way to move things forward:

- Continue to use Curamericas Global's CBIO methodology after Ebola is eliminated.
- Continue training Community Health Workers and community leaders in Ebola awareness and prevention.
- Involve local community leaders and government officials in health care delivery.

Curamericas Global is grateful for the support and sacrifice of the many Community Health Workers who worked tirelessly to stop the Ebola outbreak. Because of our previously established network of health workers and their relationships with the communities, we were able to effectively disseminate Ebola prevention and awareness messages, while other foreign aid organizations struggled with community distrust. We are incredibly grateful to the donors who supported our health workers. Because of you many lives were saved and a deadly epidemic was stopped in its tracks.





Lisa Chowthi, a volunteer from Raleigh, NC, helped weigh and measure babies, distribute de-worming medicine, and plant family gardens while on a volunteer trip in June, 2015.

Volunteers provide invaluable support to our projects by donating their time, talent and energy to our partners. Lisa Chowthi went on a life-changing volunteer trip in June, 2015. Learn about Lisa's experience below.

What was your first impression of our project site in Calhuitz, Guatemala?

When I first arrived in Calhuitz, I was in complete disbelief that in a world of such advanced methods of communication and modern technology, there are people who still live in such poor conditions. We hear about the difficult conditions in third world countries, but we do not quite understand the extent to which their lifestyle is so much less comfortable than ours. I was shocked to see so much waste and litter scattered throughout roads and yards, houses made of tin and concrete slabs, and children bathing using water buckets.

What did you learn while on the trip?

I learned how important service is and how much of an impact volunteers have on Curamericas Global's projects. Before going to Guatemala, it was hard to fathom how I could have a huge impact without any experience in healthcare or development projects. However, our work as volunteers spans beyond helping to construct buildings or plant gardens. Our presence, our donations (both time and financial), and our interactions with the community show them that we care about them. And our imprint was obvious – the children were so happy to see us, the parents were so grateful to have us, and the staff at the *Casa Materna* expressed their gratitude with so much hospitality.

What is your favorite memory from your trip?

My favorite memory was having the amazing opportunity to see a local, young woman give birth to a healthy baby boy. It was an incredible experience to view the prime objective of Curamericas Global and the *Casa Materna* program – to ensure healthy children and healthy mothers – come full circle. This experience really helped me fully understand why Curamericas Global is working in Calhuitz and the success that it has had over the years. In addition, the fact that the mother allowed me to be in the room while she was giving birth truly demonstrates the level of trust and confidence that the residents of Calhuitz have with Curamericas Global. That alone speaks volumes on how well Curamericas Global works with the community.

INTERESTED IN GOING ON A VOLUNTEER TRIP?

Ask us about joining one of several trips planned for Spring and Summer 2016 or organizing a trip of your own.

WARNING: You will not come back the same!
volunteer@curamericas.org



"I learned how the other half lives and it opened my eyes to the world and the problems around me."

– Griffin Payne, Fuquay-Varina UMC, 2015

HOW TO GIVE

Donate online at www.curamericas.org or via check mailed to
318 W. Millbrook Rd, Suite 105
Raleigh, NC 27609

Curamericas Global accepts monetary, in-kind and stock donations.

Interested in setting up monthly donations or learning about our planned giving options? Contact us at info@curamericas.org or (919) 510-8787 for more information.

Curamericas Global is grateful for nearly 20 years of support from Christ UMC in Greensboro, NC.



Thanks to long-term partners like Christ Church, we've been able to save the lives of thousands of mothers and children in forgotten communities around the world. We wouldn't be able to do it without you!

THANK YOU!

KENYA

Positive results from first quarter in Kibera show value of Care Groups



Photo by Suzanne Thomson
A young girl practices proper handwashing at a handwashing station in Kibera. Educating community members on proper hygiene is essential to reducing diseases like diarrhea that contribute to high child mortality rates.

In Kibera, the cost of health misinformation is life-threatening. Although community members are aware of the health facilities that exist in Kibera, there is a serious lack of service utilization at these facilities. To address this dangerous gap, Curamericas Global, in partnership with Carolina for Kibera, and with support from Ronald McDonald House Charities, works with Community Health Volunteers to provide health education and bridge the gap between health facilities and the community.

The report from the first quarter in 2015 show huge strides to increase use of health facility services. Twenty seven volunteers and staff were trained to utilize the Care Group model, which helps community health volunteers provide household-

level health education. As a result, 210 pregnant women were reached with vital health education and support. 99 deliveries were reported from January-June; of these, 90 were attended by skilled attendants at health facilities.

