

BBF GLOBAL RELIEF QUARTERLY

TWO YEAR ANNIVERSARY

Iryna Vashchuk Discipio, president of Revived Soldiers Ukraine, continues her mission to heal Ukraine's heroes and partner with BBF.



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CAN YOU HEAR ME?

FROM OUR PRESIDENT OZZY SAMAD



At some point in our lives, there's a good chance that nearly all of us have either heard or experienced a version of the question above. From being asked directly, though conceivably for a myriad of reasons, to other indications that our hearing has been impacted in some way. Unlike loss of vision however, it is often not as apparent to oneself; though a consistently blaring TV, seeming difficulty in understanding others in restaurants, speaking loudly or straining to hear at family gatherings, all being possible indications that one's hearing is not quite where it used to be.

Thanks to your ongoing support of our work, BBF has been able to help four separate implementation partners initiate or strengthen programs utilizing mobile health clinics (MHCs). In Pittsburgh, our collaboration with UPMC's Eye & Ear Foundation and Highmark/AHN has led to providing mobile vision and diabetes screening and primary care services to our underserved community members. To similarly address the issue of hearing loss, BBF is now working with the Eye and Ear Foundation to implement an audiology mobile health clinic. The excerpts below are from BBF's audiology research report compiled by our Director of Strategy:


Johns Hopkins University estimates that 38.2 million (14.3%) of Americans equal to or greater than 12 years of age have hearing loss in both ears. Of these:

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------------------------|-------------|
| 1. | 25.4 million have mild hearing loss | >25 – 40 dB |
| 2. | 10.7 million have moderate hearing loss | >40 – 60 dB |
| 3. | 1.8 million have severe hearing loss | >60 – 80 dB |
| 4. | 0.4 million have profound hearing loss | >80 dB |

Both “mild” and “moderate” categories of hearing loss can greatly impact an individual's ability to understand normal conversations. Mild loss means: Difficulty hearing softly spoken conversations, fast-paced speech, or speech in the presence of background noise and Moderate (or greater) hearing loss equates to: Difficulty hearing normal conversations in quiet environments even when the speaker is close to them.

In terms of daily living, hearing loss can have broad ramifications across one's health and quality of life. The areas that suffer often include:

1. **Interpersonal Relationships:** Where one is unable to communicate effectively with friends and loved ones, people with hearing loss often face social isolation and feelings of loneliness. To quote Helen Keller, “Blindness cuts us off from things, but deafness cuts us off from people”
2. **Mental/Emotional Impact:** Studies link hearing loss to higher rates of anxiety, anger, and frustration, as well as fatigue and insomnia

- 
3. **Career Barriers:** Individuals with hearing loss are more likely to have lower employment rates and productivity. Adults with hearing loss are more likely to have lower income and be unemployed or underemployed than adults with normal hearing
 4. **Healthcare Costs:** Third-party coverage is limited, often causing substantial out of pocket expenses for patients trying to access hearing aids
 5. **Dementia Risk:** Studies have shown that people with mild, moderate, and severe hearing loss, respectively, have a much greater risk of dementia over time compared to people without hearing issues.

Hearing loss in children too is also very impactful towards their wellbeing and can significantly hinder development. Research has shown that even slight hearing loss of >15-24dB in children can affect learning, speech perception, social skill development and self-image, create a need for speech therapy, auditory training and special accommodations, impair speech and language development, and lead to decreased educational achievement and social-emotional development.

To address issues of hearing loss in the community, The Eye & Ear Foundation, UPMC, and The University of Pittsburgh (UPitt) have collaborated to run a robust clinical audiology program. The cost of pediatric audiology is covered by the state CHIP (Children's Health Insurance program) and adult programs are offered for free to underserved community members. The program is run by Dr. Catherine Palmer, who is a Professor at The University of Pittsburgh, Director of Audiology for UPMC, widely acclaimed in her field, and a past President of the American Academy of Audiology. In addition to UPMC audiologists, UPitt students provide supporting care through a program called HEAR-UP - The Hearing Education and Resources for Underserved Populations.

An audiology Mobile Health Clinic (MHC) will enhance the work of these programs and assist members of our underserved communities, including the young and the elderly, address this critical and sometimes taken for granted sense.

Thank you as always for your support for our work and I hope you will consider supporting this very impactful project also!

The printing of this magazine has been generously funded by the Board of Trustees.

