



partners for care

Spring 2022

Partnering for hope and health in East Africa



From Our Founder

Connie Cheren

What does it take to change the world?

It begins when someone sees or learns about something they feel needs to change - like children drinking contaminated water or dying from malaria. Or witnessing the physically challenged crawling on the ground. It then becomes a question, "What can I do to help change the world?" From there it gives birth to ideas; ways we could help - such as water backpacks, bed nets, and mobility carts. With passion and determination, ideas turn into vision and step by step, life-changing programs are developed. This newsletter tells the stories of people who believed they could do something to help and have indeed changed the world for many people. I hope it inspires you to read of lives that have been transformed by one person who believed they could help.

I am truly thankful for our team on the ground and our many supporters who help us change the world every day.

Connie

A Message from Sammy Wanjau

Executive Director PFC Kenya

Recently, I lost my Mum. My Mum was everything to me and I miss her dearly. What has sustained me has been the support I have received from friends, family, staff and our partners in Kenya and the US. I am thankful for the love and help I have received.



Having my work to return to after we buried my Mum has been so important. The stories featured in this newsletter are merely a sample of what I am privileged to see everyday, everywhere in my nation. Our programs give people HOPE - hope for a better future for themselves and their children. From carts to computers to sewing schools to bed nets to our medical clinic, lives are being changed.

I am thankful for all those who help transform our people, our villages, and our country.

Sammy

Giving The Gift Of Mobility

In 1994 Larry and Laura Hills were missionaries in what was then, war-torn Zaire. Mel and Barbara West of Columbia, MO, were shipping them bicycles, typewriters, and sewing machines for their work. The four had never met.



When Larry and Laura came home to evaluate their mission, the four of them finally met in Des Moines, Iowa. Larry and Laura had seen so many people in Zaire crawling on the ground for lack of a wheelchair. As they parted that day, Larry asked Mel to develop his vision: a 'sturdy, three-wheeled, cranked wheelchair with hauling capacity, capable of traveling the rough roads and trails in the developing world'.

Such vehicles were badly needed by millions of persons in Africa who were leg-handicapped due to land mines, polio, birth defects, leprosy, diabetes, work and war injuries, and other causes. The vision for the mobility cart began that day.

The Wests went home and contacted their friend Earl Miner, a product designer who, with his son Rodney, designed four prototypes and built them in Mel's garage. They shipped all of them to Larry who selected one of the prototypes. This became the first PET - Personal Energy Transportation.

Production of the PETS (now called mobility carts) began in the Columbia, Missouri shop. The PET proved popular and

groups in other locations began to build PETs. In 2005 PET International, Inc. was formed to coordinate the work of the PET affiliates.

Partners for Care received their first PET in a Medshare container. That cart was taken by Pastor Hirbo to Marsabit for a man who had crawled on the ground to church for many years. The whole community celebrated when this man was lifted onto the cart!



From the vision and passion of Mel, Larry and Earl, Mobility Worldwide has now grown to 22 affiliates including three in Africa. They have produced over 100,000 mobility carts and each one has changed a life.

Through our partnership with Mobility Worldwide we have received 29 containers of mobility carts. Working with our partners in Kenya we have helped 3,946 to have mobility. This year we will receive nine more containers bringing our total number of mobility carts to over 5,000.

Receiving a cart changes a life in an instant. Beneficiaries have been able to attend school, churches and community meetings. Many start small businesses. Because Mel, Earl and Larry believed they could help, thousands of lives have been changed in Kenya and all over the world.



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Saving Lives

From A Humble Beginning

Our computer program began with one woman, Ms. Viergina Buteau, a friend of Connie Cheren, PFC founder. Ms. Viergina had lost her son Alain and wanted to do something in his honor. She donated four computers to PFC. Connie carried them to Kenya in her suitcase. From this humble beginning of four computers and one school, PFC now has 600 computers and 26 computer schools. Over 6,000 men, women and children have been trained in computer literacy.

Pete Gardner (System Administrator for Alterius Career College) joined the vision of helping Kenyans with computer literacy by donating computers to PFC. The computer program was further blessed when Dwight Smith, founder of Thanks Be To God Foundation, donated hundreds of computers to PFC.

Among the 26 computer schools, three of them are fully supported by PFC (Nairobi, Marsabit and Kilifi) while the others are run through partnerships with churches, prisons, county governments, primary and secondary schools and other non profit organizations. Through these partnerships, PFC impacts thousands of people in Kenya.



The computer schools play a vital role in Kenya. Most public schools do not have access to computers, yet Kenya has quickly moved to a digital economy. This leaves many Kenyans unemployable due to a lack of computer knowledge. Students who graduate from the computer schools have started businesses, gone on to further their education, or secured employment.

In Kirinyaga County we partnered with three polytechnic schools, establishing three computer schools. The county government added more computers due to the high demand from students. The schools are now graduating over 800 students a year!

