

»»» NEWSLETTER «««

MMTHC NEWS

Mt. Meru Tumaini Health Clinic &
Ndoombo Community Foundation



TOP NEWS OF THE QUARTER

THE POWER OF VISION

By Dr. Jill Hilty

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VISION HEALTH INTERNATIONAL IN TANZANIA

By Catherine O'Rourke

THE POWER OF VISION

A TRIP WITH VISION HEALTH INTERNATIONAL

By Jill Hilty, MD

>>> KARIBUNI

We are excited to share the incredible journey we recently embarked on to Ndoombo, Tanzania, where we witnessed firsthand the transformative impact of improving access to vision care for the 15,000 villagers residing near this vibrant community. In partnership with Vision Health International, local organizations, and dedicated volunteers, we set out to bring the gift of clear vision to those in need. Join us as we delve into the heartwarming experiences, challenges faced, and the profound change that unfolded during our time in Ndoombo.

THE POWER OF VISION

Vision is an essential aspect of our lives, enabling us to experience the world around us and participate fully in daily activities. Unfortunately, many individuals in underserved communities lack access to basic vision care, leading to reduced educational and employment opportunities, diminished quality of life, and limited social integration. Recognizing this pressing need, our team was determined to make a lasting impact in Ndoombo.

>>> ARRIVING IN NDOOMBO

As we stepped foot in Ndoombo, we were warmly greeted by the villagers, their smiles reflecting hope and anticipation. Vision Health International took the lead in bringing Ophthalmologic specialists to set up a week-long vision care clinic. Exaudh Mbise recruited eleven villagers to provide translation services and the local medical staff at the Ndoombo Dispensary worked to improve patient flow and assist with dispensing proper ophthalmic medications. The dispensary was equipped with portable optometry equipment, enabling us to conduct comprehensive eye examinations, diagnose treatable causes of impaired vision, identify patients in need of corrective surgery and provide prescription glasses to those in need.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

Our success in improving access to vision care was deeply rooted in community engagement. We worked closely with community leaders, organizing awareness campaigns and conducting informative sessions on the importance of regular eye check-ups and proper eye care. By empowering villagers with knowledge, our aim was to foster a sustainable culture of proactive eye health management.

IMPACT AND STORIES OF TRANSFORMATION:

During our time in Ndoombo, we witnessed numerous stories of transformation that underscored the significance of our mission. Elderly individuals who had long struggled with clouded vision were able to be triaged for cataract surgery. Children who had been unable to fully engage in their studies due to poor eyesight will now confidently explore their educational pursuits. These individual victories translated into a collective transformation for the entire community, igniting a renewed sense of hope and possibility.

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES:

Like any endeavor, our journey was not without its challenges. Limited resources and infrastructure posed logistical hurdles. However, through innovation and resourcefulness, we adapted and found alternative solutions. Our unwavering commitment, combined with the resilience of the Ndoombo community, allowed us to overcome obstacles and forge ahead on our mission.

LOOKING AHEAD:

Our trip to Ndoombo was just the beginning of a long-term commitment to improving access to vision care in this community. We believe that everyone deserves the chance to see the world clearly and unlock their full potential. We plan to build upon our experiences and work in collaboration with local organizations to establish sustainable vision care programs in the region, ensuring a lasting impact for generations to come.

CONCLUSION:

Our time in Ndoombo, Tanzania, was an unforgettable journey that reinforced the transformative power of vision care. By working hand in hand with the community, we were able to make a tangible difference in the lives of 15,000 villagers. The smiles, gratitude, and newfound possibilities we encountered along the way serve as a testament to the importance of our collective efforts. We invite you to join us in this endeavor as we strive to bring ongoing vision care to the region.



ON THE GROUND WITH VHI IN TANZANIA

Written in her blog and printed with permission by Catherine O'Rourke - Optician.