Healthcare on Wheels

By Hannah Schowe, Agency Writer at Think Idea Studio, a subsidiary of ARcare Foundation

KentuckyCare serves West Kentucky residents with a simple goal: “Health for All.” The medical services organization proudly serves their patients with care and trust, while maintaining their focus solely on improving individuals’ health. The Brother’s Brother Foundation has kindly contributed a resource to KentuckyCare in accordance with the organization’s mission statement, which will aid the organization in achieving its daily objectives. KentuckyCare received a donation of a mobile health unit in response to the devastating tornado that ravaged Mayfield, Kentucky, on December 10, 2021. By concentrating on the area’s short- and long-term medical care needs, the contribution of the mobile health unit will help ensure that prompt and effective healthcare services are easily accessible.

KentuckyCare received the donated mobile health unit from the Brother’s Brother Foundation on September 11, 2023. The fatal and catastrophic aftermath of the Mayfield tornado exemplified the need for a strong healthcare system and accessible medical treatment during unforeseen emergencies. Designed for urgent situations like natural disasters or remote areas with limited medical help, the mobile unit includes an examination room, a patient’s bed, a complete laboratory, and a restroom. Vital healthcare services are provided to patients aboard the unit, such as vaccinations, medicine refills, and basic health screenings, among others. Importantly, all services within KentuckyCare’s mobile health unit are free, guaranteeing that those in need can obtain essential healthcare supplies and medical assistance without any obstacles.

KentuckyCare greatly appreciates the mobile health unit’s substantial impact on improving health in Western Kentucky. The unit is pivotal in helping the organization meet its goal of providing quality healthcare services to everyone, regardless of their financial status. With the introduction of the mobile health unit, KentuckyCare has extended its services to include schools, offering services such as student physicals. This mode of service delivery, characterized by its mobility and flexibility, also allows for significant participation in community events, facilitating basic health checks. This enhancement has further strengthened KentuckyCare’s impact, ensuring access to excellent medical care across communities and promoting a holistic approach to health.



“We greatly appreciate the Brother’s Brother Foundation’s donation of the mobile health unit. This kind contribution assists us in becoming ready for the future while simultaneously taking care of our immediate healthcare needs. We sincerely value this joint effort, as it has enhanced our ability to provide even greater access to healthcare to the residents of West Kentucky,” said Chris Gibson, Chief Operations Officer at KentuckyCare.

The mobile health unit exemplifies KentuckyCare’s significant commitment to addressing the immediate healthcare needs of Western Kentucky and enhancing its preparedness for future emergencies. This initiative reflects the shared dedication of KentuckyCare and the Brother’s Brother Foundation to provide timely, compassionate, and conveniently accessible healthcare. It underscores the collaborative effort of these organizations to ensure that every individual has the fundamental right to health.

Safeguarding Maternal Health: Improving Epilepsy Treatment for Pregnant Women in Central African Republic

BBF Global Relief has sent a shipment of antiseizure medication to a health clinic in the Central African Republic that is treating pregnant women with epilepsy.

It's estimated that more than 20 million people in sub-Saharan Africa have epilepsy, a neurological condition that can cause recurring and unprovoked seizures. Anti-seizure

medications play a crucial role in managing the condition. According to the World Health Organization, up to 70% of people living with epilepsy could become seizure-free with the appropriate use of antiseizure medication.

In Africa, over 70% of patients with epilepsy do not have access to treatment.

Of the more than 30 antiseizure medications on the market, only a handful are available in sub-Saharan Africa. All of these medications increase a woman's risk of giving birth to a child with malformations when taken before or during pregnancy, leaving millions of women with epilepsy with no access to safe treatment.



Bottles of the antiseizure medication Levetiracetam arrive at DREAM Sant'Egidio's pharmacy in Bangui, Central African Republic. | Photo courtesy of DREAM Sant'Egidio.

The International Epilepsy Treatment Guidelines regard Levetiracetam as one of the few safe options for women with epilepsy, but the drug's high cost has made it widely unavailable in sub-Saharan Africa.

By connecting with its pharma donors, BBF was able to acquire and send 1,300 bottles of Levetiracetam to Clinique DREAM, a healthcare center in Bangui, Central African Republic. The clinic is run by DREAM Sant'Egidio, a health program began as an initiative to treat HIV/AIDS in Mozambique and has since expanded to provide free chronic disease treatment in 10 countries in Africa.



