



### From Our Founder Connie Cheren

I could say that when we started Partners for Care we had a master plan of what we would achieve. But, that would not be true. We only knew we wanted to see if we could help change lives. All of the programs in Partners for Care developed because of a partnership.

This edition of our newsletter tells the story of how I met some of these partners. Some I simply met on a plane. Some heard me speak about Partners for Care. And, in some cases I just said yes to a request.

These partnerships have helped Partners for Care change the lives of thousands. By partnering we have shipped 34 containers to Kenya bringing computers, mobility carts, adaptive equipment and sewing machines - all used to change a life.

I truly thank God for bringing into my life the people you will meet through these stories.

Connie

### A Message from Sammy Wanjau

Executive Director  
PFC Kenya

Thirteen years ago, when Partners for Care was first organized, we had a handful of staff and a very modest operating budget. We were a small, grassroots nonprofit with a vision for helping the people of Kenya, especially the children, to thrive. I couldn't have foreseen the importance of the work we would do.



What I did know was that changing lives in a country with so much need would require the support of some very strong partners in the US and in Kenya. I love that our name reflects perfectly what we do – partner with others to care for others. Partnering with others gives PFC added resources and expertise we need to serve others and, in turn, we provide the partner organization with “boots on the ground” to implement a program or solution and stories of real lives changed to highlight the impact.

We are blessed to work with some amazing organizations such as MedShare, FODAC (Friends of Disabled Adults and Children), Mobility Worldwide, Greif, and Thanks Be To God Foundation. Together with our partners, PFC has delivered thirty four 40-ft containers of needed medical equipment and supplies to some of Kenya's most remote hospitals and clinics, established computer and sewing schools to provide opportunities for employment and small businesses, distributed thousands of mobility carts to disabled children and adults lifting them off the ground, and provided safe drinking water through the distribution of tens of thousands of water backpacks.

We dedicate this newsletter to all our incredible partners. We couldn't do this work without you!

Sammy

# Changing Lives

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## An Unusual Request



Connie remembers the call well. The caller explained that an Ohio State University (OSU) student trip had fallen through and would she be willing to have 10 OSU students and an advisor spend a week at her home in Atlanta. They would volunteer their time to help Partners for Care with anything we needed them to do. This was the beginning of our partnership with the Buck-I SERV program.

Buck-I SERV is an OSU student organization that provides opportunities for students to serve. It was wonderful hosting the students. They helped us during the day and watched inspiring movies in the evening. The students didn't know each other before the trip but, by the end, they were like family.

Connie has hosted six teams. This year, we connected virtually because of the pandemic, but the students hope to return next year. Buck-I SERV students have helped with so many projects and have taught us so much. We look forward to their next visit.



## Can I Surprise You?

When thanking a donor for supporting the water backpack project he totally surprised us.

Dwight Smith, Columbus OH, had donated to the water backpack project and Sammy, John and Connie went to his office to thank him. Dwight asked our Partners for Care (PFC) staff what each did with PFC. When it was John's turn, he said he managed our computer school. Dwight asked "Can I surprise you?" Dwight then took us to a room full of computers. As it turns out, Dwight's business is to image and deploy computers for a large hospital, a university and many K-12 schools. After a few years, the computers are exchanged for newer ones. Working through his non-profit, Thanks Be To God Foundation, Dwight donates the older computers to non-profits. John was speechless. Dwight said they were older model computers. John assured Dwight that there were no computers in Kenya as nice as these "used" computers.

Thanks to our partnership with Dwight, PFC now has over 600 computers in Kenya and has opened 20 computer schools. Over 4,200 students have graduated, with many successfully securing jobs or going on to further their education.

Dwight certainly did surprise us that day!





