

partners for care

Spring 2023

Partnering for hope and health in East Africa



From Our Founder *Connie Cheren*

Over the 15 years I have been working with Partners for Care, how we help developing nations and even how we spread the Gospel has changed. Corbett and Fikkert's book "When Helping Hurts" and Robert Lupton's book "Toxic Charity" challenged us to rethink how we do missions. "Do no harm", "don't create dependency", "don't do what others can do for themselves" became principles we strive to follow. Many began to question the role of short-term missions, asking the question, "why go?"

In this newsletter, I am sharing with you how people who have gone on a trip with me have answered that question. I am grateful for their sharing of "why" they went.

Connie

A Message from Sammy Wanjau

*Executive Director
PFC-Kenya*



My PFC staff has hosted many teams over the last 15 years. Before a team arrives, the staff prepares menus, shops for groceries and prepares their rooms. They pick team members up at the airport, load their bags into our truck and take everyone to the PFC House. Our staff ensures all team members' safety while in the country. The staff prepares their meals, accommodating special diets. They work hard to both show teams the work we do everyday in Kenya and to provide an opportunity for team members to work alongside us.

Team members help put together mobility carts and participate in distributing them. They visit our computer schools and sewing schools and learn about our safe water backpack program and our bed net program. They go with our medical team to make home visits to our patients who live in one of the three slums we work in. We share our country's history and how we fought for our independence. We show teams the desperate poverty and the beauty of our country.

I ask team members to pray for us, tell others about our work, and help us raise financial support. I also ask team members to consider financially supporting our work themselves. For now, we do need financial support. Someday, maybe that will change – I pray it does.

The best teams leave my staff more encouraged and confident in their work and remember us when they go home.

Sammy

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Changing Lives

Spring 2023

Lori & Savannah Baumgartner

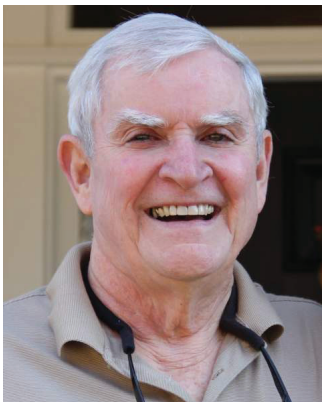
Savannah and I thank you again for the life-changing experience you allowed us to join. We know you have a reason for everything you do, and allowing God to use you to serve and share is a blessing to others. PFC and everyone on the ground is in our thoughts and prayers. We are forever changed, and we thank you!



Christi & Keith Badowski

Keith and I were very impressed with the entire organization of Partners for Care (PFC). You and all of your Kenyan team are doing a great work of God – and we are so happy that we got to be a small part of that. PFC's themes of development and sustainability are where PFC really stands out. Keith and I will continue to spread the word about PFC and all it is doing – I can tell you that everyone we have talked to so far can't believe all the components Partners for Care has in play all at once. It's really amazing.

Tribute to Harold Bolton



Harold was a special friend to me and Partners for Care. He was helping me before there was a Partners for Care. He is survived by Sandra, his wife, who has also been with me from the beginning. Thank you, Harold, for mentoring me along the way as we worked to grow Partners for Care.



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Saving Lives

Laura Leeds - Why Me?

For the past ten years, I have listened to my friend, Connie, and watched her do amazing things to develop Partners for Care (PFC) in Kenya. I prayed and thought about going there. The trip cost makes an excellent donation to the organization, and wouldn't PFC prefer to have money instead of me? Of course, Africa would be a new notch on my travels, but again WHY GO? I can see the pictures from every non-governmental organization (NGO) asking for money, so WHY GO? But when I prayed about it, I kept getting the same answer GO, and so I finally did.

I did not have to go to know that the Kenyans live in extreme poverty and have no water, and their children die of hunger and curable diseases. There is not enough water for the children to have clean, safe drinking water; 4% of the children are wasting from lack of food and water. Worldwide, about 3 million people die of curable conditions. In Nairobi, about 60% of the people live in slums. They do not have the luxuries of indoor plumbing, running water, or stoves. They scrape together money to send their children to school so they will have a better life. A small percentage of them are educated beyond high school.

