



# projectc.u.r.e. communiqué

Delivering Health and Hope to the World

**I**t was a trip to Tanzania that changed Patty Kelly's life. For the last several years Patty has been a nurse educator primarily in East Africa and a volunteer for Project C.U.R.E. as a Clinics Team Leader and participant and Needs Assessor. In Tanzania, Patty witnessed babies dying due to birth asphyxia, the inability of the baby to take its first breath immediately after birth. The images and loss of these tiny lives haunted Patty.

Then, a little over three years ago, Patty learned about a program developed by the American Academy of Pediatrics called Helping Babies Breathe (HBB). HBB was created specifically for babies who are born in limited-resource countries and who need help with their first breaths. Patty sensed this could be the solution to the tragedies she witnessed in Tanzania, so she wasted no time finding the training on the HBB program. The training would be worth it—Patty knew lives would be saved.

Patty's was right—the HBB course would save babies. Patty completed the training and became an HBB Master Trainer. She now knew that her mission was to help save the babies around the world by providing critical training based on the HBB curriculum. Mothers and fathers would no longer have to grieve a needless death simply due to lack of education or lack of a simple suction device.

The world tour began. As a volunteer with Project C.U.R.E., she has taught the HBB program in Tanzania, Rwanda, Uganda, Ghana, Kenya, Ecuador, Mexico, and Papua New Guinea, and she is just getting started. "Every time I resuscitate a baby, every student I teach to resuscitate a baby, every student's face I see who has the 'aha' moment are the moments I treasure," she says.

Patty continues to mentor sites where she has hosted trainings. In Puebla, Mexico, for example, her HBB students have held seven of their own trainings for

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saving  
**BABIES**  
**ONE**  
**BREATH**  
at a time

## A World of Extreme Contrasts in Honduras: Observations from Project C.U.R.E. Board Member Bruce Schroffel



Many recognize Bruce Schroffel as a healthcare guru. He is the former President and Chief Executive Officer of the University Of Colorado Hospital Authority, and served as the Chief Executive Officer of University of Colorado Health until January 31, 2014. Previously, he held various positions with healthcare facilities in California and New York. However, since joining the Project C.U.R.E. Board, Bruce Schroffel has found a way to, “do good things in the world and give back.”

Bruce recently returned from a Needs Assessment of health facilities in Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula, Honduras. While these are ranked as some of the best in Honduras, they are still very needy in terms of basic supplies and equipment. Bruce recounted the lack of simple items such as soap. The result... infection problems. He shared how only emergency surgery had been performed over the past six months because of the lack of basic consumable medical supplies. Without things such as gloves and suture, no other surgeries could be performed. He conveyed his surprise as he witnessed newborns sharing warmers and beds due to a lack of equipment. And while babies snuggled together are a cute sight, Bruce observed that it is a very dangerous practice to the health of the baby. “It won’t take much to make a huge difference,” he acknowledged.

While there, Bruce documented what he termed as the, “significant divide and astute and profound need” between the rich and the poor in Honduras. Heartbroken, he watched as the underprivileged children waited for the trash trucks to arrive at the landfill. Once they dumped their loads, the children began rifling through the garbage for food to eat and metals to sell.

Bruce also recognized a similar divide within the healthcare system. “In general, the staff and doctors are passionate about their work and are very talented, yet they only have about one-eighth of the resources we have here for care, which breaks down to about \$0.12/dollar/patient.” At that level, it’s nearly impossible to deliver the healthcare that the community needs. For example, Bruce assessed a psychiatric hospital that functions as

an in-patient facility. However due to the lack of funding for staff and given that there were no beds, the hospital could only be utilized for out-patient care. As a result, thousands of mentally ill patients are left to roam the streets of Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula.