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# Saving Lives

## Just Say Yes

## I Met Her On A Plane

**Gary Moreau,**  
Mobility Worldwide MO-Columbia



Most people who know Connie know that she usually says “yes” to any request for help and asks questions later. When Nell Diallo was with MedShare, she called and asked if Connie would accept a 40-ft container of donated medical supplies that was “stuck” in Mombasa. Of course Connie said yes not knowing what was involved in clearing a container at the port. Connie asked Nell if there was anything that would tell her what was in the container. That’s when Connie learned all about “packing lists.”

Nell sent Connie the packing list and the first twenty-four items listed were PETS. Connie had no idea what a PET was. The container finally cleared after two trips to Mombasa and many lessons learned about bringing a container to Kenya. When it finally arrived at the PFC office and staff opened the container doors, there were twenty-four big boxes, each with the word PET imprinted on them. Staff quickly assembled the contents from one of the boxes which turned out to be our first mobility cart!

We have now received 34 containers and 3,025 mobility carts. It is good to say “yes” when asked.

Connie was on a plane to Washington, DC traveling for work and made small talk with the woman sitting next to her - name, work, reason for travel, etc. They landed and parted ways. Two weeks later Connie was on the flight to DC again and so was this same woman. This time the woman showed Connie a water backpack she had with her. She explained how this water backpack could help transport safe water for millions in the world who carry and store water in contaminated jerry cans.

The woman Connie met was Liz Blake. At the time Liz was Senior Vice President and General Counsel at the International Habitat for Humanity. Liz connected Connie with Scott Griffin and David Fischer who were working with Greif (Greif developed the water backpack). Three weeks later Liz traveled with Connie to Marsabit where they distributed the first water backpacks in Kenya.

We now have distributed over 50,000 water backpacks throughout Kenya and hope someday to produce the packs in country. Liz also generously funded the Marsabit Center which now has the largest computer school in this area. Liz remains a supporter of the work of PFC.



**Our first pack recipient**

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## Zetech University



• **Innovation Hub:** In partnership with Zetech, PFC set up an innovation hub at the main campus in 2018. The hub is used by students with innovative ideas who don't have access to computers and internet to improve their coding skills and develop applications and websites. Over 180 students have benefited from the program. Among the innovations from the hub is a digital walking cane to assist those with visual impairments, without the need for a personal guide.

• **Prison Computer Schools:** PFC partners with Zetech University and the Kenya prison system to educate inmates in prisons. PFC provides the computers for training and maintains them while Zetech University provides the syllabus, trains the teachers, and certifies the students. 400 inmates have benefited from the program.

• **Mobility Carts:** PFC in partnership with the Lions Club and Zetech have helped 40 needy physically challenged people receive mobility carts through their Corporate Social Responsibility program. The presentation of the carts was aired on KTN one of Kenya's major local TV stations.

Zetech University has been a partner since 2018. The partnership came about when two of our staff, John and Chalo, were attending the university and shared the work of Partners for Care with one of their lecturers. John's school project highlighted the work Partners for Care (PFC) does with our computer schools. The head of Zetech's ICT department took note and organized a meeting with the Director of Corporate Affairs, Mr. Moses Maina who loved our work. Mr. Maina set up a meeting with Professor Njenga Munene, the Vice Chancellor, which ultimately led to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the university to partner in the following areas:

We are grateful for our partnership with Zetech University.



Partnering for hope and health in East Africa



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# Saving Lives

## Mount Kenya University



Connie & Sammy signing the MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) with Professor Waudo, Vice Chancellor of MKU

Some years ago, Connie was meeting our Partners for Care clinic doctor for dinner and he brought his instructor from Mount Kenya University (MKU) with him - Dr. Linus Ndegwa. Dr. Linus asked about Partners for Care and Connie told him about our medical clinic. He visited the clinic the next day and said he wanted to help. He set up a meeting with Sammy and Connie to meet with Mount Kenya University.

