

# CELEBRATING 15 YEARS OF THE NYADIRE CONNECTION

www.nyadire.org

November 2021

## TNC: From A Small Group Has Come Big Change

*“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”*

*--Margaret Mead, anthropologist, recipient of the Planetary Citizen of the Year Award in 1978*

Margaret Mead wasn’t referring to The Nyadire Connection when she shared those words.

But today she could be.

Just ask Rev. Alan Gurupira, assistant to the United Methodist Bishop, Zimbabwe Episcopal Area, who has seen firsthand what change at the Nyadire Mission in northeastern Zimbabwe looks like.

“The Mission will never be the same again,” he said. “We are very grateful and thank you very much for your support. It has spread to all facets of our life here, to elevate the lives of our people.”

TNC was formed in 2006, but its journey began six years earlier, when the late Sally Ernst, then a passionate and active member of Christ UMC in Bethel Park, invited a representative of the UM Church’s General Board of Global Ministries to speak at the church. Afterward, he described to Sally a new program called “Hospital Revitalization” and mentioned Nyadire Hospital as one of those in great need. Sally, a strong advocate for international mission work, encouraged the church’s senior pastor, Rev. Brian Bauknight, to consider the hospital project.

In 2002, four people from CUMC, including Sara and Richard Dickey, traveled the more than 8,400 miles to Nyadire on an assessment mission. When they returned, CUMC agreed to sponsor Nyadire Hospital and initially raised funds to bring

a missionary doctor there, and to make a number of facility improvements.

Then, in 2006, 18 church members visited Nyadire and worked on converting an existing building to a nurses’ dormitory, provided training on medical equipment, and conducted an elaborate “Vacation Bible School” production called “100% Chance of Rain.” Those first 18 names bear repeating here: Chuck Billerbeck, Sue Bower, Sara and Richard Dickey, Kelly Elder, Janet Elders, Rev. Tom and Nancy Funka, Rev. Kimberly Greway, Tom Greway, Drew Harvey, Phil Himmler, Mark LaRosa, Mary Kay Miller, Ron Morris, Jeff and Virginia Smith, and Mary Beth Zollars.



“We came home and agreed that Nyadire was a place that needed us, and a place that we needed,” Drew said. “I think we all saw what a life of spiritual richness looks like, and we also saw a place with very capable people, skilled at helping thousands, but people who now needed a helping hand. We studied a bit, discussed a lot, and asked ourselves a basic question: If we want to help, how do we do it right?”

The group developed a set of organizing principles that remain the same today: Relationships and connections are the foundation, so we should stay at the same place when we visit, build trust, get to



know one another, educate each other; Americans are always full of ideas about what should be done, but we need the humility to listen and then try to enable Nyadire’s priorities; help the mission to move toward self-sustainability; build a big tent of supporters, welcome their feedback and involvement, and maintain unquestionable financial integrity; remain 100 percent volunteer and an integral part of the church.

That was 2006, and TNC is now celebrating its 15th anniversary.

From the beginning, TNC’s all-volunteer, nonprofit operating model has been to organize trips to Nyadire several times annually to build relationships, learn the mission’s priorities, offer administrative support and raise funds for one-time projects and ongoing programs. Then throughout the year, TNC representatives monitor progress with their program counterparts at Nyadire via countless phone calls, emails and video chats.

What’s been accomplished in these 15 years?

TNC has organized nearly 50 mission trips, with roughly 130 people returning to Nyadire, many for multiple times. With 16 trips, Mary Beth has logged the most; her mother, Elsa, is the oldest to go, and Frankie Stoltenberg, at age 10 in 2012, was the youngest.

*(Continued on page 2)*

# TNC: Small Group, Big Change

(Continued from page 1)

Most travelers came back with passionate ideas and many of those ideas turned into ongoing programs, each with a leader in Pittsburgh and a leader in Nyadire. We currently operate 12 programs focused on Health, Orphans and Education, and below are some of the life-changing initiatives we've helped to make possible during the past 15 years:

## HEALTH

- Helped to fund a doctor for the hospital
- Outfitted a surgical suite and provided surgical instruments, supplies of suture and consumables such as gowns, masks, gloves
- Provided vision testing and eyeglasses for thousands of patients, and trained a Zimbabwe team to conduct ongoing vision clinics
- Purchased basic food bundles for about 450 families for one year during global pandemic
- Stocked the Nyadire pharmacy with drugs/medicines
- Refurbished rural health clinics, at a cost of about \$300,000 each
- Supplied roughly 40 rebuilt sewing machines and thousands of material kits used to improve personal hygiene for woman and young girls



## ORPHANS

- Provided funding to enable the survival of the mission's orphanage, which is home to more than 20 children
- Facilitated hiring of a local administrator, Emmanuel Chiimba
- Provided funding to orphans in remote areas to keep more than 400 kids in school
- Supplied more than 3,500 backpacks filled with school supplies

## EDUCATION

- Purchased nearly 1,000 textbooks for O-Level exams
- Supplied sponsorships and materials for Hearing Innovation, including hearing aids
- Developed partnership with Engineers Without Borders and Carnegie Mellon University; students designed solar street lighting for Nyadire

- Provided scholarship funds for about 25 students to continue their advanced and vocational educations

With 15 years of ministry in Nyadire completed, we are eager to continue helping to enable life-changing improvements, and we look forward to working alongside our long-time partners in Zimbabwe.