So again, I ask WHY ME? Kenya is a young nation. Many of their young adults are resourceful, talented, and serious. I learned that with a high school education, men and women dedicate themselves to improving the lives of their communities and families. They use their resources and talents to influence and change what they can. No matter how small their wages, they reach back and take care of their parents and siblings' families. When parents die, they take care of the children. This caring comes at a cost – they sacrifice their comforts and futures, but

their faith in God is enormous. They know that He will provide. That provision comes from those of us who have been given the GIFT of living in a resource-rich country.

Now, WHY ME is clear. I found a deep faith in God in the people of Kenya, and I found where I need to strengthen my belief in HIS providence. But more importantly, I realized that I and we in America did not earn our good life – it is a GIFT. Our GIFT began when we were born or immigrated here. Yes, we work hard, but Kenyans also work hard and yet suffer. Going forward, my job is not to take my running water, house, food supply, choices, medical services, and our free education for granted. My job will be to follow the prophet Micah and “Seek justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God.”



partners for care

Sandy Matthews

People have asked me why I go to Kenya and why do I raise money for PFC? It is because I have experienced first-hand how PFC is changing lives in Kenya. I have witnessed the staff working hard to be sustainable while still extending a helping hand to the poor. On my first visit, I cried every day. As a public servant, I have helped many people who had food insecurity, no electricity, no housing, and no access to medical needs. Even when I volunteered to minister in the inner city with our church, assisting those in need with food distributions and school supplies, I never experienced the extreme poverty in Kenya. Their lack of access to water, food, employment, and children, with jiggers, broke my heart. I was so humbled to be given an opportunity to share the love of God with those who have a great need in Kenya. Connie asked me why I did not cry on this visit. The answer is because I was witnessing what PFC and the donations are doing. Each dollar raised is changing lives. Whether it is for a water backpack, a bed net, a mobility cart, a literacy school, a computer school, a sewing school, or a children's rescue center, lives are changing both physically and spiritually.

I have visited the Kibera, the Githogoro, and the Marurui slums. Many of the homes are built from mud bricks and corrugated metal and house some of Nairobi's poorest people. There is no sanitation and no running water. The slums house sixty percent of the population of Nairobi. I have visited the Manyattas and the church in the "ends of the earth" area of Kenya. PFC extends hope and love to these areas through its various programs.

- *Ten dollars saves a life. It is the cost of a water backpack that holds safe water and keeps a child from getting waterborne diseases.*
- *A ten-dollar donation provides the cost of a bed net to a family to protect their children from mosquitoes carrying malaria. I have witnessed their gratitude to the PFC staff for receiving a bed net.*
- *A fifty-dollar donation provides mobility, independence, and hope to a disabled child or adult.*
- *I spoke with a crippled mother whose child had to watch her sit and beg on the streets for money or for someone to carry her from place to place. She said most called her vulgar names and passed her by. Now with mobility, she has dignity. Her child sees her as a strong businesswoman who operates her own business and provides for their needs. She is thankful to God, PFC, and Mobility Worldwide. She has hope, and she no longer depends on charity.*
- *I bought candy from a severely disabled man who is seen as a businessman in his community instead of being pitied and scorned while begging from the dirt on the side of a road. He is independent, transports himself with a mobility cart, and provides for his needs by selling candy. He has joy in his life because of the gift of mobility.*
- *A one-hundred-dollar donation provides a sewing machine for a sewing school. I visited a sewing school where men and women were learning to sew so they could support themselves and provide for their families. They were grateful to have an opportunity to learn a profitable skill from their teacher. The schools are now sewing bed nets for the PFC Bed Net Program.*



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Saving Lives

Sandy Matthews

During my visit, I mainly worked with Mary Wang'ang'a and Lucy Kahiu. Mary is doing an impressive job with the mobility cart program. She is excellent at networking. She teaches the assembling process and oversees the distributions. Lucy is the Director of Sustainability and, in a span of six months, has set up, marketed, and run the Airbnb business out of the home in Nairobi. It is netting a profit. I assisted her with staging the rooms, and we discussed tips on how to improve the marketing. Lucy is good at researching. She is lovely to work with.

