



The Nyadire Connection

The Nyadire Connection (TNC), based in Pittsburgh, PA, is a faith-based non-profit volunteer organization that seeks to support and sustain the United Methodist Mission in Nyadire, Zimbabwe.

VOLUME 19

www.nyadire.org

February 2019

Mission Trips Planned For June, July

TNC is planning **Volunteer in Mission Trips** to Zimbabwe, Africa in June and July this year. We're looking for volunteers with a wide range of skills in the areas of education, ministry, agriculture, health, maintenance, and more. There are endless opportunities to engage in cross-cultural relationships, develop partnership programs, serve God and others, and grow spiritually. If you are interested in joining a team or hope to learn more, contact **Molly Michael** at mollyalice.michael@gmail.com or (412) 805-6481, or visit our website at www.nyadire.org. Space is limited. Dependent on airfare and time of year, the total cost of a mission trip (not including the optional excursion) is approximately \$2,800 - \$3,000. Trainings are mandatory and will begin soon for all interested members.

EWB/TNC Combine To Improve Nyadire Security



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Story and photo By **Chenayi Kumuterera**, communicator for Zimbabwe West Conference

Walking across a dark campus at night now is safer at the Nyadire United Methodist Mission, thanks to recently installed solar lights.

Through a five-year partnership between the United Methodist mission and **Engineers Without Borders USA**, the lighting project improves security for the campus and the community.

Retired engineer and United Methodist **Drew Harvey** of Pennsylvania said the project grew out of The Nyadire Connection, a faith-based, nonprofit organization that seeks to support and sustain the *Nyadire Mission*.

*(Photo at left: **Melina Driscoll** and **Ashley Burbano**, team members with Engineers Without Borders USA, inspect lights at Nyadire.)*

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Senior Project Empowers Girls In Nyadire

By Ava Ekstam, Seneca Valley High School Senior

For my senior project, I wanted to find a way to empower teenage girls, to interact with them and try to build up their confidence. I was also interested in going on a mission trip, so I started to research programs at my church, Dutilh UMC in Cranberry Twp., and found The Nyadire Connection and its **Empowerment Pads Program**. The program helps girls and women have sanitary protection during their monthly cycle so they can go to school and



work. The pads not only offer hygiene benefits, but they *empower* the girls. These pads are assembled at sewing parties and put in a hygiene kit along with soap and a sewing kit for the girls, so I decided to host a sewing party at Dutilh – with help from **Bonnie Lawson**, TNC’s program leader, and **Debbie Little**, my project mentor and also a Dutilh member. I learned a lot about patience and faith during my project. Before the actual party I had to cut 400 pieces of flannel (part of the pad) and fold 1,000 instruction sheets together (to teach girls how to wash these pads and show a calendar to track their cycle). This was a lot for me in the midst of school and applying to college, but I truly wanted to make this sewing party happen. After completing these tasks and other needs for the project, it was time to have the sewing party. I was nervous but Bonnie and Debbie (see photo below) along with my family and friends helped me to set up the party and showed me what I should expect. The party was a huge success! Over 50 people



came and everyone was so kind and helpful. We had several tables where people made the components of the hygiene kits, and an assembly line where people packed them. The kit allows for girls in Zimbabwe to be educated on how to sew these pads themselves, which gives them the confidence they need and empowers them to teach other girls. Everything went so smoothly and we made over 500 hygiene kits! This summer, my family and I, along with Debbie and others from Dutilh, are planning to go to Zimbabwe on a mission trip. While there, we hope to speak with the girls who are receiving the hygiene kits to see how they are affecting their lives. I am truly blessed to have this opportunity and can’t wait to see where it goes. Thanks to Bonnie, Debbie, my church, and my family for helping me. This was by far the most influential and amazing project I have ever experienced.

Hippo Water Rollers Ease Pursuit Of Water



Have you ever stopped to think about how much water you use in a day or to appreciate how convenient and easy it is for you to access that water? Every day, without much conscious thought, we turn knobs or push buttons to take showers, water plants, wash our cars, wash our clothes, flush the toilet, brush our teeth, get a drink, wash our dishes, or rinse our face. We even have the luxury of determining what temperature our water will arrive in when coming out of the faucet, hose, or machine. Most of the time we don't even know how much water we are using, let alone wasting. According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency, the average American family uses 300 gallons of water per day and 24% of that usage is just from flushing the toilet (2016). Consider how difficult

your daily life would be without instant access to H₂O.