"The Nyadire Connection is one of the best arms of partnership we have ever had in our relationship with a partner conference," said Bishop Eben Nhwatiwa of the Zimbabwe Episcopal Area. "Through the work and ministry of TNC, the health delivery to many people in our church and the surrounding communities here in Zimbabwe has been transformed."

Transformation – change – led by a small group of committed citizens. Enabled by the financial donations and support of many. That's The Nyadire Connection, as we celebrate our 15th anniversary.

# TNC Announces New Leadership Team, "Forward 15" Strategy



Leave it to Drew Harvey to capture the powerful essence of TNC, the organization he helped to form and has served as chairman for the past 15 years.

Said Drew, "We call TNC a 'partnership' and it's always been easy to describe a tangible list of what TNC does for Nyadire: construction of clinics, sponsorship of orphans, provision of medicines, etc. But, as an equal partner, what have the people of Nyadire done for us? The answer is not so intuitive, but equally valuable.

"Because of Nyadire and our friends there, I've clarified the priorities of what's important in my life. I've seen people manage difficult, even desperate, situations with joy in their hearts and a trust that God is always with us. My spiritual life and faith journey have become richer and more honest. I've been inspired by so many incredible people, including Zimbabweans and my fellow TNC colleagues. I've learned that striving toward a stronger personal relationship with God leads me to help others, and helping others synergistically grows my relationship with God. As a former Western Pennsylvania UMC Bishop used to frequently say and write, 'The Journey Continues.' True that."

Indeed, after 15 years, the journey will continue, with TNC announcing a new leadership team as part of our "Forward 15" strategy.

Effective Jan. 1, 2022, Drew and Treasurer Richard Dickey will be retiring from the roles they've held since the organization's inception and will be succeeded by a five-person leadership team of experienced TNC members.

“Through the generous support of our donors, the commitment of our program leaders, and the strong relationships we have with our friends in Zimbabwe, TNC has built a solid foundation during the past 15 years,” Drew said. “As we transition to a new leadership team, we look forward to the next 15 years with just as much energy and passion. Personally, I have been blessed by the many TNC relationships I’ve developed over the years, both here and there, and I expect to remain involved as we continue to fulfill our mission.”

The new leadership team consists of Ralph Duckworth of New Sewickley Township, Chairman and Director-Strategic Outreach; Chuck Billerbeck of Upper St. Clair, Director-Finance; Debbie Little of Cranberry Township, Director-Strategic Inreach; Sandy McKnight of Adams Township, Director-Administrative and Programs; and Tim Wesley of Cranberry Township, Director-Communications. Members of the leadership team have been involved in TNC for an average of about 10 years and bring extensive professional expertise to their roles.

On behalf of the new leadership team, Ralph said: “We want to thank Drew and Richard for their many years of dedicated service. Under their leadership, along with the efforts of the entire TNC team and our partners in Zimbabwe, our organization has made a difference in the lives of many people. We are committed to maintaining these important relationships and building on our accomplishments for at least the next 15 years.”

In a note to Drew, Bishop Eben Nhwatiwa of the Zimbabwe Episcopal Area, wrote: “It is a joy for me and the whole church here to see these solid plans about the future leaders for The Nyadire Connection ... Allow me to welcome the new team of leaders. They have the will and zeal to continue this important ministry. I can assure you that their counterparts in Zimbabwe will work side by side with them in the most harmonious manner possible.”

As part of its “Forward 15” strategy, TNC expects to play a significant role in helping Nyadire move toward self-sustainability by providing administrative and financial support to expand the mission’s farm. Farm expansion at Nyadire has been cited as the key priority by church officials in both Nyadire and Harare, headquarters of the UM church in Zimbabwe.

Rev. Alan Gurupira, assistant to Bishop Nhwatiwa, said an agricultural board has been meeting and working on a vision to expand farming production and output throughout UM missions, including Nyadire.

“We will need support from TNC,” he said.

Rev. Lance Mukundu, Nyadire Station Chair, has talked about the goal of “developing the farm and other areas to become self-sustaining for all departments. We hope the farm can produce enough food to feed all, including schools and the hospital. The TNC partnership will be vital to that goal.”

TNC fully supports this goal and looks forward to working with local and national church officials in Zimbabwe, as well as current and new donors in the U.S., to help fulfill Nyadire’s movement toward self-sustainability.

“We believe our ‘Forward 15’ strategy – developed through discussions with our friends and partners in Zimbabwe – represents a lofty, yet achievable goal,” Ralph said. “Our new leadership team has accepted the challenge, strengthened by our faith that God will continue to bless our efforts.”

Ralph has been active in TNC since 2013 when he co-founded the rural medical clinic refurbishment program. He has travelled to Zimbabwe three times and led a mission team from Dutilh UMC in 2019. He has been a member of Dutilh since 2000, has been active in Dutilh’s Men’s Group and has served in various laity leadership positions. Ralph retired as a CPA and financial advisor in 2020 after a 46-year career which included founding his own CPA firm. He and his wife, Jan, have one adult son, a Weimaraner and a Vizsla.