One of our very successful partnerships is with Tumutumu School for the Deaf. We partnered with the school six years ago, donating 10 computers to them. The school has used the computers to train the students not only in computer literacy but also in basic school lessons. As the principal explained, “Children with a hearing impairment are visual learners - so computers are invaluable in helping us teach them. Since we started using computers to teach lessons, student performance has improved tremendously”.

Graduates of the computer schools often go on to start programs of their own like Hesbon Omondi. After graduating from one of our partner schools, Save a Life, Hesbon started his own non profit school, Life Mtaani, in his home area of Mathare slum. He is now helping other youth learn computers, photography, and video editing.



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Changing Lives

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Families Are Fed By Needle And Thread

The sewing school program was birthed in 2017 in the Columbia, Missouri mobility carts shop. Connie and Sammy were on a visit to the shop when Sammy met Jim Weisbrook and Jim Sandfry, who sat among hundreds of sewing machines repairing them so they could be shipped to developing nations.

Sammy already had a vision of setting up sewing schools to change the lives of people in Kenya by providing them with sewing and design skills. He shared his vision with Gary Moreau, Director of the shop. Gary gifted Sammy with 20 sewing machines and promised more.

We opened our first school on December 15th, 2017 with these 20 machines. Connie had asked Cara Canon, a PFC board member, to fund the costs of establishing this first school and she agreed! Cara's heart is to share the Good News of salvation with women through helping them learn skills to support their families.

This would mark the beginning of a program that has since received 283 sewing machines and helped us establish 28 sewing schools. We have taught 1,829 students sewing and design skills. In our first school in Nairobi we teach students how to sew bed nets. Learning how to sew a bed net gives students much needed skills to seek meaningful employment or start small businesses, equipping them to support themselves and their families.

We get to hear many stories everyday of how many of our former students have transformed their lives for the better. The impact is truly life changing.

We wanted to share one story from the many we receive. It is about two of our former students from Elohim Sewing School, one of our partner schools in Matsangoini, Kilifi County.

Josephine Juma and Pricilla Wema joined Elohim Sewing School in March 2021, graduating in November the same year. Neither had been able to get an education and both struggled to find employment. After they graduated from the sewing school they partnered to establish a home-based tailoring business. They repair clothes, make dresses, shorts and school uniforms. They have become financially independent and are able to support their children. They now have a plan to join a savings scheme and expand their business. Josephine and Pricilla are shining examples of a lives changed!



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Sleep Tight

Sometimes someone knows they want to help but isn't sure how to help. Neil Richter believed the twine from hay bales should be saved and not just thrown away. He began weaving them together to make rope, which he donated to Gary Moreau, of Mobility Worldwide in Columbia, Mo.



Gary asked Connie if PFC could use the rope. Connie knew the rope could be used in Kenya - she just didn't know how.



The barrels of rope were shipped to Kenya and Sammy sent them to Peter Chvala, Director of PFC in Kilifi. Peter sees thousands of children sleeping on the dirt floor of their tiny homes, where they are bitten by jiggers causing pain, sickness and even disability. Peter had the idea that he could use the rope to make beds. A new program - Rope Beds - began. To date, the Kilifi staff have made 43 rope beds, where the children are now "sleeping tight" in safety. Neil is helping change the lives of children in Kilifi, Kenya.



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Just A Net



Jim and Judy Wall wanted to help prevent malaria in children. They knew a simple bed net would prevent millions of children from dying from malaria. They wanted to help. Their partnership has helped us distribute over 25,000 bed nets, changing countless lives! And, Partners for Care has started making the bed nets in our sewing schools. Teaching students how to make a bed net gives them a skill that can help them secure employment or start their own small business. So many moms are grateful their children no longer get malaria. Jim and Judy have made the world safer for thousands of children and families in Kenya.

Safe Water is Life

When David Fischer, then CEO of Greif, went to Haiti after the earthquake in 2010 he saw women carrying water in heavy, contaminated jerry cans. He knew this was one of the causes of so many people becoming sick and even dying from waterborne diseases. He decided to help. His decision led to a vision, which became the water backpack. The water backpack is a low cost, safe, water transportation and storage device. Partners for Care partnered with David and conducted three research projects demonstrating the long term impact of the water backpack. PFC has over 68,000 water backpacks in Kenya helping thousands have safe water. Our plan is to implement in-country production of the water backpack, bringing jobs as well as safe water to Kenya. David is now a PFC board member helping promote his vision of safe water for the world.



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The Team in Kenya



Charles Mathenge



Lucy Kahiu



Mary Wang'ang'a



John Wang'ombe



David Chanzera



Kano Daro



Pamela Muhatia



Peter Cheya



Karisa Menza



Jefwa Katana



Justus Charo



Pastor John Njuguna



Ann Mugure



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Thank You to All Our Partners!



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