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# communiqué

Delivering Health and Hope to the World

Volume 19, Issue 1

## *Dreaming of a Healthy Zambia*

### **FIRST LADY ESTHER LUNGU, PROJECT C.U.R.E. & COCA-COLA DELIVER \$1.1 MILLION IN MEDICAL SUPPLIES & EQUIPMENT TO STRENGTHEN THE HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE FOR THE COUNTRY**

#### **MADAME ESTHER LUNGU DREAMS OF A HEALTHY, ECONOMICALLY AND SOCIALLY EMPOWERED COUNTRY, WHERE ALL PEOPLE ARE HEALTHY AND CARED FOR.**

And as the First Lady of the Republic of Zambia, she is in a position to make that dream come true. As a vocal advocate for maternal and child health, the empowerment of women and girls and for people with disabilities, Mrs. Lungu is committed to helping her citizens access healthcare.

Healthcare in Zambia is often inadequate due to a lack of government funds and insufficient aid from nonprofit organizations. Too often, these factors result in a lack of medical supplies and equipment and a shortage of medical personnel. With a doctor to patient ratio of one doctor for every 12,000 people, there is a shortage of more than 3,000 doctors throughout the country. What's more, the country lacks the supplies and equipment to adequately treat patients in hospitals that are already overwhelmed. Medical clinics in rural areas have the additional burden of limited treatment options, empty shelves and very few pieces of working biomedical equipment.

In response to these critical needs, Her Excellency collaborated with Project C.U.R.E. as the featured guest of honor at our most recent First Ladies Luncheon. In a speech to more than 1,500 attendees, she expressed the urgent need to strengthen medical facilities and improve neonatal and child healthcare throughout Zambia. Following her remarks, the audience was invited to respond with financial donations, all of which were used to deliver 40-foot containers of medical supplies and equipment to Zambia.

The First Ladies Luncheon was generously sponsored by Coca-Cola South Africa (Pty) Ltd., Zorai Procurement Services Ltd., Multiface International, and others. These companies have joined Mrs. Lungu and Project C.U.R.E. in their commitment to strengthening the health infrastructure in Zambia. "By collaborating with Her Excellency and Project C.U.R.E., together we can optimize the best local projects that make a positive impact on women, children, and families in Zambia," said Jenifer Jessup, Director of Public Relations & Government Affairs at Swire Coca-Cola, USA.

**Project C.U.R.E.'s First Ladies Luncheon funded the delivery of four 40-foot containers** filled with equipment and supplies including anesthesia units,

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operating room lights and tables, patient ventilators, electric and ICU beds, ultrasound units, and other diagnostic equipment, all valued at more than \$1.1 million. The donations went to Kabwe General Hospital, Monze Hospital and numerous clinics throughout Zambia that were identified by the First Lady.

In addition to the First Lady's Luncheon, Project C.U.R.E. introduced Mrs. Lungu to the work of Saving Mothers, Giving Life (SMGL). Led by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), SMGL introduced safe childbirth practices that reduced maternal mortality by nearly 50% over five years. As a part of the SMGL Governing Counsel, Project C.U.R.E. delivered life-saving medical supplies and equipment



First Lady Esther Lungu speaks to the Project C.U.R.E. PhilanthroTravel group during the celebration of her work with Project C.U.R.E.



The visiting Project C.U.R.E. donor group learns how their contributions are making a difference.

to SMGL partner health facilities. The result was that pregnant mothers now have access to safe delivery services within two hours. This is revolutionary in a country where women may walk more than 100 miles to deliver their baby at the nearest healthcare facility. Prior to the SMGL initiative, many of those expectant mothers simply didn't survive.

Recently, the First Lady of Zambia hosted a delegation of 11 visitors through Project C.U.R.E.'s PhilanthroTravel program. The trip was an opportunity for a small group of Project C.U.R.E. donors to go "full circle" and visit the sites where their contributions had made a difference. At the Kabwe Hospital, small babies were in incubators that had been donated by Project C.U.R.E. The nurses and doctors were honored that Mrs. Lungu would make the two hour journey to share in their excitement, and recognize how they had utilized the gifts from Project C.U.R.E. and the First Lady to change the lives of mothers and children in Zambia.

Other stops included a health symposium hosted by the Zambian Health Ministry and the First Lady, a visit to meet local school children, a tour of the Kasisi Orphanage and a trek to see the wildlife. Truly the most important of all of the activities was the time with the First Lady in celebration of her work with Project C.U.R.E.



Project C.U.R.E. PhilanthroTravelers visited the Kasisi Orphanage and then enjoyed a trek to see the wildlife.

There is an African proverb that begins with the words, "It takes a village..." In certain cases, that may be true. In others however, **it takes a First Lady who is dedicated to the well being of her citizens, together with a team of dedicated partners and a relationship with Project C.U.R.E. to make a lasting impact for thousands of people.**



# A Chance Encounter IS SAVING LIVES IN IVORY COAST

Abraham Bah was excited about his first trip to the United States. A native of Ivory Coast, Abraham emigrated to England in his twenties, and arrived in Colorado Springs in July 2016 for a Bible study conference. He was hoping to learn from the speakers, make some friends and maybe spend some time seeing the local tourist sites.

It was there in Colorado Springs that a chance encounter would change Abraham's life, and the lives of thousands of other people.