>>> THE TRIP IS FINALLY HERE

As you all may know, we are here in Tanzania for an eye screening project with Vision Health International (VHI). This trip had been originally planned for June 2020, we all know why that ended. But now, it is 2023, and we were FINALLY able to come out to the beautiful country and do what we came here to do, help the people of Tanzania.

Our group of 12 ophthalmologists, nurses and techs were all finally here in Tanzania and came together for the first time Sunday morning. Once we were all settled into our beautiful hotel in Arusha, our team came together for our first team meeting and set out to set up our clinic. We are partnering with the Ndoombo Community Dispensary to use their space and to help in establish proactive eye health in the village the dispensary serves. We all were quick to set up each room to fit our flow of the clinic. With check-in, refractions, three rooms for each doctor, and an optical/check-out. It seems as if this team has been on a trip or two before and knows how to make a clinic quickly their own. I am in charge of optical which I always love to help with. Giving out glasses can be instant gratification. Just a simple pair of readers for sunglasses can change a person's daily life. We will always be ordering glasses from the company Essilor, a great glasses company partnered with VHI, for patients for specific prescriptions. These glasses will most likely arrive back at the clinic 5-6 weeks from now for patients to pick up.

Once the clinic was set up, we went out for an authentic Tanzanian dinner which was delicious. Grilled meat, sautéed spinach, fresh veggies, plantains, and a maize dough-like ball in which we got to use our hands to roll up and pick up the meat or veggies with. Delicious! When we got back to the hotel, our team went right to sleep. We were all pretty exhausted.

>>> THE CLINIC DAYS

We had our first day of clinic. We saw 125 patients with 23 of them being signed up for cataract surgery. Readers and sunglasses are big giveaways to each patient. Only about 8 pairs of glasses have been ordered as of now. The doctors have been noticing a lot of one-off diagnoses from each patient and are things they have never seen before in the patient's eyes. We are set off to do our second day of clinic today, and we expect the flow of the clinic to be a lot smoother. Let's hope we get just as many patients. It is raining today, so hopefully that does not stop the patients from showing up.



➤➤➤ FINAL DAY REFLECTION

Wanted to give yet another update here in Tanzania. Today we finished up the last day of clinic and I feel like we accomplished much more than just giving vision and care to these patients. Thursday we saw 180 patients, then on Friday we saw over 200 patients, then today on our last day, for only having a half clinic, and still saw 119 patients. In total for all five and a half days of clinic, we saw 852 patients. Our goal was to see 600. Over 100 patients were referred to surgery or seen further about a glaucoma diagnosis. 500 pairs of sunglasses were given out as we ran out of sunglasses to give. A lot of prescription glasses were ordered and hundreds of readers were given. I am not sure of the exact numbers just yet for the glasses, but I can tell you so many people were walking out happy. Every day we were in the clinic, more and more patients were showing up. We were told that the word got out around town about the great work we were doing.

All of this work would be nothing without the Ndoombo Community Dispensary, the staff, and the volunteer translators. There is only so much we can do without the help of the rest of the team. We are so grateful for the work that we were able to do, but even more grateful for the work that everyone put into this week as well. As it has been many years since I have been on a VHI trip, this feeling of accomplishment and satisfaction from patients is addicting and must be the reason we keep doing the trips. The exhaustion and chaos during the clinic is well worth this feeling at the end and I can not wait until I get to do it all over again.



➤➤➤ FINAL GOODBYES AND A SURPRISE

As we were leaving the clinic for the last time this afternoon, many of the staff and volunteers had said to me, “this is not a goodbye, but a see you later, as you will be back in Tanzania soon”. I would LOVE to come back to this beautiful country. The views of this country is just as beautiful of the personalities of this country as the “personalities of the people here are just as colorful as their clothing” (Nikki, Trip Co-Director). My favorite part of this trip by far is the gift that I received in the middle of the clinic today. One of the translator’s mothers, sister-in-law to our host Exaudh, handmade a dress for me with African fabric and it is STUNNING. Fits me like a glove and I could not be more happy the way it turned out. What a treat to bring back home.