I was able to see Peter Cheya again and hear the wonderful testimonies of what is taking place in Kilifi County. They are eradicating jiggers, teaching literacy, how to use computers and sew, and helping students become sustainable. Peter is humble and filled with the love of Christ, which overflows to those around him. He has evolved into a captivating leader.

When Pastor Hirbo died last year, it broke our hearts. He touched so many lives. I questioned why God would take him and could not grasp how anyone would be able to take his place. I do not know why, but I do know Pastor Hirbo has finished his race and received his reward. He had a life well-lived. He set the standard for us to follow as a servant. His selflessness and love for others will forever be an impact on my life. He has passed his baton, and others have grabbed it and are running the race. His wife is finding joy in loving on the children who need help at the Center of Hope. Kano Daro is the new Director of PFC Marsabit, John Guyo assists, and Pastor Hirbo's son, Isaiah, is preaching in the church. I was privileged to meet Kano. He is exactly right for the position, and I imagine so are the members of his team. They are continuing the work in Marsabit. I can imagine Pastor Hirbo smiling in heaven. I cried for the first time that night, humbled by the reminder that our God is faithful and good. He already knew who would come next.

It was not possible to visit Marsabit to see the Center of Hope. It will be a visit for another time. To be continued....



Changing Lives

Spring 2023

Danny & Daniel Kellenberger

Having been with Partners for Care since its inception in 2008, going to Kenya in 2019 was long overdue. I decided to bring my 13-year-old son, Daniel, so he could see how blessed he is to be born in the US. We were both excited to go and witness all that Kenya has to offer, and I couldn't wait to meet the PFC staff.

We left very early the first morning to travel to Marsabit. The ride through the desert was eye-opening as we saw animals and people struggling in the dry, drought conditions. The longer we drove, the smaller the "cities" became. When we finally arrived, we met with Pastor Hirbo and the people of Parkishon. We saw people who lived in Manyattas, not much taller than Daniel. We were surrounded by love, as evidenced by smiling children. Not long after we got to Parkishon, Daniel pulled me aside and said, "Dad, how is it that these people have so little yet are so joyful?" That melted my heart.

Heading to Kiliffi to see the work of Peter Cheya was another life-changing moment for us. The Kenyans are resourceful and work in challenging conditions, yet they are always cheerful, especially Peter, with that big, million-dollar smile. We were blessed to be able to witness how God works in ways that we will never understand. I hope and pray to continue spreading the word about the good the staff in Kenya is doing.



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Teresa Kersting

Today, I went with the medical team on their home visits to PFC patients who live in one of the three slums PFC serves. I could see this is why I came. I needed the reminder to put me back in balance. A restart.

A recognition that "everything in heaven and earth belongs to God"; His people back in northern Michigan and His people here in the slums. He loves us, whoever we are. There is no caste system with God.

I feel His presence in the small metal container where the fragile yet broad-smiling welcoming grandmother, who is raising her beautiful grandchildren with no visible resources, offers us tea. I wonder if all I can offer her back is tears, but I know this is a lie and choose not to agree with it. I offer a smile. I offer a gentle touch. I offer the hope and love from my spirit to hers. You don't need a translator when smiling.

I talked with Max Maina, who was leading the group to the various medical home visits through the slums. He knew the different alleyways and easily navigated the odorous sewage-filled trenches lining the alleyways. He knew his way. He knew the people. Through discussion, I discovered Max was the same person who assisted with navigation the last time I came to Kenya to "reset my heart" 10 years ago. How can this be, My Dear Heavenly Father? Why has Max been here for so many years, plans to return tomorrow and the next day and the next? I surmise it is because of the love he has for his people. God's people. Heavenly Father, may I be as faithful in loving the people You call me to in my small world.



Spring 2023

Saving Lives

Pat & Dr. Craig Wendt

My husband and I met Connie on our first trip to Kenya 12 years ago and joined her again ten years ago and again this month. Our goal was to 'get an update' as long-term donors and fairly new board members. First and foremost, we observed that Connie has not lost her drive or her focus when many others would have lost their way years ago. Her goal to make an impact on the people of Kenya through safe drinking water, malaria prevention, job training, the rescuing of orphans, health intervention, mobility for the lame, and on and on still continues. In addition, Connie's primary focus of training young Kenyan leaders who will reach their own people, still is at the forefront of all she does. The fruit from PFC surpasses any ministry we've experienced in our life in missions.