Chuck has been a member of TNC since its creation in 2006, when he was part of the inaugural team that travelled to Nyadire. He has been to Nyadire four times and has been active in numerous initiatives including farm revitalization. He retired from a 35-year career at BNY Mellon in 2017. Chuck and his wife, Amy, have been members of Christ UMC since 1998, and have two daughters and one granddaughter.

Debbie has been involved with TNC for about five years, during which she

has led the planning for several of TNC’s friend-raising and fund-raising events. She is a member of Dutilh UMC and traveled to Nyadire in 2019. Debbie is an attorney with Dentons Cohen & Grigsby in Pittsburgh, practicing in the area of commercial litigation. She has two grown daughters.

Sandy has been involved with TNC since 2010 and has visited Nyadire five times, gaining a broad perspective of our programs and administrative needs. Sandy has a master’s degree in International Management and pursued a career in banking and commercial insurance brokerage before leaving the formal workforce to raise three daughters with her husband, Gary. She is a member of St. Paul’s UMC.

Tim has been a member of TNC since 2013, through his initial involvement in the clinic program and all aspects of TNC’s communications activities. He has visited Nyadire once. Tim retired in 2019 after a 30-year career in corporate communications. He and his wife, Maria, have attended Dutilh UMC since 1997, and they have three adult daughters and one grandson.



*Elsa Zollars, who happens to be the oldest TNC traveler to visit Nyadire, has played a major role in our success. For many years, Elsa has helped to tell the TNC story through newsletters, brochures and other methods of communication.*

# First Trip Memories Remain Vivid



It was June 2006, and Mary Beth Zollars was completing another year as a German language teacher at Chartiers Valley High School. As she sat at her desk during one of the last in-service days of the school year, something moved her to call the office at Christ Church in Bethel Park, where some of her fellow members were getting ready for a mission trip to an unknown, faraway village in Zimbabwe.

“I just called the church to see if I could help pack medical supplies,” she said. “They said the team had a cancellation and wondered if I would want to join, so I did. It was a total fluke!”

That “fluke” lit a passion that still burns brightly today, as Mary Beth fell in love on that trip – in love with the young children at the orphanage, that is. Upon returning, she decided to lead TNC’s first program, sponsoring children at the Home of Hope orphanage, and 15 years later she continues in that role, thanks to that “fluke” phone call.

Enjoy these other memories of that trip, from some of TNC’s first voyagers:

## Drew Harvey

The people we met at Nyadire were all so welcoming, joyous, and capable. However, I remember being equally amazed and inspired by my fellow travelers. Although I knew everyone from our preparation, each person met every challenge with a smile and positive spirit. We would sit in a devotion circle each evening and I would listen to people tell the most spiritually rich stories of their day. God felt very close on those evenings and was definitely sitting in the pews with us during the departure church service. I just remember thinking, “These are some of the finest people I’ve ever known.”



## Sue Bower

For most of us, this was the biggest trip, the farthest journey out of our comfort zones we had ever done. We really didn’t even know each other that well. Our travel was difficult. We arrived in Harare airport two days later in a completely different world, with none of our luggage arrived. We were immediately greeted with smiles and hugs; they grabbed our carry-ons and we headed to the bus. We were seated with new African friends. My partner was Barbra, holding her infant daughter who was afraid of me and my white skin.

After our long ride to Nyadire, we arrived to a total blackout and went into a house full of more new friends to eat a dinner of foods not familiar to us. The next morning (Sunday) we headed to church under a beautiful blue sky. And so the trip went, so many new experiences, food, friends, too many to count. Soon our time was up and we had to leave, say goodbye to the people we had only known for two weeks. Why was this so hard to do? There were tears all around among the hugs and gifts given. And the whole way home, all we could think about was when can we come back? How could this have all happened in such a short time? Our lives were changed forever, whether we knew it or not.

## Mark LaRosa

I remember seeing mothers waiting under the trees for infant weighing and immunizations. And the expectant mothers who would bring their families, stay in a hut and wait to deliver. Most of all, I’ll never forget the great smiles and look of resiliency on peoples’ faces. I kept asking myself, “How do they do it?” Then I learned about their values and faith, and this was the gift they gave me to bring home, and the reason I wanted to return.

## Rev. Kimberly Greway

After traveling more than 8,000 miles and touching down on three continents, our large group of volunteers arrived in Harare with only our carry-on luggage. I will never forget how so many people from Nyadire had traveled hours to greet us. Our few pieces of luggage were piled onto trucks while the volunteers and the welcoming crowd from Nyadire piled into a bus. The Zimbabweans ensured that each of them sat with a volunteer and over the next four hours, lifelong friendships began to form. We sang and chatted as we bounced along. We asked about names and families, jobs and hometowns. We shared a kind of communion that would only continue and grow over the next 15 years.

## Mary Beth Zollars

We helped with a two-week Vacation Bible School. In the mornings, we talked about the life of Jesus, and in the afternoons we covered the story of Noah. The experience still provides a flood of memories – no pun intended – of children singing, learning and playing. I have never in all of my life encountered such a vibrant experience.

Working with mission team members and teachers from Nyadire Primary School created lifelong friendships. I knew in 2006 that it was the beginning of a great chapter.