Reflecting on his visit, Bruce commented, “This was a trip of extreme contrasts. It really will take just a little bit to change a huge amount of lives.” He went on, “I’ve traveled a lot in my life and seen great need. I was taken aback at how little they had. This trip was a perfect way to get my own needs satisfied. **We don’t realize how extraordinarily blessed we are.**”

To help blur the lines of extreme contrast and close these healthcare gaps, please volunteer, donate supplies or give money at [www.projectcure.org](http://www.projectcure.org).



## Kits for Kids is Making a Difference a World Away

While in Tanzania, the Project C.U.R.E. team distributed more than 30 Kits for Kids to the third grade class at the Stella Maris Education Center. All of the children are learning in English—a key skill to have to compete for scarce secondary school openings. The children are truly accomplishing incredible things daily, especially since many of them have been orphaned from AIDS, malaria, or other illnesses.

The Project C.U.R.E. team also had the chance to distribute 30 additional Kits for Kids to recuperating children at The Plaster House in Arusha, Tanzania. Named after the plaster casts that the children wear, this rehabilitation center is a home for children from around Tanzania to recover after they have had corrective orthopedic surgery, plastic surgery or neurosurgery for a disability. Currently, The Plaster House has 18 beds, 3 housemothers and the potential for catering up to 50 pre- and post-operative patients. The Plaster House's outreach program visits over 30 villages and communities with the goal of educating people about disabilities in children, identifying children who can benefit from corrective surgery, and arranging for these children to receive the operations they need to live a long and fulfilling life. Without The Plaster House, children would be forced



Third grade students with their Kits for Kids bags (left). Mothers and babies at the Plaster House in Tanzania (right).

to recover in their homes and often times would develop rashes, infections, and other life-threatening complications that would require additional medical care.

Kits for Kids is a great service-learning activity for a church youth group, or employee engagement activity. In fact, in 2013/2014, Project C.U.R.E. delivered 4,725 Kits to 26 countries. However, requests for the Kits exceeds 70,000 Kits.

Fill Kits for Kids today at [www.projectcure.org/programs/kidskits](http://www.projectcure.org/programs/kidskits).

### saving BABIES – continued from page 1

the surrounding communities. And, Patty's efforts continue once she has left a country with the "Train the Trainer" model. Those who have been trained, train others so that those who attend a birth will be skilled in newborn resuscitation.

In fact, only three days after a training for midwives in Uganda, Patty's team went on a mentoring visit to one of the clinics. Annette, a trainee met them at the door and told them that she saved a baby just the night before! Prior to the HBB training, Annette said that she would have set the baby aside thinking it was a stillbirth. She would have then consoled the mother and then gone on with her day. However, having just gained this life-saving new knowledge, she bravely applied her new skills and saved the baby boy's life. Right there at the clinic, Patty and the team had the privilege to see this baby boy enthusiastically nursing.

Some would call Patty an angel sent by Project C.U.R.E. because of her many stories of hope. She, however, sees her work as a labor of love and dedication. On a previous trip to Uganda, Patty trained the staff at a new, small maternity hospital near Kampala. A baby girl delivered by C-section was not breathing. In the past, the baby almost certainly would have died. However, Patty resuscitated



HBB training in Tanzania (left). Happy and healthy because of HBB in Uganda (right).

little baby Bernice, and although a close watch was kept on Bernice for 48 hours, she recovered beautifully. Four months later, Patty was back visiting and Bernice's mother brought the baby to show Patty her healthy and thriving four-month-old daughter.

At 71, Patty gets asked how she does the extensive travel and hard work. Patty's response is simply, "I can't not do it." Her work is literally saving babies around the world one breath at a time.



International Headquarters  
10377 E. Geddes Ave. Ste. 200  
Centennial, CO 80112

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Jan Mazotti  
Director of Communications,  
Marketing & PR

Linda Wood  
LW design & art, LLC

Project C.U.R.E.  
International Headquarters  
10377 E. Geddes Avenue  
Centennial, CO 80112

phone  
303.792.0729

fax  
303.792.0744

[www.projectcure.org](http://www.projectcure.org)

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