A STARRY NIGHT REFLECTION

By Aliliywa Mbise

>>> EXPANDING OUR COMFORT ZONE

It all started with the questions, "How can we grow our network? How can we get people involved? How can we make it fun?" Our goal for this small gala event was to initiate a larger presence within the Greater Milwaukee area and raise funds for future medical and health projects for the Ndoombo Community Dispensary. Our theme was chosen to give our attendees a wave of nostalgia, an excuse to get out of that old prom dress and dance the night away with their new 100 friends. Along with MMTHC expanding its reach, these events create a wonderful opportunity for attendees to meet like-minded people and hear stories of memorable, life-changing service trips to the clinic itself.

As you walked in on Friday, August 11th, the industrial complex of the Bucyrus Club met you with some wonderful updates. With Afrobeats playing softly overhead you head straight through to stop at the bar while admiring the attire of the other patrons. Continuing through you were met by warm smiles of the Mbise family. Candles flickering on the tables in the distance, with the boutique on your left and silent auction on your right. A table depicting the clinic's history sat on the wall directly in front of you. As the wafting of chipsi myiyi and all of the incredible appetizers peaked through the grand ballroom you were transported back to your memories of a school dance. DJ Pete carried us through the night with some Afro beats, throwbacks, and pop hits of today. Just a little taste of the fun that was had.

Overall the event was a great success. For a first-time small gala event, having 89 guests is terrific and we enjoyed the company of each and every one of you. We were able to raise \$5,199.90 with your generous donations and from the boutique. Thank you again to the Bucyrus Club for your generosity and talents.

None of this would have been possible without the support and time of the Mt. Meru Tumaini Health Clinic Board and the Bucyrus Club of South Milwaukee for being the event venue. A big thanks to all of those who volunteered, worked, and attended to make our event a success!

Even without the event being over for the night, the buzz for another had already begun. You are cordially invited to our Masquerade Gala on October 4th, 2024. Save the date! A sit-down dinner will commence with a presentation about the Ndoombo Community Dispensary along with the boutique and silent auction. Watch our website and Facebook page for upcoming details. We can't wait to see you then! **Karibuni** (Welcome everyone).



A STARRY NIGHT DANCE





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WAYS TO DONATE



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On our website www.mmthc.org

By mail at our mailing address

Money isn't the only donation we accept.

If you're interested in volunteering for events contact us on social media or our website.

If interested in service trip opportunities, fill out our application online.

Trips occur annually with an **estimated** cost of \$3,000 including airfare.

PARTNERSHIPS:



Vision Health
International



Foundation for African Medicine & Education

FINANCIAL REPORT FOR 2022-2023 FISCAL YEAR

Beginning Balance as of July 1, 2022	\$117,371.74
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Revenues:

Designated Contributions	\$15,429.00
Non-Designated Contributions from fundraising	\$6,631.59
Non-Designated Contributions (including bequest)	<u>\$23,650.20</u>

Total Revenues	\$163,082.53
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Dispensary Expenses:

Dispensary Employee Salaries	\$30,905.00
Electric Utility Expenses	\$655.00
Pharmacy Expenses	\$3,000.00
Technology Expenses	\$263.75
Tanzania Government Fees	\$7,080.00

Service Project Expenses

Dispensary Medical Equipment	\$8,554.02
Maintenance & Renovations	\$2,888.00

Administrative Expenses

Organizational Fees	\$545.11
Wire Transfer Fees	\$365.00
Professional Fees	\$1,100.00
Printing & Postage	\$511.49
Fundraising Expenses	\$1,173.00
Office and Digital Expenses	\$381.89
Travel Expenses	\$6,417.78

Total Expenses for the Year:	<u>\$63,840.04</u>
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Income less Expenses:	<u>\$99,242.49</u>
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Ending Balance: June 30, 2023	<u>\$99,242.49</u>
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