At the meeting, they were surprised to find the head of each department waiting to hear about the work of Partners for Care (PFC). After thoroughly vetting PFC, the university formed an official partnership with PFC. Through this partnership we have conducted three studies:

1. Behavior Change Study on the Acceptability of Pack H2O in a rural community of Embu County, Kenya
2. Evaluation of Water Backpack (Pack H2O) Utilization in Kenya
3. Study on the Psychosocial and economic impact of mobility carts distributed by PFC among physically challenged persons in Kiambu County, Kenya

We also co-wrote a chapter, *Challenges in Providing Universal Health Coverage in Kenya*, [Global Health Informatics: Principles of eHealth and mHealth to Improve Quality of Care](#) for a Harvard textbook.

The university organized a run to raise funds for the water backpacks. We have traveled together to Marsabit and Kilifi on mission trips together. And, MKU and PFC recently received the University Award for Innovative Civic Engagement. This award for \$20,000 provided funds to distribute 1,000 water backpacks and treat 3,500 men, women and children in Kilifi for jiggers. Together with MKU students, the PFC staff went door-to-door, and village-to-village and treated 3,525 people, mostly children, for jiggers. Jiggers are parasites that embed themselves in the feet of those inflicted causing intense pain and disability. After being treated by PFC staff and MKU students, the children were able to return to school. The program included educating families on how to prevent re-infestation.

PFC is grateful to Dr. Peter Kiria and all the professors at the

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## If I Ever Go On A Mission Trip, It Will Be With You



Cris & Pastor Hirbo with the motorbike

It seems like Connie has always known Cris Willis. Cris is one of those special, dynamic people you never forget once you meet her. Cris's church was studying the book "Radical" and the pastor challenged the congregation to go on a mission trip. Cris called Connie and told her that she knew if she ever went on a mission trip, it would be with her.

Not only did Cris go with Connie to Kenya on that first mission trip, but so did her daughter Kacey who had just graduated from high school. It was a memorable trip for everyone – Cris, Kacey, Connie, and the Kenya team. Cris later returned to Kenya with her husband Gary and they have now been to Kenya with Partners for Care three times.

The impact Cris and Gary have had on PFC is immeasurable. They donated funds to purchase Pastor Hirbo's first means of transportation, a motorbike. They funded the opening of the medical clinic, which has now treated over 40,000 patients. For many years, Cris and Gary held a fund-raiser at their store in Cumming, GA (Parsons) to raise money for Partners for Care. They've sent thousands of shoes for the children in Kenya. They've recruited their whole family to support PFC and they donate regularly to ensure the work of PFC continues.

We are so grateful that Cris chose to go with Connie on her first mission trip, and so are all of the PFC staff.



Kacey in Marsabit



Partnering for hope and health in East Africa



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# Saving Lives

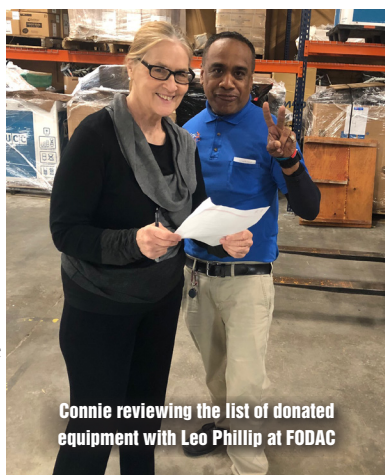
## In Search Of An Electric Wheelchair

Connie was asked if she could find an electric wheelchair for someone in need in Kenya. She was told to see if we could get one from FODAC - Friends of Disabled Adults and Children. We went on-line and completed the application requesting an electronic wheelchair.

We were pleasantly surprised when we were told we could come and pick up the wheelchair. Connie volunteered to pick it up and she is glad she did. Connie found a warehouse full of electric wheelchairs, special adaptive equipment, and so much more. That day Connie was blessed to meet Chris Brand, the Executive Director of FODAC. Her question to Chris was, "how do I get some of this wonderful equipment to Kenya?" Chris told her he would donate a 40-foot container of equipment. She just needed to raise the \$10,000 shipping costs.