## Phil Himmler

Upon returning home, I placed a photo in a very important devotional book. Connie, the woman in the photo, had sat next to me in the bus that transported our first team to Nyadire from the airport. The nurses and other staff people had been instructed to sit with a marungu (white person) to “make a friend.” Connie and I have remained dear friends ever since. Connie had lost her first husband shortly after her twin babies were born; he was killed in a car accident. It was then that she decided to become a nurse in order to support her children. Connie later married a man named Blessing, and he recently passed. How sad for her to go through this kind of grief again!

The photo with Connie was taken at the Harare airport just before our trip home, proof that a lasting friendship was born in Nyadire, Zimbabwe in 2006. Connie’s children, daughter Fadzae and son Munashe, attended our first Bible School and are now grown adults! I treasure this photo.



## Chuck Billerbeck

Best beer ever: It was a Castle lager in the Johannesburg airport on the trip home. I can taste it to this day!

The Phil Chain: On the return trip to the U.S., there were flight cancelations and I remember having to physically tether myself to Phil with a gold chain so she wouldn’t wander off amid all the chaos. We managed to get the last British Airways flight to Newark.

The Midnight Run: On our trip over, the baggage trailed us by a week, and some baggage never did arrive. I remember going

to the first church service on Sunday dressed in my khaki shorts and a white shirt and tie borrowed from Rev. Julius Tsiga. When the bags finally did show up, Julius and I left for the airport one evening. The road to Harare is two lanes and scary even during the day. At night, the trucks from Mozambique and Malawi fly down that road! People, including small children, walk up and down that road at night as well. On the way back from the airport, Julius finally opened up about what life was like in Zimbabwe.

## Tom Greway



The team arrived at Nyadire in total darkness on Saturday night. The next morning we joined hundreds of students from the primary and secondary schools along with adults who lived on and near the Nyadire Mission for an outdoors Sunday worship service on a field next to the church building. It was a special Sunday in which persons and groups of persons made their offerings to the church. I was struck by the powerful singing and by the pastor announcing by name and amount the offerings from the people.

Following the service, I remained in my chair simply trying to let the memory of what I had just witnessed and experienced soak in. Was I really sitting in the warm sun in the heart of the African Continent surrounded by hundreds of Zimbabweans? My musings were interrupted by a 10-year-old girl who planted

herself directly in front of me, looked in my face, and asked, “Who are you?” As a teacher, I have been asked some tough questions in my life. But, wow, how do you begin to explain to a young child in a totally different culture who you are? I did my best, only to have her ask a second question: “What is your name?” Followed by: “Why are you here?” Her name was Millicent, and she said she was a boarding student in the primary school and lived in what sounded like “halfway.” I thought she was mispronouncing where she lived, and I kept insisting she lived in Harare, not “halfway.” For the next four days, Millicent was able somehow to locate me every day for a brief conversation. On Thursday she told me she was going back to “halfway”, or in my mind Harare, the next day for the school break. I gave her some pens and said goodbye.

That weekend, our group went by bus to visit Africa University in Mutare. On Sunday, on the drive back to Nyadire, the driver announced that we were going to stop for food and some shops at “Halfway.” What? Did I hear that right? Yes, there really was a place called Halfway. After leaving the bus, I went into the first shop and asked if they knew a girl named Millicent, and they did! They told me where she lived with her mother, above a nearby shop. I went to that shop, found the mother and asked her about Millicent. She said that Millicent had come home from Nyadire and told her about a man named Tom whom she had met in Nyadire. I told the mother I was Tom, and she located Millicent. I was able to buy her an ice cream cone before re-boarding the bus back to Nyadire.

## 2000

Representative of UM General Board of Global Ministries spoke at Christ Church, seeking support for revitalizing Nyadire Hospital

## 2002

Richard and Sara Dickey joined small team to visit and evaluate hospital

Major fundraising campaigns began at Christ Church

## 2007

- Home of Hope Outreach (HOHO) program started with first 100 orphans; annual enrollment now exceeds 400 students
- TNC began monthly review meetings
- Support network expanded to include Jefferson Hospital, Allegheny General Hospital, McKeesport Hospital, Pitt Nursing School, Brother's Brother Foundation, Global Links, Linus Project, Bethel Park Schools, Carnegie Mellon University, Women's Care International, Rotary Clubs, and several UM Churches (Christ Church, Mt. Lebanon UM, First Bethel, Baldwin Community, St. Paul's)
- Provided funds to repair X-ray machine and other critical pieces of hospital equipment
- Through financial support, enabled hiring of Emmanuel Chiimba as HOH Administrator
- Created first TNC website and published regular newsletter to inform donors and supporters
- Dr. Kasombo Tshiani named senior doctor at hospital, with Christ Church providing the top-up salary
- Container program started; to date, more than 20 containers have been shipped, with specifically requested items such as hospital and medical supplies



Home of Hope- 2006

## 2009

- Campus Crusade for Christ sent container of cholera medications
- TNC represented at "Summit Meeting" held at Africa University
- Sent 250 backpacks for HOHO program; have averaged about 300 annually since
- Published Lenten Calendar to raise funds for cholera control
- Held ZimJam concert and golf outing fundraisers
- Purchased nets for Imagine No Malaria

