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## CHAIRMAN UPDATE



1 Chronicles 16:8, "Oh give thanks to the Lord; call upon his name; make known his deeds among the peoples!"

Dear brethren, I greet you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ from whom all blessings flow. I continue to be amazed of what our Triune God is doing through all of us. We are not able to do the work of this ministry on our own. I

am so grateful for you standing by us through prayers and your financial support as we serve God while doing His work through this ministry. I am overjoyed to make His deeds known to all His peoples. God worked through the medical mission team as He healed the sick during the mission trips the past few years. Please read updates from the recent medical and discipleship outreach in March 2025. His church on the school campus is also growing. We conducted pastoral conference the beginning of March 2025, where about 25 pastors attended for training provided by Pastor Mike from Texas. The training was well received by the local pastors in Liberia that attended. There were a lot of requests at the end of the conference for more training like this each year. They want training for both pastors and their wives and other leaders serving in the churches in Liberia. We pray for God to provide the means to continue providing training as they do not have opportunity like this to grow in their faith. Below are few updates from the many things God is doing that I would like for you to read.

To end my section of this newsletter, I want to thank all of you who stood by our side in many ways during my recent illness. For those of you who didn't know, I got sick with abdominal pain on March 1, 2025. I underwent surgery for small intestine obstruction. I was then diagnosed with MALT Lymphoma. A cancer that is treatable and curable, praise be to our God. We saw the oncologist who reviewed all of my records and gave me a good prognosis. He said I do not need treatment at this time since the PET scan did not show cancer anywhere else in my body. I will continue to follow up with him every 3 months,

with CT scan and laboratory blood work. I am so grateful to God for His healing mercy. Secondly, I am grateful for Dr. Statz. He was not just my surgeon but a father to me. He was totally a God send. He was able to do a clean-cut during surgery without any other finding to be seen on the PET scan. Lastly, I want to praise God for the medical service we have here in the US, and that I did not go on the medical mission trip and get sick in Liberia or on the flight going or coming.

To God be the glory.

Martin

## YASSA'S JOURNEY CONTINUES

**BY: FRANK MCGIVERN**

The beautiful story of "Yassa" continues to unfold. As we traveled in March for the 3rd Bridges of Hope medical missions trip, it was our hope to see Yassa again, in person. In the prayer room a young child named Lil' Harry was brought in



for prayer. He's the son of a Bridges teacher at Hope, Harry Sr. As Pastor Beau sang gently to him in his arms, we began to tell Harry's parents about the marvelous miracle God has been performing in Yassa. Believing by the same power and grace of our Lord, Harry too would be healed. No sooner had we finished praying, I looked to the left of the prayer room entrance and there stood the most beautiful

sight I could ever imagine, Yassa had come to see us. How she's grown! It's in these special moments of time God reveals what's possible by his word in Mark 9:23. Yes, all things are possible to those who believe.

The timing was completely God, and we no doubt trust that in his Glory, the Lord is once again at work in both Yassa and Lil' Harry. In the photos are Napoleon and Bindu Blackie; the brother and



sister who rescued Yassa; Jessica Hart, the Dr who saw Yassa last year and recognized only God could do what was needed; Frank McGivern, discipleship team member who prayed for Yassa; and of course, Yassa! In the second photo are four children of the Blackie family, Yassa's brothers with her. Continue to pray for Lil Harry and Yassa, as Gods unending glory continues to shine at Bridges Hope campus.

## 2025 BRIDGES OF HOPE MEDICAL MISSION – SURGICAL SITE AT PHEBE HOSPITAL

**BY: LISA KREBS**

Our surgical site included 8 members completing 22 surgeries in 6.5 surgical days at Phebe Liberia Hospital. The team removed 17 thyroid goiters, repaired 4 large groin hernias and 1 large shoulder lipoma. With the donated supplies, the help from our surgical team, and our pre-op/PACU staff, the local surgeons from Phebe Liberia were able to complete an additional 122 surgeries, which included hernia repairs, hysterectomies/large uterine fibroid removals and lipoma removals. Our Bridges of Hope surgical team collaborated with the Phebe hospital staff throughout our patients' entire length of stay and provided post operative and continuing lifestyle education. Our 2 Monument Health CRNAs also had the opportunity to teach at the Phebe School of Nurse Anesthesia and provide hands-on learning experience in the operating room with a Monument Health donated video laryngoscope and other educational materials.