Our friends in Nyadire, Zimbabwe are very aware of how important water is as a resource. Often times, the country struggles through severe droughts when water becomes very scarce or dry spells when the government has shut off electricity. In rural areas during these situations, Zimbabweans fetch their water from a shared local source such as a well or borehole. Most times, retrieving water from a local source requires walking or traveling a far distance. Keep in mind, one can only gather as much water as they can carry and water is heavy! 1 gallon of water weighs 8 pounds, so a 5 gallon bucket is 40 pounds! Because of this, a lot of time and energy is spent harvesting this essential resource. Water is needed for drinking, maintaining hygiene, and producing gardens and crops. How can we help our friends transport their water more efficiently?

In 2016, the outreach team at Baldwin Community United Methodist Church donated 2 Hippo Water rollers through TNC to be used at the Nyadire mission hospital and Chendenga, a rural clinic.

Hippo Rollers are an innovative yet simple idea that changes lives. Their aim doesn't solve the issue of having water but it provides an immediate and appropriate alternative to access water. These containers can hold up to 5x more water than a 5 gallon bucket and are durable enough to be rolled across rough terrain. They are also user-friendly for children and older adults and can be easily cleaned. Hippo Water Roller was established in 1994 with the intention to alleviate the strain on women and children and assist with retrieving a larger amount of water quicker which allows for more time for education and household/agricultural tasks. Though we have only donated 2 Hippo Water Rollers so far, it is apparent they prove useful and create a positive impact on the community.



To learn more about Hippo Water Roller's inspiring journey, check out their website at <https://www.hipporoller.org/>. If you are interested in making a donation toward purchasing more Hippo Water Rollers through TNC, contact us at nyadireconnection@gmail.com.

After 12 Years, The Numbers Tell A Story

Nobody wants to be “just a number.” But sometimes being “just a number” tells a story. This photo tells a story about the people in the photo but so much more.

The photo below of the FIRST MISSION TEAM OF 17 VOLUNTEERS to visit the UNITED METHODIST MISSION in NYADIRE, ZIMBABWE was taken in 2006. The story began when Christ



UMC and **Rev. Dr. Brian Bauknight** was approached about helping to revitalize a struggling UM hospital in Africa. The choice was Nyadire Hospital, which had no doctor at the time. A presentation was made to Christ UMC congregation to raise \$100,000 to make urgent repairs to the hospital and bring a doctor to the facility. A mission trip was organized to work on the identified priorities to make the facility more viable.

Headed by **Drew Harvey**, the volunteers traveled to Nyadire in July 2006 for two weeks of work. **Chuck**

Billerbeck, Ron Morris, Rev. Tom Funka, Richard Dickey, Jeff Smith, Mark LaRosa and Tom Greway worked on creating dorm rooms for the nursing school and repair projects. **Sue Bower and Kelly Elder** worked with the nurses and the hospital, and **Nancy Funka, Mary Kay Miller, Phil Himmler, Janet Elders, Virginia Smith, Kimberly Greway and Mary Beth Zollars** organized Vacation Bible School for the mission children. VBS concluded with the musical presentation, “100% Chance of Rain.” Interestingly, children were still singing “Who Built the Ark?” to TNC teams in summers to come.

When team members returned home, they decided to continue the work and formed a new organization, THE NYADIRE CONNECTION (TNC). Teams have visited every year since.

Many of the original group have made return trips to Nyadire: **Sara Dickey** (11 trips), **Kimberly Greway**, now **Rev. Greway** (6), **Janet Elders** (6), **Mary Beth Zollars** (15!), **Sue Bower** (6), **Phil Himmler** (5), **Mark LaRosa & Chuck Billerbeck** (2 each), **Drew Harvey** (10).

Certainly an awesome number of trips that speak volumes about the commitment to a small place on the map some 8,400 miles away. The good news is that more and more people are involved and love the work they do.

