

# **MARY ZIGBUO**

## **GLOBAL MISSIONARY MINISTRY UPDATE**

### **LIBERIA**

**April 2015**

Warm greetings from Liberia where I serve as a Global Ministries missionary in a special six month Ebola response and health strengthening support assignment since November 2014. Over the past months, I've had the privilege of serving alongside my Liberian colleagues towards our collective goal of responding to the Ebola crisis while ensuring the continuous operation and ongoing development of our health care system. I've supported four UMCOR International Disaster Response Ebola interventions. In so doing, we traveled throughout the country and I am a witness of the United Methodist Church of Liberia's relevant, resourceful, Christ-centered ministries of education, health care, social justice, agriculture, and other remarkable ministries aimed at improving the quality of life for God's people throughout Liberia. Now that Ebola is no longer a crisis, I am currently supporting two very important administrative transitions: Ganta United Methodist Hospital and the UMC Department of Health and Welfare. These two vital components of our health structure sustained administrative changes. The UMC Board of Health developed comprehensive transition plans for the two entities and I am humbled to play a leading role in carrying out these plans. Thank you for your prayerful, material and financial support that strengthens UMC Liberia's efforts to respond to Ebola, while at the same time provide quality, affordable health care for rural, subsistence farming families.

#### ***EBOLA UPDATE***

Liberia is just two weeks away from being declared Ebola free! There have been many lessons learned during the Ebola crisis that resulted in some positive behavior changes among families:

- ✓ Hand washing throughout the day is prioritized
- ✓ Meal sharing practices are discouraged
- ✓ Body preparation for burial is pre cautioned
- ✓ Comprehensive awareness activities enables communities identify Ebola symptoms to curtail future outbreaks
- ✓ and many more long term changes that will be integrated into the habits and customs of individuals, institutions and communities; thus providing a conducive environment for promoting a healthy society.

#### ***UMCOR INTERNATIONAL DISASTER RESPONSE INTERVENTIONS***



Isiah 49:16 says: ***Look! I've inscribed you on the palms of my hands, and your walls are forever before me.*** This passage from Isiah assures us that we are safe in God's hands. To me, the work of missions is like a remarkable ***safety net*** for God's people. Those who are at risk of "falling through the cracks" are rescued by the ***safety nets*** provided through our response to missions.

Behwan Town was one of three southeastern towns that benefitted from an UMCOR sponsored food security and Ebola awareness intervention during January and March. A one-month food supply was given to 900 beneficiaries who met the following criteria: abandoned elderly persons, vulnerable persons with disabilities and vulnerable pregnant women. Selected community residents, leaders, teachers, etc. were trained as Ebola Awareness Trainers and accepted the responsibility of spreading awareness in a wider

geographic scope. ***I met 11 year old Mary*** in Behwan Town. An enlarged abdomen caused Mary to walk with a side-ways limp. This qualified her to receive a one month food subsidy under the category of "vulnerable

disabled”. Mary captured the hearts of everyone on our team! Her family explained that over the course of two years, though Mary was taken back and forth to a local health facility, the medical staff was unable to address her condition. Our team contributed funds so Mary could acquire medical attention at the regional hospital in Tappita, located about a hundred miles away. Mary and her mom made the tedious journey to Tappita. They were joyfully received and hosted by Rev. Victoria Dennis, principal of Tappita United Methodist School. Mary’s condition was eventually diagnosed as “enlarged spleen” and required an urgent surgical intervention; however, surgery was postponed for two weeks because she was also diagnosed as being malnourished. The medical team prescribed nutritional supplements to build up her fragile immune system. Today, two months later, not only has Mary recuperated, but for the first time in her life she is attending school! “Adopted” by the community who hosted and prayed for and with her, Mary’s mom has decided Mary will remain in Tappita with her new-found extended family so she can be near the medical facility and continue her schooling. Rev. Dennis, the doctors and nurses, as well as those who support UMCOR provided the *safety net* that prevented Mary from dying of a treatable medical condition. The course of events points to my testimony that God has a wonderful plan for this little one! *The Mary’s of the world is the reason why I am thankful for your prayers, material and financial support that allows my missionary service. Your support enables me experience joyful ministry in spite of ongoing resource and other challenges.*

### **HEALTH STRENGTHENING SUPPORT**

The United Methodist Church operates five health care facilities:

1. George Z. Dean Town Clinic at Camphor Mission, Grand Bassa County, Administrator: Mary K. Gargar-Swee, who is also a Registered Nurse;
2. John Dean Town Clinic at John Dean Town, Grand Bassa County Administrator: Sister Rebecca Senyon who is also a Registered Nurse;
3. Weala Clinic at Weala, Margibi County Administrator: Sister Nyempu Kolleh who is also a Registered Nurse;
4. Ganta United Methodist Hospital, Ganta, Nimba County Administrator: Brother Patrick Mantor, who is also a Nurse Practitioner
5. Diecke Clinic, Diecke, Guinea; Administrator: Sister Yah Boayue,

It is a great joy to provide you with an overview of the overall performance of our health care facilities. Through a collective staff of over 260 persons, the five health care facilities provide treatment services through daily out-patient clinics, remarkable and amazing community based primary health care programs and activities , dental clinic, eye clinic, diabetes clinic, HIV/Aids clinic, orthopedic clinic, surgical services (through the facilities in Ganta, Weala and Diecke), x-ray and ultrasonography services, emergency triage, laboratory services, prenatal clinics, maternity clinics, in-patient wards, clinic based and community outreach vaccination and immunization campaigns. Our facilities’ collective community based health care outreach activities include: water and sanitation , malaria prevention, construction of birthing houses, targeted health talks, general health screening, immunization and vaccination, traditional midwife training, community health volunteer training, and other community based life-saving and life-improving trainings, forums, teachings . Community based health education is done with the advice and participation of local, community based leadership structures. .

**Bishop and Sister Innis on the newly bulldozed John Dean Town Road**



One of our clinics is located in an area where the road network is very challenged, or non-existent. Through a wonderful partnership support, coupled with local contributions of labor and funds, we celebrate the new road just recently *bulldozed* to John Dean Town! Community based primary health care outreach efforts through all the health facilities improves the quality of life for people living in hundreds of communities in Grand Bassa, Nimba and Margibi counties AND the forest region of The Republic of Guinea. Community engagement, health education and

empowerment is a primary goal of our health care ministry.

Rebecca Senyon and Jerry Giah (principal of the mission school) in John Dean Town



I am humbled and amazed by the commitment of Rebecca Senyon who, before the recent road construction, led her John Dean Town Clinic primary health care team on a weekly four hour walk (one way!) to hold an outreach clinic in Gbozon where they give health talks, traditional birth attendant training, and other interventions aimed at improving the general healthcare of the people living in and around this remote community.

And what about Yah Boayue's courageous efforts to move the Diecke Clinic based in the Republic of Guinea from a run-down building to a newly constructed facility? In a strange land, faced with language and cultural differences, Yah applied her God-given talents to finalize the construction of the new facility while resourcing furniture, equipment, personnel and others to maintain the clinic's operation.

There are other remarkable, courageous, spirit-filled efforts worthy of mention....but, because of time, cannot be mentioned. But, with the eyes of faith, I invite you to consider the urgency of providing health care in areas of the country where resources are sparse, poverty is prevalent and the road network is challenged.

### ***OVERVIEW OF HEALTH CARE FACILITIES***

Our health care facilities operate within the guidelines of and in collaboration with the county health authorities. Operation funds are primarily derived from service fee intake and partnerships through the Advance, Global Health, and other partnership efforts strengthens our goal to provide quality health care for all persons living within and without our catchment communities.

Below, please find a brief update of each facility:

***Ganta United Methodist Hospital*** has a staff of over 200 persons including medical, administrative support, service support, grounds maintenance, and general maintenance. Brother Patrick Mantor is the new Hospital Administrator and Sister Nora Keah-Sandi is the new Associate Administrator. The hospital serves over 300,000 persons living in northeastern Liberia and along the Liberia/Guinea border. The following treatment areas/services are provided: Out Patient/Ambulatory Care Clinic, Dental Clinic, Eye Clinic, Diabetes Clinic, HIV/Aids Clinic, Community-Based Primary Health Care, Orthopedic Clinic, Surgical Services, X-ray and Ultrasonography services, Emergency Triage, Laboratory, Prenatal Clinic, Labor and Delivery and In-patient Wards. The January-March 2015 statistical report includes: Out-patient visits- 6248; In-patient admissions- 951; Births- 233; Ante-natal visits- 1047; Surgeries- 354; Dental Clinic visits- 185; Orthopedic Services- 274; X-ray- 107; HIV tests- 291 (10 positives); Laboratory tests (general)- 4138; Diabetes Clinic- 124; Malarial Consultation- 2752 (1086 positive and treated); Deaths- 48.