## 2006

In preparation for first mission trip, "African Awareness" sessions held at Christ Church with professors from Pitt's Africana Studies Department

July 28-Aug. 16: Team of 18 traveled to Nyadire, worked mainly on construction of nursing dormitory and Vacation Bible School

Sept 21: Team members met and decided to form The Nyadire Connection; set guidelines, chose leaders, agreed to focus initially on Health and Orphans

Funds sent for fuel, nurse graduation, nurse sponsorships

Home of Hope (HOH) orphanage program started, with first donations accepted in 2007; program has enabled more than 20 children annually to live there

Volunteer-in-Mission (VIM) program started



Girl Empowerment- 2010

## 2008

- Controversial elections in Zimbabwe led to violence, hunger and general deprivation throughout country; TNC canceled summer VIM trips
- Shipped many boxes of food in response to hunger crisis
- Creative Hands began making blankets and hats for babies born at Nyadire
- Provided funds for purchase of truck for hospital
- Christmas Connection began with 150 cards and funds

## 2013



**Sister Rut- 2011**

- Drew Harvey, Sara Dickey and Ralph Duckworth traveled to Zimbabwe to assess conditions and needs of six rural medical clinics affiliated with Nyadire Hospital; concluded that all six needed to be rebuilt
- Men's Ministry at Dutilh UM Church began to coordinate Rural Clinic program, starting with Chikwizo; expected cost of about \$300,000; to date, five clinics have been rebuilt at a total cost of about \$1.5 million; clinics have been furnished with equipment and furniture from private donations
- Drew Harvey named 2013 Jefferson Award recipient, presented to recognize and honor community and public service
- Rev. Julius Tsiga named Nyadire Station Chair and Rev. Forbes Matonga named Pastor in Charge
- Zimbabwe confirmed new constitution and held elections; TNC canceled planned VIM trips because of political uncertainty
- Program to install non-grid-connected lighting at Nyadire approved by Engineers Without Borders (EWB) through student chapter at Carnegie Mellon University (CMU)

## 2011

- Dr. Larry Tanyanyiwa joined hospital staff
- At 95%, Zimbabwe unemployment was world's highest
- "Africa February" held at Christ Church; education and fundraiser included multiple speakers and events
- O-level Textbooks program started; since then, has purchased more than 900 books used by students to study for exams
- UMCOR committed funds to finish water project
- Sister Rut Lindgren, founder of HOH, passed away
- Container arrived with one-year supply of medical consumables and sutures



**Rural Clinics- 2013**

## 2010

- Zimbabwe Partnership created in agreement between Zimbabwe Episcopal Area Conference and Western Pennsylvania Conference
- Rev. Julius Tsiga, chaplain to hospital, and wife, Joyce, hospital matron, visited Pittsburgh
- Bishop Thomas Bickerton and Western PA UM Conference staff visited Nyadire to promote Imagine No Malaria
- Dave Seveck of ComputerReach visited Nyadire to set up Internet Cafe with Apple computers
- Girl Empowerment program started; now serves more than 400 girls at eight schools and six clinics
- Built hospital storeroom
- Inmates at Allegheny County Jail began sponsorship program of HOHO children
- TNC began selling tickets to Upper St. Clair/ Bethel Park Rotary chicken dinner

## 2012

- Purchased "African Bikes" in Harare
- Funds provided for fencing around School of Nursing dormitory
- "Baby Gracious" found along Nyadire road, and eventually placed with a family
- Running water returned to Nyadire after eight years
- Truck purchased for Nyadire Farm; TNC supported Butchery, Garden, and Poultry operations

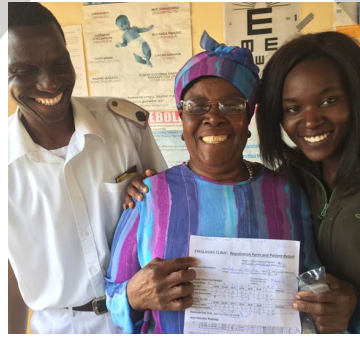
# The Nyadire Connection TIMELINE

## 2014

- Local college students Jessi Mazzone and Natalie Geer braved a rainy, cold day and icy water of the Ohio River to do Pittsburgh Polar Bear Plunge, raising more than \$40,000 for rebuilding Nyahuku clinic
- Chikwizo clinic refurbishments completed
- Solar water heater provided to Nursing School
- HOH children enjoyed excursion to Victoria Falls
- UMC of Finland began initial work on new HOH
- Sewing Circle events and refurbishment of sewing machines started
- New TNC website posted

## 2015

- Nyahuku clinic rebuild began
- HOH's Emmanuel Chiimba attended Asian Rural Training Institute in Japan
- Major donations of school supplies collected from several Pittsburgh-area schools
- Shipped ocean container that including furnishings for clinics
- Delivered 2,600 pairs of eyeglasses
- Made presentations to all Pittsburgh District churches to ask for financial support for clinics