Care Groups also contributed to increased knowledge on health topics including antenatal care, handwashing and hygiene, danger signs in pregnancy, exclusive breastfeeding, and emergency danger signs in newborns and during the postpartum period. 1,398 household visits were conducted to pregnant women and households with children under five to disseminate vital health messages on these and other topics.

While conducting home visits,

Continued on back page

GUATEMALA

Study shows Casa Materna project leads to increase in health facility births

The results are in! A recent study shows that the *Casa Materna* maternity centers are not only saving the lives of mothers, but are also helping to increase the number of births that occur in a health facility. A traditional Mayan birth occurs in the home, usually on a blanket over a dirt floor, with the assistance of a traditional midwife called a *Comadrona*. Encouraging women to give birth at a *Casa Materna* prevents unnecessary maternal and child deaths by ensuring that the births take place in a clean, safe space and with the help of a skilled birth attendant trained to respond to any complication.

The study results indicated that the *Casa Maternas* have helped increase the percentage of women giving birth in health facilities. In *Casa Materna* partner communities, 70% of women delivered in a health facility compared to 30% in non-partner communities. These findings are particularly impressive due to the low percentage of facility births overall

in the Department of Huehuetenango (21%) and low percentage of facility births among indigenous women in Guatemala as a whole (29%).

Curamericas Global is grateful for the support of organizations and individuals like you who make these extraordinary results possible.

Reports like these reveal the strength of our programs and our ability to make profound impacts on the communities we serve. Thank you for joining Curamericas Global as it continues



Children gather outside the Casa Materna in Calhuitz to show their gratitude for the services provided. The Casa Maternas have increased health facility births and contributed to decreased maternal mortality rates in the area.

to end preventable maternal and child deaths around the world.

LIBERIA

The Ebola Aftermath: Personal testimony from a Nehnwaa staff member

Dennis Web is the Community-Based Primary Health Care Department Supervisor of our partner in Liberia. During the Ebola outbreak, Web analyzed data on confirmed, probable, and suspected cases of Ebola and compiled a report on his findings for Ganta Hospital and other partners. In July 2015, Web reflected on his experience living through the Ebola outbreak and offered his suggestions going forward.

The Ebola outbreak posed heavy burdens on the people of Liberia. It broke the boundaries and norms of cultures throughout the country. It was a strange and devastating disease; few people had heard of it and few knew how to face the disease when it arrived in Liberia.

I led the first case management team to Small Ganta (the epi-center of Ebola in Ganta City). The team was first denied access to the victims but after some frantic efforts through awareness, discussions, and persuasion we got through. The community's main concern was around the use of chlorine solution as a disinfectant. The belief was that the chlorine was making



Pregnant women attend an Ebola prevention and awareness session in Zao, Ganta County, Liberia.

people weak and eventually killing them. I stood before the crowd and was sprayed several times to convince everyone the spray would not kill me. We took 14 samples of suspected Ebola specimens that day and took another five the following day. Fourteen of these specimens were positive of Ebola; 12 of the positive cases died and only two survived. This was

the beginning of the major Ebola outbreak in Ganta City.

Going Forward

Having worked in the Liberian health system for the past 28 years and thoroughly scrutinizing the health infrastructure, I wish to

Continued on back page

“My sister experienced [the life-saving transport to the hospital from the community]. It was because of Nehnwaa, the vehicle was able to pick her up from the town there when she was almost at the point of death. She survived because of [the Curamericas Global] Nehnwaa program.”

– Nora Keah, Associate Administrator of Ganta United Methodist Hospital

BOLIVIA

Creative solutions to solve health issues in Bolivia



Two women discussing issues of domestic violence during a scene from Cuando las Flores Hablan.

In the city of El Alto, located in the highlands outside of La Paz, Bolivia, our partners at Andean Rural Health Care (CSRA in Spanish) are working hard to provide creative solutions to address difficult health and social issues.

One solution was the creation of an educational film. *Cuando las Flores Hablan* (When Flowers Speak) was inspired by eight real life testimonies and was filmed with the participation of local actors and actresses. The testimonies are stories of different cases of violence that occurred in El Alto, a location that suffers from increasing female homicide rates. The film also features an extended debate guide, which is being used to lead discussions between teachers and youth in schools.

We're proud of our partners in Bolivia and their creative strategies to address health challenges in El Alto. More women and children are alive and healthy today because of their dedication to providing vital health services to communities in need.

Visit our blog to learn more about CSRA's work to improve maternal and child health in El Alto and to watch the full version of *Cuando las Flores Hablan*.