While in the country, our team visited the markets in Gbarnga and saw one of the patients who had her thyroid goiter removed earlier in the week. The patient was so grateful to the team and said, "you gave me my face back." This was truly humbling to the team members that they were able to provide such a life-changing procedure.

The surgical team was immersed in Liberian culture through the local church, art, cuisine, and music. Their hearts are forever changed by the hospitality received and friendships made along the way. Thank you to our Bridges of Hope board members, prayer teams, and families at home who supported their work and made these life changing procedures possible.



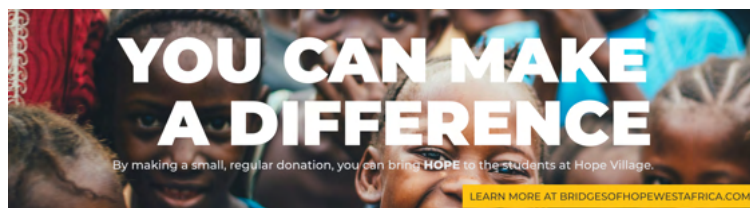
*Photo taken by Lisa Krebs. A moment in time capturing our collaborative efforts with the Phebe hospital CRNAs. Pictured is Brother Arkoi, CRNA intubating with the donated video laryngoscope. Education provided by Kaycie Stewart, CRNA on the right. And assistance by Tylinn Wright, OR RN on the left.*



*Photo taken by Lisa Krebs. View from the head of the bed during thyroidectomy surgery. Pictured left to right: Ruth Smith – RNFA, Jerimiah – Phebe hospital scrub tech, Kaycie Stewart – CRNA, and Dr. Michael Statz – General Surgeon.*



*Loading up the van for a trip to Gbonga. Pictured left to right: Dr. Michael Statz – General Surgeon, Sister Marie Padmore, Doris Fritts – RN, Tylinn Wright – RN, Ashton Tveter – NA, Lisa Krebs – CRNA, Tasheba Gagnalske – RN, Ruth Smith – RNFA, and kneeling - Kaycie Stewart – CRNA.*



## TESTIMONIALS FROM PATIENTS WHO RECEIVED SURGERY

Mr. Fred Larkey (pictured on the right on the next page) was diagnosed with an inguinal hernia four years ago and endured much pain because of his condition, which needed surgery that he could not afford. He expressed his gratitude saying, "I'm very glad to go through this surgery successfully. I also





extend my thanks and appreciation to Bridges of Hope Surgical Team for providing surgical services that I'm a beneficiary of."

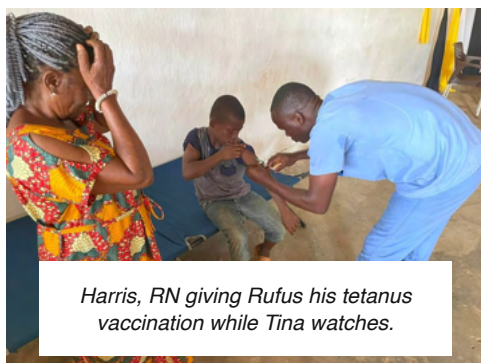
Mr. Yearketo Kollie (pictured on the left) visited Bensonville hospital, and the doctor told him that he had a hernia, and he needed surgery. He was told that the operation would cost \$25,000 Liberian Dollars, which is equivalent to about \$125 US Dollars. This condition lasted for ten years because he didn't have the money to pay for surgery. He expressed his gratitude saying, "I'm very grateful to the Bridges of Hope Surgical Team for the service they continue to provide for Liberians. I also want to tell God thanks for being by my side to go through this surgery successfully. I pray that this team will continue to come to Liberia to provide the services for the needy. It was God through this team that brought me to this point. I never knew that I was going to have surgery because I never had the sum of \$25,000LD to pay for surgery."