***John Dean Town Clinic*** is located in Grand Bassa Count and currently managed by a staff of five (5)- administrator, dispenser, registrar/vaccinator, cleaner, and security. The catchment area covers about 35 towns and villages that are scattered across the southeastern Newcess area of Grand Bassa County and borders Rivercess County. The inhabitants of these villages are mainly engaged in subsistence farming and petty trading. The clinic is open for outpatient services though out the year, with few short stay services given to critical patients. A comprehensive Traditional Birth Attendant training is supported by partners in Ann Arbor District. This training will strengthen the clinic's ability to address maternal child health risks throughout its catchment area. 188 persons accessed the clinic services from January to March 2015. Services include: prenatal care, deliveries, post natal care, vaccinations, community based primary health care and routine illness screening and treatment.

**George Z. Dean Memorial (Camphor** is located in Grand Bassa County and has a staff of four: administrator, dispenser, vaccinator, and a trained, traditional midwife. The clinic provides services for a little over 7000 persons in the west eastern part of Grand Bassa County. The nearest hospital is 13 kilometers away! 62 towns and villages benefit from the clinic services. During January-March 2015, 318 persons accessed the clinic services ranging from prenatal care, deliveries, prenatal clinic, post natal clinic visits, vaccinations, family planning clinic, and routine illness (infections, colds, malaria, blood pressure, etc.) screening and treatment.

**Weala Clinic** is located in Weala, Margibi County and has a staff of thirteen: one medical doctor, two scrub nurses with one nurse anesthetist, two registered nurses, laboratory staff, other clinical and administrative staff. This clinic serves the town of Weala and surrounding villages. It offers laboratory services, prenatal and post natal care, vaccinations, laboratory services, surgical procedures with short stay options (major surgical needs are referred to a hospital), community based primary health care. Through the support of Hands of Hope International, during 2014 the clinic offered a comprehensive, 5 day medical team comprised of international and national volunteer health care specialists (doctors, specialized nurses, etc.) who performed community based screening and treatment as well as clinic based surgical and general treatment procedures for more than 800 people.

**Diecke Clinic** is actually a health center located in Diecke, Guinea. The clinic has a staff of twelve: one physician, one Lab Tech, one Registered Nurse (RN), one Trained Traditional Midwife (TTM), four Nurse-aides and four administrative and support staff. Five additional clinical staff are contracted. The clinic provides out-patient and in-patient services. It offers laboratory services, prenatal and post natal care, vaccinations, laboratory services, deliveries, surgical procedures with short stay options (major surgical needs are referred to a hospital), community based primary health care.

#### **OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTNER WITH US**

We warmly invite you to prayerfully consider partnering with us by supporting either of the below that touch your heart:

- ✓ Basic laboratory set up at John Dean Town Clinic. This will strengthen the clinic's services and encourage greater service access among its catchement area.
- ✓ Revitalization of George Z. Dean (Camphor Mission Clinic). Laboratory supplies and equipment is needed to revitalize the laboratory service which has been down for over a year.
- ✓ Strengthen Diecke Clinic laboratory services. Equipment is needed to strengthen the clinic's existing laboratory.
- ✓ Two computers are needed to support (and modernize) Ganta Hospital's record keeping system.
- ✓ Motorbikes to strengthen outreach activities are needed at Diecke, John Dean Town, and George Z. Dean Clinics.
- ✓ Funds are needed to support the Department of Health's local partner engagement and general administrative oversight, monitoring, supervision, and medical supply activities.
- ✓ Supporting my **Global Ministries Salary Support Advance 10721Z**
- ✓ Supporting the **Advance for our Department of Health, #3020622**- General Health and Ministry

For financial contributions, you may:

1. Use Global Ministries' website: [www.umcmmission.org](http://www.umcmmission.org) to send a donation for my salary support. At the bottom of the page, click on "Missionaries". Scroll to my name and my profile will appear. At the bottom of my profile is a link to make an online donation.
2. Mail a check to your local United Methodist Church or conference office; or directly to Global Ministries. Write "Mary Randall Zigbuo, Advance # 10721Z" on the memo line of your check and/or assisting with my project support Advance #3020622 by mailing to:

**Advance GCFA**

**P.O. Box 9068**

**New York, NY 10087-9068**

Thank you for all you do! I hope to hear from you by emailing me at [maryrandallzigbuo@gmail.com](mailto:maryrandallzigbuo@gmail.com).

Blessings,

Mary Randall Zigbuo

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