The training and jobs provided to over 30 young Kenyan staff, complete with health care and disability benefits, is a tremendous contribution through the efforts of PFC.

We greet those staff we know from our previous trips with joy! The staff that continued since we were in Kenya 10 years ago have grown and are doing very well. Some who have been working for PFC for years have advanced and trained in new responsibilities. For us, there are now faces behind the names we see on the website and newsletters. Mary Wang'ang'a, who leads the amazing mobility cart program, is bright, efficient, and has excellent social skills. Kano Daro in Marsabit is bright and compassionate as he follows in Pastor Hirbo's footsteps. Peter Cheya in Kilifi is Jesus in human flesh. He makes everyone he smiles at feel loved. Amazing how God has blessed PFC with these servants!

We also witnessed first-hand the emphasis on sustainability with funds being raised by the INUA merchandise, the Airbnb, sewing and computer schools, tent event space rental, and music studio development.

We, as westerners on a vision trip, find the precepts PFC lives by foreign and difficult to wrap our heads around, as we try to 'walk them out' on the streets of Kenya. We, as privileged westerners, are comfortable, confident, and have the heart to serve and see change for those who are living in such difficult circumstances. There is a collision of ideologies. Regardless of preparation prior to participating in a 'PFC Vision Trip', concepts such as: 'Let the Kenyans take the lead in all things,' 'don't take photos so they don't feel like a spectacle,' 'don't tempt them to want to make requests of westerners' and the other precepts for 'doing no harm' are difficult to fully understand. It's a fragile ecosystem. When 'harm' happens, it takes time and effort to heal the damage done. It is this training 'on the ground' during a vision trip that can solidify these concepts in our hearts and minds.

In closing, in addition to "Sharing the Story of PFC," we have committed to work with Connie to 'fine-tune' the vision trip experience for participants. This month a handbook has been written to prepare participants. A small group study of When Helping Hurts will be utilized either prior to trips or as a tool for morning devotions and debriefings.



Changing Lives

Spring 2023

Linda Grosskopf

Going to Kenya with PFC changed my 'lenses' and my life. I have not been able to look at life the same since, nor can I forget the people I met, experiences I had, or unsee what I saw. I am compelled to tell the stories and do what I can to help.

I remember kneeling in the sand alongside Pastor Hirbo, bathing a 7-year-old orphan boy in a desert tribe in Marsabit. He wore a tiny, tattered t-shirt – his only earthly possession. With his wounded little feet in my hands, all three of us silently cried. My heart was overwhelmed. No one at home would ever believe what was before me. Pastor Hirbo later wept as he prayed over the conditions of his people in this particular tribe. And yet, somehow, right there, I saw God. I saw great need...but more importantly, an opportunity to help and a hope and determination to overcome it. I sat and prayed with a tribal grandmother, blind from the reflection of the sun off the sand. We didn't speak the same language, but as she took my hand in hers and gently patted it as if to comfort me, words became irrelevant. There too, was God. Love doesn't always need words. I visited a widow battling an incurable disease in her tiny tin home. This simple visit and a gift of maize were everything to her – not only physically, but because she knew she wasn't alone. Someone came, and someone cared. I watched a girl offer one of her shoes to a friend who had none. Each skipped away joyfully, wearing a single shoe. A small girl sat with her friends, carefully dividing her one piece of candy into four tiny pieces...so they each had some.

I came home from that trip so humbled. What if I learned to share like that? Would I give one of my only shoes away? Could I find joy in the middle of a slum because of a brief

visit and a bag of maize? Could I serve like the Kenyan staff do, so filled with passion, faith, and hope for their fellow man?

For the 12 years I have known PFC, I have seen them transform not only bodies but hearts as well. Through untold physical acts of mercy, empowering programs that give lasting change, and opening hearts to the Gospel, they are changing their nation, one life at a time. I want to learn to live with little and give much as they do.