A doctor is now available and the hospital is functioning with good equipment and a supply of pharmaceuticals to improve lives. Sponsorship programs are keeping kids in school equipped with the tools to do the work. The hearing impaired are also being sponsored and fitted with equipment to aid their ability. Recently a large-scale vision/eyeglass program is ongoing allowing even a 100-year-old man to see better for the first time. And scholarships are being awarded for higher education. The list goes on, and the numbers accumulate. But it’s not about numbers. It is about a **CONNECTION**. It’s about caring. **It’s about God’s love.**

Words of Appreciation From Rev. Mukundu

Rev V.L. Mukundu, Nyadire UMC Mission Station Chairperson & College Chaplain, offered his thanks in emails to TNC recently:

- To the students of **Engineers Without Borders**:
 - “I am just writing this note to thank you for visiting us at Nyadire. We always feel highly honored when we receive you here. The fact that you sacrifice your time and resources for the benefit of Nyadire mission makes us as a community feel so humbled. We were so much happy to see how much concern you have on our solar lights life and even the proposed bio-gas project. We don't have enough words to thank you but only the Lord God will always reward those who do good to others. We pray for the continued success of our partnership and may the good Lord continue to guide you as a team as you continue with your works of charity worldwide. God bless.”
- To **Don Ziegler**, who leads TNC’s **Eyeglasses** program: `
 - “Calvary greetings. This letter serves as an appreciation to your sacrifice of time and resources which brought you to Zimbabwe and in particular to Nyadire mission. The eye clinic will forever be cherished by all those persons whose sight has been restored through the eye glass program. This program is a God given project and as a community we glorify the Lord through your works of charity. On behalf of the UMC and Nyadire community, I really want to thank you Don for all the efforts and risk you have always taken in an effort to assist our people. May the good Lord continue to bless you as you restore sight to many souls through the eye glass program.”

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He said the collaboration started with student **Maddie Gioffre**, who traveled to Nyadire twice with The Nyadire Connection team while she was in high school.

“She later went to Carnegie Mellon University (in Pittsburgh), majoring in civil engineering, and became active with the Engineers Without Borders organization. She came to me in 2014 and suggested that Nyadire Mission and (The Nyadire Connection) could be good partners for an international project for Engineers Without Borders.”

He said discussion with Nyadire Mission followed, and the first project to light the pathways without depending on electricity began. The team raised about \$50,000, and in September 2017, a system of 24 solar streetlights was installed along major pathways used by Nyadire students.

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“We interviewed students and people who live nearby,” said **Cathy Fang**, a project leader for Engineers Without Borders, “and received a lot of positive feedback. Not only do the lights provide safety to students walking back to their dorms, but also when electricity is out, students sometimes sit under the lights to do their homework.”

The Nyadire Mission provided 5 percent of the capital funds, as well as housing, food and transportation for the Pittsburgh students while they were in Zimbabwe, and committed to maintaining and sustaining the work.

Engineers Without Borders harnesses the skills of engineers to tackle the challenges that keep the world’s poorest people from living healthy, productive lives. Professional engineers volunteer their time to address technical problems around the world. Engineering students from university chapters work on both local and international technical projects.

The students are also volunteers, and although they do not receive academic credit for their work, they gain valuable experience. The students must follow the “engineering process” as specified by the national organization, and for international projects, they must have cultural and technical mentors, Harvey said.

Carnegie Mellon students, including project leaders Fang and **Christina Ou**, team members **Ashley Burbano** and **Melina Driscoll**, and mentor **Don Ziegler**, recently visited Nyadire to check on the operation and ensure that proper maintenance is being completed and the system is sustainable. Burbano and Driscoll said that as they researched prior to their visit, they tried to imagine the situation and the community. Seeing the campus in person gave them a fuller, clearer picture of the impact on Nyadire, so that when they returned to the U.S., they were better prepared to make revisions.

“The solar lights brought so much joy to the (teachers’) college,” said third-year student **Talent Nyemba**, 26. Before the lights were installed, she said, “moving at night was so scary (because of) the distance between the dining hall and the hostels.”

The lighting was a welcome addition, she said, especially for female students who sometimes catch a 5 a.m. bus from campus to Harare.

“The lights brought much-needed illumination and reduced the risk of theft and loitering of students in dark corners,” noted the **Rev. Lancelot Mukundu**, Nyadire Station chair. “It also gave freedom of movement to the local people.”

He said the station has established a fund to save \$100 per month for the next seven years, which is when the life span of the batteries will expire and they will need to be replaced.

“This is a beautiful extension of ministry, really beautiful,” said Zimbabwe Episcopal Area **Bishop Eben K. Nhiwatiwa**. “We know of Doctors Without Borders. Now we have the Engineer Without Borders at Nyadire. In the spirit of *chabadza* (working together), we say ‘Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!’”