## 2025 BRIDGES OF HOPE MEDICAL MISSION - CLINIC SITE AT HOPE INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN ACADEMY SCHOOL

BY: JESSICA HART

Our Rapid City clinic team members joined with our Liberian medical partners to fulfill a successful medical mission in 2025. With Martin falling ill just days before our scheduled departure, our team quickly rallied to do whatever was necessary. We applied a successful triage strategy and cared for 909 patients in just seven days of clinic. We saw patients ranging in age from two weeks to 87 years. The sickest patients were seen within the first three days of the clinic treating many for typhoid and malaria, various infections, and uncontrolled hypertension. We saw many dehydrated and malnourished children and are so thankful for the donation of 60 cans of powdered A2 infant formula directly from the A2 Milk Company.

On Day 2, a 10-year-old boy presented with a nail puncture wound to the foot with no tetanus vaccination history. A local pharmacy had the vaccine which we administered along with



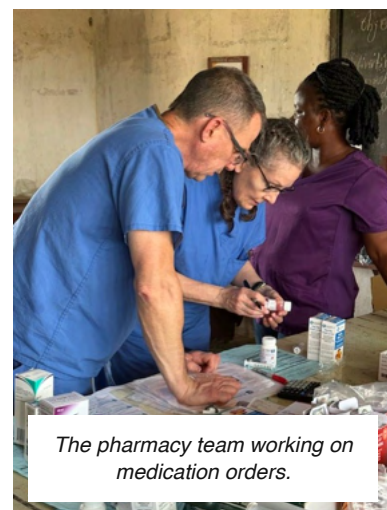
*Harris, RN giving Rufus his tetanus vaccination while Tina watches.*



*Pastor Beau prays with a young mother and her children.*

antibiotics and prayer. By the following week, he was happy to show us his healed foot. Two extremely ill patients with acute malarial symptoms presented to the clinic on Day 3. One of our Liberian nurses had a rapid-diagnostic test for malaria in his first aid kit. Both patients tested triple positive. Our entire team rallied together to care for these patients: get their symptoms under control with medication, keep them

hydrated, and get their first dose of anti-malarial medication in their systems. We laid hands and prayed for both. After about 2 hours of care and prayer, they were both able to get up and walk home! Without treatment, they were most certainly at risk of death. We thank God for the quick-thinking and dedicated team members, the medications we had to treat their symptoms and malaria, and Jehovah Rapha, our healer.



*The pharmacy team working on medication orders.*



*Pictured Left to Right, back row: Pastor Mike Cheeson, Frank McGivern-Discipleship, Lynn Williams-Discipleship, Bar-Lee Klein-RN, Christine Digler-RN, Brad Haupt-Pharmacy, Beau Bendigo-Discipleship. Front row: Hawa Cheeson-Pharmacy/school nurse, Paula Stotz-Pharmacist, Avery Hart-Triage, Emily Williams-Triage, Roxie Gittings-Pharmacy Technician, Jessica Hart-CNP/lead. Not pictured: Harris-RN, Chris-RN*



## BRIDGES OF HOPE, INC IS CELEBRATING OUR 20TH ANNIVERSARY! TWENTY YEARS OF SERVING THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF CHILDREN IN LIBERIA!

A timeline of some of the many milestones.

**Summer of 2005** - Rev. Padmore shared a dream to establish a school and orphanage in rural Liberia.

**August 2005** - Purchased fifty acres in Liberia.

**September of 2005** - Incorporated as a non-profit corporation in South Dakota.

**October 2005** - Purchased the domain name bridgesofhopewestafrica.com.

**January of 2006** - Engineering Ministries International surveyed the property and sketched the plan for a 12-room school surrounded by small homes to accommodate teachers and children.