Johnny and Ricki Hein are happily retired and now devote much of their time to volunteering and helping others. They were attending the same Bible conference, sitting by the hotel pool before the kickoff of the first day's events when Abraham happened to pass by. Ricki, gregarious by nature, offered her friendly hello and invited Abraham to sit and chat.

As the three new friends became acquainted, Abraham shared about his family, the circumstances that brought him to the conference and stories of his beloved Ivory Coast. He described the pristine rain forests, stunning beaches and rich cultural heritage. He shared the joyous spirit of his people, which is nothing short of inspirational given the harsh realities of their day-to-day lives. Poverty and internal conflict had overwhelmed government resources, resulting in a humanitarian crisis. Those most vulnerable—children and families—were hit the hardest.

As a successful entrepreneur with a thriving consulting business, Abraham was humbled by his good fortune. He felt driven to do what he could to help people in Ivory Coast who were less fortunate.

The Hein's were deeply moved by Abraham's passion. They too had a special place in their hearts for helping others. Johnny knew exactly what to do. "I've got to show you something," he said to Abraham. "You'll just need to reschedule your flight back home. Trust me, you won't regret it."

Several days later, the three of them traveled North from Colorado Springs to the Project C.U.R.E. headquarters in the suburbs of Denver. As they walked into the huge warehouse, Abraham couldn't believe his eyes. There were aisles of boxes filled with medical supplies, and rows of equipment. It was everything that rural Ivory Coast communities desperately need to address their healthcare needs. At that moment, Abraham realized that his vision was not just some pie-in-the-sky aspiration. This could actually happen!

The next year was filled with a whirlwind of activity. Project C.U.R.E. representatives conducted a Needs Assessment of hospitals in Ivory Coast while Abraham, Johnny and Ricki raised the funding to deliver a 40-foot container of life-saving medical relief.

In June 2018, less than two years after Abraham and the Hein's first met the C.U.R.E. Cargo container of wheelchairs, canes, lab equipment, ultrasound scanners, consumables, hospital beds and so much more arrived at clinics in two Ivory Coast villages. The doctors at these clinics finally had the resources to provide proper treatment to members of their community.

In March 2019, a team of doctors and nurses conducted the first C.U.R.E. Clinic in the Ivory Coast. Timed to coincide with the arrival of the Project C.U.R.E. Container, this team of dedicated clinicians attended to hundreds of villagers suffering from a wide spectrum of ailments ranging from infection to hypertension, allergies and vision issues. For some, it would be their first time to be seen by a healthcare professional.

For example, a local farmer came to the clinic with a severe infection on his left wrist. The wound was so painful and debilitating that the man was unable to tend to his crop, sell his produce at market or feed his family. With just a simple antibiotic and some basic wound care, the man's wrist quickly healed. "Thanks to the medical professionals who worked tirelessly at the C.U.R.E. Clinics, the farmer regained his livelihood as well as his dignity," said Abraham.

There is more to be done. Expectant mothers continue to need proper pre-natal attention. Well-baby care is still severely lacking. Children must be treated for life-threatening illnesses. Rural villages in the Ivory Coast remain in desperate need of quality healthcare services and need the supplies to support that treatment. Fortunately, Abraham has a vision to transform the Ivory Coast healthcare system by building year-round clinics that address the most pressing needs of the communities they serve.

A chance encounter between Abraham, Johnny and Ricki has become the catalyst for a series of miraculous events that have reverberated across three continents and impacted thousands of lives.

**You too can deliver health and hope to doctors and nurses in Ivory Coast who need our help. To contribute to the shipment of the next 40-foot container to Ivory Coast, please visit: <http://bit.ly/RIAIvoryCoast>.**







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## *I Can Do That!*

**MEET CORA SHOCKLEY.** Cora is an exceptional 11-year-old girl who volunteers at Project C.U.R.E. in Nashville, Tennessee. More than a year ago, Cora and her father Bill learned about Project C.U.R.E. from Raymond White, a friend from Brookmeade Congregational Church and a member of the Project C.U.R.E. Ambassador Board.

Cora and her youth group at Brookmeade got excited about the mission of saving lives, and arranged a time to come to the warehouse for a volunteer day. Cora's journey began with sorting donated medical supplies at the Project C.U.R.E. warehouse.

Cora understands that sorting hospital supplies is necessary, and only one part of the ongoing Project C.U.R.E. process. After sorting the donated supplies and equipment, they are then delivered to hospitals and clinics in need. Each of the recipient facilities have been verified by volunteers who conduct on-site Needs Assessment studies to ensure that the donated items are appropriate. "I like to sort the supplies, and I like being part of a team," she says. "I get

to talk to everyone while we work."

She recognized that she is fortunate to live where she does; "I have a doctor in town and we can see him whenever we need without a day's travel. Our hospitals have the supplies they need and of course here we have ambulances if you need one."

While being involved with Project C.U.R.E., Cora also learned more about Raymond White's work as a Project C.U.R.E. Needs Assessor. Raymond has traveled to nearly 150 countries and conducted studies of partner hospitals on nearly every continent. Cora reflected on Raymond's important contributions, "I think I would like to travel and do that. **But my job right now is to encourage others to start volunteering. I hope to convince others at my school to donate some time or money to Project C.U.R.E.**"

*If Cora's story has inspired you or your student to get involved, visit [www.projectcure.org/volunteer](http://www.projectcure.org/volunteer) to see volunteer opportunities at our six Distribution Centers.*



*see separate file for new remittance envelope layout - 2 pages*