EyeGlasses Program Helps Others See The Light

Our TNC **EyeGlasses** team conducted clinics in Nyadire and the rural clinic of **Chindenga** in January. They served a total of 660 patients. To date, all the EyeGlasses Clinics have served 7,691 patients. During this trip, we served our oldest patient to date; 110 years old (born in 1908).

On average about 50% of the patients are fitted with used donated prescription eyeglasses. About 25% of the patients have good vision and have no need for eyeglasses to improve their distance vision. In the container currently in route to Nyadire, there is a large supply of reading glasses that will be dispensed upon arrival to those in need.

Our team on this trip was comprised of 8 Assistants which are experienced and fully trained, and 5 volunteers from the local community. Our next trip is planned for the rural clinic of **Mashambahnahka**, in July. This will mean we have served all 6 of the rural clinics. The local team of Assistants conducts follow-up clinics from time to time to continue servicing our brothers and sisters in Zimbabwe.

Thanks to TNC for their on-going support of this valuable program. Many of our TNC members collect used eyeglasses necessary to keep this program running. And several provide donations to offset the cost of this program.

Other partners assisting with this program include Mission Vision who have provided the training, used of diagnostic equipment, and refurbish the eyeglasses we take. Brothers Brother helps with the container shipments and supplied the reading glasses currently in route to Nyadire. This program lets us share the love of Christ with those in need.

News and Notes: Dindi Construction Underway

- **Charlie Moore** and team visited the **Dindi** Rural Health Clinic in January and reported that construction work has started and funds are flowing from GBGM. **Hannah Mafunda** advises that the GBGM grant was approved in April 2017. Furnishings for Dindi are included with the container currently awaiting clearance before final delivery to Nyadire.
- Update on **Hearing Impaired Program**: The Hearing Impaired Resource Unit was introduced to the Nyadire Primary School in 1994 with the help of the community, church, and Ministry of Education. It serves as a special education school for children in the Mashonaland East Province and is one of the few hearing impaired programs available in the entire province.
 - Solar Ear: Funds were sent to AudioMax and they will travel to Nyadire this month to fit SolarEar Hearing Aids, and teach proper use and maintenance.
 - Sponsorships: 9 students are being sponsored; we need five additional sponsors to cover all 24 students in the program. For more information about the program or to become a sponsor, contact **Molly Michael** at mollyalice.michael@gmail.com

Sister Rut Scholarship Honors Nyadire Hero

For over 10 years, TNC has provided financial educational sponsorships for students in the HOH, HOHO, and HI programs throughout their primary and secondary schooling. Now, TNC has decided to assist these students further with their pursuit of a continued education to enable them to become active and contributing members of their community. In order to sustain the significant early work in supporting educational opportunities for primary through secondary grades, we have developed the **Sister Rut Scholarship Program**.

Sister Rut Lindgren (photo on right) was a missionary nurse from Finland who lived in Nyadire for more than 35 years. Through her years of ministry Sister Rut oversaw the expanded program on immunization for the hospital, driving out to surrounding villages each day to provide immunizations and clinic-based care in hard-to-reach areas. She would visit 24 villages on a weekly basis. Sister Rut had a deep love for the least of God's children, being an orphan herself. Rut adopted and raised many Zimbabwean children during her time in Nyadire. She has been quoted to say: "Every child needs to be held," and she continued to live accordingly. In 1999 the life project of Sister Rut, the "Home of Hope" Orphanage was opened in Nyadire.



Money for building the orphanage was raised in Finland, who continues with cooperation with The Nyadire Connection (TNC). At the time of her death she was caring for six children who lived with her. Care for these children is, of course, an immediate concern. Today many children are enjoying the fruits of Sister Rut's ministry as are numerous people who have been affected by her love and care. Sister Rut's dedication to serve generously continues to be an inspiration to members of The Nyadire Connection and Zimbabwe community. TNC members, blessed with her friendship, describe her as having an "unwavering commitment," "a spirit of love and service," and being a woman with "true courage".

TNC honors this program in memory of Sister Rut's legacy as we continue to support Nyadire and many of our students through a tertiary education.

For more information on the scholarship, visit this link at TNC's website:

<http://www.nyadire.org/sister-rut-scholarship.html>

**Remember, as they say in Zimbabwe,
"God is good all the time; all the time, God is good."**