I have personally grown through PFC's model of equipping, not enabling, and doing no harm. I believe it's the best way because developing people and leaders in sustainable ways moves us all closer to our destiny. It's the way to transform lives, families, generations, and even nations. I WANT to partner in transformative, lasting change. I am thankful for all I have learned.

Changing the world isn't just about what we give; it's how we give. "Leave people better than you found them" is a favorite quote of mine, and it sums up the ministry of PFC perfectly. I am humbled and blessed to be a part of this great work.



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Saving Lives

Alan Wessler

I committed to providing a short trip wrap-up on our travels to Nairobi with Partners for Care. What follows is my attempt to capture the essence of what we witnessed.

With any organization, business, or charity, a key question is, "What kind of impact are we having? Are our efforts relevant to those who use our products and services? And, how do you determine that?" The need for carts from Mobility Worldwide is great here. So many people can be lifted up off the ground, opening up new opportunities and providing for better health, better education, and a better life. In some cases, they move from literally pulling themselves along the ground to a place of better self-esteem, renewed hope, and personal dignity.

Whether it's improving health for kids by providing bed nets (preventing malaria-carrying mosquitoes from infecting them while they sleep), establishing the sewing, literacy, and computer schools that give them a leg up on education, the ability to make a living to feed themselves and make a better life for their family; or making rope beds to keep their kids from sleeping on the ground; or providing water packs for safe drinking water to prevent waterborne diseases, PFC offers a host of programs that meet people at their needs.

The Kenyan people are proud and determined, but grateful for this assistance. Always stamped on my brain are the images from this trip - the smiles of the cart recipients as they receive their carts, the laughter of the children, the gratefulness for this change, whether vocalized or seen on their faces. We witnessed that the partnership between PFC and Mobility Worldwide provides real life-changing impact. It was an eye-opening experience!

Susan Wessler

We now close this day with our eyes a little more opened to everyday experiences in Kenya, the challenges they face, the hardships they bear, the tangible necessities of food and water that they are so in need of, and the hope they have because of the PFC staff dedicated to making their lives better. We have seen and have been touched by our Kenya experiences, and we will lift up these individuals each day in prayer as they continue to do God's work.



Changing Lives

Spring 2023

Craig Anderson

Connie - I am just waking up from a night in my own bed, and I miss the mosquito netting, instant coffee, trying to figure out what the sausage was made of, but most of all, the fellowship. As I was flying back, I had time to put together a slide show to share with family, Mobility Worldwide (MWW) volunteers, and the Step2 team. One of my most important thoughts as I was putting the slides together was the PFC team. Each had a set of core values based on a passion to serve that was truly amazing. They left me with great admiration for the people of Kenya, and as I put together my stories, I had so many wonderful thoughts and feelings because of my time with them.

When I arrived home, and shared stories with my wife - most of them were about the PFC team. She was so fascinated with their culture and history. My stories are about mobility carts, but even more important, is what PFC is doing with an incredible group of people. I only wish each person from Executive Director Sammy Wanjau, to Wavinya Jacinta who prepared our meals knew the impact they left on me. We were treated with the highest respect and served with love every time we interacted with them. They are truly incredible.

I am sure I speak for the MWW team that was there when I say - It was a wonderful week in Kenya. And thank you to the entire team for having patience with me and my anxiety as I waited for the MWW carts to arrive. Those two carts were special to me as my brothers and sister sent funds to build them in honor of my parents, who passed away a year ago. My mother had always wanted to see Kenya and a cart recipient. I had stickers honoring them with me - and while I was unable to be there when the carts were completed and



delivered to attach their decals - I know my mother and father were looking down from heaven and smiling on Kenya and everyone there.

So - THANK YOU for striving to make a difference in this world. I respect your passion and accomplishments. Clearly, there is much to do, and I look forward to helping MWW continue to advance as a PFC partner.