**Eyeglasses Test- 2017**

## 2017

- Dutilh UMC hosted "TNC Month" and raised more than \$13,000 for various programs; during month, TNC members provided mission minutes, hosted display tables, sold crafts, and told TNC's story
- Don Ziegler trained 12 volunteers in Zimbabwe to conduct eye testing
- TNC hosted "friend"-raiser event at Calvary United Methodist Church and Brother's Brother Foundation
- Jimmy VanderSchoor presented 900 Bibles to graduating students
- Mt. Lebanon UMC hosted sewing party for Girl Empowerment program



**Hearing Innovation- 2016**

## 2016

- TNC celebrated 10th Anniversary
- Rev. Lancelot Mukundu named Nyadire Station Chair
- Hearing Innovation program started
- Baldwin Community UMC donated two Hippo Water rollers
- Nyahuku clinic refurbishment completed; TNC participated in dedication ceremony with UM Zimbabwe Bishop Nhwatiwa presiding
- Christ Church dedicated \$320,000 of its "Giving Hope Building and Missions Project" to rebuild Dendera clinic
- Eyeglasses clinic conducted with 513 patients receiving glasses

## 2018

- Nyadire celebrated arrival of first solar street lights, thanks to CMU student chapter of EWB; 24 street lamps planned for installation
- Sister Rut Scholarship program started; 22 students currently enrolled in higher education programs such as teaching, mining engineering, actuarial science and law
- Dendera clinic dedicated
- Container arrived in Nyadire with 236 boxes to be distributed; items included medical supplies, eyeglasses, pastoral supplies, hospital maintenance supplies, sewing machines and hygiene kits
- Purchased 250 O-Level textbooks and distributed to HOHO schools, with recipients to decide on service projects



## 2019

- Rev. Julius Tsiga passed away; he was a friend, mentor and pastor to so many people in Zimbabwe and to TNC
- Teachers and students of Hearing Innovation visited Great Zimbabwe Monument, the trip of a lifetime for many
- Dutilh UMC preschool children raised and donated \$1,200 to HOH to purchase seven Buffalo Bikes from World Bicycle Relief in Harare; Dutilh mission team delivered bikes
- Emmanuel Chiimba visited Pittsburgh, presented HOH vision and expressed gratitude for support
- Conducted eyeglasses clinics in Nyadire and Chindenga, serving 660 patients
- Construction started at Dindi clinic, with funds from GBGM
- Mt. Lebanon UMC packed and sent 200 backpacks for HOHO students
- Zimbabwe Partnership renewed



Partnership Signing- 2019

## 2020

- TNC began working with Nyadire Social Committee to help meet the critical need for food during COVID-19 pandemic; donors provided nearly \$100,000 to purchase food bundles for about 450 families, through April 2021
- Dutilh UMC pledged \$50,000 from its “Make Room” campaign toward rebuild of Mashambanhaka clinic
- United Methodist Foundation of Pennsylvania (UMF) provided \$25,000 grant for rebuild of Mashambanhaka clinic; UMF also matched an additional \$25,000 of clinic donations received by TNC from a virtual fundraising event
- Hearing Innovation collected hearing aids and conducted parent workshop at Nyadire to equip parents with basic signing skills and ways to empower their children
- Shipped containers that included 26 sewing machines and more than 150 Girl Empowerment kits
- Held groundbreaking at Mashambanhaka clinic
- Hot water provided at HOH, following purchase of iron frames to set up solar hot water tanks.

## 2021

- TNC celebrated 15th Anniversary; United Methodist News Daily Digest featured extensive story, with photos and videos compiled by Kudzai Chingwe, a local writer
- Finland UMC provided new playground equipment to HOH
- In tribute to her memory, legacy and support, TNC renamed Eyeglasses program The Faith Geer Memorial Eyeglasses Program; program surpassed more than 7,000 patients served
- Purchased seven “pop-up classrooms” from ComputerReach; each unit included tables, chairs, power strips, eight computers, and projector, all mounted on a movable cart; teachers will provide computer training for seven students at a time at Nyadire and HOHO schools
- Announced “Forward 15” strategy, with new leadership team and renewed focus on expanding Nyadire farm to continue moving toward self-sustainment for mission
- Completed rebuild of Dindi and Mashambanhaka clinics; TNC participated in both dedication ceremonies with Bishop Nhiwatiwa presiding
- Offered abundant thanks to Chairman Drew Harvey and Treasurer Richard Dickey for their roles as founding leaders of TNC



Bikes- 2019

# PROGRAMS

Currently, TNC provides administrative and financial support for 12 programs, focused on Health, Orphans and Education. Please see below for a description of each, including contact information for our program leaders.

If you'd like to apply your professional expertise or personal passion by becoming involved in a program, please contact a member of the TNC leadership team or any of the program leaders below. We'd love for you to join our international mission efforts!

## HEALTH

### MEDICAL AND DOCTOR SUPPORT



TNC's financial support ensures that a doctor is stationed at the Nyadire Hospital and also enables numerous medical projects and programs. Examples include equipping of a surgical theater, advanced nurse education, and specific equipment provision or repair. Contributions help cover these ongoing expenses.

Leader: Sue Bower  
Jsbow125@aol.com or  
412-885-8904

### OCEAN CONTAINERS

Many medical and educational items urgently needed in Nyadire are available in the U.S. through donations or at a much-reduced cost. TNC and other organizations collect items that Nyadire specifically requires and requests. Then we arrange to ship these items in 40-foot-long ocean containers, the only cost-effective solution, so they can eventually arrive in Nyadire by truck. Handling and shipping fees are up to \$15,000 per container with a typical transit time of three to four months.