Women sit on a bench in the waiting area at DREAM Sant'Egidio's clinic in Bangui, Central African Republic. | Photo courtesy of DREAM Sant'Egidio.



Clinique DREAM, a healthcare center in Bangui, Central African Republic is operated by DREAM Sant'Egidio, and treats patients with AIDS and other chronic diseases, such as diabetes, high blood pressure and epilepsy. | Photo courtesy of DREAM Sant'Egidio.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Sun-Powered Medicine

In 2007, Chip Pickering took a trip with Engineering Ministries International to repair the power system at Phebe Hospital in Liberia. As he was leaving, the Minister of Health, Dr. Walter Gwenigale, asked Pickering if he would consider developing a program to bring solar power to Liberia's health clinics.

"They said that if we could bring power to the clinics, it would provide a 20% improvement in the infant mortality rate, notwithstanding all of the other treatment benefits of having modern technologies associated with it," Pickering says.

Over 80% of Liberia's public health facilities were destroyed in the 14-year civil war that had ended four years prior. According to the UN Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation, for every 1,000 babies born in Liberia in 2007, about 80 died before their first birthday—an infant mortality rate 12 times higher than that in the United States.

Pickering developed a pilot program and began installing solar panels in clinics and orphanages. In 2012, he founded Pickering Energy Solutions, a company that installs solar panel systems in the US and provides a framework for providing free solar energy at facilities in Liberia.



Pickering Energy Solutions team members install solar panels on the roof of Kiantahun Community Clinic in Lofa County. | Photo courtesy of Pickering Energy Solutions

BBF Global Relief began its partnership with Pickering Energy Solutions in 2015 by funding a solar array at a health clinic in Sanoyea, a town in Bong County. Since then, BBF has collaborated with Pickering Energy Solutions to install a total of 53 solar arrays in hospitals and medical clinics across 7 of Liberia's 15 counties. The impact has saved hospitals, medical clinics and schools more than \$125,000 in electricity costs and prevented more than 650 tons of carbon dioxide emissions from being released into the air.

The Pickering Energy Solutions team and staff members at Kiantahun Community Clinic pose for a photo outside the Lofa County clinic. | Photo courtesy of Pickering Energy Solutions



More notable are the ways the solar installations have improved Liberia's healthcare system.

Using energy from solar panels, hospitals and medical clinics can power

refrigerators that keep vaccines at proper temperatures and lights in emergency rooms and operating rooms, allowing doctors to work overnight. Nurses can use fetal doppler meters to determine an infant's position immediately prior to birth, helping them determine the best course of action during delivery.

Over the past several years, BBF has helped Pickering shift the program's approach to focus less on installing solar panels at new sites and more on maintaining and repairing the systems already in place.

"You can put a system in, but unless you have people that are trained to understand how it operates and have funding for the replacement components and things like that, then it's not going to continue to work," Pickering says.

Pickering has made the solar program in Liberia more sustainable by training a team of 10 people in Liberia who manage the installations and repairs. He has also encouraged his workers to start their own solar companies.

Funding from BBF continues to support Pickering's program by supplying battery replacements and spare parts in addition to funding new clinics where needed.



COVER STORY

**Unwavering Compassion:
Iryna Vashchuk
Discipio's Mission to
Heal Ukraine's Heroes**

COVER STORY

As Ukraine reaches a solemn milestone of two years since the invasion, the spotlight falls on the remarkable dedication and unwavering commitment of Iryna Vashchuk Discipio. From her achievements on the track to her transformative work in aiding wounded soldiers, Vashchuk Discipio embodies determination and compassion. She has tirelessly advocated for those who have sacrificed for their country, establishing Revived Soldiers Ukraine to provide crucial rehabilitation and support. As the nation reflects on the continuing challenges faced since the invasion, Vashchuk Discipio's efforts exemplify the strength and solidarity of the Ukrainian spirit.

Raised in Irpin, Ukraine, a city outside of Kyiv, Iryna Vashchuk Discipio attended Olympic reserve school and ran for the Ukrainian National Team. In 2003, she came to the United States to join the track and field team at the University of Southern California, where she set a regional record in the 1500m run and was named an All-American in track and field and cross country running. After college, she coached division I track and field teams at Pepperdine University and Loyola Marymount University.

When Russia invaded Crimea in 2014, Vashchuk Discipio's focus shifted to helping Ukraine's wounded soldiers recover from severe injuries. As an athlete, she understood the importance of physical strength and resilience, qualities she channeled into assisting those who have sacrificed for their country.

