



African Mothers Health Initiative

Dear Friends, The Holidays are upon us again and at this time when so much energy is being expended highlighting our differences, discussing points of contention, and drawing lines in the sand, it feels all the more important to reflect on blessings and build community. My boys and I spent a day last week baking pumpkin bread to share with some of those who live on our street and they all three participated eagerly. I want to look up from all our phones and tablets and really see the people around us. I want my boys to see the world around them and know that part of being a good human is being a good neighbor. Today I want to share with you some of the faces and stories from your neighbors across the world. These women and families live across the ocean and deep in the heart of Africa but they feel the immediacy of your compassion and generosity; and in this sense - that they are affected so deeply by even modest gestures - they are your neighbors.



A Graduate. *This beautiful girl was discharged from our baby care program over a year ago. Her mother gave birth to her well before her due date and then died soon after, leaving her to her maternal aunt. In their desperate search for support her aunt and grandfather found two programs, our baby care program and another that would take custody of the baby for a minimum of six months. The family was unwilling to give up the baby and now say that our home-based care ensured her survival and also strengthened the family as a whole.*

Trips to Malawi. Two groups from the US traveled to visit our program in Malawi this past year. I traveled in April with Dehlia R. Gonzalez, a nurse and board member. And Allie Herson Jones, a graduate intern with AMHI from the University of San Francisco traveled to Malawi in June. After more than four years of being away from

Malawi, I was deeply saddened by what I found. Deep suffering and deep poverty persist. For the poorest in Malawi, not much has changed in the past decade or longer. Each year brings

Our year in numbers:

Babies cared for ... 101

Mothers cared for ... 65

Visits conducted ... 1,298

Money raised: \$69,328.05

new crises that put lives at risk (i.e. floods, famine, etc) and basic support for families is lacking. The long daily line of men, women, and children snaking around hospital buildings towards the outpatient department was a constant reminder of the

disparity between needs and services

available. The problems are obvious; there is much to do. Thankfully, there were many...some European local volunteers, our Malawian staff, and most importantly the beneficiaries of our programs who reminded me of our impact. They pointed to the places and people where there is strength and who are now healthy because of what we have done.

WHAT IS AMHI?

For those of you who are new to our non-profit we are a tiny US registered non-profit supporting home based nursing care of vulnerable moms and infants in Malawi, Africa. We do our work through our sister organization, Joyful Motherhood in Malawi. All donations are tax deductible.



A Woman's Story. Catherine is a young woman who developed a fistula after a horrific second labor. Joyful Motherhood nurses connected her with an organization to do the repair and followed her through six surgeries. A few years later, the fistula reopened with her third delivery and our nurses again assisted her through the recovery. During the process her husband left her and her community ostracized her, making her emotional recovery as difficult as the physical recovery. She says that the nurses helped her regain her confidence and restore her sense of self-worth.

Matching Donations. This year we have the opportunity to participate in a program by Johnson and Johnson in which they will match all donations dollar for dollar for individual donations up to \$250 (if you feel inspired to donate more, please do!). If you would like to participate, please look for instructions on our website:

www.africanmothers.org/donate. Of course you can also simply mail a check to: **7304 Carroll Ave, #173, Takoma Park, MD 20912**

Thank you for standing with us!

Happy Holidays from Joanne Jorissen Chiwaula and the Board of AMHI (Genevieve Grabman, Apur Shah, Gigi Jorissen, Meredith Kruger Kos, Dehlia Ramos Gonzalez, Blanca Lesmes, Meera Nosek, Shelly Broussard, and Heather Satterfield) www.africanmothers.org