



African Mothers Health Initiative

Dear Friends,

Congratulations to you! This year marks our 10th year of work and service in Malawi. And, this past month we enrolled the 1,000th baby into our program. These accomplishments we credit to your support. Here are a couple stories about your impact across the world.

Townsend was born in a small community hospital. He was a tiny but healthy baby and his mother carried him back to their village with joy and expectation. One week later she had an asthma attack. On the long way to the

hospital for treatment she died and in that instant Townsend's world crumbled. According to culture her family was supposed to take him in and raise him, but no one wanted to accept responsibility for the baby fearing he would die.

For a moment imagine yourself living in a small house of brick and mud with a thatch roof and a neatly pounded and swept dirt floor. Several times a day you must walk to collect water and carry it back to your home on your head. What you plant, what the rains provide and what you harvest is what you will feed your family for the year, though the soil is more dust than dirt after many years of farming. When times are desperate you will eat less and less, some days you will fast. The money you have comes from a few crops sold or perhaps the sale of a goat. You survive on this land, each day looking into the eyes of your children, worrying about how to fill their bellies, how to send them to school, how to protect them from illness and cold. And then imagine someone handing you a newborn baby. This is not your baby. You have no milk for this baby. You have no money to buy milk for the baby.

This was the situation of Townsend's extended family. At last, his aunt, accepted him without knowing how she would sustain his delicate life. She lovingly added his needs to the many she was already struggling to meet. It is hard to insert ourselves in this story. Hard to imagine how our heart and head would react. We do not fault those who did not want to get involved but we have so much respect and admiration for those who chose the more difficult path and so much pride and JOY in the result of our collaboration.

This year we raised \$73,325.66
We enrolled 152 babies and 56 women. We are caring for 210 babies. Our nurses made 2,200 visits to moms, babies, and communities. \$12,000 is earmarked for the purchase of a new vehicle. A representative is currently car shopping in South Africa. We will send our update and picture soon.

All donations are tax deductible. Checks made out to AMHI may be sent to: 7304 Carroll Ave., #173, Takoma Park, MD 20912. Or you may donate with a credit card at www.africanmothers.org/donate

Nitta, one of the nurses of Joyful Motherhood (our implementing partner in Malawi), found him one week later, struggling on the thin edge of survival. At the moment they met, death seemed all but certain. But then, because of you, everything changed for the better. Townsend was enrolled in our program and our nurses began to visit regularly, bringing formula, teaching his aunt how to prepare the

milk, how to prevent illness and regularly assessing his health and development. Over time they became acquainted with entire

extended family and gradually helped mend rifts.

Today Townsend is 18mo old, he is a healthy boy who runs with the other children when he sees our vehicle approach from down the dusty road. Our nurses continue to visit him and he is loved by his aunt as well as his extended family.

In Malawi there are too many

babies like Townsend but there are also many like his aunt and Monica [see story left] who have incredible love and demonstrate amazing resilience with a little support.

African Mothers Health Initiative ensures that fragile infants and critically ill women receive life saving home based nursing care.

The true value of our work lies in the care provided. We witness babies transform from fragile malnourished newborns to feisty toddlers and witness women regain their health and strength and joy. *"Just by going [to their homes in the villages], it brings an impact. It brings some love that they never expected. When we are talking to them initially they feel we are strangers. But we meet them in their homes, they see we are the same and speaking the same language. It takes away all the fear they have about the hospital. It changes their mindset."* Nitta Chakanika Joyful Motherhood nurse

Our heroes are the nurses of Joyful Motherhood; every mother, sister, aunt, and father, who against all odds and at great personal sacrifice holds out hope and love; and YOU for making this work possible.

Happy Holidays and thank you for your continued support from Joanne Jorissen Chiwaula and the Board of AMHI (Genevieve Grabman, Apur Shah, Meredith Kruger Kos, Dehlia Ramos Gonzalez, Meera Nosek, Shelly Broussard, and Heather Satterfield).

Monica married when she was barely twenty. She and her husband envisioned a family with multiple children but years passed and Monica did not conceive. Two decades later Monica went to a health center feeling ill and was told she was pregnant. Her pregnancy progressed normally but her labor lasted too long and she started to bleed. When she reached the hospital the clinician told her that her uterus had ruptured and her baby was dead. He surgically removed her baby and then her badly torn uterus. After a few days spent lying in an open ward amongst new mothers nursing babies she returned home, still weak, and severely anemic. Joyful Motherhood nurses found her and her husband struggling without enough food. The nurses brought enriched porridge and iron pills. They brought compassionate ears and counseled the couple. They monitored her recovery. And, they gave Monica \$12. With this money Monica purchased supplies to start a small business of making and selling donuts. Monica is very grateful for her business, which she says has improved her life and the life of her husband.