"The injuries were insane. You see broken bodies, burned bodies, it was so crazy to see that. It was very powerful," she said.

She began donating money to support wounded soldiers, but, realizing it would be a while before the war ended, she started to take a more sustainable approach. Vashchuk Discipio reached out to her connections in the medical field and began working with nonprofits in the United States that treat wounded Ukrainians. But many of them didn't treat soldiers.

With limited medical infrastructure in Ukraine, soldiers with complicated injuries had nowhere to turn.

"The Ukrainian medical system was not ready for those injuries. Ukraine never fought a war [before this] and the medical system was so poor. Our military hospitals were like nothing. No



medication, no dealing with infection no dealing with injuries, it was very, very bad,” Vashchuk Discipio said.

In 2014 she collaborated with the Ukrainian Federation of America to bring her first soldier to the United States for rehabilitation at Next Step Fitness in Los Angeles. She began Revived Soldiers Ukraine the following year to scale the operation, and in 2021, opened Next Step Ukraine, a rehabilitation center in Irpin. It was the first cost-free rehabilitation center in the country.



Vashchuk Discipio spent years talking about the war in Ukraine, but it wasn’t until Russia’s invasion in 2022 when RSU’s work really started to gain attention.

“It wasn’t easy because at first Ukraine wasn’t as popular within the United States,” Vashchuk Discipio said.

“In 2022, on February 24, I felt like the entire world heard what I was trying to say for eight years, and we started working harder and more.”



Amadeo, a piece of rehabilitation equipment purchased with a grant from BBF Global Relief, helps patients with spinal cord and brain injuries improves functioning in hands and fingers. | Photo courtesy of Revived Soldiers Ukraine

and helped over 1,000 soldiers receive medical care by paying for their medical bills or treating them at Next Step Ukraine.

It’s difficult to capture the tragedy that’s unfolded after two years of nonstop war in Ukraine, but the statistics that are reported are bleak. In 2023, it was estimated that upwards of 20,000 Ukrainians have had one or more limbs amputated since the start of the war.

Amidst this ongoing crisis, RSU and Next Step Ukraine play a critical role in providing vital support and rehabilitation services to those affected. Last year, Next Step Ukraine’s four-person rehabilitation team in Irpin saw 151 wounded serviceman and civilians for treatment. Meanwhile, RSU brought 39 wounded soldiers to the United States for prosthetics and rehabilitation treatment at no cost to the patient. To date, the organization has brought a total of 80 wounded soldiers to the United States for treatment

Many of these patients had multiple amputations or upper limb amputations. A person with a leg amputation above the knee, for instance, cannot walk on mechanical knees, hinge joints that rely on

muscle movement and control. The solution is to fit the patient with myoelectric knees, “smart” knees that adjust to the environment, allowing patients to climb up steps, hills, and walk backwards all by selecting certain functions on a smart phone.

Getting a patient fitted for prosthetics and helping them stand upright can be a process that takes 3 to 4 months. Subsequently, they need to undergo the process of learning how to walk. However, none of these steps can be accomplished without adequate funding

“It’s not only money to pay for prosthetics but also to work with the person to fit them in prosthetics and help them learn how to walk and learn how to use their new legs,” Vashchuk Discipio said.

A grant from BBF Global Relief will bring four more soldiers over to the United States in 2024.

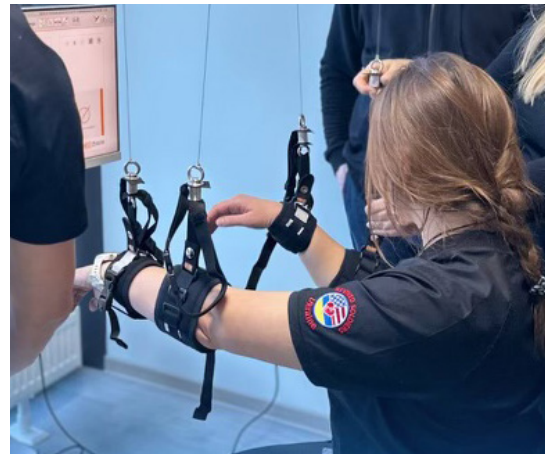
Previous funding from BBF helped RSU open its second rehabilitation center, Next Step Lviv, by purchasing Amadeo and Diego equipment from rehabilitation technology company Tyromotion. The state-of-the-art devices use virtual reality to help paralyzed patients restore function in their arms, hands and fingers. Only a handful of them are available in Ukraine, most of which are in private rehabilitation facilities.

