

Dear Supporters of African Mothers Health Initiative,

2010 is quickly coming to an end, which means it is time for an update on the great work you are sponsoring in Malawi and time to express our gratitude. Over the past year African Mothers Health Initiative (AMHI) has supported the provision of home based care to 60 postpartum women and over 100 vulnerable infants (including 64 new infant admissions), through the activities of our sister organization Chimwemwe mu'berekwi (Joyful Motherhood).

There are many stories which powerfully illustrate the impact of your donations and for us the greatest motivation to continue this work is seeing the results and hearing the gratitude directly from those we serve. This year we want to share a transcribed testimony from Bambo Shisangwi – a leader in one of the villages with Joyful Motherhood beneficiaries – and we hope his words bring you closer to the work you are supporting:

It was by the Grace of the Lord that Beatrice [Joyful Motherhood nurse and program manager] discovered the sick twins of our village. Originally the mother of the twins was not living in this village but in her husband's village with him. When her husband died, she was pregnant, very sick and weak. She was brought to this village by her husband's relatives. That woman was so sick after delivery that the milk in her breasts ran dry and the baby twins were starving completely. Thanks to Beatrice and Joyful Motherhood, which took care of the family, the twins have survived. The mother discovered during delivery that she was HIV positive. Beatrice gave her advice and education and now she is alive, healthy, and happy.



Bambo Shisangwi & his wife

Our community was not sure the twins would survive when they got sick, but thanks to the help from Joyful Motherhood, we understood the emergency and the need to bring them to the hospital where they were diagnosed with tuberculosis, and after the treatment they recovered.

The education provided by the staff of your organization taught their mother to care for herself and the twins, and the nutrition provided made a huge impact on the mother's and children's health. Because of Joyful Motherhood's help, I am praying to God to always protect the members of the organization who are giving time and money for the success of Joyful Motherhood. Because of the friendliness and care Beatrice gives us, I hope Joyful Motherhood will expand and increase its help to provide other communities with health and education. . .

The twins, now 18months old were saved and seeing them growing happy and healthy will always remind us of Joyful Motherhood, we are very lucky to have your organization around us.

If you are interested in more stories and regular updates, please join our cause on Facebook and/or visit our website and check the news section on our homepage [www.africanmothers.org](http://www.africanmothers.org)

## 2010 Programs

At the end of 2009 we made the decision to focus on **providing home based care to vulnerable postpartum moms and babies**. Previously AMHI, through Joyful Motherhood, ran a feeding program for children and supported a handful of students with school fees. Though these programs positively impacted many children and adolescents, we recognized that these activities fell under the mission of multiple organizations within Malawi. At the same time, we recognized that no other organization in Malawi provided targeted care to vulnerable moms and babies in the days and months following difficult deliveries. Thus we felt compelled to refocus our resources. In March 2010 we transferred our feeding program to the John C Thomas Children's Foundation and we completed paying school fees for the students who were enrolled in our tuition assistance program.

Currently AMHI supports two programs: In the first program, **(1) the Baby Care Program**, Malawian nurses identify vulnerable infants at birth (e.g. orphaned newborns, premature babies, and multiples) and begin regular home visits from the time of discharge to the age of one year. In the second