**January 2006** - Ground was broken for the first six classrooms.

**June 2006** - Received our charitable status from the IRS.

**Summer 2006** - Life Water Canada drills first well.

**September 2006** - 120 children are attending school.

**February 2007** - The school is dedicated.

**Fall 2007** - 240 children are in school.

**2007 – 2008** - Eight homes are constructed with donations from individuals and churches to house teachers and orphans. They are arranged in "pods" of four duplex homes with a cook "shack" in the center of each group of homes. Seventeen orphans are being cared for in the village. A Toyota Hilux pickup truck was purchased to serve the needs of the school. UN Construction: Hope Village leadership entered into an agreement with UN High Commissioner for Refugees, who were resettling some Sierra Leone refugees in Liberia, asked us to take refugee children. We agreed to take thirty students from them. UNHCR helped with two wells, two community pit latrines, a three-classroom structure and seating for the classrooms they will construct.

**2009** - Lend a Hand is established to meet the needs of Hope Village students and orphans with the Adopt a Teacher & Classroom project. 11 pallets of books gathered from area schools by Lee and Robbie Ahrlin were shipped by container to Hope Village.

**October 2012** - A child sponsorship program was established, \$120 to support a child.

**2017** - A deep well was drilled by Life Water Canada that provided abundant clean water no matter the time of year, rainy or dry season.

**2018** - An 8-kilowatt generator was donated and shipped to Hope Village by GenPro Energy Solutions. Nine donors contributed to a replacement truck for the 10-year-old Toyota Hilux delivered to Hope International Christian Academy (HICA). The roof of the school was replaced. Students from SDSM&T made their first visit to Hope Village. In subsequent visits each year they worked to build a structure to house the generator, install a submersible pump in the well, replace a tank on the water tower, run water lines to the school, bury electrical lines, and construct a sanitary toilet.

**2017 – 2018** - Martin & Stephanie Digler join the board of Bridges, assume leadership & cast a vision for future endeavors for the organization. In addition to a Christ-Centered education, they established a vision to bring quality health care to Liberia and established a Bible teaching church on campus. Arlen & Gwen Pequette became "coordinators", undertaking a new student sponsorship program.

**November 2018** - Teachers Stephanie Digler & Kari Smith work with teachers to provide encouragement & professional development to the staff, meet with teachers to best help our Education Committee partner to promote a Christ-centered education.

**Spring 2019** - HOPE SCHOOL RANKED #1 IN DISTRICT

**2020** - All of the homes in the village were renovated, repairing structures, replacing roofs with a steeper, more durable roof and fresh paint.

**2021** - New student sanitary latrines open. Fall Medical Mission Team provides surgical services at Phebe Hospital and walk-in clinic at Hope Village School.

**2022** - Sanitary toilets were installed in the village homes.

**2023** - A new database for students and sponsors was developed to better track student progress and sponsor coordination.

**January of 2024** - Medical Mission Team provides surgical services at Phebe Hospital and walk-in clinic at Hope Village School.

**March 2025** - Medical Mission Team provides surgical services at Phebe Hospital and walk-in clinic at Hope Village School

### Key Figures in establishing Bridges of Hope, Inc.

**In Liberia:** Reverend Victor Padmore, Marie Padmore (Martin Digler's sister) established our partner, Hope International Ministries in Liberia.

**In Rapid City:** Joel & Elli Schwiesow, Mike & Connie Diedrich, Dave Patterson, Randy Taylor, Pam Glyn, Russ & Dalaina Salamun, Arlen Pequette

**WE ARE SO GRATEFUL FOR GOD'S PROVISION, GUIDANCE AND GRACE OVER THE YEARS & WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING WHAT GOD DOES IN THE YEARS TO COME!**