Since that day, we have shipped three 40-foot containers from FODAC. Ken and Barb Munkel raised the funds for one of the containers. Thousands of physically challenged people have been helped in Kenya. Chris has donated walkers, canes, wheelchairs, beds and so much more.

Chris and Connie went to Puerto Rico together after the earthquake where they distributed water backpacks and adaptive equipment to many in need. She is glad someone needed an electric wheelchair and we are glad she volunteered to pick it up.



## More Than Carts



Sammy Wanjau, PFC Kenya Executive Director, and Connie were visiting the Mobility Worldwide MO-Columbia shop. Sammy took a walk through the shop and found two men repairing sewing machines. One of the volunteers, Jim Sandfry, explained that people donate used sewing machines and they repair them and include the machines in the mobility cart containers. Jim asked Sammy if he wanted sewing machines sent to Kenya. Sammy said yes and now we have 225 sewing machines and 11 sewing schools. Hundreds of men and women have learned to sew and have opened businesses or found jobs after graduating.

When we received the first sewing machines, we needed funds to set up the first school. Connie asked Cara Canon, PFC Board member, if she would fund the first school and she said yes! We will always be grateful for Sammy's walk through the shop and for Cara's support, which marked the beginning of our sewing program.



partners for care

## You Never Know Who Is In The Audience

When asked, Connie is happy to share the story of Partners for Care. She loves sharing how the Partners for Care staff in Kenya work every day to reach the most vulnerable, the lost and those in need.

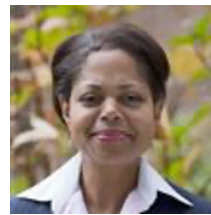
Connie was speaking at a volunteer event at Mobility Worldwide MO-Columbia and sharing the story of PFC including our bed net program. Malaria is a major cause of death, especially for children under five. It is transmitted by the bite of a mosquito at night while the child sleeps. A simple bed net prevents malaria and can save the lives of millions of children.

After Connie finished her talk Jim Wall approached her and told her he and his wife Judy wanted to donate funds for us to buy and distribute nets. He donated funds, and we bought and distributed the nets. Then he donated more funds and we distributed more nets. Then more funds and more nets.

Through our partnership with Jim and Judy Wall we now have distributed over 14,000 nets and this year we will distribute 10,000 more nets. Connie was glad Jim and Judy were in the audience that day.



## Why I Support Partners For Care



We love sharing with others why our donors choose to support Partners for Care. Their support, and the reasons for it, encourage our team on the ground and help sustain the work, during even the most difficult times.

Our newest board member, Kelli Joyner, has been a monthly donor to Partners for Care for seven years and has supported every PFC campaign! Kelli is committed to PFC in many ways and has helped grow the organization and advance the work of our team on the ground. She secured UPS's help to send 90 computers to Kenya, which helped us set up 9 partner computer schools, helping to change the lives of thousands of students. Kelli recently retired after a 36 year-long career with UPS.

When we asked Kelli why she supports Partners for Care, she said:



*We support Partners for Care because it is lifting individuals out of poverty in a sustainable manner one village at a time. PFC hires local individuals to be the "boots on the ground" and thereby also lifts them out of poverty and ensures that highly-trained individuals remain in the community to prevent a reversal of gains.*



We are grateful to Kelli and to all our PFC supporters!



**This edition of our newsletter is dedicated to Jim Page of Wilco Signs & Printing.**



We had the pleasure of meeting Jim Page of Wilco Printing through our relationship with Marty Averette. Marty is our friend who outsourced our printing needs. Once he introduced us to Jim we knew we'd found a home. Jim believed in what we do as an organization and has routinely given us discounts on our orders. Jim and his staff treated us like a million-dollar-a-year client instead of like the small business we are. He was patient with us as we learned how to produce higher quality prints and images. When it was time for our first ever Virtual Elephant fundraising event, Jim did not hesitate to sponsor us even in the midst of a pandemic. Though Jim passed away earlier this year, he leaves behind a legacy with his family and his business.

## Thank You to All Our Partners!