Most recently, BBF helped RSU fund a specialized treadmill that uses virtual reality to help patients with neurological injuries build coordination and relearn how to walk. At the time of writing, the equipment was in the process of being sent to the rehab facility in Lviv. Once it arrives, it will be the only piece of equipment of its kind in Ukraine, making RSU the best rehabilitation facility in the country, according to Vashchuk Discipio.

“We’re going for it, we’re going to make this happen,” she said.

In recognition of her remarkable work, in 2023, Vashchuk Discipio received the second degree of the Order of Princess Olga award, the highest recognition bestowed upon women in Ukraine. This prestigious accolade, presented by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, stands as a testament to Vashchuk Discipio’s extraordinary dedication and contributions to her country. Her unwavering commitment to aiding wounded soldiers and her tireless efforts in establishing and expanding Revived Soldiers Ukraine have not only garnered widespread acclaim but also earned her the admiration and respect of her fellow citizens. The Order of Princess Olga award serves as a symbol of recognition for Vashchuk Discipio’s exemplary leadership, compassion, and unwavering commitment to serving her community and country.

“It’s an honor to be recognized for the work we do,” Vashchuk Discipio said.



Diego, rehabilitation equipment purchased with a grant from BBF Global Relief, uses virtual reality to help patients with spinal cord and brain injuries regain mobility in their arms. | Photo courtesy of Revived Soldiers Ukraine

DISASTER RESPONSE

Rebuilding Hope: BBF Grant Provides Support to Students Displaced by Wildfires

Less than two weeks after the August 8 wildfires that killed 100 people and left thousands of families without homes, students at Maui Prep, a private school 15 minutes north of Lahaina, did what millions of students do every fall—they went back to school.

This year, navigating through the school day poses a significant challenge for both students and teachers alike. Maui Prep, which normally teaches 300 students from preschool to 12th grade, stretched its resources to accommodate an additional 100 students from schools that were damaged in the fires.

Nearly a third of the student body had lost their homes in the disaster. As teachers grappled with their own devastation, they had the added struggle of teaching classrooms full of traumatized students.



Dr. Lisa Zamora, Academic Dean, counselor, and Algebra I teacher at Maui Prep reached out to a few local counselors and asked if they could volunteer their services during students' first week back. Dr. Zamora knew Maui Prep needed a solution to help students cope with trauma now, as well as long term.

“Everybody’s different. Somebody could be going through the effects of the trauma in the first few months, but for others you might not see it until later on,” Dr. Zamora said.

A grant from BBF Global Relief hired Tori Davis as a part-time therapist at Maui Prep, where about a third of the student body lost their homes in the wildfires in 2023. | Photo by Alexis Merrill

One of the counselors who answered the call was Tori Davis, a therapist for almost 40 years.

At the time, Davis, 65, was teaching pickleball and providing counseling on the side, but when the fires ignited, she put down her racket and began serving her community. She joined a therapy first response team and spent 12-hour days providing counseling services to communities in the burn zone.

One day she was assigned to Maui Prep, and Dr. Zamora immediately noticed Davis' ability to connect with students and teachers.

“Students were instantly comfortable with her. A lot of the teachers that spoke with her initially in those first few days [were saying things] like ‘Wow, when we talk, I feel good. I can do this. She re-energized me,’” Dr. Zamora said.

BBF Global Relief gave Maui Prep a grant to hire Davis as a part-time counselor for the entire school year.

Davis visits Maui Prep two days a week, providing cognitive behavioral therapy to about 10 students each day. The services are also available to teachers and parents.

About halfway into the school year, Dr. Zamora and Davis both agree that things on campus are looking better. Preschoolers enjoy their day riding balance bikes and seniors are excited for college.



There’s still a long way to go. Many students are still in temporary housing and struggle when moving hotel to hotel and teachers and school administrators are taking on more than usual.

Davis says some people estimate it will take three to five years to recover from the wildfires. She doesn’t know if that will be true. Either way, she’s optimistic.

“I don’t know why I’d be a therapist if I didn’t keep hope in my bonnet,” she said.