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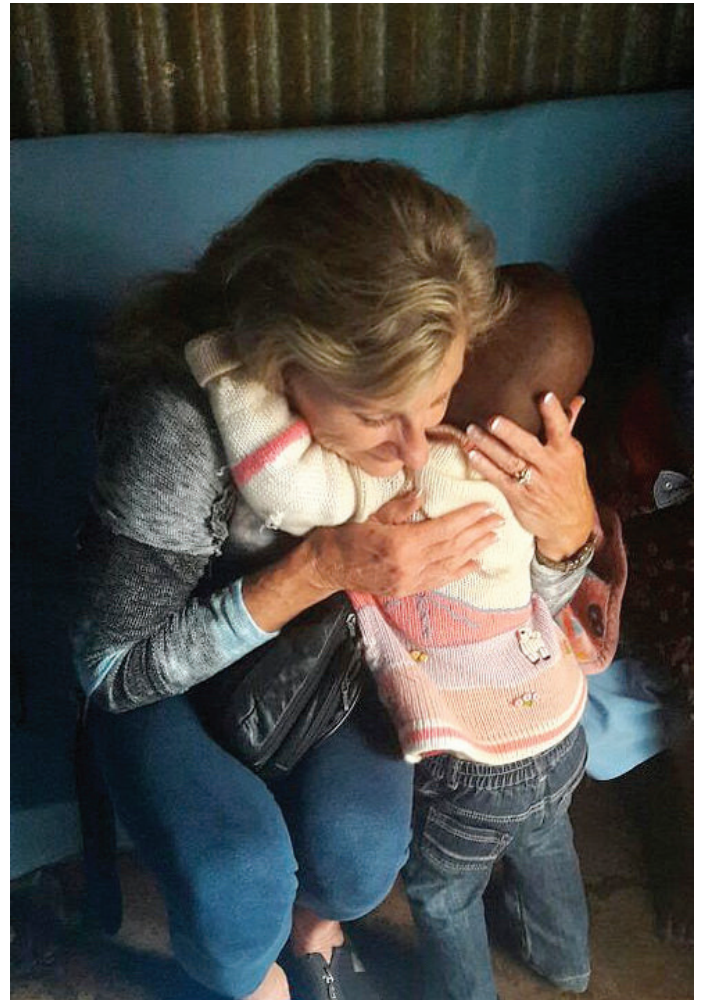
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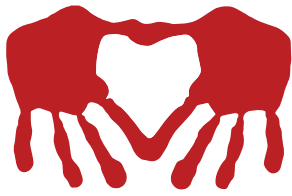
Saving Lives

Bridgette Boylan

During my time here, I have had the opportunity to interact with many Kenyan women...from the young ladies on the what if? volleyball team to the grandmothers learning to read and write at age 83. What I've come to realize is that, just like me, they have hopes and dreams for their lives. They are students who dream of an education. They are young women hoping one day to work at something which gives them purpose. They are mothers who pray for protection and for provision for their children. Like me, most women I know are often overwhelmed by all we have to do. How are we to manage work, children's schooling and activities, and the home front? Just like me, the women here work very hard to provide...but unlike me, it is a daily struggle for them. Some walk six hours a day to carry water on their backs, and some rely on prayer alone for daily bread. Just like me, the mothers want more for their children's generation. I am so inspired by these women here. I have much to learn from them. Again, I am nudged by that small voice inside, which reminds me of all the times I have said, "I have nothing in the frig/pantry to eat," or standing in my closet frustrated because "I have nothing to wear."

At the end of the day, just like me, we are both loved beyond measure by the same awesome, loving, amazing God. Praying we never forget how blessed we really are.

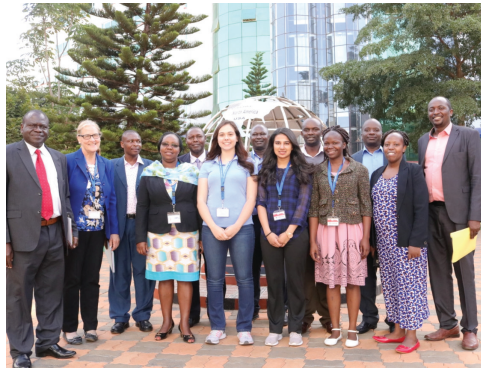




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SOME OF OUR PAST TEAMS