Leader: Drew Harvey  
drewharvey@verizon.net or 412 841-3738

### RURAL MEDICAL CLINICS

Nyadire Hospital has responsibility for six rural health clinics in the region. Each clinic serves between 5,000 and 8,000 people in the local community and is the primary medical care facility for people with malaria, cholera, hepatitis, and other infectious diseases. Many people walk miles to get to the clinics, and a high percentage of women deliver their babies there. For many years, the clinics were in disrepair, with no running water, flush toilets or electricity, and not enough space to properly serve their patients. In partnership with Nyadire and the Zimbabwe Ministry of Health, TNC has led the renovation of five clinics, which are now providing significantly enhanced medical care to the local populations.

Leader: Ralph Duckworth  
taxplan1951@gmail.com or 724-272-0069



### MEDICINE AND DRUG SUPPLY

Chronic diseases such as high blood pressure, diabetes, and malaria cannot be treated without medicines, but Nyadire hospital typically has limited or no drugs available. We work closely with the pharmacist and doctors there to determine what drugs and quantities are most critically needed. TNC sends funds every three months directly to the drug supplier in Zimbabwe and Nyadire hospital then places the order and collects the medicines.

Leader: Drew Harvey  
drewharvey@verizon.net or 412-841-3738

### FAITH GEER MEMORIAL EYEGLASSES

Partnering with Mission Vision and initiated by the late Faith Geer, TNC provides eye exams and eyeglasses to improve the vision of people in Zimbabwe. TNC volunteers have been trained and certified to conduct eyeglass clinics by Mission Vision, which also provides used eyeglasses. The TNC volunteers then train other medical personnel in Zimbabwe to conduct additional clinics, which enables significant expansion of the program throughout the region.

Leader: Don Ziegler  
Don.ziegler@icloud.com or 412-956-2660



### GIRL EMPOWERMENT

Girls in Zimbabwe can quickly fall behind their male peers in school when they must miss several school days a month due to a lack of feminine hygiene supplies. Women are often likewise hampered in their daily work and activities. These issues can lead to reduced self-esteem and even isolation. Through the Girl Empowerment program, TNC provides hygiene kits, along with culturally and developmentally appropriate hygiene education, to help girls and women address some of these concerns. Recently, the program has expanded its ministry to include sewing for safety and other products, including facemasks and school uniforms.

Leader: Bonnie Lawson  
bonnielawson58@comcast.net or 412-759-3546

# ORPHANS

## HOME OF HOPE

Located at Nyadire, the Home of Hope orphanage cares for about 20 orphans and vulnerable children aged 1-18. It is the brainchild of Sister Rut Lindgren, a missionary nurse from Finland, who grew up as an orphan, lived and worked in Nyadire, and was inspired to help orphans and the needy. About 25% of all children in Zimbabwe are orphans. TNC recognizes this enormous challenge and – through donors who sponsor specific children – provides financial support for the operational needs of the Home, including food, school fees, uniforms, medical fees, staff salaries, fuel, and water.

Leader: Mary Beth Zollars  
mbzollars@aol.com or 412-498-2281

## HOME OF HOPE OUTREACH/SCHOOL SPONSORSHIP

More than 500 children in and around Nyadire have been identified as orphans. Some live in orphanages or extended family; some are living on their own, leading their own households and often parenting younger siblings. The Home of Hope Outreach/School Sponsorship program seeks to ensure that as many orphans as possible in the Nyadire region are able to get a basic school education and learn essential life skills. In partnership with the Nyadire Mission and schools in the surrounding area, the program connects orphans with sponsors who assist in funding the student's education.

Leader: Marie Hunt  
emptynest05@comcast.net or 724-207-0281



# EDUCATION

## ENGINEERS WITHOUT BORDERS

Engineers Without Borders (EWB) is an international organization where professional engineers volunteer to resolve challenging technical problems globally. The EWB student chapter at Pittsburgh's Carnegie Mellon University partners with TNC. Working closely with the Nyadire Mission, TNC helps to identify a specific need or challenge, such as the lack of electricity. TNC then engages the EWB chapter to develop a solution, based on a detailed methodology and the goal of sustainability. For example, EWB students designed and installed solar street lights at the complex along the pathways leading to mission schools.

Leader: Drew Harvey  
drewharvey@verizon.net or 412-841-3738

## HEARING INNOVATION

The Nyadire Primary School offers educational resources and support to deaf and hard-of-hearing students, with the help of the community, the church, and the Ministry of Education. It serves as a special education school for children in the Mashonaland East Province and is one of the few programs of this kind in the province. Students not only learn and perfect Zimbabwean Sign Language, they also learn life skills such as arts and crafts, market gardening, welding, fashion and fabrics, and carpentry. The school charges a fee to attend and uniforms are mandatory. Students also must pay a boarding fee because they travel from a long distance to attend this specialized program. By providing financial support, TNC enables children to attend the school and improve their quality of life in many ways.