Prior to arriving in Maui 6 years ago, Davis worked at the Child and Family Psychiatric Center in Medford, Oregon. She provided counseling services in the aftermath of the 2020 Almeda wildfires that destroyed over 2,000 structures in Oregon and the Paradise wildfires that killed 85 Californians in 2018, the deadliest wildfire outbreak in recent US history--until the outbreak in Maui last year.

I truly thank your people who fund situations like this ... you’re an angel out of nowhere. Thank all of your contributors. Please let them know they made a huge difference and really continue to make a difference.”

—Tori Davis, LCSW

EDUCATION

BBF Promotes Self-Care and Sustainability for Girls in Zimbabwean Communities



Thanks to a grant from BBF in 2023, a twelve-year-old program in Zimbabwe is helping more girls sew their own reusable sanitary supplies to avoid missing school during their monthly cycles. The program, associated with the United Methodist mission in Nyadire, continues to grow and achieve sustainability. Its results are leading to new opportunities for education and ways to help the community meet its basic needs.

BBF asked the director of the program, Bonnie Lawson of Pittsburgh, to answer a few questions about its progress and potential. Bonnie is a former supply chain executive at Bayer Material Science who serves on the board of trustees of

BBF. Serving seven schools in or near Nyadire, her team's effort is known as the Girl Empowerment Pad (GEP) program.

The below interview has been edited for length. The full article is available online at https://brothersbrother.org/grq24_education_gep/

Q: What are the goals of the Girl Empowerment Pad (GEP) program?

A: The goals of GEP are to: (1) Keep girls in school during their menstrual cycle to prevent learning loss; (2) Provide participating students tailoring skills; and (3) Offer culturally- and age-appropriate health, hygiene and menstrual education.

Q: How did the GEP program start?

A: In 2011, volunteers from The Nyadire Connection (TNC) mission team based in Pittsburgh visited Nyadire schools. TNC, which offers school fee sponsorships, learned that a lack of sanitary napkins contributed to an increase in absenteeism for female students. As in other nations, the country's poverty limits access to menstrual products. While 88% of women and girls use disposable products in urban areas, only 68% do so in rural areas according to WHO and UNICEF. Disposable sanitary pads are a luxury item for many Zimbabweans.

Back in Pittsburgh, TNC volunteers (mostly women) sprang into action when they heard of this need. They initiated what became a multi-church, multi-sector grass roots response that eventually encompassed groups such as church sewing circles, high school clubs, craft stores, and the Women and Girls Foundation of Southwest Pennsylvania.



The girl empowerment farm team

Q: What was the Zimbabwean reception, given the sensitivity of the topic and local culture?

A: As the program took shape, we were careful to respect Zimbabwean preferences, not only with regard to a napkin pattern but also to health education. Together we chose and integrated into sewing classes a culturally and developmentally appropriate book on the menstrual cycle. This book was written by Zimbabwean author Annie Kanyemba, and is called *Growing Up in School*.

GEP program teachers in Zimbabwe expressed thanks to us in responses like these:

- Our children in the pad program will live to remember this, as their lives were changed for the better.
- Due to economic hardships, parents are very much relieved by your donations toward the girl child.
- It is so difficult here for children to discuss [health] with a [teacher]. You gave us a breakthrough. Pupils confide in us now. They are not even shy to ask for emergency kits.
- The program has boosted their confidence, as they can now attend school even on their period days.

Q: How has the program evolved?

A: The first volunteers made pre-sewn, reusable cotton sanitary napkins and sent them overseas to gauge the attitudes of teachers and students. After receiving an enthusiastic response, the Pittsburghers downloaded patterns and asked their Zimbabwean partners to choose a napkin pattern for them to sew on their own. The Americans also converted donated electric sewing machines to manual operation as appropriate, and sought fabric, money donations, and recruits for “sewing parties.” These parties resulted in boxes of “GEP kits” being delivered to Nyadire through BBF.

The “GEP kits” are one-quart Ziploc bags with fabric and materials for three pads; needle and thread; underwear; a bar of soap; and instructions in English and Shona for maintaining the pads and making them using the hand-sewing option. In class, Zimbabwean teachers also taught students to make pads using sewing machines.

It was clear that students gained confidence and skills (and stayed in school) by making their own pads. Likewise, to promote further independence, by 2020 U.S. volunteers began sending teachers unassembled materials so they could make their own kits.

Since then, the program has a dedicated purchasing agent for domestic procurement of supplies. Teachers have extended instruction from pad making to sewing school uniforms and other garments and household goods, and have incorporated male students who wish to learn tailoring skills. The program is also exploring a “train the trainer” approach via the establishment of a GEP sewing scholarship (see below).