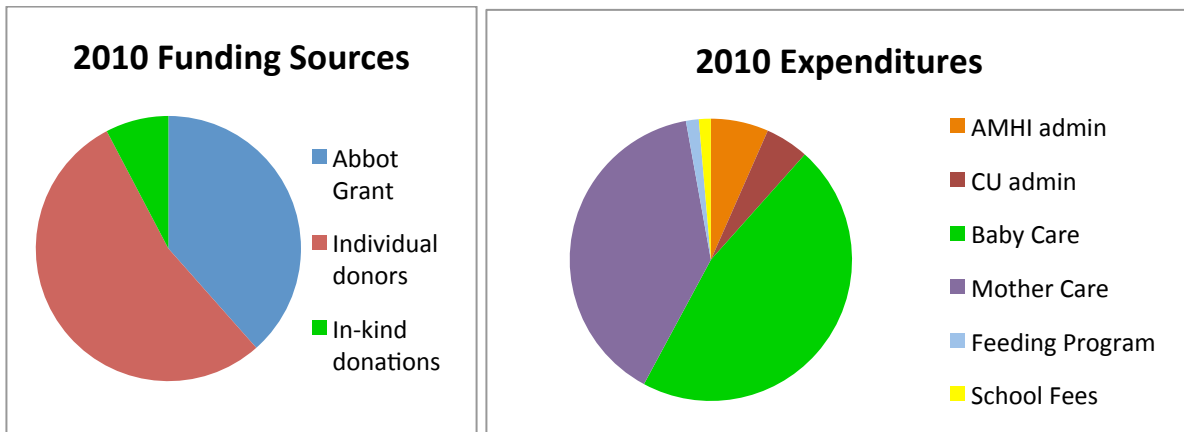


program, **(2) the Mother Care program**, Malawian nurses identify women who are critically ill after delivery and provide a minimum of six postpartum home visits once they are discharged from the hospital. During each visit the nurse assesses the health of the mother and/or young children and the home environment. She provides supplemental nutrition if needed (i.e. protein rich foods to a breastfeeding mother, or formula to an infant without access to breast milk). She also provides health education to the mother, guardians (those caring for the ill mother or orphaned infant(s)), and community members; and works with the community to develop an action plan to be used to transfer a woman or

child to the hospital in case of emergency. Slightly more than half the clients we serve come from the peri-urban area of Lilongwe and the remainder lives in the surrounding rural villages.

## 2010 Financials

Though 2010 was a difficult year economically in the US, you enabled us to support even more mothers and babies. AMHI received a total of \$61,612 in direct funds, which included a grant from the Abbot Foundation for \$25,000 to expand our Mother Care program.



Approximately 12% of the funds received went towards administrative costs, and 88% went towards the programs.

### News and Points of Interest

- Missing Children. Malawian nurses accept as fact the common phenomena that infants and toddlers who lose a mother, often soon follow her in death. However it has recently come to our attention that global statistics are not capturing these child deaths. Considering that Malawi has one of the world's highest maternal mortality rates it is possible that hundreds if not thousands of children are missed. These at risk babies are the very infants and children our program targets.
- Contextualized Care. All the care in Malawi is provided in the home environment by Malawian nurses and this has led to some unexpected outcomes. Occasionally a nurse will become aware of the stigmatization of a woman following a health crisis and is able to educate and work with the community to reintegrate the woman. This is not usually possible in programs conducted from centralized locations or carried out by foreign aid workers.
- New Board Member. AMHI is pleased to welcome Julia Betts to the board. Julia has a background in marketing and public relations. She is a senior staff member at National Instruments and has already assisted AMHI with the creation of a video, which may be viewed on our home page; and the organization of a successful fundraiser in Austin, TX this November.

### Our Needs

Transportation continues to be an issue for nurses providing services to women and babies in rural Lilongwe District particularly in the rainy season. Nurses rely on public transportation and bicycles to reach our clients, which is both difficult and time consuming. A vehicle would improve efficiency and the ability to serve those in remote areas. We need approximately \$20K above our current budget to cover the cost of a vehicle, associated taxes, and petrol.

## How to Help

- Your direct donations are always greatly appreciated. [www.africanmother.org/donate](http://www.africanmother.org/donate)
- If you are impressed and touched by the work we do, we would appreciate your help in spreading the word. We appreciate any opportunity to talk about our work in Malawi, if you are a member of a church, school, or community organization and believe your fellow members may be interested in hearing our story please let us know.
- Volunteers – we are always in search of good volunteers both in Malawi and the United States, particularly with skills in grant researching/writing, fundraising, and driving (in Malawi).
- Be creative – runners have raised money with our donation form, high school students have held bake sales and organized a karaoke night, let us know what you can do.



**Thank YOU!!** We are acutely aware that the work in Malawi would never happen without your support. We know there are many worthwhile causes both in your local communities and globally. We are grateful that you have demonstrated and continue to demonstrate your compassion and commitment to vulnerable women and babies in the small beautiful country of Malawi. And, we are both inspired and humbled by your trust in us to act on your behalf to transform the lives of people half a world away whose faces you may never know.

With Gratitude,

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