Leader: Molly Michael  
mollyalice.michael@gmail.com or 412-805-6481

## VOLUNTEERS IN MISSION

Each year, TNC organizes several mission trips to the Nyadire Mission. By doing so, we offer assistance to our friends there, and we provide opportunities for our volunteers to grow spiritually by serving God, helping others and learning from the relationships we have built with the people of Zimbabwe. The Nyadire Mission is a rural complex located in the Northeastern region of Zimbabwe; it has a hospital, school, orphanage, nursing school, teachers college, church, and farm. TNC has been leading large group teams since 2006, with some of our leaders traveling to Nyadire since 2002. Nyadire is a safe, secure community that loves our visits. Volunteers stay in clean brick houses with beds, bathrooms, occasional running water, spotty electricity, and meet new friends. Prior to each trip, we meet for planning and training sessions, and we coordinate with the leaders in Nyadire. Our volunteers don't need to have special skills, and we always adapt our trips and projects to fit the abilities and interests of our team with the needs of the Mission.

Leader: Molly Michael  
mollyalice.michael@gmail.com or 412-805-6481

## SISTER RUT SCHOLARSHIP

Sister Rut Lindgren was a missionary nurse from Finland who lived in Nyadire for more than 35 years. With unemployment extremely high in Zimbabwe, young people striving to land a job sometimes consider additional education at a university or vocational school. To assist with their financial obligations, TNC provides funding through the Sister Rut Scholarship. Interested students apply for funds and a TNC committee reviews their comprehensive applications, selects the scholarship recipients and monitors their progress.

Leader: Molly Michael  
mollyalice.michael@gmail.com or 412-805-6481

# Let's Not Forget The Passion

By Phil Himmler

*(Composed in 2006 while flying home from the first mission trip to Zimbabwe)*

Let's not forget the passion that we felt in Zimbabwe  
There, we saw unbridled love in the people we saw each day

In poverty, their joy glowed a golden sheen  
Which inspired a hope, a dream clearly seen

Let's keep the dream alive as the hope within us grows  
To see their lives improve as God's grace through us bestows

There is within potential to make this dream come true  
If we pray to our God, then pursue

Let's celebrate the love for our God in every day  
By remembering the people we met, our friends in Zimbabwe

Let's not forget the passion, we felt inward pain  
God, we pray you will send us again

## To Drew and Richard, We Say: "Tatenda!"

Chuck Billerbeck spent his career in banking, so he's very skilled with numbers. And it turns out he has a knack for words, too.

At a recent TNC meeting, Chuck tried to summarize what Drew Harvey, as chairman, and Richard Dickey, as treasurer, have meant to the organization they helped to found in 2006.

"These guys are like Mount Rushmore to TNC," said Chuck, referring to the famous mountainside monument in the U.S. which pays homage to four highly regarded presidents (George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt and Abraham Lincoln).

Other TNC leaders nodded at that notion and later, by email, offered their own words of tribute and thanks to Drew and Richard:

**Ralph Duckworth** – Many thanks for your 15 years of dedicated service. Your passion, vision and perseverance have led TNC to take on bold initiatives that have improved the lives of thousands of people, including mine and those of the other TNC volunteers. Your compassion and love of others have touched the hearts of many and will not soon be forgotten. Thank you for being Christians who live the Word.

**Marie Hunt** – TNC would not be what it is today without Drew and Richard. They are a true testimony to putting your faith in action. Their gift of service and leadership, and their focus on building relationships, have blessed us all. Drew, I appreciate the ways you have nurtured the passions of each member of TNC, while at the same time asking the hard questions that need to be asked to assist in keeping the vision and mission in the forefront. Your words of encouragement, inspiration, motivation and support have enabled each ministry area to blossom. Thanks for your tireless leadership that has enabled the ministry to grow and thrive. Richard, I know that the addition of the Home of Hope Outreach program added many more hours of work. You graciously embraced the challenge of recording sponsorship payments and keeping the donations categorized correctly. You have graciously answered my unending questions. Thank you for the many hours you have given to this ministry.

**Debbie Little** – Thank you so much for your dedication to TNC and Nyadire. You live your faith and that's demonstrated in your leadership, which has inspired so many others to get involved, myself included. I'm blessed to be with you on this God-led journey.

**Molly Michael** – Drew, thank you for leading TNC with so much energy and attention to detail. I will forever be in awe of your wisdom and leadership. You are a legend. Richard, thank you for your diligent efforts in maintaining TNC's finances over the years. From the many checks I've mailed you to the crumbling piles of faded receipts I brought home from Zimbabwe, you kept my programs' balances in order! On top of managing finances, you make a great VIM Team van driver as well.

**Tim Wesley** – Drew, thanks for your leadership, commitment, energy and enthusiasm. And thanks, especially, for your friendship and for being such a strong, Christian role model to me and many others. I will continue to enjoy our discussions of many different topics. Richard, you have been a tireless TNC advocate. No volunteer organization can last 15 years and provide more than \$5 million without a trusted financial leader such as you. Thanks for your dedication and commitment, and for always providing an energy boost through candy bars – with the proceeds going to TNC, of course!

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

*Vist [www.nyadire.org](http://www.nyadire.org) for more information.*



*Design and printing courtesy of  
Western PA Conference of the United  
Methodist Church Communications*