Q: What are GEP’s current needs?

A: We want to plan for a day when GEP is completely independent and self-sustaining. We are immensely proud of our team, which now “owns” 100% of the operational portion of the program. The program no longer incurs shipping costs or storage fees. Through local procurement, funding goes directly to the community, supporting local businesses and entrepreneurs.

This successful transfer means our donor model has changed from an in-kind, delivery system (e.g., fabric shipped overseas) to a financial approach sustained by cash donations for local purchasing and training.

To achieve sustainability, our twelve-year-old program needs more than just materials. We envision a need to cultivate new leaders as sewing and hygiene teachers move on. So we are exploring a sewing scholarship that would enable recipients to attend the Tabudira or other nearby vocational school to earn a certificate in tailoring. Scholarship recipients would agree to perform community service by teaching sewing at one of the participating GEP schools.

The program was built on small donors, and their support continues to be critical to the continuation of the program as we seek diverse sources of support.

To read the full interview, view additional photos, and information on how to donate, please visit https://brothersbrother.org/grq24_education_gep/



The transportation of materials from Haare to Nyadire. BBF supported



Girls sewing pads by hand. Essential feature for rural areas

“I’d like to thank BBF for its support, which enabled the local purchase of cotton fabric used in sewing kits provided to each female student we serve. They use these kits to make their own sanitary napkins and avoid the terrible consequences of missing school for lack of hygienic protection. I also credit BBF with “feeding and growing” the GEP program by providing shipping support when we were sourcing most of our materials in the United States.” Bonnie Lawson, director of the Girl Empowerment Pad program

To date, across seven primary schools in or near Nyadire, more than:



4K
COPIES

of the book *Growing Up in School* (on puberty and menstrual management) have been distributed

10K
PADS OR KITS

have been distributed

20
TEACHERS/LEADERS

have been trained to teach students to sew pads (at least two per school, plus teachers at “waiting mother” clinics served by TNC)

4K+
GIRLS

have participated in this life-changing, confidence-building program

100
SEWING MACHINES
have been donated



Blossoming Beyond Program Update

We are thrilled to share an exciting update on our Blossoming Beyond breast cancer program. Thanks to the incredible support of our donors, our fall campaign was a tremendous success, allowing us to further our mission of providing vital assistance to those affected by breast cancer. Thank you to all who generously contributed.

In line with the Blossoming Beyond theme of holistic care, we are delighted to announce that a grant has been awarded to Keepers of the Flame Foundation in Georgia. This grant will facilitate a pilot program offering counseling to women undergoing breast cancer treatment and those who have recently completed treatment.

Additionally, BBF is continuing to partner with RAD-AID to support a women's health program in Northern India. In collaboration with NIMS University Rajasthan, RAD-AID will launch a women's mobile health program that among other services, will provide mammography for breast cancer.

Together, we are making a meaningful impact in the fight against breast cancer and promoting women's health worldwide.

WHAT YOU MISSED ONLINE

Facebook: The solar panel installation at the Hermanas Misioneras del Buen Pastor Clinic in Puerto Rico is now complete! The mental health clinic offers free and discounted counseling, child abuse prevention programs and blood bank provisions. Access to solar power will save the clinic an estimated \$300 - \$400 every month, money that can instead be used to provide more services to the community.

Instagram: BBF wrapped up the first month of 2024 with 12 shipments of medical supplies and pharmaceuticals to 6 countries, including Sierra Leone, the Dominican Republic, and Guatemala.

LinkedIn: More than 90% of the population in Gaza is experiencing crisis levels of hunger, according to the World Health Organization. A grant from BBF Global Relief has provided hot meals amid ongoing food shortages.

BBF Blog: Every month, more than 9,000 patients seek medical assistance at El Progreso Hospital in Yoro, Honduras. A donation of pharmaceuticals and medical supplies from BBF Global Relief helped doctors care for patients with epilepsy, gout, and other chronic diseases.

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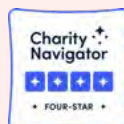
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Brother's Brother Foundation relies upon the generosity of our donors who want to make a difference. Monetary donations make it possible to continue our health, infrastructure, disaster response, and educational programs around the globe.

To make a donation, please visit our website, at
www.brothersbrother.org

THANK YOU!



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